

Ethics for Life

Voices from Ecumenical Partners on a New Paradigm of Life and Society

Jubilee Volume: 60 years of Bread for the World
Cornelia Füllkrug-Weitzel/Dietrich Werner

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“Ethics for Life – Voices from Ecumenical Partners on a New Paradigm of Life and Society”

Editorial: Cornelia Füllkrug-Weitzel/Dietrich Werner

Bread for the World, the national protestant development agency in Germany is celebrating its 60th anniversary in 2019 as it was on 12th December 1959 that 12.000 Christians came together in Berlin Convention Hall for holding the first founding congress of this organization for ecumenical Diaconia and development cooperation. Bread for the World emerged as a result of ecumenical Diaconia received by churches from America, France and Britain by German churches in a country still marked by the aftermath of a destructive second World War and in a context having to integrate more than 13 Mio. refugees from Central and Eastern Europe. The gratitude having received this aid was transformed into a lasting effort to return aid and to get involved in ecumenical Diaconia for others on a global scale. Bread for the World also was a consequence of the German protestant church leaders strong involvement in the young global ecumenical movement and beginning ecumenical social thought.

Faced with the challenges of the first development decade in the sixties this organization from its very beginning put the questions of justice and peace in a global and ecumenical context. Bread for the World throughout its six decades of history had understood itself as a learning movement continuing the journey of discerning what is the will of God in the midst of an unjust world, to ask for the significance of unfolding a new ecumenical social ethics in times of “Rapid Social Change” (as a study process of Church and society/WCC was called).

Therefore also at this occasion of the 60th anniversary Bread for the World has been in dialogue with its international partners. Some have been asked to accompany the work of Bread for the World in its “Global Reference Group” which meets regularly each year (and again in a new composition in October 2019). Others have been suggested by regional desks and then have been invited to contribute to this volume with key contributions from international partners of BfdW.

The idea for this volume emerged with a paper produced in 2018, in the last working period of the former Global Reference Group, the international advisory body of Bread for the World, under the title “Ethics for Life – Towards a New Paradigm” (reprinted in Appendix 1).

The Global Reference Group of Bread for the World in a report from 2018 had stated:

“The global civilisation is in crisis. The current situation is an outcome of a dominant globalized economic model that prioritizes markets, profits, growth over people and nature, resulting in growing inequalities and environmental destruction. If we keep on this path, we continue risking the very existence of human life, human dignity and the future of the planet. The current predominant development paradigm is redundant. It is based on neo-liberal thinking and the belief in a continuous economic growth. Since the ecological limits of the world have already been reached a long time back, it becomes necessary to reassess the validity of such a paradigm. We need to lay the foundations for a new kind of thinking. We need to show a direction for how life and society is to be organized: a well thought, integrated approach to critique the prevailing dominant growth model of development, democracy, nation state and capitalism. We need to create the space and give a voice and visibility to solutions which transform the economy and power relations.”

The international volume thus intended to bring together a selected number of voices from international partners of BfdW highlighting their new approaches and perspectives related to a new paradigm of life and society as experienced, articulated and pursued by partners of Bread for the World in different contexts. Bread for the World wanted to create a space for international partner’s voices (from contexts both in the South, the East and the West) in order to articulate current approaches to justice, peace, human rights and ecology. Following the suggestions from the Global Reference Group the volume was produced by the department on policies, dialogue and theology in 2018 and is now published under the title “Ethics of Life – Voices from Ecumenical Partners on a New Paradigm of Life and Society”.

While Bread for the World has more than 1000 partners in the world and receives many reports on projects achieved and evaluated, the intention of this collection of some 27 essays of partners was more to focus on conceptual and foundational ethical considerations which contribute to the formulation and common search process for a new and alternative concept of development. Some are using the language of an ‘alternative development paradigm’

while others would renounce the validity of the notion of ‘development’ altogether and try to apply other terms for defining guiding principles for a comprehensive transformation process in society and in politics. Both development practitioners as well as international prominent scholars on development, religion and ethics were asked to contribute, including the Nobel Peace Prize recipient Kailash Satyarthi, and the Receivers of the Alternative Nobel Prize (Right Livelihood Award) Vandana Shiva and Colin Gonsalves.

The texts included in this publication bring together theological, ethical, political and practical perspectives from various continental, political and confessional perspectives.

The key questions authors are reflecting include:

- What are emerging essentials and distinct features for a new paradigm of life and society?
- What are future-oriented and promising approaches and practical models for supporting the dignity and justice of people and nature?

While the numbers of voices which have been collected are by no means exhaustive in terms of the global spectrum of partners of Bread for the World the 27 essays collected are grouped in five major thematic areas:

1. Religion, Development and Ecumenical Diaconia
2. Ethics of Integral Development
3. Ethics of Ecological and Climate Justice
4. Ethics of Economy, Caring and Sharing
5. Ethics of Human Rights, Migration and Peace

Themes taken up include the question on why and how faith based organizations offer a unique potential and added value for “transformational development” and what kind of shortfalls and warnings need to be heard for collaboration of governments with FBOs (Rudelmar Bueno de Faria, Azza Karam). The significance of the new international debate on ecumenical Diaconia for getting churches involved in a comprehensive approach to social and prophetic witness, lobbying and advocacy work (Kjell Nordstokke, Cibele Kuss) is highlighted as well as surprising examples of civil society organizations and FBOs getting involved in widening the civic space and deepening social service delivery to those in need (Kenneth Mtata, Theresa Carino). Partners call for a complete redefinition of the development concept seen from indigenous people’s perspective, overcoming growth centered and anthropocentric approaches to economy and unfolding the relevance of a new paradigm of life and society in a harmonious and balanced relation to Mother Earth (*buen vivir*) as well as a serious reconsideration of gender and ecological ethics (Alberto Acosta; Sushant Agrawal/Joyce Thorat). How much these alternative approaches are related also to legal issues and challenges to the protection of basic human rights to food and protection of children against child labor and child abuse is vividly illustrated by Colin Gonsalves and Kailash Satyarthi. Contemporary challenges demand for a more radical involvement and openness for deliberate interfaith collaboration for a new interreligious ethics

which reflects a fundamental respect for life (Obiora Ike, Joyanta Adhikari). At the core of several articles there are drastic regional and national challenges concerning deteriorating environmental conditions for life in both African and Asian and Latin American contexts (Elena Cedillo, Geoff and Kate Davies, Gloriose Umuziranenge, Simon Awad, William Magesse, Vandana Shiva) which demands for nothing less than the “overcoming of the war against Mother Earth”, resistance against the patenting of seeds and elements of nature by big transnational corporations and the protection of the biodiversity of seeds which is the basis of sustainable livelihoods and food sovereignty of farmers and of food and nutritional security for society and the whole earth family (Vandana Shiva). The search for a new paradigm of an “economy of sharing and caring” is gaining momentum and also crucial scientific insights both in the Latin American debate as well as the international ecumenical study process on a new global financial architecture, an economy for life and a new approach to a culture and economy of conviviality (Candido Grzybowski, Athena Peralta, Isabel Phiri, Agnes Abuom, Janka Adameová). At the same time issues like the spread of modern forms of slavery, lack of protection for migrants and refugees, worsening features of human rights situations, the space for civil society organizations and the role of churches and church based organizations for conflict solution and peace need continuous attention (Gemma Cruz, Basil Fernando, Karen Nazaryan, Nicola Piper).

The panorama of voices from international partners shows that Bread for the World is part of a global network of determined search and dialogue processes on an alternative paradigm of economy, global relations and society which press for a social-ecological transformation process of human civilization in ways not always fully realized within western societies.

More attention need to given by national governments as well as international stakeholders to the urgent demands for an alternative concept of global growth and economy which had been highlighted by the United Nations General Secretary already 2013 in the UN study process on “Harmony with Nature”¹ when it was stated in his UN Report:

“Neoclassical economics has a tendency to assume that human well-being increases with the accumulation of more goods and services. On the other hand, ecological economics, while recognizing that our well-being depends to a large extent on economic development, stresses the negative impact of our unbalanced relation with nature. It attempts to protect the Earth by assigning market values to nature in an attempt to pursue

1 — See for the whole series of UN dialogues: www.harmonywithnatureun.org/dialogues/

harmony with nature. Ecological economics thus paves the way for the recognition that sustainability is a multifaceted goal that focuses on economic, social and environmental dimensions. It points to the need to ensure the resilience of ecological and socio-economic systems by conserving and investing into in natural, social and human assets...

It is universally recognized that in order to achieve a balance between the economic, social and environmental needs of present and future generations it is necessary to foster a universal respect for the Earth system and its species, as well as an acceptance of our responsibility to restore the health and integrity of the planet's ecosystems.”²

Bread for the World – together with its international partner organizations in many regions of this world is giving a vital contribution not only to provide vital services for people in need, but also to ask those conceptual and ethical questions which point to the structural, social and political factors hindering and blocking access to decent development, human dignity and ecological integrity in the current circumstances. It is interested to continue regional ecumenical partner dialogues and to learn from partners in non-western contexts as this belongs to the key principles of our understating of partnership (shared goals, transparency and integrity, mutuality) as it is unfolded in the new partnership policy paper of Bread for the World from 2018 (see Appendix II). It is from indigenous wisdom traditions from the Andean region that new concepts of the Rights of Mother Earth are inspired – therefore partners both from Latin America as well as from Africa and Asia have reminded us to do more work on comprehensive concepts of sustainability, including lobbying efforts for the suggested Universal Declaration of the Rights of Mother Earth to be considered at the UN level (recommended to us by Vandana Shiva from India, see Appendix III).

We express our deep gratitude to all authors who have contributed their precious time to write essays for this volume and also thank all colleagues in various departments of Bread for the World who have given valuable advice and recommendations to be asked for

2 – <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/1299301/>

their perspectives and have provided assistance. We finally hope that this booklet can both inspire further dialogue, work and commitment of and between partner organizations on key elements of new paradigms of life and society which will unfold the biblical vision that it becomes for every being on earth “that everyone would have life, and have it in its fullest.”(John 10,10)

Religion, Development and Ecumenical Diakonia

Chapter 1

The Significance of Religion and Development and the Critical Revision of the Development Concept

Rudelmar Bueno de Faria¹

The Significance of Religion

For many years, researchers, academics and policy makers have anticipated that modernization and globalization would lead to a secularized world, where religion would be less regarded in most of societies. Peter L. Berger, an influential Protestant theologian and sociologist, propagated the secularization theory, but fought the “God is dead” movement of the 1960s, arguing that faith can indeed flourish in modern society if people learn to recognize the transcendent and supernatural in ordinary experiences. Before his death in 2017, he concluded that to replace secularization theory – to explain religion in the modern world – we need the theory of pluralism: “Modernity does not necessarily produce secularity. It necessarily produces pluralism, the coexistence in the same society of different worldviews and value systems.”²

We see religion playing a stronger role nowadays. Despite impressive advances in business and technology, people continue to hold strongly to their faiths, viewing the world through the prism of religious ideology even as they live increasingly modern lives. According to estimations, globally, more than 80% of people identify themselves with a religious

¹ – Rudelmar Bueno de Faria is the General Secretary (CEO) of the ACT Alliance, an international coalition of 150 churches and faith-based organizations working together in humanitarian response, development work and advocacy action in over 125 countries. He served as the World Council of Churches (WCC) Representative to the United Nations in New York. Rudelmar has over 25 years of experience working with national and international faith-based organizations. His education embraces business administration, international relations and foreign trade. He has post-graduation studies in Diakonia and Community Development and several specialization courses related to international, humanitarian and human rights laws. Rudelmar is a member of the United Nations (UN) Faith Advisory Council and the UN Steering Committee on Prevention of Violence and Hate Speeches.

² – The Cresset, “A Conversation with Peter L. Berger – How My Views Have Changed” http://thecresset.org/2014/Lent/Thuswaldner_L14.html (accessed 10 August 2018).

group.³ Religions orient the lives and important decisions of many families and communities on a strong base of values. With their holistic world views, religions continue to challenge or support the development of economic and political sub-systems that dominate societies and undermine and fragment life in community. Religious communities and religious leaders have a track record in raising their voices in contexts of economic injustices, extreme poverty and widespread inequality, as well as to denounce the misuse of political power, racism, violence and religious hate speeches that could lead to atrocity crimes. At their worst, they have deliberately, or unintentionally, supported social and cultural norms and structures that undermine human dignity and human rights. Religion is, therefore, important not only at a personal and household level, but societies and politics are influenced by religious factors as well.

“Across the world, religious faith motivates people to mobilize around shared spiritual as well as political objectives, forming groups that sometimes are important social actors, whether within civil society or as political parties, directly engaging with state governance. Thus, by understanding the role of religion we can better understand political processes and societal developments.”⁴

In the last decade, the United Nations, multilateral organizations and governments have demonstrated increased interest in religion and faith-based organizations, whether to enforce shared values and objectives, to take on the task as humanitarian and development providers, or to counter terrorism and hate speeches. The international development cooperation is also framing their policies within this same logic.

Religion has a unique role and positive potential in shaping a world which is based on social justice and dignity. Religious leadership is fundamental to find collective solutions to make a positive difference in the lives of marginalized and poor people. Religious organizations and leadership can help to localize development objectives, to empower people for their direct and continuous participation in the places they live. They can do this on the base of social mobilization and two-way communication everywhere.

3 — Pew Research Center’s Forum on Religion & Public Life, Global Religious Landscape, December 2012. <http://assets.pewresearch.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/11/2014/01/global-religion-full.pdf> (accessed 8 October 2018).

4 — Nilsson, Eva Christina and Heidi Moksnes. “Faith in Civil Society Religious Actors as Drivers of Change.” Edited by Heidi Moksnes and Mia Melin, 3-7. Uppsala, Uppsala University 2013.

The significance of development

The traditional concept of development was always very much linked to industrial dynamics, and the political, social, cultural and economic processes generated around them. The World Economic Forum is fashioning now the Fourth Industrial Revolution, which is expected to be built on the digital revolution that has been occurring since the middle of the last century. It is characterized by a fusion of technologies that is blurring the lines between the physical, digital, and biological spheres⁵. The rapid development within technology, including the rise of social media, means that the world is connected as never before, bringing positive and negative results. The use of smart technologies for development and trade and smart tools to measure development impacts provides new and exciting opportunities for how development actors work. Artificial intelligence may bring benefits and risks for humanity. This is combined with an increased influence of the media and the roles, habits and attitudes of Millennials, i.e. those who are born in the years between 1980 and 2000.

Since the founding of the United Nations (UN) and its Breton Woods Institutions, the UN development agenda has focused primary on expanding economic growth and shared prosperity for all nations. After the horrors of the World War II, fueled by racist and nationalist extremism, the dominant approach has been to achieve peace and enduring prosperity through an integrated global economic system of free trade.

Gradually, policy makers have realized that a narrow focus on economic growth has destructive consequences for the environment as well as increased inequality, and that we should shift to a new form of development that considers its environmental and social consequences.

This is termed sustainable development. Launched broadly at the Rio Earth Summit in 1992, the continuing UN sustainable development dialogues have produced such talks about greening cities, energy supplies, agriculture, forestry, climate change, etc., as well as internalizing social and environmental costs in a new bottom line and transferring green technologies and providing financial assistance to developing countries to leapfrog to sustainable future⁶.

5 — World Economic Forum, “The Fourth Industrial Revolution: what it means, how to respond” www.weforum.org/agenda/2016/01/the-fourth-industrial-revolution-what-it-means-and-how-to-respond/ (accessed 10 August 2018).

6 — Dialogue and Alliance, a journal of the Universal Peace Federation, Vol. 29, No.1, Summer 2015. Issue Theme: Interreligious Dialogue and the Sustainable Development Goals, page 32.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, or Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), adopted by the UN General Assembly in September 2015 brings together 17 goals with 169 targets in an ambitious and comprehensive program to transform the world by 2030. As such, it presents both huge opportunities and challenges. These principles were endorsed by the UN to guide how it will support the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The principles acknowledge first and foremost that the 2030 Agenda is country-led and country-owned, with actions firmly determined by national needs and capacities. The principles align with and amplify a number of the defining characteristics of the 2030 Agenda, including its universal, integrated and global nature; its focus on people and their rights; its pledge to “leave no one behind” and to reach the furthest behind first; its attention to peace, justice and strong institutions; and its emphasis on collective ambition and partnership.

The role of religion in development

The nexus between religion and development has been part of the secular-religious debate, but often religion has been ignored and side-lined in international development theories and strategies. The dominance of modernization and secularization theories had a strong influence to this marginalization, despite some few initiatives to consider the role of religion in economic development, like the one started by the then president of the World Bank James Wolfensohn, in 1997, when he expressed astonishment that the Bank had few meaningful relationships with faith groups or communities, despite its recognition that they played an important role in the lives of the poor.⁷

The notion and norm of secularization has fostered a kind of religious illiteracy that is widespread today, and many have lost the language for talking about values, beliefs, and spiritual and religious issues.

For many people, religion exists as a separate dimension of life, often operating behind or in conjunction with drivers of development. Others argue that religious ideas are what motivate people to act and that adhering to a religious worldview results in specific outcomes. They

7 — Clarke, Gerard. “Religion and development: Challenges for donors and for faith groups”. In *Faith in Civil Society Religious Actors as Drivers of Change*. Edited by Heidi Moksnes and Mia Melin, 13-30. Uppsala, Uppsala University 2013.

particularly address the failure of technocratic visions of development to respond to the issues of everyday life.

Religious organizations and religious leaders are in the front line of communities all over the world, and people look to them for leadership in the most difficult times. A distinctive feature of the religious institutions is that they are represented at local levels in almost all parts of the world. The potential to be in contact with local situations and realities – which can be very different – has been used very well. In this way, much has been learned about the importance of cultures and religions in connection with development. However, the intersection between religion, development and culture (tradition) has also created some conflicting interpretation around development principles. Although cultural and religious practices can both support and inhibit development, development cannot be sustainable unless the positive cultural and spiritual practices of persons and communities are recognized, enhanced and incorporated into development processes.

Reflecting a growing awareness on the part of governments of the need to engage with religious actors, sometimes makes them wary of engagement with religion. Faith groups have often not developed a better appreciation of how they are perceived, and to governments to understand and recognize where they have distinctive and sometimes unique contributions to make to development processes. Local communities, religious organizations and government actors often do not share sufficiently common language and discourses on issues of mutual concern. Religious communities still must bridge this gap by enabling effective communication and better understanding of their position vis-à-vis sustainable development concerns and frameworks. Also, the priorities of religious communities do not necessarily coincide with those of governments, especially with respect to timescales. Religious communities often perceive their efforts as oriented towards long term changes and improvements, whereas governmental operational speeds are often dictated by short term bureaucratic or political cycles.

Religious organizations are often the “wrong size and shape” for linking with government on sustainable development policy issues. They need to develop a better understanding of policy organizations and processes to identify relevant and effective points of engagement. On the other hand, policy makers are seeking ways to understand the changing nature of politics and faith within local faith communities. Due to their shared beliefs and values, faith groups are trusted by these communities and can be effective interlocutors between the grass roots and policy-makers in a wide range of development and transitional contexts.

The historical avoidance of religion in development processes seems to be ending. The UN and many governments are increasingly recognizing the important contribution of religious leaders and organizations in political processes such as the 2030 agenda for

sustainable development. They have all come to understand that religion can play both a positive and negative role in areas of peace and security, sustainable development and human rights.

Ecumenical standing on development

Historically, faith-based organizations have been delivering development programs and projects around the world, and in some cases even driving development concepts at community and country level. Many governments recognized the impact and influence of culture on development strategy, but not the specific role of religion in this equation, despite the strong influence of religion within culture.

The first assembly of the World Council of Churches (WCC) in Amsterdam, 1948, raised issues of development – though not in the strict sense of the word – and its relationship with justice. The third WCC Assembly in New Delhi, 1961, observed that: “The reality of political independence is threatened by economic dependence either upon countries or upon international industries”. Therefore, the assembly called for a “more adequate strategy for world development.” The World Conference on Church and Society in Geneva, 1966, was pivotal to put the issue of world development on the agenda of the churches in a major way. The conference stressed that international economic cooperation is a moral imperative and that this issue should be addressed from a position of solidarity with the poor and the oppressed. During the second half of the 1960’s the debate changed. The very idea of development was challenged, and some chose instead to speak about liberation. This decade united public and humanitarian agencies, including the churches, in their engagement for a better world. It led to the formulation of theories on development, and to new awareness regarding objectives and working methods. This process of the professionalizing development work also had consequences for ecumenical agencies, and it brought many advantages. It raised the awareness of quality and competence when involved in development work, of considering the root causes of poverty and of addressing issues of justice and human rights. It caused a move away from benevolent charity models to more participatory and empowering practices, it addressed critical questions like the role of women in society and the situation of marginalized groups. It also fostered practices of responsible administration, of accountability when managing financial resources, and of honest and critical self-evaluation.

In 1974, the concept of sustainability was articulated at a WCC gathering of scientists, theologians and economists in Bucharest. This consultation was convened in response to the Club of Rome’s report, “The Limits to Growth” which sounded an alarm about how natural resource depletion, pollution, and population growth was placing an intolerable strain on the Earth’s resources. What emerged out of the Bucharest discussion on the role of science and technology in the development of human societies was the articulation of a concept called

“sustainability” – the idea that the world’s future requires a vision of development that can be sustained in the long run, both environmentally and economically. The awareness of the need to link socio-economic justice and ecological sustainability has been a recurring theme within the ecumenical community and has been a gift to the broader global community.

Today, the wider ecumenical movement (WCC and other global Christian organizations) and other faith are directly engaged in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, participating at national, regional and global policy development, implementation and monitoring, making governments accountable to the commitments they assume in 2015.

Critical revision of the development concept

The globalization brought the world together, a process that evidently had many positive effects; at the same time, it caused new divisions, mainly among those who are rich and those living in poverty. One of the serious effects of globalization is the way economic and political power now is being exercised, emptying the role of local, national and international authorities and undermining their democratic legitimacy. Instead, transnational structures that do not have to give account for how they are acting and expanding their power. In our globalized world, cultural boundaries disappear, and technical innovation bring people closer through the virtual world. However, these interactions have not prevented the surge of extreme poverty. More than a billion men, women and children continue to be imprisoned by poverty. In the past two decades, the world has achieved remarkable progress in reducing the number of people living in extreme poverty, but on the other hand the globe’s richest 1% own half the world’s wealth, according to a new report highlighting the growing gap between the super-rich and everyone else⁸.

For organizations involved in development work, including religious actors, this means a shift from traditional economic development to a struggle for justice and sustainability. The face of poverty has changed; what is new is that large areas of poverty exist within middle-income countries. In many cases, growing poverty is a result of political mismanagement, corruption, warfare and climate change, and not because of lack of development per se.

The task of ending extreme poverty and promoting sustainable development requires however a committed engagement by the international community and the will to deal with the underlying causes of poverty and injustices.

8 — Credit Suisse, “Global Wealth Report 2017”, Distribution of wealth across individuals and wealth inequality, page 9.

It also includes a change in habits that cause poverty: greed and waste, numbness to the pain of others, and exploitation of people and the natural world. These conditions require a different approach to ensure transformational development by fostering inclusion, sustainability and respect for diversity, which can be found, if intentionally promoted as such, in the sustainable development goals' framework.

Transformational Development

Religious organizations build on the basic assumption that faith has a positive meaning at both the individual and societal level not only as a motivational source, but also as an ethical and transformational asset. Religious actors and communities exert much influence that can work for deep and sustainable societal change. Recognizing the power and influence of religious belief and practice over people's lives, religious organizations uphold the importance of moral discernment to support life-affirming expressions of faith and religious conviction in changing contexts. For religious actors working in development, there are some basic key principles to be considered in work and in their partnerships:⁹

- Upholding Human Dignity and Human Rights
- Fostering Empowerment and Participation
- Upholding gender justice in our actions
- Defending democratic space and organization
- Promoting local leadership and grassroots organization
- Practicing Accountability to each other and the communities we serve
- Adherence to high humanitarian and development standards

ACT Alliance's¹⁰ understanding of transformational development draws from its theological affirmation that all persons are created in the image and likeness of God with the right and potential to live just, humane and dignified lives in sustainable communities. Profession of faith requires the rejection of those conditions, structures and systems which perpetuate poverty, injustice, the abuse of human rights and the destruction of the environment.

9 — General assumptions and standards for quality and accountability, extracted from the "Ecumenical Religion and Development Strategy" developed by the ACT Alliance and the World Council of Churches, Geneva, June 2018. These concepts are also included in the ACT Alliance Global Strategy 2019-2026 (to be published on November 2018).

10 — ACT Alliance (Action by Churches Together) is a coalition of 150 churches and church-related organizations working together in over 125 countries to create positive and sustainable change in the lives of poor and marginalized people regardless of their religion, politics, gender, sexual orientation, race or nationality in keeping with the highest international codes and standards. <http://actalliance.org> (accessed on 03 October 2018).

Transformational development is about acting so that all peoples' human rights are upheld. In an increasingly globalized world, lives are increasingly interlinked.

Transformational development therefore involves change for all those involved; those with power, wealth and influence who control and use more than their share of resources and those most adversely affected by oppressive structures and systems.

Adopting a transformational development approach commits religious organizations to mutual learning through joint analysis, action and reflection, recognizing that both historic and current day injustices (such as slavery, colonization, trade practices, discrimination, corrupt leadership and the destruction of the environment) impoverish people and deny them their human rights. In undertaking transformational development, it is possible to support the empowerment of communities most affected by oppressive structures to claim their rights, and to work for the transformation of values and structures that lead to over consumption and the lack of sharing of available resources.

Efforts to promote transformational development vary from the global to the local level and may range from campaigning at the global level on issues such as debt or trade to supporting communities at the local level in their efforts to obtain access to safe water, adequate food, health services and quality education. It also includes challenging those with resources, power and influence. The following concepts are central for understanding of transformational development:

- **Participation:** recognizes the right to self-determination for all of God's children in every aspect of transformational development. Transformational development promotes participation of those people who have been marginalized and whose rights have been violated in all aspects of their own development including the joint analysis of their situations, identification of their own needs and assets, contribution of creative solutions, planning and decision making on the development endeavors to be undertaken and the subsequent implementing, monitoring and evaluation of these endeavors.
- **Empowerment:** embodies the ideal of individuals and communities overcoming unjust power relations to achieve their human rights. Transformational development promotes styles of relationships, strengthening of community institutions and building of technical capacity which fosters empowerment.
- **Capacity Development:** Development which is imposed and/or remains dependent upon external support/and/or results in unequal dependency is not sustainable.

Transformational development enhances the capacity of those people and communities whose rights have been violated to overcome poverty and injustice and determine their own future by increasing their skills, knowledge and access to resources. New values and skills are also required by those with resources and power to transform the culture of over consumption and lack of sharing of available resources.

- **Non-discrimination** honors the God given dignity of each person and affirms international principles such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. While transformational development favors those affected by injustice and oppression, it does not discriminate on any basis including gender, ethnicity, culture, political affiliation, religion, age and sexual identity.
- **Gender Equality.** Transformational development requires a gender analysis of the roles and relationships of, and between, men and women within the family and broader community. All development has a gender impact and affects women and men differently. Transformational development requires the participation of both men and women in the decision making and implementation of development activities to ensure that the activities enhance the situation of women enable men to participate appropriately and promote gender justice relations in the whole community. This includes action to change unequal power relationships between women and men (including ensuring equality of women and men under the law) and that women have access to and control over their share of resources.
- **Cultural and Spiritual Sensitivity.** Development cannot be sustainable unless the cultural and spiritual dimensions and practices of persons and communities are recognized, respected, enhanced and incorporated into the development process. Transformational development recognizes this and promotes a holistic understanding of human beings. Cultural and religious practices which are harmful to individuals and undermine their human rights will be challenged. Religious actors will not use any development assistance for the purpose of proselytizing.
- **Reaffirming Human Rights.** Human dignity and well-being are enhanced through ensuring that governments fulfil their responsibility to reaffirm and make effective people's rights: political, social, economic, cultural and environmental. Civil society plays a key role in strengthening those rights and advocating for the accountability of governments towards human rights. Transformational development focuses on the interests and rights of the most marginalized and discriminated rights-holders being addressed; political and legal empowerment of rights-holders; legal enforcement and access to justice and remedies; and promoting organizational policies and procedures that are non-discriminatory and respectful of rights.

- **Advocacy** seeks to address the root causes and effects of poverty and injustice at the community, national and international levels. Transformational development promotes attitude change, mobilizes public opinion and strengthens strategic alliances to influence those in positions of power to change oppressive policies and structures in order to promote justice. To be effective, advocacy should start at the grassroots level by facilitating people's ability to advocate for themselves. Capacity building of those in positions of influence is also important.
- **Promoting Peace, Reconciliation and Right Relationships.** Transformational development promotes a culture of peace and right relationships at all levels, including the home, community, nation and internationally. At a local and global level, it requires an analysis of the underlying causes of conflict and violence and advocates the cessation of oppression, social deprivation and violent confrontation. Transformational development in communities which have experienced recent conflict incorporates effective prevention and reconciliation strategies pertinent to such contexts. It strengthens indigenous capacities and incentives for peace and reconciliation and empowers individuals and groups within societies affected by conflict to cope with past traumatic events.
- **Effective Communication.** Appropriate communication in transformational development begins by listening to, respecting and uplifting the voices of those who are marginalized and whose rights have been violated. Transformational development promotes communication methodologies which are open and inclusive of gender, race and culture, including honest and transparent communication to those with resources, influence and/or power.
- **Environmental Sustainability.** The earth and all it contains are God's gifts, and all persons are called to participate in the ongoing creation, preservation and sustaining of God's creation. Transformational development challenges policies and practices at the household, community, national and global level that threaten God's creation and demands that alliance members consider the impact that their actions have on the environment. Transformational development works to preserve, maintain and regenerate natural resources through drawing on the knowledge and practices of all people, especially indigenous peoples, and promotes the use of appropriate technologies.
- **Over-consumption and lack of sharing** of available resources by some members of God's family (in both the North and the South) prevents others from achieving their human rights. Transformational development will promote sensitization, changed attitudes and actions within communities with excess resources and the ability to effect change.

Conclusion

Transformational and sustainable development is about acting so that all peoples' human rights are upheld. Many religious organizations and leaders are working against poverty, exclusion and inequalities, and developing new forms of solidarity, promoting new international and financial architecture, fiscal justice, or social security. This work continues to be a major focus of religious organizations. Based on their identity they work to build on the opportunities for faith-based organizations in the global religion and development agenda and increase understanding and visibility of the role faith-based organizations play.

It is required to build robust programming in priority development areas, incorporating a strong dimension on countering inequalities and economic injustice, as well as to promote sharing of innovation and good practice among faith communities and organizations. This will place a strong emphasis on 'local agency' and putting people at the center of development, integrating a human rights-based approach in our work, ensuring that development programming encompasses integration of economic, social, political and ecological dimensions, and integrates influencing for change to norms and policy to overcome root causes of poverty and injustice.

Religious organizations should align their work on transformational and sustainable development to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the achievement of the SDGs.

At one level, and as cohesiveness and capacity is enhanced, this will require national religious organizations to engage substantively in the policy development, implementation and monitoring of national implementation plans, and as such will be contextually driven in relation to the overall policy framework and any particular goal. Joint implementation of pilot programs of like-minded religious organizations towards the implementation of SDGs (inter alia in partnership with UN agencies and other partners) is crucial, with the intention of broadening their scope as this strategy progresses.

In the spirit of the 2030 agenda, religious organizations should promote the underpinning principles of the SDG framework (by which the UN system is holding itself to account): to "leave no one behind" and to reach the furthest behind first, to focus on people and their rights, to ensure sustainability, to address peace, justice and strong institutions, and its universal, integrated and global nature.

To address root causes of injustice, vulnerability, and poverty religious organizations should implement coordinated advocacy for justice and dignity at local, national, regional and global levels. Advocacy is an essential complementary tool for the successful implementation of transformational and sustainable development, and emergency preparedness

and humanitarian response. Advocacy should be faith and human rights based, and as such is an important expression of religious prophetic voice, where we denounce injustice and announce the good news to all.

The motivation for advocacy should be both prophetic and political. Prophetic in the sense that we will advocate for the restoration, preservation and upholding of the dignity of all people, who are created and bear in the image of God. This also includes advocacy for the environment and the integrity of all creation. Advocacy should be political as we engage with political processes, structures and decisions makers, whose role and mandate have impact on the lives and livelihoods of people and communities.

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Chapter 2

How faith-based organizations contribute to paradigms of global cooperation and development

By Azza Karam¹

“In general terms, “development” refers to an event constituting a new stage in a changing situation, or the process of change per se. If not qualified, “development” is implicitly intended as something positive or desirable. When referring to a society or to a socio-economic system, “development” usually means improvement, either in the general situation of the system, or in some of its constituent elements. Development may occur due to some deliberate action carried out by single agents or by some authority preordered to achieve improvement, to favorable circumstances in both. Development policies and private investment, in all their forms, are examples of such actions.”²

Amartya Sen’s concept outlined in *Development As Freedom* remains one which is acclaimed and relevant. He argues that human development is about the expansion of citizens’ capabilities. For Sen, freedom means increasing citizens’ access and opportunities to the things they have reason to value. In 1999, i.e. almost two decades ago, Amartya Sen described the context of the world in terms which are eerily familiar to what we live through today. He noted:

“... we ... live in a world with remarkable deprivation, destitution and oppression. There are many new problems as well as old ones, including persistence of poverty and unfulfilled elementary needs, occurrence of famines and widespread hunger, violation of elementary political freedoms as well as of basic liberties, extensive neglect of the interests and agency of women and worsening threats to our environment and to the sustainability of our economic and social lives. Many of these deprivations can be observed, in one form or another, in rich countries as well as poor ones.

... We have to recognize ... the role of freedoms of different kinds in countering these afflictions. Indeed, individual agency is, ultimately, central to addressing these deprivations. On the other hand, the freedom of agency that we have individually is inescapably

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² — Lorenzo G. Bellù, “Development and Development Paradigms. A (Reasoned) Review of Prevailing Visions“, FAO Issue Papers, EasyPOL Module 102, 2011, www.fao.org/docs/up/easypol/882/defining_development_paradigms_102en.pdf

qualified and constrained by the social, political and economic opportunities that are available to us. There is a deep complementarity between individual agency and social arrangements. It is important to give simultaneous recognition to the centrality of individual freedom and to the force of social influences on the extent and reach of individual freedom. To counter the problems that we face, we have to see individual freedom as a social commitment.”³

Expansion of freedom is viewed, in this approach, both as the primary end and as the principal means of development. Development consists of the removal of various types of restrictions that leave people with little choice and little opportunity of exercising their reasoned agency.

The development paradigm

If a paradigm in Kuhn’s sense means a common framework, a shared worldview that helps to define problems, a set of tools and methods, and modes of resolving research problems, then development may be understood as a series of debates. The development paradigm therefore, is a multilayered knowledge concept, and an evolving process.⁴

The development paradigm rests on a cornerstone belief in the pursuit of human freedom and advancement, a classical theme that may be traced to more than two millennia ago, especially to Plato and Aristotle’s ethical claims about social engineering and the quest for the good life. Foundational to the enlightenment as well, such perspectives have come to embrace rationality. They actually resonate with the writings of Amartya Sen and others about how to reduce constraints and expand the scope of collectivities to be free to choose among alternatives. In its different iterations, the development paradigm continues to be a vision about emancipation from the blockage that limits choice and open policy space. The goal is to establish self-sustaining growth and build the capacity for realizing human potential.

But how can self-sustaining growth be realized given the contexts of multiple and simultaneous volatility in which we live today? Joseph Stiglitz argues that “the economic consequences of volatility go far beyond the loss of [Gross Domestic Product] GDP ... there are also further effects: the loss of well-being from increased insecurity; the deterioration of health; the loss of human capital; the adverse effect on well-being from the increase in crime that typically results – including increased expenditures on ‘defensive measures.’”⁵

3 — Amartya Sen, “Development as Freedom”, Excerpt, 1999, <https://archive.nytimes.com/www.nytimes.com/books/first/s/sen-development.html?mcubz=1>

4 — Thomas S. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. Chicago: Chicago University Press, (1970)

5 — Joseph Stiglitz, “Macroeconomic Fluctuations, Inequality, and Human Development”, in *Journal of Human Development and Capabilities: A Multi-Disciplinary Journal for People-Centered Development* 13(1), (2012): 31-58

Stiglitz stresses that issues of inequality and human development, on the one hand, and instability, recessions and recovery, on the other, are intertwined. But Stiglitz also emphasized that the effects of the policies adopted to respond to a recession may be long-lived, especially where this concerns human development. The policy implications of his analysis point to the fact that even if governments were not directly concerned with social justice and the distributive consequences of policy, to promote a more stable economy with a smaller likelihood of a downturn, they still need to be mindful of, and attentive to, inequality.

Glyn Williams notes that “participatory development today stands accused of three interrelated failings: of emphasizing personal reform over political struggle, of obscuring local power differences by uncritically celebrating ‘the community’, and of using a language of emancipation to incorporate marginalized populations of the Global South within an unreconstructed project of capitalist modernization... But this ‘de-politicization’ critique has its own blind spots: ... it is in danger of over-stating the control over development projects and programmes participation affords vis-à-vis other forms of management. *Participation may indeed be a form of ‘subjection’, but it can also provide its subjects with new opportunities for voice, and its consequences are far from pre-determined.*”⁶

It could be argued that over the last few decades, development praxis has gone from the colonial notion of ‘white man’s burden’, to slightly less empire-oriented but nevertheless resource and interest-based interventions, to – several decades later – a ‘trade-not aid’ attempt to level the still imbalanced playing field, where it is at least acknowledged that ‘sustainability’ and ‘power’ related specifically to financial capital were required to somehow face each other. I think it is possibly safe to say, that we are now on the particular pier on which terms like ‘participation’, ‘mutual interest’, ‘collaboration’, ‘partnership’, and even business-laden terms such as ‘value-added and ‘comparative advantage’, are all themed wooden slats on this particular walk-way to the ocean.

Glyn Williams’ quote above serves to remind us of some of the most noteworthy pitfalls encountered on this development journey, and to alert us to the fact that participation itself is a double-edged sword. But Williams (and other contributors to the journal issue referred to below) also discussed another point of direct relevance here which is the uncritical celebration of the community. Too often in United Nations (UN) and bilateral development discourse, we hear ‘community’ essentialized – i.e. almost always as an inviolable, overly homogenous and somehow clearly distinct set of constituency from ‘the rest of’ development actors. ‘Community-based approaches’, ‘community-based organizations’, ‘community leaders’ are terms which are oft-used and yet remain ill-defined, to the point of being, frankly, problematic.

6 — Glyn Williams, “Evaluating participatory development: tyranny, power and (re)politicization”, in *Third World Quarterly* 25(3), (2004): 557–578, cited here: 557–559

By bringing in the faith elements, in and of themselves heavy with complexities and contradictions, I believe we are providing a needed ‘reality-check’ for all things the notion ‘community’ stands for.

This is not because faith-based organizations (FBOs) for instance, will speak for communities and or be useful lexicon instead, rather, because in shining the spotlight on the faith elements, we may be better able to reflect the myriad nuances and interwoven elements of what some of these communities, in fact, may entail. Religious institutions, religious leaders (male and female), faith-affiliated and faith-inspired service delivery mechanisms, government-sponsored faith-based service partners, even government-affiliated faith-based advocates, international FBOs with local offices, are all part of the faith-based infrastructures, which are tightly interlinked within the so-called ‘communities’. At least by appreciating this kaleidoscope, we can better seek to focus the lenses we need on communities.

Global cooperation: inequality and the potential for paradigm transformation through the SDGs

Inequality has featured in the discussion and formulation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) since the very beginning and throughout the various iterations of the goals and targets.⁷ It is worthwhile noting some important distinctions when examining inequality, particularly whether or not the primary metric of examining inequality is income or some other measure. Another distinction is the issue of horizontal inequality, or inequality between culturally defined groups, to be contrasted with vertical inequality, or inequality between individuals. Much of the discussion of the former is centered on issues of conflict between groups, whereas the latter emerged as the much more common lens through which to view issues of inequality. Interestingly, a considerable part of the discussion of inequality in the SDGs actually concerns horizontal inequality, as there are many issues related to access and equal opportunity as well as a number of provisions against discrimination.

Also when discussing types of inequality, it is valuable to contrast between inequality of opportunity and inequality of outcomes. What the development goals underline is that the starting conditions matter. Overall, there are strong interconnections between inequality of opportunity and inequality of outcome, but establishing equality of opportunity may be rather difficult if initial conditions are not taken into account.

7 — See UN/DESA, “Inequality and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”, Development Issues No. 4, 21 October 2015, www.un.org/en/development/desa/policy/wess/wess_dev_issues/dsp_policy_04.pdf

Moreover, when discussing inequality within the context of the SDGs, it is important to bear in mind an oft-used term: ‘inclusive’, which appears in a number of areas. Broadly speaking, if something is inclusive, it implies a degree of coverage of all individuals. Therefore, the discussion of inclusive growth implies that the growth applies, more or less, to everyone. At the very least, inclusive is taken to imply a certain stance on growth that does not contribute to rising inequalities.

Another term that appears throughout the SDG Agenda and features prominently in a number of goals and targets is ‘access’. The idea of access to resources, services or opportunities has been recognized for quite some time as an important part of discussions around inequality, both as a driver when access is lacking, or as an ameliorating force when access is granted. Improved access by the poor to public assets and services (especially in the education and health sectors) and income transfer programmes to sustain the poorest families are considered essential to changing the structure of opportunities, and are key to reducing the generational transmissions of poverty and inequality.

Addressing inequality and ameliorating access are not just a function of secular agendas and institutions, however. Indeed, these are areas for which and in which religion and religious institutions have long played a critical role. It can be argued that the very basis of all religious narratives is to address inequalities of power and access to basic resources.

Faith-based organisations and the ‘renewal’ of development paradigms

Geopolitical alliances, governance regimes and direction of international development aid are all shifting. The very air we breathe and the environment around us, including plants and animals, are facing drastic changes in basic survival patterns. One of the many changes becoming increasingly difficult to ignore, especially for longstanding secular organizations, is the extent to which religion is surfacing as a critical broker of human and governmental existence.

FBOs vary per religion, size, location, areas of interest, positions on diverse development-related issues and priorities, geopolitical positions, regional and national and local base of activities as well as interests – to name but a few.

A study – albeit contested – published by the World Health Organization in the early part of the Millennium, alerted development practitioners to one of many subsequent reality checks for many of those working in the health and development fields in particular. According to these studies, FBOs provide an average of 30 to 40 percent of basic health care in the world. This figure is expected to be much higher in contexts where conflicts and/or humanitarian emergencies are active (e.g. Sierra Leone, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Syria) where organizations such as IMA World Health indeed inform us that almost 75 percent of the basic health care can end up being provided by FBOs.

An embarrassment of riches?

We know that religious communities are capable of unparalleled social mobilization and behavioral impact, not to mention moral standing. Religious institutions also have convening capacities inherent in raising and utilizing legions of human resources in the form of volunteers – which no other institution can boast the likes of anywhere in the world. Moreover, they are also owners of the longest standing and most enduring mechanisms of raising financial resources. In times where traditional ‘secular’ development is confronting its strongest set of resource challenges, these capabilities cannot be underestimated.

World Vision International’s overall revenue was above USD 2 billion in 2012 and World Vision U.S. revenue alone was just over USD 1 billion. In the same year, the total group source of Islamic Relief was over GBP 40 million – this is not counting the charity funds which are nearly equal in amount – while Lutheran World Relief’s total support and revenue was around USD 38 million. None of these organizations parallel the Catholic Church’s diverse assets. In 2012, *The Economist* conducted an investigation that estimated that the U.S. Catholic Church spends USD 170 billion annually. Of that total, about USD 150 billion was Catholic hospitals and universities – which operate independent of religious authority – and about USD 11 billion for parishes, plus a smaller amount for Catholic charities.⁸

At the same time, from a significantly more impoverished perspective, in the words of one Nigerian Catholic nun who oversees some orphanages and women’s empowerment initiatives in rural Nigeria, “USD 100 can go a very long way to provide basic needs.” The point is, FBOs vary, and the biggest among them can stand very tall indeed next to its secular developmental counterpart. The smallest of them, which may never feature in a mapping exercise conducted at capitals or in a Western-based non-governmental organization (NGO), can very literally be involved in care for thousands of the world’s poorest.

⁸ — See *The Economist*, “The Catholic church in America. The working”, 16 August 2012, www.economist.com/newsbook/2012/08/16/the-working and SLATE, “How Rich is the Catholic Church?”, 14 March 2013, www.slate.com/articles/business/moneybox/2013/03/catholic_church_and_pope_francis_religious_institutions_are_exempted_from.html

A shared narrative

The realities of service provision, resource capacity and political presence alluded to above, not to mention the potential of faith leaders and organizations to mitigate or aggravate a variety of conflict intra and inter-communities, underlines the existential relevance of the work of religions to development.

It is interesting to now note the relevance, indeed significant overlap, between the narrative of the SDGs and some of the most prominent religious narratives of our time.

According to a 2015 Pew Research Center demographic analysis, Christians continue to be the largest religious group in the world making up nearly a third (31 percent) of earth's 7.3 billion people.⁹ Within that, the largest denomination is the Catholic Church, with roughly 1.2 billion adherents.¹⁰ The Catholic Church is the most organized institution relative to other faiths and as such, Catholic organizations related to the Church are relatively easier to identify, and are among the most numerous and active in development and humanitarian fields around the world. Given these realities, we are prompted to review the Catholic narratives which are of direct relevance to development work, which brings us to the *Laudato Si*.

Pope Francis' Encyclical *Laudato Si* has been described as a worldwide wake-up call to help humanity understand the destruction that man is rendering to the environment and fellow human beings. While addressing the environment directly, it is argued that the document's scope is broader since it looks at not only the human effect on the environment, but also the many philosophical, theological and cultural causes that threaten the relationships of humans to nature and human beings to each other, in various circumstances.

Articulating the value of 'partnership' (one of the five 'Ps'¹¹ underlining the SDGs and the substance of a whole goal number 17), the SDGs note a determination to revitalize global partnerships, based on a spirit of strengthened global solidarity, stressing the needs of the poorest and most vulnerable, and underlining the importance of including people, as well as highlighting the crucial interlinkages and integrated nature between all facets of human life and existence, as critical to the realization of the ambitions across the full extent of the SDG Agenda. Only unless and until this inclusivity and integration is realized, then the lives of all will be profoundly improved and our world will be transformed for the better.

9 — Pew Research Center, "The Changing Global Religious Landscape", 5 April 2017: 8, www.pewforum.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/7/2017/04/FULL-REPORT-WITH-APPENDIXES-A-AND-B-APRIL-3.pdf

10 — BBC, "How many Roman Catholics are there in the World?", 14 March 2013, www.bbc.com/news/world-21443313

11 — The other 4 Ps are people, planet, prosperity, and peaceful and inclusive societies.

Almost eerily similar is the language and intent in chapter 6 of the *Laudato Si*, paragraph 202, which stresses that “many things have to change course, but it is we human beings above all who need to change. We lack an awareness of our common origin, of our mutual belonging, and of a future to be shared with everyone. *This basic awareness would enable the development of new convictions, attitudes and forms of life. A great cultural, spiritual and educational challenge stands before us, and it will demand that we set out on the long path of renewal.*”¹²

Clearly, therefore, if we are to benefit from the social capital available for sustainable human development, human rights, and peace and security, then faith-based actors and engagement therewith continues to be a must.

An important signpost ‘warning’ on the road to transforming development paradigms

Now let us circle back to Sen’s description of Development as Freedom. Sen argued that “It is important to give simultaneous recognition to the centrality of individual freedom and to the force of social influences on the extent and reach of individual freedom. To counter the problems that we face, we have to see individual freedom as a social commitment.”¹³

We have argued that religious actors are not all alike, that their very organizational ethos provide a long standing ability, and not insignificant resources, to address issues of access and inclusion, which are integral to both the evolution and sustainability of development paradigms, particularly as enshrined in the SDGs. But what is about a favorable environment and attitude towards faith-based actors in secular international development fora?

A decade ago, it was difficult to get Western policy makers in governments to be interested in the role of religious organizations in human development. The secular mindset was such that religion was perceived, at best, as a private affair. At worst, religion was deemed the cause of harmful social practices, an obstacle to the ‘sacred’ nature of universal human rights, and/or the root cause of terrorism. In short, religion belonged in the ‘basket of deplorables’.

Yet, starting in the mid-1990s with then President of the World Bank James Wolfenson and celebrated in 2000 under then UN Secretary General Kofi Anan when the Millenium Development Goals (MDGs) were agreed to, a number of religiously-inspired initiatives coalesced, all trying to move religion to international development’s ‘basket of desirables’.

The number of initiatives within the secular multilaterals – like the UN – which focused on ‘religion and development’ began to slowly attract the attention (and the money) of some Western donor governments such as Switzerland and Norway, both of whom were keen on mobilizing religious support for women’s rights in particular. Some governments

12 — Crux, “Laudato Si’ – Chapter Six: Ecological Education and Spirituality”, 18 June 2015, <https://cruxnow.com/church/2015/06/18/laudato-si-chapter-six-ecological-education-and-spirituality/>

13 — Amartya Sen (1999)

(such as the USA and the United Kingdom) dabbled in engaging with religious NGOs both at home in their own countries and supporting some of them in their development and humanitarian work abroad. Nevertheless, from a multilateral perspective, the larger tapestry of Western donor support to efforts around religion tended to be marginal – dipping toes in the water rather than taking a plunge.

Beginning with the increasing presence of al-Qaeda on the world stage in 2001, the subsequent wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, the world is witnessing the gruesome hydras of religious extremism, at once fueling, and being fueled by, the phenomena of ultra-nationalism, racism, xenophobia and misogyny. Some Western governments spoke openly of engaging religious actors in counter-terrorism, but this narrative was fraught with political tensions. With the administration of US President Barack Obama and together with European Union allies, the narrative turned to Countering Violent Extremism (CVE), or Preventing Violent Extremism (PVE), as the UN endeavored to implore. The new acronyms, however, appeared a thinly veiled guise for the same old counter-terrorism.

When migrants appeared to ‘flood’ some European shores (albeit in numbers which are only a fraction of those ending up in developing countries), there has been a noticeable surge of keen interest by several Western governments in this ‘religion thing’. As the administration of US President Donald Trump completes its 1.5 years in power, the discussions (and Western government resources) for religion are increasingly turning to ‘religious liberty’ issues or freedom of religion and belief (FORB).¹⁴

For the UN developmental entities who had invested significantly to generate the interest of their largest Western donors in the relevance of religions to development, spurred by the learning from the MDGs and with a view to realizing Agenda 2030¹⁵, there is a noticeable *volte face* which is taking place right under their noses. Almost overnight, UN-steered initiatives to engage with religious actors and enhance partnerships around health, education, environment, women’s rights, humanitarian work, all of which had been painstakingly prepared and backed by years of research, consultations, networking and shared practice (as the work of the UN Interagency Task Force on Religion and Development testifies) became the object of desire by some governments. Rather than seeking to support the UN in continuing to engage with this work and the critical partnerships developed and labored over for years, however, the objective of these governments is to seek to directly manage the convening, networking and funding roles of faith-based entities, ostensibly with the same objectives of achieving the SDGs.

14 — See the remarks by Vice President Pence at the Ministerial event hosted by the US Government, www.whitehouse.gov/briefings-statements/remarks-vice-president-pence-ministerial-advance-religious-freedom/

15 — See UNFPA, “Religion and Development Post 2015”, 12-13 May 2014, www.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/DONOR-UN-FBO%20May%202014.pdf

But there is a crucial difference between the UN convening and working with FBOs and religious leaders on the SDGs, and one or a handful of governments selecting which specific aspect they are comfortable supporting FBOs in realizing.

What is required in order to transform paradigms is a social, political, financial and cultural responsibility in order to tackle interrelated inequalities which are acting as constraints. To expand the scope of individuals and communities to be free to choose among alternatives, no one government can deliver to all the religions of the world. And if the select governments choose with whom to work (and with whom not to), they will, per definition, run the risk of prioritizing one religious community over another. This will be an additional risk to the already problematic approach of working separately with secular NGOs on the one hand, and religious NGOs on the other – thus effectively silo-ing the civil societies they are endorsing. The latter is happening at a time when civil society space is already shrinking worldwide.¹⁶

To transform the development paradigm – to give simultaneous recognition to the centrality of individual freedom and to the force of social influences on the extent and reach of individual freedom – a multilateral approach with diverse civil society members – as opposed to one government in the Western hemisphere supporting one religious organization in another country – would be more conducive.

At the same time, the agenda of multilateral entities has to remain distinct from the national self-interest of any one government – or a handful thereof – no matter how powerful this government (or these governments) may be. This applies to all issues, constituencies and types of partnerships outlined in SDG 17. But the argument here is even more powerful: that where religions are concerned, the need for unbiased and non-partisan engagement with religious actors, distinct from any one nation's self-interest, is crucial.

16 – European Parliament, “Shrinking Space for Civil Society: The EU Response”, 2017, [www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2017/578039/EXPO_STU\(2017\)578039_EN.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2017/578039/EXPO_STU(2017)578039_EN.pdf)

If there is suspicion about the role of a non-Western government in supporting religious actors in countries outside of its own, then why do we not also suspect Western governments of involving themselves in supporting religious efforts in countries other than their own?

This question becomes especially pertinent when we begin to look at the religious composition of the Western governments now keen on ‘supporting religion and development’ abroad – they are mostly Christian. And if we look at the governments viewed with much suspicion who have long been supporting religious engagement overseas (also for development and humanitarian purposes, one might add), they tend to be Muslim. A coincidence perhaps?

To avoid these kinds of questions, it would behoove all concerned parties interested in achieving the significant targets of the new paradigms enshrined in the SDGs, and with a view to endorsing the United Nations’ mandate of safeguarding peace and security and protecting human rights, to support the efforts of the UN system in engaging the *whole* of civil society.

Rather than efforts driven by some governments, to work with select religious actors, in some countries, the challenge (which is fully achievable) is to strengthen the multi-faith and broad-based civic coalitions of legally registered, bona fide NGOs, working with and known to their governments and to the UN entities, at national, regional and global levels, to deliver for the world.

That is a critical element of the new paradigm. Otherwise, the danger is that such efforts will be misconstrued as the new colonial enterprise in international development, playing into rising religious tensions globally.

History is replete with examples where mobilizing religious actors in other countries, no matter how well-intentioned, can create some rather unholy alliances. The ability of faith-based entities to contribute to development paradigms, and indeed to revitalize and catalyze these, is not in doubt. The important nuance here is *how* these paradigmatic changes can take place in a way that upholds, strengthens and revitalizes our shared planet with all its people, so that no one is left behind.

Chapter 3

The significance of the new discourse on Ecumenical Diakonia for the future of development cooperation

By Kjell Nordstokke¹

Introduction

In June 2017, the World Council of Churches (WCC) Executive Committee received a study document on Ecumenical Diakonia (henceforth ED-document)² and recommended its member churches and ecumenical partners to study it in relation to their diaconal engagement. While diakonia has been on the agenda of the WCC since its very foundation in 1948, this document marks a new step in articulating diakonia as faith- and rights-based action. In addition, it aims at responding to the new landscape of poverty and injustice in today's world, as well as to the new agenda for development cooperation, as articulated by the UN Agenda 2030 and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDG).

This article presents ED-document and some aspects of its way of addressing the relationship between diakonia and development work. It parts from understanding Ecumenical Diakonia as the joint effort of churches and diaconal organizations (often called related agencies or specialized ministries) across confessional and geographical boundaries working for a better world for all to live in, in particular those facing poverty, marginalization and other systemic mechanisms of social exclusion.

The ED-document is based on the view that diakonia belongs to the nature of being church, and thus constitutes an integral dimension of its mission to the world.

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² — See: www.lutheranworld.org/sites/default/files/2018/documents/ecumenical-diakonia-document-en.pdf

Connected to this theological platform, it also maintains the view that the church always has been engaged in diakonia across borders, from the time of the New Testament when churches in Greece and Asia Minor joined the campaign organized by St. Paul of assisting the poor congregation in Jerusalem.

In the last part of the 1950s, churches and diaconal agencies, mainly in the global North, got involved in development work. They shared the optimistic political vision of that time and its conviction that the former colonies in Africa and Asia that now had gained independence would soon develop their economy and social order and become well-functioning democracies following the welfare model of Western nations. It took less than a decade to unmask this dream, acknowledging the many root causes of poverty and injustice. Since then different theories of development have emerged, challenging churches and their diaconal agents to rethink their distinct role and contribution as development agents.

It is important to remember that churches and mission organizations already had since long had been engaged in nation building in the new independent global South, mainly by established schools and health services. From the 1960s churches and governments engaged more targeted within the field of development, which opened for channeling public money into projects and programs operated by church-based diaconal agencies. It followed that the agencies had to adjust their work to the requirement of the donors, which meant adopting the public standards of professional performance as well as downgrading references to their own religious traditions. Critics, in particular voicing the view of churches in the global South, claimed that the alliance with public donors would lead to a secularization of the agencies; they also questioned the practice of establishing partnerships with secular organizations rather with churches.

As the title of this article indicates, a lot has happened since these first decades of development cooperation. It has become clear that it no longer makes sense to divide the world into developed and developing countries. We live in a globalized world. In every corner of the world, we are challenged by the alarming consequences of growing inequalities, new mechanisms of social exclusion, increasing political hate language and terrorism, new waves of forced migration, and not at least, ecological imbalances and climate change. Many of these concerns find expression in the UN Agenda 2030 and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) that calls all nations and all agents of civil society, including faith communities, to engage in action for a better future for the world. In many ways, this agenda replaces the old paradigm of development.

The background of the Ecumenical Diakonia document

Another important issue that has prepared the ground for a new discourse on Ecumenical Diakonia, has been the emerging recognition of the role of religion in development. 85% of the world's populations are affiliated to a religious body. Many of them, in particular those living in the global South, will have their value system anchored in their faith and religious practice; they will listen to their religious leaders when it comes to behavior and social

change. Faith matters, as the struggle against apartheid clearly proved, and as is also seen in campaigns against HIV and Ebola. The UN system has acknowledged this fact and adopted strategies of involving faith leaders and faith based organizations (FBOs) in their work.

It took some time before the agents of Ecumenical Diakonia recognized this new context as an opportunity to affirm their distinct role and assets as faith-based actors within civil society. Some have resisted the use of the term FBO, partly arguing that conservative actors in the US have modelled it in a way that does not fit in Europe; others claim that it as concept is too wide to be helpful in a professional discourse. However, soon public donors in Europe also would start to ask diaconal agencies about their 'added values' and their 'comparative advantages', indicating that issues of identity and distinctive role had become part of the agenda also in this part of the world.

ACT Alliance, established in 2010 as a coalition of churches and church-based agencies engaged in humanitarian aid and development work, was also confronted with these challenges. Its founding document states that its vision is to "work together for positive and sustainable change in the lives of people affected by poverty and injustice through coordinated and effective humanitarian, development and advocacy work".³ There is no doubt that this vision links to the mandate which ACT has received from a worldwide alliance of churches and from the ecumenical movement; this is affirmed in the way ACT presents itself and its work. However, less is said regarding the distinctiveness of its work, beyond the ambition to operate "in keeping with the highest international codes and standards".⁴ This may have contributed to questions raised by church leaders in the global South criticizing ACT for behaving as any secular development actor and for bypassing local churches when implementing its work.

The 2013 WCC General Assembly in Busan, South Korea, addressed this issue. A workshop working under the theme *Compelled to Serve: Diakonia and development in a rapidly changing world* called for a deeper analysis of diakonia and development, and invited churches and ecumenical partners to reflect theologically on the implications of the changing development paradigm and to develop "a common diaconal language. We are faith-based and rights-based and we need to identify what it means in practice, which includes defining our mandate and our core values and by mapping our diaconal assets".⁵

A year later, in September 2014, the WCC and ACT Alliance jointly organized a consultation in Malawi, inviting churches and related agencies to discuss how to overcome the tensions experienced in the performance of Ecumenical Diakonia. The consultation recognized the need to "be clear about our common calling, identities, mandates and the distinct role of each", and asked the WCC and ACT Alliance jointly to develop "a document that

3 — ACT Alliance, "Founding Document", 2009, <http://actalliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/ACT-Founding-document-ENG.pdf>

4 — ACT Alliance, "About", <http://actalliance.org/about/>

5 — Isabel Apawo Phiri and Kim Dongsung, "Called to Be a Diaconal Community through a Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace", in *The Ecumenical Review* 66(3), (2014): 252-264; cited here: 261

clarifies our joint understanding of Ecumenical Diakonia. This document should outline the theological components and be practical in terms of content”.⁶

The WCC Executive Committee at its meeting in June 2016 approved an outline of the document and affirmed its purpose “to develop an understanding of Ecumenical Diakonia that:

- Takes into account the longstanding experiences of diaconal practice and reflection within the ecumenical movement, in particular by the WCC and the LWF;
- Considers the specific contribution of professional diaconal agencies in their role as members of the ACT Alliance;
- Responds to relevant social and political issues in today’s world that challenge churches and related agencies in their diaconal action;
- Provides theological insight that underscores the Trinitarian and ecclesiological founding of diakonia and that can orient churches and related agencies in their diaconal practices;
- Proposes concrete steps to be taken in order to strengthen the diaconal capacity of the churches in cooperation with their ecumenical partners.”

Together with a Reference Group, I was given the task of producing the document, and by April 2017, a draft was ready. In June, the WCC Executive Committee received it and asked member churches and ecumenical partners “to work with the document, make it their own and share their feedback with the WCC”, with the intention to have a final version of it adopted by the WCC Central Committee when meeting in Geneva in June 2018.⁷

Diakonia as theological concept

One of the prime purposes of the ED-document is, as referred to above, to clarify the theological basis of the term “Ecumenical Diakonia”, underscoring its Trinitarian and ecclesial founding. This task relates to the fact that not all churches within the ecumenical movement are familiar with the term “diakonia” or even ready to include it in their theological vernacular.

Some claim that the concept belongs to the tradition of a few Protestant churches, mainly Lutheran and Reformed, with an understanding largely shaped by the German context in nineteenth century. Churches, such as the Catholic, Orthodox and Anglican, have deacons as part of their ministry, but they do not link this title to a distinct area of

6 — World Council of Churches, “Report of the International Consultation on the Relationship between Churches and Specialized Ministries. 4-10 September, 2014. Nkopola Lodge, Mangochi, Malawi”

7 — See report on Central Committee Session June 2018: www.oikoumene.org/en/press-centre/news/wcc-explores-ecumenical-diakonia-as-way-towards-renewed-unity.

ministry. Within this tradition, the deacon is the first step in the hierarchical order, with tasks as much of liturgical as of caritative nature.⁸

Admittedly, “diakonia” as biblical concept is not as clear as often maintained; its history of interpretation is somewhat confusing. The modern diaconal movement, emerging in Germany in the 1830s, interpreted “diakonia” as caritative service, or helping people in need. H.W. Beyer played a key role in giving this view academic sanction when defining “diakonia” as “active Christian love for the neighbor” in Kittel’s standard Dictionary of the New Testament.⁹ Within this tradition, deacons and deaconesses would be persons trained and designated for diaconal work, often linked to health and social services.

Recent research has verified that in ancient Greek the word “diakonia” has a variety of meanings; however, none of these relates to caring services for sick and poor. Rather “diakonia” means a task or assignment, often as a messenger or as a go-between person.¹⁰ The relation to the master is what matters; he authorizes the messenger and defines the nature of the service to be performed. Thus, the Apostle Paul refers to the diakonia that Christ has given him (Acts 20:24; 2 Corinthians 4:1) and presents himself as a deacon (*diakonos*) for the church (Colossians 1:25). Later, when the office of deacon appears as parallel to that of the bishop, there are no indications that the deacon has a distinct caritative mandate (1 Timothy 3:8-13).

When the Greek New Testament was translated into Latin, “diakonia” became “ministerium”, as in English “ministry”. It can therefore be considered a misinterpretation when the pioneers of the diaconal movement read this term as a mandate to care for people in need. ‘Diakonia’ as term does not in itself have a caritative connotation. However, as we have stated above, what matters is the relation to the one who commissions for service. This opens for a theological reading of diakonia that refers to Jesus, to his ministry and the vocation to be his followers. The ministry of Jesus is one of healing, empowering, reconciling and transformation; he came “not to be served but to serve” (Mark 10:45). It makes therefore sense to claim that the church is mandated to be diaconal in the sense that it called to follow the example of the Lord, as stated in the saying of Jesus: “Whoever serves me must follow me, and where I am, there will my servant be also” (John 12:26).

8 — The Vatican II opened for establishing ‘a permanent diaconate’ in the Catholic Church; however, without clarifying the distinct nature of this ministry. In addition, Anglicans have taken up the idea of introducing ‘distinct deacons’.

9 — Hermann Wolfgang Beyer, “diakoneo, diakonia, diakonos“, in *Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Neuem Testament*, II, Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, (1935): 81-93

10 — John N. Collins, *Diakonia. Re-Interpreting the Ancient Sources*. New York: Oxford University Press, (1990)

The WCC has since its foundation in 1948 promoted an understanding of “diakonia” meaning “responsible service of the gospel by deeds and by words performed by Christians in response to the needs of people”.¹¹

Largely, this definition affirms the caritative reading as developed by the modern diaconal movement. In the 1950's, the term became more or less synonymous with 'inter-church aid' that became a significant branch of the work of the WCC and the LWF (Lutheran World Federation). Both organizations were strongly engaged in coordinating efforts of their member churches to assist victims of war, in particular refugees, first in Europe after the World War II, and later in Palestine, Hong Kong and other regions of conflict. National agencies, such as Norwegian Church Aid, Christian Aid (UK) and Bread for the World (Germany), coordinated the support of this work, some of them with the understanding of being specialized ministries within the area of Ecumenical Diakonia.

On occasions, the WCC has promoted theological reflection on diakonia, opening for a broader and more nuanced interpretation. A significant step was the Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry Study (BEM document, 1982) that invited member churches to reflect on the diaconal ministry as a 'ministry of love' that interconnects worship and service.¹² The Vancouver Assembly (1983) affirmed the ecclesial dimension of diakonia, overcoming the view that it mainly was an activity, performed by persons or institutions specially committed to diaconal activities:

Diakonia as the church's ministry of sharing, healing and reconciliation is of the very nature of the Church. It demands of individuals and churches a giving, which comes not out of what they have, but what they are. Diakonia constantly has to challenge the frozen, static, self-centered structures of the Church and transform them into living instruments of the sharing, healing ministry of the Church. Diakonia cannot be confined within the institutional framework. It should transcend the established structures and boundaries of the institutional church and become the sharing and healing action of the Holy Spirit through the community of God's people in and for the world.¹³

A WCC consultation organized in Geneva (1982) under the theme *Contemporary understandings of diakonia* had paved the way for this new understanding. It drew on impulses from the Orthodox tradition that presented diakonia as a “liturgy after the Liturgy”, as “an integral part of a living Christian community's concern and pastoral care for

¹¹ — *Dictionary of the Ecumenical Movement*. Geneva: WCC Publications, (2002): 305

¹² — World Council of Churches, *Faith and Order Commission. Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry*. Faith and Order Paper No. 111, Geneva: World Council of Churches, (1982): 36

¹³ — David Gill (ed.), *Gathered for Life. Official Report VI Assembly World Council of Churches, Vancouver, Canada 24 July – 10 August 1983*. Geneva: World Council of Churches, (1983): 35

all those within the community and for all those who come within range of its knowledge and loving care”.¹⁴

In affirming the ecclesial dimension of diakonia, the role of the local congregation is underscored. Here diakonia can be experienced as mutual caring and healing, and not as a subject-object relationship where some have the role as professional helpers, while other are recipients of assistance. This perspective opened for connecting diakonia to “sharing” that had become a key theme in the WCC in the 1980s, and in particular in the quest for ecumenical sharing of resources.

Parallel to developing the ecclesial dimension and its affirmation of diakonia being an integral part of the Church’s mission in the world, there was a growing awareness of the prophetic dimension of diakonia. Questions related to justice and to the root causes of poverty convinced diaconal agents to move beyond charity work and conceiving diakonia as humble service. Diaconal action would have to be rights based; it should promote human dignity and work for justice, peace and the integrity of creation.

The mentioned Geneva consultation (1982) criticized diaconal services that were “ancillary to domestic capitalism and colonialism” and did not “contest the main social evils of these dominant socio-economic systems”. It called for a diakonia that is liberating and asked churches to re-think their priorities, and “to engage in and support programmes for realizing justice”.¹⁵

The WCC document on ecumenical diakonia seeks to harvest from this learning process. It affirms the ecclesiological, holistic and prophetic dimensions of diakonia, presenting it as bold faith- and rights based action.

It further links to present processes within in the ecumenical movement, in particular to the convocation made at the 2013 Busan Assembly to join in a *Pilgrimage of justice and peace*. The “transformative journey that God invites us to”, reminds the churches of their vocation to “participate in God’s own mission for the world following the example of Jesus, which means, meeting him wherever people suffer injustice, violence and war”.¹⁶ In other words, the invitation to the pilgrimage of justice and peace is a reminder of the diaconal mandate given to the churches and to the ecumenical movement. Ecumenical Diakonia represents one relevant way of responding to this calling; at the same time, it inspires Ecumenical Diakonia to renew its commitment to justice and peace in partnership with churches and people of good will.

14 — *An Orthodox Approach to Diaconia. Consultation on Church and Service*. Orthodox Academy of Crete, November 20-25, 1978. Geneva: World Council of Churches, (1980)

15 — World Council of Churches, “Contemporary understandings of diakonia. Report of a consultation. Geneva, Switzerland 22-26 November 1982”

16 — “An Invitation to the Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace”, in *The Ecumenical Review* 66(3), (2014): 383-390

The Agenda 2030 and Ecumenical Diakonia

The socio-political environment for Ecumenical Diakonia has changed significantly over the last decades. On the one hand, large numbers of people in the global South have been able to improve their lives, having access to clean water, education, health services etc. Without doubt, Ecumenical Diakonia has contributed to this process, especially when it has taken the form of solidary and accompanied people in their struggle for a better future.

On the other hand, there are trends that cause concern. One is the increasing inequality in the world with an alarming concentration of power, both political and economic. New waves of nationalistic ideologies bring with them hate language that cause fear among minority groups; in some countries the civil society is under pressure with shrinking space for critical voices. New forms of poverty are emerging, often as result of local conflicts, dismantling of public welfare service, or in some cases, even collapse of governmental institutions.

These developments evidence that Ecumenical Diakonia must respond to “the signs of the times”. It requires a solid analysis of the social-political reality with an understanding of the root causes that drive people into poverty.

At the same time, it implies readiness to assume a bold role as actor on the public arena, engaging in public agendas that seek to commit governments and civil society to struggle for a better world. The United Nations has since the 1990s recognized the role of civil society and of faith based organizations when implementing its work. For instance, the campaign against HIV and AIDS evidenced the importance of building alliances; the churches were recognized for their ability to work with the grassroots at the same time as they formed international network.

Today the UN Agenda 2030 and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) represent a unique opportunity for Ecumenical Diakonia of networking with public authorities and agents of civil society. The SDGs open for coordinated work, for advocacy and public witness. Most of its concerns are not new to the churches and diaconal agencies; they have already since long been engaged in eradicating extreme poverty, promoting public health and education etc. From a strategic point of view, the SDGs represent a unique opportunity for upholding this engagement and strengthening its public relevance. The commitment of Agenda 2030 to ‘leave no one behind’ corresponds to what Christians hope and pray for, and what diaconal action seeks to achieve. The SDGs therefore represent a new and opportune platform for international cooperation, they provide a relevant agenda for Ecumenical Diakonia to renew its commitment and identify new forms and areas of action. At the same time, it allows Ecumenical Diakonia to put into practice the new paradigm and its shift of focus from aid to justice, from assistance to empowerment, from acting for to acting with and through local communities.

The ED-document does not pretend to prescribe how churches and agencies can be involved in all 17 SDGs. Instead, it points at five key areas of action where Ecumenical Diakonia already has a strong commitment, and that link to central items of the SDG agenda. They are:

- Migration and refugees
- Economic justice
- Climate justice
- Gender justice
- Health justice

This does not mean that churches and diaconal actors are recommended to limit their engagement to these five issues. Rather, these themes are keys that may be helpful in unlocking the challenge to engage in the SDGs, finding links to existing diaconal activities, and to reflect critically and constructively on how to involve in further cooperation within civil society.

The SDGs and its UN Agenda 2030 represent strengths and weaknesses. Among the strengths is its global approach, inviting all nations and local contexts to join in working for a better world for all to live in. Another is its affirmation of the roles of the local agents and of civil society in pursuing the goals. However, there are also weaknesses, in the first place a lack of critical analysis of the ruling economic model and its political impact. The way power is established and exercised in today's world has supported the increasing inequality in all parts of the world. The SDGs do not address these issues properly; working with them should therefore include critically questioning and analysis. For that reason the five key themes referred to above, all raise the question of justice and human dignity.

Although the SDGs present a global agenda, they must be approached contextually. For the network of agents of Ecumenical Diakonia, ACT Alliance has a unique role of convening and uniting forces. Its national forums can bring local churches and diaconal agencies together with the purpose of strengthening capacities and of mutual accompaniment in establishing strategies and implementing activities.

The distinctiveness of diaconal action

The fact that Faith Based Organizations (FBOs) today are publicly recognized as agents of transformation and social change is related to a growing awareness of their distinct competence.

In the past, diaconal agencies have not always promoted their identity as church-related and faith-based, they have rather underscored their competence as development agents, following the professional ideals of secular actors.

This is now being changed. Partly, this is due to the new understanding of religion in development, acknowledging on the one hand the role that religious leaders may have in

legitimizing social change. This has been evidenced, for instance in efforts of overcoming harmful cultural practices, such as female genital mutilation (FGM). On the other hand, ordinary people are often motivated by faith when being engaged in social practice; faith orients their value systems, it nurtures their hope for the future.

Parallel with this development goes a growing awareness of the distinct assets that diaconal actors possess. Many of these assets are tangible, such as buildings, installations, well established services, a rich variety of programs and activities, and not at least, competent people, both employed and voluntaries. In some countries in Africa, faith based organizations run up to 50% of all health services; this shows not only the volume of diaconal assets, it also indicates the importance of being wise stewards and mobilize the assets in the best possible way.

In addition to such tangible assets, it also makes sense to talk about intangible diaconal assets.¹⁷ Among them, are narratives, rites and rituals, relationships and ways of seeing, behaving and acting. For instance, have biblical stories like the parable of the Good Samaritan throughout centuries inspired people of faith to follow his example.

One of the chapters of the ED-document reflects on these issues, encouraging its readers to strengthen the awareness of diaconal identity and practice. This includes readiness to develop a 'diaconal language' that gives account to what moves diakonia, its vision and values, and that affirms the importance of tangible and intangible diaconal assets. It urges diaconal agents, in particular the leadership, to be bilingual in the sense that they can articulate the distinctiveness of diaconal action as faith and right based, both in a secular language and in the language of faith. It further points to capacity building and formal training in diakonia as key challenges in Ecumenical Diakonia.

Challenges and opportunities of Ecumenical Diakonia

Ecumenical Diakonia is facing a number of challenges. Some relate to new social and political trends and the changing landscape for humanitarian aid and development work. Many countries experience political extremism that foster polarization and a hate language that fuels conflicts. Refugees and migrants are less welcome than a few decades ago; their right to hope for a better future is often denied.

It is possible to note deterioration when it comes to the working conditions for organizations and people involved in humanitarian aid and development work. In many countries, shrinking public space hampers the work, and in cases, personal security is at risk. In addition, many organizations, including diaconal agencies, are facing financial constrains due to reduces public funding of their work.

17 — Kjell Nordstokke, "Mapping Out and Mobilizing Diaconal Assets", in Stephanie Dietrich et al. (eds.), *Diakonia as Christian Social Practice*. Oxford: Regnum books, (2014): 214-225

This situation urges Ecumenical Diakonia to make a critical assessment of structures and working methods. The possibility of building networks and of working with others must be explored, both like-minded organizations within civil society, inclusive with secular groups and with groups of other faiths, as well as with public institutions.

It also points to the importance of giving priority to tasks that express the core purposes of diaconal engagement, of promoting human dignity and working for justice, peace and the integrity of creation. This commitment implies using work methods that foster transformation, reconciliation and empowerment.

In today's reality, Ecumenical Diakonia has to be prophetic. This is an intrinsic part of its identity as faith- and rights-based action. Justice and peace are basic elements in the biblical vision of well-being and thus express the faith base of diakonia.

At the same time, they constitute fundamental conditions of a political environment that secure human dignity and social welfare.

From the point of Christian faith, diakonia is a call to participate in God's transformative and healing mission. Traditionally, this call has been presented as a vocation (Latin: *vocatio*) both to the church and all its baptized members to work for what is right, true and good.

In a diaconal perspective, vocation links to advocacy (*ad-vocatio*) and provocation (*pro-vocatio*). No true vocation ignores the situation of the other; advocacy as public witness and action in favor of the dignity and rights of marginalized and excluded people thus is an integral part of diaconal action. Advocacy may irritate and provoke resistance; that is a risk that diakonia must be ready to take, knowing that provocation in the first place does not mean to provoke irritation, but to call into being (*pro-vocatio*) new insight, awareness and attitudes that will open for new ways of acting and living together as people. That is probably a dimension of the "Diakonia of reconciliation" that the Apostle Paul refers to (2 Corinthians 5:18).

Chapter 4

The Role of Churches in Making Diakonia Transformational

By Cibele Kuss¹

Diakonia is a word of Greek origin, widely propagated and translated as “service”. The verb “to serve” is problematic in a colonial context, where slavery is perpetuated as a concrete reality of abuse, prejudice and discrimination, which is the case in Brazil and many Latin American countries.

From the perspective of gender justice, it must be recognised that a large part of diaconal initiatives in Christian communities and faith-based organisations are carried out by women.

Márcia Paixão states that “the feminisation of *diakonia* has denounced this normative role for women, and this bondage with servitude that prevents women from participating [...] and prevents their self-liberation and full development from deciding and contributing in public spaces.”²

Diakonia is updated within its contexts of action, just as theology needs to qualify its language and narrative to contemporary themes and dilemmas, so that the Kingdom of God and its justice are in fact for all people, for all of God’s creation. In this sense, the political, economic, cultural and environmental context in which *diakonia* is exercised as an expression of solidarity, transformation, love and the politics of faith is strategic so that

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- 1 — Rev. Cibele Kuss is Executive Secretary at the Lutheran Foundation of Diakonia. The Lutheran Foundation of Diakonia (FLD) is a civil society organization, created by the Evangelical Church of the Lutheran Confession in Brazil (IECLB), which operates through support and monitoring of groups projects, networks, forums, and organized movements and through the direct execution of projects and programs in the areas of Economic Justice, Environmental Justice, Rights, Diakonia, and Humanitarian Aid. Its headquarters is located in Porto Alegre, State of Rio Grande do Sul, in Southern Brazil, and it operates throughout the Brazilian territory.
 - 2 — Márcia Paixão in an article from 2017 is quoted in: Lutheran Diakonia Foundation, *Fé, justiça de gênero e incidência pública: 500 anos da Reforma e Diaconia Transformadora (Faith, Gender Justice and Public Incidence: 500 Years of Reform and Transformational Diakonia)*. Cibele Kuss (Editor.), Porto Alegre: Fundação Luterana de Diaconia (2017), page 96, see: www.fld.com.br/uploads/publicacoes/Livro-PDF.pdf

social changes in the field of affirmation of rights take place in dialogue with present and future dramas and possibilities.

For Kjell Nordstokke, “the Christian community is therefore the first place where *diakonia* is exercised. But there are bigger challenges. Therefore, the Christian community must necessarily broaden its scope of action within society and the world. The bigger that beam is, the better you’ll have to organise.”³ The role of churches is to pluralise their actions in the contexts in which they operate, from the awareness of communities towards an inclusive, merciful and politicised *diakonia* that acts so that the most vulnerable populations access their rights and that governments are democratic, fulfilling their role in the implementation of public policies in health, education, security, employment and income, culture and the environment. In Brazil, the diaconal action of churches is challenged by a reality strongly marked by racism, religious intolerance, misogyny, LGBT-phobia, fundamentalism and the fascist threat present in the hate speech of political leaders, supported by a large part of Brazilian society, who invoke God’s name.

Questioning the role of churches in the context of undemocratic democracies

In 2017, the commemoration of the 500th anniversary of the Reformation took place in a historical period of profound transformations, whose main characteristic is the crisis of capitalism and the increasingly evident incompatibility between capitalism and democracy. What will come after this crisis we do not yet know. The horizons are uncertain. It is necessary to understand and bring to mind the functioning of churches in past historical periods, in challenging and troubled contexts, so that we can build the necessary seams in affirming the transformative role of theology through its diaconal, public and prophetic voice.

Organisations, institutions and movements from the reform movement are called upon to bear witness to democracy and freedom in places steeped in authoritarianism and violence. Churches and their diaconal organisations play a role in bearing this witness with courage and firmness.

Keeping in mind the due proportions and historical differences, even the 16th century was characterised by profound crises with great moral decadence and violence.⁴ The changes of that period led to the transformation of the feudal system towards the Renaissance and Modernity. Religion played a key role in this process. Strange as it may seem, in the current context, the role of religions in transformations is no less relevant than it was in the centuries preceding the Reformation and in the century of the Reformation. What

3 — Kjell Nordstokke (Org.), *Diaconia: Fé em ação (Diakonia: Faith in action)*. Synodal Ed., St. Leopold, (1995): 59

4 — Richard Tarnas, *A epopeia do pensamento ocidental: para compreender as ideias que moldaram nossa visão de mundo*. Rio de Janeiro: Bertrand Brasil, 8. Ed., (2008): 249

is different is the degree of influence and the role of religion in the processes of transformation and in the current crisis.

One of the relevant characteristics of the religious, political and economic context of the 16th century was that the life of the State was guided and defined by inherited structures of power and laws imposed by tradition or higher authorities, in this case, the Church. The Roman Catholic Church, which was symbiotically linked to the Roman Empire, ensured that the cultural authority of the West was a monolithic bloc⁵. This did not mean that the European context of the time was not pluralist or free of social conflict. As Silvia Federici recalls in her book *El Caliban y las Brujas*⁶, already in the 12th and 13th centuries millenarian movements emerged spontaneously and mobilised people excluded from the feudal system. The excluded groups were poor and landless peasants, priests removed from the priesthood and women. These movements spread prophecies and apocalyptic visions of a future not partially distant but imminent, in which many of those who lived could be active witnesses of a new world without suffering.

More organised than the millennial movements and with the aim of creating a new society and promoting a radical democratisation of social life⁷, heretical movements reinterpreted the religious tradition to promote spiritual renewal and social justice. Heretical movements have denounced social and religious hierarchies, private property and the accumulation of wealth. They were responsible for spreading a new understanding of society that redefined all aspects of daily life, including work, property, sexual reproduction and the situation of women. These movements claimed human emancipation in a truly universal way.⁸

The understanding of heretical movements at that stage was that God did not speak through the clergy because of their greed, corruption, and inconsistent behaviour. This questioning of the Church was more political than religious, since challenging the Church meant facing the pillar of feudal power.⁹

These movements are given little consideration when one thinks of the Europe of that period. Similarly, there is a tendency to consider the Europe of the Middle Ages as exclusively Christian, which it certainly was not. As Amjad-Ali notes¹⁰, the Iberian peninsula for eight hundred years was under Muslim rule. In the 14th century, Turkish imperial expansion expanded, resulting in Islamic control over most of Central and Eastern Europe. Besides the Muslim presence, the strong and influential Jewish presence cannot be ignored, to say nothing of practices considered pagan.

5 — Tarnas (2008): 240; 256

6 — Silvia Federici, *El caliban y las brujas – cuerpo y acumulación originaria*. Madrid: Traficantes de Sueños, (2010): 51

7 — Federici (2010): 54

8 — Federici (2010): 54

9 — Federici (2010): 55-56

10 — Charles Amjad-Ali, “Prejudice and historical application: radical hermeneutics of Luther’s treatment of Turks (Muslims) and Jews”, in Martin Hoffmann, C. Daniel Beros and Ruth Mooney (eds.), *Radicalizando a Reforma – Outra teologia para outro mundo possível*. São Leopoldo: Ed. Sinodal; Faculdades EST (2017): 257-290: cited here: 258

In this sense, conceptions of God were quite varied and depended a lot on people's experiences and their position in society. There was a God for clergy and a God for lay people; a God for monks and a God for secular people; a God for powerful people and a God for the humble; a God for poor people and a God for rich people.¹¹

Dialogue between the different expressions and understandings of God was not a reality. There was, rather, persecution and violence to banish the different and impose a single understanding of God. To this end, the elaboration of the discourse on evil and the Devil was fundamental to justify the public persecution of those who were identified as a threat to the established order. Inquisitions are the greatest example of denial and death for those who were different.

Jumping through centuries, a symbolic moment of this rapprochement was the creation of the World Council of Churches (WCC) after the Second World War. The creation of the WCC and its work has been essential to engage the joint action of different churches in favour of a culture of peace.

