

Aid Evaluator (Aid-E) Web-Design

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1. Introduction

I began this project in 2005 trying to look for people to help me make the web-page. Inspired by Wikipedia, I could not understand why we should not gather our data on development aid and follow best practice. People were, as they still are, turning skeptical over the relatively poor results, widespread corruption and high administration costs. Some web-sites started-up and rated organizations on a few issues, often just administration costs. None have tried to give a full range of all the organizations, so that people can see the priorities of the organization and pick their own priorities. It seemed stupid to not try to gather all the data and info available, the internet and open source collaboration made gathering huge amounts of data and organizing it possible.

As the development of the page grew I found it silly to try and list relevant information about NGOs without making it clear to the public where they could find the nearest aid. It was the same functions and it would give volunteers a better sense of purpose by updating pages, and thereby helping people.

These two areas have become the primary targets, although organizing aid on a community lever and having an open source website willing to take in best practice, so that need could possible even be part of assessments and best practice solutions could be developed. There are so many ways to improve how we help each other. It is a big job and it can only be done by a large force of volunteers gathered in an open well-functioning open source website. The UN and EU do not have the capacity but the internet and pages such as Wikipedia makes it possible for individuals help to map out the local aid, so that everyone can find the appropriate organization that they either: need, wish to assist, or wish to include in planning.

1.1. Summary

To make a web-site where users can find help locally and get relevant information about it. There are three main target groups:

- People in need of help/assistance.
- People wishing to donate or volunteer for an organization that fits their personal priorities.
- People/Researches & NGOs who are in need of better information and fact to make informed decisions.

The information on the page must be: Easy to access and comprehend; relevant to the users; as credible as possible; and it must be regularly updated to be sustainable.

2. Features

The main features needed on the webpage are: A database, complex admin and sign in features and complex forms to fill out for profile pages.

Database

Each organization is categorized. This is done in 3 ways. 1. Geographic locations where they work. 2. Topics that they work with (i.e. children, environment) and 3. How they work. How they works is one of the most extensive as the organization here must answer: if they help people from the street or only people they pick out themselves; economic questions; if they are locally based; if they have and want volunteers; and many other such features.

When organizations and regular users fill out the form for their profile page, some of the questions will be mandatory while some are optional. Whatever is chosen must automatically appear on the appropriate pages. For instance if an organizations deals with children, water, etc. The short descriptive text, as shown here, must appear on all of the relevant pages.

■ **A NEW BEGINNING RWANDA** (Nyagatare)

Has a community center where they help widows and orphans. They also have a health post for the community and they aim to help the widows with income generating activities.

[See more about A New Beginning in Rwanda here](#)



In addition, when people search for results, it should be possible for them to find exactly what they look for and save these results, on their personal profile pages.

Complex admin and sign-in features

Give that this webpage must be build up by volunteers, often volunteers with very minimal it experience, there must be an easy way for them to edit pages.

There are 6 numbers of users who needs different admin functions:

1. (No sign-in). Everybody should be able to add organizations to the pages. On each page (that lists organizations) there must be an “Add organizations box” to all the geographically list pages. You should not have to sign-in to add an organization. However, the admin of the page on which the organization is added must approve the organization before it appears. After you add the organization a box should say: “Thank you for contributing, the organizations will be added as soon as it is approved by the administrator of this page”.

2. (User sign-in). The Organizations Profile Page. Organizations can get a profile page by filling out an interactive form (forms vary depending on country and type of organization). Some of the questions will be mandatory while others are optional. The organizations should always be able to edit the information and they should be asked to update information every 6 months. It is important for users to know how the projects are going and which projects are finished and which are starting up.

3. (User sign-in) The Donors (regular users) Profile Page. Like the organizations, regular users, who are potential donors, must also fill out an interactive form. This form will assess the personal criteria and preferences that this person prefers organizations live up to. People should always be able to save and their search results. People should also be able to share their Aid Profile on social networks.

