

Abstract

This diploma thesis addresses the phenomenon of volunteerism in the form of teaching English in the so-called developing countries. The focus is especially on its direct form, without the mediation of any third party, where people from the Global North arrange their volunteer stays directly with the people from the Global South whom they then visit and teach English as volunteers. The main objective of this thesis is to determine whether this form of volunteerism is beneficial and if so then who benefits from it to what extent and in what way.

My research provides a critical analysis of this phenomenon through a review of literature concerned with the broader context of this topic and qualitative research which consists of two parts. First, I have conducted field research in Ecuador where I have taught English as a volunteer in a local school. Then I have conducted semi-structured interviews with volunteers from the Global North who had participated in similar volunteer stays in the Global South.

Through this research, I have come to the conclusion that the described form of volunteerism can be very beneficial for all its participants if it is well established. However, its main benefit lies not in the improvement of the level of local English but in its potential of supporting intercultural understanding, solidarity, and compassion thanks to which it may help create a better human community on a global scale.

Key words: volunteerism, development cooperation, tourism, voluntourism, sustainable development, Ecuador