



NORWEGIAN
SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY

“We have to break the dependency syndrome”

The role of religion in development

An empirical study of the program *Income Generating Activity* operated by *Bridge For Life*

Ethiopia

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The rich and the poor meet together; the Lord is the maker of them all.

(Proverbs 22:2, KJV)

ABSTRACT

This thesis addresses an empirical study of the non governmental organization (NGO) Bridge for Life Ethiopia (BLE) and how their implementation of income generating activity (IGA) can contribute to a sustainable human development of the country. The study will also look at the way BLE's religious values are incorporated in the field of development as understood by the participants and employees of BLE, local community and the local government, known as the Kebele. My research question is:

What effect does the local Non-Governmental Organization Bridge For Life Ethiopia have on the Sustainable Human Development in Ethiopia through their Income Generating Activities, and what role and function does religion have in this social development process?

Using this specific method of income generating activity, Bridge For Life presents a focus on the family as a whole, empowers the parents to be self-reliable while requiring them to send all their children to school, through support provided by BLE and income generated by the parents through the IGA. The research also reveals how Christianity and the role of religion contribute as a motivational factor for working in development and how it also builds trust and transformation in the community.

This qualitative and empirical in-depth research can be a contribution to the field of the role of religion and development. By operating at a local level the research also will contribute to how sustainability can be achieved, by participating locals in development work, and how cooperating with the Kebele can form a relationship of trust and transparency.

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To my God, who gives peace and hope and is always faithful.

ABBREVIATIONS

AU	African Union
BLE	Bridge for Life Ethiopia
BLN	Bridge for Life Norway
CSP	Charities and Society Proclamation no. 621/2009
DDVE	Development Dialogue on Values and Ethics
EECMY	The Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus
EOC	The Ethiopian Orthodox Church
EPRDF	Ethiopian People’s Revolutionary Democratic Front
FBO	Faith Based Organisation
GNI	Gross National Income
HDI	Human Development Index
IGA	Income Generating Activity
IMF	International Monetary Fund
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organization
MGDs	Millennium Development Goals
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NHDR	National Human Development Report
ODA	Official Development Assistance
PRs	Poverty Reduction Strategies
SAPs	Structural Adjustment Programmes
UN	United Nation
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
WB	World Bank
WCED	World Commission on Environment and Development
WFDD	World Faith Development Dialogue
WPE	Worker’s Party of Ethiopia

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1 INTRODUCTION

This thesis is an empirical study of the development program Income Generating Activities (IGA) operated by the non-profit making non-governmental organization (NGO) Bridge for Life Ethiopia (BLE).¹ In this chapter, my personal motivation for choice of topic and country of my research, as well as a short presentation of the main topic of the thesis will be given. Further, the research question and three sub-questions are presented followed by an explanation of the methodology used and the main literature for the subjects. In the end a brief overview of the content of the chapters will be presented.

1.1 Personal Motivation

Growing up as a child of a Norwegian development aid employee in Tanzania in the early 90s as well as staying in Ethiopia at the Horn of Africa², between 2010 and 2012, where I was engaged in many different projects, from learning Amharic³ and Ethiopian culture at language school, to teaching a group of adult women in a development project, has had a profound impact on my life. Chasing a deeper desire to learn more about this continent as well as the field of development, led me to pursue a Master's Degree in Religion, Society and Global Issues, focusing on the aspects of human rights, reconciliation, development and religion.

Looking from a development perspective, an enormous field of development organizations, both faith-based and secular, such as UN, Save the children, Norwegian Church Aid, The Norwegian Lutheran Mission, and the UNDP, among many others, are located in Ethiopia. After spending time in Ethiopia and having witnessed many different projects, both successful and unsuccessful, as well as hearing about how power is abused and money is wasted in various parts of Africa, I was curious to research deeper into this enormous, yet interesting field.

This opportunity presented itself when I was introduced to Bridge for Life. My interest was caught in my first meetings with the founders of Bridge for Life Ethiopia /Norway⁴ as I heard their thoughts regarding development and their Income Generation Activities (IGA). I was

¹ The picture on the front page is taken by me during the field-study in Ethiopia. This is a picture of the compound where

² See Appendix 2: Map of The horn of Africa.

³ Amharic is the official language spoken in government and business (Shinn 2013: 3).

⁴ Bridge For Life Norway (Bro for Livet Norge) is the sister-organization of Bridge For Life Ethiopia, located in Norway.

eager to conduct a more in-depth research of how they witness IGA as a contribution to a sustainable human development of the country, as well as understanding the way their religious values are incorporated to the field of development. An agreement was reached that I would conduct a social research focusing on Bridge for Life Ethiopia's Income Generating Activities and the role of religion in their organization. I found this project a perfect opportunity to research the topics I desired, as previously introduced.

The goal of the research is to find out how the organization, Bridge For life Ethiopia, can contributing to a sustainable human development through their implementation of the Income Generating Activities and how the role of religion is understood in relation to development projects, like IGA, by the participants, staff and local community.

Since BLE is not registered as a church, the Charities and Society Proclamation NO. 621/2009 required the organization to leave the spiritual portion out of their work (MFA: Charities and Societies Proclamation NO. 621/2009). Still, they appear to be rooted in Christian values that are crucial for their development work (2.5.5). It was therefore my interest to determine if spiritual life influences BLE's approach to a sustainable human development.

1.2 Presentation of the Main Topics

1.2.1 Religion and Development

The combination of religion and development is a highly complex matter. One of the reasons is how they individually contain many different approaches and principles. This makes it even more important to first define them separately (Fretheim 2012:85). I have therefore chosen this "separation" as a theme that goes through the thesis, by dividing them it makes it easier for an explanation of how the relationship will come together.

An agreement on what the definition of religion is has not yet been made among Western analysts (Haynes 2007: 14; Fretheim 2012: 84). Yet, there are two main categories in the definition of the sociology of religion: (1) The *substantive*, mainly the content, personal belief and superstition and (2) the *functional* definition, focused on the effect religion has on a certain society or people (Furseth and Repstad 2006: 16). This research will be focusing on the functional definition of religion.

Today the concept of development has grown to something Thomas Hopper explains as a multifaceted phenomenon, pointing to the way development is used differently in public discourses seeing development is either a change of “good” or change of “bad” (Hopper 2012: 11-12; Phillips 2010: 1-2). To understand it in the connection to the thesis and to better understand the nature and meaning of development a historical backdrop will therefore be important, starting with the modernization theory from the 50s with its emphasis on economic growth to a more contemporary theory based on human development focusing on people, opportunities and choices (Hopper 2012: 3,11; Bull 2006: 47).

As the new millennium approached, the development network respond to the disappointment of the ongoing poverty in the world, which lead to an initiative by the UN that focused on reaching the poor more directly, titled the eight *Millennium Development Goals* (MDGs)⁵, (Haynes 2007: 9; Bull 2006: 48-49). This turned the focus to the ways grassroots communities and community participants could contribute to sustainability by helping the locals gain more control of their own futures (Hiebert 2009: 160). The renewed focus on both human development and the MDGs brought up how faith-based bodies, like religious leaders and churches, can contribute to achieving the goals (Haynes 2007: 3-4, 9). Yet, there is still a contested issue concerning the way religious actors in the field of development can contribute with an “added value” or not (Fretheim 2012: 89). This picture will help to frame a discussion for this thesis in later chapters.

1.2.2 The Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia

As BLE is located in Ethiopia, a country that has been facing several famines, going back many centuries, with the most recent in 1984-85, has had drastic change in recent years, as it is one of the fastest growing non-oil producing economies in Africa with major economic and social improvements stated in the latest UNDP Report (Shinn 2013: 168) (UNDP: NHDR Ethiopia 2014). Yet, the country is still facing severe poverty, ranking 173rd out of 187 countries (UNDP Human Development Report 2014: 162). Despite this, the country has been able to achieve six out of the eight MDGs with a government eagerly engaged in a major

⁵ The MDGs are: (1) Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger (2) Achieve universal primary education (3) promote gender equality and empower women (4) reduce child mortality (5) Improve maternal health (6) Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases (7) Ensure environmental sustainability (8) Develop a global partnership for development (Hopper 2012:13).

effort to transform Ethiopian society and place the country on a path to become a middle-income economy by the year 2025 (UNDP: NHDR Ethiopia 2014).

Psalm 68:31 (King James Version) reads, “Princes shall come out of Egypt; Ethiopia shall soon stretch out her hands unto God.” Ethiopia is mentioned several times in the Bible and holds a rich religious history. Where the Ethiopian Orthodox Church once held great influence in the state, as expressed by Patriarch Tewoflos in 1969, “There is no state without the church and there is no church without the state (...),” today this relationship has been diminished by a growing modernization (Eide 2000: 2, 32, 34). This is also shown by the CSP of 2009, which strictly separates faith-based organizations from development work (MFA: Charities and Societies Proclamation NO. 621/2009).

1.2.3 Bridge For Life Ethiopia

Bridge For life Ethiopia is a non-governmental and non-profit making humanitarian organization. The idea and vision of BLE started in the mid 2000 with a group of Christian Ethiopians who had the same vision of helping the poorest segments in their society, especially children from vulnerable families in Ethiopia (2.5). The concept grew to what today is known as Bridge For Life Ethiopia, located in the capital Addis Ababa.

By receiving 95% of their donations from supporters in Norway, through Bridge for Life Norway, the intention was to start as an international organization (2.5.3). But due to difficulties with registration, the organization BLE is a local NGO run only by Ethiopians. The organization began with open Christian values but had to exclude the spiritual aspect in the light of the new Charities and Society Proclamation NO. 621/2009. This prohibits them from coming under the category of an FBO⁶(2.5.5). However they still pursued their dream of helping vulnerable children by opening a preschool in the Yeka sub city of Addis Ababa. Though they have Christian values, BLE is registered as an NGO, not a Faith Based Organization, alternative to many organizations that have religious values.

⁶ Faith Based Organization referred to as: FBO is defined by Clarke and Jennings; “any organization that derives its inspiration and guidance for its activities from teachings and principles of the faith or from a particular interpretation or school of thought within the faith.” (Clarke and Jennings (2007) Cited in Olowu 2011: 56).

One of the focuses of Bridge For Life is Income Generating Activities. The aim for IGA is to extend their services beyond solely giving education for children, but also to work towards sustainable economies for the parents. So far they have helped 50 guardians⁷ with the provision of a one-time start up capital of “seed money.” This is followed by business training, counseling in social economics, and teaching on savings that will lead to creating a business to support their whole family. (2.5.4)

1.3 Research Question

This thesis is a research focused on the NGO, Bridge For Life Ethiopia, placed in the Yeka sub city of Addis Ababa. I will be specifically studying the informant’s; mainly the local Kebele, the guardians, staff and board members in Ethiopia and Norway, understanding of the effect of the development program’s contribution to a sustainable human development through the IGA, and also what role and function religion has in this social development process.

My research question is therefore as follows:

What effect does the local Non-Governmental Organization Bridge For Life Ethiopia have on the Sustainable Human Development in Ethiopia through their Income Generating Activities, and what role and function does religion have in this social development process?

Sub-question 1: *How do the informants understand the importance of being a local NGO?*

Sub-question 2: *How can IGA contribute to a sustainable human development for the guardians?*

Sub-question 3: *What is the informant’s understanding of the role of religion in development?*

⁷ The parents are referred to as the “Guardians,” this stands for the parents of the children in the preschool of BLE, and the partakers in the IGA.

1.4 Method and Material

The thesis is a qualitative research meaning it will go in-depth into the program of BLE and how it is impacting the sustainable human development of the participants of the IGA. Qualitative Research, understands the social world by examining how the participants interpret the world they are a part of, and also the way social properties are products of social actors, the interaction between individuals (Bryman 2012: 380, 710). The research was therefore conducted by using semi-structured interviews, group interviews, and observation in the field in Ethiopia, including recording and writing down field notes, and collecting material that was given to me. The fieldwork I did was in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia February-March 2015. In addition, I conducted one group interview with the board members in Norway, in Bergen 11th of May 2015.

1.5 Literature

Of the literature concerning development, I have mainly focused on the following:

Understanding Development (2012) by Paul Hopper; *Development* (2010) by Anthony Payne and Nicola Phillips; *Poverty, Politics and Development Interdisciplinary Perspectives* (2006) edited by Dan Banik; *Development as Freedom* (2001) by Amartya Sen as well as United Nations Development Reports from 2014.

The focus literature for my thesis concerning religion *and* development or religion *in* development has been mostly drawn from: *Religion and Development* (2007) by Jeffrey Haynes; *Religionens Rolle I Bistand og Utvikling* (2012) edited by Asle F. Jøssang and Arne Olav Øyhus; *Religion and Development: Ways Of Transforming The World* (2011) edited by Gerrie ter Haar; and *Religion and Development: Rewriting the Secular Script* (2009) by Séverin Deneulin and Masooda Bano.

There are mainly three volumes I have sourced my information about Ethiopia. These are Eide, Ø.M. (2000) *Revolution and Religion in Ethiopia: The Growth & Persecution of the Mekane Yesus Church 1974-85*; Shinn, D.H. and Ofcansky, T.P. (2013). *Historical Dictionary of Ethiopia*; and Milkias, P. (2011) *Africa in Focus: Ethiopia*. I have also found

reports from UNDP helpful, especially the National Human Development Report Ethiopia from 2014 (UNDP: NHDR Ethiopia 2014).

There is a good amount of literature on Ethiopia, but what I have experienced is that there are very few findings about Income Generating Activities (IGA). In order to understand, I have been searching for organizations in the area of IGA and also talking to government officials to get more knowledge about the field.

1.6 Structure of Thesis

The structure of the chapters of the thesis is as follows:

In chapter 2 the background information of the thesis is presented including the current realities in Ethiopia, Ethiopian history, religion and state. Second I will look into the work of BLE, their history, vision and structure with a more in-depth description of the Income Generating Activities.

Chapter 3 presents the theoretical framework for the thesis. Theory of *development* as well as the theory of *religion and development* is explained.

Chapter 4 explains choice of methods, use of semi-structured interviews and how they were conducted, ethical consideration, and a description of the preparation for the research in Ethiopia. Lastly, difficulties and limitations that were experienced during the field studies and research will be presented.

In chapter 5 the empirical findings are presented and separated into proper categories and groups.

Chapter 6, the discussion, is where I will present an analysis of the findings of the research. The way it is presented is a discussion of the theory presented in chapter 3 against the findings from chapter 5.

In the final chapter, chapter 7, the conclusion is given by answering the research question and the sub questions of the thesis. This will be based on the previous chapters findings and analyses. I will also determine if there will be opportunities for further research.