During the Second World War, some church leaders became involved with the Nazi regime in Germany and the Fascist regime in Italy. Others pretended not to know about the atrocities being committed. Biblical scholars collaborated in a project of the Nazi government that aimed to "de-judaicise" the Bible, the catechism and Christian theology in Germany¹². The end of the war and its consequences forced church authorities to review the social role of their institutions, their public presence and their relationship with political power.

The resistance of the ecumenical movement, known in Germany as the Confessing Church, formed by people who sought to affirm the Jewish roots of Christianity, who dedicated themselves to articulating international networks of solidarity with Jews and denounced the exterminations practiced in the concentration camps, became fundamental to reflect on the role of cooperation between different traditions of faith, so that a real reconciliation of humanity could occur.

This movement called attention to the urgent commitment of Christians in overcoming racism, class hatred, misogyny, anti-Semitism and other forms of intolerance. The motivation was the Gospel itself, which challenged us to look at society from the perspective of those who suffer from violence, prejudice and exclusion. They understood that it was necessary to look at and listen to the people who were suspected only because they transgressed the hegemonies and norms established and considered definitive. This movement is also an inspiration for the practice of a Transformative *Diakonia* even today.

This brief historical retrospective illustrates how complex, ambiguous and difficult cooperation between churches and religious groups is.

11 — Charles Le Goff, *O Deus da Idade Média – conversas com Jean-Luc Pauthier*. Rio de Janeiro: Civilização Brasileira, 2. Ed., (2010): 11

12 — Peter Goodwin Hetzel, "Jesus the Revolutionary: Radicalising Christology after Bonhoeffer", in Martin Hoffmann, C. Daniel Beres and Ruth Mooney (eds.), *Radicalizando a Reforma – Outra teologia para outro mundo possível*. São Leopoldo: Ed. Sinodal; Faculdades EST, (2017): 205-228: cited here: 212

A deep spirit of exclusivity still permeates the traditions of faith. In the same way, dogmatism, placed above the Gospel, hierarchies, attachment to power, understanding the community of faith as a space for the preservation of culture, are some of the elements that resist and impede the practice of transformative *diakonia*.

Faith traditions are still being mobilised or instrumentalised to ensure that the interests of major economic powers are achieved. An example of this is the support given to extremist groups with different traditions of faith in regions rich in oil and mineral reserves.

The co-option of religious organisations by the financial market is another complex issue to be considered when talking about cooperation. It is interesting that the World Bank has increasingly stimulated cooperation and partnership in regions with deep economic and social problems. Religious organisations are considered to be very reliable by local populations because they practice *diakonia*. They are usually in places where other organisations do not come. The whole point is that the World Bank's interest in religions does not mean transforming the system that generates poverty. Faith-based organisations, in fact, with their altruism and detachment can be used to minimise the impacts of economic decisions decided by a tiny minority that has the power to define large economic projects.

It is not possible to talk about cooperation without asking about the reasons for this cooperation. What is expected of faith traditions and what are their limits for reviewing their dogmas and conceptions of faith when human suffering presents situations that clash with the world's understanding of a particular faith tradition? This is the case, for example, with projects aimed at the prevention and care of HIV-positive people. The involvement and engagement of faith-based organisations has been very important in carrying out this work, particularly in African countries. It is known that for HIV not to spread, it is necessary to use condoms. However, some faith-based organisations do not accept condom use because they are contraceptives. These organisations have been working on the diagnosis of HIV/AIDS and the follow-up of HIV-positive people. They do not enter into the issue of prevention because this issue is in disagreement with their doctrine. In Brazil, this debate is as complex as it is in other parts of the world.

Challenges for a transformative *diakonia* in the Brazilian context

The presence of Christianity in Brazil was not free of violence, starting with the arrival of the Roman Catholic Church together with the Portuguese navigators and the imposition of Christianity on the indigenous peoples. Enslaved Africans were forcibly baptised and

their African names were replaced by Portuguese ones. They were banned from using their original name, i.e. this was violence against their identity. Later, tensions occurred between Catholics and Protestants, who also had discriminatory and violent attitudes towards indigenous and African people.

In their book *Brazil: A Biography*¹³, authors Lilia M. Schwarcz and Heloisa M. Starling go over in detail the three main foundations of the Portuguese colonialist project. The first was the military foundation. The second foundation was the Christian religion. The colonialist strategy understood that the new land should all be offered to God. This offering would take place through the conversion of the Gentiles (Indians). And, the third foundation was mercantile, beginning with the exploitation of the brazilwood tree.

Most of the missionary projects implemented in Brazil were aimed at converting people to the “correct” faith tradition. Some Protestants did not see Brazil as Christian because most people were Roman Catholics. Catholics saw Protestant groups not as an expression of Christianity, but as sects. Afro-Brazilian religious traditions were persecuted. Their services should be held in the quiet of the night, in secret. Spiritism was seen as charlatanism and for a long time was forbidden. All this indicates that there is a strong history of religious intolerance in Brazil.

The Brazilian electoral context of 2018 is a political framework that is uncertain and tense. Again, God has been an unwanted and important actor on the political scene. His name is disputed by all political currents. In churches, the same tensions and polarisations can be observed as in society. People are fighting each other. Faced with the increase in the public expression of Christian fundamentalism, Brazilian universities have sought to create dialogue with those who have sought to reflect theologically on issues related to human rights, especially the vast majority of historically vulnerable groups. However, the freedom of reflection and theological elaboration has not been wholly accepted. For many church members, free theological thinking has been a problem, even when it is carried out responsibly. In this sense, the question is how Christian witness can be updated in an increasingly complex world if theology cannot have freedom of elaboration and expression? How is *diakonia* to be updated if the practice of mercy with indigenous peoples, *quilombolas*, women, traditional peoples and communities is being restricted and persecuted by groups and individuals within the churches?

The escalation of conflicts in the name of God is a false and empty conflict. That needs to be made explicit. It cannot be so among us Christians because faith in Jesus Christ calls us to unity (John 17:23-23). This pseudo-conflict generates mistrust and harms Christian witness in the public space. How can we speak of love if many people within churches proclaim hatred, advocate torture, the return of dictatorship and a ‘Clean Church’?

Perhaps the moment after which rapprochement became possible was the 1950s, when different Protestant churches began to start a dialogue and reflect on their social

13 — Lilia M. Schwarcz and Heloisa M. Starling, *Brasil: uma Biografia*. São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, (2015)

responsibility in Brazil. Later, with the opening made possible by the Second Vatican Council, the Roman Catholic Church also became part of the ecumenical movement.

Occasional experiences of ecumenical cooperation began to emerge. However, the symbolic moment of this cooperation was in the context of the Military Dictatorship, when the joint cooperation of the Churches was fundamental in denouncing the tortures. A symbolic landmark was the inter-religious celebration that took place in São Paulo Cathedral on the occasion of the death of Wladimir Herzog. Roman Catholics, Jews and Protestants participated in this celebration.

The characteristic that has marked the Brazilian ecumenical trajectory is the commitment to the promotion of human rights, translated into theological language as Transformative *Diakonia*.

The main experiences of ecumenical cooperation took place around this theme. Among the many examples, in the field of ecumenical and confessional diaconal organisations, one can recall the One Million Cisterns Campaign¹⁴, which called on the country's churches to donate financial resources for the construction of water tanks in the North-East. Another experience was the defence of the rights of indigenous peoples, carried out by the Council for Missions to Indigenous Peoples and the Indigenous Missionary Council. The first is linked to the IECLB and the second to the National Conference of Bishops of Brazil (CNBB). Walter Sass, in his book *Caminhos Sinuosos*¹⁵, goes over the history of the Council for Missions to Indigenous Peoples (COMIN) and the cooperation between these two Councils in support of indigenous peoples. In the book, there is an interesting discourse on the nature of missionary work, based on coexistence with the indigenous peoples. The realisation that Christianity should not be considered as an absolutist religion is gradually developing. Missionary work, therefore, is not the immediate preaching of Jesus, but the concrete diaconal action in favour of the survival of indigenous peoples.

However, despite the many affirmative examples of ecumenical cooperation, this practice has recently become quite difficult and often conflictive. One of the most complex aspects is inter-religious cooperation work, especially when this cooperation is specifically with religious traditions of African or indigenous origin. Racism, in that situation, is the wall that prevents this kind of cooperation from happening.

¹⁴ — See: <https://ecofeminismgsla.wordpress.com/2016/04/16/one-million-cisterns-p1mc/>

¹⁵ — Walter Werner Paul Sass, *Caminhos Sinuosos*. São Leopoldo: OIKOS, COMIN, (2012)

In recent years, another form of ecumenical cooperation has been strengthened, termed “hate ecumenism” in an article written by Antonio Spadore and Marcelo Figueroa¹⁶. This ecumenism is an expression of both Roman Catholic and evangelical fundamentalism. Its aim is to combat agendas considered anti-Christian. Among the themes are issues related to gender, family models, sexual and reproductive rights, among other things.

It is important to note that the current anti-gender campaign emerged as the Vatican’s reaction to the discussions and demands presented at the International Conference on Population in Cairo in 1994 and at the World Conference on Women in Beijing. Immediately after these Conferences, the Vatican convened experts to initiate a counterattack on women’s agendas and reaffirm Catholic doctrine and the naturalisation of the sexual order.¹⁷ It is from this initiative that the understanding of “gender ideology” has been formulated, around which a real social and moral panic has been created, in addition to violent actions.

The campaign against “gender ideology”, which is nothing more than a campaign against gender justice, has prevented open talk about various types of violence, especially domestic violence, against women and LGBTI people and has united Catholic and evangelical fundamentalists.

Rearguing the concept of *diakonia* as service within the perspective of the feminisation of diaconal work, not as subservience or servitude, but in the construction of the empowerment of women performing *diakonia* in all spaces of the church, of society, of families, gives a transformative dimension to the lives of women.

Discussing and practicing Transformative Diakonia necessarily requires churches to be open to horizontal, sincere dialogue. It also requires accepting to review doctrines and dogmas whenever they, instead of promoting Jesus Christ, promote intolerance and fear. In this sense, a great challenge is to oppose the politics of religious identity, in the case of

16 — Antônio Spadore and Marcelo Figueroa, *Fundamentalismo evangélico e Integralismo católico: um “ecumenismo do ódio*, in IHU online, 17 July 2017, www.ihu.unisinos.br/78-noticias/569668-fundamentalismo-evangelico-e-integralismo-catolico-um-ecumenismo-surpreendente

17 — Rogério Diniz Junqueira, “Gender Ideology: the genesis of a reactionary or political category: – The promotion of human rights has become a “threat to the natural family”, in Costa Paula Regina Ribeiro and Corpes Joanalira Magalhães, *Debates contemporâneos sobre a educação para a sexualidade*. Rio Grande: ed. Da FURG, (2017): 25-52: referred to here: 32

Brazilians, Christians, which prevent any discussion on sexual and reproductive rights, sexual orientation, religious diversity and gender justice.

It is necessary to keep in mind that religions, including Christianity, are important sources for identity politics, because people understand that they have divine authority to judge and punish people they consider to be outside of what is “accepted by God”.¹⁸

This kind of religious identity could be opposed by a “politics for our neighbour”¹⁹ that does not disregard the complexity in the ethical analysis and the plurality of the political agenda. From the perspective of the politics of others, the needs of all people, especially those excluded and attacked due to prejudice and political and theological postures, are ethically considered.

Diakonia as a policy of proximity – ecumenical missions among indigenous peoples

Since 2015, faith-based and social organisations have carried out ecumenical missions²⁰ to be close to threatened and criminalised communities and territories. Representatives of churches, ecumenical and interreligious bodies, civil society organisations and human rights defenders have all participated.²¹ Two ecumenical missions went to Mato Grosso do Sul in 2015 and 2016, denouncing the ongoing massacre of the Guarani Kaiowá in that state; to Pará, Pau D’Arco, in 2017, denouncing the murder of rural workers; and to Rio Grande do Sul, to different municipalities, in 2017, in solidarity with the Guarani and Kaingang indigenous peoples. They always visit communities in their own localities, taking time to listen, with spirituality and brotherhood. After each visit, denunciations of violations of indigenous rights are sent to public agencies in Brazil and to international organisations. Public hearings are also held to involve the local community.

For the Secretary-General of the ACT Alliance²², Rudelmar Bueno de Faria, who came from Geneva and participated in the initiative, visiting the indigenous communities allowed him to understand in detail the scope of the current political project that is taking

18 — L. Craig Nesson, “Going Beyond Luther’s Ethical Reformation: Peasants, Anabaptists and Jews”, in Martin Hoffmann, C. Daniel Beros and Ruth Mooney (eds.), *Radicalizando a Reforma – Outra teologia para outro mundo possível*. São Leopoldo: Ed. Sinodal; Faculdades EST, (2017): 232-255; cited here: 232

19 — Nesson (2017): 232-233

20 — some of the organisations promoting ecumenical missions: Ecumenical Forum ACT Brazil (FE ACT Brazil), National Council of Christian Churches (CONIC), Process of Articulation and Dialogue (PAD), Ecumenical Coordination of Service (Cese), Council for Missions to Indigenous Peoples (COMIN), Lutheran Diakonia Foundation (FLD), Indigenous Missionary Council (Cimi), among others.

21 — Initiative of the Ecumenical Forum ACT Brazil (FE ACT Brazil)

22 — ACT is an international organisation based in Switzerland. It brings together 146 organisations from 125 countries. In Brazil, the member organisations are FLD, Diaconia, Koinonia and the EESC. ACT has a consultative seat at the UN and will include the situations discussed in Rio Grande do Sul in international forums and in the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues.

away hard-won rights. “We will act based on the influence of our members and their engagement in a joint strategy for the justice and dignity of indigenous Brazilians, *quilombolas* and other excluded communities.”²³

“It is essential that the ecumenical movement gets to know the reality of the life of indigenous people and strengthens its denunciation of how the Brazilian Government and the agricultural system are increasingly disrespecting the right of indigenous peoples to land, for their own advantage,”

said the Secretary General of the National Council of Christian Churches, Romi Bencke. “Therefore, the initiative: to be ecumenical, in its essence, is to defend rights”. For her, another important element is to combat the idea that “going on mission” means converting people to Christianity: “on the contrary, we want to affirm religious freedom and guarantee the right of all to exercise their spirituality”.²⁴

The theology of grace and Luther’s writing on “Christian Freedom” emphasise love of neighbour as the ethical core of the gospel. This is the aspect to be given value in diaconal work which is to be ecumenical, inter-religious and transformative. In this sense, the political agenda par excellence is Matthew 25:31-46, which affirms mercy as the centre of diaconal action. Mercy is political because it affirms the dignity of all people and causes unjust structures to be transformed. *Diakonia* is a political action of mercy.

23 — Koinonia, “Ecumenical Mission in RS denounces violence and dismantling of public policies aimed at indigenous people”, 22 December 2017, <http://koinonia.org.br/noticias/missao-ecumenica-no-rs-denuncia-violencias-e-desmonte-de-politicas-publicas-destinadas-indigenas/6015>

24 — *ibid.*; also see www.luteranos.com.br/noticias/fe-act-brasil-promove-missao-ecumenica-junto-a-comunidades-kaingang-e-guarani and www.cese.org.br/missao-ecumenica-em-apoio-aos-camponeses-e-camponesas-do-para/

Chapter 5

How Faith actors have Defended, Defined and Widened Civic space in Zimbabwe¹

Kenneth Mtata, ZCC

1. Introduction

The continued decline of the national economy, a repressive and tense political environment, and the limited space for civil society engagement that have characterised the situation in Zimbabwe in the last 15 to 20 years contradicts the letter and spirit of the Constitution of Zimbabwe, the aspirations of the universally agreed Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), especially Goal 16, as well as relevant human rights instruments and laws. The church and its different faith-based actors and institutions have carried out key interventions to defend, define and broaden the civic space in this regard. The following research report which describes this process uses the work of various Christian movements and institutions, including the Zimbabwe Council of Churches (ZCC) and Zimbabwe Divine Destiny, as well as the experiences of the Africa Sustainable Peace Institute for Research and Education (ASPIRE) to demonstrate how such efforts played out in Zimbabwe particularly in the context of the recently concluded Operation Restore Legacy.

This report details the findings of a research on how faith actors have defended and widened civic space in Zimbabwe.

Broadly, the various sections of the report provides an account of the research process, the findings, gaps and conclusion which will subsequently inform policy and practice by local and international actors interested in pursuing a sustainable, multi-dimensional and

¹ — The following is a shortened version of a paper published 22 May 2018 under the title: Tracking progress in the attainment of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) number 16: Documentation on How Faith actors have Defended, Defined and Widened Civic space in Zimbabwe”, written by Rev. Dr. Kenneth Mtata, General Secretary of the Zimbabwe Council of Churches

multi-disciplinary development agenda in Zimbabwe. However, the research does not intend to provide a comprehensive and conclusive research outcome but to contribute to the growing stock of knowledge on religion and development and to the pursuit of peace and development in Zimbabwe.

2. Contextual analysis of the social, economic and political situation in Zimbabwe

Civic space in Zimbabwe continued to deteriorate despite the adoption of the new constitution in 2013, as laws designed to operationalise the various constitutional Commissions were not signed. The major crisis in Zimbabwe has to do with failure to implement the constitution and subsidiary laws. For instance, the Zimbabwe Human Rights Commission (ZHRC) has not been able to address the numerous politically motivated human rights abuses which were perpetuated from the 1980s to date. Similarly, the Gender Commission, the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission, the Media Commission and the National Peace and Reconciliation Commission (NPRC) have all been formed but not much work has been undertaken in relation to implementation of their mandate partly due to political interference and the lack of independence from the state. In view of this reality/crisis,

the church has consistently advocated for the speedy implementation of the constitution and prioritization of the citizens' agenda in national processes. In doing so, and whilst working hard to address its own internal challenges, the church entered into a multiplicity of collaborative pacts with like-minded civil society actors in seeking to promote democracy and to inspire the crafting of a national vision as articulated in the Zimbabwe We Want discussion document.

This was indeed the case even though part of the church, even though small, was watching from the side-lines.

Media reports indicate that in the period 2014 to 2015, the Zimbabwe Human Rights Commission (ZHRC) handled over 400 new cases, of which about 50 were open cases while the rest were dealt with privately² because of their complexity and sensitivity. It is

2 — Human Rights Commission; 2016

also important to note that the ZHRC does not have the power to arrest, but to investigate issues reported to it, directly and indirectly. The ZHRC is constitutionally mandated to refer human rights-related offenses to the police who are often accused of being partisan and serving the interests of the incumbent Head of State. Hence, there is a lack of trust among the citizens, the Commission and the police.

Before the enactment of the National Peace and Reconciliation Act, the space to discuss *Gukurahundi*, the 2002, 2005 and 2008 political violence has been heavily monitored and curtailed by the State. Following the advent of the “new dispensation”,³ which denotes the replacement of the Robert Mugabe administration with the one led by E.D Munangagwa under the auspices of the Zimbabwe Defence Forces (ZDF) through an operation code named Operation Restore Legacy, there has been a notable increase in the opening up of the civic space. The new dispensation, which effectively started in November 2017, has thus far raised the hopes and expectations of Zimbabweans and foreign investors alike.

The civil society and the academia which have tirelessly tried to unveil human rights abuses in the years before November 2017 have been arrested, tortured and some forced into exile which is indicative of the limited civic space to interrogate pertinent national issues. The Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum reports that the year 2016 witnessed a new wave of protests following citizens’ engagement in social movements such as #Tajamuka/Sesijikile, #ThisFlag among others. As the protests against deteriorating economic conditions gained momentum, State agents increasingly resorted to the use of brutal force, torture, abductions and arbitrary arrests as a means of intimidating, investigating and obtaining information or confessions from real or perceived offenders as well as to instil fear within the general populace.⁴

Protests in Harare and Beitbridge failed in 2016 because the military was against them. After a failed attempt to demonstrate against injustices, Zimbabweans resorted to the use of social media platforms as a means of expressing discontent where there is some allowance to protest. However, church activists such as Evan Mawarire, Martha O’Donovan and Matigari were either intimidated or arrested for causing social unrest and insulting the former President through social media. The media in general is still polarised and is generally perceived as being partisan for and against political interests in Zimbabwe. As a result of polarization citizens generally withdrew from participating in national processes thereby widening the divide between policy makers and citizens. In response to apathy and fear arising from years of a repressive administration, various church institutions reoriented their strategic plans accordingly.

High ranking military personnel Rt.Lt.E.Rugeje, the Zanu PF political commissar, reminded and threatened people who had attended a Zanu PF rally with a repeat of the

3 — The new dispensation was terminology used both officially and in the street to describe the new regime after the fall of Mugabe.

4 — Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum; 2016

2008 violence.⁵ The future is uncertain. In that regard, Zimbabwe Electoral Commission (ZEC) has not taken much steps and implemented electoral reforms which guarantee a free, fair and credible election in 2018. The unceremonious resignation of Justice Rita Makarau as the ZEC chairperson and the appointment of High Court Judge Priscilla Chigumba could be indicative of the advancement of factional political interests. Between January and May, 2017 alone, the Zimbabwe Peace Project reported a total of 649 cases of politically motivated violence.⁶ These cases have been on an upward trend since March, 2017 with harassment and intimidation cases continuing to dominate the recorded violations. Given that the election season is upon Zimbabwe, intimidation in the rural areas escalated as more cases of politicians demanding registration slips from villagers increased⁷. In response to this and as part of its mandate, the church has mobilized its leadership to continuously undertake voter education targeting the Christian majority in both rural and urban areas.

3. The motivations for civil engagement

In May, 2016 the Church conducted a research in Zimbabwe and identified 3 major issues in relation to governance and peace which motivated it to engage other stakeholders:⁸

3.1 Fragmentation

Zimbabweans are suspicious and afraid of each other. The Zimbabwean society is deeply fragmented at societal and national level. Leaders in the government and the Church are no longer committed, but are in pursuit of personal gains at the expense of the people. From a church perspective, it is difficult to pin-point who the 'Church' is. Since 2010, there has been the formation of many churches which preach prosperity in an economically deprived country. From a political point of view, there are too many splinter political parties, reported to be 84⁹, which are breaking away from bigger parties. This development translates into bitter power struggles which have also precipitated into the Church. Individuals within the main political parties are bent on amassing support to secure their own positions after the 2018 elections. For example, the brawl among Nelson Chamisa, Elias Mudzuri and Thokozani Khupe is caused by the issue of succession of the ailing party leader Morgan Tsvangirai of the leading opposition alliance MDC in the case that

5 — The Mirror, 'Rugeje threatens a repeat of 2008,' 11-17/01/18, Zimbabwean News.

6 — Zimbabwe Peace Project, 2017

7 — www.thestandard.co.zw/2018/01/28/zec-called-rein-zanu-pf-voter-registration-slips/

8 — Zimbabwe Council of Churches and ASPIRE (2016) 'Researcher's workshop: Towards Mapping Zimbabwe Churches' Engagement with Sustainable Development Goal 16' Report.

9 — Zimbabwe Electoral Commission, 2018

he fails to represent the party. In most instances, individualism works against the collective national interests.

3.2 Citizen disengagement

Due to fragmentation at all levels of society, citizens are frustrated and have disengaged from national and civil society activities including those conducted by the church. People are no-longer interested in participating; levels of apathy at social, political and economic levels are high. As government's repressive laws continues to limit public participation and freedom of expression, a growing number of the youthful population has resorted to the use of alternative, "unregulated" social media platforms. At church level, people are moving back and forth between Pentecostal and mainline churches in search for a gospel that speaks to their interests and needs. As such, whilst the ideologically sound continues to keep with the mainline churches owing to their stability and predictability, the youthful members of the church have rather taken an interest in the prosperity gospel being preached by some Pentecostal churches. In general therefore, the church is under pressure to absorb high levels of mobility and dual allegiance.

3.3 Economic deprivation

Due to a shrinking economy, Zimbabweans are deeply trapped in debts which they are getting from banks and loan "sharks". Citizens sleep in bank queues to collect the little cash money still available the following day. Cash shortages have reached alarming levels. The difficult economic conditions in Zimbabwe have partly entrenched a veritable culture of corruption in and outside the church thereby compromising the foundations upon which the Zimbabwean society is based. In response to this development, some churches have heightened teachings on biblical ethics and values as well as empowering their membership to undertake entrepreneurship initiatives in order to complement existing income sources.

3.4 Needs addressed by the church – providing joint vision, development and safe convening space

The study discovered that participants to the study were confident that faith leaders have an important role to play in influencing and shaping opinions and public perceptions of communities who hold them in high regard and look up to them for leadership and guidance. Participants to the study also revealed that faith actors are capacitated to unite, mobilize, develop and 'heal the nation' using resources such as nurturing fellowship, unity and agency, including a vision for nation building on the principles of justice, equity and participation. This is drawn from the hermeneutical resources of relating sacred texts, liberative interpretive traditions to speak to varied contexts of readers. Coming from the background that the ZCC has theological and biblical commitments, it

is strategically positioned to address the country's socio-economic needs because she is accorded moral high ground and has proved to be a fertile safe space for critical solidarity for public engagement. Sensitizing faith leaders on peace, human rights and Gender Based Violence (GBV) will thus create a critical mass of opinion leaders to promote the message of zero tolerance to all forms of violence, creating a more conducive environment for the promotion and protection of the civic space, election and co-existence in Zimbabwe. The Zimbabwe Council of Churches (ZCC) has increased the buy-in of faith leaders and the laity about human rights, peace and justice, so that these issues trickle down to grassroots level. The ZCC remains an indispensable platform for part of the 80% of people who profess to be Christians¹⁰ in Zimbabwe to engage collectively in sustainable dialogue for conflict transformation.

Closely linked to the above is the observation that churches are safe convening spaces. Research participants revealed that churches are open (safe) spaces to freely talk about injustices, human rights and peace in Zimbabwe as compared to the communities they reside in. Zimbabweans still highly distrust each other in these spaces as others before have worked as informers of the State.

The Church remains the space where you find politicians, civilians, pastors and lay people sitting side by side. With appropriate mobilizing and organizing capacities, the church has the power to bring these people together engaging collectively on national issues as illustrated by the increased use of the National People's Convention (NPC) as a trusted, safe convening space for civil society.

In the past few months before 'the new dispensation' and removal of Mugabe from power by the military, Zimbabwe's shrinking civic space became marred by intimidation, violence and incarceration of activists who were perceived as 'enemies of the State'.

3.5 Religious/theological argumentation used

The work of the Churches has been distinct from the work of other actors because it is based on some key theological and critical themes.

The starting point of the ZCC engagement is based on the understanding that all human beings are created in the image of God, as shown in the creation stories in Genesis 1 and 2. This understanding combined with the Human Rights Charter has emboldened the Church's defence of the citizens as a Christian duty. If all human beings are created in the image of God, then all people must be treated with dignity and rights.

The second theological starting point recognizes that human beings are already in the bondage of sin and injustice. God always shows up to address injustice by raising God's people to lead the liberation. The story of the book of Exodus shows how God used Moses and Aaron and Miriam to lead the suffering Israelites out of an oppressive and unjust system in Egypt. And ultimately God reveals God's vision of community in the way Jesus identifies his self-sacrificial mission as 'good news to the poor and freedom for the oppressed' (Luke 4, 18) Just like in the days of Moses, the ZCC remains the 'voice of the voiceless' and the conscience of the nation in times of oppression to uphold the dignity of mankind in Zimbabwe where the Constitution is disregarded and violated with impunity.

The understanding of peace as Shalom – not merely the absence of war and conflict, but presence of life in fullness – has also informed the work of the ZCC. Shalom, a concept which refers to the total or holistic life, has been adopted by the ZCC. Since 1964, it has put upon itself the responsibility to pursue 'shalom' as the gift of all people regardless of political affiliation, race, ethnicity or religion. This shalom or holistic peace refers to a situation in which everyone enjoys peace mentally, physically and spiritually.

Since the task of the church actors in pursuit of justice means that sometimes the church confronts the powers that be,

the ZCC has seen its work within the prophetic theological tradition where the prophets of old engaged the kings without fear and favour.

This theology is also aware that there were prophets who legitimated the palace and turning a blind eye to the violations of human dignity. The ZCC and has traditionally infused the prophetic tradition in its work by confronting secular power such as did Elijah, Jeremiah and Samuel even when it means getting into conflict with the King.

3.6 Church-civil society cooperation in responding to the crisis in Zimbabwe

All ZCC projects which aimed at defending, defining and widening civic space in Zimbabwe were implemented through local women's, men's, youth's and pastor's ecumenical forums of the 26 member churches. The ZCC leveraged the majority advantage to effectively and collectively address the national governance and human rights challenges in

Zimbabwe through the alignment of interests, building partnerships and stimulating collective action amongst all stakeholders to defend, define and widen the civic space. Heads of member denominations were also involved for member church buy-in. These constituencies are always key in project planning and implementation by creating an open-dialogue platform for amplifying voices of the faith community at a larger scale.

Cooperation of the national and local governments was also recorded in the projects organised by ASPIRE and the ZCC, though not easy with the former. The ZCC and ASPIRE also saw more CSOs seeking to collaborate with them for example in the National People's Conventions, public dialogues and workshops which enhanced the effectiveness and depth of engagements. One important resource the ZCC brings is the wealth of its local, regional and international networks through platforms such as Fellowship of Christian Councils in Southern Africa (FOCISSA), the local ACT Forum, and its partnership with FBOs in Europe and the USA. The recent solidarity visit by the global ecumenical partners led by the World Council of Churches allowed the wealth of religion to be evident.

4. Research findings concerning the role of Faith actors for defending, defining and widening the civic space in Zimbabwe

4.1 Active citizenship, Good governance and Peace building – the nature of engagements

Since the revival of the ZCC¹¹, from a moment of apparent inactivity to ongoing attempts at recalibrating its image and strategic direction, the study noted that faith leaders who have emerged as opinion leaders are more active on **social media platforms** where they have some sense of security and have a larger audience. On such platforms, faith leaders are engaging more on issues related to governance, human rights, politics and democracy without fear. Social media is more accessible and far reaching as compared to other platforms in Zimbabwe as according to the usage Statistics: 6,759,032 are internet users as of June, 2016.¹² Since the emergence of Facebook and most recently WhatsApp, the Church is utilising social media platforms to enable church leaders inclusive of Bishops, pastors and the laity to interrogate governance and human rights issues. Social media conversations, enabled by the high technology penetration in Zimbabwe, has seen faith actors being able to reach out to more people as compared to the past years, interrogating human rights,

11 — The ZCC had declined in its influence in the last few years. It has taken a new influential role in the last two years.

12 — Zimbabwe Internet Statistics and Telecommunications Report (2016), www.internetworldstats.com
› Africa Internet Stats ›

peace and governance issues. Academics, lecturers, activists and leaders are interacting in real time from all parts of the country, but on the same platform.

In 2017, these Local Peace and Gender Committees (LPGC) have assumed a lobby and **advocacy approach** by actively mobilising communities and raising awareness in human rights, electoral processes, peace and conflict issues as well as advisers to local and traditional leaders as they solve conflicts within the communities. They are however not in many communities because the project was limited to specific Districts in Zimbabwe. The ZCC's project design was meant to assist the Church in rebuilding its capacity in effective leveraging of the collective voice of all member churches. This approach was premised on the realisation that the majority of Zimbabweans are connected to the Church and in turn the Church has strong influence on the broader population to raise awareness, mobilise and influence action within the civic space at all levels. The Church realises that when it is united, then it is also in a position to lobby duty bearers for effective policy reforms. For example, against the background of renewed ZCC, the General Secretary of the World Council of Churches and the ZCC arranged a meeting with MDC President, Morgan Tsvangirai, and the then Vice President E.Mnangagwa in August, 2017 to discuss peace, human rights and good governance in preparation for the 2018 elections.

To enhance the participation, relevance and influence of the ordinary citizen in national democratic processes, the ZCC was also instrumental in the distribution of the Constitution through its constitutional awareness project. This document is critical in **raising awareness and knowledge** of civil-political rights which are critical in defending the civic space. By the end of 2017, the ZCC had distributed 400 copies of the constitution across the 10 Provinces after the research revealed that faith actors in the Church do not have the requisite human rights awareness knowledge and capacity of human rights and peace to defend, define and widen the civic space in Zimbabwe. Knowledge is power. In progressive democracies such as South Africa, United States and Britain, citizens defend, define and widen the civic space by exercising their constitutional rights, an element which is lacking in Zimbabwe. About 78% of Zimbabweans do not know the 2013 Constitution.¹³ After the Constitution was distributed, congregants belonging to the men's, women's, youth's and pastor's forum committed themselves to the cause of peace, justice and human rights.

The ZCC also organised and **convened worship services, bible studies and joint ecumenical gatherings and worship** in line with its role in the promotion of church unity and social unity in Zimbabwe. Using readily available resources has also elevated the ZCC as a faith movement bringing Christians together in large numbers. For example, during the celebrations of 40 years of autonomy by the United Methodist Church, 7000 people gathered to commemorate this event and the ZCC General Secretary used this opportunity to talk about unity, peace and prosperity in Zimbabwe.

Through **public community-based dialogues**, the Provincial/National People's Conventions and the Christian Vote Campaign as platforms for discussions, the ZCC were

instrumental in popularising the rights and obligations of citizens through the Church and also organised ecumenical members, the civil society and Zimbabwean citizens in engaging duty bearers. Public statements directed at the government were produced from these people's conventions. The participant's views and opinions on these platforms influenced the recovery of not only ZCC members, but also the nation at large to the benefit of all actors who look up to the Church as a platform for mobilizing citizens and churches to defend and widen the civic space in Zimbabwe. The year 2017 saw the academia, the civil society, students, other Faith Based Organisations, Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and political parties coalescing around the ZCC with regards to empowerment and governance issues, hence securing and widening the civic space towards nation-building, Christian unity and social cohesion. The Church played a similar role as it did in the early 2000s where it raised burning constitutional, human rights, economic, peace and electoral questions and led to the formation of Zimbabwe Electoral Support Network, National Constitutional Assembly, Zimbabwe Peace Project and ZIMCODD.

4.2 Youth empowerment and Wider Civic Society Networking

In the same context, the ZCC has been providing a platform for young people to engage and promote the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The research also discovered that there is high apathy amongst the youth. This is sad since the youths make up the majority of the population and hence need to take a lead. In many cases young people's voices are left behind in the civic space. There is deliberate effort by faith leaders in the ZCC to focus on youth under the banner of the Ecumenical Youth Empowerment Programmes as they require support in order to face the challenges posed by a deteriorating socio-economic and political environment in Zimbabwe. During the transition which saw the ouster of former President R.G Mugabe and coming in of President E.D Mnangagwa, young people from across the country gathered for a National Ecumenical Youth Empowerment Summit to discuss the socio-political and economic context, under the auspices of the ZCC. Ecumenical Young People, apart from sharing different experiences, they had the opportunity to engage various government departments and youth leaders from across the political divide in Zimbabwe.

The Ecumenical Youth Empowerment Programmes have created a dialogue platform that has led to the increase of young faith actors in the civic space. Young people have been visible in civic platforms at local and national level. The voices and presence of young people in the National People's Conventions enabled them to air their views in response to the change of leadership. Young people have also created their own local spaces for engagement known as the Ecumenical Youth Fellowships. These spaces have enabled increased dialogue and sharing of ideas amongst young people. The space has also provided learning and education as young people engage in national development, constitutionalism and economic issues. It has also been a space where young people learn to interrogate pertinent issues through engagement to promote mutual understanding, prevent conflict, combat violence, discrimination, participate in conflict resolution, also building and consolidating

peace in the country's new 'dispensation'. This is a sustainable platform that allows ecumenical young people to use their creativity to make the change happen for themselves and for the nation. There is potential to widen a sustainable dialogue platform for young people as they are the majority of the Zimbabwean population.¹⁴

Youth and other faith leaders have also been involved in issues of social and economic justice. The platforms have been created by the Church to engage with the government to address the social and economic problems being faced by Zimbabweans at the moment. The Church has been instrumental in engaging issues around natural resources governance, the national budget and corruption, amongst others. This space has been largely occupied by other civil society players who are into research and advocacy. The Church has however been working together with the civil society to compliment this work by providing a theological reflection and a faith based approach to economic issues. The Church has been working with Zimbabwe Environmental Law Association (ZELA), Zimbabwe Coalition on Debt and Development (ZIMCODD) and the Centre for Natural Resources Governance, among other organisations. The Church has also been leading the conversation on the National Budget Review Process under the National People's Convention. This initiative by the Church is meant to provide one common voice for the civil society in general on critical national issues.

4.3 Learnings for the role of the church in its engagement for the common good in the public space

We can ask here whether there are any learnings and indicators of success that can be used in various contexts across the country and region in analysing the role of the churches and their engagement for the common good in the public space in Zimbabwe. From the beginning in 1964, churches saw themselves as 'the Church' body attending to the spiritual, physical, social, economic and political needs of Zimbabweans. This church unity is the one which informed all its activities in 2017 which implies that this work can be done when the Church is one. Against this background and in response to the increasingly shrinking civic space in 2017, all ecumenical forums under the ZCC attended and supported public dialogues, trainings, Provincial/National People's Conventions and formed Local Peace and Gender Committees within the confinements of 'the Church' without fear of arrest or persecution by the State because they felt safe and somehow protected from the State. By using its own buildings, the Church reduced expenses and also ensured the safety of participants. During the gatherings, the ZCC discussed electoral issues, constitutional issues, governance challenges and *Gukurahundi* and none of the meetings were disrupted by the State.

This points to the fact that ‘the Church’ must always keep a safe distance from political parties, but actively engage them at the same time to hold them accountable and promote value-based democracy.

A good example of how not to relate with politics is the unhealthy conflation of some apostolic churches with the ruling ZANU-PF party during the transitional events of November 2017 in which the Church got embroiled in factional wars and lost its integrity. The Church can be used by politicians to mobilise on its behalf and get corrupted by the benefits it solicits from the relationship. The ZCC also used Training of Trainers (ToTs) to increase the knowledge and understanding of faith leaders in human rights, peace and constitutionalism. When E.D Mnangagwa replaced R.G Mugabe in November, 2017 the ZCC took this opportunity to gather and tap into the views of the masses because the State was distracted. Participants felt that the civic space has opened up a little bit after the fall of Mugabe.

4.4 Gaps identified

- There is the lack of community protection groups to cushion the community from all forms of conflict and violence. This also includes mechanism in which civil society groups under threat can find shelter from the church. Related to this is

the absence of strong, strategic and tactical synergies between and amongst the various church and civil society groups in responding to conflict and human rights abuses.

This reality informed the ZCC’s intervention strategy to form Local Peace and Gender Committees, but more needs to be done to ensure that communities are self-reliant in effectively responding to conflict and violence.

- The Church also noted with concern the absence of the voice of the church in political issues as some faith leaders have become reluctant to get involved in issues related to human rights and peace building as they are closely related to ‘politics’. This raises the

urgent need to build strong theological foundations to support the churches in their public engagement.

The study concluded that faith leaders are active but largely confined in issues such as gender based violence where they feel more comfortable and less threatened.

- Closely linked to the above is that the Church still lacks competence in advancing peace and human rights issues. More capacity building and trainings need to be done.
- The Church works with very limited funds as Donors are not prepared to readily give money to implement projects as the church is viewed rather as a 'spiritual' than a developmental hub.
- People with Disabilities (PWDs) are left out in some very crucial processes in Zimbabwe. The ZCC and other Faith Based Organisations need to come up with a strategy to deliberately include PWDs.

5. Conclusion and Executive Summary

The ZCC is building on its previous work of facilitating the development and implementation of programmes aimed at promoting active citizenship, citizens broad-based dialogue, public influence and participation in matters that concern them. This influencing include, among other things, to empower, conscientise and build the capacity of church members who risk standing aloof to some of the political processes to the detriment of nation building. Through some of its projects, ZCC has already established local peace committees in Mberengwa, Beitbridge, Gwanda, Matobo, Marondera, Chinhoyi and Kadoma Districts, has convened public dialogues in Hwange, Masvingo and Bulawayo, conferred the youths in Harare and organised community ward based trainings across the country. This intervention will build on that work and allow ZCC to reach out to other Districts and all the other Provinces. The project also enables synergy in the areas of peace and human rights working with and strengthening ZCC's Provincial and District ecumenical fora's participation to defend, define and widen the civic space in Zimbabwe in line with the SDG 16 in ensuring access to justice, peace and accountable institutions for all.

The role of the church in the public life of Zimbabwe has been both positive and negative. But in the last few years, the positive contribution of the church in the process national transition has been visionary and transformative.

While the negative contribution of some church actors were evinced by the presence of some African independent churches who filled the Rufaro stadium in support of Grace Mugabe, the wife of the then President when she was using the church and its various assets to vilify

his political opponents, the response of the other churches in the subsequent deterioration and ultimate change of political leadership was recognisable.

The positive engagement of the Church and faith-based actors to contribute to the realisation of a just, peaceful and inclusive Zimbabwean society can be traced as far back as the struggle for independence, from the 1960s and 1970s. The struggle for independence was generally waged by the people of Zimbabwe under the leadership of the nationalists most of whom had been educated at church mission institutions. In these mission schools, the would-be nationalists attained empowering education that encouraged critical thinking. Such education emboldened the students to take up an active role in the struggle for independence.

Following the attainment of independence, the Church joined in the national reconstruction program based on the enduring Christian principles of justice, peace and equity. Of course, there is a dark part of the history when the church lowered its guard and did not provide adequate response to the brutalities against thousands of people especially from Matebeleland and Midlands Provinces¹⁵ in an operation code named *Gukurahundi* in the early 1980s. While the government claimed the exercise was aimed at ridding the region of armed dissidents, the indiscriminate killings demonstrated that this was actually a project aimed at getting rid of any political opposition in the form of Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU). Not the whole church was complicit by silence. The church led by the Roman Catholic Church's Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace (CCJP) was one of the main actors to respond immediately to these atrocities by providing the few available documentation of what happened.

Once more, in the 1990s, the Church in Zimbabwe played a catalytic role in championing the agenda for justice and peace by insisting on the need for a home-grown constitution as well as for free, fair and credible elections. People like the Lutheran Bishop, Dr Ambrose Moyo, who had been appointed into the Constitutional Committee but resigned when he saw how the process was manipulated, played an important role in the campaign against the 'No' vote in the subsequent referendum. This was, in fact, the first defeat incurred by the ruling party in an open election. Through instruments like the National Constitutional Assembly¹⁶ and the Zimbabwe Electoral Support Network¹⁷ which were actually formed at the behest of the church, the collective role of the church was quite evident in the defending and defining civic space.

As the church continued to create this space for civic engagement, students, churches, labour and other sectors of society increased their collective reflection on the agenda for nation-building which saw the different formations leading to the establishment of the Movement for Democratic Change in 2000. Ever since the ruling party resorted to violent

15 — Catholic Commission for Peace and Justice in Zimbabwe; (CCJPZ; 1997

16 — aimed at fostering a locally driven constitution making process

17 — which aimed at ensuring electoral processes provided a free and fair environment for democratic space for deciding leadership transitions and governance accountability were some of the institutions that emerged from the work of the ZCC

and repressive politics leading to violent and highly contentious elections in 2000, 2002, 2005 and 2008. There was an increased cry over violence and intimidation against opposition members as well as allegations of election rigging.¹⁸ The repression was also escalated by the enforcement of the controversial Public Order and Security Act (POSA) and the Access to Information and Privacy Act (AIPA). These laws thoroughly restricted any civic social space by restricting freedom of speech, freedom of assembly, and other related freedoms. Church space became very useful since it could be used to facilitate civic engagement. It was actually during a trip to one of the prayer events that the leaders of the opposition MDC were brutalised and badly injured.¹⁹ It had become clear the church was facilitating civic space to remain open.²⁰

Indeed under so much pressure, some churches capitulated and gave in to the dictates of the repressive state.²¹ Some church leaders saw this as an opportunity for self-enrichment as some of them accepted personal favours from the government such as farms confiscated from white farmers. This weakened the voice of the church during the time when society desperately needed it. But for some church leaders, in the midst of this repression was still the environment for imagination. It was during this period that the Church, under the Zimbabwe Heads of Christian Denominations (ZHOCD), crafted the “Zimbabwe We Want²² Discussion Document” in 2006 which would sow seeds for a new constitution in 2013. The voice of the church was continuously heard as it played a crucial role by supporting the formation of government of national unity when the nation had reached an impasse following the controversial 2008 election. Although much of its role was behind the scenes, there is general agreement that the church played an important role in the formation of government of national unity in 2009.

The underlying concern of the church to have a home-grown constitution was finally realised when in 2013 churches mobilized its members to be part of the constitution making process. As noted before, this effort of the church, especially the Zimbabwe Council of churches, had started in the 1990s when the church helped in the formation of the National Constitutional Assembly (NCA) from its programs. Indeed, the establishment of the new constitution was made possible by the government of national unity. But without the support of the church, the opposition party in government remained vulnerable and the civil society battle weary after many years of repression and decline of financial resources. The church remained one of the enduring spaces for ongoing engagement because it was resourced locally and thus fundamentally not dependent on external funding. As an enduring space for ongoing engagement, the church also played a leading role in

18 — Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum; 2009

19 — www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/1545548/Beaten-blinded-but-defiant-in-face-of-Mugabe.html

20 — www.ccsf.org.zw/sites/default/files/publications/Role%20of%20the%20Church%20in%20Violence-2.pdf

21 — Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation News broadcasted scenes where high ranking ZANU-PF rallies were done with the support of Apostolic Christian Council of Zimbabwe, among others.

22 — Zimbabwe We Want, 2006 http://archive.kubatana.net/docs/relig/zim_churches_national_zim_vision_060918.pdf

expanding the available space by actively supporting the work of prominent human rights defenders such as Jestina Mukoko under the banner of the Zimbabwe Peace Project (ZPP). In essence, the Evangelical Fellowship of Zimbabwe (EFZ), the Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace (CCJP) and the ZCC were amongst the initial members of the ZPP at its formation. Individual human rights defenders such as Jestina Mukono, can be singled out as prominent during this period. But still, their work blossomed under the community radio run by churches airing from outside the country. It was from this

The decline of the opposition parties demonstrated by fragmentation after the election defeat of 2013, saw also the decline of civil society as hope for meaningful change was evaporating and as some civil society actors sought to recalibrate their legitimacy partly by re-adopting people-centeredness as compared to partisanship. Additionally, the decline of civil society during that period could also be explained by fear of victimization and prosecution by the Mugabe administration. Economic decline also saw the civil space closing as many NGOs lost the capacity to occupy space left void by a waning opposition. In 2014, the Zimbabwe Council of Churches commemorated 50 years of its founding and used the occasion to celebrate its past successes, reflect on its limitations and ponder its future. The occasion helped to highlight the fact that Zimbabwe had just turned 34 from independence from colonial rule. This occasion did, however, not raise the profile of the ZCC to the level of its potential. Other initiatives such as the Ecumenical Church Leaders' Forum and the Africa Sustainable Peace Institution for Research and Education (ASPIRE) emerged to fill the void left by the Church's inaction. The ASPIRE meeting in 2015 to deliberate on the contextualisation of the SDGs in Zimbabwe was attended by both clergy and civil society actors, sought to show how the church could use their influence to the realisation of the SDGs, especially Goal 16.

In 2016, ASPIRE did another research and the prognosis showed that instead of exhibiting signs of democratic development and good governance, the nation had actually slid into a ditch from which it was unable to extricate itself characterised by deep societal divisions, apathy and acute economic decomposition. The study was necessitated by the observation that the internal succession struggle within the ruling party was getting out of hand and had intensified in 2016. The ZCC, together with the Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops' Conference, produced several pastoral letters to warn that such hyped public confrontation within the ruling party could no longer be sustained. The equally fragmented and under-resourced civil society could not take advantage of this situation. In effect, a number of developments worked against attempts at galvanising a collective voice amongst civil society, not least the fierce competition for resources and the discernible dearth of strategic leadership.

Not heeding to the call of the church, the situation in the ruling party escalated with the expulsion of the vice-President, E.D. Mnangagwa, at the end of 2017 triggering the intervention of the military, leading to the resignation of the President R.G. Mugabe. This situation created a new crisis for civil society since on one hand there was celebration that with the departure of Mugabe there will be new space for civil society. But there was another concern whether the military, once they had tested power, would allow civil engagement.

The Zimbabwe Council of Churches immediately organised civil society to coalesce around a common agenda to engage the new regime. Guided by its 2017–2020 strategic plan which was actually based on the SDG Goal 16, the ZCC offered a safe space for civil society to converge and organize under the National People’s Convention (NPC). The NPC became the new space under which civil society, labour, church and social movements would redefine their engagement. In broad terms, the key messages from the NPC have centered on speeding up of: the alignment of laws with the constitution and constitutionalism; democratization; social service delivery and effective redress of historical atrocities and fragmentation in the Zimbabwean society. *See Annex 5.2 for further details, which is an NPC Outcome Statement that was presented to the new administration.*

In addition to the use of secondary data through document analysis, the research team conducted Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) disaggregated by gender and age in 5 Districts across Zimbabwe. These discussions captured perceptions of different social groups through a series of guided questions that elicit their knowledge, attitudes and impressions concerning the specific project outcomes. The FGDs incorporated a community scorecard in which church members rated responsiveness and accountability of power holders as well as their own capacity and confidence to hold power holders to account using a grading system in the form of scores.

Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) were conducted with participants derived from all ecumenical forums in the Church and the local church leadership. Key informants were purposively selected, considering their particular knowledge and participation in areas of concerns to specific partners and their outcomes. The research also employed questionnaires and surveys through triangulation so that one tool compliments the short falls of the other.

Chapter 6

The role of faith-based NGOs in service and advocacy in a rapidly changing China

Theresa C. Carino¹

With the recent spate of violence, propagated internationally by individuals or groups claiming religious allegiance and motivation, there is much skepticism about the value and relevance of religion. The Pew Research Center suggests that roughly one-third of 198 observed countries experienced some kind of hostility in which religious motivations play a role.²

Yet, governments in the west have, in the last few years, been stressing the positive role of religion in development. The new interest has to do with the growing recognition that religion has remained a significant global force in shaping public life. More than 80 percent of the global population affiliates with a religion, and religious values and religious leaders influence the thoughts and actions of billions of people.³ They own outright about 8 percent of the habitable surface of the planet while a further 15 percent is considered sacred – sacred mountains, rivers, valleys and cities. They run over 50 percent of all the schools worldwide – including 64 percent of all schools in Sub-Saharan Africa according to United Nations Children’s Fund.⁴

Growth of the NGO sector in China

In China, the interest in the role of faith-based organizations (FBOs) became evident after the latter’s visible and relatively significant participation in relief efforts after the highly destructive Sichuan earthquake of 2008. This was a significant turning point in the state’s

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2 — Ulrich Nitschke and Bennet Gabriel, “The International Partnership on Religion and Sustainable Development/PaRD: A global and inclusive partnership to harness the positive impact of religion in Development and Humanitarian Assistance”, in *Ecumenical Review* No. 68(4), December 2016: 378-386: cited here: 378

3 — Nitschke and Bennet (2016): 379-80

4 — Joanne O’Brien and Martin Palmer, *The Atlas of Religion*. Oakland, CA: University of California Press, (2007).

recognition of the tremendous contributions that non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and religious organizations can make.

In early 2012, six ministries including the State Bureau of Religious Affairs, in conjunction with the Central United Front Work Department, the Ministry of Civil Affairs, the National Development and Reform Commission, the Ministry of Finance and the State Administration of Taxation, jointly issued the “Advice about Encouraging and regulating Charity Work done by Religious Communities”.⁵

This paper will indicate some of the trends that are taking place in the NGO sector in China and how, some FBOs, like the Amity Foundation, are moving towards advocacy rather than simply providing services.

In the last decade, the numbers and types of NGOs in China have grown considerably. The range of nonprofit, philanthropic and other social organizations has expanded rapidly, as have their fields of activity, including their partnerships with the government and business sectors.

NGOs of various kinds are moving gradually but steadily from the margins of society into the mainstream.

The Chinese government has encouraged the incubation of service delivery organizations at the grassroots so there has been an explosion in grassroots organizations providing services for the disabled, abandoned children and the elderly. But increasingly, there are also organizations that provide assistance and legal aid to migrant workers, promote the rights of the disabled, and those living with HIV/AIDS. There are voluntary groups providing shelters to children and women suffering from domestic violence. There are groups that are monitoring water pollution in rivers and lakes. There are women’s groups advocating gender equality. Many of these groups may not be registered. Official statistics indicate that there are over 600,000 registered NGOs in China. Many more than that have, however, not been registered, or have been registered as non-profit enterprises due to the challenging requirements for registration. Nevertheless, in 2015, the Ministry of Civil Affairs reported

5 — Qiu Zhonghui, “Preface”, Theresa C. Carino (ed.), *Christianity and Social Development in China*. Hong Kong: Amity Foundation (2014): v

that in the whole of China, social service organizations had grown to 1,668,000 an increase of 6.8 percent over the previous year.⁶

Working with vulnerable groups in the Chinese context

To explain how I see advocacy work being done in the Chinese context I will focus mainly on the work of the Amity Foundation. Founded by Bishop K. H. Ting in 1985, Amity is both an NGO and a FBO. It has a dual identity in the sense that it operates like most NGOs in China but from its inception, has had links with churches in China and overseas.

Like many NGOs and FBOs over the last 30 years, Amity has been providing much needed help to the poor and vulnerable. Statistics from the Ministry of Civil Affairs in 2014 have indicated that 74 percent of private orphanages in China are operated by individuals or organizations with a religious background.⁷ Catholic and Protestant organizations have also been involved in HIV/AIDS prevention work, providing much needed awareness-raising in communities and support for people living with AIDS. In their work with vulnerable peoples, FBOs do not just deliver services, they work at changing mindsets and attitudes. People suffering from HIV/AIDS, disabilities and mental illness have always suffered humiliations and stigma from the public, including from their own families. Eliminating stigma associated with HIV/AIDS, disabilities and mental illness is one of the major concerns and outcomes of NGO/FBO work.

Social change and adaptive governance

Chinese NGOs approach change in an incremental way and mirror China's overall approach to reforms. We have seen the Chinese government's pragmatic approach to economic reforms: that is, to hold limited or controlled experimentations, initiating many pilot programs or creating special economic zones to determine the right policies. Successful "models" are then replicated on a

6 — Ministry of Civil Affairs, "Growth in Social Organizations", 2015, www.mca.gov.cn/article/sj/tjgb/201506/201506008324399.shtml

7 — Ministry of Civil Affairs, People's Republic of China, "Notes on Information Concerning homes run by Religious Organizations for Orphans and Abandoned Babies", 2014, www.mca.gov.cn/article/zwgk/jd/201405/20140500631722.shtml

larger scale from the county and municipal levels upwards to provincial and national levels.

Sebastian Heilmann has aptly described how this approach has been used in introducing change and reforms in China in various sectors.⁸ In his case study of how technology is upgraded in the manufacturing sector, he notes a striking combination of central coordination with local experimentation during implementation that is in turn fed back into national program adjustments and policy diffusion.⁹ Heilmann has used the term *adaptive governance* to describe this pragmatic and seemingly effective approach by the Chinese government to reforms and socio-economic change.

In the same manner, in the Chinese social context, ‘model projects’ constitute a practical form of ‘advocacy’ by civil society organizations (CSOs) using a bottom up approach. Rather than pose direct challenges to the state or making open critiques, many NGOs/FBOs prefer to present viable, workable solutions to social problems. By proving the efficacy and impact of a ‘development model’ at the micro or local levels, they can persuade and convince local governments to adopt these models or approaches that are then scaled up.

An illustration of this approach can be gleaned from Amity’s work on HIV/AIDS prevention. Amity started education in HIV/AIDS prevention in the 1990s, even before China’s policies were announced. A three-year AIDS Prevention Education Program was started in one county in Yunnan in 1996 with the local government. It offered training courses for AIDS educators at the county, township, and village levels. AIDS education materials were distributed and AIDS prevention knowledge was transmitted through mass media, schools and publicly posted slogans. House-to-house visits were made to both infected and uninfected people. The program won much praise from local and foreign experts as well as from the people and the local governments. As a result, the program was scaled up and gained more government investment in it, expanding to more areas and adding new and important elements to the project.

8 — Sebastian Heilmann, Lea Shih and Andreas Hofem, “National Planning and Local Technology Zones: Experimental Governance in China’s Torch Program”, 2013, www.uva.nl/binaries/content/assets/subsites/netherlands-china-law-centre/seminars-gsinc-bestanden/paper-by-heilmann-shih-and-hofem-about-governance-in-china.pdf

9 — Heilmann et.al (2013): 2. The Torch Program was launched in 1988 to promote the commercialization of Chinese R&D, which is the diffusion of new technologies to production and markets. The Torch Program governs a group of presently 83 high-technology zones (HTZs) that have made a disproportionately strong contribution to Chinese exports of higher-value, technology-intensive products.

Transmitting new concepts in development

In this way, NGOs have been channels for transmitting ‘modern concepts and approaches to development’ through exchanges and experimental or pioneering projects.

One important concept has been that of *participatory development* – which involves notions of self-reliance and democratization at the village level. This has been promoted, since Amity’s inception, as part of poverty reduction projects.

In practice, this has, for example, involved an insistence on farmer or stakeholder participation in the design, implementation and assessment of rural poverty reduction projects. Local officials are required to attend workshops together with farmer leaders to jointly prioritize project goals and targets. Project committees must have equal gender representation and financial contributions, based on the Three-in-one concept. Amity usually contributes one-third of project costs, the local government provides another third and farmers make contributions either in cash or in kind. This approach has fostered a stronger sense of project ownership among stakeholders and have led to changes in attitudes among Amity’s local government partners. After several years of partnering with Amity, they have been observed to be more consultative and community-based in their approaches to local governance.

Both in its rural and urban projects, Amity pays close attention to building sustainable communities. This has been best illustrated in its post disaster reconstruction of 900 homes for 4,000 people at Woyun Village in Sichuan in 2008 after a devastating earthquake. To assist its reconstruction efforts, Amity invited a volunteer team of professional architects from the prestigious Hong Kong Institute of Architects (HKIA). John Ng, leader of the volunteer team, stressed the following philosophy: “The main issue is how to build a *sustainable community*. It’s not just environmental but also social. The environmental aspects include conservation, ecological resources, agricultural farming. The social aspects are often neglected. The way homes are built and located, the hardware around, all of these affect social interaction, social participation and community cohesiveness.”¹⁰

In the rebuilding of Woyun Village, frequent consultation with the villagers was essential. After taking careful notes of the terrain, traditional customs and designs, and expressed needs of the villagers, the Hong Kong architects started drafting some initial architectural

10 — Theresa C. Carino, Interview with Mr. John Ng, Chair of the Hong Kong Institute of Architects, on 3 August 2013 at Royal Yacht Club in Hong Kong

plans and designs. The designs were then posted on walls in public places so that farmers could study them and make further alterations to suit their individual needs.

Planning for community rebuilding and environment also included attention to demographics. As close to 16 percent of Woyun's population were over 60 years of age, Amity encouraged households to have three or even four generations living together by providing additional financial incentives. The architects proposed more clustering of homes with better access to infrastructure such as roads to ensure fairness to all. Farmers liked the suggestions and decided to trade lands and house lots so that the entire village would have a more 'rational layout' and families would be closer to their relatives.

Building social cohesiveness required space for more social gatherings. Consideration was given to community-based areas for relaxation and entertainment such as eating places or village 'diners' to encourage more social interaction. Public spaces were provided to facilitate and strengthen communal interaction among households. Preserving and expressing the local culture was also given emphasis. The architects paid much attention to the cultural and design preferences of the local area such as wall murals featuring a local art style called *nian hua*, decorative main gates and grills. To accommodate local practices and farmers' preferences, toilets and 'wet areas' were located at the back of the house.

The villagers' active participation in home rebuilding had a collective and positive psycho-social effect on the community. Their shared, common interest led to mutual help in the process of construction and they assisted one another in ensuring that homes would be built to last and to withstand another earthquake. The sharing of knowledge and mutual help contributed to a much-needed sense of safety and security that aided in the overall sense of recovery and normalcy.

Transformative effects

In the process of reconstruction in Woyun Village, a new concept was introduced by Amity staff when additional funding was offered to 'vulnerable groups'. This provision was predicated on the understanding that it would be the villagers themselves who would have to decide, through a consultative process, on how "vulnerable groups" would be defined and who in the village would be included in that category. "Initially, villagers did not understand why Amity wanted them to identify the vulnerable persons in the village. They felt they had all suffered equally in the earthquake and had lost everything. They felt vulnerable."¹¹ Through three days of intense discussion, consultation and debate on 'equality and fairness', Amity finally convinced farmers to draw up their own lists of vulnerable households. Ultimately, farmers did identify 43 vulnerable households that had lower incomes, and with family members who were elderly, disabled or in ill-health.

11 — Theresa C. Carino, Interview with He Wen, Associate General Secretary, Amity Foundation on 23 July 2013 at Amity Foundation Headquarters in Nanjing

After the debates on ‘vulnerable groups’, villagers began to give greater consideration and sympathy to those less fortunate than themselves. This heightened social sensitivity was collectively expressed when the villagers spontaneously collected funds to donate to Taiwan flood victims in 2009 and again to victims of the Ya’an earthquake in China in 2013.

The de-stigmatization of vulnerable groups has also featured prominently in Amity’s work with HIV/AIDS sufferers. In churches where congregations still have very limited knowledge about AIDS, it is a common belief that the disease is a product of sin and those infected deserve to be punished. In one city where a third of the local tricycles used for public transport were driven by people infected with AIDS, HIV positive drivers began to lose their livelihoods as a result of stigmatization. It was only after intensive training sessions on HIV/AIDS that church-goers began to empathize and change their mindsets towards those living with AIDS.¹² In 2017, in an effort to further raise public awareness and understanding about HIV/AIDS, Amity sponsored a cross-country tour on motorbike by a well-known HIV-positive rider who is advocating “Zero Discrimination”¹³.

Amity’s bottom-up, participatory approach has been challenging for officials accustomed to a top-down style of working. The village head of Woyun Village acknowledged that Amity’s dedication, efficiency and transparency in governance gained villagers confidence and admiration, leading to considerable pressure on local government leaders in surrounding villages to perform better.

It has been argued that the state’s pro-philanthropy policies are in fact twenty years behind the religious groups’ initiative in providing social services.¹⁴

Wu Keping’s study has tried to show that the engagement in philanthropy was not a top-down process but rather the result of an interactive process between top-down policies and bottom-up grassroots efforts from religious groups and individuals who have been pushing the boundaries all along. This was only possible when the state has ‘one eye open and one eye closed’ to such matters. The success of early experiments with religious philanthropy by innovative religious actors should be partly attributed to this blind-eyed governance.¹⁵ The positive influence on local governance has led to the opening of more space for FBOs through more refined legislation.

12 — Kou Weiwei, “Christian Social Responsibility: Practising Love and Serving Neighbors” in Theresa Carino (ed.), *Christianity and Social Development in China*. Hong Kong: Amity Foundation, (2014): 245-247

13 — The Amity Foundation, “Medical Service and Public Health”, *Amity Annual Report 2017*: 37

14 — Wu Keping, “The Philanthropic Turn of Religions in Post-Mao China: An Interactional Perspective”, Asia Research Institute Working Paper Series No. 235, March 2015: 6, www.ari.nus.edu.sg/wps/wps15_235.pdf

15 — Wu (2015): 6

Values that religions contribute to sustainable development

Besides working with local governments, Amity also works with local churches in China.

In a recent training program in Nanjing for local churches on the theology and practice of diakonia, it has become evident that a considerable number of churches in many provinces have begun to run social services for vulnerable groups ranging from elder care centers, orphanages, centers for training the mentally and physically disabled, to health clinics and hospitals.

Churches or FBOs related to churches have also begun to reach out to migrant workers' children, responding to the physical and psychological needs of children, women and the elderly left behind in villages, and orphans living with HIV/AIDS. In some urban congregations, there has been growing consciousness of the need to contribute towards ecological conservation and to reduce the carbon footprint of the Chinese population.

It is increasingly acknowledged that spiritual transformation is essential to social transformation. While the purely market economy stresses profit and competition, highlighting advantage and personal gains, religious values help to contain such extremes of capitalism.¹⁶ For Christians, the Bible does not speak of “development” but of human dignity, equality and social justice rooted in the understanding that human beings are created in the image of God. Values of love and compassion nurture human growth and well-being.

Compassion, however, is not a monopoly of Christianity. In China, philanthropy is framed by the religious traditions of Confucianism, Buddhism, and Daoism – the “Three Teachings” that shape the philosophical framework instilling values and motivations for philanthropic behavior.

16 — Fenggang Yang, “Market Economy and the Revival of Religions”, David A. Palmer, Glenn Shive, and Philip L. Wickeri (eds.), *Chinese Religious Life*. New York: Oxford University Press, (2011): 209-226

Similar to the modern definition of charity and philanthropy, followers of the “Three Teachings” are motivated to help others and practice kindness. Confucianism emphasizes the responsibilities of caring for one’s family, while Buddhism stresses compassion. Daoism exhorts people to be aware of the needs of others, the people surrounding them.¹⁷

Despite its Christian background, which has always been a sensitive issue given Christianity’s history and association with the west, Amity has recently been designated as a training center for the five major religions (Buddhism, Catholicism, Daoism, Islam and Protestant Christianity) in social development in Jiangsu Province where it is located.¹⁸ This attests to the support and understanding for Amity from the local government that has been built on its social contributions through the years. It represents a breakthrough in the recognition of the role FBOs can play. In a further move, the local government offered free office space for all the five religions in one building, ensuring more contact and exchanges among them.

Rise of Chinese philanthropy and NGOs going abroad

In the last fifteen years, Amity has been one among dozens of Chinese NGOs that have been carrying out social development projects and emergency humanitarian response in countries outside of China such as Nepal, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, Kenya and Ethiopia. Amity Foundation has contributed to post-typhoon relief in the Philippines especially in the wake of the major disasters wrought by typhoons Ondoy (2009) and Haiyan (2013), working in tandem with a local youth organization and using grants from the Hong Kong Government’s Disaster Relief Fund. It has contributed to the use of renewable energy in the form of biogas digesters in Madagascar, working with an international partner and with local churches. More recently, Amity has worked with its overseas partners in earthquake relief in Nepal (2015), in drought relief in Ethiopia (2017) and in flood relief in Sri Lanka (2017). In some instances, funds for humanitarian work have been raised online, as was true in the response to the earthquake in Nepal.

What is notable in the last 5 years has been the heightened public response to disasters both in China and overseas and the willingness of individuals to contribute. Public awareness of social needs has been heightened in China by the new development in online fund-raising for social causes supported by internet and e-commerce giants such as Tencent and Alibaba. In 2017, on September 9th dubbed “9/9 Charity Day”, several million netizens were motivated to donate 1.3 billion RMB to social causes in a matter of three days – an increase

17 — Andre Laliberte, David A. Palmer and Keping Wu, “Religious Philanthropy and Chinese Civil Society”, David A. Palmer, Glenn Shive and Philip L Wickeri (eds.), *Chinese Religious Life*. New York: Oxford University Press, (2011): 139-151

18 — Qiu Zhonghui (2014): 28. The five “major religions” officially acknowledged in China refer to Catholicism, Protestantism, Buddhism, Taoism and Islam.

compared to the previous year.¹⁹ The amount included 829.9 million RMB from the public, 299.99 million RMB from the hosting social media company's Tencent Foundation as a 'matching fund' and 177 million RMB from social enterprises, according to figures published by Tencent. This benefitted 6,500 projects throughout China.

Public donations used to be state-led in the past but recent years have shown the power of the internet and new media to mobilize resources from the general public to support social causes. This has broadened the support base for civil society organizations to engage in social development.

Remaining challenges

In his recent speech to African representatives in Beijing, Liu Yongfu, minister of the State Council Leading Group Office of Poverty Alleviation and Development stated that "The rural poor population decreased from 99 million in 2012 to 30.5 million in 2017, a total decrease of 68.5 million and an annual decrease of 13.7 million. Poverty incidence decreased from 10.2% to 3.1%.²⁰ He added that in 2017, the per-capita disposable income of rural residents in poor areas reached 9,377 yuan (about 1,400 dollars), an increase of over 50 percent compared with that in 2013, and the gap between this per-capita disposable income and the national rural average was further narrowed.

However, according to the 2018 Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI), while only 1.4 percent of the Chinese people live under the income poverty line of 1.9 dollars (purchasing power parity), some 4 percent are multi-dimensionally poor.²¹ The MPI, introduced in 2010 by the UNDP, looks beyond income to understand how people experience poverty in multiple and simultaneous ways. It identifies how people are being left behind across three key dimensions: health, education and living standards. Those deprived in at least of a third of the MPI's components are defined as multi-dimensionally poor.²²

19 — China Development Brief, "Third '9/9 Philanthropy Day' raises 1.3 billion", 11 September 2017, <http://chinadevelopmentbrief.cn/news/third-99-philanthropy-day-raises-1-3-billion/>

20 — Liu Yongfu, "Speech at the FOCAC Africa-China Poverty Reduction and Development Conference", 14 August 2018, http://p.china.org.cn/2018-08/14/content_58688352.htm

21 — China Daily, "China's precise poverty reduction inspiring as 'multidimensional poverty' hits children worst: expert", 21 September 2018, <https://europe.chinadaily.com.cn/a/201809/21/WS5ba46250a310c4c-c775e788f.html>

22 — China Daily (2018)

Conclusion

Officials have claimed that every month, about 1 million people are being lifted out of poverty in China and the government’s current target is to “eliminate poverty” by 2020, ten years ahead of the SDGs 2030. Even if this is attained, the disabled and elderly will still remain among the most disadvantaged in Chinese society.

The official press reported in 2018, there are around 85 million people in China with some form of disability.²³ It is noteworthy that more attention and support are now being given to those living with mental and physical disabilities. The President of the China Federation for the Disabled has said that in the last 5 years, more than 1.7 million households with disabled members have had their unsafe houses renovated and 20 million received physical rehabilitation services.²⁴ The readiness to invest more for poverty alleviation and to improve conditions for people with disability is admirable.

Nevertheless, there remain huge challenges linked to poverty and social marginalization in China. Unless marked improvements are made in the education, training and employment for the disabled and in removing discrimination and stigma against them, they will still remain the poorest in society. In this context, NGOs can play an important role in bringing about change.

For many governments, poverty alleviation is a question of financial means, technology and markets. This may be true to some extent but it means that a ‘gospel’ of technical progress and of prosperity for all is being preached. Development aid has too often focused on the transfer of knowledge, technology and capital, without sufficiently taking into consideration local cultural and religious conditions and ordinary people’s worldviews.²⁵ There must be a more holistic understanding of development. For most people in the ‘global south’, existence is understood holistically, whereby the material and spiritual are intertwined. Welfare therefore should be understood as well-being in the broadest sense. It is the values and the people-oriented approach of FBOs that make a difference. In China, scholars who have studied FBOs have emphasized the importance of the normative in FBO contributions to sustainable development. FBOs such as Amity Foundation and its

²³ — Li Lei, “Improving lives of disabled people will be priority”, in *China Daily*, 15-16 September 2018, front page

²⁴ — Li (2018)

²⁵ — Kjell Nordstokke, “Faith-based Organizations and their distinctive assets”, in Kenneth Mtata (ed.), *Religion: Help or Hindrance to Development*. Lutheran World Federation, (2013): 227

Catholic counterpart, Jinde Charities, have pioneered in many areas that were considered difficult and taboo. In 1997, both organizations began work on HIV/AIDS education and prevention when it was still a little known disease.

Chinese scholar Wei Dedong has observed that projects involving leprosy patients and disabled infants require much devotion and commitment. Many Catholic nuns spend their entire lives providing that service. After a visit to a care center for people with disabilities run by Catholic nuns in Hebei, a monk from a Buddhist orphanage was impressed by what he observed as “the upholding of God’s love and the replacement of complete despair with the greatest mercy”. This magnificent compassion has much to do with religious faith. “Religion casts love in the darkest and coldest corners.”²⁶

Like most Chinese NGOs, Amity Foundation has tried to work within the political boundaries, quietly promoting and creating ‘space’ for ‘alternative’ development strategies.

In the present Chinese context, Amity’s collaboration with the state sector, particularly at the grassroots level, provides opportunities to introduce new approaches and attitudes toward development.

I see more and more NGOs engaged in rights-based work, including humanitarian response to disasters, working against domestic violence, and promoting the rights of the disabled.

Amity’s contribution includes its insistence on participatory management, gender equality, leadership development and ecological sustainability. Successful projects can become models for replication, have a multiplier effect and eventually impact policy formulation.

From the beginning, Amity has articulated the need to raise democratic consciousness and encourage participatory management. For Amity, education in democratic citizenship is part of development work, and project management is a learning process toward community-based development and participatory development.

In the end, advocacy is not only about policy or structural change but also about the changing of public attitudes and mindsets. Chinese NGOs challenge the development agenda through their practices rather than through direct criticism or confrontation with the government. In this respect, there remain many gray areas for experimentation and innovation in social development practices despite political constraints. I believe there is actually more social and political space for civil society than the legal framework might suggest.

26 — Dedong Wei, “Subjective Consciousness, The Core Driving Force of Religious Charity: A Case Study of Jinde Charities”, Theresa C. Carino (ed.), *Christianity and Social Development in China*. Hong Kong: Amity Foundation, (2014): 83-94

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Ethics of Integral Development

Chapter 7

Buen Vivir. An existing utopia and a concept under construction

by Alberto Acosta¹

**First, they ignore you,
then they laugh at you,
then they fight you,
then you win.
*Mahatma Gandhi***

Despite change and readjustment efforts at the dawn of the 21st century, the concept of ‘development’ has faded more quickly than in previous decades. This has been influenced by neoliberalism and its failure in Latin America, which does not mean that neoliberalism is definitively defeated.

This failure served as an impulse to several political changes in some Latin American countries, whose clearest expression has been the coming to power of South American *progressivism*. No doubt there were various processes at play, and each progressive government has a different flavour, but all of them shared a rejection of neoliberal reductionism. The aim was to re-engage with sections of the populace, to defend the leading role of the State and to take more energetic action to reduce poverty, while granting feminist, ecological and de-colonial demands.

In this way, various Latin American countries began to move gradually along a post-neoliberal path, highlighting the return of the State to economic management. However, this path has not even begun to approach ‘post-development’ and, still less, post-capitalism. Progressives did not transform the ‘productive matrix’ of their countries; on the contrary, they drowned in new and massive resource extractions. They did not affect the

¹ — Alberto Acosta, Ecuadorian economist; university professor; former Minister of Energy and Mines; former President of the 2007 Constituent Assembly. Author of numerous publications. N.B. Many of the reflections in this article are part of this writer’s ongoing process of learning for more than a decade. Particularly noteworthy is Alberto Acosta’s *El Buen Vivir Sumak Kawsay, una oportunidad para imaginar otros mundos* (*Buen Vivir Sumak Kawsay, an opportunity to imagine other worlds*). Quito: Abya-Yala, (2012) and Barcelona: ICARIA, (2013). This book has been published in continuously revised and expanded editions, in French: *Utopia*, (2014); in German: Oekom Verlag, (2015); in Portuguese: Editorial Autonomía Literária and Editorial Elefante, (2016); in Dutch: Uitgeverij Ten Have, (2018).

wealth concentrating matrix: the poor did a little better, as long as the boom in raw material prices lasted, and the rich much better. Nor did they definitively leave neoliberalism behind. In some cases, such as Ecuador, progressivism ended up returning to neoliberal practices and even open and liberalising visions; it is enough to point that, in Ecuador, the progressive government signed a free trade agreement with the neoliberal European Union (EU), similar to the agreement reached by the neoliberal governments of Colombia and Peru with the neoliberal EU.

At the end of the day, beyond progressive and ‘revolutionary’ discourses, progressive Latin American governments have maintained the model of accumulation by extraction inherited from colonial times and dominant throughout the republican era. It is evident that this extractivist route leads to a dead end. Putting it in Albert Einstein’s words, “nothing is a more real sign of foolishness than to do the same thing and the same thing over and over again, and expect the results to be different.”²

Here a question must strike us:

Is it possible to escape from the ghost of ‘development’ by constructing new utopias to guide us? This is, without doubt, the great task, to recover and build utopias, the possibility and viability of which must be built.

The task, in reality, is framed with post-capitalism as its horizon, not just post-neoliberalism.

In this context of criticism and alternative constructions, the contributions of indigenous peoples have gained a new prominence. Their values, their experiences, their practices, in short, their *Weltanschauung* were here before the arrival of the European conquerors. In the republican period they continued to be invisible, marginalised or openly combated. Their proposals include some questioning of ‘development’, both practical and conceptual.

These original proposals emerged at a time of generalised crisis of the nation-state, with its oligarchic and colonial roots, thanks to the growing organisational and programmatic strength of the indigenous and popular movements. Their emergence – as vigorous political actors – explains the appearance of *Buen Vivir*. In this scenario also began to consolidate the questions and ecological alternatives, many aligned with the vision of harmonies with nature proper to *Buen Vivir*.

2 — Note of the editors: Albert Einstein is broadly credited with exclaiming “The definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over again, but expecting different results”. It truly doesn’t make a difference that there’s truly no proof that Einstein really put forth this expression; it’s still an awesome quote!

When we talk about *Buen Vivir* (‘collective well-being’) or *sumak kawsay* we propose, primarily, reconstruction from the utopian point of view of an Andean and Amazonian future, without denying other very powerful contributions such as *eco-swaraj* in India or *ubuntu* in Africa.³

This approach cannot be exclusive or conform to dogmatic visions. They must necessarily complement each other and to be expanded incorporating other discourses and other proposals coming from different regions of the planet, spiritually related in their struggle for a civilising transformation inspired from visions that point towards the construction and reconstruction of the *pluriverse*.

Buen Vivir, a proposal for reconstruction and construction

Buen Vivir or *sumak kawsay* – being above all a political discourse – does not synthesise any totally elaborated or indisputable proposal, as it does not emerge from academic reflections, nor from proposals elaborated in any political party. And, by the way, if *Buen Vivir* comes from a millenary Andean-Amazonian matrix, it is carrier of other rationalities and other ways of thinking and seeing. It is very complex, if not impossible, to understand

3 — The list of texts dealing with this subject is getting longer and longer. It is convenient to know, besides the works of the author of these lines, the contributions of Atawallpa Oviedo Freire, for example, *Qué es el sumakawsay – Más allá del socialismo y capitalismo* (*What is sumakawsay – Beyond socialism and capitalism*). Quito, (2011). Another key author is Fernando Huanacuni Mamani, *Vivir Bien/Buen Vivir. Filosofía, políticas, estrategias y experiencias regionales andinas* (*Buen Vivir/Vivir Bien. Andean Regional Philosophy, Policies, Strategies and Experiences*). Convenio Andrés Bello, International Research Institute and CAO, La Paz, (2010). An important text is the book already quoted by Omar Felipe Giraldo (2014). We could also mention the contributions of Eduardo Gudynas, by way of example, the article *Buen Vivir: sobre secuestros, domesticaciones, rescates y alternativas* (*Buen Vivir: kidnappings, domestications, ransoms and alternatives*), in Atawallpa Oviedo Freire (ed.), *Bifurcación del Buen Vivir y el sumak kawsay* (*Bifurcation of Buen Vivir and Sumak Kawsay*). Quito: SUMAK Editions, (2014): 18-40; also in the same book, Josef Estermann’s article, *Ecosofía andina. Un paradigma alternativo de convivencia cósmica y de vida plena*. (*Andean Ecosophy. An alternative paradigm of cosmic coexistence and full life*). Pablo Solón’s contribution is remarkable: *¿Es posible el Buen Vivir?, Reflexiones a Quema Ropa sobre Alternativas Sistémicas* (*Is the Good Life Possible? Reflections to Quema Clopa on Alternative Systems*), La Paz, (2016). You can also read related visions that are helpful: François Houtart, *El concepto del sumak kawsay (Buen Vivir) y su correspondencia con el bien común de la humanidad*. (*The concept of sumak kawsay (Buen Vivir) and its correspondence to the common good of humanity*), in *Ecuador Debate* 84, (2011): 57-76

it using the theoretical instruments of Modernity. It does not seek to assume the role of a global mandate, as happened with ‘development’ in the mid-twentieth century. *Buen Vivir* is a path which must be imagined in order to be built, on the one hand, but which is already a reality on the other hand.

These indigenous ways of seeing the world, tied to specific territories, pose different options to the western world view when they arise from non-capitalist community roots, harmonically related to Nature. From this reading,

***Buen Vivir* proposes a civilising transformation by being – at the very least – biocentric, no longer anthropocentric (although it is better to see it as a way for harmonious relations with no centre); communitarian, but without rejecting the individual; sustained in plurality and diversity, not one-dimensional and also not mono-cultural.**

As is easily perceived, the world demands a deep decolonisation,⁴ to be spelled out intellectually, politically, socially, economically, culturally, etc. This means reconstruction and construction. But, in addition, as Enrique Leff notes, imagining *Buen Vivir* not only offers us other ways of organising life, but also different ways of understanding the world.⁵ These two issues provide a synthesis with greatest potential.

Buen Vivir takes us away from the universal goal for all societies: the progress seen as productivist and ‘development’ as a single direction, especially from the mechanism of economic growth, as well as its multiple synonyms. But not only does it put them aside, *Buen Vivir* proposes a different vision, much richer in content and more complex.

In reality, *Buen Vivir* presents itself as an opportunity to collectively build new forms of life. It is not a recipe book embodied in a few constitutional articles (remember the cases of Ecuador and Bolivia) nor a simple summation of isolated practices, and even less of some good wishes of those who try to interpret *Buen Vivir* in their own way.

4 — Among the different authors who have worked on the colonality of power I highlight the contributions of the brilliant Peruvian thinker Aníbal Quijano (on this and other issues), whose most outstanding works, for the most part, are included in *Cuestiones y Horizontes. Antología Esencial. De la dependencia histórica-estructural a la colonialidad/decolonialidad del poder* (Issues and Horizons. Essential Anthology. From historical-structural dependence to the coloniality/decoloniality of power). Buenos Aires: CLACSO, (2014).

5 — Enrique Leff, *Imaginaris sociales y sustentabilidad* (Social imaginaries and sustainability) in *Cultura y representaciones sociales* 5(9), (2010): 42-121

Buen Vivir should be seen in the context of a long search for alternative ways of life forged in the heat of popular struggles, particularly of native peoples and nationalities. What is remarkable and profound about these alternative ideas is that they come from traditionally marginalised, excluded, exploited and even decimated groups. They are proposals invisible for a long time, which could now help to dismantle several concepts hitherto assumed to be indisputable.

In short, these post-development visions surpass the contributions of the heterodox currents of Latin American dependency or structuralism theories, which in reality sought ‘alternative development’, when it is increasingly necessary to generate ‘alternatives to development’. That’s what *Buen Vivir* is all about.

Buen Vivir from an indigenous utopia

Buen Vivir, as a grouping of resident practices of resistance to colonialism and its aftermath, still exists as a way of life in several indigenous communities, which have not been totally absorbed by capitalist modernity or which have resolved to remain on the margins of it.

This observation, from the outset, rules out that the indigenous world – broadly speaking – has not suffered during an endless process of conquest, as a process of exploitation and repression through the long colonial night, which has lasted into the era of independence. Colonial and capitalist influence is present in multiple forms in that world, which forces us to abandon romantic approaches to that reality. Growing segments of the indigenous population have been absorbed by the logic of monetarisation and mercantilisation proper to the capitalist market. There are indigenous groups in situations of great precariousness, trapped by the dream of the myth of progress, which – objectively speaking – will be impossible for them to achieve. And, by the way, as the migration from the countryside to the city carries on, so does the uprooting of urban indigenous people, who are gradually distancing themselves from their traditional communities.

What is important is to recover some experiences and lessons from this traditionally marginalised world, which is still denied the possibility of contributing conceptually.

To begin with,

there is no idea analogous to ‘development’ in indigenous knowledge. There is no conception of a linear process of life with a previous and subsequent state, namely ‘underdevelopment’ and ‘development’; a dichotomy that peoples and countries should go through in order to achieve well-being, as is the case in the Western World.

Nor are there concepts of wealth and poverty determined by the accumulation and lack of material goods. Moreover, the human being is seen as one more actor in Nature, not as 'its crown'.

Buen Vivir is governed by the harmonious life (or, if you will, in a 'balance') of the human being with himself, of individuals living harmoniously in community. Indeed, life in harmony between different communities is fundamental, extrapolated to peoples and nations. And everyone, individuals and communities must harmonise their lives with Nature.

This conception of life, where relationality – everything is related to everything – is preponderant, raises an incessant and complex flow of interactions and exchanges. Giving and receiving, in an endless process of reciprocity, complementarity and solidarity – this is the basis of *Buen Vivir*. In other words, the ethical stance that should govern the life of a human being is assumed: to take care of oneself and other resident beings. And in this world of harmonies life is above all other considerations. We would say, in terms of political confrontation, that in *Buen Vivir* it is the reproduction of life, not of the capital, that is of interest.

The concepts that sustain *Buen Vivir* must be understood from different approaches, denying the homogenisation of conceptions because they restrict the visions and comprehensions of others. Anyway, the core of the debates contains the holistic way of seeing community life and Pacha Mama (Mother Earth) in relation and complementarity between them. Community and Nature establish the bases to construct the proposals of *Buen Vivir*. In addition, the principles of the indigenous spiritual world – respect, solidarity, complementarity, relationality – are essential in *Buen Vivir*, its *sumak kawsay*.

