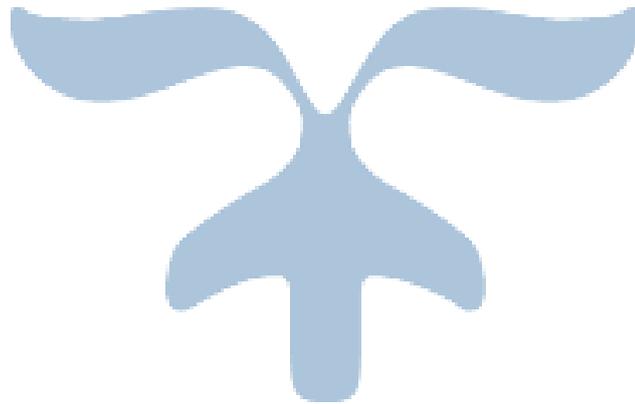


EU FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR AFRICAN MIGRANT'S ORGANIZATIONS IN THE
NETHERLANDS: THE CASE OF AFRICA IN MOTION

EUROPEAN COMMISSION AS A FUNDING INSTRUMENT



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(EUROPEAN COMMISSION AS A FUNDING INSTRUMENT)



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JUNE 29, 2016

BSc IN AGRI-BUSINESS AND BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

SPECIALIZATION IN EUROPEAN UNION STRUCTURAL FUNDS MANAGEMENT

THESIS COACH: JANTIEN TEMPERT

Preface

I have written this report to obtain the Bachelor in Agribusiness and Business Administration, with specialization in European Union Structural Funds Management issued by the CAH Vilentum University of Applied Sciences. It was also written to validate the continuation of the researcher's Masters in International development studies or European studies.

This report was also written for the company where I undertook my internship. The internship started on 29th of March and ended on 25th June 2016 at Africa In Motion (AIM) NGO in Utrecht in The Netherlands.

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I am most grateful for God Almighty for granting me the knowledge and wisdom to undergo this program successfully. I also deeply appreciate my parents for the emotional and spiritual support I got from them.

This research could not have been completed without the help of my company coach. Mr. Max Koffi, Executive Director of AIM organization. Mrs. Esther Bakker, one of the board of directors at AIM organization. She has shared her expertise and insights throughout the entire research period.

I also extend my gratitude to my thesis coach Ms Jantien Tempert the course coordinator Animal Health and Welfare and EED Animal Production, and Lecturer Animal Husbandry at CAH Vilentum University of Applied Sciences. She has added her contribution by accessing the progress of the research, together with my second coach Mr. Lambertus Vogelzang, European Structural Funds Management coordinator at CAH Vilentum of Applied Sciences.

I would also like to thank all the AIM employees, volunteers and the guests from other NGOs who made the research complete by dedicating their time and sharing their ideas and thoughts on the research topic.

I hereby confirm that, this is my own work and it has not been published anywhere else or presented to any other institute of learning for grading.

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List of acronyms

ACP	African Caribbean Pacific
AIM	Africa In Motion
EEC	European Economic Community
ERDF	European Regional Development Fund
ESF	European Structural Funds
EU	European Union
FAO	Food for Agriculture Organizations
GNI	Gross National Income
MEPs	Members of Parliaments
NGOs	Non- Governmental Organizations
OECD	Organizations for Economic Co-operation and Development
OED	Organizations for Economic Development
SMEs	Small & Medium Enterprises
UNICEF	United Nations Children Fund

Summary

The amount of money allocated to development work has been decreasing globally. Due to the looming financial crisis, many government institutions that use to allocate resources to NGOs involved in development work have significantly reduced. This research offers critical suggestions on ways to improve grants for NGOs, involving EU Commission as a funding instrument. The research main question is “How can Netherlands-based NGOs focusing on Africa-based projects benefit from EU funding?” with the following Sub-Research Questions:

- a) How has the structure of the EU as a funding institution evolved over the last 20 years?
- b) What challenges has AIM faced in its attempts to secure EU funding?
- c) How has AIM adapted to these challenges?
- d) How can AIM increase her chances of securing EU funding?

The target group for this research is small and medium NGOs that are 1) based in the Netherlands and 2) whose work focus on issues facing the continent of Africa. By using AIM as a case study, this study hopes to highlight the challenges these NGOs face. The researcher opts for a thorough understanding of the situation instead of a shallow and broad understanding. This research has been conducted by the use of cross-sectional design using qualitative data collection method to examine the research issue as it manifests itself in the NGOs at a single point in time.

The study helped to determine the different ways of getting funding from different donors and how the organizations can maintain the trend.

The key findings in this study are that AIM has a couple of organisational, human resources, alignment of congruent barriers to accessing EU funding. The findings have also illustrated that the organisation is aware of the challenges and that it has been thinking about solutions towards the challenge of accessing EU funding.

Some of the conclusions and recommendations for this research are that: (i) a clear management philosophy is required for the company to be committed in the resourcing acquisition process: (ii) the percentages to acquire from donors and self -reliance initiatives should be clarified and (iii) initiate a project management approach, to keep track of deadlines, milestones and outputs for the EU funding and call for proposals.

Chapter 1 Introduction

Non-governmental, non-profit organisations mainly depend on funds from a variety of sources to support their activities. The biggest portion of these funds is acquired by applying for grants in the form of projects to a variety of donor organisations. This process takes the shape of a competition where applicants compete for a share of the available money. Guidelines for qualifications are set by each donor depending on the donors' area of interest.

Since the 2008 financial crisis, the amount of funding available for non/profit organisations globally has decreased (Leach-Kemon et al., 2012). The decline of funding means that difficult choices have to be made for the future of organizations. The measures taken ranges from complete closure of non-profit organisations to downsizing. Closure and downsizing has consequently led to a decrease in unemployment. As unemployment increased activists' have had to make the critical decision of whether to stay in a shrinking organization or move elsewhere to search for greener pastures (Reinhart & Rogoff, 2009).

Another driver of change facing non-profit organisations is the approach applied in funding. Traditionally donors allocated resources to projects they considered will implement a given solution for a particular problem or issue in the developing country. Over the last couple of decades, the paradigm for NGO resourcing has gradually been shifting from this practice to funding NGOs that engage in social entrepreneurship projects (Dey & Steyaert, 2010). In this case, NGOs are expected to come up with projects that solve a particular issue while generating income to cover their own expenses.

Africa in Motion (AIM) is a small Africa-focused NGO in the Netherlands that has been depending on donor funding from the government via the supervision of Kerk In Actie and Oikos since 2010. In 2013 the Dutch government significantly reduced funding for both institutions and in so doing for AIM. AIM has since then been struggling to get access from a variety of sources with little success. Faced with the threat of closure, AIM management has been searching for other means to intensify her efforts in securing EU funding. (Max, 2016). However, for the small organization, this appears to be a difficult undertaking, mainly because of the scanty of information on what the EU can mean for AIM. AIM represents many NGOs that could benefit from the EU funding schemes but are too intimidated by the perceived size and complexity of EU as a donor institution. A failure to understand this institution and thus a failure to properly align their grant applications with the focus areas of the institution could deny them the resources so needed to keep them in operation. (Vincent, 2006). This study, therefore, comes at a crucial time

to explore the opportunities out there and to suggest possible changes in approach that AIM and other similar NGOs can apply in this quest.