4. (Aid-E sign-in) The Geographic Volunteer Admin Pages. This user/Aid-e volunteer is responsible for the geographic page of his or her home town (or area in a bigger town). The admin here should be able to add news and organizations to the page and the map. He or she should approve added organizations and, if it is a big city or area. The person should be able to grant and take away admin rights to the geographic volunteers in smaller areas and to thematic areas within his or her geographic location. A geographic location can be a very small village or an entire country. It should be possible for there to be more than one admin for a town.

5. (Aid-E sign-in) The Thematic Volunteer Admin Page. The thematic volunteer does not have quite as many responsibilities. He or she must still get the organizations added approved by the Geographic volunteer. Their job is to provide relevant news on the topic. (It depends on the capabilities of the database, if the thematic volunteer can add and correlate the organizations then this is also ok, still there should be a notification for the geographic volunteer who should have the ability remove entries). It should be possible for there to be more than one admin for a topic.

6. (Aid-E sign-in) The Super Admin. This admin can like the Geographic volunteers sign out both Geographic and Thematic admin functions to various people. He, she or me, should be able to take away the admin rights, if the job is not done well or misrepresented. It should be possible for there to be more than one admin and it would be nice with some kind of back-up in case of hackers.

Other Features

The other features are described in more detail under the different pages.

Pages

There are different functions the pages especially on the index page. There are 8 types of pages:

- The index page
- The list pages: Geographic, Thematic, and “criteria”.
- The Give and Find Aid Geographic Thematic Pages
- The Profile page for regular users
- The Profile page for organizations
- The About page
- The Add info/Volunteer page
- Aid to other Countries (Development Policy Page)

Index Page

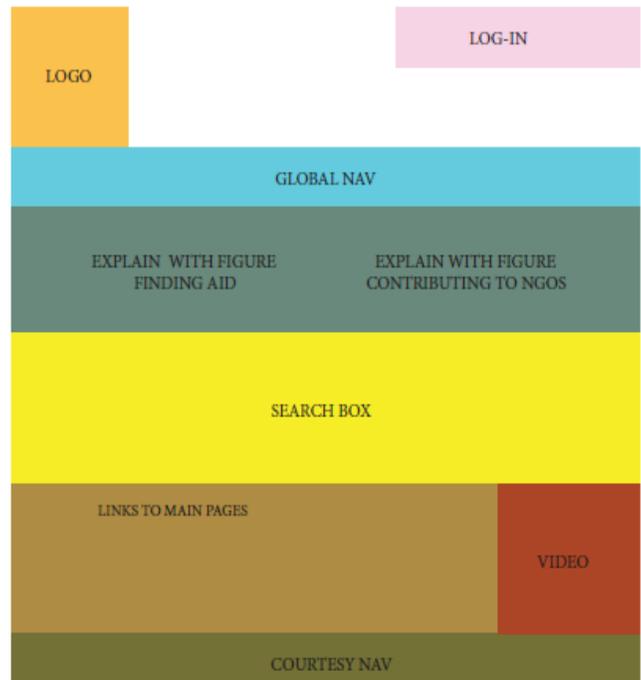
The Index page serves two main purposes: It must make it easy for users to:

Understand what the page is. To understand what the page is; there must be a video, a text and perhaps a graphic depiction to explain this. There must also be references to people on: How and why they should create a personal profile page or become a volunteer.

Understand how to use it. It must be easy to use the page and find what you are looking for. If you are looking for help an interactive search box, should help find the right aid. If you want to give aid or see what is done in an area, this should also be facilitated in the interactive search box. In addition, the page should look interesting without taking away the spotlight on the main function in the search box. That may include high rated organizations and or a poll on where aid is most needed.