It is interesting to recognise that, at the community and Ayllu level⁶ in many parts of the Andean and Amazonian region, *sumak kawsay* is an expression rarely used to describe a lifestyle and state of life. It is more that *allí kawsay* (as David Cortez, one of the greatest scholars of this subject, reminds us) is a statement of life with qualitative, subjective (good, tranquillity, love, happiness) and material elements (house, money). In that text, due to lack of space, the conceptual and philosophical bases of indigenous cultures are not explored any further.

This worldview requires, to be adequately understood, the history and presence of indigenous peoples. Thus, this process is based on the principle of historical continuity of these communities. The past and the future merge in a present of reconstruction and construction of these alternative alternatives. It is an option for the future and just as much a recognition of the past, living well in the present.

The indigenous community, *indigeneity*, without idealising it, in broad terms has a collective project for the future with a clear continuity from its past. These Andean and Amazonian utopias, which also exist in other regions of the planet, are embodied – in various ways – in their discourse, in their political projects and in social and cultural practices, including economic practices. These visions are not (or cannot be) exclusive because

6 – By 'Ayllu' a group of families related by consanguinity and affinity is referred to.

they recognise the contributions of the different social groups, but they confer a specific fundamental weight to the cultural characteristics of social groups peripheral to and marginalised by Modernity.

Here lies one of the greatest potentialities of *Buen Vivir*: to fulfil the task of apprehending – without idealising the indigenous reality – of the experiences of peoples who have lived with dignity and harmony since time immemorial. And even if these indigenous communities were to vanish as a result of permanent capitalist destruction, their experiences and memories would serve to construct new epistemic frameworks and promote alternative life projects.

From this broad indigenous perspective, it is not surprising that conventional ‘development’ has been seen as a cultural imposition inherited from Western, and therefore colonial, knowledge. It follows that many of the reactions against colonialism imply a distancing from developmentalism.

***Buen Vivir*, in short, breaks the anthropocentric logics of capitalism as a dominant civilisation and breaks with the various existing strains of socialism which must be rethought from socio-bio-centric positions and which will never be updated just by name changes.**

Let us not forget that socialists and capitalists of all kinds clashed and still clash within the framework of ‘development’ and progress. It is crucial to overcome anthropocentrism, an objective that is gaining more and more followers. Let us emphasise that criticism of anthropocentrism has even come from the Catholic Church itself. Pope Francis finished his encyclical *Laudato Si’*, by accepting that:

“modern anthropocentrism, paradoxically, has ended up placing technical reason over reality, because the human being neither feels Nature as a valid norm, nor even less as a living refuge... In modernity there has been a great anthropocentric excess.”⁷

7 — Pope Francis, *Encyclical Letter, Laudato Si’: Our Common Home*. Rome: Vatican, (2015)

Anyway, the fundamental effort lies in overcoming capitalism as a “civilisation of inequality”,⁸ in the words of the Austrian Joseph Schumpeter, and above all as a predatory and exploitative system. This is a system that “lives to suffocate life and the world of life”⁹ as the Ecuadorian philosopher Bolívar Echeverría has stated.

Buen Vivir, in short, by proposing the overcoming of capitalism, is a kind of civilising change. But this does not imply that capitalism must first be left behind in order to promote *Buen Vivir*. In fact, multiple experiences based on elements of *Buen Vivir* have survived from colonial times up to the present day.

In conclusion, *Buen Vivir* is a subversive experience of the future. It is not a mere invitation to go back in time and rediscover an idyllic and non-existent world. But, to be truly a transformative proposition, *Buen Vivir* cannot become a kind of religion with a catechism, manuals, ministries or political commissars.¹⁰

Let us clarify this because the approach to indigenous experiences from *Buen Vivir* is not free from conflicts. As it is a philosophy of life under construction, there are spaces that allow the appearance of, for example, excluding and even conforming approaches of dogmatic visions. This is a risk when we try to differentiate and even separate *Buen Vivir* from *sumak kawsay*. While this could help to better understand indigenous communities, an isolationist dogmatic position can impede a great dialogue between bodies of knowledge and wisdom that humanity is so much in need of.

Let us emphasise, of course, that *Buen Vivir* or *sumak kawsay* o *sum qamaña* is anchored “in the historical legacy of the Andean peoples, in their daily practices, in their practical wisdom”.¹¹ It is nurtured by the learning and experiences of indigenous communities, as well as their diverse ways of producing knowledge. These derive from their different ways of seeing life and their relationship with Pacha Mama. They accept as their unifying axis the relationality and complementarity between all living beings, human and non-human. It is forged from inter-culturality. It lives in economic practices based on solidarity.

And being immersed, above all, in the search and construction of alternatives from the popular and marginalised sectors, *Buen Vivir* will have to be built from below and from within each of the collectivities, based on the democratic logic of community roots. In fact, it is a proposal that arises from the periphery of countries considered to be the periphery of capitalism – ‘the periphery of the periphery’ – from historically marginalised groups. José María Tortosa describes it accurately:

8 — Joseph Schumpeter, *Capitalism, Socialism, and Democracy*, 1942; and: J.A. Schumpeter: *Capitalism, Socialism, and Democracy*: Third Edition (Harper Perennial Modern Thought) 2008

9 — Bolívar Echeverría: *Circulación capitalista y reproducción de la riqueza social. Apunte crítico sobre los esquemas de K. Marx*, México: UNAM/Quito: Nariz del diablo, 1994.

10 — See Alberto Acosta, *Riesgos y amenazas para el Buen Vivir (Risks and Threats to Buen Vivir)*, in *Ecuador Debate* 84, (2011): 51-55

11 — Hector Alimonda : *Desarrollo, posdesarrollo y “buen vivir”: reflexiones a partir de la experiencia ecuatoriana*. CRÍTICA Y EMANCIPACIÓN, [S.l.], p. 27-58, jun. 2012.

“The idea of *sumak kawsay* or *suma qamaña* is born on the social periphery of the world’s periphery and does not contain the misleading elements of conventional development. (...) the idea comes from the vocabulary of once totally marginalised peoples, excluded from respectability and whose language was considered inferior, uneducated, primitive, incapable of abstract thought. Now their vocabulary has been included in two countries’ constitutions.”¹²

It should be noted, in the case of Ecuador, that the Constitution contrasts these two concepts: ‘development’ and ‘*Buen Vivir*’, but it is no less true than in the constitutional debates – that somehow still continues – the *Buen Vivir* thesis was positioned as an ‘alternative to development’. However, in fact, the governments of Ecuador and Bolivia have used *Buen Vivir* as a slogan to propitiate a kind of return to ‘development’. Thus, by emptying it of content, it has been transformed into a device of power and a tool for government propaganda.¹³ This is one of the specific risks run by *Buen Vivir* as it is still a vision under construction.

In any case, it is worth noting that the proposal gained strength in the Constitution of the Republic of Ecuador (2008) and in the Constitution of the Plurinational State of Bolivia (2009) with a text that refers to “*Buen Vivir*” (Ecuador) or “*Vivir Bien*” (Bolivia), both expressions originating in South America’s traditionally marginalised, but still living, indigenous languages such as *sumak kawsay* (in Kichwa), the *suma qamaña* (in Aymara), the ñande *reko* o *tekó porã* (in Guaraní), the *pénker pujústin* (Shuar), *shiir waras* (Ashuar) among others. Similar notions exist amongst other indigenous peoples, for example among the Mapuches of Chile: *kyme mogen*; the Kunas of Panama: *balu wala*; the Miskitus in Nicaragua: *laman laka* but also in the Mayan tradition in Guatemala and in Chiapas in Mexico.¹⁴

Now, we must emphasise that these kinds of approaches and proposals – similar in many respects, but not necessarily the same in all respects – are also present in various

12 — José María Tortosa : *Sumak Kawsay, Suma Qamana, Buen Vivir*, in: Fundacion Carolina 2012: www.plataformabuenvivir.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/07/TortosaSumakKawsayBuenViviro9.pdf

13 — The present writer, who was president of the Constituent Assembly of Montecristi, in which the concept of *Buen Vivir* or *sumak kawsay* was incorporated, knows how complicated this discussion was, in which at times the idea of an “alternative development” prevailed and not necessarily an “alternative to development”.

14 — It is important to note that the translations of these terms are not simple and not without controversy. Currently, diverse and even contradictory descriptions and definitions are in vogue. Among many contributions on the topic, which is not addressed in this paper, there are interesting reflections from the Sarayaku community in the province of Pastaza, Ecuador. In this community an interesting “life plan” has been elaborated and discussed, where fundamental principles of *Buen Vivir* are synthesised.

other places, with various names and characteristics. These are values, experiences and, above all, practices existing in different periods and regions of Mother Earth. It should be noted that *ubuntu* (the sense of community: *a person is a person only in relation to other people and other living beings*) in Africa¹⁵ or *eco-swaraj* (radical ecological democracy) in India portray and convey similar concepts.¹⁶ The concept could also incorporate the powerful reflections of the *svadeshi* which captures much of Mahatma Gandhi's thought.

While *Buen Vivir* – as well as all the other currents we have just described – cannot deny the existence of conflicts, however, it does not exacerbate them by pretending that society is organised around the permanent and inequitable accumulation of material goods and power, moved by an endless competition between human beings who, by the way, destructively appropriate Nature. Human beings, in this way of seeing life, cannot be seen as a threat or as subjects to be defeated and defeated. Nor can Nature be seen as a mass of objects to be exploited.

Buen Vivir collects the best of practices, wisdoms, experiences, knowledge from indigenous peoples and nationalities. *Buen Vivir* is the essence of indigenous or native philosophy, in a broad sense, in that it applies to all that is relative to a particular people originating in the territory that they inhabit. In short, the aim is to get to know those civilisations that possessed organisational traditions prior to the appearance of the modern state and which represent cultures that survived and survive the colonising expansion of Western civilisation. This approach seeks to know the contributions of community life that has managed to survive within the dominant systems of a colonisation that has already lasted more than 500 years.

In short, the concepts of *sumak kawsay*, *allí kawsay*, *suma qamaña* and *Buen Vivir* or *Vivir Bien* can be understood from different approaches and visions. There is no accurate translation from one language to another, so we cannot find correct synonyms but only equivalents. The homogenisation and over-positioning of a concept restricts the visions and understandings of others.

This is fundamental. We must be careful not to manipulate – or allow to be manipulated – the concept of *Buen Vivir*, distorting its meaning and scope. That is what happened in Ecuador and Bolivia. There, as we have already pointed out, the concept has been emptied of its content by governments. It does not matter at all that this worldview – *Buen Vivir* or *Vivir Bien*, including its translation into indigenous languages – has been incorporated into the Constitution of the Republic of Ecuador (2008) and the Constitution of the Plurinational State of Bolivia (2009). In these countries – where they even talk about *Buen Vivir socialism*, *community socialism* or *biosocialism* – a neo-developmentalism is unfolding, sustained by

15 – A brief approximation to the topic is available in the book of Giacomo D'Alisa, Federico Demaria and Giorgios Kallis (eds.), *Decrecimiento. Vocabulario para una nueva era* (*Decrease. Vocabulary for a new era*). Barcelona: ICARIA, (2015).

16 – Kothari, Ashish, Federico Demaria and Alberto Acosta, "Buen Vivir, Degrowth and Ecological Swaraj: Alternatives to sustainable development and the Green Economy", in *Development* 57(3/4), (2015): 362-375

unbridled extractivism, which seeks to finance processes of modernisation of capitalism. That is all there is to it.

So, we must not be fooled by the *Buen Vivir* propaganda of the ‘progressive’ governments of these countries. There, this concept has been vampirised in order to put it at the service of their cravings for a concentration of power and social discipline. In this way, *Buen Vivir* became a mere device of power to modernise capitalism. That is not more than a real aberration.

In addition, to prevent a unique and indisputable concept, it would also be better to speak of ‘*buenos vivires*’ or ‘*buenos convivires*’¹⁷, following Xavier Albó. That is to say, good coexistence of human beings in community, good coexistence of communities with others, good coexistence of individuals and communities in and with Nature.

In short, the idea is to question the failed impulse to ‘development’ as a global mandate and sole path, proposing no longer ‘development alternatives’, but ‘alternatives to development’. For this reason, already in the 21st century, many different responses to ‘development’ and progress, coming from other readings and realities, are being reinforced. Noteworthy are warnings of environmental degradation caused by Western consumption patterns, and growing signs of ecological depletion of the planet. Mother Earth does not have the capacity for absorption and resilience for everyone to repeat the consumerism and productivism of the industrialised countries. Conventional ‘development’ and progress concepts do not provide adequate responses to these warnings.

It also follows from the above that there is no single possible and desirable vision. *Buen Vivir* cannot be monocultural. *Buen Vivir* is plural – *buenos convivires*, as noted above – and arises especially from indigenous communities, without denying the technological advantages of the modern world or the possible contributions from other cultures and knowledges that question different presuppositions of the dominant modernity. Those are the questions that should arise from a wide and respectful discussion of the propositions of *Buen Vivir*.

Buen Vivir and the recovery of utopias

Trying to solve this riddle will not be easy. To begin with, we must rediscover “the utopian dimension”¹⁸ as raised in the eighties of the 20th century by the Peruvian Alberto Flores Galindo. This implies strengthening the approaches and conceptual assessments of community life, such as relationality and reciprocity. It will also be necessary to consolidate the basic values of democracy: freedom, equality, solidarity and fairness, as well as political,

17 — Xavier Albó: Suma qamaña = convivir bien. ¿Cómo medirlo?. En Ivonne Farah y Luciano Vasapollo (coord.), *Vivir bien: ¿Paradigma no capitalista?* (pp. 133-144). La Paz: CIDES-UMSA/La Sapienza/OXFAM 2011.

18 — Alberto Flores Galindo, *Reencontremos la dimensión utópica (Let’s rediscover the utopian dimension)*. Lima: Instituto de Apoyo Agrario y El Caballo Rojo, (n/f), see also: <https://marxismocritico.com/2016/01/08/reencontremos-la-dimension-utopica/>

religious, sexual and cultural tolerance. And all this implies a political-cultural reencounter with Nature.

In short, *Buen Vivir* opens the door to building an emancipatory project. A project that, by adding many stories of resistance struggles and proposals for change, by nourishing itself with local experiences, to which contributions from different latitudes must be added is positioned as a starting point for the democratic construction of sustainable societies in all places. Therefore, issues such as the construction of a new economy or the Rights of Nature, making the Human Rights fully valid and real, are issues of interest to Humanity and, as such, should be discussed and addressed.

There is no recipe for building different societies. However, not having a default path is not a problem. It is quite the opposite. The situation frees us from dogmatic visions, although it demands greater clarity in the destiny we want to reach, assuming the transition towards another civilisation in the context of *Buen Vivir* itself: it is not only the destination that matters, but also the way or ways to achieve human life in dignity, guaranteeing all human beings and non-human beings a present and a future, thus ensuring the survival of Humanity on this planet.

To build a different society, returning to the thought of Flores Galindo: “There is no recipe. There is neither a mapped-out path, nor a definite alternative. It has to be built.”¹⁹

Chapter 8

Ethics of integral development as seen from CASA India

By Sushant Agrawal and Joycia Thorat¹

Introduction

We are living in a polarized world.² Despite the tremendous progress we have made in science, technology and finance, we have not been able to build an inclusive, equal, just, happy and peaceful world for all. In order to make the world a better place for everyone, we need to constantly question and continuously rethink the development paradigm. Is the progress we are making in the right direction?

It is critical to explore a new approach to an ethics of integral development in today's highly volatile context. In this new approach perspectives of ecological responsibility, gender justice and perspectives from communities from the margins should be brought together.³

For long, development paradigms have been defined through faulty understandings of civilization, culture and progress bolstered by pseudo-scientific theories of racial superiority and notions of white supremacy which are not in tandem with the cultural, social and economic contexts of the developing nations. The development model of the 80s systematically dismantled the welfare model and forced states to liberalize their economies

1 — Sushant Agrawal is Director of CASA, the Church's Auxiliary for Social Action (founded in 1947) which is a non-religious Indian development organization based in Chennai and a service wing of the National Council of Churches in India comprising the Orthodox and Protestant Church Societies in India. He also is former ACT Alliance Moderator and former member of Global Advisory Group for Bread for the World. Joycia Thorat is Project and Policy Officer at CASA and works with this organization since 2001. She has published widely on gender, food security, climate change, and peace building with focus on women, tribal and dalit.

2 — Vandana Shiva, "The Polarized world of Globalization", publication by Navdanya, (2005)

3 — Joycia Thorat and Beulah Shekhar, "Information technology as a cost effective and efficient mode of communication", in *Indian Journal of women's studies*, ISSN 2320-6403, Vol. 10, Issue 1, Oct 2010, in: www.alagappauniversity.ac.in/research/44

allowing globalization to pervade and function as a tool of neo-imperialism to be wielded by the global North.⁴

The fundamental drawback of this model is that it offers temporary attraction of high income and a fast lifestyle with ‘modern’ comforts, for very few, leaving the majority to struggle for survival.⁵

According to Lori Keleher, integral development ethics instead is a field concerned with ethical reflection on the means and ends of development.⁶ It is marked by a synergetic and symbiotic relationship between ethics and integral development according to Castrillon Sergio.⁷ Ethics of integral development should be oriented towards development for all creation and by all creation and in all aspects of life in totality. This paper attempts to encapsulate ethics of integral development as both a faith and secular concept. It also tries to integrate gender ethics which is an important aspect of integral development. The paper also relates to current trends and challenges with regard to extremism in the current global and Indian context. It understands itself as a case study towards enhancing ethics of integral development as understood by CASA, India.⁸

The Indian scenario

Today the world remains an unequal, unfair, unsecure and unhealthy place for virtually half of its population. About 30 percent of global population has no access to adequate healthcare, 40 percent lives in abject poverty, which is cruelest form of insecurity. Every second child is poor, and between five and ten million children die of preventable causes. Rich neighbors behind the high walls of gated nations have 50 times more income at their disposal, while around 70 percent around us live in poverty.

In the Indian context Women, tribal/aboriginals, Dalits and minorities are mostly subjected to such conditions and are part of the statistics of deprivation.

As per March 2016 in the Human Development Index India ranks 131 among the 188 countries listed.⁹ India’s Socio Economic Caste Census of 2011 released by the Government of India in July 2015, gives the status of poor in the country. Rural poverty scanned in micro details after 7-8 decades (last done was in 1932), is an important document for those who want to understand ethics of integral development.¹⁰

4 — Michel Bauwens, “P2P Perspectives: Alternative Development”, originally published by P2P Foundation, 28 February 2014, www.resilience.org/stories/2014-02-28/p2p-perspectives-alternative-development/

5 — Bastiaan Wielenga, *Reflection on the Biblical call to Choose Life*. SCMI, India, (1994)

6 — Lori Keleher, “Towards an Integral Human Development Ethics”, in *VERITAS* 37, August 2017: 19-34

7 — Sergio Castrillon Orrego, “Ethics, social economy and economic development”, in *Revista Universidad EAFIT*, 42(142), (2006): 95-112

8 — <http://casa-india.org>

9 — UNDP, *Human Development Report 2016. Human Development for Everyone*. New York: UNDP, (2016)

10 — Government of India, *India Socio-Economic Cast Census 2011*, July 2015

The crucial finding of the SECC is that 86.9 million rural households of the 179.1 surveyed across 640 districts shows one of the 7 indicators of deprivation listed by SECC, i.e. (1) households with kuchha houses (no proper house), (2) no adult member in working age, (3) households headed by no working age male member, (4) those with handicapped members and no able bodied adult (5) households with no literate adult above 25 years (6) landless households engaged in manual labor and (7) Scheduled Caste/Scheduled Tribe households.

India is a home to 179 million rural households. Out of this half live on manual casual labor. Nearly 54.0 million rural households are in the landless laborers category which is the main running theme of deprivation. With no skills and no asset they are most vulnerable. Along with them small and marginal farmers are getting pauperized due to wrong policies and climate change. 55 percent households have no adult literate above 25 years. As per the survey the rural scenario is 23.7 million people live in one or less rooms with Kuccha walls and kuccha roof. The number of such households constitutes 13.25 percent of the 179.1 million rural households.

A socially significant confirmation is that 21.5 percent of rural households belong to Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe Category. Only 14 percent are engaged in the government, public and private sector jobs. Due to pressure on land, fragmentation and low returns, vast number of people, both men and women, are doing different kinds of jobs apart from seasonal work in the field. Only 10 percent have regular salaried income. 92 percent of rural household run on less than Rs 10,000 per month.

In Urban India the scenario is that 350 million urban households have no source of income whatsoever. 900 million households are headed by a female person. 10 percent of urban houses have no access to drinking water and electricity. Today after almost seven decades of independence, still 51 percent of the 1.3 billion population of India show signs of poverty.

The grave social inequalities and spread of poverty in urban and rural settings is aggravated by the effects of increasing climate change: In 2016 India reported the highest number of death worldwide with extreme weather.

In the global risk index 2017 released at COP 23 India was identified as the sixth most vulnerable nation on earth when it comes to climate change. Millions of people have their life cut short by world -betting's level of pollution. India is home to half the earth worst polluted countries. Though India is the third largest economy in purchasing power parity and will become the world's fifth largest economy, 240 million homes in India cannot take for granted what the developed nations enjoy in the click of a button. There is no electricity still for 240 billion people of the Indian population who therefore do not have access to the

fruits of economic development. Energy consumption will double by 2030 and reliance on coal. Whether it is possible keeping global warming less than 2 degree centigrade may be determined by the path India will take.¹¹ Until now the increasing marginalization and violence against women, Dalits, tribals, differently-abled, sexual and religious minorities in India are alarming.

A crucial parameter which plays into the picture of widespread poverty and marginalization is the situation of women in India: India ranks 108 among the 144 nations surveyed in the Global gender gap index of 2017.¹² Many women are more likely to be poorer than men because they lag behind in social and economic status. Many women work largely in the informal sector, lack education and skills and are hence engaged in low-wage jobs having occupational risks. In addition they face unfair intra-household distribution of resources. They are responsible for child care and care of elders, fuel wood collection, fetching water and cooking. Gender-based subordination is three fold for a Dalit women, being Dalit and being women and poverty adds on to all that.

Most of the rural women have even less power, less money, less freedom but more work and more responsibility. They constitute the underprivileged group, leading subordinate lives and without any hope of improving their living conditions. Development efforts by the government do not sufficiently reach the women yet.

Women in addition bear the burden of population control in India. With India to overtake China by 2030, only 2.2 percent males underwent sterilization 2013-14. But of those who underwent sterilization in 2013-14 over 97.7 percent were women. This reveals the extreme gender bias.

Also the provision of services of care is seen mainly as feminine attribute, duty and socially constructed role. Care is considered a non-market good. Even women working outside spend on the average 3 hours and more in domestic care duties than men who spend 75 minutes only per week. There are many additional parameters (like the low ranking of India in the female entrepreneur's index ranks which indicate that gender justice still is a huge issue in India.

Faith perspectives on ethics of integral development

CASA is an instrument of "Ecumenical Diakonia" – an expression of the Church's 'being' and 'doing'. Diakonia as we understand is a ministry integral to the nature and mission of the Church, built on the foundation of Christ. Christians' understanding of the Church and its mission is rooted in the vision of God's great design for all creation, both manifested and

11 — Shashi Tharoor, "Saving the common wealth and planet", *The Week*, 6 May 2018, www.theweek.in/columns/shashi-tharoor/2018/04/27/saving-the-commonwealth-and-the-planet.html

12 — World Economic Forum, *The Global Gender Gap Report 2017*, Cologny/Geneva: World Economic Forum, (2017), www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_GGGR_2017.pdf

promised in Jesus Christ.¹³ Life is a gift from God. It's also a choice. Choosing life and making right choices will preserve life. Wrong choices destroy the gift of life.

CASA's self-understanding and approaches in social action is based upon the conviction that all are created in the image of God (Genesis 1:26-27).

Moses was saved by the midwives, his mother and sister, the Pharaoh's daughter's maid and Pharaoh's daughter herself (Exodus 2). God was sending Moses: "I am sending you to the king of Egypt so that you can lead my people out of this country" (Exodus 3: 10). Ruth was willing to go along with her mother-in-law (Ruth 1:16) Esther was risking her life to save the Jews (Esther 4:16). These are all examples from the Old Testament tradition reminding us of God's call, commandment and commitment to serve and save the oppressed. In CASA's approach also New Testament traditions are playing an important role, like Jesus saying I have come to give you life; life in all its abundance (John 10:10). Jesus also said: "I have come to set the captives free" (Luke 4:18), "I have come to serve and not to be served" (Matthew 20:28). There are several narratives like the parables of lost coin, sheep and the lost son (Luke 15:1-32) which inform the work of CASA and inspire an understanding of diakonia which is about to life socially responsible for each other and working for the common good.

A new ethics of integral development therefore is inspired by the vision to be in communion with each other as God is a God of relationship. There is no relation with God if there is no proper relation with one's neighbor and no spirituality without social responsibility. To serve and be prophetic is an age old Jewish tradition and biblical vision.¹⁴

CASA also feels inspired by a mission spirituality which is always transformative to life. It resists and seeks to transform all life destroying values and systems wherever these are at work, in economies, culture, politics, in our institutions.¹⁵ Our faith in free gift of life, which compels us to confront, unjust systems, structures, politics, culture, dominations exploitations and corruption.¹⁶

13 — Jooseop Keum (ed.), *Together towards life – Mission and Evangelism in changing landscapes*. Geneva: WCC, (2013): 57

14 — Dietrich Werner, "Forms and History of Diaconia in Church History and in the Ecumenical Movement – Potentials for a German-Chinese Diaconia Learning and Exchange Process", July 2017

15 — Accra Confession, covenanting justice in the economy of the earth, World Alliance Reformed Church, 2004, see: <http://wrc.ch/accra>; and: <http://wrc.ch/accra/the-accra-confession>

16 — WCC, "Alternative Globalization: Addressing People and Earth – AGAPE", 2005, www.oikoumene.org/en/folder/documents-pdf/pb-06-agape.pdf

For CASA challenging and confronting unjust power structures also in the sense of continuing the liberating “Jesus Feminism”, feminist theologians have talked about, is an integral component of their ethics of integral development¹⁷

CASA rejects the policy of unlimited growth through domination of global free market which is an ideology that claims to be without alternatives, demanding an endless flow of sacrifice from poor and nature. We are called to choose life.

The reign of God instead opposes the empire of mammoth. The false image of market promotes, that it can save the world by wealth creation and prosperity needs to be corrected.¹⁸

CASA confirms that people on the margins have agency and their active hope, collective resistance, perseverance to remain faithful to the promised reign of God is a key sign of integral development. Development and mission efforts therefore are not to be directed at people as recipients only but the main concern is about to restore honor, dignity and worth to each person.¹⁹

For CASA and churches in India it is necessary therefore also to address structural sin. The integral mission of the Church, which is our mandate which can be substituted to integral development, should emphasize the Church and our diaconal institutions to serve as a suffering servant opposed to the conquering king of colonial history.²⁰

Therefore CASA goes with an understanding of development which is expressed in PopePaul VI’s Encyclical *Populorum Progressio*²¹ in which he emphasized that development must not be understood solely in economic terms but in a way that is fully human. Therefore development is not just about raising all people to the level currently enjoyed by the richer countries using a plunderers route, but rather it is about building up a more decent life concretely enhancing every individual’s dignity and creativity and to do this within the given planetary boundaries.

17 — See for instance: Surekha Nelavala: Jesus Asks the Samaritan Woman for a Drink: A Dalit Feminist Reading of John 4, in: www.lectio.unibe.ch/07_1/pdf/surekha_samaritan_woman.pdf

18 — See: Joseop Keum (ed): Together towards life. Mission and evangelism in changing landscapes. WCC Mission Statement 2013, in: www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/publications/TogethertowardsLife_SAM-PLI.pdf

19 — Rose Dowsett et al. (eds.), *Evangelism and Diakonia in Context*. Edinburg Century Series, Oxford: Oxford Regnum International Book, (2015)

20 — Gabriele Dietrich referring to M. M. Thomas in: Lalrinawmi Ralte and Stella Faria (eds.), *Waging Peace: Building a World in Which Life Matters*. Delhi: IWIT/ISPCK, (2004)

21 — Pope Paul VI, “Populorum Progressio”, 26 March 1967, http://w2.vatican.va/content/paul-vi/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-vi_enc_26031967_populorum.html

Secular perspectives on ethics of integrated development

Development ethics promotes an inter-disciplinary, intellectual scope for the reflection and analysis of values, functions and ideas. It is a vigorous way to define healthy pluralism, reject unsupportable values, harmful functions and false beliefs.

It is interesting to note that in recent secular discourses on development ethics we can see a convergence with some basic assumptions of Christian development ethics and an integral understanding human development as outlined in the chapter above.

In the Post-Second World War context the Marshall Plan and post-colonial independence countries seeking aid first of all the assumption dominated that with economic aid and continuous economic growth world economic poverty would gradually, even automatically decrease. The middle of 20th century saw the end of Second World War followed by reconstruction of Europe and colonial independence nations seeking aid. In 1950 international investment, loan and intervention were made available for other countries in with growth-oriented economic assumptions and goals dominated. The major vision was to develop less developed nations (LCDs) by generating and sustaining the gross national product (GNP) with a hope to decrease poverty. The striking experience however was that though the GNP grew in the years of the 1950s, 60s and poverty did not reduce equally. In 80s and early 90s many countries stopped in terms of their growth of the GNP as they were paying back debts. Many poor countries sacrificed the state's growth to payback the debts. Post development schools towards the end of the 20th century then rejected such models and concept of development altogether.

This was the time when a strong critique of the growth-oriented economic development paradigm was developed by many scholars and alternative, more holistic approaches were sought after. It dawned on people that true development for the people is not just to have more, but to be more.²²

The insight emerged that authentic development presents a type of development which results in individual and societies becoming more human and parameters to be considered for a holistic notion development comprise more than economic growth, but need to embrace also response levels to basic needs, happiness, wellbeing, freedom, empowerment, agency, capabilities, democracy and many more indicators. New concepts of "integral development" therefore speak of at least four major aspects to be considered and properly integrated with each other:

1. Nature and community, 2. Culture and spirituality, 3. Science, systems and technology, 4. Entrepreneurship and economics which need integration.²³ It is interesting to realize

22 — See scholars like Gustavo Esteva and Denis Goulet, referred to by Nikos Astroulakis, "Ethics and International Development :The development ethics Paradigm", in *Journal of Economics and Business* XVI(1), (2013): 99-117

23 — Alexander Schieffer and Ronnie Lessem, "Integral development", in *Integral Leadership Review*, April-June 2014

that there are also important contributions to concepts of integral development nowadays from other religious traditions such as Islam.²⁴

It has become clear thereby in recent secular discourses that the concept of development always is an inherently value laden process, i.e. that it has its own “spirituality” and needs to be checked in terms of what values and spiritual orientations are behind its concept.²⁵ Every decision – in the economic sphere or in the political – has moral implications and is based on certain guiding values. This value-oriented concept of development is a conviction where we see some convergence between secular and religious viewpoints on development emerging in recent years. Our common value orientation should be that all creation and all aspects of human beings are inherently valuable and deserve to flourish. Only in bringing together pluralistic approaches in the field of development ethics from both religious, secular and other approaches an integrated concept of development can be nurtured which is needed for enhancing ethical reflection to build a world where every human being and every creation can live a holistic life.

Gender and environment ethics

It has been stated already that ethics of integral development would be incomplete without inclusion of the gender view point. According to Alison Jaggar, the noted feminist, traditional ethics let down women badly. It fails to see women’s oppression, does not give importance to moral issues of private life, and also gives an impression that women are not morally as mature and deep as men. Traditional ethics have always overrated traits that have been largely perceived as culturally masculine – independence, product, war and death and underrates culturally perceived feminine traits like interdependency, community, connection, sharing, emotion, body, trust, nature, peace and life. Men emphasize rules, rights, and universality, as high moral ground compared to female moral reason which gives importance to empathy, relationship, responsibility, particularity and partiality.²⁶

It is important for an ethics of integral development that a new paradigm of life and society includes gender ethics as its key component.

24 – Waleed El-Ansary, “Linking ethics and economic for integral development: The need for a new economic paradigm and the three dimensions of Islam”, Al-Alwani Lectures 202, Washington Theological Consortium, 2012, <https://wasitheocon.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/11/Ansary-2012-Lecture.pdf>

25 – Jay Drydyki for instance talks about “seven values of development”: well-being, equity/equality, practical agency/empowerment, human rights, cultural freedom, sustainability and no corruption (see Jay Drydyk and Lori Keleher (eds.), *Routledge’s Handbook to Development Ethics*. London: Routledge, (2018)).

26 – Alison M. Jaggar, „Feminist ethics: Some issues for the nineties“, in *Journal of Social Philosophy* 20(1-2), (1989): 91-107, <https://philpapers.org/rec/ALIFES>

Gender ethics accepts the differences in each other, opposes patriarchy and does not mask thoughts into a rigid truth that always was, is and forever will be. Gender ethics is open, and not just confined to meta, normative levels, but it is practical and personal. It does not impose a single standard, but offers women multiple choices to understand the way in which gender, race, religion, ethnicity, class, caste, inequality, climate issues intercede with moral decisions.

Gender ethics and environmental ethics have a very close relationship. The environmental ethics questions a rigid biblical understanding of nature as passive or inert, it expresses anti-colonial ethics and supports epistemologies based on wisdom of relation centered on traditions and practice. The Anchorage Declaration 2009 of the Indigenous Peoples' Global Summit of Climate Change²⁷ reaffirms the unbreakable and sacred connection between land, air, water, oceans, forests, sea, ice, plants, animals and human communities as the material and spiritual basis for our existence. The term "care" is meant to describe the moral significance of interdependence and connection between human and non-human beings.²⁸

Environmental ethics therefore also has to talk about power relationships among people and between people and various institutions of colonization, exploitative mining industries of today and nature destroying businesses, dams and power generators.

CASA's partnership with Bread for the World for a new paradigm of development

For development practitioners of a faith-based organization there is a strong conviction that struggle against injustice is spiritual and integral to the Christian Mission and therefore belongs to the ambits of ethics of integral development.

In the following we will recall two case stories from CASA's work in the context of violence against Dalits, which are those at the bottom of the caste system, people who have no rights and which are denied the very essential rights of human dignity. Most Dalits don't have land to cultivate, land to live in or even land to be buried in.

In a village in Maharashtra two Dalit girls were bullied by a gang of upper caste young men because they dared to go to college. They were one day raped by the men. As in most cases police refused to file first information report (FIR) which would give the girls the right to pursue the case through the courts. But the girls managed to file the FIR.

In the second case Jaya Waghela, 52, spends more than an hour cleaning herself every morning. But the soap and water cannot wash off the stench of human feces she cleans

27 — Indigenous Peoples' Global Summit on Climate Change, "The Anchorage Declaration", 24 April 2009, <https://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2009/smsn/ngo/168.pdf>

28 — Julie A. Nelson, "Care Ethics and Markets: A View from Feminist Economics", MIT, Global Development & Environment Inst. Working Paper No. 10-02, 1 May 2010

everyday with her broom at 600-odd public toilets, along the banks of the river Bhima in Pandharpur district of Maharashtra. “The stench is so overbearing that it has killed my appetite”, says Waghela, who has stayed away from her kitchen since she began working as a manual scavenger since 20 years ago in 1993. Ironically the same year, Central Government enacted the Employment of Manual Scavengers and Construction of Dry Latrines (Prohibition) Act, which bans such scavenging. For Waghela, who starts her day before the break of dawn, work is at its toughest during the month of July, when nearly 100 million pilgrims gather at Pandharpur, Maharashtra for the Ashadi Ekadashi Yatra.

What does an ethics of integral development imply in such a context?

CASA has stimulated and supported a network of Dalit activists who are empowered to working on preventing atrocities against Dalits. The facilitation discussion, and trainings and platform to share their experiences, plan their strategies, discuss their problems and sharpen their skills helped them to respond to such situations. If Dalit activists are intimidated in one village they could quickly call for support from Dalit activists working in other villages. In the case of the girls the Dalit activists joined with local villagers and pressurized the Police to act. Cases were filed and charges pressed. The rapist finally was taken into custody.

CASA is also assisting Dalit activist for working on land rights. As per the law and policies of the government Dalits are using vacant public land, cultivating it and working on registering for ownership in their names. Dalit activist are providing input to the government to bring in policy changes wherever required to benefit the marginalized Dalit. They are helping Dalits to register for the government funds to which they are entitled. Their aim is to show the people who kills or intimidates Dalit, Tribal people (Adivasis) and women or deny their dignity and rights, as Dalits are not victims alone. They are sending out a loud message to the perpetrators and wider community that Dalits have support from highly organized activist networks and that violations of rights under the constitution will not be accepted and tolerated.

Thus their work will help to stop atrocities against Dalits and eventually dismantle the caste system. Similar networks have been set across the country to empower women, tribal and other marginalized groups.

Our understanding of an ethics of integral development therefore is inspired by the words and thoughts of Jayaprakash Narayan who was one of the greatest revolutionary leaders of India of recent times, as he unfolded the vision of a just and participatory society in which every individual and every resource would in fact be dedicated to serving the weak, a community dedicated to the well-being of the least and weakest.

Recommendation for a new paradigm of development work for faith communities around the globe

For Christian agencies in development work like CASA it is very important to be connected with other ecumenical partner agencies in other parts of the world. Being connected by the common mandate to serve Ecumenical Diakonia is to support each other in the difficult task to really serve the poor. A new approach to integral development has to take the wider notion of “ecumenical” seriously, i.e. the whole inhabited earth and the whole of the universe, as we all need to share and belong together.

Development agencies have a task to share together in the mandate of Christ who said: “whatever you did unto the least of my sisters and brothers you did it unto me” (Matthew 25:40). We therefore also need to share our work and concern against injustices with other faith communities. A new approach to the ethics of integral development needs the widest possible framework of collaboration in the struggle against injustice and violation of human dignity.

The fellowship of Christian agencies for development should also continue to be inspired by the principles of sharing in Ecumenical Diakonia in Early Christianity as we can read in the Book of Acts: “All the believers were together and had everything in common. Selling their possessions and goods they gave to anyone as he/she had need” (Acts 2:44-47). “All the believers were one in heart and mind. No one claimed that any of his/her possessions was his own but they shared everything they had. There were no needy persons among them. For from time to time those who owned lands or houses sold them, brought the money from the sales and put it at the apostles’ feet, and it was distributed to anyone as he had need” (Acts 4:32-35).

In India, churches and ecumenical organizations are one of the largest holders of land property and wealth. How much are we putting them to the use of the marginalized?

It will cost less than 70 billion USD a year (0.4 percent of the total annual income of Christians) to provide all people in developing and under-developed countries with basic education, health care, and clean water which are the fundamentals for eradicating poverty – and yet poverty goes on unabated.²⁹

²⁹ — David Barrett and Todd Johnson (Sources for this information are from World Missions, Caleb Project, World Christian Trends, World Christian Encyclopedia, Atlas of Global Christianity)

Churches both in India as well as in other countries of the world have to learn and ask themselves how they can meet the really poor in their own contexts and how they can practice radical ways of sharing their resources with those who need them most.

“Integral Mission” is another term used in Spanish speaking churches in Latin America which can be interchanged with the notion “integral development” which stands for holistic transformation. For the followers of Christian faith this means that the proclamation of Gospel and the practical demonstration of Gospel in acts of diakonia do not just exist side by side or separately from each other. They are interrelated, which means that both proclamation has practical and political consequences, as we call people to love and repent in all areas of life, and similarly also our social involvement has evangelistic consequences as we always bear the witness of Jesus.

For us in CASA a new approach to ethics of integral development has five essential key components which can be mentioned as follows:

1. Integral development has to be gender-oriented and ecologically sensitive
2. Integral development has to be inclusive
3. Integral development has to be sustainable
4. Integral development has to be pluralistic
5. Integral development has to be localized.

Conclusion

The recent recognition of the role faith-based organizations (FBOs) at United Nations bodies and international arenas in the sector of humanitarian work, development and advocacy is very significant for us. This is a recognition earned through our commitment and work at grass roots levels for a long period. Such recognition demands us to demonstrate powerfully the work and our compassion with people at distress and to become stronger in transparency and accountability to all stakeholders and to our faith. We need to be more and more prophetic if we want to be living organizations and effective faith actors.³⁰ Setting people and creation free from all bondages and enabling them to lead a dignified life is the ultimate scope of ethics of integral development.

Chapter 9

The Indian Right to Food Case – Public Interest Litigation

Colin Gonsalves and Megan Bingham (ed)

The case of *Peoples' Union for Civil Liberties (PUCL) versus Union of India*, popularly known as the Right to Food (RTF) case, had a rather casual beginning. Advocate, Colin Gonsalves, was visiting villages in Jaipur, Rajasthan, with a group of friends. The starkness of the widespread hunger and malnutrition there was unsettling. The economist, Jean Dreze, told the friends that there were 60 million tonnes (MTs) of grain lying in the warehouses of India and that if one were to put those grains in a straight line they would go to the moon and back. How could the government allow their citizens to die of starvation when they had it in their power to release food for the poor? This was particularly concerning, as the government was actually obliged under the Famine Codes, which were introduced by the British colonial government to set up an “efficient system of intelligence” with respect to famines and scarcities so that the administration would be warned in time of the prospect of a famine and would not be taken by surprise. The Codes were also meant to put in place a programme for relief works to “fortify the people” in difficult times.¹ The Codes warned that “there is no greater evil than the depression of the people; for moral depression leads directly to physical deterioration”.² Under the Codes, every adult was to be given Rs 0.5 and every child was to be given Rs 0.3 per day as of 1962. Clearly they were not given this amount and government officials were uniformly ignorant not only of the provisions of the Famine Codes in their states, but of the very existence of the Famine Code itself! Colin suggested filing a public interest petition in the Supreme Court of India to enforce the Famine Codes. They all readily agreed.

The petition

The petition began by referring to the “innumerable cases of starvation deaths reported across the country...largely due to non-availability of food to people over a long period of time”. There was “no food available in the public distribution system (PDS) and prices at commercial shops [were] exorbitant”.³ The petitioner pointed out that the buffer stocks of

1 – Famine Code of the State of Rajasthan, Writ Petition (Civil) 196 of 2001 in the case PUCL and others Vs Union of India and others, p. 55.

2 – Ibid, p. 78.

3 – Ibid, p. 4.

grains with the central government at that time were approximately 20 MTs and a government Minister admitted that there was “surplus food stocks in the country”.⁴ The petitioner warned “many people are facing starvation and will die soon if nothing is done immediately...there is massive unemployment, the people are sinking deeper and deeper into debt, children are dropping out of school, and cattle are [dying]”.⁵ Though millions of tonnes were lying idle in public warehouses in Rajasthan and across the country, people were still dying. Summing up the petitioner charged the state of Rajasthan and the Union of India with having “failed abjectly in discharging its responsibility ... under Article 21 (The Right to Life) of the Constitution of India”.⁶

Colin remembers telling colleagues that they ought not to spread the word too wide as the chances of admission were remote considering the Supreme Court’s dismissal of a similar case, filed by the legendary social activist, Kishen Pattanayak:

“There is no reason not to accept the statements made on behalf of the state of Orissa that the measures... are being taken for the purpose of mitigating hunger, poverty, starvation deaths...[and] soon the miseries of the people of these two districts will be over.”⁷

The legal team were all deeply apprehensive about the outcome of the case. Of course, they had nothing to lose.

Public interest litigation

it may be useful to say a few words about public interest litigation (PIL) in India. How did the Court permit a petition to be filed on behalf of over 300 million people without the signature of a single affected person and without reference to a single individualised case of malnutrition or starvation? How was the petitioner to gather the extensive documentation required for the case when the PUCL had no funds of its own and the task was gigantic? Could the State not claim to have financial constraints limiting its ability to do away with the hunger prevailing on such a large-scale? Would the directions of the Court not remain mere paper instructions incapable of being enforced? The answer to these questions lies in the revolutionary development that took place in Indian jurisprudence in the eighties which gave birth to a new branch of public interest law, known as public interest litigation (PIL). In 1981, the Supreme Court devised a new legal method of seeking judicial redress from the courts in cases of a violation of a constitutional or legal right. If a victim of the wrong, by virtue of poverty, helplessness, disability or socioeconomic disadvantage could not approach the court, a concerned member of the public could apply on their behalf. The typical formalities and fees required by the courts are excused in the case of

4 — Writ Petition (Civil) 196 of 2001 in the case PUCL and others Vs Union of India and others, p. 8.

5 — *ibid* p. 9.

6 — *Ibid*, p. 18.

7 — Kishen Pattanayak Vs State of Orissa (1989 Supp. (1) SCC 258.

PIL. On this basis, the team drafted the petition on behalf of the millions of people starving in Rajasthan.

The case begins

Mondays and Fridays are exciting days in the Supreme Court. These are the fresh matter days. The atmosphere is like a circus with lawyers being aggressive at times, interrupting judges, speaking while the judges are speaking and arguing with their opponent lawyers. It was on such a day that the Right to Food (RTF) case was first heard. On opening his papers, Justice Kirpal directly announced, “this cannot be. We cannot allow the state of affairs to continue”. The case was off and running!

Cut the flab somewhere else

On July 23, 2001 the Attorney-General first argued that India was a country with a huge population and, given the financial constraints, it was difficult to do away with hunger and malnutrition. This was a common perception. Prior to the RTF case, the courts were generally very reluctant to make orders imposing huge liabilities on government. After Mr Justice Kirpal said, “Cut the flab somewhere else...either you do it or we will tell you how to do it”, never was the argument repeated.

On August 20, 2001, the Supreme Court noted:

“The anxiety of the Court is to see that the poor and the destitute and the weaker sections of the society do not suffer from hunger and starvation...Mere [government] schemes without any implementation are of no use. What is important is that the food must reach the hungry.”

Additionally Justice Kirpal ordered that all States and Union Territories be impleaded in the matter. This expanded the scope of the case to the entire nation. But as the original petition only related to the Famine Codes in Rajasthan, with this expansion, it was necessary to think afresh about the legal strategy of the case. The team then argued that the right to food must be realised through the proper implementation of existing government schemes related to providing nutrition to the poor. They were not legal entitlements, but they provided a coherent, logical way forward since the State could not disown their own schemes. The enormous financial and administrative implications of the case on the government did not really occur to anyone then. So, on 17 September 2001, when a direction

was made to “all the state governments to forthwith lift the entire allotment of food grains from the central government under the various schemes and disburse the same in accordance with the scheme”, the sense of success was immense.

However this order was not to be the last. What follows is a brief discussion of seven schemes the Court directed governments to implement after the initial 2001 order. To advertise the success of each order and ensure the news reached all rural residents, the orders were often presented in public places, via radio and TV, through translation into regional languages and English.

Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY)

AAY required the government to identify the poorest of the poor, giving them a special ration card, enabling them to receive grain at Rs. 2 a kilogram for wheat and Rs 3 a kilogram for rice. On 2 May 2003 the Supreme Court made a landmark order expanding the list of beneficiaries for the AAY scheme, to include six other classes of vulnerable people, including amongst others, older persons, women with no regular support, disabled persons and the unemployed.

Mid-Day Meal Scheme (MDMS)

The Supreme Court directed governments’ full compliance with the MDMS so that every child in every government primary school would be provided with a meal with a minimum content of 300 calories and 12 grams of protein every day for a minimum of 200 days. Prior to this order, the MDMS had almost ground to a halt.

National Old Age Pension Scheme (NOAPS) & Annapoorna Scheme

At the Court’s direction, persons above the age of 65 who did not have a means of subsistence were to be paid a pension under NOAPS. Additionally, those not receiving a pension would be entitled to 10kgs of free grains per month under the Annapoorna Scheme.

National Maternity Benefit Scheme (NMBS)

The Court directed the enforcement of the National Maternity Benefit Scheme (NMBS), which required a payment of Rs 500 to all BPL pregnant women, prior to childbirth to provide extra nutrition.

National Family Benefit Scheme (NFBS)

Further, the government had to properly implement the NFBS, in which destitute BPL families who had lost their breadwinner were provided with Rs. 10,000.

Sampoorna Grameen Rozgar Yojana (SGRY)

SGRY allowed for poverty stricken persons to obtain 100 days of employment per year in government programmes, after which they would be paid in cash and grains. The Court ordered municipal councils (gram panchayats) to draft employment generation proposals to facilitate SGRY. The programme envisaged the “creation of useful community assets that have the potential for generating sustained and gainful employment such as water and soil conservation, afforestation and agro-horticulture, silvipasture, minor irrigation and link roads.” The order further directed the governments to focus on “agricultural wage earners, non-agricultural unskilled wage earners, marginal farmers and, in particular, [scheduled castes] and [scheduled tribe] persons whose wage income constitutes a reasonable proportion of their household income and to be given priority to them in employment, and within this sector shall give priority to women.”

Integrated Child Development Scheme

Perhaps the most significant programme affected by the petition was the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) scheme. ICDS provided supplementary nutrition for children aged 0-6, adolescent girls and pregnant and lactating women.

The Court made an order dated 29 April 2004 as under:

“It is evident that the ICDS is perhaps the largest of all the food supplementation programmes in the world... It was initiated in 1975 with the following objectives... (i) to improve the health and nutrition status of children... (iii) to provide pregnant and lactating women with food supplements... and (iv) to enhance the mother’s ability to provide proper child care through health and nutrition education... It appears that a lot more deserves to be done to ensure that nutritious food reaches to those who are undernourished or malnourished... The food is supplied to children through Anganwadi centres (AWC)... We direct the Government of India... to increase the number of AWCs.”

On 13 December 2006, the Court made a series of stunning directions. The first direction to the respondents was to “operationalise a minimum of [1,400,000] AWCs [and]... it was directed that Rs. 2 per child per day would be allocated, and spent for supplementary nutrition”. An order to construct hundreds of thousands of physical structures (AWC buildings) was an incredible judicial response to the nutrition crisis the ICDS sought to address.

Article 21: the right to life includes the right to food

On 2 May 2003 the Supreme Court found the approach of the government to the case “distressing.” Holding that the right to food would be an integral part of Article 21 of the Constitution – the right to life – the Supreme Court held as follows:

“Article 21 of the Constitution of India protects for every citizen a right to live with human dignity. Would the very existence of life of those families below poverty line not

come under danger for want of appropriate schemes and implementation thereof, to provide requisite aid to such families?"

Corruption in the public distribution system (pds)

After a leading TV channel aired a clip showing trucks loading grain for the Public Distribution System (PDS) from Food Corporation of India warehouses to commercial flour-mills, instead of ration shops, there was mass condemnation. Additionally, the NGO, Parivartan, had collected documents revealing that grains distributed from ration shops had not been received by beneficiaries. PDS grain was being diverted to the black market and police and officials were not responding to public complaints. Parivartan conducted a public hearing with citizens, police officers and government officials. The social audits done by Parivartan concluded that misappropriation was to the extent of 55% in the case of kerosene, 93% of wheat and 96% of rice. The panel hearing exposed an unholy nexus between the police, government officials, the ration shop owners and the local Member of the Legislative Assembly (MLA). The latter's involvement was demonstrated as they were responsible for licensing ration shops and auditing the system. The public hearing held by Parivartan was unique as for the first time Below Poverty Line (BPL) persons were able to directly confront senior police and government officials. As a result of this hearing and Parivartan's efforts to inform BPL persons of their rights, activists were repeatedly physically attacked. In light of these events, the RTI petition also sought to reform the Public Distribution System (PDS). It sought to shift control of the PDS from private dealers to gram panchayats, women's self-help groups, large adimjati multipurpose cooperative societies (LAMPS) and primary credit cooperative societies. The petitioner also sought directions for preference and reservation to be given to indigenous peoples, dalits, persons with disabilities and other disadvantaged sections.

On July 12, 2006 the Court found, "there is practically no monitoring over the sums allotted for the PDS (which) is in the neighbourhood of Rs 30,000 crores annually." Realising the magnitude of the problem the Supreme Court constituted a Central Vigilance Committee (CVC) to "look into the maladies which are affecting the proper functioning of the system and also suggest remedial measures". The Court said that it was giving this "unusual direction in view of the almost accepted fact that large-scale corruption is involved. The ultimate victim is the poor citizen who is deprived of his legitimate entitlement of food grains".

Grievance resolution

As there did not exist any grievance resolution mechanism, the Court directed that any complaint with respect to implementation of schemes or corrupt first be made to the gram panchayats and district councils (zilla panchayat), before reaching other officials including the Chief Secretary of each State.

The Gram Sabhas

The gram sabhas are the organs of local self-government and are arguably the real institutions of people's rule. In order to ensure that the people of India at the grassroots have control over the food distribution schemes, the Supreme Court made a rather revolutionary direction:

“The gram sabhas are entitled to conduct a social audit into all food/employment schemes and to report all instances of misuse of funds to the respective implementing authorities, who shall...investigate and take appropriate action.”

The Commission

Additionally, the Court ordered the established of a Commission of the Court for “the purpose of looking into any grievance that may persist after the grievance resolution procedure has been exhausted”. On the Commissioner recommending a course of action to ensure compliance with the Supreme Court's various orders the governments were required to “forthwith act upon such recommendation and report compliance”. The Commissioners were also able to appoint reputed individuals and NGOs to function as assistants and advisers. These persons travelled through the country, collected information, did surveys and research work, conducted public hearings, met with officials and attempted to persuade them to carry out certain reforms. In this way the orders of the Supreme Court permeated the country. What started as a top heavy initiative slowly became grassroots-based. Slowly the Commissioner's office became the backbone of the Right to Food (RTF) case. Eight extensive reports in several supplementary reports were filed in the Supreme Court and became the factual basis of the ongoing petition.

Monitoring By The Supreme Court

In 2004, the Supreme Court observed, “we are told that despite the fact that one-and-half years have passed, some of the states have not even made a beginning”. Consequently, the Court kept the petition pending and required affidavits proving on-going compliance. Essentially the Court itself would monitor implementation of the orders in another unique Indian innovation.

The right to food campaign

It is necessary to point out the interrelationship between the RTF case, the media and social movements. The legal initiative did not initially consult right to food or food

sovereignty groups. This was largely due to the justifiable lack of faith many had in the efficacy of the legal system. That the case took off is one of the ironies of the situation and a happy one at that.

In the weeks prior to the petition being filed, newspapers and television channels were full of reports of deaths by starvation. There were graphic images carried of tribal families who had died eating mango kernels, grass and other toxic and inedible substances. In reply, media interviews showed Ministers claiming that this was simply their custom. Resultantly, the media covered the proceedings on a day-to-day basis. This huge generation of positive public opinion contributed to the case's early success.

The moment the orders began to come in, it struck social activists that something unusual was afoot. The orders of the Court in this case took them – and the advocates in the case as well – quite by surprise. As order after order was made, it became quite clear that something most unusual and positive was taking place.

The developments may have had something to do with the judges presiding over the case. It started with Justice BN Kirpal, who was a rather determined judge and who would take things forcibly to its logical conclusion come what may. In this case he was determined to bring about change. When he retired, the case was heard by Chief Justice YK Sabharwal, who was, compassionate and concerned. He was an equally perspicuous, forceful judge, and determined and he took the case forward. When he retired, the case landed before a bench of Justice Dr Arijit Pasayat and Justice SH Kapadia who also took the case forward with considerable enthusiasm. The petitioner was fortunate to have this series of justices who were determined to take the case to its logical conclusion.

As the first few orders came in, there was a noticeable revival in the right to food campaign, almost as if it had received a shot in the arm. Women's organisations, tribal groups, NGOs of all types, economists, nutritionists, academics, lawyers and journalists all got involved. It was magnificent to see the spread and depth of the movement. These organisations and individuals became the backbone of the case. They collected information, conducted surveys, public hearings and submitted data and information to the Court. They guided the petitioner and the advocates as to the issues to be taken up and the demands to be made. They decided strategy and tactics. They monitored the court orders and immediately reported instances of non-compliance. They wrote articles in newspapers and held numerous meetings where governments came in for trenchant criticism. It is this campaign that is responsible for the success of the case and its long-term ramifications.

Some failures

While the legal strategy in the RTF case was to seek implementation of existing government schemes related to the right to food, the wider campaign was never intended to be so limited. The case was merely a starting point.

Thereafter, the campaign was supposed to address issues of displacement from land, contract farming, the use of pesticides and chemicals, promoting organic farming, minimum

support prices for small and medium level farmers, the diversion of agricultural land into non-agricultural use, non-interference from the World Trade Organization (WTO), the spread of genetically modified food, the privatisation of water, the displacement of indigenous peoples from their lands and the extensive growth of environmentally damaging mining. But this transition from a legal case focused on schemes to a political movement aimed at combating the shift in the balance of power regarding land and resources, never took place. There was not a political shift in focus from food security to food sovereignty as the right to food movement was not able to join with tribal movements seeking to fulfil their right to reside and use their traditional forest areas. It could not merge with existing farmers' movements at a critical period when land reforms were made for the benefit of capitalists deliberately making farming unprofitable, while farmers were pushed off land after recommendations from the World Bank. Similarly, the movement was unable to deal with the issue of genetically modified foods due to political differences within its ranks, as a result of which the farmers' movement against genetically modified (GM) foods remained separate. The spread of the campaign across states was not converted into coordinated action. The discontent, frustration, misery and unhappiness at the grassroots remained untapped for action to realise the right to food in its broadest sense.

The national food security act, 2013

Nevertheless, after several reports of governments' non-compliance with court orders, the move towards drafting a Right to Food Act picked up. In 2009, the United Progressive Alliance promised to ensure food security within 100 days if they were elected. After winning the election, the drafting of a National Food Security Bill was high on the agenda.

Many members of the right to food campaign were adamant that such a bill should widen its perspective and move into issues of food sovereignty covering critical areas relating to land reform, forest rights, water privatisation, genetically modified food, biodiversity and traditional knowledge. After many consultations and drafts, the National Food Security Act, 2013 (NFSA), was enacted on 10 September 2013 “to provide for food and nutritional security...by ensuring

access to [an] adequate quantity of quality food at affordable prices to people to live a life with dignity”.⁸

The government claimed the Act’s benefits would potentially cover 67% of India’s population, 800 million people, and represent the world’s biggest social sector programme. Through the existing Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS), 5kg of food grains would be distributed at subsidised prices to priority households. It would also provide for penalties for government officials’ non-compliance as well as grievance mechanisms through vigilance committees at the state, district, block and fair price shop levels. Of course the Act was not without its critics. While it commits to supporting agriculture and farmers, the provisions are ambiguous. Additionally, there is no establishment of panchayat grievance redress bodies, potentially barring people living in remote areas from making complaints at a local level. Finally, the Act only relates to food security and does not tackle issues of food sovereignty. Nonetheless, when implemented properly, the sheer scale of the programme is astonishing.

Conclusion

The nationwide effects of the RTF case could not have been foreseen on that first visit to Rajasthan villages. The case, its subsequent orders and the enactment of the National Food Security Act (NFSA) reflect its long-term significance. The communal efforts of lawyers, activists, open-minded judges, journalists, scholars and others have radically impacted the lives of literally millions of people suffering from a fundamental denial of their right to food. The law can provide a catalyst for the voiceless to hold a government to account. The effects of this case will continue to endure in the future.

8 — Preamble, National Food Security Act, 2013, No. 20 of 2013. See also: <https://dfpd.gov.in/nfsa-act.htm>

Chapter 10

The march towards a child friendly world continues...¹

The Office of Nobel Peace Laureate, Mr. Kailash Satyarthi

Leaving behind a comfortable job as an electrical engineer in 1980 when Mr. Kailash Satyarthi started his fight against child labour, it was not even considered an issue in India in the first place. Not only did he confront those who employed and exploited children but also had to fight against the mindset that considered child labour normative.

Freeing Wasal Khan's daughter Sabo along with 36 other slaves from a brick kiln in Punjab at the order of Delhi High Court in response to Mr. Satyarthi's Habeas Corpus petition in March 1981 happens to be the first ever documented slave labor rescue operation in the history of independent India.

Since the larger fight was against the societal mindset, he always knew that only a mass movement would be the most befitting response. Any help towards the marginalized children in India was only viewed from the lens of charity or philanthropy. Bringing the rights based perspective for children aligned with the sovereign and constitutional guarantees was the actual need of the hour. That was the main objective with which Mr. Satyarthi launched Bachpan Bachao Andolan² (Save the Childhood Movement). Likeminded partners, friends and colleagues stood as a pillar of support in raising the Andolan (Mass Movement) for protecting the rights of children. Every time he rescued and reunited children with their families, he could see the glimpse of God in the tears of joy that rolled down the cheeks of their mothers. That feeling is divinely inexplicable and kept him surging ahead.

¹ — Kailash Satyarthi is internationally acclaimed Indian child rights activist and Nobel Peace Laureate 2014. In 1980, Satyarthi gave up his career as an electrical engineer and founded the Bachpan Bachao Andolan (Save Childhood Movement) then same year. See also: www.satyarthi.org.in

² — See: www.bba.org.in

Mr. Satyarthi's wife Mrs. Sumedha Kailash, friends and colleagues gave unconditional support in his fight against child labour and exploitation. Aadarsh Kishore and Dhoom Das did not think twice before laying down their lives in the line of duty. Such was their determination. He had carried Dhoom Das' dead body on his shoulders to the hospital. That weight always reminded him of his colleagues' supreme sacrifice and motivated him to work with all his might to save childhoods.

The groundswell of people willing to fight for the rights of children kept increasing by the days and so did the Movement. The more the better! Without a law on child labour, any institutional intervention against this crime was not really possible. In fact without a law, child labour was not even considered as a crime. Mr. Satyarthi along with his colleagues fought tooth and nail with the law makers and then the Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act could see the light of the day in 1986. It was undoubtedly a weak law but it was better than having no law at all. Over the years Mr. Satyarthi and his colleagues kept striving to strengthen the law. Their endeavor has always been on prevention, prohibition and rehabilitation. Therefore they kept working with various law enforcement agencies to strengthen prosecution in favor of the children in order to maximize relief and compensation under different laws.

Soon Mr. Satyarthi and his colleagues realized that the Judiciary could be a powerful stakeholder in fighting for the rights of the children. They actively started engaging with the Judiciary both at Apex and State levels to secure favorable judgments for the most marginalized and vulnerable children. The tally of children being rescued and rehabilitated started going up and so did their confidence. Effective rehabilitation of exploited children and their reintegration in the mainstream society has always been their endeavor. As the movement expanded they also opened up three rehabilitation centres, Mukti Ashram – the short term rehabilitation centre in Burari in the outskirts of Delhi; Bal Ashram – long term rehabilitation centre in Virat Nagar near Jaipur in Rajasthan and Balika Ashram for vocational training of girls in Virat Nagar. Sumedha Ji nurtured children at the Ashrams giving them the motherly love that they deeply missed. Several children who have been rehabilitated in the Ashrams have grown up to become doctors, engineers, lawyers, teachers and social workers doing the entire Movement proud.

In the late eighties, Mr. Kailash Satyarthi founded the South Asian Coalition on Child Servitude (SACCS) for elimination of child labour and helping the rescued children access education and rehabilitation services.

Policy advocacy for upholding the rights of all children with the help of member partners in South Asia and other key stakeholders like Government and Civil Society had been the most important facet of SACCS under his leadership.

Mr. Satyarthi has always believed in taking everybody along on the path of justice for the most vulnerable and marginalized children. Industry was no exception. In the early nineties when Corporate Social Responsibility as a phrase had not even been coined, he engineered the first ever voluntary social certification system Rugmark (now known as Good Weave) which ensured that the carpets were not made by children. This successful intervention became a case study in business schools and more and more sectors were willing to replicate the model in their supply chains. The exports of carpet from South Asian region increased as the number of child labourers in the supply chain came down from over a million in the 1990s to less than 200,000 now. Over the years Mr. Satyarthi and his team worked with several sectors like chocolate, sports goods, garments and mica mining among several others on issues of prevention of child labor.

Taking the spirit of people's movement to uphold the rights of children on the international turf Mr. Satyarthi conceived and led one of the largest civil society movements Global March against Child Labour³ with 7 million people traversing across 103 countries covering 80,000 km with a demand for an International Law on Worst Forms of Child Labour in 1998. This eventually led to the adoption of ILO Convention No. 182 on worst forms of child labour which was formally acclaimed in 1999 and went on to become the fastest ratified convention in the history of ILO with the help and support of key partners of the Global March.

The efforts of Global March which is world's largest coalition of Child Rights Organizations, Trade Unions and Teachers' Organizations led to child labour policy changes in hundreds of countries across the globe in line with the tenets of Convention 182.

Owing to concerted results of all stakeholders on the path paved by the Global March the number of child labourers has come down from 260 million in 2000 to about 152 million in 2017 while children in worst forms of labour slashed from around 150 million to 73 million in the same period.

At the turn of this century Mr. Satyarthi founded the Global Campaign for Education (GCE)⁴ – the largest civil society movement working to end the global education crisis and ensuring that States deliver the right of everyone to a free, quality public education. This put the global policy advocacy spotlight on Right to Education for all children and the emergent need for its financing by international donor fraternity.

3 – <https://globalmarch.org>

4 – www.campaignforeducation.org/en/

Mr. Satyarthi has always believed that not only is education a perfect antidote for child labour and exploitation but also an enabler for all other rights. His Movement against child labour was strengthening world over but a stark reality that stared at the children of India was that education was still not a fundamental right in India as late as 2002. Raising a clarion call for making education a fundamental right, he led the Shiksha Yatra (Education March) in 2001. Traversing through 20 States, covering a distance of 15,000 km, a rally of about tens of hundreds of marchers reached Delhi from Kanya Kumari after travelling for 115 days. A demand for the betterment of people came from the people itself. It was too strong to be ignored. Such is the power of Jan Andolan (People's Movement). This resulted in

86th amendment in the Constitution of India making free and compulsory education of all children in the age group of six to fourteen years a Fundamental Right. Eventually The Right to Education Act came into force on 01st April 2010.

Quite dichotomous as it may sound, freedom does not come for free and somebody has to pay its price. Mr. Satyarthi, his colleagues, his Son Bhuwan have been brutally attacked by slave masters and traffickers on several occasions. His home has been ransacked and office gutted several times, rape threats were given for his daughter, but nothing could deter them from fearlessly marching towards the path of freeing the children and fighting for their freedom embracing the principles of non-violence.

Each attack, every blow made Mr. Satyarthi and the Movement stronger and much determined. Kalu Kumar – a pillar of the Movement was on a mission in a remote village of Jharkhand to sensitize the villagers against child labour and trafficking when he was bitten by a snake cutting short a bright, dedicated and enthusiastic life. Kalu Kumar was a former child labourer. His determination to work with Mr. Satyarthi in eliminating child labour was as solid as a rock. The Movement may have lost Kalu in person, but his zeal and dedication continue to inspire all the members.

Mr. Satyarthi never believed in a piecemeal approach of just rescuing children from exploitation, but his endeavor has always been to work for the holistic welfare of children and their communities. With an eventual aim of creating a child friendly world the importance of creating a sustainable eco-system for children cannot be emphasized upon enough. Mr. Kailash Satyarthi introduced the concept of 'Child Friendly Village' (*Bal Mitra Gram*)⁵ in 2003. In a child friendly village all children are rescued and withdrawn from work and are enrolled in schools. Further to give them flair of democracy and good-governance a

5 – <https://satyarthi.org.in/Programmes>

children's parliament (*Bal Panchayat*) is constituted through secret ballot where the children elect their representatives. The Bal Panchayat raises issues related to the children's rights and welfares in front of the *Gram Panchayat* which happens to be the constitutional body of the village. The volunteers of Satyarthi Movement ensure a proper dovetailing between *Bal and Gram Panchayat*. Owing to active intervention at the grassroots level crimes like child labour, child marriages, trafficking, drug and substance abuse among others are stopped in these villages. Further the volunteers of the Movement sensitize and empower adults of these villages about the state sponsored welfare schemes that they are entitled for which further benefits the community. This model has been a tremendous hit and till the end of 2018, 540 child friendly villages have been instituted in India.

In 2014, the Nobel Committee conferred the Peace Prize on Mr. Kailash Satyarthi⁶. This was the biggest boost for the cause that he had been fighting for thirty four years. Suddenly the global spotlight came on the tyranny that the most marginalized children across the world had been enduring.

In its truest sense Nobel Peace Prize to Kailash Satyarthi was a victory of these children of the world who had been waiting to be emancipated from exploitation and violence. This was the first time ever that the Peace Prize went to the cause of children.

Peace is unimaginable till all children get their due right to be safe, healthy, educated and an equal opportunity for a promising future. Mr. Satyarthi dedicated his medallion to his Nation which is now a permanent exhibit in the museum of Rashtrapati Bhawan (Indian President's House).

Taking together the global civil society, World Leaders and Global Organizations Mr. Satyarthi got child protection and welfare related clauses included in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the United Nations to mobilize global support for sustained efforts to end child slavery, trafficking, forced labour and violence against children.

People and Mass movements have been his biggest strengths to drive sustainable social change in the best interest of children across the globe. In 2017, raising a clarion call against child sexual abuse, Mr. Satyarthi led the 12,000 Km Bharat Yatra⁷ (National March from Kashmir to Kanya Kumari) taking along the child abuse survivors; civil society organizations; politicians across party lines; bureaucrats; celebrities, faith leaders and media among others to put the national spotlight on this pressing issue. Members of Satyarthi Movement

6 — www.kailashsatyarthi.net/nobel-gallery

7 — <https://bharatyatra.online/>

played a significant role along with the Government of India to draft a robust anti-trafficking bill. Subsequently Union Cabinet approved The Trafficking of Persons (Prevention, Protection and Rehabilitation) Bill, 2018 in February 2018 and the Bill was passed in Lok Sabha (The Lower House of Parliament of India) in July 2018 but was not tabled in Rajya Sabha (The Upper House of Parliament of India) even after much persuasion, follow-ups and assurances by the law makers cutting across party lines. The budget session of 2019 was the only opportunity before the General Elections which the Indian Polity wasted. By doing this they again proved that children – just because they do not have voting rights – are not on their list of priorities. Mr. Satyarthi has made it abundantly clear that his fight for a robust anti-trafficking legislation in India shall continue till its logical conclusion.

One of the fruits that Bharat Yatra bore was the passage of Criminal Law (Amendment) Bill, 2018 in both the houses of Indian Parliament with stringent and deterring punishment for child rape.

In December 2016, Mr. Satyarthi created ‘Laureates and Leaders for Children’⁸

as a first of its kind platform bringing together Nobel Laureates and Global Leaders to build a sense of urgency, collective responsibility and a strong moral voice to galvanize political will for making this world peaceful where all children are healthy, safe and educated. There have been two summits, one in Delhi in 2016 and the other one at Dead Sea in Jordan in March 2018. The Dead Sea declaration was a clarion call for governments, law makers, corporates, donor agencies, civil society organizations, teachers’ organizations, youth organizations to come together in aid of children who are facing unimaginable violence day in day out as victims of forced labour, trafficking, slavery, refugee crisis, prostitution, armed conflicts, child marriages, illegal organ transplantation and pornography.

At Jordan the Global Leaders and Laureates committed to:

- Step up peace building and financing efforts with a reduction of global military expenditure and adequately funded education, health, nutrition and all other child related SDGs including but not restricted to SDGs, particularly 4.7; 5.2; 5.3; 8.7; and 16.2 among others;
- A legally binding global convention against online child sexual abuse, backed by a new Global Task Force against online child pornography, child sexual abuse and child trafficking to provide victims with holistic support;
- Interagency coordination and collaboration at national as well as global level for scaling up efforts to eliminate slavery, trafficking and child labour;

8 — <http://laureatesandleaders.org/>

- Measurable time-bound commitments from governments, international organizations, civil society and the private sector to prioritize children on the move, especially refugees, and ensure their education, protection, nutrition, physical and mental health;
- Strengthening and expansion of the global database and registry of traffickers hosted by Interpol to combat trafficking, and for the creation of an online policy tracker that monitors legislation on trafficking, child labour and abuse as well as enforcement of that legislation;
- Accountability by governments and international organizations in meeting their commitments to protect children and in ensuring justice in cases of crimes against children;
- Support youth leadership and urge governments to integrate human rights education into national curricula so that the next generation is aware of their rights and empowered to assert them.

Youth are the prime movers for a child friendly world. They have the moral power and courage to bring about a discernible change in the lives of the most marginalized children.

In 2016 Mr. Satyarthi launched world's largest youth campaign '*100 million for 100 million campaign*'⁹ to give a platform to amplify the voices of young activists around the world and inspire them to lead change in their communities by standing up for the rights of children and youth who may have been left behind for some reason but in no way are they any less deserving for a future that is inclusive and promising. This campaign endeavors that 100 million privileged youths and children world over stand together with their 100 million not so privileged peers and support their efforts to move from slavery, danger, violence and despair to freedom, safety, peace and hope. The campaign has already been launched in 40 countries and has received tremendous response from reputed organizations including Bread for the World.

The 100 Million for 100 Million Campaign believes that:

- The strongest and most compelling voice in any discourse on the rights of young people is the voice of young people themselves;
- The fastest way to make an impact is to target our local representatives and decision-makers, and effect change in our own communities;
- Working in partnership is the most sustainable way to ensure change is implemented and endures;

9 — <http://100million.org/>

Now let's come to the most contemporary threat to children across the globe.

The internet which was created to meet the emergent needs of globalization for sharing knowledge and information is now turning out to be extremely dangerous for our children.

Recently two girls in their early teens were sexually exploited in Madagascar by a 59-year-old European man, whom police believes is part of a larger network of criminals involved in the production and online distribution of child sexual abuse material. One of the survivors testified that the man, who took nude photographs of both girls for online distribution, sexually assaulted her. He is now in prison, awaiting extradition to France. This is not an isolated case restricted to any one country, but the crime of online child sexual abuse and pornography has emerged as an 8 Billion USD global industry in itself which does not include the exponential profits that data service providers across the globe are booking. Blocking child porn websites is a low hanging fruit but checking and curbing the data of service providers and individuals from producing, storing and disseminating such content is necessary. The internet has to be regulated for the safety and protection of our children.

It is for this reason Mr. Satyarthi has demanded for

a legally binding UN convention against online child sexual abuse and pornography.

Several Nobel Laureates, Heads of States and Global Leaders including Chancellor Dr. Angela Merkel, the President of Panama, Her Highness Sheikha Moza of Qatar, the President of Argentina, and Secretary General of OECD among several others have extended full support for the cause. His Holiness Pope Francis has also strongly supported the endeavor and a senior official from the Vatican is working with the Satyarthi Movement on the proposed legislation.

Online Child Sexual Abuse may include, amongst others online child sexual abuse; inclusive of audio-visual/text/virtual imagery; Online Grooming; Sexting; Sexual extortion; Sex trafficking; child sex tourism. Digital Abuse of Children of non-sexual nature may include, amongst others indoctrination and radicalization of children for terrorism or use of children other forms of extreme violence; Cyber-Bullying; Hate crimes; Trafficking; Drug dealing; Cyber-Stalking; Incitement and control leading to self-harm.

While ILO Convention 182; UNCRC; the Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography and a few other legislations do talk about the

crime, it is limited to child pornography and they are not legally binding. The proposed legally binding UN Convention that Mr. Satyarthi envisages will focus on the preemption and prevention of all forms of online sexual abuse, and prioritize efforts and resources towards elimination of this crime against children. It will be backed by a new Global Task Force against online child pornography, child sexual abuse and child trafficking to provide victims with holistic support. A dedicated international toll-free helpline for reporting cases under real-time supervision of INTERPOL or any other relevant agency will also be provided for. The convention will also create a Treaty Body with a technical arm which could provide assistance to stakeholders where knowledge and expertise to deal with such cyber-crimes is inadequate. The Treaty Body will also facilitate procedures related to extradition between various countries. The Convention besides providing for a comprehensive universally agreed upon definition of online child sexual abuse and its forms will ensure a convergence of efforts at national, bilateral and international levels along with a multi-disciplinary, multi organizational and sustainable approach. This will lead to a uniformity in legal regime dealing with online sexual abuse of children, as well as uniformity in standards and efficiency of global law enforcement response.

In a private audience with Pope Francis in the Vatican in November 2018, Mr. Satyarthi had raised concern about the growing cases of child sexual abuse in the Church. His Holiness had apprised Mr. Satyarthi that the upcoming meeting of Presidents of Catholic Bishops Conferences in February 2019 will be a very practical one to combat the issue. The conference that was in session until 24 February 2019 culminated with three concrete initiatives for “Protection of Minors in the Church”:

1. The imminent publication of a *Motu proprio* by the Pope, providing rules and regulations to safeguard minors and vulnerable adults within Vatican City State.
2. The distribution of a Rulebook to Bishops around the world, explaining their juridical and pastoral duties and responsibilities with regard to protecting children.
3. The creation of an operative “task force”, comprising competent experts, to assist those Bishops’ Conferences that may lack the necessary resources or expertise to confront the issue of safeguarding minors, and deal with abuse.

On Thanksgiving in 2018, the Award-winning documentary – *The Price of Free*¹⁰ – featuring a slice from the life and work of Nobel Peace Laureate Kailash Satyarthi to end child slavery was globally released on YouTube. The 87-minute documentary shows bone-chilling, daredevil, secret raid-and-rescue operations, keeping audiences on the edge of their seats. Mr. Kailash Satyarthi’s noble mission and selfless work, captured on film, exposes the plight of young children who are trafficked for forced labour. The film also apprises audiences of the grave threats and attacks that Mr. Satyarthi and his colleagues have endured over the past four decades in an endeavour to rescue and restore childhood.

10 — www.youtube.com/watch?v=UsqKz1hd_CY

The film shows LIVE raid operations led by Mr. Satyarthi, showing relentless work of Bachpan Bachao Andolan. Shot in sweatshops operating out of narrow lanes and dark asphyxiating dungeons the film captures some of the most deplorable working conditions in India in an attempt to show the magnitude of the burgeoning child slavery issue that affects both developing and developed countries alike.

The film exposes the modus operandi of child traffickers and provides audiences with an opportunity to understand and reflect on why millions of children are trapped in child labour and slavery, with the tools to invest, advocate and lead change in their community and around the world.

The Satyarthi Movement aims to take this film to tens of thousands of schools and colleges across the world to spread awareness about this issue. The film highlights the herculean challenges activists face while undertaking raid-and-rescue operations to free children from slavery. Much beyond just talks and arm-chair activism, the film poses some really tough questions to companies and consumers awakening their conscience towards protection of child rights. This film helps audiences understand the plight of millions of children trapped in child labour and slavery, further galvanizing social and political interventions towards curbing these crimes against children by advocating and leading sustainable change across the world.

As they say castles are not built overnight, Mr. Kailash has nurtured Satyarthi Movement for children with his sweat and blood along with his friends and colleagues over the last four decades and their humble efforts of restoring childhoods are clearly yielding results in the interest of the most marginalized children of the world. Mr. Satyarthi's single aim in life is to ensure that every child is free to be a child. He is sure that together with the help of all stakeholders, he will be able to see the end of child exploitation and violence against children within this lifetime. "With beacons of hope in our hands and compassion lit hearts this march towards a child friendly world will continue till every child on this earth is free, safe, healthy and educated", quotes, Mr. Kailash Satyarthi.

Chapter 11

Interreligious ethics in higher education – Challenges for a new paradigm of life and society – The Globethics.net program as model

By Obiora Ike¹

“I have long believed that when government, civil society and, particularly, Religious communities work towards a common goal, transformational change can take place. Faiths and religions are a central part of that equation. Indeed the world’s faith communities occupy a unique position in discussions on the fate of our planet and accelerating impacts of climate change. As a secular organization, the United Nations does not have any common language or common religion, but like all faiths we do work on behalf of the disadvantaged and the vulnerable people. We share the same ethical standards and belief in the inherent dignity of all individuals and all human beings.”²

Contemporary challenges to life and society

The principal questions of interreligious ethics circulate around the topic of “why ethics matters” and how faith groups, believers, and leaders of various religious confessions can

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- 1 — ike@Globethics.net. Dr Obiora Ike is Executive Director of Swiss-based NGO Globethics.net and a leading Roman Catholic professor of social ethics from Nigeria.
 - 2 — Ban Ki-Moon, UN Secretary General, Speech at the First Term Plan event at Windsor castle, UK, 8-9 September 2009, in Alliance of Religions and Conservation and UNDP, *Faith in the Future. The Bristol Commitments*. Bath, Ranchor Prime, (2015): 7

apply their sets of religious beliefs to the progress and practice of ethical principles. These principles bother on values and virtues; the search for integrity epitomized in the lives of the founders of various religions such as Buddha, prophet Mohammed, Jesus Christ the son of God and the saints and prophets known to various religions and continents and the common good of all.

Interreligious ethics further reflects on *fundamental respect for life* which often is the basic teaching of most religions; the respect for human dignity; belief in the promotion of individual/communal responsibility and freedoms and the rights which belong to humans because they are made in the image of the divine. Interreligious ethics further addresses issues linked to the protection, promotion and advancement of life in society and the environment; the linkage of faith beliefs with action for justice; issues of war and peace; the place of ethics in business, finance, politics, education, family, community, technology and society, including the challenge to pursue issues of inclusion for discriminated groups in dominant religious traditions with practices that affect victims – the poor, especially women, youth and marginalized groups. In essence, how can a living faith and religious belief systems integrate ethically acceptable actions that go beyond beliefs to inculcate rationally grounded basis of doing the ought, the right things, thus, bringing ethical dilemmas into the central concerns and challenges for faith groups, religious leaders, believers and even for non-believers from ideals to reality?

And how can the goals of inclusion, fairness and equality be integrated into global concerns of religious groups to effect that – nature, flora, fauna and humans – and indeed entire creation are nurtured, the planet – “our common home”³ and the environment protected so that a peaceful ecology for all is achieved? These are issues addressed in interreligious ethics in higher education.

The global context:

There is no shortage of pronouncements that a world for everybody often considered by many as ‘ideal’ and ‘illusory’ and therefore ‘unrealistic’ remains the greatest challenge for humanity in the 21st century. The issues confronting nations and peoples globally indicate an unfinished business of building solidarity amongst members of the human family and establishing their bonding and ultimate meaning. No wonder, poverty in the midst of plenty and the task of eradicating extreme poverty, disease and hunger remain a challenge.

Today humanity is ashamed of its inability to respect and defend human life, protect the environment, promote human dignity and guarantee the welfare of all. The lack of responsibility and values-driven leadership in local, national and international contexts bear the clear evidence of failure – a failure to guarantee values cherished universally by all – freedom, participatory democracy, justice, respect and equality, tolerance, peace and socio-economic welfare for all. It is not however the systems that failed first. What failed

3 — Pope Francis. *Encyclical Letter Laudato Si, On Care for Our Common Home*. Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, (2015)

first is the lack of ethical principles in human agents and the lack of integration of character formation in the youth – thus the need for filling this gap.

It is no exaggeration to say that contemporary life and society often lack shared values across sectors and cultures and as a consequence suffer from a growing gap of any meaning in life and the absence of peace based justice.

Other challenges and existing threats come from a divided world; from environmental degradation, including of our climate to extreme weather events which endanger lives, livelihoods and whole nations.⁴

The scandal of current patterns of consumption generating levels of pollution which our planet cannot cope with at a time when many die of hunger and homelessness is simply mind boggling. Economic growth compatible with our planetary limits and decent employments which put people before profits remains elusive. With all the many positive achievements of humanity during our time in the areas of advanced scientific developments and technology, space travel, the arts, financial transactions and swift communications, medicine and civilization, conflicts and insecurity continue to prevent progress for the majority who live in un-freedom and without basic rights in the 21st century. In some cases religious and ethnic motives are instrumentalized to settle political differences. The nature of conflict has also changed considerably as armed conflicts are far more likely to occur within states than between them, and to involve disparate non-state actors.⁵

Taken together, we see institutional weakness in government, economy, traditional and religious institutions including the academia showing a growing lack of trust or respect by citizens for established authority and institutions around the globe. And perhaps more worrisome is a growing absence of faith in the human values that guide people; values founded on sound moral and natural reasoning, using freedom to make choices and decision that affect the common good.

The agenda of achieving levels of inclusive and sustainable development for societies that “no one be left behind” stands behind the efforts made with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the United Nations (UN). These efforts are supported by continued action at regional, international, national and non-governmental levels. The further support from civil society, businesses, individuals, religious and faith-based organizations,

4 — Pope Francis (2015)

5 — Alliance of Religions and Conservation and UNDP, *Faith in the Future. The Bristol Commitments*. Bath, Ranchor Prime, (2015): 14

raising voice and engendering positive action, to serve and save lives gives credence to the need for interreligious ethics as a priority area for reflection.

Scope and aim of interreligious ethics

Religions have a clear role and a calling beyond their unique salvific faith mission, to promote ethics, values and the practice of virtue and to do this beyond their various religious faith groups or traditions. This function which corresponds to the heritage of many religions as the repository of humanity's history and values, traditions and ethical principles is invaluable and a great cultural asset and historical resource.

The scope of interreligious ethics is therefore essentially but not limited to the promotion of co-existence amongst peoples, since the divine to whom all religions adhere to is creator, center and sustainer of all that is.