1.1 Target Group and dissemination of information.

The target group for this research is small and medium NGOs that are 1) based in the Netherlands and 2) whose work focus on issues facing the continent of Africa. By using AIM as a case study, this study hopes to highlight the challenges these NGOs faces. The researcher opts for a thorough understanding of the situation instead of a shallow and broad understanding. Keeping in mind the time and resources limitation, a case study is chosen. A case study allows for deeper exploration and understanding of a rising issue. (Noor, 2008). Most employees in AIM work for other NGOs too. To broaden the context and enrich the data, the researcher will ask AIM volunteers for their experiences in regard to this topic in other NGOs. This data will be incorporated in the report to strengthen the need for further research in this area. The researcher hopes to follow up this research in her master studies, whereby a nation-wide approach will be adopted.

This research is one of its kind, done in English in the Netherlands. Its results will, therefore, be useful not only in the Netherlands but also by other NGOs beyond the Netherlands that struggle with acquiring EU funding. The results will be shared via a presentation first to the board of directors followed by a presentation at other events organized by AIM in her lobbying for Africa programs: Social entrepreneurship and Africa25. The ultimate goal is to create awareness of the

issues facing these companies in the Tweede Kamer and the EU itself. If the recommendations are implemented, it will ultimately benefit many NGOs. The first objective of this research is designed specifically to unravel the perceived complexity concerning the EU funding. By studying how the funds have evolved, major patterns in focus and trends in funding will be identified. This information will help AIM in streamlining her internal activities, operations, approaches, and focus even though at grant request preparations to increase her chances of acquiring funding.

1.2 Problem description and demarcation

According to Parks (2008), the amount of money allocated to development work has been decreasing globally. Due to the looming financial crisis, many government institutions that used to allocate resources to NGOs involved in development work have significantly reduced this amount. In 2010 the EU developed short of its development aid target of 15 billion. (Spence, T. 2011). However, an ongoing aid fall threatens the sustainability of NGOs activities and may mean developments targets are not met. The Netherlands is one of the largest NGO funding countries in western Europe. It is ranked 7th in Europe and 16th globally in terms of money spend on subsidies, unemployment support and other social transfer. (Gabi Spitz, Muskens, & Ewijk, 2013). Many Dutch-based NGOs depended on to a great extent on government support either in funds, subsidies or in materials. Just like other countries that are affected by the financial crisis, the Dutch government cut down budget allocation for development work. (McKinley, 2009) This has led to more competition for available resources, a reduction in the type of projects being funded and ultimately in the closure of many NGOs. Those that are still operating are forced to explore alternative sources of funding (Spence, 2011). For most of these NGOs, the EU is the next best alternative source of funding. With no previous contact with funding sources outside of the Netherlands, the multinational EU institution poses a myriad of complexity in grant applications for prospective NGOs. According to Bartle (2012), the principal of funding is such that NGOs try to frame their grants application in a way that meets the criteria and the focus of the funding organisation. That is to say that the more the applicant's goals are aligned with the focus of the donor, the higher the chances of getting funding from that particular donor. The opposite is equally true. As NGOs struggle with the unfamiliar, there seems to be little information out there on how the EU funding is distributed, the exact criteria for access and most importantly how to increase chances of securing funding in this competitive environment. By using AIM as a small Africa-focused NGO in the Netherlands, this study aims to uncover these complexities and suggest possible solutions that AIM and other similar NGOs can use to better understand EU funding and to increase their chances of securing EU funding.

1.3 Main Research Question

How can Netherlands-based NGOs focusing on Africa-based projects benefit from EU funding?

1.3.1 Sub-Research Questions

- (a) What is the structure of the EU as a funding institution?
- (b) What challenges has AIM faced in its attempts to secure EU funding?
- (c) How has AIM adapted to these challenges?
- (d) How can AIM increase her chances of securing EU funding?

1.4 Research Objectives

The main objective of this study is to uncover challenges faced by African focused NGOs in securing EU funding, with the aim of suggesting appropriate approaches to increase their chances of securing EU funds.

The main objective will be realized through the following specific objectives:

- a) Describing the structure of the EU funding scheme.
- b) Analyzing the funding constraints has affected AIM in securing EU funding for her projects.
- c) Exploring the actions taken by AIM in addressing the challenges faced above and how these actions have affected her operations.

- d) Suggest alternative approaches that AIM can employ to increase her chances of securing EU funding.

Chapter 2 Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

2.1.1 What is Development Aid – Theory, Policies, and Performance?

Development aid (also development assistance, international aid, foreign aid, official development aid), according to the free encyclopedia is “the financial aid given by the government and other agencies to support the economic, environmental, social and political development of developing countries”. It generally includes grants from worldwide donors in order to attempt to improve the livelihood of people living in both urban and rural settings.

2.1.2 The history of development aid theory.

Development aid theory provides a special issue to the development aid arena since 5 decades ago (1960).

The establishment of the Development aid theory (EEC) goes back in 1957 as the arrangements between the EEC and its member states to foster economic union, and in so doing the political union. Consequently, the EEC established the European Development Funds (EDF) in 1957. The aim of this framework was to “provide development aid to African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries and to overseas countries and territories” Until now it is financed by its member states through voluntary contributions and is the main financial hub for ACP countries.

2.1.3 Framework for aid allocation in the European Union

According to Alesina and Dollar (2000) the first aspects to look while looking for funds are the criterion governing aid allocation policies. The factors influencing aid allocation can be seen revolving around two alternative determinants: the ‘donor interest’ and the ‘recipients need’ where the process of aid allocation entails two kinds of questions: “whether to allocate the aid to the potential recipient, and in case of a positive answer, how much aid to give to this recipient” (Tarp, Barch, Hansen, & Baunsgaard, 1998).

2.2 Donor interest

The concept of donor interests and its deterministic power of shaping goals and focus areas for donor Aid applicants can best be illustrated by the Marshall plan. In the aftermath of world war II, the Marshall plan whose single major donor was the USA offered great support by providing funds to a small number of countries whose economies had been destroyed by war. These funds were for providing a framework for alleviating the burden of reconstruction after the war to help modernize these countries and to prevent the spread of communism. The budget sharing system received a lot of acknowledgments through the early 1990s following the collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of the cold war for it was flexible enough to embrace new recipients. The division of these funds sets the precedent upon which further foreign and donor aid was used. For instance, the Marshall plan was given to countries based on their importance in revitalizing economic stability in Europe and their position in preventing the further extension of communism. This trend continues to date where NGOs adopt a funding policy that seeks to meet certain areas of interest to the funding body (Baillie and Laurie, 2011).

2.3 Recipients’ need

While donors are mostly motivated by their interests in Aid allocation, coined around core focus areas, these focus areas can be said to emanate from specific needs or issues that affect the recipient. Donors identify these needs either from experiences with travel or from things they see on the media. For bigger donors such as the EU areas of focus tend to be identified from scientific research-based data. For instance, we see the EU aligning its funding with the millennium development goals since the year 2000. In the 11th European Development Fund -2014-2020 we see more focus on humanitarian aid, citizenship and human rights, a move that can be linked to the increasing political crisis in associated with the Arab Spring.