Index page Features

- The Interactive Search box:** An easy way to look for and find the local aid. Example of a sorting interactive box <http://www.blivenhaj.dk> not that it should look anything like that but it must change to help you find what you need. I am not an expert in how to do that the best and most easy way but the most important is that it is easy to make it work and find the information people seek.
- Video** A video should explain the purpose and how to use the page.
- Text/Graphic explanation** should explain the purpose and how to use the page.
- Get Your Personal Profile.** Something somehow should make it attractive for users to get a profile page to become responsible in the way they give aid.
- High Rated Organizations?** It could be a good idea to have flash pictures. The pictures would liven up the page and organizations would be proud if they made it on top. There could be a box for the highest rated or for the newly added or both. I am cautious though, as flash is distracting and the focus should be on the message of the page.
- Poll?** Geographic pages should have polls so people can see the main issues to fight. Perhaps also polls to determine the organizations doing the best job, according to public opinion (maybe not since it is hard to trust the credibility of such polls). There could be one on the page on what is most important to deal with generally: War, Water, Energy, Job-creation, Trafficking etc.



The list pages: Geographic, Thematic, and "criteria".

The aim with these pages is to give oversight of the aid provided in the given area or topic. There should be maps on top of the page to help give an understanding of how many organizations helps there. There should be a list of the organizations and if it is a topic page there should be links to geographic areas, whereas the geographic areas should also have links to the topic pages. (Links or drop-box). The criteria page will probably not be used much by the public but more for research and to help the database find organizations, that live up to the personal preferences of the user. Hence the criteria pages will not be in any immediate need for administrators, as the

other two pages will have. *In the long run however, there are ambitions to make development aid experts administer these areas and make them able to compare and contrast best practice solutions.*

Features

- **Database run list (run by admin).** See admin section for more.
- **Ability to add Organization without being logged in.** See admin section for more.
- **Map** Probably Google and preferably so that people can add organizations to the map
- **Drop-down box with links (For the Geographic and thematic pages).** Example here:
- **Poll.** People should be able to suggest a problem; the problem getting the most votes get on top. 4-5 visible options. It would be nice if only citizens could vote but I guess that is not possible?
- **Picture of the Geographic area.** Only photos taken by the admin or which do not have copyright.
- **News Section** (not yet on the criteria pages). People should be able to add news but the admin must approve it. Also the admin should be in charge of this section. It would help the users in knowing what is going on in that area, and also keep them interested in returning to the page, to see the news section. RSS for their profile pages could also be an option, if it's possible?
- **Relevant Links:** If there is information that stands out and is more relevant for the user, than the general lists.
- **Calendar** (if appropriate/optional). People should be able to add event but the admin must approve them. Also the admin should be in charge of this section.
- **Give Aid & Find Aid Boxes**

The Give Aid and Find aid Geographic and Thematic Pages

On both the Geographic and the thematic pages you should be able to see a Give Aid and Find Aid boxes. There should be a short text on where to find aid.

Also, on the Find Aid page should be listed all the organizations which the database has listed as providing aid and being open to aid new people in this particular area.

In the Give Aid page the database should list the best rated organizations and it should also be possible for people to pick their own criteria to see which organizations here match their preferences the most. The function needs some help but this page is a good layout:

<http://www.aidevaluator.com/countries/rwanda/types/give/children.html>

There are plans to make a page for NGOs, where they can see which donors typically support people in that area, but it has not yet been fully thought though yet as donors are much harder to keep an eye on.

The Profile page for regular users

From the index page or from wanting a social profile application on you social network; users should be interested in making more sound decisions and showing off their responsible choices.

An interactive quiz should find out their personal priorities and criteria for organizations. This is difficult to make as it must correlate to the type of user and previous choices. Currently, it is only possible by going to the specific page and looking for the options. If you are a donor, NGO, or researcher you will also want options, for instance you may prefer to support an orphanage that has no other sponsors and more children than others. Also you may not want to support organizations that import everything it uses or has no concern for the environment.

When the quiz is over the database should create your personal profile page, which you should be able to edit anytime. There should be room for you to show which organizations you support and why. Your choices and reasoning should be listed and a list of other relevant organizations should be in the bottom.

