Non-Governmental Organizations’ Impact in a Sustainable Context:
A Case Study from ActionAid Denmark’s Global Platform Mt. Kenya

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Abstract: As the world globalizes and people travel more, volunteering has never been more popular to combine with a cultural exchange. Many countries have volunteers and non-governmental organizations which try to help that country’s vulnerable. This study investigates the impact of non-governmental organizations through a case study done at one of ActionAid Denmark’s Global Platforms in Kenya. This Platform works as one of ActionAid’s training hubs where participants from mostly Denmark and Kenya take part in courses focusing on capacity building and global citizenship. Their aim is to provide knowledge to facilitate social change. By using qualitative data in the form of interviews and observation, this study makes an impact assessment and evaluates what impact the Mt. Kenya platform actually achieves and what challenges there might be. Questions about the impact and challenges are asked to a wide range of involved people at the Platform, namely participants, staff, locals and neighbors. This study’s theoretical concept employs the theories “4 Levels of Evaluation” developed by Donald Kirkpatrick and Robert Brinkerhoff’s “The Success Case Method” as well as Jack Mezirow’s theory of transformative learning and Beck’s & Purcell’s theory of social change. The analysis shows that the trainings themselves make a tremendous impact on the individuals participating in the Platform’s trainings. The courses are well structured and executed by the facilitators. The concept where different cultures meet and interact is a success in itself. To make even more impact in the community and for the people in the surrounding area, the Platform needs to be more visible to the locals and improve its marketing and communication activities so the locals want to participate more.

Keywords: Non-governmental organization, capacity building, impact assessment, cultural exchange, social change, sustainable development

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Summary: As the world globalizes and people travel more, volunteering has never been more popular to combine with a cultural exchange. Many countries have volunteers and non-governmental organizations which try to help that country’s vulnerable. In some countries it can even be debated whether non-governmental organizations should take on some problems that the government might be responsible of, since the help might be needed and appreciated but lead to paralyzing the government in fulfilling its tasks. In those cases, non-governmental organizations have a contradictory effect.

This study investigates the impact of non-governmental organizations through a case study done at one of ActionAid Denmark’s Global Platforms in Kenya. This Platform works as one of ActionAid’s training hubs with a human rights-based approach where participants from mostly Denmark and Kenya take part in courses focusing on capacity building and global citizenship. The Platform’s aim is to provide knowledge to facilitate social change towards a more just and equal society. Through intercultural dialogue, field trips and practical exercises, they aim at enabling young people to realize their own power and act collectively to bring social change in their communities and also worldwide.

By using qualitative data in the form of interviews and observation, this study makes an impact assessment and evaluates what impact the Mt. Kenya platform actually achieves and what challenges there might be. Questions about the impact and challenges are asked to a wide range of involved people at the Platform, such as participants, staff and locals.

Together with the empirical data and the theory of social change, the analysis shows that the trainings themselves make a tremendous impact on the individuals participating in the Platform’s trainings. The courses are well structured and executed by the facilitators. The concept where different cultures meet and interact is a success in itself. This effect is even enhanced since the courses focus on the participants sharing their experiences. Through that they learn from each other and develop a common understanding that gives the participants more confidence, courage and an open mind. To make even more impact in the community and for the people in the surrounding area, the Platform needs to be more visible to the locals and improve its marketing and communication activities so the locals want to participate more.

Keywords: Non-governmental organization, capacity building, impact assessment, cultural exchange, social change, sustainable development

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1. Introduction

We live in a globalized world, where international trade and migration grows. More people become aware of situations occurring in the world and many want to give a helping hand. Some look beyond their own comfortable living and solidarity, welfare and development are spreading.

Non-governmental organizations have over the years contributed to sustainable development. Mobilizing people to campaigns has become an important element of negotiations, ranging from the regulation of hazardous wastes to a global ban on land mines and the elimination of slavery (IISD, 2013). Non-governmental organizations have helped to focus attention on the social and environmental externalities. From the pressure by activists, duty bearers can be held responsible to deliver justice and fair rights (ActionAid, n.d.).

With different means and resources, non-governmental organizations exist worldwide. Some are highly sophisticated; others are small grassroots collectives. “Although it is often assumed that non-governmental organizations are charities or have non-profit status, some are profit-making organizations such as cooperatives or groups which lobby on behalf of profit-driven interests. For example, the World Trade Organization’s definition of non-governmental organizations is broad enough to include industry lobby groups such as the Association of Swiss Bankers and the International Chamber of Commerce. Such a broad definition has its critics. It is more common to define non-governmental organizations as those organizations which pursue some sort of public interest or public good, rather than individual or commercial interests” (IISD, 2013).

Some groups may pursue a single policy objective, for example access to AIDS drugs in developing countries or freedom of press. Others will have more extensive policy goals such as poverty eradication or human rights protection. However, one characteristic these diverse organizations share is that their non-profit status means they are able to devote themselves to issues with longer time spans, such as climate change, malaria prevention or safe cities for women. “Public surveys reveal that non-governmental organizations often enjoy a high degree of public trust, which can make them a useful - but not always sufficient - proxy for the concerns of society and stakeholders” (IISD, 2013).

I got the opportunity to do an internship during the fall of 2014 on a Global Platform in Kenya run by a cooperation between ActionAid Denmark and ActionAid Kenya. Their main goal is to train and empower youth and women to engage and create social change in their respective community. I spent four months there and took the opportunity to make the Platform my case study to investigate whether non-governmental organizations make an impact on its surrounding and what kind of impact. This is my starting point of the thesis. From the Platform I collected all empirical data which will be presented in chapter 6.

1.1. Impact assessment

There are difficulties with measuring impact. How can one prove that impact has been made because of something like an initiative from an organization, for example a training? In an OECD study it was stated: “confirmed by data and interviews in all the different case study countries - is that in spite of growing interest in evaluation there is still a lack of reliable evidence on the impact of non-governmental organizations development projects and programmes. There are reasons for this: most impact assessments have had to rely on qualitative data and judgments as a result of inadequate or non-existent monitoring and base-
line data, most impact evaluations have been undertaken very rapidly and most evaluations have focused on recording project outputs and not outcomes or broader impact. Yet in spite of this initial reaction to the study has been broad agreement with the analysis and conclusions drawn even from (donor) countries not included in the studies synthesized” (Riddell, 1997).

Being an almost 20 year old quote, I find most of it compelling except for the lack of evidence, where there now are ways to get past that. The OECD study concludes generalizing the impact of non-governmental organizations should be made very cautiously since it is hard to estimate how they have affected. It might have improved the living standards for some, but there can also be other factors that have caused this, which means it is difficult to get a clear opinion on who exactly are the benefactors and implementers. There is nonetheless a need to enhance knowledge about impact to be able to continue the work that is done and to clarify a strong strategy that donors and stakeholder can easily understand and be a part of. (Riddell, 1997).

Impact assessment in this study means the affect that the Platform has on the people involved. I want to evaluate, and also investigate on which level the Platform affects, i.e. makes an impact. I want to do this to examine non-governmental organizations presence, through one particular case, and discuss whether they help or not.

In the name of social change ActionAid believes that their presence with trainings can help. "The fundamental for all our trainings and our work in general is that we believe that social change can be brought about by a strong, active and effective civil society and a strengthened global citizenship. To promote the overall objectives, training must go beyond the individual outcome and focus on the capacity development and empowering effect for organizations" (AADK, 2013)

ActionAid’s overall aim is to create social change through training. In order to evaluate the impact of social change and whether ActionAid succeeds in doing that it is highly relevant to start with defining the concept social change. There are many definitions of social change but I chose the following because it was the one I found most equivalent for my topic and it resembles the discourse at the Platform and ActionAid’s organization: “Genuine social change is change that reshapes the balance of social power away from ruling elites into the hands of people who are marginalized in the current social order. It comes about through a process of critical thinking and collective action which produces people with a new vision of themselves and their society and new organizations which provide an abbreviated experience of transformed relationships and a power base for political change” (Purcell, 2010, p. 23).

1.2. Literature review
Little has been found on reports which investigate how much non-governmental organizations actually affect and what good they do. It was the lack of documentation and curiousness around the topic that determined me to make an impact assessment. One reason has probably to do with the difficulties to measure this sort of impact.

Donald Kirkpatrick’s “4 Levels of Evaluation” (2007) and Robert Brinkerhoff’s “The Success Case Method” (2009) where used to decide how to make an impact assessment to begin with. These are used by ActionAid in their own evaluation work. ActionAid had no impact assessments documented from any of their Platforms so this was what I had to work with and create my own. Jack Mezirow’s (2009) theory of Transformative Learning and Becks & Purcell’s (2010) theory of social change were used in as a foundation of the theory to be able to analyze what makes an impact and how it affects. I was also introduced to Knud Illeris’
“Lärande” (2007) and Glynis Cousin “Researching Learning in Higher Education” (2009), those references have been a great help for both my theory and method.

I used mostly Robert Yin’s “Case Study Research, design and methods” (2014) for the method. It gave a whole and clear explanation on what a case study is and how it is conducted and what challenges there are to attend and be aware of.

“The Pedagogy of the oppressed” by (Freire, 2000) and “Encountering Development” by Arturo Escobar (2012) have helped me keep a holistic approach to the study and reminded me of the bigger picture and the purpose of my research. These together with Dambisa Moyo’s book “Dead Aid” have urged me to remain a critical mind towards development and bring to light the challenges that come with it. They are the main drivers in my character in the analysis and discussion. They speak of the West’s attempt to deliver development as a ‘failure’ and questions whether portrays of Africa that is depicted by journalists is the equivalent reality.

The central vocabulary used in this study is the same as the key words and are the following: non-governmental organizations, volunteering, capacity building, impact assessment, cultural exchange, social change, and sustainable development. These terms were searched through various databases provided by the Uppsala and Lund University library and Google Scholar mixed with other words such as theory, empowerment, and ActionAid.

1.3. Problem statement

ActionAid’s mission and vision is to reach social change globally and fight poverty and injustice. In a globalized world, ActionAid is not the only organization working towards social change. Little research has been conducted on the actual impact of the non-governmental organizations. Several issues can be associated with their work.

The Platform works as a training hub providing courses in empowerment and entrepreneurship for youth and women. The underlying idea is that people with no or little means can come to the Platform and learn skills and tools about how to create social change for themselves and others. Although several success stories are known, no general statement regarding the effects of the Platform can be made due to the lack of documentation. It remains unclear, whether benefits are only accruing at an individual level or are shared by a community.

Global Contact is ActionAid Denmark’s travel program which sends the participants to the Platform. After the completion of the course, participants are sent to their volunteering placement. Although the local Platform trains the participants, Global Contact receives the feedback after the placements. Therefore, it needs to be studied whether the course provides the necessary preparations for the placement. As for the local participants, not much feedback is obtained. A question worth investigating is whether the knowledge provided is useful in their further careers and endeavors in life.

The Platform finances itself mostly through donations and the contributions by the Danish participants. Consequently, ActionAid Mt. Kenya is highly dependent on external financial resources. Although Kenya was not affected by Ebola last year, the number of participants still declined which poses a problem to the organization. As a result, the financial dependence on resources outside of the organizations needs to be assessed.
1.4. Purpose and aim
This study’s purpose is to investigate what effects non-governmental organizations have in the society and to the people they work with. It also wants to examine how learning affects both the individual and the community.

The main target group for this thesis is people committed within the aid/volunteer sector with a sustainable approach in mind. It can be both researchers from an upper high level of education but also for the youth looking for something to fill their gap year with, or the student who studies Development Studies, International Relations or Sustainable Development, etc. The research aims of this study are to find out how ActionAid’s Global Platforms’ concept is affecting the people they intend i.e. making an impact in terms of social change and to what level.

1.5. Research questions
Based on the content presented above the following research questions are:

- How does the Platform make an impact in terms of social change? To whom and to what extent?
- Are the trainings accomplishing what is intended?
- Is ActionAid’s approach sustainable?

1.6. Disposition
To facilitate the reading I will here present a simple outline of the report.

This first chapter provides an introduction to the subject investigated, defines the term impact assessment, followed by a literature review, and states the problem statement, study’s purpose, research aims and questions.

The second chapter presents the background of the case where the work of ActionAid is explained more in detail.

Chapter three introduces the theoretical framework that describes learning and connects it to training and social change. Following is the fourth chapter that features the methodology on how to evaluate. This is followed by chapter five that contains method where case study as a method is presented and challenges, limitation and ethics are discussed.

Results of empirical data from the interviews and observations are presented in chapter six and taken further for analysis and discussion in a larger context in chapter seven and eight. The report finishes up with conclusions in chapter nine.
2. Background to case
In 1972 ActionAid was founded in England as a non-governmental organization and is now established in 45 different countries worldwide. With their vision of “a world without poverty and injustice in which every person enjoys their right to a life of dignity” they work followed by their mission which is “to work with poor and excluded to eradicate poverty and injustice” (ActionAid, 2014). They believe that an end to poverty and injustice can be achieved through action by individual and collective, led by the affected people and supported by solidarity, and campaigns that address the structural causes and consequences of poverty (ActionAid, 2014).

![Countries ActionAid is established in](image)

Figure 1: Countries ActionAid is established in (Denmark, n.d.)

ActionAid is an international organization with a professional approach, well worked out strategies and firm structures. ActionAid have 10 Key Change Promises that they see as problems worldwide and they want to see these being improved:

1. Securing women’s land rights
2. Promoting sustainable agriculture
3. Holding governments to account on public services
4. Achieving redistributive resourcing of development
5. Transforming education for girls and boys
6. Harnessing youth leadership to end poverty and injustice
7. Building people’s resilience to conflict and disaster
8. Responding to disasters through rights
9. Increasing women’s and girls’ control over their bodies
10. Generating women-centered economic alternatives (ActionAid, 2014)

Before ActionAid Denmark was called *Mellemfolkeligt Samvirke*, a well known and established non-governmental Danish organization that has 70 years of experience in aid and volunteering. They have also a long experience and a vast range of educating youth in social change through conducting trainings. They joined ActionAid and changed their name to ActionAid Denmark to be able to be a part of something bigger and expand their network. ActionAid Denmark’s Training Department – Training for Change that is in charge of all the trainings’ structure, lay-out and content was founded in 2009. So far they have branched out...
in eight different so called Global Platforms, “sub organization” situated in different countries with the purpose to train local youth with empowerment towards social change.

Figure 2: ActionAid Denmark’s Global Platforms (Denmark, n.d.)

The figure is an illustration of where ActionAid Denmark’s Platforms are situated geographically. ActionAid International Kenya merged with ActionAid Denmark in 2009. They opened a so called “training hub” at a Platform near Mount Kenya, outside the town Nanyuki, in Laikipia County, Kenya. Here they offer both young Danish and Kenyan participants courses focused on capacity building, that involves global citizenship, volunteerism, solidarity across borders, and activism. Their aim is to provide youths from around the world with knowledge, skills and attitude to facilitate social change and fight poverty and injustice. Through discussions, inter-cultural dialogue, reflection, field trips and practical exercises, they aim at enabling young people to realize their own power and act collectively to bring social change in their communities and also worldwide (ActionAid, 2014).

2.1. How Global Platform works

In the late 1990s the “Human Rights Based Approach” emerged as a new development paradigm. This new approach had swept through the internet, policy makers, and development assistance agencies, bilateral donors, and nongovernmental organizations worldwide within less than a decade. Consultants and advisors are today elaborating and mainstreaming the paradigm through reports, workshops, and project evaluations, ensuring that rights-based thinking on development problems will continue to widen and grow for years to come (Kindornay, 2012). ActionAid’s strategy takes point of departure from the Human Rights Based Approach. It is best described by the old Chinese saying: “Give a man a fish, and he can eat for a day, teach him to fish and he can eat for a lifetime” meaning that we should help people in a way of giving them tools and skills in order to improve their lives themselves instead of only giving them food or other supplies to survive short-termed. It is an evolvement compared to others ‘Basic Needs Approach’ which essentially only means aid.