Religious dialogue has relevance when it moves beyond the past to the sharing of values in current plural socio-religious contexts with the aim of promoting an atmosphere for mutual respect, learning from each other, and carrying out joint activities which serve human life, support vulnerable groups, and engage the environment by advancing virtue and values described as ethical practices. The second ecumenical council convoked and held at the Vatican from 1962 to 1965 encouraged closer and stronger bonds between various religions and amongst peoples, highlighting better relation of Christians to non-Christian religions towards fostering unity and love grounded in the common bond of the human community in its origins and its ultimate meaning.⁶

According to the council, "All people of whatever race, condition and age, by virtue of their dignity as people, have an inalienable right to an education that responds to their own vocation and is in line with their temperament, their specific gender, culture and the traditions of their own country, and at the same time, is open to a fraternal coexistence with other peoples, in order to ensure true unity and true peace on earth"⁷. This call is both

6 — Pope Paul VI, *Nostra Aetate (Declaration on the Relation of the Church to Non-Christian Religions)*. Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, (1965)

7 — Pope Paul VI. *Gravissimum Educationis, The Declaration on Christian Education*. Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, (1965)

opportunity and challenge. In higher education, capacity is built of the agents of human civilizations – teachers, students and professionals in centers of formation with content and curriculum to assist societal transformation.

Interreligious ethics makes education transformational

It is important to link education to character formation by building upon virtues and values-driven educational models and systems beyond just knowledge transmission. When students at the end of a course obtain their certificates, they are certified by their institutions as professionals in a specific discipline or study. But this is not enough for society and its need for values driven leaders. What certification does a student get for character and good conduct which is both a qualitative and valuable service to the larger society? Let's take an example from the area of business and the economy which affects teachers of business and students. There is a challenge to conduct business with 'good conscience' and finding solutions that combine sustainability and risk factors to protect the environment. Such studies maintain that

investing in good conscience, which implies bringing into perspective the environmental, social and governance concerns that feed into the product design is an asset, not a loss.

Advocates of sustainable investing argue that stronger scores in areas such as corporate governance can improve a company's performance. Religious investors are in the forefront championing responsible investments that reduce exposure to contentious stocks, such as weapons manufacturers or tobacco companies, or fossil fuels and all this is good ethical practice applied to business.⁸

Interreligious ethics includes activities which bother on democracy and education

Societies globally are opening up to novelties through improved information, sharing and participation. This includes styles of governance where democratic norms and procedures

8 — J. Thompson, Financial Times, "Investing in Good Conscience Wins More Interest", 5 November 2018, www.ft.com/content/b0b99c92-c246-11e8-84cd-9e601db069b8

are common. There is need therefore for religious institutions to rethink democracy in the light of the various faith traditions in a multicultural world and advance ways and means of improving participation, giving voice especially to women and youth, sharing governance ideas and introducing pedagogical tools for teachers and training programs. These efforts give democracy at this hour of its crisis some orientation at a global level. Since many faith traditions are theocratic in structure, a certain form of decentralized management of affairs would give credence to the models of managing modern society which democracy projects.

Interreligious ethics and new educational models

In view of the realization that education is indeed integral and includes skills acquisition, basic and advanced tertiary education with professional skills, interreligious ethics could help governments and communities improve on such educational models which empower the learner to theoretical and practical skills.

Fighting hunger and malnutrition

Interreligious ethics in higher education offer possibilities in the search for solutions for a new paradigm of life and society. By their nature and structure, they have potentials to generate and contribute to research, training and teaching based on a broad range of resources that come from the speculative sciences – philosophical, theological and socio-religious studies – and the wisdom of generations and traditions.

At a time when humanity is challenged by hunger and disease, faith-based organizations with their history of religion and social change can translate such knowledge base into enhancing the use of scientific methods and new technologies in their institutions of higher learning. Intercontinental networks of universities, exchange programs, mentorships, research collaborations belong to the field and capability of these traditions.

The aim is to translate these various religious beliefs and faith teachings into practices that are values driven, producing responsible leadership and ethically binding rational conduct for the common good of all and the wellbeing of entire creation. It is indeed a bold attempt to promote the relationship between religious beliefs and ethical conduct and

compare these teachings with their faith practices in a systematic and scientific manner, establishing their link, mutuality, commonalities and differences including contradictions.⁹

Religions play a critical role in the integration of ethics in society

Martin Palmer, Secretary General of the Alliance for religions and Conservation has stated that “religions hold a key – an important key – to the task that humanity has been given” in achieving the SDGs.¹⁰ This explains why the efforts made to focus on the role of religion and religious groups especially in the fields of education, remain clearly important.

The commitment of the SDGs for more models of sustainable development needs a cross-sectorial approach and major new global initiatives for interreligious ethics, as the ethical and spiritual foundations for an alternative concept are not yet fully there. In the post-modern era, the tendency is for some agencies alongside governments Faith actors are diverse, diffuse and plentiful.

In many developing countries, religious and faith groups offer through their structures a leadership role in being the largest providers of educational institutions (65 percent of schools and hospitals and social services in several nations are offered by religious intuitions and non-state actors).¹¹

It is a known fact that the oldest social service providers known to humankind are religious institutions. In most cultures of the world, religious leaders are trusted often more than those in government or the NGO world and they are listened to and followed in ways almost no other sector of society can hope for. They range from small communities at the heart of each and every social group, to religious leaders of communities (of different sizes, locations and faith traditions) to CEO’s and staff of major faith inspired NGO’s working

9 – O. Ike, *A world for Everybody – Communicating Faith in the Diversity of Cultures – Interreligious Dialogue and Co-Existence*. Enugu: BEW IT Limited, (2016)

10 – Alliance of Religions and Conservation and Conservation and UNDP, “Long Term Plans and Commitments”, in Alliance of Religions and Conservation and Conservation and UNDP, *Faith in the Future. The Bristol Commitments*. Bath, Ranchor Prime, (2015): 21

11 – Alliance of Religions and Conservation and Conservation and UNDP, *The Zug Guidelines for Faith Consistent Investing*. 2016

on all aspects of human existence and experience. Their contributions therefore, are equally diverse and significant. These religious and faith groups are local, national and international in understanding and reach. Through their teachings and practices they manifest the core beliefs and with them the core values of their traditions, using language which is accessible and value filled such as compassion or love or trust. This unparalleled outreach which speaks to norms, behaviour, attitudes and social and political trends cannot be underestimated.¹²

Globethics.net providing the framework for interreligious ethics

At Globethics.net¹³, the need for a strategic network of significant pilot models of how interreligious ethical formation and common research can be done to include institutions, programs and individuals was already conceived and is currently being carried out.

The vision at Globethics.net is clear and bold, namely: to integrate ethics in higher education. At the level of higher education institutions, we encounter the youth – future leaders of communities, families, institutions, businesses and nations.

Upon these and their knowledge and integrity rest the future of societies. They need to be empowered by their institutions, learning environments and teachers whom we engage with tools and resources.

Promoting ethics as policy in higher education is highest priority and agenda at Globethics.net. It implies a policy focus and engagement with regulators and decision makers, but also with key providers of educational products which in many cases involve religious and faith-based groups.

The consortium on ethics in higher education provides such a platform with several universities from all the continents involved. These consortium members belong to all the major faith groups – Hindus, Buddhist, Christian, Muslim, Traditional Religions and secular state and private actors in higher education. There is extensive work currently undertaken and the impact is enormous.¹⁴

12 – Alliance of Religions and Conservation and UNDP (2015): 19

13 – Globethics.net Foundation website, www.globethics.net.

14 – Globethics.net, *Globethics.net Annual Report 2017*. Geneva: Globethics.net, (2018): 12

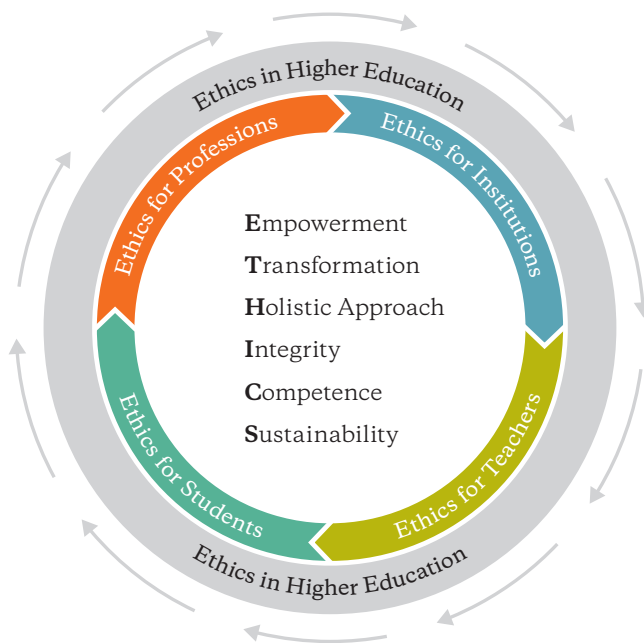


Figure 1: Globethics.net Ethics Strategy Focus
 Source: *Globethics.net*

The founder's spirit behind Globethics.net was motivated by a deep emotional commitment and sense of responsibility to work for global leadership founded on ethical pedestals. The overriding conviction then, as it is still now, was on the need for a united global effort to promote values-driven leadership through ethics, so that we can meaningfully control the forces of science and technology and govern the peaceful evolution of human society.

There is an additional conviction which has emerged from the dialogue of Globethics.net with many international partners on issues of interreligious ethics and interreligious leadership formation:

Looking at the current framework of UN organizations the religion and development discourse clearly points to the conviction that the UN ECOSOC Council (United Nations Economic and Social Council) on a structural level needs as equivalent an official and highly visible

UN Council for Cultural, Ethical and Spiritual Transformation with leading representatives of all major traditions and interreligious think-tanks which can stimulate attempts to establish the ‘cultural dimension of the Great Transformation’

which is now globally recognized but not yet institutionally implemented in the UN system in terms of a greater visibility, participation and impact of religious organizations and ethical think-tanks for issues of eco-social transformation. How can we synchronize governance with appropriate key values of interreligious ethics? How can we enable participatory decision-making mechanisms at the global level and deal with the challenges of rapid digitalization and the ambivalent role of social media in politics and societies? These questions need to be answered and to be dealt with continuously on a responsible UN level.

One may observe generally that the significance of higher education in the area of development co-operation is underestimated. Yet, forming the elites for future global networks of new responsibilities for sustainability needs much more intentional capacity building of change agents for eco-social transformation. Therefore we also need to have more visible and determined support and collaboration between development agencies and higher education institutions. The socio-economic transformation processes which we need globally

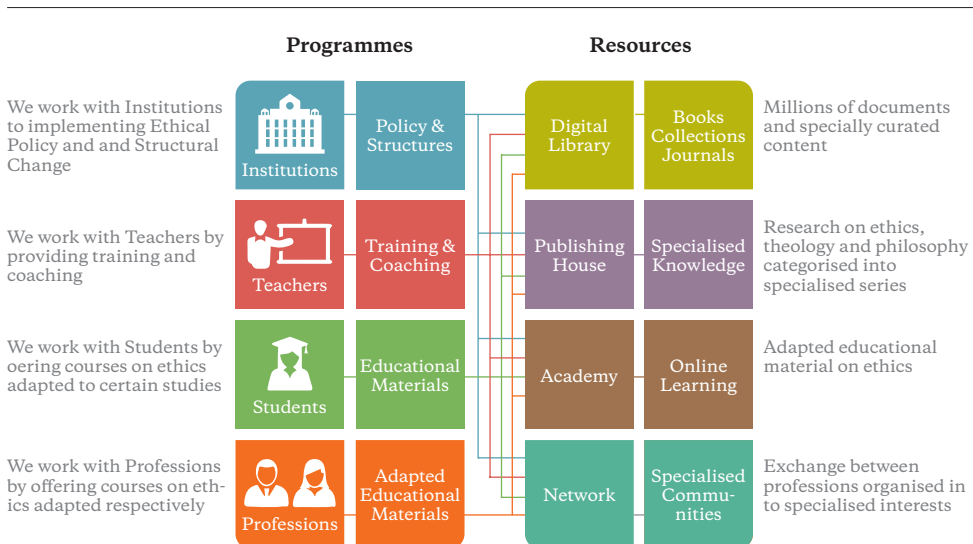


Figure 2: Globethics.net Programmes and Resources Block Chart

Source: *Globethics.net*

for the implementation of the UN Agenda 2030 will not be possible without massive investment in education and ethics in leadership education. Where will the future elite otherwise be trained and where will new ethical and morally informed majorities come from?

Activities promoting interreligious ethics are carried out through the Globethics.net program anchored on four products and four resources. These are support to institutions, empowerment of teachers, and capacity for students and provision for professionals. In detail this implies:

Support to institutions: in their efforts to introduce ethical behaviour in higher education institutions and support the integration of relevant and contextual standards and structures. The objectives aimed at include assistance that encourage ethical behaviour; developing standards and structures; building capacity; ensuring that ethics directorates are established in higher education institutions; training the trainers; offering tailored solutions and resources; involving experts on ethics to support the institutions; enhancing credible benchmarks and institutional assessments.

Empowerment of teachers: This is achieved in higher education through teacher training, research, course development and collaborative projects. The objective is to encourage ethical behaviour amongst supervisors, facilitators, training professionals and persons involved as teachers in teaching and research by provide trainings, course content; resources and tools for teaching on applied ethics.

Capacity for students: With target groups such as undergraduate and post-graduate candidates, doctoral and research fellows, effort is made to encourage students to behave ethically through learning and researching, showing them best practices of individuals, companies and organisations that have become successful by following ethical standards and principles; offering new perspectives on intercultural exchange and dialogue for peace and sustainable development.

Provision for professions: The target groups are professional associations and their members; research institutes on ethics and providers of public utilities including government ministries. The objective is to provide educational and training material on applied ethics adapted to professions across sectors to grow a deeper understanding of ethics in their context. Trainees obtain knowledge and practice of ethical thinking and lifestyles that support their work and enhance sustainability concerns In professional sectors.

Practical suggestions

It is suggested to develop clear ethical guidelines on accountable and responsible religious leadership and religious management for religious communities so that churches and other religious communities can be shining examples of trustworthy religious leaders instead of examples of scandals and distortions in terms of ethical and anti-corruption standards.

We ask that higher education actors make policies that empower people and develops talents; that these policies translate higher education to achieve transformative roles by placing the common good before self-interest; that higher education takes a holistic approach through understanding of in-depth correlations; that higher education serves integrity which makes values-based decisions and behaviours; finally that higher education promotes competence of the educated by focusing on innovative and collective proficiency that serves sustainability. This means to essentially standing up for our one world.

The work of ACT Alliance and its member organizations in the area of interreligious peace ethics, interreligious ethics of sustainability and ethics of entrepreneurship is very important as the dividing lines between religion and business often are blurred and very problematic features also occur in all types of religious communities, where religion is sometimes used simply boost profit-oriented business.

Suggested is also that every development organization creates visible staff departments and clear guidelines on interreligious collaboration in development.

Conclusion

The challenge for all religions at this stage of human history is to collaborate on the levels of joint actions that impact positively on the common good of all. Religions have this potential. That we must once again reaffirm the cultural and spiritual values that irresistibly draw humanity into the future through ethical practices that considers the 'ought' and 'the right' and also do so because it is the right thing to do, this time, not just because of laws or morality or sanctions but as a way of life. This compels us to rediscover the underlying power behind all sciences – of literature, history, philosophy and the other humanities – to restore wholeness to our highly fragmented view of the world by reuniting the objective and subjective dimensions of social reality.

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Chapter 12

The Role of Asian Inter-Faith Relationships for a New Paradigm of Development

Joyanta Adhikari¹

Introduction

Inter-religious relationships have been an inevitable feature of what it means to be the church in the multi-faith setting of Bangladesh. This article traces the broader ecumenical and socio-economic responsibilities of the development perspective of the church, for transforming and changing the society in the context of religious diversity. It expresses that community transformation has to be an integral part of the ministry of the church today.

The article then will lay out the key theological touch points of the ecumenical socio-economic developmental journey, in relation to the role of inter-religious collaboration so as to state its rationale of the paradigm shift at present day and its relevance.

Further, in trying to explore the changing dynamics and characteristics of being in “Inter-Faith Relationships” today, it will explain its relation with the changing matrix of the developmental phenomenon and highlight what is going to matter most in the days ahead. It will also offer few essential points for addressing the challenges and commitment of the theological nexus if we are to take seriously the reality of religious diversity in our context.

The community of faiths in Bangladesh already has experienced that the Christian Church has been involved since decades in the transformation of the society, especially when it took sides with the poor and oppressed. At the same time

from its very beginning the Church was not just a ‘separate and stand-alone’ body, but in the multi-faith context of Bangladesh the Church people have made

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an outstanding effort to be a meaningful and effective part of other-faith communities for many examples of ‘humanitarian work’ or to serve as a ‘change maker’ or ‘catalyst’ for overcoming differences and working for transformation.

At times the church seemed to have lost this focus, but somehow, throughout the ages, it has regained its strength to sustain this mission responsibility. Today, more than ever, given the increasing poverty, violence, rights violation and injustices in the world, the Christian church is called upon to embrace, engage and continue with its task of being a serious agent for transformation and change, and can only achieve this with other faith friends. It has to fulfil the Gospel imperative of making the world a better place for all and to live with justice, peace and in harmony.

To fulfill this task we must reshape and restructure our combined roles and ‘ways of doing’ things, to make them more effective and liberating, by rethinking and reorganizing the mindset with our other faith friends. Yes, it is challenging, but not impossible.

The Role of the Church in Interfaith Relationships

In the modern learning journey of the Churches the “World Missionary Conference” in Edinburgh in 1910 considered among other topics also the implications of their understanding of mission for the missionary methods. Of all the 1200 delegates at that conference there were but seventeen not belonging to white male clergy from Europe or North America. This meant that only a small proportion of the attendees could actually consider this critical missiological question. The outcome therefore was still very much in the mode of the missionary 19th century of the past and reinforced the missionary mandate: “to evangelize the world in this generation.”

However already in the second “International Missionary Conference”, convened in Jerusalem in 1928, the concern had become much stronger to deal not only with the emerging secularism but also with the Christian approach to other religions in non-western contexts. What is distinctive, universally valid, sufficient, and authoritative about the Christian messages in interfaith contexts, were critical questions for the Assembly.

Asserting that Christian Gospel does provide answers to a troubled world, yet affirming values in other religions, the conference called on Christians to join hands with all people of faith, to confront growing impact of secular culture and needs of the day. Some participants, unable to agree with such an affirmation of other religions, expressed concern that “syncretistic thinking” was undermining the importance and urgency of Christian mission.

Others maintained that Christian uniqueness precluded partnerships and joint efforts with other religious tradition even.

An outstanding event in Christian efforts to deal with other religions was made in the “International Missionary Conference”, held at Tambaram, South India, in 1938. The discussions of this council revolved around its preparatory volume, Hendrik Kraemer’s ‘The Christian Message in a Non-Christian World’. Using Karl Barthian categories of Christian uniqueness and decisiveness, Kraemer justified the Universal Mission of the Church in its perceived relation to the world’s major religions.

Hendrik Kraemer and other Western theologians whose thinking was largely based on Karl Barth’s views, had few means for dealing with interfaith reality, while Dr. D. T. Niles and other Asian giant theologian, encouraged participants greatly on the Church’s challenging role and responsibility to people of other-faiths’ people, particularly also to liberate them.

Controversies that followed Tambaram were so wrenching, and the second world war with its aftermath – granting independence to colonized Asian countries at the end – was so stunning, that theologians changed their focus from debating Christian uniqueness and dialogue to addressing the responsibilities of Christians to other-faith people and to contribute to nation-building.

This shift points to a main paradigm shift in the understanding of the Church’s role, as to become more open as a community towards people of other-faiths’. But it took almost thirty years until the “WCC Dialogue Consultation” in Kandy, Sri Lanka 1967 for this paradigm shift to become more broadly visible and recognized. The Kandy document was the first ecumenical document to submit the term “Dialogue” as a new basis for Christian relationships with people of other faiths and this led to the establishment of the Sub-Unit on Dialogue in the WCC in 1971.

Interfaith Relationships in a Multi-Faith Context

It is known to everyone that Christians in Asia constitutes a religious minority, on the other side most of Asian countries, including Bangladesh live in multi-faith settings. Thus relationships in development engagement should not only be limited to Christians or among Churches only, but genuine relationships should encompass inter-religious solidarity.

Bishop Duleep de Chickera, of the Anglican Church in Sri Lanka, called for interreligious relational solidarity and integration in his presentation at a joint consultation of CCA and WCC on ‘Revitalizing the Ecumenical Movement in Asia’ in 2008. He gave several reasons why interreligious relationship and integration ought to be a serious vision of Asian Churches today –

2 — www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/wcc-programmes/ecumenical-movement-in-the-21st-century/non-member-churches-ecumenical-organizations/revitalizing-the-ecumenical-movement-in-asia

(i) Interreligious relationship is biblical and theological, as God is eternal, omnipresent and ever dynamic. (ii) Inter-religious relationship will impact dehumanizing experiences of Asia, as there is a collective religious conscience on issues, such as poverty, religious intolerance, gender injustice and environment; (iii) Interreligious relationship will impact the world church today, especially with the waning enthusiasm, for it in some global organizations; (iv) Engagement in inter-religious relationship will help us to deal with conflict and socio-economic injustice; (v) In inter-religious relationships good and bad things emerge, as one raises questions and leaves it to others to discern for themselves.

There is a lot that religious adherents share together. There is also a lot that we need to face or bear together. The inter-religious relationship is the only way for churches in Asia, especially in the Bangladesh context, in order to survive, develop and live together.

How Peace building and Interfaith Relationships are put in practice in the work of CCDP

The Christian Commission for Development in Bangladesh (CCDB) was formed in 1973. It is designed as a national level voluntary organization to complete the relief and rehabilitation work initiated in 1972 by the Bangladesh Ecumenical Relief and Rehabilitation Services (BERRS), for responding to the needs of the affected people during the war of independence in 1971 and to undertake development interventions.

CCDB envisions a just and caring society where people live in peace, dignity and in harmony based on ecumenical principles. Its work is oriented towards all people within God's creation irrespective of race, religion and color although initially, there was a misconception that this organization only works with a Christian reference group since its name starts with the word "Christian". Bangladesh though has a common culture with many different languages. There are still some tensions due to different religious beliefs, values and traditional practices in social and economic areas of life. It is known that Bangladesh is a Muslim majority country with a majority of about 89% Muslims. Hinduism constitutes about 9% of the population and there are about 2% other religious groups like Buddhists (0.1%), Christians (.4%) and other tribal groups. In the Chittagong Hill Tracts Buddhist tribes are the majority and have a mixture of tribal cults and Buddhist doctrines.

Attacks on religious and ethnic minority communities continue to be a “problem” despite the fact that constitutional rights to religion freedom and equal rights are protected. Religious and ethnic minorities are very vulnerable due to their limited influence in political parties and as a result they are quickly losing land, properties and sometimes their lives.

Since the last two and half decades CCDB has been addressing issues of peace among different religions and ethnic community to maintain societal harmony through media campaigns and through creating and using information, education, communication (IEC) materials through billboards, publishing leaflets, brochures, small books and case studies in an effort to reduce vulnerability of the poor and the marginalized.

There are issues of rights and justice which are inter-linked with religious beliefs and differences and this often creates tensions and conflicts in communities.

In addition, vivid engagement with the poor segment in communities in development efforts create a different form of conflicts and tensions, as the resources are limited and all needy families cannot be addressed at a time by development and aid agencies.

Keeping this in mind, CCDB with the financial assistance of Bread for the World, Germany, started the ‘CAPACITY BUILDING FOR PROMOTION OF PEACE (CBPP)’ program in the year 2005 as a part of the Regional Mainstreaming Process of LCP (Local Capacities for Peace) South Asia Network which was comprised of nine member organizations from four countries from South Asia like Bangladesh, India, Nepal and Pakistan.

A new phase of this program started from last January 2018. CCDB is implementing a national, regional peace building program which is called, “LOCAL CAPACITIES FOR PEACE (LCP) PROGRAM” which aims at mainstreaming all NGO’s (Non-Government Organization) development programs. The common humanitarian and developmental Do No Harm (DNH) values and frameworks are carefully maintained and are followed strictly in all programs’ planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation stages as the ultimate goal of this program is to ensure peace and social harmony.

CCDB organized dialogues and enlightens workshop, training courses among different faith and ethnic groups to promote societal peace. In 2018 for instance the “LOCAL CAPACITIES FOR PEACE (LCP) PROGRAM of CCDB organized training courses on “Interfaith Development” at the CCDB-HOPE Foundation Center.

The objectives of this interfaith development course were to (a) create a safe environment in which CCDB staff members and reference people could explore

difficult issues together, (b) to learn about each other's religions and to share and mutually observe religious practices, (c) to explore personal religious identifications, stereotypes and beliefs about other religious and national (Adivasi-Aboriginal, Bengali) identities and ways in which each religion contributes to peace/conflict, (d) to develop action plans for local work in CCDB's project areas, (e) to develop leadership skills for working in interfaith settings.

With regard to “the non-violence campaign to protect Adivasi/Aboriginal rights” the LCP project of CCDB organized a campaign at the CCDB-Daudpur area. A total of 500 representatives of different stakeholders from local NGOs and CCDB Forum members attended. It can also be noted that in the recent past in collaboration with CCDB, LCP South Asia Network Secretariat organized a study visit to the Ukhia-Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh, on “Assessment of the impact of Rohingya Refugee Crisis in South Asia”. Thus the “*LOCAL CAPACITIES FOR PEACE (LCP) PROGRAM*” of CCDB proved to be not only a very effective tool for those who are working in conflict areas but also an effective instrument in interfaith issues by trying to bring peace, harmony and active tolerance to different faith groups through knowledge and educational enlightenment.

Paradigm Shifts in Inter-Faith Relations Today

It has become common to speak about a paradigm shift in understanding interfaith relations today. While others have given major attention to socio-economic, theological and ecumenical perspectives of change, ‘Paradigm Shift in interfaith-relations’ denotes a remarkable and important change that happens when usual ways of thinking about or doing something are replaced by a new and different way. Thus, a “Paradigm Shift” happens when the old (previous) paradigm is abandoned in favor of a new one.

The term ‘Paradigm Shifts’ entered in the ecumenical discourse in the 1980s. David Bosch used this language effectively through his classic work, “Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission”. This study of the major paradigms of mission throughout Christian history was capped with Bosch's proposal of an “Emerging Ecumenical Paradigm.”

However, this does not represent a new paradigm as such, but more of a bringing together of good and desirable elements in recent missiological thinking in Inter-Faith context, while socio-economic developmental process denoted an essential part of it. Particularly, in “Developmental Theological Discourse” we need to critically revisit and

evaluate our old understandings and practices in order to see, where traditional developmental approaches has proven deficient in order to bring expected impact towards the ultimate goal.

The “New Paradigm of Mission’ today should challenge traditional partnership with its economic and socio-political agendas, agents, think tankers, stakeholders, and strive to foster new facets of solidarity and connectivity with the actual marginalized people in their concrete human needs.

The paradigm shift In terms of religious diversity implies to be in real solidarity with others, to be one with people of other faiths, to identify with the others, to feel strongly for their pain and hurt, and to share the burden of the others as if it were one’s own.

Solidarity with people of other faiths implies the self-emptying mindset and attitude of Christ (*kenosis*) in an effort to lift up those who are downtrodden, oppressed, exploited and dehumanized.

Paradigm Shift in Social Responsibility in a Multi-faith Context

The eminent Sri Lankan theologian, Dr. Aloysius Pieris, was the first one to come with new ideas from Asia, particularly on the basis of the Buddhist spiritual context. According to his statement, the Church uses two models for alleviating poverty in Asia: the (i) “Western Development Model”, a continuation of missiology of conquest and power that dominated churches yesterday; and (ii) the “Latin American Praxis Model” that lacks a perceptive understanding of religious ethos of the East.

Regrettably, both models are inadequate from Asian perspectives. As we know about Poverty, Pieris reminds us, that poverty has a positive role in “Eastern Religions” and in “Western Monastic Traditions”. Indeed, voluntary poverty has acted as a ‘Spiritual Antidote’ against the forces of mammon.

In the lives of leaders such as Mahatma Gandhi, ‘opted poverty’ served also as a ‘political strategy’ against mammonic powers, which subjugated the masses through oppressive systems. Where these Western models foster the enslaving pursuit of “Freedom from Poverty,” an Asian model tempers it with its value of “Freedom that comes from Poverty.”

Asian theology, Pieris argues, must undergo a double Baptism, in the Jordan of “Asian Religions” and in the cross of “Asian Poverty”. At that point, Asian Christianity will find itself open in new ways to participate with other religious communities. Participatory Theology,

which according to Pieris is particularly an Asian virtue, must include at the theological table both scholars of different religious traditions and those who are poor.

For many decades now, Christians have engaged colleagues of other religious traditions in interreligious dialogical relationship. We have built relationships, learned from each other, and engaged in many valuable initiatives. We have learned to be critical of the other and critical of ourselves in the presence of the other.

At our best, inter-religious dialogical discourse and relationships in practical life complement each other in our daily life. So the plane “Theological Table Dialogue’ has already been shifted into a “Daily Life Table Dialogue Space”, and in many cases these “Practical Life Dialogues” have been transformed visibly into forms of combined action to address social issues more effectively.

Now time has come to bring and accumulate common thoughts and action of our individual faith’s traditions on our present day table, to be shared with other-faith friends, to make an effective combination for common social transformation.

Like in other parts of Asia, already in Bangladesh both the Church and Christian have tested, sharpened, and refined their theological ideas for engaging into contemporary inter-religious “Common Issue” based relationship. This however, is not enough.

We have now come to a stage when we must really engage each other, in most serious conversations, in which our religious communities engage in a “Theological Table” which is related to our field in daily life. There is a need to bring the “Life Sustaining Issues”, like socio-economic developmental issues, including other cross-cutting and burning questions on to the theological table as well.

We need a “Table Fully Open” to self-critical evaluation of our own religious theological traditions, open for deep listening, for learning from others’ theological insights, and for working together to address more sustainably and theologically for meeting the ongoing contextual needs of our communities.

New Paradigm of Development (NPD) views of trio Nobel Laureates

We may now consider some of the ingredients of the NPD, seen primarily through the lens of the ideas and writings of three Nobel Laureates – Amartya Sen, Joseph Stiglitz and Douglas

North. Though each economist takes a somewhat different perspective in the development agenda, each is dissatisfied with the contours of the “Old Paradigm Development” particularly those parts that reflect the “Principles of Washington Consensus” and/or take a more utilitarian and uni-dimensional approach to development.

Each thinks of development as a holistic and multi-faceted, yet contextual, concept that embraces a variety of human needs and objectives. To a greater or lesser extent, each is concerned with the dynamics of structural societal transformation. Each emphasizes importance of institutions, and each regards the means and ends as being interwoven and part of the development process.

Looking at specific contributions of Laureates and that of Amartya Sen, he gives most attention to ways and means of advancing real freedom for people. He suggests this is best accomplished by removing the main sources of “un-freedom”, e.g. poverty, tyranny, poor economic opportunities, neglect of public facilities and intolerance of repressive governments, and by the enhancing of the more positive freedoms of choice, opportunity and personal capability (Sen, 1999).

In the pursuance of these goals, Sen also views substantive freedom as a means, as well as an end of development. In identifying five types of freedom, Amartya Sen pays special attention to upgrading institutions, which he regards as an essential prerequisite for people, to value better and control their lives; to advance their true functional assets and responsibilities; and ensure a desirable balance between tasks and priorities of different constituents of the wealth-creating and allocative process.

Amartya Sen, of course, recognizes the huge difficulties in measuring or evaluating the kind of development he urges, but suggests a start should be made, by incorporating better freedom and capability related indices into any measure of human wellbeing.

For Joseph Stiglitz, development is primarily concerned with economic and structural transformation of resources, capabilities and preferences of societies, and that of mind-sets, values and entrepreneurship of its individual and organizational stakeholders. Stiglitz’s main criticisms of the OPD – as set out, for example, in Stiglitz (1998) and Yusuf and Stiglitz (2001) – are that it is too narrowly focused; it is incapable of coping with the needs of an uncertain innovating global economy.

It tends to be adversarial in its approach; it ignores issues of ownership, sovereignty and participation; it underestimates the role of non-market actors, in helping to reduce or counter-act coordinating failures of markets and to provide collective goods or those that generate externalities or spillovers. It pays little or no heed to institutional infrastructures; quality of which (he asserts) is one of the critical determinants to direction, structure and speed of the transformation process; and it fails to acknowledge the inseparability among multiple goals of development and in particular, interface between efficiency, distribution and cultural identity.

Stiglitz believes that the NPD should be more holistic, more consensual, more socially inclusive, more open, and more participatory in its content than its predecessor. It should better recognize and appreciate role of partnerships, networks and social capital as contributors to these goals. It should place learning process, willingness and capabilities of individuals and organizations, to adjust to economic and social regeneration, centre stage.

It should pay more attention to the role of civil society and special interest groups as development enhancing entities. It should be more dynamic in its perspective and accept that development process involves a continuum of equilibrium situations. It should include a wholesale reappraisal of objectives and functions of leading supranational organizations, especially United Nations, World Bank, International Monetary Fund and the World Trade Organization.

Of the three Nobel Laureates, Douglass North is the one who pays most attention to the role of incentive structures and enforcement systems in affecting the trajectory, structure and impact of economic development. Such institutions – as he identified in several of his publications- have been all too frequently ignored or discounted in the neo-classical literature.

But North, like Sen and Stiglitz, believes in contemporary characteristics of global economy and re-evaluation of views by both individuals and organizations about the purpose and content of development. Its determinants are compelling scholars, business community, civil society and governments, to examine more carefully institutions and institutional infrastructures undergirding economic activity.

Few Challenges for a New Paradigm Development

A major challenge of a new development paradigm is to shift emphasis of development assistance to a higher plane – from a focus on resources to a focus on human purposes and interaction and mutual capacity building. In practice, it means changing the mindset of those who still see participation or interaction as methodology. It means developing new structures and processes that will identify and facilitate interaction among key stakeholders of the development process.

It means creating new financial mechanisms that can respond to needs generated by such a process rather than being tied a priori to the financiers' view of development needs.

There are many cases in which such constraints had been overcome, and many others where such efforts continue to be undermined. The biggest obstacles to the implementation of such ideas have been institutionalized attitudes, patterns of relationship, and core processes that are based on the philosophy that sees development as expertise to be transferred along with technology and financial resources.

The governments, development agencies and other bureaucracies seem to hold on to resource a philosophy of fear that moving into a more participative mode will mean loss

of control. The cases of success show admirably that the opposite is true: ‘letting go of the rope’ can lead to more power. As Halle Jörn Hanssen of Norway asserted: “Governments and development agencies have to learn to operate with more appreciation, less influence and less control”.

On a hopeful note, many governments and development agencies are becoming aware of new ideas. Although the lack of support and even sabotage of such new efforts are still too common, many practitioners feel that a new climate has already been created, that encourages experimentation with new models, strategies and practices. A change of attitude is taking place.

Human-centered development then requires a shift in the center of development efforts – one which is inspired from within rather than imposed from without – one which empowers, rather than disempowers. Human-centered development cannot be achieved by gradual changes or improvements in methodology. Human-centered development requires a whole new attitude and philosophy, new models, new practices and new roles for governments and for development assistance agencies.

Human-centered development requires a change in attitude. Whether as individual practitioners or as whole organizations or as government, all are responsible for the effects of our actions on others and on the whole.

Conclusion

Finally, today we need to promote a new directional paradigm in our developmental arena. In pursuing this huge task we must come together as a faith community, especially those who are involved among us in inter-faith development, in less developed and in developing countries like Bangladesh, we have to establish a new pattern of relationships, more consistent with the requirements of new development paradigms.

Many development practitioners find it difficult ‘to let go of the rope’, wishing to control outputs and terms of interaction between stakeholders. The costs of this reluctance to change, in terms of our mindset, deforming our ongoing leadership pattern, reshaping present developmental processes as a whole, social barriers and stigmas, religious ‘gap’ and misunderstandings, governmental administrative limitations, corruptions and many other initiatives are needed in order to step forward towards a real process of reformulation of the modes of collaboration for sustainable development endeavors.

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Ethics of Ecological and Climate Justice

Chapter 13

Central American perspectives on ecological and climate justice

Elena Cedillo¹

Introduction

This article is a reflection on ecological and climatic justice and the problems facing the Central American (CA) region, specifically in the CA4 countries: Honduras, Guatemala, Nicaragua and El Salvador. It presents relevant context information in these countries and introduces to the economic effects that affect people, especially those living in the so-called Dry Corridor of Central America, which covers more than 82 percent of the areas characterized to develop livelihoods. Finally, the article tackles in a concrete way the global panorama in which these countries are located.

The article also presents elements that identify climate risks in people's development, from a perspective of those losses and damages that are not economic, and to which little attention is paid. Our analysis leads us to consider that we are dealing with a question of ecological and climatic justice. There is an enormous potential by faith-based organizations (FBOs) – in our role of being defenders of the interests and rights of those less favored and of those who have no voice – for action and for assuming with responsibility our duty to take care of “our common home”².

Environmental problems are not at all foreign and they become more acute over time. The negative effects of climate change are intensifying and extreme climate events such as droughts and floods are increasing in the region affecting us in greater proportion year after year. Problems of water availability, loss of soil fertility, loss

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 - 2 — Pope Francis, *Encyclical Letter, Laudato Si': Our Common Home*. Rome: Vaticana, (2015)

of biodiversity and ecosystems as well as the spread of tropical diseases are on the rise.

New negative impacts on health, among others, have as a main actor the human being – we are the ones who generate all these problems and at the same time we are also the ones affected. It is clear that the level of impact increases according to the levels of vulnerability to which we are subject.

Central America is a region that has extensive coasts including areas of very low altitude. As we will see later it is a region that suffers the negative effects in a disproportionate manner. It is affected by droughts, floods, tropical depressions, cold fronts, cyclones, the El Niño and the La Niña phenomena.

A view from the region

38,443,526 million people live in Central American Region, specifically in the so-called CA4 region (Honduras, Guatemala, Nicaragua and El Salvador) with a total territory extension of 372,972 km². Approximately 10.5 million people live in the Dry Corridor, which embraces 43 percent of the total of the CA4 territory, that is 159,182.71 km². 58 percent of the Dry Corridor is affected by high and severe drought, putting at high risk of vulnerability the people living there, a mostly poor population whose main activity is small scale agriculture.

Guatemala	El Salvador	Honduras	Nicaragua
Territorial extension of 108,889 km ² .	Territorial extension is 21,041 km ² .	Territorial extension is 112,492 km ² .	Territorial extension is 130,373.4 km ² .
38,407 km ² are part of the Dry Corridor, 35% of its territory. ³	19,759 km ² are part of the Dry Corridor, 94% of its territory.	67,068 km ² are part of the Dry Corridor, 60% of its territory.	33,948 km ² are part of the Dry Corridor, 26% of its territory.
The population is 16,924,190 inhabitants (2017). ⁴	The population is 6,581,940 inhabitants (2017). ⁵	The population is 8,866,351 inhabitants (2017). ⁶	The population is 6,071,045 inhabitants (2015). ⁷

3 – Characterization of the Central American Dry Corridor. Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, 2012

4 – National Institute of Statistics – Estimated population 2017.

5 – According to estimations and projections of national population 2005-2050, General Directorate of Statistics and Censuses (GDSC).

6 – National Institute of Statistics 2015

7 – INIDE – Estimated population 2015. The projections are made in five-year periods; the closest to the analysis is 2015.

Guatemala	El Salvador	Honduras	Nicaragua
79% of people are under 30 years of age.	63.7% of people are under 30 years of age.	67% of people are under 30 years of age.	64% of people are under 30 years of age.
Women are 51% of the population.	Women are 52.8% of the population.	Women represent 49% of the total population.	Women represent 49% of the total population.

Table 1: Main characteristics of the CA4 countries

According to the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) in 2016, more than 3.5 million people in Central America faced a prolonged drought that put their lives and development at risk.⁸

Although drought is a phenomenon of slow evolution, it has caused significant socio-economic impacts, particularly in agricultural areas highly dependent on the rainy season. This has resulted in losses or reduction of harvests, food insecurity and increase in prices of the basic food basket, directly affecting the livelihoods of families dependent on agriculture. In the last five years, El Salvador, to give a dramatic example, has suffered the worst droughts of the last two decades. Even more so, the country experienced the worst drought of the last 44 years in 2015.⁹

El Salvador has accumulated damages and economic losses in the production of basic grains for more than USD 7.77 million in the agricultural cycles of 2014/2015, which represents a third of the country's total production of basic grains.¹⁰

A 2016 report by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations estimated that until August of that same year, the losses caused by the El Niño phenomenon accounted for approximately 80 percent of the harvests.¹¹ The same study states that of the 57 areas characterized by livelihoods in Central America¹², 47 are located in the Dry Corridor strip, where productive activities such as agriculture are carried out. 100 percent of the zones characterized for livelihoods in El Salvador and Honduras are in the Dry Corridor, while Guatemala and Nicaragua have approximately 75 percent of their livelihood zones within this corridor.

8 — One year at a glance 2016, Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean, OCHA.

9 — Banco Central de Reserva de El Salvador

10 — According to the report on results of the Survey of Estimation of Losses and Damages in the Production of Basic Grains (maize and beans) of the zones with deficit of rain caused by the meteorological drought (CENTA 2015); see also: www.statista.com/statistics/263977/world-grain-production-by-type/

11 — Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

12 — These zones, due to their social and economic characteristics, plus the variability of environments and resources, offer the potential to develop different livelihoods where people, families and communities support their needs.

The outlook is not encouraging when we review projections of agricultural production yields against climate change of the main products such as maize, beans and coffee.

Let's explore the information regarding maize, which contributes 31 percent of the food energy per person in Central America. According to the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (CEPAL)¹³, for example, the corn production under the scenario used by the less pessimistic Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC, see table below) indicates that the average yield could decrease at the end of the century by 26 percent in Nicaragua, 23.69 percent in Honduras, 7.07 percent in Guatemala and 16.18 percent in El Salvador. If we review the figures of the most pessimistic scenario, the decrease in the yield of this product could reach levels of 45 percent in Nicaragua, 42.28 percent in Honduras, 21.77 percent in Guatemala and 37.40 percent in El Salvador.

The situation is an alarming decrease in the levels of production and the quality of food, thus accentuating food insecurity.

Country	Average yield 2001-2009 (t/ha)			Projection of yields to 2100		
	Maize	Beans	Coffee	Maize	Beans	Coffee
Scenario B2 – less pessimistic						
El Salvador	2,79	0,9	0,54	-16,18	-17,26	-37,88
Guatemala	1,91	0,7	0,92	-7,07	0,94	-21,27
Honduras	1,49	0,7	0,72	-23,69	-20,39	-29,72
Nicaragua	1,55	0,7	0,65	-26,00	-26,11	-47,64
Scenario A2 – more pessimistic						
El Salvador	2,79	0,9	0,54	-37,40	-48,92	-57,92
Guatemala	1,91	0,7	0,92	-21,77	-17,44	-35,57
Honduras	1,49	0,7	0,72	-42,28	-42,04	-32,76
Nicaragua	1,55	0,7	0,65	-45,01	-54,39	-53,07

Table 2: Evolution of the yields of the main products of the basic basket in the region. Scenarios B2 and A2 according to the IPCC panel. *Source: CEPAL. CAC/SICA 2013-2014*

13 — Comisión Económica para América Latina y El Caribe, *Cambio Climático en Centroamérica, Impactos Potenciales y Opciones de Políticas Públicas*. México: Naciones Unidas, (2015)

In addition, the region is characterized by deforestation, soil degradation and water scarcity. Main causes are the demand for land for agriculture, urban use, mining or infrastructure development.

View at a global level

According to German Watch, the Global Climate Risk Index for the period 1997-2016 indicates that Honduras is the country with the highest climate risk, Nicaragua is in fourth place, Guatemala in eleventh and El Salvador in sixteenth.

The index indicates the level of exposure and vulnerability to extreme weather events. This should be interpreted as a warning to be prepared for more frequent and/or more severe weather events in the future.

As we can see in the following table, over the decades, the countries of the region have been at high risk levels. On the other hand, the fifth report of the IPCC indicates that human influence in the climate system is clear and increasing.

The report also points out that

among the key risks for Central and South America are lower water availability and greater number of floods and landslides, less production and quality of food as well as spread of vector-borne diseases.¹⁴

Country	1998-2007	1990-2008	1990-2009	1991-2010	1992-2011	1993-2012	1994-2013	1995-2014	1996-2015	1997-2016
El Salvador	30	37	17	23	15	13	12	14	15	16
Guatemala	11	24	20	12	11	10	9	10	9	11
Honduras	1	3	3	3	1	1	1	1	1	1
Nicaragua	3	5	4	4	3	4	4	4	4	4

Table 3: Climate Risk Index of CA4 Countries Accumulated
Source: German Watch, Global Climate Risk Index

¹⁴ — IPCC, Intergovernmental group of experts on climate change. Climate Change 2014: Synthesis Report, www.ipcc.ch/pdf/assessment-report/ar5/syr/SYR_AR5_FINAL_full_wcover.pdf

It also indicates an increase in temperature for all of Latin America by 2100 whereas the projections for Central America vary between an increase of +1.6°C to +4°C. This definitely brings with it a series of drastic changes in the lives, not only of the people but also of the species that inhabit it.

Finally, the Climate Vulnerability Monitor 2012 that presents an analysis of the global impacts of climate change and the carbon economy, from the economic, environmental and health point of view, points out a severe vulnerability range for Nicaragua, high vulnerability for Honduras and moderate vulnerability for El Salvador and Guatemala.

Beyond economic losses and damages due to climate effects

In the region, not only do we count the economic losses in different sectors due to climate change effects, but we have also focus on exploring non-economic losses and damages: those impacts that affect people in their most integral dimension.

In a survey carried out in El Salvador in 2017 of farmers in the Dry Corridor¹⁵, losses and damages are identified in biodiversity, land productivity, the agricultural frontier and mental health. It is important to mention that in this situation, the farmers interviewed were thinking and/or planning to leave their territories and move to another city since the economic activity that has been the main source of their income is no longer viable. This mobility would put us in a future scenario of internal displacement due to the effects of climate change.

Other relevant elements, such as traditional knowledge, which is so present among farmers and the indigenous population¹⁶, social cohesion and identity are more and more affected by the prolonged extreme weather phenomena. Changes in rain patterns in the e.g. greatly affect planting periods. The ancestral knowledge that has marked the sowing periods for decades is no longer valid.

Furthermore, mental and physical health is undoubtedly affected by these phenomena. The prolonged drought that affects the region bears feelings of frustration and loss of hope. The population is increasingly pushed to abandon not only the land but also their main productive activity which in many cases has been carried out by generations. They move to urban areas which lead to higher unemployment rates.

By identifying this type of loss and damage we place people at the *center* of everything. Social cohesion, identity, belonging to a territory and mental health affect the economically

15 — Evaluating non-economic losses and damages induced by climate, 2017; see article on Climate Challenges in Central America's Driest Areas: <http://country.eiu.com/article.aspx?articleid=1937024177&Country=El%20Salvador&topic=Economy&oid=76502391&aid=1>

16 — The indigenous population of Guatemala represents 40% of the total population of the country. National Institute of Statistics, Guatemala, 2013, see also: www.centralamericadata.com/en/article/home/Guatemala_National_Census_in_2013

active population. It leaves people without a plan of life, without a future in the horizon, without hope, thus aggravating the circles of poverty and vulnerability.

The issue of ecological and climatic justice and the potential of FBOs for action

The evidence described above is only one part of the effects we identify in the wake of climate change in the region. *We are facing a question of ecological and climatic justice:* historically, the countries in the region have contributed less to these problems but suffer the effects to a greater extent.

For Leonardo Boff, ecological injustice and social injustice are intimately related. Social injustice is derived from the economic model and the ecological injustice is linked to social injustice. Climate change does not respect national borders or the levels of wealth or poverty. It affects everyone. However, the difference is that while the rich can adapt more easily, the poor do not have the means to defend themselves and end up suffering the damages of a problem they have not caused.

Boff also mentions that to address this problem, it needs to be addressed with a global solution, which implies a paradigm of society that reflects the difficulties brought about by changing lifestyles and consumption habits.

“...We need universal solidarity, collective responsibility and care of everything that lives and exists (we are not the only ones who live on this planet and use the biosphere). The awareness of the interdependence between all and of the unity between Earth and humanity is fundamental.”¹⁷

According to Guillermo Kerber’s thesis on ecology and Latin American theology,

“Climate justice cannot be considered in isolation from economic justice, social justice, and ecological justice. By interacting with them, it promotes solidarity, sustainability, sufficiency and the participation of all,

¹⁷ — Leonardo Boff, *Ecology and Liberation. A New Paradigm*, Orbis Books New York Maryknoll 1995; Leonardo Boff, *Cry of the Earth, Cry of the Poor*, Orbis Books 1997,

human beings and other creatures for the common good and the community of the Earth.”¹⁸

When we refer to the effects of climate change, we are facing a situation of multidimensional justice which is well recognized in the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change of “common but differentiated responsibilities”.

“Parties should protect the climate system ... on the basis of equity and in accordance with their common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capacities.”¹⁹

Consequently, the developed countries should take the initiative in the fight against climate change.

Identifying the international instruments that offer some principles for climate justice and demanding their implementation is a commitment that we all must assume. The 2015 Declaration of Religious and Spiritual Leaders at the United Nations Conference on Climate Change reaffirmed that it is an opportune moment to guarantee climate justice, to initiate an unprecedented structural and individual transformation, and for a leadership that is real and visionary.²⁰

We as FBOs are thus called to take concrete action for climate justice, actively promoting the participation of churches and civil society: setting an agenda with a strong ethical and spiritual dimension, leading social auditing for compliance with the commitments of large emitters of greenhouse gases, building bridges between different actors and forming alliances for transformation.

18 — Guillermo Kerber, Thesis published in Portuguese in Uruguay: The place of ecology in Latin American theology, Montevideo 1996

19 — United Nations, *United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change*, Art. 3.1, 1992, <https://unfccc.int/resource/docs/convkp/conveng.pdf>

20 — “Statement of Faith and Spiritual Leaders on the upcoming United Nations Climate Change Conference, COP21 in Paris in December 2015”, http://actalliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/COP21_Statement_english2.pdf

Turning our speech into action!

Here are some proposals that would allow us to take concrete actions:

- Promote adaptation actions based on mitigation for irreversibly affected territories where livelihoods can still be developed and where the combination of the use of renewable technologies and local knowledge can achieve coexistence with scenarios such as drought; develop local models that can contribute to generate territories with sustainability, thus recovering biodiversity.
- Promote and adopt the extensive and intensive use of renewable energies, for example, solar energy; thus contributing to a just energy transition, based on the democratization of energy production and the concept that energy production should not be based on a large-scale production model.²¹
- Promote models of risk transfer including and protecting the most vulnerable; carry out advocacy at the national level for the implementation of models such as micro climate insurance; up to policies of protection and management of financial, productive and environmental risks.
- Assume new patterns of consumption under a new responsible climate conscience in order to be coherent with the care for creation, and to develop an ethic of caring for others, including nature. These new patterns of consumption under a climate perspective should deepen in a society where unfairness and inequality deepen day by day.
- Demand compliance with international mechanisms that offer principles of climate justice and by lobbying decision-makers.
- Link the commitments of the Paris Agreement, the Sustainable Development Goals and the Sendai Framework to protect and guarantee the lives of the most vulnerable. FBOs and churches have an undeniable link with communities and with people. We therefore must assume a strategy of political advocacy that is based on the local needs to protect and accompany the most vulnerable people by articulating actions at the national, regional and global levels.
- Carry out advocacy campaigns to ensure that climate justice is in the public discussion.

We are obliged to promote and assume changes in consumption patterns, showing credibility and authority, involving all people and not leaving anyone behind.

21 — A model of Just Energy Transition in Central America is directly related to the implementation of the National Determined Contributions (NDC), and it is in relation to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) and the National Adaptation Plans (NAP).

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Chapter 14

Ethical perspectives on multi-faith approaches to ecological transformation in Southern Africa

Ngonidzashe Edward, Kate and Geoff Davies, Francesca de Gasparis¹

Introduction

The ecological crisis is one of the greatest global challenges of our time. It is characterized by the interrelated consequences of environmental degradation, pollution, resource depletion, species extinction and climate change. In Southern Africa, negative and devastating impacts of this crisis on people, ecosystems and biodiversity is exacerbated by growing global inequity.

At the center of the ecological crisis is what Pope Francis describes as the “unfettered human greed and appetite for power and profit that has resulted in the abuse and exploitation of both people and nature”². This abusive exploitation is because we are locked into our own ego-centric perspectives, shortsighted needs and greed. Hence, we have failed to respect, care for and protect the environment and the sanctity of all life.³ This failure has

¹ — Bishop Geoff Davies is the retired Bishop of the Anglican Diocese of Umzimvubu in the Eastern Capes in South Africa. In 2004, together with his wife Kate, an environmental educator, Bishop Geoff Davies in 2004 initiated the formation of the Southern African Faith Communities’ Environment Institute, SAFCEI, a multi-faith NGO. It supports and encourages religious leaders and people of all faiths to respond to the environmental crisis and lobbies for environmental accountability and ethical economics from government and all sectors of society. Ngonidzashe Edward is a Zimbabwean Jesuit who has studied at Hekima Jesuit College in Nairobi and published the first *EcoJesuit Newsletter in Africa* and is working both with SAFCEI and with CYNESA, a network of Young Catholics in Africa Caring for Creation. Francesca de Gasparis is a specialist in climate change, environmental and gender issues in Africa and the new Co-Executive Director of SAFCEI since 2017.

² — Pope Francis, *Encyclical Letter, Laudato Si’: Our Common Home*. Rome: Vaticana, (2015)

³ — Pope Francis (2015)

led to the current ecological crisis that threatens the existence of all forms of life and human life support systems on the planet.

This essay is based on an interview with Bishop Geoff and Kate Davies, the founders of the Southern African Faith Communities' Environment Institute (SAFCEI), on *Ethical perspectives on interfaith approaches to ecological transformation in Southern Africa*⁴. During the interview, each talked about the importance of the concept of eco-justice and the multi-faith approach used by SAFCEI. They see these two approaches as the ethical framework through which faith communities need to work to address the ecological crisis in Southern Africa.

In this essay, we explore and discuss the concept of eco-justice and how in Southern Africa the ecological crisis is linked to the struggle of the poor for social and economic justice, and the role of faith, and in particular the multi-faith approach used by SAFCEI, to provide an ethical and spiritual basis for ecological transformation. We conclude by highlighting how different faith communities in Southern Africa are awakening to their common call and shared mission to collaborate in caring for and protecting both the poor and the environment.

Linking ecological transformation and socio-economic justice

In Sub-Saharan Africa, ecological transformation is inextricably linked to the related struggle against socio-economic inequalities and the scourge of poverty. Until relatively recently, the ecological crisis was considered to be a distant and remote concern in this part of the world. Considered to be a middle-class challenge, the environment was often mistaken as solely a conservation issue, and a problem and issue for people whose main concern was to protect wild spaces and species. As the emerging threats from 'brown'⁵ issues, like energy deprivation, pollution, poor sanitation, water quality and access to land, have become more pronounced, the interlinkage between the ecological crisis and socio-economic inequalities are being realized. With this goes the understanding that while we are all affected by the ecological crisis, it is the poor countries and poor people who suffer from it the most. The struggle of poor and developing countries is therefore an ecological and socio-economic justice struggle.

It has taken decades for arriving at a greater and more comprehensive level of understanding and appreciation like expressed in the views of the German Reformed theologian, Jürgen Moltmann:

4 — Interview with Ngonidzashe Edward (6 May 2018). Bishop Geoff (affectionately known in Southern Africa as the Green Bishop) and Kate Davies are the founders of the Southern African Faith Communities' Environment Institute (SAFCEI) in Southern Africa.

5 — S. DeGruchy, "An Olive Agenda: First thoughts on a metaphorical theology of development", in *Ecumenical Review* 59(2&3), (2007): 333- 345

“We shall not be able to achieve social justice without justice for the natural environment; we shall not be able to achieve justice for nature without social justice.”⁶

The connection between ecological transformation and socio-economic justice nowadays has become a critical meeting point for defining justice activism in South Africa. In the article, ‘*Seeking Eco-Justice in the South African Context*’, Conradie et al stresses the link between ecological concerns and the problems that the poor and marginalized face in South Africa. The authors regard ecological transformation as an extension of the ‘justice struggle’ in post-Apartheid South Africa.⁷ The COP 17 climate talks in Durban in 2011 marked a turning point in the ecological justice struggle in South Africa. The social agenda that had previously focused only on seeking to address the multiple problems of poverty, inequality, hunger, unemployment, the HIV and AIDS pandemic, gender-based and domestic violence, xenophobia, gangsterism, drugs, crime, and corruption began to embrace broader ecological concerns.⁸ These are now becoming integral to the struggle as many people are realizing that the wellbeing of the planet and flourishing life-support systems cannot be separated from social and economic justice. Some environmentalists argue that climate change is an economic issue, rather than an ecological one in order to focus the decision-making that will be required by humanity to stop climate change in terms of societal economic structures and our consumption patterns⁹. Activists in Southern Africa however are increasingly recognizing that concern for ecological transformation is part and parcel of the current justice struggle agenda articulated as the *Cry of the earth, cry of the poor* by Leonardo Boff¹⁰ related to the complex crisis we are faced with which is both social and ecological, demanding an integrated approach to alleviate poverty, restore dignity to the excluded, and to protect and restore nature’s integrity.

Although the ecological crisis, of which climate change is one of the most extreme expressions, affects all human beings, it does not do so equally.

6 — J. Moltmann, *The future of creation: Collected essays*. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, (1979)

7 — E. M. Conradie et al., “The struggle for eco-justice in the South African context”, in D. T. Hessel and L. L. Rasmussen (eds.), *Earth habitat: Eco-injustices and the church’s response*. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, (2001): 135-158.

8 — SAFCEI and its partners organised the *We have Faith Campaign* leading up to COP 17 in Durban in November/December 2011. Using the momentum that the COP created, several activities were carried out under the theme “Act Now for Climate Justice”, see the *We have Faith Campaign Report*, <http://safcei.org/resources/we-have-faith-campaign>

9 — “Interview with Sir Jonathon Porritt – Business & climate change”, <https://envisionation.co.uk/index.php/nick-breeze/137-interview-with-sir-jonathon-porritt-business-climate-change>

10 — L. Boff, *Cry of the earth, cry of the poor*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, (1997)

It is often those who have the least responsibility for environmental destruction, who are most vulnerable to the negative impacts of climate change and other related adversities, including previously disadvantaged communities in South Africa, and rural communities and women in the region.

Here, massive socio-economic inequalities persist in spite of the democratic liberation in 1994.¹¹ According to the latest Poverty Trends Report, 55.5 percent of the population of South Africa (about 30.4 million people) still live in poverty¹², in spite of the fact that this is one of the richest countries in Africa. Notably, poverty and inequality in South Africa have racial, gender, age related and spatial dimensions. The majority of people affected are black Africans, women, and youth, including children.¹³ These include a variety of marginalized people on the economic periphery, including poor people in townships, informal settlements (slums) and rural areas, refugees and migrants, women and children, mining workers, as well as factory and farm labourers. This pattern of socio-economic inequality and poverty is similar throughout the African sub-continent. While poverty and economic inequality may appear to be unrelated to the ecological crisis, the Interreligious Eco-Justice Network (IREJN)¹⁴ points out that people in affluent societies consume more goods, services, food, water and energy than those who reside in less developed countries and as a result, rich people have a far larger ‘ecological footprint’ than poor and marginalized inhabitants in all regions of the world.¹⁵ This results in a gross social and economic imbalance. As the rich get richer, living in exclusive and luxurious circumstances, the poor are left further and further behind in rapidly deteriorating conditions and further degraded environments. This situation drives the ecological crisis, forcing people directly dependent on natural resources for daily fuel and natural resources to decimate resources like wood, water and the land to glean what they can for survival from what is left of natural ecosystems and biodiversity.

11 — see Victor Sulla and Precious Zikhali, *Overcoming Poverty and Inequality in South Africa: An Assessment of Drivers, Constraints and Opportunities*. Washington, D.C.: World Bank Group, (2018)

12 — STATS SA, “Poverty on the rise in South Africa”, 2017, www.statssa.gov.za/?p=10334

13 — *ibid.*

14 — See: <https://irejn.org>

15 — see the Interreligious Eco-Justice Network (IREJN) blog “Eco-Justice, Economic Inequality and the Gini Coefficient: Integrating Social and Ecological Concerns”, <http://irejn.org>

Merging environmental and socio-economic justice issues into an “eco-justice” approach, challenges both the human capacity to destroy the earth and the abuse and manipulation of economic and political power. The ultimate price is paid by poor people, the wider earth community of living plants and animals and natural systems.

Two complementary concerns, based on the underpinning ethical principles of all faith-based organizations capture SAFCEI’s eco-justice narrative and the organization’s call for action: Eco-justice integrates “the social and the ecological – one dealing with income disparity, poverty eradication and ensuring human dignity, and the other related to safeguarding the natural environment from unsustainable and negligent human activity”¹⁶. It is worth noting that in South Africa these eco-justice concerns are included in the constitution of the country, which states that everyone has a right:

- To an environment that is not harmful to his or her health or well-being;
- To have the environment protected, for the benefit of present and future generations, through reasonable legislative measures that;
 - Prevent pollution and ecological degradation,
 - Promote conservation, and
 - Secure ecologically sustainable development and use of natural resources while promoting justifiable economic and social development.¹⁷

This eco-justice ethical perspective to ecological transformation has been articulated in faith texts, some of which pre-date today’s challenges by centuries. Recently it has been eloquently articulated in Pope Francis’ Encyclical Letter on the Environment, ‘*Laudato Si’: On Care for Our Common Home*. In the Encyclical, the Pope refers to the situation as a “complex crisis which is both social and environmental”¹⁸. He highlights the need for integrating social and ecological issues when addressing this crisis, which involves combating poverty, restoring dignity and protecting earth (our common home). The focus of this, is the poor, who are most affected.

16 – *ibid.*

17 – see Constitution of South Africa: Section 24 of the Bill of Rights; see: www.no-afriamafurnace.co.za/?page_id=40

18 – Pope Francis (2015); in: http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20150524_enciclica-laudato-si.html

“It needs to be said that, generally speaking, there is little in the way of clear awareness of problems which especially affect the excluded. Yet they are the majority of the planet’s population, billions of people. These days, they are mentioned in international political and economic discussions, but one often has the impression that their problems are brought up as an afterthought, a question which gets added almost out of duty or in a tangential way, if not treated merely as collateral damage. Indeed, when all is said and done, they frequently remain at the bottom of the pile.”¹⁹

In line with this, SAFCEI’s approach is shaped by the unique history of the African sub-continent and we believe that a faith-based ethical approach to eco-justice is the most appropriate way to address the ecological crisis.²⁰ This is particularly in view of an unfortunate legacy of corrupt leadership and the fact that more than 90 percent of the population of the continent profess to having a religious belief.²¹ This approach provides the opportunity and possibility of integrating issues of social and economic justice and the needs of poor in the quest for ecological transformation.

The ‘faith factor’ in ecological transformation in Southern Africa

Religion has not always had a good reputation with regard to the maintenance or restoration of ecological integrity. In his historic thesis on *‘The Historical Roots of Our Ecologic Crisis’*, the historian Lynn White discussed the negative role religion has played in the ecological crisis.²² His suggestion that the Judaic and Christian emphasis on the transcendence of God above nature and the dominion of humans over nature has led to a devaluing of the natural world and a subsequent destruction of its resources for utilitarian ends.²³ This assertion is especially true in Southern Africa where western religious beliefs have been

19 — *ibid.*

20 — from the interview with Ngonidzashe Edward, 6 May 2018

21 — Pew-Templeton Global Religious Project, “Sub-Saharan Africa”, www.globalreligiousfutures.org/regions/sub-saharan-africa/religious-demography/#/?affiliations_religion_id=0&affiliations_year=2010

22 — Lynn White, “The historical roots of our ecologic crisis”, in *Science* 155 (3767), (1967): 1203-1207

23 — *ibid.*

historically associated with colonialism, apartheid, and even, capitalism- which have been responsible for plunder, exploitation and abuse resulting in many injustices against the people and the environment. However, despite religion's tainted history, it still has a crucial role to play regarding the ecological crisis in Africa.

Kate Davies proposes that religion has the potential to play a vital role in the reversal of the very ecological crisis for which it is partly responsible. She talks about the 'greening agenda of religion.' This is a process of recovering and re-valuing the embedded religious values of sufficiency and simplicity. She calls for the need for a turning to a more eco-feminist approach underpinned by broad ethical foundations and eco-theologies for ecological transformation.²⁴

Tucker and Grim make the same point by arguing for re-evaluation and re-imagination of the religions in general with regard to human-earth relations in the light of the current environmental crisis.²⁵ They suggest that religions help to shape our attitudes towards nature by providing basic interpretive stories of who we are, what nature is, where we have come from, and where we are going. As White had observed, "What people do about their ecology depends on what they think about themselves in relation to things around them. Human ecology is deeply conditioned by beliefs about our nature and destiny – that is, by religion."²⁶ Thus, religion has a significant role to play in ecological transformation as it provides an ethical orientation and basis of how we should treat other humans and how we should relate to nature and all of her creatures. Significantly, this approach to religious traditions may be critical in helping to re-imagine and renew our commitment to fostering mutually enhancing human-earth relations in the light of the ecological crisis. This is more so and quite urgent in the context of Sub-Saharan Africa where religion still plays such an important and influential role in the life of so many people.

24 — K. Davies, "Greening Christian Institutions and Practices: An emerging ecclesial reform movement", in *Ecclesial Reform and Deform Movements in the South African Context* 4, (2015): 40

25 — M. E. Tucker and J. A. Grim, "Introduction: The emerging alliance of world religions and ecology", in *Daedalus* 130(4), (2001): 1-22

26 — Lynn White (1967), *ibid*

Converging perspectives: One Earth, Many Faiths – all Caring for Creation²⁷

As we have already noted, faith communities in Southern Africa have been slow to respond to the ecological crisis as the focus in more recent years has been on human rights, the liberation struggle and a social-political agenda. However,

in the last ten years, through deepening work done by SAFCEI and partner organizations, there has been an awakening with a growing realization that faith communities have a mandate to care for the poor and for the earth.

This has resulted in a new commitment by a significant number of people of faith to Earth stewardship and earth-keeping. It comes from an emerging consciousness of the deepening ecological crisis and an appreciation by many religious traditions that they have a responsibility to care for and protect earth's life support systems and all forms of life, not just humans. Paul Knitter has promoted the concept of 'One Earth, Many Religions'.²⁸ It encourages different religions to find common ground in order to develop a 'global responsibility for the earth community' and 'global ethics of care for humanity and the earth'.²⁹ This has inspired people of various faiths to come together and find ways of addressing the ecological crisis that is threatening all life on the planet. We are beginning to experience a convergence of religious perspectives on earth care which has never been seen before.

In Southern Africa, Christianity and Islam, as the predominant faiths, have been most visible in the roles they have played in creating awareness about caring for and protecting 'the poor of the earth and the earth of the poor'.³⁰ Ultimately, the result of this 'awakening, realization, and renewal of commitment has been the creation of what Thomas Berry called "a new consciousness of the multi-form religious traditions of humankind" as a means towards renewal of the human spirit in addressing the urgent problems of contemporary society.³¹ Significantly out of such calls to action, a number of networks of religious people have emerged all working together to address the ecological crisis in Southern Africa.

27 — see SAFCEI, "Faith and Spirituality", <http://safcei.org/faith-perspectives/multi-faith/>

28 — Paul Knitter, *One Earth, Many Religions: Multi-faith dialogue and global responsibility*. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, (1995)

29 — *ibid.*

30 — An expression used by Bishop Geoff to highlight the interconnectedness of the Poor and the Earth.

31 — quoted in Tucker and Grim, *Ecology and religion*. Washington D.C.: Island Press, (2014)

SAFCEI is one of the faith networks in Southern Africa that has embraced this new consciousness. Central to the eco-justice mandate is SAFCEI's deep commitment to a multi-faiths approach. It is based on the realization of the power of faith communities when they work together. To find common ground and co-operate with a community of people belonging to different faiths is to feel an affinity with a wider spiritual community, one which is open to learning from other philosophies or worldviews. This approach should not be confused with an inter-faith approach which involves developing a homogeneous synthesis between different religious approaches. While no one faith is compromised in essence, the experience of working in a multi-faiths context is a universal leveler, and involves 'getting alongside' with others through cooperation and collaboration. In an interview with van Schalkwyk, Bishop Davies pointed out that the multi-faith approach used by SAFCEI grew organically through a process of listening to and sharing understandings of how people of all religions have a common relationship with the earth.³² This multi-faiths approach has enabled SAFCEI to successfully mobilize and bring people of different faiths together "raising awareness about the diverse traditions that acknowledge the sacred in nature and help people to grow spiritually through a deeper connection with creation".³³

Conclusion

For many people, particularly in Southern Africa, the ecological crisis is not only the result of anthropological, environmental and climatological factors. It is also a moral and spiritual crisis. Broader ethical and religious perspectives that view human beings as creatures of nature, embedded in the interconnected web of life and dependent on the natural ecosystems are needed if we are to address the crisis.

There is therefore a need of *conversion* in order to restore the human-earth relationship. In his Encyclical, *Laudato si*, Pope Francis suggests that this conversion involves renewing our commitment to the 'Care for Our Common Home and all Creation'.

32 — A. Van Schalkwyk, "Ecological activism and an inter-religious dialogue of life—a case study of the Southern African Faith Communities Environmental Institute", in *Scriptura: International Journal of Bible, Religion and Theology in Southern Africa* 112(1), (2013): 1-21

33 — see SAFCEI, "Multi-Faith Approach", <http://safcei.org/faith-perspectives/multi-faith/>

According to Bishop Davies, “caring for creation goes far beyond stewardship: it is loving, cherishing, protecting, preserving and being compassionate to and for all life”³⁴. This caring is found in all faith traditions and cultures captured in the *Ethics of Reciprocity*, commonly known as, the Golden Rule – “Do to others as you want others to do to you”. Kate Davies points out that the ethic of reciprocity and commitment to care for creation is a common thread that runs through all the worlds’ major faith traditions. As expressed, right relationships with the earth and each other will only be fully re-stored when our words and actions are underpinned by the core spiritual values of the Golden rule, to do no harm to the whole earth community.³⁵

Underpinning the ethical perspective of the multi-faith approach for ecological transformation in Southern Africa is the concept of *Ubuntu*.³⁶ This philosophical approach has been described as the capacity in an African culture to express compassion, reciprocity, dignity, humanity and mutuality in the interests of building and maintaining communities with justice and mutual caring. The literal meaning of the expression which defines *Ubuntu Umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu* – is: “A person is a person through people”. Hence, *Ubuntu* has to do with the notion of humanness (*Ubuntu-ness*) and moral obligations to fellow human beings. SAFCEI asserts that *Ubuntu*, which is based on the understanding that our existence as (human) beings only becomes meaningful through our relationships with others, must include our relationships with the whole community of life. We are not just individual beings for ourselves, we have evolved as social organisms within the intricate and interconnected web of life. Within each of our human bodies there are ecosystems of bacteria and other micro-organisms that we rely on to digest, process and carry out basic cellular functions. In terms of the ecological crisis, there is need for a new theology and appreciation that recognizes our total dependence on the ecosystems that support us. Earth-Keepers are people of faith who have embraced their faith commitment to care for the living earth, to encourage us to cultivate and care not only for ourselves, our families and our sisters and brothers, but also for the web of life, our extended family. Like St Francis of Assisi, we need to love deeply the animals, the forests, the air, water, and wetlands. This is how SAFCEI³⁷ seeks to strengthen its faith and ethical response to the ecological crisis. Mobilizing faith communities, who have a presence in every corner of the sub-continent, to care for and protect the community of life and Earth’s natural systems will help build a global movement to bring about an ecological transformation.

34 — Bishop Geoff, “Easter Message: Renewing our commitment to creation care”, 2017, www.safcei.org

35 — Kate Davies, “Values Underpinning an Ethical Nation: The rights of mother earth and our obligations to the earth community”, 2016, www.safcei.org

36 — The word *Ubuntu* is derived from a Nguni (isiZulu) aphorism: *Umuntu Ngumuntu Ngabantu*, which can be translated as “a person is a person because of or through others”.

37 — For the ongoing work of SAFCEI see: <https://safcei.org>

Chapter 15

Community empowerment and environmental justice in Rwanda

Gloriose Umuziranenge¹

Introduction

Rwanda is rich in biological diversity.² It has an abundance of natural resources which play a big role in promoting the wellbeing of the population. Natural resources and the community are closely related because most of the community relies on the goods and services provided by those natural resources for its livelihood. For so long environmental conservation approaches were characterized by injustice, whereby the community was not considered as actors in the process of the conservation of environment and they did benefit from the environment in which they lived.³ As indicated by Adams and Infield, protection of the environment and conservation of natural resources started with a protectionism approach which denied neighborhood communities to take an interest in conservation activities and they had no privilege to use their own resources for their essential needs.⁴ However, since the 1980's, that old conservation approach has been replaced by a new conservation approaches known as community based conservation, that includes local communities in the management of natural resources and increases their participation and involvement.⁵ Environmental justice, as a crucial element in natural resource management, calls for involving different actors to participate in the decision making process and the implementation of those decisions to manage natural resources in a transparent way by considering the voice of everyone. It calls for ending unequal distribution of environmental costs as a way of ending existing environmental injustice. Thus,

1 — Gloriose Umuziranenge is a lecturer in Faculty of Development Studies and head of Natural Resources and Environment Management Department at Protestant University of Rwanda.

2 — Government of Rwanda, *Biodiversity Policy*. Kigali, (2011)

3 — Muradian et al., "Payments for ecosystem services and the fatal attraction of win-win Solutions", in *Conservation Letters* 6(4), (2013): 274-279

4 — M.W. Adams and M. Infield, "Who is on the Gorilla's Payroll? Claims on Tourist Revenue from a Ugandan National Park", in *World Development* 31(1), (2003): 177-190

5 — T. Blomley et al., *Development AND gorillas? Assessing fifteen years of integrated conservation and development in south-western Uganda*. London: IIED, (2010)

community empowerment and environmental justice are strongly linked and the one should benefit from the other. Environmental justice is greatly concerned with social justice within a society.

According to the American philosopher John Rawls, a society can be considered as egalitarian and just when it is concerned with the principles of equality and cooperation which value human rights and the dignity of everyone, including the poor.⁶

Environmental justice

Environmental justice seeks for better conservation outcomes by involving all people and treats them fairly in all activities regarding the environment.⁷ It refers to the process by which environmental actors and the community work together by identifying needs, shared values and challenges and setting up measures and goals to address them as well as implementing together different activities and projects. This requires a full respect of human rights by involving everyone in the process.⁸ It has to show elements of freedom of expression where everyone is heard. In environment related matters, natural participation of the community in decision making procedures, participation in meetings, and participation in distribution and management of resources is much needed for a sustainable natural resource use. People should feel that they are not excluded from what is happening in their society, especially those vulnerable and poor ones, in order to improve their wellbeing by sharing equitably in the resources from the environment and the benefits from them. All decisions are made following rules and regulations already designed and that are clear, accessible and understandable by the community at all levels.

For so long, the community was considered as having more interests in the resources and therefore being most interested for exploiting them for their own profit, without any consideration. With this view, many decision-making bodies advocated for restrictions and the removal of the community from resource use as a good approach for protecting the environment. In addition, Garret Hardin in his article *Tragedy of the Commons* considered community users of resources as rational individuals who he thought would use the resource just for their own interests. Hardin indicated that in such situations, overuse and

6 — John Rawls, *A theory of justice*, Harvard University Press (1971).

7 — M. Leciejewski and H.A. Perkins, "Environmental Justice in Appalachia: Procedural Inequities in the Mine Permitting Process in Southeast Ohio", in *Environmental Justice* 8(4), (2015): 111-116

8 — L. Resham, "Good governance: A viable option for social Justice in India", in *International Journal of Arts, Humanities and Management Studies* 1(4), (2015): 49-62

degradation would reduce natural resources.⁹ Those views associated with the exclusion of the community in natural resources conservation failed to achieve their objectives due to the resistance of the community in abusing resources and engender environmental injustice. However, other researchers have proved that there were some communities who managed to be involved together to manage the resources from which they depend, where local institutions and the community create their own rules, monitor its compliance in the community around and sanction those who break the rules. Many scholars regarding the commons' uses indicated how some communities with their indigenous knowledge succeeded to manage their resources properly. An example of such a community, which is called Van Panchayats of Uttarakhand in India, has shown a big ownership in forest conservation that there has to be some nesting of institutions and structures in larger and higher 'enterprises', or arrangements in promoting good conservation of forestry resources with regards to their well-being.¹⁰ In their study about natural resource management, Fairhead, Leach, and Scoones indicated that there are better environmental management outcomes once all actors are involved and interact with each other (i.e. local communities, indigenous knowledge, related institutions) with a full respect of one another and transfer of ownership, and that they can properly use rights and control over resources that beforehand were removed from the poor into the hands of the powerful.¹¹

Community empowerment

During the last decade, community empowerment through training and participation of the locals has become a serious issue in conservation of natural resources and environmental related matters.

Participation can be of two types: the Top-down approach and the Bottom-up approach. The book *Empowering Communities through Participatory Methods* by G. Narayana Reddy describes the top down approach of community participation, in which the government provides and decides for the community everything, which develops a sense of dependency and lethargy among the people. He proposed as the alternative to the top-down approach a partnership and bottom-up approach, where the government and the community work

9 — G. Hardin, "The Tragedy of the Commons", in *Science* 162(3859), (1968): 1243-1248

10 — Elinor Ostrom, *Governing the Commons: The Evolution of Institutions for Collective Action*. Cambridge: Cambridge Universities Press, (1990)

11 — James Fairhead, Melissa Leach and Ian Scoones, "Green Grabbing: a new appropriation of nature?", in *The Journal of Peasant Studies* 39(2), (2012): 237-261

together in planning and making some decisions.¹² The community is empowered to have greater knowledge, control, authority, and thereby promote equitable sharing of costs and benefits. With good governance principles and leadership styles, many decision makers started shifting from the top-down approach to a partnership and bottom-up approach. They consider the community as an important element in the success of the conservation of natural resources.

It is in the interest of the community to take care of their resources because they are the primary actors and users of them and incentives from their efforts should be given and should satisfy their basic needs. Once they are excluded from their resources they will continue to abuse and destroy them.

Community trainings may be considered as a tool of empowerment, building beneficiary capacity, increasing effectiveness in the desire to share costs, and improving the efficiency and success of the projects. Although community participation and trainings have to be viewed as a tool for good governance and empowerment, the way they are presently organized is considered unsustainable, as just a couple of local people gain advantages or are included in settling on choices about its improvement. To be sustainable, the action should be suitable to the neighboring community, informing everybody with no rejection and should include all partners in the basic leadership style. People should have the relevant assets and instrumental freedoms (representation and consultation) to achieve different needs, including human assets (health and education); natural assets (having access to resources); and physical assets by access to the infrastructure.¹³ Community empowerment in its inception seeks to improve the wellbeing of neighborhood communities through the creation of jobs; expanding their infrastructure and providing education as well as training to the residents. For instance, the Government of Rwanda since 2005 has presented an income sharing system that is comprised of sharing 5 percent of tourism income between the nation and the community encompassing the recreation center of neighborhood community that bears the cost of its preservation and additionally advantage from it and has a stake in its prosperity. The Rwanda Development Board invests 40 percent of the total

12 — G. Narayana Reddy, *Empowering Communities through Participatory Methods*. University of Michigan, (2002).

13 — Chung, Yi-Fan, *The Orang-Asli of Malaysia: Poverty, Sustainability and Capability Approach*. Lund University Centre for Sustainability Studies, (2010)

revenue-sharing funds to support community enterprises, with the remaining 60 percent funding the local infrastructure.¹⁴ This is to ensure that the local people consider the parks as their own.

On the environment side, this is one of the ways that can increase awareness amongst local people with the hope that they will support conservation and contribute to natural resource protection. The Tourism Revenue Sharing Program is now considered a good approach which involves and makes local communities feel they are participating in conservation and development and, at the same time, benefitting from this program by having different jobs, and infrastructures, as well as different trainings.

The link between environmental justice and community empowerment

Community empowerment initiatives normally seek to improve the quality of life of the surrounded areas. The community also depends on the environment in which they live. Therefore, the environment has an impact on the quality of life of the communities in identified areas.

Community empowerment increases community participation in environment related matters by involving them in the decision-making process to respect their norms and values.

It is important to note that community participation in decision making is a crucial element to ensure sustainable conservation and development process.¹⁵

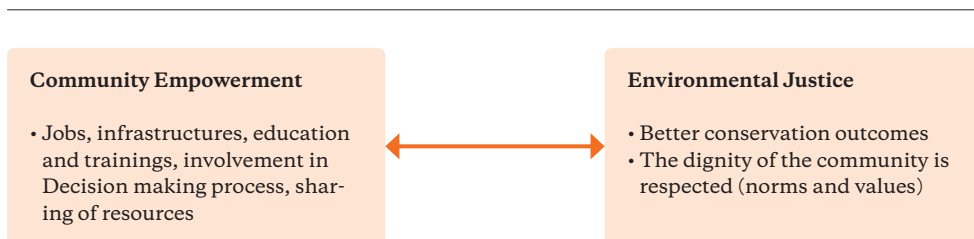
Nowadays, one of the greatest problems over the world is climate change. The world climate is increasingly changing, causing trouble to the environment and huge costs to the economy and society worldwide, especially in developing countries.¹⁶

Furthermore, environmental destruction through inappropriate measures of waste management negatively affects communities' lives and harms their environment. In fact,

14 — IIED (International Institute for Environment and Development), “The Poverty and Conservation Learning Group”: Organizations – The Rwanda Development Board (RDB), 2013, <http://povertyandconservation.info/en/org/00447>

15 — W. Zhao and J. R. Ritchie, “Tourism and poverty alleviation: an integrative research framework”, *Current Issues in Tourism* 10(2&3), (2007): 119-143

16 — UNDP, *Human development report 2007/2008. Fighting climate change: Human solidarity in a divided world*, <http://hdr.undp.org>



The link between community empowerment and environmental justice

the accumulation of products or a substance that is no longer suited for the environment, including solid waste, semisolid wastes, garbage, trash, refuse, paper, rubbish, ashes and liquid waste as viscous mixture of human products of digestion (urine and faeces) stocked in toilets sewage and other mixtures from industries, hospitals, and residues of automobile fuels have negative impacts to the global natural environment. In addition, the dispersion of waste and poor waste management can harm biodiversity, both directly, like the consumption of plastics by marine wildlife and indirectly, like landfill sites, which provide ideal conditions for bacteria that cause animals' illness, produce methane and a potential greenhouse gas that contributes to climate change. Therefore, environmental degradation generates further poverty by the exhaustion of natural resources and creates prejudice to the exercise of basic rights.¹⁷

In fact, climate change can affect crop growth and quality, farming practices, livestock health, and pests, as well as pest control and the varieties of crops and animals that could be raised in particular climactic areas. These can, in turn, affect the availability and price of agriculture products, as well as the costs of doing business¹⁸ and reinforce poverty among the communities. Therefore,

overty and environmental destruction reinforce each other. People in poverty readily seek alternative way of living in abusing natural resources by engaging themselves in environmentally destructive activities,

17 — IUCN (International Union for the Conservation of Nature), *Human Rights and the Environment: Overlapping Issues*, IUCN, Gland, 1, (2007); see: www.iucn.org/theme/environmental-law/resources

18 — IPCC, *Climate Change 2007. Mitigation of climate change. Working group III contribution to the fourth assessment report of the intergovernmental panel on climate change*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, (2007), www.ipcc.ch/pdf/assessment-report/ar4/wg3/ar4_wg3_full_report.pdf

including deforestation, as well as farming and grazing on degraded lands as the only choice. Yet that degraded environment doesn't offer a good condition for the poor to live in.