Since 2000, the EEC Development policy has undergone several reforms, significantly the establishment of the European Aid external cooperation office (AIDCO) in 2001. (AIDCO) and the Directorate for Development and Relations with ACP countries joined to form Development

and Cooperation-EuropeAid after 10 years which was on 1 January 2011. In the same year, Agenda for Change Communication was adopted by the European Commission. The agenda for change was implemented with the aim of increasing effectiveness and impact of the EU's development policy. Since its establishment, the ACC has highly impacted the facilitation of the poverty eradication. It saw a move towards a more focused approach, where the EU will focus its funding on not more than three sectors per country, focusing resources on areas that are most needed and thus most relevant for poverty alleviation, and specializing in the poorest countries and most fragile states. This saw, for instance, the move from funding regional groupings e.g. the East Africa to individual countries. Or a shift from a focus on funding health in Kenya to funding food security in 2014. There has been a move too by the EU from only funding governments and consortiums but also funding individual NGOs and Not for Profit Organizations. Another move has been a focus on areas covered which is reviewed every six years. Receiving countries need however to keep track of changes in these focus areas and to keep aligning their goals accordingly (Foreman, 1999).

The extent to which these issues resonate or are in line with the recipients may be debatable as the question arises, that there are many other little-known recipients needs that will receive little scientific or media attention but are equally significant. In the author's opinion, the focus areas approach could be limiting as recipients try to align their "problem" with the funded areas at the expense of real issues because funds allocated must be used for the purpose for which they were applied and cannot be diverted to other pertinent issues.

2.4 Barriers to funding

2.4.1 Size matters

According to Homi Kharas, (2007) the average number of donors per country is growing while average project size appears to be shrinking contrary to (Clinton O'Brien, 2012) national donors seem to be shrinking due to economies of scale in the largest NGOs.

Young NGOs are in a vulnerable state when it comes to accessibility of funds from the donors. The International donor's agency requires the track record of already successful, budgeted and implemented projects from the small NGOs in order to qualify and gain trust to secure funding. Hence, Small NGO like AIM requires a connection with high profile NGOs to ensure a high probability of funding. The collaboration of organizations will assist in continuity and building up of public profile for the smaller NGOs to ensure the future funding security (Edward and Fowler, 2003).

2.4.2 Networking

Small NGOs requires networking to ensure credibility and growth from existing networks sponsored by local governments or international agencies. This will ensure wide connection to other stakeholders and members who share the same visions, aims, objectives and goals.

2.4.3 Legal barriers

According to Dochas, (2015) smaller NGOs find it difficult to access EU funding, for the process is complex hence practicality favors the mighty NGOs. Dochas offer advice to the members of the smaller NGOs on how the EU funding can be easily accessed. The eligibility and funding criteria are also outlined in addition to collaboration with members of Concord to advocate for simple mechanisms that can be more responsive to the needs of the applicants and recipients. More so, it provides an overview of potential opportunities to the members for easy funds accessibility. It is argued that, when the non-profits are small, there is a wide variety of raising funds from different donors because they require a small amount of money since they are small, and they can use a strategy of inspiring executive director to stand out of the crowds and convince the donors for more funds. When a large amount of money is involved, everything changes because a large sum of money is involved.

In addition, European Commission has the ultimate responsibility to check how the grants are spent. However, the national government has the responsibility as well to conduct checks and audits on the EU, as the 80% of the budget is managed at a country level.

2.4.4 Financial sustainability

For an NGO to thrive through all the years, financial sustainability is the main key factor to be considered, this is to ensure that the organization has a long time in operation. The outlined requirement is that a company member must sell the ideas, objectives and goals of the organization to other NGO members and create partners within the civil society to encourage the success of the proposal writing and conception of best projects for better funding. This creates enlargement on the funding barriers.

The call for balancing financial and social objectives are the main target for many NGOs as there is more emphasis on opportunities and institutional performance. This means that fewer of those in need are targeted. To ensure this, it is argued that “it is now time to innovate and design programs that maintain high standards of financial performance” Markowisk (2002, p.3).

2.5 Solutions to barriers

According to EU development aid, (2015) expert organizations and civil society could improve access in the adaptation of projects. In addition to grants, other available finance ways that could support funding efforts should be investigated should be used to determine the solutions.

2.5.1 Mandatory target

The exact target of the financial bodies should be identified. This might involve agencies that offer all kind of support. either, funding, individual support, crowdfunding, churches, proposal writing, advice and capacity building.

2.5.2 Financial monitoring and support

Support from the relevant bodies should be identified for example through special funding windows. Small scale partners should be given a chance to explore and expand their network.

Chapter 3 Research design and methodology

3.1 Research design

This research has been conducted by the use of cross-sectional design meaning that the data was collected at one point in time. It applied qualitative data collection method to get insights of the structure of the EU as a funding organization and to find out how African Oriented NGOs base dint he Netherland can increase their chances of securing funds form the EU.

3.2 Research approach

This study employed an inductive approach because the researcher made use of existing theory and knowledge to get insights into the topic of study. Such an approach uses qualitative approach to understand the research context in a deeper manner and normally the researcher is part of the research process (Saunders et al (2009). In this study these characteristics are fulfilled. The scope of the research questions was narrowed and interviews were held to generate new information on the research topic and to answer specific questions and sub-questions.

The researcher has chosen a case study approach. A case study is an in-depth study of a particular situation, in this case, an NGO organization within The Netherland. Often a case study is used to make broad research field researchable (Shuttleworth, 2014). Funding for development projects is a broad research field which means there are many NGOs, non-profit making organizations, and other donors offering grants to different categories of projects. In addition, the need to identify specific values, objectives and goals, visions and missions have to align with the donors versus recipients.

This research was conducted in the form of a case study which proved to be most effective with the interaction of those involved in the study (employees, volunteers, and guests) (Creswell, 2002) In addition to getting the real situation on the ground.

3.3 Data collecting techniques and procedures

The following two data collection tools were used:

- 1) In-depth secondary data review was used to answer question 1
- 2) A semi-structured interview was used to answer other questions

3.4 Population and Sampling

This study employed a convenience purposive sampling technique. This technique is suitable for a population that assumed a homogenous sample population. The researcher identified the people with the required information that the researcher had gathered and requested them for the interview. Purposive sampling is the process used to determine a certain group of samples consciously rather than random selection of the general population (Robinson, 1998; Stewart, Shamdasani and Rook 2007). According to Calcraft (2005), Steinberg and Price, 2008 the sample size of a qualitative research, is not necessarily associated with the size of the population. It is more determined by the depth and focus of details employed in the analysis of data. The ultimate test of sample appropriateness is the extent to which the features of the population are represented in the fused sample (Cooper and Schindler, 2008).

The interviews were held in AIM organization with AIM permanent and volunteer workers. This is a total of 16 employees with 3 permanent employees. All Permanent employees were interviewed, while up to 3 volunteers who have had actual grant making tasks were interviewed, 2 temporary employees and 2 guests from Oikos NGO were interviewed as well. summing to a total of 10 interviewees who were interviewed. The interviews were spread over two weeks. Each interview lasted for about 45 minutes with permanent employees and 20-30 minutes with the volunteers. The interviews were recorded, and some not recorded according to the respondent's preference.

To broaden the context and enrich the data, the researcher asked AIM volunteers for their experiences in regard to this topic in other NGOs so that the data collected will be incorporated

in the report to strengthen the need for further research in this area. The researcher hopes to follow up this research in her master studies, whereby a nation-wide approach will be adopted.

