

**THE APPLICATION OF TRANSFORMATIONAL DEVELOPMENT  
FROM A CHRISTIAN PERSPECTIVE: A COMPARATIVE CASE STUDY**

by

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submitted in accordance with the requirements for  
the degree of

**MASTER OF ARTS**

in the subject

**DEVELOPMENT STUDIES**

at the

**UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA**

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30<sup>th</sup> of December 2021

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**The application of transformational development from a Christian perspective: A comparative case study**

I declare that the above dissertation is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

I further declare that I submitted the dissertation to originality checking software and that it falls within the accepted requirements for originality.

I further declare that I have not previously submitted this work, or part of it, for examination at UNISA for another qualification or at any other higher education institution.



30<sup>th</sup> of November 2021

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**ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

I would like to thank my supervisor, Dr. Thomas Kroeck, who guided me throughout this dissertation, for his time, patience, encouragement and his useful comments and questions.

Also, I would like to thank my interview partners from World Vision Germany and Burundi, Tearfund Ireland and Sheltering Wings for sharing their limited time and rich experiences and for giving their valuable input. Without your participation, this research would not have been possible.

Furthermore, I would like to thank my husband and family who patiently supported me throughout the entire process and took great care of our son during those long working hours.

And last but not least, "I give thanks to you, O Lord my God, with my whole heart" (Psalm 86:12)

**ABSTRACT****THE APPLICATION OF TRANSFORMATIONAL DEVELOPMENT FROM A  
CHRISTIAN PERSPECTIVE: A COMPARATIVE CASE STUDY****Student number:** 10245324**Student name:** Melanie Tenkodogo**Degree:** Master of Arts in Development Studies**Department:** Development Studies, University of South Africa**Supervisor:** Dr. Thomas Kroeck**Summary**

This research answers the question: “How is the concept of transformational development understood and implemented in specific projects by Christian development organisations?” Transformational development is a Christian development approach aiming at holistic transformation with a relational understanding of poverty and development. The understanding of transformational development is directly linked with its application. Different implementation strategies are used by Christian development organisations, but the research showed how the organisational and local contexts equally shape the concept’s application. This includes the Christian development organisations’ (religious) identity, their history and organisational development, current size and resources, funding and their corresponding projects and professionalism. The extent to which Christian elements are included in projects depends equally on the Christian development organisation’s programming and (religious) identity. Small and less professionalised Christian development organisations are encouraged to reflect upon their development concepts.

**Keywords:** development, religion, theology, evangelical, Christian development organisations, transformation, transformational development, relational approach, empowerment, Christian witness, mission

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**ABBREVIATIONS**

ADP	Area development programmes
BMZ	Bundesministerium für Zusammenarbeit und Entwicklung
CAFOD	Catholic Agency for Overseas Development
CARSA	Christian Action for Reconciliation and Social Assistance
CDO	Christian development organisation
CLA	Cluster Level Association of Self-Help Groups
COP	Conference of Parties
CPM	Core Project Model
CSO	Civil society organisation
CWB	Child well-being
FBO	Faith-based organisation
FLA	Federal Level Association of Self-Help Groups
GT	Grounded theory
HDI	Human Development Index
HDR	Human Development Report
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
P4YED	Peace for Youth Economic Development Project
PCFID	Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue
PCM	Project cycle management
PLA	Participatory Learning and Action
PRA	Participatory Rural Appraisal
RDA	Relief and Development Agencies
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SHG	Self-Help Group
SKYE	Skills and knowledge for youth economic empowerment
SW	Sheltering Wings
TD	Transformational development
TF	Tearfund
TFI	Tearfund Ireland
UN	United Nations
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme

UNISA	University of South Africa
WCC	World Council of Churches
WEA	World Evangelical Alliance
WVI	World Vision International
WVIB	World Vision International Burundi

# CHAPTER 1: ORIENTATION OF THE STUDY

Chapter 1 discusses the background to the research question, the problem statement and resulting research objectives. Furthermore, the importance of the study and the personal motivation of the author for the research are disclosed. The research design and methodology are outlined, together with a definition of the key terms. The first chapter ends with a chapter layout.

## 1.1. BACKGROUND TO THE RESEARCH QUESTION

In the last decades, the often-applied development concept based on economic growth has been questioned:

For mainstream economics and for most governments development is equal to economic growth and based on increased production and consumption and indiscriminate extraction of natural resources. This model however results in rising economic and social inequality, violations of human rights and destruction of nature and biodiversity (Van Zeeland 2016:9)

Development workers and academics worldwide have recognised this ambivalence. Hence, the development discourse and practice has shifted away from a purely economic perspective: The Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) Agenda for 2030 by the United Nations (UN) with a transforming and holistic approach (UN 2015) or approaches such as Bhutan's Gross National Happiness Index (Alkire & Foster 2008:1). However, in many cases, the concept of economic growth still prevails. Among the different actors that question this development model are faith-based organisations (FBOs) and among them Christian development organisations (CDOs) (Van Zeeland 2016:1).

As all (religious) beliefs shape values that are strongly relevant in development, such as education and economics (Tomalin 2014:529), it is crucial to consider religious beliefs in development work. However, for a long time, religious beliefs and spirituality have been "*underrepresented in development literature and the policies and programmes of development organizations*" (Ver Beek 2002:68). In the last decade this started to change as it has been noted that religion plays an important role in development:

Religion informs and nurtures people's understanding of the good life, their hope, their self-esteem and belief in dignity and rights, their courage to fight for these rights, and their resilience in times of disappointment. Therefore, religion must be considered in development (Thomsen 2016:417).

While the process of recognising the relevance of religion and worldview is still ongoing, secular development work supports an enlightened worldview. In some cases, religious worldviews are closer to the worldviews of beneficiaries and southern partners than secular approaches are. Religious development concepts can therefore bring additional value, especially as FBOs have been actively present in the development field for a long time. They have been implementing their own approaches to development while recognising that religious traditions play a very important role in the lives of many people in developing countries (Tomalin 2014:529) as well as in the lives of their staff.

It is therefore reasonable to consider religious beliefs in the development and concepts of FBOs. To this effect, it is obvious that not all development researchers and development worker are theologians or religious studies specialist and may lack the tools on how to consider those believes. Participatory methods with openness to religious views are already an important step towards the openness towards religious believes. Also Assessing the work and understanding of poverty and development of FBOs and how those organisations implement their specific faith-based concepts in different contexts can be of interest for the general development discourse. On these grounds, this dissertation seeks to examine the application of a Christian development concept, notably the Christian concept of transformational development (TD), to examine its contribution to the current development discourse.

The concept of TD has been the basis of CDOs like World Vision International (WVI), smaller CDOs and mission organisations that work in the field of development. The application of the concept remains unclear, as interviews with Christian development workers have shown (Kroeck 2015:392-393). The existing ambivalence, where CDOs actively implement TD whilst other Christian development professionals remain uncertain about TD's goals and application, reveals a lack of research about the concept. More literature and publications concerning the application of TD would help smaller CDOs to formulate models for working with TD. That is why this dissertation seeks to contribute to a better



understanding of the application and implementation of TD in theory and practice. From a Christian perspective, the biblical account propagates the concept of transformation in connection to material and spiritual transformation throughout the Old and New Testament and the book of revelation points to a transformational finality yet to come. But the use of the term transformation increased in the 1980s during the mission movement (Jakob 2015:109). Before this, the balance between the proclamation of the gospel and addressing social issues in missionary work caused controversies and debates between different Christian denominations. As a culmination of these debates, the Lausanne Movement introduced the term *transformation*. It was understood as realising God's vision in all relationships: social, economic and spiritual (Kapolyo 2005:133; Zwick 2005:80). And it also meant reflecting God's will to let all societies experience God's love, especially the poor (Samuel & Sugden 1999:1). David Bosch was one of the theologians who introduced the term to the ecumenical missiology debate, in his book *Transforming Mission* (1991). Still, the concept of transformation mainly arose from an evangelical<sup>1</sup> context, on which this dissertation is focusing, as TD has been called "*the evangelical world's most rigorous and cohesive development paradigm*" (Offutt 2012:43).

Naturally, most development concepts aim at changes in various, but from a Christian perspective the goal of TD "*is summarised by the idea of shalom: just, peaceful, harmonious, and enjoyable relationships with each other, ourselves, our environment, and God*" (Myers 2011:175). The Christian understanding of development includes a relational approach to development, aiming at sustainability, holistic thinking and transformational processes (Myers 2011:173-203). In summary, transformation is defined as a dynamic process of change, which leads to the realisation of the kingdom of God (Jakob 2015:111), or the state of *shalom* (Faix 2012). Faix and further authors pick up this concept and develop it further, naming specific areas of transformation and focusing on the transformation of society (Jakob 2015:109-116; Faix 2015:117-129). The theoretical exploration of the topic gives a more detailed idea of how TD can be understood.

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<sup>1</sup> See clarification of key terms.

## 1.2. PROBLEM STATEMENT AND RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

As TD aims at transforming various areas of life, the application of the concept remains vague. Also, the goal of shalom has been criticised as non-reachable (Offutt 2012:44). The ambivalence of CDOs working with TD and the absence of literature about its application hence persists. Therefore, the objective of this research is to analyse the concept of TD from a Christian perspective by doing a comparative case study of three CDOs and one project of each. The main research question is: “How is the concept of TD understood and implemented in specific projects by CDOs?”

Out of this research question, some subquestions emerge:

- How does the Christian perspective of TD relate to current development theories and where does it differ?
- How is TD understood by CDOs?
- TD is a holistic concept, but in a development project, not all areas of life and people groups can be targeted at the same time. What can help to prioritise specific areas and target groups?
- How can the concept of TD be consistently applied to the work of a CDO and in specific development projects?
- What role does the Christian faith play in specific projects and why?
- What does the use of this Christian concept mean for individuals who do not adhere to the Christian faith? Does the implementation of this concept exclude certain population groups and if yes, how is this mitigated?
- What can this specific Christian approach add to the development discourse?

The following research objectives guide the dissertation:

- 1) Through a literature review, establish a theoretical framework for the research (Chapter 2: Literature review on TD).
- Explore the concept of TD from a Christian perspective (2.1. The concept of TD).
  - Relate the concept of TD to current development approaches (2.2 Relation to current development approaches).

- 2) Study the application of the concept in literature (Chapter 3: The application of TD in literature).
  - Find propositions for the implementation of the specific contents of TD in the literature.
- 3) Study how TD is understood by three CDOs and applied in each one of their projects through empirical research (Chapter 4: Methodology; Chapter 5: Empirical research findings and analysis).
- 4) Relating the findings to relevant literature: discuss the chances and challenges regarding the application of TD and its contribution to the general development discourse. (Chapter 6: Discussion)

### **1.3. IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY**

Worldwide, churches and CDOs are engaged in development work and are important players to strengthen a transnational civil society (Van Zeeland 2016:3). This positive effect is only possible with well-reflected and applied development concepts. This dissertation wants to contribute to an enhanced knowledge of the Christian concept of TD and its implementation in practice. Asking the question of how to implement a Christian understanding of TD contributes to the theological discourse about transformation and the discussion on development and can make the concept of TD more actionable for practitioners. The empirical research can give other CDOs an orientation on how to apply TD to a specific target group, or in a specific organisational and local setting.

### **1.4. PERSONAL MOTIVATION FOR THE STUDY AND SELF-POSITIONING**

Religion plays an important role in my life, as I am a Christian and working as a deacon in a Protestant church in Germany. I assume that faith and spirituality may play important roles in the lives of humans and may be important resources for human development. Naturally, I am predominantly interested in the Christian understanding of development and its corresponding approaches. TD fascinates me because it abstains from the idea that some people or nations are less developed than others and that there is a predetermined route to follow “towards” development. It concerns rich and poor people alike, as it contains a

change of lifestyle independently of one's social status. Through my previous research, I am still connected to several development projects. As such, I am interested to assess how this concept can be implemented for example in a small project in sub-Saharan Africa, which motivated the research question of this dissertation.

I understand my own Christian belief predisposes the analysis to certain biases (such as viewing the concept of TD as a "promising" concept from the outset of the research). Being aware of this, I intend to mitigate any biases through my own critical and sceptical disposition and by counting on inputs and feedback from persons of different beliefs.

## **1.5. BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY**

### ***Research design***

This dissertation aimed at contributing to the theory and practice of TD from a Christian perspective. This was done through the review of literature through which categories and approaches for the implementation were deductively derived. These were the foundation for the empirical research. For this purpose, cases were identified that served to gain further insight into how the concept is understood and applied in different contexts and projects. To answer the research questions, a comparative case study was conducted: Three projects of CDOs that work with their Christian concept of TD were examined through document analysis, complemented by two expert interviews per case. As the understanding of TD depends on who defines it and in which context it is defined, this largely affects its implementation. So, the comparison of several cases is helpful: the variety of cases bears the ability to illustrate how the concept is understood and how it has been implemented in different projects, in different organisational and local contexts as well as for different target groups.

### ***Sampling***

Purposive sampling (Ridder 2016:162) had to provide relevant information related to the research question. The population consisted of all CDOs worldwide that implement a concept joined to TD. Potential cases were identified through

literature (Kroeck & Schneider 2015; Myers 2011; Kusch 2007) and the Christian Community Development Conference (<https://ccdnetwork.de/>). It was necessary to look into the vision, mission and goals of possible cases to identify their understanding of development.

The aim to have three cases, each case representing a CDO of different size and resources and with a Christian identity, and the location of their projects in different countries, was reached. Three cases were the maximum achievable dimension within the time and resource limitations of this dissertation whilst realising the potential for comparable insight.

### ***Data collection***

After the identification of suitable CDOs, the persons in charge were contacted to get permission and access to relevant documents. Because data collection is vulnerable to bias by the author or the sharing organisation, Gerring proposes a combination of primary and secondary sources to provide a more holistic view, as diverse sources will reveal different aspects (Gerring 2017:173-175). Therefore, different types of documents were included in the data and additional expert interviews conducted to triangulate the data. Those interviews were semi-structured as *“they occur if there is a basis of knowledge but new aspects are aimed to be identified”* (Ridder 2016:167). They were mainly carried out in English; where necessary or helpful, German or French was used, so no translator was needed as the interviewer is fluent in German, French and English. Taking the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic into account, which was at its height during this research, methods were used that could be conducted despite the need for social distancing and that valued the health of all participants, such as videoconferences.

### ***Data analysis strategy***

For data analysis, grounded theory (GT) (Strauss & Corbin 1996) with some adjustments was used. The sample and the collected data of each case were first analysed using deductive categories derived from the literature review that structured the data collection and analysis. Subsequently, the classic steps of GT were used, namely open, axial and selective coding (Breuer, Muckel and Dieris 2019:255).

### ***Scope, delimitations and limitations of the study***

There might be other transformational development theories, but one of the delimitations of this study was adherence to the Christian perspective of TD, with Myers (1999, revised 2011) as the main source, taking into account its historical roots and further enhancements. Also, this dissertation mainly focused on the development literature of the Protestant (evangelical) context, as TD has its source in the evangelical context (Offutt 2012:43). Even though the relevance of other religious development literature such as Ecumenical, Catholic or Islamic contributions to this discourse is respectfully recognised by the author, the available time and resources of this dissertation restricted the inclusion of other religious approaches.

In addition, the empirical part was limited to a comparative case study of three CDOs and one projects of each that have a transformative objective. Whilst interesting findings have been made, this research cannot provide an answer for all development projects that want to use TD as an approach. The dissertation instead sought to contribute some ideas and direction to guide future projects in their design and implementation.

### **1.6. CLARIFICATION OF KEY TERMS**

In this section, the key terms are explained, specifying the meaning of the concepts used in this dissertation.

#### ***Development***

For many decades development was mainly tied to modernisation and economic growth which has been widely criticised also for the fact of determining countries as underdeveloped (Escobar 1997:85ff; Frank 1966:149; Van Zeeland 2016:1ff). This restriction of development was especially rejected by Latin Americans for creating dependencies in the 1960s, as they rejected the Western modernization as corrupting and destructive and as ongoing form of colonial domination (Sidaway 2014:147; Pieterse 2010:220). This resulting in alternative approaches to development, such as Human development following Sen's work and defining development as the enlargement of people's choices (UNPD 1990:1ff). This important approach still bears some difficulties, as people can

live fulfilled lives without completely free choices, can remain in poverty even though having free choices and the enlargement of choices might focus on individual needs, not on those of society or groups. This is why in this dissertation development is defined as a multidimensional, ongoing process with an enabling environment of freedom where people can interact based on sensible rules (Rihani 2002:164). Approaches of post-development rejecting all forms of dominion and dependency, including development aid (Ziai 2010:24ff; Esteva 1995:158-160), neglecting positive effects of development efforts, such as the decline of infant mortality rates and the rise of life expectancy (Ziai 2012:134). Sustainable development as defined by the Brundtland Commission (1987) is important, but their definition left many open questions concerning the definition of needs and what is to be sustained (Redclift 2014:333). Hence, development in this dissertation is understood as aiming to end all dimensions of poverty by bringing sustainable change in the economic, social, and environmental dimensions, as the Agenda 2030 states (UN 2015).

### ***Transformation***

While development is the process of enhancing freedom and ending poverty, the biblical word *shalom* best describes the aim of transformation: “*Shalom represents restored relationships with the Creator, with others in community and with the environment*” (Chester 2015:139). Transformation aims at *shalom* at all levels and is part of God’s mission (*Missio Dei*): the restoration of salvation and justice (Faix 2012:9), containing the political, social, economic, cultural, legal, ethnic, ethic, emancipatory and theological level (Faix 2012:3,7). Transformation is always a process, beginning with and aiming at the two major goals of changed people, who have discovered their true identity and vocation and changed relationships that are just and peaceful (Myers 2011:202).

### ***Empowerment***

Empowerment refers to a process with the goal to enable, motivate, promote or increase capability. Essentially empowerment is a process of social change led by the people themselves to direct and shape their lives according to their choices (Myers 2011:208). Participation and empowerment are closely related

and both concepts imply that people should have the right to determine their own path of development (Hamm 2001:1019). While Narayan argues that *“Empowerment is the expansion of assets and capabilities of poor people to participate in, negotiate with, influence, control, and hold accountable institutions that affect their lives.”* (Narayan 2002:18). Further than institutions are concerned, it is important to see this in the social context. Thus empowerment should be recognized as an outcome of interpersonal (mutual empowerment) and collective social action (social empowerment) (Pigg 2002:1).

### ***Evangelical***

The evangelical movement is dynamic and multi-layered. In Europe, evangelicals are identified as Christian people with traditional values and conservative ethical and political positions (Hardmeier 2009:19). The evangelical movement contains at least six different groups (Breyerhaus 1975:307f). Hence, evangelicals are not found or understood as a specific denomination or church (Hardmeier 2009:19). They need to be differentiated from Christian fundamentalists (Berneburg 1997:18-21). Summarised, the key priorities of the evangelical Christian faith are the exclusive claims of Christ, the meaning of Christ’s death, the necessity of conversion and the lostness of humankind (Brown 2014:296). An exemplary evangelical movement is the Lausanne Movement (<https://lausanne.org>): *“This evangelical commitment to Trinitarian faith and to the threefold emphasis on the Word, the Cross and the Spirit may be viewed as defining theological characteristics of the Lausanne Movement”* (Dahle, Dahle & Jorgensen 2014:7). Another example is the World Evangelical Alliance (<https://worldea.org/>).

### ***Christian development organisations***

As faith-based organisations (FBOs) have not been homogenously defined (Tomalin 2014:532) and this dissertation focuses on Christian organisations in development work, CDO has been chosen as the main term. A CDO is defined as *“...a civil society organisation that exists to promote human well-being through development activities, guided by its understanding and application of Christian faith”* (Hancox 2019:4). The CDO has characteristics unique to religious organisations, namely the adherence and practice of the Christian faith,



and should not be subsumed as a subtype of NGOs (Hancox 2019:5). At the same time, the CDO shares some characteristics of development organisations. Its purpose is the promotion of well-being, which is reflected in its activities, but the faith dimension shapes its Christian distinctiveness, “...as it seeks to be guided by its understanding and application of the Christian faith” (Hancox 2019:6). “Historically, the CDO has roots in mission organisations, diaconal institutions and charities, both large and small, Northern and Southern, with a range of Christian beliefs” (Hancox 2019:7). Finally, the CDO is defined by its relations to development NGOs, with other CDOs and with local church congregations (Hancox 2019:7).

## **1.7. CHAPTER LAYOUT**

This dissertation contains six chapters.

*Chapter 1:* Briefly explains the background of the research, the problem statement, the research question and objectives, the importance of the study, the personal motivation and self-positioning of the author, gives a brief description of the research design and research methodology and finally defines the key terms of the dissertation.

*Chapter 2:* Provides the first part of the theoretical framework, exploring TD in the literature and putting the concept in relation to current development theories

*Chapter 3:* Provides the second part of the theoretical framework, exploring approaches to the application of TD in practice.

*Chapter 4:* The research design and methodology, including the sample and sampling technique, data collection, the data analysis strategy and research ethics and quality.

*Chapter 5:* Presents the findings of the empirical research and analyses them according to the data analysis strategy, grounded theory.

*Chapter 6:* Discusses the findings by relating them to the theoretical framework of TD and other relevant literature and answers the research question. Recommendations and points for further research are given.

## CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW ON TRANSFORMATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Chapter 2 describes the concept of TD, tracing its origins and former concepts, the content of the main concept by Myers (2011), and the derivatives of the concept. Furthermore, the concept is described in relation to current secular development concepts to highlight the commonalities and differences of the concept and to discover what TD can contribute to the general development discourse.

### 2.1. THE CONCEPT OF TRANSFORMATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

#### 2.1.1. The rise of the term ‘transformation’

The term transformation is used in all kinds of contexts. The original meaning from its Latin roots can be translated as conversion or shaping something into another form (Jakob 2015:109). The term is not used exclusively in the Christian development context but is applied in many other fields such as educational and political science, sociology and missiology . As Faix points out, those fields are all intradisciplinary and concerned with transformational processes, as well as reshaping and reforming in some way (Faix 2015:117). Looking at the Christian development context, the different meanings of transformation have gained a certain importance, as the development field also involves political science, sociology and social work (Faix 2015:117-119). The different notions of transformation from the mentioned fields that are relevant in the Christian development context are presented below (Faix 2015: 117-120):

- a) *Political science*: transformation as a change of regimes and form of government, societal and economic change.
- b) *Sociology*: change of political systems, ideology, value systems, social structures, social systems, lifestyles, or economic systems (Leibfried & Zürn 2006:11).
- c) *Social work*: analysing transformational processes and actively changing them for the better with a focus on the individual. Social work furthermore contributes methods and instruments on how to capture societal

situations and challenges as well on how to approach them, for example with community development.

In this non-exhaustive listing, it can already be seen how difficult it is to distinguish between various notions of transformation and how complex an overarching definition of transformation might be. Of course, in the Christian development context, the meaning of transformation in theology and missiology also plays an important role. To understand those theological and missiological approaches on transformation, it is helpful to trace the rise of the term transformation in the mission movement, which can be understood as the root of the TD concept.

The political, social and theological challenges of the 1960s led to the need to renew the understanding of mission in the mission movement. Before, mission was generally understood as the sending of missionaries in regions with few or no Christians to convert them to Christianity. This understanding had been criticised as colonialist and power-driven (Jakob 2015:109; Hardmeier 2015:15). After the end of colonialism, planted churches all over the world became independent and the need for church planting overseas became redundant. Also, after World War II, a general scepticism about the Western world and Christianity arose. As communism spread in Asia, Russia and East Europe, missionaries had to leave communist countries. Hence the idea of bringing the gospel to the whole world became a utopia (Hardmeier 2015:22-25; Hardmeier 2009:4ff; Faix 2013:21). This was discussed by the World Council of Churches (WCC) at several ecumenical mission conferences, such as the one held in 1952 in Willingen. Simultaneously, the Catholic Church worked on this subject, especially in several declarations of the popes (Paul VI and Benedikt XVI). Another important background of TD can be found in liberation theology which has its origin in the late 1960s in Latin America and identifies compassionately with the poor. The ground for liberation theology had been prepared in the 1950s by Christian base community movements aiming for social, political and economic reforms in society and the participation of laypeople pastoral activities of the church. The theology is grounded on a life changing encounter with Christ as a liberator and with the neighbour in need, which should result in transformative action (Altmann 2009). While liberation theology emerged in a mainly Catholic

context, it equally influenced the ecumenical movement (Altmann 2009). Liberation theology has some roots in Marxism, but sees Christianity compatible and beneficial for conscientization, also called critical consciousness (McLaren & Jandric 2018:256). Paulo Freire, a liberation pedagogue, significantly contributed to liberation theology with his work (Kirlyo 2011:167). One key term is conscientization. It is understood as a process of developing a critical awareness of one's social reality through action and reflection. This involves examining and acting on the root causes of oppression as experienced (Freire Institute 2022). The process of conscientization is closely linked with a so-called Easter experience, that entails a radical conversion to transformative action (McLaren & Jandric 2018:256ff; Altmann 2009; Freire Institute 2022). There are many parallels to TD, even though liberation theology seems to be far more political, while TD has a strong focus on relationships on personal and community level.

Looking at the ecumenical movement, in the ecumenical mission conference 1952 in Willingen, the term *Missio Dei* gained a lot of importance. *Missio Dei* anchors the sending of the church within God's character and work. It emphasises that mission is not primarily a human activity, but first and foremost part of God's actions (Hardmeier 2015:21). Ecumenical circles unilaterally developed the concept of *Missio Dei*: the role of the church was to take part in God's mission to bring about shalom (Hardmeier 2015:34). While this sounds quite similar to Myers's understanding, the ecumenical movement reduced its meaning to the political fight for justice and peace without a vertical dimension (:34-35). So, the WCC declared in 1968 in Uppsala that in missions, the fight for social justice was prior to evangelisation (Berneburg 1997:49; Bosch 1991:382-383). Hence, the goal of mission became humanisation rather than Christianisation (Berneburg 1997:49-52). For the evangelical movement, this was unthinkable, which reinforced the search of the evangelicals to clarify their own understanding of *Missio Dei* and the relation between evangelisation and social concerns in missions. This led to a continuing series of autonomous evangelical conferences to clarify this question (Wheaton and Berlin 1966, Wheaton 1973, Lausanne 1974, Manila 1982, Grand Rapids 1982, Wheaton 1983 etc.) (Stott 2007:177-179; Berneburg 1997:53-71; Samuel and Sugden 1987:vii-xi; Hardmeier 2009:20ff). The abiding struggle among evangelicals to determine the relationship between evangelisation and social action initiated the Lausanne Movement. At the first

international congress on world evangelisation 1974, the Lausanne Covenant was published (Lausanne Movement 2020). The Lausanne Covenant underlined the connectedness of word and deed, evangelisation and social action in mission, even though evangelisation was still seen as preceding social action (Berneburg 1997:85). In 1978, five evangelical leaders emerged in a process to study and reflect on the nature of development from a biblical perspective, which culminated in the Wheaton Consultation 1983 (Samuel & Sugden 1987:ix-x). The Wheaton Consultation 1983 strongly reintroduced the importance of social action to the evangelical movement. Here, the term transformation was first used in the final document of the Consultation with the title: *“Transformation: The Church in response to human need”* (Samuel & Sugden 1987).

Bragg then takes this debate in the framework of secular and Christian development work and proposes transformation as a Christian alternative to development (Bragg 1984:156). He defines transformation as

the change from a level of human existence that is less than that envisioned by our creator, to one in which a person is fully human and free to move to a state of wholeness in harmony with God and with every aspect of his/her environment (Bragg 1984:157).

This breathes the understanding of shalom as the aim of transformation which corresponds to more current understandings of transformation (Faix 2012, Myers 2011). Although, Myers does not consider Bragg's paper as applicable development theory (Myers 2011:153), together with the Wheaton 1983 Statement it is one of the first steps that connect transformation with development, hence Bragg's concept is further elaborated in Section 2.1.2.

In the Lausanne Forum 2004 in Pattaya, the term transformation became a key word that made clear how mission aims at both conversion and social change (Berneburg 2014:61; Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization 2004). Mission as transformation can be seen as a holistic striving to change societies, communities, villages and cities in the direction of the kingdom of God (Zwick 2007:88), not as a theocracy, but as realising God's vision in all relationships: social, economic and spiritual (Kapolyo 2005:133; Zwick 2005:80). It also means reflecting God's will to let all societies experience God's love, especially the poor (Samuel & Sugden 1999:iii). Transformation is thus a task for the church and all Christians, which should equally demonstrate salvation in word

and deed (Berneburg 2014:61). Mission as transformation includes the transformation of the individual as well as his/her environment (Zwick 2007:88). This concept will also be further elaborated in Section 2.1.2.

Interestingly, the term transformation was also introduced to the ecumenical movement. This has been attributed to David Bosch (Jakob 2015:112). In the mission statement of the WCC from 2012, mission is called a part of God's mission (Missio Dei) and concerns all parts of life and society (WCC 2012:7). The document also includes the understanding of a "transformative spirituality" that nurtures transformation (WCC 2012:12-14). In this context, transformation is compared with the Easter mystery of the resurrection and hence of renewal and reformation (WCC 2012:13-14). Even though this reflects a Christian understanding of transformative spirituality, any spirituality in any religion can of course be transforming.

Coming back to the Lausanne Movement, it continued its work separated from the WCC. At the same time, evangelical theology also re-influenced ecumenical theology. The WCC itself states:

[The] ...growing intensity of collaboration with the Evangelicals, especially with the Lausanne Movement for World Evangelization and the World Evangelical Alliance, has also abundantly contributed to the enrichment of ecumenical theological reflection on mission in unity. Together we share a common concern that the whole church should witness to the whole gospel in the whole world (WCC 2012:24).

Regardless, the Lausanne Movement continued following their own path and from there, the term transformation became part of the Christian development concept formulated by Myers (2011). Myers himself took part in the Wheaton Conference 1983, was inspired by Vinay Samuel and Chris Sugden, who edited the document "*Transformation: The Church in Response to Human Need*" (1987). He was also inspired by David Bosch and René Padilla, who had both been deeply involved in the Lausanne Movement (Myers 2011:xxv-xxvi). Myers's concept will be further discussed in Section 2.1.3.

While the term transformation found its way into the Christian development and mission context, it has to be noted that both the term transformation and TD are also used in the secular development context. The World Bank Group defines "*transformational engagements as individual or series of interventions that support deep, systemic, and sustainable change with the potential*

*for large-scale impact in an area of a major development challenge*” (Heider 2016) as TD. While the goal of secular development can be summarised in the SDGs (UN 2015), the aims of Myers, TD and other Christian concepts of transformation that aim at shalom have a far more spiritual approach. Even though certainly some Christian development projects resonate with the definition of the World Bank, the target course is different. Therefore, this is not the definition of TD that will be used for this dissertation. However, the relationship the Christian perspective of TD to current development approaches will be discussed in Section 2.2.

### **2.1.2. The Wheaton Consultation 1983 and the Christian concept of transformation**

Most former concepts of transformation in the context of Christian development work go back to *“a nine-year period of evangelical exploration of holistic theology beginning with the Lausanne Congress in 1974 and ending with The Wheaton Consultation in 1983 that produced the statement Transformation – The Church in Response to Human Need”* (Sugden 2003:71) In the preparations for the Wheaton Conference, the interim steering committee decided to abandon the notion of development, as the term was secularly loaded. The best alternative term they could find at the time was social transformation (Dayton 1987:54). Dayton defines intentional social transformation *“as a process of external intervention intended to enable a people to become better than before”* (Dayton 1987:55). The definition intentionally does not define “better”, as it has to be uniquely defined for each people in their own context (Dayton 1987:55). The author sees redemption as God’s ultimate intention for the world that has been revealed in the gospel (Dayton 1987:55-56). *“The Christian goal for social transformation is thus to model the good news to provide everyone with the opportunity both to respond to the commands of the gospel and to live in obedience to it”* (Dayton 1987:59). Dayton’s understanding of social transformation seems to be a reflection that informed the alternative Christian goal of development as transformation and that laid the ground for further reflections, such as those of Wayne Bragg.

Bragg was one of the first theologians to propose transformation, as an alternative to development. He understands transformation as *“a particularly*

*Christian concept – to take the existing reality and give it a higher dimension or purpose ... It takes what is and turns it into what could be”* (Bragg 1984:157). Bragg sees transformation as a concept that is fully applicable to the Western world, while development is often exclusively applied to the Third World (Bragg 1984:157). This makes the goal of transformation different and globally applicable. Bragg lists the following characteristics of transformation: life-sustenance, equity, justice, dignity and self-worth, freedom, participation, reciprocity, cultural fit, ecological soundness, hope and spiritual transformation (Bragg 1984:157-165). His concept goes further than Dayton’s definition of social transformation and includes ecological and cultural aspects. A new aspect that is added to the discourse is the point of reciprocity, that values the benefits of intercultural contact, as all societies benefit from other societies, as well as the diffusion of innovation, while acknowledging the benefits of independent discovery within a culture (Bragg 1984:162). This aspect of reciprocity is included in the relational approach of Myers, too, as well as the aspect of cultural fit, that resonates with his participatory approach of TD. Furthermore, Bragg sees cultures being a part of God’s creation, that all have intrinsic values that can be used for social transformation (Bragg 1984:163). Even though Bragg favours culturally fitting transformation, the ultimate goal of transformation for him is still a state of wholeness in harmony with God and with every aspect of one’s environment, which finally does not respect the cultures’ inherent religion and believes, similar as in Myers approach. Finally, the Christian perspective remains central in Bragg’s theory, as for him transformation implies the restoration of mankind to the image of God, where human beings are co-creators and stewards of creation. Also, Bragg sees the need to change social and economic relationships to conform with the kingdom of God (Bragg 1984:157). Even though Bragg does not explicitly name the term shalom, his theory strongly resonates with the concept, which Faix (2015), Myers (2011) and others adopt in their approaches, too. Those characteristics of transformation by Bragg have, like the other concepts of transformation and TD discussed in chapter 2, been part of the categories that helped to analyse the data in the case studies.

Another participant in the consultation, Tienou, an African theologian, states: *“At the very heart of transformation is the proclamation of the gospel.*



*Proclamation, of course, is a matter of both word and deed*” (Tienou 1987:178). Interestingly, more than ten years later, Myers comes to a similar conclusion in his concept: *“There can be no practice of transformational development that is Christian unless somewhere, in some form, people are hearing the good news of the gospel and being given a chance to respond”* (Myers 2011:145). Tienou also concludes that evangelism and social transformation are two sides of the same coin: *“While there can be social transformation apart from evangelism, there is normally no evangelism that does not result in social transformation”* (Tienou 1987:179). In this dissertation, evangelism is understood as the proclamation or sharing of the gospel in all its forms, including words and deeds. This also explains the above quoted, as of course social transformation is possible without evangelism as we see in secular social work and development work, but evangelism should always include acts that promote social transformation, following the example of Jesus, so evangelism should at its best also result in social transformation. While this fact was discussed at the Wheaton 1983 Consultation, it seems that it has only been generally accepted by evangelicals in 2004 (Zwick 2007:87).

The final statement of the Consultation picks up the term transformation again, although some participants would have preferred to keep the term development for a better understanding and rather reinterpreting it for a Christian understanding (Samuel & Sugden 1987:256). King critically observes how *“‘Transformation’ came to serve as the evangelical in-house-term that distinguished Christian development from the kind practiced by the World Bank or USAID”* (King 2019:175). Regardless, the term transformation has been chosen and is defined as *“the change from a condition of human existence contrary to God’s purpose to one in which people are able to enjoy fullness of life in harmony with God”* (Samuel & Sugden 1987:257). The goal of transformation can be best described *“by the biblical vision of the Kingdom of God”* (Samuel & Sugden 1987:257) and hence in the meaning of shalom.

The church plays an important role in transformation, as it is the basic unit of Christian society (Wheaton 1983 Statement 1987:261):

In this way transformation takes place in the lives of Christians as individuals, families, and communities; Through their words and deeds they demonstrate both the need and reality of ethical, moral, and social transformation (Wheaton 1983 Statement 1987:261).

This central position of the church has been recognised by most authors writing about transformation in the Christian context (Faix 2012:91-93; Myers 2011:76-79,191-192; Samuel 2002:247). Myers even concludes that *“Christian activists and Christian agencies must be rooted in the larger church as well as its local expression”* (Myers 2011:191).

Furthermore, the Wheaton 1983 Statement gives a clear direction to Christian aid agencies, with the major concern *“to implement in our organizations a positive transformation demonstrating the values of Christ and His Kingdom”* (The Wheaton 1983 Statement 1987:263). The statement also recommends characteristics such as cultural sensitivity, transparency, partnering with local people and dialoguing to those agencies (The Wheaton 1983 Statement 1987:263-264), which are still important standards of today’s general development work. The Wheaton 1983 Statement and its basis laid the groundwork for Myers’s concept of TD.