Facebook Application: The mainstream potential donor is not aware of how important it is to make the right decision. In addition all choices are based on subjective experiences and feelings. To engage this type of donor a Facebook application, which gives the user a humanitarian “social responsibility” profile, would be a good way to inform the user though an adaptable questioner. It would give them status and make it clear for themselves and friends; the reasoning behind their set of priorities.

There are some considerations on whether or not to grade people on their Aid-e Profile. Perhaps for those who say that the system doesn't work there should be a funny “Slacker on Aid” status. Others might get a “I have thought about this” Status whereas others could be “An Angel in Disguise”. Another option would be to give them stars according to the priorities of Aid-e, which would be schmuck but perhaps more professional. Of course terms could also be more professional like “Non believer of Aid”, “Making a Difference”, Thoughtful Aid ..something”.

The Profile page for organizations

Organizations aim to portray the best possible image. They would likely try to get into as many categories as possible to be seen. For instance many organizations call themselves locally based, even if every employee is a foreigner, except their driver. Hence it is necessary for them to give good reasons and occasionally proof, that what they claim is true. The interactive form will not be bullet proof but it will make an effort to get truthful and relevant information on the actual activities of the organizations.

Features

- **An interactive form** with required and optional fields of entry.
- **An interactive Pie chart** where they can easily insert, income and expenditures.
- **Google map** so that the organization can show where it is situated
- **Photo.** On the page it is preferred that they have a photo of their local head office.
- **Box for news updates**, which when updated regularly, should favor them in the rating system.
- **Box for video material**, which would also give them plusses.
- **Ratings.** *Still not fully though out, as organizations with bad ratings might not want to be listed then. So maybe not.*

About page

Trust is an essential part of the webpage. There must be explicit information on the aim of the web-site and who is in charge. Unlike many other web-sites partnerships cannot be made, as it is difficult to provide unbiased evaluations of NGOs, if you partner with either the NGOs or commercial companies (that supports organizations). Starting up a new initiative without partners is quite difficult, yet necessary, and people should be able to see this.

Other from links to the Aid-e Profile Page and Page of volunteer administrators/contributors, there would be no need for and other features on this page. *Perhaps however, it should contain a disclaimer?*

The Add info/Volunteer page

There are two pages here: One is for potential Volunteers and the other for regular users/potential donors and organizations. Both must contain the relevant information needed to convince them to make a profile page or volunteer.

Features

- **Video**, with specified information directed at the specific audience. Which on the “You Profile Page” means two videos; one for users and one for organizations.
- **Graphic/Text** information material
- **Example Profile Pages**
- **List of benefits**
- **Disclaimer?**

Aid to other Countries (Development Policy Page)

Simple list page of organizations and governments.

Features

- **Google map**. To show the flows of Aid to both geographic and topical areas.
- **Potentially illustrations**. To show the flows of Aid to both geographic and topical areas.
- **News Section**
- **Relevant Links**

Strategy

The Objectives of Aid Evaluator (Aid-E)

The main goal is to insure that aid is made more efficient. Usually when you want to optimize a system, you gather all available data, you compare it and you pick the right choice for you. In this case no one is collecting the available information before reaching a conclusion; Aid-E aims to change this unfortunate lack of detail and give people the option to make informed decisions. People should access the information they need, and it must be done in a way so that everyone can understand it. For instance, maps are a good way to show who works where; pie charts are a good way to show how finances are used etc. There must be options for both the slightly interested and experts. Ultimately the hope is that funds are directed, to where they are most needed and spend in the most effective manner.

Revenue

In case revenue, the page could charge users and NGOs for the service but the negative factors, far outweigh the positive. Also, given the trust factor commercial interests are also difficult, so in effect the only way forward, which does not compromise the integrity of the site, is to rely on volunteers and an effective web-system. This is also to current state of the page, where volunteers make various pages in the start-up countries Rwanda and Denmark.