Besides interviews, the researcher intended to use surveys. Surveys were chosen to narrow down what was exactly expected from employees, volunteers and guests. Surveys are flexible in administering and tend to have a higher reliability of information because the respondent answers the question themselves without the influence of the interviewer. Based on these factors surveys were chosen as the second method of study (Wyse, 2012). The survey was meant to answer question 2 and 4, in addition, it consisted of 10 questions. The survey started directly with questions, which was viewed as more important and directly to the point which seemed to align with the researcher's expectation.

Due to challenges in implementing this, the survey was abandoned for an in-depth interview. See chapter four response rate for full details.

3.5 Data analysis methods

By analyzing the interviews, the author was able to identify other alternatives of accessing funds for development project. Qualitative data was analyzed in order to provide the relevant information needed, by use of Excel and Word. Data collected via interviews was analyzed using content analysis. The recorded interviews were transcribed to identify key ideas or factors. These were put into an excel sheet. The excel sheet has a list of all questions and a section for recording the major ideas. These ideas were then grouped into similar concepts and these concepts grouped into similar themes to identify key challenges to funding and possible solutions to these challenges. The results will be presented using graphical representations and in prose. Prose presentation will be accompanied. Quotations from interviews are presented to support the finding, discussions and recommendation.

3.6 Limitations

Due to limited time, the researcher did not manage to include the total population, even though the population was relatively small. Time also limited the amount of data that was collected, as some guests and volunteers were not willing to have longer interview sessions because of their busy schedule.

The interview was done in two cities in The Netherlands, Utrecht and Nijmegen. This means that finance was a problem for volunteers who insisted on meetings outside these two places.

Chapter 4 Research Findings

4.1 Introduction:

This chapter presents the analysis of the results collected in a period of two weeks in the study that aimed at finding out how African oriented Dutch NGOs can increase their chances of acquiring funding from the EU. The chapter starts with an analysis of the response rate, followed by the key themes identified from the qualitative data. A presentation of data pertaining to each sub-research question is presented.

4.2 Response rate

Being a case study, the goal to collect data from a sizeable group of respondents has given the true picture of the real case on the ground as accurate as possible. Considering the size of the case study, the researcher aimed at interviewing as many people as possible. Below is a breakdown of the response rates achieved.

Table 1 response rate data

Total employees	16	Interviewed	Percentage
Permanent	3	3	100
Temporary	7	2	28.6
Volunteers	6	3	50
Total staff interviewed		8	
Guests		2	
Total sample interviewed		10	

Overall response rate $8/16=50\%$

4.3 Sub question one: The EU funding structure

4.3.1 Brief introduction on how the EU funds works

The European Union became formal under the Maastricht Treaty in 1993. It was aimed to secure free movement of people, goods and services within its member states. The EU involves various institutions, the European parliament which represents the EU citizens who are directly elected by them with 754 members of parliament (MEPs), the European council, which consists the head of state or government of the EU membership and the European commission which represents the interests of the EU as a whole (EU Commission Memo, 2013). EU played a great role in 2000 in the negotiation of Millennium Development goals, which were to be achieved by 2015.

The EU Commission offer directs financial contributions in the form of grants in support of organizations and projects whereby interested parties can apply by responding to proposal calls. Though there is no guarantee of securing EU funding. EU works best if there is an alignment of policy priorities, aims, objectives and vision with the organizations in question. In return, this supports the free movement of goods, people, and services as well as promote innovations, support jobs and collaborations between the EU countries and promote the European single market against US, China, and other emerging economies.

4.3.2 Beneficiaries of EU funds

a. Member states

The EU and its member states are the World's biggest Aid donors (OECD, 2015) the commission, funds several departments from all sectors, to name a few, fisheries, agriculture, rural development, (ESF) European social funds, (ERDF) European Regional Development Fund, society research, climate business, foreign policies, fight against fraud, immigration, health, education, humanitarian aid among others.

On the other hand, based on the performance and competence, it gives support to private and public organizations. It does not give 100% of project costs but some exceptions apply. Reason

being it requires some involvement from several member state institutions. Grants have to be given on the basis that the project does not exist and projects that are not profit based.

b. EU and the world

EU development aid rotates around 150 countries in the world. It offers direct aid to large countries, this process is termed as “graduation”, it focusses on offering support to the poorest places worldwide. The support further goes to the vulnerable and disaster strike countries which make it to be the only donor that support countries that are suffering from conflicts and fragility (Development aid, 2015)

The decision and management on the projects funded are in partnership with EU and each government. EU prioritizes its development programmes according to the needy projects that each country has. This principle is known as “Country Ownership” (Development aid, 2015)

The EU relies on organizations that are experienced to implement its development programmes. It gives funding to big NGOs like Amnesty, UNICEF, FAO and development agency of the EU member states. In recent changes, the EU involves, civil society organizations, trade unions, environmental organizations, Human rights groups etc. during its cooperation with partner countries”. (development aid, 2015)

4.3.3 Practical procedure for NGOs

EU Commission gives a grant to the public or private organizations and to individuals who are practically exceptional, (who can implement the projects concerned at their best capacity). The application has to be checked in the EU online portal which is also published in the official journal of the EU or C-Series. The Commission issues proposal calls which have to be responded to. Forms have to be filled and closer attention has to be adhered to because between 20-50% of programmes match funding, then submitted before the deadline.

4.4 Sub-research question 2: What are the challenges faced by AIM in its attempt to secure EU funding

This research question was used to mainly find out what are the key barriers to funding. The researcher sought to get insight into why AIM has not been able to secure EU funding since its inception six years ago. Finding out these challenges will thus contribute to the main research question by presenting a clear view of her weakness, which can later be turned into opportunities and thus help in her strategy for future applications. The table below shows the key findings for this question. The first column shows the code given to the respondents because they were promised anonymity. The second column shows each respondents response to this question, which are then grouped into similar themes.

Table 2 responses and themes

Respondent identification number	Actual Response		Abstract Theme
1	Lack of fund	F	Lack of Funds
2	Funds	F	Projects incongruence
3	Projects Incongruence	P	Organizational factors
4	Small enterprises	S	Enterprise Size
5	Context of quality	Q	Projects Quality
6	Organizational factors	O	

7	Enough preparations	O	
8	look for new strategy	O	
9	Tools for improvement	Q	
10	Execution of projects	E	

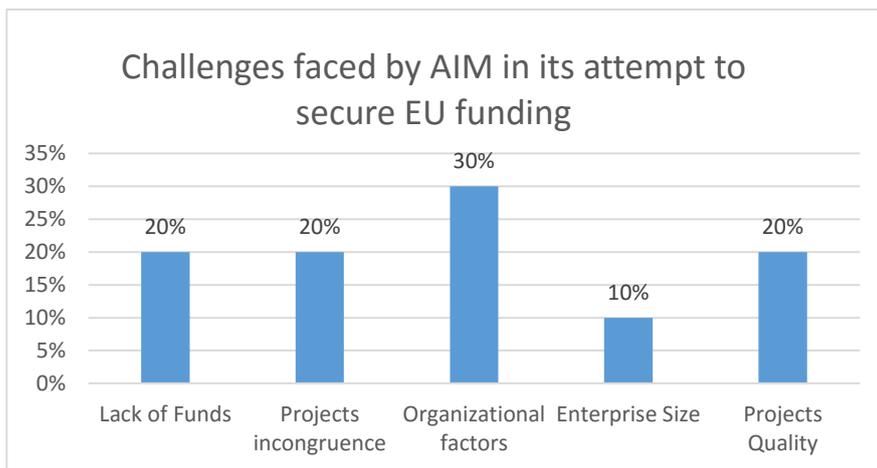


Figure 1. Challenges facing AIM

As presented in figure one above, the data reveal that employees have an experience in dealing with the issue at hand. All respondents had something to say for this questions. This implies a significant level of awareness of the challenges facing Aim as far as funding is concerned. From the data above, 30% of the respondents cited a lack of enough time for preparations for the EU application. The quote below by respondent 6 illustrates this fact:

“Basically, the main problem we face is a lack of time. Everything happens so fast for these applications. You are too busy with things and before you know it is almost deadline. Sometimes we do not even know that the applications are open. We always find out too late.”