2 BACKGROUND

In regards to the research, it is important to first consider the history to understand the current realities in Ethiopia. This will help to establish the environment in which BLE operates. In addition to this, there will be a more detailed explanation of Bridge For Life Ethiopia and their IGA program.

Located northeast in the Horn of Africa, bordering five countries – Eritrea, Sudan, Kenya, Somalia and Djibouti, Ethiopia is a land of a vast geographical, historical and cultural significance. With live volcanoes, snow-capped peaks, hot deserts, and home to the Great Rift Valley, it is also the second most populated nation in Africa with an estimated population of 96,506,031 as of July 2014 (Shinn 2013: 1-2; Worldmeters: Ethiopia Population).

Although there are more than 70 languages in Ethiopia, Amharic is the official language spoken in government and business, and Oromo or Oromiffa would be considered the most important Cushitic language (Shinn 2013: 3). With an estimated number of 85 distinct ethnic groups in Ethiopia, political parties have been formed around ethnic lines since 1991 (Shinn 2013: 163). According to the 2007 census, the largest ethnic groups are: Oromo with 34.5 % of the population, Amhara 26.9%, Tigray 6.1 %, Sidama 4%, Gurage 2.5%, Welaita 2.3%, Hadiya 1.7%, Afar 1.7% and Gamo 1.5 % (Shinn 2013: 163).

2.1 Historical Backdrop

In order to understand current situation of Ethiopia, the following section will give an important historical explanation.

2.1.1 The Rule of the Emperor Haile Selassie 1930-1974

The emperor Haile Selassie (1892-1975) brought western civilization to Ethiopia by establishing the first radio station and sending hundreds of young Ethiopians abroad to study (Shinn 2013: 202; Milkias 2011: 53-54). At the time of Haile Selassie's rule, Mussolini's desire of building a Roman Empire lead the Italians to launch an invasion in 1935, with 500,000 men against an Ethiopian army equipped with only a few guns, spears and clubs. The Ethiopians fought against the Italians for six months, until the troops of Mussolini succeeded in entering Addis Ababa, after using poisonous gas. In response, Haile Selassie fled to

England where he stayed in exile until he reclaimed the throne in 1941 and continued to modernize Ethiopia by expanding education, telecommunication and employment (Milkias 2011: 54; Shinn 2013: 203).

Despite the positive happenings, Haile Selassie met some resistance. In the constitution of 1955, the emperor vetoed, referring to himself as “sacred,” as well as making the Church and royal family in control of 90 percent of the land (Milkias 2011: 63). The unpopularity grew in 1955, as political parties were still banned and as much as 96 percent of the people were illiterate. It was these circumstances that the anti-feudal, mostly students and teachers who couldn’t channel their grievances in any other manner due to the lack of political parties, instigated a Marxist revolutionary upheaval (Milkias 2011: 64).

The bloody revolt aimed to have a shock effect on the emperor and they were hoping he would bring about rapid reform, including the abolition of feudal landownership. But Selassie’s response was just the opposite. The abortive coup d’état had sounded a clarion call for change, but he refused to implement reforms that even foreign advisers were urging him to adopt. This changed 14 years later with the Ethiopian revolution of 1974 (Milkias 2011: 65). With the failure to dismantle feudalism, corruption in high places and the claiming of the lives of hundreds of thousands of peasants, the Ethiopian revolution in 74 started to unfold. Teachers went on strike along with taxi drivers, factory workers, and members of the military. There were armed force personnel that created a committee called the Derg and started to chart the political course of the country. Haile Selassie was dethroned and died under mysterious circumstances while under palace arrest. (Milkias 2011: 66)

2.1.2 The Derg and the Red Terror 1977-1991

The Derg destroyed opposition and secured power in 1977-1978 through its “Red Terror” campaign where thousands of Ethiopians were jailed and tortured and an estimated 100,000 political opponents were killed (Shinn 2013: 351). By 1978 the Derg signed a “20 year treaty of friendship and cooperation” with the Soviet Union (Shinn 2013: xxvii). The Derg ruled in different forms, primarily under the guise of the Worker’s Party of Ethiopia (WPE), which was established in 1984 with Mengistu Haile Mariam as the secretary general. In 1987 a new constitution was written declaring that the WPE should be the leader of the state, essentially

creating a one party socialist state named the People's Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (Shinn 2013: 423). During the communist rule, the state faced opposition from several rebel fronts, predominantly in the north. It wasn't until the rebel groups unified and formed the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF), a coalition of the Ethiopian People's Democratic Movement and the Tigrayan People's Liberation Front, that they were able to fight their way into Addis Ababa in 1991 (Shinn 2013: xxviii, 158). With a lack of support from former allies due to the recent fall of communism, Mengistu Haile Mariam had no choice but to flee to Zimbabwe.

2.1.3 EPRDF from 1991 to 2015

Throughout the 90s the EPRDF established an interim government with Meles Zenawi as the acting head of state. Numerous peace talks were held between the different rebel factions and as the country rebuilt itself, treaties were made with different neighboring countries. In 1993, Eritrea voted for independence with 99.8 percent in favor, and on 24th of May they declared independence with recognition from Ethiopia (Shinn 2013: xxviii-xxix). After an unsuccessful attempt to extradite former Derg leader Mengistu from Zimbabwe, the Special Prosecutor's Office in Ethiopia found 73 former Derg officials guilty of 211 counts of mass murder, torture, and forced disappearance (Shinn 2013: xxx).

After an unexpected death of the Prime Minister, Meles Zenawi, in August 2012, the EPRDF immediately elected Zenawi's Deputy Prime Minister, Hailemariam Desalegn, as acting prime minister in September 2012 (Shinn 2013: 15).

In the following section a brief presentation Ethiopia's history and relationship with UN will be given, this is to provide a fuller understanding of how the UN is implementing development programs in Ethiopia. Second, the history of NGOs, including FBOs, will be presented.

2.1.4 Ethiopia and the United Nations

The history of Ethiopia's relationship with the UN goes back before the existence of the UN. Having been a member of the League of Nations, Ethiopia experienced first hand the failure of the League's abilities to secure peace when it was invaded by Italy (MFA: Ethio-Un

relations). After WWII, Ethiopia became one of only two African founding members of the UN (MFA: Ethio-Un relations). Ever since then Ethiopia has been highly committed and engaged with the UN and its many declarations and conventions. It has contributed significantly to the UN's peacekeeping efforts in conflicts in Korea, Rwanda, and Congo (MFA: Ethio-Un relations). Various UN agencies can be found in Ethiopia, such as the United Nations Economic Commission of Africa headquarters, in addition to the UNDP, which plays a vital role in the development of Ethiopia (MFA: Ethio-Un relations). As Ethiopia cooperates with the UN in many different ways, it continues to believe and support the vision and work of the UN in its many different capacities as quoted from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA):

Ethiopia firmly supports the belief that the UN will be able to organize itself for the serious and complicated tasks that lie ahead of us all. That is why Ethiopia will continue to strengthen its cooperation with the UN and with its specialized agencies, to help to speed up development, to protect its national security, and to work for peace and respect for international law in the Horn of Africa and globally.
(MFA: Ethio-Un relations).

2.1.5 NGOs and the Charities and Societies Proclamation of 2009

Though Ethiopia long had its own form of informal community based organizations that gave aid to its members, foreign organizations started establishing themselves as early as the 1930s as Faith Based Organizations (ICNL: NGO Law Monitor: Ethiopia). In the 50s, humanitarian NGOs started arriving, including the Red Cross and in 1952, the Ethiopian Civil Code and Regulation 321/1959 was the base for early NGO registration and operation laws (ICNL: NGO Law Monitor: Ethiopia; MFA: The CSP and national and international NGOs in Ethiopia). For over 50 years these laws were in place and as the world had modernized, it was time for the legislation to change as well for the benefit of the NGOs and Ethiopia. In 2009 the Charities and Societies Proclamation (CSP) was introduced to aid NGOs, societies, and charities in Ethiopia's development (MFA: The CSP and national and international NGOs in Ethiopia).

Through the CSP and the establishment of the Charities and Societies Agency (CSA), the government has more oversight when it comes to the registration and operation of foreign and local NGOs (MFA: The CSP and national and international NGOs in Ethiopia). Before the CSP of 2009 there were 3,822 NGOs registered in Ethiopia and after 2009, 739 of those NGOs have been reregistered with an introduction of about 300 newly registered NGOs per year (MFA: The CSP and national and international NGOs in Ethiopia).

Since the theme for this thesis is religion and development. It will be appropriate for a further explanation of the history of religion in Ethiopia and the current situation of religion in the country followed by a presentation of the relationship between the state and religion today.

2.2 Religion in Ethiopia

Religion has played an important role in Ethiopian history especially within the politics and society; therefore it will require for further information (Eide 2000: 1).

Under the name Cush, Ethiopia is mentioned in the Bible several times, which has placed a focus on the Old Testament in Ethiopian Christianity. The Ethiopian Orthodox Church (EOC) was founded in the fifth century and was the earliest pioneers of planting Christianity in sub-Saharan Africa (Shinn 2013: 156-157; Eide 2000: 31). The strong biblical culture of Christianity in Ethiopia comes from the belief that they are the chosen people of God, with direct descendants of King David of Israel (Eide 2000: 31). Religion continued to carry an influence with the Ethiopian State for several years, as the EOC was the state church, heavily involved in all legislation and government decisions (Eide 2000: 32). Patriarch Tewoflos phrased in 1969, “There is no state without the church and there is no church without the state. In Ethiopia church and state are one and the same.” (Eide 2000: 32)

However, during the revolution in 1974-91, and also with the modernization of agricultural and medical service, the church role and authority in government seemed to lose its influence (Eide 2000: 2, 34).

Ethiopia has also been exposed to Islam starting from the early seventh century when a group of Arab followers of Islam were persecuted from the authorities in Arabia, leading them to

take refuge in the Axumite kingdom in Ethiopia's highland (Shinn 2013: 216). Later in history, Islam expanded in the country through ethnic groups such as the Oromo (Eide 2013: 34). In most of the history, Muslims have been prohibited from taking part in Ethiopian life. However Emperor Menelik II and Haile Selassie I pursued more tolerance towards Muslims, compared to their predecessors. In the constitution of 1931, the Muslims gained the right to acquire land and hold important positions (Eide 2013: 35). The growing involvement by fundamentalist Wahhabism with elements coming from the Gulf States led to a financing of many new mosques in Ethiopia. In 2011 the minister of federal affairs expressed a concern about this Wahhabi influence. Not necessarily connected, in 2011 a Muslim mob burned down 69 Protestant churches in the Muslim majority area of Oromia Region, forcing 4000 people from their homes (Shinn 2013: 216-217).

The history of the missionaries has also been very influencing on the Ethiopians since their arrival in the 16th century (Shinn 2013: 293). The Ethiopian Orthodox were skeptical of most missionaries, believing they came to Ethiopia to steal from their "flock" with their offers of health-care and education (Eide 2000: 35-36). However, as a result of efforts by the Swedish Evangelical Mission for nearly a century, the mission built a good reputation with selflessness and devotion to health and education for the ones in need in Ethiopia and Eritrea. The Emperor therefore was convinced that the missionaries were an important part of the "new Ethiopia", and valued their work (Eide 2000: 36-37).

The Ethiopian Evangelical Church, Mekane Yesus (EECMY) that was founded in 1959, faced many persecutions, especially during the revolution. Evangelical churches in Ethiopia experienced closing of more than 2,500 churches as well as their leaders being imprisoned and even tortured (Eide 2000: 2-3). Despite the severe repression of missionaries during the Derg regime, the Protestants have grown since the EPRDF took power in 1991. Today, the church is one of the fastest growing churches in Africa, with a membership of over 2 million in 1998 (Eide 2000: 2). The foreign missionaries are still very active in Ethiopia, with a growing influence of the Pentecostals in the country especially within many indigenous groups (Shinn 2013: 341-342).

According to the 2007 census,⁸ today about 43.5% of the total population belongs to the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, about 34% are Muslims, and 18.6% are protestant Christian (Shinn 2013: 158, 232, 342).

2.3 Current Realities

Since the thesis is focused on the sustainable human development of Ethiopia, the following section will explain how this has been implemented. The NHDR of 2014 with its focus on “Accelerating Inclusive Growth for Sustainable Human Development in Ethiopia” will be mentioned including the worries and key areas for recommendation (UNDP: NHDR Ethiopia 2014). This will be explained to gain a better understanding of the reasons behind BLE’s implementation of IGA.

2.3.1 Ethiopia Towards a Social and Economical Change

Ethiopia has been a country that has been victim to several famines, most notably the famine of 1984-85 (Shinn 2013: 169). At the turn of the century former Ethiopian Prime Minister Meles Zewani had a vision for his nation in which he stated:

We cannot but feel deeply insulted that, at the dawn of the new millennium, ours is one of the poorest countries in the world. The darkness of poverty and backwardness had dimmed the country’s once proud and powerful reputation. A thousand years from now, when Ethiopians gather to welcome the fourth millennium, they shall say the eve of the third millennium was the beginning of the end of the dark ages in Ethiopia.
(Prime Minister Meles Zawani)

Even though the West seems to hold on to a starving Ethiopia, Zenawi’s vision is becoming a reality. The UNDP Ethiopia Annual Report from 2014 indicates a significant economic and social change in the country’s last 15 years, probing how Ethiopia is among the highest growth rates in the world with over 10% (UNDP Ethiopia: Annual Report 2014: 3). The report indicates how Ethiopia has the fastest growing economy, with a poverty rate decline

⁸ Ethiopia conducted a census 3 times in its history, the most recent in 2007 (Shinn 2013:94)

from 38.7% in 2004/05 to 26% in 2012/13 (UNDP Ethiopia: Annual Report 2014: 3). Agriculture accounts for 85% of the total employment (UNDP Ethiopia: Annual Report 2014: 3). A 53.2% increase in HDI since 2000 indicates a 3.34% annual increase (UNDP Ethiopia: Annual Report 2014: 3). The country had been able to achieve six out of eight of the Millennium Development Goals by 2015, lacking on MDG3; Gender Equality and Women Empowerment and MGD5; Reducing Maternal Mortality Rate (UNDP Ethiopia: Annual Report 2014: 3). Ethiopia is planning to become a middle-income country with a climate-resilient, carbon-neutral and green economy by the year 2025 (UNDP Ethiopia: Annual Report 2014: 6). Also through the Entrepreneurship Development Program, over 10,000 existing and emerging entrepreneurs have received intensive training since the launch of the program in 2013 (UNDP Ethiopia: Annual Report 2014: 16). Norway, with a contribution of \$1.33 million, and Japan, with a contribution of \$0.53 million complete the top 5 ranking of the UNDP Ethiopia's donors list in 2014 (UNDP Ethiopia: Annual Report 2014: 22).

