

# Do I look like I need help?

## Mirroring 'Aidland'

In a post-colonial world, mainstream media tends to contribute a stereotypical view of Africa: poor people who need help and westerners who go and help. Through frequent travels to the Great Lakes region, along with readings about anthropology of aid, I came to adopt a different view. Many Burundians and Rwandans are doing very well given the structural environment they live in. Aid reproduced these unequal structures rather than challenge them.

These snapshots from field research mirror my everyday life in Aidland and the everyday lives of people crossing my path. They mirror the contrast in the comfort of privileged aid workers and the agency and resourcefulness of privileged and unprivileged locals.

by Astrid Jamar

## Reading Suggestions



### Aidnography

“Aid works through individual and corporate agency, and its actors are embedded in matrices of complex social relations. The true nature of these relations is typically obscured by ideologically defined subject positions (benefactor, donor, expert, partner and recipient). Furthermore, the forms of social awareness within which this vocabulary makes sense are contradictorily embedded in and disconnected from domestic (i.e., national) contexts.”

Gould (2014, 6)

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