### **2.1.3. Myers’s concept of transformational development**

Myers’s work (Myers 2011) has been defined as *the “capstone work of TD theory”* (Offutt 2012:40) and as *“the evangelical world’s most rigorous and cohesive development paradigm”* (Offutt 2012:43), which is why his theory is central in this dissertation. TD is defined as a positive change in the whole human life, materially, socially, psychologically, and spiritually, towards the goals of transformation. It is a lifelong journey (Myers 2011:4). The relational approach to development puts the relationship with God in the centre and believes that this can positively influence other relationships (with oneself, others, the community, and the environment). Here, as well as in other parts of his work, Myers paints a very idealistic picture and seems to miss how religion and theology can create division between communities and people. At the same time, he puts relationships at the centre of his concept, which includes reconciliation as an important aspect to overcome conflicts and to create shalom. The author sees the biggest transformational divide as the division among poor and non-

poor: by helping both recover their true identity, this division is hoped to overcome (Myers 2011:182). Myers summarises his goals of TD as follows:

a) *Changed people: Recovering true identity and vocation*

Through a ‘web of lies’ the poor think of themselves as valueless and believe they have nothing to contribute to society (Sugden 1997:183). In the case of the non-poor, the web of lies includes overcompensation and haughtiness as internalised lies, leading them to believe that they have power over the poor and can play God in the lives of others. In both cases, the aim is to recover true identity and vocation, even though the starting points are different (Myers 2011:182). The transformation of poor and non-poor is illustrated in Figure 2.1. that shows how transformation is understood as an unendingly process towards Myers’ twin goal of TD:

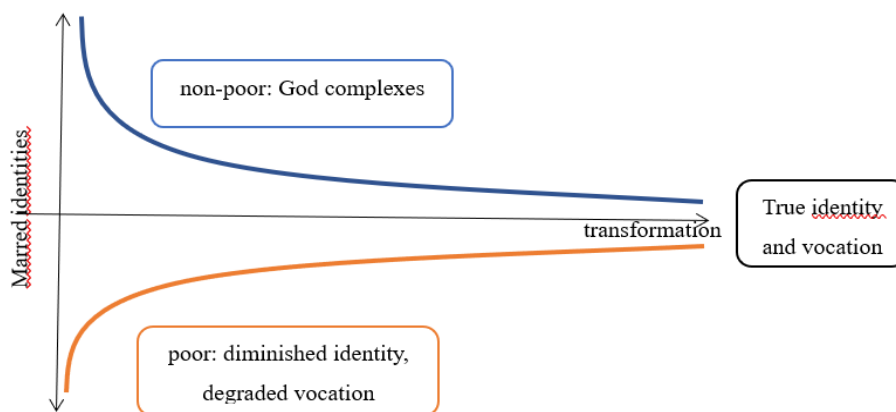


Figure 2.1: Transformation of the (non-) poor after Myers. Own figure.

The inclusion of poor and non-poor is an important shift in the focus of TD. But even though TD aims at the restoration of true identity and vocation, it can eschatologically not fully be accomplished in life but serves as target course for development programmes: “*We know we cannot bring the kingdom and yet we are committed to work alongside its coming*” (Myers 2011:172). The same can be said for the second goal of TD, which has been sharply criticised: no community has ever reached the state of shalom, because broken relationships and sin are still part of humanity, which makes shalom an aspiration but not an

attainable goal (Offutt 2012:44). Practitioners therefore have to ask serious questions about metrics and how they can know when to stop working in a community (Offutt 2012:44).

*b) Just and peaceful relationships*

Identity and vocation are expressed through relationships, which require TD to focus on restoring relationships (Myers 2011:180). From the Christian perspective, the central relationship is with God, who has already opened the way to restore people's relationship to him through Jesus Christ (Myers 2011:181). Figure 2.2. shows how Myers understands transformed relationships.

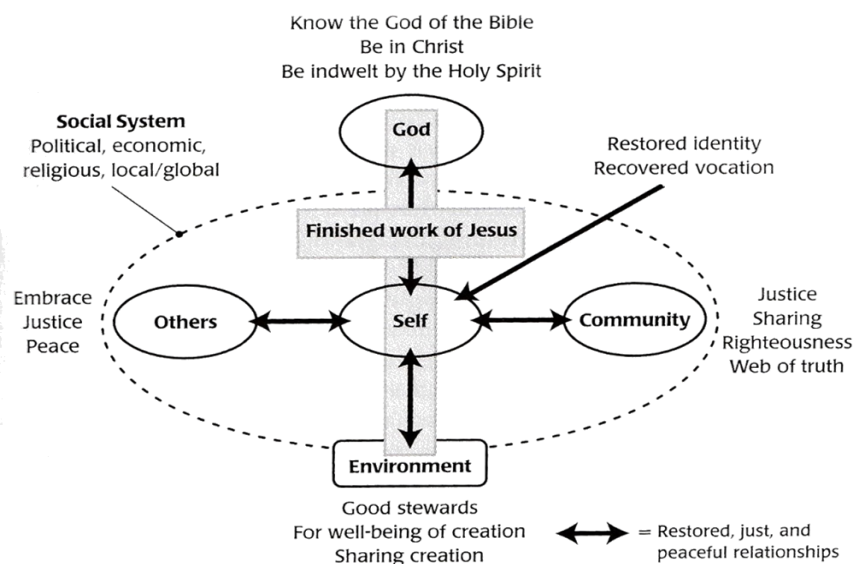


Figure 2.2: Myers' understanding of transformed relationships (Myers 2011:181)

Myers's understanding of development is profoundly driven by his understanding of poverty:

Poverty is a result of relationships that do not work, that are not just, that are not for life, that are not harmonious or enjoyable. Poverty is the absence of shalom in all its meanings. (Myers 2011:143)

Critically in this understanding is the eclipse of structural causes of poverty. Part of the strategy Myers proposes to that point, are changed people, who then should address and change unjust power structures. But he also admits to the structural causes of poverty on national, international and global level, which he shortly touches on, proposing the reformation of the international order, public service and policies and the restructuring of economy with institutional reforms

for good governance to attain socially just and sustainable economies with accountable and inclusive systems of governance (Myers 2011:189). What kind of reformation and restructuring this might be, is left open, which is critical, but shows Myer's focus on relationships on the local and personal level.

Furthermore, Myers agrees to the understanding of power structure that propagate lies, which is expressed by political, economic and cultural coercion and by the non-poor playing God in the lives of the poor (Myers 2011:135-139). While Myers sees power structures as seduction for humans to gain power and play God in the lives of the poor, his argumentation mainly reflects his Christian worldview with a biblical understanding. The aspect of power that promote lies, deceit, temptation and can be a is also found in Chambers "*Whose reality counts*" (Chambers 1997:76ff) and therein has an important point. Power structures are made to order and execute power over others, therein possibly transporting values of superiority and inferiority.

Shalom can be understood as the harmony God intended for creation and communicates the connection between development and evangelism (Bradshaw 1996:17-19). Peace is sometimes obtained in the presence of material scarcity and injustice, but justice is indispensable to shalom (Offutt 2012:43). Where the non-poor are preventing the poor to find their place in the socio-economic system, injustice prevails and shows how non-poor equally need transformation, but also that structural causes of poverty need to be addressed. But the aim of shalom creates a distinction between TD and secular development theories (Offutt 2012:43). Another distinction of TD from secular development theories is its understanding of poverty. The understanding of poverty strongly influences how institutions, organisations and individuals see development and how they implement development projects. Therefore, it is important to disclose the Christian view of the poor and how Myers understands poverty. Concerning Christian perspectives of the poor, Myers refers to Richard Mouw (1989). Table 2.1. presents an overview of Mouw's typology with Myers's addition.

Table 2.1: Christian perspectives of the poor (Myers 2011:108-109)

View of the poor	Theological frame	Key biblical texts	Expressions	Why the poor are poor	Christian response
Poor made in the image of God	Creation	Genesis 1-2	Poor as creative. Poor as a work of art. See God's hidden glory.	The poor lack skills, knowledge, and opportunity.	Enable the poor to be fruitful and productive.
Poor as people in rebellion	Fall	Genesis 3 Proverbs	Poor as lazy. Poor make bad choices. God helps those who help themselves.	The poor are in rebellion and their culture keeps them poor.	Challenge the poor with the gospel and encourage them to make better choices.
Poor as Christ incarnate	Incarnation	Gospels	Christ in the distressing guise of the poor. What you did for the least of these...	The poor lack love.	Accompany the poor and relieve suffering as possible.
Poor as God's favorites	Prophetic Eschatological	Exodus Prophets	Blessed are the poor for theirs will be the kingdom. Liberation theology	The poor are oppressed by the non-poor. Poverty is structural.	Work for justice. Help the poor find their voice and place in socio-political-economic system.
Poor as lost souls	Salvation Soteriological	Matthew 28 Acts	The better future lies in eternity. Save as many as we can. The poor will always be with you.	The poor are lost from God, and the kingdom is coming soon.	Proclaim the gospel and encourage the poor to respond.

Mouw's typology makes it very clear how the general worldview and understanding of poverty influences the development concept and the objectives of any development project. While some of those views of the poor seem to be quite short-sighted, there certainly are Christian mission or development organisations that only focus on one of those approaches. This can equally be said of secular NGOs that focus on a specific notion of poverty (f. ex. the material or financial aspects). But usually, the CDOs' understanding of poverty and development is broader and contains several of those notions.

Even though, Myers admits to structural causes of poverty, in his understanding the cause of poverty is fundamentally spiritual, because from a Christian perspective sin as a broken relationship to God is the root of deception, distortion and domination in all relationships (Myers 2011:144-145). Therein, a spiritual reality underlies all systems and structures, including those that are keeping people in poverty, which he understands as implications of spiritual poverty (Myers 2011:117). This definition is a change of perspective on poverty and broadens the pool of those who are recognised as the poor, as *"...in God's sight all human beings are poor"* (Myers 2011:145). Here, it must be critically

noted that the author continues to use the terms poor and non-poor for all people who in his understanding of relational poverty are “poor”. Even though the reader understands that he tries to differentiate between people who lack materially and financially (as well as being relationally poor) and between rich and well-placed people who are nonetheless relationally poor, this is not further elaborated in his book. This implies, that there are no materially poor people who live in wholesome relationships, as the brokenness of those relationships is the cause of poverty. Having been in West Africa, the author critically questions this theory, as many materially and financially poor people seem to live in far more healthy relationships to God, others, themselves, the community and sometimes also to the environment, than many Westerners do. This does not exclude that many of those relationships might be unjust (as the dependency theory also suggests). The discrepancy is an inconsistency in Myers’s concept. Of course, in Myers’s understanding the non-poor suffer from the same kind of poverty as the poor, namely from a marred identity, as they think they can dominate others and play God in the lives of other people (Myers 2011:145-146). Hence, they have equally lost their vocation and believe in a web of lies that is differently composed than those of the poor (Myers 2011:146-147). The cause of poverty of the non-poor is the same as that of the poverty of the poor, only differently expressed (see also Figure 2.1). Figure 2.3. illustrates the evolution of a relational understanding of poverty (Myers 2011:144).

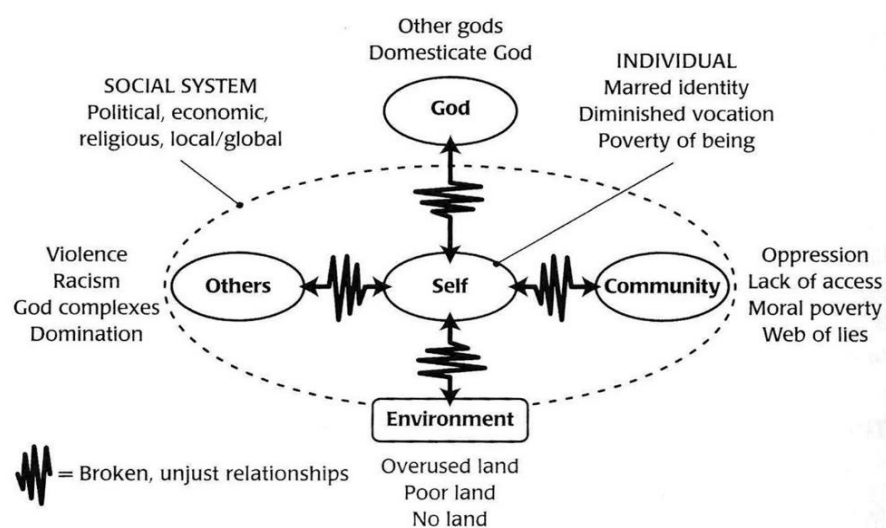


Figure 2.3: A relational understanding of poverty (Myers 2011:144)

The relational understanding of poverty draws attention to the importance of the local church in concerning the teaching of transformational goals, even though World Vision, for example, involves the entire community in its development programmes (King 2019:224). Those transformational goals are equally necessary and applicable in Western countries, as TD has the same agenda for the poor and the non-poor, but different issues and starting points that require different approaches. The Micah Network is one example for the application of a transformational Christian approach worldwide, known by the term “integral mission”. The Micah initiative challenges Christians, CDOs and churches worldwide to live out the gospel and its social consequences (Ramachandra 2009:116). Each Christian should therefore transform his/her environment naturally. The Micah Network tries to awake Christians for topics like justice and social implication (Rempe 2009:93) and has also established agencies in the Western world for this purpose (Rempe 2009:95).

In the relief and development sector, World Vision can be called the pioneer of TD, also because Myers has worked at World Vision for a long time. World Vision saw TD as validation for its own Christian development models and Myers’s concept became the most influential approach, notwithstanding that secularist claimed that he was simply spiritualising secular theory (King 2019:223). While this criticism is partly understandable, the concept of TD discloses the Christian worldview on development and presents new understandings of poverty and development that are hardly comparable with secular understandings, such as the relational understanding of poverty, development and the goal of shalom. Myers concludes the goals of TD in the following quotation:

In summary, to move toward a better human future we must encourage and develop relationships that work for the well-being of all, relationships that are just, peaceful, and harmonious. This is the heart and spirit of shalom and the only way leading toward abundant life for all (Myers 2011:183).

From there, the author draws an important implication for Christian development workers: *“There can be no practice of TD that is Christian unless somewhere, in some form, people are hearing the good news of the gospel and being given a chance to respond”* (Myers 2011:145). In Figure 2.4. Myers presents a framework for transformation to resume his content on the TD concept.



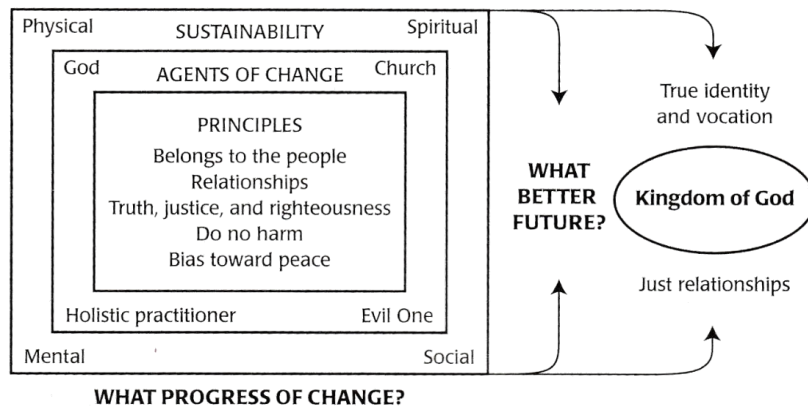


Figure 6–6: The framework for transformational development.

Figure 2.4: A framework for transformational development (Myers 2011:202)

What is striking in this framework is the orientation to the question “What better future?”, which is always answered by the kingdom of God or the state of shalom. Certainly, this still leaves a big scope of possible theological and practical interpretations, but it is a long-term target course that is often missing in secular development approaches.

#### 2.1.4. Further publications on transformation in the context of mission and Christian development work

After the publication of Myers’s book *Walking with the poor* (1999 and revised version from 2011), the term transformation was still used and further developed, for example within the Lausanne Movement. The first conference of the Lausanne Movement and the Wheaton 1983 Consultation delineated in Section 2.1.2 did not ascribe the same value to social action as to evangelisation in their final documents. Nevertheless, the equivalence of both topics is now acknowledged in the church and CDOs all over the world (Zwick 2007:163). It was recognised in the second Lausanne Forum (1989 in Manila), where word and deed were both seen as the expression of evangelisation, even though evangelisation was still prioritised. Further publications on transformation in the context of mission and Christian development work followed over time.

#### **2.1.4.1. Samuel and Sugden 1999**

Vinay Samuel and Christopher Sugden continued to work on the topic of transformation from a Christian perspective. 1999, they published *“Mission as Transformation”*, *“to bring together in one place material that has been developed since 1983 on the understanding and practice of Mission as Transformation”* (Samuel and Sugden 1999:ix). Samuel describes how *“one component of transformation is the integral relation of evangelism to social action”* (1999:229), an aspect that had already been expressed by Tienou 1987 (Tienou 1987:178). Samuel does not seem to differentiate very clearly between mission and transformation:

I say mission is individuals coming to Christ, challenging corrupt and sinful systems, structure and cultures and enabling individuals and communities to experience God’s transforming power. (Samuel 2002:244)

He then presents transformation as having to do with experiencing Christ and lives being transformed with a total reorientation of that individual and their relationships as well as the reconstitution of his/her identity, which is also empowering (Samuel 2002:244). So, for Samuel, there is no big difference in the goal of mission and transformation. There might be one slight difference, which can be seen in Sugden’s resume of Samuel’s characteristics of transformation:

Transformation focuses on persons; it is about the development of personhood in community and the building of communities; it is the action of communities (and their institutions), through which public goods are created and evil systems can be attacked (Sugden 2003:72).

Grams correctly compressed Samuel’s content into one sentence: *“In a word, transformation of persons is about character transformation. (...) the goal of transformed personhood is that Christ is formed in us”* (Grams 2007:195). In this understanding, transformation can be seen as a long-term goal of mission. While mission means reaching people with the gospel, transformation would then mean the changes that conversion bears as consequence. Even though transformation is an objective per se in TD, evolving autonomously from a conversion, Myers himself presents the restoration of the relationship to the God of the Bible as central and as being the *“point of maximum leverage of change”*

(Myers 2011:181). In any case, for Samuel as for Myers, transformation is not just about the poor, but about all people (Grams 2007:195).

Considering those reflections that occurred around the same time as Myers's concept of TD, one may ask, if the concept of transformation and the concept of TD cannot be seen as circumscription of "mission" to better fit into the context of development and to be taken more seriously. To clarify this question, in 2003 Sugden published an article with the current state and practice of TD. There, TD is labelled a process that "*facilitate[s] the acceptance and application of the values of the kingdom of God in human communities*" (Sugden 2003:75). The article shows how TD goes further than mission as defined previously (Samuel 2002:244). TD was promoted by CDOs working among the poor and was born from the question of what makes Christian development Christian (Sugden 2003:71). When Samuels presents his main points about the process of transformation (Sugden 2003:72), those dimensions can equally be resumed in Myers's goals of development: changed people that recover their true identity and vocation and just and peaceful relationships (Myers 2011:4). Looking at the future to which Sugden's transformational concept is pointing, there are many parallels with Myers's TD: the new creation (eschatology), the centrality of the cross, concentrating on communities to bring positive change, reconciliation between people and communities, witnessing, stewardship, enhancing freedom, establishing a healthy relationship with oneself, and not least, shalom containing healthy relationships in general (Sugden 2003:73-74; Myers 2011:181 ff). Sugden concludes:

Transformation has not really been one theory or set of theories about poverty (...). It has been used as a strategy – as a way of attending to the whole person in the whole of their relationships. ... It has been more of a narrative, a framework, ... explaining causality as a basis for problem-solving action (Sugden 2003:75).

Hence, one can assume that Myers brought those theories together to form a complete Christian development concept in his notion of TD. At the same time, as Sugden predicted (Sugden 2003:75), different wholistic mission strategies arose from the concept of transformation, such as the concept of integral mission (Kleiner 2007:170ff; Ramachandra 2009:113ff). Hence the search to elaborate a concept of transformation might also be understood as another way to develop a holistic mission concept.

#### **2.1.4.2. Integral mission 2001**

Among other Christian players, the Micah Network, a global coalition of evangelical churches and agencies, the AEM, an evangelical umbrella organisation for mission work, and the Evangelical Alliance have developed and are working with the concept of integral mission:

Integral mission or holistic transformation is the proclamation and demonstration of the gospel. ... in integral mission our proclamation has social consequences ... And our social involvement has evangelistic consequences as we bear witness to the transforming grace of Jesus Christ (Micah Network 2001:1).

In this declaration on integral mission, the drawn-out discussion of social action and proclamation of the gospel, which has been addressed in many ecumenical and evangelical mission conferences, has come to an end. Integral mission includes both equally. The Micah Network focuses on poor and marginalised people, on advocacy and on reconciliation and justice (Micah Network 2001:2-3). The Micah Network's declaration objects to the word development because it implies that there are developed and underdeveloped countries and concludes that the term development does not recognise the need for transformation in industrialised countries (Micah Network 2001:2). Yet, Voegelin talks interchangeably about integral mission and (Christian) integral development work (Voegelin 2007:258). This again raises the question of whether Christian development work and mission work can fully be distinguished from each other. One hint is given by Ramachandra, who describes how the term integral mission has dominated over the term TD and holistic mission on a meeting of evangelical development organisations in 2001, where the Micah Network was founded (Ramachandra 2007:113). This leads to the conclusion that integral mission can be seen as a further development of TD, but with a different audience, because the Micah Network defines integral mission as the task of local churches and every Christian individually (Micah Network 2001:2-3). Even if CDOs often hire Christians for their development work, this is not always the case. World Vision, for example, has also hired Muslims, especially in Muslim countries (King 2019:227). Integral mission as the task of churches and Christians reflects an attitude, but cannot be seen as a development concept per se. At the same time, the aims of integral mission and TD largely overlap. The aim of integral mission is shalom, which will only be completed with the

return of Jesus Christ. Where people get to know God and gain more humane living conditions, the beginning of the shalom in God's kingdom can be experienced (Voegelin 2007:259). Shalom is also the aim of TD (Myers 2011:183) and transformation in general (Sugden 2003:73). Still, the worldview of TD is a relational one that seeks changed people and just and peaceful relationships (Myers 2011:182ff). This relational view has no specific place in the concept of integral mission, which is rather seen as an expression of living the whole gospel.

Another differentiation between integral mission and TD can be made, as there is no separation of mission overseas or local mission anymore, due to the secularisation of the West and the rise of Christian spirituality in countries of the South. Mission is no longer a geographical definition, it is neither local nor global, but is now called "*glocal*" (Schmutz 2009:112). Even though TD sees its goals as equally applicable to the poor and non-poor (Myers 2011:178), the focus and application of TD lie on poor and marginalised people in the Global South.

#### **2.1.4.3. Pattaya 2004**

Concerning the Lausanne Movement, only the Lausanne Congress 2004 in Pattaya reached an equal integration of social action and evangelisation, consolidated as holistic transformation (Zwick 2007:163-164). Zwick calls transformation a key term of the Lausanne Forum in Pattaya, stating that transformation concerns the change of communities, villages and people in all areas of life through Jesus Christ. Mission and transformation can contextually be differently expressed and should be carried out and pursued especially by the local church (Zwick 2007:167-168). One interesting point of transformation in that context was how people at risk were explicitly not only the receivers of charity but foremost the receivers of a new dignity as children of God and hence stewards of their own destiny (Zwick 2007:165-166) This idea of ownership of the transforming process is one interesting point to examine in the application of TD. As for Myers, one of the major goals of TD is that people rediscover their true identity and vocation so that they can contribute to the well-being of themselves and their community (vocation) (Myers 2011:177-180).

#### **2.1.4.4. Theology of transformation (around 2007)**

As early as 2003, Sugden asked for the need to continue to use the framework of transformation to encourage further theological reflection on our choices in development (Sugden 2003:75), leading to a discussion of a theology of transformation. *“By a theology of ‘transformation’ is meant an Evangelical mission theology that embraces social transformation as equally a part of the gospel as personal transformation (repentance and conversion) – a holistic theology”* (Grams 2007:193). This mission theology of transformation can be seen as an attempt to bring the reflection about mission and Christian development work in the evangelical sector together to form a theology as a groundwork for mission as well as for development practice. While this attempt was quite useful, the different terms for this theology (transformation mission theology, mission theology of transformation, transformational mission theology, theology of transformation) on the first page of Gram’s article, reinforce the preliminary nature of the proposed theology. Grams discusses the topic historically, theologically and hermeneutically. He concludes that there will be different sorts of transformation in various cultures, contexts and religions, but Christian transformation comes from the biblical narratives and continues in the life of the Christian community. He then calls the Christian transformation the transformation par excellence (Grams 2007:204). Grams tries to distinguish Christian transformation from other transformational processes, appearing quite presumptuous but remaining consistent with his Christian worldview.

Furthermore, a theology of transformation is convinced that *“transformation comes from God: it is spiritual”* (Grams 2007:204). It aligns with Myers’s understanding that transformation is first and foremost a work of God (Grams 2007:205).

In summary, the theology of transformation can be understood as a continuous task that points the Christian community in the right direction in its response to mission (Kirk in Grams 2007:209). Grams’s article is one step further in the debate of evangelicals clarifying their approach to mission and Christian development work. The Marburger studies of transformation continued the discussion of fundamental questions on a theology of transformation in the German-speaking context (Faix, Reimer & Brecht 2009).

#### **2.1.4.5. ACT Alliance 2008**

ACT Alliance is a large faith-based coalition of Protestant and Orthodox churches and church-related organisations. The NGO is engaged in humanitarian, development and advocacy work worldwide. It has 130 members that work together in 120 countries in the context of humanitarian aid, development and advocacy (ACT Alliance 2020). The coalition bases itself on a transformational understanding of development (ACT Alliance 2008:2). The theological affirmation is that *“all persons are created in the image of God with the right and potential to live just, humane and dignified lives in sustainable communities”* (ACT Alliance 2008:2). Transformation here equally involves change for those with power and for the oppressed. The promotion of TD by ACT Alliance ranges from campaigning at a global level to supporting communities at local level to obtain access to safe water, adequate food and other needs. Central concepts that correspond with Myers’s understanding of TD are participation, empowerment, capacity development, gender equity, reaffirming human rights, advocacy, promoting peace, reconciliation, and right relationships, together with environmental sustainability, including addressing overconsumption and lack of sharing (ACT Alliance 2008:2ff). ACT Alliance differs from Myers’s understanding of TD in that his goal of changed people and peaceful and just relationships (Myers 2011:180) are only found among the central concepts, but not explicitly named as goals. Also, the concept of shalom is missing in the understanding of development by ACT Alliance.

ACT Alliance furthermore has a passus on *“Non-Discrimination”* (ACT Alliance 2008:4) that states that TD *“does not discriminate on any basis including gender, ethnicity, culture, political affiliation, religion, age and sexual identity”* (ACT Alliance 2008:4); this can be seen as a derivative and improvement of Myers’s concept, as well as the concept of *“effective communication”* (ACT Alliance 2008:5), which is the foundation of successful and peaceful relationships.

Similarly, ACT Alliance aims at being culturally and spiritually sensitive, taking cultural and spiritual dimensions in the development process into account. ACT explicitly states: *“ACT Alliance will not use any development assistance for the purpose of proselytizing”* (ACT Alliance 2008:4). Myers, on the other hand,

thinks that “*the need to proclaim the good news of Christ is directly related to a Christian understanding of transformation*” (Myers 2011:309). Myers, too, does not call for proselytism or coercive, manipulative or culturally insensitive evangelism, but calls for an attitude that “*prays and yearns for people to know Jesus Christ*” (Myers 2011:310). Here the difference between an evangelical approach from Myers and the ecumenical approach by ACT Alliance is visible.

#### **2.1.4.6. Cape Town 2010**

In 2010, the Lausanne Forum met in Cape Town, discussing the topic of world evangelisation. In Cape Town, the term transformation seemed to play a subordinate role, as it is not mentioned at all in the Cape Town Commitment (2010). Nonetheless, various key topics of TD were discussed at the conference. Seeking justice and shalom for the oppressed and the poor, serving people with disabilities and people with HIV, as well as striving for peace in ethnic conflicts and working towards creation care are included into the final document (Lausanne Movement 2011:39-47). The Cape Town Commitment lays a theological groundwork for evangelicals concerning theological questions arising in the development context, but is not a theology of transformation either.

#### **2.1.4.7. Marburger studies of transformation: Faix & Künkler 2011 and others**

After the Lausanne Forum 2004 and 2010, the concept of transformation was again further dealt with by Tobias Faix, Tobias Künkler and others in the Marburger studies of transformation (Faix, Reimer & Brecht 2009, Faix & Künkler 2012, Kroeck & Schneider 2015). Transformation has been discussed in the context of community transformation (*Gesellschaftstransformation*).

One of the questions discussed by the German scholars, is where and with whom transformation of the community begins. While Kessler argues that it always starts with the transformation of the individual/oneself (Kessler 2009:286), Künkler argues that processes of change need to happen at least equally at the community level (Künkler 2009:116). Community and individuals only exist through their inseparable relationship with each other (Künkler 2009:113), thus the transformation of the individuals always influences the



community and *vice versa*. In 2012, Rabens brought together the two approaches to community transformation by describing the transforming impact of the Holy Spirit as a community experience. The Holy Spirit transforms and enables individuals to share love by letting them experience the same feeling in loving communities. Hence, the transformation of the community begins simultaneously at the individual and community levels (Rabens 2012:140-141).

Faix presents scientific fields where the term transformation plays an important role (political science, sociology and social work, as well as spirituality, see Section 2.1.1) for the meaning of transformation in the context of development work (Faix 2015:117-119). Furthermore, Faix discovers transformation at all levels, namely the macroscopic, mesoscopic and microscopic levels. The macroscopic level contains societal change like post-secularisation, pluralisation, globalisation, the asymmetry of North and South and postcolonialism; the mesoscopic level concerns institutional changes and the acceptance of institutions in society; at the microscopic level, transformation refers to changes in the context of families, work, etc. (Faix 2015:119-120). Faix theologically develops nine specific aspects of transformation that aim at shalom: political, social, economic, cultural, legal, ethnic, ethic, emancipatory and theological (Faix 2012:71-72), and sometimes adds ecological aspects as well (:78-79, 84-85). In this regard, Faix is more specific in defining areas of transformation, while Myers leaves this completely up to the community (Myers 2011:175). Of course, Faix's aspects of transformation are very broad, so that few transformational processes can be placed outside those areas.

Theologically, Faix is quite near to his precedents: through Christ's sacrifice on the cross, our relationships can be restored at all levels. This spiritual transformation has political, social and public consequences. In every sphere of life, Faix sees shalom as the condition that corresponds to the kingdom of God (Faix 2012:81). He hence accords with Myers's framework for transformation (Myers 2011:202) and equally sees the church as a central player in the process of transformation (Faix 2012:87).

The theology of transformation, especially the transformation of a community (*Gesellschaftstransformation*), has also been critically mentioned. Theologians such as Gilbert do not share Faix's understanding of transformation as woven into the biblical story. The conclusions drawn from

Genesis and other parts of the Bible do not necessarily proclaim transformation as a core exercise for all Christians, while leaving the proclamation of the gospel behind (Gilbert 2011:136). Finally, Gilbert clarifies that one can be transformational, but still keep Jesus and the cross in the centre of the gospel (Gilbert 2011:138), which is exactly what Faix does.

### **2.1.5. Conclusion**

The Christian tradition and history per se contains many stories of holistic transformation. In the Bible, plenty of transformational stories are presented, as transformation is one core element of Christian faith. Even though this being the case, the term transformation is never used explicitly (Jakob 2015:113). Religious traditions mostly focus on the transformation of the individual and society (Shapiro 1989:16). Already the Jewish tradition in the Torah knows transformation, for example Noah who is a character in the midst of a massive change process. Even though this is just one example of transformational stories of the Torah, the narrative shows how incremental change may be longer lasting (Wasserman 2006). From a transpersonal psychology perspective, the goal of transformation in Judaism can be symbolically understood as reaching “the promised land”, which for the individual might include a transformation of consciousness and personal behaviour (Abraham and Jacob), but can also include an entire community to seek societal transformation as in the case of Moses (Shapiro 1989:20). Those Jewish roots of Christian tradition are part of the origin of a Christian perspective on TD.

The term transformation is used in many different contexts, which impedes a clear definition of the term. Jakob defines its original meaning as the conversion or shaping something into another form (Jakob 2015:109). The term plays a role in various scientific fields such as political science, sociology and social work (Faix 2015:117-120) and is also used in the secular development sector (Heider 2016). The Christian understanding of TD can be traced back to the Lausanne Movement that strongly influenced Bryant Myers. The Christian perspective on transformation arose from a nine-year period in which evangelicals explored the relation between evangelism and social action in mission and resulted in the statement *Transformation – The Church in Response to Human Need* which was published in 1987 (Sugden 2003:71,

Samuel and Sugden 1987). In the Lausanne Forum 2004 in Pattaya, the term transformation became a key term that expressed the equivalence of social actions and the proclamation of the gospel in mission (Berneburg 2014:61).

The Micah Network proposed the idea of integral mission in 2001, which generally resembles the concept of TD. In integral mission, social actions and proclamation of the gospel are equally valued and integrated. Both are seen as an expression of the Christian faith (Micah Network 2001:1). Integral mission can therefore be understood as a derivative of TD, mainly applicable to churches, Christian communities, and individual Christians in their daily life as an expression of their Christian faith.

Besides Bragg, who as early as 1984 described the term transformation as a Christian alternative concept to development (Bragg 1984:154), Myers significantly contributed to TD becoming a prominent development concept used by Christian aid agencies. The Christian perspective of TD aims at shalom in the form of the kingdom of God, not as a theocracy, but through restoring and developing relationships that work for the well-being of all, that are hence just, peaceful and harmonious (Myers 2011:183). The goals are to recover one's true identity and vocation as well as having just and peaceful relationships (Myers 2011:4). In summary, most Christian and transformational concepts and the derivatives envision the goal of transformation in working towards the kingdom of God and towards the state of shalom (even though the term shalom is not always specifically referred to) (Wheaton 1983 Statement 1987:257; Bragg 1984:157; Myers 2011:175,183 Sugden 2003:74; Faix 2012:81). It has become clear how one's worldview (here a Christian one) influences the understanding and the application of development. One important example is the topic of eschatology that serves as an objective for development programmes, as Christians should know that they cannot establish the kingdom of God, but are *"committed to work alongside its coming"* (Myers 2011:172). This has also been criticised, as the state of shalom can be an aspiration, but it is not intended as an attainable goal per se (Offutt 2012:44). This brings further challenges: *"How do development practitioners know when they are close enough to stop working in a given community? What metrics of evaluation work, when goals are unattainable?"* (Offutt 2012:44) Those inquiries are to be taken seriously and will be relevant for the application of TD. On these grounds, the theology of

transformation could provide a groundwork to reflect on Christian choices in development (Sugden 2003:75) and could become a theological framework for Christian mission and development practice. But as Jakob observes correctly, until now no systematic theology of transformation has been developed (Jakob 2015:113).

It is striking how most Christian transformational concepts aim not only at poor people but at all people, including the Western world, and the whole of creation (Dayton 1987:55, Wheaton 1983 Statement 1987:258, Bragg 1984:157, Grams 2007:195, 201), which is a significant merit of the concept. Still, there is a certain focus on the “poor” or those in human need, because the Christian message encourages its believers to take care of the least (Wheaton 1983 Statement 1987: 257; Bragg 1984:153; Myers 2011:143; Sugden 2003:74).

TD understands poverty as relational: poverty is the result of broken or unjust relationships and is fundamentally spiritual (sin) (Myers 2011:143ff) Here, Myers is not fully consistent in his concept, as following this understanding of poverty, rich people can equally be understood as poor. While he elaborates this (Myers 2011:145), he still sticks to the term poor/non-poor, implying that poverty is related to material or financial wealth.

Nonetheless, TD is a comprehensively mapped out development theory that is actively used by CDOs such as World Vision (King 2019:223). It is specifically compiled for CDOs, while further derivatives such as holistic mission approaches (for example integral mission), have other purposes or are rather to be understood as concepts for Christian communities, churches and Christian individuals or groups to live out their beliefs actively.

Faix brings the transformational discussion to the German-speaking context as the transformation of the community (*Gesellschaftstransformation*) (Faix 2012:68ff). He adds nine specific aspects of transformation that aim at shalom to the discussion: political, social, economic, cultural, legal, ethnic, ethic, emancipatory and theological (Faix 2012:71-72). In addition, he raises ecological aspects (Faix 2012:78-79, 84-85). In this regard, Faix’s areas of transformation are far more specific and can be understood as a valuable addition, as Myers declines to specify further areas of transformation, which he leaves completely up to the community (Myers 2011:175).

In this chapter, it has become obvious that a precise separation of mission and Christian development is quite difficult. Integral mission and TD have been used as two terms for similar theories (Schmutz 2009:113) and integral mission could be seen as derivative of TD for a different setting. So, the evangelical perceptions of mission and Christian development work largely overlap. Looking at the theoretical level of TD, a differentiation can be made between mission and Christian development work. While mission is the task of local churches and each Christian individual, Christian development work can also be carried out by development workers of different faiths, as shows the example of World Vision (King 2019:227). Furthermore, mission is not defined geographically and turns to rich Western countries equally as to poorer countries in the South. The focus of Christian development work still lies on “less developed” countries in the Global South.

## **2.2. RELATION TO CURRENT DEVELOPMENT APPROACHES**

This subchapter seeks to answer the following subquestion of the dissertation’s research question: *How does the Christian perspective of TD relate to current development theories and where does it differ?*

### **2.2.1. Development and religion**

As TD has a Christian perspective on development, the relationship between development and religion is briefly discussed here. Over 80% of the world population are said to be religious and religious groups have always contributed to the provision of people, as states the German Bundesministerium für Zusammenarbeit und Entwicklung (BMZ) (BMZ 2016:4). Religion and religious groups in the past have thus been both promoting and repressing in development (BMZ 2021; Mayotte 1998:65).

In the history and sociology of religion development themes have repeatedly been considered, not only in the context of Christianity. As religious traditions often include a focus on the transformation of the individual and society, development themes have been part of the history and sociology of religion ever since their existence (Shapiro 1989:16; Kritzinger 1992:104ff). Vice versa, the sociology of development has repeatedly treated religious

phenomena (Forde 2013; Rappaport 1967:17ff; Giri 2004; Deneulin & Bano 2009).