Branding

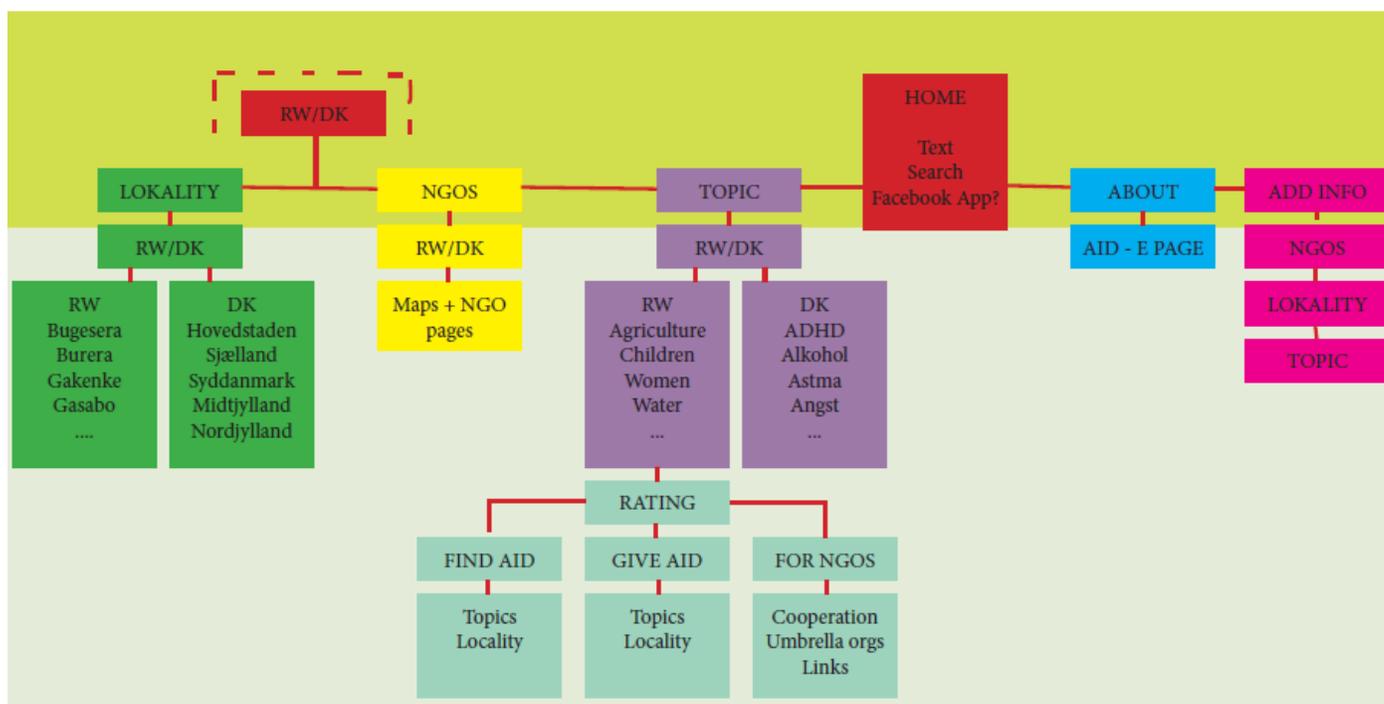
Unlike most aid organizations, who appeal for people to empathize with the poor, this site with to branded as being trustworthy and based on logic. It makes sense to help people out of poverty. It also makes sense to protect our environment and human rights. Decisions must be based on reason. Feelings both can and should play in, when people chose what matters most to them, however, who to support should be based on reason.

The Objectives of the User

In case of the target groups, some users will be looking for information on where to get help, while others will look for how to help, or simply seek a comprehension about who does what, where. Some of the users will have a very limited knowledge on how to access information, while others will be experts; there should be relevant options for both. It is particularly relevant for the users in developing countries, like Rwanda, that they can use the phone to access the web-site, as these are common in contrast to computers.

Structure

Below you can see a hierarchical diagram, which has been chosen given the sense of logic that the site aims to portray. Listing all NGOs would not be helpful to most people. Therefore it must be categorized so that users can search for it. The diagram only looks as the page is currently and it does not include all the mentioned areas yet.