2.3.2 Sustainable Human Development in Ethiopia

The NHDR of 2014 indicates the challenges that Ethiopia is still facing despite the major economic and social improvements. Over 25 million Ethiopians are still facing poverty and vulnerability and the country ranks 173rd out of 187 countries in the latest UNDP Human Development Report (UNDP Human Development Report 2014: 162).

An “inclusive growth for sustainable human development” is the focus of the report saying how in 1998, when the last NHDR was written, the development challenges that Ethiopia faced were much different. Inclusive growth meaning a sustainable pathway out of poverty (UNDP: NHDR Ethiopia 2014). However, the country is still facing the same challenges.

The most worrying factors that the report focuses on are:

- 1: Maternal- child health cares.
- 2: The un- and under-employment in urban and rural areas, especially the shortage of productive jobs for the poor and needy, particular the young.
- 3: The low level of savings, especial the high dependency ratio contributes to the level of savings, which further contributes to a low level of investment.

4: The school system is also on the list of worries. Ethiopians are getting basic education, which is a huge achievement, as the report argues. However, there is still a high level of illiteracy, with over 20 million Ethiopians who cannot read or write.

5: Corruption is still a major bottleneck in government efforts to transform the Ethiopian economy and social wellbeing.

(UNDP: NHDR Ethiopia 2014: 96)

In summary maternal child health care, un- and under-employment, low level of savings, school system, illiteracy and corruption are the main worries. Further the report focuses on three key areas for recommendation for an inclusive growth for sustainable development to get out of the problems mentioned above.

1: The first area is an expanded and deeper provision of basic social services, focusing on the qualities that are provided and that will have a long-term benefit for the poor.

2: The second promotes to support the accountability of the local governance at the Kebele level.

3: Third is to promote and encourage the private sectors that foster more productive employment for both urban and rural poor, especially those that target the most vulnerable:

How the Government should consider additional ways of expanding the role of NGOs and CSOs in improving the delivery of, social and economic services, thereby promoting a governance framework that is even more inclusive and participatory (UNDP: NHDR Ethiopia 2014: 95-96).

Since BLE is working closely with the local government office, the Kebele, a short explanation of how the Kebele system works will be necessary for the further chapters.

2.4 The Kebele System

Kebele stands for “neighborhood” in Amharic and is the smallest government administrative unit in Ethiopia. The Derg originally created the Kebele in 1974 as a controlling system that the EPRDF kept until today, operating up to 500 families in each system with a party loyalist and leaders representing ordinary citizens, the council and cabinet prepare annual

development plan, collect land and agricultural taxes, control development activities, and are involved in community conflicts (Shinn 2013: 234).

The following section will give detailed information about BLE, their visions, history and motivation. Also, an in-depth description of IGA will be given an.

2.5 Presentation of Bridge for Life Ethiopia

I will now give a presentation of Bridge for life Ethiopia and their Income Generating Activities. The information is mostly internal information, interviews, observations, and field-notes, as well as reports and documents handed to me by the representatives of BLE during my fieldwork in Ethiopia.

2.5.1 The Vision and Mission for BLE

Bridge For Life Ethiopia is a nongovernmental and a non-profit making humanitarian organization found in 2007 and established in 2008, registered by the Ministry of Justice in Ethiopia and, as of 2009, the Charities and Societies Agency as well.⁹

Their vision is to meet basic human needs and educational demands for the poorest segments of society, particularly vulnerable children. They believe in self-reliance and sustainable development among Ethiopian communities and households.

Their strategy is to bring life changing impact to guardians and their children by providing basic needs, regular education and by training the poorest segments of the community. Their mission is to increase the number of self-reliance by reducing poverty through education, job opportunities and income generating activates in the community. They cooperate together with Children, Youth and Women's Affairs Office of the local Kebele to accomplish this. (BLE 2014)

⁹ Information about BLE that was handed to me during my fieldwork will be referred to as (BLE 2013 or 2014). Additional information comes from interviews and observation from the fieldwork; I will refer to this as (BLE uncited). This can be information given to me from the government, staff or board and in some cases this cannot be considered as neutral.

2.5.2 The Pre-School

Bridge for Life Ethiopia hopes to create self-reliance and sustainable development among Ethiopian communities and households in addition to seeing a bright future for children. Through helping the “ignored portion” of the community, especially children, their vision is to change lives through education. By running a pre-school in the Yeka sub city of Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, they have helped 80 children as of 2014. In the pre-school there are two classes with a total of 24 children between the ages of four and six years old. They also cover the children’s medical costs, especially nutrition, and give emergency support to children affected/infected by HIV/AIDS (BLE 2013). After the preschool, BLE continues supporting the children in higher levels of education, up until grade ten.

2.5.3 Partners and Bridge For Life Norway

The sister organization, Bridge For Life Norway, was found with the same vision for needy people. They are responsible for 95% of Bridge for Life Ethiopia’s funding through individual supporters from different backgrounds, including both Christians and non-Christians (BLE uncited). BLE also has some partners from the government bodies to help them in achieving their mission to reduce poverty (Bro For Livet Norge)

2.5.4 Presentation of The Income Generated Activities

Income Generating Activity is a grant in the form of “seed money” given to community members to start small businesses. It encourages community members to embark on economically viable projects that could be sustained in the long run (BLE 2014).

This program was incorporated into Bridge for Life Ethiopia after the local Kebele office brought up a concern about the sustainability of the organization. They wanted to see a lasting work that would not rely solely on BLE. They asked the founders of BLE what their sustainability strategy was. After considering this and different options, BLE decided to use Income Generating Activities, with the thought, if they can help the guardians to increase their income, then they will be able to send their children to school. Since then, BLE has been able to help 50 of the children’s guardians with basic business training and by offering seed money (initially 2,200Birr, but now 4,000Birr¹⁰) to start their own Income Generating Activities. (BLE uncited)

¹⁰ The Ethiopian Birr is the currency of Ethiopia (Shinn 2013:110)

Every year, the Kebele presents a list of the poorest most vulnerable families in the community to BLE. From that list, the guardians select five people at random and the other five are chosen by the guardians' representatives, based on who is most in need, in cooperation with BLE. The ten new guardians meet with staff of BLE regularly for the first year to receive training in small business management, savings, and other areas to help prepare them to start their business. (BLE uncited)

BLE then provides the total ten guardians with a startup capital. They encourage the guardians to develop a business from a skill they already are familiar with. Then four times a year, on a quarterly basis, BLE follows up with each guardian to record the growth or decline of his or her business and evaluate the next steps. Through this they have seen very good results and business profits with 74% (BLE 2014).

BLE's goal is to follow up the guardians and their children until the child they have been supporting has reached tenth grade. BLE helps to support one child from each family to attend school, and in the case of a family with multiple children they then expect the guardians to send the other children to school with the income they have generated from the IGA. (BLE uncited)

BLE now sees that the IGA project is growing and building upon itself. Nineteen of the guardians, who already have independent, growing, small businesses, desire to come together and start a new business with the goal of building the community and increasing their revenue. This has been named group IGA. In collaboration with the concerned government offices, this group will receive additional training and even be provided a building for the business. (BLE uncited)

BLE uses the term "seed money" that the guardians receive for starting their business. This comes from a definition of "seed capital" which is defined as receiving a relatively small amount of money to start a business (Investopedia: Seed Capital). The money is often from the company founder's personal assets or from family or friends (BLE 2014).

The reality that BLE is an NGO and not an FBO is a complicated case. To understand this issue deeper, an inclusive explanation will be in the following:

2.5.5 BLE and the CSP of 2009

The Charities and Society Proclamation NO. 621/2009. Section 2 - subsection 16 states:

‘Religious Organization’ means an institution established by believers to organize and propagate their religion and shall not include organizations established for the achievement of any proclamation or charities established by the religious organization. (MFA: Charities and Societies Proclamation NO. 621/2009)

All the staff and boards members of BLE are personal Christians, however when BLE was founded in 2007, they were not registered as a religious organization (BLE uncited). Due to this, when the CSP of 2009 came into action, religious activity and charity work were not allowed to be included in the same organization. Religious organizations are only allowed to propagate their religion and other organizations working in charities like, BLE, are only allowed to continue working in charity, without including religion. Therefore, since BLE was registered as an NGO and not a religious organization (also known as FBO) the law keeps them from promoting their religion.

The law also explains how it found it necessary to enact a law in order to aid and facilitate the role of Charities and Societies in the overall development of Ethiopian peoples.

2.6 Summary

This chapter has dealt with the important background information, beginning with a brief history of Ethiopia up to the current situation of the country explaining their involvement with the United Nations and cooperation with NGOs, charities and societies. Next, the aspect of religion was introduced, showing that Ethiopia has a strong biblical Christian culture that which today is still a significant part of people’s lives. It was also discussed how Ethiopia currently has one of the fastest growing economies in sub-Saharan Africa, though it still is only ranked 173 out of 187 when it comes to facing poverty and vulnerability (UNDP Human Development Report 2014: 162). Therefore the NHDR states a focus on inclusive growth of sustainable development. The last section that was discussed was the beginning of Bridge for Life Ethiopia and a presentation of the Income Generating Activities that this thesis will be focusing on.

3 THEORY

Theory is important to the social researcher because it provides a backcloth and rationale for the research that is being conducted. It also provides a framework within which social phenomenon can be understood and the research findings can be interpreted (Bryman 2012: 20).

Above, Bryman explains how theory is an important framework for qualitative research; in the following chapter suitable key-concepts that are part of forming this theoretical structure and outline for my empirical study will be presented. Due to how the main research question for this thesis can be divided into two parts; sustainable human development, and the role of religion, I find it as a suitable structure to also divide the theory into two parts. Kjetil Fretheim explains how the combination of religion and development can become too complex and one-dimensional without first defining each term (Fretheim 2012: 84). Therefore, before continuing to discuss this relationship, I will be giving a definition of these terms separately followed by the theories that are connected to them and why they are suitable for the research.

3.1 Development

As mentioned above, development is one of the main concepts for the theoretical framework of this thesis. For the sake of my empirical study, development, with its complex nature and different methods and principles, will be discussed and how those methods and principles are mostly adaptable for the empirical research of this thesis that is presented in chapter 6.

First, a definition of the term “development” will be explained. Second, different development theories will be presented in a historical timeline, starting from the early 1950s, addressing the contested views and different structures, praxis and principles.

3.1.1 Defining Development

As defined by the Merriam-Webster Dictionary, development is:

- (1) The act or process of growing or causing something to grow or become larger or more advanced.
- (2) The act or process of creating something over a period of time.
- (3) The state of being created or made more advanced.

(Merriam-Webster Dictionary: Development)

From this definition, one can come to the conclusion that development is a process of creating something over time, however the definition cannot stop there. Today, with its enormous field of different actors and views, meanings and questions, where some say it's a change of "good" and others a change of "bad", development has grown to something Thomas Hopper explains as a multifaceted phenomenon (Phillips 2010: 1-2; Hopper 2012: 11-12). Therefore, development needs a further explanation. Hopper, stresses how an important starting point for understanding the meaning and nature of development is to examine its history (Hopper 2012: 3). In the next sections different theories will therefore be presented starting with the modernization theory from the 1950s to post modern theories addressed in the recent years to help the reader gain a better understanding of development theory.

3.1.2 Development from the 1950s to 1970s

In the aftermath of the Second World War, the modernization theory of development became a key term to programs and institutions like the United Nations (UN), the World Bank (WB) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) (Hiebert 2009: 261; Hopper 2012: 3). The UN was created in the aftermath of the Second World War, yet it was not until the 1960s, UN's first "development decade," that they became engaged in development. Since then, the United Nations has been very important in regards to development (Hopper 2012: 7).

President Harry Truman's speech in 1949 is understood for many as the starting point of development, announcing a "bold new" program using development aid from the West to reach "underdeveloped areas" helping them in achieving a start to their own development (Haynes 2007: 2). The main view of modernization theory is seeing countries moving from being traditional to modern societies where traditions and customs are seen as hindrances for development (Hopper 2012: 30). This theory places the blame for a nation being underdeveloped on its internal conditions, structures and traditions, rather than any external forces or factors. In this view, the west is seen as a counselor with its expertise and practices (Hopper 2012: 30-31).

Critics however, believe that Truman's speech causes developing countries to look to the United States as an ideal model (Hopper 2012:4). This indicates that it only presents a small

part of insight into development saying how even in most modern societies elements of traditions are also found, like in the West, in which case it can not be a universal model of development (Hopper 2012: 32).

In the 1960s the ongoing global inequality set fourth a new wave of radical and neo-Marxist critics known as the dependency theory. Their thought was based on the idea that international capitalism was exploiting the relationships causing an unequal development where the North is stealing the wealth of the South (Hopper 2012: 35). In the 1970s there was still underdevelopment and international agents like International Labour Organization and the World Bank put an emphasis on “redistribution with growth” and “basic needs” (Hopper 2012: 5). The economic growth continued to be emphasized but a greater emphasis was put on meeting the needs of the poor as well as a growing focus on environmental awareness and gender roles (Hopper 2012: 5). However, this theory also faced criticism, stating how dependency theorists “exaggerate the extent and nature of dependency” and also disregarded the internal causes of underdevelopment, meaning they emphasized the redundant role western powers bear and underplay the domestic factors like, for instance, corruption in the authorities in an African nation (Hopper 2012: 37).

With the 80s also came a debt crisis, especially in Africa and Latin America, which lead to more financial assistance from institutions like the World Bank and IMF. As this global financial recession came, it also brought about neo-liberalism, which the World Bank and IMF implemented as adjusted financial assistance, and was dependent on the developing nations participation in the global market, reducing their state socio-economic activity (Hopper 2012: 6). With the neo-liberalism drawing ideas from the classical economists Adam Smith (1723-1790) and David Ricardo (1772-1823), it argued that the countries would benefit from producing products that were cheaper compared to other countries, which would then be traded for goods they didn't have (Bull 2006: 38). Neo-liberalism was drawing from the belief that the state bureaucracies only were slowing down the developmental growth, and led to a lack in the capability for the individual, arguing how the states involvement in economy is an obstacle for the potential for global market trade (Bull 2006: 38-39).

Critics against neo-liberalism have been many, saying how export growth is often a consequence rather than a cause of economic growth (Bull 2006: 40). Other critics argue that

it produces low levels of economic growth, and that many domestic producers in the South are not able to compete with the North in the same field (Hopper 2011: 41).