But one major result of the age of enlightenment in Europe was the neglect of religion and religious believes. This resulted in the fact, that religion has barely been considered in the theory and praxis of development cooperation between North and South (Holenstein 2010:64-65). This has various reasons, for example, *“the idea ... that secularisation goes hand-in-hand with the transition to modernity and economic development”* (Tomalin 2014:530) as well as the idea that secularisation was also believed to be a premise for democracy (Holenstein 2010:66). However, this understanding shifted again in the last decades. Faith has anew been recognised for its resources of values, political power and religious congregations and FBOs as an important part of civil society (BMZ 2016:7). This has been the case for faith institutions and leaders confronting issues such as child soldiers, trafficked girls, female genital cutting, the persecution of witches and others (Marshall 2011:50-51). As Marshall states: *“Faith institutions and ideas have had significant influence, direct or subtle, on thinking about development”* (Marshall 2011:32). Therein, religious and cultural systems have been discovered as agents of change in developing areas (Agbiboa 2012:199ff). This can also be a change for the worse, as *“religious values and practices may act against the interests of the development process”* (Tomalin 2014:531). The positive and negative potential of religion in development work has been much discussed (BMZ 2016:7; Holenstein 2010:64ff; Tomalin 2014:529ff). The former blind spot, or *“development taboo”* (Ver Beek 2000) has diminished since among others the World Bank started to research the work of FBOs and started to partner with faith groups in the World Faith Development Dialogue 1998 (Holenstein 2010:20-71; Marshall 2011:36ff). But, FBOs should not be simply subsumed among other NGOs, as important differences and lessons could be lost. Moreover, FBOs as CDOs are not a united group (Marshall 2011:33). *Peu à peu*, the development discourse is opening up for religious perspectives on development (Kritzinger 2000:113). This has also been recognised by the governmental development institutions arguing that the SDGs can only be reached with religious actors (BMZ 2021). In consequence, TD can be one of

those religious perspectives on development, adding to the general development discourse.

### **2.2.2. Participatory and community development**

TD favours participation in development work. Which has actually has multiple meanings: participation is thought to make development more efficient and effective, is has an important aspect of mutual learning and is thought to be more transformative (Mohan 2014:132). It is both a methodology and a strategic goal of development (Connell 1997:4). As Chamber argues, since the mid-1970s participatory methodologies evolved faster and faster in development practice (Chamber 2007:286). This involved several participatory methods, such as the participatory rural appraisal (PRA) and participatory learning and action (PLA) that were more and more applied in development work (Chambers 2007:286ff, Chambers 2003). In TD the participatory methods play an important role as the *“PRA/PLA seeks and embodies participatory ways to empower local and subordinate people, enabling them to express and enhance their knowledge and take action”* (Chambers 2007:3). The main components of the approach are the facilitators’ behaviours, attitudes and mindsets, connected to what has been called precepts of PRA, the many PRA methods and sharing without boundaries, which also includes relationships (Chambers 2007:8-9). Of course, participatory development can also be misused and has also been criticised (Mohan 2014.134-135; Leal 2007; White 1996). Still, Myers asserts how helping people to recognise their knowledge and thus participation *“goes a long way helping them overcome their marred identity”* (Myers 2011:256). The role of participation in TD has been described as the role of a genuine or senior partner; the form of participation in TD should be integral and central, and the extent of participation should be complete and without limit (Myers 2011:215). Bragg even argues that the degree to that people participate in the process of transformation, to that degree the change would be meaningful and lasting (Bragg 1983:162). This is why participation is also one of the characteristics of transformation defined by Bragg (Bragg 1983:158ff). More currently, ACT Alliance also formulates participation as the right to self-determination of people living in poverty in the whole process of TD, empowerment and capacity development as three of the twelve central concepts to the idea and practice of

TD (ACT Alliance 2013:2-5; Van Zeeland 2016:7). This shows how TD centrally includes a participatory development approach.

Strongly connected with the participatory approach to development is the approach of community development. There seem to be no universally valid definition of community development, as a certain “*fuzziness of definition of community development*” (Biddle 1966:5) seems to persist. Some common ground is that community development is an asset-based approach that helps communities and public agencies to work together to improve services and decision-making. Principles that are at the core of community development are self-determination, empowerment, collective action and working and learning together (Scottish Community Development Centre 2022). Those mentioned principles are all picked up by TD in some form. The centrality of the community, as propagated by Myers (Myers 2011:182ff), can lead to the understanding of TD as community development from a Christian perspective.

### **2.2.3. Capability/capabilities approach and human development**

The capability approach by Amartya Sen and the capabilities approach by Martha Nussbaum have gained of importance in academia and policy making in the last decades (Robeyns 2006:351). The capability approach understands poverty as being the result of the deprivation of human freedom (Nussbaum 2013:187ff; Tenai 2016:7). From that perspective development means to enhance and create freedom by widening people’s choices in all areas of life, economic, social and cultural, to increase their level of achieved well-being (Deneulin 2006:1). The approach thus values choice as a central aspect of well-being (Tenai 2016:6). Following the capabilities approach, humans have innate powers (basic capabilities), which are either nurtured or not. So, basic capabilities need to be unfolded and shaped (Nussbaum 2013:23). But this should not to happen from outside, as the capability approach emphasis the people’s agency: “*It is the people themselves who decide what kind of development they want.*” (Deneulin 2006:2). This leaves the freedom for the individual to (not) exercise his/her capability (Nussbaum 2013:25; Sen 1995:40-41). Especially the latest aspects strongly resonates with the Christian perspective of TD, as individuals are seen as the image of God with inherent capabilities and a free choice of applying those capabilities.



Despite the wide (political) recognition of the capability approach, as for example by the UN in its Human Development Report (UNDP 1990; Robeyns 2006: 351-352), the approach is facing a variety of critique and limitations. Repeatedly named have been the lack of specification concerning the focus on capabilities or functionings, the selection of relevant capabilities and the issue of prioritizing different capabilities (Robeyns 2006:353; Pogge 2010:17ff; Tenai 2016:7). Another relevant issue of the capability approach that has been rightly raised is the concentration on individual capabilities, freedom and agency versus taking into account the socio-historical dimension and including concepts of collective capabilities (Ibrahim 2006:401ff; Deneulin 2006:72ff).

Nonetheless, there are parallels between Sen's perspective and Christian anthropology as noted above. But they "*... part ways with the further Christian understanding that the freedom that God grants human beings ... is not the unlimited freedom of the autonomous Western self*" (Myers 2011:31). This is an important distinction between the secular capability approach and TD. TD encourages people to give up some of their freedom for the sake of others, themselves and God and their relationships towards them. TD aims at restoring relationships, which includes aspects such as forgiveness and reconciliation. Thus, the restoration of relationships does not directly lead to enlarged freedom, but can also mean restricting one's personal freedom to reconcile or leave space to the other. Still, Tenai argues that the Sen's work can enable the church in their response to poverty (Tenai 2016:8-10), which is also applicable to CDOs. Furthermore, Nussbaum distinguishes between internal capabilities (trained or developed traits and abilities through social, economic, familial and political environment such as political skills, the skill of sewing, etc.) and combined capabilities (Nussbaum 2013:22). Combined capabilities are the existence of the internal capability to do something (for example expressing a political opinion) and having the substantial freedom to do so. Thus, one important goal of the approach is to enhance internal capabilities through education and resources, to enhance physical and emotional health, and family care. As TD has a focus on empowerment that can be defined as a process to promote and increase capability (Myers 2011:218). Furthermore, the capabilities approach strives to provide substantial freedom for people to put their internal capacities into practice. That also means fighting against social

and political injustice (Nussbaum 2013:18-21) which corresponds with the principle of advocacy of TD and resonates with the TD's goal of "just and peaceful relationships" (Myers 2011:180).

Beyond that, human development has been defined as "*a process of enlarging people's choices*" (UNDP 1990:1). Human development is closely connected with the capability/capabilities approach as it "concerns [for] the use of these capabilities" (UNDP 1990:1). The three foundations for human development have been said to be leading a long, healthy and creative life, being knowledgeable and having access to the resources needed for a decent standard of living (UNDP 2021). As argued above, TD has a deep link with empowerment and wants to empower people to be their own agents of change (Myer 2011:180). Through advocacy, TD envisions increasing the opportunities for its beneficiaries and so contributes to the "*richness of life*" (UNDP 2021). The Human Development Index (HDI) has contributed to enlarging the understanding that monetary measures are not sufficient proxies of development (UNDP 2021). In addition, the Human Development Report (HDR) 2000 combined the "*understanding of human development as the enhancement of capabilities with the concept of basic freedoms*" (Hamm 2001:1010). TD similarly reaches deeper and wider than aiming at economic growth, including the relational understanding of development and therein the spiritual, environmental, personal and interpersonal realm (Myers 2011:181).

#### **2.2.4. Human rights-based development**

Even though it is possible to see human rights as the rights to certain specific freedoms, the concept of human rights and the human development approach cannot be subsumed into each other (Sen 2005:152). The human rights-based development approach sets the achievement of human rights as its objective, but how this goal is to be reached, is extensively debated. The topic of human rights has among others been a "*central pillar of the United Nation's work*" (UN Sustainable Development Group 2022) with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. A human rights-based approach includes empowerment, transparency and accountability as operating principles (Kotzé 2009:8), which are also principles of TD. The UN Sustainable Development Group describes the approach as

a conceptual framework for the process of human development that is normatively based on international human rights standards and operationally directed to promoting and protecting human rights (UN Sustainable Development Group 2022).

It is worth noting, that there is no universal approach of human rights-based development, but many variations depending on the implementing actor such as local NGOs or (inter-) governmental actors (Broberg & Sano 2017:665; UN Sustainable Development Group 2022). In human rights-based development, discrimination and inequality are seen among the most central causes of poverty that entails the necessity to promote and protect human rights (Broberg & Sano 2017:666). Critique against the approach has also been risen by CDOs, such as Tearfund and the Catholic Agency for Overseas Development (CAFOD). Amongst the risen concern was the universalism proposed by human rights might be insensitive to cultural difference and biased by Western liberalism and individualism (Miller 2015:72ff).

Looking on the Christian perspective of TD, human rights treaties or good governance are less in the focus of Myers (Myers 2011:101). Myers describes *“seeking truth, justice and righteousness”* (Myers 2011:186) as an important step towards tackling poverty, but he barely mentions human rights in his major publication. He recognises that the social systems of the poor should be focused on and that good development work generates the need for policy and advocacy work (Myers 2011:271). Myers does not see human rights as the main goal of development, but where the human rights-based approach resonate with Myers’ understanding TD is the shift from people being passive recipients to active right-holders (Broberg & Sano 2017:666; IDS 2003:2). In consequence, Myers would rather see empowered people who fight for their human rights as the goal of TD.

ACT Alliance though, considers injustices as causes of impoverishment that deny people their human rights (ACT Alliance 2008:2). Their approach to TD comprises the *“empowerment of communities most affected by oppressive structures to claim their rights.”* (ACT Alliance 2008:2). Therein, ACT Alliance includes in its TD principles the aspect to reaffirm human rights through empowerment, capacity building, participation and advocacy (ACT Alliance 2008:4). Similarly, World Vision sees the restrictions on human rights as a result

of poverty (Byworth 2003:112) and thus sees awareness raising of human rights and international conventions as part of TD (Byworth 2003:108).

2.2.5. The sustainable development goals and transformational development While global development players successively recognized the impasse of unlimited economic development through accumulated natural crisis, degradation of agricultural resource bases and growing food insecurity, the call for another approach to development increased (Du Pisani 2007:83ff; 87-88). With the UN Conference on the Human Environment in 1972 environmental, economic and social issues were for the first time linked at this level. This marked a shift in international governance and entailed the creation of the UN Environment Programme (International Institute of Sustainable Development 2022). But it was only in 1987, when the Brundtland Commission defined sustainable development as *“development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.”* (Brundtland Commission 1987) in *“Our common future – the World Commission on Environment and Development Report”* (Brundtland Commission 1987). Even though the Brundtland Report recognized the difficulties between economic growth and environmental protection, the widely used definition of sustainable development still lacked clarity on various levels (Du Pisani 2007:88). Redclift for example argues understandably how needs themselves change and that the needs of future generations might be different from those of the present generation (Redclift 2014:333). Furthermore, the question remains of what exactly should be sustained. This question can be answered differently: sustaining can be related to natural resources and genetic material, but it can also refer to current levels of production of consumption (Redclift 2014:334ff). Those exemplary answers to the question of what should be sustained can be mutually exclusive and thus show the shortcomings of the definitions.

Further efforts towards sustainable development in response to the threats of climate change were amongst others the 1994 United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the Kyoto Protocol (1997) and the Paris Agreement (2015) to stabilize greenhouse gas concentrations (UNFCCC 2022). The Conference of the Parties (COP) as the decision-making body of the Convention meets annually to work towards

planetary sustainability (UNFCCC 2022a). But the abiding need to respect planetary boundaries and the response of governmental and UN bodies has often resulted in the call for international institutional and UN reforms (Galaz et al 2012:87).

Another approach, that can be seen as derivative of the sustainable development approach, is the concept of thriving. Thriving focuses on qualitative growth that supports prosperity in partnerships by being part of nature and seeking co-designed development (Moggi, Pierce & Bernardi 2021:830). The recent and evolving concept arose from nature studies and goes beyond the simple survival and therein surpasses the concept of sustainability (Moggi, Pierce & Bernardi 2021:834). The relatively new concept still lacks clear definition in research (Moggi, Pierce & Bernardi 2021:839).

Despite this new understanding of sustainable development, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development has been adopted by all United Nations Member States in 2015, having at its heart 17 Sustainable Development Goals (UN 2021). The breadth and depths of the SDGs have been said to be unprecedented and to aim at harmonizing human activities with the regeneration of life on earth (East 2021:107). Therein, there has been a shift of understanding from sustainable to regenerative development. Regenerative development goes beyond sustaining an unstable balance between economic development and the protection of the environment towards finding ways of using regenerative design, inspired by the interdependent nature of living systems and the nature's capacity for evolution (East 2021:107-108).

The perspective from the sustainability theory on transformation, puts sustainability in its focus. This requires adaptive management, learning and the efforts to address underlying causes of vulnerability and structural injustice (Madvig & Roche 2016:12). A transformative agenda has been set in the SDGs (Madvig & Roche 2016:5), but the understanding of transformation in the SDGs only partly overlaps with the Christian perspective of TD: First, sustainability is an important focus of TD; while ecological sustainability is the focus of the SDGs, TD includes physical, mental, social, and spiritual sustainability (Myers 2011:192ff; see Section 3.4). However, TD equally wants to tackle poverty following its relational understanding of poverty (:144). This resonates with SDG

1 (End Poverty), SDG 2 (Zero Hunger), 3 (Good Health and Well-being) as well as SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth).

Regarding the relational focus of TD, the aim of restoring relationships equally envisions gender equality (SDG 5), reducing inequalities (SDG 10) and fostering partnerships (SDG 17). As TD also aims at restoring relationships with the environment, combating climate change (SDG 13) and protecting terrestrial ecosystems (SDG 15) can equally be part of the goals in TD projects. Advocacy is also an important principle of TD (see Section 3.2.3) that aims at peace, justice and strong institutions (SDG 16). Furthermore, one of the main goals that have been pronounced for TD are just and peaceful relationships (Myers 2011:180ff), hence SDG 16 highly correlates with the Christian concept.

SDG 12 (responsible consumption and production) is especially relevant in the Global North, carried out, for example, through the Micah Network, which uses integral mission, which is highly related to TD (2001, see 2.1.4). In addition, it has to be noted that TD is thought to be an empowering and participative development concept, so if a community found its greatest need to have a school or a well, this could equally be part of TD projects, which would also include SDG 4 (Quality Education) and SDG 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation).

SDGs that resonate less with TD are probably Goal 9 (Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure) as well as SDG 7 (Affordable and Clean Energy), which are tackled by governmental institutions rather than by CDOs.

The case study showed that projects applied with TD equally contribute to the SDGs. Tearfund Ireland, which implements SHGs in Ethiopia, explained how this project contributed to SDG 1,2,5 and 13 (TFI 2020b:16). Similarly, World Vision includes SDG target mappings in all their Core Project Models, attributed to their child well-being goals (WVI 2016:4)

### **2.2.6. Conclusion**

As the re-perception of religion in development have increased in the last decades, the value of religious development approaches is more likely to be recognised by the general development discourse. This is why the relationship between current development approaches and TD has been discussed briefly in this subsection.

The discussion showed how the Christian approach of TD highly resonates with sustainable development and the SDGs and how professionalised CDOs that work with TD also measure their contribution towards the SDGs. SDGs that resonate less with TD are probably Goal 9 (Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure) as well as Goal 7 (Affordable and Clean Energy), which are tackled by governmental institutions rather than by CDOs.

As participation and empowerment are key values of TD, the participatory approach can be seen as fully integrated into TD and has been an important source to the Christian concept. The Christian development approaches also serve themselves by tools such as PLA/PRA, which are used in participatory development. Similarly, the key principles of community development have been included into TD and especially Myers focuses a lot on the community, TD can be seen as community development concept from a Christian perspective with a strong relational focus.

While the capability and capabilities approach has a similar view on people's having inherent capabilities that need to be unfolded, there are differences in the context of the direction of the approaches. The capability and capabilities approach aims at enlarging freedom, while TD aims at restoring relationships, which does not necessarily result in enlarged freedom. Also, TD encourages people to restrict their own freedoms for the well-being and freedom of others. But TD has a focus on empowerment and thus equally wants to promote capabilities, while the choice to use those capabilities is left to the people in TD as in the capability/capabilities approach.

TD aims at *"just and peaceful relationships"* (Myers 2011:181) and therefore values advocacy as an important part of its means, so the approach contributes to the fight for human rights, even though it is not its focal point. It rather empowers and encourages its beneficiaries to fight for their own rights. TD is still similar to human development as it helps people to enlarge their choices and goes deeper and further than tackling economic aspects. TD contributes to the *"richness of life"* (UNDP 2021) and from its Christian perspective it aims at shalom, which includes just and peaceful relations. TD is nurtured and informed by secular development approaches as well as by Christian mission and liberation theology. Secular development work as well as Christian mission work both contribute to achieving shalom, which has been

identified as the goal of TD. The surplus that the Christian perspective adds, is the reconciliation with God, that is central in the Judeo-Christian concept of shalom.

## **CHAPTER 3: THE APPLICATION OF TRANSFORMATIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN LITERATURE**

Chapter 3 focuses on the characteristics of TD and explores what has been proposed in the literature for their application. Therefore, the chapter is structured according to the framework for TD (Myers 2011:202; see Section also 2.1.3). Further aspects related to TD work cannot be treated in depth.

### **3.1. GOALS OF TRANSFORMATIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

The framework for transformation points towards *the “best human future – the kingdom of God”* (Myers 2011:202). This ultimate goal of TD can be encapsulated in the Hebrew word shalom, which means restored relationships with God, with others in the community and with the environment (Chester 2012:139). Concerning the implementation of shalom, TD has been harshly criticised by Offutt, who sees shalom as an aspiration rather than an attainable goal (Offutt 2012:44). From a Christian perspective, the state of shalom is never fully reachable on this earth, so the question arises of how it can actually be implemented. As an all-encompassing goal, it is not fully applicable, but with Chester’s definition of shalom, it becomes more tangible. Concerning this matter, O’Reilly understands shalom as reconciliation, and thus as restoration of relationships (O’Reilly 1999:125). Hence, the implementation of shalom then means the implementation of the relational goals in TD:

In summary, to move toward a better human future we must encourage and develop relationships that work for the well-being of all, relationships



that are just, peaceful, and harmonious. This is the heart and spirit of shalom (Myers 2011:183)

Therefore, Myers states that the twin goals are *“changed people: recovering true identity and vocation”* (Myers 2011:177) and just and peaceful relationships that are an expression of one’s identity and vocation (Myers 2011:180). The role of relationships is further elaborated in Section 3.2.2.

### **3.2. PRINCIPLES OF TRANSFORMATIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

The goals explained in Section 3.1. are pursued by a principle-centred process (Myer 2011:202). Myers’s most important principles for TD are elaborated in this section.

#### **3.2.1. Participation and ownership (belongs to the people)**

TD has a strong emphasis on participation and local ownership:

Agencies, therefore, should give adequate priority to listening sensitively to the concerns of these communities, facilitating a two-way process in communication and local ownership of programmes. ... The guiding principle is equitable partnership in which local people and Western agencies cooperate together (Wheaton 1983 Statement 1987:262-263).

Participation has been defined as one characteristic of transformation (Bragg 1984:162). The role that people play in social transformation is crucial, because *“To the degree that people participate in the process, to that degree it is meaningful, effective and lasting”* (Bragg 1984:162). Bragg also suggests local ownership of the programme from the beginning and justifies it theologically, stating that true human transformation arises *“when people are able to act upon their own needs as they perceive them”* (Bragg 1984:162), or in other words, when people are empowered. Equally, Myers sees local participation as a critical success factor of TD which should be integral and central, complete and without limit, and it should have the effect of empowerment (Myers 2011:214-215). He explains: *“The essence of empowerment is that there is some kind of process of social change directed by the people themselves by the way they choose”* (Myers 2011:218). In this regard, participation must not be restricted to local leaders, government employees or agency staff, but must include all social groups of the community, children, men and women, Christians and non-Chris-

tians, young and old people (Myers 2011:214-215). The best way for participation would be to work with a representative group of or the whole community, which admittedly is not homogenous and difficult to distinguish. This certainly is a challenge and needs suitable methods for the application of authentic participation. Participatory methods are nowadays standard in modern development work and involve methods such as community organising, PLA, PRA and many more (see for example Chambers 2007:13ff). TD furthermore uses tools such as appreciative inquiry and positive deviant, which Myers sees as practical tools to overcome the marred identity of the poor (Myers 2011:267). The latest tools in particular apply a highly appreciative attitude that values the participants as competent experts of their situation and hence as people made in the image of God. In the last decades the importance of culture and religion has been further recognised in development work. From a Christian perspective, this also involves the spiritual Christian realm and its active application throughout the participatory planning process (Keppler 2015:274; Section 3.4).

One possibility for authentic participation is to form partnerships (Myers 2011:215; Consultation Report 1999:399). An authentic partnership can also encourage beneficiaries to develop a mind-set of being active and responsible owners of the development programme (Hoksenbergen 2005:190; Myers 2011:269). Partnerships can exist in various ways: between northern and southern NGOs in the context of (knowledge) resourcing, donors and supporters with implementing NGOs or partnerships of NGOs and beneficiaries (Consultation Report 1999:397). Local or international partnerships with government, civil society, the business sector and faith groups are highly important for development work. In all cases, partnerships that create or maintain dependency and inequality need to be avoided.

Coalitions of churches and CDOs such as ACT Alliance and the Micah Network have adopted the principle of participation and empowerment as part of their values (ACT Alliance 2013:3; Micah Global 2001:4-5) and envision participation throughout the whole project cycle management (PCM) (ACT Alliance 2013:3).

### **3.2.2. Restoring relationships (relationships)**

As TD describes the nature of poverty as fundamentally relational, an important aspect in the process of change is restoring relationships and maintaining peaceful, just and productive relationships (Myers 2011:185). This aspect can be implemented in development projects that aim explicitly at transforming and restoring relationships such as peacebuilding projects, mediation, psychological help, etc. While relationship-focused projects such as the Christian Action for Reconciliation and Social Assistance (CARSA) in Rwanda (Mbonyingabo 2015:366ff) exist, the relational focus of TD is also woven into the mentality and attitude of development work. Those are then expressed in approaches, methods and tools that are inclusive, participatory, empowering and in some cases spiritual. Myers subdivides the “levels of relationships” in the relation to oneself, to the other and the community, and to God and the environment (Myers 2011:144). For structural reasons, this subdivision has been adopted here.

#### **3.2.2.1. Relationship to oneself**

The transformation of people mostly starts with the transformation of the individual:

Ultimately, the effectiveness of transformational development comes down not to theory, principles or tools, but to people. Transformation is about transforming relationships, and relationships, are transformed by people (Myers 2011:219).

In consequence, having a healthy relationship with oneself is crucial and includes topics such as dignity and self-worth that have been defined as characteristics of transformation (Bragg 1984:160). It is difficult to be solely a receiver of dignity, which is why Bragg proposes self-reliance in development work as the implementation of this relational aspect (Bragg 1984:160), which could be applied in an asset-based approach. Capacity building, ownership, participation, and empowerment can also be effective means to help people experience their importance, value and self-efficacy. Similarly, Myers defines the transfer of resources and the increase of access, agency and choices as meaningful, only if they are done *“in a way that allows the poor to recover their true identity and discover the vocation God intends for them”* (Myers 2011:179). While this is no

concrete reference on how to implement those goals, it shows how Myers envisions them to be woven into TD work and how they are expressed in the chosen methods and approaches of TD. Promoting the restoration of the relationship with oneself is closely linked with how one is treated. Treating beneficiaries and partners with respect and recognising their abilities and resources is important (Micah Network 2001:2). ACT Alliance also proposes participation, empowerment and capacity development as goals and means to help people to live just, humane and dignified lives (ACT 2008:1-2).

### **3.2.2.2. Relationship to others and the community**

On the horizontal level, Myers focuses on others and the community. This includes individuals from whom someone has distanced him- or herself, which puts the topic of reconciliation on the agenda (Myers 2011:182; see also Section 3.1.4). The relationship to the “other” also involves the relationship to the CDO and its staff. In this domain, reciprocity is an important characteristic of TD (Bragg 184:162), together with equitable and authentic partnerships in which local people and (Western) agencies cooperate (Wheaton 1983 Statement 1987:264).

Furthermore, reconciliation at an individual level between the self and the other is complemented by the transformational processes of the entire community. In the case of CARSA, *“Every major event in the ‘Cow for Peace’ programme is accompanied by a communal ceremony led by local community leaders”* (Mbonyingabo 2015:372). The case study of this programme has shown that the community is essential for sustainable transformation through reconciliation (Mbonyingabo 2015:372). TD is rooted in communities, and the transformation of persons and the community is closely interrelated (Sugden 2003:72). Communities operate through institutions and implementing TD can also happen through them (Sugden 2003:74). Therefore, stable and just communities are important; Samuel even considers building communities a strength of evangelicals (2002:247). The evangelical CDO World Vision, for instance, uses area development programmes (ADPs) that have been investigated for their contribution to peacebuilding (O’Reilly 1999:111). ADP is defined as child-focused, sustainable TD programmes with different contents (health, education, agriculture, etc.), whose operation and community ownership resides in a network of

community committees who oversee the running of the projects (for further information see O'Reilly 1999:127). It is clear that *"there appears to be a direct connection between effective, participatory grassroots development and peace-building"* (O'Reilly 1999:113). As to the relationship with the community, *"There are many things that need changing that can only be addressed by the community working together"* (Myers 2011:182). How the restoration of relationships in and with the community should be addressed is not further elaborated but is of course highly dependent on the context. Overall, the attitude of the development agency is important: *"the fact that the assistance was inclusive, targeting all ethnic, religious and social groups alike, spoke deeply to the communities of the need for impartiality"* (O'Reilly 1999:135). Hence, cooperation, authentic partnerships, empowerment and inclusive participation are aspects that positively transform the relationship to the community. ACT Alliance, for example, relies on the participation, empowerment and capacity development of partners to strengthen the community and thus the relationship of individuals with the community (ACT Alliance 2008:3). TD fosters a culture of peaceful and just relationships at all levels, which requires the analysis of underlying causes of conflict and violence as well as advocacy to end oppression, social deprivation and conflict (ACT Alliance 2008:4). Myers further mentions the division between poor and non-poor as a critical factor in long-term change (Myers 2011:182). To close this gap, justice needs to be restored and oppression ended, which accentuates the need for advocacy.

### **3.2.2.3. Relationship to God**

From a Christian perspective, a relationship with God is a central aspect of TD, which is strongly linked with experiencing Christ (Myers 2011:181). The encounter with Christ is believed to lead to a reorientation of the individual and his/her relationships and to the reconstitution of his/her identity, and can lead to empowerment (Samuel 2002:244). Myers's understanding of transformed relationships is built on Jesus Christ's death on the cross that reconciles humanity with God. This *"finished work of Jesus"* (Myers 2011:181) connects God with oneself, enables restored identity and a recovered vocation and in the process revives the relationship with others, the community and the environment (see also Section 2.1.3). This understanding differentiates CDOs

following the concept of TD from secular NGOs that work with similar approaches. Tim Chester concludes that Christian values are necessary, but not sufficient to make development Christian (Chester 2015:137). He argues that the commitment to the conversion of the poor through the gospel is what makes Christian development distinctly Christian (Chester 2015:143). This, of course, will be expressed in various ways in the practical work of each CDO, depending on their faith factor (Unruh & Sider 2005) and also depending on the context. This central aspiration of the Christian faith finds its expression in the implementation of development projects and programmes as well as in the work of CDOs in the form of evangelism or Christian witness. From an evangelical Christian perspective, the horizon of change is believed to be more limited, if beneficiaries are not seeking God (Myers 2011:181). This is why it is important to note that the encounter with God and the inner transformation of people can be promoted, but never forced or “externally made”. Therefore, this aspect of TD can only be implemented in the Christian witness and Christian spirituality expressed by the CDO, its staff and its Christian partners.

The relation of evangelism and the social involvement of Christians has been widely discussed in the mission movement from which TD evolved. It was finally resolved in the Wheaton 1983 Consultation, where Tienou concluded: *“Evangelism and social transformation are two sides of the same coin”* (Tienou 1987:179). The proclamation of the gospel was then understood as a matter of word and deed (Tienou 1987:178) (see also Section 2.1.2). Myers argues that transforming development cannot be done without evangelism, but it may not involve manipulation or culturally insensitive evangelism (Myers 2011:310). The Christian network MissionRespect has established recommendations for Christians worldwide on how to conduct Christian witness, underlining religious freedom, mutual respect and solidarity and encouraging cooperation with other religious communities to engage in interreligious advocacy of justice and the common good (WCC, PCFI and WEA 2011:1-6). This signifies that in sensitive situations such as the persecution of Christians, proclaiming the gospel might be nothing than a mere ongoing Christian presence (Chester 2015:143; Shani 1999:106ff). Nonetheless, from a Christian perspective, Christian witness is important and possible, even in places where the Christian faith is not welcomed, such as Mauritania. Shani, who worked for World Vision Mauritania, reports that

they pray for those who are open for them to do so that they are open for discussing Christianity and Islam, and that they witness through their quality of work for which they give God the glory. Also, living consistently with the teachings of the Bible and loving people unconditionally are part of non-verbal Christian witness in an Islamic setting (Shani 1999:107). But:

A commitment to gospel proclamation does not mean a commitment to bad, uncontextualized, manipulative or crass gospel proclamation. ... Proclamation is about effecting eschatological change (Chester 2015:143-144).

So, the proclamation of the gospel is always working towards shalom, the main goal of TD. The proclamation of the gospel is presented as an attitude in TD, rather than an actual activity of development. This attitude could be formulated and set in a relevant document of the CDO such as the statement of faith, a code of conduct, handbooks and guidelines and then be implemented in the approaches and methods that the CDO uses. In any case, Myers clearly says that the “go and tell” frame from churches or traditional mission agencies does not fit a development agency, because it is anti-developmental (Myers 2011:314). Therefore, evangelism or Christian witness comes second, as the proclamation of the gospel is a *“response to a question provoked by the activity of God in the community”* (Myers 2011:315), which would mean that the gospel would be primarily shared in deeds than in words, which then decreases the difference to secular NGOs. In this context, Myers argues that everyone is always witnessing to something: to their culture, values, beliefs, to democracy, to their education and social background and much more. Therefore, it might be better to openly witness one’s faith, as *“for Christians, being a witness is integral to who we are and what we believe”* (Myers 2011:309). The attitude for Christian development practitioners in TD is, therefore:

What we put at the center of our program is our witness. We must always ask if we are acting as a dependent people, looking to God for every good thing. We want people to observe us and say, “Theirs must be a living God!” (Myers 2011:313).

This attitude can only be implemented individually in the values and character traits of each development worker and in the values and standards that adhere to Christian faith in the management and practice of the CDO, but it can also be expressed in practice by religious activities such as prayer, worship or devotions.

However, development practitioners and CDOs can also spread secular thought, especially their dualistic worldview in Christian development work (Matthews 1999:290-293). That is why the critical reflection on the development practitioner's worldview and behaviour is important for TD. The idea is for TD to be "a process whereby concepts, tools, attitudes and skills facilitate the acceptance and application of the values of the kingdom of God in human communities" (Sugden 2003:74)

This can for example be expressed in various forms of prayer such as individual development workers praying for the projects, for stakeholders, for themselves, for wisdom, or in prayer meetings of the agency's management team, or even prayer meetings arranged by the local church or as part of focus groups or community meetings. Prayer consists of giving thanks, intercession, request, lamentation and worship. Kusch proposes several methods for implementing prayer in the practical PCM such as combining brainstorming with prayer (Kusch 2014:131), doing prayer walks in addition to classic site visits (Kusch 2014:142), prayer as support for decision-making (Kusch 2014:163) or concluding meetings with blessings (Kusch 2014:189). Christians may draw on the power of the Holy Spirit through prayer (Samuel 2002:247). But prayer can also have the aim to hear what God has to say: *"Together we need to be quiet and listen in the midst of all the information we have gathered and be open to God leading us to the information and conclusions that God deems most important"* (Myers 2011:247). Thus, for Christians, the process of development work is a spiritual exercise (Myers 2011:248). Also, prayer is an element every person, rich or poor, has unrestricted access to, and it can therefore be empowering and participative, even though it might equally be exclusive to people of a different faith, depending on its implementation.

Another important expression and element of the Christian faith is reading and studying the Bible. This is also specific to the implementation of Christian development work. From a Christian perspective: *"The point of departure and the point of return is not the Bible as a source of rules or a conceptual foundation ... but as meditation of the creative power of our God, the ultimate basis of our life and ministry"* (Alvarez, Avarientos & McAlpine 1999:58). For Myers, the biblical story is the framework for releasing the transformative power of the Bible (Myers 2011:333). How Christian development professionals read,



understand and use the Bible is highly important as it discloses their worldview, such as an individualistic or dualistic worldview that separates the spiritual from the material world. The Bible does not only address the individual or the spiritual matters of life, however; it addresses the whole community and all people or ethnic groups, and it concerns all spheres of life and is therefore very relevant today (Alvarez, Avarientos & McAlpine 1999:60). Hence, World Vision has for example implemented the Scripture Search method that interprets personal experiences in the light of the Bible and the Seven Steps method that is a Bible-reading tool to make the biblical text relevant for people. More methods are needed that are appropriate for small and large groups, to allow bringing questions to the Bible and *vice versa* (Alvarez, Avarientos & McAlpine 1999:63). The authors highlight the importance that the community should be able to read and reflect on the Bible themselves and not simply consume prepared interpretations. In Christian development work, Bible readings can be integrated with the development process (Alvarez, Avarientos & McAlpine 1999:61-62). In this matter, other methods of participative Bible reading used in church group work could be used and adapted for Christian development work. The participatory approach to reading the Bible is central in TD as it addresses *“individual and group values and behaviors, uniting ... Christians from different traditions”* (Alvarez, Avarientos and McAlpine 1999:76). Myers warns:

...the responsibility for development, including spiritual development, belongs to the people and not to us. The challenge is to find ways of using the Bible in human and social transformation that place the responsibility for asking questions of and seeking answers from the Bible within the community itself (Myers 2011:332).

All those expressions of Christian faith in practical development work of CDOs show very clearly that religion cannot be treated from a meta-level or as purely functional. Religion always needs to be lived and shared from its substance to unfold its transforming potential (Gühne 2015:362). Students from Theological Education by Extension witnessed that the spiritual and empowering encounter with the God of the Bible entailed a transformative change in all areas of their life (Gühne 2015:361), which resonates with Myers's assumption that the encounter with God is helpful for further change (Myers 2011:181).

#### **3.2.2.4. Relationship to environment**

The promotion of a transforming relationship to the environment can be applied by integrating ecological aspects such as ecological sustainability, ecological soundness and creation care in general within TD projects. This aspect of TD is theologically closely related to the stewardship of humanity over creation. This was also discussed at the Wheaton Conference 1983 and its application involved the sharing of resources and giving to others, as well as the work for peace to avoid nuclear contamination or destruction through wars (Wheaton 1983 Statement 1987:258-259). Besides this, Bragg proposed ecological soundness as characteristic of transformation and its application in “*gentle technology*” (Wheaton 1983 Statement 1984:163) that should work with nature instead of abusing it, which resembles the green technology that several nations are currently trying to develop. Furthermore, the Lausanne Movement addresses pollution, the overuse of land and resources, and proposes environmental advocacy and action as an application (Lausanne Movement 2011:17). In consequence, information and raising awareness for environmental topics play an important role in development projects. As many beneficiaries are depending on agriculture, Christian FBOs are challenged to promote agricultural methods that are sustainable and friendly to the environment or that can even reverse environmental damage (Consultation Report 1999:404), which in many areas is not possible. Already in 1992, the World Evangelical Fellowship discussed the relation of evangelical Christianity to the environment and pointed out seven degradations of the environment: the alternations of earth’s energy exchange (global warming and destruction of the earth’s protective ozone shield); land degradation; water quality degradation; deforestation; species extinction; waste generation and global poisoning; and human and cultural degradation (loss of native knowledge on living sustainably and cooperatively with creation) (World Evangelical Fellowship 1999:346-347). Those environmental challenges need to be taken into account when planning a development programme. ACT Alliance, for example, demands that its members consider the impact their actions have on the environment (ACT Alliance 2008:4).

Part of the restoration of the relationship with the environment is not only the integration of ecology in development projects, but also addressing over-

consumption in the Global North and promoting recycling and the reduction of consumption (World Evangelical Fellowship 1999:351). Therefore, TD *“will promote sensitisation, changed attitudes and actions within communities with excess resources and the ability to effect change.”* (ACT Alliance 2008:4).

### **3.2.3. Advocacy (truth, justice and righteousness)**

Seeking truth, justice and righteousness includes addressing consequences of sin such as injustice, lies, domination, violence and disempowerment (Myers 2011:186). This can be implemented through establishing transparent project structures with authentic partnerships, but also includes truthful relationships, helping people to reflect on themselves and discover their own realities. However, *“development interventions alone are not enough. The social systems within which the poor live must now become the focus of transformational change”* (Myers 2011:271) This is why Myers argues that good development work generates the need for policy and advocacy work (Myer 2011:271). This argument is comprehensible as empowered people usually want to express their political voice and advocate for their rights. Therefore, empowered people not only create the need for advocacy but also promote advocacy from within the community.