ActionAid sees poverty as a violation of human rights. Human Rights Based Approach is one of the key methods of the work at ActionAid. In ActionAid’s mission it says to work with the people rather than for them. The purpose of the approach is to create awareness about human
rights and give the people the ability to organize and knowledge to claim those rights and hold duty bearers to account. “We support people to analyze and confront power imbalances and we take sides with people living in poverty” (AADK, 2013). By doing this the people in need are more in control of their own life and therefore more encouraged to improve it. With this approach ActionAid teaches people to support themselves. They need to take action to develop social change and that is how the approach becomes sustainable.

2.2. Trainings at the Mount Kenya Platform

The trainings are run with 5 principles:

- Participatory training – everyone is included in this learning and is supposed to learn from each other, that requires everyone to participate and share experiences.
- Creativity – the complex issues at hand often do not have an already finished solution, but demands innovation and creativeness to work out.
- Learning by doing – followed by the principle “act – reflect – apply” where it is important to try your ideas and not to be afraid of failing but to see it as a process in order to make something better.
- Political empowerment – in a democracy everyone has a right to have an opinion but also an obligation to take part in the political agenda.
- Public action learning – be aware of the possibilities and advantages to join a movement. (AADK, 2013)

The Platform’s local and international facilitators are highly experienced in the fields of facilitation, cultural understanding, voluntarism, activism, communication, media and international development. Eight staff members out of twelve are from Kenya, the rest are from Denmark. They all have different backgrounds from various fields. Pedagogy is one of the most important elements the trainers work with. They prepare the sessions not to become lectures where the facilitator seems more like a teacher and the participants act only as pupils who take notes on what the teacher says. All sessions are carefully planned and structured so it will be interactivity between participants. The focus is on the participants’ sharing of experiences and the other participants can learn from it. It makes them feel like they matter and with the participants sharing so much they grow quickly into a group with a lot of team
spirit. Thanks to this they are able to be creative and out of their comfort zone, which helps
them to become stronger and better persons. The focus is also on empowerment so the
participants get a feeling that they have a voice; they can make changes in order to be active
in their community. Youth often get pointed out to be the leaders of the future and at the
Platform they stress this fact and encourage youth to take more initiative and responsibility in
their community.

Trainings provided at the Platform are among others one month long course, called Global
Volunteers. This serves as an introduction for Danish participants (in average around 10-15
people) before their volunteer work in some country of East Africa. The course contains
workshops and excursions with focus on culture, livelihood, poverty, politics, and power
relations among other things in order to prepare them for the experience that waits at their
placements. This training runs most frequently during the year and is the one with most
participants in total.

But the Global Volunteer Course is only a small element of what they do at the Platform. To
get a better picture I will explain the other courses shortly.

Another course that runs during a long period of time over the year is called the Global
Citizen Course. Usually half the participants are from Denmark and the other half comes from
various countries in Africa, in total they are around 15 persons. They come together for four
months, which include most of the elements in the Global Volunteer’s course but also far
more extensive. The participants go for example to Tanzania for a month where they visit
coffee and spice plantations, a prison and a rehabilitation center. They spend one week around
the Platform or in the neighboring town Nanyuki with their own development project - that
enforces social change and also sustainability.

There are two trainings quite similar to one and another, they are called Global Interns and
Global Health, and they are one to three weeks long for Danish nurses that come to learn
about health with focus in Africa. Some excursions and workshops are the same as for the
Global Volunteer’s only they focus more on health. The participants for example visit the
hospital nearby, which other participants do not. Some go back to their studies in Denmark
after the course; others go and do an internship at hospitals around the country.

Twice a year the Platform runs a so called Youth forum. It is a one times four day course for
local youth that come to the Platform and interact and have workshops with the other
participants. The themes can for example be leadership and communication, how to do a
workshop, sustainable development, and democracy and politics. Not only do the youths learn
about these things but it also gives them a cross-cultural experience, which is supposed to
open their perspective and increase tolerance.

This study conducted interviews from participants of the Global Volunteer course and the
Youth forum because Global Volunteer is the most general one and the Youth forums are the
ones aiming at local youths where social change is supposed to happen.

Lastly the Platform provides courses for already experienced facilitators. These are within the
similar field with the purpose to make them better facilitators but also to share knowledge and
experiences on for example how to improve their programs.

Besides these scheduled standard courses the Platform also runs other trainings for the local
community especially for youth and women. The focus is usually on empowerment and social
entrepreneurship.
2.3. Global Contact

Global Contact is ActionAid Denmark’s non-profit cultural exchange- and travel programme for volunteers that want to contribute to make a change for the better in this world. Each year they send approximately 800 Danish youths and adults to volunteer together with ActionAid’s mission to “end poverty and fight injustice” (ActionAid, 2014). It is through Global Contact participants sign up for the courses executed at the Global Platforms (AADK, 2014). This is seen as an alternative for an ordinary Dane to go out in the world and encounter the depth of a culture rather than travel as an ordinary tourist. Global Contact strives to provide a genuine cultural meeting, face to face with the local people and a peak through the facade of a country. Global Contact provides three different categories of journeys, volunteer work, folk high school and internships. For the volunteer work one stays at the Platform for a one month introduction and then attends a placement where volunteer work awaits at for example a school or an orphanage for a couple of months.

With the folk high school one does no volunteering but stays at the Platform and does trainings and work-shops but also travels a fair share and visit different places.

The internship is different, i.e. instead of visiting the Platform as participant one works as staff member and helps with things that can be needed such as trainings and excursions. This opportunity gives an extraordinary experience and more knowledge of our global world with a sense of working with, and even maybe having made a difference for, the world’s poorest. Global Contact has a 70 year long experience with development work and people who want to make a difference. It began in 1946 with volunteers in Europe and with time it has expanded to what we have today. Global Contact recently expanded and opened an office in Sweden to also capture Swedish contributors (Actionaid Sweden, 2014).

The organization is divided in Global Contact and Global Platforms for structural reasons. It is better to have one gathered group whose responsibility is to assist with all marketing, recruitment and travel arrangements for the participants while the staff at the Platform only focuses on their space.
2.4. Activista

Another important part of ActionAid is Activista. Activista is ActionAid’s global youth network involving more than 50 ActionAid partners and thousands of volunteers in more than 25 countries. ActionAid recognizes youth as being one of the most marginalized groups of people who are being failed by current efforts to eradicate poverty. ActionAid claims that youth often represent one of the most exposed groups when it comes to issues like hunger, education, maternal health, governance and environmental sustainability. “Youth are not only the leaders of tomorrow, but they are also the drivers of change today” (ActionAid, 2012). ActionAid believes young people are central to the process of development and should be seen as important resources of drivers and performers of development. “Activista seeks to harness this resource and fulfill young people’s right to participate in their own development” (ActionAid, 2012). Anyone who wants to be an active member can be an Activista.

Activista has become a vast network with young people around the world, from high- to low income countries, urban and rural places, brought together with ActionAid through social media and campaigns to unite and share ideas and act in solidarity. They create different campaigns depending from what country they are in; it can be for example push for tax power, against land grabbing or for safe cities for women. They collaborate with various artists to create innovative and powerful campaigns. “Activista empowers and enables young people to actively participate in the decision making and political processes that affect their lives” (ActionAid, 2012). They also focus on capacity building and shared learning in the same spirit as the Platforms.

The Platform works as a partner and a collaborator for the Activista’s in central Kenya. Here they can come together, if they have questions or to get help. They can also use the Platform to meet and mobilize.

Figure 5: ‘Outside classroom’ (researcher’s own photo)
3. Theory

One reason for non-governmental organizations to continue their work is on the assumption that they are needed in the area and are making an impact; why else would they go on? But unfortunately few research studies with evidence of impact have been published. Probably it has to do with the complexity of measurement. Much of the information is anecdotal, meaning it is very hard to measure if it was because of the help from the non-governmental organization that farmers grew more crops? It might also just have been better weather conditions? There are impact stories of remarkable change, but it lacks formal research or a body of literature to support it (Hailey, 2009).

3.1. Transformative learning

Transformative learning is, simply put, about learning that change people’s behavior through a change of thought. Most people do not change their behavior (or practice) unless they have not changed their perception about themselves and how the world works. I.e. the change of thought might not just be a possible way to changed behavior but a necessary one.

Jack Mezirow is widely acknowledged as the founder of the concept transformative learning who recognizes our urge to make meaning of our daily life, but to do so in a truthful way we also need a critical dimension of learning to recognize and reconsider the structure of assumptions and expectations, which frame our thinking, feeling and acting. “These structures of meaning constitute a ‘meaning perspective’ or frame of reference” (Mezirow, 2009, p. 90). Mezirow is influenced by Paulo Freire’s work “Pedagogy of the oppressed” that was first published in 1968 and proposes a new pedagogy in the relationship between teacher, student and society, wanting a more horizontal spectrum of it. It is a theory of existence that views people as subjects, not objects, who constantly reflect and act in a transformative way to make the world a better place for all to live in. By conscientization Freire means demythicizing reality, where the oppressed develop a critical consciousness through acting as their own agent in social transformation (Freire, 2000).

Transformative learning has now grown into a huge concept and it is used by many different researchers. A clear definition does not come across easily but going back to Mezirow’s frame of reference he speaks of what is the core message which is to expand the mind’s views in a holistic way: “Transformative learning is defined as the process by which we transform problematic frames of reference (mindsets, habits of mind, meaning perspectives) – sets of assumption and expectation – to make them more inclusive, discriminating, open, reflective and emotionally able to change. Such frames are better because they are more likely to generate beliefs and opinions that will prove more true or justified to guide action” (Mezirow, 2009, p. 92).

Illeris (2007) describes it as a character of complex and profound measures that includes a learning aspect about feelings and actions. It can be a learning with a prolonged process where the social relations plays a prominent role. After the transformation one can feel like a new and better person.

By changing the frame of reference a belief can be validated through a discourse leading to a consensus Mezirow claims. In that way knowledge expands and takes into account other experiences. By being aware that we do not know everything makes us open to change. “This is why our conclusions are always tentative: we may always encounter others with new evidence, arguments or perspectives. Thus diversity of experience and inclusion are essential to our understanding. It is important to recognize that the only alternatives to this dialectical
method of inquiry for understanding the meaning of our experience is to rely on tradition, an authority or force” (Mezirow, 2009, p. 91).

There is a process of transformative learning that involves some guide lines in how it is achieved:

- “Reflecting critically on the source, nature and consequences of relevant assumptions – our own and those of others;
- In instrumental learning, determining that something is true (is as it is purported to be) by using empirical research methods;
- In communicative learning, arriving at more justified beliefs by participating freely and fully in an informed continuing discourse;
- Taking action on our transformed perspective – we make a decision and live what we have come to believe until we encounter new evidence, argument or a perspective that renders this orientation problematic and requires reassessment;
- Acquiring a disposition – to become more critically reflective of our own assumptions and those of others, to seek validation of our transformative insights through more freely and fully participating in discourse and to follow through on our decision to act upon a transformed insight” (Mezirow, 2009, p. 94).

This description of learning fits well in the frames of ActionAid. First of all when it comes to the Danish participants and how they change their whole context by traveling from Denmark to a completely different environment both physically and mentally. Transformative learning and ActionAid emphasize on critical thinking and stress the participants to be aware of their surroundings. They push people to recognize the reality through empirical experiences (in this case for example through many various excursions) and let participants participate as much as possible in the local life such as community work, visit schools, cooking with local families and so on. This is done to encourage the participants and locals to take action in their community to make social change.

Questions have been raised by other educators concerning transformative theory. Some critics are not clear of the role played by emotions, intuition and imagination in the process of transformation in reality. This criticism of the theory is justified says Mezirow and replies: “The process by which we tacitly construct our beliefs may involve taken-for-granted values, stereotyping, highly selective attention, limited comprehension, projection, rationalization, minimizing or denial. That is why we need to be able to critically assess and validate assumptions supporting our own beliefs and expectations and those of others” (Mezirow, 2009, p. 95).

Another criticism against Mezirow’s theory has been its de-emphasis of social action. An important goal that some adult education holds is to effect social change. “Transformation theory also contends that adult education must be dedicated to effecting social change, to modifying oppressive practices, norms, institutions and socio-economic structures to allow everyone to participate more fully and freely in reflective discourse and to acquiring a critical disposition and reflective judgment. Transformative learning focuses on creating the foundation in insight and understanding essential for learning how to take effective social action in a democracy” (Mezirow, 2009, p. 96).

It can be argued that there is a diversity of perspectives in transformative learning but has been undermined due to the most dominant perception, which is Mezirow’s. There is according to Taylor (2008) a lot of potential to offer a more diverse interpretation but the contributions are not fully appreciated and therefore hard to practice. But by being aware of
this criticism it can still be advocated that transformative learning is about keeping a critical mind against anything, even its own paradigm. With recognizing for example the empirical findings as quite individual, one keeps in mind that generalizations are hard to make but still one is allowed to some careful generalizations (Taylor, 2008).

3.2. Beck & Purcell three areas of social change

To look at the different factors that drive people to make social change, transformative learning describes change in individuals. To connect this in a larger context Beck and Purcell’s theory explains how training individuals can expand into a change in society.

Drawing on the legacy of Paulo Freire, Beck & Purcell’s theory in whole is described as if youth is trained in capacity building, it will affect them into a changed behavior and that will spread whereas they are a big part of the community they live in and its future (Purcell, 2010). Meaning that if change is wanted on a local level, one might start with the individuals because that is what a society is built upon. Of course change in behavior does not always mean good behavior so that is why we need to explore the themes within social change; the borrowed categorization is from Thin (2002):

- “Social justice: equal opportunity and the achievement of all human rights;
- Solidarity: cohesion, empathy, co-operation and associational life;
- Participation: opportunities for everyone to play a meaningful part in development; and
- Security: livelihood security and safety from physical threats” (Purcell, 2010, p. 26)

Beck & Purcell (2010) break up social change into three different areas in order to deepen the analysis and identify the distinct areas of social experience where change for good can occur.

3.2.1. Legal Change

The first area of change is within legal change. From the 1960s there has been a tradition to involve youth and community work/campaigning in order to be able to adjust and influence law and social policy. Community-based campaigns around environmental issues, equality for same-sex couples, anti-discrimination, human rights is to mention a few that has been stepping forward in the recent years. Thanks to these campaigns laws have been altered, social policy monitored and the ability to result in some aspects of social change has improved.

“Although one could be argued that legal changes are only effective when people have the power/will to enforce them. So while focusing on legislation remains a valid focus for social change it can be problematic, and cannot be expected to succeed on its own; parallel developments are also required in awareness-raising in the wider community and the development of the power structures within communities experiences injustice, which can the ensure that legislation is enforced” (Purcell, 2010, p. 47).

3.2.2. Economic change

In the second area Beck & Purcell (2010) describes youth and community workers making a difference in the economic sphere. To mobilize people and move from a position of low resources and dependence takes initiatives in terms of actual money and free or subsidized housing, health care, education and childcare etc. “Micro-finance initiatives give access to credit to the world’s poorest people, which can then be used to establish businesses, take part in education or improve their homes and neighborhoods” (Purcell, 2010, p. 48). The challenge here is to make sure that the individuals, communities or countries will be able to make use of these additional economic resources. Some stakeholders only exclusively lend to
women. They state that women are more reliable in paying back and that they use the loans more wisely than men (WuDunn, 2010).

3.2.3. Changes in individuals
The final area to be considered is social change based on work that is directed at individuals. These are models that take point of departure from the idea that social change is accomplished through the accumulation of individual change in beliefs, personality or lifestyle.