Navigation Menus

- Easy navigation is a must, if people are to find what they are looking for.
- There must be a global Menu, with links to: The Index page, The “About Page” and the “Add Info” page and “Your Profile” page called by your name, if possible. There should also be a **Local Menu** which makes or adds the country you are interested to the Nav.

Text/Images

Text could be used to explain the web-site; however, many newcomers do not have the patience to read a text. Hence the plan is to make a more visual figure that shows how you can: A. Find aid and B: Find an organization to assist. Pictures tend to draw attention and comprehension better than text. Apart from the illustrations there should be no pictures, to confuse and give mixed signals.

Colors

The colors should be discrete to make the site simple; however they must be strong and stand out to highlight the most essential areas such as the search box.

Logo

The logo symbolizes how all hands are needed to help each other. In addition, the star in the middle hints towards the rating and analysis, which the site aims to provide. The colors can be seen as different skin colors, which is clever enough but perhaps not visually the best option? I am open to suggestions.



How to engage and attract users

Part of the reason behind the Aid-E concept had to do with the fact, that people are not sufficiently engaged in the decisions they take, when donating to charity. Making a page full of information, that interested users would find useful, does not automatically attract the general public. Thus, the user experience (UX) must be made quite exceptional to reach this target group. On the other hand, those looking for assistance will not be needing as much encouragement, but they would rather prefer simplicity.

Human-computer interaction (HCI)

The Users Perceptions

Non-profit web-sites often make Users suspicious, especially the target group of donors, who are already jaded in terms of seeing and results from their good deeds. Equally, those looking for aid, will probably have looked many places without finding the aid they need. This means that there is a lot of skepticism to overcome, and it must be explained how this truly is non-profit and just meant to be a tool for the specific users. The perception of the user is essential to attract and engage them and is not an easy task given the short span of time; the regular user will give before they continue browsing. The users' perception relies on practical aspects, previous experience and the users' state of mind, which must be carefully considered.

Practical aspects/Usability

First off the user must be able to understand, see and use the page. The comprehension aspects have been covered how to see the page, is a different matter. Most users in Rwanda use mobile phones to access the web, which is also often the case for users in Denmark, however, most Danish users would still use their computer or Ipad. So the layout must comply with phone standards. In Rwanda the User may also be using quite old browsers, so there should be options for that also. Each page should be of a limited size, to facilitate the ability to see it on a small screen and the search box must be exact, so that the user can quickly find the required information.

State of mind

Aid-E appeals to disgruntled or suffering people. Users who either need help or who wish that aid could be more effective and want to partake in taking responsibility for making informed decisions. This type of users is not in the state of mind to bear over with the many lapses of information, which are bound to occur. To make up for these flaws the part that work, must work flawlessly. The user should expect to be given the best results, based on the available data and he or she should be encourage and applauded for taking responsible action. This is particularly important for the volunteers, who add information. They should have their name featured on the page, which they are responsible for updating, and they should feel ownership and pride of this page.

The hope is that when users start feeling good about their actions on the site; they will help build up the network so that the creation of oversight and insight will cause better access to aid and an improved system of delivering assistance.

Best Possible Outcome

Not a favored topic as it seems unrealistic to many including myself. Still, if the site did work it could have some remarkable results:

- Everybody could be able to find the closest and most appropriate aid
- Donors would make much more informed decisions and support the best projects/organizations
- People would be able to see how and where aid works
- Fewer people would be able to not be charitable based on the typical grounds of corruptions and high administration fees.
- Aid organizations and planners could make more informed interactions and they would get more support for the right actions.
- The polls would make it possible for local communities to gather and work on the problems they identify and rate.
- We could all try to do our best unhindered by the lack of knowledge and facts, which we currently face.
- Aid would improve for those most in need and it would be more efficient.
- When it is possible to see that you can get assistance locally, or at least find the nearest aid or do something about it. The people will have more trust in each other. There would be less fear and the world would be better.