The 80s were also the decade where the concept of sustainable development came into acceptance with the World Commission on Environment and Development in 1987, which led to the Brundtland Report, *Our Common Future* (Hopper 2012: 6). This concept will be discussed further in the following section.

In the 90s, neo-liberalism continued to have an effect on development, but with the widespread awareness on the importance of culture and grassroots engagements, a post-development perspective started to gain more interest. The criticism to the structural adjustment programmes (SAPs) resulted in the World Bank's Poverty Reduction Strategies (PRSs), arguing how developing countries themselves should be the ones to form their own development approaches (Hopper 2012: 7). Though the PRSs have been criticized by whether or not locals are actually involved in creating them (Hopper 2012: 7).

Looking back on the history of development, the criticism of the modernization, dependency and neo-liberal theories has led to new models that are more focused on localism and sustainable development. Therefore I find these theories important for a deeper explanation due to the theoretical framework of the thesis.

3.1.3 From Sustainable Development to Sustainable Human Development

At the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro, Sustainable Development – Agenda 21- came up, based on a report published by the World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED), named *The Brundtland Report*¹¹ after the former Prime Minister of Norway, Gro Harlem Brundtland (Ruud 2006: 135-137). The Brundtland Report defined sustainable development as, “Development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (WCED 1987: 41). The word “sustainable” means, “to uphold” coming from the Latin word “sustenerere” (Redclift 1993 cited in Ruud 2006: 136). In modern times the term comes from the German forest management; in the way a forest will be perceived sustainable if the trees that are cut will be reproduced in growth (Stenseth 1992 cited in Ruud 2006: 136). There

¹¹ Also known as *Our Common Future* (Hopper 2012: 6).

are multiple understandings and concepts of sustainable development, with many differing perspectives and approaches from deep ecologists, anthropologist and politicians, among others (Hopper 2012: 219-220). The pluralism of the concept of sustainable development also shows that countries often have their own way of pursuing it (Rogers, Jalal and Boyd 2008: 23 cited in Hopper 2012: 221).

In the 1990s The UNDP took sustainable development even further with a focus on “the ethics of development” influenced by the work of the Indian economist Amartya Sen (Bull 2006: 47). He viewed development as something that was not only about economic growth, but rather on the freedom of the individual to pursue the life that he or she has reason to value. Poverty was not simply about lack of income, but the lack of opportunity (Bull 2006: 47). With Sen’s idea, the landmark of his writings came in 1990 with the UNDP’s annual Human Development Report (HDR) and the Human Development Index (HDI). The HDI measures not only the economic growth, but also human welfare, primarily concerned with a greater attention to political freedom and social welfare. (Phillips 2010: 123; Bull 2006: 47; Hopper 2012: 11)

With the main focus on people, opportunities and choices, UNDP describes Human Development as follows:

Human development – or the human development approach - is about expanding the richness of human life, rather than simply the richness of the economy in which human beings live. It is an approach that is focused on people and their opportunities and choices. (UNDP: *About Human Development* 2015).

The Human Development Report from 2014 explains that choices, as pointed out in the quote above, are dependent on a person’s capabilities, which is everything someone can do or be (UNDP: HDR 2014: 23).

The 2014 HDR also focuses on sustainable human development. Helen Clark, the administrator of the UNDP introduces the report saying:

If people remain at risk of slipping back into poverty because of structural factors and persistent vulnerabilities, development progress will remain precarious. The

eradication of poverty is not just about ‘getting to zero’—it is also about staying there. (UNDP: HDR 2014: v)

The report emphasizes reducing vulnerability and advancing human development. It states that all people can be vulnerable to some degree, but those who are most vulnerable are the ones living in extreme poverty and deprivation, making up more than 15 % of the world’s population (UNDP: HDR 2014: 2-3).

The report points to how vulnerability restricts people from achieving better human development. Where human development is about giving people more choices, vulnerability, on the other hand, threatens choices and capabilities. Further the report states how unskilled workers and people who are illiterate are more vulnerable than others because they have fewer choices. This will affect people psychologically, in lowering their work motivation and self-confidence for example as well as physically in increasing illness. (UNDP: HDR 2014: 23).

However, human development has also received criticism for the way they measured gender inequality and how they were too obsessed with numbers (Barhan and Klasen 1999; Max-Neef 1991 cited in Phillips 2010: 124). Nevertheless Payne and Phillips argue that despite its critics, human development has contributed with a powerful new way of thinking and measuring development (Phillips 2010: 125).

The way the human-centered development is focused on empowerment can be linked to participatory development, which will be discussed later. Empowerment in this case, means that the outsiders or the “experts” role in the development process needs to be reduced as stated by some advocates of this theory (Hopper 2012:11). This is connected to Amartya Sen’s work *Development and Freedom* (2001). Here Sen emphasizes freedom, opportunity and choices of the people (Amartya Sen 2001 cited in Hopper 2012: 11). This is an important point for the thesis in the way it connects sustainable development to sustainable human development.

3.1.4 Sustainable Human Development: Education and Capabilities

When considering the research, it will be important to look at Sen's capability approach in the way it can contribute to sustainable human development, specifically in the case of education and training. I see this as important due to the fields of development this research is focusing on.

In the capability approach, Amartya Sen views education, including learning and skill development, as one of the critical foundations for other capabilities by the way it is central for the well-being (Sen 2001: 292).

Education can lead to more income, but other than income the person, through education, has also gained the ability to read, communicate, make better choices and be taken seriously (Sen 2001: 294). Hopper makes the point, drawing from Sen, that education is important to human capabilities in the way learning and skill formation increases a person's productivity and contributes to their self development (Hopper 2012: 85).

MDG number two focuses on achieving universal primary education for all children (Hopper 2012: 90). In 2010 UNESCO reported that 72 million children were missing out on the right to education. The UNESCO report says further, if this goal is to be achieved, a greater financial commitment will be needed; this includes from governments, the international community and aid donors (UNESCO 2010: 4 cited in Hopper 2012: 90-91).

However, a main reason for children not attending school is ultimately due to poverty as families in poverty keep their children from school in order to work and make money to meet their family's needs. This was shown in 2000, when 250 million children were in child labor (Hopper 2012:86-87).

Hopper points out three ways education can contribute to individuals and society; (1) It can give access to employment by equipping individuals and families. (2) Education can lead to develop values like self-discipline, self-motivation and the importance of hard work. (3) It can also lead to new opportunities and new ideas. (Hopper 2012: 85) He points out examples were education helped small-farmers in developing countries increase their production and has motivated parents to send their children to school (Hopper 2012: 84-85).

3.1.5 NGOs and Participatory Development Theory

A reaction to the top-down, western-dominated approach to development, participatory development took off in the 1970s (Chambers 1997 cited in Hopper 2012: 159). Where micro credits, like in Bangladesh with the Grameen Bank, gave its financial assistance directly to the poor, which was found to be very successful (Hopper 2012: 160). Participatory development has different concepts but a common theme is that it emphasizes localism, self-determination, grassroots activity, and empowerment. It involves local people at all stages in the development process and in return, this makes them more in charge of their own life (Hopper 2012: 160).

(s)ince people themselves know best what they need, what they want and what they can afford, only close cooperation between project implementers and the community can lead to project effectiveness. (Desai 2000b: 117 cited in Hopper 2012: 160)

The way that sustainability is a “buzz word” today, participatory development seems to be very close to this term:

...Participation is inextricably linked with a central preoccupation of our age, namely achieving sustainability. Quite simply, sustainable development necessitates community participation. (Hopper 2012: 160)

For some, participatory development is about power and who controls it. It challenges the traditional role of international agencies and institutions in the development field. By making the local individual the participator, they are more likely to keep a commitment to the project. There is also a psychological approach, stating that this will give a deeper feeling of self-worth and self-esteem (Rowland 1997 cited in Hopper 2012: 161).

However, participatory development has its critics, saying how in most cases it is the NGOs that are filling the role of participatory development where their donors can have agendas that they want to pursue in the set area or region. Even though the locals are the ones who are in

emphasis, the neglecting of mismanagements and corruption should not be thought of as unable to happen (Hopper 2012: 164).

An important aspect for development is the role of NGOs and how they have been working with the local community and are participating in development aid. I find this important for the thesis. The latter section explained participatory development, and the way it is mostly connected within the NGO circle. I therefore find it important to explain this relationship further, including the way that NGOs are working in the development field, pointing to how they have been both criticized and praised in development theories.

NGOs are non-for-profit organizations independent of government and businesses. NGOs differ according to their size, sector, target groups, forms of intervention and value base, which refers to if they are faith based or motivated by humanitarian ideas or political ideology (Borchgrevink 2006: 257-258). NGOs have been a model for the participatory development, because they are closely connected to the local community. Even though local NGOs can vary in many different ways, in the field and approaches, they operate mostly at the community level, while International NGOs (INGOs) are more worldwide. In the 1980s the amount of NGOs arose, especially in Africa, encouraged by the financial difficulties and the amount of fragile states that existed in the 1990s, but also by the globalization and spread of information. (Hopper 2012: 167)

A concern is how NGOs are either tied to donors or to governments they work with. Others criticize NGOs for lacking transparency (Desai 2002a cited in Hopper 2012: 169). This causes them to lose touch with the roots of the poor (Ebrahim 2003 cited in Hopper 2012: 169). Competition that arises between NGOs is a concern that can be raised especially in a region with increased NGO involvement (Hopper 2012: 169-171). It is also pointed out that NGOs lack a national vision of development because they are often project-oriented (Lewis and Opoku-Mensah 2006 cited in Hopper 2012: 169). Questions critics raise about NGOs are the way they use their donor's money, in this case, NGOs can respond that they are non-profit organizations and their "staff are motivated by altruism rather than personal gains" (Hopper 2012: 171). Edwards and Hulme argue that there is growing evidence that NGOs are not as effective as it was hoped in reduction of poverty, participation, flexibility, innovations and cost effectiveness. (Hulme and Edwards 1995: 6 cited in Hopper 2012: 171)

In defense of the NGO, they seem to have many positive aspects in how they are close to the people who need assistance, where they distribute food, clothing, offer training, education, community service and micro credits, they set up schools, teach, run clinics and hospitals, give local people jobs, and challenge governments that are corrupt with anticorruption movements. In terms of poverty reduction, NGOs have contributed significantly in the way they provide basic services and promote income-generating activities (Borchgrevink 2006: 269). It is difficult to make an overall conclusion of the way they do development because of the way the NGO sector has such a big arena, with a multiplicity of different ways they operate. According to David Lewis, with the globalization and growing challenges to the state “NGOs will need to link both local and global agendas if they are to be affective” (Lewis 2002 cited Hopper 2012: 174).

3.2 Religion and Development

The last section of this chapter will look at how the theory of development’s relationship with religion has received growing awareness recently. The main authors in this case that I have chosen to focus on is Jeffrey Haynes in the volume *Religion and Development; Conflict or Cooperation* that examines both positive and negative aspects of religion and development, focusing on the role of the four major religions, Islam, Christianity, Hinduism and Buddhism, in Africa, Asia and Latin America (Haynes 2007: 1-2). Haynes points to different reasons why religion has gained such a resurgent and wider concern in development. With the demands for a greater development justice and better governance, there is now an awareness of non-state entities, including faith-based organizations potential in this work. It is also mentioned how in the developing world, religious leaders are trusted very much in their society (Ferret 2005 cited Haynes 2007: 3). He also points out that there needs to be a “robust partnership” between secular development agencies and faith based bodies, reiterating the fact that faith based organizations cannot work by themselves (Haynes 2007:123). I will go into this later.

There are various additional contributors to the topic of religion and development found in Ger ter Haar’s volume *Religion and Development: Ways of Transforming the World* (2011) where they describe *integral development* as development that addresses the material, social, political, and spiritual spheres of life (Van der Wel 2011: 259). Haar looks at the value of

religion on the ground in developing countries as a “positive resource,” stating that religion should therefore be “an important resource for development agents” (Haar 2011:24). These thoughts will be discussed further in below:

3.2.1 Defining Religion

To define religion is a very difficult task. One of the first problems is the term “religion” because it is “Eurocentric in nature” (Holenstein 2005: 7 cited in Haynes 2007: 14). This means that outside of the European and western world there is a need to think about religion in the relationship to its culture, because in most developing countries, religion is a very important part of people’s life (Haynes 2007: 14).

Some believe that there will never be an agreement on how to define religion, however, to help put limitations around the word, Marty (2000) mentions the following 5 observable facts, stating that religion:

- (1) Focuses our ‘ultimate concern’;
- (2) Builds community;
- (3) Appeals to myth and symbol;
- (4) Is enforced through rites and ceremonies;
- (5) Demands certain behavior from its adherents. (Marty 2000 cited Haynes 2007: 14)

Haynes brings these points together explaining religion as “a system of beliefs and practices... involving that which is sacred in a society” (Haynes 2007: 14). He further states that there are two parts to religion in the way it can affect the world, speaking about the doctrine or theology, what religion *says*, and its value as a social phenomenon, by what it *does* (Haynes 2007: 14).

As was previously explained in the introduction (see 1.2.1), this thesis is a research on religion in a social context in which Furseth and Repstad mention two main (or often used) categories in the definition of the sociology of religion: substantive and functional definitions (Furseth and Repstad 2006: 16). The *substantive* definition explains the content of religion, where the *functional* is mainly focused on the effect religion has on a certain society or people (Furseth and Repstad 2006: 16). The latter will be the most useful for this research.

3.2.2 The Resurgence of Religion in Development

In the end of the ninetieth century, with the blossom of the social science, religion was viewed as something that couldn't compete with rational and human reason (Bano 2009: 15). The fathers of sociology, Emile Durkheim and Max Weber established the thought of the opposite relationship between modernity and religion known as the secularization theory. The theory believes that as the society modernizes, the sacred will lose its meaning and the secular will become more important (Bano 2009: 53). However, today there is a rapidly growing literature question of whether or not religion has lost its role in development. In the following section I will discuss this debate.

One of the reasons religion is resurgent in the development world is the way that religious leaders have influence in the world. This was proven when the World Bank carried out 60,000 interviews involving impoverished people in 60 different countries around the world¹² (Tyndale 2011: 209). What was revealing was how throughout the world, religious leaders were seen as the most trusted in terms of leadership and power (Tyndale 2011: 209). Tyndale points out that this is one of the reasons that organizations often work very close with grassroots communities specifically more than any other (Tyndale 2011: 209).

The renewed focus on human development also includes an increased concern for life's spiritual dimension, seeing the importance of different actors in the development field, whether secular or religious based, both asking the same questions and sharing the same concerns for how to achieve development goals (Haynes 2007: 3-4). A more in-depth explanation of human development can be found in section 3.1.3 with the main focus on people, opportunities and choice.