In this quote another organizational element can be identified, that is a factor of timing. It appears that there is not enough time to actively source out the information about projects and project deadlines on time. This could imply a human resource issue that can be related to the volume of work, the number of staff or a weakness in the management philosophy. This will be discussed further under the project congruence theme identified in the section below.

Respondents felt that size was a barrier to funding. Respondents believe that small NGOs are less considered when it comes to funding. As discussed in the literature review, INGOs, and National government are the main recipients, then the NGOs go through the government to get funding which requires also other administration process and time-consuming. Broad funding department and administration workload is yet another barrier that small NGOs face in their attempt to look for funds which in-turn demoralizes the organization to apply for funds related from big organizations. To quote one of the respondents:

“I don't think any small company gets those funds..... they are very political. Big NGOs like (names withheld) get all the money and here we are suffering. We are too small, man. We are too small....”

The EU funds have different target groups, however, 80% of the money is distributed in such a way that the government is the custodian of these funds. The remaining 20% is available for other independent bodies to work with. Governments normally tend to work with known NGOs that has a tried and tested track record. The risks of involving small little known NGOs could just be too high or too complicated or costly for governments to deal with.

Another theme identified were related to congruency. In this aspect, respondents felt that the process was too complex. Although some respondents could not exactly elaborate on this aspect, there was a general feeling that the application procedure was difficult to meet. As mentioned in chapter two, the EU funds have a dedicated webpage on funding, the information is quite general more guideline than a detailed handbook. There is also no dedicated services to help applicants with writing their proposal or polishing them to meet the standards. Such kind of expertise can only be acquired via prior experience.

Asked to elaborate on complexity, one respondent said

“it is just too complex, eerr ...it is difficult. You need to do too many things. Fulfill so many requirements, small NGOs requires manpower and experts to write proposals and don't forget a lot of people will apply for funds so it is highly competitive and once you get the money, the EU will ask for a lot of administration which is a special burden for small organization”.

Respondents also felt that the quality of their projects is a barrier. So a lack of alignment in the quality was seen as not being competitive enough. Even though their proposals met the key requirements, the way they were articulated or put together was not convincing enough. The competition from other big organizations and special manpower is also seen as a barrier.

“we write good proposals, but we always get denied. we tick all the boxes. They gave us good feedback on (name withheld) but do not give negative feedback, they don't give us any money.... We are beaten by the big guys. I think it is a comparison of us and big universities and companies.”

Small Dutch organisations are used to simplified procedures, with support from a number of organisations and a large body of volunteers in the Dutch funding arena. Dealing with the EU funds is a multilevel, multi stage process that is not in the culture of small Dutch NGOs.

The above paragraph leads the researcher into the next finding: **human resources**. Respondents felt that they lacked the necessary human resources needed to prepare for the EU proposal calls. As just mentioned, preparing proposals requires experience, which can only be attained by having gone through the process. Small NGOs like AIM are staffed mainly by temporary and voluntary staff, who do not have the required experience in such activities. Outsourcing the grant proposal writing is a costly undertaking that does not guarantee a positive outcome. On the other hand, existing funding is secured for specific projects. Aim has to justify that they spent these funds for the purpose of achieving the goals of that particular project. With only project based source of income, it is not possible to divert funds from one project to pay for the staff costs associated with outsourcing the EU grant proposal writing activity. Would alternative sources of funds enable Aim to cover for this costs?

An interesting and an unexpected outcome is that of stress: a couple of respondents mentioned that the process is rather stressful. Formulating ideas for the project was considered unpleasant experience. This could be attributed to the fact that as stated in the literature review, most NGOs, have to modify their areas of focus to align with the focus areas of the donors. In most cases, these being in areas they may not be passionate about nor qualified in. An NGO that is struggling to stay in operation may endure this process for this purpose only and thus a negative response will only work to further demotivate the team. This could in turn lead to poorer performance in future applications and the cycle of failure continues.

4.5 Sub question 2: How has AIM adapted to the challenges of funding constraints?

When asked how AIM has far adapted to these challenges, the respondents found it difficult to come up with real answers. The most common answer was to focus on alternative sources of funding and to keep trying. Focusing on other sources shows that AIM has resigned from further pursuing these funds. As mentioned in the barriers, this can be expected considering the cited stress, money spent and perceived high rate of failure. Keep trying, implies a rather optimistic view, where AIM hopes that one day they might get lucky and acquire the funding. To succeed in this very competitive environment the later is highly unlikely and the former opens up opportunities for exploration. The respondent replied by giving an example,

.... , sometimes we do barter trade with people, if someone is doing something for you, you can do something back, maybe you can deliver service in exchange. a simple example, if I bring cheese and you have bread slices, I can give you cheese and you give me slices. This means doing things for each other without involving money. This is how we have managed to tackle some money problems here and there.”

Another respondent added:

...eier, to relieve stress and avoid failure, we have to be well prepared, straightforward, be clear, don't make the project broad like a book, show the goals, show your objectives, show figures and all will work out well.

4.6 Sub question 3: Suggest alternative approaches that AIM can employ to increase her chances of securing EU funding?

This research question sought to investigate from the respondent's point of view what they thought was practical solutions for the barriers facing AIM in applying for the EU funds. From this question mainly two key solutions were put forward. The majority of the respondents believe that it will make a great difference where small NGOs engage themselves in income generating activities to become self-reliant. Examples suggested for this include revolving funds, offering trainings to other companies within the expertise of AIM (e.g. doing business in Africa, intercultural training etc.)

.....if we can make the project plan sustainable I think EU will fund us. If it suits the aims and objectives of the EU, they can but no guarantee.

Another respondent added:

‘I think we should show the project, show the donor that you can think and come up with brilliant ideas, write a good pilot project and they will easily fund you’

Another respondent proposed:

‘you can use women empowerment, refugees, environment, the vulnerable, at least use a touching matter’

Investing in permanent structures which means AIM will be less dependency on donors and the organizations day to day operations can run smoothly is another alternative source of funding. Some respondents proposed doing business with other NGOs and partners. In return, a certain

percentage will be returned to it in their account every month as commission or shares in the permanent structures. These self-reliance measures are in line with the current shift in literature as evidenced in the move from donor reliance to social entrepreneurship discussed in literature review.

The second popular suggestion is the focus on cost cutting measures. Under this, investing in human assets was suggested. This means that AIM should invest in raising the capacity of their staff to ensure that they have the skills to write creative proposals.

“Yes, the organization should train people who can handle things in the company, the focus is in the name, AIM for Africa In Motion. income generating activities like micro credit, helping startups.”