The area can be explained in the way that achieving change is prioritized at the individual level over the group/community. Social change is then expanding from the individual further to its surroundings, spreading to and affecting others. “Approaches under this model would be typified by those focusing in the development of human capital and would include confidence building, training and skills development. The logic of this approach is that the development of skill and confidence can overcome the culture of communities which might be typified by lack of aspiration and limited expectation of meaningful employment. Increases in skills and qualifications would then lead to increased employment levels and more affluent communities. As a result of this, related issues of crime, drug taking, poor health, and so on would be improved” (Purcell, 2010, p. 49).

One risk with this approach would be if the intention is social change in a neighborhood. Often what happens in reality is that some individuals develop their confidence, skills and qualifications and perhaps leave the neighborhood for a more promising one. Theoretically if all ‘affected’ individuals leave and make no change in their original community, that society will remain the same.
4. Methodology

4.1. Kirkpatrick’s 4 Levels of Evaluation

To make an impact assessment it is necessary to know what different impact can implicate. Since it is hard to measure what this report really wants to access, there are other characters that are easier to study. These can ease the way towards what this study really wants to achieve.

Kirkpatrick gives a thorough explanation on how to proceed in an evaluation or an impact assessment. What is there that needs to be kept in mind? How does one execute such a task? Where to start? This has helped this study in the entire process of evaluation and also how to format an interview guide further in the method. Together with Kirkpatrick I briefly mention Hailey (2009) that agrees a lot with Kirkpatrick concerning capacity building.

To start a training one needs to ask the question: What are our learning objectives? This to be able to evaluate what the participants actually got out of the trainings and how it can be improved next time. Rather start slow than throw the interviewee into the interview by asking them about their first experience with the training, course or organization (Kirkpatrick, 2007).

4.1.1. Implementing Level 1: Reaction

Impact can be measured on different levels, even if it is the result in society that is pursued, studies about significant conditions of change can be helpful both because the steps are important and it can be easier to investigate.

The goal of the first level of evaluation is to measure participants’ perception of the learning experience, to this there are three primary objectives:

- “The questions must contain four essential areas for a successful training program: course, content, instructor and relevancy of the overall aim.
- The evaluation itself needs to capture a link between quality, process improvement, and action. The participants must feel that they can contribute through the evaluation to improvement, that it matters what they answer and that it will be taken into consideration.
- Without regard to owner, political correctness or other bias, action plans should initiate to address identified weaknesses” (Kirkpatrick, 2007, p. 18).

One way to measure the reaction to what is trying to be implemented can be through surveys, which are simple and cost-effective to conduct. They also give the research a wide range of recipients that makes the study more reliant. Kirkpatrick oppose the exercised criticism calling them reaction ‘smile’ sheets and some mean that they actually do more harm than good and are not worth anything regarding the effectiveness of the training. He says they can definitely be called smile sheets but he does not like the tone in which sense they are given this name. He defines the reaction sheets as ‘measures of customer satisfaction’ and that puts emphasis on its importance and value. Trainees are really your costumers, whether or not they pay for the program (Kirkpatrick, 2007).

4.1.2. Implementing Level 2: Learning

Most training programs contain three objectives when it comes to learning: to acquire knowledge, gain skills or/and change attitude. “It is important to measure learning because no change in behavior can be expected unless one or more of these learning objectives have been accomplished. […] Moreover, if you were to measure behavior change and not learning and if you found no change in behavior, the likely conclusion would be that no learning took
place. This conclusion may be very erroneous” (Kirkpatrick, 2007, p. 20). This can be connected to Transformative learning where a new thinking is seen as a prerequisite for change in behavior but might not be a guaranty. To what extent the program has been effective in regard to the objectives of measurement is the reason for evaluating Learning.

The Platform does not have exams or tests. That can be challenging to measure learning but it is up to the trainers to observe and this can be done through various activities. Performance can be used as an alternative as measuring tool, such as presentation skills, problem solving etc. (Kirkpatrick, 2007). This thesis focuses more on what the participants perceive they had learned.

4.1.3. Implementing Level 3: Behavior

“It is the personal values and beliefs that determine behavior” (Hailey, 2009, p. 44). This can be connected to Transformative learning. The third level contains measuring the behavior that takes place after the course. Have the participants followed through in their behavior, or did they keep doing what they had been doing before they attended the training program? These questions can be answered through interviews and observations. Here is where this study has its focus with the theory: changed behavior leads to social change.

Sometimes this level can be seen as the neglected level or ‘the missing link’ as Kirkpatrick refers to. This mostly because it is hard to measure due to the results come after training has ended. What is to be remembered here is that evaluators job do not finish when the program ends, although it is very hard to create a compelling “chain of evidence” leading from training to behavior. But Kirkpatrick (2007, p. 26) tries with a model looking like this:

“Here are data that show that our learners were engaged in the training and found it relevant (level 1), which led to an increase in knowledge and skills (level 2), which with the support and involvement from your fine leaders helped lead to significant changes in behavior (level 3) which ultimately contributed to the result you were looking for (level 4)”.

When new behavior is being used an inward feeling of satisfaction, pride and achievement, and happiness can occur. This term is often referenced as ‘intrinsic’. This motivation is generally longer lasting than the opposite ‘extrinsic’ (external) reinforcement. However by itself it rarely is enough to get a group behaving in a new way (Kirkpatrick, 2007).

The time aspect is important to consider when it comes to evaluate behavior. There must be some time allowed between the training and the change of behavior. “The new behaviors are critical to the execution of organizational strategy” (Kirkpatrick, 2007, p. 37). Brinkerhoff (2009) agrees but also warns not to let too much time pass before the evaluation. He says one should try to take into consideration how long it would take for the participant to execute the skills that was learned.

In this case study that consideration is hard due to what ActionAid teach is mainly life skills, skills not only for a certain situation or one specific purpose but for life in general.

4.1.4. Implementing Level 4: Results

There is always more or less a pressure on the trainers to get immediate results of their trainings. Same goes for organizations depending on donors (Hailey, 2009). The risk is then that one might take drastic, uncalculated actions in order to achieve better, faster. But it is important to let time pass before this process. The results are why we train (Kirkpatrick, 2007). The ultimate result is to measure the impact in the local community around the Platform and this I could get access to already through interviews during my stay in Kenya.
As for the impact on the Danish participants I would wait with interviewing them until they got home and had time to reflect on their visit.

4.1.5. Building a chain of evidence
A strong case can be built with the chain of the four levels. In explaining a chain of events that lead from one situation to another the researcher can evaluate the happenings together (Kirkpatrick, 2007).

4.2. Brinkerhoff’s Success Case Method
Brinkerhoff’s Success Case Method is a carefully crafted, easy and confirmed way to find out how well an organization is working. It is designed to confront and leverage the reality on what is really happening, concerning in this study’s case the Platform’s impact, through storytelling. I.e. letting people tell their story and perception on how the Platform makes impact. Storytelling is the heart of Brinkerhoff’s approach, which is designed by interviews. The most important questions in a Success Case Method is:

- “What is really happening?
- What results, if any, is the program helping to produce?
- What is the value of the results?
- How could the initiative be improved?” (Brinkerhoff, 2009, p. 6)

It has a simple two part structure. The first part requires the interviewee to ‘qualify’ the success case. That is, asking questions to be sure that the person have a success story to tell. The second part consists of probing the story, and not only to get it explained and illustrative but also identify the factors that made success possible. During the interviews I therefore try to ask the interviewees follow up questions like “Can you give an example” in the success stories they tell.

Brinkerhoff defends the method by only using data in favor of the cause or subject that is investigated i.e. in my case only interviewing people that are familiar to the Platform’s work and achievements. He means that if it is the success (same as in this case impact) one requires investigating, the data relevant needs to have experience of this; otherwise it will lead to a dead end. In this case the dead end would simply be for those people ActionAid does not make an impact at all.
5. Method
This report is a single case study with gathered data from the Platform. It uses qualitative data in the form of interviews, field notes and observation. This approach is suitable because it investigating and interpreting human behavior and experiences. Qualitative data analysis allows one to explore themes, patterns and stories within the research material. This study uses a method to mutually engage empirical data with a theoretical literature and the researcher’s reflections (Bernard, 2006). This study is mostly done in an inductive manner. It has a starting point from the observations that has developed the pattern, tentative hypothesis and theory. But it overlaps a bit with the deductive approach that starts with the theory, and then develops a hypothesis followed by observations and finish with confirmation (Trochim, 2006). Even though an inductive and deductive approach are quite different I have been using both approaches in terms of that the theory was developed to some extent before the study made its empirical data, and helped to format the interview guide.

5.1. What is a case study?
A case study is a research approach used in many different disciplines where a researcher is following one particular event, individual or organization, which becomes ‘the case’ and analyses the empirical data with help of a theory. It is an approach used in order to understand and go in depth on a complex social phenomenon “This research approach offers the opportunity to investigate issues where they occur (natural settings) and to produce descriptive and analytical accounts that invite reader judgment about their plausibility” (Cousin, 2009, p. 131).

“Case study research is rarely a single method approach” (Cousin, 2009, p. 141). To do a case study research can be useful for example where the research questions ask ‘why’ and ‘how’. That allows the investigator to focus on a case and maintain a holistic and real-world perspective. “A holistic case study is shaped by a thoroughly qualitative approach that relies on narrative, phenomenological descriptions. Themes and hypotheses may be important but should remain subordinate to the understanding of the case” (Tietje, 2002).

Hypotheses led research is not appropriate for this method. Still a single case design can involve units of analysis at more than one level, as in this case. Meaning this study wants to evaluate the impact of the Platform and if that impact can be made on various levels such as individual and societal, maybe even national or global. However the study about the single Platform is a so called embedded case study design. “Embedded case studies involve more than one unit, or object, of analysis and usually are not limited to qualitative analysis alone. The multiplicity of evidence is investigated at least partly in subunits, which focus on different salient aspects of the case. In an organizational case study, for example, the main unit may be a company as a whole, and the smallest units may be departments or even groups of individuals, such as owners and employees” (Tietje, 2002).

Since the study tries to examine the effects in a larger context on a global level a holistic design is also used. One problem with the holistic designs is that the entire case study may be done at an abstract level, lacking sufficiently clear measures or data. But if only studying the embedded design one might not be able to put it in a larger context and therefore the study is limited for further implications. If the data focus only on the individuals, the study is in fact only about the participants and not about the organization. Then the phenomenon of interest becomes the context and not the target of study (Yin, 2014). Since the interview questions also explores the interviewees’ opinions on the Platform’s impact in the community and wider context this is not a study only focused on the individuals but the surroundings impact as well.
5.2. Why case study?
As said above a case study is a good choice when there is an opportunity to investigate issues where they occur. It is also a good choice of method for a report that is broad and complex and wants to investigate the social behaviors and relations. As a got my internship on the Platform with ActionAid I got a unique inside view and opportunity to actually find out what kind of impact was made. I could through my internship meet and get the trust from locals, activists in favor of social change and decision makers. I was at the heart of a place where social change was vital for many people and in a time where people were getting more aware of this.

5.3. Limitations
I have chosen a single case study instead of a multiple case study and even though the following reasons are not all because of this, I find them important to mention. In general, one could be that the case is so called critical to the theory and that another case would be hard to fit in. Another reason is when there is an extreme case to research so unusual that it is hard to find something to compare it too. Or it could be if there is a common case, something from our everyday life that by only looking at that specific case gives enough of insight. I claim this is my study’s reason. A fourth reason is called the revelatory case. “This situation exists when a researcher has an opportunity to observe and analyze a phenomenon previously inaccessible to social inquiry” (Yin, 2014, p. 52). The last reason is when a case study needs to be examined over time, so called a longitudinal case, which means that even if going back to the same case after some time it will not be the exact same case due to time that has past and therefore not classified as a single case study.

If more time and resources would have been available, an option to strengthen the research would be with a comparative study or a collective case study with other Platforms. Then this study would have increased its validity and deepen its support but would have needed a team of researchers and a longer time frame.

5.3.1. Challenges with case study
As with most methods a case study also has it flaws and challenges.

Perhaps the greatest concern with a case study is whether it will be rigorous enough. It seems to be presumed that if using other methods it is less likely to end up with a poor report, which is said due to the numerous of references that can be used in other methods to support the research. Meaning sometimes there are not enough references and literature to support case studies. Case study research may not have as much literature with similar results as other methods. That gives the researcher the risk to be careless, not follow systematic procedures or allow equivocal evidence to influence the direction of the findings and conclusions (Yin, 2014). This is avoided by clear connections to the literature, a prepared method and a carefully selection of interviewees, which this report intend to supply.

A frequent heard question is – How can one generalize from one single case? Unfortunately there is no simple answer. Many would say that one can never generalize anything from one single case study. But others mean that one can generalize the theory around it, not people’s behavior in a society but the theory behind the behavior. Meaning generalizing from a case study is rather analytical than statistical. On the other hand if one has many different but still similar case studies to compare with, then one might be able to generalize from the empirical data found in the other places (Yin, 2014). I will in the discussion try to find comparable information about other non-governmental organizations to be able to put it in a larger context.
Despite its challenges a case study seems to be the method relevant and in favor of this report. It is a way of explaining an empirical subject by following a set of procedures (Cousin, 2009).

5.3.2. Validity

In quantitative research terms like validity, reliability and objectivity are often discussed. In qualitative research sometimes the terms trustworthiness, criteria of adequacy and appropriateness of data are used instead and some would say this is more accurate (Bryman, 2002; Mark-Herbert, 2015). In this study I stick to validity and reliability because I used mostly Yin (2014) for this section and he uses this terminology.

One of the challenges with this thesis is that I am biased since I was an intern at the Platform. Brinkerhoff (2009) says preferably when an impact assessment is being made one hires consultants from outside. A mix would be optimal for validity, one staff and one consultant Dearden (1998) claims. I do not agree. The advantage to have staff execute the assessment would be the level of knowledge and insight that comes with the work. But on the other hand I might be able to ask more relevant questions than anyone impartial and also be able to follow them up better and really reach the core of an issue.

Furthermore people in this area are not used to strangers who are not from the Platform asking them questions. When the Platform first was established it was a long and hard process to get the locals’ trust. Unfortunately the lingering corruption makes people in the area suspicious when approaching strangers start asking questions. It makes them feel unease and uncomfortable. Also some people feel shy concerning the language barrier and do not like to speak English even though they can. Therefore it is extremely important in this case that the interviewees feel a trust for the interviewer so they answer truthfully, not only what they think I want them to answer, or not even answer at all. This is of course always a risk but since they know me and my connection to the Platform, meaning that I am an intern but foremost a student at a Swedish University gives me an advantage rather than a suspicion. In any case, the likelihood that the findings will be used increase if there is a staff member involved in the progress (Dearden, 1998).

Another concern is gathering data is always a selective process. No matter how unbiased we want a research it is important to never forget that our analysis is much influenced by our own positionality. “To say data is never objective is not to suggest that qualitative analysis produces hopelessly arbitrary accounts” (Cousin, 2009, p. 32). Cousin (2009) means there are three ways to address positionality. First one should try to make the interviewee as comfortable as possible, see if there is anything the parties have in common and therefore can build empathy in-between. Secondly, the interviewer should not shine with its authority but make sure the interviewee is there because the researcher needs the interviewee’s help and is curious of the story that can be provided. Lastly, it is important for the researcher to keep this in mind throughout the interview and also try to strengthen a trust relationship. The more distance between the interviewer and the interviewee, the less trustworthy the interview will be (Yin, 2014).

With a critical mind and holistic perspective, this thesis is as unbiased as possible. Additionally as an intern I can be seen as an outsider, coming from another context without much previous experience from other Platforms and only visiting for a couple of months gives me different and new perspectives.