In the new millennium, with an enormous disappointment of the progress in the developing world, the world leaders gathered at the United Nations to shape a broad vision to fight poverty in its many dimensions. This vision was named Millennium Development Goals. These were eight goals to be achieved by 2015 (Haynes 2007: 9). The goals formed an agreement for almost all countries in the world and leading development institutions with a focus on the poor directly (Bull 2006: 48-49). However, the MDGs have also met criticism,

¹² *Voices of the Poor* is the title of these findings, published in 2000-2002 by the World Bank

some question the usefulness of the goals believing it has an unrealistic time frame, when others say it needs to be less target orientated (Hopper 2012: 14).

The MDGs brought up how faith-based bodies, like religious leaders and churches, can contribute to achieving the goals (Haynes 2007: 3-4, 9). Dele Olowu argues how the civil society, excluding private and business institutions, can be an important actor within development, including the way that faith communities and organizations play an important role in spreading information and morals, for instance about the MDGs (Dele Olowu 2012: 58). They can make them popular by translating their ideas into their own idioms in churches, mosques, temples, and synagogues (Dele Olowu 2012: 58). That further will lead to mobilizing support to communities and organizations that are working with these goals (Dele Olowu 2012: 58).

The deep-pocketed development agency, The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, better known as the World Bank, believed that it was essential to have the involvement of ordinary people and their representatives, both locals and internationals, in the decision-making process if the MDGs were to be achieved (Haynes 2007: 9-11). The president of the World Bank at the time that the MDGs were announced, James D. Wolfensohn, was part of establishing World Faith Development Dialogue (WFDD), that further lead to the establishment of the Development Dialogue on Values and Ethics (DDVE) in 1998, with the purpose of,

(B)eing primarily responsible for engaging with faith institutions around development issues and working with other institutions and leaders who are addressing the complex ethical issues around the globalization. (DDVE cited in Haynes 2007: 11)

Katherine Marshall, senior World Bank figure and initiative maker of the DDVE, stated in a speech in 2005 that there is a shared key concern between secular and faith based organizations, especially when it comes to poverty alleviation. As a result the bank believed in an increased engagement with faith-based organizations (Haynes 2007: 12).

Wendy Tyndale also comes with an contribution on the importance of how a better cooperation between faith-based bodies and development bodies will make the agenda for

achieving the MDGs even better (Tyndale 2011: 210). Faith-based groups are responsible for the work of many of the MDGs regarding poverty reduction and human development. They are also responsible for a wide range of income-generating programs and development activities like vocational courses, community development, leadership training, education and health. In Africa religious groups are running almost half of the schools and hospitals (Tyndale 2011: 210-217).

The prior segment looks at how the role of religion has gained a greater attention in the last years, specifically with human development and the MDGs. They see that cooperation with religious figures in the developing world is important, because both religious leaders and churches are among the most trusted in society.

3.2.3 Religious Worldview and Spiritual Capital

Religion has up until now been explained as a part of the concept of development, within human development and the MDGs. Gerrie ter Haar, argues that both development and religion have a vision of how the world should be transformed (Haar 2011: 5). Religion focuses on individuals inner transformation that will be important for a further transformation of the society, and development professionals focus more on the external environment and material resources that will lead to transformation (Haar 2011: 5). What is needed, she stresses further, is an “integral development” in which the two fields will come together (Haar 2011: 5). In the next section theories around this concept will be discussed.

In the non-western world, religious worldview is a highly important matter, while in western society the secular ideas are dominating (Haar 2011: 10). Weaving the two is often viewed as a “danger zone” for development professionals (Haar 2011: 5). When thinking about how religion is an integral part of billions of people’s lives, especially in the developing world, and also how it is believed by those within the development circles that development should be built on all resources that are effecting and lasting, religion should receive a significantly higher amount of attention (Haar 2011: 8). Jeffrey Haynes stresses that the issues that come between a secular and religious worldview is when the opposing views discuss what development is *for*, where the secular will see development as economic development and the

religious will argue that should not cut off its cultural and social dimensions (Haynes 2007: 108). This is where the term spiritual capital comes into consideration.

Lillard and Ogaki define spiritual capital as:

A set of intangible objects in the form of rules for interacting with people, nature, and spiritual beings (God, gods, buddhas, angels, evil spirits as believed to exist by individuals and in different religions) and believed knowledge about tangible and spiritual worlds. (Lillard and Ogaki 2005 cited Haynes 2007: 109)

The way it can further be explained, is that spiritual capital can be distinct from physical, human or social capital by the “payoff” which, in the case of spiritual capital, is something that will be received here and now, in the long term and maybe even after death (Lillard and Ogaki 2005 cited Haynes 2007: 109). Haar also explains how an invisible world affects people’s social relations as they invest in both the relations with the spiritual and the people around them to gain a better quality of life (Haar 2011: 11).

The invisible world, in other words, is an integral part of the world as people know it; the real world is not reduced to its visible or material form only. The human world is believed to be intimately connected to the spirit world, and a regular intercourse may take place between them. (Haar 2011: 11)

Haar makes a further point that people who believe in such an invisible world also believe in a transformative power where interaction with the invisible will, through a form of power, help them, and transform their lives, often drastically (Haar 2011: 14). Due to the fact that many people in the world believe in such a spiritual empowerment that can lead to better material transformation, in addition to the help of the S/spirit to get them out of poverty, she also stresses how important it is for development workers or agents to be familiar with religious ideas and practices. This can lead to better understanding of how to use religious resources for purpose of development. (Haar 2011: 14-15)

When discussing integral development, Lisette van der Wel (2011) argues that at the ground level development is integral. She points to the way many religious people hold the Bible so close to their heart, which helps them to receive hope in situations that are very hard, like with

HIV/AIDS positive Christian women in Kenya, who find courage and strength through bible studies. Van der Wel points to another case where reading the Quran helps Muslim women in Pakistan to reflect on dignity and rights. These cases understand how spiritual capital has an important impact on individuals, communities and societies. Although she also emphasizes that not every manifestation of religion should be accepted without criticism, because religion can be both harmful and beneficial. It means however that it should be a bridge between religion and development. (Van der Well 2011: 356-357)

Haar also argues that when development is viewed holistically, it is not only about the material, but also about the spiritual, meaning, “without spiritual progress there can be no material progress” (Haar 2011: 18). Peter Berger in *Pyramids of Sacrifice* (1976) talks about how development is also a “religious category” (Peter Berger cited in Haynes 2007: 109). For those people who live lives in poverty with a great lack of material, development is not only a matter for them to improve their material lives in the current, but also it is a vision of a redemptive transformation (Haynes 2007: 109). Meaning that spiritual capital is a concern that people are entrusted to preserve all resources in a wise way, to make it sustainable and changing lives, this is development (Haynes 2007: 109-110).

Further Haar stresses how human development at its “broadest sense” can be looked at as a process, not a set of practical goals to be fulfilled in a specific time frame. She argues how too many development projects are too short-term, in which after just a couple of years, they can be said to be either a success or a failure. In thinking of development that has a spiritual approach, there will be need to think in much longer time frame. (Haar 2011: 19)

As sustainable development is related to economy, natural sciences, money, technology and policy, sustainable living can only be achieved by “earthly ‘eternal life’” approach (Hogehuis 2011: 339). With use of the biblical notion, ‘eternal life’, sustainability then becomes a very spiritual matter, as Hogehuis argues (Hogehuis 2011: 339). He points to how spirituality is a way of living (Hogehuis 2011: 339). Spirituality in the context of sustainability is not only something that only is directed inward, but also directed outward. (Hogehuis 2011: 339).

Barbour 2000 also sees the way sustainable development and the importance of thinking about the needs of the future as well as the current generations can be linked to importance in religious traditions. The importance of being good stewards can be pointed out from the example in the Bible when it says, “to you and your descendants forever.” This shows the value of investment in future generations, which can also be seen as sustainability (Barbour 2000: 389).

It been discussed how a relationship between international bureaucracies and religious networks in a particular country is important for development. Haynes makes an important point that can be a hindrance for such cooperation: development agency personnel may prefer to handle large budget (Haynes 2007: 106). On the other hand, smaller amount of money in developing countries are often preferable, and easier to administrate and get better results that can hinder corruption (Haynes 2007: 106). Second problem is that the directors based in Western countries may not have the time to spend to get to know key people of local religious networks that could be an important investment for the development outcome. The last point is that Governments in many developing countries don't want to work with religious groups to reach development goals or in some cases they favor one religious tradition over another, or want to adopt a more secular agenda (WFDD 2004 cited Haynes 2007: 107).

3.2.4 Can Compassion Bring Results

“But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd.” (Matt. 9:36, King James Version)

Christians see Jesus Christ as a role model, where “the fruits of the Spirit are affective signs of Christlikeness - love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, and gentleness (Gal. 5:22)” (Hiebert 2009: 291). The way that the concept of love is used in a Biblical sense, is how God is love, coming from the word agape (Hiebert 2009: 292). Agape is unconditionally committed to the well being of another, sacrificial by not seeking its own, gracious and forgiving, spontaneous and joyful, and not controlling, loving ones enemies, seeking peace and not violence (Hiebert 2009: 292).

The outworking of agape is compassion, meaning “suffering with” (Hiebert 2009: 293). This means seeing or identifying fully with the poor, oppressed and lost just as Jesus identified himself with us by being a human (Hiebert 2009: 293). The Bible mentions how God or Jesus was “moved with compassion” 12 times in the Gospels especially towards to the suffering (Hiebert 2009: 293).

In chapter 5 titled, *Can Compassion Bring Results? Reflections on the Work of an Intermediary FBO*, of her book *Religion and Gender in the Developing World: Faith Based Organizations and Feminism in India* (2011), Tamsin Bradley discusses if compassion alone can be an effective motivation for development work and whether or not those who act with compassion have any positive results. Bradley explains how the failure of development projects often is due to the lack of long term commitment to “targeted” communities and pressure from donors to optimize results by replicating them in different regions without proper planning or budget. She goes on to explain how in contrast, sustainable development is costly in both time and finances. By forming relationships in the local “target” communities, development workers must seek to understand on a personal level, the needs of those they wish to help. (Bradley 2011: 115)

According to Bradley’s experience with individuals working in Faith-Based Organizations, they do have a form of long-term commitment that can be attributed to their faith, in which it is also a strong motivator to the individuals work. This motivation has been given the name compassion. A sense of duty that comes from the compassion Jesus showed as he built relationships with and served the poor. (Bradley 2011: 117)

However, compassion in itself is not enough and brings a limited impact. As Bradley states, compassion creates an image of suffering that objectifies the underdeveloped person, in which compassionate people view that person only as an object that needs help. This creates a one sided relationship that only satisfies the religious obligation of that compassionate person. Compassion can have a negative consequence in the way that people assume they are doing good work because of compassion, when in reality they are blinded by that fact and not realizing the ineffectiveness of their work. (Bradley 2011: 119)

3.2.5 The Need for Further Empirical Studies

The role of religion in development is a highly discussed relationship in modern theory as religion can be presented in the development field either as a good or a bad contribution. Pointing to Haynes (2007) and Haar (2011) and how religious actors in the field of development often have an unique and “added value” to development, for instance in the way they gain trust from the locals and can be part of spreading information. (Fretheim 2012: 89).

Kjetil Fretheim stresses however that a presumption about this “added value” cannot be a foundation for the theoretical work in the question of the role of religion in development. What needs to be done are empirical analyses and theoretical reflection, with research that look to one specific context in every specific case (Fretheim 2012: 88-89). Roy Mersland also argues that there is a wide agreement about the effect of religion and how religion can change people’s behavior and perceptions to both the people receiving development effect and the people giving it, yet he also indicates how there are not enough empirical studies that show the effect of religion in development projects. (Mersland 2012: 139).

3.3 Summary

In the last chapter I have presented central theories that create the theoretical framework for the research. By presenting it two-fold, with first presenting the definition of development that then leads to a more historical explanation of development, starting from the early 1950s. The relationship between religion and development was presented in the last sections, first with a definition of religion in terms of social science, then a discussion on various theories that argue that religion is resurgent in the theory of development. By looking at human development, the MDGs and sustainable development, it has been discussed how religion can be incorporated into these models. As well as how most people in the world seem to believe in a “spiritual capital” and how that can affect the outcome of development. I also addressed the arguments within development circles where the thought that building on all the resources that are effecting and lasting are important, in that case, religion should therefore be paid more attention to.

4 METHOD

To be able to undertake a research of Ethiopia, the methodology had to be taken into consideration. In the following chapter I will give a presentation on how the research was conducted and an indication to my choices of methods and selections of the material that is used to answer the research question of the thesis, as well as the validity and difficulties.

4.1 Approaching the Theme

Before I went to Ethiopia, my research question was not yet defined, but I had a general idea of the topics for the research, this was because I did not have that much information about the organization or IGA. According to Bryman, thematic analysis often used as an approach to qualitative data analysis (Bryman 2012: 579). In my case, the themes mostly came up during the fieldwork that will further make a framework for this research.

4.2 Preparation for Ethiopia

In preparation for Ethiopia my first step was to meet the board of BLE/BLN in Norway. In two separate meetings we discussed my goals, theme and structure for my research. They were very positive about my research and were willing to help me in any way. The board then contacted the local staff in Ethiopia to inform them of the research I would be conducting and were granted their permission. I then acquired past reports of the IGA program to get a better understanding and background knowledge of the project.

Every year the board of Norway travels to Ethiopia for an annual project report on activities and financial accomplishment. The board in Norway recommended that I be present during these meetings to gain perspectives on how they function. I therefore booked my flights to Ethiopia for the same time period the Norwegian board would be traveling.

My past experiences with the country came in good use in preparing to travel to Ethiopia, though I found it important to be aware of the current situation. I researched updated information through recent news reports, articles, and books on the current politics, development, and geographical district of where I would be conducting the interviews, due to the affect it can have on my research.

4.3 Qualitative Research

Qualitative Research is relatively concerned with words rather than numbers, which are more related to Quantitative Research. Alan Bryman claims that there are three characteristics in Qualitative Research. First, it has an inductive view; meaning theory is created out of the research (Bryman 2012: 380). Next, it is interpretive in its epistemological position, meaning it understands the social world by examining how the participant interprets the world it is a part of (Bryman 2012: 380). Finally, it is an ontological position described as constructionist, meaning social properties are products of social actors, the interaction between individuals (Bryman 2012: 380, 710). Qualitative research is not about how the researcher sees things, the researcher's point of view, but about how the individuals they are researching see themselves (Repstad 2007: 19).