The early literature about transformation does not yet speak about active advocacy as part of TD, but sees working for greater participation of people in decisions that affect their lives as an element of transformation (Wheaton 1983 Statement 1987:257). Similarly, Bragg names freedom and justice as characteristics of transformation (Bragg 1984:160-162), but does not mention advocacy as part of implementing those characteristics in development work. Biblically elaborated, advocacy is definitively part of transformation: *“God’s justice demands that those who cannot by themselves secure their own rights be vindicated”* (Ajulu 2001:64). Accordingly, God raised prophets to challenge rulers and leaders who failed in their accountability to people (Ajulu 2001:63). One of the most visible biblical examples for implemented advocacy is the Exodus, where God uses Moses and Aaron as advocates for the Israelites before the pharaoh.

In the more recent concept of TD, however, advocacy plays an important role. Myers proposes several tools to implement advocacy in the PCM. First, he

proposes a tool called ARVIN, which is an *“analytical framework that assesses the conditions that affect the ability of local community-based organisations to engage in public debate and participate in systems of social accountability”* (Myers 2011:272). Another tool is called community-based performance monitoring which provides and monitors a method by which communities can hold local governments and institutions accountable (Myers 2011:272).

ACT Alliance has *likewise embedded advocacy in their development strategy, stating that TD “promotes attitude change, mobilises public opinion and strengthens strategic alliances to influence those in positions of power to change oppressive policies and structures to promote justice”* (ACT Alliance 2008:4). To this purpose, advocacy starts at the grassroots level to facilitate people’s ability to advocate for themselves (:4). The Micah Network presents advocacy as part of integral mission and wants to address structural injustice as well as to help neighbours in need (Micah Network 2001:5). One specifically Christian approach to advocacy is to advocate for others in prayer before God (Micah Network 2001:4) which at the same time is an expression of Christian witness. This can of course be a meaningful completion but does not replace active political advocacy.

#### **3.2.4. Peacebuilding and reconciliation (bias towards peace)**

Working for reconciliation is an important aspect of TD, which can find expression in concrete projects. One example is CARSA in Rwanda. CARSA’s focus is to promote peace and reconciliation in the Rwandan community, due to its difficult past and ethnic conflict between the Hutu and Tutsi people (Mbonyingabo 2015:369). For this purpose, the CDO CARSA has created a three-day-workshop that combines several approaches such as Healing Wounds of Ethnic Conflict and the Empower workshop as a start towards a programme called Cow for Peace where survivors and offenders together are given a cow as a focal point for reconciliation (Mbonyingabo 2015:369-370). Such projects aim at reconciliation and the restoration of relationships and are highly transformative. As O’Reilly states:

Reconciliation is therefore a locus (physical place) and focus (on each other, on past and future), where relationships are allowed to develop through encounter, and where looking to the future creates new perspectives for dealing with the past (O’Reilly 1999:124).

This is why TD needs to include effective prevention and reconciliation strategies and empower individuals and groups who are affected by conflict to cope with traumatic events (ACT Alliance 2008:4). How participatory methodologies are used can also contribute to peace, for example by insisting on inclusive community committees with men and women, poor and non-poor, covering every ethnic or tribal group and religious group (Myers 2011:190). Nonetheless, reconciliation takes time, and it is very difficult to measure tangible outcomes because it involves people and relationships (Mbonyingabo 2015:372).

### **3.2.5. Further Principles**

Another principle that is not further elaborated by Myers is the principle of *“Do no harm”* (Myers 2011:202), which is valid overall on all dimensions (social, spiritual, physical, psychological). As TD envisions positive change, its intention is of course to avoid doing harm. Hence, codes of conduct for all stakeholders can help implement that and of course, this should be part of the CDO general ethics.

Another principle is called respecting the community’s story (Myers 2011:205) which means that the CDO and the development worker are joining the story of the community and the beneficiaries, which consists of knowledge, stories, and experiences that can be relevant to the development project. Responsibility and ownership stay with the community and the beneficiaries, which corresponds to the principle of participation and ownership (3.2.1).

Similarly, the principle *“From participation to empowerment”* (Myers 2011:214) focuses on the quality of participation and reminds NGOs to work with the entire community, including children, women and disabled people – in short, those who are usually marginalised (Myers 2011:214-215). Finally, Myers with *“Building community”* (Myers 2011:218) suggests the development worker should become a good neighbour to the poor so that a beneficiary and development facilitator may become a community with each other (Myers 2011:218-219).

## **3.3. AGENTS OF CHANGE**

People, groups, institutions and God can be agents of change if they work for transformation. They express and implement the transformational principles in

the community and within the projects. Usually in TD, agents of change work for positive change, except for the Evil One (Myers 2011:202), who Myers includes in his framework for transformation. This chapter presents the four central agents of change (holistic practitioner, the church, God, Evil One), with a view on other partners in development work. It must be kept in mind that the beneficiaries themselves are or should be empowered to become change agents of their own situation and are therefore the most important agents of change. As they are yet to become change agents through TD and are the beneficiaries and target group of the development work, their role is further elaborated under 3.5.

### **3.3.1. Role of development facilitators (holistic practitioner)**

A distinct characteristic of TD is the understanding of the role of the development facilitator. As TD is a relational approach, the attitude of the practitioner is itself transforming or can be a barrier to transformation. The goals of TD, namely to recover the true identity and vocation, are the same for beneficiaries and the practitioner (Myers 2011:221), which shows that the practitioner should be equally willing to learn and be transformed. The role of the development practitioner is rather understood as facilitator or enabler, which has also been compared to the work of a midwife. The role also extends to being an adviser and advocate (Kroeck 2015:257-258).

The aspiration Myers puts on development facilitators is for them to be holistic practitioners. For this purpose, the holistic practitioner ought to be Christian, not simply nominal, but a passionate disciple and actively involved in a local fellowship of believers (Myers 2011:221-222). Furthermore, the practitioner should have a Christian character, which includes humility, a simple life, loving and valuing people and being a good steward of the gifts God has given to them (Myers 2011:223-224). This is a very high standard set for the development practitioner and would exclude people of different faiths. Furthermore, Christians are as imperfect as any other humans. Myers recognises this ambivalence and tries to mitigate it: *“The holistic practitioner just described is a composite of the best that we can imagine ... No individual will be what I have described”* (Myers 2011:227). Similarly, O’Reilly appeals for caution about relying too heavily on individuals, who might not always have the

best intentions or can abruptly leave a programme. He accordingly proposes systems and checks to prevent over-reliance on the development worker (O'Reilly 1999:136).

Moreover, Myers wants TD practitioners to be professionals and therefore to be competent, educated and well-equipped for their work (Myers 2011:224). Too many Christians wish to do good when they see the suffering of the poor and start working in mission or development work without any competence. Hence, *“Holistic practitioners need to develop a deep understanding of the complexity of poverty and its many dimensions and expressions”* (Myers 2011:224). The development practitioner should therefore always be learning and seeking new insights for their development work (Myers 2011:225). A study of ADPs by World Vision found a strong connection between the success of the project and transformed community attitudes, values and perceptions that pointed to the lifestyle of the village development worker who promoted the values of tolerance, humility, faithfulness, self-sacrifice, service, and non-discrimination (O'Reilly 1999:135). As proven, the attitude of the Christian development practitioners is essential. Therefore, Kroeck adds the need for love and compassion, respect, humility, the willingness to grow and learn as well as patience to the important attitudes of a good development worker (Kroeck 2015:259-260).

Still, the development practitioner is always shaped by his/her own culture, religion and understanding of poverty and development (Kroeck 2015:251, 253). Self-reflection, humility and the openness to learn and be transformed are essential. Education and regular training of the practitioner are important and need to include character formation as well. Those characteristics should be integrated realistically into the application process and employment processes of CDOs.

### **3.3.2. Role of the church and other institutions (church)**

The church is said to be the basic unit of Christian community (Wheaton 1983 Statement 1987:261). The church can be understood both as the local church and the fellowship of all Christians worldwide, the so-called body of Christ. Both the local church and global church play important roles in development work in all denominations. *“Churches are the longest standing and most rooted social*

*institutions committed to developing community*” (Sugden 2000:96) The church is a central propagator of transformation and should be the visible sign of the beginning kingdom of God and hence constitute a community that contrasts with unjust societies worldwide (Faix 2012:14). Amongst others, Pope Francis I put an accent on the protection of the environment to enable healthy and dignified human lives, as humanity is part of creation (Francis 2015: §11, §67). In this context the global church should thus also be practically and dialogically engaged, so the proposition of the Pope. Basic Ecclesial Communities, which are also known as Basic Christian Communities, Grassroot Christian Communities or simply Basic Communities put in practice the dimension of communion and participation with the attempt to improve interpersonal relationships within the community (Azevedo 1985:601-602). Most Basic Ecclesial Communities are linked to the (local) Catholic Church and their members are active lay people, most of them are also poor. The approach of Basic Ecclesial Communities can be understood as a “*way of being Church*” (Azevedo 1985:604) and an active implementation of TD. From the ecumenical perspective, the World Council of Churches also uses the term transformation, relating it to mission that is working for life in its fullness and opposing structures that oppress life (WCC 2012:13). But in many ways, the global church still has to learn this transformative role. Transformation has also been understood as the response of the church to human needs (Wheaton 1983 Statement). As The Wheaton Consultation was conducted from the church’s perspective, the inner role that is attributed to the church is “*the worship and praise of God, the proclamation of word and deed of the gospel of the grace of God, and the nurture, instruction, and discipleship of those who have received Jesus Christ into their lives*” (Wheaton 1983 Statement 1987:261). From the TD perspective, the church has also the role of advocacy in addressing issues of evil and social injustice in the local community and the wider society and playing a major role in the transformation of values, attitudes and lifestyles of its members (Wheaton 1983 Statement 1987:262; Myers 2011:199). This advocacy should then extend to national and international advocacy. Furthermore, the role of both the local and global church includes responding to the needs of its members as well as ministering to the poor in the church’s area, irrespectively of their church membership status (Wheaton 1983 Statement 1987:262). Ministering can



include fundraising, prayer, practical help or other support. Fundraising within churches of the Global North often helps to finance Christian development work in the Global South.

Interestingly, aid agencies are seen as facilitators to help the global and local churches to fulfil their mission (Wheaton Statement 1983 1987:263). This has been supported by Sugden who sees the role of NGOs as encouraging the church to be holistic, building up its life and being part of it (Sugden 2002:73). Similarly, Myers states: *“Our goal must be to help the church be what it is intended to be, not to judge or to relegate it to the transformational development sidelines”* (Myers 2011:192). Many development agencies tend to understand the relationship of CDOs and the church the other way round. They should rather work together productively as stated in the Consultation of Christian Relief and Development Agencies:

Christian RDAs [Relief and Development Agencies] recognize the fact, that churches, evangelical alliances and council of churches are involved in relief and development. They should strive to support and cooperate with one another (Consultation Report 1999:398).

This quotation is part of the strategies to enhance the role of the global and local church in development proposed by the consultation of Christian relief and development agencies (RDAs). Amongst other topics, the consultation encourages national churches, evangelical alliances and the Council of Churches to operate with the involvement of local churches. On the other side, it encourages local churches to develop appropriate concepts of relief and development. At the same time, RDAs have and should have a certain accountability to the local congregation in their operating context (Consultation Report 1999:398), which is understandable as the church has been working in the community far longer than the respective CDO. As Myers points out: *“At the end of the day, the work of holistic mission belongs to the church, not the development agency or the development professional per se”* (Myers 2011:19; Chester 2015:142). Hence, it is clearly visible that for Christian FBOs, the roles of the global and local church are vital and reciprocal. Myers defines:

There are several critical contributions to transformational development that only the church can provide. First, the role of the church in transformational development is the same as ours: to love the community and to serve with a spirit of encouragement... (Myers 2011:198).

Hence, CDOs and the global and local church are partners working alongside towards the same goal. Thus, *“Christian activists and Christian agencies must be rooted in the larger church as well as its local expression”* (Myers 2011:191). In this context, Chester points out that sustainable Christian development requires sustainable Christian communities, which will be present long after any CDO has finished its projects (Chester 2015:142-143). From a Christian perspective, the gospel is understood to be the most significant force for social transformation and the church is seen as one of the most effective grassroots organisations in the world. Strong and fruitful partnerships between churches and CDOs are needed, but have not always been successful in the past (Consultation Report 1999:397).

Further roles that have been attributed to the church in the context of development is its role as a civil society organisation (Myers 2011:192; Sugden 2003:73), its pastoral presence and source of community and spirituality for the community as well as for the Christian development practitioner (Myers 2011:200). In conclusion, to be sustainable, TD needs to be connected with the church (Sugden 2003:72).

Other local institutions, structures and organisations have found little recognition in TD literature compared to the role of the church. This is understandable, as TD is a Christian approach. Nevertheless, other local structures are also very important for effective development work and crucial to transformation. Sugden supports this: *“Communities operate through institutions. We cannot access the community as a whole without working through entities and institutions”* (Sugden 2002:73). Hence, CDOs should identify partners with similar visions for development and partner with them (Samuel in Sugden 2000:107). As TD is a relational approach, partnerships with people and groups in the community are vital in the development process. Therefore, partnerships should be authentic:

In authentic partnerships, autonomous self-standing organizations work together from a foundation of common vision, values and sense of purpose. They articulate joint goals clearly and contribute complementary strengths in their efforts to achieve them (Hoksbergen 2005:190).

To promote TD, partnerships can and must extend to local government, civil society, institutions and business partners to complement rather than duplicate

development work. Therefore, partners should be mutually accountable for their work and the result achieved (Hoksbergen 2005:191).

### **3.3.3. Role of God (God)**

Spirituality plays an important role in most developing countries. Sensitivity and comprehension of spiritual matters are important, although they are sometimes attributed to religious people rather than secular people. It is nevertheless important to understand a person or community's view of reality, instead of projecting one's own belief or worldview (Jayakaran 1999:31). Correspondingly, Myers sees a blind spot in spiritual matters in development work, which needs to be corrected (Myers 2011:279-280). One practical method for this is the Wholistic Worldview Analysis, which uses the Ten Seed Technique to explore, map and name outside and spiritual dimensions of one's worldview (Myers 2011:280; Jayakaran 1999:33). The question is then how to deal and work with those worldviews. Finding common ground to establish a common vision to build authentic partnerships is an important part of the implementation. At the same time, development work, Christian or not, should always challenge cultural and religious practices and beliefs that are harmful to individuals or undermine their human rights (ACT Alliance 2008:4). This is a very sensitive, yet important, issue, which touches areas such as forced marriages, child marriages and female genital mutilation/cutting. Such practices must be addressed if Christian churches or other faith groups tolerate or promote such harmful practices.

In many cases, spiritual dimensions are believed to influence a person's life and to bring positive and/or negative change. From a Christian perspective, the triune God is an agent of change, therefore *"transformation takes place because God wants change and is enabling change"* (Myers 2011:184). The encounter with Jesus Christ and the restoration of the relationship to God is believed to enable the restoration of other relationships (to oneself, the other, the community and the environment) (Myers 2011:181). Of course, this principle cannot be implemented or regulated, but it highlights the importance of the positive and deep relationship with God that is envisioned by TD. This can only be expressed and implemented in Christian spirituality in the CDO's work and the Christian witness in the work and life of the development practitioners, to enable

people to ask questions about their belief and to eventually encounter Jesus Christ.

Prayer particularly recognises and expresses the dependence on God in everything, including in development work (Chester 2015:141). In this context, prayer entails asking God to change things and for the praying person to be open for God's transformative work, even though God might use any person for his transformative work. Christians are convinced "*that transformation comes from God: it is spiritual and it entails divine power*" (Grams 2007:204). What forms those expressions of Christian witness will take, depends first on the theology, beliefs and values of the development practitioner, as elaborated in 3.3.1; but it depends also on the religious identity of the CDO and its implementation, such as the statement of faith and its goals.

What does this mean for people in the community who adhere to a different religion? How do they experience this Christian approach to development or are they excluded from Christian development work? Generally, no one should be excluded or held off from the benefits of any development work. Already 1987, the WCC pleaded for culturally sensitive development work. This has also been expressed very clearly by ACT Alliance:

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 (ACT Alliance 2008:4).

This also means that even though Christian witness plays an important role from a Christian perspective, it should be carried out "*in a spirit of respect for the beliefs and devotion of others*" (Samuel & Hauser 1999:286).

In the last decades, addressing the spiritual realm has become more and more important in development work (Consultation Report 1999:395), but it must "*always respect the freedom of others and should not be coercive or seductive in any way*" (Samuel & Hauser 1999:286). Hence, development assistance should never be used to proselytise (ACT Alliance 2008:4). At this point, it must be noted that proselytising is not "*confined to religious organizations but is practised by movements which actively work to impose their secular, materialistic and modern value systems on people with whom they work*" (Consultation Report 1999:396). Therefore, the WCC has pledged itself to engage in dialogue

with those of other faiths, because together important development goals can be achieved such as: building up communities, common witness about the dignity and rights of human beings and addressing human need (Samuel & Hauser 1999: 286-287). More interfaith action, dialogue and partnership are also envisioned by ACT Alliance (ACT Alliance 2019:13). Those partnerships and openness can bear positive fruit: *“the fact that assistance was inclusive, targeting all ethnic, religious and social groups alike, spoke deeply to the communities of the need for impartiality.”* (O’Reilly 1999:135)

### **3.3.4. Role of forces working against transformation (evil one)**

In this section, many forces could be listed that work against positive transformation and change. Power structures that create dependencies and people exploiting others are, for example working against transformation and are usually addressed in advocacy of development work. From a Christian perspective (depending on one’s theology), there is also a spiritual antagonist that works against transformation. Even though Myers remains quite vague and says little about this area, he names Satan as *“the idea of personal evil who actively works against God and God’s intentions for human beings and creation”* (Myers 2011:65). His role is seen as working through sin in human beings, but also working through their sin in the world, as well as the promotion of a web of lies (Myers 2011:186). Sometimes Satan’s role has also been understood as a *“campaign of deception and domination through the political, economic, social, and religious structures”* (Myers 2011:186). Hence, the Christian worldview must include the understanding of spiritual forces that depending on one’s theology are more or less personal and evil and work against God and his goal of shalom.

This belief in spiritual evil is of course not restricted to Christianity. In societies with animistic beliefs, the presence of spirits that want to harm people are known. In Hindu-dominated societies, there are also gods working against the well-being of humanity. Those can also be understood as forces that work against transformation. Interestingly, Myers judges those beliefs as disempowering the poor and enriching those claiming to be intermediaries to those gods (Myers 2011:186). While this judgement can equally be rendered about Christians’ beliefs, it is important to understand the Christian perspective

and religious identity of the CDO, as the theology and understanding of TD in this area have consequences on its implementation and the nature of Christian witness in concrete projects.

### **3.4. SUSTAINABILITY**

The sustainability of projects, as well as environmental sustainability, has become one of the key elements of development work, especially since the SDGs were adopted in 2015 (UN 2015). The importance of sustainability has also been perceived by CDOs and has been implemented in their projects. Chambers, along with Jayakaran (Jayakaran 1996:8) and Myers (Myers 2011:193), proposes that even the poorest community has some level of sustainability, otherwise it would not exist (Chambers 1997:24). This appreciative perspective is complemented by a specific view of sustainability in TD. From a Christian perspective, sustainability ultimately comes from God and goes much further than maintaining project activities and impacts after the pull-out of the development agency. It includes sustainable growth, learning and continuing transformation. Hence, a transformational view on sustainability includes the physical, mental, social, and spiritual dimensions (Myers 2011:193). The physical dimension of sustainability includes “all the basics that people need to live: food, water, health, and a sustainable environment” (Myers 2011:193). This can range from sustainable forms of agriculture, enhancing the productivity and capacity of the local environment, people managing their health care to the greatest extent possible with indigenous knowledge to avoid dependency on Western pharmaceutical enterprises, to enabling the poor to create wealth, for example with micro-credits and microenterprises (Myers 2011:194).

The mental dimension of sustainability addresses the goal of *“healing of the marred identity”* (Myers 2011:194) and wants people to understand their value as human beings, made in the image of God. Myers draws on an example from the Dalit (the lowest caste in India), who are being helped to celebrate the strength and the resilience of their culture and history to reach this transforming shift of perspective. On these grounds, Myers regards helping people to learn as a critical element of mental sustainability and a key to increased human agency (Myers 2011:195). Even though this certainly is true and has a huge

empowering effect, Myers's presentation misses giving more specific references on how this dimension can be applied in practice.

Beyond that, the social dimension of sustainability in TD extends to creating “[s]ustainable social systems and helping the poor have a political voice of their own” (Myers 2011:196), which can be reached by active mutual self-help groups, empowerment and local political participation (Myers 2011:195). This also comprises building and promoting civil society, which is perceived as “*the third sector of society*” (UN 2020). Also, the stability of civil society has been recognised as increasingly important to hold leaders accountable, as a way for people to take part in decision-making and to resolve conflicts (Consultation Report 1999:407). Therefore, TD should also include peacebuilding, human rights and democratic participation in its implementation (Myers 2011:197). The Christian view of social systems and social sustainability differs from a secular understanding in that social systems are believed to have a spiritual interiority that does not want the poor to become empowered (Wink 1999). This leads Myers to the assumption that building civil society is also a spiritual task that requires spiritual tools (Myers 2011:197). This understanding will possibly not be shared by Christians of all denominations and fails to specify what those spiritual tools should be in practice.

This leads to the spiritual dimension of sustainability, where Myers wants the community to understand its dependency on God (Myers 2011:198). Furthermore, the contribution of FBOs such as churches, mosques and temples plays an important role in this dimension. They “*are the location of value and change that most often finds its roots in the transformative power of faith traditions*” (Myers 2011:198). Religion and faith traditions can, amongst others, have a transformative effect on structural causes of poverty, as the transformative spirituality of each religion can change the individual's situation. To that effect, CDOs are encouraged to work alongside people who believe differently, even though the church remains a central partner for CDOs.

### **3.5. PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION AND MANAGEMENT**

How a project is practically implemented is not part of Myers's framework for transformation (Myers 2011:202), as it only constitutes the framework for sustainable transformation. The application of TD is nevertheless closely linked

with the process of implementation; this section therefore briefly highlights the theoretical and specific characteristics of TD in each project phase before exploring it in the case study.

Most professional NGOs use the PCM to plan, implement and evaluate their development projects or their own framework for the design, monitoring and evaluation of their projects. PCM usually includes a phase of identification, design, funding, implementation and monitoring, evaluation and transition (Kusch 2014:22). Kusch adds the programming phase to the PCM, which happens at an organisational level to clarify the identity, mission, vision, values, working principles and quality standards on as well as the goals, outcomes and activities that the NGO wants to pursue. These are very important, but often missed by smaller CDOs and mission organisations (Kusch 2014:37).

### **3.5.1. Programming**

Even though the programming phase is not explicitly mentioned in Myers's *Walking with the poor* (2011), his chapters 5 to 7 elaborate at length on the questions of identity, mission, vision, values and principles for TD (summarised in Section 2.1 together with the principles in 3.2) in theory. Finally, each CDO would have to go through a programming process itself, taking the theory of TD as framework and developing its own programmatic orientation. This section now looks at one important factor of the implementation that can be part of the programming phase and/or of the identification phase, namely the target group of TD.

The target group has not explicitly been determined. The Wheaton 1983 Statement implicitly defined the target group of transformation and Christian service as the suffering, the hungry and those in need (Wheaton 1983 Statement 1987:263). Other authors apply transformation repeatedly to the poor and non-poor alike and see the need for transformation for developed and underdeveloped countries equally (Bragg 1984:157; Myers 2011:178). Still, the focus remains on the "poor", as transformation and TD both describe processes of positive change. Thus, the starting point has to be with people who have the potential for positive change. With his relational approach to poverty, Myers defines the poor further (Myers 2011:108ff; see Section 2.1.3), but he does not specify if a specific group of the poor should be targeted. So, Myers leaves the



choice of target group completely up to the community and/or development agency (Myers 2011:175). However, not all CDOs have the means to work with entire communities and some already have predetermined target groups (women, children, disabled people, elderly people) as focal points due to their programmatic and strategic planning.

To this effect, the question arises if TD is aimed at individuals or at the entire community, which would influence the implementation at the project level. This has been discussed briefly in Section 2.1.4. In summary, it has been argued that the community and the individual only exist through their inseparable relation with each other, thus the transformation of individuals always influences the community and *vice versa* (Künkler 2009:116). Therefore, transformation begins simultaneously on both levels: the individual and the community (Rabens 2012:140-141). This leads to the assumption that TD projects can either target individuals (for example widowed or abandoned women, orphans or children living on the street) and/or the entire community. Myers focuses mainly on working with the community but recognises changed people (individuals) as the greatest transformational leverage (Myers 2011:178). A development practitioner and CDO or a church cannot have equally intensive relationships with all people of the community at the same time. Finally, transformation starts with individuals out of the community, even though at best the entire community should be part of the participative processes and part of the project planning and implementation. It also has to be taken into account that the structure of southern societies is better reflected in families (Sugden 1997:99) or households (Myers 2011:110), even though those are of course constituted of individuals. In the identification phase, this thought must be retained and considered within the context of the actual project.

While Myers focuses on the community, he correctly asks what (or who) the community is, as communities are not uniform, but are *“made up of men, women, children, and old people, and these groups do not all have the same voice or concerns”* (Myers 2011:274). Participatory approaches need to consider voices from all groups within the community, but the project management need to be prepared with strategies for conflict management and resolution in case of emerging power struggles within the community (Myers 2011:275).

### 3.5.2. Identification

Identification includes getting in touch with stakeholders, analysing the context and stakeholders, assessment of community assets and needs and understanding the living condition of the community (Kusch 2014:51ff); Myers further proposes examining what works and brings life (Myers 2011:248). Therefore, tools such as the Appreciative Inquiry or the Sustainable Livelihood approach are useful and valuable (Myers 2011:251ff). He avers that the capitals that are part of the livelihood assets approach are complemented by spiritual capital, including prayer, faith, churches, mosques, temples, etc. (Myers 2011:252), which reflects the importance of spirituality in TD.

Here, it is important to say that in TD the identification process should be not only participatory but empowering. The community, partners and/or beneficiaries should be empowered to do the social analysis themselves (Myers 2011:249). The development practitioner can thus come back to well-tried methods such as community organising, PLA, PRA and others (Myers 2011:254ff, Chambers 2007:13ff).

### 3.5.3. Programme/project design

TD emphasises the process of the programme or project design (Myers 2011:239). Professional tools such as the Logical Framework may be used for project planning but are directed by the process and its tools of participation, community organisation, empowerment and ownership to help the poor to change (Myers 2011:243; Kusch 2014:120ff). Hence, TD focuses on its goals of changed people and changed relationships, which direct the development practitioner “to begin with planning for the *process* part ... and then allowing the process to develop the formal programme *plan*” (Myers 2011:242). The project design should then be a participatory process with stakeholders and partners, for them to be empowered to be the owner of their development process.

At this point, TD introduces a spiritual component to the design and planning phase that presents this process as a spiritual process as well, which involves listening to God: “Together we need to be quiet and listen in the midst of all the information we have gathered and be open to God leading us to the information and conclusions that God deems most important” (Myers 2011:247). Therefore, the Bible is explicitly mentioned as a tool in the planning process,

together with prayer (Myers 2011:247-248). This has to be handled with care as it could affront or exclude people of different beliefs and thus exclude them from participation.

#### **3.5.4. Financial planning**

The general funding strategy of any NGO or CDO also determines the planning process of its project, as it has to be taken into account if a project is fundable and thus applicable. However, there is no reference towards any specific characteristic of TD in this phase to be found in the literature. However, the assumption is that Christian projects would specifically receive donations from churches and their members, which is documented by Tearfund Ireland, which presents the church and Christian individuals as their biggest donors (TFI 2015:6). But of course, professionalised CDOs also access development funding provided by the UN, foundations, nations and other international donors.

#### **3.5.5. Implementation and monitoring**

For the actual implementation of TD projects, one of the sub-questions to the research question was, if there are specific content or development sectors on which TD concentrates. So, what exactly could a TD project look like? This was researched in literature and is shortly resumed here:

Concerning the contents of TD projects, the consultation of the Church in response to human need reduced the focal point of aid agencies in their conference 1983 to concerns of human suffering, hunger and need (the Wheaton 1983 Statement 1987:263). Bragg also gives references to possible contents of TD projects, such as: addressing basic needs (Bragg 1984:158-159), empowering local structures for self-reliance and advocating for just relationships and power structures (Bragg 1984:159-160), ecological aspects (Bragg 1984:163-164) and many more. Further than this, Bragg leaves open, how the orientation of a project is to be determined. Nowadays, the process-related course of action of TD brings openness to beneficiaries and CDOs for their projects, but this openness also entails uncertainty for the CDO and the development practitioners about possible goals and contents of projects:

The kingdom frame is inclusive of the physical, social, mental, and spiritual manifestation of poverty and so all are legitimate areas of focus for transformational development, that is truly Christian. (...) Whatever heals and restores body, mind, spirit,

and community, all can be part of the better future toward which transformational development should point. (Myers 2011:175)

Here, the contents of TD projects are completely left up to the community, which entails high ownership of the partners and beneficiaries. The idea is then that the beneficiaries themselves with partners and stakeholders and with the help of development practitioners determine the sector the project would aim at as well as the actual project.

Whereas, Faix presents nine aspects of transformation that aim at shalom: political, social, economic, cultural, legal, ethnic, ethic, emancipatory and theological aspects (Faix 2012:71-72). Plus, he sometimes adds ecological aspects, too (Faix 2012:78-79, 84-85). Those aspects could be understood as directives for transformational projects, but as those aspects of transformation are left very broad, many development sectors and projects could be classified therein. Yet, those theologically developed categories of transformation might help understand and locate the transformational goals of a community within the biblical story and those aspects of transformation.

It has to be noted that for small CDOs with limited resources who do not have the means or influence to work with an entire community, the contents of a TD project might arise differently. In practice, not all implemented development projects result from a participatory process, but sometimes from simple ideas by (local) development practitioners, by assessments of community assets and needs (Myers 2011:239) or otherwise.

When a project is implemented, its progress is usually regularly monitored. Interestingly, Myers states that “... *the value of monitoring has been undersold, the value of evaluating has been oversold and the value of reflecting has been ignored*” (Myers 2011:288). Myers sees monitoring as a useful tool to show progress towards the envisioned change. Also, as the process plays an important role in TD, the reactions to unintended consequences or unexpected events are important to transformation. Therefore, continuing adjustments to the programme design that result from monitoring and observing the programme are recommended (Myers 2011:245), which is also known as learning and adaptation.

### 3.5.6. Evaluation

Myers criticises the technical evaluation of programme impact as being necessary to inform donors, but not necessarily useful to evaluate long-term change (Myers 2011:288-289; 290). His critique is justified insofar as the envisioned long-term change in behaviour, attitude and the situation of the community in short-term development programmes can probably not be measured, as change may take place over decades and generations. Nonetheless, the technical evaluation of programme impact remains useful and important in TD.

CDOs that work with TD strive for adapted evaluation and impact assessment methods to capture the spiritual and relational notion of their concept. To capture this, (Christian) organisations need to clearly define their development objectives and values in the programming phase, so they can be measured after implementation. Stakeholders need to participate not only in the identification, design and implementation of the project but also in the evaluation. For the evaluation process, both qualitative and quantitative methods should be used (Sarma & Vicary 2005:225). While TD uses common tools of evaluation, impact assessment and monitoring, a highly participatory process is the best way to maximise those tools. For this purpose, tools such as Participatory Impact Learning, Outcome Mapping, and the Most Significant Change technique (Myers 2011:293) have been proposed.

What is also different in this phase are the specific goals that ought to be measured, which include for example the mental, social and spiritual dimensions of sustainability in addition to the physical dimension of sustainability (Myers 2011:302). Samuel understands those specific goals as measurable and calls it spiritual evaluation. He takes the example of measuring righteousness by examining the status of relationships in society. Another example is the awareness by individuals of their responsibility as stewards, which can be measured by the decreasing or increasing ability of people to make decisions and take responsibility for them, as well as in their ability to use resources and gifts efficiently (Samuel in Sugden 2000:19). Samuel even believes that it is possible to measure the effectiveness of the gospel witness and changes in attitude to God, spiritual matters, the church and to Christ, but he argues that *“the indicators are to be found rather in people’s actions than in*

*their responses to questionnaires*” (Samuel in Sugden 2000:20). Whether or not Samuel considers spiritual evaluation doable, he gives scant advice on how this can actually be done. Myers himself proposes the Ten Seed method and asking the right questions. The number of nominal converts ought not to be measured, but rather how the experience with the CDO had an impact on their understanding of the gospel and on their attitude towards it, as well as towards local Christians or local churches (Myers 2011:302-304).

In practice, development goals are mostly reflected in indicators of measurement tools. Indicators for effective measurement should cover the CDO’s vision, they should be outcomes and not activities, their meaning should be clear and they should be easy to remember (Getu 2002:93). Several macro-indicators have also been chosen by the CDO Opportunity International, such as abundance, empowerment, character and service (Getu 2002:94-96). All those macro-indicators have been itemised in detail by the CDO. The specific indicators for character, for example, contain the aspects of strengthened faith, the change in the level of giving and sharing, the change in the quality of family life among beneficiaries, integrity, the change of moral values and stewardship as the change of responsibility and accountability (Getu 2002:96). As shown by Getu, CDOs need to develop suitable indicators for the specific goals of TD, a task which has been left to the CDOs working with TD. Little information has been published concerning the application of TD in the evaluation and monitoring process. ACT Alliance, for example, provides a technical Handbook of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation to provide high-quality development standards to their members, but they do not give guidance about how to measure the specific goals of TD to their coalition members (ACT Alliance 2012).

### **3.5.7. Transition**

The responsibility for transformation and change should remain with the local beneficiaries and stakeholders so that they are owners of their own transformation and become hence agents of change. As the ownership of TD projects is thought to be very high, the transition should be planned into the programme and project design from the beginning. Myers, while working with World Vision, introduced a more relational approach to this last phase, which becomes an ongoing strategic relationship (Myers 2011:269). Central to a

successful transition is capacity building of beneficiaries, partners and relevant stakeholders, enhancing access to further opportunities such as new ideas, resources and information, disaster mitigation plans, but also planning on mitigating the impact of success, which can create new problems (Myers 2011:269-271).

### **3.6. CONCLUSION**

The major goal of TD is subsumed in the Hebrew word shalom, which means restored relationships with God, with others, with the community and with the environment as envisioned in the kingdom of God (Chester 2012:139). This goal is not fully reachable, which has been harshly criticised. However, it can be understood as reconciliation, and thus as restoration of relationships (O'Reilly 1999:125), the implementation of shalom then means the implementation of the relational goals in TD.

Those goals are implemented in transformational principles such as participation and ownership, the focus on restoring relationships, advocacy, peacebuilding and reconciliation. Included into the relational approach is the goal to restore the relationship with God, which cannot be “made” or “implemented”. The commitment to the conversion of the poor through the gospel is said to make Christian development distinctly Christian (Chester 2015:143). This has been criticised harshly:

Acts of service, such as providing education, health care, relief services and acts of justice and advocacy are an integral part of witnessing to the gospel. The exploitation of situations of poverty and need has no place in Christian outreach. Christians should denounce and refrain from offering all forms of allurements, including financial incentives and rewards, in their acts of service (WCC, PCFID and WEA 28.01.2011:3).

Therefore, a culturally sensitive Christian witness and Christian spirituality of the development practitioner within the CDO and in development work is needed, as the WCC, PCFID and WEA propose in the publication *Christian Witness in a Multi-Religious World. Recommendations for Conduct* (2011). They can be one aspect of implementing this relationship to God in TD. Looking at the relationships to others and oneself, there are specific relationship-focused projects, such as CARSA in Rwanda (Mbonyingabo 2015:366ff). But in most cases, the implementation of the relational goals of TD is generally rather woven

into the mentality, attitude and principles on how the development work is applied.

These can be implemented at an organisational and project level. Professionalised NGOs and CDOs work with PCM wherein TD focuses on participation, community organisation, empowerment and ownership. The process of project planning should therefore be highly participative. The contents and development sectors of TD projects are not set in advance, but the projects focus on the poor or those in need at all levels. The decision of the actual development sector and the project is thus left to the community, the beneficiaries, and the stakeholders. Not all CDOs have the means or the influence to work with the entire community, others (historically) have specific target groups such as children or disabled persons, which shape the contents of their projects. Nonetheless, those CDOs can work with TD in other aspects of their development work. Specifically for TD, the process of project planning should be participatory through all phases of the project cycle and the transition of the projects should be integrated into the planning process from the beginning. To be able to effectively measure the TD's impact, (Christian) development organisations need to clearly establish their overall concept at an organisational level and project level and develop suitable development indicators.

TD is implemented by agents of change. Agents of change are the players that work for (or against) change. From a Christian perspective, transformation is ultimately God's work and enabled by him; God is thus an agent of change. This dependency on God is expressed in Christian spirituality by the CDO and its staff and is expressed in varying ways in the practical work of each CDO, depending on their faith factor (Unruh & Sider 2005) and depending on the context. Religion always needs to be lived and shared from its substance to unfold its transforming potential (Gühne 2015:362). At the same time, no one should be excluded or withheld from any benefits of development work due to religion. Dialogue with people of other faiths is therefore vital, because together, important development goals can be achieved, such as building up community, common witness about the dignity and rights of human beings and addressing human needs (Samuel & Hauser 1999:286-287).