They will continue to live on the least arable land, use contaminated water and have difficulties achieving basic needs.¹⁹ The basic material needs are the foundation of human well-being, based on material needs for a good life, for freedom and choice, health, good social relations and personal security. Human well-being, in turn, depends on three different kinds of ecosystem services. These are products (e.g., food, freshwater, resources), 'regulating services' (e.g., a stable climate, water purification by wetlands), and 'cultural services' (e.g., recreation, cultural heritage, spiritual).²⁰ In addition, much of the pollution from the emission of greenhouse gas comes from developed countries. But poor, developing nations who have done little to cause the emissions of greenhouse gas are also affected by the impact of climate change at the same level as countries who have a strong capacity of dealing with the consequences through mitigation and adaptation measures.²¹ As critical ecosystem functions and resource security decline, it is the poor who bear little responsibility but who suffer the most from the impact of environmental degradation on lives and livelihoods.²² Enhancing good conservation practices of these ecosystem services can lead to better conservation outcomes and enhance human well-being. However, this depends upon on how natural resources are governed by insuring ending inequality among nations. Environmental justice is one way to combat this inequality, advocating for the application of rules and enhancing economic and social empowerment of the community, including the poor and vulnerable people from injustice that occur from unsustainable ways of using the environment and opportunities which it offers. Therefore, the increase of community participation and their involvement improves equity and empowerment of the community, while inequity in engagement processes leads to disputes and conflicts among different actors.²³ Therefore,

19 — See the so-called Brundlandt Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development, "Our Common Future" 43 (1987), in: www.un-documents.net/our-common-future.pdf

20 — Ecosystems and Human Well-being: a framework for assessment. Report by the Conceptual Framework Working Group of the UN, World Resources Institute Washington, (2003), in: http://pdf.wri.org/ecosystems_human_wellbeing.pdf

21 — UNDP, *Human development report 2007/2008. Fighting climate change: Human solidarity in a divided world*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, (2007), http://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/reports/268/hdr_20072008_en_complete.pdf

22 — Rob Nixon, *Slow Violence and Environmentalism of the Poor*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, (2011)

23 — M. Leciejewski and H.A. Perkins, "Environmental Justice in Appalachia: Procedural Inequities in the Mine Permitting Process in Southeast Ohio", in *Environmental Justice* 8(4), (2015): 111-116.

the implementation of different policies and initiatives relating to the conservation of the environment should consider the voice and consultation of the local community; otherwise social injustices at intersecting scales can occur and lead to the social exclusion of the global poor.²⁴

A partnership approach of community participation considers the community as principal actors in development and enhances social justice in resources management.

Environmental justice and community empowerment in Rwanda

Rwanda can be described as a country with severe demographic pressure relying for subsistence on a limited resource base. The 1994 genocide against the Tutsi resulted in resettlement of the population and many people in Rwanda who are living adjacent to protected areas with the richest biodiversity are the poorest and therefore they rely on natural resources found in the area. Poverty is highly recognized as a problem in the community, which leads to conflicts between the community and protected areas. Population and environment are linked together in such a way that the environment offers basic needs to the community, but the extraction of resources from the environment at a high rate finally cause poverty.²⁵

Rural areas in Rwanda especially face a big challenge associated with the low level of knowledge in relation to environmental management. In fact, the majority of the population in rural areas either burns or buries the garbage near their houses or simply dumps it outside their houses; they cut trees or burn charcoals and different wastes are disposed of on land or surface impoundments, such as pits and ponds. Such disposal sites are subject to leaks that can easily contaminate the air, soil, surface water and groundwater and may harm people and ecosystems. They pose both short-term and long-term threats to health and the biosphere in general. In addition, the community lacks the enthusiasm to contribute to solid waste management and improved environment and livelihoods due to their level of knowledge, attitudes and practices in relation to environment protection.

24 — Nancy Fraser, “Injustice at Intersecting Scales: On ‘Social Exclusion’ and the ‘Global Poor’”, in *European Journal of Social Theory* 13(3), (2010): 363-371

25 — Michel K. Masozera, *Socioeconomic impact analysis of the conservation of the Nyungwe forest reserve, Rwanda*. University of Florida, (2002)

It is quite impossible to separate natural resources and the community needs and therefore, conservation initiatives in Rwanda try to reconcile community needs and the conservation of natural resources.

Since 1998, Rwanda has adopted a decentralization methodology which aims to ensure democratic governance, accountability and community participation in the decision making process regarding environment management. In addition,

the integration of environmental principles at the constitutional level and the strategic plan of the country has had a significance impact in promoting laws and regulations regarding the environment and the rights of the people with regards to the environment.

For instance, in order to reconcile the community needs and conservation of Rwanda forests and parks, the country set up rules that guide the management and utilization of those resources. In fact, articles 20 and 21 of the organic law determining the management and utilization of forests and parks in Rwanda indicate that the responsibility to conserve and protect forests shall rest with any person who is in Rwanda. The population shall have the duty to conserve and protect forests and inform the nearest authorities of prohibited activities that may negatively affect proper forest management. In particular, those who live near the forest and who use it in accordance with the provisions of this law shall have the duty to conserve it and protect against anything that may damage it due to activities they are carried out. In addition, public and private institutions as well as non-governmental organizations (NGOs) collaborate in protecting forests against anything that may damage them. In fact, in the course of the most recent ten years, Rwanda adopted a new approach of reconciling environment and community needs through eco-tourism. Tourism in Rwanda has recorded a noteworthy development potential, with the business' commitment to the nation's GDP developing at a relentless rate.

Like briefly mentioned above, since 2005, the Rwanda Development Board (RDB), with the support of the government of Rwanda, has initiated a tourism revenue sharing scheme whereby 5 percent of the total gross revenue earned in each park is collected into a national pool and distributed to the parks at different ratios as follows: 40 percent to VNP (Virunga National Park), 30 percent to ANP (Akagera National Park) and 30 percent to NNP (Nyungwe National Park). To induce local population's ownership and benefit from those parks, RDB usually donates a portion of revenue from wildlife-based tourism to assist local

communities living adjacent to national parks in the construction of infrastructures like schools, dispensaries, water supplies, benefit to trainings knowledge related to environment protection, food security and other income generating activities.²⁶ Tourism Revenue Sharing has a positive impact on community attitudes towards conservation of the national parks by influencing attitudes, values and norms, and engendering support for conservation of protected areas to offset human-wildlife conflict, which impedes local support for national parks. The involvement and participation of the community engages them actively in the process of protecting and conserving natural resources and enhances environmental justice.

Community empowerment through trainings: The case of protestant churches

The issue of environment deterioration and its consequences has ethical and spiritual dimensions, among others. Given that the majority of Rwandans are Christian believers, a better understanding on the biblical and theological perspectives may help in the sensitisation for the change of attitudes and practices towards environment.

The Protestant University of Rwanda, which is in a partnership with United Evangelical Mission and with Bread for the World, started an environmental awareness program to help underserved communities to shape their knowledge with regard to environmental protection, especially climate change mitigation and adaptation measures as a matter of environmental justice, as well as a biblical perspective with regard to environmental care.

In fact, different participants from Protestant churches are receiving trainings to help to address local environmental, health, and economic challenges.

The training has been held at the Protestant Institute of Arts and Social Science (PIASS) since January 2017 in consecutive phases. It is aimed at improving knowledge and skills of church members, most from the Anglican Church, the Presbyterian Church and

²⁶ — R. Tusabe, and S. Habyalimana, “From Poachers to Park Wardens: Revenue Sharing Scheme as an Incentive for Environment Protection in Rwanda”, in *Mountain Forum Bulletin* 10(1), (2010): 91-93; see: <http://lib.icimod.org/record/14617> and: <http://lib.icimod.org/record/14617/files/5500.pdf>

others, about mitigating and adapting the effects of climate and its consequences on human welfare, especially on food security in Rwanda, waste management and sustainable development goals, as well as learning from what other practitioners have done in environmental protection related matters.

The partnership between Protestant University of Rwanda and United Evangelical Mission as well as Bread for the World created a working group with the emphasis on the connections between environmental justice and the role of Protestant churches and how they can integrate environmental justice and trainings in their strategic planning.

The training facilitates collaboration between churches and environmental justice stakeholders and strengthens the capacity of communities and church-based organizations to engage in environment advocacy and awareness building in planning in their neighbourhood areas. Trainings offer knowledge to the participants and make them able to respond. It is expected that at the end of the lectures, the trainees will be able to explain the consequences of human actions on the deterioration of the integrity of creation, articulate theological and biblical insights on the place of human beings in the created world and their responsibility as stewards of God in taking care of creation and argue the role of Christians in sensitisation, advocacy and practice for the integrity of the created order.

In an interview with one church member who participated in the training, he said

“If you look at our lives in many years back and see where we are now, you can see a big change. It’s true that we used to get different sources of lives from different natural resources and sometime engaged in illegal activities like burning charcoal, killing the animals and extracting different natural resources without considering the importance of them. For some time these activities constituted considerable risks because in consequence of them some people were put in jail and the probability of dying due to practicing such unsafe activities was at a higher level. Now the country has environmental rules and no one is above those rules. Today, as I benefit from this training, I am aware about our mission from the Bible and what God wants from us to keep the environment alive. Before I focused only on the mission of preaching to people and now I have another mission, to teach my followers

and other community members on the mission given by God and the mission of other conservationists.

I learned how to design a project with regards to environment management and my church can benefit from it. I and my colleagues are also benefitting from different knowledge gotten from the training and we are ready to implement what we learned here in our churches as well as to integrate environmental aspects in our strategic plan and we will also train others of our churches.”

Conclusion

Community empowerment and environmental justice are strongly linked and the one should always benefit the other. Environmental justice as a new paradigm in conservation and protection of environment could benefit from community empowerment due to the fact that when the community is empowered, threats which communities cause to the environment are being reduced. Raising the awareness of the community on environmental justice related matters and promoting equality in using natural resources impacts assessment promote a holistic approach for sustainable development. For a country to advance in sustainable development and enhance environmental justice there is a need to strengthen communities’ participation in different projects and domains so that they can feel comfortable with what is happening in their living environment. Better environmental conservation outcomes require active participation and involvement of national rules and regulations, as well as the involvement of all groups such as: women, children, youth, indigenous people, NGOs, local authorities and other movements in joint processes together.

Chapter 16

New paradigms for Ecological Education in Palestine

Simon Awad and Hannah Wright Osborn¹

Introduction

Global climate change as a result of current Western standards for economic growth is dramatically altering ecological systems worldwide. Many regions in the world are suffering in some way or another due to increased temperatures and natural disasters, seasonal shifts, and loss of keystone species among others. The Middle East region, especially Palestine, is suffering environmental instability fueled by population growth, water shortages, drought, desertification, high food prices, and the loss of biodiversity and land. To step away from the mainstream models of capitalism and mass consumption that are quickly changing the functionality of Earth's most critical systems and its people, the Environmental Education Center (EEC) in Palestine is committed to alleviating the resulting devastation toward nature and people in this region as well as developing sustainable avenues moving forward. In order to do this, a new kind of thinking is crucial to a sustainable future.

Distinct features for a new paradigm of life and society demonstrated by the EEC are community involvement, environmental and religious stewardship, and youth empowerment. The EEC believes that the environmental responsibility is an individual and collective approach.

The role of the EEC is a multifaceted one. Though its main objective is to spread environmental awareness, educate the public, care for creation, and develop sustainable solutions

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for the future, the EEC also works to attain environmental justice and develop a collective identity to the land. The EEC is challenged in meeting these goals due to the Israeli occupation which infringes on the livelihood of Palestinian society and ecology. Expropriation of Palestinian farmland, development and expansion of illegal Israeli settlements, and improper sewage and waste disposal are all wreaking havoc on the plants, animals, and humans that reside in the West Bank. The EEC calls on the collective Palestinian community to drive its existence as a faith-based NGO to achieve its goals and carry out its objectives.

Several aspects of Palestinian culture make the EEC's work easier. The culture of hospitality where the attitude is "*eleona*" (an Arabic word that means caring to help the neighbor before caring for the self), is deeply ingrained in Palestinian society. This community-oriented culture, which is the direct inverse of neoliberal thinking, is what the EEC uses to spread environmental knowledge and action. Whereas neoliberal ideology emphasizes human and market competition, Palestinian economic philosophy values collective ownership over goods and resources. With this philosophy in mind, the EEC utilizes the entire community to share knowledge and ideas about environmental concerns, facts, and sustainable ideas and actions. Every EEC workshop, training, conference, and fieldtrip teaches new life skills and encourages the sharing of information from participants with the rest of the community. This proves successful because the culture is interpersonal and hospitable to neighbors and visitors. EEC participants do not feel forced or obligated to share their new-found knowledge, but instead do it automatically because they want to help their neighbor succeed. They enjoy sharing their thoughts, ideas, and food with people around them. The community is one step in the right direction for a paradigm shift away from an environmentally devastated world.

As a Christian ministry, the EEC also embodies caring for creation.

The community-oriented culture of Palestinians translates well into stewardship through a Christian lens. Since "Palestine is the cradle of the first church, and this church has existed and held on to this land through the ages, Palestinian Christians consider their attachment to the land to be a deeply rooted spiritual bond."²

2 — Munther Isaac, "Palestinian Christian Reality and Challenges", *Introduction to Palestinian Theology*. Munther Issac (ed.). Bethlehem: Diyar Publisher, (2017): 15-16.

“Palestinians are deeply rooted with the history and geography of this land”.³ They have evolved with the land throughout a series of occupations. The people are “*samud*” (an all-encompassing Arabic term that indicates Palestinian steadfastness, hope, resilience, unity, and strength) for accompanying each other in times of need and finding strength in times of despair. When they noticed the environment suffering along with them from colonialism they were right there to care and protect it. According to the bible, the land of biblical Israel was gifted to Abraham and his descendants by God. “I will multiply your descendants like the stars of heaven, and all this land that I have promised I will give to your descendants, and they shall inherit it forever” (Ex 32:13). In his theology paper, Rev. Munther argues that what God meant by inheritance wasn’t property that one would own to use up all the precious resources and to make profit of it, but a gift to the inhabitants (current Palestinians) by God, and therefore, a religious mandate to care for it.⁴⁵ It was intended to give life and receive life. He gave them a responsibility to sustain themselves by sustaining the land. The Palestinians, as good stewards, have shown their faithfulness to the Lord by working together in harmony with nature for thousands of years.

Unfortunately, the new age of Capitalism that reached the region in the late twentieth century has interfered with this harmonization. Though many families today still remember the environment and conserve natural resources. Many farmers still practice their inherited traditional agricultural practices from thousands of years ago until now, such as in Battir Village, an UNESCO site. There are noticeable shifts toward consumption of resources such as buying into planned obsolescence and throwing away usable items. Though many enjoy the perks of free market capitalism, which does not consider the ecological impact, these free market perks are significantly limited by the Israeli occupation which controls the economy in Palestinian territories. Despite the current shift away from positive relations with the environment, the EEC has been successful at reviving the notion that a mutual relationship (where both groups survive better in the company of the other) with the natural environment is key to a functional and sustainable society, for “The Kingdom of God is not food and drink but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit” (Rom14:17). A paradigm shift toward a more sustainable environment cannot happen if the community does not have a positive relationship with nature.

To complete this new paradigm, and to sustain the natural environment in the face of the current world growth model and the Israeli occupation, investing in the children and youth of Palestine are crucial. They are the next generation of environmental leaders and problem solvers. If the EEC continues to incorporate the natural environment as a neighbor in need, and focus on getting this message across to children, who are the building blocks of society, then the future of Palestine and the Middle East will be in good hands. In this way,

3 — World Council of Churches, “Kairos Palestine Document”, December 11, 2009, www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/other-ecumenical-bodies/kairos-palestine-document

4 — Munther Isaac, “Palestinian Christians and the Promised Land”, unpublished paper, December 2017: 4-5.

5 — Mitri Raheb, *Faith in the Face of the Empire*. New York: Maryknoll, (2014): 15, 19.

the EEC will be a good model for international organizations who are also looking to step away from capitalist trends and re-establish a community-based society. The EEC believes that a new world is possible through early intervention by using education as a fundamental tool that will shift the current paradigm towards a more sustainable environment.

The role of the EEC

The EEC began its educational ministry in 1986 with programs for Palestinian children. Their vision of seeing the children as the future stewards and caretakers of the environment was always a key part of their mission. Lessons on environmental concerns and civic responsibility were integrated into the existing school curriculum and extracurricular activities in a cooperative program called “Education for Awareness and Involvement” (EAI). The goal was to encourage students to become more involved in activities that would enrich the community.

A subsequent program in 1992 was formed to strengthen the ELCJHL’s commitment to environmental education and awareness. This program was called “Children for the Protection of Nature in Palestine” (CPNP) and worked to introduce Palestinian children to their natural heritage, the local biodiversity, conservation measures, and acquiring sustainable lifestyles. Without office facilities yet, educators visited the ELCJHL schools and other local public, private, and UNWRA schools just like today with the EEC’s Class Visits. “Jesus said, ‘Let the little children come to me, and do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of heaven belongs’” (Matt 19:14). Calling the children to help, and trusting them with a responsibility to care for the environment is something that was valuable for the EEC to incorporate into their mission.

After enough church wide support and recognition, the program, referred to as the CPNP, moved into office facilities on the spacious campus of Talitha Kumi Lutheran School in Beit Jala in 1998. With permanent office space and a large area of natural land at its disposal, the CPNP immediately began to broaden the range of its educational offerings. In maintaining the program’s growing vision of environmental awareness, the CPNP was renamed the “Environmental Education Center” (EEC) in 2002. Educating the next generation of environmentalists and leaders was still central to the EEC’s mission, but the program was expanded and added teachers, women, local graduate students, kindergartens, and decision-makers to the list of groups served in order to bring in the rest of the community.

For 32 years the EEC has helped the community restore its relationship with the land while taking sustained economic growth and social welfare into account.

Global climate change and detrimental effects of the Israeli occupation on the environment motivated the EEC to expand its mission to include attaining

environmental justice, peace building, and preserving Palestinian identity.

The EEC has become a multifaceted organization that makes its programs available and accessible to all people, regardless of gender, religion, race or economic status. The EEC believes that the answers to today's most pressing environmental and social issues can be found by bringing people together, raising awareness, and empowering youth, women, and other marginalized groups. This vision complements the ecumenical goal of the ELCJHL, as it seeks to work towards reconciliation, justice, and well-being for the community as a whole.

The main objectives of the EEC are:

- Empowering individuals and communities to take action for sustainable change.
- Supporting the community (particularly students, youth, women, and teachers) in developing a deeper understanding of the symbiotic relationship between humans and their environment.
- Promoting local and global awareness of the economic, scientific and cultural values of specific natural resources, ecosystems, and habitats.
- Providing a dynamic meeting place for students, teachers and the public.
- Advocating for environmental justice, peace building and identity.
- Carrying out sustainable development

Environmental challenges in Palestine

Conflicts, unstable politics, population growth, water shortages, temperature extremes, desertification, and drought are causes and effects of global climate change in the Middle East today. In Palestine, *lack of environmental awareness and the depletion of natural resources* are challenges of keeping up with these environmental changes. The EEC has many programs and outreach campaigns to combat local environmental degradation, although it remains a great challenge. Widespread knowledge of environmental education and support for environmental action is difficult anywhere. Especially when people are faced with exciting capitalist markets, new trends and products, and absolute convenience, getting people from all aspects of society to participate in the environmental movement is no easy feat. On top of this, the EEC has another major obstacle to keep in mind when delivering environmental education to the local and international community. This obstacle has exacerbated environmental degradation in Palestine and has created major environmental justice issues for the inhabitants of the land.

The *Israeli occupation is the current major challenge* towards reaching environmental solutions in Palestine. The occupation has been the ultimate governing power over the Palestinian territories of the West Bank and Gaza for more than 50 years. The Israeli government does not

aid or support the Palestinian people in any way. Instead they place obstacles in front of any progress by the Palestinians that would create a better quality of life. For example,

the sewage water coming from Bethlehem and Jerusalem that Palestinians asked to treat and reuse for agriculture in the Wadi Nar (Kidron Valley in) the West Bank was restricted by the Israeli government. Instead treated water went to serve Israeli settlements and agriculture in the West Bank completely controlled by the Israeli government.⁶ The environmental situation continues to worsen due to the effects of the Occupation.

The depletion of natural resources and environmental neglect are often overlooked in the face of Israeli (movement) restrictions, home demolitions, and land seizures by the Israeli military in the Palestinian territories.⁷ Water resources remain under full Israeli control, allowing only limited water to Palestinians. For example,

settlers in the West Bank use an average of 600 liters of water each day, while Palestinians in the West Bank are restricted to less than 100 liters of water per day.⁸

The minimum standard water intake recommended by the World Health Organization is 100-200 liters of water per day.⁹ Israel exploits 85% of the water in the West Bank, leaving only 15% to Palestinians.¹⁰

6 — Al-Haq, “Israeli Wastewater Treatment Plant in Wadi al-Nar Designed to Benefit Israeli Settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territory”, September 3, 2013, www.alhaq.org/advocacy/targets/accountability/81-general/734-israeli-wastewater-treatment-plant-in-wadi-al-nar-designed-to-benefit-israeli-settlements-in-the-occupied-palestinian-territory#

7 — UN Environment Programme, “Human Rights and the Environment”, 2018, <http://web.unep.org/divisions/delc/human-rights-and-environment>

8 — Center for Economic and Social Rights, “The Right to Water in Palestine: A Background”, Fact Sheet, www.cesr.org/sites/default/files/Palestine.RighttoWater.Factsheet.pdf

9 — World Health Organization, “The Right to Water”, 2003, www2.ohchr.org/english/issues/water/docs/Right_to_Water.pdf

10 — Applied Research Institute-Jerusalem, “Status of the Environment in the State of Palestine 2015”, www.arij.org/files/arijadmin/2016/Final_SOER_2015_opt_r.pdf

Due to this, the water the Palestinians were able to save and reuse is now so limited that it is very close to the point of deprivation. Furthermore, the *rerouting of water for settlement usage and agricultural land outside of the West Bank, confiscation of agricultural land from farmers inside the West Bank, development and expansion of illegal Israeli settlements, and the continued construction and extension of the Apartheid Wall* are direct violations of the natural environment. Plants and animals are quickly losing critical habitat and places to move freely. Species and populations are declining due to so much change in such little time. Biodiversity is something that is now only prominently seen retrospectively inside the EEC Natural History Museum on its campus where it displays the richly diverse bird species that were here only 100 years ago.

Environmental degradation in Palestine is exacerbated by the Israeli Zionist occupation which is an act of colonialism and is having grave environmental effects on Palestinians. Colonialism is a product of capitalism, which is the main driver to global climate change which causes disturbances in natural earth processes and systems. These environmental changes greatly affect the marginalized, coastal, and poorest groups of people on earth more than other groups of people. Scientists and environmentalists alike define this as environmental injustice.¹¹ If we zoom in to the Palestinian environmental context, the Israeli occupation operates like global climate change at an accelerated rate, and the Palestinians are the marginalized people.

Palestinians are suffering greatly from the effects of exacerbated environmental conditions caused directly by the Occupation. This includes, but is not limited to, sewage and garbage pollution from settlements, factory pollution (deemed unsafe for Israeli citizens), water restrictions and shortages, seizure of agricultural land, frequent use of chemical tear gas on people and surrounding plants and animals, and indirectly toxic smoke from burning garbage.

This is detrimental to the economic and social livelihood of Palestinians. They continue to be at severe risk for many health issues, nutrient deficiencies, economic disparity, premature deaths, fatal accidents, PTSD and other mental effects. The limitations on accessing

11 — United States Department of Energy, “What is Environmental Justice”, www.energy.gov/lm/services/environmental-justice/what-environmental-justice

natural resources, freedom of movement, agricultural land, and all of the negative effects of the environment on the Palestinians in their own home is a great environmental injustice.¹²

The environmental injustice caused by the Occupation is upsetting to those invested in solving environmental issues. Somehow the environmentalists, scientists, researchers, educators, leaders, and officials of Palestinian society have to figure out a way to survive in this harsh environment. Palestinians are denied basic human and civil rights by the Israeli occupation, leading to rising poverty and unemployment levels among Palestinians, making the increasing climate changes even worse for some. Since there is no local government support and funding for ecumenical community outreach organizations such as the EEC, they must take it upon themselves to achieve environmental stability and justice within the region. This is a major and difficult task to say the least. However, the Palestinian tradition to thrive in harsh conditions just like their olive tree counterparts that have stood steadfast and resilient in this land for thousands of years is what keeps spirits high among the Palestinian community. They did not choose this situation, but it is a situation they are choosing not to ignore. They care for each other, they care for creation and for their enemies just as the Lord asks (Mark 12:30-31 and Matt 5:43-45). With its offshoots of seeking environmental justice and peace building, the EEC is a successful environmental mediator by bringing the community together to spread messages of hope and empowerment even under occupation.

A new paradigm

The EEC recognizes and values the importance of empowering vulnerable communities in Palestine as a crucial step in working towards a healthier, just, and peaceful environment.

Empowerment through education is why the EEC exists as an ecumenical and Christian ministry. Their main focus is providing the children and youth of Palestine the knowledge and resources to sustain themselves and the natural environment

in the midst of a worldwide capitalist agenda and the Israeli occupation in full swing. Currently, children are growing up in a land controlled by a body completely foreign to them. They are trying desperately to find new ways to engage in the world around them

12 — United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), “Desk Study on the Environment in the Occupied Palestinian Territories”, 2002 Report, <https://postconflict.unep.ch/publications/INF-31-WebOPT.pdf>

and to develop their identity as Palestinians. This is an increasing challenge especially when there is no official infrastructure and violence has become the norm. A fragmented land has diminished their sense of belonging and identity to it. The EEC has been called by Christ to help change this reality for youth and the rest of Palestinian society. Jesus says in his Sermon on the Mount “Blessed are the Meek, for they will inherit the earth” (Matt 5:5). Jesus said this in order to release the meek from the power of the Empire.¹³ Empowering Palestinian children and teaching them environmental science is a way for them to join their community, find their voice, and resist non-violently towards their empire—the Israeli occupation.

The EEC’s future methodology for life and society is in line with its current model, which establishes justice and dignity: the environmental justice of Palestine, human dignity in transforming the concepts of children’s and women’s rights into enforcement, the involvement of young people in building and the cessation of environmental and biodiversity abuse. With regards to the model of the center, it has derived its strength from working with children and has begun to instill a special environmental education that links life, land, the homeland and the environment. The environment is a priority, which should not be underestimated, postponed or even considered beyond help.

The reward being a collective community is the first step in moving forward in the current Palestinian environmental and political context. It is a *new paradigm of development* that works against the capitalist culture—where every man is in it only for himself—and equally against the Israeli occupation, whose mission does not offer Palestinians any sort of agency over the fate of their ancient homeland. The community will work together as stewards of the earth towards a better environment offering the land and each other respite from the current conflicts. If the collective community is the new paradigm shift towards solving environmental issues especially within the Palestinian context, then it is crucial for the young people to participate in the environmental movement as soon as possible. “The absence of any vision or spark of hope for peace and freedom pushes young people, both Muslim and Christian, to emigrate. Thus the land is deprived of its most important and richest resource – educated youth”.¹⁴ There cannot be a paradigm shift if the people who shift it are absent.

Therefore, investing in children and teaching them land stewardship through EEC programs is also a critical feature of the new paradigm. The children of today will be the activists of tomorrow. They will lead the

13 — Mitri Raheb, “Blessed are the Meek,” *Challenging Empire: God, Faithfulness and Resistance*, Nim Ateek and Cedar Duaybis (eds.). Jerusalem: Sabeel Ecumenical Liberation Theology Center-Jerusalem, (2012): 51-55.

14 — WCC, “Kairos Palestine Document”

environmental movement throughout their lives spreading vast environmental knowledge and concepts which they will have embraced early in life.

It will be second nature for them to care for and nurture the environment just as it once was for Palestinian society. Together, the community will alleviate the tremendous stress put on the environment by global climate change and local climate change.

Based on the experience of the EEC, the proposed integrated approach is the basis for developing a critical attitude towards the prevailing patterns of growth in development, through the promotion of sustainable development patterns that preserve and take care of the environment. Like their ancient ancestors, the EEC's core vision is to teach the Palestinian children and society to work together to care for their neighbors and land as God's hands on earth. *Remembering to be stewards of the earth and being an active community member is a way to care for creation* and for Palestinians to resist the occupation in a nonviolent and creative way.¹⁵ Most EEC programs cater to environmental responsibility and encourage volunteer work as an individual and collective approach. For example, during the olive harvest season, the EEC organizes campaigns that invite the youth and community to help pick the abundant fruit from trees that belong to farmers whose land has been confiscated and/or damaged by the Israeli occupation. Similarly, the EEC organizes *planting campaigns for youth and community members* to plant native trees to restore local biodiversity. Students from all over the West Bank come and participate in these group activities helping to form social cohesion. They spend the day meeting the farmers, hearing their stories, working on the land, and learning the value of helping their neighbors and the earth especially during a time of injustice and unrest both for the people and the environment. They come to appreciate their beautiful yet broken land through the devotion of time and work. These projects help to connect the youth to the land by assisting their community, show youth the value in civic engagement, and finally contribute to a greener Palestine by mitigating climate change.

Additionally, students from all over the West Bank are invited to go on *field trips, workshops, and hikes* organized by the EEC to learn about their Palestinian culture and heritage. They visit historical sites in the West Bank, except for Jerusalem which is due to Israeli movement restrictions and the lack of freedom of religion to learn about their historical roots firsthand.¹⁶ They get to walk the footsteps of Jesus and their ancient ancestors, and to feel a connection to their homeland. In interactive workshops the children of Palestine have the opportunity to learn about their traditions including food, instruments, dress, and how they are a collective group of people. Afterward, the children go on educational

15 — WCC, "Kairos Palestine Document"

16 — WCC, "Kairos Palestine Document"

hikes with EEC educators to learn about the land of their Mediterranean and arid climate, the rich biodiversity that has flourished here for thousands of years, and the relationships that are essential to sustain biodiversity. In this way, the EEC helps the younger generation to develop an identity with the land on which they live, by showing them their Palestinian culture and heritage. To help today's children to be active community members tomorrow, the EEC works to make them aware of the agency that they possess and to use it to fight for environmental and political stability. Realizing this agency as individuals strengthens the community as a whole.

To further their education, the EEC encourages creative expression from Palestinian youth. The EEC hosts several events that include opportunities for students to show pride for their Palestinian heritage. Every year in October, the EEC's *Olive Harvest Festival* incorporates creative art performances by students all over the West Bank. Through dances, songs, music, skits, poetry, and monologues, the children get to show off their Palestinian culture and heritage to their supporting community. Later in the spring, the EEC organizes *school competitions* for students to participate creatively through art showing their love for their people and for the environment. Writing, drawing, and photography are the three categories of the Spring Competitions and the students love the opportunity to participate. Winners are awarded art supplies specific to their media entered skill. These *Palestinian Identity projects* are just some of the ways that the EEC organizes to help the youth feel empowered to care for each other and for the earth in this time of environmental degradation.

Helping to empower the youth through creative resistance by establishing a sense of pride in their traditional cultural practices has helped them to make a connection with the land, causing them to criticize anti-environmental practices and intervening to correct them. *Environmental clubs* have emerged all over the West Bank since the initiation of environmental awareness by the EEC. Through the EEC there are environmental club advisors which have helped to guide the students. The students in turn have stepped up as young environmentalists electing their own leadership staff and developing their own agenda and action plans, including both on-campus and off-campus projects. They have led morning announcements to remind the rest of the school to be environmentally conscious. They have begun to design and grow school gardens to bring the environment closer to home, for a practical learning experience, and to increase the waning local biodiversity. Based around the theme of Reduce, Recycle, Reuse, and Re-purpose, leadership students have created environmental drives asking students to bring food to nourish those in need, used clothes, and also compost to fertilize the school gardens. They also organize clean up campaigns and planting campaigns in and around their schools.

Education in a broader context

By also working under an international framework, the EEC uses its agency through various mediums in order to bring attention to the social, political, and environmental situation in Palestine and the Middle East region. This helps to create awareness, exchange

experiences, increase support, gain collaborators and to mobilize and coordinate the involvement of churches worldwide for just peace in Palestine.

The EEC promotes its vision of local transformation in justice, peace and sustainability during its *annual environmental conference* which it has hosted for the past eight years. This platform brings together international and local leaders, decision-makers, researchers, academics, and community members who present and discuss research on various environmental topics such as advocacy, justice, challenges and solutions, awareness and education.

All topics are based on the premise that everyone should have the right to a “safe, healthy, and ecologically-balanced environment”.¹⁷

The EEC also has an international presence through its active role in many organizations and networks. This includes Working Group on Climate Change (WCC), Ecumenical Water Network of World Council of Churches (EWN-WCC), National Coalition of Christian Organizations in Palestine (NCCOP), International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), and Palestinian Environmental NGOs Network-Friends of Earth Palestine (PEN-GON-FoE Palestine). EEC members participate and contribute to many conferences such as, COP 22, COP23, IUCN Congress and WCC 10th Assembly. They also get to vote on environmental decisions, sign petitions, become delegates, and collaborate in research projects.

For example,

the *Seven Weeks for Water* program was an initiative that took place in Jerusalem in February 2016 during the Christian Lenten season and focused on water justice in the Middle East.¹⁸

¹⁷ — UN Environment Programme, “Human Rights and the Environment”; see: <http://web.unep.org/divisions/delc/human-rights-and-environment>

¹⁸ — See: <https://water.oikoumene.org/en/whatwedo/seven-weeks-for-water/2018-1>

As a member of EWN-WCC, the EEC helped present on the inequality of water distribution between Palestine and Israel. Influential leaders of the WCC, Lutheran World Federation (LWF), Middle East Council of Churches and local churches were active in this initiative. Resources were distributed that were based on the water crisis in the Middle East, taking into consideration the peace and justice issues that surround the water crisis.

The EEC also connects its environmental work with international advocacy through various media platforms. Its publication and award for the *Checklist of the Birds of Palestine*¹⁹ provides the international body with understanding of the relationship between humans and the environment within the region. It is also a reference tool for scientists to analyze the health of the environment through bird census. The EEC published a research paper entitled “Long Term Bird Ringing in Palestine”²⁰ in a specialized journal called “The Ring” about its ten-year study on Palestinian bird migrations that it carried out at the Talitha Kumi Bird Ringing and Monitoring Station at the campus. The data raises questions about climate change patterns for the Middle East region and can be used in collaboration with other international research. The EEC has also contributed to international works such as *Making Peace with the Earth: Action and Advocacy for Climate Justice*²¹, and has written and interviewed for local and international radio, newspaper, and television. Agencies include Al-Jazeera, NBC, French Radio, Ma’an News, Radio Orient, Wafa Agency, An-Najah University Radio, and Palestine TV.

Conclusion

To mitigate the effects of global and local climate change caused by the prevailing dominant growth model, a new paradigm of life and society is essential. The EEC has constructed this new paradigm through its mission of involving the entire community in its work, encouraging environmental and religious stewardship, and particularly by empowering the youth who are the next generation of environmental leaders and activists.

The EEC has an integrated approach and perspective, linking life and society on the one hand and the environment on the other, making it a versatile and approachable ministry. Programs and projects are not only carried out to develop environmental and religious stewardship, but also to help increase the well-being and livelihoods of Palestinians by attaining environmental, political, and social justice. Though the Israeli occupation plays a significant role in exacerbating these injustices, the EEC works hard to rekindle the hope of the community. After all, the Palestinians are a people of hope. “Hope within us means first and foremost our faith in God and secondly our expectation, despite everything,

19 — See: <http://thisweekinpalestine.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/BTM2.pdf>

20 — www.researchgate.net/publication/324930488_Long-term_bird_ringing_in_Palestine

21 — www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/publications/making-peace-with-the-earth-action-advocacy-for-climate-justice

for a better future. From this vision derives the strength to be steadfast, remain firm and work to change the reality in which we find ourselves.” (Kairos 3.2). Deeply rooted like the olive tree, Palestinians have stood steadfast for thousands of years braving the pillage and power of rulers. They are “*samud*”, and they are not giving up in changing their environmental, social, and political reality.

Empowering children to love their land and their culture will help motivate them to join the collective community in attaining all aspects of peace and justice in Palestine. Teaching them about the environment, biodiversity, and sustainability will inspire them to care for creation and give them an opportunity to creatively resist the occupation. Their presence in the Palestinian community will help reach the EEC’s goal of developing teamwork and collaboration to develop sustainable attitudes and practices, and making the EEC’s vision of creating the next generation of environmental leaders a reality.

The EEC strives to continue its programming and growth as a legitimate church related NGO through support, funding, and recognition from the international community. The EEC asks that the international community not abandon Palestinians and to stand in solidarity and justice to end the occupation. The contributions from influential partners, both faith-based and environmental based, allow the EEC to continue to work towards a healthier environment. The EEC has several official churches and groups that donate the majority of EEC’s funding especially from the Church of Sweden (and Bread for the World); we are very grateful for these contributions. However, fundraising remains a big challenge for the EEC. It is therefore important that the international church community continues to share the EEC’s mission within the Palestinian context. The Palestinian narrative regarding its social, economic, political, and environmental aspects is so complex because of how interwoven they are. The EEC hopes that its partners and networks continue to share themes of environmental justice, identity, education, caring for creation, sustainable development, human rights, peace and reconciliation to continue environmental work and protection in Palestine.

Remembering that the Israeli occupation, a product of Zionism and colonialism, is a part of the Palestinian narrative is important for the EEC to communicate. Lack of infrastructure, land seizure, illegal settlements, water restrictions, garbage pollution, movement restrictions, and home demolitions to name a few makes EEC programming much more difficult especially without local government support and funding. The EEC is truly a grassroots movement calling on its local and international community to incite change. With this in mind the EEC hopes that international churches and faith-based organizations “take a clear stand against any theology or Christian group that justifies the occupation and privileges one nation over the other based on ethnicity or a covenant”.²²

22 — National Coalition of Christian Organizations in Palestine (NCCOP), “Open Letter from the NCCOP to the WCC and the Ecumenical Movement”, *Plan for WCC Involvement for Justice and Peace in Israel and Palestine-Revised*, Executive Committee, Amman, Jordan, November 17-23, 2017: 7.

The EEC would also like for the international community to familiarize itself with the Palestinian situation through a Christian and humanitarian standpoint. The EEC asks that they read official statements that address the Palestinian situation such as those written by the World Council of Churches, and the National Coalition of Christian Organizations in Palestine and to “convene and encourage further ethical, biblical and theological reflection and discussion on issues of justice, peace, land, occupation, colonialism, annexation, anti-semitism and human dignity in the context of the situation in Palestine and Israel”.²³

Furthermore, the EEC would benefit from the development and implementation of a communication strategy to increase awareness about the realities of life under occupation, to mobilize churches for advocacy and non-violent, democratic actions against the occupation, encompassing the different WCC initiatives in Palestine, and to support local, regional and international advocacy. The EEC needs support for farmers by compensating them for their loss due to the occupation and for youth leadership programs as well as extracurricular programs. The EEC calls for advocates to end collective punishment towards the Palestinians, and the Israeli occupation altogether to work towards a better environment.

Finally, the EEC asks for the international community to “come and see, in order to understand the reality. You will know the facts and the people of this land, Palestinians and Israelis alike”.²⁴ “Through our love, we will overcome injustices and establish foundations for a new society both for us and for our opponents. Our future and their future are one. Either the cycle of violence that destroys both of us or peace that will benefit both Let us resist evil together, the evil of occupation and the infernal cycle of violence”.²⁵

23 — World Council of Churches (WCC), “Plan for WCC Involvement for Justice and Peace in Israel and Palestine-Revised”, Executive Committee, Amman, Jordan, November 17-23, 2017: 2.

24 — WCC, “Kairos Palestine Document”

25 — WCC, “Kairos Palestine Document”

Chapter 17

Tanzanian Perspectives on Ecological and Climate Justice

William Magesse¹

Background

Tanzania is located in Eastern part of Africa between longitudes 29° and 41° East, and Latitude 1° and 12° South. Topographically, the country is endowed with beautiful scenery, with mountain ranges and valleys. Tanzania is home to Mount Kilimanjaro, the highest mountain in Africa.²

Tanzania has a beautiful natural vegetation, with the exception of the semi-arid central region of the country. The natural vegetation cover includes the Kitulo Natural Garden in Makete District in Njombe Region, which has 350 different flora species. The Kitulo Garden is famously known as the Garden of God and others have dubbed it “Serengeti of Flowers”.

The Great Rift Valley cuts across the country from the western and central parts of the country running through to Mozambique. The Great Rift Valley provides ground for pastoralist activities and agriculture due to its fertile soil that supports growth of different crops. The Usangu Valley, famous for rice production in Mbeya Region lies within the path of the Great Rift Valley.

Tanzania is blessed with sufficient natural water sources. On the Western part there is Lake Tanganyika (the second deepest lake in the World), bordering Zambia, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Burundi. While Lake Victoria (the world’s second largest fresh water lake and the largest in Africa being the source of the Great Nile River) lies in the northern part of the country, bordering Uganda and Kenya. In the South West lies Lake Nyasa, bordering Zambia, Malawi and Mozambique. There are also plenty of rivers running across the country including the major rivers Rufiji, Ruvuma, Malagarasi, Kagera, Pangani, Wami, Ruvu, Ruaha, Kilombero and Mara. The Indian Ocean forms the Eastern border of the country with four major ports of Dar es Salaam; Mtwara; Tanga; and Bagamoyo (Mbegani area).

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2 — Mpangile, Tanzania (2008)

Tanzania has a tropical climatic condition with the highland temperatures ranging between 5° C and 30° C during the cold and hot seasons respectively. The temperature around the rest of the country does not fall below 20° C. normally. It is hot around the months of October to February especially in the coastal regions of Dar es Salaam, Pwani, Tanga, Lindi and Mtwara. Cooler temperature is experienced between the months of May and August, particularly in the highlands areas where temperatures may fall below 10° C.³

Rainfall distribution is divided into unimodal and bimodal areas. The unimodal areas experience rainfall once per year whereas the bimodal areas experience rainfall two times a year. The bi-modal regions experience short rainfall (*vuli*) in the months of October to December and heavy rainfall season starts around the end of March to early June. Unimodal regions experience heavy rainfall around November to April. However,

climate change, in recent years have caused variations in rainfall patterns with respect to availability and frequency (early onset, late cessation or late onset with an early cessation) accompanied with floods in times of plenty or droughts in times of less rain and therefore affecting food security.

The country's climatic conditions furthermore attracts the generation of alternative energy such as solar and wind energy. There is reliable sunshine and speedy wind that can generate energy throughout the year. For instance, wind resource encourages energy generation throughout the Rift Valley, in the highland plains and along the coast of the Indian Ocean. However, there has been minimum investment to such sources to allow production of excessive electricity that could help further tourism and improve the agriculture and semi-processing industries especially in much needed rural Tanzania.⁴

Notably also Tanzania is endowed with abundant natural resources (living and non-living), minerals such as Tanzanite, Gold, Diamond, Copper and Iron are found in abundance. Large reserves of natural gas have been discovered in southern regions of Mtwara and Lindi. It is estimated that there is a reserve of 1 trillion Cubic Metres of natural gas in coastal regions. Explorations for gas and oil are ongoing in different parts of the country attracting heavy foreign direct investment through exploration and manufacturing industry.

Furthermore Tanzania is endowed with natural and planted forests. The area covered by forest and woodlands in Tanzania mainland is 48.1 Million ha. Basing on 2012 census

3 — Tanzania Tourist Board (2018)

4 — Yassin Mbululo and Fatma Nyihiranyi, Climate Characteristics in Tanzania(2012)

the population of Tanzania currently is estimated at about 54.2 million with a per capita area of forest and woodland of about 1.1 ha. The total wood volume is 3.3 billion m³. Whereby 97% of the total volume is from trees of natural origin and only 3% is from planted trees⁵. The annual consumption demand of wood is estimated at 62.3 million m³ mainly for house hold energy. This consumption exceeds the sustainable supply causing annual wood deficit of 19.5 million m³.⁶

The estimated population of the country as of 2018 is 54.2 million with Mainland population being 52.6 and that of Zanzibar Islands standing at 1.6 million with a growth rate estimated at 2.95% per annum with more than 70% of the population living in rural areas. The number of households in rural areas is 7,262,303, equivalent to approximately 67% of the total number of households. In urban areas there are 3,977,192 households, which is about 33% of the population. The average household is occupied by 4.7 persons (NBS 2018).⁷

Tanzania's economy, the wellbeing of its population and its recent, positive economic development trajectory are particularly vulnerable to climate change and this is evidenced by the widespread damage and hardships imposed by regular drought and extreme rainfall events under current climate variability, soil degradation, deforestation and desertification.

The issue of climate change has risen up the political and development agenda in Tanzania over the past decade reflecting heightened global attention on the issue. The government, research institutions, Faith Based Organizations (FBOs) and Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs) community in Tanzania are increasingly active on the issue and with the support of development partners major research platforms and coalitions of stakeholders working on the issues have been established.

It is not easy for bare land to produce, however, with capacity building and training it is made very possible to get a sufficient amount of food that make them food secure. The process applied is like follows: After germination thinning is done to ensure that only strong plants remain. The next exercise then becomes boosting the plants using liquid manure that has been locally made by the farmers themselves using knowledge developed during trainings. An average acre plot is able to produce 14 bags of 100kgs each from 2 to 3 bags the owner used to

5 – NAFORMA, 2015

6 – National Environment Statistics Report (2017)

7 – National Bureau of Statistics (2018)

get. Some farmers have managed to get 20 bags of 100kgs each at a cost that is unbelievably low, the impact is that after two seasons the number of farmers practicing conservation farming (“farming the God’s way”) has increased to 1250 and yields have gone up to between 12 bags to 20 bags each time improving because the soil is rejuvenating from the decomposition of the mulch. Communities were also mobilized and trained on rain water harvesting.

The Christian Council of Tanzania’s involvement in alternative energy and seed production

International advocacy through taking part in Conference of Parties (COPs) meetings, National advocacy and policy making especially on extractives has been able to write, advise and advocate different actions directly and indirectly affecting climate.

On Renewable energy, the Christian Council of Tanzania (CCT) in cooperation with other stakeholders is taking a forefront position to advocate on the use of alternative energy sources especially solar energy. During the era of mineral exploration in Tanzania, the Council was able to research, write and advise on environmental consequences of mining activities, and advise on establishment of relevant policies, laws and regulations safeguarding the environment and ecology.

As for agriculture the CCT has been insisting on the use of best seeds (improved ones that give best yields as compared to the local indigenous seeds but also are climate change resistant). Applying these techniques resulted into farmers getting bumper harvests, therefore becoming food secure at house hold level and to an extent reduce their levels of poverty.

Scenarios for climate change in Eastern Africa

A brief overview of predicted climate changes and climate change impacts is necessary in order to understand their interaction with vulnerabilities. East Africa is predicted to warm by about 2-4 C° by 2100, somewhat less than the Mediterranean north-western Africa and the inner South Africa. The inner parts of East Africa and Tanzania are predicted to experience higher temperature increases than the coastal areas. Cold and dry seasons will warm more than warm and wet seasons.

Rainfall is predicted to decrease by about 0-20 percent in the inner parts of the region and the country, with dry season(s) becoming longer and having less rainfall. In contrast, rainfall is predicted to increase by 30-50 percent in the coastal areas.

The increase will take place during the rainy season and during the primary rainy season in the equatorial region which has two rainy seasons.⁸

The ongoing mineral exploration and infrastructures constructions advance the threat to climate and ecology. The Stiegler's Gorge Hydroelectric Power Project, which is under way to take place, is to be constructed inside Selous Game Reserve and will take and occupy a space equivalent to the whole of Dar es Salaam City. That alone poses an enormous ecological challenge as well as climate change challenge.

Currently, Tanzania experiences periodic draughts and floods which in fact affects our economic and social economic efforts towards general development. The central part of the country for example, receives rainfall only once in a year, making it ecologically unjust and economically vulnerable. This year, Tanzania experienced floods around Nyumba ya Mungu Dam in Kilimanjaro whereby three villages of Same District were wiped away, especially the crops. More than 4000 people were affected by the incident.

Tanzania's response to ecological and climate justice and membership of climate agreements

Tanzania, just like all other countries in the world, has tried to be just to both ecology and climate as a response to current global trends. To begin with, the country is responding to different international conventions on climate change and biological diversity.

The United Republic of Tanzania (URT) is a signatory to a number of multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs) and protocols that address various aspects of the environment as summarized in Table 1. Tanzania has undertaken various actions regarding the implementation of these agreements at the national level including their integration within existing national policies, strategies, and development goals. Following the table is a summary of Tanzania's national level responses to the important agreements namely the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and the Kyoto Protocol.

8 — Climate Change and Food Security in Tanzania, Mwandosya, Nyenzi and Luhanga (2001)

No.	Agreement/Convention	Date Government of Tanzania Ratified
1.	Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)	June 1996
2.	Convention to Combat Desertification (CCD)	June 1994
3.	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)	April 17 1996
4.	Kyoto Protocol to the UNFCCC	August 2002
5.	Convention on Wetlands of International Importance Especially as Waterfowl Habitats (Ramsar)	1999
6.	Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES)	1994
7.	Convention on the Control of Trans Boundary Movements of Hazardous Waste and their Disposal (Basel)	2002
8.	Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs)	2004
9.	Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer (Montreal Protocol)	1993
10.	Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer (Vienna Convention)	1993
11.	Protocol on Bio-safety (Cartagena Protocol)	2003

Table 1: Tanzania's international agreements on environment and climate change

On all these agreements, Tanzania is reflecting its laws and policies on ecological diversity and climate change.⁹

National Legal Frameworks: the Vice Presidents Office and the Ministries

Several actions have been undertaken at the national level to document the Government of Tanzania's commitment in relation to Climate Biodiversity (CBD) including:¹⁰

- Development of the National Environmental Action Plan (NEAP) of 1994 that culminated to the formulation of the National Environmental Policy (NEP) in 1997;
- Enacting of the National Environmental Management Act (EMA) of 2004;
- Establishment and staffing of environmental management units in Government of Tanzania ministries. Environmental Management Units are responsible for implementation of EMA at the sector/ministry level using the Environmental and Social

⁹ – Environment and Climate Change in Tanzania, May 2016.

¹⁰ – Climate Change in Tanzania. Feb, 2010.

Management Framework (ESMF). Most Environmental Management Units are still at their infancy stage since they were established within the last four years;

- Establishment of environment focal points at the LGA/district level and natural resources committees at the village government level as part of decentralizing environmental management in Tanzania;
- Creation of the Division of Environment (DoE) under the Vice President's office which has three roles related to environmental management in Tanzania namely: Formulation of policy on environmental coordination and monitoring environmental issues; Environmental planning policy-oriented and; Environmental research;

Tanzania's national level responses regarding UNFCCC and the Kyoto Protocol include the following:¹¹

- Submission of Tanzania's National Initial Communication to the UNFCCC in 2003. The Communication documents sources of Green House Gas (GHG) emissions in Tanzania, and strategies to mitigate and adapt to climate change for Tanzania;
- Establishment of a Designated National Authority (DNA) that will oversee implementation of CC related activities at the national level particularly reviewing and recommending Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) Project Development Documents (PDD) to the CDM Executive Board. The Vice Presidents Office (VPO) serves as the Designated National Authority (DNA);
- The Preparation and submission of a National Adaptation Programme of Action (NAPA) that prioritizes adaptation options in the country to reduce climate change (CC) impacts. The NAPA document was supposed to be a strategic fundraising document to access UNFCCC funding mechanisms on adaptation. However, there has been inadequate funding for adaptation at the international level since contributions to the fund by industrialized countries is voluntary. Only one of the 14 identified projects in the NAPA Document has been implemented;
- Participation in meetings of the party (MOP) for the Kyoto Protocol and conference of parties (COP) for the UNFCCC. Tanzania has been represented by the Ministry of Environment, by the Vice Presidents office of the Division of the Environment (VPO – DoE) and other stakeholders including official observers such as the Tanzania Natural Resources Forum (TNRF). Important milestones are that Tanzania has agreed to include the Nairobi framework on vulnerability and adaptation to CC, the Bali roadmap on reduced emissions from deforestation and degradation (REDD) and the Copenhagen Accord. Following the Bali road map and in line with on-going negotiations for REDD (reduced emissions from deforestation and degradation), with the Government of Tanzania, Tanzania has already started a process of formulating the

11 — Climate Change in Tanzania, Feb. 2010.

national REDD (reduced emissions from deforestation and degradation) strategy by formulating the National REDD Framework in 2009;

Additional Indicators deriving from Government of Tanzania's commitment to Climate Change agreements are the following:

- The number and content of related policies, strategies and acts enacted at the national level;
- The number of Climate Change related projects/programmes implemented by Government of Tanzania, Development Partners and NGOs;
- The establishment of government Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) focusing on environment and Climate Change in particular e.g. Environmental Management Units in each Ministry;
- The Government of Tanzania Budget/Funding for environment and Climate Change activities in particular;
- National adaptive capacity measured in terms of GDP growth, gini coefficient and other indicators of national economic development;
- The number and content of related research reports on environment and Climate Change in particular by both Government of Tanzania MDAs, academic institutions, departments, NGOs, independent researches etc.;
- The awareness among public leaders on Climate Change issues as indicated by frequency of reference to climate change by leaders at various levels in various forums;
- The mainstreaming of Climate Change issues within existing national policies/programmes/institutions etc.;

All of these legal and policies related responses by the Government of Tanzania or different government vessels have been established by the government to deal only with environmental issues. The specified ministry undertakes the role of making them function. Some of the prominent established national agencies include the following:

- The National Environmental Management Council (NEMC) that came into being in 1983 when the Government of Tanzania enacted the National Environment Management Act No. 19 of 1983 (Reviewed in 2004);
- The Tanzania Meteorological Agency (TMA), formed due to the fact that Tanzania is a signatory of Technical Regulations of the World Meteorological Organization;
- The Tanzania Atomic Energy Commission (TAEC) established by the Act of Parliament referred to as The Atomic Energy Act number 7 of 2003;
- The Tanzania Forest Services (TFS), a fully autonomous agency under the forest and bee keeping division of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism in Tanzania with the mandate for the management of national forestry and forest services;

All of these together with other agencies are trying to set justice for both ecology and climate, and they are doing so through the Government of Tanzania, Development Partners and NGOs to foster good climatic conditions in Tanzania, as well as wellbeing of all the living organisms especially those on designated areas.

Major factors that cause climatic injustices in Tanzania

The following factors and agents can be identified contributing to the causes of major ecological degradation and injustices in Tanzania:

1. Forests cutting for energy

Forest cutting (firewood and charcoal) and construction has lead to desertification and land degradation, because the demand for fuel wood is so high as almost 96% of households use forest products (Charcoal and fire wood) as sources of energy. Other drivers for desertification and land degradation include agricultural expansion, grazing in forests, illegal settlements in forests, improper livestock keeping, charcoal making, forest fires, pit sawing for lumber and poles cutting, infrastructural development, hunting of wildlife, firewood collections, these could be called the direct drivers of deforestation and land degradation.

2. Shifting cultivation in agriculture

Tanzania's farming system is basically characterized by small scale farmers who practice much shifting cultivation which increases the rate of soil degradation. Small-scale farming involves growing crops, at least in part, to be used by an individual family, with farming being a significant source of their livelihood. Subsistence farming, however, implies that farm production is solely for the family's livelihood and farm products are not sold at a market. Most small farmers do sell their crops at local or national markets. Shifting cultivation, a type of small-scale farming, typically involves clearing the land, burning much of the plant material, planting and harvesting crops, and then abandoning the plot of land (letting the land go fallow) before moving to a new plot.

3. Nomadic pastoralism

Despite different schools of thoughts, nomadic pastoralism leads to soil degradation by developing a soil surface hard pan, aggravation of soil erosion and pollution on sources of water. In semi arid and arid lands, nomadic pastoralism is beneficial compared to agriculture.

4. Mineral extractions

Mineral extraction is one of the strong drivers of deforestation hence forth climate change.

Whose effects could be felt through variability of rainfall in the areas concerned compared to the times when extraction was not done on a large scale. Large scale mineral extractions leave big ditches that normally reduce the land for cultivation and devastatingly pull down very old trees that existed there for decades accelerating deforestation resulting into reduced rainfall intensity and frequency in the locality because of the deforestation. It also increases pressure on fuel energy due to reduced number of trees.

5. The indirect drivers

The indirect drivers include, population increase resulting from natural growth and immigrants, inadequate law enforcement, weak governance, lack of awareness and mobilization and lack of sustainable alternatives.

Characterization of the main agents of deforestation and degradation revealed that human actors in various capacities and functions have saved as agents. The main agents identified included small scale farmers, loggers and pitsawing, livestock herds, firewood collectors, charcoal makers, infrastructural developers, salt industries owners, gypsum miners, tobacco farmers and immigrants.

6. Population Increase

Increasing population pushes the demand for land and forest resources upwards. The push eventually leads to forest destruction. Much as the population increase results from natural phenomenon it might also be set due to immigration that result from decreasing forest resources from somewhere. Immigrants come from both inside Tanzania and neighboring countries. The conspicuous activities that are associated with migration of people to the project area are livestock keeping and agricultural expansion.

7. Lack of Awareness and Mobilization

When communities are aware of the potential benefits from conservation and negative consequences of forest destruction their actions towards forest controls change. When awareness is combined with mobilization at local level involving for example formation

of local level institutions for forest controls communities demonstrates better control over surrounding forest resources. CCT in these villages make use of her Public Expenditure Tracking System (PETS) committees to check for the natural resources there that are kept intact or are taken in a sustainable way.

The Role of the Church and its ecumenical instrument in the Christian Council of Tanzania

The church has for a long time been involved in the adaptation and mitigation of impacts of climate change to maintain both the ecology and the biodiversity of her mother countryside.

To take care of these injustices the Christian Council of Tanzania with a membership of twelve churches and twelve church organizations, for over two decades now, has taken an active role of addressing ecological justice and climate change issues. The council has applied a multifaceted approach including capacity building to communities using the Biblical context, on adaptation and mitigation. CCT has strived to curb the effects by mobilizing communities to apply cost effective methods for agricultural production. One method that has worked very well is conservation farming (farming the God's way) which is sustainable because it basically utilizes materials within the locality.

List of Abbreviations

cBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CDM	Clean Development Mechanism
COP	Conference of Parties
DNA	Designated National Authority
DoE	Division of Environment
DP	Development Partners
EMA	Environmental Management Act
ESMF	Environmental and Social Management Framework
FBO	Faith Based Organization
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GHG	Green House Gases
LGA	Local Government Authorities
MDA	(State) Ministries, Departments and Agencies
MOP	Meeting of Parties
NAFORMA	National Forests Management
NAPA	National Adaptation Program of Action
NBS	National Bureau of Statistics
NEAP	National Environmental Action Plan
NEMC	National Environmental Management Council

NEP	National Environmental Policy
NGO	Non Governmental Organization
PETS	Public Expenditure Tracking System
REDD	Reduced Emissions from Deforestation and Degradation
TAEC	Tanzania Atomic Energy Commission
TFS	Tanzania Forest Services
TMA	Tanzania Meteorological Agency
TNRF	Tanzania Natural Resources Forum
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention for Climate Change
VPO	Vice Presidents Office

Chapter 18

Ecological Integrity, Rights of Seeds, Rights for Life

Vandana Shiva¹

Ecological Integrity: One Humanity, One Planet

Three interrelated convictions have informed our work:

- We are part of the web of life, not masters of the Earth.
- Protecting the web of life and its ecological integrity is an ethical imperative. It has now also become a survival imperative.
- The life on this planet and our own future is under severe threat. We are living through the period of the sixth mass extinction of species on earth, driven by the limitless greed of only 1% of the world's population.

The IPCC has warned that we have only twelve years to limit the climate change catastrophe.² The Inter Governmental Panel on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES), which is co- chaired by Prof. Robert Scholes (South Africa) and Dr. Luca Montanarella (Italy), has warned in its assessment that *“rapid expansion and unsustainable management of croplands and grazing lands is the most extensive global direct driver of land degradation, causing significant loss of biodiversity and ecosystem services – food security, water purification, the provision of energy and other contributions of nature essential to people. This has reached ‘critical’ levels in many parts of the world. With negative impacts on the well-being of at least 3.2 billion people, the degradation of the Earth’s land surface through human activities is pushing the planet towards a sixth mass species extinction.”*³

According to a recent Living Planet report from the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) 2018 we have wiped out 60% of the animals on the planet since 1970, i.e. the period in which industrial agriculture and chemicals spread. Fresh-water species have declined

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2 — See: www.theguardian.com/environment/2018/oct/08/global-warming-must-not-exceed-15c-warns-land-mark-un-report; see also: <https://cleantechnica.com/2018/10/09/ipcc-6-climate-change-report-we-only-have-12-years-to-fix-this/>

3 — See: www.ipbes.net/news/media-release-worsening-worldwide-land-degradation-now-‘critical’-undermining-well-being-32

by 83% in the same period. Since 1960, the global ecological footprint has increased by more than 190%. Globally, the extent of wetlands was estimated to have declined by 87% since 1970.⁴ In addition a recent German study shows, that 75% insects have disappeared.⁵ Another study from France has called the disappearance of birds in France as a biodiversity oblivion.⁶

Pesticides and poisons, first used to kill humans in concentration camps have been used in industrial agriculture for a “war on bugs”. Killing insects is their purpose.

Protecting life on earth makes ecological agriculture and organic farming an imperative. This transition for us is at the heart of extinction rebellion.⁷ The extinction of species and the destruction of the Gaia’s climate systems are interconnected through fossil fuels and chemicals based on fossil fuels. 50% of the Greenhouse gas emissions come from an industrialized food system which is also uprooting the small peasants who provide 80% of the food. The poison based monoculture paradigm of growing food is also responsible for the destruction of biodiversity and extinction of species.⁸

Overcoming the war against the Mother Earth

The war against the Earth began with this idea of separateness. Its contemporary seeds were sown when the living Earth was transformed into a dead matter to facilitate the industrial revolution. Monocultures replaced diversity. “Raw materials” and “dead matter” replaced a vibrant Earth.

4 — See: www.wwf.org.uk/updates/living-planet-report-2018; also: Living Planet Report, in: www.worldwildlife.org/pages/living-planet-report-2018, particularly p. 28

5 — Insects decline dramatically in German nature reserves: Study Report released October 18, 2017 on the web-platform phy.org; in: <https://phys.org/news/2017-10-three-quarters-total-insect-population-lost.html>

6 — France’s Bird Population Collapses Due to Pesticides, in: <https://returntonow.net/2018/03/25/frances-bird-population-collapses-due-to-pesticides/> MARCH 25, 2018 AT 4:51 PM. Also see: www.nytimes.com/2018/11/27/magazine/insect-apocalypse.html

7 — See: www.biologicaldiversity.org/news/press_releases/2019/pesticides-02-01-2019.php#.XFVHo5onTAF. twitter; also see: www.amazon.in/BIODIVERSITY-AGROECOLOGY-REGENERATIVE-ORGANIC-AGRICULTURE/dp/8193887204

8 — See: www.navdanyainternational.it/en/publications-navdanya-international/other-publications-navdanya/444-seeds-of-hope-seeds-of-resilience; also see: www.grain.org/article/entries/4357-food-and-climate-change-the-forgotten-link

Terra Nullius (the empty land, ready for occupation regardless of the presence of indigenous peoples) replaced Terra Madre (Mother Earth).

Therefore the movement for the Rights of the Mother Earth⁹ is important for us. This movement stands for an ecological transformation which is also correcting historic wrongs which have led both to the violence against nature and violence against people of diverse cultures.

The illusion of a separation of humanity from nature is part of the five century process of colonization and then the two centuries of industrialization.

The colonization transformed the biodiversity and cultural diversity of the earth into hierarchies of superior races and religions dominating over “inferior creatures” “primitive cultures” and “barbarians” which had to be civilized or exterminated. The fossil fuel age deepened the separation of humans from nature through the mechanistic paradigm which declared nature as dead raw material, eclipsing the ecological consciousness of nature as living, as self organized complexity in harmony and diversity, as creative and intelligent and as a source of all needs of all beings.

This philosophy goes back to Francis Bacon, called the father of modern science, who said that science and the inventions that result do not “*merely exert a gentle guidance over nature’s course; they have the power to conquer and subdue her, to shake her to her foundations.*”¹⁰

Robert Boyle, the famous 17th-century chemist and a governor of New England, was clear that he wanted to rid native people of their ideas about nature. He attacked their perception of nature “as a kind of goddess” and argued that “*the veneration, wherewith men are imbued for what they call nature, has been a discouraging impediment to the empire of man over the inferior creatures of God.*”¹¹

The death-of-nature idea allows a war to be unleashed against the Earth. After all, if the Earth is merely a dead matter, then nothing is being killed.

9 — www.rightsofmotherearth.com

10 — Francis Bacon in explaining his new experimental method, cited in: J. Spedding, et. al (eds), *The works of Francis Bacon* (Reprinted), Stuttgart F.F. Verlag, 1963, Vol. V, p. 506

11 — Cited in: Victor Ferkiss, *Nature, Technology and the Cultural Roots of the Current Environmental Crisis*, New York, University Press, 1993, page 40

As the philosopher and historian Carolyn Merchant points out, this shift of perspective—from nature as a living, nurturing mother to inert, dead, and manipulable matter—was well suited to the activities that would lead to capitalism. The domination images created by Bacon and other leaders of the scientific revolution replaced those of the nurturing Earth, removing a cultural constraint on the exploitation of nature. “*One does not readily slay a mother, dig into her entrails for gold, or mutilate her body,*”¹² Merchant wrote.

Rights for Seeds

The Rights for Seeds have emerged as central to ecological integrity and the integrity of creation in our times of “Bioimperialism” – when corporations are trying to establish an empire over life, through owing life itself through patents, as if seeds and life are a corporate “invention”.

Three decades ago, Biotechnology and Genetic Engineering became the Basis of Patents on Seeds, and Patents on Life. This was the reason I started Navdanya – the Seed Freedom Movement¹³ – in 1987, so that the Seeds would be able to Evolve in Freedom and Diversity. Farmers could be free to have access to this diversity, and to save and exchange their seed. Seed would be protected in the Commons, and not be privatized through Patents and Intellectual Property Rights.

India is a land rich in Biodiversity. Over 10000 years Indian farmers have used their brilliance and indigenous knowledge to domesticate and evolve thousands of crops including 200,000 rice varieties, 1500 wheat varieties, 1500 banana varieties and mango varieties, hundreds of species of dals and oilseeds, diverse millets and pseudo cereals, vegetables and spices of every kind.

This brilliance in breeding was abruptly stopped when the Green Revolution was imposed on us in the 1960’s by the chemical industry with its roots in the war. As in the colonisation of the past, our intelligence in seed breeding and agriculture was denied, our seeds were called “primitive” and displaced. A mechanical “intelligence” of industrial

12 — See the section „The Nature of Mothering“ where this quote is given, in: Catherine M. Roach, *Mother/Nature: Popular Culture and Environmental Ethics*, Indiana University Press, 2003, page 58ff; on similar lines of thought see: Vandana Shiva in: www.yesmagazine.org/issues/what-would-nature-do/vandana-shiva-everything-i-need-to-know-i-learned-in-the-forest

13 — See: <https://seedfreedom.info>

breeding for uniformity, for external inputs was imposed. Instead of continuing to evolve diverse varieties of diverse species, our agriculture and our diet was reduced to chemically grown rice and wheat.

Life Forms – forms of life – plants and seeds are all evolving, self-organized, sovereign beings. They have intrinsic worth, value and standing.

Life is self-organized complexity in constant evolution, interaction and change. Scientists like Maturana and Varela¹⁴ identified Living Systems as Autopoietic Systems¹⁵ – organized from within. Machines on the other hand, are Allopoietic Systems – assembled and controlled externally. Seed, like Nature and Humanity (Autopoietic Systems), are being redefined as Allopoietic by Global Corporate greed. One of the most dramatic ontological shifts in our times is this redefinition of living organisms, especially Seeds, as Machines – Machines invented by Corporations.

Instead seeds are the very basis of agriculture, the means of production and the basis of farmers' livelihoods. The farmers rights to seed is closely connected, even identical with their right to life. Therefore in the case of farmers the right to seed is the basis of the right to life.

The knowledge we need for breeding, selecting, evolving seed and growing food is knowledge of biodiversity and living seed, of the living soil and the Soil Food Web (i.e. the interaction between different species in the agro eco system, and of different seasons). Farmers have been the experts in all fields, as have ecological scientists who study the evolution of microorganisms, plants and animals, the ecological web and the soil food web. This complex knowledge of interacting, self-organizing, self-maintaining, self-renewing and self-evolving systems, which farmers have evolved, is now being confirmed through the latest in the science of ecology. At the agricultural systems level, agroecology is the truly scientific approach to food production. At the level of organisms, epigenetics and the new knowledge, that cells are in constant communication with each other, this new understanding is leading to the emergence of a new paradigm of life as communication and intelligence. Living systems definitely are not dead matter – just inert material, to be assembled, and modular, like a machine.

14 – See: John Mingers, The Cognitive theories of Maturana and Varela, in: Systems Practice, Vol. 4, No. 4, 1991, poage 319ff, in: <https://cepa.info/fulltexts/2253.pdf>

15 – The term autopoiesis refers to a system capable of reproducing and maintaining itself. The term was introduced in 1972 by Chilean biologists Humberto Maturana and Francisco Varela to define the self-maintaining chemistry of living cells.

Farmers have used available land and water and kept humanity nourished for millennia, constantly evolving with food tastier and with more nourishing varieties. Their success lies in their understanding of the earth, nature and her ecosystems, human beings, and all other species as autopoietic systems. It is an understanding that has allowed us to thrive. Farmers see the seed as autopoietic, just as they see themselves and nature as autopoietic.

The rights of seeds include both the rights of seed and biodiversity to evolve and flourish. It also involves the rights of farmers to have knowledge of the seed and to save and share seeds in their rich diversity and integrity.

The biodiversity of seeds is the basis of sustainable livelihoods and food sovereignty of farmers and of food and nutritional security for society and the earth family, including the insects and pollinations that thrive on the biodiversity of plants.

50 years of chemical, industrial breeding for uniformity has contributed to 4 emergencies:

- First there is a growing monopoly on seeds. The chemical giants Monsanto Bayer, Syngenta ChemChina, Dow Dupont have now emerged as a seed cartel pushing GMO technologies which have clearly failed.
- The second emergency is the epidemic of farmers suicides due to debt for costly seeds and chemicals. No free and sovereign country should allow 300,000 farmers suicides.¹⁶
- The third is the malnutrition and hunger crisis resulting from monocultures which displaced our pulses, oilseeds and millets. The rice and wheat produced is nutritionally empty, so we have an epidemic of malnutrition and micronutrient and trace element deficiencies and at the same time new food allergies have emerged such as gluten intolerance.
- The fourth is the ecological crisis of climate change, erosion of our rich diversity, desertification of our soils and severe water crisis. Globally chemical farming contributes to 50% of the greenhouse gas emissions. Even the stubble burning is an externality of the Green Revolution.¹⁷

16 — It is estimated that 300000 farmers and farm workers killed themselves in India since 1995 as a result of climate change and growing despair in the Indian agricultural sector. See: www.theguardian.com/environment/2017/jul/31/suicides-of-nearly-60000-indian-farmers-linked-to-climate-change-study-claims

17 — See: www.timesnownews.com/mirror-now/in-focus/article/air-pollution-from-stubble-burning-costing-india-usd-30-billion-annually-study/376149

Corporations breed seeds for responding to their chemicals. Chemicals need uniformity of monocultures. Monocultures are more vulnerable to the climate change to which industrial farming makes a significant contribution. And toxic chemicals are the primary reason for extinction of species, especially insects. Scientists have warned that unless we change our ways of producing food, insects as a whole will go down the path of extinction in a few decades. Pollinators provide one third of the food we eat. We have to learn that rights of other species are non-separable from human rights.

Seed and Life are not a Corporate Invention

Life is not a corporate invention, Patents on seeds are.

On the basis of this false construct, attempts have been made to create a new property in life as intellectual property, an issue that I have addressed intellectually, scientifically, politically for the past 3 decades.

Having moved one or two genes through a gene gun or an infection with a plant cancer, corporations, and their owners, are claiming “creation” and “invention” of seeds and lifeforms, and property rights to future generations of seeds.

The world view of control and ownership is creating a false and fictitious ontology.

Seeds and lifeforms are falsely viewed as corporate inventions and creations, therefore patentable. As a consequence of this fictitious ontology, there is an attempt to criminalize real people for saving real seeds.

How did the corporations create these fictions which rule us, and which have already had disastrous impacts on the biodiversity of the planet? How did we allow distorted views to inform our understanding of farmers, whose time immemorial rights to save and exchange seeds are currently being criminalized under patent law and new seed laws? And how can we reclaim the freedom of seeds and biodiversity as well as our own freedom as growers and eaters?

The fiction of seed and life as inventions begins with the first patent on life granted to General Electric in 1980. Anand Chakravarty who worked for General Electric had mixed genes from 4 bacteria. When asked if he had created something new he said he had merely shuffled genes around. Gene shufflers are not inventors or creators of life, just as furniture movers do not become architects of a house, or its owners.

Life is life because it makes itself. It is not a manufacture. Life is not an invention. It is not engineered by someone who puts it together piece by piece. A seed instead is an auto-poetic system, constantly self organizing, interacting with the soil, the sun, the water, the farmer, evolving and adapting to changing contexts. To claim that by adding one gene a corporation “creates” the seed, and all future generations which are to follow from this alteration, is an ontological flaw, a scientific outrage, an ethical violation.

Patents on Seeds therefore are a Corporate Concoction imposed unscientifically, illegitimately, unethically and undemocratically onto the world. The corporate influence on Patent Law began with the drafting of the Trade Related Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) Agreement of the World Trade Organization (WTO). James Enyart of Monsanto had said that the Intellectual Property Committee (IPC) of the multilateral corporations drafted the TRIPs:

“Once created, the first task of the IPC was to repeat the missionary work we did in the US in the early days, this time with the industrial associations of Europe and Japan to convince them that a code was possible....Besides selling our concepts at home, we went to Geneva where [we] presented [our] document to the staff of the GATT Secretariat. We also took the opportunity to present it to the Geneva based representatives of a large number of countries... What I have described to you is absolutely unprecedented in GATT. Industry has identified a major problem for international trade. It crafted a solution, reduced it to a concrete proposal and sold it to our own and other governments... The industries and traders of world commerce have played simultaneously the role of patients, the diagnosticians and the prescribing physicians.”¹⁸

In defining Seed as their Creation and Invention, Corporations like Monsanto shaped the Global Intellectual Property and Patent Laws, so that they could Prevent Farmers from Seed Saving and Sharing. This is how the Trade Related Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPs) Agreement of the World Trade Organization was invented. Article 27.3(b) of the TRIPs Agreement states:

“Parties may exclude from patentability plants and animals other than micro-organisms, and essentially biological processes for the production of plants or animals other than non-biological and micro-biological processes. However, parties shall provide for the protection of plant varieties either by patents or by an effective sui generis system or by any combination thereof.”¹⁹

Again, this protection on plant varieties is precisely what prohibits the free exchange of seeds between farmers, threatening their subsistence and ability to save and exchange seeds amongst one another.

18 — Quoted in: Vandana Shiva (April 25, 2017), in: <https://medium.com/@drvandanashiva/art-3-j-of-indias-patent-law-central-to-our-national-sovereignty-and-national-interest-772f687b46f6>; also in: Vandana Shiva, *Bio Piracy – The Plunder of Nature and Knowledge*, South End Press, 1999, page 85-86; see also: Ananda Mohan Bhattaraj, *Protection of Himalayan Biodiversity. International Environmental Law and a Regional Legal Framework*, Sage Publication 2010, page 262

19 — See: <https://medium.com/@drvandanashiva/seeds-biodiversity-and-iprs-845187d00951>

Because the Patents on Life Clause in TRIPS – Art 27.3(b) was such a drastic leap in jurisprudence, ethics, and concepts of what an Invention is, Members of WTO added a Sentence requiring a Mandatory Review of the Clause 4 years after the coming into force of The Agreement, i.e. in 1999.

India in its submission had stated

“Clearly, there is a case for re-examining the need to grant patents on lifeforms anywhere in the world. Until such systems are in place, it may be advisable to:- (a) exclude patents on all lifeforms.”

The African group stated:

The African Group maintains its reservations about patenting any life forms as explained on previous occasions by the Group and several other delegations. In this regard, the Group proposes that Article 27.3(b) be revised to prohibit patents on plants, animals, micro-organisms, essentially biological processes for the production of plants or animals, and non-biological and microbiological processes for the production of plants or animals. For plant varieties to be protected under the TRIPS Agreement, the protection must clearly, and not just implicitly or by way of exception, strike a good balance with the interests of the community as a whole and protect farmers’ rights and traditional knowledge, and ensure the preservation of biological diversity.²⁰

This Mandatory Review has been Subverted by the United States within the WTO: this Long Overdue Review must be taken up to reverse Patents on Life and Patents on Seed. Instead of trying to change India’s Laws, the United States should function as a Member of the International Community and not Undermine International Treaty Obligations, especially it’s own.

²⁰ — Quoted in: ICTSD/UNCTAD: Resource Book on TRIPS and Development, Cambridge University Press, 2005, page 396; also in: Vandana Shiva: Sovereignty. Food Security. Women in the Vanguard of the Fight against GMO and Corporate Agriculture. North Atlantic Books 2016.

Rights for Life, Rights of Nature

When we see nature as being alive and see ourselves as co-creating with her as human beings, we recognize her agency and her rights. That is why it is significant that Ecuador has recognized the “rights of nature” in its constitution.

After the failure of the Copenhagen Summit, Bolivia initiated drafting of The Universal Declaration of the Rights of Mother Earth.²¹

The third chapter of the national Bolivian law on the “Law of Mother Earth,” (Ley de Derechos de La Madre Tierra) gives legal status to Mother Earth, stating in no uncertain terms, that: “Mother Earth and all its components, including human communities, are entitled to the inherent rights recognized in this law.”

In Article 7 the following rights of Mother Earth are spelled out:

1. “To life: The right to maintain the integrity of living systems and natural processes that sustain them, and capacities and conditions for regeneration.
2. To the diversity of life: It is the right to preservation of differentiation and variety of beings that make up Mother Earth, without being genetically altered or structurally modified in an artificial way, so that their existence, functioning, or future potential would be threatened.
3. To water: The right to preserve the functionality of the water cycle, its existence in the quantity and quality needed to sustain living systems, and its protection from pollution for the reproduction of the life of Mother Earth and all its components.
4. To clean air: The right to preserve the quality and composition of air for sustaining living systems and its protection from pollution, for the reproduction of the life of Mother Earth and all its components.
5. To equilibrium: The right to maintenance or restoration of the interrelationship, interdependence, complementarity, and functionality of the components of Mother Earth in a balanced way for the continuation of their cycles and reproduction of their vital processes.
6. To restoration: The right to timely and effective restoration of living systems affected by human activities directly or indirectly.

21 — See: <http://therightsofnature.org/universal-declaration/>

7. To pollution-free living: The right to the preservation of any of Mother Earth's components from contamination, as well as toxic and radioactive waste generated by human activities."²²

In April 2011, the United Nations General Assembly—inspired by the constitution of Ecuador and the Universal Declaration of the Rights of Mother Earth initiated by Bolivia—organized a conference on harmony with nature as part of Earth Day celebrations. Much of the discussion centered on ways to transform systems based on the domination of people over nature, men over women, and rich over poor into new systems based on partnership.

The U.N. secretary general's report, "Harmony with Nature,"²³ issued in conjunction with the conference, elaborates on the importance of reconnecting with nature:

“Ultimately, environmentally destructive behavior is the result of a failure to recognize that human beings are an inseparable part of nature and that we cannot damage it without severely damaging ourselves.”

Separatism is indeed at the root of disharmony with nature and violence against nature and people. Apartheid means separateness. The world joined the anti-apartheid movement to end the violent separation of people on the basis of color. Apartheid in South Africa was put behind us. Today, we need to overcome the wider and deeper apartheid—an eco-apartheid based on the illusion of separateness of humans from nature in our minds and lives.

Human Rights flow from Rights of Mother Earth

The movement for the Recognition of the Rights of Mother Earth is a movement against forgetting. It is a movement to remember that humans are part of nature, we are members of the Earth Family, *Vasudhaiva Kutumbkam*. We are not separate from nature. We are not masters, conquerors, owners of the earth. And as I have repeatedly stressed in my work on Biodiversity, Seed Freedom and No Patents on Life, we are definitely not “inventors” of life and creators of creation as Monsanto has been trying to claim for three decades.

22 — Bolivia's “Law of Mother Earth” gives rights to planet earth, in: <https://evoxtelevision.com/blog/bolivia-law-mother-earth-gives-rights-planet>

23 — <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/2007harmony.pdf>

In forgetting that we are part of nature, we have also forgotten that – because we are part of nature and our lives depend on Mother Earth – Human Rights are derived from the Rights of Mother Earth. As members of the earth family we have natural rights that flow from being part of nature.

Human rights to life, to food and water and to air and space which we share with other beings flow from Nature's Rights. The recognition of Nature's Rights is simultaneously recognition of human rights.²⁴ The defense of nature's rights is simultaneously a defense of human rights and social justice.

As Gandhi said, the Earth provides enough for everyone's needs, but not for a few people's greed. Forgetting nature's rights and our failure to protect the earth and defend her rights has brought us to the existential emergency we face today as a species.

The industrial mechanistic paradigm of separation did not merely deny nature's rights, giving a license to ecological destruction of nature. It has also been used to deny us our human rights. When the oil industry destroys forests, seas and water, and the atmosphere, as we have witnessed with Chevron in Ecuador, BP in the Gulf of Mexico, The Delta Access Pipeline through Standing Rock Indian Reservation, and climate disasters everywhere, it is not just the rights of nature that are violated, but human rights are also violated. If water, the land, the atmosphere are polluted we are denied our rights to food and water. The human right to life and ecological conditions that make life possible are denied.

When we recognize the rights of rivers to flow free and clean, the rights of the land to its integrity and sovereignty, the rights of biodiversity and seed to evolve in diversity and freedom, the rights of atmosphere and climate system to the self regulatory processes of Gaia's climate systems, we are also ensuring that we have clean water to drink, nutritious food to eat, clean air to breathe, and a stable climate system. In other

24 — See also: David R. Boyed: *The Rights of Nature. A Legal Revolution that could save the World.* ECW Press, Toronto 2017

words, our rights are only protected when the earth's ecological integrity is protected as well.

The toxicity of greed, oil and poisons has brought us to an existential emergency. At the end of 2018, young people from across the world circulated a video saying “All I want for Christmas is a Future” because the future itself is under threat with the ecological destruction of the planet. The Rights of Nature are therefore also rights of future generations.

According to an ancient Indian text, the Ishopanishad:

“a selfish man over utilizing the resources of nature to satisfy his own ever-increasing needs is nothing but a thief, because using resources beyond one's need would result in the utilization of resources over which others have a right”.

This relationship between restraint in resource use and social justice was also the core element of Mahatma Gandhi's political philosophy. In his words he had stated:

“the Earth provides enough for everyone's need, but not for everyone's greed”.

To create the possibility and potential of a future we need a massive paradigm and world-view shift. This shift is gradually being seen through the emergence of “Rights of Nature”. After civil, political, economic and social rights have been recognized, we are now moving towards more expansive rights: the rights of nature. The emergence of these rights lends a fresh momentum to the idea of the commons and pushes us towards a deeper reflection on the relationship between nature, indigenous knowledge and the commons.

The future demands that our concepts of “political” “economic” “social” and “human” rights be taken out of their silos, competing with each other, creating conflicts between humans and humans and other species. We are human because we are part of nature. “Human” is derived from “humus” the Latin word for soil. Human Rights and social justice are rooted in our being part of the Earth Family, *Vasudhaiva Kutumbukam*. On the one hand, Earth Citizenship creates responsibilities and our duty to care for the earth and to share what we conserve and co-create with the Earth as commons – our food, our water, our livelihoods, our sustenance, the air, the atmosphere, the climate system. On the other

hand our fundamental human rights flow from Earth Citizenship, from our biological and ecological being, which we share with all other beings.

The Rights of Nature and Rights of Life provide a new solidarity with all life. It is this solidarity that gives us the power to resist brutal violence and injustice to the earth and people. It will allow humanity to find the potential for compassion, courage, cooperation and creativity to make the change that will make our common future possible as one humanity sharing one planet.

The catastrophe we face is rooted in blindness to the ecological and ethical limits set by the earth, and the limits set by social justice and human rights. We are forgetting that we are one humanity on one planet. There is no planet B. This is where we will live or go extinct as a species, with the millions that have been driven to extinction by the violence and carelessness of the brute force misleadingly called the economy. Both terms of “Economy” like “Ecology” are derived from “oikos”, our home, the earth. An economy that destroys our home is no longer economy. It is a war against the planet, the people, and our future.

To make peace among people we need to make peace with the Earth.

To defend the human rights of people, we need to recognize the rights of Mother Earth. We need to live through our creativity and her generosity to reduce our ecological footprint while expanding our planetary consciousness of being one Earth Family, with one common home. This is the call for Earth Democracy. This is our highest ethical duty as Earth citizens.²⁵

25 — For further reading also see: Vandana Shiva: *Staying Alive. Women, Ecology and Development*. North Atlantic Books 2016; Vandana Shiva: *The Corporate War on Nature and Culture*, NATRAJ PUBLISHERS, 2018; The Proposed Proposed Universal Declaration of the Rights of Mother Earth from 2010 is reprinted in the Appendix III.

Chapter 19

Rethinking Development – Conceptual Pre-Suppositions for the Pacific We Want

Emele Duituturaga¹

Introduction

Climate Change presents the single greatest threat to the livelihood, security and wellbeing of Pacific peoples.²

The fact is the Pacific island nations are on the frontline of the impacts of climate change and suffering from what is a climate crisis. Already, low lying coastal and riverbank communities are having to be relocated due to rising sea levels, landslides are a common occurrence due to unprecedented torrential rain, disastrous and extreme storms and weather patterns, regular volcanic eruptions, damaging floods, destructive tropical cyclones have become our new norm.

While the world is still negotiating scientific predictions and commitments to reduce carbon emissions, Pacific peoples are bearing the daily brunt of this climate crisis.