Some would oppose a case study like this where the research takes a point of departure from the investigators opinion. The interview questions are based to answer the research questions that were constructed from the observations made at the Platform. This then “fails to develop
a sufficiently operational set of measures and that ‘subjective’ judgments – ones tending to confirm a researcher’s preconceived notions – are used to collect the data” (Yin, 2014, p. 46). In relation to Brinkerhoff (2009) this study interviewees are only those who had or have a connection to the Platform. Therefore the other side of people that are unaware or unaffected of the Platform’s work are unheard, this because they would not have had much to say in an interview. The interview’s questions are critical enough to shed light of how to reach out to more people but there is still a risk the interviewees are biased. To minimize that risk this study uses triangulation (multiple data collection methods) in terms of interviews and observations, this is to provide a more extensive understanding of the subject (Patton, 2002).

When investigating an organization’s impact it is hard to see some results as purely made from the actor. Surely changing behavior and in this case social change can have many different actors and factors that lead to the result. This study is based on what the interviewees have answered and the questions specifically asked about the Platform’s impact (Yin, 2014). External validity has to do with analytical generalization and this study does its best not to be misguided, meaning when analyzing and generalizing this report only refers to other studies and articles that can validate and strengthen the discussion (Yin, 2014).

5.3.3. Reliability
The objective for reliability is if someone would later follow the same procedure in an earlier research and carry out the same case study, the result would be the same. The goal of reliability is to minimize the errors and biases in a study. This report is in a way subjective due to the chosen interview questions but as unbiased as possible. In order to strengthen the reliability this report will thoroughly document the procedures of the method (Yin, 2014).

5.4. Ethics
In the light of the ethical principal of anonymity I will in my empirical data name no names in regards to the interviewees and observations privacy and integrity. Nor will I write the dates of my observations so they cannot be traced back to other people involved but me. The interviewees will be asked if it is ok to record the interview and I have sent them their transcription so mistakes or errors can be corrected before the submission. The transcriptions are not published in any appendix as everything of importance is stated in the empirical data but can be available to the reader through me. All interviewees are well aware of the purpose of the study and what their answers are for (Bryman, 2002).

5.5. Interviews
Interviews are one of the most important sources of case study evidence. These are the most commonly found in case study research. The interview is an excellent tool to be able to produce rich empirical data about the lives and perspectives of individuals. The interviews are semi-structured meaning that some question are already set but have the possibility for follow up questions. Semi-structured also means that they resemble guided conversations rather than having a strict structure. Throughout the interview process it is important to follow the line of inquiry and keep the questions unbiased. The interviewer has to be open and ready to discover information which one was not prepared for and ready to follow up (Cousin, 2009).

Asking good questions and being a good listener are prerequisites for case study researchers. It is important to be able to create a rich dialogue of the collected data without risking its validity and to follow a formal protocol but be flexible if the interviewee does not understand a question or if the interviewer does not understand an answer. Being a good listener means to be able to assimilate a large amount of information without losing one’s judgment (Rubin, 2005). Another thing to keep in mind and be observant of is the information given between
Sometimes interviewee answers a question in a way which might seem confusing in text but makes sense for the interviewee and the interviewer. It is then the interviewer’s job to put it in sensible writing. To always stay focused on target and to keep in mind the aim is essential for any researcher (Yin, 2014).

I found it helpful to explain a little to the interviewees how to be interviewed. It is okay to take time to answer the question and really think through the reply. Try to talk as clearly as possible. Explain so everyone understands and it is appreciated to come up with examples. If one thinks of something too late I rather have them say it and jump back to the question than not at all. I clarified to them that all of their information was important to me.

5.5.1. Individual interviews

The aim was to capture the interviewees’ personal story and perspective so it was important to leave the interviewee that space and time. The time frame was approximately 45 minutes for an interview but if they had more to say I was all ears. In order to make the story credible and accurate it is important to remain the interview with a high degree of structure. This is needed to be sure that all critical dimensions of success are covered (Brinkerhoff, 2009).

Some challenges with interviews are that the interviewees’ responses are subject to bias, poor recall, and poor or inaccurate articulation (Brinkerhoff, 2009). This can be met by corroborate the data with information with other sources and in this case I always checked the information with the manager or other trainers who were more involved with the events of the Platform.

5.5.2. Focus groups

Intentionally this research was aiming to have three focus groups, one of the Danish participants, one of the local guides and one of the Youth forum people but unfortunately due to unforeseen inconveniences the participants and youth forum ended up as pair interviews instead. I ended up having six individual interviews and four pair-interviews, ten interviews in total.

The reason for choosing focus groups was the recognition of the rich data collection that can be gathered from group interactivity. When there is a demand of impact information, focus groups have been found useful and recommended to find out how well the learning from a program is being applied. The purpose with focus groups is for the participants to be able to share their experiences and compare them to the others and perhaps in that way expand their telling (Cousin, 2009).

When conducting focus groups it is important to be clear on the advantages and keep in mind the challenges. The advantage is that one gets more answers and opinions with a focus group but it also risks the study if one in the group is found more ‘dominating’ and the rest simply answers the same as that person. As for in single-interviews, the interviewee can feel unsure how to answer if not enough comfortable with the interviewer. It can be due to shyness or insecurity or that they actually do not have an answer to the question either they did not understand it or just do not have, in their eyes, a good enough answer. This can be overcome by before the interview starts try to make the interviewees comfortable, maybe offer something eatable and have a chat before start (Cousin, 2009). I have in this case had the privilege to meet all the interviewees before and therefore established a sort of acquaintance, not too strong so they answer what they think I want to hear but enough for them to feel comfortable in my presence.
5.5.3. Who to interview
I want to investigate the Platform’s impact both on an individual level and on community level. I have therefore collected a wide range of data in terms of interviews from people in connection to the Platform but they have very different roles.

For the individual level the interviewees are former Danish participants, who are referred to as ‘Participant 1-4’, also the local guides, ‘Activista’ and the Youth forum interviewees will have a saying in this but also provide valuable information on how the rest of the community sees the Platform.

To evaluate the impact on a more local level I interview people from the surrounding area, experienced and involved people who have a strong connection to the Platform. ‘Jack’ is one of the staff at the Platform and the ‘Teacher’ is a teacher at the school next to the Platform.

With ‘The Founder’ who founded the Platform and the ‘Manager’ I can collect a lot of information from people who are important to the Platform and has a vast knowledge about everything concerning the Platform.

Together these people can help the report to build a strong case thanks to their diversity and vast capability in connection to the Platform. The interviews are recorded and transcribed. More information can be found in Appendix I.

5.5.4. Interview guide
An interview guide is a pre-set of questions prepared for the interview. To categorize the questions chronologically was to apply simplicity. I want an easy point of departure, where the interviewees can reminisce their first encounter with ActionAid, why and how that was, hence the first categorization Initial engagement and expectations. We then move on to Experiences from the Platform where the interviewees tell me about their impressions of the Platform as a whole. In Acquisition and use of skills I ask them to reflect on their individual learning. Future suggestions is the final category where the focus is on the future and improvements. I also divide the interview guide into individual and community level to emphasize where I intend to have the focus.

A detailed description can be found in Appendix II.

5.6. Observations
From an ethical viewpoint one should be as clear as possible when observing, that the gathered material might be used for research purposes (Cousin, 2009). As soon as I had decided to do this research I tried to mention as often as I could to my surrounding that I was going to make an impact assessment on the Platform. And even before that they all knew that I had to deliver weekly reports to my university about my work and impressions at the Platform. As an observer I want to study the behaviors of the participants, their interaction in between and with locals. By catching as many details as possible the observation therefore happened without a specific observation schedule. From that view some parts of the observation can seem unstructured (Bryman, 2002).

5.6.1. Direct observations
Since a case study is set in a real-world situation there is opportunity for direct observations. It is a good addition as a source of evidence for research. These observations can be both formal and casual. A fieldworker can try to assess the occurrence of certain types of behaviors in different situations (Cousin, 2009; Yin, 2014). Since I was a part of the Platform for four months I have made many direct observations, especially during our excursions to the local
community but also during our sessions at the Platform. I documented these observations in a journal a couple of times per week. We also had to turn in a weekly report, which I include to some extent in this study under Empirical Data 4.2. When conducting interviews it can be hard sometimes for the interviewee to remember everything they have learned and experienced, then it is an advantage to have been a part of it and know what was done as a help to remember.

5.6.2. Participant-Observation
Doing participant observation means not merely being a passive observer but interacting with the objects of study (Cousin, 2009; Yin, 2014). As part of my internship and working as a facilitator at the Platform I did a lot of participant-observations. It gave me a lot of opportunities to study phenomenon that otherwise would have been delicate to investigate. For example cooking with local families, gave me a deeper insight and the time to communicate with a local family in an informal state which gave me information that perhaps otherwise would be difficult to obtain. Also when we visited the slum in Nanyuki we spent time with our guide who told me about her connection and interpretations of the Platform that will come in handy trying to see what impact the Platform does to its surrounding.

5.7. How to analyze
“There is no right way of writing up case study research but it needs to be interesting, compelling and convincing” (Cousin, 2009, p. 147).

The least developed and most difficult aspect when doing case studies is the analysis. Yin (2014) agrees that there is no good strategy or structured path on how to analyze and this can occur as a problem for some researchers. When being new to all this and not knowing what to do it is easy to get stalled or stuck with documentation. When it comes to the analysis both Cousin and Yin means that it is up to the researcher’s ability and experience how to analyze. The existing tools are important and can be useful when knowing what to look for. They can be shown to be extremely useful or not relevant at all.

Miles and Huberman (1994) suggest some things that can be a helpful starting point:

- “Putting information into different arrays
- Making a matrix of categories and placing the evidence within such categories
- Creating data displays – flowcharts and other graphics – for examining the data
- Tabulating the frequency of different events
- Examining the complexity of such tabulations and their relationships by calculating second-order numbers such as means and variances
- Putting information in chronological order or using some other temporal scheme”

By doing this in the beginning one can avoid getting stuck as mentioned before. It might even help to find a way to make a strategy on how to analyze, but be aware that it can be time consuming and sometimes it can be a good idea to take a step back to be able to move forward again. To keep in mind is that every case study has a story to tell, and it is up to the researcher to embrace that data, and treat the evidence fairly and produce compelling analytic conclusions.

Furthermore Cousin (2009, p. 147) provides some questions to look for that can help to support the analysis:

- “Are there some clear themes emerging?
• Have you got something of claim in the way of fuzzy, petite or grand generalizations?
• Can you offer good chunks of data to underpin your interpretation?
• Are there evocative vignettes to write from observation?
• Is there some interesting patterned data? What data does not fit into the pattern? What might it be indicating?
• How does this/these case studies relate to others? And to the theoretical field?
• What gaps and puzzles remain?"

It is important to keep the analysis relevant to the theory. The theory is supposed to mirror the research questions to give the whole report a structure from beginning to end. As soon as the writing starts with something that is not relevant the reader will be lost and loose interest. The research questions and theory have already shaped the data collection and therefore would have given priorities to the relevant analytic strategies.
6. Results of Empirical Data
Here I show the summary of the outcome in the empirical data from my interviews and observations.

6.1. Interviews
Why did you choose to engage in ActionAid?

There is a rather clear division between the Kenyan and the Danish interviewees in this question. Most of the Kenyans engaged in ActionAid is due to coincidence or/and convenience. Jack was, and the Teacher still is, a teacher at Daraja Academy whereby Jack got his job at the Platform. The guides and the Youth forum were encouraged to participate from some of the staff who knew them privately. Whereas for the Danish interviewees, the Founder and Activista seemed to be more targeting the Platform for being a transparent organization with a good reputation, they say they engaged in the organization due to their passion for social change.

What expectations did you have before coming to the Platform?

Most of the interviewees did not seem to have many expectations on the Platform, except for Activista who had very high expectations but nothing specific. There is a general view that the Platform is a network/capacity builder and is there to give foreign participants a genuine experience with a deeper understanding of the Kenyan way of life and for the locals a cultural exchange but most of all friendship. That is also something all of the interviewees say that they have taken with them from the Platform; the friendship and network.

Did the course meet your expectations (you got from Global Contact)?

Since most had few expectation almost everyone said they were met and beyond. Except for Activista who is the most engaged one concerning governmental work and has come to know the hard ways of activism, and states that it can be slow and have a lot of bureaucracy issues. He expected more support from the Platform with these obstacles but are looking forward to further cooperation.

The Teacher answers that the expectations for him has decreased: “In the beginning we were able to have a very intense program where participants would really interact with our students from in simple activities, like socializing to tutoring where the participants could bring their knowledge, because some are very good at teaching and the curriculum is different between the countries. From the students, they benefited a lot, to an extent that some of them learned that they could teach others. The other thing I feel was really met was the socializing, it brought a lot of exchange our students really happy.

In the beginning this was achieved. But in the recent past I think we are getting away from where we started. This time it is not so much as it used to be. Nowadays we have very few activities together, except for sports. Social time is limited. The curriculum was modified” (Teacher, 2014)

Concerning Global Contact the Danish participants inclined that the communication lacked a bit. “Global Contact lacked some information; we saw a video from the Platform but it didn’t show much. It would be nice to maybe get a schedule, to get a hint on what we would do, cause we had not much of an idea” (Participant1, 2015).

“They could have mentioned how poor parts of Tanzania actually were. I didn’t have any problems with that. But when one of our participants got robbed the first time, the
coordinator was not really serious about it. She wasn’t very helpful we got all help through our insurance. She is the local coordinator in Arusha, she was new and got sick. Those are excuses but we needed more support” (Participant4, 2015).

“And also, my school was on holiday for the whole month of December so I couldn’t work there. Global Contact should have known that and prepared something else for us. We had to find work ourselves. We expected that they had planned the whole stay for us, which are what they are for” (Participant3, 2015).

“Actually when I first came to my work there was a misunderstanding between the board and our coordinator about me being there at all, they required more money from me and I had to sit there and defend myself. It worked out but was very uncomfortable since it was my first week” (Participant4, 2015).

“It was the same with the other Global Volunteers, they were supposed to work at my work but couldn’t for some reason so they went for a whole month without any work” (Participant3, 2015).

What is social change to you?

This seemed to be a rather difficult question to answer for many, some gave examples of people in the local area that had changed their lives for the better, built a house or got a job. To everybody it was still some positive change in the society that has to do with security, education, equality, quality of life and so on.

Participant 3: “Where I worked we took the boys who lived on the street to our center and taught them math and English, gave them shelter and food. It was a Dutch founded organization” (Participant3, 2015).

Jack: “First of all: Get a job to provide a change for my family. So it starts at home but also for the youth, as they are the leaders of tomorrow. Social change is to advocate workshops (i.e. youth forums) were they learn skills to social change, they learn about their rights. Here in this area, the youth has no rights but now there is a big change after youth forum, because now they get to be part of decisions. Many decide now as a family not only the father. The youth have been given a chance to play a bigger part. We also teach women’s groups about their rights, so now there is less conflicts within the family. In Africa, men oppress women so much. But thanks to the workshops it has become better because the women have been empowered. It is now a shared decision making between man and wife. Also we have educated some in entrepreneurship, so the women can take care of their own money to use. The Platform has brought democracy to us, people are more aware about their rights, not only men but everyone. It has also brought the idea that everyone should go to school, before it was only boys. It is because of the Platform” (Jack, 2014).

Do you think the Platform delivers that?

Everybody answered yes.

In what way?

Many meant that the Platform first of all creates friendships, which also develops an understanding for each other. This understanding leads to tolerance, respect and the will to work together and this brings hope for a better and more prosperous future. It encourages people to do more for the world we live in together. In general the Danish interviewees tried to
explain the Platform into a larger context and talked about what the Platform even does on a
global level whereas the Kenyans tended to focus more on what the Platform does more on a
local level.

Jack: “With all of our workshops; the Youth forum, women’s group, community health
workers. Everyone we visit with the participants. I do not know but maybe we are covering
around 50 km² the area that we affect. Also for the participants, what they learn at the
Platform they bring home and implement. And for me it is giving a lot, a lot.”

[I then continue with the follow up question to Jack: Do the participants’ visits make a
difference to the people they visit?]