My goal was to understand how the informants, in my case, the local participants of the IGA, the board members, staff and representatives from the local government office; the Kebele, interpret the role or effect religion has on development. I also wanted to grasp my informant's point of view of how the IGA project can contribute to sustainable human development in their local community.

4.4 Research Methods

4.4.1 The Semi Structured Interview

According to Bryman, semi-structured interviews are popular in qualitative research because of their flexibility (Bryman 2012: 471). This means that the questions can be changed or new questions added during the interview. During my fieldwork in Ethiopia and Norway, eleven semi-structured interviews were conducted. Pål Repstad also mentions the semi-structured interview by stating how a researcher will have an interview guide prepared and some follow up questions ready for use, but without following a structured form. This allows for the researcher to improvise and encourages the interviewee to answer more specifically (Repstad 2007: 78). Following Repstad and Bryman's semi-structured interview method, I prepared an interview guide that gave me flexibility and was made up of questions that would lead me to answering my research question. Repstad mentions how in qualitative research, the changing

of questions is acceptable so that you can adapt your interview to the interviewee. He states that in some cases it is not necessary to repeat questions about factual information, but in other cases you may need to add new questions based on the information being given (Repstad 2007: 78-79). During my interviews for instance, I didn't want to ask each interviewee on how BLE functions when I had already received enough information about it.

I found the flexibility of the semi-structural interview very helpful as it allowed me to speak with the informants in a more conversational way. I also found it helpful when, in almost every interview I had with the informants, questions had to be followed up and in some cases, when they would answer the questions out of order, I refrained from interrupting them rather than trying to stay on script. Repstad mentions how interrupting can make the interviewee confused or insecure (Repstad 2007: 79). During my three weeks with the project I found that while conducting the interviews, in some cases, I had to add questions about new information that was presented in the current interview. For example, when I learned about the new IGA groups they were planning, I wanted to know more, so adapted my interview to include that information by asking additional questions regarding that topic.

4.4.2 Group interview

In addition two semi-structured interviews, one extensive group interview was conducted in Bergen to obtain information from the board members of BLE and BLN.

Hoel and Hvinden argue how group interviews can contribute to more full information, and in some cases one person's answer will be followed up by the other, who will give extensive information (Hoel and Hvinden cited in Repstad 2007: 99). In Bergen I chose to have a group interview containing only two people. Though it is a small group, it is recommended to have smaller groups when it is anticipated that the informants will have a great deal to say about the topic (Morgan 1998a cited Bryman 2012: 507). Since I expected to receive a great deal of information from these informants, as they have been involved from the very beginning of the organization, I wanted to have a group of only two. I found it very beneficial, as I asked them questions and they were able to answer together. This method was very helpful, and gave me the answers I needed. The fact that the interviews took place in Bergen after my time in Ethiopia gave me the added benefit of time to reflect on the data I had gathered there. This

gave me the opportunity to include questions I had added during other interviews as well as the original questions from my transcript.

4.4.3 Observation

In observation Bryman talks about the difference between overt and covert observation (Bryman 2012: 433). Pål Repstad describes the overt observation as revealing the role as a researcher to the different actors and informing them that you are making an observation. In contrast, the covert observation implies that you do not reveal your position as a researcher (Repstad 2007: 40). During my fieldwork I used the overt observation method. For the sake of my research I made the various informants well known of my position as a researcher.

Further Bryman talks about the differences between an active and passive observation. An active observation involves participating actively to some degree (Bryman 2012: 446). Most of my observations were passive, but in the board meeting, the board was open for me to take part in the conversation, which then would consider me as active. Also, when the guardians invited me to their homes to observe their businesses, I was active in asking questions regarding this.

During my three weeks I was able to make notes of what I heard in meetings and in conversations. My notes were mainly written down quickly after hearing or seeing something interesting, as Bryman calls them: mental notes, jotted notes, and full field notes (Bryman 2012: 450). Notes from meetings and conversations with people were gathered together and written in reports at the end of every day. These notes helped me remember important information to include in my research and help prepare me for the interviews.

4.5. Sampling

Pål Repstad mentions how important it could be to get introduced to the field by a leader and be able to get the best overview as possible in that time (Repstad 2007: 55). My contact person, who is also a member of BLN, first introduced me to the BLE staff. This helped to quickly gain trust and respect of the BLE staff and participants. In the first meeting I gained a good overall view on the organization and accomplished my goal to meet with the staff

immediately. In this meeting I asked general questions about Bridge for Life Ethiopia and was able to see the staff of the school, teachers, and children in the midst of their work as well as the office and property of the organization. Just as Repstad mentions, this helped me to save time and remember all the facts, it also gave me ideas for questions and analyses (Repstad 2007: 55).

Because of the annual meeting with the board, within the first couple of days, they held an additional meeting in the BLE compound at the school where they had gathered all the guardians, children, staff and board members for a welcoming of the board from Norway. Here speeches from two representatives of the guardians were made as well as speeches from the staff and board. It was a unique event for me where I had the opportunity to be introduced to everyone. I told them who I was and my role as a researcher and student from Norway and was able to talk to guardians and meet their children and families.

4.5.1 Determining the Interviewees

During the first meetings with my contact persons I informed them of whom I needed to interview. Bryman talks about how the common sampling in qualitative research is purposive sampling, in which case the participants are not randomly chosen, but instead they are strategically chosen for the goal of the research question (Bryman 2012: 418). My research is on one specific organization with few workers employed in different positions. To achieve the most versatile data the informants should be different but of course have something in common. When there is a variety amongst the informants, it increases the chance of finding new relevant data (Repstad 2007: 58). Considering this I wanted the most diverse group of people that had the IGA project as the common factor. After determining that, I chose those with whom I wanted to interview within the staff and the board.

When it comes to choosing who I want to interview in the Kebele and from the guardians, I had to ask for help from the staff of BLE. In some situations it is necessary to ask leaders or other central persons for help in your sampling. Repstad argues how this can both be helpful and harmful. Helpful because the researcher doesn't have the same overview as the local staff, but harmful because it can also lead to a methodical problem where the leader controls the sampling, leading to inaccurate results. To avoid this it's important to give some criteria to make the sampling random (Repstad 2007: 81). The local staff helped me to select the

guardians, but to avoid the problems that Repstad mentions, I gave them criteria that they should all be from the first group of participants. Also when it comes to the Kebele office they helped me pick out those who were directly involved in investigating BLE and selecting the participants for BLE.

4.6 Ethical Considerations

There is important ethical consideration that needs to be taken into consideration when conducting any sort of research. As defined by Diener and Crandall, the things to consider are if it is causing any harm to the participants, making sure there is informed consent, being aware of any invasion of privacy, and not involving any deception (Diener and Crandall 1987 cited in Bryman 2012: 135).

Having these ethical considerations in mind when I went to Ethiopia, I made the interviewees and BLE aware of how I needed to use a recording device, but that I would delete everything afterwards. Also the transcriptions will be deleted after the thesis is finished. I made sure that the interviewees were kept anonymous, including their names, ages and other personal information. Though I kept their position within the organization, whether that is guardians, Kebele representatives, staff, board members, or Norwegian partners, public for the benefit it adds to understanding the thesis.

4.7 Circumstances and Limitations

4.7.1 During Interviews

In regards to the challenges, during the interviews there were several disruptions that took place that it is important to make note of. As I conducted most of the interviews in the office of the BLE compound, most of the time it was private and quiet surroundings. However, at certain times of the day, the children from the preschool would be outside at their play times and make tremendous noise, and as my informants tended to speak softly, it was at some points very difficult to hear and understand them. The office was also used as a storage room and located between the main office and toilet, which meant staff often interrupted the interviews to use the restroom or to reach their personal belongings. At these times, I needed

to repeat questions or put the interview on hold until the disruption had passed. This may have caused certain points of the interview to be missed, but in these cases, thanks to my translator, I was able to receive all of the important information from the informant.

After the interviews, there were some instances where the informants continued to talk, when this happened, I quickly wrote notes or simply turned the recorder back on, asking for them to repeat their statements.

In one interview that was held in an office building off site from the BLE compound, parts of the interview were missed due to the loud traffic that would pass by the open window of the informant's office. This only affected the beginning of the interview, until I asked for the window to be closed.

4.7.2 Time

An additional challenge to disruptions was the issue of timing. Since my research was only conducted over the course of three weeks, my time was very precious. Having experienced Ethiopia before, I knew to expect to not plan too much for any one day, since many uncontrollable factors could cause time to be limited, including traffic, cultural perception of time, and last minute changes. In a few instances, interviews had to be postponed due to these factors. In one case, after walking over an hour to meet a guardian in their home and see their business, they had left for the day to tend to a sick relative. On a separate occasion, in a scheduled interview with a board member who also holds an important position with a different organization, I found myself driving two hours only to find out they had left town for a different meeting, in which we rescheduled for another day. The third issue concerning time came up with the Norwegian board members. Because they were in Addis for only four days, their schedule was extremely tight, with one meeting after another. I was invited to come along side them, but our planned meeting was unable to take place in their short time in Addis Ababa, so it was rescheduled for a later date in Bergen.

4.7.3 Translation

With the exception of a few staff and the all of the board members, most of the informants did not speak English at a level where they were capable to conduct a full interview. In these interviews I had the benefit of using a translator. Some of the challenges that can occur are if the translator will translate the answers into his own. In interviews that were not translated I

found it much more conversational and open with the semi structured interview guide compared to those that were translated. I would still make the point that I find the material valid for my research.

In the case of the group interview in Bergen, the interview was conducted in Norwegian. This was because I wanted a more authentic interview as English was not their mother tongue. Therefore, I translated this interview into English to the best of my ability.

4.8 Validity and Reliability

The research is theoretical and empirical based. The validity, meaning how it is measured as the actual result, and the reliability, if the study can be done again with the same result, will emerge (Bryman 2012: 168-178).

Since my research is interview based it will be difficult to measure, but what I believe can be found is that if repeated, it would be the same result. For this, the issue of time can cause the reliability to weaken; events in the country and internally within the organization can make the answers change over time. In regard to my research and the data that I have gathered, with its limitations and the way I have shed a light of transparency in the section above, I can say in confidence it is trustworthy. By being in the field for three weeks, I can see through my observation how the interviews have unity with what I observed. Also due to the way I conducted my interviews, including voices from different fields concerning BLE and IGA, I also see how their answers are different but cohering in a natural yet divergent way. In this regard I find my study and interviews as trustworthy. In addition to this, the way that the research question and its sub-question focus on the way the interviewees see religion impacting development work and the way they talk about the development program, I believe that I have been able to collect this data successfully

4.9 Summary

This chapter has discussed the methodology used in this research. I have explained how I approached this research and my preparation for conducting the interviews in Ethiopia. It was stated that this is a qualitative research. The various research methods implemented were

introduced, such as the semi-structured interview, group interview and observation. The sampling process was then explained, stating how the interviewees were selected, this lead to a discussion of the ethical consideration as well as the circumstances and limitations that presented themselves during the research. Time, translation and other factors that took place during the interviews were all introduced. Finally the validity and reliability were taken into consideration, stating that this research would produce the same results if conducted again

5 PRESENTATION OF THE EMPIRICAL FINDINGS

The current chapter will present the material, empirical findings, and content conducted during my fieldwork in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia between 20th of February and the 14th of March 2015 as well as in Norway on the 11th of May 2015¹³. The key point is to give the informant their own voice before the analysis in the coming chapter. The aim will be to answer the sub-questions, named as followed:

Sub-question 1: *How do the informants understand the importance of being a local NGO?*

Sub-question 2: *How can IGA contribute to a sustainable human development for the guardians?*

Sub-question 3: *What is the informant's understanding of the role of religion in development?*

5.1 Presentation of the Informants

A total of nine semi-structured interviews conducted in Ethiopia between February and March 2015, as well as one group interview in Bergen on the 11th of May 2015, will be presented. To keep the interviews anonymous, names, ages and other personal information are avoided. However in order to categorize them and give a better understanding of the findings, they will be presented in groups. The groupings of the informants are as follows.

Group 1: The Guardians

The first group is the guardians; they are the parents of the children who are supported by BLE and who have also been selected for the IGA. Four individual semi-structured interviews were conducted with guardians from different fields, backgrounds and religious views. In addition to the interviews, I paid a visit to three families where they showed me their homes and businesses. I will refer to them as guardian: 1, 2, 3 and 4.

¹³ See the interview-guide in appendix 1

Group 2: The staff

The second group represents the staff of BLE. Their responsibilities vary, some work with children, some do day-to-day practical work, and others work with the guardians. Those who work with the guardians give them social service, business training and counseling in socio economic activities, they also visit their residence every quarter and do bookkeeping. Due to the nature of my thesis, my focus was on these last representatives working in the field of IGA. I interviewed two representatives from the staff, who are also people from different backgrounds, education, and various lengths of employment in BLE. I will refer to them as staff: 1 and 2.

Group 3: The Board Members

The third group is the Bridge for Life board members. By being invited to the annual board meeting in February 2015, I was able to meet all the representatives from the board. In this meeting the BLE management gave reports on budget, achievements, and challenges from the previous year as well as goals, new initiatives and a projected budget for the next year. The board is made up of people from different backgrounds, employees of other organizations, and also representatives from Norway. Two semi-structured interviews in Ethiopia along with one group interview in Norway were conducted. I will refer to them as Board Member: 1, 2, 3 and 4.

Group 4: The Kebele Representatives.

The final group is the representatives from the local government office, known as the Kebele. The office is named “Children, Youth and Women’s Affairs Office”. They evaluate the organizations within their district by visiting and conducting interviews with the organization’s participants to report on their development program and to make sure they are running according to the law. It is these officeholders with whom I had two individual semi-structured interviews. I will refer to them as Kebele: 1 and 2.

5.2 Motivation for starting BLE

When looking at Bridge for Life, it is important to first understand the motivation behind the organization. The vision for the organization was stated in the documents I was given when I first came into contact with them. However I will explain the vision later in this chapter. In this section my goal is to show the motivation for why they started BLE through the

representatives more personal answers. By asking the representatives from both the board and staff of their motivation for joining BLE, they responded in the following.

In an interview with one of the founders, Board Member-1, about how the organization started and how he personally was motivated for working in BLE he answers:

(...) I was working outside Addis as a teacher for grade eleven to twelve (...) During this times in my heart I had a feeling of helping children especially the poor children. (...) me and my friends bought them some shoe cleaning materials for the children who don't have the money to buy that one. We started in that time and then I had the feeling of serving them. And then we started to at least help children to buy them educational material then me and my friend started to contributing with 50 birr or something like that, and then helping them to send them to school. This is the beginning. And then (mentions a board member) approached me that he had this heart of doing this charity workers with children. Then I am eager and thank God to open more door to help more children. So after then when (board member) asked me to do this together with him I am very interested and I left my job so for the first five months I think I'm not paid just working in the process of registration of the charity to work legally. Yes, I was working like that. And In this way I joined this project.