Another respondent said....

“Investment in permanent equipment, revolving funds as a way of giving funds to beneficiaries and investing in human assets, this means impacting knowledge to workers”

In addition, the researcher identified other themes, creativity, innovation hub and sustainable energy which were suggested to help in funds accessibility, under consumer social responsibility and National NGO platform was mentioned. As indicated in the literature review the call to be more accountable when formulating ideas, the goals, aims, objectives, vision, and mission, should align with the donor’s concept. as shown in the figure 2 below

Table 3. Solutions to improvement on funding

Respondent identification number	Actual response	Abstract Theme
1	Development of new ideas	Creativity
2	Personnel Team	Human resource
3	Shares	NGOs accountability
4	Innovation hub	
5	Sustainable energy	
6	Employment	
7	Potential partners	
8	National NGO platform	
9	Well trained team	
10	Harmonization	

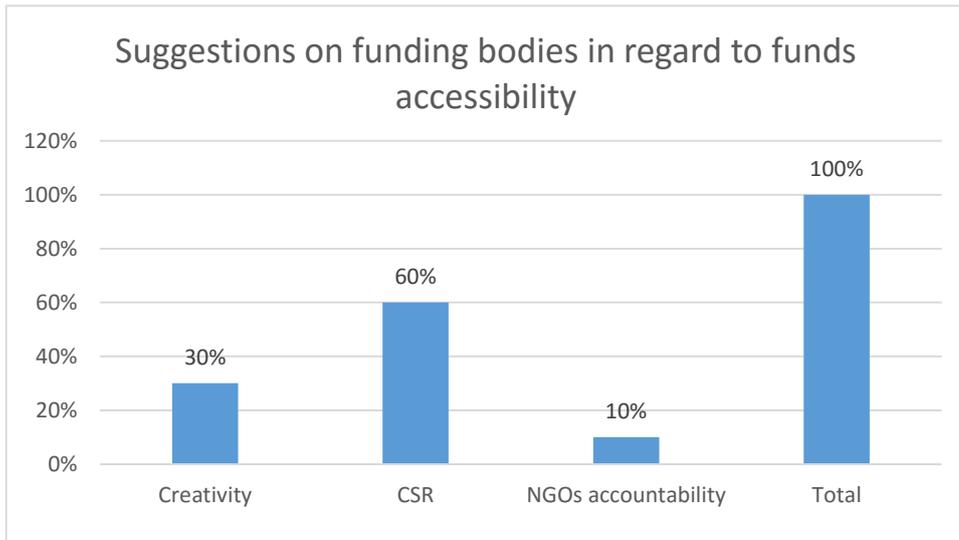


Figure 2. Suggested ideas for improvement

One suggestions were noted which came as a result of a semi- sub- question in regards to suggestions which was **what do you think should be done by EU, Dutch Government and Association of NGOs?** Three common themes: bureaucracy, social impact, and direct funding were identified. Respondents felt that there was a need to shorten the process and that the programs should be more accessible to NGOs focusing on social impact irrespective of where they are based. In addition, direct funding to NGO was suggested instead of going (Bartle, 2012)through the government. This will reduce not only the bureaucracy but also the issue of complexity. One respondent suggested:

“There are too complicated instructions in the websites. It could help if we had an open day before they open the call for proposals. You know, to explain the procedures.”

Another respondent added:

“maybe they could give a list of possible partners to work with. This is the only way we can have a chance.

Another respondent said:

“It is good to have lobbyist in the EU level to lobby for you, and also increase the network with the agencies”

With the mention of the above statement, the question of how easy it is to get the contact person came forth, the respondent replied

.... you have to go to the meetings, conferences, dinner everything you do to network and you have to sustain your network because it is not only shaking hands and giving each other business cards, the follow-up should be maintained”

Table 4 solutions on what should be done by the funding bodies

Respondent identification number	Actual response	Abstract Theme
1	Less bureaucracy	Bureaucracy
2	Shorten the process	Social impact
3	Open day	Direct funding
4	Cooperative	
5	Supportive	Proportion %
6	Social impact	Bureaucracy 60%
7	Easy available subsidies	Social impact 20%
8	Inline objectives favorable	Direct funding 20%
9	Less complexity	
10	Direct funding	

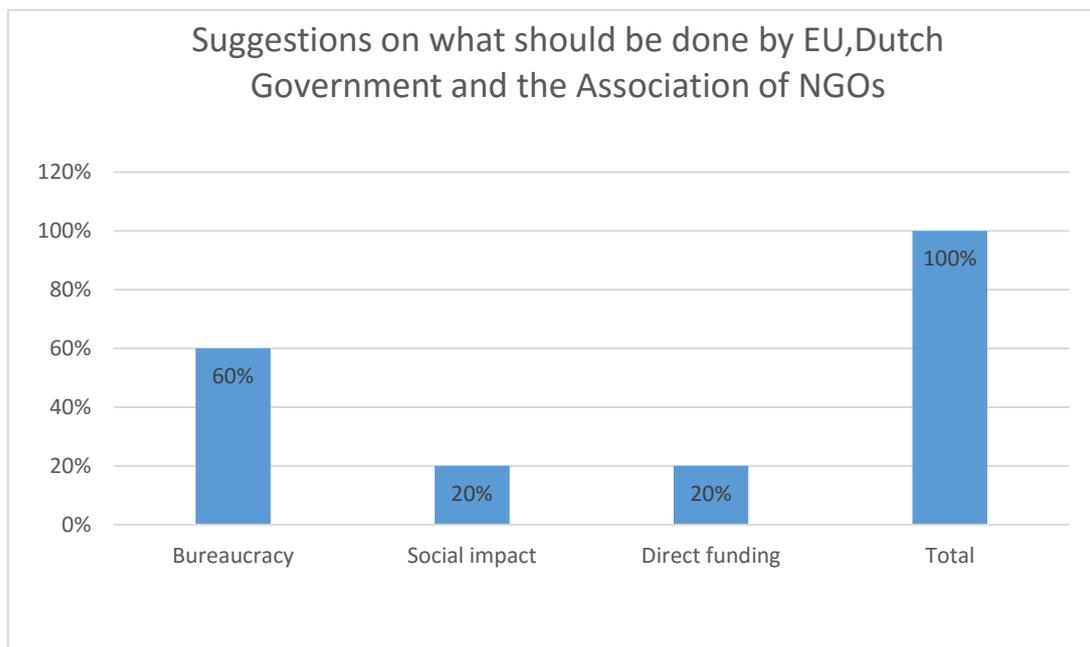


Figure 3. Suggestions on what should be done by EU, Dutch Government and the Association of NGOs

Chapter 5 Discussion and Conclusion

This chapter discuss the main findings and reflects on the data collection technique.

5.1 Answer to main research question

The researcher has been able to answer the main research question. As the findings indicate, the researcher has collected data on sub questions to better understand the main question. Data and results from these sub questions have been compiled to form a holistic answer to the main question.

The researcher has identified key themes from the analyzed data to addressing the main research question: “How can Netherlands-based NGOs focusing on Africa can increase their chances of acquiring funding from the EU.” These themes are summarized in figure 4 below.