We ask – where, just where is the justice, that those of us who are least responsible, suffer the greatest brunt? What has become of the pristine beauty and peaceful pacific we once knew? Why is this happening?

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² — 49th Pacific Islands Leaders Meeting Communique, see: www.forumsec.org/forty-ninth-pacific-islands-forum-nauru-3rd-6th-september-2018

Leading the Pacific region's largest umbrella NGO³ has been undergirded by the quest for answers to these questions. Personally and professionally, it became a journey of rethinking, praxis of action and reflection, debunking the myth that modernisation and westernisation is progress for all. Realising that development has become synonymous with neoliberal capitalism and the resultant problems of rising poverty and inequality, environmental exploitation and degradation, human rights violations and cultural annihilation, we started to search, not just for an alternative development paradigm, but for an alternative paradigm of life altogether.

The Pacific region is viewed differently by different interests and has become contested with different paradigms. Portuguese navigator Ferdinand Magellan named the Pacific Ocean in the 16th Century. Apparently, after braving perilous seas, his small fleet entered an unfamiliar ocean in November 1520. He called this body of water *pacific*, due to the calmness of the water at the time (*'pacific'* means peaceful). Indeed, peoples of the Pacific are and have been custodians of the largest, relatively peaceful and abundant ocean, with pristine beauty and rich and diverse cultures for thousands of years, but colonial legacy has shaped what we have become.

Modernisation and globalisation have brought "development" and opportunities to our shores but they have also exposed our vulnerability as small island developing states.

Development as we have known it, has threatened our family and community bonds and values, weakened our ability to live off the land and sea, and upset our harmony with the natural environment.

With fast pace changing times, the somewhat peaceful Pacific has emerged as a battleground for competing values strung with contested development paradigms. This has also sounded a war cry that we Pacific Islanders must stand strong, now more than ever before, to preserve our region, our heritage and the best aspects of our traditions, to enhance them for the benefit of our future generations.

It is time to rethink again, what development should be about, and to envision and reshape the Pacific that we want.

3 — PIANGO is an umbrella body of national umbrella organisations in the 24 Pacific Island countries and territories which was established in 1991 to represent and coordinate collective action on issues of common concern to Pacific NGOs. See also: www.piango.org.

This chapter recollects various efforts by Pacific civil society in ‘Rethinking Development’ coupled with a ‘Reshaping’ agenda to re-assert a renewed Pacific identity and strengthen solidarity in contesting the neoliberal development paradigm focused on insatiable growth at the expense of people and planet. The paper is based on our lived experiences as Pacific peoples and points to the eminent threat of climate change as sounding the alarm to urgently critique the development pathway being followed by Pacific island nations.

In this search of an alternative paradigm, we have rediscovered the fundamental values of family, life, relationships, environment, spirituality, caring and sharing as well as reciprocity as key pillars of an emerging new paradigm of life.

With almost a decade of thought leadership by Pacific civil society, it is pleasing to note that Pacific governments have more recently collectively asserted a *Blue Pacific* narrative which frames a self-determining approach to the region’s development trajectory.

Rethinking Oceania

Pacific scholars have written and articulated various rethinking approaches and paradigms that frame current thinking. Renowned Pacific scholar Epeli Hauofa, talked of the ‘*sea of islands*’ in 1993. He stated there is a gulf of difference between viewing the Pacific as ‘islands in a far sea’ and as ‘a sea of islands’. The first emphasises dry surfaces in a vast ocean... The second is a more holistic perspective in which things are seen in the totality of their relationships... It was continental men, Europeans and Americans, who drew imaginary lines across the sea, making the colonial boundaries that, for the first time, confined ocean peoples to tiny spaces. These are the boundaries that today define the island states and territories of the Pacific.⁴ “Towards a new Oceania” by Albert Wendt⁵, points out the importance of rooting oneself in one’s cultural traditions, as they are an important source of self-confidence, pride, and wisdom. He is highly critical of the colonial institutions of school and church that were based on the colonizer’s racist assumptions of superiority. These two institutions “undermined our confidence and self-respect, and made many of us ashamed of our

4 — Epeli Hau’ofa *Our Sea of Islands*, University of the South Pacific 1993, see in: <https://savageminds.org/wp-content/image-upload/our-sea-of-islands-epeli-hauofa.pdf>

5 — Albert Wendt, *Towards a New Oceania*, University of Wollongong, 1993, see in: <https://ethnc3990.files.wordpress.com/2014/12/wendt-toward-a-new-oceania.pdf>

cultures, transforming many of us into Uncle Toms and revenants,' inducing in us the feeling that only the foreign is right or proper or worthwhile" However, he raises that "our quest should not be for a revival of our past cultures but for the creation of new cultures which are free of the taint of colonialism and based firmly on our own pasts."⁶

In 2001 – the *Re-thinking Pacific Education Initiative for and by Pacific Peoples* was initiated and led by a group of Pacific educational leaders,

namely Professor Konai Helu Thaman from USP, Tonga's Minister for Education, Women and Culture, Honourable Dr. Ana MauTaufe'ulungakai and Associate Professor, Kabini Sanga from the University of Victoria in New Zealand. This was planned as a major initiative to rethink education in the Pacific.⁷ At the 2011 Pacific regional symposium⁸, Pacific educational leaders, scholars, leaders and emerging leaders reflected on the past decade of re-thinking as well as envision the future of Pacific education and leadership. They highlighted the need for Pacific people to critically rethink various developments in Pacific education, specifically formal education.

In 2010, the Pacific Conference of Churches (PCC) paper titled *Rethinking Oceania* urged Pacific Leaders to envisage a new form of regionalism and giving legitimacy to the notion of self-determination that the course of our Pacific history will be one chartered by our people and their descendants.⁹ The paper expressed the concerns of the Churches in Oceania with respect to how the people of Oceania themselves ought to live and develop, not as envisaged by those living outside the region.

It proposed a developmental model premised on sufficiency and solidarity, inclusiveness and participation – one that is no longer fuelled by the “race to the bottom” and the “endless growth” rational for development.

6 – Albert Wendt, *Towards a New Oceania*, University of Wollongong, 1993, p. 648; see also: <https://scholarblogs.emory.edu/postcolonialstudies/2014/06/21/wendt-albert/>

7 – See also: Unaisi Nabobo-baba, *Transformations from within: Rethinking Pacific Education Initiative. The development of a movement for social justice and equity*, *The International Education Journal: Comparative Perspectives*, 2012, 11(2), 82-97, in: <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1017700.pdf>

8 – See: www.usp.ac.fj/news/story.php?id=927#.WX1SNVUjHIU

9 – PCC (2010) *Rethinking Oceania – Towards sufficiency and Solidarity, Inclusiveness and participation*. See also in: <http://actnowpng.org/sites/default/files/Re-thinking%20Oceania%20pc.pdf>

The neo-liberal ethics is challenged as being directly opposite to the ideal value of sufficiency, driving the consumerist idea of “more and more” with the question posed on “when is enough, enough?”. Climate change and its impacts, fuelled by a view of development that pays no regard to the health and wellbeing of both Pacific human economy and natural ecology, demonstrates the unsustainable neo-liberal economic model adopted. The paper proposed culture and social development as key components of a new form of regionalism with the key pillars of family, life, relationships, environment, spirituality and traditional economy.

A gathering of Pacific civil society leaders in 2012¹⁰ reaffirmed the need to rethink development in the Pacific Islands faced with a changing regional context and emergent challenges: climate change being a trigger for rethinking. This was about reviewing what is considered the *Pacific Way*¹¹, rethinking the role and contribution of civil society as development actors in their own right¹², rethinking regionalism in light of the Pacific Plan Review commissioned by Pacific Islands Forum Leaders,¹³ and the establishment of a new regional organisation – the Pacific Islands Development Forum¹⁴, spearheaded by Fiji following their suspension from the Pacific Islands forum in 2006. Pacific civil society leaders assessed that the Pacific region had become highly contested for its abundance of natural resources and strategic military positioning and there was a need to think critically about regionalism being promoted by super powers who were now key players in the geopolitics of the Pacific.

Defining the Pacific We Want

Around the same time, other Pacific civil society actors were demanding a “future we want”. In May 2012, leading up to the June Rio +20 United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, Pacific CSOs issued a statement titled *The future we Demand*¹⁵ which called upon UN member states for strong political leadership to avert the imminent disaster to our planet by urgently changing dominant development and political mind-sets to provide real and transformative solutions to the threat of climate change.

10 — A project meeting convened by PIANGO

11 — The Pacific Way derived its name from a word coined by Fiji’s former statesman, and Paramount Chief, Ratu Sir Kamisese Mara to describe the region’s ceremonial and revered form of negotiations and dialogue.

12 — The Accra Agenda for Action, 2008, recognized that civil society organizations are “independent development actors in their own right.

13 — The Pacific Plan underwent a major review in 2013. See: www.forumsec.org/.../pacific-plan-review-2013-message-from-sir-mekere-morauta.html? Following the review, Forum Leaders agreed to recast the Plan as the Framework for Pacific regionalism, See: www.google.com/?ion=1&espv=2#q=pacific+plan+review

14 — Pacific Islands Development Forum , see: <http://pacificidf.org>; See also: <http://pacificidf.org/what-is-pidf>

15 — See: <http://dawnnet.org/publication/rio20-the-future-we-demand/>

In November 2013, the second regional consultation for Bread for the World Partners in the Pacific involving thirty-one Pacific CSO partner representatives met in Papua New Guinea to further develop an analysis of the root causes of problems faced in the Pacific. In the conference report titled *A new voyage: Pacific people explore the Future they want*, Pacific CSOs deepened the critique of the dominant model of development with a call to rethink the model of development, based on their experiences.¹⁶

The following year, in September 2014, Pacific CSOs met in Madang, Papua New Guinea at what was known as the *Wansolwara Dance Gathering* and the launch of the Wansolwara movement, for a week-long celebration of solidarity, shared commitment of a movement to protect our Wansolwara, our Mona Nui, our Oceania, the liquid continent to be free and self-determining.¹⁷ Participants shared their stories and pledged support by weaving art, music, poetry, dance discussions, expressing support for West Papua struggle for human rights and self-determination. This was the culmination of an earlier gathering in Nadave, Fiji to plan for the Madang gathering. A direct quote from Arnie Saiki's report¹⁸ reads: "*In Nadave we spoke about how the (Alter)native is the empire in its many faces and forms. The (Alter) native is faceless yet seen in the sorrowful eyes and scars of struggles of our people for freedom, for honour and dignity, and for legitimacy; it smiles yet without warmth; it embraces yet without compassion; it sings yet without harmony of voices. It suppresses, at times by brute force as had happened in the days of our grandparents and still today to some of us, but most times by softly killing our people through charming, enchanting and charismatic words and by its crafty and uncompromising logical and judicial frameworks. It uses our mother's womb, our language, our symbols and traditions to give birth and reproduce itself. It forces us to re-dream our dreams in its way.*"

The Pacific Island Association of NGOs (PIANGO), a partner of Bread for the World, became heavily engaged from 2013 to 2015 in the lead up to the new development agenda to be adopted by the UN following the expiry of the Millennium Development Goals. The pursuit of "*The world we want*" as a theme for the Post 2015 Development agenda¹⁹ made us think specifically of "the Pacific we want".

We convinced ourselves that the Pacific we want will not be decided in New York, Washington or Beijing for that matter. It will be decided here in the Pacific by Pacific peoples.

16 — Bread for the World, (2011). *A new voyage: Pacific people explore the Future they want*. See: www.brot-fuer-die-welt.de/fileadmin/mediapool/2_Downloads/Fachinformationen/Dialog/Dialog_11_a_new_voyage.pdf

17 — Quoted from the report of the First Landing Meeting prepared by Arnie Saiki.

18 — *ibid*

19 — The World We Want 2015 was launched as a campaign in 2012: www.beyond2015.org/world-we-want-2015-web-platform

This begun the quest for the “Pacific we want” and sparked PIANGO’s internal rethinking of its own *raison d’etat*, structures and *modus operandi* and looking to secure genuine and durable partnerships within the architecture of a renewed Pacific regionalism. The issues of identity, unity and solidarity pursued by the PIANGO network in its own journey of re-emergence, had catapulted us to rethink what we are on about as a civil society organisation. We began to rethink our particular contribution to development in the Pacific region and how civil society would grow from strength to strength until the vision of the Pacific we want is fully realised.

PIANGO’s rethinking and reshaping initiative has focussed on: (a) Creating space for a structured process of rethinking; (b) reflecting and reasserting *the Pacific we want*; (c) Linking conversations and listening to what people are saying and feeling the pulse and heart-beat of Pacific people; (d) framing and reshaping through civil society advocacy, next generation leadership development, regional architecture, think tank, media; convening multi-stakeholder roundtable discussions with Church, Government, CSO, traditional, women, youth leaders; and (d) taking stock of Pacific expertise, local culture, local epistemology and local passion; and bringing together practitioners and academics (*Pracademia*).

An Alternative Paradigm

In 2014, as a member of the Bread for the World Global Reference Group,²⁰ I was able to contribute our Pacific experience to identifying the need for an alternative paradigm as one of the key challenges facing civil society. Discussing global changes in context, the Group agreed unanimously that

the current, predominant paradigm which is shaping development efforts, is redundant. That this paradigm’s foundation is based on a neo-liberal thinking and the belief in a continuous economic growth. Since the ecological limits of the world have already been reached a long time back, it appears necessary to reassess the validity of such a paradigm.

²⁰ — An appointed group of Partner representatives that meets annually as a Think Tank with the Executives of Bread for the World on strategic positioning and partnerships. See: www.brot-fuer-die-welt.de/fileadmin/mediapool/2_Downloads/Ueber-uns/BfdW_JB_2014_E.pdf

This is evidenced by the fact that while poverty may decrease in some parts of the world, inequalities are rising. The Group encouraged Bread for the World to engage in conversations about

a new paradigm to eventually replace the growth driven paradigm to focus on life itself with its foundations to be highly ethical, built around four ethical elements: 1) ethics of nature (seeing nature as an equal partner); 2) ethics of caring (for people) and sharing; 3) ethics of commons (resources); 4) ethics of human rights beyond legal frameworks.²¹

In further pursuit of the alternative paradigm, in June, 2018 PIANGO in partnership with the Pacific Theological College, Fiji National University and the Oceania Centre for Arts, Culture and Pacific Studies of the University of the South Pacific convened the Inaugural Pacific Philosophy Conference²² in Suva, Fiji to explore the '*Vuku ni Pasifika*' – '*Wisdom of the Pacific Indigenous Relational Philosophies*'. These Partners have been leading academic institutions in the region in reinvigorating Pacific indigenous philosophies and wisdom retrieved from the womb of Pacific relational cultures and faith traditions to assist not only in the search for holistic and inclusive education, but also in reframing development paradigms and frameworks to address local and regional issues. The conference was part of PIANGO's work under its Bread for the World support on developing ideas on an alternative paradigm. The conference brought together elders as well as custodians of Pacific wisdom and knowledge, culture, dances, art, and navigation to critically dialogue and offer philosophical underpinnings to ground and assist in 'Reshaping the Pacific we want' effort by PIANGO.

The conference looked into our own Pacific indigenous wisdom, our eco-relational philosophies of life that underpin our thinking, worldviews, values, language, oratories, dances, navigations, and relationships with other people, land, ocean as well as our past history and ancestors. These relational philosophies are important in shaping and moulding not only the thinking, but also the development of frameworks, paradigms, policies, models, and sustainable ways of life in the Pacific. They are critical to the rethinking and decolonisation agenda to achieve the 'Pacific we want'.

21 — Bread for the World Global Reference Group discussions. See the complete document of the Global Reference Group in the Appendix of this publication

22 — See: www.piango.org/our-news-events/photo-gallery/inaugural-pacific-philosophy-conference-june2018-suva/; also see: <https://en-gb.facebook.com/pg/IPPC2018/posts/>

To achieve the reshaping of the Pacific we want, the method and approach of this conference appealed to the relational wisdom from our Pacific itulagi (itu is ‘side’ and lagi is ‘heavens’): our ‘side of the heavens’. For many years we’ve been interpreting reality as well as borrowing foundations of knowledge and ways of doing things from the Western itulagi. This conference called for the need for Pacific itulagi foundations of life that are grounded in Pacific eco-relational cultures and values. The itulagi approach also takes into consideration both deconstruction and reconstruction. That is deconstructing to redeem these cultures as most of them have become products of colonialism and neo-colonialism, and reconstructing them to offer and reaffirm transformative thinking and paradigms for our people.

The Blue Pacific – a new narrative

Embracing an alternative paradigm should enable Pacific communities to safeguard the pristine beauty and rich cultural heritage of our Pacific which are under threat and further compounded by challenges such as climate change.

At the forty-eight Pacific Islands Forum meeting held in Samoa, in September 2017, Pacific government leaders in their communique²³ articulated the theme of *The Blue Pacific – Our Sea of Islands – Our Security through Sustainable Development, Management and Conservation*.²⁴ Leaders reaffirmed the Framework for Pacific Regionalism²⁵ as their platform for a renewed commitment to collective action to drive the region’s policy agenda towards the realisation of the Leaders vision for a region of peace, harmony, security, social inclusion, and prosperity so that all Pacific people can lead free, healthy and productive lives. Leaders endorsed The Blue Pacific identity as the core driver of collective action for advancing the Leaders vision under the Framework for Pacific Regionalism. Through this endorsement, Leaders recognised The Blue Pacific as a new narrative that calls for inspired leadership and a long-term Forum foreign policy commitment to act as one “Blue Continent”.

The Blue Pacific must also reframe the powerful notion of the “Pacific way” to embrace new ways of thinking and acting and appeal to the young generation who are mesmerised by the social media and the age of information. The Blue Pacific way must denote a style of leadership that is respected for its inclusiveness, effectiveness and freedom from corruption. That it can be people-centered and democratic in spirit. It needs to reach into communities and address the issues that are important to them. The Blue Pacific way should deal openly, honestly and yet respectfully with problems including failures of governance and corruption.

23 — www.forumsec.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/Final_48-PIF-Communique_2017_14Sep17.pdf; see also: www.samoaoobserver.ws/category/samoa/5195

24 — See: www.yumitoktokstret.today/blue-pacific-sea-islands/

25 — Endorsed by Pacific Forum Leaders in 2014 which sets out the vision, values, objectives and approaches towards deeper regionalism

There is some agreement that, however much it evolves to meet the demands of a changing world, the Pacific way will have at its core one unchanging truth: regional interconnectedness, the idea that there is a Pacific way of doing things that is open to, but different from, the way Americans, or Europeans or Asians do things.²⁶ It is the idea of a unifying regional consciousness that should inspire us as Pacific peoples.

Conclusion

The chapter has elaborated on how neoliberal capitalism has framed ‘development’ as we know it and an assessment that through modernisation and globalisation

there has been systematic erosion of Pacific values, cultural identity, weakening of family and community bonds and disharmony with nature. Based on this, there is a call to rethink prevailing development models and to search for an alternative paradigm which recognises that in the Pacific, relationality – relationships, family, spirituality and community are the bedrock of our societies and one which puts life at the centre and preserves the best aspects of our Pacific traditional heritage.

Pacific civil society organisations like Pacific Conference of Churches and PIANGO have continued the rethinking momentum initiated earlier by academics but the paper calls for a pracademia approach (involving both practitioners and academics) to frame the necessary paradigm shift required. At the same time, how to translate the new thinking into practical actions to equip Pacific peoples to be able to adapt to fast pace changing times and the changing climate while embracing a new Pacific consciousness and an updated unique Pacific way supporting the newly emerged Blue Pacific narrative.

26 — See: Elise Huffer: Regionalism and Cultural Identity. Putting the Pacific back into the plan, Eminent Persons Group (EPG), 2004; in: press-files.anu.edu.au/downloads/press/p55871/pdf/cho314.pdf

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Ethics of Economy, Caring and Sharing

Chapter 20

The Ethical Principles of Caring and Sharing on the Basis of the New Economy

By Cândido Grzybowski¹

Introduction

It is necessary and still possible to create alternatives to a productivity-oriented and consumerist civilisation with a social system that concentrates wealth and excludes, that destroys nature, driven by market forces in search of profits and the accumulation of wealth. Inequality and social injustice exacerbated by globalisation, as well as the threat of climate change, make this task of transforming ways of living something indispensable and urgent, leaving the trap of development as life's ideal. And it will not be with barbarism, with more patriarchy, with racism, xenophobia, fundamentalism or fascism, with violence and war, that we will be able to face up to all of this.

Although we are large majorities in the South and in the North, in the East and in the West, and we have resisted all these things, we have not yet created citizenship movements rooted in the various countries which are strong enough to bring about the emergence of an alternative civilisation. What are we missing? We are longing for a wave to change everything which threatens our shared future as humanity, respecting the vitality of different cultures and the integrity of the Planet Earth – our great common good. Something capable of triggering change depends on imaginary mobilisers, strong collective dreams and desires, active philosophies, shared values and projects. We are facing the challenge of seeking a sustainable human civilisation in socio-environmental terms as an alternative to capitalist globalisation and barbarism.

Central issues in the construction of civilising alternatives are the utopias and narratives that engage in

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dialogue with our different identities and cultures, our roots and deep desires that recognise equal rights and human dignity in the diversity of who we are.

It is a matter of reaffirming ethical principles and values, visions and proposals for life, all forms of life, and respect for the integrity of the Planet as pillars and to give this priority over against values and ideals of profit and private accumulation of wealth at any cost. For this reason, building alternatives is, at the same time, deconstruction and decolonisation of what is imposed on us. We need a new worldview, philosophies and theologies of life that inspire mobilising narratives to start here and now on the paths to transformation.

Possible change implies overcoming an anthropocentric worldview and its narrative of history as permanent² human progress. As the philosopher Michel Serres reminds us, besides written history, there is the history of the planet recorded in all things, natural and human. “Consequently, the totality of natural reality is part of our heritage. It is about caring for life in all its forms, how they relate to each other and to the ecological systems of the biosphere, how humanity as an eco-social force impacts on and is impacted by this dynamic. The Brazilian theologian Leonardo Boff is emphatic about this:

“Life shows a sacred unity in the diversity of its manifestations because all living beings carry the same basic genetic code that are the 20 amino acids and the four phosphatic bases, which makes us all related and brothers and sisters to one another. To take care of life, to expand life, to enter into communion and synergy with the whole chain of life and to celebrate life: this is the meaning of the life of human beings on earth, also understood as Gaia, a living superorganism and we humans as that portion of Gaia which feels, thinks, loves, speaks and worships.”³

2 — Michel Serres, *Não só progresso. É preciso outra utopia* (Not just progress. Another utopia is needed), 07 June 2017, www.ihu.unisinos.br/568444

3 — Leonardo Boff, *A seta da evolução não é o ser humano, mas a vida* (The arrow of evolution is not the human being, but life), 16 May 2018, www.ihu.unisinos.br/579006

Care: the ‘invisible heart’ of the new economy

Care is a central principle both for a new economy and for a new power, a new social organisation and a new way of relating to Gaia’s dynamics. The greatest inspiration for thinking about alternative civilising paradigms from the point of view of care is rooted in the different analyses, visions and proposals of feminism. From a forceful criticism of both patriarchalism and capitalism, which dominate and exploit women, imposing unpaid domestic care work on them, feminist movements point to systemic economic transformation from here and now:

“As many feminist economists have avowed, the economy must be dedicated to provisioning the people’s needs. In addition, the economy must foster compassionate, mutually beneficial relationships among people, and between people and non-human life.”⁴

Feminist and political economist Nancy Folbre of the University of Massachusetts Amherst challenges Adam Smith’s ‘invisible hand of the market’ with the concept of ‘invisible heart’ to think of economics from that perspective:

“Neoclassical economics can’t really change, but economists can. They should stop assuming that the perfect self-interest drives the market and that perfect altruism beautifies the home. Both families and the larger economic systems of which they are part must encourage and enforce equitable commitments to the care of others and of our planetary ecosystem.”⁵

Care is an essential condition of life. It presupposes no exploitation, no domination, no segregation, no aggression, no destruction. It is about creating, enchanting and respecting, protecting and regenerating life and the Planet. Anyway, taking care is seeing us and feeling part of the biosphere. “More than a technique, care is an art, a new paradigm of the relationship with nature, with the Earth and with humans.”⁶

For this reason,

care is a radical questioning of the economy we have, of extreme utilitarianism, of the pursuit of self-interest, of *homo economicus*. The principle of care imposes on us the need to change the paradigm, to stop thinking of the economy as something dependent on competing

4 — Julie Matthaei, “Feminism and Revolution: Looking Back, Looking Ahead”, June 2018, www.greattransition.org/publication/feminism-and-revolution

5 — Nancy Folbre, “The caring economy: well-being and the invisible heart”, February 2017, www.greattransition.org/publication/the-caring-economy

6 — Leonardo Boff, *Sustentabilidade e cuidado: um caminho a seguir (Sustainability and Care: A Way Forward)*, 16 June 2011, <https://leonardoboff.wordpress.com/2011/06/16/sustentabilidade-e-cuidado-um-caminho-a-seguir/>

market forces. The economy must be organised according to the logic of life and care that permeates it, among us humans and among all forms of existence, as well as with ecological systems.

Since 2011, I have engaged more systematically in shared processes of search, analysis and debate on these issues. It contributes with reflections on the ethical bases necessary for a bio-civilisation, centred in the transformation of the relations between ourselves, the human beings, and the relations that we establish with nature.⁷ In one of the texts I affirm that the principle of care “should govern the infrastructure of economy and power on the way to a bio-civilisation.”⁸

When thinking about the transition to a new economy, the contributions of London’s New Economics Foundation are an important reference in this field. Care work is pointed to as central to the economy.⁹ However, in terms of epistemology and theoretical systematisation of care as a new economic concept, in view of changes in the current paradigm, I consider the work of Thera van Osch essential. In his own words:

“Inspired by the women’s movement the Ethics of Care is a promising new philosophical approach. It represents a gender aware alternative to the dominant approach of utilitarianism in politics, in economics and in social life. The paradigm of the ‘caring human being’ is multi-dimensional, recognises the mutual interdependency among individuals, and values emotions along with the rationality of utilitarianism.”¹⁰

Care is present in values, attitudes and practices, both in relationships between people and with the environment. Care is a universal human experience, present among us, every day and everywhere. However, in industrial, production-oriented and consumerist civilisation, with market value and competition, care is excluded or minimised. Thus, all human care

7 — Candido Grzybowski, *Ways and Ways to Biocivilisation*. Rio de Janeiro, Ibase, (2011)

8 — C. Grzybowski, “Biocivilisation for Socio-Environmental Sustainability: The Hard but Necessary Transition”, Michel Reder et al. (eds.), *Global Common Good*. Frankfurt am Main: Campus Verlag, (2015): 47

9 — Stephen Spratt et al., *The Great Transition*. London: New Economics Foundation, (2010)

10 — Thera van Osch, *Towards a Caring Economic Approach*. Netherlands: Care First Innovation Network, (2013): 3

activities, which are nevertheless essential for life and the planet, are as such excluded from the economy. Against the savage economy of competing market forces, where the strongest wins, we need to erect the principle of care as central to the new economy. It is a question of inspiring us in the concept of original economy (*oikonomia* = administration of a household), and of thinking again about the management of the great house that is the symbiosis of human life with the whole biosphere, life in community and in shared territories, all common and dependent on care.¹¹

“Without care, the atmosphere has been colonised by carbon emissions from large economic corporations, from companies, from the rich and powerful, from consumerism. Today, humankind is threatened as a living species as well as all life forms. Without care, the colonial work of conquering peoples and territories was made and, today, the dispute for the planet’s natural resources prevails. In search of greater productivity, without care, we are creating transgenic seeds and destroying the existing biodiversity. Without care, we are polluting water, destroying life in the oceans, cutting away forests and creating deserts. The fact is it has become impossible to think of sustainability without the principle and ethical value of care.”¹²

To get out of the capitalist labyrinth, I make my own a categorical statement by Alberto Acosta: “The challenge is set: to build from below, from the communities and from the *Pachamama*, proposals that affirm the reproduction of life, not that of the capital, nor that of power”.¹³ From a perspective of care, the perception, valuation and social organisation of work totally changes, freeing it from the bonds of exploitation and patriarchal and capitalist domination. The science, innovation and technology of the human genius, instead

11 — Pierre Calame, *Essai sur l’oeconomie (Essay on economy)*. Paris: Ed. Charles Léopold Mayer, (2009)

12 — Cândido Grzybowski, “Biocivilisation for socio-environmental sustainability: A Brazilian view on the hard, but necessary transition”, Michel Reder et al. (eds.), *Global common good: Intercultural perspectives on a just and ecological transformation*, Frankfurt am Main: Campus Verlag, (2015): 47-88: cited here: 56

13 — Alberto Acosta, Ulrich Brand: “Salidas del labirinto capitalista: Decrecimiento y postextractivismo,” in: www.icariaeditorial.com/libros.php?id=1656

of aiming to dominate and even destroy natural logic, begin to operate, with care, as an eco-social force that enhances without destroying what nature itself offers. The common good, taken from the perspective of care, takes up its place once again in the organisation of the economy, power and society.

It is not the objective in this short article to advance all the implications that the ethics of care means as a paradigm of a new economy. So, I think Thera van Osch's definition of the basic model of the care economy is sufficient here:

“The model of the Economy of Care is an approach which makes ‘Care’ the starting point and driving force of the economy. It is not about privatisation and marketing of the care sector. The economy of Care is a human-centred and environmentally friendly economic approach. It has a holistic approach. The mutual relationships and interdependency between men and women in all their diversity and between people and the natural environment are central to the economy of care.”¹⁴

Ethics of sharing and coexistence as correlates of care

There are many questions that arise from the ethics of care at the centre of the economy. In particular, I would like to highlight two principles: that of sharing and that of coexistence, without which care cannot become the structuring logic of a new economy.

To take care as a reference is to recognise that to live is to be part of a web of interdependencies between living beings of all species and between living beings and the biosphere. Living is always sharing, being part of this web. As a human invention, the economy was born essentially as a management of this interdependence in exchange with other living beings and nature. Shared care among the different living beings is an indispensable condition for the very web of interdependence of life to be sustainable. This is starting with procreation, a shared act, a kind of imperative of life. But how much barbarism among us humans can already occur in that area, in the process of guaranteeing the continuity of life. To procreate we share between the sexes. In order to flourish, life requires care and sharing in the whole web of family, community and society into which we are inserted. It is worth

14 — Thera van Osch, “Towards a Caring Economic Approach”, Care First Innovation Network, (2013): 13, www.carefirstworldwideweb.com/education/towards-a-caring-economic-approach-50

remembering here that people invented patriarchy, men's dominance over women, and all that this represents in the way of managing the care of life within families. In patriarchy the decoupling of care from the sharing of care work, as well as the rupture between care and the private utilitarian economy of exploitation among human beings, are born.

Taking care of life presupposes, at the same time, sharing all that the biosphere gives us, what we produce and what is essential for it to exist. It requires, therefore, that both the work of care and the fruits of work in general be shared, with all the radicalism that this implies. The care economy brings with it the need for sharing. This serves all that is done and produced, in terms of goods and services, like everything else: family life, the closest community, social living, culture, knowledge, income, power, in short, all the common elements of society. We are beings who share, among ourselves, with all the living beings who give us food (including those who threaten us). We share languages that unite us and the atmosphere that provides us with oxygen energy. We share the very common water of all life, its rains and droughts, its rivers and seas. We share Planet Earth. Even the functioning of the capitalist economy, which aims to accumulate wealth, is based on a minimum of sharing through the market, through exchange and consumption, without which it ceases to operate. This gives the dimension of the issue of sharing as a complementary principle of care and sustainability of life and of the planet itself.

The ethical principle of coexistence is a correlate that integrates care and sharing at the base of life and, therefore, of the economy. Coexistence or living together, as an ethical value and principle, on the one hand, and as an effective practice, on the other, is a condition of social relations, processes and structures of societies. Coexistence also needs to be recognised and valued as fundamental to the great fabric of interdependencies on which the biosphere and the ecological systems that define the integrity of the planet's natural dynamics are based. But it is important here to take coexistence as an integral principle of a new economic, social, cultural and political paradigm, of a new narrative to transform what is imposed on us today as a system and model of development, as a way of organising and living.

Coexistence is a condition for taking account of the intrinsic diversity of the web of interdependencies of living in exchange with nature and in the way societies operate. We have devised enforced and negative forms of diversity.

Today's dominant agribusiness has destroyed the coexistence with the biodiversity that is at the root of agriculture and the fantastic diversity of food culture in the world. Agribusiness concentrates large areas of land, deforests and imposes homogeneous plantations and creations. It kills biodiversity twice over: in the forests

and in its regulation of water and the climate cycle, as well as with the plants and animals it cultivates.

All this is done with a lot of pesticides, to try to protect the ‘business’ from the force of biodiversity which stubbornly persists despite the aggressions against it. Homogenising agribusiness produces green deserts of pasture, eucalyptus, sugar cane, soya, corn, coffee. It threatens the common, both the water and the territories of traditional peoples, whether indigenous or riverine, squatters, hunter gatherers, *quilombolas*. In the wake of agribusiness we have the ‘Macdonaldisation’ of food. This is an example of how the indispensable coexistence between human beings and all forms of life is socially ignored.

Since diversity is a way of life and coexistence is the integrating link of the web of existence, how to justify racism and segregation, intolerance and hatred, the exploitation of each other, class domination or the conquest and domination of entire peoples around the planet? All this represents a denial of coexistence and the imposition of destructive ways of being part of humanity and the biosphere. To live together is to recognise equality in diversity and difference. Or, otherwise, living together is living in diversity and difference with a sense of equality. We have differences between women and men, between children, young people, adults and the elderly, between healthy and sick, ethnic and racial, religious, linguistic and cultural differences. All this is life! All this presupposes care, sharing and coexistence.

The ethics of care in the use of our scientific and technical capacity

The extraordinary scientific development and its practical application in the form of technology have radically transformed the relationships between ourselves and our exchanges with nature, the condition of life. It is not my intention to focus on how such a development has taken place, but on the new ethics that it imposes.

The point is that we, human beings, through science and technology, have become a force capable of competing with natural forces, transforming them and even imploding nature. We are today an eco-social force with power over the integrity of the planet. It is on the basis of such recognition that we must think about our ethical responsibility. As the German physicist Hans-Peter Dürr says:

“With these transformations of energy, we have reached a dimension that competes with the natural forces at work on the Earth’s surface. We have thus acquired the capacity to intervene directly in the

delicate interplay of the forces that ensure the stability of our natural environment.”¹⁵

Dürr deals with the consequences of this for scientific theory and practice. But the essential historical fact is that we have changed ourselves, our way of being and acting, as subjects. Faced with this fact, in reflecting on it, I take as a reference the contribution of another German philosopher, Hans Jonas. He states: “... since ethics has to do with action, the logical consequence of this is that nature modified by human action also imposes a change in ethics”.¹⁶ As human technical intervention affects the critical vulnerability of ecological systems, it is necessary to think of a new ethical theory of nature as a human responsibility. Among us Latin Americans, there is an advanced and new reflection on the subject from thinkers like Alberto Acosta, Pablo Solon and Eduardo Gudynas. In the indigenous worldview “*Vivir Bien*”, they defend an ethic of “the rights of nature itself”.¹⁷

In my evaluation,

we have already advanced a lot in the conception of ethical parameters for a new act of care, respect and responsibility in the development and use of new technologies in the relationship with nature. Being an ethical question for the entire human community, it also becomes a principle that should be a reference for the new politics and the new economy.

For example, since the Rio-92 UN Conference, the principle of scientific precaution has been clearly adopted, which limits the adoption of new technologies where there is a lack of evidence and consensus in the scientific world on their impacts on nature. That is, if you admit human responsibility in the matter. However, this principle has been systematically flouted by governments and companies. It is emblematic the case of transgenic products and the use of pesticides in agriculture, whose release is above most of the studies that

15 — Hans-Peter Dürr, *De la Science à l'Étique: Physique moderne et responsabilité scientifique* / *From Science to l'Étique: Modern Physics and Scientific Responsibility*. Paris: Éditions Albin Michel, (1994): 18

16 — Hans Jonas, *O Princípio Responsabilidade: Ensaio de uma ética para a civilização tecnológica* (*The Principle of Responsibility: Essay of an Ethics for Technological Civilisation*). Rio de Janeiro: Contraponto/Ed. PUC-Rio, (2006): 29

17 — Eduardo Gudynas, *Derechos de la Naturaleza: Ética biocéntrica y políticas ambientales*. Peru: PDTG/RedGE/Cooper Accion/CLAES, (2014)

warn about the great risks of their use, both for the environment, with real threat of destruction of biodiversity, and for human health. Until now, the interests of large agribusiness corporations have prevailed in the political decision-making of regulatory bodies.

The problem is that all of this still goes little beyond the very restricted spheres, even in the academic area of the most important universities in the world. Science itself came out of the search for understanding and integral knowledge, of admiration for the fantastic marvel of life and of the Earth, and of respect for complexity. Science in this globalised world of business, above all, has become frantic, over-specialised, segmented, instrumental research, financed by large capitalist companies, always in search of specific solutions, of greater productivity and, therefore, of greater profit in the competition for accumulating more and more. Unfortunately, the dominant trend in the development of science is not on the side of care, despite its enormous responsibility for the issue of technologies and their impacts. Science today is evaluated by the amount of novelties that have seen patents with market value, in the name of so-called intellectual property rights – it would be better to define this as a privilege. Scientific knowledge as the common good and heritage of all humanity, always generated by the sharing among scientists, is becoming private and a source of capitalist expansion. In the final analysis, this is actually against science itself...¹⁸

A recent concrete example of this domination of private economic interest in the induction of science and technology is the enormous collaborative scientific effort undertaken worldwide to understand the *zika virus*. It is about seeking the immunising vaccine or the best medicine to control its impacts on the pregnancy of mothers and new babies, the future of the human species itself. Some learn from each other's searches and even from each other's failures. It's always been that way in science. But with the productivism and mercantilism in today's science, whoever arrives at a solution first will have the unethical right to register it as an intellectual property right, and by selling it, to gain a lot from it.

It is also important to remember that the scientific and technological advancement of our civilisation is intrinsically linked to public funding for war, for killing and dominating, not for human happiness and a good life. And what is it about a common good such as the Internet, a great human invention, which has been made the basis of great private businesses? Google, Facebook, Amazon, among others, with their applications sell us ultimately without paying us a penny for the data we provide them using their so-called 'free services' with this new form of primitive accumulation in the fourth industrial revolution of capitalism.

18 — Cândido Grzybowski, "Cidadania, controle social das CT&I e Democratização", in *O papel da C, T & I na Redução das Desigualdades Sociais e na Inclusão Social*. Coordination of the 4th National Conference on Science, Technology and Innovation (ed.). Brasília: Ministry of Science and Technology, (2010): 63-80

In the face of the threatening climate change due to the ‘colonisation’ of the atmosphere by the accumulated emissions of our civilisation, instead of moving towards a radical change in the way we use nature, we are being bombarded by the ideas of green economy and geoengineering proposals. They reproduce and exacerbate the same scientific and technical basis, the same market forces, therefore more business and expansion fronts. Even the SDGs – Sustainable Development Goals – of the 2030 Agenda, agreed at the 2015 UN Assembly, are contaminated by such ideas, without fundamentally changing the logic of market forces.

A critical analysis of the threat that this way represents has come from the ETC Group in Canada.¹⁹

Finally, raising the question of the ethics of our technological actions as human beings directly impacts the productivist, consumerist and mercantilist civilisation of capitalism, which specifically encourages the scientific and technical development of total control of nature, disqualifying any consideration of responsibilities, care, natural limits, integrity of ecological systems, climate change. We are still far from being able to create public concern with such considerations. This is where the question of how to create another narrative that values science and technology, but demands responsibility and impact assessment, which requires care as a condition of socio-environmental sustainability. Finally, care can relate to the economy as an ethical and practical precautionary principle for its scientific and technological basis.

Resistances, emergencies and new forms of relationship with nature pop up all over the world. What they bring of radical is the demonstration that new technology supposes new relationship between ourselves. In other words, it is not possible to change new technology without a socio-environmental perspective, to change how we relate to each other together with the change in the way we relate to each other in order to exchange with nature, which gives us the conditions to live. We are faced with the need to seek new science and technology, but not independently of transforming the social, economic and political organisation that sustains it.

Viewed in this way, the task is not only to identify, map and disseminate such experiences as examples, so that they multiply. We need to go further. It is necessary to produce

a narrative capable of disputing hegemony, as an ethical question and as a worldview. For this it is necessary that we integrate the experiences of development and use of new scientific and technical knowledge, inspired in the knowledge, in the experiences and practices of broad sectors of the population, in cities and in the countryside, in a new reference and in a new utopia, in addition to indispensable and fundamental concrete resistance. We have to confront capitalist civilisation as a mode of production and life with ethical issues, with a new vision of both economics and science and technology, of lifestyles, of how to live in society, caring for each other and of the integrity of nature for the new generations.

Caring for life and the Planet with its fantastic diversities

In this effort to draft ethical guidelines of care and related principles, as the basis of a new civilising paradigm, there is a big question: how can we change? Here I can give some clues that the central point of reflection itself – care – announces, so to speak. The secret of the path of transition is to discover and strengthen the multiple and diverse alternatives that already exist in practising care, sharing, coexistence, precaution, in short, to strengthen respect for the integrity of the planet and the dignity of life wherever possible.

There is no single model of systemic change to homogenising and destructive capitalism. We need common ethical principles for direction, but the diversity of life and the Earth requires, from a perspective of care, a world civilisation based on a vibrant diversity. Recognising that there is not *a single one, but many* alternatives is, in itself, a paradigm shift.

Systemic alternatives are a cultural and political heritage present in the bosom of the different peoples of the Planet Earth, but they still exist in a subordinate, dominated, colonised way. It is in these alternatives that we need to be inspired to transform the way we produce and live in a world globalised by the great economic and financial corporations, based on the logic of market forces for a greater private accumulation of wealth, the domination of nature and extractivism, patriarchalism and racism. In order to ‘decolonise’ us and emancipate us from such destructive productivism and consumerism, with their mercantilising dominance of everything, we need to value the different existing resistances and insurgencies, with what they offer as civilising alternatives to what we have.

Diversity is what characterises human life and peoples, their ways of organising and interacting with nature in order to live, their cultures, philosophies, religions. Diversity is essential in nature, in all forms of life, in the biosphere, in our Earth with its forests and deserts, mountains and plains, rivers and seas, rainy and sunny days, polar and tropical zones. However, in a world dominated by industrial, productivist and consumerist civilisation, with luxury and waste, billionaires and the miserably poor, diversity is being dominated and destroyed by mercantilisation. All cultural and natural diversity in the world is threatened with destruction. Systemic alternatives to such a civilisation are those that, with the ethics of care, rescue and put at the centre of thinking and living the force of diversity. This is a necessary and urgent task in the search for paths of systemic transition.

It is and it will be an arduous path, requiring so much cooperation. We need to begin by decolonising our ways of observing, analysing, thinking, valuing, philosophising, inherited from hegemonic eurocentrism in science, culture, and even in the lifestyles we lead. Never before has looking the other way, towards the dominated and the forgotten, been as important as at this time of great threats, such as climate change, fascism, xenophobia, barbarism. The collective strategic task we have is to rescue the common elements in the diversity of peoples, cultures and the planet, working in networks, producing knowledge in a shared way, all starting from where we are and live now, and giving recognition to the fundamental contributions of others.

Common ground can be built from the intentions and objectives that inspire resistance and campaigning, drawing from this the strength of unity in diversity. Such an attitude of humility and respect, of horizontality and appreciation of the other, of a shared struggle, is already in itself an intellectual and political transformation. That is care in practice.

We will be assuming a strategic and revolutionary position in our ways of thinking and doing, in citizen activism, denying all protagonism *a priori* and unsustainable unique solutions. Exchange and articulation become ways of thinking, analysing and strengthening each other.

We need to define our starting conditions for new narratives. Diversity, in human terms, can only be valued and articulated if we qualify it with a founding ethical principle that all of us are equal in our diversity. This is an inescapable issue, because there are no better peoples and cultures than others. We have equal rights to share the greater common good – the planet and life – having very different dreams, worldviews, religions, ways of life and cultures. A second indispensable condition is to recognise that the world is governed by

eco-social forces, not just ecological systems, and not just by human action, science and technology. It is in the organic combination, interdependence and care of the interaction between the ecological systems that govern nature and the capacity created by humanity, that systemic alternatives can be found.

With such minimum starting parameters, we can begin by mapping the various visible alternatives and continue to seek out the many others, invisible or made invisible by the domination and colonisation of our eyes, minds and hearts, with the ideal of development without the alternatives proposed and imposed on us today. The power of transformation resides there; it is alive in the social movements and organisations that engage in the construction of alternatives in their own areas of life. Coexistence and dialogue between alternatives, between cultures and new ways of seeing the world, which are involved in caring and sharing life-styles, are indispensable as a path towards change for a plural and diverse world and planet in all its marvellous unity.

Chapter 21

Ecumenical perspectives on the global financial architecture and Economy for Life.¹ From AGAPE to NIFEA

Isabel Apawo Phiri and Athena Peralta²

Introduction

It is the intention of this paper to provide an overview about challenges related to the global financial crisis experienced since 2008 and the intersection between challenges of globalization, financial crisis and ecological crisis as experienced in the lives of many people. This is a background for describing aspects of the engagement of WCC to bring ethical and economical discourses (morality and economics) together again and to review ethical considerations expressed in the learning journey from the AGAPE study process to the NIFEA study process in WCC (these concepts will be explained).

We will start this essay by highlighting the very concrete effects of economic globalization on the lives of ordinary people by telling a story of land grabbing by a multinational company and its effect on ordinary people from an African context. Secondly, we will point to some attempts to articulate some critical perspectives on the widening gap between morality and global economics in facing the world financial crisis as well as continued scandals in shadow financial markets as experienced recently. Thirdly we will reflect on globalization and its transforming effects on the global economic landscape. Fourthly we

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- 1 — A part of this paper was delivered as a key-note contribution by Dr. Isabel Phiri at the *Research in Diaconia (ReDi) Conference*, titled “Beyond Service Towards Justice”, from 12-14 September 2018 at the headquarters of *Diakonie Deutschland, EWDE, Berlin, Germany*. On the ReDi association see: www.diaconiaresearch.org
 - 2 — Dr. Isabel Apawo Phiri (Malawi/South Africa), is deputy general secretary responsible for Public Witness and Diaconia of the World Council of Churches and honorary professor in the School of Religion, Philosophy and Classics at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa; Athena Peralta is current WCC consultant for economic and ecological justice and has worked intensively on the Ecumenical Action Plan for a New International Financial and Economic Architecture (NIFEA project of WCC). She has previously worked for the National Economic and Development Authority of the Philippines and the Manila-based Poverty, Wealth and Ecology Project of the World Council of Churches (WCC)

will draw from the World Council of Churches³ (WCC) theological critique of globalization from Harare 1998 to Busan 2013. Fifthly, we will reflect on the Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace and will conclude with outlining perspectives on the Concept of an “Economy for Life” and its challenges for agents of Ecumenical Diakonia by arguing that respect for the dignity of every woman and man is central to a Christian understanding of life in all its fullness. A holistic approach is necessary and the protection of human dignity is central to theology and to human rights.

A concrete experience of injustice as the starting point: land grab by multi-national companies

A woman farmer from Mozambique shared her story to participants of a workshop on reflecting on the intersections between food and global finance organized by the WCC in 2016. The woman had been tilling a small plot of land for close to a decade, feeding her three children from the produce and earning a bit of income on the side from selling vegetables and simple crafts at the village market. One morning she was awakened by the noise of huge tractors, efficiently uprooting row after row of maize, onions and tomatoes from her garden, so close to harvesting. She placed herself – arms waving wildly – in front of the tractors. The machines grounded to a halt. For now. The following day, policemen arrived at her door. She was told to get off the land immediately. She refused. “The land is my family’s only source of sustenance”, she says. Then one of the policemen held a torch to the roof, burning her hut down to the ground. The little ones cried. The following day she went to town, children in tow, knocking on government offices. The officials asked her to produce papers proving her claim to the land. She did not possess them, never has. The officials nodded their heads: exactly. They inform her that a multinational agricultural company has been granted a license to do as they will with the land for the length of what could be her entire lifetime, encompassing her tiny plot and for hundreds of miles beyond. “The company will export sugar to Japan”, she was told. If she stops all this protesting, the company might even hire her to plant and harvest the sugarcane. They will need many workers. “But”, the woman says in anger and desperation trembling in her voice, “you don’t understand: the children cannot eat sugarcane.”

Why and how does the Church in Mozambique accompany her, if at all? Why and how does the Church in the country where the multi-national companies come from respond to

3 – The World Council of Churches (WCC) is a fellowship of 350 Orthodox, Anglican, Baptist, Lutheran, Methodist, Reformed, many United and Uniting Churches, Mennonites, Friends, Congregationalists, Disciples and African Indigenous Churches. It is broadest, most inclusive Christian organization in the world. It represents 560 million Christians in over 120 countries. The primary purpose of the fellowship of churches in the WCC is to call one another to visible unity in one faith and in one Eucharistic fellowship, expressed in worship and common life in Christ, through witness and service to the world, and to advance towards that unity in order that the world may believe (WCC Constitution, Article III).

such a story, if at all? Drawing from the *Economy of Life, Justice, and Peace for All: A Call to Action of the World Council of Churches*, the Church in both countries is compelled to respond!

“Churches must be challenged to remember, hear and heed Christ’s call today: “The time has come ... The kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the good news!” (Mark 1:15). We are called to be transformed, to continue Christ’s acts of healing and reconciliation and “to be what [we] have been sent to be – a people of God and a community in the world” (Poverty, Wealth, and Ecology in Africa). Therefore, the Church is God’s agent for transformation. The Church is a community of disciples of Jesus Christ, who affirms the fullness of life for all, against any denial of life.”⁴

This means the Church must come to accept the message of Jesus Christ that every human being must experience fullness of life. The Church both in Mozambique and in the country where the multinational company came from must also acknowledge that what this woman experienced is sinful and a denial of life. The Church which is on God’s mission must recognize that this woman’s experience requires a response not only by offering her a place to stay and food to eat, but also seek to transform the local and global laws and structures that cause such injustice.

Again drawing from the *Economy of Life, Justice, and Peace for All: A Call to Action*:

“Our vision of justice is rooted in God’s self-revelation in Jesus Christ who drove money changers from the temple (Matthew 21:12), made the weak strong (1 Corinthians 1:25-28), and redefined views of poverty and wealth (2 Corinthians 8:9). Jesus identified himself with the marginalized and excluded people not only out of compassion, but because their lives testified to the sinfulness of the systems and structures. Our faith compels us to seek justice, to witness to the presence of God and to be part of the lives and struggles of people made weak and vulnerable by structures and cultures—women, children, people living in poverty in both urban and rural areas, Indigenous Peoples, racially

4 — See the Call for action in which the six years study and dialogue process on poverty, wealth and ecology resulted in WCC in 2012: WCC, “Economy of Life, Justice, and Peace for All: A Call to Action”, 19 July 2012, www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/wcc-programmes/public-witness-addressing-power-affirming-peace/poverty-wealth-and-ecology/neoliberal-paradigm/agape-call-for-action-2012/economy-of-life-justice-and-peace-for-all

oppressed communities, people with disabilities, Dalits, forced migrant workers, refugees and religious ethnic minorities. Jesus says “Whatever you did to the least of these you did to me” (Matthew 25:40).⁵

Consequently, ecumenical witness for human dignity and the integrity of creation has centered around empowering people for justice and human rights – building their capacity and equipping them to confront injustice in their own countries. It has also required making it possible for local churches to work in solidarity with churches in global family to assist the local churches to have access to international centers of power where decisions are made that disempowers local people like the woman from Mozambique. Thus,

to be the voice of the voiceless does not mean speaking for the people struggling for the realization of their human dignity and rights, but rather empowering and accompanying them to speak for themselves.

The civil rights movement and many other initiatives of social movements have proven that policies and practices of the powerful and dominant forces change only when this call is backed and supported by vibrant and strong movements of people on the ground engaged in the struggle for justice.

Bridging morality and economics in a time of economic and ecological crisis

Ten years have elapsed since the global financial crisis of 2008 that originated in the United States of America and quickly spilled over to the rest of the world. Throwing hundreds of thousands of people into hunger, joblessness and homelessness, the meltdown of the century raised profound ethical, moral and theological questions on the behavior and actions of brokers, bankers, investors and regulators recklessly pursuing their short-term ‘self-interest’ or blindly adhering to prevailing economic ideology to the extent that the Financial Crisis Inquiry Commission in the United States acknowledged that nothing less than a “systemic breakdown in accountability and ethics”⁶ had occurred.

5 — Ibid. Call To Action. WCC (19 July 2012)

6 — Financial Crisis Inquiry Commission: Report on the Causes of the Financial Crisis FCIC (2011); see: <https://fcic.law.stanford.edu/>; also: http://fcic-static.law.stanford.edu/cdn_media/fcic-news/2011-0127-fcic-releases-report.pdf

Some years after, the issue of inequality was thrown into the limelight by Thomas Piketty with his 2014 bestselling volume, *Capital in the Twenty First Century*⁷, and was further picked up by the World Economic Forum (WEF), the G20 and the World Bank, among other influential institutions⁸ The WEF in subsequent years deemed inequality the biggest threat to the global economy. In the wake of widespread recession, it was certainly a topic that resonated with public experience, sparking widespread moral anger which may have very well contributed to the surprising electoral victories of populist and protectionist presidential candidates in some parts of the world.

More recently,

the leaking of the Panama Papers in 2016⁹ and Paradise Papers in 2017¹⁰ shed light on how affluent and global corporate actors shirk taxes through various tricks such as establishing shell companies and opening offshore accounts in tax havens.

In times marked by widening socio-economic divides and austerity programmes cutting healthcare and social protection – both lingering legacies of the financial crisis – the leaks enthused a debate on the morality or lack thereof of tax evasion and avoidance as well as induced public protests. In Iceland, the scandal even led to the resignation of the then incumbent prime minister.

More and more pressing is the issue of climate change which continues to hog headlines as climate-induced disasters – from massive floods in Kerala, India, to wildfires in Greece, Latvia and Sweden – visit with more frequency and intensity, causing unmitigated suffering, particularly among the impoverished who contribute least to global greenhouse gas emissions. Already, 2018 is well on its way to becoming the warmest year ever documented, breaking previous records set in the last decade and indicating that climate change may be accelerating faster than predicted. There is at the same time growing recognition that the problem cannot be narrowed down to the burning of fossil fuels; that it is essentially rooted in a consumption-driven, growth-oriented economy. As a response, movements calling for eco-ethical living and just transitions are thriving in both developing and developed countries.

If there is a broad lesson to be gleaned from these moments, perhaps it is this:

7 – Thomas Piketty, *Capital in the Twenty First Century*. Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, (2014)

8 – See also The World Inequality Report 2018: <https://wir2018.wid.world>

9 – See: www.icij.org/investigations/panama-papers

10 – www.icij.org/investigations/paradise-papers

values – such as justice, fairness, equity, empathy and care for the vulnerable and all creation, responsibility, stewardship, honesty, trust – matter.

There is a clear demand for it by ordinary people who are not merely consumers intent on satisfying their individual preferences or workers selling their labor to produce goods and services, but who are wondrously complex human beings who play, feel, dream and perceive right from wrong.

Moreover, they matter for – and indeed are the very foundations of – well functioning and stable financial and economic systems that are able to provision for people’s needs within planetary limits. As Robert Nelson reflects, financial and other markets require trust, honesty and “restraints on self-interest” in order to serve as effective instruments of exchange – in short: to work.¹¹

The idea that the economy is invariably intertwined with moral judgements and ought to serve a higher purpose – the ‘common good’ for instance – is hardly a novel one.

Indeed, it had been around for many centuries from the time of Aristotle (and even earlier) to the time of Adam Smith.¹² It is an idea, however, that has been neglected and to some extent rejected in the academic arena since economics as a discipline separated from moral philosophy beginning in the 18th and 19th centuries in the Western part of the world and assumed its current, reductionist form as a purportedly a-moral, technical, highly mathematicised ‘science’ that has been widely exported to classrooms around the world. It may at the same time be noted that mainstream neoliberal economics’ claim of neutrality and its corresponding focus on liberalized markets and efficiency are in fact infused with moral assumptions that privilege notions of freedom and rationality and that ultimately serve the interests of few. This implies that ethics and morality are socially-constructed and imbricated in power relations, and therefore entail critical dialogue.¹³

11 — Robert Nelson, “What is Economic Theology”, in *The Princeton Seminary Bulletin* XXV(1), (2004): 58-79

12 — Adam Smith is of course famous for fathering modern, utilitarian economics but is considerably lesser known as a moral philosopher who wrote *A Theory of Moral Sentiments*.

13 — James Brasett and Christopher Holmes, “International Political Economy and the Question of Ethics”, in *The Review of International Political Economy* 17(3), (2010): 425-453

On the 10th year anniversary of the global financial crisis, it can be observed that very little has changed in economics (the way we learn it) as well as in the global economy (the way we run it).

In mainstream economic theory and policymaking, the economy and the moral realm continue to be considered through (still) dominant neoliberal lenses as largely distinct domains. This false separation – manifested in the overreliance on supposedly neutral market mechanisms and in the dearth of ethical consideration in the actions of key economic actors – is of course an underlying yet important reason behind the 2008 financial crisis. As a United Nations Conference on Trade and Development report put it: “No doubt without the greed of too many agents trying to squeeze double-digit returns out of an economic system that grows only in the lower single-digit range, the crisis would not have erupted with such force”.¹⁴

Having highlighted of the intrinsic connections between ethos and economy, the succeeding sections will discuss two examples of current church and ecumenical schemes to inject and deepen ethics and morality in finance and economics: faith-consistent investing and the New International Financial and Economic Architecture initiative.

Faith-consistent investments

Churches and other faith-based institutions are not only moral agents, they are also economic agents dealing with pensions and other resources and have been concerned with reconciling the values they stand for with commercial or business practices for at least the past several hundred years.¹⁵

¹⁴ – UNCTAD, *The Global Economic Crisis: Systemic Failures and Multilateral Remedies*. Geneva: UN, (2009): 2; see: <https://unctad.org/en/pages/PublicationArchive.aspx?publicationid=2081>

¹⁵ – Amy Domini, *Socially responsible investing: Making a difference in making money*. Chicago: Dearborn Trade, (2001)

In particular, and over the last decade, the concept of faith-consistent investing has gained increasing popularity as a faith-founded response to the financial and ecological crisis confronting us. In keeping with their religious values and beliefs, the Quakers have historically shunned investments in companies linked to slavery and the production of weaponry. More recently, however,

we are witnessing a growing movement of churches from various traditions seeking to divest from fossil fuels and extractive activities which are known to contribute significantly to planetary warming as part of a faith-based commitment to protect creation and to practice climate justice.

In 2014, the WCC reformulated its investment guidelines to exclude fossil fuels and since then quite a few member churches have followed suit.¹⁶ As of this writing, the Church of England is the latest major church institution to remove its holdings in fossil fuel companies.¹⁷

Beyond divestment, faith-consistent investing is about conducting shareholder advocacy to challenge businesses to pay attention to their workers' wellbeing and to the ecological impacts of their operations. Perhaps more importantly, it is also about 'impact investing' or directing resources towards activities that promote the betterment of communities and ecological health such as village solar energy projects, affordable and climate-resilient housing and agro-ecological farming.

Possessing as much as 10 percent of total financial investment in the world¹⁸, the potential power of churches and other religious institutions to mobilize social and ecological investments is not insignificant. In fact, it has attracted considerable interest due in no small part to the challenges of resourcing the ambitious 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development launched by the United Nations in 2015 as well as the Paris climate agreement ratified the same year in response to the global climate crisis. As prolonged recessions and systemic tax evasion and avoidance continue to diminish the capacity of many governments to finance the 17 sustainable development goals and to resource climate resilience – estimated to cost between USD 3 to 10 trillion per year¹⁹ – it would appear that much of the financial onus is being shifted to the private sector as well as other actors including faith-based ones.

16 — www.oikoumene.org/en/press-centre/news/investment-in-fossil-fuels-is-off-the-table-for-the-wcc

17 — www.triplepundit.com/2018/07/church-england-pushes-forward-divesting-fossil-fuels

18 — Martin Palmer and Pippa Moss (comp.), *Faith in Finance*. Bath: Alliance of Religions and Conservation, (2017)

19 — Palmer and Moss (2017)

Certainly faith-consistent investing enables churches to be authentic in their own economic life to the Christian calling to care for one's neighbor and all of creation – and this is laudable in and of itself. Whether these approaches can be expected to make a substantial impact – if at all – on financial structures and sustainable investment outcomes is, however, another matter for further exploration. Frank Stillwell argues that “unless and until ethical behaviors become integral to how markets function – by directly affecting ‘shareholder value’, for example – it is hard to see the overall effect as much more than window dressing for ‘business as usual’”.²⁰

Globalization transforming the global economic landscape

Globalization has drastically transformed the global economic landscape in the last three to four decades. Barriers to the movement of many products and services across national borders have been removed. Regulations on foreign direct investments have been eased and a battery of tax and other incentives proffered in an all-out effort by many governments to attract more of them. The flows of money and other forms of capital have been greatly facilitated by dizzying advancements in information and communications technologies – massive amounts of currencies could now be transferred and or exchanged in a blink of an eye and with a mere touch of a button. Migration was and remains a key feature as people perennially seek better living conditions and dream of more secure futures for their children – this notwithstanding increasing restrictions placed on the movement of people, especially those fleeing climate-devastated, poverty-ridden and war-torn homelands.

In the 1990s up till the beginning of the 21st century, it was pretty much an article of faith that the phenomenon of globalization – driven primarily by neoliberal policy impetuses of liberalization, deregulation and privatization – would produce win-win situations, benefiting consumers, farmers and factory workers alike, as well as both developing and developed nations. Attributed almost divine-like qualities, the “invisible hand of the market” was widely hailed by government and business leaders, policymakers and renowned economists as creating unprecedented prosperity, cutting poverty and promoting eventual convergence between rich and poor, North and South.

The notion that the world was now moving towards a global, harmonious and inclusive community was certainly an attractive one, including for churches and theologians. Reflecting on the phenomenon, Jonathan Chaplin beautifully ventured:

“We have been created to aspire to mutual enrichment and global interdependence within God’s one world. More specifically, globalization is a disclosure of the spatial

20 — Frank Stillwell, “Oh, the morality: why ethics matters in economics”, 2010: 2, <http://theconversation.com/oh-the-morality-why-ethics-matters-in-economics-5963>

dimension of our created social possibilities, as they work themselves out in many spheres of human activity.”²¹

Similarly Alexandre Christoyannopoulos and Joseph Milne proposed:

“[W]hat has been called globalization certainly suggests that love keeps pulling ahead, calling human beings to broader, deeper reunion with other human beings. Love keeps pulling political institutions from ahead, guiding humankind towards the fulfilment of its destiny.”²²

The World Council of Churches’ theological critique of globalization from Harare 1998 to Busan 2013: The New International Financial and Economic Architecture

As an ecumenical body of Christian churches from around the world, the WCC envisioned and continues to uphold a vision of a whole and dynamic *oikoumene* where all life has a place to flourish. Notwithstanding this,

the WCC had from the very start espoused a more skeptical view of globalization as it was actually playing out. Informed by the experiences of Southern churches and countries with unfavorable terms of trade for their primary products – a legacy of colonialism – and with crippling debt crises and recessions during the 1980s, the WCC has been wary of projects aimed at cultivating “global interdependence” in an existing context of gaping inequities in wealth and power between and within countries.

In other words, the WCC was deeply concerned with issues of economic justice, of power-sharing, fair distribution and equitable access to God’s given resources among and

21 — Jonathan Chaplin, “On Globalization: An Exercise in Public Theology”, 1 March 2003, www.cardus.ca/comment/browse/contributor/jchaplin

22 — Alexandre Christoyannopoulos and Joseph Milne, “Love, Justice and Social Eschatology”, in *The Heythrop Journal* 48(6), (2007): 972-991, <https://dspace.lboro.ac.uk/dspace-jspui/bitstream/2134/6672/3/Christo%203.1.pdf>

within countries. This concern had been present since the 1966 World Conference on Church and Society held in Geneva.

At the same time and in agreement with aforementioned reflections, the WCC recognized that globalization had shaped and was shaping “many spheres of human activity”, that it was not merely a significant and ongoing economic event, but nothing less than a systemic process with profound theological, cultural, social, and political implications. At the 8th Assembly of the WCC in Harare in 1998, churches were thus encouraged to pose and to begin to consider the question, how do we live our faith in a time of globalization?

The WCC’s *Alternative Globalization Addressing People and Earth (AGAPE)* initiative was conceived after the Harare Assembly through a series of regional church consultations reflecting on the phenomenon, theologically and more. These served as a space for churches in the regions of Africa, Asia, and Latin America to share about the impacts of structural adjustment programmes imposed by the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank as well as of trade liberalization policies being implemented as part of the World Trade Organisation agreements. The process culminated in the 2006 AGAPE *Call to Love and Action* which made the following assertion:

“Centred on capital, neoliberal [globalization] transforms everything and everyone into a commodity for sale at a price. Having made competition the dominant ethos, it throws individual against individual, enterprise against enterprise, race against race, and country against country. Its concern with material wealth above human dignity de-humanizes the human being and sacrifices life for greed. It is an economy of death.”²³

In opposition to the ‘economy of death’, the 2006 AGAPE document delivered a call for an ‘economy of life’ grounded on Christian faith:

“An economy of life reminds us of the main characteristics of God’s household of life:

- The bounty of the gracious economy of God (oikonomia tou theou) offers and sustains abundance for all;
- God’s gracious economy requires that we manage the abundance of life in a just,

23 — WCC, “Alternative Globalization Addressing People and Earth – AGAPE. A Call to Love and Action”, 14 February 2006, www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/assembly/2006-porto-alegre/3-preparatory-and-background-documents/alternative-globalization-addressing-people-and-earth-agape

- participatory and sustainable manner;
- The economy of God is an economy of life that promotes sharing, globalized solidarity, the dignity of persons, and love and care for the integrity of creation;
- God's economy is an economy for the whole oikoumene – the whole earth community;
- God's justice and preferential option for the poor are the marks of God's economy"²⁴

Presented at 9th Assembly of the WCC in Porto Alegre, the 2006 AGAPE document was not necessarily received with broad acceptance, reflective of church divisions cut largely along North-South lines. This was to be expected as globalization presented contrasting experiences, affording the bulk of gains to people and nations rich in capital, technology and skills. At best, critics described the document's calls as "utopian". At worst, they found its critique of neoliberal globalization as "ideological" and lacking in concrete evidence. Further discussion among churches, multi-stakeholder dialogues and the conduct of regional case studies were proposed and initiated through the Poverty, Wealth and Ecology process as a follow-up to the AGAPE process.

Nonetheless,

two years after the Porto Alegre Assembly, the biggest global financial and economic meltdown the world had ever seen would bear out the WCC's appraisal of globalization, especially the globalization of financial markets.

In its wake, churches emerged sober and wide-eyed, and with perhaps a more common understanding that processes of market liberalization and economic integration have evinced highly uneven effects, concentrating extreme wealth in the hands of the so-called one percent, depressing employment and wages, and even spawning simultaneous and multiple food, financial, economic and ecological crises that disproportionately hurt the vulnerable and impoverished in both developing and developed countries.

In other words,

the 2008 crash exposed to one and all, critics and supporters of globalization alike, the brokenness of our financial and economic systems.

In particular, global governance – or rules and institutions – had barely if at all kept pace with global integration, much less tamed global markets. Where there were rules in place, they tended to further entrench inequalities and benefit the already powerful and affluent at the expense of the weak and socio-economically marginalized.

The WCC responded to the global financial crisis through a statement prepared for the United Nations Follow-up International Conference on Financing for Development in Doha in November 2008, which observed that “the present international financial system is not merely inefficient. It is a system based on injustice, whereby the global poor are essentially subsidizing the rich”²⁵.

Letters were written to the United Nations as well as to the Group of 20 in 2009, calling on the international community to “go beyond short term financial bailout actions and to seek long term transformation based on sound ethical and moral principles which will govern a new financial architecture”²⁶.

In the same year, the WCC also issued a statement on “*Just Finance and an Economy of Life*” which appealed for an ethical, just and democratic international financial regime “grounded on a framework of common values: honesty, social justice, human dignity, mutual accountability and ecological sustainability” and that “account[s] for social and ecological risks in financial and economic calculation; reconnect[s] finance to the real economy; and set[s] clear limits to, as well as penalize[s], excessive and irresponsible actions based on greed”.²⁷

In 2012, the WCC produced the document, *Economy of Life: Justice and Peace for All*, capturing the findings of the regional church discussions and researches undertaken as part of the Poverty, Wealth and Ecology process. It expressed that:

“Market fundamentalism is more than an economic paradigm: it is a social and moral philosophy. During the last thirty years, market faith based on unbridled competition and expressed by calculating and monetizing all aspects of life has overwhelmed and determined the direction of our systems of knowledge, science, technology, public opinion, media and even

25 – WCC, “Statement on the Doha Outcome Document”, 29 November 2008, www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/wcc-programmes/public-witness-addressing-power-affirming-peace/poverty-wealth-and-ecology/finance-speculation-debt/statement-on-the-doha-outcome-document.html

26 – The letter is available at www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/general-secretary/messages-and-letters/27-03-09-letter-to-g20.html

27 – WCC, “Statement on just finance and the economy of life”, 02 September 2009, www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/central-committee/geneva-2009/reports-and-documents/report-on-public-issues/statement-on-just-finance-and-the-economy-of-life.html

education. This dominating approach has funnelled wealth primarily toward those who are already rich and allowed humans to plunder resources of the natural world far beyond its limits to increase their own wealth. The neoliberal paradigm lacks the self-regulating mechanisms to deal with the chaos it creates with far-reaching impacts, especially for the impoverished and marginalized.”²⁸

It also highlighted the ecological consequences of market-driven globalization:

“Climate change and threats to the integrity of creation have become the significant challenge of the multifaceted crises that we have to confront. Climate change directly impacts peoples’ livelihoods, endangers the existence of small island states, reduces the availability of fresh water and diminishes Earth’s biodiversity. It has far-reaching impacts on food security, the health of people and the living habits of growing part of population. Due to climate change, life in its many forms as we know it can be irreversibly changed within the span of a few decades. Climate change leads to the displacement of people, to the increase of forced climate migration, and to armed conflicts. Unprecedented challenges of climate change go hand-in-hand with the uncontrolled exploitation of natural resources and leads to the destruction of the Earth and to a substantial change of the habitat. Global warming and ecological destruction become more and more a question of life or death.”²⁹

Together with the World Communion of Reformed Churches and Council for World Mission, the WCC convened later in the same year the *São Paulo Conference on a New International Financial and Economic Architecture* which observed that:

“A system of speculation, competition and inadequate regulation has failed to serve the people and instead has denied a decent standard of life to the majority of the world’s population.”³⁰

28 — WCC (19 July 2012): paragraph 14

29 — WCC (19 July 2012): paragraph 11

30 — WCC, “São Paulo Statement: International Financial Transformation for an Economy of Life”, 5 October 2012, www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/wcc-programmes/public-witness-addressing-power-affirming-peace/poverty-wealth-and-ecology/finance-speculation-debt/sao-paulo-statement-international-financial-transformation-for-the-economy-of-life

The São Paulo Statement: International Financial Transformation for an Economy of Life delivered perhaps one of the strongest theological critiques of financial globalization to date:

“We lament the manner in which economic and financial legislation and controls are biased in favour of the wealthy. We therefore affirm the God of justice for all those who are oppressed (Ps. 103:6). We call for a system of just legislation and controls that facilitate the redistribution of wealth and power for all of God’s creation.

...Therefore, we reject the explosion of monetisation and the commodification of all of life and affirm a theology of grace which resists the neoliberal urge to reduce all of life to an exchange value (Rom. 3:24). Means have become ends; instruments have become a means for the coercion of facts.

We reject an economy that is driven by debt and financialisation in favour of an economy of forgiveness, caring and justice and declare that debt and speculation have reached their limits. We affirm the words of the Lord’s Prayer in which we pray to have our own debt forgiven in the same manner as we forgive the debts of others (Matt. 6:12).

Therefore, we reject the ideology of consumerism and affirm an economy of Manna, which provides sufficiently for all and negates the idea of greed (Ex. 16).

We reject increasing individualistic consumerism by affirming and celebrating the diversity and interconnectedness of life.

We reject an economy of over-consumption and greed, recognising how neoliberal capitalism conditions us psychologically to desire more and more, and affirm instead Christian and Buddhist concepts of an economy of sufficiency that promotes restraint (Luke 12:13-21), highlighting, for example, the Sabbath economy of rest for people and creation, and the Jubilee economy of redistribution of wealth.

We reject the economic abstraction of Homo Oeconomicus, which constructs the human person as being essentially insatiable and selfish, and affirm that the Christian perception of the human person is embedded in community relationships of Ubuntu[6], Sansaeng,[7] Sumak Kawsay,[8] conviviality and mutuality. Contrary to the logic of neoliberals, as believers we are called to think not only of our own interests but also of the interests of others (Phil. 2:4).²⁹³

Building on the São Paulo Statement, the document *Economy of Life for All Now: An Ecumenical Action Plan for a New International Financial and Economic Architecture (NIFEA)* produced by the WCC, WCRC, CWM and Lutheran World Federation in 2014 declared:

“The church of Christ affirms that this God – the creating, liberating, healing, sustaining Source of all that is – is present within, among and beyond us, and is calling human creatures to receive God’s Love, trust it, and then embody it in the world. We are called to “love your neighbour as yourself,” to “love as God loves” (Matt. 22:39). We are beckoned to join with God’s Spirit of justice-making Earth-relishing Love in its steadfast commitment to transform injustice into ways of living – including social structures – that nourish dignity, freedom from oppression, and freedom for justice. The São Paulo Statement and this strategic “plan” for enacting it by seeking urgent transformative liberation from unjust financial and economic structures are a direct response, then, to a call from God to join in God’s freeing, healing, creating, sustaining activity in the world.”³²

Notably both the São Paulo Statement and Ecumenical Action Plan for a NIFEA *together* offered strong theological critiques, clear and practical proposals for changes in national and global economic policies, rules and institutions in the areas of: financial sector, public finance and debt and global economic governance. In essence these calls aim to account for and value critical social and environmental tasks, and to embed the market in the economy, economy in society and society in ecology.

The Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace: economic justice

The 10th Assembly of the WCC in Busan in 2013 culminated with a powerful invitation to churches, Christians and people of good will to participate in a common pilgrimage of justice and peace (PJP), putting into action the prayer, “God of life, lead us to justice and peace”.

As a pilgrimage *of* (instead *to* or *for*) justice and peace, the PJP is neither an expedition to a particular geographical destination nor some one-off campaign. Rather, “[it] is a transformative journey that God invites us to in anticipation of the final purpose for the world that the Triune God brings about. The movement of love which is essential to the Triune God manifests itself in the promise of justice and peace. They are signs of God’s reign to come which is already visible here and now wherever reconciliation and healing are seen.”³³

The WCC’s theological response to globalization developed over three assemblies mirrors the three dimensions of the the pilgrimage of justice and peace (PJP). It is first of all rooted in a profound appreciation and celebration of God’s wondrous gift of life which is

32 — WCC, “Economy of Life for All Now: An Ecumenical Action Plan for a New International Financial and Economic Architecture”, 28 November 2014, www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/wcc-programmes/public-witness-addressing-power-affirming-peace/poverty-wealth-and-ecology/economy-of-life-for-all-now-an-ecumenical-action-plan-for-a-new-international-financial-and-economic-architecture

33 — WCC, “Invitation to a pilgrimage of justice and peace”, 8 July 2014, www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/central-committee/geneva-2014/an-invitation-to-the-pilgrimage-of-justice-and-peace

nothing less than a concrete and powerful attestation of God’s enduring love for humanity and all of creation (*via positiva*). It rejects the idolatry of the market and the idolatrous pursuit of financial gain that has consumed modern society and captured governments; as well as condemns its death-dealing consequences on the “least among us” for whom God has expressed a preferential option and on the rest of creation (*via negativa*). Finally, it calls for a spirituality of transformation and for transformative action at all levels – individual lifestyles, church, corporate and other institutional behaviors, and national and global macro-economic structures – with a view to establishing right and just relations between people and God, within and among peoples and between people and the rest of the created order (*via transformativa*).

Economy for Life challenges agents of Ecumenical Diakonia

In the working document of the WCC, Lutheran World Federation and The ACT Alliance entitled *Called to Transformative Action: Ecumenical Diakonia*³⁴, it recognizes that social justice and transformative development will not be possible unless political decision makers take measures, at national and international levels, to reform and transform the economic system, securing a fairer distribution of resources to include financial flow, and not least, of power structures.

Economy for Life challenges agents of Ecumenical Diakonia to strengthen their commitment to economic justice. The following statement of ACT Alliance is representative of how their membership views poverty and the importance of addressing its root causes:

“Eradicating poverty is not just about addressing symptoms like the lack of income or material assets held by individuals. It is also about addressing the systemic and structural factors essential for overcoming poverty, factors that deprive women and men of their dignity, rights and entitlements.

Policies that hope to eradicate poverty also need to focus on the processes that contribute to the social exclusion and exploitation, discrimination in access to productive resources, and exclusion from participation in decision-making bodies that bars certain women and

34 — www.lutheranworld.org/sites/default/files/2018/documents/ecumenical-diakonia-document-en.pdf

men from the full enjoyment of their rights. In addition, eradicating poverty also requires growing opportunities for decent and fairly compensated work for all in dynamic and sustainable economies.”³⁵

The Ecumenical Diakonia working document also argues that:

“From a faith perspective, economy is a means of securing fullness of life, as intended in God’s care of all of creation. Economy is never an objective in itself; it should be regarded as an autonomous reality, free to establish its own norms and objective. The Economy of Life rejects as heresy absolute faith in the market and its mechanism, and condemns trust in Mammon as idolatry. It confesses that the earth and all that is in it belong to God (Psalms 24:1), and there is enough for all our needs if we share God’s resources.”³⁶

Conclusion

Globalization as a concept has risen and fallen; it has had its heyday. Indeed, some pundits have expressed the view that we are now living in a post-globalization era. While there are indeed shocking signs in current times of ignoring or utilizing international law and international agreements for one powerful country’s own purposes, of the deconstruction of multilateral regulations and accountability, in fact these have always been around us for many years if disguised in neoliberal rhetoric and economic illusions. Though globalization may have lost some of its original luster, many of the structural changes it has wrought over several decades are unlikely to go away soon and continue to demand personal and institutional repentance as well as national and global rules governed by justice and the common good. In other words, the question first raised at the Harare Assembly in 1999, “how do we live our faith in a time of globalization?” – continues to be relevant for the WCC, for churches and for theology today.

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35 — ACT Alliance et al., “Called to Transformative Action. Ecumenical Diakonia”, revised draft, 17 April 2018: 60, www.lutheranworld.org/sites/default/files/2018/documents/ecumenical-diakonia-document-en.pdf

36 — ACT Alliance (2018): 47

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Chapter 22**African perspectives on values of economy, caring and sharing**Agnes R. M. Abuom¹**1. Introduction**

The ‘sharing economy’ continues to attract a great deal of attention and scrutiny. Global companies such as Airbnb and Uber have registered explosive growth rates over the past couple of years, which,

in turn, has led to regulatory battles with governments and local authorities. Many who front the new paradigm claim that the new technologies will yield incredible results such as empowerment of ordinary people, efficiency, and even enhance environmental conservation. Critics denounce them for being about economic self-interest rather than sharing, and for being predatory and exploitative. Not surprisingly, the reality is more complex. This paper thus seeks to dissect issues encompassing the whole economy of sharing and caring in relation to how the existing values of caring and sharing for each other in Africa has set the stage for the modern paradigm. It further discusses what has been Africa’s response to the new paradigm and the continent’s key concerns. It is notable that as much as critics are concerned about the predatory nature of ‘For Profit Companies’ taking a huge pie of the market, technologies of peer-to-peer economic activity being offered are viably powerful instruments for nurturing genuine practices of sharing and cooperation in the production and consumption of goods and services.

Furthermore, the ancient Sharing and Caring nature of societies in Africa works well to propagate adoption of this idea. However, there is need for slight modifications and

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improvements in management of such platforms to prevent the perception of alienation of local companies and especially to ensure the wholesomeness of the web of life. An African perspective should be noted subscribes to the thinking that the World Council of Churches has since the *EL Escorial Consultation in 1987 on Sharing of Resources* articulated. The understanding and values therein affirm that all resources are God given and for the use of the common good and not for individuals at the expense of community welfare. Sharing and caring are to enhance community sustenance and ascertain prolongation of life.

The concept of sharing economy within traditional economic paradigm has become a global phenomenon and after capturing several markets across North America, Europe, and Asia, it is now finding its way in Africa. It is essential to observe that the African perspective of economic life is to be seen from a household standpoint.

The pre-existing sharing and caring culture in several African countries and many pre- industrial societies makes this business concept gain good momentum across the continent.

In addition to global companies, such as Uber and Airbnb, which have witnessed exponential growth in their limited years of business in this region, there are a host of home-grown players that are offering a niche and country-specific services in this space. At the same time, sharing and caring economic business does face a great deal of challenges in Africa's complex markets. Part of the challenge is that values of economy of sharing and caring from an African perspective are not fully imbibed in the new thinking.

An African perspective in terms of values is located within the household and larger community as an integral part of the web of life. In other words the health and wealth of an individual can only be ascertained in relationship to the community and the rest of nature.

Thus individuals are woven together with rights, responsibilities and obligations. The organic link between the household/community and creation sets the basis for rules of engagements, nature and scope of appropriation of resources. It is therefore within this African understanding that values of economy of sharing and caring have to be understood. The care and sharing is not a preserve of human life only, rather it is for the entire web of life. This ensures that there is the cementing of the web to avoid leakage and ensure

continuity in perpetuity for future generations. Thus this essay not only seeks to shade some light on the pre-existence of a sharing and caring culture in Africa, but also attempts to explain how that moral/ethical environment is setting the ground for economy of sharing in a modernized organizational structure. Moreover, given that Africa is the epicenter of Christianity and very religious, it is of importance to establish the convergence of the religious and cultural values.

1.1 What has led to emergence of a paradigm shift towards an economy of sharing worldwide?

One of the most prominent publications on sharing economy, Shareable Magazine², worked together with The Latitude organization³ in 2010 to develop the key forces behind the high growth rate of sharing economy. Thanks to the publication, we can now categorize the key forces into four main factors that supported the emergence of the sharing economy: First is Technology which brings together web and mobile technologies ranking them as an integral player in building large-scale sharing communities. This is due to the ability to offer a speedy interaction that aide the supply-demand cycle. A number of scholars however point out that Sharing, renting and the barter trade already existed before the internet technology. However, they do agree that the emergence of new web and mobile technologies has breathed life into the sharing economy. Second, growing Environmental concerns play a key role as many people subscribing to the Sharing Economy tend to do so in efforts to save the environment. It is important to note that in scarcity, sharing assets and resources translates to collaborating for more sustainable ways of living. Third, Economizing on cash is considered to be the common reason that has led to increased uptake of the Sharing concept in the world. Everyone wants to save money and if there is an opportunity to do so, many of them easily grab it. It is even crucial during a global recession which results in people losing their purchasing power, but coincidentally gain increased awareness about better purchasing decisions. Interestingly ‘saving money’ can be considered to be similar to ‘bettering the society and environment’ as the two are key during the actual decision making process.

Fourth and final, Community networks are seen as another key player that has led to the emergence of Sharing Economy. In fact, the new shift can be perceived as reincarnation of the ancient concept of community.

In Africa, Caring and Sharing is a key characteristic of the traditional setup that is fast dying with globalization.

² — See: <https://creativecommons.org/2010/06/10/shareable-magazine/>

³ — See: www.thelatitudeproject.com

By far, a typical African definition for the term, “community” sounds contrary from purely Western world-view of the same word “community”. Relationship networking basically is as old as man. It has been a determinant factor for the community life between members. Legum and Mmari analysed the theory of incorporation among communities in Tanzania and observed that this is what brings in the idea that role conflicts were at a very minimal level since community members were well recruited to assume their responsibilities.⁴ Elders were key instructors and nobody would question about it. Additional to the above indicator is, respecting the morals, beliefs, customs, traditions and laws. These were strongly observed. Mbiti, for instance remarks that, “African people take the moral life seriously.”⁵ It is thus very important to understand the Caring and Sharing values in Africa for anyone to analyze the impact of globalization on such morals.

1.2 The sharing and caring culture in Africa

Human beings are endowed with free agency and the attribution of certain characteristics which define life is shaped. Most often defined as a practice or virtue rather than a theory as such, ‘care’ involves maintaining the world of, and meeting the needs of, our self and others. It builds on the motivation to care for those who are dependent and vulnerable, and it is inspired by both memories of being cared for and the idealizations of self. Following in the sentimentalist tradition of moral theory, care ethics affirms the importance of caring motivation, emotion and the body in moral deliberation, as well as reasoning from particulars.

African ethics for a long time fronted the concept of sharing and caring. It continues to be the basis of many African societies where communities take care of each other regardless of the economic gains.