“Of course yes. For example the participants always bring question to the people we meet.
Maybe: What do you think of tomorrow? Do you want to change anything? Before they did
not think like that they just went on with their business. But this makes them think about
the future, maybe it gives them more hope, maybe they realize that they need a change and can
make it happen. I have seen it. For example the man, who works in a stone quarry, just
recently, because of all questions from the participants, he built a house. Another example is
a small women’s group that wanted to change so they became independent and now their
business are growing a lot” (Jack, 2014).

Do you think the Platform is needed?

Everyone agreed on that the Platform is needed. All think that the Platform does an excellent
job and feel that many people are benefitting from it. Some seemed to focus more on the direct
benefits such as income and job opportunities while others answered with a more holistic and
ideological approach.

Jack: “Very much. For one: as I said for the English level at the primary schools. Also for the
guides, and everyone who gets something from here every month they get a little more income
than they would otherwise. Some are very eager to engage and are asking me ‘When do the
participants arrive?’ and so on. We have a lot we can learn from Mzungus (white people).
People would be very upset if the Platform would close, they really appreciate it being here”
(Jack, 2014).

Founder: “The Platform has established youth connections, which are loose connections but
they hold the youth together. There are many loose groups around and the only thing uniting
them is the Platform where they can come together and meet and share ideas. There have
been very successful campaigns thanks to the Platform; the Platform is the glue that sticks our
network together. Freedom from hunger is a campaign still talked about, they interviewed
farmers about their crops and food security, and people didn’t talk about it before. They
managed to mobilize people, they even involved the street children who started to talk about
hunger and food security and what can be done to improve. They brought in government
officials from relevant ministries and asked them how they were working to improve food
security. People got to know each other. The farmers got to know the minister of agriculture.
The farmers got opportunity to raise their problems and the ministers listened and took it
seriously, for example the farmers got to say ‘Yes, we can grow crops but the roads are so
bad we cannot deliver the food to the market’. This changed the prioritization of government
projects. Roads are improving, thanks to our campaign” (Founder, 2014).

She continues: “At the same time, bringing in people like street children did not divert the
attention from the issue but it also gave the people the opportunity to ask why they are out on
the streets. And it was found that these kids are not homeless, but because of poverty they find it better on the streets during day time where they can beg for money. Which also exposes another problem within society and I think the stakeholder that where there had questions about it and where challenged to find a solution to such a problem. So an issue inside another issue that comes to surface because of the campaign” (Founder, 2014).

Activista: “Yes. Even the little things they do are very much needed. Laikipia has one of the most vibrant youth in the country. Most of the Activista people is a product from the Platform, it was there they started, and they are and the ones changing our community. Even the women that has been to the Platform, I notice them being entrepreneurs now, managing their own business. It is very much needed. Last manager was involved in our land grabbing issues and helped the community from land grabbing” (Activista, 2014).

**Have the course made you think differently when it comes to social change?**

Many still seemed not to entirely grasp the concept of social change so many did not really answer this question either. The Danish participants said they saw social change more realistically after the course, meaning no one can save the world in one day but even the smallest thing counts and matters. The local participants’ statements were:

Youthforum 3: “Yes, because by taking the youth from the community and teach them about social change they themselves change and therefore the future society” (Youthforum3, 2014).

Youthforum 2: “Yes, because when we get to invite people to the Platform the main reason they come is to meet Danish girls but after the courses you find them talking about changes they are going to make in our society. For example one friend of mine is now working with creating a platform for local youth and that is because of the Platform” (Youthforum2, 2014).

And one of the local guide answered: “I never thought of social change before. We did not engage in social change until the Platform came. And they do it really well” (Localguide1, 2014).

**What was the biggest challenge during or after the course with regards to using new skills?**

The Danish participants instantly think of the conflict management skills they acquired and say they were the hardest because usually they would run from a conflict but thanks to the new skills they were able to stay and discuss the matter. Other challenges seems to be to apply the other skills generally, some come naturally but some methods the Platform shows is not standard in the rest of society and therefore hard to apply outside, such as the informal education, participatory training and energizers.

**How have you used the skills you acquired at the Platform?**

The Youth forum interviewees and Activista all say they have become stronger persons thanks to the Platform, they have strengthen their voice, realized that their voice matters and gained confidence.

The Danish interviewees mean that many of the skills taught at the Platform somehow gets incorporated in your mind and therefore they remain quite unaware when they are used but

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1 *= only a question for participants
recognize that the Platform taught them important skills to have while volunteering. They also mention specific skills such as the language, teaching and different tools.

**What have you achieved with what you learned?**

The Danish participants felt this question was more difficult to answer than the Kenyans but they said it was more a change within, a change in their mind set, which they now see the world more realistically and with more open eyes.

Activista is most enthusiastic saying: “So many things especially within the field of leadership and governance. I was even involved on county level. I used to represent the youth in the peace committee. We have this thing called public participation when a policy is about to be made and I always go to influence and drag people along to discuss budget and policy making. I have made a big network” (Activista, 2014).

Youthforum 2 answers: “My biggest achievement is me changing my mind set with different issues. I used to look at for example leadership as a thing for people that are from a certain class but now I know it is your voice that matters, you don’t have to be rich or poor to be a leader” (Youthforum2, 2014).

Youthforum 1 says: “I have become a better person in life. That’s true. I have learnt a lot. Since I joined the Platform I am not the same who joined who came out, it is another me. In very many aspects I have improved. Especially when it comes to human rights and gay rights I have changed on that I know now that they have rights, they are people too. Before I really didn’t care much. But now every time the subject comes up I want to hear and I want to know their opinion to let them know that I have nothing against them. They should have the same access as we have. Before I criticized them without enough reasons. I have now changed my opinion” (YouthForum1, 2014).

**How has your behavior changed after you finished your course at the Platform?**

The Youth forum says jointly that they have built more confidence, that they now are brighter and bolder persons. The Danish all agree on that they have gained more patience and tolerance, and means that it is hard to divide the course from the whole experience.

One participant says: “I have gained a bigger and better understanding of the world and how people live in it” (Participant1, 2015).

The other continues with: “I am more thankful for my life, I’m not going to be angry if I don’t get the latest Iphone or if my parents haven’t cooked food for me. You appreciate what you have now much more” (Participant2, 2015).

**How will you use it in the future?**

The Youth forum seem to agree in general on what Youthforum1 says: “You do not necessarily have to go out there and be an activist. You can also pass on the knowledge and about their rights. I opened my own small ‘art group’. I want to have my own small space where youth can engage and share. Maybe a Platform on my own. What I have learned I want others to learn also. The Platform has inspired me to teach and pass on social change. I don’t want to keep it for myself. The Platform has given me the passion to teach. I have transformed. I want to create a small platform for myself for local people and foreign people where they can meet and do something constructive and share. Sharing is caring” (YouthForum1, 2014).
The Danes mention the conflict management skills again and the use of asking good question but they also think in a larger context saying “the whole experience, being away from home, standing on your own two feet. It has made me more independent and safe in myself” (Participant2, 2015). Participant 1 continues: “I appreciate what I have and I will do that in another way for the rest of my life. Also cherish the friends that we met” (Participant1, 2015).

Do you think the Platform’s approach is sustainable?

Everyone says yes more or less, agreeing on that the Platform has a steady flow of participants and adapts dynamically with the change of time and is flexible towards adjustments. It is involved in the community and well established. The Danish interviewees agree with Participant 1 when she answers: “Yes, I wouldn’t have gone if the Platform weren’t there, it was the perfect start for such a journey” (Participant1, 2015). Some challenges are mentioned though, such as the staff coming from Denmark only stays for a short period of time, which damages the continuity one of the Youth forum participants believes.

Another from the Youth forum answers: “Yes, but when we went there, the moment we were done with training they tried to keep contact with you. I don’t think that follow up is there anymore and that’s too bad” (Youthforum3, 2014).

The Founder’s answer is: “Yes and no. On one hand the Platform funding is still what it was, from the participants, unless we invest in local fundraising, or design programs that can sell locally then I don’t think relying on Danish funding is sustainable. It can to some, but to a limited extent. The intention to broaden is there. We need to design trainings that the local people are happy to pay for. So people can see the need” (Founder, 2014).

The Manager is on the same lead saying: “Yes I think so. I think we still are lacking some things, the basic Human Rights Based Approach yes I believe in. I think what is the challenge for us is actually to tell the world, we don’t have enough of documentation, we don’t, because this Platform is a part of so many other Platforms with different contexts. And I do believe that we have a very special context out here but we are not good enough to tell the world. For example, our Youth forums, what’s the purpose of the Youth Forums? That’s where you see social change happening, that’s where the impact is. But it’s not a course that anyone else necessarily sees. And that again goes back to the priorities. So I do think the approach is sustainable and I also know that the approach is something that we are working on at the moment in terms of the priorities in the approach, you know, should we ignore that fact that we need to earn money? Or should we work directly with impact because those things in this context are not the same. But I do think the approach that we are using here in the daily life, how we go about social change, how we are using the local community to gain it that’s sustainable” (Manager, 2014).

I also asked her: What are the biggest challenges with the Platform?

Manager: “The biggest challenges with the Platform as it is now, is our organization, we have merged with ActionAid Kenya, so basically we are in a, what to call it, a dual citizenship kind of situation. That means that the staff we have are not hired on equal terms. It also means that I have one boss and my staff has another, well they have me but the next level boss is someone else. And I think that creates quite some organizational challenges for us. It seems like, without saying too much, that we have a different idea when it comes to north and south in terms of social change and how to achieve it. And that puts the Platform in a challenging situation because it is not the Platform themselves that are challenging, that is running really
well. But it is more our outside structure things that creates a great difficulty for us. How it is being felt in the daily life I’m not sure for the staff. But at least from myself, it’s a very big part of my job to try to mediate between these two parties. So that’s a challenge for the Platform, in terms of organization it’s a challenge where to prioritize, we have demands from Denmark, we have to generate an income, we even have to generate a plus. On the other hand we are supposed to deliver impact and those two things can go together but they can also be very challenging to put together. And that’s a challenge for lots of NGOs it’s not only ActionAid and that is very challenging to prioritize because we are situated in a place where there are so many options of delivering social change. But I need to be able to pay my staff’s salary at the same time. So that creates both moral and ethical and financial challenge for me and the Platform” (Manager, 2014).

How do you/your family/surroundings benefit from the Platform?**

Everyone seemed to be more focused on the larger picture when I came to this question so many did not find a personal answer but made it broad instead:

Youthforum 3: “The fact that the Platform involves the local youth benefit the community because the youth is the future community” (Youthforum3, 2014).

The Teacher: “I consider Daraja as my family. The locals and my community benefit a lot. They have been given a voice. They have people who visit, who spends time there and cares about them. There is a lot of attitude change that comes along with that because we see the notion that some communities have, they are broken and the Platform is trying to fix this through empowering women for example, it has had a big and positive impact. Empower the youth. For example Monica (who is local) came and did an internship with the Platform and she came out of it and she had really grown. I met her two months ago and she was teaching here at Daraja and she is now a big woman, you can really see the growth in her. The impact is big” (Teacher, 2014).

How do you see social change in connection to the Platform?

There is a general view that the Platform engage people to make a change in their own life and even if that change might be small in the bigger context, it is huge for their lives. It spreads like rings on water.

Teacher: “One of the things that I love is the campaigning the Platform does with our locals, there are two local centers in Naibor also in Jua Kali where youth were involved in a painting that was about bringing peace, unity and coming together as people which is something very attractive and the message was very clear and just by the passion spent and the time that was given to think about it gives immediate change, in a small or a big way. There used to be a lot of theft among the youth and irresponsible behavior, as much as they do drink alcohol it has really been reduced, now they have a purpose because of the Platform. Also the elders reacted the same when a message is posted, it is read by everyone. They are curious of course” (Teacher, 2014).

Have you learned anything from the Platform that you use in your local community?

Jack captures the general answer from everyone by saying: “Yes, first, this work in a group thing. Sharing ideas, never work alone but work as a team, together. Now when the locals

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**2**= only a question for locals
want to build a house, they ask for help so we can build it faster. Also gender equality, which is helping so much. Before in our local community it was the men who made all the decisions but maybe only five per cent of the workload, the women did the other 95 per cent. Now it is better, now we include the women. Also circumcision, I show the people who perform circumcision the video we have at the Platform, so they can think before they cut. It is a video made in Africa, it is not something from Denmark. It is made here, it is real. We need to learn what is going on and the importance of it. It has helped a lot. The reactions are very negative. The video changes their mind. They understand that circumcision is neglecting our rights. Without the movie I would not have been able to change this behavior” (Jack, 2014).

What would have improved the training program?

The Danish participants wanted more excursions and more Swahili. They also thought a better connection with the Daraja girls would improve their stay and experience at the Platform. The Danish participants also said that throughout the course there were a lot of repetitions. The program could have cut down on that and taught them something else, one Danish participant said. Another Danish participant wanted in hindsight learn and talk more about the violence; how much and often children actually get hit in school was beyond her imagination and she was shocked arriving to her placement and actually went home to Denmark before scheduled time because of this.

The Youth forum interviewees requested reading materials to bring home after a course. The Founder and Manager both agreed on the next step are to document the achievements of the Platform. The structure and concept is working but now follow ups and evaluation are needed to be able to keep up the good work. The local guides’ advice was to give the local guides more salary and food for their work. The general ideas were that the trainings themselves have a good structure, a good balance between excursions, workshops and leisure time. But there can always be more trainings and more people who takes the courses.

How can the relations between the Platform and the local community improve?

The general idea is to strive for more involvement and more interactions which would result into more visibility for the Platform and the more people who are aware of the Platform the more impact they can achieve. Teacher: “It is already happening, we are involving them more, you are bringing the participants to the locals. I love the idea of spending a night in local families; there can never be a better moment” (Teacher, 2014). Localguide 1: “Maybe we can also have meetings regularly, and have a proper introduction of the Platform to the locals. Many actually just think that you are a bunch of Mzungus with a lot of money. They don’t know that you have the ability to fight poverty” (Localguide1, 2014).

What can the Platform do to be more present in the local community?

As it is a quite similar question to the one above I got similar answers from everyone for example engage more in the local community, create or strengthen the network around the Platform.

Jack: “Help out more. Maybe build a classroom or a church to make people know that we are their partners and partners help each other. I gave our old blackboard to the local school and they were so happy, they appreciated it a lot. But make no promises you cannot keep. Also, we could donate balls or other toys for the kids and youth. But never give money because of corruption. We could plant some trees just outside our premises; there is a lot of bare land. If
we can plant trees there it would be good. Or give seeds to the local people so they can plant” (Jack, 2014).

Anything to add?

Founder: “On another note the Danish volunteers challenge me, they go all the way out here and give their time for free; money and resources, I have never thought of that before. I now feel that I need to make a contribution. I am from this country! I am thanks to the participants more involved in charity than before. As much as people would criticize young people coming to Africa and volunteer, getting first hand feedback from the benefiters, it is all worth it. Also for my son to meet white people opens his mind that can hinder prejudices, they go both way you know” (Founder, 2014). She also tells me a story of how the local Masaii tribe started an uprising against land grabbing and demanded all white people out of their area, which also included the Platform. Everyone except the Platform should get out of there they said, the Platform could stay because it is seen as part of their community. Around the premises of the Platform are apparently many thefts but never on the Platform itself, meaning the people sees the Platform as off limits for stealing because the Platform itself benefits them in so many other ways.

6.2. Observations

The observations below are direct quotes taken from the journal I conducted during the stay. The observations are analytical in themselves but since they were done at the Platform I categorize them still as first hand empirical observations that I approach further in the Analysis, chapter 7. They are therefore here in the result section marked with quotation marks.