Board Member-3, a co-founder and board member of Bridge For Life Norway, tells me his side of the story:

I was raised up in a very poor family in Ethiopia and that was the main reason why the first opportunity for me to attend school was at the age of 16. I remember sitting in a classroom, with students ten years younger than me. The shame and embarrassment is something I carry with me to this day. To make a long story short, I ended up finishing college in Norway, where we went on a field trip to east Africa, I was again met by the damaging poverty, meeting children that did not have the opportunity to attend school. After arriving to Norway, I felt a strong urge to help children in Ethiopia to get into school. I don't want anyone to experience what I did with not being able to attend school. Education has changed my life and made me into who I am today. Through education I see a hope for the future for the children of the poor families and that is the reason I wanted establish a project like this.

These stories tell a very personal motivation for the foundation of BLE. In these cases the founders, having been exposed to poverty at a young age, did not want the children to experience the same poverty they did growing up. This motivated them to give the children a chance to go to school instead of having to help their parents at home, or beg for money on the streets.

5.2.1 Money not a Motivator

Often in conversation with the staff and people connected to BLE, the motivation of money seemed not to be of the highest priority. Board Member-1, explains:

(...) I work also in one other organization. What I see there is that their focus is a lot on money, but here they only want to see the change in the people. We know that God is working for us.

In an interview with Staff-2, he tells me how he worked in BLE for one year for free, even though he had to walk a long distance, and sometimes had to take several taxis to get to the organization. Several of the other workers I talked to had a long way to travel, and sometimes it could take hours to get from one part of the city to another, especially in the morning and afternoon rush hours.

Repeating what the Board Member-1 stated above:

I left my job so for the first five months I think I'm not paid just working in the process of registration of the charity to work legally.

He continues:

(...) I think the most important thing is the people's heart. That they will support the needy peoples. So it's difficult and challenges so I instead of having some kind of motivation like money or like that. The heart of the people can matter.

As pointed out in this section, BLE was started out of a desire to help the poor children and the staff working in BLE state that they are motivated by that desire to help rather than money or other things. I found this very important for my research.

5.3 Development

A core theme for this research is development, in addition to answering the research question and the sub-questions, one of my goals was to figure out how the informants understand the definition of development. The answers some of them gave me were more of an indefinite answer that pointed to the development in Ethiopia and how they viewed the country developing. They explained that they saw the country is developing with new roads, subways and a fast growing economy, yet they also saw a country still facing extreme poverty with thousands of street children, beggars and high food prices. What I experienced as the interviews and the conversations went on, is that they seem to draw a more interesting picture of how they viewed development; a long-term perspective in the thinking of reaching certain development goals.

As stated by Board Member-4:

(...) Good development is when you go from dependence to being independent.

This leads to the next important findings from my interviews; the way sustainable development was valued.

5.3.1 Vision Behind BLE and IGA towards Sustainable Development

Documents I was given that explain their program stresses how they envision self-reliance and sustainable development among Ethiopian communities by meeting the needs of the poorest in the community. Due to this they are working on a project called Income Generating Activities. The program is helping the parents of the children in the preschool to start a business, called entrepreneurship training, there they will learn to save money, are given training in small business management, and given a startup capital. So far the organization has helped 55 families in the IGA program. I wanted to know the different perspectives of how this worked and what the purpose and vision for the project was. I also interviewed the family

representatives, the guardians for the children, in order to hear their view of how it is to be part of the IGA program.

Staff-1, tells me:

The vision is that the children will have great future. That the children should not stay at home. (...) But work on a great future. If you bring them to school they can get a chance to see their bright future.

In a question about the vision for IGA Board Member-4 answers:

IGA is based out of our vision to help the most vulnerable children in the Kebele to attend school and be prepared for school through the preschool we are running. We wished to only have one child from each family in our preschool; the reason for this is so that the guardians can take responsibility for the rest of their children through the income they make from the IGA. Our purpose is to obtain sustainability in the families for the children that are part of our preschool.

Drawing from the previous, sustainable development is a high priority for BLE. The last statement shows their view of the benefit of how the guardians will take care of not only the child that BLE has in their program, but how, through their income from the business they have started, they are able to support all their other children to go to school. Also through the IGA, the project will become more sustainable; meaning they are not only helping the children in their school, but the families as a whole.

The Kebele representative, Kebele-2, claims the following in regards to IGA:

The IGA is a really good program to get sustainable growth in this country.

5.3.2 Group IGA

With the skills and finances the guardians acquired from their experience in IGA, there was an initiative brought up from the guardians themselves to take IGA further by partnering with each other to form group IGA. The idea of the group IGA had not yet been applied in the time

of my research but was still in the process of developing. Within a few minutes drive from BLE, a newly constructed building with an open space had been given to the group IGA by the government. During a visit to the compound one of the staff described it as perfect building for a group of 19 people to go together and make a business. Board Member-1 states;

One person can work on the business and they can work in the group one day in the week and work in the IGA for themselves. They can work more, its more important. They have a working place form the government now for free. They will work together. It will help the group and help their family.

Here he is explaining that in addition to the business the guardians have individually, they will be able to work on the group IGA, which means they will have two sources of income rather than one.

Guardian-4, expresses her hope for group IGA:

I also got the opportunity to join the IGA group program. (...) I hope we will do better, we already discussed and agreed so we are going to work. I hope we will be successful.

5.3.3 Education and Work: A Key to Development

In the matter of sustainable development, education and work are the significant themes that were brought up when the interviewees answered questions in regards to how Ethiopia can come out of poverty.

Kebele-2, explains:

(...) Education is a key. In our society we are not taking education as a tool to come to a development. There are cultural values that letting the society down, like some people don't work. The working culture is very poor. We need to work and get education to be sustainable.

Guardian-2, points out:

If more people can work they don't take their money to shisha places or qat places. If the days are long and they work long they will succeed.

The informants, therefore, look upon the importance of work and education as a valued contribution to the development of Ethiopia. Although the informants are from many different backgrounds, some with high education and others with low education, some that have been living in extreme poverty and some not, they all agreed on how changes in Ethiopia should come through a change in the working culture, which was explained to me as very poor.

5.3.4 Developing From a Familiar Skill

In many of the interviews there was a theme representing the informant's view that the people they help should start a business from a skill they are already familiar with. Board Member-2 member says:

We encourage them to work and engage in something they know from before.

In the matter of development, points were often mentioned on how they believed development starts from the various skills people have and cultivating those skills. He continues:

In the sense of poverty, maybe people have different skills. These skills will help them to achieve their future having different skills and working on it and then they will be changed. And they will have their own material and skills and different directions.

Board Member-1 stresses the same matter:

Sometimes people have their own potential but the potential may be helped to bring it out and they can work on it and survive. So if their potential cannot come out they will be poor and no one helped them.

BLE is helping the poorest segment of the community. In conversations with my informants and when I visited the guardians, they often told me, stressing the last point, how they often began their business with a skill they already were familiar with. In all cases they had increased their business through the business training and the one amount of seed money.

5.3.5 From Dependency to Independence

An additional point that was often talked about was how the staff and board members argue that good development is when one transitions from being dependent to independent. By giving a one-time amount rather than continued support, they stress how this can help build up a working culture. It was referred to as “planting a seed” that can grow to become something bigger, supporting family and community.

Board Member-2 explains it as follows:

We have to break the dependency syndrome: “I have a syndrome, I have to get money from the government or someone.” Instead we believe that they have to work for themselves if they are okay, and are able to do that.

Board Member-4, contributes by saying:

I also think about development, good development is when you go from dependence to being independent. That we don't make a dependency, but that we create a sustainable development with making the people stand on their own feet to make their own choices out from their own resources and point of view. We hope that this work will not stop, but be able to continue to move to new projects that will end with independence and sustainability over time.

In order to pursue sustainable development, the government required BLE to make their project more sustainable; this is where the idea for IGA came from. Board Member-4, explained:

(...) So for three years we have to have a sustainable strategy that have to be implemented in the program so the government asked us what kind of sustainable activity program do you have to support those children. And the we didn't think before. (...) And then we discussed with BLE in Norway and people were eager to know about the IGA program. So we choose to work in the IGA to be one of out sustainable program

5.3.6 A Saving Culture

An important factor that was brought up during the annual board meeting and my time in Ethiopia is the way the guardians have built up a saving culture. The Kebele, board and staff of BLE all mention how this is an enormous step for someone who has been living in poverty most of their life.

Board Member-4, points out:

We now see that they are getting their own saving accounts and banking books where they can generate their own income. What I find remarkable is the way that we now see that they are saving. To be able to create a saving culture among the poor is very important. What we also want to see if this can have a ripple effect beyond this. When they get to a stage where they can be able to hire some other people to be part of the project, this will be crucial to create more working places in the area we are involved in.

5.3.7 Personal Changes Within The Guardians and Their Family

In interviews with the guardians, I wanted to know if their lives have been changed after attending IGA. All of them agreed on how BLE has been a positive life change for them. In visiting their businesses and homes, I also got to see their production and meet their families. They were proudly showing me their cows, sheep, crops, and even their income records. Their books showed they had doubled their capital, in some cases even more than doubled, since they started the business.

In response to a question on how her life has changed after joining IGA, Guardian-3 answers:

I was struggling and buzzy going to home to home to bake injera¹⁴ And after that I heard that there was an opportunity for me to join the IGA program and through the lot, God gave me the opportunity to get my kid into this program.

¹⁴ Injera is the national food of Ethiopia. Sour, crepe-like flat bread baked from a local grain called teff (Shinn 2013:168).

She continues:

(...) I want to teach the training for my kid too.

The guardians were all explaining how before the IGA, them and their families were struggling significantly. Stories about how they didn't have money for housing or food often came up. Guardians-3 said:

Before we was not eating, only one meal a day. Now we eat three times a day.

She goes on:

I started with two sheeps. And now I have I have twelve sheeps and three cows.

The guardians told me how their lives had changed dramatically and how, through their businesses; they had money for food and to send all their children to school.

Guardian-2 stated:

I am having four people in my house, even my mom she don't have any person to help her so it has been a really good help for her.

Where they had gone from being powerless in the society, they now have new visions for their future. When I asked them about this, all of them were agreeing on growing their businesses. A significant theme is also how they wanted to be examples for others in their community and for their family, by helping others that are in situations they have been in before. "I wish to be an example for others," Guardian-3 stated.

Guardian-4 shared how she used to rob money and how IGA has helped her out of it:

My vision is to work to get more money. (...) I don't want to rob money. I don't want to be a thief, but work.

She continues:

I want to continue the business, to make it somehow bigger. And now I got the opportunity to be in the group IGA. If this program is successful I want to help people like street people that have less.

5.3.8 Challenges Regarding IGA

IGA has also faced some obstacles. When I asked the guardians about what they have experienced as the most challenging aspect of being in the program, these areas stood out: rent, the lack of consumers at different times, and the increase in the prices of food for their livestock. They stated, “Everything is getting more and more expensive.”

Both the staff and the guardians told me that the cost of rent was the main problem for many. Guardian-3, address the problem:

(...) One challenge is the house problem and the cow food, it's very expensive. It's getting more expensive. And sometimes I have to do sacrifices and take of my kids food, so that I can increase my business. It's a challenge but I have to sacrifice.

When asked if there have been challenges according to the IGA project, Staff-2 answered:

If you visit them, for a meeting to see how they are managing, maybe they are not telling you the reality.

Board Member-2 contributes to the same issue:

A problem can be that they are buying a television or something like that out of the money, and they are not getting benefited. But this happens very few times. Most we have is very successful.

Though 55 people have participated in IGA, not all are success stories. For various reasons two guardians dropped out and did not complete the program. There was also one guardian whose business failed initially and was forced to receive additional support in which case their business has become stable and is in good condition.

5.4 Registered as a Local NGO and Cooperation with the Kebele

BLE works closely with the local government offices in the sub city they are established in. The relationship between the local government offices, known as the Kebele, and BLE is based on the participants in BLE's programs. The Kebele office refers people from the local community to BLE, and that is one of the main ways people become involved with the programs like IGA or the preschool. They then were able to choose the most vulnerable families to be part of IGA. During interviews, BLE found it very important to have a close and positive relationship with their local Kebele and vice versa.

Of their relationship, Kebele-1 stresses:

If they don't have discipline they won't have good fruit. It's a result of the discipline of the staff. It's also a model that they don't select the kids themselves, but they cooperate with the government, the Woreda¹⁵ to do it. And that it is model for other organizations to work with the government.

Kebele-2 also addresses it:

The organization invited us to see their progress, we can easily see that there are good changes and we see the benefits of it. (...) Here it is a sustainable change. It's critical to change their family also. (...) The organization is a good investment for our country. The children are our future (...).

According to the Kebele, they view BLE and the relationship they share as an important model for other organizations in Ethiopia.

5.4.1 Difficulties

Some of the answers regarding BLE's experiences with this relationship also brought up certain difficulties. This came to words in an interview with Board Member-3 where he explains:

¹⁵ Addis Ababa is divided into 526 districts known as *Woredas* these hold certain administrative responsibilities. These are then divided further into Kebeles (Shinn 2013: Ivii).

The government said if you are helping 30 kids you need more than two million birr, which is usually what other organizations use, but we wanted to help 30 kids with under 500,000 birr. The government was very insecure about our budget and capacity. But at the three-year evaluation the Kebele said it was the best evaluation they had ever seen. So our contract was renewed.

He revealed a problem in the trust between BLE and the Kebele in the beginning of the organization; the Kebele was skeptical of their lack of finances. Board Member-4 member contributes to the discussion:

One of the things, which I call the “NGO sickness,” is that they use too much money for the purpose of the work. I think in a lot of the cases the government official is not always putting a hold on how much money organizations use. What I think is important is to have a good knowledge for the expenses of things. What BLE did in the beginning, we had a benchmark the first three years with another organization to get knowledge on how much things cost.

Here he explains the fact that BLE did benchmarking with an organization that had been working in Ethiopia for several years. This helped them to become more aware of the expenses it took to run an organization in Ethiopia, yet the Kebele didn't trust their financial assumptions. They proved later to be one of the better organizations the Kebele has witnessed.