Very few would argue against the fact that the pre-existent sharing and caring culture has been a key in nurturing the economy sharing model that has been received with mixed reactions throughout the continent.

4 — Colin Legum and G. R. V. Mmari, (eds): *Mwalimu: The Influence of Nyerere*. Lawrenceville: Africa World Press, (1995)

5 — John Mbiti, *Introduction into African Religion*. Second Edition. Heinemann Educational Publishers Oxford (1991)

2. Mutual Caring and Sharing

As it has been noted, mutual relationship between community members was among the key issues that characterized the African traditional setup. Studies on this concept have long underlined disappointment that some African mutual caring and sharing have been lost to the West. It is this unrecognized exportation of the sharing and caring values to the West that has seen a new economic model being shipped back to the continent with a formal organization structure. “Sense of African brotherhood/sisterhood and relatedness based on Charity... In time of food scarcity sharing is still practiced by many”.⁶ This kind of relationship looks informal yet regarded as a significant virtue among Africans. The forces behind were not as those influenced by pseudo-community but rather, due to the spirit of love, care and sharing. This is best captured in the ‘Ubuntu’ philosophy that has been cited as in various studies on the need to care and share among Africans.

2.1 Ubuntu philosophy

Ubuntu is a traditional African philosophy, defined as communicating, caring, and sharing with human beings in harmony with all of creation. It embraces hospitality, caring about others, being willing to go the extra mile for the sake of another.

Africans believe that a person is a person through other persons and humanity is bound inextricably with yours. When I dehumanize you, I inexorably dehumanize myself. The solitary human being is a contraction in terms. Therefore, you seek to work for the common benefit because your humanity comes into its own in the community and belonging.⁷ Hence, in many instances the application of Ubuntu has benefited humanity, such as after the apartheid era in South Africa. Ubuntu was implemented for those who were victimized to restore to them justice through truth and reconciliation. Thus, Ubuntu is the positive form of what happened during the negative apartheid era that stood for all that was oppressive and demoralizing in South Africa. The most serious consideration is the individual in

6 — Douglas Waruta: Pastoral Counselling in the African Perspective, in D. W. Waruta, Ed., *Caring and Sharing: Pastoral Counselling in the African Perspective*, Nairobi: Uzima Press.. All Africa Journal of Theology, Sponsored by the All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC) and Conference of African Theological Institutions (CATI), Vol. 1. : Starmat Designers & Allied, Nairobi (1995)

7 — Desmond Tutu: *No Future without Forgiveness*, Image Boks (2000); see also: Michael Battle: *Reconciliation: The Ubuntu Theology of Desmond Tutu*, Pilgrim PR, Revised 2009

the community, and that “Ubuntu better captures the underlying African world-view that expresses Africa’s egalitarian, humanistic, interconnectedness, communitarian and participatory democratic values”.⁸

Originally, African people practiced what was held to have common importance to all members of the community as contrasted to arbitrary attitude. Moments of sickness cases, natural disasters, funerals, etc. community members not only sympathized with victims but empathized i.e. showed their practical care. Communication was well applied in settling of disputes and reconciliations and learned to grow together. At child birth, for instance, other women would freely and happily take up responsibilities – bringing firewood, fetching water and do the cooking – that would be otherwise be done by the one who may have given birth.

At family level also, the concept of orphanages and child adoption was so uncommon. It was, instead, universally accepted for instance among the ‘*Nyiramba*’ as it is in many cultures of Tanzania that the youngest son is charged with the responsibility of establishing his homestead within his parent’s boma mainly in order to care for them when they become old. Furthermore, in the same manner the ‘*Haya*’ culture, Lutahoire reports that the home of a son is located near the father’s homestead; for it is part of the prestige and honor of the father and mother to have their son’s house built near their own home.⁹ Among the Ashanti of Ghana, the typical household consists an old woman, her sons, and daughters, and the daughter’s children....In any of these...the household functions as the community.¹⁰ Communities have always demonstrated a need to prepare community future activists who are responsible for their upkeep.

2.2 Dowry as a form of Economy Sharing

Across the African continent, the tradition of the dowry remains a key pillar of unifying a man and woman in matrimony. Among the Southern African Zulu tribe the process is known as *Lobola*, the Igbo tribe of West Africa call it *Ikpo Onu aku Nwayi* and in the East African state of Tanzania it is referred to as *Mahari*. The history of many sub-Saharan countries reveals that the practice of bride price was borne out of an agricultural and cattle-based economy where wealth and status were exhibited by how big your family was and how much livestock you owned. A wedding represented the loss of a daughter to a family, hence the loss of labour and someone to tend to younger children within the family. A young man, in paying bride price, would give the bride’s family gifts of livestock to

8 — O. Oko Elechi, Sherill V. C. Morris, Edward J. Schauer: Restoring Justice (Ubuntu): An African Perspective, in: International Criminal Justice Review, February 16, 2010, in: <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/1057567710361719>

9 — Sebastian Kompaan Lutahoire: The Relevance of the Human Life Cycle for Marriage and Family Education and Counseling Among the Bantu in the West Lake Region of Tanzania, South Africa, Claremont (1974)

10 — Grunlan, Stephen and Mayers, Marvin K.: Cultural Anthropology. A Christian Perspective. Grand Rapids, Michigan (1988)

replenish labour and to act as a source of food; cows and goats therefore were and are still typically offered as gifts to the bride's family.

For instance, the Maasai, who are found in both Kenya and Tanzania, dowry would always come in the form of livestock. The two families would agree on the exact number of livestock heads to be offered. Being a pastoral community that values livestock, the number could be as high as 100 heads of cattle. This would be seen as significant boost to the economic status of the woman's family. By sharing wealth, communities would coexist and care for each other long after the marriage. This further signified honour to the family of the bride while the groom demonstrated that he can provide for his wife and ultimately for the new family the union will create.

In the Shona a man has to pay what is known as '*roora*' in order to marry a woman. The process itself doesn't happen all in one go; rather it is a series of stages acknowledging the family for their work in raising the daughter. These include the payment of the '*mbereko*' in the form of a blanket which acknowledges the mother carrying her daughter on her back as an infant as well as '*majasi*' to the parents of the bride for their wedding clothes which usually are worn at the religious wedding ceremony. The bride's siblings also receive presents, usually in the form of money. Although this practice varies across Africa, the groom expresses appreciation for the family of the bride through gifts of palm wine, blankets, beer and pots in places like Kenya and Nigeria.

In the modern era, this has taken on a new form, that of money. Across Africa, there is a growing preference for money as a form of dowry rather than cattle. The two families essentially just meet to agree on the exact amount required for a woman's hand in marriage. This has led to many critics arguing against it claiming many consider it as a form of selling a human being thereby undermining the essence of wealth sharing.

2.3 Ujamaa in Tanzania

Perhaps a better example of Africa's attempt at developing a Shared Economy model was in Tanzania through Ujamaa philosophy.

Ujamaa was the social and economic policy developed by Tanzania independence President famously known as Mwalimu Julius Nyerere from 1964 to 1985. The philosophy relied on collective agriculture, under a process called villagization. President Nyerere set to build a fully functioning economy based on values of caring and sharing. He intended to encourage collective effort in agricultural production through villagization. From 1968 to 1971, the village population rose from 58,000 people to upwards of 1.5 million. This led the government to enforce villagization with legislation, making it compulsory. Due to the

effectiveness of this law, by 1976 approximately 90 percent of the rural population in Tanzania lived in villages. This indicates that roughly 11 million people were forced to resettle. This is a negative effect of the Ujamaa system, as people were reluctant to abandon their homes and were often forced to do so against their will. For many, this meant abandoning family members, churches, and cemeteries, all of which were significant from an ancestral point of view. President Nyerere believed development could only occur when Africans strive to further develop themselves. He sought to harness labor based on people's will to help each other achieve a common goal.

One of the major problems with the implementation of Ujamaa policy was the way in which the rural population was coerced into cultivating agricultural goods in communal farms. In other words, this rural development was imposed on the people, not decided upon by the people themselves.

One may question why people would have wanted to work longer and harder on crops they were unfamiliar with when they previously survived from subsistence farming and agricultural cultivation for self-consumption. Overall, the government failed to assist the villages by neglecting to provide villagers with the necessary skills to manage a village. The transformation programs consisted of settled farmers using modern technology given to them by the World Bank to farm whilst under the supervision of World Bank employees acting as village managers. This exploited villagers as it allowed them to be cheap labour in the eyes of the World Bank. Similar to the entrance of financial institutions, the NGOs that were allowed to enter post-colonial Tanzania followed the state's agenda. In other words, these NGOs, including Oxfam and Christian Aid, were essentially state actors as they were heavily involved in the Ujamaa process. Christian Aid heavily supported the villagization process from 1973 to 1975 even though the organization was fully aware of the violence used to force the rural population into villages. Critics of this plan are that the regime failed to care about what Africans valued most and went on to brutalize them into adopting the plan, leading to its failure.¹¹

¹¹ — Zakji Ergas: Why Did the Ujamaa Village Policy Fail? – Towards a Global Analysis, in: *The Journal of Modern African Studies* Vol. 18, No. 3 (Sep., 1980), pp. 387-410

3. The new paradigm that is economy sharing and caring

Fast-forward and we have a modernized paradigm that is economy sharing which has shocked traditional markets to the core. Sharing economy businesses have been growing at an accelerating rate globally with leaders such as Airbnb and Uber taking over their traditional hospitality and travel competitors and becoming the largest players in the tourism and passenger transport sectors, respectively. After gaining huge market in several mature economies, the asset-light collaborative economic model is now making its presence felt in Africa. With profits from developed countries, such big companies predated on the existing market is a no brainer. With Africa having a vast youth population and a growing middle class, several markets in the African continent offer a huge growth potential for companies operating the sharing economy model.

In 2016, Airbnb (A company that helps with travel hosting services for tourists globally) saw a 95 percent rise in the number of house listings in the continent, which increased from about 39,500 in 2015 to 77,000 in 2016. Furthermore, online users of its platform hit 765,000 in 2016, thus registering an amazing 143 percent rise. Another company earlier mentioned in this paper is Uber, which has entered the transport industry with a storm offering an easier way to order cabs in cities. Uber entered Africa in 2013 through Johannesburg and has expanded into 15 cities across eight African countries in a span of just four years and

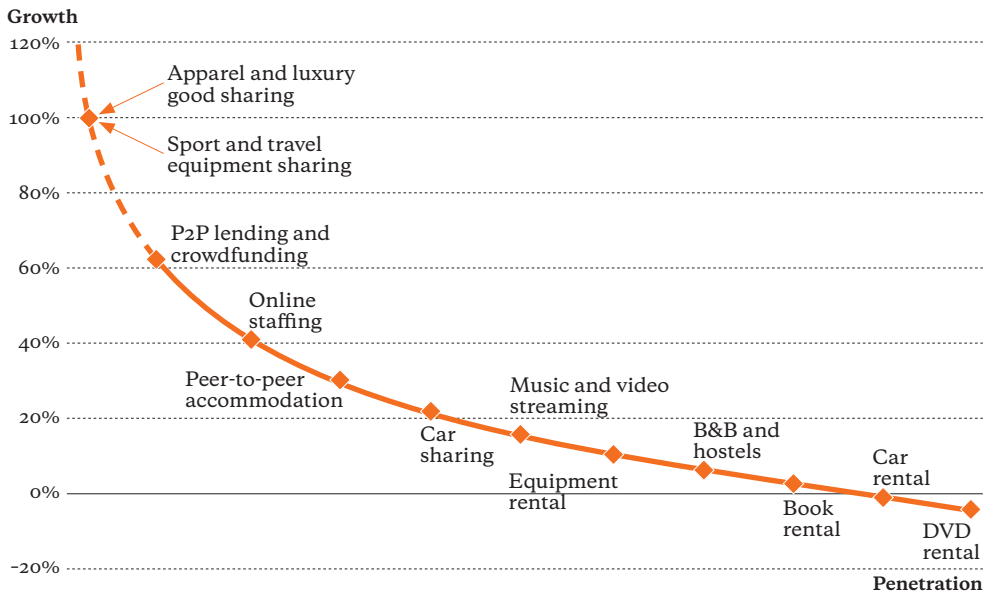


Figure 1: Maturity growth expectations of sharing industries
 Source: Schroders, PWC Date: 2016

has over 60,000 partnering drivers across the continent. Scholars who have been monitoring the industry observe that this remarkable growth is helped by a rapidly growing middle class that is looking for convenient and reasonable solutions. Additionally, the sharing economy concept helps Africans bridge service gaps created by inadequate resources and infrastructure present in the continent. Below is a graph showing the expected sharing economy growth rate and fields that are seen as viable ventures in the continent.

3.1 Modern African economy of sharing attempts in response to the invasion of international companies

With disruption of industries created by global giants, local operators in Africa had to act fast and smart to thrive.

There is thus a host of exciting African inroads into the sharing economy, some 100 percent domestic, others a beneficial blend of Western and African know-how.

An example of such a blend is Nigeria’s Amazon-like company, Jumia – which is an online shopping store with five million subscribers, 15 million monthly users and a presence in 16 countries. The same is operating in Ghana, where another company, swiftly, has entered the sharing economy by facilitating the sharing of shipping containers. By seeking out empty space in shipping containers, swiftly reduces shipping inefficiencies, and facilitates shipping for small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) and individuals who could otherwise not afford to do so. By sharing costs and collaborating, Ghanaian businesses and individuals can access land, sea and air goods transport. This is especially important for economic diversification and the key role played by small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) in overall economic health. Moreover, greater access to shipping facilitates more access to international markets, allowing more companies and individuals to export sooner, helping drive sustainable export driven growth in Ghana and beyond.

In Tanzania there is the newly created Worknasi – an online platform for office and meeting space sharing for businesses, freelancers and other users.¹² While similar apps exist elsewhere, the office sharing market is virtually untapped in Africa. Co-founder Edgar Mwampinge hopes his company can help other African entrepreneurs access the kinds of facilities traditionally closed to them. “As a startup you can’t afford to spend huge

12 – See: <https://worknasi.com>

amounts of money for an office: that is too risky because you can't predict what will happen in a year, let alone three months."¹³

While similar services exist outside Africa, Swiftly¹⁴ aims to corner the regional market and distinguish itself by not charging consumers a matching fee. Instead, Swiftly generates income from fees leveraged on freight forwarders, who in return save money on advertising budgets and are connected with more customers, hassle free. Here are some fundamental principles of Economy sharing.

3.2 African concerns about the new paradigm: sharing isn't always caring

The sharing economy appears to be an innovative idea that we can only welcome as it was initially an African way of life. However, while numerous cosmopolitan users might be open to the idea of sharing their rides, food, and living rooms with strangers, others might furrow their eyebrows just at the thought. Sharing economy practices are not risk- or nuisance-free for their users or for third parties.

An example of this is private kitchen offerings where one can order dinner at a stranger's place. While this might be economical, restaurants have often complained that these private kitchens are not licensed, not subject to health or safety standards, and may put the health of customers at risk. Moreover, neighbors of Airbnb hosts around the world have complained that they do not wish to transform their buildings into hotels, sharing access to common facilities with total strangers. These concerns have also drawn the attention of regulators. In the case of Uber, the company guarantees criminal background checks on all drivers, and that all drivers have sufficient insurance and their vehicle inspected. However, one may wonder how transparent and rigorous these inspections and background checks are. Another question that may arise is whether these drivers are self-employed entrepreneurs or under the control of Uber. Uber has argued that the company is just creating a business model and these drivers are independent. However, if something goes wrong

13 — See Edgar Mwampinge, quoted on his website: <http://disrupt-africa.com/2017/04/tanzanias-worknais-is-airbnb-for-african-office-space/>

14 — See: <https://swiftly.global>

with this sharing practice, customers might be better protected if Uber could be held liable. The same argument goes for Airbnb: hosts are required to comply with local regulations. Airbnb only facilitates the contact between hosts and travelers and ensures the payment. Yet, more recently it has been announced that the company will start collecting local taxes for their hosts. The following section analyzes the reasons for traditional taxi regulation and questions whether these arguments are equally applicable to Uber and similar network transportation systems in the sharing economy. The mentioned concerns are just some of the aspects that should be brought to attention regarding these online platforms that facilitate contact between individuals. In addition, the quality and reliability of shareable goods and services are highly dependent on the effectiveness of peer-review systems. Airbnb started its business by sending employees to New York City to meet hosts in person. However, with the expansion of its business this is far from being possible. The system's safety and protection against fraud relies heavily on peer-reviews and the fact that the payment will only be transferred to the host after the traveler has checked in. Travelers may nonetheless see their reservations suddenly cancelled – something that would rarely happen in the case of a hotel. Travelers may also find houses that do not comply with safety and fire regulations, or that do not comply with common standards of hygiene.

3.3 Illusion of ‘partnership’

The companies disguise the practices of labour exploitation under the rhetoric of freedom, flexibility and partnership. The rhetoric relies upon the conventional idea of work – where employers own the production force and pay hourly wages. The fact that the companies only provide the app is overemphasized to maintain an impression that the drivers are not employees. Far from being a neutral platform, the app creates a hierarchy of customers-middleman-drivers. The company is at the top of the power ladder. Meanwhile, ‘customers act as managers’ as their ratings determine the drivers’ eligibility for bonuses. While ratings can ensure service quality, customers’ ignorance can badly affect drivers. A friend of mine was reluctant to give five stars because she thinks perfection is only for God; while for the drivers, four is a failing grade. In case of dispute, the companies almost surely champion customers over drivers. An interviewee told me Grab suspended his friend for three days because a customer’s review had mistaken him for another driver. The image of ‘micro-entrepreneur’ compels drivers to use their own production force and cover their own costs for petrol, parking, maintenance, vehicle insurance and communication.

The more they work, the higher the expense and the greater the risks. At the end, the company wields the upper hand in determining labor terms. After cutting drivers’ subsidy, the current maneuver is to regularly decrease the amount of bonus as well as increase the required performance. Labor terms are frequently changed to suit the company’s interests while mechanisms of negotiation are largely absent. Drivers have tried to organize collective bargaining via protests. But, as of 2017, the companies officially suspend drivers who initiate, co-ordinate and join any form of demonstrations.

4. Future challenges and opportunities

Because of the economic crisis, unemployment rates have risen; the purchasing power of consumers has declined; and bank loans have become more difficult to obtain. Such factors have resulted in individuals looking to both earn and save money.

Sharing is a common method in which individuals, particularly among low-income groups, have saved money. For example, close-knit, low-income individuals often share expenses and transportation. They also provide social and emotional support and barter services such as childcare.

Though sharing was prevalent among low-income groups before the digital age, there have been concerns about increasing levels of mistrust in disadvantaged neighborhoods and a general decline in social capital. Levels of poverty and unemployment especially along gender lines and climate injustice are troubling the souls of many an African ordinary citizen.

Given the potential for increased social capital, income, reciprocity and the increasing access to information and communication technologies (ICTs) in disadvantaged communities, the digital-sharing economy could greatly benefit these communities.

The emergence of digital platforms such as Amazon Mechanical Turk¹⁵ (AMT) has seen an uptake among low income groups in India; however, workers in developing countries are not yet completing tasks for a living. Past research investigating employment technologies for individuals with varying socioeconomic and criminal backgrounds suggest that factors such as the lack of credit, the need for money upfront, and reluctance to provide personal and credit card information online may prevent individuals from using such.

Conclusion

While the concept of sharing economy seems to fit perfectly in the African lives, it does require the companies to follow a much localized approach accounting for specific regional dynamics in order to blend with the countries' local fabric. While this gives an advantage to the local companies that better understand customer needs, it becomes difficult for

them to match the scale of global leaders who have hefty marketing budgets. Although sharing economy has largely captured the travel and passenger transport, with medical, education, and several other vocational services also seeing new businesses entering with sharing economy model, it is the crowd financing segment that might see the next boom in Africa. The African region houses several dynamically emerging economies, with huge hunger for capital, and digital crowd funding platforms can help small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) connect with potential investors, and help African start-ups with seed capital. In addition to basic investment, these platforms can also offer mentoring opportunities to small start-ups. While there already are a couple of companies, such as VC4Africa, that are operating in this space, crowd financing as a sharing economy business still has great potential to be tapped in Africa, especially beyond the cities of Johannesburg and Cape Town, where ideas are in abundance but there is lack of investment and support.

It is important to also observe that the African values and conceptual framework is based on economy of life in which life, death and destiny determine economic activity. As stated earlier, life is not lived in isolation which current dominant economic paradigm subscribes to; and death is mourned, celebrated and commemorated linking the unborn, living and ancestors. Hence any economic activity is informed by the chain of generational linkages in reference to the rest of creation. Our identities in terms of names are very much part of the living and the ancestors.

The current global economic model negate the very essence of African values of sharing and caring as the latter confirm the need for justice, egalitarianism and sustainability.

Each generation has specific challenges to grapple with and for the African and global community today, the challenges include how to restore values of a life sustaining economic paradigm and how to reconstruct movements and cultures that affirm justice, peace and integrity of all creation.

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Chapter 23

“Re-forming Community Diaconia and Working Towards a Convivial Economy in the Context of Eastern and Central Europe – interdiac Perspectives”

Janka Adameova¹

Introduction

This chapter will reflect on the development of interdiac, which is an innovative network academy working to support diaconia and Christian social practice in Central and Eastern Europe. In the work of interdiac² we have developed a participatory approach both to the development of our self-understanding and definition of our aims and to our approach to learning and practice. This requires time to listen to each other across the different historical, cultural and political borders that so easily divide people and communities in the region. The background shared particularly is in the formerly centrally planned economies because this factor still creates some specific issues and reflects some common issues.

The Regional Context

The fifteen partner organisations of interdiac are active across the Central and Eastern European region and it is important to understand the specific challenges faced and to recognise both commonalities and differences.

1 — Janka Adameova is Manager of the cross-border diaconal network of interdiac in Český Těšín – Czech Republic. See also: Jana Adameova: Grenzüberschreitende diakonische Netzwerke – Grundlagen, Kriterien und Prozesse der Stabilisierung sozialwirtschaftlicher Ablauforganisation am Beispiel vom interdiac, AV Akademikerverlag 2015

2 — More information about interdiac is to be found on the web site: www.interdiac.eu

The shadow of the former communist system still has an impact across the region even though the major system changes took place nearly 30 years ago!

It is also important not only to recognise the diversity of the region, but also the diversity of the churches' experience of communism as it still affects the present context.

The transformation processes in the region have led different countries to varied levels of the recognition and development of civil society, but overall civil society remains underdeveloped. The creation of welfare state and social security provisions are also uneven and diverse. People have been confronted with political changes in the past decades, which have promised new hope for the future which have not always delivered and in fact in some cases, promising developments have gone into 'reverse'.

Some countries and some regions of countries have quite strong economies, but many are suffering from economic collapse to the extent that both industrial and agricultural employment has all but disappeared. Very different models of welfare, which have been built (or not) depend on previous models from the 'communist' times plus memories of welfare and diaconia from 'pre-communist' times as well as by copying from 'western' models. On top of this, the phenomenon of short term and permanent out migration is also big problem for some countries and regions. The question of participation in political and economic life is also on the agenda for civil society and the churches. However, it is especially the question of the role of the church and diaconia in issues of work, economy and the environment which is often not developed at all. One lens, which we used to view this, was the question of 'justice' – especially economic justice. Another is the development of civil society and local self-organisation, which also has a problematic history, since autonomous initiative and self-organisation, was mostly not permitted in the former system. Participation in civil society has been recognised by UNDP research as an area needed to overcome social exclusion alongside economic inclusion and functioning comprehensive health, education and welfare services.³

Furthermore, the creation of democracy is still undergoing a learning and formation process. However, in some cases achieved developments are being negated or undermined politically and by growing conflicts as well as corruption which is evident in quite many contexts. As already mentioned, in many countries, the lack of a functioning and valued civil society reinforces alienation and reduces self-respect by denying an important means through which people can effectively take action to create change in their situation. Alongside this, the consequences of the financial and consequent political crisis with its wider global implications have had a negative impact on the developments in particular societies.

3 — 'Beyond Transition, Towards Inclusive Societies', UNDP, Bratislava, 2011

The breakdown of the former centrally planned economies opened the whole European space to consumer pressures. In this process,

the combination of individualism and consumer values alongside the pressure of financial markets have contributed to the splitting of society.

There is a widening gap between a smaller group of very affluent people, and a growing number of people living in poverty across the region, although again, there are differences between countries. However, in general, the continued growth of inequality is antithetical to the promotion of the common good of all. Previous generations had experienced shortages of even the most basic goods and services and a lack of resources to meet basic needs. These conditions have also now returned to some regions and for some groups in Eastern Europe. Critical new factors are the drive to keep consumption led demand growing (not relating this to basic needs), growing indebtedness and the perceived priority of restoring the finance system. This means official efforts to deal with the economic situation may create more poverty and still do not address basic needs.

Furthermore, the extreme nationalistic movements and communist parties have recently secured more votes and have gained an influence on public life, in some cases coming into power.

Populist politics is leading to a harsher climate which is becoming more hostile to minorities and excluded groups, especially asylum seekers, refugees and other immigrants.

This fast-changing regional social, economic and political context is very much shaped by tension and conflict situations of different kinds and on several levels, from the personal to the institutional and from the community to the societal level. The roots of the open and/or hidden conflicts often lie in a lack of understanding and reflection on human diversity, in terms of identity, culture, religion, language, ability, race and nation.

At the same time our interdiac partners wanted to discuss the fact that communities in many Eastern European countries had been living with diversity for generations. Regularly coming to the top of the agenda was the presence of Roma minorities in many countries and also the fact that the present borders of Europe cut different minorities off from adjoining states where they are a majority. Furthermore, inside national territories, religion

seems to play a role in resurgent national identities, which creates difficulties for some in everyday life and for the churches. This gives added salience and urgency to efforts for ecumenical and inter-faith work.

Diaconal organisations and churches are a part of these changes and are addressing the reality that the systems which are very much shaped by historical experience and memory also reflect certain societal & cultural patterns. Alongside the responses to the social phenomena through diaconal action, they also have to deal with the question of identity in very complex surroundings and with the fact that religion, identity and nationality cross-cut in ways which raise questions in many contexts.

The demand and expressed need to respond to these challenges arose directly from the organisations who participate in the interdiac training, development and networking activities. The participatory development of interdiac is focussed in the membership of the so-called Honorary Council which is the policy forum of the Academy.⁴

The Development of interdiac

The International Academy for Diaconia and Social Action (interdiac) has been on the way since 2008, growing as learning and living community. Our journey started 11 years ago with a strong belief in diaconia as working for change in people's lives, in communities and in the societies where they live.

Two diaconal social service providers and a University supporter founded interdiac along with a growing number of partner organisations in the Central and Eastern European region. This gradually expanding number of partner organisations and a second University partner play a key role in interdiac development.⁵ The interdiac network provides a space and resources for learning, development and research, which is grounded in the regional context and specific concerns of all the partners.

interdiac creates learning programmes to support innovative approaches to diaconia and Christian social action. The main characteristics for the learning programmes are to focus on needs and issues defined by interdiac partners and to integrate theory and practice with theological reflection and spirituality.

⁴ — A diverse network of 15 interdiac partners in 13 Central and Eastern European countries participate in developing the work of interdiac by supporting the design, delivery and evaluation of interdiac programmes & identifying expert resource people: see www.interdiac.eu/about-us

⁵ — see www.interdiac.eu/about-us

interdiac uses a blended learning approach which integrates practice-based learning and theory using different platforms and media to facilitate learning processes.

The on-going interdiac Research Platform shares the resources and insights of partners working on specific research theme areas, currently, 'Youth on the Margins' and 'People on the Move' as well as a project to deepen the understanding of diaconia expressed by different churches across the region. Reflecting on the theology and the values of the practice of diaconia is a corner stone of the vision we strive to work towards. Furthermore, interdiac works for knowledge development not only with its partner organisations in the region but also with other partners worldwide.

interdiac perspectives on Diaconal Practice

The partner organisations and participants in interdiac learning and developmental programmes have recognised the need to develop their work in a wider context and to adopt new strategies to address newly emerging and fast changing social phenomena. As well as the interdiac programmes themselves, the partnership with LWF has also opened up new analysis and possibilities for development.

One of the most important aspects expressed is the need for diaconia and Christian social action to be based on more thorough and competent analysis of the situation and context.

In the past many actions have begun without careful analysis and this has led to ineffective short-term actions, project failures or burn out. In some cases, donor agencies have 'driven' project development according to their priorities which sometimes override local priorities. This has included a deeper analysis of the processes towards social inclusion and the necessary diaconal practices which this implies. The analysis and strategy development supported by interdiac also includes the need to impact policies in church and society. As an example of the result of this process, interdiac organised an international seminar which launched the

‘Bratislava Declaration on Strategies to Overcome Social Exclusion’.⁶

Diaconia needs to develop a strategy of working with and on behalf of people and communities who are excluded to create change at different levels from local to national to international. This implies openness and flexibility in responding to new and emerging needs or in developing new working methods.

Based on the experience of interdiac, if community diaconia is going to meet the challenges of the changing context it will need to be based on working approaches that build in participation and empowerment from the start. It will be based on long term processes of building on relationships with people and implies a longer-term funding and support strategy. Diaconia in local communities needs creative people and a readiness to begin to act without having all the structures clearly in place. The reason for this is that the basis of local diaconal work is an inductive approach that does not start with preconceptions of the definition of the problem or the solution. It is clear that the development of community based diaconal practice that is empowering and transformative needs to be grounded in a leadership model that combines the ability to take initiative with an ability to listen to and reflect with people. On each step of the way, care has to be taken not to ‘leave the people behind’!

Seeking Conviviality

A core element in the interdiac development journey has been the promotion of joint initiatives which catch the energy of the partners and therefore create a ‘sparkle’ which then gets its expression in the activities of people in the diverse living and working environments across the region and beyond. I remember very well one of these ‘sparkling moments’! We were in the process of giving a name to the ideas we wanted to work with and reflecting on them in a light of the analysis of previous actions by members of the network. At the same time these reflections were stimulating our forward look and creating a future vision.

The particular moment was in February 2011 when Tony Addy sharpened up one of our reflection sessions, bringing a bunch of ideas together in this phrase:

‘interdiac works for social justice, peace and conviviality’. He added that, *‘conviviality can be understood as the art and practice of living together’* So, that is how ‘conviviality’ was born as a diaconal concept and found its family roots in interdiac!

6 — Download from: www.interdiac.eu

interdiac seeks conviviality ‘the art and practice of living together’ and works for the social conditions that underpin conviviality.

The concept of conviviality helps us, because it is about openness and working through the differences between us. It actually links to diaconia and the diaconal call. We should be open especially to the ‘other’ who is different, who has a different biography and background.

We have discovered that diversity can also be enriching, and the sharing process breaks down fear and stereotypes. Respecting diversity gives an enriching momentum to interdiac programmes.

But there was another discovery.

We normally think the call to diaconal service comes from God, but we found in many of our stories that the ‘call’ comes from the ‘other person’ who is marginalised, excluded or vulnerable.

Recently, at an international seminar in Tallinn we heard the touching story of Mati, a leader of the Peeteli church diaconia centre who has been following the call from the kids on the street which he heard one morning at 2.00 am 22 years ago! This process started with a ‘very banal’ action and reaction. While seeing a group of 4 children in the slum area in the northern part of Tallinn, he stopped the car and asked the question: “Are you hungry?” As a positive answer to this question, he brought a plastic bag full of sausages and bread. The struggle as to whether and how continue after this one-night action was not an easy process, especially because of Mati’s different life expectation from life. But the call from these ‘forgotten children’ visible in the late night was so strong that has lasted till now. It continues to bring new hope for the lives of other many children living in this nationally diverse part of Tallinn. At the same time, this is not only a new start for these children, but the openness to meet ‘other’ and receive from them reveals unearned gifts, a grace which informs and shapes the lives of those working with these kids as professionals and volunteers and transforms the church. This echoes the understanding that God is especially present in marginalised and oppressed people and that we all have something to give, but we each also receive many gifts.

This is a key to diaconal action that we are all givers and receivers. Reciprocity and participation support the dignity and lift up the self-esteem of the individual person.

The treasure of this approach is that it recognises that everybody has gifts to bring. But more than that, it puts an emphasis on equal sharing of biography and resources. It recognises that we are formed through relationships and experiences, positive and negative. As we are formed by relationships, we use relationships to create change. It means equal participation, transparent processes and trust building. Conviviality disappears if there is no trust.

This invites us to reflect on our everyday life in terms of openness and relatedness. But it also invites a reflection on professional practice and the way in which professionals, be they social workers, pastoral workers or others working in relation to people to reflect on how their own 'service model' and their own organisation or church is also seeking conviviality. Furthermore, it has implications for the structures of the economy and society and for politicians and those involved in decisions about work and economy. It encourages a reflection on and response to changes in the present economic and political priorities, in terms of an examination of what supports convivial life together and what obstructs living together or what provokes and supports divisive behaviour amongst people in different local contexts.

A key role of diaconia is to focus on people and communities who suffer from injustice and exploitation.

This work is grounded on direct engagement with people who are marginalized, for example people who are out of paid employment or who are under-employed or who otherwise suffer from bad working conditions.

Other important justice issues which diaconia has to address include the rights of immigrant and minority groups, people with disabilities and especially the rights of people who are not legally recognised as citizens or denizens.

In general terms then, the focus of diaconia on justice issues follows three main lines.

The first stems from the focus on people who are marginalized or who are in some way disadvantaged.

Based on the understanding that all are made in the image of God and are valued equally regardless of their status, class or abilities and therefore cannot be denied the basics for a life in dignity, diaconia has to work directly with those who are marginalized in order to address their needs. But meeting needs has to be done in a way that enhances the dignity of all the people involved and which enables them to participate in addressing the issues that affect them. For example,

it is not only a question of food but of how food is shared and how the context of sharing food promotes conviviality, which includes common action.

The second main line stems from this. Social justice is also about participation. Meeting basic needs is fundamental, but it is also important to enable all people to participate in political, economic and cultural life. The problem is that financially and resource poor people also lack time and resources for civil participation. A functioning democracy involves wide participation in the institutions and processes, which affect everyday life.

It is important to create diaconal service models where the members of different groups, for example those with a migrant background, can develop their own activities in relation with each other and those who are the traditional residents. In some cases, such church-based initiatives are the only source for many services which are denied to some groups of people and also provide a focal point where the skills and expertise of different groups can be enhanced and shared.

The third main line is to press for the implementation of political and economic policies which ensure that the resources of society serve the common good of all. This means that economic and political powers also should be responsible for the wellbeing of all and for the care of creation. It has been remarked that we not only need to meet the immediate needs of people but also to work for a society and economy that does not produce poverty.⁷

The interdiac Partnership with The Lutheran World Federation

In the interdiac developmental journey, a more recent keystone in the bridge between people engaged in community diaconia and churches and diaconal institutions nationally and

7 — Addy, T., 'Seeking Conviviality – a new core concept for Diaconia', interdiac, Cesky Těšín, 2017

internationally, was the invitation of Lutheran World Federation (LWF), Europe Region to join them in developing a process towards the Reformation Anniversary, which would focus community diaconia. The process, which is still continuing led to a series of publications on conviviality as a new concept for community diaconia and the formation of the so-called European Solidarity Group. The first report was called,

‘Seeking Conviviality – Re-forming Community Diakonia in Europe’.

The European Solidarity Group also produced a book of Bible Studies, ‘Convivial Life Together. Bible studies on Vocation, Dignity and Justice’.⁸

The next stage of the process was to focus on the work, welfare and economy and the results of this were published in a volume which focused on five identified themes where the present-day developments were crucial for diaconal actors to address at different levels. These were:

- Work and Welfare
- Debt
- Migration
- Corruption and Transparency
- Creation and the Environment.⁹

The discussions in the Solidarity Group in the first phase concluded that a key underlying issue is that the present economic and policy framework is shaped by neoliberal ideas about ‘economy’ and related understandings of the person. The aim of the second phase, which was explored in a workshop in Manchester, UK. was to go more deeply into the pressing issues, which must be addressed if we want to aim for a more convivial economy and to outline possible actions towards such an economy. As well as dealing with the consequences of present policies and the underlying paradigm, diaconia must struggle for a political and economic paradigm that does not have these negative effects. The Solidarity Group divided into five working groups, each of which explored one of the themes mentioned above and prepared the basic material for further exploration in the workshop. The report which was produced covers the main lines of the developed overview and the outcomes of the working groups as they point toward the actions needed to support a convivial economy.

⁸ — Addy, T., ‘Seeking Conviviality – Re-forming Community Diakonia in Europe’, Geneva, LWF, 2013

Addy, T., ed., ‘Convivial Life Together. Bible Studies on Vocation, Dignity & Justice’, Geneva, LWF, 2015

⁹ — Addy, T., ‘Towards a Convivial Economy’, Geneva. LWF, 2016

The first part of the report deepens the discussion about the link between the ideas of conviviality and of work and economy. The second and central part deals with each of the five key themes using the experience and insights of participants and the local partners in Manchester. The third part of the report looks for the resources that we have to work on these issues in terms of our motivation, relationships and spirituality. Finally,

the report outlines a framework for diaconal strategies and practice in relation to the creation of a ‘convivial economy’.¹⁰

Conclusion

The partner organisations and participants in interdiac learning and developmental programmes have recognised the need to develop their work in a wider context and to adopt new strategies to address newly emerging and fast changing social phenomena. In recent years the partnership with LWF has been very fruitful in opening up new insights and developing analysis and practice. In order to move forward with the strategic development, interdiac organised a 10th Anniversary Conference in Kyiv, October 2018. Over 70 participants evaluated the progress so far and identified the key challenges and needs which interdiac should address through learning, research and networking. In 2019, interdiac will launch its new medium-term strategy based on developments so far and the recommendations of the conference.¹¹

In general terms, as will be evident from the description of the development of interdiac, we believe that Diaconia and Christian social action should

work for strategic working partnerships with civil society and the creation of dialogue between diaconal actors and state/political actors.

10 — For more detailed discussion of these issues and corresponding strategies for diaconia see Addy, T., 2016 op. cit.

11 — To keep up to date with interdiac developments please register for the interdiac eNews which is published about 4 times a year. Write to: office@interdiac.eu

Furthermore, the capacity to work for changes in the society and economy as well as change in persons and communities must be emphasised.

For the future, the profile and image of Diaconia and Christian social action in the region also needs to be more effectively developed and communicated. Ecumenical and participatory work should be the norm and interdiac is committed to supporting platforms for inter-church working, sharing experience and coalition building.

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Ethics of Human Rights, Migration and Peace

Chapter 24

When Sin Meets Grace: Toward an ethic of vulnerability in the context of human trafficking and modern-day slavery in Asia

By Gemma Tulud Cruz¹

Introduction: Human trafficking and modern-day slavery in Asia

Human trafficking represents one of the most extreme forms of exploitation and is defined by the United Nations in the so-called *Palermo Protocol* (the “trafficking protocol”) as “the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons by means of threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability, or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation” (Article 3a).²

Considered as a scourge, almost every nation is affected by it as a country of origin, transit or destination for victims since victims may be workers in food processing factories, waiters

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 - ² — See the protocol at www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/ProtocolTraffickingInPersons.aspx

or cooks at restaurants, construction workers, agricultural laborers, fishers, housekeeping staff at hotels, domestic help in private residences, or sex trafficked women and men in brothels, spas and massage parlors. Not surprisingly, it is the third most lucrative illicit business in the world, after arms and drugs, and a major source of revenue for organized crime.

To be sure, human trafficking is categorized in various ways³ but there are about four principal forms which I will briefly describe here, particularly as they occur in Asia. The first form is forced labor. The majority of trafficked persons in and out of Asia are victims of forced labor. Compelled to work against their will often through threats of violence or punishment, they are subjected to jobs in agriculture, janitorial work, sweatshops, the fishing and service industry, domestic servitude or begging. Foreign migrants recruited for unskilled work are particularly susceptible to trafficking schemes that have to do with forced labor. Take the case of Phirun, a farmer from Cambodia, who was promised better economic opportunities in a factory in Thailand. He travelled to Thailand without papers where traffickers took his passport, sequestered him, and sold him to an owner of a fishing boat. He was constantly at sea and worked round the clock cutting and gutting fish with little food or water. Sometimes, he was beaten unconscious and watched as other workers were tortured or shot, their bodies thrown into the sea.⁴

One equally destructive but perhaps lesser-known form of forced labor in the Asian context is state-sanctioned, or worse, state-organized forced labor. China has landed on television news in the past for its prison labor camps. Slave-like forced labour in North Korean political prison camps, which were first set up in the late 1940s or early 1950s and given as a punishment to locals and foreigners alike for the slightest perceived dissent towards the totalitarian ruling dynasty, also has people working for 14-16 hours every day with just a handful of corn to live on. Suzanne Scholte of the North Korea Freedom Coalition, a group of organizations based in Washington DC assisting defectors and campaigning for improved human rights, says that “they are intentionally starved and worked to death...Torture is common, there is no medical aid and the sanitation is horrible. They wear the torn uniforms of old prisoners and sleep crammed together in a room.”⁵ Not content with enslaving its own people at home, North Korea also send thousands of its own people to work in ‘slave-like’ conditions overseas. In Russia, for instance, North Korean workers are made to live in shabby living quarters and have restricted access or contact with the outside world.⁶ I heard the same story of these often invisible, state-sponsored, migrant workers from North Korea when I was in Mongolia in 2017 to run a seminar for

3 — James Kanali, “Human Trafficking and Migration: A Defining Problem of the Twenty-first Century”, in *Asian Horizons* 8(4), (2014): 752-767, cited here: 758

4 — Daniel Groody, “Moving Targets: Migrants, Globalization and Human Trafficking”, in Hillie Haker, et al. (ed.), *Human Trafficking*. London: SCM Press, (2011): 15-23; cited here: 18-19

5 — Joanna Walters, “North Korean prison camps: a harrowing reality but US student could be spared”, 18 March 2016, www.theguardian.com/world/2016/mar/18/us-student-north-korea-hard-labor-camp-otto-warmbier

6 — Emma Burrows, “Russia’s hidden world of North Korean labor”, 16 January 2018, <https://edition.cnn.com/2018/01/15/europe/russia-north-korea-labor-intl/index.html>

missionaries. It is alleged that up to 80 percent of these workers' earnings are sent back to Pyongyang to help prop up the regime.

In the hands of unscrupulous recruiters and employers the *khafel* system for migrant workers in the Middle East could also end up as a form of forced labor for the millions of Asians who are recruited mostly in construction and service-oriented work.

French photographer Philippe Chancel has a body of work on these workers, particularly South Asians in construction work, which he considers “modern-day slaves”. Few of us would have also probably heard about the forced labor of their own citizens that is organized by the governments of Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan. In fact, forced labor production is deeply entrenched in the economies of these two countries, which survive primarily on its so-called ‘white gold’ or cotton. Klara Skrivankova describes how it works:

“The state owns most of the land, leases it to the farmers and imposes cotton production quota. Failure to meet the annual quota results in punishments, public humiliation or even loss of land. The procurement price is also set by the governments and is deliberately lower than the cost of production....Pickers often sleep in barracks without running water or basic sanitary equipment. They work long hours every day to fulfil the government imposed cotton quotas...”⁸

A second form of human trafficking and modern-day slavery, which is prevalent in rural villages in South Asia, is bonded labor or ‘debt bondage’. This happens when migrants incur a transportation ‘debt’ owed to traffickers who demand labor as repayment. Very often the terms and conditions have not been identified in advance, and the services

7 — See Philippe Chancel, “Workers”, <http://philippechancel.com/albums/workers/>

8 — Klara Skrivankova, “Why you could be wearing cotton picked by forced labor”, 02 October 2015, <http://edition.cnn.com/2015/10/02/opinions/uzbekistan-turkmenistan-cotton/>

rendered are often not applied to the ‘liquidation of the debt’. What is worse is that workers can inherit their ancestors’ debts, enslaving the entire family for generations. Bonded brick workers in Pakistan and India are well-known examples of this form.

A third form is child labor. One of the myths of human trafficking is that it involves adults only. The reality is that there are millions of children between the ages of 5 and 17 who are exploited around the world in debt bondage as child soldiers, in drugs and illegal arms trade, prostitution and pornography and other illicit activities. The most recent report from the International Labour Organization puts about 152 million children, aged between 5 and 17, as victims of child labor.⁹ These are the children who are recruited by governments, paramilitary organizations, or rebel groups – sometimes through force, fraud or coercion – to work as war combatants, labor or sexual slaves, cooks, maids, messengers, and spies. The abuse that these children go through is horrific. In the case of the above mentioned case of state-inflicted forced labor in Uzbekistan and, in particular, Turkmenistan children are among the tens of thousands coerced by government officials to pick cotton in hot, hazardous and unsanitary conditions.

Last but not least, are sex trafficking and organ trafficking. In Asia, sex trafficking is often associated with Cambodia and the Philippines while organ trafficking occurs considerably in Nepal. In Asia’s history, or more appropriately *herstory*, the case of the comfort women from Philippines, Korea, and China, who were taken by force and turned into sex slaves by the Japanese army at the height of Japan’s imperial expansion across the Asian continent, is one of the earliest and well-known form of sex trafficking in Asia. Today, Thailand is a hub for syndicates trafficking women and children in the region.

Faces of vulnerability in the context of human trafficking and modern slavery

As a global scourge that operates with the help of networks and syndicates, human trafficking and modern day slavery inflicts misery and death to various members of the human community.

Everyone is vulnerable to it and/or rendered vulnerable by it. Indeed, whether it is the victim or those of us who watch horrific scenes unfold in front of our television or computer

9 — International Labour Organization, “40 million in modern slavery and 152 million in child labor around the world”, 19 September 2017, www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/newsroom/news/WCMS_574717/lang--en/index.htm

screens, or the quiet suburban neighborhood that serve as a perfect camouflage for illegal activities, or even the vicious pimp, no one is spared. It is to these faces of vulnerability in the midst of such horror and evil that I now turn to.

The first locus of vulnerability is obviously the victim. To be sure, the trafficked and enslaved person himself/herself embodies different and intersecting levels of vulnerability. These include, first and foremost, the lack of opportunities or alternatives in life caused by poverty that often drives victims or, in the case of child labor, their guardians or parents in the hands of traffickers. Then there are, of course, the very horrors that mark the experience of being trafficked and enslaved itself, which are characterized by various forms of exploitation and abuse. The exploitation and abuse, which could be economic, sexual, and emotional, are possible mainly because of the vulnerability of the victims. Moreover, the vulnerability of victims is exacerbated when they are taken to another country without any (proper) documentation, trapping the victims more deeply into the web and vicious cycle of human trafficking and modern-day slavery.

The greater irony is that the horrors victims go through as trafficked persons render them even more vulnerable to other forms of victimization. First, they suffer from the burden of prejudice, having ‘voluntarily chosen’ to be ‘smuggled’ into their destination country. Second, victims become prey not only to their pimps, brokers or immediate traffickers but, in more sinister ways, to organized crime. A third layer of vulnerability is inflicted on the victims by the state through its lack of appropriate laws, or lack of effective implementation of existing laws and, worse, its criminalization of the victims.

Families and friends of trafficked persons also embody vulnerability. This is true even in cases such as child labor, where it is the victims’ very own loved ones who sell them. Perhaps most of us will not hesitate to say that the pain and suffering of families and friends is incomparable to what real and direct victims experience. However, as Sophie Hayes indicates in *Trafficked*, a best-selling book based on the author’s own experience of being trafficked, she lived through what happened but her mother can only imagine it, and she was not sure which is worse.¹⁰ Thus, we should not discount the torment that a mother or father, who sold a child in desperation, may experience on a daily basis. As Jyotsna Chatterji points out, especially in the case of India, poverty remains as the most common push factor driving the trafficking business.¹¹ While such torment does not make these parents less guilty or less accountable it only goes to show the wide-ranging nature of the misery and destruction that trafficking brings.

10 — Sophie Hayes, *Trafficked: The Terrifying Story of a British Girl Forced into the Sex Trade*. New York: Harper Collins, (2012)

11 — Jyotsna Chatterji, “Trafficking in Women and Children”, in Virginia Saldanha (ed.), *Discipleship of Asian Women at the Service of Life*. Volume II, Quezon City: Claretian Publications, (2011), 181-189; cited here: 182

A third face of vulnerability is reflected in the individuals, groups, and communities who courageously work in exposing, as well as preventing, human trafficking and modern-day slavery and prosecuting the perpetrators.

In many cases these advocates are victimized themselves not just by the perpetrators' network of accomplices but also by the state apparatus. For example, Uzbek police have assaulted Elena Urlaeva, a prominent human rights defender, for attempts to document forced labor.¹² Syeda Ghulam Fatima, who is described as a modern day Harriet Tubman in Pakistan for devoting her life to ending bonded labor in her country, has been shot, electrocuted, and beaten numerous times for her activism.¹³ What the stories of Elena, Syeda and, of course, the stories of struggle, resistance, escape, and new life among victims themselves show us is that stories that relate to human trafficking and modern-day slavery are not all about sin but also, to a certain extent, about grace.

A fourth face of vulnerability is illustrated in local communities preyed upon by traffickers for their next victims, and in individuals, families and communities (in other words, the rest of us), whom traffickers inflict their shady business activities and practices on, by turning them/us unwitting consumers of products and services borne on the backs of trafficked and enslaved people. Indeed, the reality is that many cases of trafficking and slavery flourish in ordinary respectable streets with tidy yards and quiet neighbors.

The last face of vulnerability in the context of human trafficking and modern day slavery is the trafficker himself/herself. This seems a little far-fetched but if the basic premise on human trafficking is that it wounds us all then one can also speak of vulnerability in the case of the trafficker. In fact, Vatican II document *Gaudium et Spes* seems to push the envelope further by saying

“Whatever insults human dignity, such as...slavery, prostitution, the selling of women and children; as well as disgraceful working condition, where men are treated as mere tools for profit, rather than as free and responsible persons; all these things and others of their like are infamies indeed. They poison human society,

¹² — Skrivankova (2015)

¹³ — Hilary Whiteman, “The photos that raised \$2 million to free bonded brick workers”, 19 August 2015, <https://edition.cnn.com/2015/08/19/asia/pakistan-humans-new-york-bonded-labor/index.html>

but they do more harm to those who practice them than those who suffer from the injury. (GS, no. 27)¹⁴

So how do we make sense of all these from a theological perspective? What empowering Christian thinking and practice could be brought to bear on such multifaceted brokenness?

Reimagining vulnerability

“Vulnerable populations” is a term used to refer to social groups that are discriminated against, marginalized, and disenfranchised from mainstream society. It is a term that clearly applies to victims of human trafficking and modern-day slavery. At the same time, the deprivation and powerlessness of the poor, the patriarchal culture which remains a powerful force in Asia, and the unrelenting global consumer appetite that feeds the trafficking business,¹⁵ wound the whole human community. This collective experience calls for theological reflections on vulnerability not only because the victims are rendered vulnerable by the curtailment of their freedom and the exploitation and abuse they are forced to live with, but also because this global scourge is a challenge to humanity’s capacity to be vulnerable.

Indeed, as illustrated in the preceding discussion human trafficking and modern day slavery lays bare human vulnerability, and the challenge to harness this vulnerability to address the problem. Elizabeth O’Donnell Gandolfo argues that divine love responds to vulnerability by empowering human beings with resources needed for resilience in the face of harm and resistance to violence and oppression. Gandolfo contends this redemptive power of divine love has a Trinitarian structure to it, offering 1) the invulnerable power of preservative love; 2) the power-in-vulnerability of solidarity with the human condition and; 3) empowerment for creative transformation in the Spirit of holy longing for abundant life. In a nutshell Gandolfo’s work suggests that vulnerability is both the site of our deepest wounds and the condition for the possibility of experiencing redemption.¹⁶

To be sure, vulnerability is a capacity that marks the human condition.

14 — Pope Paul VI, “Gaudium et Spes”, 07 December 1965, www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19651207_gaudium-et-spes_en.html

15 — Jyotsna Chatterji (2011): 182-184

16 — Gandolfo shows this by doing an analysis of three practices that have the potential to nurture the growth of divine love in Christians and human beings in general: dangerous memory of suffering, contemplative kenosis, and solidarity. See Elizabeth Gandolfo O’Donnell, *The Power and Vulnerability of Love: A Theological Anthropology*. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, (2015).

Human beings, in other words, are constitutively vulnerable. To be human is to be involved in a dynamic process of living, growing, dying. Human vulnerability itself may be taken to mean the ability to be corporeally, mentally, emotionally, and existentially affected by the presence, being, or acting of another or something other. In a general sense, it means openness, relatedness, mutability, and communicability.

Thus, it is also often connected to notions of fragility and frailty. Something that is vulnerable is not strong or powerful but is weak and breakable. Indeed, the conventional and tacitly assumed understanding holds that to be vulnerable is simply to be susceptible, exposed, at risk, in danger. In short, it is to be somehow weaker, defenceless and dependent, open to harm and injury. This prevalent understanding of vulnerability is a somewhat oversimplified and unilateral understanding of the term. As a result we are, oftentimes, taught to avoid, dismiss, minimize and deny our vulnerable self and we use unflattering, if not downright derogatory, labels or categories to enforce this such as ‘sissy’ or ‘softie’ to stifle it.

As could be seen in the above mentioned case of Sophie Hayes,

vulnerability can become a source of power insofar as victims themselves become ‘wounded healers’.

Knud Jorgensen echoes such argument by pointing out how vulnerable mission begins from below.¹⁷ However, the experience of people directly or indirectly touched by human trafficking and modern day slavery also shows the need for a more nuanced understanding and practice of vulnerability that does justice to its complexity. To be sure, the receptivity inherent in vulnerability points to the ability to be touched, interrupted, challenged, and even changed and transformed. Moreover, as an ambivalent notion, the condition of potential that marks vulnerability makes both positive and negative experiences possible. It can bring about loss and pain, but it also points to the possibility of creativity.

17 — Knud Jorgensen, “Servant Leadership: Power, Vulnerability and Reconciliation”, in Atola Longkumer et al. (eds.), *Mission and Power: History, Relevance and Perils*. Oxford: Regnum Books, (2016), 111-124: cited here: 120

In its positive dimension, vulnerability is an invitation and a call for responsible relationship: that the vulnerable person be recognized, taken into account, cared for, respected, loved, and protected.

Its negative side is the inherent ability of every human being to be hurt, wounded, disregarded, and ultimately killed. It equals violability, injurability, and mortality.¹⁸

But how might vulnerability with a difference look like in the context of human trafficking and modern day slavery? How could it possibly be expressed in order to address the problem? Let us now turn to what could be seen as three interconnected expressions that respond to the questions.

The first expression of transformative vulnerability is solidarity. The late John Paul II identifies solidarity as the ethical demand that arises from the dignity and social nature of the person. In a nutshell, solidarity is the recognition of our shared humanity and could serve as an appropriate response to a structural sin such as human trafficking and modern day slavery. First of all, solidarity “is not a feeling of vague compassion or shallow distress at the misfortunes of many people, both near and far” but “a firm and persevering determination to commit oneself to the common good”¹⁹ especially for the poor and vulnerable who have a special claim to it. Solidarity implies vulnerability but one that comes with responsibility. Without correlative duty, solidarity becomes sentimental. Moreover, solidarity requires a sense of interdependence because “when interdependence is separated from its ethical requirements, it has disastrous consequences for the weakest”²⁰. Such understanding and practice of solidarity is imperative, especially since trafficked persons are “the most defenceless members of the human family, the ‘least’ of our brothers and sisters”²¹.

For those trafficked across borders, their status as non-citizens renders them particularly vulnerable. Thus, it is important to emphasize the glocal (global and local) nature of solidarity, especially since in some cases trafficked and enslaved persons are failed by the very people they expect to care for them, e.g. a family member, a friend, local leaders or their own government. In such cases global solidarity, through transnational policy and advocacy tackling human trafficking and modern day slavery, plays a critical role.

18 — Marianne Moyaert, “On Vulnerability: Probing the Ethical Dimensions of Comparative Theology”, in *Religions* 3, (2012): 1144-1161

19 — Pope John Paul II, “*Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*”, no. 38, 30 December 1987, http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_30121987_sollicitudo-rei-socialis.html

20 — David O’Brien and Thomas Shannon, *Catholic Social Thought: The Documentary Heritage*. New York: Orbis, (1992): 17

21 — John Paul II, “Letter to Archbishop Jean-Louis Tauran on the Occasion of the International Conference: Twenty-first Century Slavery: The Human Rights Dimension to Trafficking in Human Beings”, 15 May 2002, http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/letters/2002/documents/hf_jp-ii_let_20020515_tauran.html

The global factors for this social problem also understandably make a global response imperative.

Two of the main reasons why human trafficking is flourishing are the strong demand for cheap labor and the constantly rising demand in the area of prostitution. We cannot deny that the ignorance, silence, indifference, lack of vigilance and sensitivity, as well as greed of the rest of us render us witting or unwitting accomplice to the existence and persistence of this social problem.

Do we ever wonder, for example, about the people who toil with their blood and sweat and, oftentimes, their lives so we can have fish to eat, clothes to wear, or chocolates to indulge on? Do we ever stop and think whether the sex worker we passed by or the person sitting next to us on the train or the plane is a trafficked person?²²

The seemingly ordinary yet sinister nature of this social problem drives home the point that it will take not just extreme vigilance, but also great courage, to live up to the moral duty that comes with solidarity when responding to it. Nathan Sharansky, the Russian mathematician, chess player, and human rights activist who was refused permission to emigrate from the Soviet Union to Israel and jailed for nine years in a Siberian prison, says that one of the most important realizations of his life during his time in prison is that there are two human passions, namely freedom and identity, and that we can make progress along these twin paths only if we open our eyes, our ears, our hearts, or only through allowing ourselves to be vulnerable to all of the suffering and all of the joy of life. In the context of sophisticated and highly organized forms of human trafficking, that can bravely and easily shuttle trafficked persons right under our noses on buses, trains, and planes, the task is even more daunting as the illusion of freedom for the victim makes the crime harder to detect. This points to the next two transformative expressions of vulnerability in the context of human trafficking and modern day slavery, that is, justice with mercy. These two are simultaneously engaged here as they are closely linked.

The minimal risk of discovery and, consequently, of criminal prosecution and judgment against traffickers, due to various factors such as ineffective laws or weak implementation of laws embolden traffickers and heighten the victims' vulnerability. Since the victims themselves often have no legal rights or resources, because they are 'people without

22 — See, for example CNN, "7 Ways to spot that someone is being trafficked", 05 August 2015, <https://edition.cnn.com/travel/article/human-trafficking-at-airports/index.html>

papers', they scarcely represent any danger for the exploiters. From a Christian perspective justice is a debt that we owe to those who have been denied the well-being of human flourishing. Its realization in the context of human trafficking and modern day slavery entails attending to the various conditions that fuel and feed the problem. For example, Pope Francis calls, above all, for a threefold commitment at the institutional level: prevention, victim protection, and the legal prosecution of perpetrators.²³ Gerald Barnes adds that "human trafficking will never be truly defeated without eliminating the consumerism that feeds it" and that "over the long term, the global community must work together to reduce the factors that make persons vulnerable to traffickers, such as the lack of economic opportunity in migrant-sending countries, especially for women"²⁴.

Indeed,

emphasis should be placed not just on law enforcement but also on the recovery and care of victims and on providing them with legal protection and social services as soon as possible, particularly for child trafficking victims. Here lies the importance of mercy as a moral underpinning in realizing justice in the context of human trafficking and modern day slavery.

The reality is that human action can deviate from justice itself even when it is being undertaken in the name of justice. We can easily deceive ourselves into thinking that we are acting justly and, for this reason, John Paul II suggests that without mercy justice cannot be established: "Society can become ever more human only if we introduce into the many-sided setting of interpersonal and social relationships, not merely justice, but also that of "merciful love"²⁵.

This means that the seemingly fragile acts of tenderness and love – acts of social mercy – should not be considered as mere 'band-aids'. Rather they are the very sign of God's goodness in the world. In any case, in all conversions from suffering to hope, from

23 — Pope Francis, "No Longer Slaves but Brothers and Sisters", 01 January 2015, https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/messages/peace/documents/papa-francesco_20141208_messaggio-xlviigiornata-mondiale-pace-2015.html

24 — Gerald Barnes, "Statement on Human Trafficking", in *People on the Move* 105, (December 2007), www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/migrants/pom2007-105/rc_pc_migrants_pom105_statement-human-barnes.html

25 — John Paul II, "Dives in Misericordia", no. 14, 30 November 1980, http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_30111980_dives-in-misericordia.html

sin to freedom, and from despair to faith mercy is the effective element that offers a future and enables change. Taking cue from Ezekiel 36:26 only mercy can transform “hearts of stone” into “hearts of flesh”.

Mercy differs from justice but is not in opposition to it. Rather, mercy conditions justice in the sense that true mercy is the most profound source of justice and is a mark of the whole of revelation (DV, no. 13-14). This is important because, in many cases, legislation does not keep up with real situations. Legislation is necessary but it is not sufficient for setting up true relationships of justice and equality.

If there is no feeling of respect for and service to others beyond legal rules then even equality before the law can serve as an excuse for flagrant discrimination, continued exploitation, and actual contempt. Without mercy, justice is perilously close to becoming unjust. Mercy, therefore, is not the opposite of justice or the complement of justice but its very condition.

This is because, as Jon Sobrino points out, mercy is a basic attitude toward the suffering of another, whereby one responds to eradicate that suffering for the sole reason that it exists, and in the conviction that, in this response to the ought-not-to-be of another’s suffering, one’s own being, without any possibility of subterfuge, hangs in the balance.²⁶

It could be said, therefore, that mercy stands outside or beyond the law as the ultimate appeal that keeps even justice itself answerable to a higher call – the call of mercy. Mercy, in other words, is linked with metanoia: We are all guilty, and we are all the time bearing each other’s faults. We are all trespassers before God and before each other and without mercy there would be no hope for any of us. Indeed, mercy is the sole refuge of the good in being. Social mercy is crucial to our society; without it we could not even claim to be a society, that is, of any human or humane proportion, where our bonds are always of friendship and fraternity, forgiveness and forbearance – knowing that we are all in this boat together, and only mercy can sustain us. This mercy, which is rooted in empathy, is a testimony to the fact that our desire to improve society and the lives of individuals is not born of some purely intellectual, social or political position. Instead, it is born from a fundamental conviction of every human being’s value.

26 — See Jon Sobrino, *The Principle of Mercy: Taking the Crucified People from the Cross*. New York: Orbis, (1994).

Conclusion

Vulnerability is not just a condition that limits us but one that can enable us. As potential, vulnerability is a condition of openness, openness to being affected and affecting in turn.

In the context of human trafficking and modern-day slavery, vulnerability is where sin and grace meet as it paves the way for receptivity, relatedness, mutability, and actions toward justice

It is in the embrace of pain and suffering that we come to know who we really are, what we humans are capable of, what really matters. In so doing we also open ourselves to mercy and, consequently, to naming and identifying ways toward having right relationships.

Chapter 25

Ethical perspectives and priorities on human rights and civil society in Asia

By Basil Fernando¹

William Butler Yeats gave a glimpse of the post-Second World War world in his poem *The Second Coming*:

**“Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold;
Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world,
The blood-dimmed tide is loosed, and everywhere
The ceremony of innocence is drowned;
The best lack all conviction, while the worst
Are full of passionate intensity.”²**

This poem was published in 1919, in the immediate aftermath of the First World War and in the environment that finally produced the Second World War. Even before this, Nietzsche had predicted the development of extreme forms of violence in Europe as a result of the displacement of the belief in God, which was the source that created what was understood to be the basic moral fabric of Europe.³ In 1922, TS Eliot’s *The Waste Land* was published. Eliot wrote, “I will show you fear in a handful of dust.”⁴

The ‘new world’ brought about by the Second World War and the atomic bombs possessed by both the United States and the Soviet Union led to new challenges to humanity. It is in light of these challenges that the modern global project for human rights had its

1 — Basil Fernando was executive director of the Asian Human Rights Commission and Asian Legal Resource Center in Hongkong

2 — William Butler Yeats, “The Second Coming”, www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/43290/the-second-coming

3 — Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*. Walter Kaufmann (ed.), New York: Random House, A Vintage Giant, (1967): 7

4 — T. S. Eliot, “The Waste Land”, www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/47311/the-waste-land

beginnings.⁵ The adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights⁶ by almost all countries in the world took place against that background. In what became the foundation for the new world order, a radical doctrine advocating the equality of all human beings was articulated. No human being was excluded in this radical new perspective. It was agreed that all have the same dignity and status.

Thus, the Universal Declaration differed from all other well-known declarations on human rights: the Magna Carta of 1215 confined the extension of rights to the barons, particularly limiting the right of king to arrest, detain or punish them without fair trial, or to deprive them of their properties; the rights of man declared in the French Revolution was confined to the country, though the principles spread later on and have a universal significance; this is also true of the American Bill of Rights. None of these documents mention the rights of women or minorities. The Universal Declaration was to be for all, irrespective of difference of class, caste, gender or other distinction, including disability.

Thus,

the Universal Declaration was an attempt to think in terms of the whole world and to attempt to set up standards of treatment for all human beings.

In the earlier development of the Western world, a similar notion was expressed when St Paul wrote, ‘... there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus’ (Galatians 3:28). The only limitation was in terms of a belief in Jesus Christ, thus defining limits in terms of religion.

The radical new perspective adopted in the Universal Declaration is of great importance as, during the time up to the Second World War, most European nations understood the world to be the Western world. The justification of colonialism was often articulated in terms of superior civilizations as against other inferior civilizations. The Universal Declaration virtually abolishes that manner of understanding of the world.

While the implications of this wider understanding of humanity may have many connotations, one of the most

5 — V. R. Krishnayer, *Dialectics and Dynamics of Human Rights in India: Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow*. Calcutta: Eastern Law House, (1999): 139

6 — UN General Assembly, *Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 10 December 1948, 217 A (III)*, www.refworld.org/docid/3ae6b3712c.html

significant implications was that humanity shares a common standard of morality and ethics.

Thus, the various articles of the Universal Declaration set out, as rights, those essentials that go to the preservation of this common morality. Beginning with the idea of non-discrimination and non-exclusion, the Declaration goes on to specify elements that are essential for the preservation of the dignity of human beings. The Declaration creates universal prohibitions against those practices that are opposed to notions of shared moral standards as birthrights of all human beings. The prohibitions of illegal arrest and illegal detention; the right to fair trial by a competent judiciary before any punishment can be meted out; rights of appeal – these were declared to be the rights of every human being. These rights, won after centuries of struggle involving sacrifices of life and liberty, were declared to be the rights of everyone. It may be argued that the rights won through historical struggles were declared to be the inheritance of everyone.

The Universal Declaration also set out some basic rights of all human beings to be respected by all states, such as the right to life, right to education, right to healthcare, right to leisure and culture, and the like. The standards of morality expected of the new world were thus set out in the Universal Declaration.

In subsequent developments, the global human rights project attempted, through covenants and conventions, to expand the idea of moral standards into legally binding obligations. The adoption of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) in 1966 marked this development. Since then, many attempts have been made to make provisions for transforming the basic moral obligations contained in the Universal Declarations to be binding obligations under international law as well as in domestic law.

Besides creating legal obligations, extensive attempts have also been made towards the development of legal mechanisms for the enforcement of these moral obligations to be transformed into legal rights through international as well as legally enforceable rights with remedies under domestic law. Various UN bodies, such as treaty bodies, the appointments of Rapporteurs, and specialized bodies such as the Committee against Torture, and similar groups relating to the rights of women and children, and many other specific subjects were part of this attempt. The Vienna Conference on Human Rights⁷ created the High Commissioner's Office for human rights, which was considered a high point in the search for the practical implementation of human rights. The development of various regional mechanisms, such as the European Court of Human Rights and other bodies, were also attempts in this same direction.

The subsequent development of the Human Rights Council was also meant to be a more effective means of achieving the practical implementation of rights than the former

7 — World Conference on Human Rights, 14-25 June 1993, Vienna, Austria

mechanism under the UN Human Rights Commission.⁸ Although the actual achievement of this aim may have suffered setbacks due to many pressures, the aims behind the creation of the UN Human Rights Council was to create progress towards better implementation of human rights in the world. Work on cases is also carried out by the Human Rights Committee.

The overarching principles obligating states to implement rights were entrenched under Common Article 2 of the ICCPR and ICESCR.⁹ This obligates states to take legislative, judicial and administrative measures in order to ensure the implantation of rights enshrined in the Universal Declaration and other covenants and conventions duly adopted by the United Nations.

The challenges

The last few decades have seen developments that point to certain limitations in the vision of the achieving universal moral norms and standards through the jurisprudential and practical developments described above.

A key limitation was the inadequate attention given to the protection of moral norms through legal systems without taking into consideration yet unrealized political and social developments in a considerable part of the world. The assumption that mere international agreements could result in political and social developments leading to the adoption of legal norms has been proved a fallacy in many parts of the world. While it has been possible to achieve consent and even ratification of United Nations covenants and conventions, the actual measures taken for practical implementation of such norms and standards have been much less than expected.

The basic problem involved is not difficult to understand. In developed democracies, which are, for the most part, a number of countries in the Western world, there have been several centuries of political and social struggles to reach that stage. Thus, the higher degree of compliance with moral norms and standards has not happened merely due to legislative enactments or other declarations but the opposite; legislation and other declarations have

8 — United Nations Secretary-General, “Secretary-General’s Address to the Commission on Human Rights”, 7 April 2005, www.un.org/sg/en/content/sg/statement/2005-04-07/secretary-generals-address-commission-human-rights

9 — Editorial Board, “Open letter to the global human rights community: Let us rise to article 2 of the ICCPR”, in *Article 2 1(1): 2-4*, <http://alrc.asia/article2/in-print/volume-1/volume-1-number-01/>; issue 10, article explaining the meaning of legislative, judicial and administrative measures in article 2

followed victories in the struggles to subdue certain forces in society and have led to high levels of consciousness about a new set of obligations achieved through political and social struggles. The historical narratives of various countries demonstrate what these struggles have been and how new standards have been achieved. In fact, these narratives are very well documented and easily available for anyone who is interested in looking into them.¹⁰

In many other parts of the world, due to various developments peculiar to each of these countries, such struggles have not led to similar results. There are many places in which struggles for equality have been successfully repressed and where the old order, based on opposite standards, has been able to maintain itself. Any serious study into the histories of inequality will demonstrate how certain aspirations for change have been suppressed or, in certain circumstances, how such aspirations did not spread enough to win support among the larger section of the population in those countries. What is simply obvious is that entrenched inequalities that have been dealt with by some societies have not been successfully addressed in other societies.¹¹

When the Universal Declaration and other UN covenants and conventions were adopted, serious thought should have been devoted to ways in which less advantaged countries – in terms of the moral and legal norms envisaged in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights – could be practically helped to achieve the political and social developments that could create the foundation for respect for these newly articulated ideas of radical equality to be achieved in these countries.

This would have required extensive and frank discussions in which people who aspire for these changes in these less advantaged countries could, themselves, have had the chance of expressing their views on the matter.¹² Perhaps, in the immediate aftermath of the

10 — For example, Gary Haugen and Victor Boutros, *The Locust Effect: Why the End of Poverty Requires the End of Violence*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, (2014); Geoffrey Robertson, *The Tyrannicide Brief: the Story of the Man who Sent Charles I to the Scaffold*. London: Chatto & Windus, (2015).

11 — Nick Cheesman and Basil Fernando, “Why Asian Legal Institutions Fail to Protect the Human Rights of the Vulnerable”, Fernand de Varennes and Christie May Gardiner (eds.), *Routledge Handbook of Human Rights in Asia*. London: Routledge, (2018, forthcoming)

12 — For an example of a model that can be used in such discussions, see: Basil Fernando, *Demoralization and Hope: A Comparative Study of the Ideas of N.F.S. Grundtvig (1783-1872), Denmark and B.R. Ambedkar (1881-1956), India*. Hong Kong: Asian Human Rights Commission, (2000).

Second World War and the emergence of a new global situation in terms of the development of nuclear weapons, may not have provided such a climate for a global discourse on the matter. However, the issue is that such a discourse did not take place, and, therefore, the undertakings in terms of the Universal Declaration did not take place in an adequately well-informed situation.

In the subsequent decades, very little has been done to overcome this situation. Even today, there is in the world no well-informed consensus on the manner in which the less advantaged countries (in terms of political and social development required to bring about radical equality as required by the Universal Declaration) can make the achievement of these rights a practical possibility.

The underlying problem

It is not difficult to identify how it is possible for one part of the world, known as developed countries, to be in a position to practically implement the norms and standards envisaged in the modern international law on human rights while those other countries, usually called developing or less developed countries, have not been able to do the same. This relates to the problems associated with inequalities in the distribution of wealth in the world. The mere adoption of the Universal Declaration was not an adequate step towards the development of a global consensus on assisting less advantaged countries (in terms of world history) to be helped in an adequate manner to reach the developments necessary, in economic, social and political spheres, to be able to practically develop possibilities for the implementation of rights within their legal systems and thereby bring about respect for common moral norms and standards as required in the new world order envisaged after the Second World War.

Creating the material environment for the respect of universal norms and standards

Perhaps the most difficult problem in the world is the development of a consensus on at least the minimum requirements of the less advantaged countries to overcome some of their basic problems so that all peoples in these countries can aspire towards the achievement of what some countries have achieved in the course of their historical development. Without material means, it is not possible to nurture new ideas and ideals that give rise to expectations of a higher nature in relation to the dignity of people and to bring about the conditions that enable actual respect for such human dignity. Despite this being the most difficult problem, this is also the most important problem that needs to be solved if the universal norms and standards required by the modern understanding of human rights is to become a reality for the whole world. The core of the debate on raising respect for moral norms and standards needs to be in this very area, bringing about a discussion towards arriving at the above-mentioned objective.

Transformations of political systems

A closer examination of many of the countries in Asia clearly shows more authoritarian rather than democratic transformations in their political systems. From a human rights point of view, authoritarianism means the suppression or imposition of serious limitations on the basic civil and political rights of the people.

Ever-increasing restrictions on the freedom of speech and of association are a direct result of the expansion of the authoritarian grip on societies. This is combined with the loosening of legal restraints on every form of extrajudicial killings, including enforced disappearances¹³; permitting illegal arrest and illegal detention¹⁴; allowing many forms of physical and psychological torture¹⁵; restricting or virtually displacing the right to a fair trial and expanding the power of the state to impose punishments without any recourse to judicial oversight¹⁶; and, in short, suspending access to every form of legal protection, either formally or in practice.

All this is aimed at denying or limiting people's political participation in running their societies. This is accompanied by ideological developments that advocate authoritarianism as a necessary instrument of economic development and social stability. Advocating for rights is often portrayed as the pursuit of alien or Western modes of thought and political styles that are detrimental to rapid economic progress. On this basis,

the suppression of civil and political rights is ideologically justified as being necessary economic development, and democracy, rule of law and respect of human rights are portrayed as necessary sacrifices. In terms of

13 — Asian Human Rights Commission, "Cyberspace Graveyard for Disappeared Persons", www.disappearances.org

14 — For example: *Report of the Special Rapporteur on Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman Treatment or Punishment on his Mission to Sri Lanka*, (2017), in: www.refworld.org/docid/58aefcf34.html

15 — Basil Fernando, *Narrative of Justice in Sri Lanka: Told through Stories of Torture Victims*. Hong Kong: Asian Legal Resource Centre, (2013)

16 — Nick Cheeseman, *Opposing the Rule of Law: How Myanmar's Courts Make Law and Order*. Cambridge: Cambridge, (2016)

this overarching ideological framework, a political model is developed that favors authoritarianism over democracy.

The rights of women and minorities, and environmental rights

While there had been some attempts to develop legislation to protect the rights of women, the rights of minorities and environmental rights, practical enforcement of these rights has been limited in less developed countries. Generally speaking, there has been a degeneration when it comes to practical access to these rights. This can be explained because of the need for a functional state apparatus as a pre-condition for the enforcement of any right. In the many countries that have seen a breakdown in their legal and political systems, there is an inability to control crime within a rule of law framework, which has an impact on women and minorities in particular. The overarching insecurity pervading such societies puts women in a vulnerable situation. It is commonly said that the test of whether people are secure in a society is to look at its impact on women. For example, when women feel unsafe travelling after dark, this is a clear indication of the state's inability to enforce the law. This lack of protection affects all minorities as well. Attempts to protect those targeted for their sexual orientation or gender identity often fail for the same reason.

Insecurity and the inability to enforce the law is also the greatest enemy of the environment. The destruction of forests, theft or pollution of natural resources, and other activities that undermine people's rights to live in a habitable environment thrive in the context of impunity.

Of particular concern is the difficulty in accessing drinking water due to the unscrupulous release of chemicals, which also leads to extremely seriousness medical consequences, such as kidney failure. A state that is weak in law enforcement cannot act decisively to resolve any of these problems. There are many illustrations of this throughout developing countries in Asia.¹⁷

17 — Asian Human Rights Commission, "INDIA: The government must act immediately to save the lives of protesters", www.humanrights.asia/news/urgent-appeals/AHRC-UAU-030-2012/?searchterm=Jal%20Satyagrah; Ben Boer, *Environmental Law and Human Rights in the Asia-Pacific*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, (2015), chapter 5

Human rights defenders

For individuals and organisations committed to fighting for the protection and promotion of every kind of human right, the lawless contexts of many developing countries is threatening.

There are constant reports of attacks on human rights defenders. Authoritarian states consider human rights defenders to be hostile elements. National security concerns have been used by states that develop anti-terrorism laws to silence human rights defenders.

Where the relationship between the state and the people becomes confrontational and violent, the state is particularly concerned about maintaining secrecy about what takes place on their territories. Violations of human rights are often followed by attempts to erase all evidence. Human rights defenders are particularly targeted because they try to expose such acts and develop international and local advocacy to expose and resist such violence.

The Asian Charter¹⁸ and declarations on the right to justice, peace and culture in Asia, including the upcoming Declaration on Right to Justice – A Supplement to Asian Charter¹⁹, address these issues and the need for practical reforms that allow for the actual enforcement of human rights.

Challenges to civil society

The abovementioned political transformations and consequent attacks on human rights pose enormous problems to civil society in less developed countries, including many Asian countries. Civil society is faced with enormous confusion due to these developments.

¹⁸ — Asian Human Rights Charter 1998

¹⁹ — Asian Human Rights Commission/Asian Legal Resource Centre, “WORLD: Draft Asian Declaration on right to justice – right to an effective remedy for violations of human rights in terms of Article 2 of the ICCPR”, <http://alrc.asia/draft-asian-declaration-on-right-to-justice-right-to-an-effective-remedy-for-violations-of-human-rights-in-terms-of-article-2-of-the-iccpr/>

This confusion spreads into intellectual life, creating difficulties in theoretically understanding the new crises and formulating solutions that can be the basis for their struggles to defend their livelihoods and other rights. The uncertainties that arise as a result of this could be said to be the source of many of conflicts within civil society and obstruct the growth of powerful solidarity movements based on common objectives and commonly agreed strategies.

It also creates highly complex psychological problems that disturb individuals, families and society as a whole. Finding solutions to these psychological crises also adds to the confusion in civil society. It also provokes negative reactions that support nihilistic tendencies. These tendencies, in turn, create serious problems that obstruct the development of solidarity movements. Alternatives like mass migration are common features in most of these countries. Dislocation within their own societies and exposure to new situations as a result of migration have caused new forms of conflict and instability. This situation has caused spiritual crises, the expression of which has given rise to racism and other forms of divisions that have the potential to cause violent conflicts.

Challenges to civil society movements committed to democracy, rule of law and respect for human rights

New forms of social crises and many forms of dislocation taking place in societies have created serious obstacles to the development of movements committed to the promotion of democracy as authoritarianism develops new forms of attacks on civil society to discourage it from embarking on struggles for democracy.

Enormous restrictions placed on freedom of expressions and association virtually criminalize many activities and create an intimidating social ethos, leading to an unfavourable environment for movements to defend democracy.

Authoritarianism particularly targets political parties that are rooted in democratic traditions. It also penalizes legitimate protest and state security apparatuses develop new branches for surveillance as well as violent suppression of non-violent demonstrations and other civil society activities. The most frightening aspects of such suppression are the legitimation of arrest without due cause, permissiveness towards prolonged detentions and

even extrajudicial killings, including enforced disappearances.²⁰ To enable such suppression, the system for the administration of justice that may have prevailed in normal circumstances is severely curtailed through attacks on the independence of the judiciary and the prosecutorial branches, and limitations being placed on the powers of investigation into human rights abuses by state authorities.²¹ Paramilitary forces are also absorbed into the police force, which causes severe problems for civilian policing. The overall development is towards greater militarization and the paralyzing of the justice system. When a common understanding develops within society that their system of administering justice can no longer offer them legitimate protection, and that the institutions in the justice system are being reshaped to suppress them, hopelessness prevails about the possibility of finding solutions to their problems.

This new environment poses a problem to human rights organisations in particular in terms of how they can engage in protecting people’s human rights when they can no longer rely on the justice system – or the legal system as a whole – to be the primary recourse for their protection.²²

This has caused bewilderment as the human rights movements also oppose the use of violence as a form of protest. Certain sections of society do take to violence on the pretext that there is no other alternative for the defence of people’s rights. The growth of these movements, in turn, strengthen the oppressive approach taken by the state and the growth of draconian anti-terrorism laws, as well as the harsh methods of enforcing such laws.

The overall situation that civil society movements face in less developed countries is now echoed in other places. There have been global changes under various pretexts, such as anti-terrorism and anti-migration efforts, that have led to threats to democracy in developed countries, including Western democracies.

20 — Jane Thomson-Senanayake, *A Sociological Exploration of Disappearances in Sri Lanka*. Hong Kong: Asian Human Rights Commission, (2014)

21 — Basil Fernando, *Torture: As An Entrenched Part Of Cruel, Inhuman And Degrading Legal Systems*. Hong Kong: Asian Human Rights Commission, (2017)

22 — For example, Basil Fernando (2013) and Gary A. Haugen and Victor Boutros (2014).

The growth of right-wing tendencies in developed countries strengthens those who are opposed to democracy in developing countries as well. This poses serious problems for the growth of global solidarity movements.

The reduced support from democratic movements in developed countries is a further cause of anxiety for civil society movements in developing countries.

The need for a new discourse on the protection of human rights

The post-Second World War developments that promoted human rights globally, symbolized by the adoption of the Universal Declaration and United Nations mechanisms as well as the policies of developed democracies to support civil society movements in developing countries, created the kind of discourse that still predominates. However, in the new environment described above, this global human rights movement needs to strengthen and develop its capacity to face up to the present threats. The articulation of human rights principles through various conventions, which was a major achievement of the earlier period, no longer suffices when dealing with the present crises.

The global human rights movement needs to develop the capacity, both in the areas of understanding and practical action, to support movements in less developed countries by placing greater emphasis on the actual implementation of human rights rather than mere agreements to promote human rights.²³

In this practical sphere, support for the reform of organs responsible for the administration of justice – namely, an independent judiciary, an independent department for prosecutions, and civilian policing institutions that can conduct impartial investigations – are essential as a counterstrategy to defeat the present-day developments towards authoritarianism and

²³ – AHRC/ALRC, “WORLD: Draft Asian Declaration on right to justice”, in: www.humanrights.asia/news/ahrc-news/AHRC-PAP-001-2018/

suppression. The defence of the rule of law against the arbitrary actions of the state has become a precondition for sustaining and developing the capacity of civil society movements to provide vibrant and effective leadership for the protection and promotion of human rights.

The emergence of such support from developed countries to developing countries largely depends on the resolving of problems associated with the distribution of wealth, the resolution of which is the ultimate source of a durable solution to these problems. Liberty should not be seen as an excuse for denying equality of opportunities for all.²⁴ It needs to become the core of the discourse seeking solutions to the extremely difficult problems we are facing today. Contributions made by such thinkers as John Rawls²⁵ and others in this direction should be made a very important part of the global discourse for making the world a peaceful environment for everyone to live in.

Once again, things are falling apart and the center cannot hold. The best must regain their conviction that human rights principles are fundamental to the world they want to live in, and must be willing to confront the complexities and difficulties involved in practical enforcement of human rights.

24 — John Rawls's description of the two principles of justice: the liberty principle and the equality principle. John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*. Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, (2005).

25 — John Rawls (2005)

Chapter 26

Ethics of conflict. Ethical perspectives on dialogue and trust building in contexts of conflict in Armenia.