6.2.1. Structure

“When the participants are done with the course and leave the Platform, the staff at the Platform more or less never hears from them again. I understand that it is not their job to look after them during their placement as that task has been delegated to a local coordinator but it confuses me in how the follow up then gets back to the Platform. How can an organization move forward if no evaluation is in place? Or is the evaluation in place but never really reaches back to the staff? It also seems like the will to adjust some of the feedback we get is quite low. Of course some is impossible to do anything about, some is improved immediately (maybe not totally without personal interest) but some does not seem to get done. Is it not vital for the Platforms survival sustainably to welcome all feedback and do as much as we can with it? There seems to be some confusion when it comes to joint responsibility.”

6.2.2. Follow up

To be able to make an impact it is needed to evaluate and take that feedback into consideration. I checked with the participants whether they got to deliver feedback once they were back home. I know they are all invited to a “welcome-home weekend” where evaluation is on the agenda, one participants replied: “Yes we absolutely did. We talked to our Danish coordinator about how our trip was and whether we liked it or not - and especially what worked out as we expected and what didn't. We also made a list of things that would be great to bring to the volunteer-country for future volunteers. All in all a great weekend” (Participant1, 2015).

I then emailed the person who was in charge of these evaluations to ask about the process from when she collects the evaluations to when something is presented to the staff at the Platforms. She replied: “Yes, it’s correct that the evaluations from the weekend don’t always
get to the Platforms, because we don’t really evaluate on the Platforms at the weekend since they do that at the Platform. The information gathered is used by Global Contact to improve their program and the placements/families. After half a year or one year (depending on when they return home) the volunteers receive an online evaluation that they fill out, where they also evaluate on the use of the Platform stay. This evaluation is passed on to the Platforms” (Evaluator, 2015).

When I ask the Manager she says the Platform does not get any evaluations from Global Contact, they do their own evaluation at the Platform. “We are contracted to deliver the preparation course only” (Manager, 2014). This is discussed further in the Discussion, chapter 7.5.2.

6.2.3. Finance
“The Platform is facing a big challenge financially because when they merged with ActionAid International Kenya it is against the law to be a non-governmental organization and make profit at the same time. But ActionAid Denmark demands that they are financial sustainable. The Platform is in a deadlock. They need income to be able to exist. And also to do the trainings that they actually want to do, to be able to make an impact. That is why the Platform is here: to create social change through training for local youth and women. But the problem is that they cannot charge the locals because they would not afford it. The Platform gets the money from other trainings they do with for example the Danish participants. So what kind of balance is required have between free trainings and paid ones? It was also raised that the paid courses are almost preformed as a routine nowadays and routine can kill motivation. To come up with new trainings and adjust those to different consumers, that is motivational.”

6.2.4. Media
“The west’s media view of Africa plays a huge part in the Platforms everyday life. Many locals think much of it as exaggerations and sometimes they do not even understand from where the media gets everything. Unfortunately this affects us often in a negative way. There has been a great loss of participants signing up for courses for next year, probably much due to Ebola and terrorism. The media tends to describe Africa as dangerous, corrupted and uncivilized. What people easy forget is that there actually already lives an entire population here, with lives equally worthy as to any other. But how to overcome all these prejudices is an excellent question. I believe travelling leads to tolerance. The Platform offers an experience where the participants not only go in a bus with the locals outside for them to take pictures of, but an actual connection, an interaction and a friendship. The Platform stress and hope that the participants feels responsible to forward the message of the real truth about Africa, that they become some sort of ‘ambassadors’ or representatives to their peers when they go back home.

Of course people are worried concerning the terrorism at the border to Somalia but Kenyans do not even feel it is their war to fight. They mean it is between the military and the Muslims and doubt it will spread. The tragedy of Westgate they of course condemn and see as a deed of foolish, ignorant people that they do not relate to at all. Kenyans as I understand are not afraid of terrorism but tourists that consider going to the country are. Unfortunately the media portraits terrorism as a prevalent threat to the whole country, to entire Africa I would say.

Ebola has had consequences for our amount of sign ups of participants even though it is supposed to be almost 6000 km away. Once again people generalize too much and one country in Africa becomes the whole Africa. We had many asking us if we had Ebola in Kenya during my stay. People where afraid of coming to the Platform because of it, since Kenya also
is in Africa, people were afraid of it spreading. And the irony in it all is that fighting 
generalization and prejudices is exactly what ActionAid is trying to do. That is why they have 
a Platform in Kenya. To invite people from the West and to make them see that it is not as 
bad, horrible or awful as some think it is, to open their eyes and create tolerance.”

6.2.5. Sustainability

“In ActionAid there is a conscious endeavor to not have a steep hierarchical organization, it 
wants to be as flat as possible which I find a great asset when it comes to sustainability. 
Employees get better along when they find each other as equals. Even though I was ‘only’ an 
intern, they made me feel just as important as anyone else; my points mattered just as much 
as anyone else’s. They listened to my opinions, I was allowed to come up with ideas, we even 
executed and followed through with a lot of ideas of mine and they thanked me for it and 
showed a lot of appreciation. With including me as a member of our team instantly I also felt 
more comfortable which motivated and allowed me expressing myself. As a result I got more 
productive and more innovative.

The collaboration between Denmark and Kenya I find as one of the most vital factors when it 
comes to sustainability. Evidently there are challenges, but to have foreign people traveling 
here without knowing anything about the culture, planting a project and go back again after 
some time would never work. With this merge comes a unique opportunity to really get to 
know one and another’s culture in an optimal way that lasts. The mixed staff plays different 
but just as important roles for this to work. Cultural differences will occur but as experienced 
as the staff is they know exactly what to do and how to handle it. And help is never far away. 
One of the workshops are actually conflict management that gives everyone the confidence 
and will to solve whatever problem that lies in hand.

ActionAid is a firm believer in democracy and they deliver their message in a great manner. 
Most seem to have jumped onboard, believing that it is the way to go. Although some at the 
Platform are not as convinced, being quite critical towards democracy, saying it is 
complicated and if it is not delivered delicately, it can be damaged and bad guys can take 
advantages of it and hide behind it while doing bad deeds.” This is more discussed under 
chapter 8.2.
7. Analysis
In this part I analyze the empirical data and synthesize it with the theory. I take point of departure from Beck & Purcell’s three areas of social change but also involve transformative learning that was presented in the theory. Once again it says if one trains youth and affects them into a changed behavior it will spread whereas they are a big part of the community they live in and its future (Purcell, 2010).

7.1. Legal Change
To involve youth and community work/campaigning in order to be able to adjust and influence law and social policy (Purcell, 2010).

As for the Youth forum guys and Activista they nowadays are more involved into politics thanks to the Platform. Even the local guides say that some never thought about social change before the Platform. More people around the Platform now know their rights and feel motivated and empowered. By this they want to both use this power to influence their society and spread the knowledge. As the guidelines point out in transformative learning it is through critical thinking and empirical experiences one finds own conclusions of the truth and take action accordingly (Mezirow, 2009).

Freedom from hunger is a great example of a successful legal change ActionAid together with Activista and the Platform accomplished. In the Founder’s interview she states that “the Platform is the glue that sticks our network together” (Founder, 2014). This whole initiative to take action would never have been possible without the Platform. They managed to lift an important, vital question about the country’s agriculture which was a huge problem that people did not know how to fix. With the help of the capacity at the Platform they managed to mobilize people and raise this issue so the government had to listen. As a result the infrastructure was improved. On top of that they raised awareness about street children, their struggles with hunger and food security. They even enlighten the fact that many of these street children are not homeless but only restless. They have no access to school and therefore spend their days on the streets. This developed a whole new discourse within and exposed the issue of street children.

Land grabbing is a huge problem around the world but maybe most in Africa. Staff and the Founder tell me during the interview how much the Platform has helped people around the area with this issue. They can come to the Platform for legal advice or if they just need to print a paper or borrow a computer. Unfortunately but logically there is some limit to how much the Platform can help since the help is free of charge and the trainers need to have an income. The help has been inconsistent. This is too bad since it is exactly what ActionAid wants to do, but due to the pressure of being a business they cannot help the ones that really need it. Instead help goes to the people who can pay. This is a failure, not from the organizations but from our globalized society which I discuss more in the Discussion section 6.4.1.

The Founder illuminates the category of security, as said above, of how the local Masaii tribe saw the Platform as a part of their community and therefore let it be when uprising was prevailing. She also mentions that around the premises of the Platform are a lot of thefts but never on the Platform itself, meaning the people sees the Platform as off limits for stealing because the Platform itself benefits them in so many other ways (Founder, 2014).

The category of social justice could be recognized in every area of change but especially the case where Jack says women and youths are more a part of the decision making I want to
acknowledge as a social justice. With them being a part of the decision making the chores in
the home are also more divided equally he says.

Another example of social justice is in the same time as the Platform started an all girls school
started on the same premises. It is hard to estimate how much impact that school and the
Platform has done but evidently more girls has started to go to school and Jack (2014) says
more girls are going to school nationwide (UNICEF, n.d.). Since it is nationwide it is hard to
estimate how much it is thanks to the Platform but another source says it is a lower rate of
girls (and boys but less girls) in rural areas (Onyango, n.d.) so maybe in this case the Platform
together with the Daraja school had something do to with this particular place. Thanks to girls
making it through school they get empowered and more freedom to choose their future. It also
makes society more equal because the girls become more aware about their rights.

The Youth forum people and Activista say they are more aware of their rights and even
participate in decision making on a political level. They also have become more aware of
others rights for example homosexuals. Youthforum 1 (YouthForum1, 2014) points out that
before he started being active in the Platform’s works he opposed homosexuals because it is
obscenely stigmatized in his society. However, after being involved at the Platform he has
now realized that they have the exact same human rights as he has and are just as normal as he
is. This can also be connected to Mezirow’s (2009) theory and his frame of references where
one not only gains knowledge about something but it also changes opinion about it. These
three examples could eventually expand and make women and gay more equally on a legal
level.

7.2. Economic change

Where youth and community workers can make a difference is in broad terms the economic
sphere. To mobilize people and move from a position of low resources and dependence takes
initiatives in terms of actual money and free or subsidized housing, health care, education
and childcare etc (Purcell, 2010).

I find this area the most interesting and a bit contradicting. ActionAid’s approach is all about
how not to give money direct to people but to teach people how to make money on their own
and survive on that. Jack agrees when I ask what more can be done by the Platform in society,
he says never give money, due to corruption. But he says at the same time small amounts of
money have changed many people’s lives around the Platform, for example the cleaning
ladies and the local guides, they do not get much, but it is a lot to them. They even say that
they do not know what they would have done without this income. Has the Platform then lost
its way in terms of instead of empowering people in their surrounding, making them
dependent on the money the Platform provides? The Platform arrange Masaii people to come
and dance at the Platform during every new course. Joint with this they also bring
merchandise crafts to sell, no one minds and many of the participants appreciates it since they
can take the opportunity to buy souvenirs for their loved ones at home. It is in general seen as
a harmless thing, but where is it necessary to draw boundaries? The risk here is that maybe
the laundry ladies next will bring merchandise to sell. And this was not the point of the
Platform to begin with.

Jack also mentions when I ask him how to improve the relations between the Platform and the
community that we should start giving the people from the outside that helps us (for example
participants’ interviews for their documentation project) some money, not a lot but a symbolic
amount he argues, he thinks it feels a bit awkward when we visit and take up their time and
then give nothing back. He finds it a bit rude, but acknowledges the Platform cannot afford to
give money to everyone they encounter. And once again that is the sustainable way. But Jack is in this case prioritizing the act of courtesy rather than the bigger picture (Jack, 2014). It is hard and difficult to stay on target and being aware of where and how to draw lines between helping the locals in a sustainable way. I discuss this further in the Discussion chapter 8.

The same area of discourse came to light in the interview I had with the local guides. They did not seem to have a lot of knowledge on what the Platform actually does or what it stands for. But they were the ones most in favor of being given money and according to them the Platform could improve by giving the local guides more salary and lunch. When I asked if the Platform was needed they stated that the most beneficial purpose of the Platform was giving the surrounding people jobs and an income. I cannot help by wondering if they cannot see the bigger picture and why this is.

For a sustainable future the people around cannot be dependent on the Platform itself giving them jobs and income. The purpose of the Platform being there is far larger. Its purpose is to inform the locals and give them tools and skills to take their lives to wherever they want and to make them aware that they are in charge of their own lives. Now as it looks from the view of the guides they only like the Platform for the money that is given them. I point this out as a flaw in the Platform’s marketing, meaning by not taking advantage of the local guides’ opportunity to tell their society of what their workplace is and do; they lose perhaps some impact that could have been made? Have the Platforms succeeded with its purpose if some thinks that the money they give is the most important they do?

At the same time, Jack tells me success stories where women in the neighborhood have taken classes at the Platform in empowerment and social entrepreneurship which gave them the opportunity to start their own businesses that eventually flourished. Those are excellent examples how the Platform gives them money indirect with a sustainable approach and it goes hand in hand with transformative learning where one takes action through making decisions of what life we want to live (Mezirow, 2009).

7.3. Changes in individuals

The final area to be considered is social change based on work which is directed at individuals. Meaning social change is accomplished through the accumulation of individual change in beliefs. It can be explained in the way that achieving change is prioritized at the individual level because the individuals can later mobilize. (Purcell, 2010).

Through pedagogic workshops the Platform makes sure everybody gets noticed. Individuals grow stronger as persons and they realize that their voice matters. This is the core of ActionAid’s vision. Throughout the interviews it is obvious that this is the participants biggest achievement, they have developed as humans, they have become more open minded as global citizens, and as Youthforum 1 (YouthForum1, 2014) puts it, become better persons in the bigger context. Both the Manager (2014) and the Founder (2014) speak for everyone when they say “This is where it happens” (meaning at the Platform social change happens that leads to greater things). This goes hand in hand with Mezirow’s theory of Transformative learning. By having simple discussions and workshops they make a huge difference for the participants, in the sense that it changes their perception of things. With having Danish participants present brings a priceless interaction between cultures and knowledge that cannot be found in books. Even if it did, it is another thing to experience it. Cultural knowledge brings tolerance.
One of Purcell’s (2010) challenges to put all focus on training individuals could be that it results into them leaving the community for a better one, and by leaving that community it would remain without change. The local youth interviewed in this study do not really have the intentions on leaving their neighborhood. In this case some might go off to university but it is at the same time many who stay. Even if some goes off to college they might come back some day. Also, ActionAid’s aim of their courses is to target the most vulnerable in the society i.e. those who have no or little possibilities to move. The rate that moves back home or close to where they grew up is hard to estimate in this case and depends on numerous of things, for example the field of study, job opportunities and so on. “Jacana Partners, a private equity firm based in the UK, Kenya and Ghana, surveyed African MBA students who were studying in Western business schools at the end of 2012. 70 percent of respondents said they plan to work in Africa after graduation” (Felter, 2014). Though in the same article the interviewee who is from Zambia but studies in Boston states: “There are far much more opportunities here than I can get back home and especially in the field in which I am – theological or religious studies. We don’t have that many opportunities back home.” According to a report by the Africa Research Institute (2012) they urge African governments, policymakers and international donors to acknowledge fundamental changes in urbanization trends. They state that Kenyan urbanization has decreased from 34% in 2001 to 22% in 2010 and claim the general idea of the urbanization is occurring faster in sub-Saharan Africa than anywhere else in the world, as migrants move from rural to urban settlements is a fallacy (Potts, 2012). In 2014 the rate increased to 25% (CIA, 2014). An advantage would also be if individuals move, they could bring with them their knowledge and hopefully pass it on so it spreads.

On the one hand I noticed the challenge many faced during the interviews in defining social change. This is ActionAid’s goal, to make social change but many seemed to miss that point. It is happening in a great scale but in a sort of incautious way for the individual. On the other hand it does not have to mean just because one cannot define a word one is not capable to grasp the concept. Even though I would like to see people be more aware of that term since social change is the Platform’s message. How can people achieve something they cannot describe? I do agree with the Manager (Manager, 2014) when she says that it has become a “buzzword”, meaning that it has become a very trendy word that everybody use all the time and therefore it can mean anything or nothing. At least one participant said that with being aware of social change it was more obvious to her when she came out volunteering.