From a Christian perspective, there is also a spiritual antagonist, who has been called Satan or the devil, who is believed to work against



transformation. While the existence of an evil power as a person depends on the theology of each Christian, the belief resembles the belief of evil spirits or gods in other religions. This understanding has to be taken into account and challenged to empower people to become change agents of their own transformation.

Further agents of change are the development practitioner, who should also be willing to learn and to be transformed. The role of the development practitioner is understood as that of a facilitator or enabler, which has also been compared to the work of a midwife. The role extends to being an adviser and advocate (Kroeck 2015:257-258). In a study of ADPs by World Vision, a strong connection between the success of the project, transformed community attitudes, values and perception and a tolerant, humble, faithful, self-sacrificing, serving and non-discriminatory lifestyle of the village development worker was found (O'Reilly 1999:135). Therefore, good education and training, effective selection methods, self-reflection and a value-promoting management philosophy are important features to equip development practitioners to be effective agents of change.

Another important agent of change from a Christian perspective is the (local) church. CDOs are their partners, working alongside them towards the same goal. The church also plays an important role as a civil society organisation (Myers 2011:192; Sugden 2003:73), in its pastoral presence and source of community and spirituality for the community as well as for the Christian development practitioner (Myers 2011:200). As the church will be present when the involvement of the CDO ends, being linked with the local church can enhance sustainability (Sugden 2003:72).

Moreover, CDOs should identify further partners with similar visions for development and collaborate with them (Samuel in Sugden 2000:107). As TD is a relational approach, partnerships with people and groups in the community are vital in the development process. The definition of authentic partnerships best reflects the relationship with local stakeholders envisioned in TD.

From a Christian perspective, sustainability ultimately comes from God and goes much further than maintaining project activities and impacts after the pull-out of the development agency. It includes sustainable growth, learning and

continuing transformation. Hence, a transformational view on sustainability includes the physical, mental, social and spiritual dimensions (Myers 2011:193).

## **CHAPTER 4: METHODOLOGY**

Chapter 4 presents the research methodology. To this end, the research design with the research method, a comparative case study, is elaborated, including the (de-)limitations of the research and methodology. Furthermore, the research process is illustrated, comprising the sample and sampling technique, the data collection, the data analysis strategy. A reflection concerning research ethics and quality finalises the chapter.

### **4.1. RESEARCH DESIGN**

This dissertation aims at reviewing the application of TD from a Christian perspective in theory and practice. It thus wants to contribute to the theory and practice of this Christian development concept. To this end, we have to examine the epistemology of this dissertation: In social constructivism, people develop a subjective meaning of their experience (Creswell 2013:24). Meanings and interpretation emerge as we interact with our environment and connect our observations to our experience and knowledge, which we transfer to concepts and theories (Ridder 2016:65). This explanation of constructivism has been supported by Creswell, who argues that subjective meanings are formed through interactions with others and historical and cultural norms and are thus constructed socially (Creswell 2013:25). This is also the case for development theories and concerns individuals as much as development agencies. Therefore, this dissertation follows a constructivist understanding which encompasses the need to consider and analyse the context (for example, a case) to explore and understand the meaning or interpretation in depth (Ridder 2016:65).

Strübing and Ridder recommend qualitative research in cases with complex social situations and for research studies for which material cannot be adequately made accessible with quantitative methods (Ridder 2016:76; Strübing 2013:4). The topic of TD and its application include both complex social situations and material that is difficult to assess with quantitative methods. To lay a theoretical framework for this empirical research, Chapter 2 served to elaborate the theoretical framework of TD from a Christian perspective. In Chapter 3, the implementation of TD was theoretically explored, following the framework for TD (Myers 2011:202). Several categories of implementation have been compiled in addition to the category of project implementation and management (3.5) to establish a deductively derived theoretical framework for the empirical study, which will help to structure the research. The topic has been explored in three specific cases and the deductively derived categories helped to analyse the data concerning the application of TD. Nonetheless, the empirical research remained open to new inductive insights from the case studies. Strübing argues that it is illusory to believe in the dichotomous confrontation of deductive and inductive methods, not least because the inductive gain of scientific insight can never be completely detached from theory (Strübing 2013:7). Hence, this research tested the existing theory on the implementation of TD and at the same time generated new theory concerning the application of TD out of the empirical research in practice. The study aimed to probe how the existing theory of TD is understood and implemented in practice, to sharpen, falsify or complement the current theory.

#### **4.1.1. Research method: comparative case study**

To this end, a comparative case study with three cases was conducted. The following defines the chosen method for this research:

A case study research is a qualitative approach in which the investigator explores a real-life, contemporary bounded system (a case) or multiple bounded systems (cases) over time, through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information (Creswell 2013:97).

Three CDOs with their TD concepts and one project each have been examined, in line with the above-mentioned definition of a case. Even though it has been

discussed if a case study is to be seen as a strategy of inquiry, a research strategy or a methodology, the research follows Creswell, who clearly defines it as a qualitative research method (Creswell 2013:97). Yin gives three helpful indicators that a case study is a useful research method (Yin 2018:2): the main research question should ask “how” or “why” – which in this dissertation is fulfilled, looking at the main research question: “How is the concept of TD understood and implemented in specific projects by CDOs?”. Furthermore, if one has little or no control over behavioural events and it is a contemporary phenomenon, Yin suggests employing a case study (Yin 2018:2). As all those requirements were met, a case study was chosen as a research method for this qualitative research.

A multiple-case study is a variant of the same methodology that involves more than one case to illustrate a specific issue (Yin 2018:54; Creswell 2013:99). A multiple-case study is also called a comparative case study (Thomas 2016:173) because with several cases that illustrate the research issue, the focus is also on the comparison of those cases. This particular method was chosen to explore how the TD approach can be applied in different contexts by different CDOs. Using the case study method with three cases provided the opportunity to compare how TD could be implemented in different organisational and local contexts and on different target groups and could help to develop some generic criteria on how to implement the concept elsewhere. This research is nonetheless not positioned to provide an answer for all development projects that want to work on the basis of TD, seeking instead to contribute some ideas and direction to guide future projects in their design and implementation.

This case study can be said to be “*instrumental*” (Thomas 2016:120) in the sense that the cases served as tools to sharpen the concept of TD and its application in practice. At the same time, the study can also be seen as exploratory, as there is no fully elaborated concept on how to implement TD in a specific setting and each case helped to further explore the understanding and practice of the application of TD.

A case study logically begins with the selection of a specific case or multiple cases. Gerring defines a case as a “*spatially and temporally delimited phenomenon of theoretical significance*” (Gerring 2017:27). Thus, three cases were chosen. The sample and sampling technique is further explained in Section 4.2.1.

#### **4.1.2. Delimitations and limitations of research and methodology**

Concerning the delimitations of the contents of the research, it has been made clear that it is limited to the Christian concept of TD and thus focuses on CDOs that work with a TD approach. Due to the scale, timeframe and feasibility of the research and dissertation, the research restricted itself to the application of the concept in Protestant (including evangelical) organisations for better comparability. This is only consequential, as TD has been called “*the evangelical world’s most rigorous and cohesive development paradigm*” (Offutt 2012:43). The researcher nevertheless respectfully notes that the inclusion of other denominational and religious development approaches could bear some interest, but as common ground and comparability was attained the above argumentation was followed.

Choosing a multiple-case study as the research method, brings further limitations that need to be unfolded openly. Even though the research treats multiple cases, the results are only sections of reality. The choice of three cases permits a relative comparability but does not allow generalisation, as there certainly are other ways in which TD is understood and implemented, especially in different organisational and local contexts. The decision to look at three different cases also entails that each case could not be studied as deeply as it could have been if only working with one case (Creswell 2013:101). Nonetheless, case studies can provide detailed in-depth information of cases, but the method was restricted by distance and travel restrictions linked to the COVID-19 pandemic as well as by time and resources. As the main research question was a conceptual one, a major part of the research has been done through the content analysis of documents, which is independent of travel restrictions. The reliance on mainly strategic documents of the CDOs vision and work as well as project reports limits the insight into the application of TD and those vision in practice. No direct critical analysis of the programmes or projects could be made and no current beneficiaries could be interviewed. This would have been very valuable, but unfortunately was not actionable due to travel restrictions because of COVID19, but also due to resources and the given timeframe. This is, why the content analysis of documents was at least complemented by two interviews per case with staff in key positions at an

organisational level, mostly programmes managers, who were familiar with TD, and with staff at the project level who were familiar with the project itself, hence local project managers. The fact that no field exploration was possible, still limited the understanding of the projects and their contexts and generated the need for more detailed background research to better interpret the data provided by the research.

## **4.2. RESEARCH PROCESS**

### **4.2.1. Sample and sampling technique**

Creswell states that typically for a multiple-case study, no more than four to five cases are chosen (Creswell 2013:101). Due to resources, time and feasibility, this has been taken into account and a sample of three was chosen to assure comparability. The cases were CDOs that work with a TD concept or a derivative. Moreover, one particular project of each CDO was chosen to analyse the application of the concept. The CDOs were identified through research in literature, participation in the Christian Community Development Conference, recommendations by Christian development experts and online research. The precondition for the potential cases was that their understanding of development and poverty or their vision and mission statement had to have a Christian perspective on development and where possible should adhere to a form of TD concept. Of course, they also had to be Christian, as the Christian perspective on TD was the focal point of this research.

In the literature, TD refers to the poor and those in need at all levels as a target group. Also, concerning the implementation of TD, the choice of the content of a project is generally left to the community. This research wanted to determine if this was also the case in practice. Therefore, the CDOs were intentionally chosen to differ in size, resources and professionalism. The target group and contents of the projects were also sought to be diverse. The selection of the projects was influenced by the advancement of the projects, as projects that were more advanced in their project cycle to give more practical insight on the implementation of TD. The selection of the projects was thus mostly determined by the CDO and by the accessibility and availability of the projects' responsible person. The CDOs all identify as Christian organisations working in

the development field. While WVI and TFI both openly state that they work with TD, SW only informally works with TD in the examined field office and primarily identifies as a mission organisation. The latest case represents many other small mission and development organisations who lack consequent programming, but apply TD in their own understanding. Of course, this affects the comparability of the three cases as WVI and TFI are better compatible than all three cases. So, case C (SW) can be understood as an outlier case, that helps sharpen the more elaborated TD approaches of case A and B and gives insights into the reality of smaller mission organisations and their application and understanding of TD.

The research had two levels: first, the content analysis of publicly available and internal documents of the CDOs containing their tools, strategies and practices for implementing the transformational concept. This was complemented by information from the interviews conducted on an organisational level. This can be seen as the “site level” (Creswell 2013:156). In a second step, the content of documents pertaining to the individual projects of each CDO was analysed and complemented with the contents of the interviews at the project level to understand how those strategies were implemented in practice. This can be understood as the event or process level (Creswell 2013:156).

In this research, neither the cases nor the individuals for the interviews were located in a single site. Their dispersion could thus provide *“important contextual information useful in developing categories in the axial coding phase of research”* (Creswell 2013:150). The diversity of the cases extends to the geographical location, the chosen projects and of course to the different organisations. This diversity largely enriched the research, but also added complexity to it. Nonetheless, the variety was maintained and rigour in the research was ensured to extract the relevant content out of the diverse cases.

The sampling technique can be called theory-based (Miles & Hubermann 1994:28), as some criteria were defined in advance to identify the cases and sites, such as that the CDO had to subscribe to the Christian faith and work with a TD approach. The selection of the projects then generally followed the *“maximum variation sampling”* (Creswell 2013:157), as the selected sites (projects) within each case, varied in content, geographical location and in their

individual application of the Christian development approach. Table 4.1 gives an overview of the three CDOs, their projects and project location

Table 4.1: Overview of research cases

<b>CDO</b>	<b>Project</b>	<b>Project location</b>
<b>Case A</b> <b>World Vision International (WVI)</b>	Peace for Youth Economic Empowerment through Church Partnership (P4YED) with skills and knowledge for youth economic empowerment (SKYE) clubs	Burundi
<b>Case B</b> <b>Tearfund Ireland (TFI)</b>	Self-help groups	Ethiopia
<b>Case C</b> <b>Sheltering Wings (SW)</b>	Village of Hope (women’s crisis centre)	Burkina Faso

#### **4.2.1.1. Description of cases**

Case A is World Vision International (WVI), an internationally recognised Christian (evangelical) FBO that focuses on children. Their ultimate goal is the *“Sustained well-being of children within families and communities, especially the most vulnerable ... that they will enjoy life in all its fullness”* (WVI 2020b:4). The CDO was established in 1950 by an American missionary (King 2019:20) and is now one of the largest Christian humanitarian organisations in the world. The CDO maintains offices in nearly a hundred countries with around 38 000 employees and an annual budget of two billion dollars (King 2019:1). While the organisation consists of numerous national offices worldwide that work towards their common goal, WVI provides global coordination for the partnership and ensures that global standards and policies are pursued. The global coordination functions are called the Global Centre, whose staff work in offices around the world. The support offices fundraise to support the CDO’s programmes all over the world and the programmes are implemented locally by field offices that



coordinate local agencies and community members in the implementation of programmes. WVI has an international board of directors and its members, called the Council, form the highest governing authority for fundamental decisions (WVI 2021c). The CDO works with the concept of TD and Bryant Myers has been one of the leading development researchers. Hence, his publication *Walking with the poor* (1999) has been highly influential on their understanding of TD (King 2019:222-223). Over time, the understanding and application of TD have been refined. Nowadays, the CDO understands TD as:

A vision and a process. The vision is “life in all its fullness” for every child; girls and boys, families, communities and societies living abundant lives characterised by dignity, justice, peace, and hope. The process is a transformational journey of shared learning and holistic change, through which people discover God’s love and purposes for them as they work with others to address injustices and improve and sustain child well-being (WVI 2017b).

This research concentrates on the German support office, the Burundian field office and one of their projects in Burundi. The analysed documents were provided by the German support office and the Burundian field office or were publicly available. The documents have been chosen due to their topics linked to the theoretical categories of Chapter 3. Those have been complemented with an interview with the programme management director of WV Germany and the Project Manager of the P4YED project in Burundi. The project is called the Peace for Youth Economic Empowerment through Church Partnership (P4YED) Project (WVI Burundi 2020:1) and wants to empower churches and FBOs for holistic ministry to improve child well-being (WVI Burundi 2020:2). The desired project outcomes are the increased faith partnerships’ capacity to facilitate holistic development and the peaceful coexistence of faith groups as well as youth economic empowerment (WVI Burundi 2020:2). The project was integrated into an already existing partnership of six different Burundian churches to strengthen the partnership (A\_12:127). In addition to activities to strengthen the collaboration, 28 SKYE clubs were set up (WVI Burundi 2020:4).

Case B is the CDO Tearfund Ireland (TFI). The CDO was born from a movement of evangelical Christians in the UK and Ireland who wanted to respond to the suffering of people in extreme poverty, injustice, and natural disasters in the late 1960s. In 2008, the organisation became operational and

registered as a charity in 2008 in Ireland (TFI 2021b). The organisation presents itself as follows:

We're Christians passionate about ending poverty. Working through the church community, we are committed to seeing lasting local change, whole communities lifted out of poverty for good. When disaster strikes, we respond quickly doing everything we can to protect the most vulnerable (TFI 2021a).

While the CDO pursues TD (TFI 2015:11), the organisation focuses on vulnerable women and children at risk, transforming communities, responding to humanitarian emergencies and partners with churches in Ireland for funding, raising awareness for development and mission work (TFI 2021a). The CDO supports projects in Ethiopia, Yemen, Syria/Lebanon, and Cambodia (TFI 2021c).

For this case study, the self-help group approach in Ethiopia has been chosen as a project. The project facilitates the formation of self-help groups (SHGs) of around 15-20 people in extreme poverty. Those SHGs serve as a platform to regularly save money, receive loans and pursue businesses to increase income. Furthermore, the groups foster democratic decision-making principles and are a platform to learn other skills (TFI 2020: 2). The aim was to help vulnerable households and communities in several regions in Ethiopia to attain sustainable development through inclusive economic growth and building their resilience (TFI 2020:2). The project is run by the field office of the CDO in Ethiopia in cooperation with three national NGOs.

Case C, Sheltering Wings (SW), can be understood as an outlier case. Even though it is a Christian organisation that runs development projects and understands its work as transformational, it does not officially claim to work with TD or integral mission. However, in the Christian context there are many organisations with a primarily religious purpose that also work in development and aim at transformation. Case C can help to break down the theoretical application of TD for smaller CDOs that are less professionalised and have less access to funds than the other two cases, which reflects the reality of many Christian CDOs. Also, the comparison in the axial coding with cases A and B will help on both levels: sharpening the transformational application profiles of WVI and TFI as well as understanding how smaller CDOs apply their Christian development

work. Therefore, this case is an important complementation to the comparative case study.

Sheltering Wings (SW) was founded in June 1999 by a single missionary, who started to work in Burkina Faso, West Africa. It grew considerably over the years and expanded to different countries and now has more than 20 long-term missionaries in the field (SW 2021c). The American mission organisation and support office is based in Leasburg, near St. Louis, Missouri and is a registered NGO (SW 2021c). The organisation is committed to the mission of reaching the lost and disenfranchised throughout the world, to bring them the reconciliation of Christ and to see individuals equipped and share the gospel (SW 2021a). The Christian NGO is a private initiative, involved in development issues on a non-profit basis (Desai 2014:568). A variety of development projects are realised through the partnership of donors, missionaries and local people in different parts of the world. SW Burkina Faso is also registered as an NGO there (I\_C1:113-114) and could be seen as a field office. The chosen project is the Village of Hope, a women's crisis centre in Burkina Faso. The purpose of the project is to empower women to care for themselves and their families and to know the hope they have in Jesus Christ, thus transforming them and their situation (SW 2016). For this purpose, women in difficult circumstances (widows, those experiencing gender-based violence, disability, extreme poverty, etc.) are received into the project with their children for nine months to learn new skills. At the end of the programme the women graduate, leave the centre and are encouraged to start their own little business. The project partners with the local church, female Christian teachers and instructors, missionaries and US churches as donors. The aim is to address each woman's needs educationally, spiritually, and physically (SW 2016).

#### **4.2.1.2. Characteristics of interviewees**

Participants in the sample must have experience of the phenomenon being studied (Creswell 2013:155). In our context, this meant that the interviewees were employed by the CDOs being studied. For the interviews concerning the projects, the interviewees had to work within or supervise the project, making them experts in the project, those were thus project managers. For the interviews concerning the general application of TD, the interviewees needed to

be familiar with the strategic documents of the CDO and the application of TD. Therefore, those interviewees could be employees of the CDO working in the administration or management level of the CDO, who did not necessarily have all information concerning the project itself, those were thus programme managers. Table 4.2 gives an overview of the conducted interviews, their codes and the characteristics of the interviewees, including their occupation, gender, age, religion, nationality, mother tongue as well as the duration and language of the interviews.

Table 4.2: Characteristics of interviewees and interviews

Case	Code	Occupation	Sex	Age	Religion	Nationality & Mother tongue	Duration & language of interview
A	A_I1	Director project management	m	58	Protestant (free church)	German German	1h 8min English
	A_I2	Project manager P4YED	m	43	Protestant /Pentecostal	Burundian Kirundi	1h English/French
B	B_I1	Regional programme manager TFI	m	59	Protestant	Ethiopian Amharic	1h 30min English
		Programme manager local partner CDO	m	40	Evangelical Christian	Ethiopian Amharic	
	B_I2	International Programmes Manager	m	49	Protestant (free church)	German German	1h 31min English/German
C	C_I1	SW country director	f	54	Protestant (non-denominational)	American English	1h 4min English
	C_I2	Project manager women's crisis centre	f	41	Pentecostal	Burkinabe French/Mooré	40 min French

### 4.2.1.3. Sample of documents

After locating suitable sites and individuals, contact had to be made with the CDOs. Some contacts were made through intermediaries from the Christian Community Development Conference who were already acquainted with the projects, CDOs and persons in charge. Where this was not possible, formal letters or emails were sent with the request to participate in the study. Qualitative research also requires permission to study the site: in this dissertation, this was achieved through sending out a permission letter and a participant information letter. The individuals that were asked to participate in interviews were requested to sign a consent letter. Those letters had been approved by the Ethical Research Committee of UNISA beforehand.

For the content analysis, relevant documents were made available by the CDO and complemented by publicly available documents that were relevant to the topic. During the research process, the documents were exchanged if very few codings were found. Moreover, the length of each document had to be feasible as there was an extensive amount of content available. An overview of the probed documents is given in Table 4.3.

*Table 4.3: Overview over document samples*

Case	Pseu do- nym	Title	Type of document	Date	Lan- guage	Pa- ges	Pub- lic/ in- ternal
<b>Case A</b>	A_D1	TD. Description and resources	Overview table	05/2020	English	2	public
	A_D2	Transformational De- velopment	Strategic document	11/2017	English	5	inter- nal
<b>WVI</b>	A_D3	Project Model: Chan- nels of Hope	Project Model ex- planation	2017	English	23	public
	A_D4	Sustained Child Well- being: How can World Vision best contribute? World Vision's Drivers of Sustainability (long version)	Strategic document	04/2014	English	13	inter- nal
	A_D5	Brief Summary of Pro- ject Models	Overview table	09/2017	English	7	inter- nal
	A_D6	What is Transforma- tional Development	Summary	2017	English	2	public

	A_D7	The Development Programme Approach Handbook	Handbook	2011	English	35	public
	A_D8	Peace for Youth Economic Empowerment through Church Partnership (P4YED) Project. Project Management Report	Report	2020	English	9	internal
<b>Case B</b> <b>TFI</b>	B_D1	A short introduction to mission	Booklet	2016	English	8	public
	B_D2	Understanding poverty. Restoring broken relations.	Booklet	2019	English	24	public
	B_D3	Endline Survey 2020	Report	09/2020	English	37	internal
	B_D4	Theory of change	Summary	09/2020	English	9	public
	B_D5	Annual Narrative Report: Community Self-Help for Economic Empowerment, Food Security and Climate Change Resilience Ethiopia	Report	2020	English	41	public
	B_D6	Civil Society Fund 2020 Round	Fund Application	2020	English	34	internal
	B_D7	Story of A.G.	Narrative	04/2021	English	4	internal
	B_D8	'United against poverty, together for transformation'. Strategic Plan 2015-2020	Strategic document	2015	English	24	public
<b>Case C</b> <b>SW</b>	C_D1	Newsletter Winter 2019/20	Newsletter	2020	English	4	public
	C_D2	Newsletter Spring 2021	Newsletter	2021	English	4	public
	C_D3	Newsletter Spring 2020	Newsletter	2020	English	4	public
	C_D4	Women's Centre Vision and Mission	Strategic Document	2016	English	3	internal
	C_D5	Annual Report 2019	Report	2019	English	4	public

C_D6	Our Story	Website	2021	English	1	public
C_D7	About Us	Website	2021	English	1	public
C_D8	Newsletter Fall 2019	Newsletter	2019	English	4	public

#### **4.2.2. Data collection: expert interview, content analysis of documents**

In a case study, a small number of cases are intensively studied to gain knowledge about the larger population of cases (Gerring 2017:28). Therefore, multiple instruments can be used. In this dissertation, the instruments were a content analysis of relevant documents of the cases of CDOs and their implementation of TD. This analysis was then complemented by two semi-structured expert interviews per case.

##### **4.2.2.1. Interviews**

To establish the interview guideline, information from Chapter 3, the application of TD in literature, was used. Semi-structured interviews were used due to their advantages, namely that a list of relevant issues could be covered concerning the application of TD. At the same time, semi-structured interviews offered *“the freedom to follow up points as necessary”* (Thomas 2016:190). For the interviews, Creswell proposes several steps that can help to assure a valid quality of the data, such as identifying interviewees that can best answer the research questions, determining the type of interview, recording procedures and using an interview guide, as well as pilot testing (Creswell 2013:164-166). Those steps have been strictly followed to attain valid data. Thus, the interview guideline has been submitted to the Ethical Research Committee of the University of South Africa (UNISA) and was revised to the satisfaction of the supervisor before being used in the field. The pilot testing with a CDO founder and development worker in Latin America helped to refine data collection plans and the interview guideline (Creswell 2013:165).

Given the global and national situation in Germany with changing meeting restrictions, together with distance and limited resources, all interviews were conducted via video conference and recorded with the permission of the interviewees. Jowett points out, that *“interviewing people online during a global pandemic ... may also have implications for the validity of the research.”* (Jowett

2020). Even though this limitation needed to be taken into account, the well-being of interviewees and the researcher had priority over the quality of the research.

#### **4.2.2.2. Document analysis**

For a case study, the type of information and the form of data that is typically collected is extensive and can include documents, records, interviews, observations, and physical artefacts (Creswell 2013:149). For the topic of TD and its application, the main type of information that was collected, consisted of documents from the CDOs, as each of them had their own strategies for implementing TD. Those documents range from mission and vision statements, newsletters, project reports, policy papers, the definition of theories of change, TD, mission and poverty, websites to fund applications containing summaries to others that served to help understand the application of TD.

This research study was conducted in the 2021 academic year, while the worldwide COVID-19-pandemic was restricting international and even regional travel. One major advantage was that the analysis of documents was not limited by travel restrictions. All interviewees signed an informed consent letter and agreed in writing that their interviews might be recorded. All data concerning the research are safely and digitally stored.

Moreover, the language has to be mentioned. Even though five out of the six interviews were conducted in English, it was not the mother tongue of the researcher or all the interviewees. This led to linguistic challenges during the research, interviews and analysis. Nonetheless, as the interviewees worked in a development context, all except one were quite fluent in English. As the dissertation is written equally in English, this helped to avoid misinterpretation, misunderstanding or loss of meaning through translation. Even if the main research language was English, when interviewees wished to express themselves in their mother tongue, they were of course free to do so, which they occasionally did. The last interview (C\_I2) was conducted in French, as the interviewee was not fluent in English, which was no problem as the interviewer was fluent in French. The interview was then translated by the researcher. For the transcription of the interviews, a programme ([www.sonix.ai](http://www.sonix.ai)) was used and the transcript was then reviewed by the researcher.



### **4.2.3. Data analysis strategy**

The data analysis strategy is of great importance concerning the empirical study, as it also influences the data collection process and of course the interpretation and understanding of the collected data:

Data analysis in qualitative research consists of preparing and organizing the data ... for analysis, then reducing the data into themes throughout a process of coding and condensing the codes, and finally representing the data in figures, tables or a discussion (Creswell 2013:180).

This is the basic analysis strategy of most qualitative research and also shaped this research's data analysis strategy. Additionally, for a case study, a detailed description of the case and its setting is important (Creswell 2013:199). On these grounds, a detailed description of each case has been provided in Section 5.2 as one step of the data analysis strategy.

For the analysis of the collected data, the strategy first relied on the theoretical propositions and deductive categories that had been developed in Chapter 3. The propositions also shaped the data collection plan and therefore yielded analytic priorities (Yin 2018:168). Yin points out that those propositions can help to organise the analysis and can point to relevant contextual conditions and explanations (Yin 2018:168-169), as has been the case in this study.

Concerning the further data analysis strategy, the research followed the concept of GT (Strauss & Corbin 1996) with some adjustments. While Strauss and Corbin propose a theoretical sampling (Strauss & Corbin 1996:152ff), the cases had been predetermined, as they had to fulfil certain conditions such as being a CDO working with a TD concept. Moreover, the sample and the collected data of each case started with deductive categories that structured and organised the data collection and analysis.

Nonetheless, the steps of analysis proposed by GT, namely open, axial and selective coding, were followed (Breuer, Muckel & Dieris 2019:255). The first step of open coding helps to open up the data in small units of codes that can generate new categories or subcategories if they are summarised (Breuer, Muckel & Dieris 2019:255; Corbin & Strauss 1996:44ff). Open coding is an analytical process to identify concepts that are developed regarding their characteristics and dimensions (Corbin & Strauss 1996:54). Open coding was thus applied to the collected data of each case separately, while the categories

and codes that were found in the first case were searched for and reviewed in the data of the other cases as well. When further categories or codes were discovered, the other cases were again screened for those new codes and categories. To facilitate the analysis of the data including the coding, the MAXQDA software was used.

In the phase of axial coding, the empirical connections in and between the categories have been examined. This meant exploring the context, cause, phenomenon, strategies and consequences for each case concerning the application of TD (Breuer, Muckel & Dieries 2019:255). Axial coding is a complex process of inductive and deductive thinking that is led by asking questions to discover, for each phenomenon, the original conditions that led to the phenomenon, its characteristics, its context, its actions and strategies and its consequences (Corbin & Strauss 1996:93). Out of those contents, an integrative GT about the application of TD was developed for each case, each depicting a certain type of how the Christian development approach could be applied.

After the analysis of each case, a cross-case synthesis as an analytical technique was helpful to put the relate the findings of each case in this multiple-case study (Yin 2018:194). The goal in this case-based approach was to retain the integrity of the cases, but *“to compare or synthesise any within-case patterns across the cases”* (Yin 2018:196). This phase corresponded to the selective coding that served to integrate the concepts of each case into a common GT, if possible. The procedure of this phase was very similar to the axial coding phase, except for being conducted on a more abstract level (Corbin & Strauss 1996:95).

### **4.3. Research ethics and quality**

Even though human participants were directly involved through interviews, all interviewees were of age and had full control of their mental abilities. The CDO granted permission and access to relevant information and consented to take part in the research. Also, all interviewees voluntarily agreed to do the interview, read the participant information and signed a consent letter. As the subject of the research referred to the application of the concept of TD, this was not considered a private or personal topic that could harm the interviewees directly.

Of course, sensitive information that could afflict the concerned CDO or their employees was treated as such and privacy policies were maintained. All CDOs and interviewee partners freely agreed to having their names published. In the case of the CDOs, the names were used, so that the supporting documents could all be referenced correctly. For the interviewees though, anonymity was sought. Indicators were therefore assigned to each interview and the proposition to change the participants' names and use pseudonyms (Thomas 2016:81-82) was implemented (see Table 4.2).

The language barrier could be considered an ethical challenge, as the researcher and five out of six interviewees did not speak English as their mother tongue. Four of the interviewees were nevertheless fluent in English, as they were working in development agencies and internationally active. One interview was conducted in French. In the other cases, where the interviewees felt more comfortable to speak in German or French about certain topics, this was also possible.

All interviews were conducted via online video calls due to the distance and the worldwide COVID-19 pandemic. Given the distance, resource and travel restrictions, no further field exploration in the geographical location of the CDOs and their projects was possible. As this excluded observation on the spot, the research relied even more on the contents of the interviews and the content analysis of the relevant document. As the subject extends to the application of a development approach, this was unfortunate but did not impair the validity of the research.

The main data in this research were collected from a content analysis of the CDOs' documents. These were documents that were publicly accessible, complemented with project reports and other internal documents provided by the CDO (see Table 4.3). Hence, the protection of data privacy, especially concerning specific development projects, posed a potential risk. To avoid any social, legal or political risk due to loss of status, privacy, social standing or financial risks as a result of confidentiality breaches through the incautious publication of data, sensitive data such as financial, personal and social data were, if anything, only considered abstractly and encoded. Data privacy policies were maintained. The data have only been used for this research and will be kept (digitally) secure; this applies especially to files that contain pre-

anonymised names (Thomas 2016:83). Furthermore, the findings were submitted to the interviewees and CDOs to countercheck the contents and where they wanted to proofread the transcripts of the interviews before the submission of the dissertation.

As the use of (internal) relevant documents such as project reports depended on the selection of the CDO and the verdict of the researcher, this selection already presented a certain bias to the research, as it depended on the openness and straightforwardness of the CDO to share the relevant documents. This bias could only be mitigated using manifold documents and the complementation of information through the interviews. Ultimately, the researcher is well aware that the entire research she carried out is biased by her religion and worldview, which could have led to prettifying certain aspects accidentally. Proofreading also included a professional editor, to ensure better understandability and higher quality of the dissertation.

## **CHAPTER 5:**

### **EMPIRICAL RESEARCH FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS**

Chapter 5 presents and analyses the findings of the empirical research to understand the application of TD in practice. The findings emerged from the document analysis of the three cases as well as from the complementary six interviews (two for each case), held respectively with the CDO of each supporting office and a staff member of the field office who was directly involved in the projects. In each case, a GT evolved that was then compared to each other for common ground and differences. The findings are then discussed in the light of the theoretical framework of TD from the literature review (chapters 2 and 3) and further literature.

#### **5.1. OPEN CODING: GENERAL FINDINGS**

After the full process of open coding of all 24 documents and 6 interviews, a total of 2 909 codes were identified and clustered in corresponding categories. Those categories are deductively elaborated from the theoretical framework (Chapter 3) and inductively from the documents and interviews themselves. A code system with main themes, categories and subcategories was generated as illustrated in Table 5.1, differentiated into cases and their documents and interviews.

Due to the huge number of codes, Table 5.1 can only give an overview of the main categories and codes. The completely expanded Code-Matrix-Browser is given in Appendix 1. Nonetheless, this overview already gives references to the main topics, focal points, and specific aspects of each case.

Table 5.1: Overview of the code system

Code System	Case A_WVI_Interviews	Case A_WVI_Documents	Case B_TFI_Interviews	Case B_TFI_Documents	Case C_SW_Interviews	Case C_SW_Documents	SUM
> Understanding of Poverty	2	13	2	25		1	43
> Understanding of TD	3	16	10	30	7	3	69
> Vision & Goals of TD	6	52	15	43	5	5	126
▾ Principles of TD							0
> participation & ownership	5	55	8	13	3		84
> relationships	38	153	61	116	64	16	448
> advocacy	8	60	17	50	6	2	143
> conflict mitigation/ promoting peace	4	6	4	3			17
> empowerment/ building capacity	10	51	13	61	6	7	148
> others		5		1			6
▾ agents of change							0
> CDO	7	24	27	60	38	11	167
> development practitioner	8	44	12	17	13	4	98
> the church	13	38	22	37	6	4	120
> faith leaders	4	25	1	6	7	5	48
> role of God		3		4	3	2	12
> Role of other religions/ spirituality	7	24	6	2	10		49
> further agents of change	8	55	23	61	6	10	163
> other		1		2			3
▾ project implementation & management		1	1	1			3
> sectors & projects	7	64	23	70	47	20	231
> Target Group	6	49	12	28	11	1	107
> specific TD		22	1	2	1		26
> approaches		17	14	12	1	4	48
> methods/ tools	4	23		4			31
> PCM	26	126	30	78	18	3	281
> sustainability	3	60	8	16	13		100
> Outcomes: change/ transformation	17	50	47	171	35	18	338
Σ SUM	186	1037	357	913	300	116	2909

Looking at the general number of codings, WVI (186 codings in the interviews and 1,037 codings out of the documents, hence 1,223 codings in total) and TFI (357 codings out of the interviews and 913 codings out of the documents, thus a total of 1,270 codings) largely outweigh the codings of SW (300 codings from interviews, 116 from documents, a total of 416 codings). SW, being a smaller organisation, provided fewer documents for analysis and sources such as websites and newsletters for the analysis. Furthermore, SW is considerably less professionalised than WVI and TFI, as reflected in the elaborateness and volume of their documents. The huge sum of codings for WVI lies in the fact that of the three cases it is the largest CDO, is highly professionalised and also provided large documents for the analysis. TFI, on the other hand, generated many codings from the interviews, with two participants in one interview, which hence took more time and room than the other interviews (B\_I1).

Furthermore, in the category principles of TD, there is an accumulation of codings when looking at the role of relationships, which also includes partnerships as related to others (311 codings in total). Hence, all three cases have recognised the importance of fostering good relationships and restoring relationships to oneself, to others and the community, to the environment and God and have included this principle in their work with different emphasises

(WVI 16.11.2017; Tearfund 2016:3-4; C\_I2:12). Concerning the principles of TD, another high amount of codings was found for advocacy (143 codings in total), Christian witness (154 codings in total) and empowerment/capacity building (147 codings in total), which was anticipated due to the nature of the TD concept. However, the relatively weak accumulation of codings in conflict mitigation/promoting peace (17 in total) is surprising. Other than this, some differences between the cases are already visible in the overview, such as the relatively strong focus on Christian witness from SW (42 codings in the interviews) and the lack of codings concerning participation and ownership in the same case, while there is a strong focus on capacity building in TFI (73 codings) and on restoring relationships in WVI (151 codings total), due to their focus on partnerships.

Moreover, the dimension agents of change reveals a strong focus on the CDO, particularly at the organisational level, in line with the research question about the CDO as the entity that implements and applies TD in practice with its partners. Another focal point in this category lies in the church as agent of change (114 codings). This was also anticipated (see Chapter 3) given that the research is examining TD from a Christian perspective. The subcategory “further agents of change” then comprises other stakeholders and partners (civil society/NGOs, donors and supporters, community, government and other partners) and are thus numerous.

While sustainability is a focal point in the documents of WVI, SW has no reference to sustainability in their documents. Similar, far more information was found concerning PCM for WVI and TFI than for SW, as SW are not working with PCM. Still, the total of codings in the category PCM is quite high (281) as this concerns the concrete implementation of the concept in projects. Equally, the number of codings for the different development sectors, which also include the analysed projects, consolidate a bigger part of the codings (227 in total). The different cases and the subsumed content of the findings of the axial coding are presented and discussed in 5.2.

## **5.2. AXIAL CODING: FINDINGS OF CASES A, B, C**

After the code system was developed through open coding, this was followed by axial coding (see Section 4.2.3) to substantially connect the codes. For this

purpose, the coding paradigm of context, consequence, cause, strategy, and activities of a phenomenon was applied. The analytical focus was on the phenomenon of how TD is understood and applied. First, a logic model for axial coding is given for each case, which is then elaborated by highlighting the focal points of each case. For better understanding, the findings were differentiated at the organisational and project levels.