Karen Nazaryan¹

**Blessed are the peacemakers,
For they shall be called sons of God
(*Mathew 5-9*)**

Before thinking on ethics of conflict, let us clarify, what is ethics and what is the nature of the conflict I am focusing on. If we compare evolution or progress of technology, taking as reference for example the information technology (IT), with the evolution of ethics, we notice a huge difference. We see that IT is literally developing every day, whereas the understanding of ethics and what is ethical practically have not changed much since antique times. From this standpoint, the quotation of I. Kant from *Critique of Practical Reason* (1788) is very illustrative: “two things *always* fill the soul *the starry sky above me and the moral law within me*”.²

From this point of view, the degree of conservatism in moral principles of ethics which we observe in interpersonal and public interrelations becomes understandable. At all times, situations were viewed as being more ethical and desirable when various layers of society were existing in accordance with each other, or – even more desirably – in harmony. Although that type of social structure has always been an impossible ideal, people at all times were

1 – Dr. Karen Nazaryan, Executive Director of World Council of Churches Armenia Round Table foundation (WCC ART) accepted the delegation

2 – Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason*: The full quotation is: “Two things fill the mind with ever new and increasing admiration and awe, the more often and steadily we reflect upon them: the starry heavens above me and the moral law within me. I do not seek or conjecture either of them as if they were veiled obscurities or extravagances beyond the horizon of my vision; I see them before me and connect them immediately with the consciousness of my existence.”, in: www.goodreads.com/quotes/21053-two-things-fill-the-mind-with-ever-new-and-increasing

dreaming of this ideal situation and were striving for it.³ And in cases, when public interrelations were dangerously moving away from a harmonious state of affairs, when times came during which “the upper classes cannot, and the lower classes do not want to live as before”⁴, this was considered a revolutionary situation, very often accompanied by violence, bloodshed and perturbations. There have been many attempts in history of solving conflicts in society by revolutionary methods, i.e. by violence and force and coercion. Less known are examples by which peaceful methods have been used as an effective solution of crisis situations.

At this point I would like to discuss one of those peaceful attempts which is displayed nowadays before our eyes in Armenia. Crisis situations started to develop in our country during the last ten years. At that period some 10 years ago the strategy of overcoming poverty was buried, according to which the poverty by 2015 should have been as low as 19 percent of the population, and the Gini coefficient (a statistical measure of wealth distribution within a population) should have been decreased considerably. But what did we have in reality? The poverty in 2017 was 30 percent of the population (by other estimates, more than 45 percent), whereas the Gini coefficient in 2006 was 32.5%, and in 2015 it still was 32.4%.⁵ All significant development projects, which had been declared earlier, were no more there and had vanished. The state debt ratio had increased by several times. Moreover, this dramatic social and economic development was accompanied by further polarization of the society: the poor became poorer, and the rich became richer. This means that

instead of development we had an increasing sense of indifference, stagnation and setback in the Armenian population.

But the elections were falsified, the opposition was disintegrated, and it was possible to continue ruling and plundering the country without changing the direction of development.

But it turned out that the people’s patience was not endless, and the cup of desperation could not be filled up all again without end. At this point it is proper to recall the words of the American President Abraham Lincoln: “You can fool all the people some of the time, and some of the people all the time, but you cannot fool all the people all the time”.⁶ A small opposition party started a modest movement of disobedience, and the protests and political slogans spread like a snowball. In a couple of days the protests covered the whole

3 — “Heavenly Order” of Confucius, “Utopia” of Thomas More, “The City of Sun” of Tommaso Campanella

4 — a saying attributed to Lenin

5 — See: www.indexmundi.com/facts/armenia/indicator/SI.POV.GINI

6 — reference

country, bringing to a halt every sphere: transportation, schools and universities, enterprises and even could halt obedience to authorities, to the government machine. After a few days of protests and general strike in an unprecedented process of peaceful transformation the Prime Minister resigned, the Government crashed down, the Parliament, with the ruling majority, got scared and elected the leader of the protesters as the Prime Minister, handing to him great powers. One should have seen people's exaltation, when Serzh Sargsyan, who was the President for Armenia for eight years, and then changed seats in a Prime Minister's chair, resigned. That powerful nation-wide exaltation I was seeing for the first time. What were the slogans of the new Government? Primarily it was the fight against corruption and social polarization which eroded and separated the society which were declared an urgent priority of the new government.

In fact, the struggle, or in even stronger words the “war against corruption” penetrated into all layers of society.

This is a very bruising battle as, firstly, the corruption – in one form or another – penetrated every dimension of society, and, secondly, ‘how to separate the wheat from the chaff’, and not to arouse polarization and confrontation?

Thus,

the people's revolution, which solved one conflict and removed a part of the establishment with tainted reputation, calling themselves a political party, may cause a risk for one more conflict.

It is not surprising that a frequently discussed issue nowadays is whether a small parliamentary fraction, although having the support of the great masses of the population, could irreversibly change the historical discourse. It is obvious that in the course of time the wave of enthusiasm will go down. On the other hand, there is a risk that the young and inexperienced ministers and other managers of the highest rank, ‘will become bureaucrats, if not corrupt officials’. There is nothing more but to hope that in future such developments will not arouse a heated conflict similar to then one in 2018, and that our country, in the course of the time, will find quite an effective antidote to avoid another revolutionary situation.

It is worth mentioning that the methods to prevent such an unwanted development have been worked out within the frames of the conflict transformation concept. The periodical alternation of power and the accountability of authorities, the distinct segregation of powers and the independence of various branches of authority as well as the actual

observance of main rights and freedoms of citizen are all related to this sphere and both conditions as well as objectives for peaceful conflict transformation.

It is vitally important to know that conflict transformation is about transforming the way in which societies deal with conflict situations and changing the methods of conflict solution from violent to non-violent modes of acting.

We should try to understand what is involved in the transformation of conflict and what methods could be used in practice for proper conflict management. We are limiting our argumentation regarding conflict solution mechanisms for conflicts in society, leaving out interpersonal and interstate conflicts.

The more effective ways a society has developed for conflict management the more likely it can become that activities for conflict transformation can contribute to the transformation of a destructive conflict into a constructive conflict with methods of soft power to be used for conflict solution.

What is that transformation and the appropriate methods of soft power applied to conflicts in the society?

Slogans like ‘we are for the expropriation of expropriators’ or the plea “We will totally destroy the world of corruption, and then we will build our world” are reflecting the longing for long awaited justice, for the recovery of fairness, violated many years ago, but they do not carry much further. Certainly, slogans like this are a reflection of a long accumulated hatred toward the oligarchy, disappointment by injustice and plunder. But when the first euphoria is gone in a social protest movement, this phenomenon of a radical rhetoric also vanishes, and people and the state start their painstaking and constructive work of dialogue and reconstruction. Certainly without a process of purge of the most odious personalities the transition would be difficult to imagine. But it is important not to be carried away by the process of “dispossession of kulaks” and KGB mania (campaign against the former Committee for State Security in the Soviet Union), as there is a tough and big job on comprehensive social and political transformation to be done. In this situation a reflection

about the potential capabilities of proper conflict transformation methodologies becomes very important. A number of conflict theorists and practitioners, including John Paul Lederach, advocate the pursuit of “conflict transformation” as opposed to “conflict resolution” or “conflict management”.⁷ Conflict transformation is different from the other two, Lederach asserts, because it reflects a better understanding of the nature of the conflict itself. “Conflict resolution” implies that conflict is something bad in itself, hence something that should be ended. For us, it is important to separate these approaches because of two reasons: at first, it is important that possibly less people think that they are losers of a conflict situation.

Conflict transformation presupposes that all are equal, all citizens of the country are equal and all have equal possibilities. This is an important precondition for local and regional conflicts not to slide into a global conflict, to settling accounts and war.

We have to remember, though, that the freedom and equality, as everything in this world, have their good, as well as their negative sides, the freedom is equally favorable to the bad and good. That is why it is the task of civil society and the authorities to create an atmosphere of good will, of tolerance and of antipathy towards corruption in any manifestation, hence, ideally to support the atmosphere of Christian love for one’s neighbor.

We are not painting a rosy picture here of a non-existing paradise which will never be able to be built in reality. It is similar to the goals which have been formulated in the Sustainable Development Agenda after global participatory discussion on the UN General Assembly in 2015. The first one of those goals which h formulated the vision to eliminate the poverty on the globe by 2030 cannot be achieved in completeness and universality as there is no country in the world which has completely eliminated poverty. But still there are countries and societies which achieved great progress on that path and it is necessary to follow them. Therefore it is important strategically to formulate visions and to articulate targeted goals which can be measured and to create mechanisms and incentives to reach significant results. Therefore also

7 — John Paul Lederach/Michelle Maiese: Conflict Transformation – a circular journey with a purpose, in: *New Routes. A Journal of peace research and action*, Life and Peace Institute Uppsala, Vo. 14, 2/2009, p. 7ff, in: https://peacemaker.un.org/sites/peacemaker.un.org/files/ConflictTransformation_NewRoutes2009.pdf

in Armenia we should not copy blindly others' experiences and models, but to be in dialogue with each other on a sustained process of social and political transformation which leads to a win-win situation based on the best and typical features of our people, their diligence and adaptability, their discipline and emotionality, their pragmatism and belief, their optimism and centennial sadness.

Today, as hundreds of years ago, people have an unshakable understanding of what is ethical, and what is not ethical. This is a basis to work upon even if some of our public perceptions on transformation has been changed as the world became smaller.

For achieving a real change in economic, social and spiritual dimensions in the life of our society, efforts are needed of everyone, not just of the powerful people, not just of important or rich people.

But everyone of us is urgently needed and is required to help in limiting and curbing the tendencies that lead to destructive and intractable conflicts. Eventually by these peaceful methods of transformation we will be able to reach notable changes in the life of the entire country. The positive side of the current global trend towards democratic participation is not only and not so much the simple participation in voting processes and the respect for the majority's opinion, if it wins, but the democratic principles also include a real attention and respect towards the opinions and feelings of the minority, and sometimes it should include a fervent striving to reach a consensus between both groups. Often I had the impression in my practice and work with the Armenian Round Table Foundation that due to certain conditions it was impossible to reach a consensus on a specific case. But the practice often showed as well, that as a result of hard and patient work with the use of special techniques it could become possible to reach a consensus practically on all cases. Therefore,

the win-win method of conflict transformation should and can be successfully used in a wide range of cases of conflict.

The main guarantee of success must be the determination, the ability and the vision for persistently striving for a transformation, for changes, for a process of reformatting of conflict or discordant situations. It is obvious that conflict is an inevitable part of any social change. Therefore first of all, we should understand, what is the nature of the conflict within our society. What are root causes, what could be the desirable solution for leading our society on the path of constructing and creation of a society, based on building, work, entrepreneurship, investment, belief and tolerance? We need to identify people, who can be carriers and leaders of such transformation process and we need to find out where they are and where to seek for them. Who are they? Politicians, intellectuals, businessmen, Christians, atheists – they all can belong to them. I am convinced that that type of people exist. But it is simply that they should get self-organized and help our country to find the only correct and effective way of development in the difficult conditions of society reformation. The first condition is that these should be individuals, fully engaged in their sphere, who have no personal ambitions, who are moved by their unselfish willingness to help the new authorities. To initiate this process today we need to have proper people, who can become the engine and drivers of the ongoing peace and conflict solution process. They should be real opinion leaders with skills and abilities to listen and to convince. The need for this method of conflict transformation is based on a strong sense of socio-economic injustice which often serves as significant motivator for social movements. A new way of development should be based on the conflict transformation which is composed of the ability to listen, to tolerance and to nonviolence. If we consider the use of conflict transformation methodology for the whole of the society and the entire country, we will confront many difficulties on that learning journey. For example, one of the important preconditions in the conflict transformation methodology is a joint agreement on what provided a red step or line in a dialogue process. In relation to the society, it is not clear, how to establish, identify and keep certain red lines. In our understanding, there should be absolute openness and fairness in the dialogue between government and society, based on the contemporary practice which is very difficult of even impossible. The next difficulty is how to make the exiting bureaucratic machinery to work in different way, i.e. to really be fair, to be open to listen to people and to address people's needs. And finally we need to learn together how to initiate huge social-economical changes in the country, to eliminate corruption and injustice without creating additional problems with the neighboring countries, regional and global superpowers. We have mentioned only a few of many problems and obstacles that need to be considered and overcome if we want to transform and eventually solve the social problems of the country which have been accumulating through decades. Nevertheless, we think that the peaceful conflict transformation approach is the most appropriate way to deal with the changing paradigm of our country, which is still in transition, and which wants to fight corruption and inequality, to eliminate poverty and longs to be consolidated on the basis of trust and solidarity.

Of course, this cannot be done overnight, it needs long and patient everyday work. This entails building up trust among different layers of the society. It also needs accountability and transparency at all levels, starting from the highest ones and down to each level in society.

I would like to close our reflections on the possibilities of the civil society to influence in a supportive way the changes, taking place in our country at present. I think we are well prepared for a process of change and transformation, as during all the years we were implementing the method of conflict transformation in everyday activity, mainly related to the programme of regional peace. This was also possible due to the supportive attention of our ecumenical partners, represented also by the German Protestant Church development agency.

Conflict transformation is about transforming the ways in which societies view and deal with conflicts, moving scenarios from violent to non-violent means and settings. This concept is very important for our society, because we shouldn't increase and aggravate conflicts in the society, while fighting the evil of corruption.

All people in Armenia should understand that the time of total corruption and plunder is over, and nobody will live in the old coordinates system. I think, nowadays the highest officials of the country are sending a very clear message to all layers of the society, saying that now we should work according to the rule of law, and that a new style becomes visible for many people. It gives us a good chance for a comprehensive peaceful transformation from a society with the systematic disease of corruption to a society with the rule of law and democratic participation.

Chapter 27

Towards a Global Compact on Migration – A new paradigm for human rights of migrants?

Nicola Piper¹

Following its adoption in Marrakech on 10 December 2018 by 164² of the United Nations 193 member states, the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (hereafter: Migration Compact) was officially endorsed by the UN General Assembly on 19 December 2018. Despite its (often lamented) non-binding nature, the Migration Compact represents the pinnacle of a process spanning almost two decades, aimed at reviving and strengthening multilateral efforts on developing a coordinated response to international migration by all countries involved (as places of transit, origin and destination) around the world. Such efforts had severely stalled since the formal adoption of the 1990 UN Convention on the Rights of All Migrant Workers and their Families whose process of coming into effect took the longest and which remains the least widely ratified of the ten core conventions of the UN³ – one key signifier of the continuing obstacles and resistance to the advancement of migrants' human rights.

As an academic researcher, I have followed this process of concerted multilateral action and activities, often referred to as “global governance of migration”, closely ever since it started in the early 2000s⁴ when the then Secretary General of the United Nations, Kofi Annan, took it upon him to “take a more comprehensive look at the various dimensions of the migration issue”⁵, leading to a series of institutional efforts. One of the first

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2 — 152 states voted in favour, 5 opposed it, and 12 abstained (see <https://news.un.org/en/story/2018/12/1028941>).

3 — Nicola Piper (2016) ‘Keeping on the Move: Study of the Genesis of the 1990 Convention on the Rights of All Migrant Workers and their Families and its Implications today’, *Issue (Heft) no. 130* (series *Gerechtigkeit und Frieden*), German Commission for Justice and Peace, Bonn (ISBN 978-3-940137-70-8)

4 — Historians would argue for a much longer time line but I refer here to concerted efforts by the United Nations and various international organisations, alongside regional consultations and the input by civil society organisations from around the world. The first global event tackling migration is usually seen to have been the 1994 Cairo International Conference on Population and Development which was organized by UNDESA (the United Nations Department for Economic and Social Affairs) and whose Programme of Action included one chapter on international migration (UNFPA 1994).

5 — UNGA (2002), ‘Strengthening of the United Nations: an agenda for further change. Report of the Secretary General’. 9th September 2002, page 10.

steps taken thereafter was the establishment of the Global Commission on International Migration which undertook a huge data gathering exercise, regional consultations and expert meetings during its three year life time between 2003-2005, culminating in the publication of its final report “Migration in an interconnected world” and list of recommendations. The International Labour Organisation (ILO) renewed its efforts on improving protection of migrant workers by devoting its annual congress in 2004 to labour migration and by giving birth to the latest addition to its body of international labour rights standards: ILO Convention No. 189 on *Decent Work for Domestic Workers* which was adopted in 2011 and is highly relevant to the many, mostly female, migrant domestic workers (alongside their native counterparts) around the world. Other international organisations also produced flagship reports on migration, such as UNFPA in 2006 (“A Passage to Hope: Women and International Migration”) and UNDP in 2009 (“Overcoming Barriers: Human mobility and development”).

This range of activities led to the build-up of a sound knowledge base on migration, and in so doing prepared the way for the United Nations’ holding of its first UN High Level Dialogue on Migration and Development in 2006 (followed up in 2013) which in turn resulted in the annually held *Global Forum on Migration and Development*. Combined, these actions and efforts achieved a better and deeper understanding of the benefits and challenges for all who are affected by migration: so-called countries of origin, transit, destination and migrants themselves. The expectation was for this comprehensive understanding of all aspects of migration to provide sufficient political will and impetus for the creation of a global regulatory framework that would underpin not only the existing international human and labour rights framework⁶ but also resonate the spirit of the SDGs to “leave no-one behind”.

This centrepiece is

the Global Compact on Migration. It was conceived not to establish new norms but rather to strengthen existing principles by moving beyond rhetoric to action, and in so doing to provide, as per the words of UN chief António Guterres, a “roadmap to prevent suffering and chaos”⁷.

For someone who has closely followed this process for almost two decades on the basis of participant observation and interviews with various stakeholders, it is clear that the

6 — There are three migrant-specific conventions: 1990 UN Convention on the Rights of All Migrant Workers and their Families, the ILO Conventions 97 and 143 on labour migration.

7 — See <https://news.un.org/en/story/2018/12/1028941>.

implementation of this “roadmap” has its opponents and will be faced with numerous, primarily political and institutional, obstacles. At the core of this opposition is the non-acceptance of the basic idea that migrants, as non-citizens, have or should have the same rights as all (citizen) human beings.

As with the gradual development of most (if not all) human rights instruments aimed at improving the situation of specific social groups (women, children, ethnic/racial minorities, disabled etc.), it is the activism and advocacy by civil society organisations (CSOs), including faith-based organisations (FBOs) and trade unions, that are paramount in influencing discourse and the at times negative rhetoric that circulates in the public domain (social, print and other media).

This is at the core of this contribution: the argument that CSOs and FBOs play a vital role in reaffirming the human rights of migrants (‘rights on paper’) and realising the fulfilment of such obligations and duties in practice (‘rights on paper’).

This important advocacy work is growing worldwide as reflected in the various coalitions and platforms that have been created with the view to engage more effectively with international processes such as the Migration Compact which in turn contributes to a new understanding of migrants’ rights as a global phenomenon which requires whole-of-government and multi-stakeholder engagement⁸.

Migrants’ Rights

Conventionally, rights are viewed as being conferred via citizenship, understood as a legal and social status that defines responsibilities, prescribes collective identity,

8 — For a more detailed discussion, see Piper, N. (2015) ‘Democratising Migration from the Bottom Up: the rise of the global migrant rights movement’, in: *Globalizations* 12(5): 788-802; Piper, N. and Rother, S. (2014) ‘More than remittances – Resisting the Global Governance of Migration’, *Journal fuer Entwicklungspolitik/Austrian Journal for Development Studies*, Vol. 30(1): 30-45; Piper, N. and Rother, S. (2012) ‘Let’s argue about migration: Advancing a ‘Rights’ Discourse via Communicative Opportunities’, in: *Third World Quarterly* (special issue on ‘Global Governance, Contentious Politics and Human Rights in the South’, guest-edited by J.B. Grugel and A. Uhlin), vol. 33(9): 1735-1750.

and bestows political membership through the exercise of democratic rights⁹. People's increasing mobility across international borders, however, has propelled scholars and activists to question this concept of national citizenship¹⁰.

While institutions and politics at the nation-state level have been mostly reluctant to reconceptualise 'global' citizenship rights, some scholars¹¹ have argued that international human rights instruments are protecting migrants' civil and social rights. Since the adoption of the Universal Declaration on Human Rights in 1948, national and regional institutions have by way of ratification committed to the implementation of such rights. At the same time, the idea of bestowing rights to noncitizens, especially when they entered in an unauthorised manner or engage in activities that their visas do not allow for, is still considered 'counter-hegemonic' on the ground by many¹².

Despite their existence 'on paper' (ie. in theory), thus, migrant rights are met with great obstacles in terms of their actual fulfillment (that is, 'rights in practice'). Given their marginal socio-political and legal status, migrants are often left in a void when it comes to claiming their rights, be they work-related or otherwise. This is even worse for migrants who enter a country without authorisation and/or a work permit but none the less engage in income generating activities: their 'illegal' entry or visa status usually takes precedence over their rights as workers which in practice translates into their deportation (or deportability) upon detection, rather than leading to an investigation of labour rights violations committed by employers or recruiters. Demands for the instalment of firewalls by rights advocates have largely fallen on deaf ears¹³.

This means migrants are among the most marginalised groups as regards labour and work rights, not only because their marginalisation is connected to their status as noncitizens, especially if their act of migration was

9 — Seyla Benhabib (2007) "Twilight of Sovereignty or the Emergence of Cosmopolitan Norms? Rethinking Citizenship in Volatile Times", *Citizenship Studies* 11, 19-36.

10 — Saskia Sassen (2002)

11 — One such scholar is Soysal 1998.

12 — Tanya Basok (2009), "Counter-Hegemonic Human Rights Discourses and Migrant Rights Activism in the U.S. and Canada," *International Journal of Comparative Sociology* 50 (2): 179-201.

13 — Laurie Berg (2016) *Migrant Rights at Work: Law's Precariousness at the Intersection of Immigration and Labour*, Routledge

unauthorised¹⁴, but also to their status as precarious workers who typically find employment in sectors void of sufficient, if any, regulatory framework, beyond the reach of labour inspectorates¹⁵.

Furthermore, the delivery of both citizenship and classic human rights were for long seen as the remit of states. However, states cannot be primary agents of justice alone since states can be unjust or weak. The thinking around human rights has in fact moved on to consider the role and responsibility of so-called non-state actors such as corporations or businesses, international institutions and non-governmental organisations¹⁶. This is replicated by the strategies and practices of social movements whose political activism has gone beyond borders by engaging in transnational alliances and/or forming global justice networks) and addressing their advocacy to 'global sites'¹⁷. Other sub-state entities that have begun to be vocal in voicing the need to strengthen migrants' rights legally and institutionally are cities or municipalities: mayors have established a global network and there are numerous examples of them declaring their cities as 'sanctuaries' or 'human rights cities'¹⁸.

What is at stake here, therefore, are neither conventional nor cosmopolitan notions of citizenship which tend to be devoid of taking into account the realm of global politics, nor a liberal, individualistic notion of human rights. Rather, a 'new rights' agenda reflective of global interconnectedness of places and spaces is required which places migration squarely in the context of debates about global justice and the combined responsibilities of multiple agents in multiple sites.

14 — Tanya Basok, see footnote 11.

15 — Piper, N., Rosewarne, S. and Withers, M. (2017) 'Migrant Precarity: 'Networks of Labour' for a rights-based governance of migration', in: *Development and Change* 48(5): 1089-1110.

16 — Andrew Kuper (ed) (2005) *Global Responsibilities – Who Must Deliver on Human Rights?*, London: Routledge.

17 — Keck, M. and Sikkink, K. (1999) 'Transnational advocacy networks in international and regional politics', *International Social Science Journal* 51(159): 89-101; Routledge, Paul and Cumbers, Andrew (2009). *Global justice networks – geographies of transnational solidarity*, Manchester University Press; Nicola Piper (2015) 'Democratising Migration from the Bottom Up: the rise of the global migrant rights movement', in: *Globalizations* 12(5): 788-802.

18 — See www.globalmayorsforum.org and <https://citiesofrefuge.eu/team/prof-dr-barbara-oomen>.

Such ‘new rights agenda’ reflects, amongst other, also the growing centrality of rights in debates about global development as well as debates on the democratic deficit in global governance¹⁹. Such debates have expressed concern over both the legitimate nature of agents (‘who’) as well as the process (‘how’) involved in generating outcomes in the form of binding and non-binding regulatory frameworks on a global scale with national and local implications. Such shifts in emphasis and thinking are also reflected in the more specific discussion over how to secure *labour* rights in the 21st century which has begun to centre upon

two key questions: (1) how best to define the human rights responsibilities of non-state actors, and (2) how labour rights apply to migratory or non-citizen workers, including undocumented migrants as the most vulnerable of all.

Human Rights-based Approach to Migration

Global migration governance is essentially the product of three, at times competing, discursive frameworks, based on specific political priorities: (1) the *economic approach* based on the facilitation of mobility with emphasis on skills and qualifications; (2) the *securitisation approach* focused on controlling borders and population flows (exit and entry); (3) and the *rights-based approach* centred upon international human rights instruments (United Nations conventions and international labour standards by the ILO). The first two approaches are typically championed by governments and employer organisations. The latter approach emanates mostly from civil society organisations, including faith-based organisations and labour unions (and some employers). The human rights approach includes protection for the majority of migrants who end up in low-wage sectors, are less skilled or have an irregular, unauthorised status in relation to entry visa, residential and work permit²⁰. Given the range of priorities and interests involved in migration governance by various stakeholders, the attempt to arrive at an agreeable global framework has unsurprisingly been a delicate balancing act as evident from the most recent negotiations around the Global Compact of Migration²¹.

19 — J.B.Grugel and N. Piper (2009) ‘Do rights promote development?’, in: *Global Social Policy*, vol. 9(1): 79-98; Jan Aart Scholte (2011) (ed), *Building Global Democracy?* Cambridge University Press.

20 — Details of civil society position can be found in the “Ten Acts for the Global Compact” statement (see madenetwork.org) and also in the 20 points developed by the Vatican (“Responding to Refugees and Migrants: Twenty Action Points for the Global Compacts”).

21 — See e.g. Forum section in the academic journal *Global Social Policy* 18(3), 2018, for more detail.

At the core of controversy and disagreement is the perception that the global compact establishes (1) a general “right to migration” undermining the principle of national sovereignty; and provides (2) full rights to undocumented migrants, countering the cyclical nature of a capitalist economy with cycles of labour shortages typically followed by economic downturns.

In addition, migrants are seen as posing a potential strain on public services, reinforced by the assumption that migrants turn into permanent settlers. There is, however, no established freedom of mobility on a global scale²². In fact, there is the international human right to leave and return to one’s country of birth but this is not accompanied by the universally accepted right to immigrate. Such right to free cross-border circulation currently only exists on the regional level (such as e.g. within and between the EU and MERCOSUR member states).

On the issue of mobility, a particularly pressing issue as regards migrant workers is the relative lack of labour mobility. Migrants are typically hired on temporary contracts, often tied to specific employers. This renders migrant workers extraordinarily vulnerable and skews the power balance in favour of employers. The exploitative recruitment process along global production and care chains, substitution of contracts as well as the underpayment and non-payment of wages are in fact the most pressing issues identified by migrant and labour rights activists (supported by research findings²³). Well-reported instances of exploitation, such as the treatment of South Asian construction workers employed in Qatar ahead of the 2022 FIFA World Cup (Amnesty International 2016) are only the tip of the iceberg in this regard. Migrants are commonly subjected to abuse and violation of their labour rights not only during overseas employment, but in fact throughout the migration cycle, starting already at the pre-migration stage and also upon return. It is this lack of labour mobility tied to specific hiring and employment practices which are under-regulated and therefore pose a particular problem.

One important pathway to the gradual realisation of such a rights-based approach is via democratising the decision-making process and participation by the people who are affected. It is again the ILO’s tripartite system that is unique as far as global governing institutions are

22 — As lamented in 1971 by Roger Nett in an article entitled “The Civil Right we Are not Ready For: The Right of Free Movement of People“, *Ethics* 81: 212-227.

23 — See e.g. Farbenblum, B., Taylor-Nicholson, E. and Paoletti, S. (2013), *Migrant Workers’ Access to Justice at Home: Indonesia*, Open Society Foundations: New York.

concerned in allowing almost equal representation of workers alongside employers and governments. However,

being historically derived from the European and North American experience of industrial revolution and worker movements, worker representation via formal unions has been based on skilled workers in formalized employment situations, based on a model of industrial citizenship derived from western contexts.

Historically, informal workers, among them women and migrants, had for long been excluded from political representation and the process of standard setting whose principle means were the creation of a series of conventions and recommendations on *national* labour practices.

In the current phase of transnationalising labour markets, however, a standard setting framework designed for national systems of regulation no longer suffices.

As far as the emerging global governance system on migration is concerned, overemphasis on the regulation of exit and entry has not been matched with equal concern for the regulation of employment practices and workplace conditions. Put differently, the rise in ‘migration governance’ has been accompanied by a lack in appropriate ‘labour governance’ which is manifested in the poor implementation of labour rights, including insufficient allocation of resources to labour inspection. By contrast, vast resources are poured into border control mechanisms by wealthier countries of destination such as the US, Australia and in Europe. In addition, migration policy has been largely developed in an undemocratic manner, removed from participation by organisations which represent the interests of migrants.

In times when the idea of ‘migrant rights as human rights’ is not widely recognised, let alone translated into practice, their promotion hinges upon pressure ‘from below’. Thus, the formation of, and migrants’

participation in, civil society organisations and labour unions becomes a central factor in the advancement of a rights-based approach to migration.

In the context of strictly temporary employer-tied or so-called “circulatory” migration schemes, such activism has to address the drivers of migration (which are also often related to decent work deficit) in addition to labour rights violations in countries of destination – i.e. a holistic rights-based approach that spans all stages of migration and intersects with the discourse and policy practices of “development”.

Civil Society Engagement

Given the very political nature of the “global migration governance project”, states’ multilateral interaction provides a powerful context for the mobilisation from below by civil society (and other private) actors whose responses and strategies are shaped by and also shape such interactions.

The migrant-serving and/or migrant-run organisations tend to provide a migrant-centric counter-narrative to the state-dominated efforts. Their voices and actions often derive from a social change agenda centering upon notions of justice, fairness and equality.

Furthermore, CSOs and FBOs form a bridge between the global, national and local levels of policy making; and they typically do so by forming partnerships, networks and coalitions with other civil society organisations across place, space and issues.

One such platform is the Churches Witnessing With Migrants initiative which was conceived by the National Council of Churches in the Philippines (NCCP)²⁴ and Migrante International in 2013. It is a platform for

24 — See: <http://nccphilippines.org/cwmm/>; https://info.brot-fuer-die-welt.de/sites/default/files/blog-downloads/stockholm_affirmations_final_5_14_2014-1.pdf

advocacy, focused on forced migration in all its forms comprising three types of organisations: FBOs, migrant serving CSOs and migrant membership organisations.

Another example is the Asia Pacific Refugee Rights Network (APRRN)²⁵ which constitutes a regional network of organisations working with and for refugees and victims of trafficking.

The promotion of a rights-based approach to migration by the fledgling global migrant rights movement as represented by the *Global Coalition on Migration* (www.gcmigration.org). The qualifier “global” in its title has two meanings: 1. Global as in targeting multilateral fora and processes (such as the GFMD, UN High Level Dialogues, Global Compact); and 2. ‘global’ as in its geographic reach, being composed of regional networks of migrant rights and grassroots organisations from around the world. Its purpose is to counter the economic or security-based approaches typically taken by states by proposing an alternative vision based on a human rights approach. The regional migrant advocacy networks which are part of the global migrant rights movement have developed a comprehensive critique and analysis of state proposed policy frameworks in their discursive and prescriptive forms by attacking narrow and highly selective migration policies that have circumscribed migrants’ spatial and socio-economic chances for mobility.

The main members of this global movement, regional networks from around the world, were partly the product of global opportunity structures provided by the gradual institutionalisation of global migration governance²⁶ (such as PANiDMR in Africa, founded in 2010); others gained further strength from such global developments (e.g. the well-established Migrant Forum in Asia, or MFA, which has existed since 1990). The key role of those regional networks is to feed regional specificities (based on the significance of so-called ‘South-South migration’) into the advocacy efforts of the combined global migrant rights movement. In doing so, regional networks bring the voices of “their” migrant constituencies, and thus region-specific concerns, to the multilateral level, and thus to the attention of global actors and the state community, reinforced on the basis of critical mass gained by their participation in the global migrant rights movement.

The migrant rights community has emerged organically in response to the real experience of the many low-wage, low-skilled, at times undocumented or irregular migrants who have been moving within an unregulated space or navigating a restrictive regulatory framework. Studies have shown how CSOs have often sprung up as service providers, only to subsequently turn into advocacy organisations; also there are examples of return migrants establishing politically-engaged organisations as the result of the politicisation

25 — <https://aprrn.info>

26 — See Betts (2010) for a detailed timeline of the key milestones of global migration governance.

effect of their migration experience²⁷ Their regional networking activities are often the offspring of transnational networking between country of origin and destinations (such as in Asia); or they may have been triggered by the recent proliferation of regional, but more often global, governing fora and processes (such as in Africa and Latin America). They have, thus, either been built in response to, or been consolidated and expanded by, intensifying multilateralism in the field of migration policy.

By establishing and consolidating transnational advocacy relations across major sending and receiving countries in all major regions, civil society organizations and their regional networks appear to have achieved a greater level of regional solidarity compared to government-led initiatives.

This is evident from the expanding and deepening regional network activities in terms of membership and activities and the value seen in doing so²⁸. This is further exemplified by their advocacy for a rights-based approach to migration which covers all phases and dimensions of migration (pre-departure, overseas stint, and return) highlighting the specific responsibilities of all countries at all stages of the migration process.

For migrant rights advocates and their networks, the two cornerstones of the integrated rights-based approach to migration governance are, therefore, ‘recognition’ of migrants as rights holders and migrant ‘representation’ in the political process at the regional and global level via meaningful participatory channels and access of collective organisations.

27 — Piper, N. (2009) ‘Temporary migration and political remittances: the role of advocacy networks in the transnationalisation of human rights’, in: *European Journal of East Asian Studies*, vol. 8(2): 215-243.

28 — Piper, N. and Rother, S. ‘Political Remittances and the Diffusion of a Migrant Rights Agenda in transnational activist networks: the case of the Migrant Forum in Asia (MFA)’, in: *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* (JEMS), forthcoming in 2019.

Combined, the regional CSO networks advocate for greater freedom of mobility parallel to addressing the root causes of migration in order to make “migration a choice, not necessity” (UNHDL statement 2013). Unlike states, however, they do so on the basis of a rights framework, drawing on the full range of existing international human rights instruments.

Back to the Global Compact – concluding remarks

The Global Compact on Migration is the result of a road that has consolidated what is referred to as “global governance of migration”, i.e. the gradual cooperation by states on a multilateral framework dealing with international migration from a human rights and development perspective.

The process around the Migration Compact was and is, just like most multilateral processes, predominantly a state-led affair, but despite this, the Compact negotiations were commendably open to civil society, reflecting the much talked about “whole of society approach”. A range of civil society groups were key ‘partners’ at all stages and their composition reflected the typical CSO crowd attracted by UN processes, including the Global Forum on Migration and Development: migrant and diaspora organisations, trade unions, private sector, foundations, faith-based groups, human rights and development oriented organisations, and academics.

As positive can be noted that CSOs have by and large welcomed the process for bringing migration back into the central work of the UN, after the years of extra-UN fora having been the dominant format. In this way, a human rights based approach to migration has been affirmed. This is a positive development since the inception of the GFMD process (as the outcome of the first UN High Level Dialogue on International Migration and Development in 2006) which – as an extra-UN process – has all along been viewed very critically.

On the list of critical, negative issues, there is the continuing key role of the IOM to the detriment of the ILO’s placing at centre state alongside other IOs who are custodians of standards and human rights instruments. With the IOM’s move to come closer institutionally to the UN system (and its celebration as *the* UN agency on migration), this concern has become more severe. The ILO and other human rights championing UN organisations will be part of the core group of agencies comprising the UN Migration Network which will form working groups that are to look into implementation of the Migration Compact. It has to be seen how this will pan out. Key is for CSOs and trade unions to gain firm place at the table.

As far as the wording of the GCM is concerned, the Zero Draft was viewed by CSOs as a much better outcome than anyone would have expected. Against all odds, it had reaffirmed commitments approved two years ago in the New York Declaration, as well as identified in the ILO labour standards and human rights treaties. Some of this has, not surprisingly, been lost in the final version, as the result of tough negotiations. In this sense, to quote the WIMN statement from July 2018, CSOs see the Global Compact “as a transitional step, but not yet transformative”. So, although the Migration Compact is a pinnacle, it does not mean that the work is over. It has only begun.

Appendix

Chapter 28

Ethics for Life – A Framework for a New Paradigm

A Discussion Paper of the Bread for the World Global Reference Group
January 2018¹

Introduction

The BfdW Global Reference Group (GRG) is a body of 10 representatives of partner organisations of Bread for the World (BfdW). It has the role of a think tank and gives advice to the Executive Board of Bread for the World. From 2014 to 2017, the group has met each year to discuss emerging trends and issues which are of key relevance for the strategic direction and the work of Bread for the World.

A recurring topic of the GRG meetings has been the concept of a “New Paradigm.” This document summarises the findings, definitions, key concepts and recommendation of the GRG on this subject.

Why is a “New Paradigm” relevant to Bread for the World?

The global civilisation is in crisis

Today, we are facing multiple crises – financial, economic, food, energy, and climate – which have a tremendous negative impact on people’s lives, livelihoods, human rights and nature. These negative trends are seen as unavoidable by-products of globalisation. This is further exacerbated with the failing state, both in terms of political will as well as capacity to address this nationally and globally. The current situation is an outcome of a dominant globalised economic model that prioritises markets, profits, growth over people and nature, resulting in growing inequalities and environmental destruction. If we keep on this path, we continue risking the very existence of human life, human dignity and the future of the planet. We need to recognise that we are jeopardising the future.

1 – The following paper is the Outcome of the discussions of the Bread for the World Global Reference Group meeting between 2014 – 2017. The Final version was produced on 31st January 2018.

We need to review and rethink the fundamentals

Now is the time to review the very fundamentals of our systems. The existing piecemeal and ad hoc alternate models with limited interventions cannot address the massive global crisis. The current predominant development paradigm is redundant. It is based on neo-liberal thinking and the belief in a continuous economic growth. Since the ecological limits of the world have already been reached a long time back, it becomes necessary to reassess the validity of such a paradigm. We need to lay the foundations for a new kind of thinking. We need to show a direction for how life and society is to be organised: a well thought, integrated approach to critique the prevailing dominant growth model of development, democracy, nation state and capitalism. We need to create the space and give a voice and visibility to solutions which transform the economy and power relations.

We need to develop an inspiring vision

The need therefore is to develop a new paradigm with an inspiring vision for humanity. The elaboration of a new paradigm should be a cornerstone of Bread for the World's strategy. Such a new paradigm should focus on life itself, and its foundations should be highly ethical. To realise this, Bread for the World should engage in conversations with both its own constituency and its partners to further develop the concept. When the vision of the New Paradigm unfolds further, it will positively influence civil societies and societies in large and will pave a way for a more just and sustainable society.

Core Elements of the New Paradigm

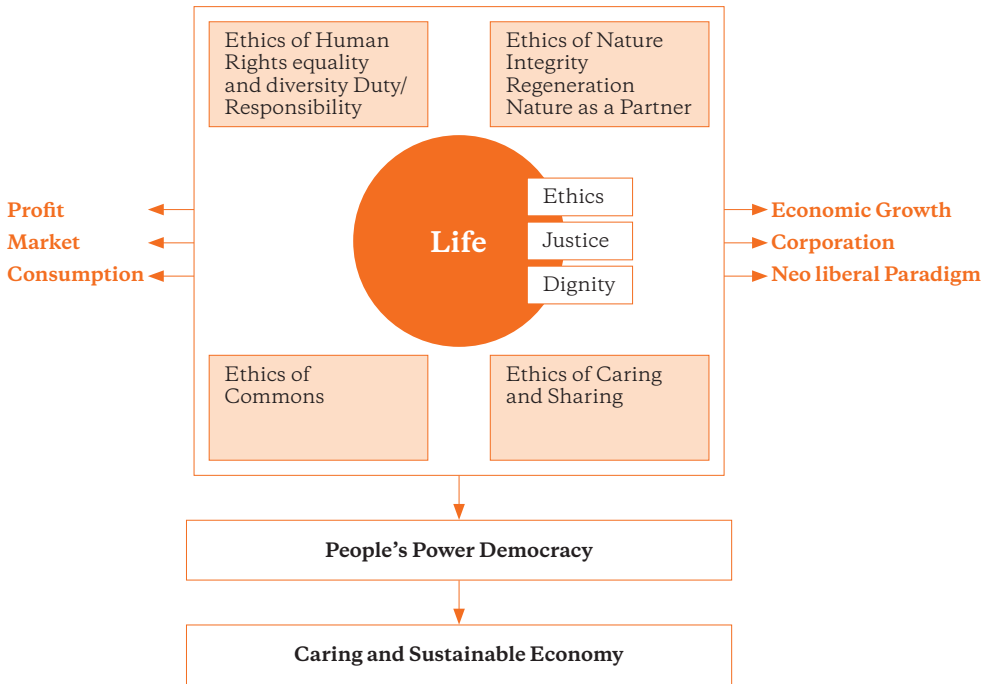
The New Paradigm is not an alternative development paradigm. It is a paradigm of life/society. It thus challenges dominant patterns and systems that have formed our minds and societies (e.g. globalisation, colonialism, patriarchy). In this sense, it does not provide pre-defined solutions, but rather a uniting future vision for a human society based on common and shared knowledge and needs.

The New Paradigm is built on **four ethical pillars**:

1. Ethics of Nature (seeing nature as an equal partner)
2. Ethics of Caring (for people) and sharing
3. Ethics of Commons (resources)
4. Ethics of Human Rights (beyond legal frameworks)

Further to these four pillars, there would be certain topics/issues that have to be taken into account consistently in all plans and actions:

1. **Addressing inequalities** in all its forms
2. **Support civil society** in general and its think-tanks in particular



The core of the New Paradigm is **LIFE**. Life includes all lives – nature and humanity – and is bound to three core values:

1. **Ethics** – the philosophy that investigates, what is the best way for humans to live, and what kinds of actions are right or wrong in all situations.
2. **Justice** – is the attainment and the philosophical discussion of that which is just. It is not limited to procedural justice based on application of law, but includes social justice rooted in ethics, philosophy, religion, values.
3. **Dignity** – is an intrinsic human characteristic, which believes all human beings are inherently worthy beings. Dignity is the basis of self-respect and unconditional respect from others as well as for difference in others.

The four pillars

In defining the four pillars more in detail, the GRG provides guidance in the selection and direction of topics Bread for the World should engage with.

Ethics of Human Rights

Human Rights are premised on the principles of dignity, universality and equality. Development from a Human Rights perspective thus involves societies allowing women and men to expand their economic role without sacrificing their right to a dignified life. Human Rights should go beyond technocratic solutions rooted in the rhetoric of legal language, and instead address the most pressing issues of vulnerability, marginalisation and discrimination faced especially by women from socially and economically excluded communities. Human rights should be an instrument equally for Northern and Southern governments and civil society, and unequal power in rights discourses and work need to be discussed.

Ethics of Nature

Nature is an actor fully involved in human life, and not an object of human economic activities – as a source of resources and a sink for emissions. Nature is not (only) a means for human life, but a cooperative partner with equal value as well as an end in itself. All relations with nature have to be designed in a form which maintains integrity and helps to strengthen the regenerative forces of nature.

Ethics of Commons

By organizing ourselves around the *commons* we can create a new way of being and living, both in the relation between humans and our relation with nature. But being common is not an *a priori* condition, it is a result. Goods are not common, they are socially made common. Common is not an inherent or intrinsic quality of the good (natural or produced), but it is a quality that social relation gives it. To generate commons goods is a special way of organizing social life.

Ethics of Caring and Sharing

Care is not just an activity (caring for) but also a practice that encompasses an ethical, emotional and relational dimension (caring about). Therefore care is both, a set of values and a series of concrete practices. A caring society – from a global to a local level – should be one in which care penetrates all major societal institutions because care/caring is not just an activity or a form of work, but a system of social relations that recognises the interdependence between human beings. Caring implies sharing. Based on the experience of everyday life, caring means shouldering responsibility for others and making a conscious commitment to other people and society at large. In this sense caring implies reaching out to something other than the self – implying a deep empathy with other human and non-human persons, including nature.

Operationalising the New Paradigm

‘Planetary Citizens Movements’ as a central pathway

The central pathway to reach the New Paradigm are ‘Planetary Citizens’ Movements’ (PCM). These movements will be the mobilisation towards the New Paradigm, and will visualise the central topics and pillars of the New Paradigm. PCMs will evolve organically out of existing networks and groups that mobilise their constituencies on pressing, cross-regional key themes. An example for this are glocal (global/local) operations, advocacy and mobilisation where many partners at different levels work together in planning, implementing and advocating for a common issue. The critical task in the evolution of PCMs is not to create new groups or networks, but to link existing ones around mutually relevant topics and issues, and provide them with the space and resources to collaborate, act and advocate on behalf of their shared constituencies.



Movements cannot be created within the conceptual and resource strains of a project. But certain activities can aid in the creation of an enabling environment that leads to the organic development of PCMs. These activities should start with, but also go beyond the network of BfdW's partners.

Moving towards transformative partnerships

The GRG proposes the concept of *transformative partnerships*. The basis of partnership are the shared values, goals and ethics which extend beyond a funding-based relationship. Based on the understanding of a shared responsibility, partnership should be more oriented towards networks than simply to bilateral cooperation. BfdW is already working strategically with some partners, but has a large number of partners which it is mainly providing funding to. The concept of transformative partnership sets the different types of partnership within a revised action-reflection framework. This means that not all partners need to be in strategic alliances or experimental partnerships, but they all need to feel that they are part of movements and strategic for the new paradigm.

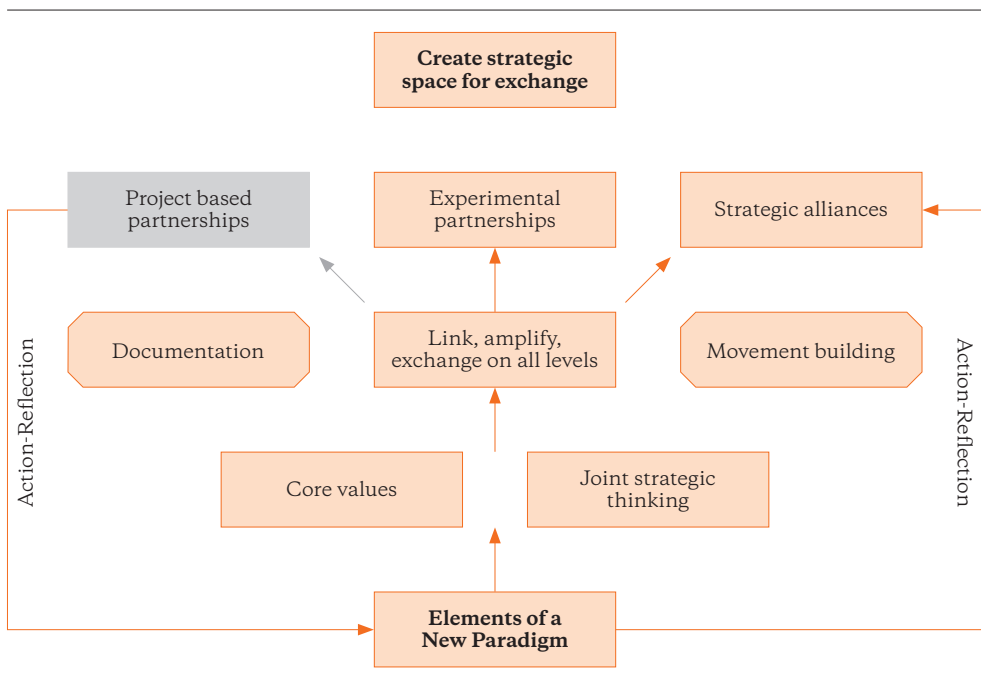
Elements of an action-reflection framework

An **action-reflection framework** is crucial to support pathways towards a new paradigm. Such a framework (illustrated below) can support the strategic orientation of BfdW's work towards a New Paradigm. It can help to explore its concepts by gathering concrete experience together with partner organisations.

Starting points are the elements of a new paradigm which the GRG has elaborated so far. This is an important step, but it is still on a theoretical level and not complete. It needs further efforts to make it more concrete and to understand what it actually means for the different fields of work.

Core values and joint strategic thinking should form the **basis for BfdW's cooperation** with partners.

- **Core values** are the understanding that life and human dignity and not funding should be put at the centre of the cooperation. The ethical pillars of the new paradigm should guide the common work. These are the ethics of human rights, of nature, of commons and of caring and sharing.
- **Joint strategic thinking** needs to look for ways to enhance social change and take up what is already in the networks of BfdW and its partners, but also beyond. BfdW should aim for identifying seeds for a new paradigm and a planetary citizen's movement and to promote them. It needs to address root causes of crisis and injustices and strive to meet



the immediate needs of people while working towards long-term structural changes. In order to better achieve this, the vision of cooperation must change. Strategic thinking needs to be linked with reflection. It also needs long-term strategies and a coherent planning as well as exploring alternatives to the current project approach. Such a change, however, needs the willingness and ability to deal with tensions both within the organization and with other actors.

In its cooperation BfdW should strive to **link and amplify the work of the partners and foster exchange** between them. For this, BfdW needs to **create strategic spaces for exchange**. This is done by two complementing forms of cooperation:

1. **Experimental partnerships** should be a way to identify and cooperate with valuable initiatives or grassroots organizations. A more strategic funding needs a longer perspective and more flexibility when supporting new actors and new ways of political engagement. It also means that partnerships without funding could play an important role. For experimental partnerships BfdW needs to be able to take a (calculated) risk and allow innovation. It should be a process-based approach where BfdW should invest in the process, not in (planned) outcomes. Such experimental partnerships can be the basis for strategic cooperation.
2. **Strategic alliances** should aim at supporting the networking of partners, linking them up with other networks as well as identifying new networks. For this BfdW should strategize more with partners on regional level. Strategic alliances can be fostered by linking like-minded people and support cross sectoral/border exchange, South-South cooperation and the use of social media solutions for partner communication and exchange.
3. **Project-based partnerships** also need to feel that they are part of movements and strategic for the new paradigm. This means that BfdW should always keep in mind how their work could be linked to other organisations, where there are linkages to global issues and where there is potential to move to a more strategic cooperation.

Two additional elements which are crucial in strategic cooperation are an increased focus on documentation and movement building. **Documentation** is the basis for the reflection of BfdW's role for the new paradigm. BfdW needs to make better use of the reflection of partners' experiences. Supporting knowledge production from the South and improving data collection of communities could contribute to creating new and alternative narratives. Equally important is the focus on **movement building** which needs a support for leadership in the South and a strategic investment in people to nurture critical thinking.

Still, there are various **limitations** for implementing such an action-reflection framework. Some limitations are external factors, i.e. the changes in political behavior. Others are internal, i.e. the focus on projects and standards. These limitations need to be dealt with when building the new paradigm further.

Key recommendations for further development

Based on the discussions between 2014 and 2017, the GRG recommends that BfdW should **engage in conversations on the new paradigm**. In particular, BfdW should:

a) assess the internal effects of a new paradigm shift

- reflect on alternatives to “classic” project structures
- cooperate with partners within an “action-reflection-framework”
- dare to live a transformative partnership model

b) prioritize areas of work which are instrumental for the work on the new paradigm

- peace & conflict and shrinking space
- a Climate justice agenda

In following these recommendations BfdW can make a **contribution to strengthening the Planetary Citizens’ Movements**.

Chapter 29

Our understanding of collaborative partnership at Bread for the World and Diakonie Katastrophenhilfe

Adopted by the Development Service and Humanitarian Aid Committee, 11 April 2018

1 Introduction

Collaborative partnership is key to the way Bread for the World and Diakonie Katastrophenhilfe (DKH) work.¹

From the very beginning, our organisation and its predecessors have hardly ever been directly operationally active in other countries; instead, they aimed at achieving their objectives in collaborative partnership with or through the collaborative support of churches and, later on, other civil society organisations. An exception have been and will be those humanitarian relief operations, where there are no partners at all or only weak partners on the ground. Otherwise, co-operation with partner organisations is a constant characteristic of our organisation's way of working and understanding of its role. Additionally, it is a particular motivation for many staff members to work for our organisation.

However, applying the principle of partnership to our daily work remains a constant challenge. That is why it is essential for staff at Bread for the World and Diakonie Katastrophenhilfe at home and abroad (particularly new staff) as well as experts and consultants working with partners, to familiarise themselves with the principle of partnership. This

¹ — In this paper, Bread for the World and Diakonie Katastrophenhilfe are being referred as either “the organisation” or “our organisation” wherever they are both being mentioned in one and the same context.

document is intended as an aid to that end.² It provides a basis for the induction of new staff members and for discussion within our organisation. Equally, it is a tool for dialogue with partner organisations and other players, particularly the global and regional ecumenical networks. Therefore, half or a whole day of study should be offered at regular intervals as part of our internal training programme. This will provide new staff members in particular with the opportunity to familiarise themselves with requirements and challenges of a practical understanding of partnership.

2 Purpose, objective and duration of partnership

“The work of the Protestant Agency for Diakonie and Development is committed to the following objectives: [...] joining with ecumenical partners in organising the church’s contribution to overcome poverty, hunger and need in the world and tackling their root causes.”³

Our organisation enters into partnerships in order to carry out this mandate. The objective is not to sustain partnership as an end in itself (which is part of the responsibility of the missionary societies in Germany belonging to the member churches of the EKD/Evangelical Church in Germany), yet as an instrument to exercise shared responsibility for the world. The term *partnership* describes a co-operative effort between people and institutions in which common goals are pursued on the basis of shared core values and ideas as to how to achieve these goals.

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- 2 — This policy paper was compiled by an internal project group *Understanding Partnership*. Back in spring 2014, the group was mandated to draw up a paper on the understanding of partnership at Bread for the World and Diakonie Katastrophenhilfe as well as the resulting need for action. Staff from various areas of work within the both organisations participated in this working group. The document is the result of many discussions over the past three years throughout units and departments within both organisations, among members of the project group *Understanding Partnership* and during three internal staff events. It is also based on the documents from its predecessor organisations:
- Das Partnerschaftsverständnis von „Brot für die Welt“ und der Diakonie Katastrophenhilfe. Vergewisserung zum 50. Jahrestag von „Brot für die Welt“ [*How Bread for the World and Diakonie Katastrophenhilfe understand partnership. A review on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of Bread for the World*] (2009);
 - “Gemeinsam gehen”. Die Beziehungen des EED zu seinen Partnerorganisationen [*“Walking together”. The relationship between EED/Church Development Service and its partner organisations*] (2009).
- 3 — See the Articles of Association of the Protestant Agency for Diakonie and Development [Evangelisches Werk für Diakonie und Entwicklung e. V.], Preamble.

Our organisation is a church-based agency. As such, we consider churches and church-based organisations and networks as our partners.⁴ Partners are also those civil society organisations at home and abroad with which Bread for the World and Diakonie Katastrophenhilfe have agreed to co-operate to achieve common objectives within a defined time-frame. The duration of a project partnership or advocacy partnership depends on the time required to achieve its objectives. In order to achieve long-term effects, partnership is rarely established for the short-term. Long-term partnerships exist with a small number of partner organisations owing to their extensive capacities and constantly emerging projects. In individual cases, Bread for the World and Diakonie Katastrophenhilfe support partner organisations institutionally and help to build and expand their capacities, also for fundraising, in order to promote their independence. Co-operation happens in different ways, for example, through humanitarian aid projects, financial sponsoring projects, shared lobby, advocacy and educational projects, by way of recruiting experts and volunteers, identifying scholarships, promoting education and training, capacity-building measures, or consultancy. At present, new partnerships are established every year with ten percent of our allocations, while some old ones are terminated.

3 Manifestation of partnership

Partnerships with Bread for the World and Diakonie Katastrophenhilfe come in many shapes and sizes. Our partner organisations are active in development co-operation, human rights work, humanitarian aid or welfare and social work; they have different internal orientations and different geographical foci. They may be active at local, regional, national and/or international level. We have partners we collaborate with on political matters, as well as those who work with Bread for the World/Diakonie Katastrophenhilfe offering financial, personnel or consultancy support (or a combination of these forms of co-operation) in order to improve the lives of people on the ground. Our partners comprise churches, individual organisations and ecumenical or secular networks of different sizes, in Germany, the Global South or around the world.

Collaborative projects with partners are generally formalised as a contractual partnership to implement specific projects. This requires a high level of commitment, is based on common values and agreements between the relevant partners, and takes account of the opportunities, strengths and weaknesses of all involved. They are never established simply to transfer resources, but always to co-operate in solving mutually identified problems, pursue common goals and react jointly to initiated or unexpected changes. By working together

4 — Regarding the definition see the letter of the BMZ (Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development) dated 30.11.1988 “Leitsätze zum kirchlichen Bezug” [*Guidelines on Church References*] (320 – T 7000 – 129/88).

in partnership to achieve agreed objectives, transformative learning processes take place that change both parties.

The advance of globalisation and transnational challenges will in future require new forms of partnership in order to jointly shape change processes in the Global North and South.

4 Theological context

4.1 Equal status of partners

As Protestant agencies, Bread for the World and Diakonie Katastrophenhilfe essentially see their work intertwined with the worldwide ecumenical interaction of Christian churches. Collaborative partnerships between churches always have a tripolar relational framework, as the partnership between two (church) partners is geared towards and manifested through a third dimension, God's mission (*missio dei*) which all churches and Christians alike are part of. All partners have an equal share in God's mission to the world to establish His kingdom of justice and peace, and all walk this path at the side of the poor (priority *option for the poor*)⁵.

This shared mission, and this shared relationship with God are the foundation for the equal status of Jesus' "companions" and imply a very critical approach to power. This understanding is a guiding principle within the international ecumenical movement, particularly within the World Council of Churches (WCC) and the ACT Alliance and, therefore, also in the discussion around *Ecumenical Diakonia*⁶ in which our organisation is actively involved. This principle of equality between us and our partners also provides the basis for our principle of partner autonomy; we shall take a closer look at this in section 7.

4.2 Joined in the Body of Christ

These principles of equality and equality can also be illustrated by a further Biblical motif, which talks of Christians, parishes and churches in all parts of the world and all denominations as being parts of a global "body" whose "head" is Christ. Our organisation sees itself as such a part; from this derive the priority relationship to churches and church structures around the world and the conception of ourselves as well as our identification as part of the global ecumenical movement and particularly the WCC and ACT Alliance. This is the defining element of our organisation's work.

The global Body of Christ is understood as a global community of sharing – shared joys and shared sorrows – and of caring for each other, which encompasses both material

5 – The phrase "option for the poor" was coined in liberation theology and first occurred in the document "Evangelization in the Present Day and in the Future of Latin America" as set out by the Roman Catholic Episcopal Conference of Latin America held in Puebla on 13 February 1979.

6 – The *Ecumenical Diakonia* document was compiled by an international ecumenical commission and adopted by panels of WCC and ACT Alliance. No official version has been published to date (12.12.2018).

and non-material dimensions of mutual sympathy (intercession, apostolic journeys, epistles) (1 Corinthians 12:26) and in which every part has something to give and needs something else: only when this diversity of needs and talents is brought together in interplay does our common path become possible. The well-being of the whole body of Christ is dependent on the condition of the weakest parts (1 Corinthians 12:22 et seq.) Ecumenical partnership therefore takes place as mutual giving and receiving in the one Body of Christ (*koinonia*). All resources and talents are understood as a gift of God to “build up the body” and not as something we own and certainly not something we have “earned” –and especially not the fact that we currently have more financial resources available (which had, as we know, been very different after the Second World War). This, as well as the image of Jesus as the head of the body in which all parts of global Christendom are connected to each other, shows that no one has reason to feel superior, or should feel so, to those who at this present moment are poorer in resources. We are all reliant on God’s gifts and every human is at times poor and at others rich (2 Corinthians 8:12-15). Therefore, all – rich and poor – should be grateful and humble to God as a giving power. Haughtiness on the part of the present so-called “donor organisation” is out of place, according to Christian understanding.

In the epistles of Paul, the Apostle we can see the model of Ancient Christians’ advocacy for communities in need in different contexts (2 Corinthians 8:1-15). Every part of the Christian Church which spans countries and peoples can find itself in the role of donor or recipient according to the specific situation.

The history of Diakonie Katastrophenhilfe and the programme *Churches helping Churches* reflects this as well: they were started as a grateful reaction to the post-war help that the German Protestant churches received from churches in Western Allied countries, countries which had until shortly before been enemies, and that was meant to rebuild Germany and the German churches, to relieve hunger and to integrate refugees. Our ministry thus began as a recipient and remained so until, thanks to the support of other ‘members of the global Body of Christ’, the German churches became giving organisations. We wish this for all church partners and it can happen to them with God’s and our help. Thus theological and historical reasons strengthen our understanding of equality among partners. Partnership in an ecumenical dimension and from the viewpoint of the church is a process of mutual giving and receiving which goes far beyond a project-oriented partnership.⁷

Fundamental to how we deal with each other in this community of sharing in the Body of Christ is, firstly, the basic attitude that all serve each other as well as constantly calling hierarchies and power structures into question (Mark 10:43) and, secondly, it is the attempt to create an alternative style to the patterns of global relationships in the midst of globally asymmetrical structures of the distribution of power.

7 — The collection for the early church in Jerusalem can be seen as a basic model for ecumenical social and welfare work. A description can be found in the document *Ecumenical Diakonia*. See also the international ecumenical debate on “ecumenical sharing of resources” in the 1980s. (Guidelines for Sharing, El Escorial 1987; available at www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/wcc-programmes/justice-diakonia-and-responsibility-for-creation/ecumenical-solidarity/guidelines-for-sharing).

4.3 Ecumenical diakonia – a common mission in this world

As we walk with God on the path to change the world, the following quotations from the Bible guide our way:

- God created humanity in His own image (Genesis 1:27) as male and female. Together men and women are called on as allies of God the Creator to live in the world, to cultivate it and to preserve it.
- For Christians the highest commandment is love of God and of our neighbour. Whosoever has experienced God's love becomes free to be present for others with commitment and creativity. This is expressed in the care of the poor and the needy which is founded in the Old Testament tradition (Deuteronomy 10:19) and found its challenging culmination in the parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37) Here the "foreigner" becomes a "partner" to the man attacked by robbers by helping him in his need and accompanying, healing and helping him to continue on his own path on his own feet.
- In the New Testament Jesus Christ meets people as the one who confronts injustice, exclusion and enslavement of people with the new reality of the rule of God and frees all people to full humanity in dignity and justice and peace (Luke 4:18). We are called on to perpetuate his mission against the suffering of the world (Matthew 28:19). This is the meaning and common goal of our shared actions with partners and, of course, must stand the test in our dealings with partners.
- Jesus does not avoid the suffering of the world but bears it IN PLACE of people and WITH them. On his path of suffering he places himself by the side of all those who suffer and identifies himself with them so closely that he equates service to them with service to himself. Therefore the path of Christians (and hence also ecumenical partners) by the side of the poor, their Christian charity, and their prophetic advocacy for them becomes a question of faith, a question exemplifying and revealing the love (or lack of love) of God, and therefore is not merely an ethical question posed on a whim. This is what constitutes Christian mercifulness and solidarity with all who are poor, marginalised and disenfranchised (Matthew 25:40). From this derives the mission for Bread for the World and Diakonie Katastrophenhilfe to stand by the side of these people, together with our partners, and to help them to shape their lives independently and in dignity. Therefore partnership with church-based partner organisations is not merely a priority and a common goal, but is also a shared motive. Our first loyalty and obligation to co-operation lies with church-based partners, with whom we share the same mission and with whom we are already walking a common path as disciples of Jesus.

The option for the poor applies to all poor and oppressed people, as Christ saw it, and is independent of which religion they belong to. In his solidarity and selection of his companions and helpers Christ did not limit himself to people belonging to a certain religion. Much to the dismay of the religious leaders of his time, he also approached those belonging to other religious communities and won them over to his movement. The orientation towards his mission to practice love to one's neighbour and justice means, as an additional

or secondary reason, it is necessary and sensible to collaborate with partners and target groups of different ideologies or religious convictions. That is why our range of partners also includes people from different religions and ideologies and organisations who have come together for different reasons. This applies in particular to countries where the majority of people are not Christian. As long as organisations share our vision and our ethical principles of people on this earth living together in peace, justice and the integrity of Creation, they too can become important partners. This all the more so since dialogue and the scope for action across religious divides is important in religiously charged conflicts.

5 Development context (Bread for the World)

The reason for Bread for the World to co-operate with partners is the aim of working towards equitable living conditions for its target groups⁸:

“People and communities within the scope of action of supported projects and programmes who are affected most by poverty and hunger, injustice and inequality, violence and endangerment of natural resources and of peace mobilise their powers of self-help and are enabled to lead a dignified and more peaceful life, to increasingly participate in economic, social and political life, and can emancipate themselves from marginalisation and oppression.”⁹

Partner organisations often act as intermediaries for target groups with little formal organisation and take action through and with these groups to bring about change. In other cases partner organisations themselves are the target group of sought-for change.

In the world of the 21st century, different players must work on our shared global challenges and questions. A crucial factor is working together to shape and stimulate change in the Global North and South, where every stakeholder has an important task to perform in his/her respective location. This requires new forms of global co-operation within civil

8 — Our target groups in this document are people and groups of people who are strengthened through various measures to initiate positive changes to their lives.

9 — Strategic planning of Bread for the World 2016-2020, Objective 1.

society between credible local and national players and has an impact on how partnerships are approached.¹⁰

Development processes can only be successful if they are wanted, planned, determined and borne by those affected on the ground. The comprehensive assessment of situations on the ground, their description through the eyes of those affected in different ways, the identification of the need for change and intrinsic motivation to translate all these into specific, independently planned and accountable steps always build on the initiative of those who are relevant protagonists on the ground – we in our country, our partners in theirs. We need their information, viewpoints, analyses and support through temporary collaboration or event-related presence for advocacy and educational work on sustainable development in Germany and around the globe, coordinated and owned by us. In contrast, our partners require, at times, financial or personnel support, information and analyses provided by us for their own work for which they bear responsibility. Bread for the World does not actively carry out “development programmes” in the Global South, nor do our partners here in Germany; instead we support initiatives where those affected have joined forces, as well as churches or other local partners who are authorised to act in the name of or with the target groups. We work on the assumption that only this type of co-operation – which is generally and increasingly reciprocal – respects the dignity of those involved, strengthens their ability to act and promotes long-term commitment. Implementing our own projects would not ensure this.¹¹

Such an understanding of collaborative partnership aims to create a global collaborative community where local partners who are in control are connected globally with each other and attempt to find solutions for their specific situation and which serve the global aim of an equitable and peaceful world. All partners – including our organisation in Germany – are responsible for contributing their part.¹²

The secular international debate on development during the first decade of this century contains similar elements – such as the 2005 Paris Declaration (with its principles of ownership, partnership alignment, harmonisation, focus on results, mutual accountability) and the 2008 Accra Agenda for Action, which states:

10 — The Global Reference Group of Bread for the World has given our organisation important stimuli (see document *A Framework for a New Paradigm. Summary of discussions 2014 – 2016* (2016)).

11 — This reflects the principle of subsidiarity, according to which problems can best be resolved where they occur. Players of civil society/partner organisations develop alternative models using their own resources and capacities, concepts and social and technical innovations, making use of their extensive experience. Bread for the World and Diakonie Katastrophenhilfe support them in this work.

12 — This basic understanding lies at the heart of the foundation of the ACT Alliance.

“In the Paris Declaration we agreed to develop a genuine partnership, with developing countries clearly in charge of their own development processes.”¹³ In addition, it resolves to develop “processes for the joint and equal partnership of developing countries and the engagement of stakeholders”.¹⁴

6 Humanitarian context (Diakonie Katastrophenhilfe)

The co-operation of Diakonie Katastrophenhilfe with its – also primarily church-based – partners is founded on the same theological convictions. It has formulated its task as supporting people “who are threatened or currently affected by violence, wars, expulsion, displacement or natural disasters”.¹⁵ The foundations of co-operation in humanitarian aid include a common commitment to internationally-recognised principles and standards of humanitarians and the humanitarian principles of the *Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and NGOs in Disaster Relief*¹⁶, the *Principles of Partnership*¹⁷, SPHERE standards¹⁸, and other voluntary declarations – most recently at the World Humanitarian Summit in 2016.¹⁹ Furthermore, they also include all voluntary commitments to certain policies made by members of the ACT.

- Unfortunately, humanitarian aid around the world continues to be dominated by international players – not only but also because it requires considerably greater international coordination. The UN play a key role, and churches, as well as other local civil society players, at times do not have enough experience and capacities, and in any case have too few resources. Strengthening churches and civil society as humanitarian players in their own countries is, therefore, self-evident and a core concern for Diakonie Katastrophenhilfe, which shares the ethical objectives and principles of Bread for the World. Together with the whole ACT Alliance family, it took a political stance at the first World Humanitarian Summit in Istanbul in 2016 and takes a pioneering role in the debate on local solutions.

13 – OECD (2010): The Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness and the Accra Agenda for Action, p. 15 (available at www.oecd.org/dac/effectiveness/34428351.pdf).

14 – Ibid., p. 21.

15 – Statutes of the Protestant Agency for Diakonie and Development e. V., Article 7(3)1.

16 – Available at: www.ifrc.org/Global/Publications/disasters/code-of-conduct/code-english.pdf.

17 – Principles of Partnership. A Statement of Commitment. Endorsed by the Global Humanitarian Platform, 12 July 2007; available at www.icvanetwork.org/system/files/versions/Principles%20of%20Partnership%20English.pdf.

18 – Current version available at: www.spherestandards.org/handbook.

19 – See Core Commitments at www.agendaforhumanity.org/core-commitments.

- Partnership with local players is a matter of course for Diakonie Katastrophenhilfe; it is always the first objective and is practised whenever possible, i.e. where competent and effective partner organisations are already in place at particular locations in need. That is why Diakonie Katastrophenhilfe works closely with partners to strengthen their capacities for humanitarian aid in the medium term as well as their risk analysis and prevention skills so they quickly become capable of acting on their own.

In addition, there are a series of other contexts in which Diakonie Katastrophenhilfe sees reasons for collaborative partnership:

- Local partner organisations are part of the civil society within their country and have relevant political contacts and networks. That is why they are an important bridge between the affected population which is not organised, on the one hand, and governmental and international players on the other. They can strengthen communities to improve their own organisation and resilience in the field of disaster risk reduction and in a context of conflict.
- Local partners existed before catastrophes, they are on the ground during catastrophes, as first responders they can cover the most important period of emergency aid during the first days and will still be on the ground after the acute phase of the emergency when the focus is placed on rehabilitation.
- Partnerships with local organisations increase accountability of humanitarian aid vis-à-vis the local population and their participation in planning and implementation of humanitarian aid.
- Partnerships with local organisations can raise acceptance of humanitarian aid and hence facilitate humanitarian access.
- Especially in fragile countries or in armed conflicts, partnerships with local organisations are often the only way to help the civilian population affected, since the state government is either not in a position to fulfil its role or is a party to the conflict itself and therefore cannot provide humanitarian aid that is consistent with international principles.

7 Principles of partnership

- The following “Principles of Partnership” form the basic foundation of co-operation with all partner organisations and apply to Bread for the World, Diakonie Katastrophenhilfe and the programme *Churches helping Churches*.
- *Shared objectives*: Shared objectives and values are fundamental to a partnership. This also includes a shared understanding of the causes of poverty, vulnerability, injustice, natural catastrophes and conflicts, as well as shared strategies and approaches to combat and resolve these problems. Together our primary duty is our shared commitment towards the target groups.
- *Autonomy of partners*: Partners respect each other regardless of the organisation’s power or size. They recognise and respect each other’s mandate, political convictions, obligations

and their respective independence. It is, therefore, essential for any partnership, that, firstly, Bread for the World does not ever become operationally active²⁰ in other countries and Diakonie Katastrophenhilfe does only do so in specific circumstances. Activities are generally the responsibility of partner organisations. Secondly, it is a core principle for Bread for the World and Diakonie Katastrophenhilfe not to compete with partner organisations (e.g. in the acquisition of resources or in taking on tasks which can equally be done by the partner organisation).

- *Reciprocity*: In a partnership, both parties are entitled to a self-confident, competent and proficient counterpart. Accordingly, they discuss in tandem priorities, objectives and analyses; they plan interventions, communication strategies and define the task at hand so it can be achieved by complementing each other's abilities. In these discussions, however, Bread for the World, Diakonie Katastrophenhilfe and their partner organisations play different roles, i.e. reciprocity cannot be achieved in every context. At the same time, our partners feed our debates in Germany with their insights and analyses, their values and spirituality. These lessons enrich and legitimise our work.
- *Transparency and integrity*: Transparency, reliability, accountability and the fight against corruption are the basis for the co-operation of Bread for the World and Diakonie Katastrophenhilfe with their respective partner organisations. To the best of its ability, our organisation contributes to ensuring that its associates act with integrity in accordance with its values, and contribute to a culture of transparency that strengthens and maintains the credibility of Bread for the World and Diakonie Katastrophenhilfe, on the one hand, and that of their partners on the other. Both parties benefit from this – particularly in a world where the credibility of civil society is increasingly being called into question. In addition to the contractual requirements for transparency, it is our organisation's aspiration that all partners disclose their own conceptual concepts and information as well as possibilities and limitations. Mutual accountability includes accountability for the financial, institutional and political circumstances in which all those involved must act. This also includes the conscious awareness that financial sovereignty can influence the balance of power within a partnership.
- *Inclusion of spiritual resources*: For the co-operation between Bread for the World and Diakonie Katastrophenhilfe and their partner organisations it is clear and important for all involved that development can only succeed, when all essential dimensions of human existence are considered. This includes, among others, culture, spirituality and religion. If we were to take the multi-dimensional aspect of life processes seriously, efforts to bring about individual and collective development could not be directed at material needs and our "daily bread" only, but would have to address psychological, social, cultural and spiritual dimensions as well. Bread for the World and Diakonie Katastrophenhilfe,

20 — Generally, Diakonie Katastrophenhilfe works with partner organisations, but reserves the option in certain scenarios such as large-scale catastrophes, which exceed the capacities of partner organisations, to take action itself.

therefore, incorporate the general dimension of religion, the role of spiritual resources and issues of spiritual motivation into partner dialogues and project considerations as sources of hope and motivation for transformation.

- *Trust and patience:* Bread for the World and Diakonie Katastrophenhilfe are dedicated to building and nurturing trusting and sustainable relationships. This requires that both partners should openly and honestly articulate their respective expectations of each other and of the partnership. In the context of development co-operation both parties must be clear that development, transformative processes, the strengthening of resilience, creation of gender equality, empowerment of marginalised, vulnerable people and those affected by catastrophes are long-term processes which require institutional flexibility and trust in developments which cannot always be calculated beforehand. Humility, patience, reliability, empathy and conflict management skills are essential to quality transformative processes.
- *Do No Harm:* It is important for Bread for the World and Diakonie Katastrophenhilfe that unintended, negative effects through its partnerships are avoided through appropriate analyses before and during co-operation. This applies to the actions implemented as well as to the relationship between the partners itself.

8 Criteria for eligibility of partners

As described above, churches and national as well as international Christian organisations and networks play a priority and key role. However, Bread for the World and Diakonie Katastrophenhilfe have been working together for decades with non-church, as well as church-based partner organisations. In many countries this has resulted in them learning from each other, working with each other, and complementing each other. The co-operation between organisations of the women's and other social movements and the churches serves as an excellent example in this respect. The "Leitsätze zum kirchlichen Bezug" (*Guidelines on Church References*), as agreed with the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)²¹ as well as *Funding Guidelines*²² and the *Eligibility criteria for projects and programmes financed by the Church Development Service*²³ state an explicit priority on promoting church-based partners whereas they also accept secular partners.

21 — Letter of the BMZ dated 30.11.1988 "Leitsätze zum kirchlichen Bezug" [*Guidelines on Church References*] (320 – T 7000 – 129/88).

22 — BMZ (2015): Verfahren der Förderung entwicklungswichtiger Vorhaben der Kirchen aus Bundesmitteln [*Procedures for the federal funding of development-oriented projects of the churches*].

23 — Förderkriterien für KED-finanzierte Projekte und Programme (Position 1.12 im Haushalt des EED: KED-IP), verabschiedet vom Bewilligungsausschuss des EED am 30.3.2005 [*Eligibility criteria for projects and programmes financed by the KED (Church Development Service) (Item 1.12 of the EED's budget: KEP-IP), as adopted by the authorising committee of the EED on 30.03.2005*].

No partner organisation may discriminate against people or groups within its target group, but should select its target groups solely in accordance with their need for support and the support measure's prospect of success. As for humanitarian aid, this is also defined by the humanitarian principles and standards of the international community. It is self-evident that all partners should have at their disposal the necessary organisational prerequisites for administering funds, or that these can be established in the foreseeable future by measures of capacity building supported by our organisation.

When entering into a partnership to achieve specific objectives, Bread for the World and Diakonie Katastrophenhilfe place particular emphasis on the partner organisation's competence or rather its capacity, the participation of target groups as well as shared values. This equally applies to both church-based and secular partners.

As already stated, Bread for the World and Diakonie Katastrophenhilfe always offer project- or programme-related support and do not sponsor partner organisations per se. Generally, partner organisations approach us with project proposals; in exceptional cases we propose project ideas that partner organisations can pick up on in their project applications. Thereafter, the inception, continuity and termination of partnerships must be objectively justified on the basis of various criteria and institutionally decided. They are not decided at the discretion of individual staff members. The following aspects are taken into consideration:

1. The partnership is based on the principles as presented in section 7 and/or the partner organisation must share the *Principles of Partnership* of humanitarian aid.²⁴
2. The work of the (potential) partner organisation and the specific project/programme corresponds with our organisation's portfolio, as defined bindingly by its strategic objectives, sectoral and regional policies and strategy papers. In the context of humanitarian aid (Diakonie Katastrophenhilfe) co-operation is based on the compliance with the humanitarian principles²⁵, the *Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and NGOs in Disaster Relief*²⁶, as well as the *ACT Code of Conduct Policy*.²⁷
3. In co-operation with project partners, actual projects are impact-oriented, offer the prospect of success, and are in compliance with the formal criteria as set by our organisation's the project standards. The partner organisation has at its disposal sufficient administrative and financial capacity as well as also adequate governance structures to ensure successful project implementation, or agrees to establish the aforementioned capacities and structures – where necessary with our support.

24 — Principles of Partnership. A Statement of Commitment. Endorsed by the Global Humanitarian Platform, 12 July 2007;

25 — The four humanitarian principles are: humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence.

26 — Available at: www.ifrc.org/Global/Publications/disasters/code-of-conduct/code-english.pdf.

27 — See the ACT Alliance Code of Conduct Policy. For the prevention of misconduct, including corruption, fraud, exploitation and abuse, including sexual; and to ensure child safeguarding; available at <http://actalliance.org/documents/act-alliance-code-of-conduct>.

4. Partner organisations are either an autonomous organisation of the target group or target-group-specific. The latter manifests itself through, for example, participatory planning and controlling as well as transparency vis-à-vis the target groups during execution and monitoring of the project and the transfer of responsibility to them.
5. In the context of humanitarian aid (Diakonie Katastrophenhilfe), which traditionally is rather event-driven (crisis, catastrophe, conflict), partnerships are also increasingly established on a long-term basis and substantiated through specific projects. However, depending on and due to the (non-)availability of funds, long-term support of humanitarian projects of partners cannot always be ensured. Hence such work is subject to a certain degree of fluctuation. Therefore, occasionally the suitability of humanitarian projects for subsequent funding by development stakeholders is also being considered and supported.

9 Terminating partnerships

Partnerships are generally not intended to be permanent. Our organisation wishes to be open to new partnerships, ideas, emergencies, issues and regions. It is, therefore, necessary to both shape vibrant partnerships and also terminate them. In recent years a benchmark of setting up 10% new partnerships per year has been tried and tested; this ensures a vibrant exchange with new partners and prevents stagnation.

Decisions to terminate project co-operation do not always imply the end of partnership. In any case, terminating development funding (Bread for the World) or the long-term support during prolonged humanitarian crises and conflicts (Diakonie Katastrophenhilfe) always require comprehensive advice and decision making as much as an appropriate and sufficient timeframe.

Ideally, exit strategies relating to project collaboration are a subject of consideration from the start of a partnership. The reasons can be manifold and must be carefully weighed and communicated as early as possible in a transparent manner with regard to all consequences. Refraining from financial support is not identical with terminating a collaborative partnership with our organisation. The partnership might be continued in different ways (personnel support, advocacy partnership, co-operation within a network, etc.). If financial assistance were to come to a complete end and as long as this would not have been caused by grossly negligent misconduct or breach of contract, the partner organisation should, if at all possible, be supported in the following transition period. This may take the form of consultancy, networking, risk cushioning, the early announcement of phasing out funding, and capacity-building measures for staff.

Chapter 30

Universal Declaration of Rights of Mother Earth

April 22, 2010, World People's Conference on Climate Change and the Rights of Mother Earth Cochabamba, Bolivia¹

Preamble

We, the peoples and nations of Earth:

- considering that we are all part of Mother Earth, an indivisible, living community of interrelated and interdependent beings with a common destiny;
- gratefully acknowledging that Mother Earth is the source of life, nourishment and learning and provides everything we need to live well;
- recognizing that the capitalist system and all forms of depredation, exploitation, abuse and contamination have caused great destruction, degradation and disruption of Mother Earth, putting life as we know it today at risk through phenomena such as climate change;
- convinced that in an interdependent living community it is not possible to recognize the rights of only human beings without causing an imbalance within Mother Earth;
- affirming that to guarantee human rights it is necessary to recognize and defend the rights of Mother Earth and all beings in her and that there are existing cultures, practices and laws that do so;
- conscious of the urgency of taking decisive, collective action to transform structures and systems that cause climate change and other threats to Mother Earth;
- proclaim this Universal Declaration of the Rights of Mother Earth, and call on the General Assembly of the United Nation to adopt it, as a common standard of achievement for all peoples and all nations of the world, and to the end that every individual and institution takes responsibility for promoting through teaching, education, and consciousness raising, respect for the rights recognized in this Declaration and ensure through prompt and progressive measures and mechanisms, national and international, their universal and effective recognition and observance among all peoples and States in the world.

¹ — For further details of the campaign for asking the UN to adopt a Declaration of Rights of Mother Earth to complement the Human Rights Declaration see: www.rightsofmotherearth.com

Article 1. Mother Earth

- (1) Mother Earth is a living being.
- (2) Mother Earth is a unique, indivisible, self-regulating community of interrelated beings that sustains, contains and reproduces all beings.
- (3) Each being is defined by its relationships as an integral part of Mother Earth.
- (4) The inherent rights of Mother Earth are inalienable in that they arise from the same source as existence.
- (5) (Mother Earth and all beings are entitled to all the inherent rights recognized in this Declaration without distinction of any kind, such as may be made between organic and inorganic beings, species, origin, use to human beings, or any other status.
- (6) Just as human beings have human rights, all other beings also have rights which are specific to their species or kind and appropriate for their role and function within the communities within which they exist.
- (7) The rights of each being are limited by the rights of other beings and any conflict between their rights must be resolved in a way that maintains the integrity, balance and health of Mother Earth.

Article 2. Inherent Rights of Mother Earth

- (1) Mother Earth and all beings of which she is composed have the following inherent rights:
 - (a) the right to life and to exist;
 - (b) the right to be respected;
 - (c) the right to regenerate its bio-capacity and to continue its vital cycles and processes free from human disruptions;
 - (d) the right to maintain its identity and integrity as a distinct, self-regulating and inter-related being;
 - (e) the right to water as a source of life;
 - (f) the right to clean air;
 - (g) the right to integral health;
 - (h) the right to be free from contamination, pollution and toxic or radioactive waste;
 - (i) the right to not have its genetic structure modified or disrupted in a manner that threatens its integrity or vital and healthy functioning;
 - (j) the right to full and prompt restoration for violation of the rights recognized in this Declaration caused by human activities;
- (2) Each being has the right to a place and to play its role in Mother Earth for her harmonious functioning.
- (3) Every being has the right to wellbeing and to live free from torture or cruel treatment by human beings.

Article 3. Obligations of human beings to Mother Earth

- (1) Every human being is responsible for respecting and living in harmony with Mother Earth.
- (2) Human beings, all States, and all public and private institutions must:
 - (a) act in accordance with the rights and obligations recognized in this Declaration;
 - (b) recognize and promote the full implementation and enforcement of the rights and obligations recognized in this Declaration;
 - (c) promote and participate in learning, analysis, interpretation and communication about how to live in harmony with Mother Earth in accordance with this Declaration;
 - (d) ensure that the pursuit of human wellbeing contributes to the wellbeing of Mother Earth, now and in the future;
 - (e) establish and apply effective norms and laws for the defence, protection and conservation of the rights of Mother Earth;
 - (f) respect, protect, conserve and where necessary, restore the integrity, of the vital ecological cycles, processes and balances of Mother Earth;
 - (g) guarantee that the damages caused by human violations of the inherent rights recognized in this Declaration are rectified and that those responsible are held accountable for restoring the integrity and health of Mother Earth;
 - (h) empower human beings and institutions to defend the rights of Mother Earth and of all beings;
 - (i) establish precautionary and restrictive measures to prevent human activities from causing species extinction, the destruction of ecosystems or the disruption of ecological cycles;
 - (j) guarantee peace and eliminate nuclear, chemical and biological weapons;
 - (k) promote and support practices of respect for Mother Earth and all beings, in accordance with their own cultures, traditions and customs;
 - (l) promote economic systems that are in harmony with Mother Earth and in accordance with the rights recognized in this Declaration.

Article 4. Definitions

- (1) The term “being” includes ecosystems, natural communities, species and all other natural entities which exist as part of Mother Earth.
- (2) Nothing in this Declaration restricts the recognition of other inherent rights of all beings or specified beings.

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