### 7.4 Interactive change – fourth area of social change?

In Beck & Purcell’s theory (2010) they present four categories of change: social justice, solidarity, participation and security. These can be put in whichever of the following presented three areas of social change. As I was trying to put the categories into these areas I found it rather difficult to fit in participation and solidarity. I cannot see a direct connection to neither a legal change nor an economical one. A change in the individual is there, but I think where the real change happens is within a group, meaning to participate is to be part of a group. Solidarity means staying loyal to your fellowman and support them in need. Therefore I would like to introduce one additional area; the Interactive change.

Inspired by Mezirow’s Transformative learning and ActionAid’s focus on letting people create an understanding of each other through cultural exchange and sharing of experiences I want to have this as an additional area on its own. Participation and interactivity have as mentioned before transformed the participants immensely they all say in the interviews. It transforms their perception of the world and their reality, which is also what transformative learning is about. This cultural exchange and the practice on being partaking encourage the
local youth to be more involved in their community to create social change. The involvement stretches from the political sphere and decision making to volunteering to build a new house for the neighbor or just decreasing crime rates. The way the Platform conduct their trainings as mentioned is to make the students as partaking as possible, it is through their experiences and shared ideas that the others learn and raise awareness about issues that are concerning. By being a part of something and participate most of us feel more included which makes us more empowered. This is one of the Platforms goals. All the interviewed participants say they feel more empowered and stronger mentally to fight the challenges they will face.

The Founder (2014) feels challenged by the Danish participants to do more for her community. As said in the empirical data she feels it is thanks to the Danish participants who encouraged her to do more in the local society and to be more involved and help out more for those in need. She says also that it is thanks to the participants she knows it is possible to make a place better. The participants made her realize that. She adds the fact that her son is being able to meet and acknowledge white people he will grow up with perhaps a greater understanding or more tolerance for races than other, because prejudice goes both ways.

Overall it seems like the participants have gotten the most out of simply meeting other people and sharing idea and exchanging experiences. This was what the Founder (Founder, 2014) said was the whole point with starting the Platform so in those terms they really have achieved with great results.

Jack also says thanks to the Platform where participants goes out to different schools and teach English the English skills in schools have improved. The participants also get the opportunity to make their own projects while visiting the Platform and many choose to collaborate with schools in the neighborhood and this is also a factor of the improved English skills Jack says.

About solidarity the Teacher tells a story of how one village in the neighborhood before had a quite high crime rate and theft which he claims had decreased thanks to the Platform. People there had started to get a view on what they did back at the Platform and got curious, with the information about the Platform’s work and a message written on one of the town walls in graffiti many got encouraged to behave in a more compassionate way. When I ask what Jack has learned from the Platform he gives the example of collaboration, that people in the neighborhood nowadays have started to ask each other for help more and by doing so they get an increased standard of living. “Instead of building your own house by yourself that would take a couple of months, they can now get it done together in a couple of weeks” (Jack, 2014).

With the Platform’s approach in being interactive with the locals the participants could build stronger bonds with the people they visited and worked with. They said that thanks to what they learned and experienced at the Platform they got a deeper connection and understanding of the culture. The trainings stress a lot of not being a spectator but a part of the social environment.

7.5. The Platform’s challenges

7.5.1. Structure

In the interview with the Manager I ask what challenges the Platform is facing and she answers it is mostly structural challenges. The merger between Denmark and Kenya she says has put the Platform in a dual citizenship meaning it takes a lot of her time trying to mediate between these parties. These structural issues might be possible to draw a parallel to the observation that was made about the feedback/ follow up. Can it be that some areas of joint
responsibility have not been pointed out? Is the staff due to the confusion not motivated enough? Is the goal too unclear? On the other hand it seems like the Manager is aware and is willing to do something about it. We had staff-days that focused on our purpose here and how to improve it and defining why we were here and so on. But as the Manager says it is a struggle for her to mediate between the offices, they seem to have the same ideology but different ways to achieve it, which leaves the Platform working with the locals but for the ActionAid in Denmark. That probably makes the staff a bit confused on what they should prioritize.

7.5.2. Follow up

As for the feedback from participants everything seemed to have a firm and established process yet something prevents the feedback to be followed up. I just wonder if it would not be helpful to hear if the preparations they got at the Platform were equivalent to what the participants needed at their placements.

When I during the interviews asked the Youth forum participants if the Platform was sustainable they mentioned that before it was a much better follow up among former participants. After the course was finished the Platform would try to stay in contact with the participants but that seems not to have lasted.

I think if the follow up and communication with the Danish and Youth forum participants could improve, so could the program. The Platform would have learned what the former participants would want to change in the program. After all it is a course preparing them for their volunteer work which they cannot really evaluate until they are done. With the evaluation from the ‘welcome home weekend’ I think the Platform would be able to develop an improved version of the course. As for the Youth forum I think it is a matter of some sort of ‘alumni’ organization that could be established. This way former participants could stay in touch and perhaps help each other with potential projects. Thanks to this they maybe would feel more ‘wanted’ and motivated to continue the activism towards social change.

Overall the organizational structure seems to be as one of the Platform’s greater challenges. The Danish participants also pointed out during the interviews a problem concerning Global Contact. All participants at their volunteer placements should have a local coordinator that is supposed to be available 24 hours a day, seven days per week. Due to unforeseen inconveniences the coordinator was very hard to get a hold of. This was to many participants a bit tiresome and disappointing when they needed help. In defense, the coordinator was new at her job and unfortunately struck ill during the interviewees’ time at their placements. But cannot this be prevented in some way? Either have a back up person who can help the participants or prepare the participants that the coordinator can sometimes be difficult to reach and inform them on what to do if that is the case. Unforeseen inconveniences do happen of course but should they not try to protect the participants from that as much as possible? On the other hand maybe they might as well learn that sometimes life is hard to predict and then it is important to make the best of it. Once again the Platform teaches life skills and this is one of them. It is actually what the Danish participants mention as what they have learned and brought home the most.

7.5.3. Communication

I would like to shortly discuss the Daraja School. There are girls with tremendous potential right next to the Platform, but they still cannot seem to find the occasion to work with them. How come? What can be done about it? The Teacher I interview from Daraja highlights the issue and says it worked fine before but somehow both Daraja and the Platform started to become busier and the schedule harder to put together (Teacher, 2014). Since the Platform’s
goal is to empower and promote social change I believe it would be splendid to focus more on targeting the girls at Daraja. The problem seems to be that what the Platform does will not help them through the exams, which demand an awful lot from them, so of course the activities of the Platform are not first priority. In the Platform’s defense it seems like there were more activities with the girls before, but due to feedback from the participants changes were necessary to fit in the schedule. Time was taken from interacting with the girls and out to interact with other locals instead. During the interviews the Danish participants said they would have liked more time with the girls (Participant1, 2015), which shows that it cannot be easy to set a schedule that pleases everyone, meaning there will always be feedback on improvement.

Many also say in the interviews that the Platform could be more visible and clear with what it can provide (Founder, 2014). The Founder also pushed for a better way to show locals the benefits of paying for a course at the Platform. I would say this has to do with marketing and visibility, something everyone mention in the end of the interview when I ask how the Platform can improve both the training and the relation to the community. The majority say we need to go even more local, the Platform needs to be even more out there in society and market themselves and make sure people are aware of what they stand for and what they do. But maybe this is less about marketing and more about communication? Maybe what the Platform needs to do is to go out and meet the inhabitants of the community and listen to what they have to say and what they need? I.e. focus more on/improve communication.

Communication can also be connected to the issue the Youth forum guys let me know that apparently many local boys only join the Platform to meet white girls. This can be seen as quite inappropriate and it could develop a risk that their expectations are not met and the will to learn might not come in first hand. I see this as a lack of communication and being clear with the Platform’s purpose. But at the same time the Youth forum guys say that it is some boys’ intention to start with, but the outcome is that they sit with fellow locals and discuss how their society can improve, not chasing girls. If that is the result, maybe the signing up intentions does not matter?

Same goes for the very first questions I ask during the interviews which show that many had no or very few expectations on the Platform. This can be seen as lack of marketing. For the Platform’s survival this will become more important and they might have to put more focus on it. Meaning if no one has any expectations, why should they engage in the first place? For now, if the outcome is that people are really satisfied with the Platform, then maybe it does not matter what their expectations were in the first place.

On the one hand it can be an obstacle when reaching out to people. Of course the organization cannot reach out to everybody and the Founder (2014) says they reach out to the people who are ‘under the radar’ meaning the ones who want to be involved, but the Youth forum people mean that not too many knows about the Platform in Nanyuki town and therefore the Platform should try to market themselves more.

On the other hand when I was there the staff seemed rather busy so the immediate excuse can be that they simply have no resources but it is a priority that they will need to take on the Manager says (2014). The Founder also says that some trainings need to change and make the effort to offer something the locals will be willing to pay for. There needs to be a change of customers if the Platform is to survive in a sustainable way, she means.
7.5.4. Finance

In a world dominated and run by finance ActionAid Denmark as a non-governmental organization solemnly depends on donations. Some come from DANIDA (Danish International Development Agency) but most come from private donors. In order to continue to get this money they need to be validated, meaning showing how the money is spent. This is thoroughly presented on ActionAid International homepage (ActionAid, n.d.) “We consider accountability as part of a dynamic process to advance change and as part of our theory of change. Many of the mechanisms that support accountability practices such as evaluations, participatory advocacy and planning and transparent governance, also support and enhance processes of change. We also believe that our investment in accountability systems should be proportionate to overall investment in programme work” (ActionAid, n.d.)

The Platform’s budget has gotten tighter due to a decrease of participants and ActionAid Denmark asks them to be financial sustainable, which means sticking to the budget so the expenses should not exceed the earnings. To be able to retain the Platform in the condition it is now many participants are Danish youths who pay for their visit. “If we had a bigger budget we would do more courses for the local audience such as youth groups, women’s groups etc” (Manager, 2014).

Non-governmental organizations budget has also become a problem for people who want to go volunteering. Many organizations take a tremendously high fee, an approximate amount these days are on around 2000 euro per month of volunteering (Abroad, n.d.). I guess with the increasing popularity of volunteer work in needing countries has turned into a business because people see the profits one can make from it. One who opposes the industry’s growing interest states: “They [the volunteer program] can cost a fortune, but local communities see little of the benefits -- and all volunteers are left with is a dose of cynicism. It's a minefield out there” (Clothier, 2012).
8. Discussion
In this section I discuss the analysis in a wider context.

8.1. Human rights-based approach; a winning concept?
Human rights-based approach seems like a better alternative to the older need-based approach and has now become trendy. But that also leaves some organizations behind in the sense that donor organizations now only want to collaborate with recipients who only carry out human rights-based approach. The transition of preferences does not need to be an easy one and will leave people with less donations (Kindornay, 2012), though this might be a change necessary for a more sustainable future. Kindornay (2012) wonders whether the approach is just a fad and will fade away eventually. Some would claim that even though human rights-based approach is not perfect and has challenges of its own, it is still much better than the former alternative. Human rights-based approach is not something static, but still in progress. As is community development. “Community development is never static: its practice is always reforming in dynamic with current thought, political contexts and lived experience.” (Ledwith, 2011, p. 14) Is that not how to reach improvement?

But if we go back to the metaphor about the man with the fish: What if there is no more fish to catch? What if the fishing rod breaks and he has no possibility to repair it or get a new one? What if due to climate change the water where he used to fish runs dry? Does ActionAid really leave their partners with the right skills and tools able to make a social change? Youth forum had trouble answering the question Have the course made you think differently when it comes to social change? The question also takes me back to the interviews where I had the expectation that the interviewees would be more aware of the Platform’s bigger picture, i.e. social change that will last. But many of the locals seemed to see the more obvious benefits in the small amounts of money they got for example the laundry and cleaning ladies, the local guides etc. Does this leave the locals more dependent than independent of external help?

To raise the question in a larger context I wonder if a non-governmental organization can get too occupied with their ‘rescue’ of a country that it actually not benefits anymore by their presence? This is highly relevant in today’s society taking Nepal as an example. Even before the earthquake there were so many non-governmental organizations present, the government seemed to have put some of the responsibility on to them. The government does not have to work in every matter, because if not, non-governmental organizations will jump in and ‘take over’. Now with the earthquake I cannot help but wonder; would the government be able to give better help if it had not been ‘paralyzed’ by all the non-governmental organizations? Is it that since so many non-governmental organizations is at hand, the government did not have to develop a system that took care of all citizens and therefore lacked the preparation in case of a natural disaster? In this discussion I want to stress that I do not mean that a country has not the right to ask for help when a natural disaster hits. I simply question whether the presence of too many non-governmental organizations before the disaster in Nepal, had the government not as prepared as they could have been?

Two weeks after the earthquake Voice of America writes: “The United Nations and numerous non-governmental organizations seeking to assist quake-stricken Nepal are blaming the country’s weak government, with a reputation for inefficiency and corruption, for hindering the massive relief effort” (Herman, 2015). And The Atlantic says “If Nepal Says It Has Too Many Health Workers, the World Should Listen - It’s time for the international aid community to take stock of what the country really needs” (Misra, 2015). Meaning Nepal does not really need any more medical personnel but instead medical supplies. There are at the moment too many doctors on the ground with no opportunity to do what they came for; there are simply
not enough means in terms of supplies. As well-intentioned and appreciated the help is, it does not concur with the actual needs on the ground. And this is not the first time this happens the article continues. The Tsunami 2004 in the Indian Ocean and the earthquake in Haiti 2010 both had troubles with the aid, rescue, non-governmental organization situation, Rory Carroll writes in the Guardian: “Haiti needs NGO help. But is also need to rein in aid tourists who turn the country into a zoo and to fold the serious NGOs into a coherent, Haitian-directed strategy” (Carroll, 2010).

The point here is of course not to condemn non-governmental organizations’ work or even question whether non-governmental organizations are needed for a better world but to discuss the risks and challenges with some non-governmental organizations presence in certain countries. If some employed by the Platform thinks the most important thing the Platform does is to give out money or they get participants on the presumption that they will meet white girls, then they might need to reevaluate their goals and purpose, also to improve their communication with the surrounding environment.

In another article Voice of America writes about wheelchair-basketball in Uganda and finish the article by says: “Along with the basketball association, there are disabled sports associations for rowing, football and swimming. Although they are part of the Uganda Paralympics Committee, they receive very little funding from the government, relying on NGOs for support” (Paulat, 2015). I guess the optimal would be that the support from non-governmental organizations is only temporary until the government takes their responsibility seriously and helps all citizens of Uganda. What if the government sees it as an issue already being dealt with by another ‘donor’ and therefore they do not need to do anything about it? But on the other hand, if the feeling is that the government cannot or will not help, eventually one might wants to give up and turn elsewhere. What if there was no choice and one had to fight the government to step up?

### 8.2. Democracy

How does it actually work when an organization from a high-income country establishes itself in a low-income country and tries to tell them how to develop in the ‘right’ way? Is always the knowledge provided relevant? In the example of democracy many in the case of the Platform is all for it, but is it because the locals truly care or is it because the Platform has pushed for it? Meaning how much is okay to push for developing countries meeting our standards in the West? Is it somewhat of an obsession the West has forced on the developing countries? Do some countries force democracy just as non-governmental organization forces to help in Nepal?