### 5.2.1. Case A: World Vision Burundi and the P4YED project

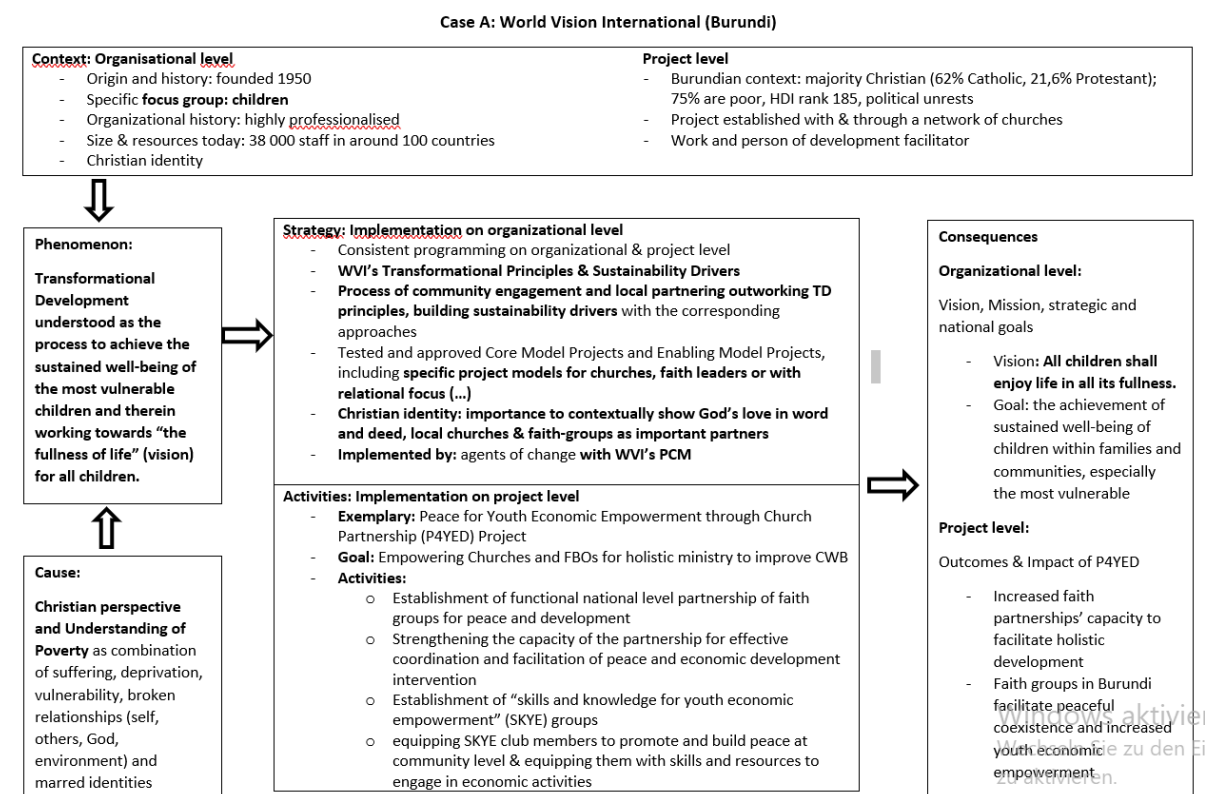


Figure 5.1: Axial Coding World Vision International (Burundi) (own figure)

In this part of the dissertation, Figure 5.1 is explained, following the elements cause, phenomenon, context, strategy, activities and outcomes.

#### 5.2.1.1. Cause

A Christian perspective on poverty is the main cause and motivation for WVI to search for corresponding development concepts that respond to poverty and is hence its *raison d’être*. It results in a specific understanding of poverty, which WVI defines as: “a surmountable condition of deprivation, vulnerability and



broken relationships, which threatens human survival, involves unacceptable human suffering and prevents people from fulfilling their God-given potential” (WVI 16.11.2017:1). The roots of poverty and injustice are understood as broken relationships (with others, with God, with the environment) and a marred human identity (broken relationship with self) (WVI 16.11.2017; A\_12:33-35). Those root causes of poverty are often hidden in social, cultural and spiritual issues that manifest as harmful cultural practices, social norms or power dynamics but also in structural and economic injustice, which keep people trapped in poverty (WVI 2017b:1). This understanding of poverty is intertwined with the appeal to all Christians to serve the poor and the response of an individual, the founder of the CDO, Robert Pierce, who presents the initial motivation of WVI: *“We serve everyone. We want to be in the world what we think Jesus Christ would be if He were in the middle of all these problems and needs”* (Robert Pierce, Founder and President 1950–1967 in WVI 2021b)

#### **5.2.1.2. Phenomenon**

The phenomenon is the understanding of TD from a Christian perspective and its application in practice. The CDO’s understanding is succinctly summarised in the following quotation:

Transformational Development is how World Vision responds to poverty and vulnerability as we follow our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ to promote human transformation, seek justice and bear witness to the good news of the Kingdom of God. **Transformational Development** is both a vision and a process (WVI 16.11.2017; accentuation in the source).

TD is thus the process of achieving WVI’s ministry goal, namely the sustained well-being of children within families and communities, especially the most vulnerable. This means working towards their vision of “life in all its fullness” for every child in every context (WVI 2017b:1; WVI 2020b:5). Life in all its fullness (WVI 2017b:1) is defined as people living abundant lives characterised by dignity, justice, peace and hope. Therein, the process of TD is seen as a *“transformational journey of shared learning and holistic change, through which people discover God’s love and purpose for them as they work with others to address injustices and improve and sustain child well-being”* (WVI 2017a:1). This also includes the restoration of identities and relationships that are central to the pursuit of WVI’s vision (WVI 16.11.2017:2)

### **5.2.1.3. Context**

The phenomenon is directed and further defined by its context both at the organisational and project levels. The separation into the context of the CDO itself and the context of the specific project also serves to facilitate structural distinctiveness.

At an organisational level, the understanding and application of a development concept are naturally directed by the origin and history of the applying unit, the CDO. WVI was established in 1950 by an American missionary (King 2019:20) who was moved by the poverty and need of orphans in Asia and perceived an individual calling to tackle the poverty of the children (A\_11:26; WVI 2021b). This origin determined the focus on the most vulnerable children as the target group of the CDO and the starting point of the CDO's organisational development. Looking at WVI's history and structure, WVI professionalised and expanded strongly since 1950 to become one of the largest Christian humanitarian organisations worldwide, with around 38 000 employees in nearly a hundred countries and an annual estimated budget of around two billion dollars (King 2019:1). Their structure includes a global partnership of all WV offices and the division into supporting and field offices (WVI 2021c; see also Section 4.2.1.). The size and (financial) resources of the CDO require clear programming and structures, hence directing the application of TD in practice. Not least, the identity of WVI as Christian relief, development, and advocacy organisation (WVI 2020b:2) determines and defines its understanding and application of TD, which is of course not static and has developed and changed over time (Lin 2019:80-81).

At the project level, the application of TD is influenced by the cooperation of local stakeholders, as TD is applied to a participative process and enhances the quality and stability of partnerships (WVI 05/2020). For the implementation, the person and the work of the development facilitator (field worker, development worker, and those in management positions) is also part of the context that influences and shapes the application of TD together with the other agents of change (God, the church, faith leaders, other partners). Furthermore, WVI

expects that TD should lead to a mutual transformation of staff, partners, leaders, community members, governments, supporters and beneficiaries themselves (WVI 16.11.2017:3).

Moreover, the local context of the project determines how TD is applied, especially how explicit Christian witness and the Christian identity of the CDO is communicated (A\_I1:34) and with whom partnerships may result from the initial planning dialogue:

So, when talking about faith leaders and their crucial role in influencing people behaviour towards positive and healthy child development, then naturally we would go to Christian groups in such contexts. We would also go to secular groups in such context. We would also include rare Muslim groups in these contexts, but no we don't have a preference towards Christian groups or churches in these contexts. We would invite any faith-based organizations to the initial dialogue where needs of children are assessed in a certain community (A\_I1:43).

As the examined project is situated in Burundi, the Burundian context is relevant here. While 75,1% of the population in Burundi live in multidimensional poverty, the country occupies rank 185 of the HDI (UNDP 2020a). The country's economic and political crisis has worsened since 2015 (Bertelsmann Stiftung 2020:3). The majority of the population adheres to the Christian faith, with 62% Roman Catholics and 21,6% Protestant. Around 6,1% have no religious affiliation, and around 2,5% are Muslim and another 2,3% Seventh-day Adventist, while another 3,7% belong to indigenous religious groups (U.S. Department of State 21.05.2021a). With the situation of the project in a network of churches and a country with a huge majority of Christians, expression of the Christian faith is explicitly visible in WVI work (A\_I2:113), which is different in other contexts.

#### **5.2.1.4. Strategy**

The strategy is understood as implementation at organisational level. The strategy to apply TD is structurally embedded in WVI's consistent programming at the organisational and project levels. For the application, WVI has formulated its own principles of TD: listen, include, empower, connect, challenge, and adapt (WVI 2020:5-6). At the national level, those principles are included in the national office strategies, the Community Engagement and Sponsorship Plan, and all technical programmes (WVI 2017b:2). Furthermore, the TD principles

have been formulated in a partnership policy that applies to all entities of the CDO and “*is relevant to all operational contexts*” (WVI 16.11.2017:2). Those principles are put into practice at a community level by using corresponding tools such as the development programme approach, which is usually a contextualised version of the national office’s approach. The principles are generally combined with the so-called drivers of sustainability, which describe the characteristics of a community that make it more likely to sustain improvements in child well-being in the future. The building of those drivers (local ownership, partnering, transformed relationships, local and national advocacy, and household and family resilience) through the implementation of the TD principles is seen as the best chance of sustaining the organisation’s impact on child well-being (WVI 05/2020:1). Hence, the drivers of sustainability are built into the development programme approach and the associated technical programmes (Anderson 2014:2) and then adapted to the local context (:7). This has also been the case in the P4YED project, where the local church network is seeking ways to continue and sustain the results (A\_12:29).

The WVI organisational strategy to implement TD includes the core project models (CPM),<sup>2</sup> which are expected to make up the majority of WVI’s work in stable communities (WVI 2020b:20). The CPMs are all tested, evaluated, and approved and they are often combined with enabling models<sup>3</sup> (WVI 2021a). Within those CPMs, some specific models have a relational focus, aiming at churches, faith leaders or families.

Regarding the religious identity of WVI’s staff, for those who are Christians, the CDO uses an Integrated Focus, “*which means that in all places where WVI works, staff appropriately express their Christian identity, prioritise children, and empower communities and partners who are rooted in the context*” (WVI 2020b:1). In combination, this builds WVI’s distinctive identity (WVI 2020b:1). Although WVI’s approach always promotes nurturing and cultivating spiritual relations, it does not necessarily differentiate if this spiritual relationship

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<sup>2</sup> WVI has currently 16 Core Project Models. Those Project Models are specified project models that reflect the priorities of one or more sectoral, thematic or line of ministry strategy. An example is the Channel of Hope CPM that works with faith leaders to improve the situation for children. (WVI 2021a, WVI 08/2017, WVI 2016)

<sup>3</sup> An enabling project model is often combined with a specialised project model to enable the effective implementation of the overall project and serves as key component in a wider project (WVI 2021a).

is with a God called Allah or with gods called differently in other religions (:34). *“We don’t make any difference irrespectively of religion”* (A\_I1:34). So, the *“Christian approach and motivation to our work can have hundreds of expressions depending on the context”* (A\_I1:34). In the partnership policy explaining TD, God is nevertheless seen as an agent of change and expressions of the Christian faith such as prayer for their work are very important (WVI 16.11.2017:1-2). And as God is seen as agent of change, WVI’s work is understood to join God’s work (WVI 2017b:1), which corresponds to the theological understanding of Gods mission (Missio Dei: see Section 2.1.1).

Irrespective of WVI’s Christian identity, the CDO serves all people regardless of religion, race, ethnicity or gender (WVI 2020b:2). Similarly, the staff of WVI is not necessarily Christian:

Naturally most of our staff, although it is no precondition, most of our staff would have a Christian socialization, consider themselves Christian. Although, as I said, this is not a precondition, like in countries where there are no Christians, of course, we work also with staff of different ... other religion (A\_I1:43).

#### **5.2.1.5. Activities**

Activities are the implementation of TD at project level. At a project level, WVI implements TD as a process of community engagement and local partnering that creates a locally owned vision for child well-being and empowers children, families and communities to plan and control their own journey of transformation (WVI 16.11.2017). Concerning partnering with local partners, WVI generally is open for any partner that works towards the improvement of child well-being:

But I repeat myself, if a staff was found in a mixed context that he or she exclusively or predominantly works with Christian groups, when there are many groups promoting well-being of children, that would be against explicit World Vision policies which clearly states that we are non-discriminatory in whatever sense (A\_I1:43).

Consequently, WVI engages churches and other faith-based organisations in local partnerships, but also the government and other existing community groups and organisations (Anderson 04/2014:4). WVI therefore builds partnerships across stakeholders (community, government, academic, etc.) (:7) and at

all levels relevant to the programme (district, subdistrict, zonal, regional, village, city (:10):

Partnering enables our work to be more sustainable, effective and efficient. It builds legitimacy, it taps into local knowledge enhancing the relevance and efficiency of our activities, it leverages external resources, it enables co-operation, it reduces duplication and builds long-term ownership (WVI 2020b:6).

WVI's strategy also comprises connecting local partners and the community *“with governments, businesses, and others to form partnerships and develop access to resources to achieve sustainable change”* (:6). Moreover, the beneficiaries and stakeholders, who are part of the planning process, decide for the development sector and participate in the project design and corresponding CPM and enabling models are then proposed to work with (Anderson 2014:2; WVI 2020:10, WVI 2021a). The process is thought to implement the TD principles and to build the sustainability drivers while using the corresponding approach. In stable contexts, WVI works with the “Critical Path” tool (see Figure 5.2)

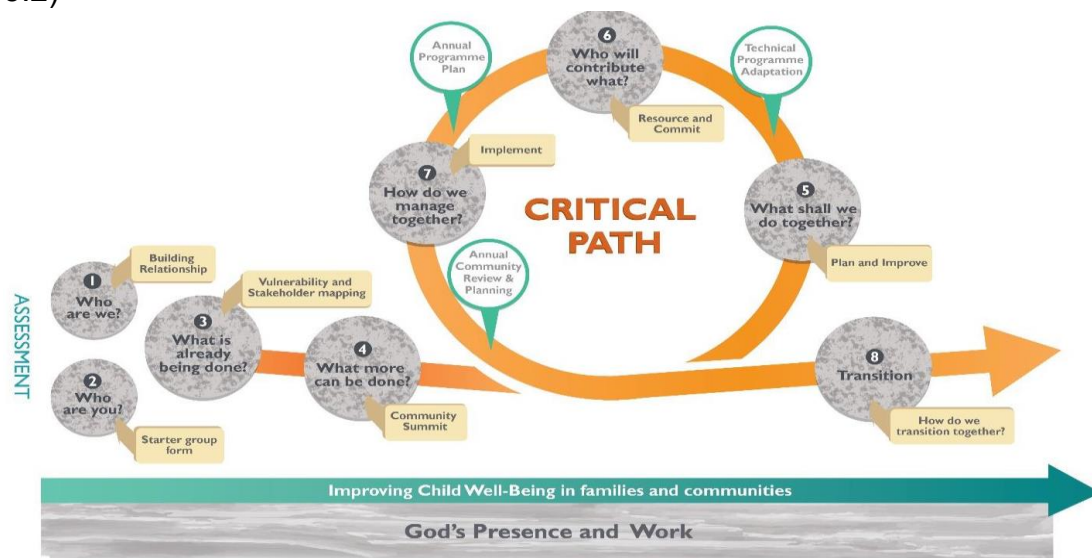


Figure 5.2: "Critical Path" Tool (WVI 05.07.2020:9)

This tool guides through the participative process and can also be used as a spiritual tool connected with prayer and discernment (2020b:10).

The project example is called Peace for Youth Economic Empowerment through Church Partnership (P4YED) (WVI Burundi 2020:1). Its goal is to empower churches and FBOs for holistic ministry to improve child well-being (:2). The desired project outcomes are the increased faith partnerships' capacity to

facilitate holistic development and the peaceful coexistence of faith groups, as well as youth economic empowerment (:2). Output activities to achieve those outcomes were the establishment and function of a partnership of faith groups for peace and development at a national level and the strengthening of its capacity for effective coordination and facilitation of peace and economic development interventions. Furthermore, 28 functional SKYE clubs have been established and equipped to promote and build peace at the community level, and also given skills and resources to engage in economic activities. The SKYE approach is an enabling model (A\_I2:61). The SKYE groups serve as money-saving and learning platform for youth in various areas, such as agriculture and livestock farming, and also addresses health awareness and relational questions (WVI Burundi 2020:4). The groups' major goal is to equip the youth with skills and resources to engage in economic activities (:5) to bring about change, to empower them and prevent unemployment (A\_I2:43-45). The project was integrated into an existing partnership of six different Burundian churches to strengthen the partnership (A\_I2:127). Throughout the project, WVI uses a PCM adapted to their needs.

As the P4YED project is planned and implemented within a network of churches, Christian witness expressed in prayer, devotion and worship, for example in team meetings, is a vital part of it (A\_I2:113). But in the implementation with the beneficiaries, the Christian witness takes the form of interventions and support of the needs of people, hence the form of deeds (A\_I2:109). The interviewee states that in a Muslim context, Christian witness would take other forms, as *“to show the love of God to people ... does not require to be Muslim or to be Catholic or Protestant. Everyone can see and they realize that you are doing a good job for them”* (A\_I2:121), which could rather be seen as religiously motivated development work.

#### **5.2.1.6. Consequences**

At an organisational level, the CDO has formulated the goal of their development work as the achievement of *“Sustained well-being of children within families and communities, especially the most vulnerable”* (WVI 2020b:4) that is derived from their vision for every child that they will enjoy *“life in all its fullness”* (WVI 2020b:4).

At a project level, the consequences of the application of TD in practice are the outcomes and the impact of the projects, in our case of the P4YED project. But it has to be noted here that in this research only interviews and documents have been analysed. The research cannot draw on project evaluation and the found consequences in the document and interviews have not been evaluated. The planned outcomes, in this case, are the increased capacities of faith partnerships to facilitate holistic development, the peaceful coexistence of faith groups and increased youth economic empowerment (WVI Burundi 2020:2). As the project was not fully concluded when the research took place, the evaluation report could not be integrated with this analysis. The project progress report shows that most of the outcomes were reached, the partnership established, and SKYE clubs founded and trained on economic topics, project management, peacebuilding and conflict resolution. the church leaders' capacity has also been strengthened through reflection meetings (WVI Burundi 2020:4-6). COVID-19 influenced the implementation of the project as gatherings of people could not take place and adaptations were required (WVI Burundi 2020:6).

The analysis of the documents points to changed relationships with the environment, with others, with God, and with the self as well as changed beliefs, values and traditions as consequences of WVI's transformational projects and those of the P4YED project. Those relational aspects of the vision are also measured and evaluated by WVI, for example in questions and indicators such as if children can report an awareness of God's love during the last 12 months or if they can report an improvement in the trust and communication with their parents or caregivers (A\_I1:52). And then "hopefully you can see a change to the better, but sometimes you can see a change to the worse or no change at all" (A\_I1:52). In addition, the P4YED project has also impacted the participating churches about the importance of also addressing other realms than the spiritual realm and therein positively transformed the local church:

Actually, in the Burundian contexts, pastors, you know, church leaders believe that when they are preaching the good news to people, they think it's all. They forget that they have to eat, they have to send their children to school, they have to ... pay for health, especially for their children. They forget it, that spirituality is good when also you have something to eat, when you ... are able to provide for your family. And then they said ... it has revealed it. I quote them. It is with this project that we realized that



preaching is ... ehm ... not the only that is necessary ... to get a life. They have also to be empowered in terms of agriculture in terms of farming, in terms of school to be able to take care of their children, their families, you know, good relationships and so on. And this is really a kind of ... witness that ... the project played ... within the Church (A\_I2:111).

### 5.2.2. Case B: Tearfund Ireland with Self-Help Groups

Figure 5.3. shows an overview of the axial coding of the documents of TFI and their SHGs in Ethiopia. The figure is then elaborated in this section.

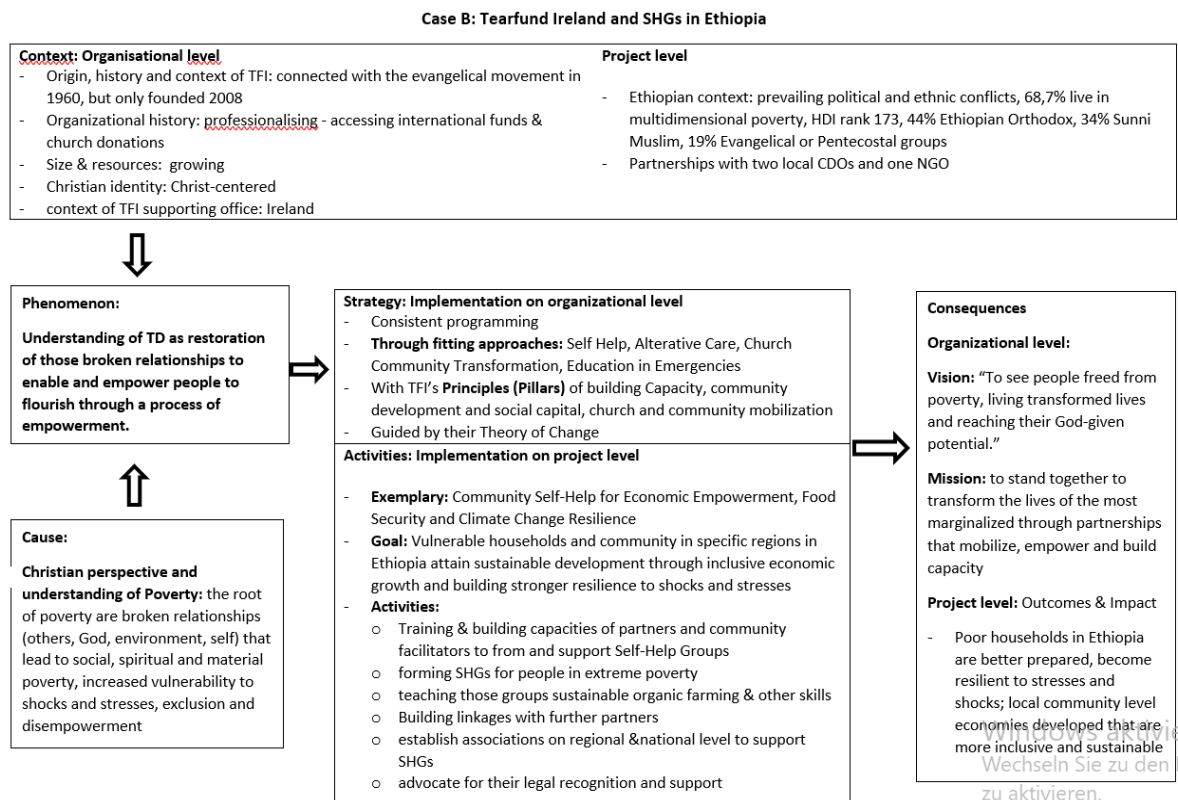


Figure 5.3: Axial coding Tearfund Ireland & SHGs Ethiopia (own figure)

#### 5.2.2.1. Cause

The cause for TFI to apply TD from a Christian perspective can also be found in the prevalence of multidimensional poverty (Tearfund 2019:4-5; TFI 2015:4). Poverty is seen because of broken relationships with oneself, with others, with God and the environment/creation. Those broken relationships result in expressions of disempowerment (exploitation, injustice, greed, and inequality) that lead to material, social and spiritual poverty (TFI 2015:1). Relational poverty is not restricted to the Global South but can be found in all countries (TFI 2015:2).

The prevalence of poverty is counterbalanced by the biblical mandate to show the love of God: *“we are called to show the love of God and the good news that Jesus promised through every aspect of our lives. We do this by serving people, as Christ did”* (Tearfund 2016:2). Tearfund thus understands its calling as to *“follow Jesus where the need is greatest and to work with the church to see people lifted out of poverty”* (Tearfund 2016:2). As TFI assumes that *“it is possible to address poverty effectively by creating the right environment and applying the right tools”* (Tearfund 2019:18), this leads to the next element, namely *phenomenon*.

#### **5.2.2.2. Phenomenon**

To tackle poverty as illustrated above, a specific concept and understanding of development are needed. Tearfund’s approach to overcoming poverty hence includes the restoration of all four types of broken relationships and goes beyond meeting basic needs to enable and empower people to flourish (Tearfund 2019:8). The Tearfund key concept is *“integral mission’ which understands that God is working to restore broken relationships by responding holistically to people’s needs, including economic, emotional, spiritual and physical ones”* (Tearfund 2019:12) This corresponds to the approach of the Micah Network (2001). TFI uses the term TD and integral mission interchangeably (B\_12:60). Their theory of change that responds to their theory of poverty explains both their understanding of TD and their strategy (TFI 2020a:2). The theory draws on Myers’s concept of TD (Myers 2011; TFI 2020a:8) as well as Christian’s concept of power and disempowerment (Christian 1999) and theory of changes from other branches of Tear/Tearfund (TFI 2020a:8).

The mission of TFI is to *“stand together to transform the lives of the most marginalized through partnerships that mobilise, empower and build capacity”* (TFI 2020a:2). Thereby, the CDO wants to approach its vision of *“flourishing communities in partnership with local churches free from poverty and injustice”* (TFI 2020a:2). The application of this theory of change in practice and hence the implementation of TD (TFI 2015:11) are influenced and determined by the context at both organisational and project levels.

### 5.2.2.3. Context

At an organisational level, the application of TD is determined by the applying entity, the CDO. While TFI is a quite young organisation, the roots of the CDO go back to the evangelical movement in 1960 in the UK, which wanted to respond to poverty around the world. In the light of the Biafra famine, Christians in the UK and Ireland responded to poverty through the Evangelical Alliance Relief Fund, which later on birthed the Tearfund organisation (TFI 2015:7). After having supported Tearfund for decades, in 2000 TFI became a separate organisation, which became operational in 2008. Until 2015, TFI had already trebled its income (2015:3), a sign that the CDO is growing. The organisation focuses on vulnerable women and children at risk, transforming communities, and responding to humanitarian emergencies. It partners with churches in Ireland for funding, raising awareness for development and mission work (Tearfund Ireland 2021a). The CDO has projects in Ethiopia, Yemen, Syria/Lebanon, and Cambodia (Tearfund Ireland 2021c). The work of the CDO is highly professional, as they are working coherently with the UN SDGs and Irish Aid's International Development Policy. TFI is also a member of an umbrella body of Irish development charities (TFI 2015:20-22) together with other relief and development umbrella associations.

As the CDO is located in Ireland, the Irish context and their relationship with poverty and mission influence their work and approach to TD. The Irish population and government have their own experiences with hunger and poverty (famine in the 1840s), which tend to resonate with topics related with hunger, such as agriculture, livelihoods and income (B\_I2:31). As TFI is accessing international and government funds as well as church donations, this indeed influences the choice of approaches and sectors, as the question of fundability is always important to a CDO (B\_I2:75).

TFI describes itself as a Christ-centred organisation that wants to follow Christ's example in words, actions and its entire life (Tearfund Ireland 2015:12). This is expressed through Christian witness in practice: *"So, they can ... see and they can follow Christ based on our work, our positive work or our ... effort in changing the livelihoods of the community, the entire community"* (B\_I1:72). Hence, the CDO sees itself in line with Irish missionaries of the past and defines

its work as “... ‘missionary’ based on God’s call and heart for the poor, holding to the same values and seeking holistic transformation through working shoulder to shoulder” (TFI 2015:8). The international programmes manager describes their role as “missional” (B\_I2:122) and explains it as follows:

Our role is to help people in need come out of poverty with Christians and as Christian neighbourly love – love your neighbour as yourself and help them in this process and thereby helping churches, and people to be Christian, to be relevant to the needs of people (B\_I2:136).

He then summarises their role appropriately, at once defining the CDO’s Christian identity: *“Like the Salvation Army talks about ... soup and soul. And so ..., our thing is the soup, perhaps sometimes there would be conversations with people around soul as well, but that’s not ... our mission.”* (B\_I2:122)

At a project level, the primary context is the local context of Ethiopia, where the SHGs are implemented and where a TFI field office is located. Ethiopia has undergone a change of government in 2018 following persistent demonstrations and protests against political repressions and inequalities in land allocation (Bertelsmann Stiftung 2020a:1). Even though a Ministry of Peace was created, and political detainees were released, ethnic clashes still prevail (:1-2). Other than this, the country currently experiences a series of ethnic and political clashes around the region of Tigray (Mackintosh 2021).

Economically, there has been improvement (:2), though 68.7% of the population are in multidimensional poverty (UNDP 2020b). Around 44% of the population are part of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, 34% are Sunni Muslim, and 19% are part of Evangelical or Pentecostal groups (U.S. Department of State 12.05.2021b).

As TFI works mainly with local partners, the quality and stability of partnerships are contextually important for the implementation of TD. Those partnerships at an organisational level mirror the focus on relationships at the programmatic level (TFI 2020a:4).

For the local implementation, the funding of a project usually plays a role, as described in the organisational context. The project is funded by Irish Aid, the people of Ireland, Tear Australia and CEDAR Fund (TFI 2015:34). However, as the SHG are self-funded and not dependent on external resources (B\_I1:99), and thus work with the asset-based approach, they are highly transformational.

#### 5.2.2.4. Strategy

At the organisational level, TFI equally sets on consistent programming and has developed the organisational theory of change that responds to their understanding of poverty and includes their project approaches. Their theory of change is illustrated in figure 5.4:

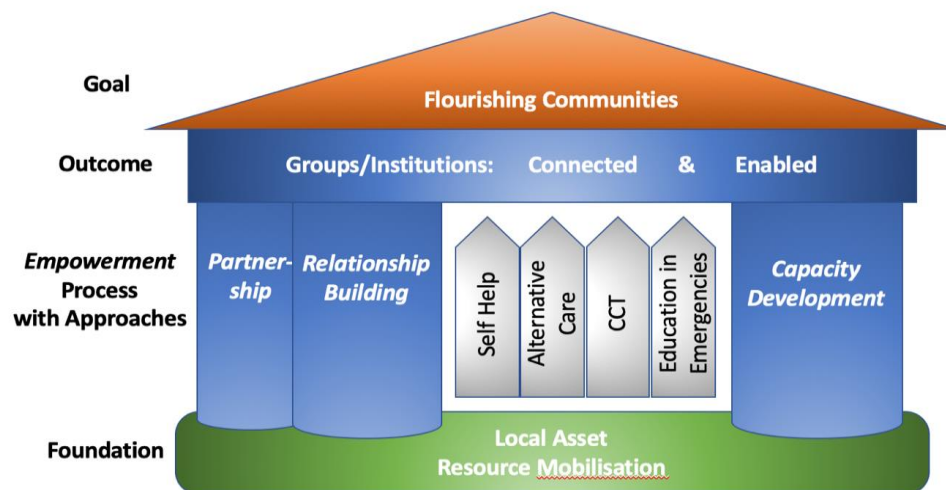


Figure 5.4: Tearfund Ireland's organisational theory of change (TFI 2020a:3)

The organisational theory of change fits into Tearfund's general theory of change (Tearfund 2019:18) and can be seen as their concept of TD. TFI has chosen approaches to implement TD that correspond with their principles: building capacity towards self-help, community development and building social capital (networks and groups that support each other), working asset-based and mobilising the church to engage with the community around felt needs (Tearfund Ireland 2015:12). Therein, the CDO has a strong focus on empowerment and capacity building.

Partnerships are vital for TFI, as they understand that TFI can only achieve impact in collaboration with others (TF 2019:18). TFI collaborates with local CDOs, NGOs and CSOs, but where necessary also with international NGOs, which reflects their focus on relationships at a programme as well as the organisational level (TFI 09/2020:3). Furthermore, the partnership with the local church and Christian-based organisations is seen of critical importance (TFI 2015:3). Nonetheless, the projects of TFI, including the SHGs are open for people of all religions as TFI also has signed the Red Cross Code of Conduct (B\_I1:72,103; B\_I2:29,115-116).

Looking at the Christian identity of the CDO, their faith as expressed in prayer and devotions and the community with churches is implemented by the staff in the supporting office in Ireland and the field office in Addis Abeba (B\_I2:111-112). Assumably this goes for the local Christian partners, too, but it is not a condition or obligation imposed on any of TFI's partners (B\_I2:112).

#### **5.2.2.5. Activities**

TFI's activities to implement TD have been examined by taking as example the project approach of SHGs in Ethiopia, which are called: *"Community Self-Help for Economic Empowerment, Food Security and Climate Change Resilience"* (TFI 2020b:1). The goal of the project was and is for vulnerable households and communities in specific regions in Ethiopia to attain sustainable development through inclusive economic growth and building stronger resilience. The project facilitates the formation of SHGs of 15-20 people in extreme poverty. SHGs serve as a platform to regularly save money, receive loans and pursue businesses to increase income. Furthermore, those groups foster democratic decision-making principles and are a platform to learn other skills (Tearfund Ireland 2020: 2). The project is run by the field office of the CDO in Ethiopia in cooperation with three national NGOs. The activities of TFI and their partners entail the training of community groups and community facilitators, creating linkages with the local government, training model farmers and local animators to demonstrate and pass on skills for soil conservation and sustainable agriculture. The community facilitators were trained to form and manage community groups (SHGs) and support for the weekly meetings of the SHG was equally provided. Furthermore, cluster level associations and a federal level association were formed, and their capacity was built to support the SHGs. To this end, policy-level dialogues with the government were enhanced for legal recognition and support. Another important activity was the capacity building of the partners in the form of workshops to put in place a monitoring and learning system across the SHG network (TFI 28.09.2020),

In this project, the motivation for the development work is coming out of the staff's belief in God and the work itself is seen as Christian witness:

People ... might see – Okay, here is Christians doing something in one way, or another. ... our role is to help people in need come out of poverty

with Christians and as Christian neighbourly love – love your neighbour as yourself and help them in this process and thereby helping churches, and people to be Christian, to be relevant to the needs of people, just like, I would say, Jesus gave people, you know, Jesus fed the 5,000 or Jesus, Jesus healed people, and sometimes he healed people and just healed them (B\_I2:136).

TFI itself has no mandate for evangelism, even though the CDO would welcome it if a church on the ground would be doing both, namely helping the poor and evangelising (B\_I2:118).

#### **5.2.2.6. Consequences**

At an organisational level, the consistent programming to achieve TFI's vision of *"Flourishing communities in partnership with local churches free from poverty and injustice"* (TFI 2020a:2) can be seen as a consequence, as the programming itself is also part of the strategy to reach the CDO's vision. The mission statement *"to stand together to transform the lives of the most marginalized through partnerships that mobilise, empower and build capacity"* (TFI 2015:10) is implemented in TFI's values (Christ-centred, justice, relational, passionate, integrity) and their strategic goals: to enable the local church and other partners to transform the lives of the most vulnerable and marginalised people, to become more known and understood across churches in Ireland and equip them to engage in social justice in development, to advocate with and on behalf of the most marginalised and vulnerable and to grow and strengthen organisational resources, technical expertise, skills and capacities (TFI 2015:10).

At a project level, the outcomes and impact of the SHG project are exemplary consequences of the phenomenon. In this case, poor households in Ethiopia are better prepared and become increasingly resilient to recurrent stress and shocks. Hence, the project has contributed to climate-adaptive agriculture, resilience, and the adaptive capacity of farmers that live in one of the most food-stressed areas of the country (relationship to the environment). Moreover, food insecurity has been reduced and a positive trend in the perceived household income noted (Dejenu 2020:18-19). Furthermore, the project strengthened the local community-level economies to be more inclusive and sustainable, for example by small business development in the SHGs (:19). More than this, in a

cost-benefit analysis, the SHGs gave evidence of long-term change in terms of asset accumulation, food intake, nutrition, education, healthcare, resilience, social relations and environmental awareness with very high cost benefit ratios (TFI 2020a: 6-7). In addition to the economic and material empowerment that fosters disaster resilience and structural changes like the legal recognition of the SHGs, the project could verifiably show the positive relational changes such as increasing social and psycho-social well-being over time, social development with decreased social isolation and improved social skills and interaction (relation to others) and improvement in self-confidence and hope (relation to self) (TFI 2020a:7; TFI 2018). Also, the relationship with God changes in some cases, as the interviews speak of “converters that come to church because of our work” (B\_I1:72) and spiritual growth (B\_I2:17). Furthermore, the work of TFI also serves the churches and SHGs to be relevant to people’s physical and spiritual needs, as the church often focuses on evangelism without being relevant to the need of people (B\_I1:72, 103; B\_I2:122).

### 5.2.3. Case C: Sheltering Wings and the Village of Hope

Figure 5.5 outlines the axial coding of the interviews and documents for Case C, SW and the Village of Hope. Underneath the figure, the content is further explained.