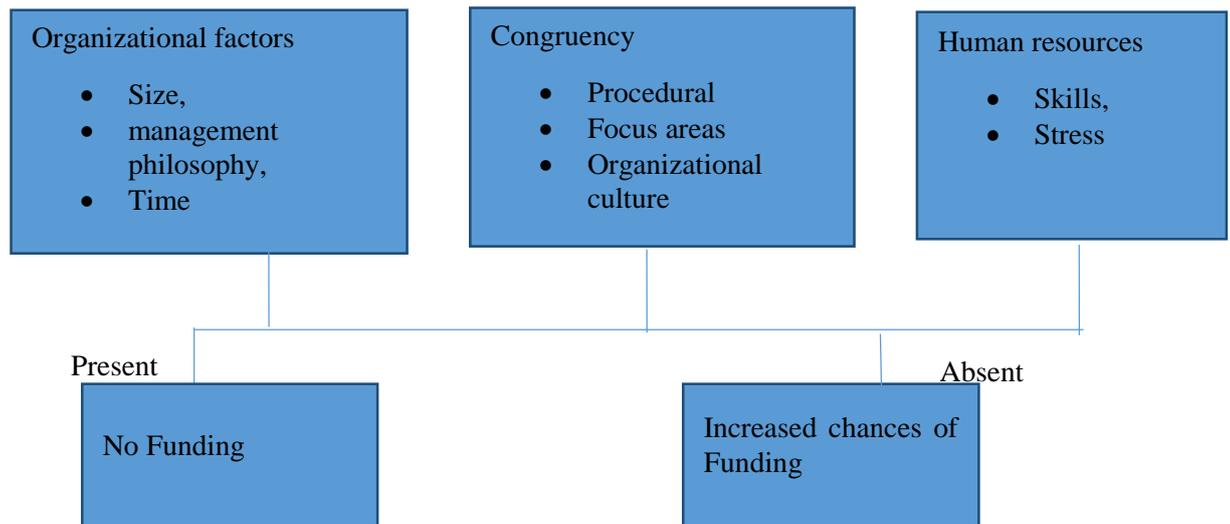


Figure 4. major themes to increasing chances of acquiring funding

The research has shown that organizational factors are an important element for AIM to be able to increase her chances of acquiring funding from the EU. These factors relate to matters that have to do with the structure of the organization that could hinder access of funds. Examples of these subfactors are as follows: size, time and management philosophy. The findings show that time is an important factor in such that it dictates the credibility and thus reputation of the organization applying for the funding. This finding corresponds with the arguments of (Conan Obrien, 2012 and (Homi Kharas, 2007) that indicate size as an important barrier to funding by big donor institutions.

Furthermore, the findings of the study bring out the theme of congruence in relation to the match between the donor and the applicants. As the study has shown, the EU has specific funding priorities. AIM has indicated too that they do not qualify because of different area of focus. In addition, incongruence in terms of complexity in procedures between the organizations is in line with the arguments study results of Foreman, (1999) in which he concludes that when global NGOs provide the framework that local NGOs must follow, management issues such as role conflicts and staff management skills, can be expected.

The findings also show that resources are a major problem for NGOs when it comes to acquiring grants. The most difficult resource being skilled human resources. As Edward Fowler, (2003) put it, volunteers normally seen as motivated and charismatic people that are passionate for a particular cause, specific skills notwithstanding. NGOs such as AIM are manned by a very small core team that is supplemented by university students as volunteers. These findings are in line with the literature on volunteering that shows a significant increase in the number of unskilled

volunteers engaging in NGOs. This influx has result into what is termed as volunteer tourism. However, the increase in number of volunteers is not synonymous with increase in required skills. As long as volunteerism remains free or cheap labor, it remains difficult to find people with proposal writing skills.

If the above themes are present in the NGOs, the chances of acquiring EU donor funding are reduced. If the factors discussed in the themes are absent or minimized, the chances of acquiring EU funding will increase.

5.2 Reflections on research methodology

The researcher had planned on creating surveys and sending them via survey monkeys to volunteers who had worked with AIM before but currently work elsewhere. However, the logistics of delivering these questionnaires proved difficult as the researcher was not able to obtain the details of these staff and to establish if they still worked in NGOs within the timeframe of the study. Time as a limitation, thus came into play. So the researcher modified their approach to be thorough in the in-depth interviews to gather data that is as representative as possible.

5.2.1 How has this affected the generalizability of the results collected in this study?

The researcher acknowledges that the results of this study might not be representative of all NGOs in the Netherlands. This is because they are collected form one organization as a case study. It is possible that other organizations have different views of the issue at hand. Keeping this in mind the researcher modified the research approach to apply an exploratory design with a case study approach. In areas that are less researched, exploratory research is needed to explore the key issues in that specific area. A case study allows one to explore emerging issues in depth. Focusing more on quality and deep understanding instead of broadness. Where time and money is not a limitation two or three cases can be sampled and their results compared.

As with many researches, tradeoffs have to be made. In this study the researcher chose for quality instead of quantity by opting for in-depth interviews of subjects in a case study instead of a shallow view of the situation of many NGOs.

Chapter 6 Conclusion

In conclusion, the study has achieved its objective to a great percentage. The objective was to uncover challenges faced by African focused NGOs in securing EU funding, with the aim of suggesting appropriate approaches to increase their chances of securing EU funds. The study has been able to reach this objective for one NGO in the Netherlands: AIM. The reason why it was not possible to meet the Objective for many other NGOs is time limitation and the fact the issue under study is an exploratory issue that would best be approached by an in-depth study of a single case.

Answer to sub question 1: The key findings for this sub question is that the EU is a well-structured funding institute that focuses on giving grants to the public or private organizations and to individuals who are practically exceptional, (who can implement the projects concerned at their best capacity). The application has to be checked in the EU online portal which is also published in the official journal of the EU or C-Series. The Commission issues proposal calls which have to be responded to. Forms have to be filled and closer attention has to be adhered to because between 20-50% of programmes match funding, then submitted before the deadline.

Answer to sub question 2: The key findings from this study are that AIM has a couple of organisational, human resources, alignment of congruent barriers to access EU funding. The chapter 4 has also illustrated that the organisation is aware of the challenges and that it has been thinking about solutions towards the challenge of accessing EU funding.

Answer to sub question 3: Among these solutions, self-reliance was put forward as a key solution. By finding their own alternative sources of funding, they do not have to rely on donor funding for their survival. Another key solution has been training of staff to ensure that they are well conversant with the requirements of donors outside EU.

Finally, this chapter illustrates that the study has fulfilled the overall aim of the study which was to find out how Netherlands-based NGOs focusing on Africa can increase their chances of acquiring funding from the EU.

6.1 Future areas of research.

The study was exploratory and thus did not give a broad understanding of the entire NGO arena in the Netherlands. The researcher thus suggests future studies to replicate the study and include a wider scope. A comparative study that clearly identifies and takes into account the differences between NGOs is recommended.

6.2 Recommendations

The following recommendations are suggested.

The major recommendations for this study is a clear clarification in the vision, mission and overall strategy of AIM regarding their resourcing model. AIM seems unclear on whether they want to continue being funded by donors. A clear management philosophy is required for the company to be committed in the resourcing acquisition process. The percentages to acquire from donors and from self-reliance initiatives should be clarified.