Arturo Escobar (2012, p. 79) proposes a decentering of representative democracy and the setting into place direct, autonomous, and communal forms of democracy” ActionAid promotes democracy as one of the most fundamental rights there is. It is your right to have a saying in how your country runs. But do people really care? Dambisa Moyo who is the author of the book *Dead Aid* claims “a women in rural Dogo [Dogo is a made up country in her book which represents the average country in Africa] cares less about the risk to her democratic freedom in forty years time than about putting food on her table tonight” (Moyo, 2009, p. 152). Some of my observations agree. Is the West’s growing obsession for democracy in developing countries the right way to go? What does democracy matter if the people cannot get food on their table? To put it in the perspective of Maslow’s hierarchy of needs one clearly needs food rather than democracy. I guess money does not buy happiness, but it buys survival and that is more important to many than democracy when it boils down to it.
I am not saying pushing for democracy is wrong but I am asking if it works or even matter to some extent, meaning is it for our sake or theirs? Who is then benefitting from democracy? As for in Kenya, the tribe Kikuyu is the biggest which gives them a majority in parliament and also gives them a sort of justified dominance over the rest. In the 2007 election the Kikuyu representative was elected again but the people who were not from that tribe had enough and riots was carried out and people were killed (ICRtoP, n.d.). Is this an example Escobar’s representative democracy? He gives another example in his book from Mexico in 1982 where perceived as transitions to democracy increased social exclusion and violence significantly (Escobar, 2012).

Maybe this had nothing to do with democracy per se, but the people in the wrongdoing managed to hide behind it.

The interviewees, on the other hand, stresses the fact on how much the Platform has given them and how grateful they are for that in terms of democracy, meaning their civil right and that they can affect their future through democracy. The Platform has given them the strength and courage to engage in the local politics where in this case they are actually able to make a change in their community. They also say they are more excited about decision making and encourage other friends to participate as well. They have become good role models for their society. The Platform trains local youth into making them feel like an important part of this world that gives them dignity. This is a good example on grass root democracy that comes from the people instead of authority, which is an excellent step towards a more sustainable development.

8.3. Voluntourism

Aid can be seen as strictly in monetary terms but also human capital is a huge asset to help bring development in low-income countries. Aid can be divided into development aid and humanitarian aid where development aid is seen as the long-term aid and can be for example investments in other countries and corporations building schools and hospitals. Humanitarian aid is more short-termed, where aid-workers’ help for example when disaster hits with food, shelter and health care.

Volunteer tourism, also called Voluntourism is: “A form of tourism in which travelers participate in voluntary work, typically for a charity: at the core of voluntourism is the desire to help others” (Oxforddictionaries, 2014).

Over time a new form of tourism has developed; people who would rather call themselves ‘travelers’, who seek personal and unique experiences beyond what is offered by mass tourism. More and more people from the Western society go to low-income countries to assist with developing work or conservation of some sort, to make a practical difference and contribute to development. They want to spend their time more meaningful. Arguably voluntourism involvement enhances participation in social movements and networks in the sense that it increases self-efficacy and facilitates the development. In a South African case study it is said while national contribution is minimal the local contribution must be noted as potentially significant (Rogerson, 2004). The opinions are divided at the Platform whether it is voluntourism that is going on but either or, I think voluntourism is a fine combination between a travel experience and doing something meaningful which benefits both the recipient and receiver. Does once again the definition matter when the outcome is good?

But all the outcome does not have to be good, meaning “a lot of big travel companies now create volunteering opportunities, but it just doesn't fit with what's really needed overseas” (Clothier, 2012). This can be connected to what was said about Nepal.
It is told when one has everything, filled every basic need, as many of westerners have, compassion is what brings one further. (Renter, 2015). “People who do volunteer work, for example, often change their narratives of who they are, coming to view themselves as caring, helpful people” (Barker, 2015). If wealth is in abundance for some people, in some countries, should we not take that advantages and let those people give that compassion to others? Of course countries should strive to be self reliant, but evidentially it is easier said than done in this global world we live in. It can also be due to the globalized world that some countries have to ask for help to begin with, meaning colonization, land grabbing etc. Maybe not every country is an island (WuDunn, 2010).

8.4. Media
As mentioned in the observations the decreasing number of participants has to do with the media’s scary and twisted picture of Africa. Africa is often depicted as underdeveloped, dirty and poor. What many seem to forget in all this chaos as it is depicted, lives a population; people who are just like any other, carrying on with their ordinary lives. Many participants who come say that they are positively surprised about the conditions and thought for example they would live more picturesque and simple than they did. And as for the local people the participants are surprised of how open, generous and happy they are. What seems to be sometimes forgotten in media is that they are exactly like us, only with different resources and backgrounds. At the Platform they push for the view of vulnerable people not as victims but as actors of social change and stakeholders of their own future. They do not need our pity, they need our alliance. But as long as the media will write about Africa in the narrative that they do, this is a challenge. In the newspaper The Guardian Fungai Machirori writes about the ‘rising narrative’ that was crushed by the Ebola outbreak and how much Africa has to suffer due to the narrative of Africa in general. “The continent has great promise and developments, but it also has many challenges to overcome” (Machirori, 2014). One of the best outcomes in my opinion for the Danish participants is that they can go back home and be ‘global ambassadors’ and tell the other side of the media’s, the whole story and the truth about the world to their local community. It is highly needed for another narrative by now (Akingbolu, 2015).

8.5. Sustainability
Sustainability can contain many aspects; usually it is the aspects of environment, economic and social. But sometimes too little focus is on the social bit. Of course the society depends on the survival of the environment and economy but if more focus would be on the social part i.e. tried to engage the people more in term of ‘saving’ themselves, the environment and economy might also be saved. I think ActionAid’s care about the people is their sustainability stronghold and that is what will make them survive as an organization.

To go back to the empirical data the participants all answered yes to the question if they thought the Platform was sustainable. The Danish elaborated on how they otherwise would not be able to make this journey and how important it was for them with this introduction to be able to gather such an understanding of the culture. Both the Founder and the Manager answered yes and no at the same time, saying it worked fine for now but to keep the Platform there needed to some improvements in for example marketing.

As said in the observations the organizational structure have some advantages for example the hierarchal flatness is inspiring and leave a nice message to the people around saying that everyone is equal. The collaboration has already been mentioned, that the Platform would not have worked the same without it. An all Kenyan organization would probably have worked
fine but an all Danish organizations might have encountered more challenges due to cultural differences.

It seems like the Platform are doing a great deal of impact just with the cultural exchange and excursions they do. Both for the participants who later say that they appreciate their circumstances of life more in general, and for the locals who have gotten questions put in their mind by the participants about the future dreams, volunteerism and sustainability.
9. Conclusion

ActionAid’s entire approach delivered by the Platform is in my opinion a winning concept. The trainings themselves at the Platform work well according to the empirical data.

Consistent with Beck & Purcell’s area of Legal change the Platform has achieved in giving the surrounding people awareness of their own rights and the empowerment to fight for them. In the area of Economic change the Platform has facilitated mobilization of people. That has resulted in successful campaigns where authorities have listened to the people and changed accordingly.

Changes in individuals is the area where the most impact from the Platform is made. But an additional area of Interactivity explains also that bringing people together form a unique cultural understanding. In lines with Mezirow’s theory sharing experiences create tolerance between people and build peoples’ capacity to bring about social change.

The participants at the Platform all say that they have grown and become better persons and learn life skills that they are forever grateful to have obtained. Including the skills and tools provided by the Platform the participants develop a network of friends. This network is not only seen as the most important and useful to many of the participants but is also something that can never be taken away from them. Nor can the knowledge, self-esteem and courage the Platform has given them.

Yet the Platform has some challenges to consider for a better sustainable future. The organizational structure can be contradictory considered as one challenge, due to the different views of social change by the offices in Denmark and Kenya. They have the same ideology but different ways to achieve it. At the same time the structure of hierarchy is one of the more successful achievements within the organization. It sends a good message by having a flat organization when working with the most exposed people. It shows them that they also matter and are here on this earth on equal terms with equal rights. The same goes for the collaboration; it would have been harder without the collaboration between Denmark and Kenya, as mentioned before the cultural meeting is so beneficial in so many aspects that even if it would not have been more than that, it would have changed many life-perspectives.

There is still some way to go when it comes to the visibility, marketing and communication of the Platform. The Platform could follow up the evaluation from participants better. They should make the local people know what it does and what it stands for. And the Platform could also be more responsive in what the locals want and need. By being even more involved in the community and finding local investors the Platform can surely find more participants and partners in a sustainable way.

Some of this could have been solved if it would not be for the tight budget ActionAid as well as many other non-governmental organizations has to maintain. Unfortunately in the Platform’s case fewer participants have signed up for the courses recently and this has partly to do with terrorism and Ebola. Here media plays a huge role. The media’s to some extent exaggerated narrative about Africa in general hinders many travelers to go. Therefore it is vital that the Platform continues with their trainings so the participants can act as ‘ambassadors’ and spread their knowledge.
Acknowledgements
I would like to thank my supervisor Maja Elmgren who has supported me tremendously and been an excellent help. Moreover, I would like to express my gratitude to Gloria Gallardo who has provided valuable insights. Lastly, I would like to thank Sonja Martinov for her comments during the opposition. My boyfriend, family and friends have been a great support during my writing with cheers and appraisal. This report would not have been possible if it were not for the people at the Platform in Kenya, it has been a wonderful experience and a true pleasure to get to know the people there. It has been a privileges and a mind opener to get an insight into their culture and hear their thoughts and dreams.
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Participant1, 2015. *Interview participants 1&2* [Interview] (27 2 2015).


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YouthForum1, 2014. *Interview YouthForum 1* [Interview] (17 12 2014).


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Interview no</th>
<th>Background information</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Activista</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>The coordinator for five years for the local network Activista Mt. Kenya.</td>
<td>I want to know his opinion on how the Platform is affecting the society and also how the Platform and Activista collaborate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jack</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>The cultural understanding trainer at the Platform, also an important man in the community; some call him ‘Chief’ of the community because of his great influence.</td>
<td>He can give good perspectives on what the meaning of the Platform has for the local people.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Guide 1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Help the Platform to show the participants around its surroundings.</td>
<td>They are youths living in the villages close by and because they are a part of that society they can give a good image on what the locals think about the Platform.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Guide 2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Local Guide 3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>These are the participants from the Global Volunteer course where they stay one month at the Platform and afterwards go volunteering. The course’s purpose is to ease the participants into the culture and make it more than a visit, an intercultural exchange rather than just tourism.</td>
<td>They can give a good view on how the courses at the Platform affects on an individual level.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Participant2</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Participant3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Participant4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>The Founder</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>The one establishing the Platform in 2009 and got it up and running. Now owns a restaurant in town but is still much involved in ActionAid’s work and other developments in town and has a vast network.</td>
<td>Experienced and well aware of the Platform’s needs and challenges. Can give me information on what works and not concerning structure, collaborations between offices etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Manager</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>The one with most knowledge about the Platform and ActionAid as a whole with structures and challenges. Responsible for everything that is going on at the Platform and the final decision maker.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Teacher</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Teacher since six years back at the all girls school Daraja Academy that the Platform shares its premises with.</td>
<td>Has good knowledge about the Platform’s history and collaboration with the local community. Can give me insights in how the Platform is looked upon from the outside.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youthforum 1</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Youth from Nanyuki town that comes to the Platform</td>
<td>Since they live in or around the town they have a network</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Youthforum 2 10 every once in a while for various forums and courses. well connected to the ones the Platform wants to reach and play a big role for my impact assessment. They can give me information on how much the Platform’s presence affects.

Appendix 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level &amp; Category</th>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>Methodology &amp; Theory</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Individual &amp; Community Initial engagement and expectations</td>
<td>Why did you choose to engage in ActionAid? For those who did not really engage I ask: How were you first introduced to the Platform?</td>
<td>I want to know whether the first contact was a conscious choice or more out of coincidence. This can show if the Platform succeeds in marketing itself.</td>
<td>Kirkpatrick (2007) mentions the importance of the introduction during an evaluation; this to ease the interviewee into the interview by starting from the top.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>What expectations did you have before coming to the Platform?</td>
<td>I ask about expectations because it is an important gateway to how ActionAid is perceived from the outside and whether that needs to be altered.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Individual Experiences from the Platform</td>
<td>Did the course meet your expectations (you got from Global Contact)?</td>
<td>Expectations have also to do with marketing but also how the Platform communicates with recruitments. Global Contact is only discussed with the Danish participants.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>What is social change to you?</td>
<td>Since ActionAid’s main aim is social change I want to first of all find out if we are talking about the same thing, to find a common ground and speak the same language.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Do you think the Platform delivers that?</td>
<td>I make this a yes or no question instead of formulating it like a <em>how</em> question because then it would be the lead the interviewee and not giving him the space to answer no. Same goes for the question about sustainability further down. Instead I continue with a follow up question: In what</td>
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<tr>
<td>Question</td>
<td>Answer</td>
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<tr>
<td>Have the course made you think differently when it comes to social change?</td>
<td>These questions can be tricky to answer for some of the interviewees, if they are not sure of the definition of social change. I therefore try to prepare them with the question: “What is social change to you?”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Acquisition and use of skills</td>
<td>This I ask in order to be able to grasp if the training program is effective meaning if they teach skills applicable to an everyday life and therefore having the space to affect/make an impact.</td>
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<tr>
<td>What was the biggest challenge during or after the course with regards to using new skills?</td>
<td>Assuming they have acquired skills at the Platform I now connect Kirkpatrick’s (2007) Implementing Level 2: Learning, and Brinkerhoff’s (2009) question: What results is the program helping to produce? where the focus is on what they actually have learned, which sometimes are easiest access through a test but ActionAid does not use that since the participants are there by their own will and are supposed to learn for their own sake, not anyone else. Therefore, I just ask them how they have used the skills in order to find out what they have learned.</td>
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<tr>
<td>How have you used the skills you acquired at the Platform?</td>
<td>Question like these can be difficult to answer when many of the skills learned come subconsciously and therefore maybe are not thought of, that is why I have three questions rather similar to each other, to give the interviewee some time to consider.</td>
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<tr>
<td>What have you achieved with what you learned?</td>
<td>Kirkpatrick’s Implementing Level 3: Behavior.</td>
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<tr>
<td>How has your behavior changed after you finished your course at the Platform?</td>
<td>Kirkpatrick’s Implementing Level 3: Behavior and 4: Result. By reflecting on their change in values and beliefs a change of behavior can also be expected to follow according to Hailey.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
These two questions above also connect to Brinkerhoff’s (2009) question: *What is the value of the results?* Meaning here that the value is what the interviewees have gotten out of being a part of the Platform, i.e. their achievements and change in (better) behavior.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How will you use it in the future?</th>
<th>Has the Platform any future aspects? Do the participants acknowledge that these skills can be used every day for the rest of their lives and does the Platform encourage that?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Community</strong></td>
<td><strong>Do you think the Platform’s approach is sustainable? (In what way?)</strong> Because my field of study is sustainable development I want to know if the interviewees reflect about sustainability. What is sustainability to them?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>How do you see social change in connection to the Platform?</strong></td>
<td>Here comes the part where I want the interview to focus on the wider context. Does the Platform make an impact in the society around? Does Beck &amp; Purcell’s theory concur with the Platform’s activities? The questions are similar to each other because I want the interviewees to take some time to consider their answer, here I am also hoping for some examples in terms of success stories.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>In which way can you see social change happening?</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Have you learned anything from the Platform that you use in your local community?</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Future suggestions</strong></td>
<td>What would have improved the training program? I do not mention the word impact because I want to leave the questions rather open and minimize the risk of the interviewee feeling unable to answer, being too specific would increase this risk. They are not impact experts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>How can the relations between the Platform and the local</strong></td>
<td>The last two question are quite similar but they might also be a bit difficult to answer, as said It is important that the interviewees understand that we know there is always space for</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>community improve?</td>
<td>before the interviewees are no experts within the field of impact assessment but they are mostly in depth with what the Platform is doing so therefore I want to have two similar question to really give them a chance to answer as rigorously as possible. improvement and that we want to become better at what we do. At the end of the day, they are our customers and there is no better way of marketing than rumor; the better reputation - the more participants (Brinkerhoff, 2009; Kirkpatrick, 2007)</td>
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<td>---</td>
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<tr>
<td>What can the Platform do to be more present in the local community?</td>
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