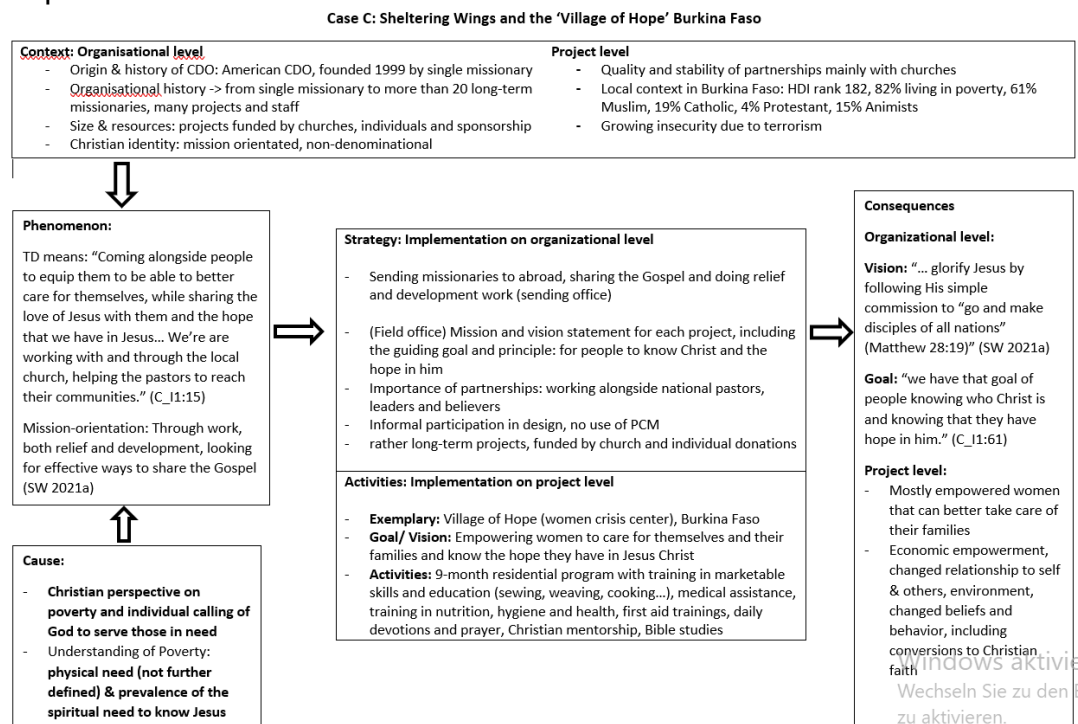


Figure 5.5: Axial coding Sheltering Wings Burkina Faso (own figure)



### **5.2.3.1. Cause**

Concerning SW, the cause of the phenomenon can be seen as the prevalence of poverty in combination with a general calling of Christians to serve the poor and the individual calling of God to serve those in need (SW 2021a). However, SW describes poverty though as “*people’s physical needs*” (SW 2021a) and the concept is not further defined. The CDO recognises the target group of their missionaries’ work as “*the lost and disenfranchised throughout the world*” (SW 2021a), wherein they express their understanding of the prevalence of a spiritual need to know Jesus Christ. Hence, poverty is not primarily understood as relational, except in the spiritual realm concerning the relationship with God.

### **5.2.3.2. Phenomenon**

The phenomenon of this outlier case is the application of relief and development work from a Christian perspective, including distinctive Christian witness (SW 2021a), which is also understood to be transformational (C\_11:75,79; C\_12:6,16). Even though the CDO might not title their Christian development work as TD, the understanding that the director of SW Burkina Faso has of TD very much corresponds to the definition of integral mission of Tearfund (2019:12):

Coming alongside people to equip them to be able to better care for themselves, while sharing the love of Jesus with them and the hope that we have in Jesus ... We’re working with and through the local church, helping the pastors to reach their communities (C\_11:15).

Hence, even if SW Burkina Faso has not officially stated that they work with TD, at least the project under the director in western Burkina Faso applies a form of TD from a Christian perspective.

### **5.2.3.3. Context**

At an organisational level, the development work is influenced by the CDO’s origin, the organisational history and the context of the sending organisation. The American CDO was founded in June 1999 by a single missionary, who started to work in Burkina Faso, West Africa. It grew a great deal over the years and expanded to different countries, and now has more than 20 long-term missionaries in the field (Sheltering Wings 2021c). Compared to cases A and B, it is quite a small CDO, which is mainly funded by individual donations, churches

and sponsorship (Sheltering Wings 2020:2). The context of the sending organisation is the USA, which also determines that most of the missionaries that work in development are Americans.

The religious identity of the CDO and its staff is focused on proclaiming the gospel as stated in their mission (SW 2021a). The organisation does not align itself to any denomination, but has a very literal understanding of the Bible and is thus rather conservative in its statement of faith (SW 2021a).

At a project level, the context highly determines how their informal development concept can be implemented. As the projects evolve around missionaries, the character, beliefs, person, conduct and understanding of the development of the missionary and the CDO's local staff influence the implementation of the concept. Furthermore, the CDO mainly partners with pastors and churches (C\_11:15), so the quality and stability of those relationships and partnerships also have a contextual influence on the application of their concept.

Moreover, the local context of Burkina Faso, where the Village of Hope is located, determines how projects can be implemented. Burkina Faso occupies rank 182 in the HDI and 82% of the population live in multidimensional poverty (UNDP 2020c). Looking at religion, 61% of the population are Muslim, 19% Catholic, 4% belong to various Protestant groups and 15% are animists (U.S. Department of State 12.05.2021c). Around 60 different ethnic groups live in Burkina Faso, who speak different languages. Around 48% of the Burkinabe belong to the ethnic people group Mossi. As the Mossi represent the ethnic majority there are seldom tribal issues (Hoffmann and Wiegand 2001: 11) The official language is French, but the rural population mostly speaks their ethnic languages. Burkina Faso is experiencing challenging security issues through Islamic terrorist attacks, especially along the border with Mali and Niger, so about 6% of the population are internally displaced. Within the cultural and country-specific settings of Burkina Faso, the Village of Hope lies in north-west Burkina, a Mossi-dominated area.

#### **5.2.3.4. Strategy**

At an organisational level, the main strategy is: *“To send and support missionaries called to reach the lost and disenfranchised throughout the world”* (SW

2021a) and then to share the love of the gospel through them in word and deed (SW 2021a) and through relief and development work (SW 2021b).

As to SW Burkina Faso at an organisational level, each project has a mission and vision statement that includes the guiding principle of the CDO, namely sharing the love and hope of Christ (C\_I1:15), and thus sharing the gospel in word and deed (SW 2020a). Another important principle is partnerships as the CDO is “*working alongside national pastors, leaders and believers*” (SW 2021a), but also partnerships with other CDOs, NGOs, local government and other partners (C\_I1:3,11,25,71; C\_I2:57). The long-term goal is for their projects to be run by Burkinabe, but for the moment the ownership and funding rely on the CDO itself (C\_I1:43).

As SW understands itself as a mission organisation that sends missionaries abroad to spread the gospel (Sheltering Wings 2021a), case C focuses on restoring the relationship with God, which is their guiding principle:

And number one, first and foremost in every single one of our Ministries is we want the people to have the hope that comes with knowing Jesus because that is number one and how they're going to continue on with life and know that they no matter what God loves them and is with them. And we'll be there walking with them (C\_I1:5).

In the project and project goals, the mission orientation of the CDO is evident. The CDO wants people to know and be reconciled with Jesus Christ as SW expresses in their statement of faith: “*We believe that man’s only hope of redemption is through faith in the shed blood of Jesus Christ, accomplished through the regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit*” (SW 2021a). This being their major goal, the relationship with God and thus appropriate Christian witness as proposed in the publication *Christian Witness in a Multi-Religious World* (WCC, PCFID and WEA 28.01.2011) are central in their work.

SW does not use a PCM but has rather long-term projects that are funded by international Christian congregations and individual donations. Local staff informally participate in the planning process of the projects (C\_I1:61).

#### **5.2.3.5. Activities**

While SW in general has the goal to reach the lost and disenfranchised throughout the world and bring the reconciliation of Christ (Sheltering Wings 2021a), this remains the main goal and guiding principle of the missionaries and

local staff in the field (C\_I1:5,61; C\_I2:2). The vision for the project Village of Hope, however, includes the notion of empowerment, according to the CDO: *“Empowering women to care for themselves and their families and to know the hope they have in Jesus Christ”* (Sheltering Wings 2016:1). The project aims at being a safe and loving environment for women and their children in crisis and wants to provide a programme that addresses each woman’s need educationally, spiritually and physically (Sheltering Wings 2016:1). For this purpose, women in difficult circumstances, for example widows, women who have experienced gender-based violence, disabled women or women in extreme poverty, are received into the project with their children for nine months to learn marketable skills. The beneficiaries of all religions are welcomed (C\_I1:51, C\_I2:28), but the Christian profile of the CDO is also openly communicated, which in the past has at times prevented people from participating in the programme (C\_I1:53; C\_I2:29).

When the women finish the programme, they graduate, leave the centre and are encouraged to start an income-generating activity. The project is implemented in a tight schedule of lessons and guided activities such as gardening, a community kitchen with hygiene and cooking lessons, spiritual and practical mentoring by instructors, Bible studies and devotions, literacy and math class, sewing, weaving, crocheting, soap-making and other handicrafts. The focus lies on marketable skills like sewing and weaving, and attending daily devotions (Sheltering Wings 2016).

#### **5.2.3.6. Consequences**

The women who complete the project are considered to experience a holistic transformation:

When I look at the women who arrive at the beginning completely lost and disoriented, who afterwards are primarily healed in their heart, they know the Lord Jesus who heals their hearts and the find their peace again and leave and encourage other women (C\_I2:6 own translation).

The women thus experience a changed relationship with themselves, others, God, and the environment (C\_I1:19) and are economically empowered (C\_I1:5,75). Their beliefs change and some also convert to the Christian faith (SW 2020b:3; C\_I1:75; C\_I2:4,6). The CDO does not conduct formal evaluation,

but the director has regular reflection meetings with the local staff on the situation and development of the project (C\_I1:74,83; C\_I2:69,73).

### 5.3. SELECTIVE CODING

A cross-case synthesis helped to put the finding of each case into relation with the other cases in this multiple-case study (Yin 2018:194). The findings are presented here, following the framework of the GT.

#### 5.3.1. Causes

The cause for the application and understanding of a Christian perspective of TD that extends over all three cases is a Christian perspective on poverty, as shown in Table 5.2.

*Table 5.2: The causes for Transformational Development*

Case A: World Vision	Case B: Tearfund Ireland	Case C: Sheltering Wings
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>God shows a bias to the poor and he expects Christians (WVI) to care for and protect them as demonstration of God's love and His passion for justice (WVI 2017b:1)</i></li> <li>- <i>Roots of poverty as broken relationships (to others, self, God, environment)</i></li> <li>- <i>Understanding of poverty as a combination of suffering, deprivation, vulnerability and broken relationships</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>Early Christian church where the community of believers shared resources, so that there was no poor among them (Acts 3:43) and other biblical mandates (Isaiah 1:17) as motivation and example for their work (TFI 2019:3-4)</i></li> <li>- <i>Roots of poverty as broken relationships (to others, self, God, environment)</i></li> <li>- <i>Understanding of poverty as social, spiritual, material poverty, increased vulnerability to shocks and stresses, exclusion and disempowerment</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>"Go and make disciples of all nations" (Matthew 28:19) (SW 2021a) and 1 Corinthians 5:17-20 commissions the reader to holistically share the Gospel and witness one's faith (SW 2021b)</i></li> <li>- <i>Prevalence of the spiritual need to know Jesus</i></li> <li>- <i>Explicit individual calling of people to serve and share the Gospel</i></li> <li>- <i>Understanding of poverty as material/physical (and spiritual) need</i></li> </ul>

As WVI (WVI 2017b:1) formulates it, the Bible tells how God shows a bias to the poor and calls Christians to care for them, therein witnessing in word and deed to their Christian faith. One example is found in Isaiah 1:17: *“Learn to do right; seek justice. Defend the oppressed. Take up the cause of the fatherless; plead the case of the widow”* (in TFI 2019:3). A reaction to poverty is the witness of Christian hope in word and deed. This religious mandate and the prevalence of poverty can be understood as the original motivation of the three CDOs to engage in development (together with relief and advocacy) work. In addition, the missionaries of SW also experienced an individual spiritual calling to their work, which has not been explicitly mentioned in the other cases.

While WVI and TFI share the relational understanding of the roots of poverty as proposed by Myers (2011:181), their understanding of poverty differs, showing the CDOs’ emphases, such as TFI’s focus on empowerment and resilience.

SW does not have an equally differentiated understanding of poverty, as the CDO focuses on material, physical and spiritual needs, especially the believed need of people to know Jesus Christ.

### 5.3.2. Phenomenon

Table 5.3: The understanding of TD of cases A, B, C

Case A: World Vision	Case B: Tearfund Ireland	Case C: Sheltering Wings
TD is both the vision and the process to achieve improved and sustained child-well-being for the most vulnerable <i>including the restoration of broken relationships</i> and thus working <i>towards life in all its fullness</i> for every child in every <i>context from a Christian perspective</i> (WVI 16.11.2017; WVI 2017b:1; WVI 2020b:5)	TD seeks <i>to restore broken relationships to enable and empower people</i> to reach their vision of <i>flourishing communities in partnership with local churches</i> free from poverty and injustice (TFI 09/2020:2)  TFI uses the term TD and integral mission interchangeably (B_I2:60)	“Coming alongside people to <i>equip them to be able to better care for themselves</i> , while <i>sharing the love of Jesus</i> with them and the hope that we have in Jesus... We’re working with and through the <i>local church</i> , helping the pastors to reach their communities” (C_I1:15)

In Table 5.2, we see the phenomenon as the understanding and application of TD in all three cases. All three CDOs see TD as the expression of their Christian faith and identity. Cases A and B include the need to restore broken relationships, as the concept is their answer to their relational understanding of poverty. Both also include the notion of shalom, expressed as *“life in all its fulness”* (WVI 16.11.2017) and *“flourishing communities ... free from poverty and injustice”* (TFI 09/2020:2). Even though case C does not mention shalom explicitly, the CDO refers to *“bringing the reconciliation of Christ”* (SW 2021a) and working in the kingdom (of God) (Matheny in SW 2019:1), which indicates the theological understanding of shalom as being their goal, too.

All three cases describe TD as a process of empowerment (empower, enable, equip). WVI and TFI describe this as a holistic and relational process of empowerment, while SW is focused on Christian witness. At this point, it should be noted, that SW has no formal definition of TD, as they lack consistent programming, especially concerning their development work. The quote by the director of SW Burkina Faso defining her understanding of TD (C\_I1:15, see Table 5.3.), corresponds with the Tearfund definition of integral mission (Tearfund 2016:12) and is hence an informal definition of TD.

Furthermore, the church is explicitly part of TD in all three cases, as the work in partnerships with and/or through the local church and also aim at mobilising the local church (WVI 16.11.2017:4; TFI 09/2020:2; C\_I1:15).

Looking at the differences between the cases, WVI focuses on the target group of the most vulnerable children, which has been defined by their history (A\_I1:25-26), while TFI focuses on the most marginalised and vulnerable (which includes children at risk and orphans, but not exclusively) (TFI 2015:15), and SW has defined their target group as the “lost and disenfranchised” (SW 2021a).

### 5.3.3. Context

#### Organisational level

Table 5.4: Organisational context of cases A, B, C

<i>Category</i>	Case A: WVI	Case B: TFI	Case C: SW
<i>History, organisational development, size and resources today</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- founded 1950 by an American missionary</li> <li>- enormous growth and highly professionalised</li> <li>- ca. 38 000 employees and numerous projects in 100 different countries</li> <li>- accessing international and national funds as well as donations (from churches and individuals) and sponsorship</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- connected with the evangelical movement in the 1960s in the UK, separate organisation since 2008</li> <li>- started highly professionalised</li> <li>- 12 employees</li> <li>- projects in five different countries</li> <li>- accessing international and national funds, as well as donations (from churches and individuals)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- American CDO, founded in 1999 by an American missionary</li> <li>- from a single missionary to more than 20 long-term missionaries, many projects and staff</li> <li>- ca. 20 international staff in four different countries</li> <li>- projects funded by churches, individuals and sponsorship</li> </ul>
<i>Religious identity</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Christian</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Christian: "Christ-centred", parachurch organisation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Christian: mission-orientated</li> </ul>
<i>Context of supporting office</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- USA/Germany</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ireland</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- USA</li> </ul>

#### 5.3.3.1 History, organisational development, size and resource today

Looking at the history, the organisational development and current size and resources of the CDOs can only be done partially here, but it is evident that WVI



and SW both were started by a single American missionary and thus have similar roots. WVI grew tremendously over the last 70 years, at the same time becoming highly professionalised and evolved in its Christian understanding since its founding (Lin 2019:172). The CDO accesses international funds, individual and church donations and fosters child sponsorship. While SW has also grown over the last 22 years, it remains mainly dependent on individual donations and support from international churches, as its religious identity remains this of a mission organisation. TFI is the youngest of the three CDOs, but started quite highly professionalised, presumably through the cooperation with other Tear/Tearfund organisations, such as Tearfund UK (TFI 2015:20), and accesses international funds as well as receiving support from the Irish church. The origin and history of each CDO naturally shape the identity of each CDO and thus their current understanding and application of TD, as TFI for example defines their work as “... ‘missionary’, based on God’s call and heart for the poor, holding to the same values and seeking holistic transformation through working shoulder to shoulder” (TFI 2015:8), hence aligning themselves with the work of former Irish missionaries (:8), even though the CDO renounces evangelism and proselytising in their work (B\_I2:118).

#### **5.3.3.2. Religious identity**

It is significant that the religious identity of WVI shifted from an American evangelical missionary organisation to one of the largest Christian international relief, development and advocacy organisations. In this context, it has been interpreted that “*being Christian has become an adjective describing the kind of development relief and advocacy organization it is*” (Lin 2019:80). TFI describes itself as “*Christ-centred*” (TFI 2015:10), but does not see its mandate as evangelism or even proselytising. Nonetheless, the two interviewees from TFI understood their work as an expression of their Christian faith (B\_I2:123; B\_I1:72) and were open if their Christian partners evangelised (B\_I2:118). However, SW see their mandate as evangelising and sharing their faith. Hence, the (religious) identity nurtures the CDOs’ understanding of TD and its application, particularly concerning the implementation of Christian witness and strategic priorities.

### 5.3.3.3. Context of supporting office

Another interesting point is the fact that the context of the support office influences the application of TD in practice. TFI reports in their strategic paper how the Irish resonate with topics around livelihood and hunger (TFI 2015:7-8), thus projects in this sector seem to be more likely to be funded and implemented (C\_I2:31). This is very likely to be similar in the other cases but has not been mentioned explicitly.

Table 5.5: Context on project level for cases A, B, C

Category	Case A: WVI	Case B: TFI	Case C: SW
<i>Local context</i>	Burundi: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- majority Christian (62% Catholic, 21,6% Protestant)</li> <li>- 75% of the population are poor</li> <li>- HDI rank 185</li> <li>- political unrest</li> </ul>	Ethiopia: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 44% Ethiopian Orthodox, 34% Sunni Muslim, 19% Evangelical or Pentecostal groups</li> <li>- 68,7% of population live in poverty</li> <li>- HDI rank 173</li> <li>- prevailing political and ethnic conflicts</li> </ul>	Burkina Faso: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 61% Muslim, 19% Catholic, 4% Protestant, 15% animists</li> <li>- 82% of population are living in poverty</li> <li>- HDI rank 182</li> <li>- Growing insecurity due to terrorism</li> </ul>
<i>Project partners</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Project established with and through a network of churches</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Partnerships with two local CDOs and one NGO</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Local Protestant church</li> </ul>

At a project level, the local context highly determines the application of TD as development projects are contextually adapted and respond to local needs. WVI for example, focuses on the promotion of peace through relying on a network of churches in Burundi, which has lately experienced political unrest, at the same time promoting economic empowerment in a poor country.

### 5.3.3.4. Project partners

Similarly, the partners with whom the projects are implemented are relevant to the application of TD, as the WVI and TFI partners mainly implement the

programmes. Therefore, the quality and stability of the partnerships, as well as the partners' priorities, goals and understanding of TD, are also relevant. TFI works with two CDOs that are development wings of local churches, which strongly connects the SHG with the local church, for example, some SHGs are implemented by local churches (C\_12:49). SW mainly works with the local church by including Christian women from the church as mentors for the women and visiting their church services and events with the beneficiaries.

### 5.3.4. Strategy

Table 5.6: Organisational strategies cases A, B, C

<i>Categories</i>	Case A: WVI	Case B: TFI	Case C: SW
<i>Principles</i>	<p>WVI's principles of TD:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Listen (to God and to people we serve)</li> <li>- Include (the most vulnerable children and their families)</li> <li>- Empower (children and communities)</li> <li>- Connect (with partners)</li> <li>- Challenge (the systems that cause poverty and vulnerability)</li> <li>- Adapt (to each context and to changing circumstances)</li> </ul> <p>Sustainability Drivers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Local ownership</li> <li>- Partnering</li> <li>- Transformed relationships</li> </ul>	<p>With TFI's Pillars:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- building Capacity</li> <li>- community development and social capital</li> <li>- church and community mobilisation</li> </ul> <p>Values:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Christ-centred</li> <li>- Justice</li> <li>- Empowerment</li> <li>- Relational</li> <li>- Passionate</li> <li>- Integrity</li> </ul> <p>guided by their theory of change</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Sending missionaries abroad, sharing the Gospel and doing relief and development work (sending/supporting office)</li> <li>- Guiding principle: for people to know Christ and the hope in him</li> <li>- Importance of partnerships: working alongside national pastors, leaders and believers</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Local and national advocacy</li> <li>- Household and family resilience</li> </ul>		
<i>Implementation</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- As process of community engagement and local partnering outworking TD principles, building sustainability drivers with the corresponding approaches</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Through partnerships and capacity building and the mobilisation of church and community</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- With and through local staff</li> <li>- Rather long-term projects, funded by church and individual donations</li> </ul>
<i>Project model/approaches</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Tested and approved Core Projects Models and Enabling Project Models, including specific project models for churches, faith leaders and with a relational focus, etc.</li> <li>- Specific approaches for different contexts (fragile states, urban context, etc.)</li> </ul>	Through fitting programmatic approaches: self-help, alternative care, church community transformation, education in emergencies, etc.	-
<i>Programming</i>	Consistent programming on organisational and project level	Consistent programming on organisational and project level	Fragmented programming <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- (Field office) mission and vision statement for each project, including the guiding goal</li> </ul>

<i>Target group</i>	- Most vulnerable children	- The most marginalised and vulnerable	- The (spiritually) lost and disenfranchised
<i>Project cycle management</i>	- Yes, uses a PCM adapted to their needs	- Yes	- no use of PCM, long-term projects
<i>Sustainability</i>	- Very important, pursued by the implementation of the Sustainability Drivers	- Very important, implemented by the choice of sustainable approaches with high local ownership, etc.	- aspired, gradually reviewed for each project
<i>Role of Christian witness</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Importance to contextually show God's love in deeds</li> <li>- Open expressions of the Christian faith only if contextually appropriate (on both project and organisational level)</li> <li>- Nurturing spiritual relations (not necessarily Christian)</li> <li>- Local churches and faith groups as important partners</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Following Christ's example holistically, TD is seen as an expression of Christian faith, no evangelism</li> <li>- Expressions of Christian faith on organisational level and where appropriate with Christian partners</li> <li>- Open if (church-based) partners do both</li> <li>- Local church, CDOs as important partners</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Sharing the Christian faith is central</li> <li>- Prayer, Bible, devotions, worship, Christian mentorship (expressions of the Christian faith) are openly included in projects</li> <li>- Local Church as the main partner</li> </ul>
<i>Role of other religions</i>	- Partnerships with organisations of all faiths	- Partnerships mainly with churches, CDOs, but not exclusively	- Partnerships mainly with churches, but not exclusively

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Being Christian is no prerequisite for being staff</li> <li>- Beneficiaries of all religions (no discrimination regardless of faith)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Being Christian is a prerequisite</li> <li>- Beneficiaries of all religions (no discrimination regardless of faith, gender)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Staff in key positions are Christian</li> <li>- Beneficiaries of all religions (no discrimination regardless of faith, gender)</li> </ul>
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Looking at the strategy in Table 5.6 to implement each CDO's understanding of TD, different approaches are observed. TFI and WVI formulated their own principles (Pillars), which included some of the principles from Myers (2011; Section 3.2). TFI defines some aspects as their values (such as empowerment, justice and advocacy) that are part of WVI's principles and drivers, but the principles of the CDOs have much in common, which can be traced back to their similar understanding of poverty and TD. The Christian identity is included, the relational approach is visible, as is the empowering and partnership-orientated approach of both CDOs. TFI explicitly mentions the mobilisation of the church and community as one of their principles, which resembles the mobilisation of the community (and at times churches and other faith groups) that WVI envisions through their participative process of project planning, which is formulated in their principles (see Table 5.5). SW's main strategy is individual-related, as they are sending individuals abroad to share the gospel and do relief and development work. Those individuals each work with the guiding principle of enabling people to know Christ and the hope in him in partnership with local churches (C\_11:61).

WVI and TFI both often implement their projects and TD principles through partnerships and mobilising the local church and community, whereas SW implements their projects with local staff, as their long-term projects are first managed by international staff and later on handed to local staff.

Another part of the strategy to implement TD for WVI and TFI are predefined CPMs and approaches that resonate with TD. While WVI has 16 CPMs (WVI 08/2017, further explained under 5.2.1) plus several Enabling Project Models for different development sectors (education, health, etc.), TFI has chosen Core Programmatic Approaches that correlate with their theory of

change and TD. WVI furthermore has contextualised approaches (development, fragile states, urban context) for the implementation of their CPMs. Though the CDOs use different terms, their professional strategy for the application of TD is similar, except concerning the choice of the development sector of the projects, which is chosen by the beneficiaries for WVI and more strongly predetermined by the Core Programmatic Approaches of TFI. This strategy brings a certain framework for implementing TD, while SW does this far more freely. SW does not have something similar; their projects are strongly determined by the local needs and spiritual guidance (SW 2021c). SW equally does not implement their project through a PCM, but has long-term projects funded by international donations. In this context, consistent programming for their development work could be of value. SW Burkina Faso has formulated a mission and vision statement for each of their projects, which includes their guiding principle, but this is barely comparable to the consistent programming of WVI and TFI, who both also work with PCMs adapted to their needs.

Those strategies show the huge differences of professionalism between the cases, but also mirror the (religious) identity of the cases as a Christian development, relief and advocacy or mission organisation. This is equally visible in the category sustainability, which is aspired to by SW but has not been planned for each project and thus has to be reviewed individually for each project.

The influence of the CDOs' origin and history can also be seen, when looking at the different target groups. While TFI and WVI agree to focus on the most vulnerable and marginalised, WVI focuses especially on children, which is connected with their history (C\_I1:26). SW organisationally has not further defined its target group than the "*the lost and disenfranchised*" (SW 2021a), but has different target groups in each project, like women in crisis for the Village of Hope.

The religious identity of the cases also determines their strategy concerning the implementation of Christian witness in their projects as well as the role of other religions. From case A to C, there can be seen an augmentation of organisational devoutness. WVI and TFI both abstain from evangelising but understand their work as expressions of their faith at an organisational level. WVI attaches importance to nurturing the spiritual relationships (to whatever

God) (A\_I1:34); TFI includes expressions of the Christian faith at an organisational level (prayer and devotions in staff meetings) and is open if their Christian partner does both, sharing the gospel and development work. For SW, sharing the Christian faith is central and expressions of their faith are openly included in projects and at times mandatory for beneficiaries. In all three cases, the local churches are important partners; for SW the local church remains the main local partner. TFI also focuses their work on local churches and CDOs (TFI 2020a:4-5), whereas WVI sees secular and other faith groups as equally important partners (A\_I1:34). Therefore, being Christian is no precondition for working with WVI, whereas at TFI adhering to Christian faith as staff is very important and for SW at least staff in key positions are Christian. All three CDOs emphasise that they serve all people without discrimination on the grounds of gender, sexual orientation, religion, or nationality.

### **5.3.5. Activities**

Concerning the projects and their goals for the three cases, they first seem to be quite different as shown in Table 5.6. While WVI has a superordinate goal to empower churches and FBOs for holistic ministry to improve child well-being, this also includes economic empowerment, which is part of the SHGs and the women's crisis centre. All projects focus on capacity building, but WVI and TFI primarily build the capacity of the partners, who then empower the beneficiaries, whereas SW directly trains its beneficiaries through their local staff. This shows also that WVI's take is rather the role of "catalyst and convenor" (WVI 16.11.2017:4; WVI 2020b:19):

By placing partnering at the core of our development programme approach, World Vision can play contextually appropriate roles of facilitator, broker or intermediary, capacity builder, technical supporter and even service deliverer where necessary. (Anderson 2014:4)

This is very similar to TFI's role as they work through "partnerships that mobilise, build capacity and empower" (TFI 2015:10). Thus, the activities of both CDOs concentrate on the capacity building of partners. Interestingly, the SKYE groups closely resemble the SHGs except for a younger focus group, and both CDOs work with local churches and/or other CDOs. Specific for SW is that evangelism



is integrated into the project, which is also part of the project’s goal, whereas this is not part of cases A and B.

Table 5.7: Activities on project level for cases A, B, C

Case A: WVI	Case B: TFI	Case C: SW
<p>Peace for Youth Economic Empowerment through Church Partnership (P4YED) Project, Burundi</p> <p><b>Goal:</b> Empowering Churches and FBOs for holistic ministry to improve CWB</p> <p><b>Activities:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Establishment of functional national-level partnership of faith groups for peace and development</li> <li>○ Strengthening the capacity of the partnership</li> <li>○ Establishment of SKYE clubs</li> <li>○ Equipping SKYE club members to promote and build peace at community level &amp; equipping them with skills and resources to engage in economic activities</li> </ul>	<p>Community Self-Help for Economic Empowerment, Food Security and Climate Change Resilience</p> <p><b>Goal:</b> Vulnerable households and communities in specific regions in Ethiopia attain sustainable development</p> <p><b>Activities:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Building capacity of partners and community facilitators to form and support SHGs</li> <li>○ Forming SHGs for people in extreme poverty</li> <li>○ Teaching SHGs sustainable organic farming and other skills</li> <li>○ Establish associations at regional and national level to support SHGs</li> <li>○ Advocate for their legal recognition and support</li> </ul>	<p>Village of Hope (women crisis centre), Burkina Faso</p> <p><b>Goal/Vision:</b> Empowering women to care for themselves and their families and know the hope they have in Jesus Christ</p> <p><b>Activities:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ 9-month residential programme with training in skills and education, medical assistance, training in nutrition, hygiene and health, daily devotions and prayer, Christian mentorship, Bible studies</li> </ul>

### 5.3.6. Consequences

As Table 5.6. shows, the consequences of the CDOs’ strategy at an organisational level are primarily their clearly defined vision and mission and goals, where only SW explicitly includes the goal of sharing their faith. For cases A and B, those visions and goals are then implemented through consistent programming into strategic goals, quality standards and other frameworks for their work and then contextualised for each project. SW lacks this consistent

programming, especially for their development and relief work, but its work is far more decentralised and individual-related.

Table 5.8: Consequences for cases A, B, C

<i>Level</i>	Case A: WVI	Case B: TFI	Case C: SW
<i>Organisational level</i>	<p><b>Vision:</b> All children shall enjoy life in all its fullness.</p> <p><b>Goal:</b> the achievement of sustained well-being of children within families and communities, especially the most vulnerable</p> <p>(WVI 16.11.2017:1-2)</p>	<p><b>Vision:</b> To see people freed from poverty, living transformed lives and reaching their God-given potential.</p> <p><b>Mission:</b> to transform the lives of the most marginalised through partnerships that mobilise, empower and build capacity (TFI 09/2020:2)</p>	<p><b>Vision:</b> “glorify Jesus by following His simple commission to “go and make disciples of all nations” (Matthew 28:19)” (SW 2021a)</p> <p><b>Goal:</b> “We have that goal of people knowing who Christ is and knowing that they have hope in him” (C_11:61)</p>
<i>Project level:</i>	<p>Outcomes and impact of P4YED:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Increased faith partnerships’ capacity to facilitate holistic development</li> <li>- Faith groups in Burundi facilitate peaceful coexistence and increased youth economic empowerment</li> </ul>	<p>Outcomes and impact of the SHGs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Poor households in Ethiopia are better prepared, become resilient to stresses and shocks; local community level economies developed that are more inclusive and sustainable</li> </ul>	<p>Outcomes and impact of the women crisis centre:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Mostly empowered women that can better take care of their families</li> <li>- Economic empowerment, changed relationship to self and others, environment, changed beliefs and behaviour, including conversions to Christian faith</li> </ul>

The consequences at a project level can only be touched on here, as the research relates to the interviewees’ statements and documents, including progress reports, but not on the projects’ final evaluation reports. Of course, the impact and outcomes of the projects are consequences of the phenomenon of

the understanding and application of TD of each CDO. The outcomes for cases A and B are the outcomes stated in their project reports (see Table 5.7), which were mostly reached, even though there have been adaptations to the project design and adaptations to changes due to the COVID-19 pandemic. All three cases seek to help their beneficiaries to improve their economic and material situation. But the scope of reached beneficiaries largely varies from case to case. The P4YED project reports 3,000 indirect beneficiaries and 630 youths and 190 faith group leaders as direct beneficiaries (WVIB 2020:2), whereas each SHG, with over 600 SHGs in Ethiopia, consists of 15-20 people, thus reaching a total of 11,013 households, which includes around 59,590 people (Dejenu 2020:4). The people that attended the women's crisis centre Village of Hope range around 15 women as direct beneficiaries, which leads to the assumption that even if including the local staff as participants and the households of the women, the total of direct and indirect beneficiaries would be estimated at around 150 people. As SW has no PCM, they do not have a formal progress or evaluation report.

In addition to quantifiable outcomes as the number of SHGs, SKYE clubs and the evaluations made, the research showed that the SHGs had a positive effect on the participants' social and psycho-social well-being (TFI 2020a:7). This highlights the relational approach and shows improved relations to oneself and to others, which would presumably be similar for WVI's SKYE clubs in Burundi. Where the project included agricultural or environmental training, the interviewees also reported changed relationships with the environment (A\_I2:52; B\_I1:69). SW is leading by example concerning topics like garbage management and recycling (C\_I1:19), but no consequences have been reported concerning the beneficiaries. Concerning the relationship with God, conversion to the Christian faith and spiritual growth have been reported for TFI (B\_I1:72; B\_I2:17) and SW (C\_I1:75; C\_I2:4,6):

There are many converts, that come to church because of our work. So, when we go to the community, we do not directly preach that Jesus is Lord or Jesus died for you, something like that. But just we just show what Jesus showed (B\_I1:72).

WVI and TFI both report that the local church also experienced transformation, as the local church mainly concentrated on preaching and the spiritual well-

being of their congregation, and did not consider the need of the people around them, which changed through WVI's and TFI's work with them (A\_I1:111,122; B\_I1:103).

#### **5.4 CONCLUSION**

The research showed how the understanding of TD is closely linked with the CDO's understanding of poverty (see 5.3.2) and differs from case to case. The common ground is that in all three cases, TD is understood as an expression of the CDO's Christian faith and identity. A relational approach aiming at the restoration of relationships (with self, others, God, the environment) is included by two of three cases, whereas it has to be said that Case C lacks a formal sophisticated definition of TD. The vision of TD includes the notion of shalom in all cases, which WVI and TFI aspire to reach through a process of participative holistic empowerment. To implement TD, all three CDOs work closely with or through the local church, aiming at their mobilisation, and with local CDOs, but also with other partners.

The application of TD is influenced by the CDO's context at an organisational level by its history, organisational development and its current size and resources, as well as its current (religious) identity. It can also be influenced by the CDO's national context, as described for TFI in Section 5.3.3. Furthermore, the implementation into specific projects is shaped by the CDOs' organisational strategy, which strongly depends on their professionalism. WVI and TFI have through consistent programming mapped out transformational principles/pillars for their work and developed project models/programmatic approaches that resonate with TD and apply their principles/pillars. WVI then applies those project models and principles, contextually adapted, by a participative process with the local community and local partners. TFI likewise applies their approaches contextually adapted through and with local partners with the use of adapted PCM. SW, as a mission organisation, however, works far more individually and has no formal framework and no PCM for the implementation of their development projects, but rather relies on spiritual guidance and long-term projects. In all three cases, the implementation of a specific project is determined by the local context and the quality and stability of partnerships with local partners and their capacity.

As a result of the CDOs' different strategies, the organisational and local context, the activities of each project are different, but some analogies could be identified. All three projects contain activities for economic and multidimensional empowerment, and capacity building of beneficiaries and partners. In addition, the focus on relationships is mirrored in the examined development projects, with all three forming groups from among the most marginalised and vulnerable, connecting and empowering them and linking them with government and other service providers. Specific for SW is the openly integrated evangelism into their project(s), which reflects their religious identity as a mission organisation.

Concerning Christian witness, it has been found that for all three CDOs, their development work is an expression of their faith, but how explicitly this faith is implemented depends on the organisational context, especially on the CDOs' religious identity. Therefore, how explicit Christian witness is visible in the application of TD varies strongly, as shown in Table 5.5. The strong connections with the local (and international) church as a partner are also part of the expressions of Christian witness and identity. In all three cases, the CDOs work with beneficiaries regardless of their religious faith and WVI also partners with the organisation of all faiths, while SW and TFI mainly, but not exclusively, partner with churches and CDOs. Those findings will be discussed and reflected in Chapter 6 to answer the research question with its sub-questions.

## CHAPTER 6: DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### 6.1 DISCUSSION OF THE KEY FINDINGS

The discussion of the key findings answers the sub-questions of the research aligned with the categories of the selective coding process. The findings are related to relevant literature, especially to the theoretical framework of this dissertation (chapters 2 and 3). This will come to a head to answer the main research question: *How is the concept of TD understood and implemented in specific projects by CDOs?* Each sub-question is subsequently discussed.

- 1) *How does the Christian perspective of TD relate to current development theories and where does it differ?*

As participation and empowerment are key values and methods of TD, the Christian development approach resonates with the participatory and capability/capabilities approach. While TD uses participatory tools such as the PLA/PRA for the application, it also promotes and fosters the capabilities of beneficiaries to become agents of change for their own situation. To this effect, TD enhances the capability and capacity of development partners and beneficiaries to claim their human rights. The Christian perspective sees each beneficiary made in the image of God, with unique capabilities that people should unfold. Where this differs, is mainly in the view of the aim. TD's aim of shalom includes a close relation with the triune God and others which possibly include ceding one's freedom for the well-being of others.