Other recommendations specific to increasing chances of funding by the EU are:

- 1) Form partnerships with more recognized NGOs to tackle most of the organizational barriers. i.e. Netherlands Organization for Scientific Research.
- 2) Focus on identifying ambassadors who could promote AIM and raise its recognition, act as mentors for staff training and maybe possible sponsors. i.e. project manager from successful INGOs who can offer competence skills and services as well as Government officials who deal with foreign policy for Aid and Trade department to offer advice and way forward.
- 3) Initiate a project management approach, to keep track of deadlines, milestones, and outputs for the EU funding call for proposal. This will ensure that they are aware of the deadlines and are prepared in time. The identified stress will also decline if this is done.

Other general recommendations include:

Try to find other partners from different countries to enhance the network and maintain it by regular communication. For example, weekly and follow-up of the agreed issues should be maintained.

Work in collaboration with EU recognized institutions and this will make more likely that the applications will pass through. For example, be registered on a platform of NGOs in The Netherlands and become a member. All benefits that come with membership AIM will be among the beneficiaries.

Look for recommenders, to enhance the originality and worthiness of the written proposals and AIM organization as a body. for example, INTERREG (euregio, Interregional) Utrecht municipality i.e. regional development funds offices, WelcomEurope etc.

From the Dutch government level, probably the organization could introduce all the projects the organization is dealing with and let them be discussed in the parliament. Also provide training and capacity building to the NGOs personnel.

Harmonize their efforts, meaning AIM should combine their potential with other similar NGOs and create an umbrella in charge of proposal development, by sharing information among the NGOs dealing with the same type of projects. This will encourage transparency in the NGO sector and will avoid drafting the same kind of project proposals from the same NGOs.

6.3 Applicability of recommendations

The AIM organization can implement the above recommendations and conclusions by ensuring that there is a person to take up the responsibility. i.e. employing a project manager to ensure that all the plans made during the meetings, seminars and conferences are put into action and follow-up is done.

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Appendix 1 Questionnaire

Interview questions

Please fill the following questions to the best of your knowledge.

1. What challenges has AIM faced in its attempts to secure EU funding?
 - a. What role does funding play in determining the success of your projects?
 - b. Can you please tell me about AIM's sources of funds?
 - c. How easy is it to access donors?
 - d. Have you ever tried getting funding from the EU?
 - e. Please walk me through the process you took in your attempt to secure EU funding
 - f. Please tell me more about the specific challenges you encountered while looking for funds?
 - g. Have you ever made plans and project expecting to get funding from the EU and then this funding did not go through? If so, how did this affect AIM
2. How has AIM adopted so far to the above challenges?
 - a. What did you do to accommodate this failure in the short term and in the long term?
 - b. What actions have you taken to ensure that the obstacles you faced in your previous applications are eliminated?
 - c. Are you doing the same with other donor organisations?
3. How can AIM increase her chances of securing EU funding?
 - a. Can you please suggest actions that you think AIM can take to improve her eligibility for EU funding?
 - b. Can you please mention what you think that the following bodies can do to improve access to EU funding for AIM and similar organisations?
 - i. The Dutch government
 - ii. The European Union
 - iii. Association of NGOS
 - iv. International NGOs

Questionnaire

Please choose the answers that best suits the question asked below.

1. What challenges has AIM/ your organization faced in its attempts to secure EU funding?
 - a) Lack of access
 - b) Too complicated instructions from the website
 - c) Not knowing the application deadline
 - d) Lack of partners to work with
 - e) Too strict eligibility criteria
 - f) The projects not being among the focus areas of EU
 - g) Not meeting the tender call deadline
 - h) Not aware of the proposal call deadline.
 - i) Complexity in choosing the type of grants
2. Please fill in as much information below as possible.

1. What do you think should be done by the following people to improve access to EU funding for AIM and similar organisations?

- v. The Dutch government
- vi. The European Union
- vii. Association of NGOs

3. Has your organization thought of securing funds from other donors?
4. What are your future plans in regard to maintenance of already funded project?
5. How has the lack of funds affected the implementation of the projects?
6. Please state ways in which you think the organization can be independent without depending on funding/government subsidies?
7. What do you think should be done by the funding bodies in regard to the funding accessibility?
8. What is the focus of AIM/similar organizations in the future, are you planning to continue depending on donors?
9. In your opinion, where do you see the organization in the next couple of years?
10. Outline other possible ways you think can be used to obtain funds?

Appendix 2: Checklist Report Writing

Name: Monicah Karimi Class: 4IF Date: 20/6/2016

Title report:

Thesis report. (EU funding opportunities for African based NGOs in The Netherlands)

“The case of Africa In Motion”

When you have checked your report using this checklist, you must add this to your report as an appendix. No form means no mark.

Items marked with an * are so-called killing points. IF there are more than five killing points ticked on the checklist, the report must be improved on all failed parts and must be handed in again together with the old version. N.B: No killing points are allowed in the thesis

ASSESSORS: Tick the box of the items which are not sufficient!

1. Use of English:

- Does not contain more than 3 grammar errors, spelling mistakes or typos per 1000 words*
When more than 3 mistakes per 1000 words are found, the report will be marked a fail.
- Contains correct punctuation*
- Is attuned to the chosen target group (appropriate style) *
- Shows a functional and business-like writing style*
- Is not written in the “I” form*

2. The report:

- Report is properly bound, no staples (hard copy) *
- Is free of plagiarism* (check exam regulations)

3. The cover:

- Displays the title
- Author(s) is/ are mentioned

4. The title page:

- Title is specific*
- Author(s) is/ are mentioned in alphabetical order*
- Date and place of publication are mentioned*
- The sponsor/orderer of the report is mentioned*

5. The preface:

- Contains personal reason for writing
- Contains acknowledgement (“ I” form permitted in the preface)

6. Table of contents:

- All parts of the report are numbered*
- The summary and appendices are included
- Table of contents is clear
- Page numbers are consistent

7. The summary:

- Is a concise version of the entire report
- Contains conclusions
- Does not contain personal opinions
- Is well structured
- Is written business-like

- Follows the table of contents

8. The introduction:

- Is chapter 1*
- Invites the reader to read
- problem demarcation and justification are clear and specific*
- The problem context is clear and to the point*
- The aim of the research and the report is clear and specific*
- Research methods/ data collection are described *
- The function of the chapters in the report is concisely described *

9. The (construction of the) core:

- Chapters, paragraphs and subparagraphs are numbered and clearly structured (with a maximum of three levels) *
- Enumeration levels are clearly distinguishable*
- Chapters and (sub) paragraphs have a fitting title
- A chapter covers at least one page
- New chapters start on a new page
- Sentences are typed in sequence, without hard return within the paragraph
- Figures are numbered and have a fitting title, which is put below the figure. *
- Tables are numbered and have a fitting title, which is put above the table*
- Figures and tables are referred to in the text*
- Each appendix is specifically referred to in the content
- Pages are numbered*
- Pages have a functional layout

10. The discussion of results:

- Contains a review of relevant sources
- Valid argumentation is provided
- Contains a critical evaluation of own findings

11. The conclusions and recommendations:

- The conclusions are based on relevant facts and / or discussion
- The recommendations are based on relevant facts and / or discussion
- Does not contain any discussion or information that does not appear elsewhere in the report text*

12. References:

- The text is written according to the APA-rules * (check intranet)

13. The list of sources:

- Is drawn up according to the APA-rules* (check intranet)

14. The appendices:

- Are all numbered
 - Each have an appropriate title
 - Do not contain the author's own analyses.
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