Even though the approach comprises the call for advocacy, human rights are not its focal point. Hence, TD theoretically has less in common with the human rights approach to development. In practice though, fighting for human rights and advocating for beneficiaries plays an important role at WWI and TFI on local, national and international level (I\_A1:45; Anderson 2014:6; TFI 2020:3-4). This is not the case for SW, which does mainly advocate on local level (C\_I1:96).

Related to the human development approach, TD contributes to the "*richness of life*" (UNDP 2021), which is encompassed by the major goal of shalom from a Christian perspective. Of course, the concept of shalom is more than the richness of life and comprises reconciled relationship on all levels. The aspect

of reconciliation and the focus on relationship therein is specific to TD. The case study showed that this is mainly expressed in the importance of partnerships and Christian Witness in its various forms.

Furthermore, TD resonates with and contributes to most of the SDGs. Professionalised CDOs such as WVI and TFI that work with TD therefore also measure their contribution towards the SDGs

## 2) *How is transformational understood by CDOs?*

To answer this question, the link between the understanding of poverty and the understanding of development has to be highlighted. As development concepts mostly respond to a specific understanding of poverty, how a CDO understands poverty (consciously or unconsciously) defines how their approach and understanding of TD takes shape. The understanding of poverty of the cases A and B of this study are closely connected with Myers's understanding of poverty as a distortion of relationships with others, God, oneself and the environment (see 2.1.3). TFI's understanding includes the aspect of disempowerment, the lack of access to opportunities and services and a "rule of law that does not treat everyone equal" (TFI 2020a:1). In addition, TFI relates its understanding of poverty also from Jayakumar Christian's understanding of poverty as a disempowerment system, in which the poor are thought to be held captive in disempowering social, cultural, personal and spiritual systems (1999:334). Sen's capability approach also applies here: "*A person's advantage in terms of opportunity is judged to be lower than that of another if she has less capability – less real opportunity – to achieve those things that she has reason to value*" (Sen 2009:231). SW, in contrast, reduces the understanding of poverty to material and physical needs but combines this with the understanding of a spiritual need to know Jesus Christ (see Table 5.1 and Section 5.3.1). WVI understands poverty equally as a combination of suffering, deprivation, vulnerability, and broken relationships (16.11.2017) and therefore mostly adheres to Bryant Myers. This is no surprise, as Myers's publication *Walking with the poor* (1999) has been highly influential on WVI's understanding of poverty and TD. The publication has also influenced TFI's theory of change (King 2019:222-223; TFI 2020a:8). The understanding of poverty is then combined with the biblical appeal to holistically serve and witness to the poor,

which corresponds to understanding faith as a mandate for social action (dutiful ministry) and an agent of social change (empowered ministry); in the case of SW it includes the understanding of an evangelistic ministry (Unruh & Sider 2005:69-77). As shown in Section 5.3.2. for CDOs using TD, this is also an expression of the CDOs' Christian identity.

The CDOs understand TD as a process to reach their specific visions, which all the notion of shalom to some extent. Shalom must be attained by empowering people and restoring broken relationships while working with and through local churches (Table 5.3).

The relational approach that includes restoring relationships (with self, others, God, the environment) is included by two of the three cases, while all three cases directly or indirectly contain the idea of shalom as a vision. This is an example of how *“Our worldview shapes our values, our values shape principles and goals we adopt, these determine our policies and decisions which are then implemented through our practice”* (Chester 2015:134). As stated, the Christian perspective on (transformational) development is in this way tightly connected to its application. Chester shows clearly links abstract ideas to practical action. To demonstrate this process, Table 6.1. explains with a fictitious example following the theoretical framework of TD, how the vision of shalom can be translated into TD projects. Here, it becomes clearly visible how the Christian perspective runs through the different layers of understanding of TD and finally shapes its application.

The CDOs aspire to reach their vision through a process of holistic empowerment. As to SW as a mission organisation, their understanding of poverty is less elaborate (Table 5.2) and focuses on material and physical needs plus the belief of the need to know Jesus Christ. Vinay Samuel, an Indian-Anglican evangelical theologian, understands individuals' coming to Christ and enabling individuals and communities to experience God's transforming power both as mission and transformation (Samuel 2002:244). This corresponds exactly to what the director of the SW women's centre describes, to wit that the transformation of circumstances is believed to follow personal spiritual transformation (conversion) (C\_12:6).



Table 6.1: Example of a ladder of abstraction (adapted from Chester 2015:134)

Worldview	The state of shalom is the aspired goal of creation. This means flourishing communities living in peace, justice and in restored relationships with others, themselves, God and the environment.
Values	People should have the opportunity to flourish, to experience peace, justice, and restored relationships.
Principles and goals	We will advocate with and for people experiencing unjust structures and relationships.  We will holistically empower people to use their potential and escape poverty.  We will focus on relationships and their restoration.
Policies and decision	We will build the capacity of local partners for advocacy. We will advocate on an international level for people suffering from unjust structures.  We will provide business advice, education and practical skills.  We will encourage peaceful conflict resolution, reconciliation and fostering community in the local church.
Practice	We will train a local CDO to lead a campaign.  We will provide training for skills in small businesses, literacy and handicrafts.  We will train facilitators from the local church in conflict resolution and encourage the formation of SHGs.

3) *TD is a holistic concept, but in a development project not all areas of life and people groups can be targeted at the same time. What can help to prioritise on specific areas and target groups?*

Because the scope of this question is so wide, the answer is broken down in units in this discussion. The target or focus group can be predetermined by the CDO's history, as for WVI, which focuses on children, or determined by the CDO's mission or goal, at best defined by consistent programming.

In theory, the answer to the question of whether the individual or the community should be the target is that the community and the individual only exist through their inseparable relationship with each other; therefore, the transformation of individuals always influences the community and *vice versa* (Künkler 2009:116). In practice, it has been found that WVI and TFI's work is far more community-orientated than that of SW, also because of their chosen approaches and the larger scope of their projects.

As all three CDOs respond to poverty (relational and multidimensional), the most vulnerable and marginalised have become their focus group, which needs to be identified for each context (WVI 2020b:6). The course of action that is taken to determine the focus group for each area is in the case of WVI and TFI an assessment process carried out by the beneficiaries themselves and/or the local partner (A\_1:22; B\_I1:76). TFI uses self-wealth ranking, which is described as a rigorous public process that helps to identify the poor (B\_I1:76). WVI uses a tool called "vulnerability mapping" to identify the numbers and types of vulnerable children (WVI 05.07.2020:12). Both processes must be done transparently and sensitively to avoid manipulation and biases.

Even though TFI and WVI use participatory methods to identify the local focus group, the staff is encouraged to accompany the process in personal or communal prayer (WVI 16.11.2017; B\_I2:122). As to SW, the focus groups and new projects are mainly determined through prayer, the discernment of the international staff and the counsel of local staff and pastors. In the latter case, the process is not participative and bears the risk of working directly through a cultural lens without proper contextualisation by the local staff. It seems as if SW uses social responsibility as a bridge to evangelism: *"It is often possible to move from felt needs to the needs of the spirit"* (Kapolyo 2005:137).

The same applies to the prioritisation of specific areas of life or development sectors. For professionalised CDOs such as TFI and WVI, priorities are defined through the participative assessment of local needs and capacities. This can be accompanied by the search for spiritual guidance through prayer, depending on the local context, the CDOs' religious identity and priorities. Nonetheless, it has to be noted that all three examined projects touch on many areas of life and use the basic project as a vehicle (B\_I1:27,35,53; Dejenu 2020:4) for holistic empowerment, but focus on the project's goal of economic empowerment and in the case of SW on Christian witness.

4) *How can the concept of TD be consistently applied to the work of a CDO and in specific development projects?*

For the application of TD in the work of a CDO, several strategies have been analysed in the empirical research, but there are also contextual aspects that shape the application of TD which will be briefly discussed here. Those are the organisational and local context. The organisational context includes the history, the organisational development of the CDO and its current size and resources, but equally the CDO's (religious) identity and, where applicable, the context of the supporting office. The understanding of (transformational) development evolves together with the organisational development of each CDO. As illustrated in the discussion of subquestion 3), the understanding of TD is closely linked to its application (Table 6.1). The evolvement of TD is seen best in the case of WVI, which reflects on *"their journey of development understanding and practice"* (Byworth 2003:102) to formulate their TD core document, which "emerged from a participatory process across the World Vision partnership over the past three years." (Byworth 2003:102). In this regard, the stage of the organisation has to be taken into account (Lin 2019:48): TFI, as a relatively young organisation, is still at the beginning of this evolvement, while SW's understanding of TD and their development work has already evolved (Table 5.3; C\_I1:15), but is not yet reflected in their publicity. The size and resources of a CDO influence the organisational structure and the organisational and theoretical frameworks that are used. As WVI has around 38 000 employees and offices in over 100 different countries, it indeed needs a clearer structural,

organisational and theoretical framework for applying TD than an organisation with 11 to 20 employees, which is reflected in the strategies of the CDOs.

Similarly, the funding and the corresponding fundraising concept of the CDO and specific projects influence a CDO's work and its self-concept (Kusch 2014:83). If a CDO accesses international funds, quality standards and donor requirements must be met, which influence the application of TD in specific projects. The requirement is explicitly expressed in the following: *“International donors have particular goals to achieve through their spending, creating incentives for NGOs to align their objectives and priorities with these in pursuit of funds and leading towards the external determination of local agendas”* (Banks & Hulme 2012:12). SW, which mainly works with donations of individuals and churches for a specific, predetermined project, has no restrictions concerning Christian witness; if for example it wishes to launch a project funded by an international donor that prohibits religious elements in the application of the project, it would have to change its approach. WVI and SW also include sponsorship in their fundraising concept, which has been discussed and criticised broadly (Watson & Clarke 2014; Sherman 20.04.2021). Even though this criticism is not addressed in this dissertation, it is evident that the choice to include sponsorship in a CDO's fundraising concept entails consequences for the implementation of a project, as WVI for example has included specific child sponsorship standards and guidelines for sponsorship in its programming (WVI 2020b:34).

The context of the supporting offices continues to be important, as has been described for TFI and the connection of Ireland with poverty and mission (TFI 2015:7ff). Furthermore, the country context (both of the supporting and the field office) *inter alia* affects *“the kind of management seen as desirable in the operational context of the organization”* (Lin 2019:47), which has been explored in greater depth by Hofstede (2003).

Looking at the (religious) identity of the CDOs, all three organisations have roots in missionary work through their founding history or, in the case of TFI, in aligning themselves with the work of former missionaries (TFI 2015:8). WVI has evolved situationally, strategically and structurally from an American evangelical missionary organisation to one of the largest Christian relief, development and advocacy organisations worldwide, which seems to have led

to a diminished Christian influence on the overall ministry and strategy of the organisation (Lin 2019:80-81). TFI's identity as a "*parachurch organisation*" (TFI 2015:5) is reflected in its approach of working through local churches as part of its application of TD. SW as a mission organisation also implements their projects with a focus on Christian witness in word and deed.

The literature says little on the issue of the organisational and local context in connection with TD, which is partly because Myers "*hardly addresses the organizational unit ..., preferring to focus on ... the individuals doing development work*" (Hancox 2019:3). This can be seen as a weakness of Myers's publication, as the CDO is the organisational entity that sets the structural framework for development work in the Christian context as well.

The local context that influences the application of TD can only be discussed case-wise or even project-wise, as each local context is unique and regionally and locally different. One aspect shown in Table 5.5 is the impact of partnerships, which confirms the importance of the church as a local partner of the CDOs and an agent of change, which has been deductively derived in Section 3.3.2. As the quality, stability of partnerships and capacity of the local partners contextually influence the application of TD, partnerships should be authentic, working together from a foundation of a common vision, and be complementing each other (Hoksbergen 2005:190). This is exactly what TFI (C\_I2:19) and WVI envision: "*World Vision promotes relationships with and between partners that are transformational, by living out the principles of mutual benefit, transparency and equity*" (WVI 16.11.2017:4).

The main strategy that has been successfully used to implement TD by the more professionalised CDOs, namely WVI and TFI, is consistent programming at an organisational level, which can include the definition of the CDO's identity, mission, vision, and its defined values and principles (Kusch 2014:38). This mission statement is then operationalised into standards and working principles to be practically applicable (:39ff; Table 6.1). While WVI and TFI have clearly undergone such a programming phase and are regularly reviewing their programming, SW lacks consistent programming for their development work, leaning more toward individual-related work, and seeking spiritual guidance through prayer (Table 5.5).

The context and the programming of a CDO also determine the focus group in the application of TD, as the poor have mainly been designated as the target group (Wheaton 1983 Statement 1987:263; Myers 2011:175) even though in the literature the poor and non-poor are said to require transformation equally (Bragg 1984:157; Myers 2011:178).

Concerning the TD principles, WVI and TFI do not simply adopt Myers's principles (Myers 2011:204ff; Section 3.2), but formulate their own principles corresponding to their mission, vision and values, even though the principles largely overlap with those of Myers. Participation and local ownership, the relational approach, and advocacy are important parts of both CDOs' work. The principle "*expressing a bias towards peace*" (Myers 2011:190) where specific peacebuilding projects were shown as one possibility for the application, has partly been verified. While WVI comprises peacebuilding aspirations through the P4YED project, the CDO is not "*an expert organization in peace-keeping and reconciliation*" (A\_I1:20). Nonetheless, WVI and TFI endorse and teach democratic values in their empowering projects, like the SKYE groups or the SHGs by TFI, which the international programme manager sees as a "*platform for learning democratic decision-making processes ... which to me ... is really the basis of peaceful society*" (B\_I2:31). SW, on the other hand, has no formulated principles, except the sending of missionaries and their guiding principle for people to know Christ, which reflect their identity as a mission organisation.

As to the planning and implementation of TD, there is an emphasis on the participative process of project planning (Myers 2011:243), which is echoed in WVI's approach and understanding of TD (tables 5.3 and 5.6). TFI's core programmatic approaches, such as the SHGs, are highly empowering, going beyond participation or empowerment and seeking to attain local ownership of the projects (TFI 2020a:5). The planning process is moreover thought to include the search for spiritual guidance (Myers 2011:247-248), which is definitely the case for SW (2021d) and applies to WVI (16.11.2017:1-2) and TFI (B\_I2:11-112) as well. In how far this is applied in practice can vary, as shown by Lin, who found that for example staff at World Vision Papua New Guinea "did not agree that God's direction was intentionally sought in the decision making of WV PNG" (2019:121), but this also was dependent on different individual leaders (:128).

The extent to which a CDO uses a form of PCM is highly related to the professionalism and capacity of the CDO, but also their major goals:

Anyone involved in foreign missions knows that statistics are not the only or even the most accurate metric for measuring a mission's output (...) When we show our love for God and for our neighbors, we can touch more hearts than can be counted. Walking up to a disabled widow on the street and spending time listening to her heart and giving her some water & peanuts may have a greater effect and reach than reporting the number of cans of baby formula distributed (SW 2020b:4).

To manage their projects, TFI and WVI use a PCM adapted to their need with a set of common and own tools for their work (WVI 2020b:34; TFI 2020b) and engage in monitoring and evaluation (TFI 2020a:3; Anderson 2014:8-9). SW uses no PCM, has long-term projects and practises informal monitoring, learning and adaption and evaluation through reflection meetings and mentoring (C\_I2:69; C\_I1:75, 83). As far as the evaluation of the CDOs' goals is concerned, the goal of shalom has been criticised as not being attainable and Offutt has cynically asked for metrics to measure shalom (Offutt 2021:44). This has been mitigated in practice to the extent that the notion of shalom is part of the vision, as seen with TFI and WVI (Table 5.3), which sets the direction of the CDOs' work. The goals have been broken down to be reachable and measurable. WVI has developed corresponding indicators to measure the "soft part of shalom" (A\_I1:52). Those are for example if the beneficiaries can report an awareness of God's love in the last 12 months, and if there is an increase in trust and communication with their parents and peers (A\_I1:52) or indicators connected to Christian impact, the emergence of hope and caring for others (Sarma & Vicray 2005: 232). The extent to which TFI includes the measurement of those relational and spiritual parts of their goals in their regular evaluations, remains open, even though it has to be mentioned that the psycho-social dimension and mechanisms of SHGs were researched with quantitative and qualitative data to capture non-quantifiable impact (TFI 2020a:7; Cromie, Fagan & Rebsso 2017).

Regarding the agents of change (development facilitator, the church and other institutions, God and the Evil One; see Section 3.3), their role was referred to during the interviews and the research, but not as centrally or exclusively as in Myers's framework for transformation (Myers 2011:202). In contrast to Myers, this research study focused on the CDO as the applying entity of TD. The

individual development facilitator, who has been roughly defined as the individual doing development work (Hancox 2019:3), is encouraged to be a holistic practitioner in the theoretical foundation of TD (Myers 2011:219ff; Section 3.3.1). The characteristics that Myers describes for a holistic practitioner have not necessarily been adopted for the CDOs' staff (for example, staff are not required to be Christian), as they expect too much and are not applicable in a code of conduct or the values of a CDO. Naturally, the personal behaviour and attitude of a development facilitator play an important role in his work, independently of his faith, and his behaviour or interpretation might differ at times from organisational frameworks. While the church as elaborated in Section 3.3.2 plays a central role as a partner in all three cases, other institutions and faith groups are also understood as agents of change, depending on the CDO's religious identity and approach. The Christian perspective of evil powers (Satan) that are working against transformation, raised by Myers (2011:65), has neither explicitly nor implicitly been mentioned in the analysed documents or the interviews, though individuals might approve of this understanding.

The organisational strategies combined with the local assessment of need and capacity and/or the process of community engagement (for WVI) then determine the goals and activities of each project, as shown in Table 5.7. The contents of projects applied with TD can thus be manifold, as can the outcomes. If and how religious elements are integrated with development services depends on each CDO's religious integration strategy (Unruh & Sider 2005:96ff).

How far the expected changes of the specific projects actually apply, could not be reported with certainty here, as the information was not drawn from evaluation reports and the research was not an evaluation of the projects' outcomes and impact.

##### *5) What role does the Christian faith play in specific projects and why?*

A highly relevant factor that shapes the phenomenon of TD and its application is the religious identity of the CDO. Unruh and Sider (2005) conducted research about the social services of churches and on some points, their research can also be applied to Christian development work and TD. While these authors have developed a typology concerning religious characteristics of social services, which will be picked up later on, they also examined the perception of



spiritual meaning in faith-based social action. This is relevant as the perception of the spiritual meaning of action can at times be the main difference and still be considered as religious activity: “While faith-based and secular activism often look similar in terms of the goods or services provided, they may be shaped by significant differences in what this involvement *means* to activists” (Unruh & Sider 2005:85). They differentiate as follows:

- a) *Dutiful ministry*: faith as mandate for social action (Unruh & Sider 2005:69)
- b) *Empowered ministry*: faith as agent of social change (:73)
- c) *Devotional ministry*: social action and the spiritual life of the self (:75)
- d) *Evangelistic ministry*: social action and the spiritual life of others (:77)

The perception that the Christian faith enhances a mandate of social action (dutiful ministry) has been found in the document analysis of the three cases (Table 5.4) as part of the causes or reasons why CDO saw the need to work with TD. “Given the perception that reality falls far short of God’s vision for individuals and communities, the corollary for many socially active Christians is that God has enlisted them to do something about it” (Unruh and Sider 2005:70). This perception certainly is part of the founding motivation of WVI (2021b), SW (2021c) and TFI (2015:5). And (Christian) faith is definitely seen as an agent of social change (empowered ministry) within the three CDOs (TF 2019:18; C\_I2:83; WVI 16.11.2017:1-2), as this includes recognising God as the agent of change (Unruh & Sider 2005:73). The devotional aspect of TD has not been explicitly found, except once (C\_I2:83), but it has not been part of the research question either. In contrast, the aspect called “evangelistic ministry” (Unruh & Sider 2005:77), which intends to have spiritual outcomes as well as material benefits, reoccurs in the context of religious integration strategies and Christian witness.

Coming back to the religious identity of the CDOs that influences their application of TD, Unruh and Sider propose a typology to cluster FBOs and their programmes or projects, following the classification of their religious characteristics at organisational and programme levels. Following this typology, SW would be defined as a faith-permeated CDO, as the CDO complies with all of its characteristics both at the organisational and project levels. TFI cannot be

classified so easily. The organisational characteristics of TFI correspond more closely with the faith-centred typology, but the characteristics of their programmes are rather faith-affiliated. WVI can be classified as faith-affiliated. This external classification of the cases' religious characteristics may not correspond to the CDOs' own assessment of their religious identity and can also vary, especially in the case of WVI and their numerous supporting and national offices, as has been shown by Lin (2019:136). WVI presents itself as a Christian organisation, TFI as a Christ-centred parachurch organisation and SW as a mission organisation. Whether religious elements are included in the SHGs in Ethiopia depends on the SHG members themselves (B\_I2:17,110) and on the local partners, who seem to integrate religious elements such as prayer in their work (B\_I1:72). SW includes religious elements such as devotions, church services, prayer and worship in the women's crisis centre as mandatory elements (SW 2016), whereas WVI adapts the expression of Christian witness and thus the inclusion of religious elements to the context (A\_I1:34). In the case of P4YED, expressions of the Christian faith are visibly included, for example with prayers, as the project is implemented through a network of churches (A\_I2:113).

How religious elements are implemented in social services provided by churches or as to this research by CDOs are described by Unruh and Sider (2005:96ff) (Table 6.2).

Table 6.2: Strategies for Integrating Religious Elements into a Social Service Program (Unruh & Sider 2005:96)

Strategy	Are explicitly religious program elements . . .		
	Substantially present?	Part of the planned program design?	Mandatory?
<i>Implicit</i>	No	No	No
<i>Invitational</i>	Yes, in the form of invitations to outside religious activities	No in the service provision; Yes in religious activities outside the program parameters	No
<i>Relational</i>	Yes, in the form of informal interactions with staff	No in the service provision; Yes in intentionally cultivated relationships	No
<i>Integrated-Optional</i>	Yes, unless clients decline to participate in religious activities	Yes	No
<i>Mandatory</i>	Yes	Yes	Yes

For SW and the Village of Hope project, this integration strategy would be mandatory (C\_I2:12), while for TFI and WVI at an organisational level it would be contextually implicit as explained above regarding the religious communication strategy. For the P4YED project, which is implemented by a network of churches, the invitational, relational and integrated-optional may be also part of the strategies. TFI's organisational strategy would similarly be implicit, but can be different for their Christian partners in Ethiopia (B\_I2:118) and is furthermore left up to the SHG groups themselves (B\_I2:17).

To implement TD, all three CDOs work closely with or through local churches, aiming at their mobilisation, and with local CDOs, but also with other partners.

- 6) *What does the use of this Christian concept mean for individuals who do not adhere to the Christian faith? Does the implementation of this concept exclude certain population groups and if yes, how is this mitigated?*

In all three cases, the CDOs work with beneficiaries regardless of their religious faith. WVI also partners with organisations of all faiths, while SW and TFI mainly but not exclusively partner with churches and CDOs.

The second part of the subquestion is: *“Does the implementation of this concept exclude certain population groups and if yes, how is this mitigated?”* Here it has to be noted that the concept per se does not exclude any population groups, and the examined CDOs try not to do so either. SW and WVI both report that there have been individuals and/or organisations that have decided not to work with them owing to their profile:

that can also happen ... to World Vision in predominantly Christian contexts, that certain groups and communities for whatever reasons, they rather don't want to work with World Vision. I mean, that is, I think, a normal experience in any social work that sometimes you need also to come to the conclusion, collaboration with some people or groups of people are better than others (A\_I1:41).

As a strategy to handle this phenomenon, WVI presents itself explicitly during the planning process, assessing the community's understanding of organisations generally and WVI specifically. Thereupon developing *“a concise message in World Vision in the country and in this community ... we should ensure that WV's national strategic priorities are explained so that the parameters of WV's*

*potential involvement are understood*” (WVI 2020b:10; Figure 5.3, Step 1: “Who are we?”). This has helped to reduce prejudice, misunderstandings, unrealistic expectations, and fears (A\_I2:127). SW also openly explains its Christian identity and all components of the programme to prospective beneficiaries of the Village of Hope. TFI mostly works with and through locally known partners, which can help local beneficiaries to understand TFI’s position. However, the CDOs are not actively work against the fact that certain people decide not to work with them. Instead, they openly communicate their Christian identity together with their identity as CDO, leaving the choice to the beneficiaries to participate or to partner with the organisation. In conclusion, neither the TD concept per se nor the examined CDOs consciously exclude people from participating in their projects. Of course, interview with direct service beneficiaries could be helpful to provide further insight into this aspect, which was not possible due to the Covid pandemic, time and the range of this study.

*7) What can this specific Christian approach add to the development discourse?*

To conclude this discussion, the final sub-question above is answered, at the same time considering possible chances and challenges of TD.

*a) The potential (and challenge) of faith in development*

The ambivalence of all social services provided by Christian organisations continues to remain in the context of TD:

One side ... looks to the transforming potential of religious faith .... They assert that faith changes people’s lives, makes them more whole persons and responsible citizens, and thus strengthens the social order. The other side... voices a pervasive norm that considers proselytizing offensive or even harmful to the social order ... they argue that it is wrong to impose one’s faith on others, especially when those other are at their most vulnerable. (Unruh and Sider 2005:17)

This contrastive perspective on the potential and perceived danger of any Christian development work can cause problems concerning partnerships or the interpretation of CDOs as having a hidden agenda. TFI and WVI have both experienced people believing that their CDO had a hidden agenda, but in both cases, this perception gradually decreased as the community saw how the CDOs worked (A\_I1:43; B\_I1:73-74). SW has no hidden agenda but

communicates their agenda quite openly as could be seen in the project Village of Hope, where each potential beneficiary has had several conversations with the centre's director in which the content of the project and the religious identity are disclosed (C\_I2:71). Of course, imposing one's faith on others, whether included in a hidden agenda or openly, or exerting pressure on people, using development services as leverage, is not appropriate and is a potential challenge for CDOs or mission organisations working with TD (see WCC, PCFID and WEA 28.01.2011:3). At the same time, as mentioned above, faith has a transforming potential, as it shapes identity and transports and nurtures values and can hence contribute to the transformation of individuals and communities (BMZ 2021). One possible strategy to react to this challenge is the continuous mission drift of CDOs. WVI, for example, contextually encourages their beneficiaries to nurture their relationships to any God, irrespectively to which God this might be (A\_I1:34). In this form, TD is applicable to all forms of

*b) Relational understanding of poverty and development*

TD adds its relational understanding of poverty and development to the development discourse, which aims at holistic transformation and empowers beneficiaries to actively engage in their process of transformation. Hence, the concept does not only apply to beneficiaries but is also transforming the CDO's staff, donors and supporters and is applicable in the Global North, for example as the Micah Network (2001, see 2.1.4) is doing. Relationships are vital for one's existence, as *"all human life, of course, happens in a network of relationships"* (A\_I1:16). If a CDO embeds TD in their mission statement and through consistent programming, smoothly applies it in their principles and strategical framework, the concept stands a chance to implement a holistic and relational approach including the vertical (God, self, environment) and horizontal (others and community) realm. As mentioned by one interviewee, all people live in a network of relationships that contribute to and determine their well-being. The restoration and transformation of those relationships are thus vital for people to experience positive change in their lives. The relationship with oneself is closely related to empowerment and a change of perspective from being poor to being an agent of change, which is what Myers calls *"healing of the marred identity"* (Myers 2011:194). From a Christian perspective, the restoration of one's

relationship with God is the key to personal change, which is also indicated by the potential of faith, as mentioned above. Moreover, faith can also increase one's resilience, give comfort, encourage, inspire, and motivate. In addition, having a relationship with God includes people easily into a religious congregation and contributes to reducing social isolation. Restoring the relationship to the environment includes the care for creation. The restoration of relationships with others is closely related to conflict-mediation and peace-building and values such as reconciliation and forgiveness. The challenge is to find fitting and appropriate ways to include the relational focus in projects or to focus on the relational aspect, as the CARSA project (Mbonyingabo 2015:366ff) in Rwanda is doing. In all cases, a consistent application of TD also entails the necessity to properly define the understanding of poverty and TD, hence the need for programming. Medium and small CDOs may lack the organisational and financial resources and the knowledge or skills to do so. For smaller CDOs, working with participative approaches and directly with the community could exceed their competences, which indicates the need for education and training in community development work and participative processes and methods. Those relational dimensions of poverty addressed by TD should be complemented by efforts to tackle structural causes of poverty. While there is a theoretical shortcoming on this subject in TD literature, two of the three cases, successfully fight against structural causes of poverty, using advocacy on personal, local, national and international level. Therein, the CDOs benefit from secular development theories and development NGOs.

The influence of secular development NGOs on CDOs is nonetheless ambivalent, as it has positively influenced the CDOs' organisational structures, access to funding, partnerships and programme design, and helped CDOs to access resources, programmatic approaches, capacity building, networks and more. However, the CDO should still keep their orientation and Christian identity, so the CDO *"needs to reflect on its means and how to maintain its identity and the application of the Christian faith whilst seeking cooperation with other development sector actors"* (Hancox 2019:8) This equally concerns CDOs working with TD from a Christian perspective.

### *c) Working with the local church*

Another contribution of TD to the development discourse is the strong inclusion and partnership with local churches, which is an important chance. “The value of the local church is that it is a grassroots network with access and the ability to influence attitudes, values and behaviour, while providing leadership” (TFI 2020a:4). Therein, the local church is furthermore connected with a network of churches that often reaches very isolated regions where other organisations and institutions have no access, and it has a political creative power (BMZ 2016:7). This puts the church in place to address the issues of social injustice in the local community and wider society (Wheaton 1983 Statement 1987:262). The local church will be present long after the CDO has ended its projects (Chester 2015:142-143); partnering with the local church offers thus the chance of sustainability, and building capacity of faith leaders presents the chance of ongoing change, as the core model project Channels of Hope of WVI is doing. As with any faith congregation, there is at the same time also the risk of using religion to maintain harmful traditions or legitimate exclusion or worse. This is why CDOs need to pay attention to whom they may partner with and build faith leaders’ capacities, as WVI is already doing.

## **6.2. METHODOLOGICAL REFLECTION**

In this research, the application of TD from a Christian perspective has been analysed based on two CDOs who work with TD and one outlier case, which locally also works with TD. One project of each CDO has also been analysed. The research included a literature review on TD and its implementation to provide a framework for empirical research. Based on that, eight relevant documents for each CDO and its corresponding project were analysed and complemented by two interviews per case. The analysis method followed the GT approach.

### **6.2.1. Course of action**

The general literature review concerning the concept of transformation and TD, which was partly conducted at a theological level, left a gap concerning the application of TD. Therefore, Chapter 3, which comprised a more specific literature review regarding the application of the Christian development concept,

was added. Those deductively derived references have been valuable to establish the interview guidelines and helped structure the analysis of the empirical research.

As to the samples taken, an adaption was made: the original plan was to have four CDOs in this comparative case study with different projects on different continents. This proved to be unrealistic due to the available time and capacity of the researcher, so the sample was reduced to three CDOs and their projects, located in different African countries (Burkina Faso, Ethiopia and Burundi).

### **6.2.2. Limitations**

Due to COVID-19 and the distances, all interviews were conducted online to protect all participants' health. Still, this could have led to missing out on non-verbal communication. Furthermore, unstable internet connections complicated mutual understanding at times. To better capture non-verbal communication and to mitigate misunderstanding, the interviews were (video-)recorded to grasp more aspects. Using this method, six interviews were conducted and recorded, with five out of six video recordings and one voice recording owing to technical challenges.

Concerning the document sample, it must be noted that there were no final evaluation reports of any of the examined projects, the projects were still ongoing as during the research. In the absence of final reports, the discussion reflects expected outcomes, outcomes mentioned in progress reports, and observed outcomes noted by the interviewees, none of which can be understood as scientifically reliable data.

As to the interviews, 24 documents with varying lengths have been analysed (Chapter 4). The analysis with the GT method resulted in 2 909 codings. This has been an immense amount of material to structure, categorise, analyse, and interpret. Therefore, not all categories have been presented and analysed in depth. A reduction to the most relevant categories was done to be able to carry out the research in time. This corresponds to the research method of GT and comprised all relevant information.

Ultimately, the research has presented a brief glimpse of three different CDOs, their structure and their work. This section cannot fully grasp the



complex framework and structures of especially WVI and TFI. Even with best effort and relying on available data, processes or contents might have been misunderstood as the researcher herself was not part of the CDOs. Where doubts arose, the researcher sought to mitigate them by contacting the CDO.

### **6.2.3. Possible bias**

The research is aware of possible bias regarding the sampling of documents and interview partners. The analysed internal documents were provided by the contact persons within each CDO or were publicly available. The provision by the CDOs means also that the sample included a preselection, which was done without the influence of the researcher.

Regarding the content, the sample consisted of different document types complemented by the interviews (Table 4.3). As to the generalisability of the results even within the CDOs themselves, there might be varying understandings of TD within one organisation from office to office and those can also be individually interpreted by staff. Hence, the retrieved understanding of the documents and interviews represents the organisational framework and insight into the interviewees' understanding of TD, but must not be regarded as universal for all entities of the CDOs.

As to the strategies in Section 5.3.4., it must be mentioned that professional CDOs have different organisational strategies, such as national strategies, partnership strategies and others that could not all be covered. The strategy presented here is the foundational strategy of the CDO for applying their understanding of TD; what can be understood as a strategy or activity can vary according to the perspective of the researcher. To mitigate bias, the results from different sources were triangulated.

### **6.2.4. Added value of the research**

This research contributes to closing the gap between the theoretical-theological discussion of transformation and TD from a Christian perspective by focusing those discussions and relating them to CDOs and projects that work with TD in practice. Furthermore, the research sample comprised three CDOs of different sizes, resources, contexts and (religious) identities and examined how they understand and apply TD in practice. The research gave insight into the

structure and functioning of the three cases and how their understanding of TD is implemented in the organization and then applied to a specific project. One case was an outlier case that defined itself as a mission organisation and only locally worked with TD. The mission organisation, namely SW, was representative of many other small mission organisations and CDOs that have less capacity and work differently than more professionalised CDOs accessing international funds. Together, those three cases can serve as examples for small and medium-sized CDOs and mission organisations on how to work with a Christian perspective of TD.

### **6.3. RECOMMENDATIONS CONCERNING THE APPLICATION OF TRANSFORMATIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

Based on the results of this study, some recommendations can be made for CDOs wishing to work with TD. This is done to give smaller and less professional CDOs ideas on how to apply TD to their projects.

#### **6.3.1. Programming**

The research showed how valuable consistent programming is for the application of TD. The definition of the vision, mission and goals, including the (religious) identity and the general focus/target group of the CDO, is the basis for a qualitative application of any development concept, providing a reliable framework for the CDO's work. The example of SW as a mission organisation shows how this CDO has developed its mission statement for sending missionaries but lacks consistent programming for its actual development work.

#### **6.3.2. Principles**

Together with programming, it is helpful to define transformational principles for development work and to regularly reflect and review them. Chapter 3 of this dissertation provides an overview of references in the literature to the application of TD, including an overview of the proposed principles (Section 3.2). This literature review and the reviewed literature (see bibliography) as well as the principles of WVI and TFI can serve as references for CDOs interested to work with TD. The inclusion of the Christian identity, the relational approach, the focus on empowerment and capacity building as well as the relational focus,

expressed for example in the importance of partnerships, have been found to be important parts of the cases' principles, especially TFI and WVI.

### **6.3.3. Implementation**

Implementing TD in a specific project encourages local participation in the project planning and its implementation. It facilitates planning of contextually adapted projects and increases local ownership and therein the sustainability of projects and their impact. TFI as a quite young and small CDO serves as an example of how the church and community can be reached at a larger scale through an approach like the SHGs. The use of appropriate planning tools such as PCM supports the transition of projects and avoids dependency on the implementing CDO.

### **6.3.4. Local church and CDOs**

In theory and praxis, the local church is a central and important player and partner. The Christian identity of CDOs can be a door-opener to finding a common vision for lasting and authentic partnerships with the local church and local CDOs, although a clear communication of the CDOs' role is needed. Establishing qualitative partnerships needs time to build relationships.

### **6.3.5. Role of Christian witness (vis-à-vis people of different faiths)**

As shown in the discussion, there are different possibilities for integrating religious strategies into one's social and/or development work (Section 6.1; Unruh & Sider 2005:96ff). Those strategies have, of course, different effects on people of different faiths and should be considered carefully. The strategies are closely linked with the Christian identity, which is defined through an organisation's history, organisational development, mission statement and current size and resources. This religious identity should equally be reviewed and reflected on regularly to avoid an unconscious drift in any one direction. As an orientation guide, the typology of Unruh and Sider (2005:110ff) can be consulted. Strategies to integrate or implement Christian witness into development work need to be carefully reviewed and reflected on to avoid manipulation or the (un)intentional exploitation of vulnerable people. The guideline provided by the WCC, PCFID and WEA (28.01.2011) is an important resource for this process.

#### **6.4. POINTS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH**

- As noted under 6.2. the understanding of TD in the organisational framework may differ from how staff in supporting and national or field offices understand and apply TD. Thus, an interesting point for further research would be to take different offices of one CDO and conduct research on the understanding of TD and its application and compare it with the formal organisational framework.
- To further explore the effects of contextualisation on the application of TD, projects of one CDO in different countries or regions could provide further information.
- Even though this research gave some indication that the typology by Unruh and Sider (2005:110ff) concerning the religious characteristics of social services organisations and programmes, as well as their other concepts, apply to CDOs and their projects, this topic would equally profit from further research with a larger sample of CDOs and their projects.
- Furthermore, the relational understanding of poverty and development, as well as their application, could be researched in depth. This could also be done in comparison to other relational development approaches.
- Partnering with the local church is an important aspect of TD. Research about the chances of and challenges concerning partnerships with local churches with CDOs is another interesting point to explore.
- In addition, the connection between personal (spiritual) transformation and the connection with the transformation of the community would be another point for further research.

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