5.4.2 The Importance of being a Local NGO

In a group interview with the board members of Bridge For Life Norway the question regarding why they wanted to be a local NGO was brought up. The informants tell how they planned to be an international organization, but after bumping into some registration difficulties, they chose to be a local initiative. Board Member-3 points further:

That we ended up being a local NGO, turned out to be very successful, it gives us a much better foundation in Ethiopia rather than if we were an international organization.

He continues:

The benefit with being a local affiliation is that we are not only getting someone who comes from a foreign country to do some development work in Ethiopia, but there are local people that are running the organization. There is a local board and partners, and this makes the organization sustainable. In the long term we want the organization to be on its own feet, a long-term project like IGA can contribute by sowing seeds for the next round.

In an interview with Staff-1 about the relationship with the sister organization Bridge for Life Norway he answers:

We have a good culture; we talk together with brother and sister from Norway. We come we talk, they are not donors and we are the receivers. We are Christian, we have the same vision, and from that culture we get a good structure. There will be a good change from it.

5.5 Religion and Development

In Ethiopian culture, religion is a common part of people's worldview (see section 2.2). During my time of research this was often witnessed in greeting with the use of God's name. When meeting with both the staff and guardians "God" and "Jesus" were a common part of their language.

To grasp the idea of how BLE is an organization that is not registered as a church or a religious organization as well as the way this is understood by the informants, I will present interviews concerning this. In addition to the way the organization is still open about their personal Christian belief, even though it is not allowed to do spiritual work according to the law. The question of whether or not this was affecting their work was raised during the interviews. Here, personal motivation, Biblical understanding, and challenges according to the NGO law will be presented, as well as the opinions from the guardians and Kebele representatives.

5.5.1 Compassion

In response to the question regarding personal motivation for working in BLE the staff and board members often brought up their Christian belief as a catalyst for starting in development work. A commonality between the staff showed how they felt a need for their people, as Staff-2 describes it: “I want to help the poor people, I feel my poor people.” The way he describes his feelings for his people was a repeating theme the staff brought up. Board Member-3 contributes to this saying:

It is my personal opinion that there are people in Ethiopia who are suffering and there are good resources here in Norway that can help them. But it needs a bridge that has knowledge to both the locals in Ethiopia and the locals in Norway. In this I can stand as a representative from Norway’s donors and also those that need the support, like a bridge between those continents. Further I want to say, as a personal Christian, Jesus stands between humans and God, and without him no one can come to the Father. This is also my own personal belief on how to live out compassion in practice. It is my Christian belief together with practical application.

Something that was often mentioned as a personal motivation for the staff working in BLE was the compassion that is emphasized as a practical entity, as mentioned above, that comes alive through the informant’s personal faith.

5.5.2 Bible

During the interviews the Bible was often mentioned as a source for their work. Biblical verses were regularly referred to in interviews; drawing from Biblical stories or vocabulary and using them to explain certain situations. Words that stood out from a Biblical perspective were often: “fruitful, eternal life, reaping and sowing.” As Board Member-1 says:

Our principles and the word of God is a good principle of development. If we check ourselves with the word of God, we will be fruitful.

Staff-1 also points this out by saying:

It's the hope for our country; every development country has God and religion. If there is not a part of it, it's not fruitful. Positive things like honesty, if the staff are honest the development work will be very great. By every organization will be transparencies they do this because we are Christian. We are obligated to do development work.

Here he explains how the organization and the staff are working according to the Bible.

The way the Bible was an important value in the organization was brought up during the interview with Board Member-4:

The idea of IGA and the use of "seed money," is something that can be referred to as our paradigm and understanding of sowing and reaping in the New Testament and in the biblical understanding. We also see the importance of sowing the money in good soil, so it can bear good fruit. By following up the participant of IGA, we want to hinder the seeds from falling in bad soil, rather than being put to good use. The principle here is that to sow and reap is very important for us.

Here he explains how the word of "seed money" can be referred to the way it is used in the New Testament with planting seeds into good soil that will be fruitful. By referring to a Biblical motivation for IGA, the way the guardians are receiving "seed money," they can build a business that will bear good fruit for a sustainable development.

5.5.3 The Separation

Since BLE started in 2008 and was not registered as a church or religious organization, the NGO law of 2009 required them to leave the spiritual part out of their organization. Many of my informants from the staff and board mention this as a challenge since all the staff and board members are Christians. But to keep the law, they do not doing ministry, referred to as "spiritual work" or missions with the kids or guardians.

Board Member-1 explains it:

In our registration we planned to work on it, spiritual activity as one part as one department, but after the law, we are not aloud to do it because working spiritual is

different from working in the secular world. So helping the children in physical activities are different that helping them in spiritual activities. So we have this category. We are forced to work not on the spiritual activity because we are NGO, because NGOs cannot work on spiritual things. So this is one thing also other challenge after register. But in our thinking that we will work on it.

Here it is explained how BLE had to leave out their spiritual activity after 2009 because the government says that religious and secular are to be separate. Although he finds it difficult, he further mentions how the organization can still have their values. Many of the informants mention how the values of Christianity could be shown through their work of helping the poor.

Board Member-1 says further:

We have the values to work (...) inside the organization, but legally known working on spiritual things are not aloud. You cannot do that one. But the values like helping the poor in a very king matter and lovely matter is appreciated with no problem.

Staff-2 contributes to the same topic:

Yes, for me religion is very important in development. When we are in contact with the people your should have good personality.

Although, some of them saw the separation as challenge, opposite views were also referred to. When some of them could understand why the government had the law of separation. Staff-1 explains it:

We show them honesty and they want to be honest and productive back. Even the Muslim lady say “may Allah bless you.” “You are working good work so may Allah bless you.” They trust you, even the people that are Muslim. They give their kids to us, because they know we are motivated by God.

The separation is also an including action for the diversity of the society, even if people are Muslims, Protestants, or Orthodox, they will be included into the organization.

It was explained to me that the government was often afraid that when NGOs had a certain religious background they could focus on only helping people from that certain religion.

As explained in an interview with Kebele-1:

They do not work with only one religion, but select from the local Kebele, so its not for only one specific religious group they help (...) There's different and helping everybody, they are not discriminating. (...) The organization is implication the congregation "the right of children" without race and religious discrimination. Because all organization that are planted with Ethiopian government should have this. They give equal opportunity to all children.

5.5.4 Religious Values from the Outside

Since BLE is not aloud to do spiritual work, I wanted to understand if the guardians could recognize the values that BLE was talking about.

In all cases, the guardian's answered without doubt that they knew that the staff were Christians. Guardian-1 pointed out:

Yes, they fear God so they help people. Under that God fear (...) I know they are Christians, because they go to church. And I know that the staff is Christian. I know because they go to church. Because they fear God they are working properly.

The guardian here refers to how she sees some of the staff go to church, and that she knows about their religion. This was also noticed in interviews with two of the other guardians.

Where Guardian-1 said:

This organization is an answer for our pray. Because there is one other organization, that is secular. And they abused the money; they had to close because of that. When it comes to BLE it was an answer to our prayer because the workers in BLE have God-

fearing spirit and respect for the community. They are working honestly, they have integrity here.

In a question concerning how they understand religion in development work. Main themes of trust, honesty and work were mentioned.

Guardians-1 continues:

People trust religious people more. Not only on the organization level. But also when it comes to when we are renting. The people who is renting they respect people that are religious more because they don't drink (...). The community has more respect for religious here.(..)There is poverty in Ethiopia, and we know that, the only thing is with Gods help to get out of it. People have to get work to get out of poverty. So I trust these two things God and work.

Guardian-3 brings in the previously mentioned notion of work and says the following about religious people needing to work.

The change has to come, because there are many people that are poor and there are problem. Religious people should work. Even what religion they are from like protestant or orthodox, when the religious people are working there are good fruit and good result.

A contrasting view comes from Guardian-4 says:

I don't think work is of religion. Whether you are religious or not, you can work. Every person can believe what they want. Work is work. Religion and work don't go together but of course religious laws helps the religious people to help poor people, that's why I think organizations like this is helping people like me. There is a role in religion to help poor people.

5.5.5 Challenges with religion in development

Even though religion was mentioned as something positive for development work, many of my informants mention how religion also can be abused. As one of the guardians said "So we

can't say they are doing good work only because they are Christians without seeing their work." Staff -1 pointed out how people can abuse their motives:

Yes, well as a Christian we can easily abuse our motives. It's easy to abuse money and power, but as Christians we have to trust each other. But if we are not working on it to change it can get challenge.

He continues:

Not all people can go to the word of the God. They can use religion as an advantage. For example they use it as an excuse to not be asked in situation. There are many people that can be corrupt and abusing property. They are using the religion as an excuse. Religion is a good transparency; you want your workers to have good strategy implemented according to the Bible, with pure heart and good work it will be successful. But not every one is working according to this truth.

They are here referring to how religion can be used for bad. The guardians were often mentioning how it was important to be religious for doing development work, but also that it could be abused when people are not honest and abusing property. The staff was pointing to how important it is to not use religion as an excuse.

5.6 Summary

In this chapter I have presented the empirical findings of my research. I began with giving a presentation of the informants, divided into four groups. I then went into the motivation of starting BLE, which was explained by the staff as from a desire to help the poor children. It was then presented how development was understood by the informants in regards to BLE including topics such as sustainable development through the IGA program, saving culture, personal changes, education, and challenges. The importance and difficulties of being registered as a local NGO were then introduced. Finally the informants understanding of religion in development was presented. Here the informants shared their opinions about being motivated to work with BLE from compassion, their Biblical values, and challenges with

religion in development. The issue of the CSP of 2009 was also addressed in regards to BLE and their registration status as well as how their religious values are seen from the outside.

Next I will analyze these empirical findings as compared to the theoretical framework presented in section 3.

6 DISCUSSION

The research question for the study is:

What effect does the local Non-Governmental Organization, Bridge For Life Ethiopia, have on the Sustainable Human Development in Ethiopia through their Income Generating Activities, and what role and function does religion have in this social development process?

In order to answer the research question, three topics will be discussed regarding it. The first topic will discuss the effect of BLE being a local NGO, breaking down the organization's structure and nature. Second, will be how IGA is affecting the sustainable human development in Ethiopia. The third and last topic is how religion can affect a program such as Income Generating Activity.

The topics will be presented in this sequence because it is important to discuss the NGO's structure and program as compared to development theory before I dive deeper into the sustainable human development and religion aspects. I will then look at the IGA program in light of the current development climate in Ethiopia. Building off of everything previously mentioned, I will finish with bringing the role of religion into the discussion.

6.1 Participation and Localism

6.1.1 Local NGO: *"We are not only getting someone who comes from a foreign country"*

NGOs have been a model for participatory development since they are closely connected to the local community (Hopper 2012: 167). The bottom-up approach became more popular through participatory development, which had an emphasis on localism, self-determination, grass roots activity, and empowerment that involved local people at all stages of the development process, helping them become more in charge of their own lives (Hopper 2012: 160). The theory of participatory development is an interesting theory that I will discuss compared to the findings of my research in regards to Bridge for Life Ethiopia's status as a local NGO.

Board Member-3 states:

The benefit with being a local affiliation is that we are not only getting someone who comes from a foreign country to do some development work in Ethiopia, but there are local people that are running the organization. There is a local board and partners, and this makes the organization sustainable.

The way that theory of participatory development can coincide with BLE was revealed to me through the group interview in Bergen. As the one of the founders, Board Member-3, discussed how BLE started, they thought it would be easier to register as an International NGO, because of their plans to partner with people in Norway. When they discovered this would be a difficult process, they decided to register as a local NGO, which, as this was a local initiative to begin with, was to everyone's satisfaction. They expressed further how they see this as very successful in the way Board Member-3 expresses, "(...) That we ended up being a local NGO, turned out to be very successful, it gives us a much better foundation in Ethiopia rather than if we were an international organization." (5.4.2).

Another thing the theory pointed out was how the locals themselves know what they need, what they want, and what they can afford, and that only close cooperation between project implementers and the community can lead to project effectiveness (Desai 200b: 117 cited in Hopper 2012:160).

I can see that BLE prefers to be and values being a local NGO, yet they still appreciate the input from outside voices by the way they have a sister organization in Norway and involve the Norwegians in the decision-making processes. Through this they contribute to having a stronger foundation in Ethiopia.

NGOs are responsible for taking over the role of participatory development; this is because they often are the ones who are closest to the locals (Hopper 2012: 166). Borchgrevink argues for how, in terms of poverty reduction, NGOs have contributed significantly in the way they provide basic services and promote income-generating activities (Borchgrevink 2006: 269).

As an NGO, BLE complements this theory with their vision to help the poorest in the community by assisting them in gaining self-reliance and sustainable development. This goes hand in hand with how Ethiopia's plan for an inclusive growth is to see the poorest segment in the community build sustainable lives. I will go further into this aspect in section 6.2.

In the following, I will discuss BLE in light of participatory development, as it involves local people at all stages of the development process, helping them become more in charge of their own lives. (Hopper 2012: 160)

6.1.2 Marginalization: *"They do not work with only one religion"*

Participatory development has been criticized for how it can be difficult to have an equal representation of the locals in societies where women and ethnic minorities are marginalized. My research shows that BLE includes people from all different backgrounds, ethnic groups, genders and religions. I see that BLE is including people in their program not based on ethnicity, religion or gender but rather on who are the most in need in their local community. They do this by working closely with the local Kebele, who provides BLE with a list of the most vulnerable families in the community. From there BLE selects five families at random and the guardians themselves select the other five based on those they see are in the most need. I witnessed this during my research, when I interviewed women from different religions and ethnic groups represented in Ethiopia. In an interview with Kebele-1, he expresses:

They do not work with only one religion, but select from the local Kebele, so it's not for only one specific religious group they help (...) There's different and helping everybody, they are not discriminating. (...) The organization is implication the congregation "the right of children" without race and religious discrimination. (5.5.3)

However, one thing I did find was an uneven number of men and women involved in the IGA program, this could raise the question if they favor women over men. The ratio is currently 25% men and 75% women. A problem I discovered after conducting the interviews was that I lacked female representation in my interviews of the staff as well as lacking male representatives of the guardians, to make a conclusion that they are not marginalizing in regards to gender.

6.1.3 Agenda: Local vs. Donors: “They are not donors and we are the receivers” BLE receives its money from donors, specifically in Norway, yet in interviews with staff and board members, I find that money was not one of the highest priorities, and instead the highest priority was helping the people. An additional aspect of participatory development that is criticized, is how NGOs determine what is best for the local communities to whom they are not held accountable, often implementing their own or their donor’s agenda for the region (Hopper 2012: 169, 163).

When talking about alternative agendas from donors, the question could be raised if they have Christian donors who expect BLE to perform “mission work,” but it was revealed to me that BLE receives donations from both secular persons and Christians who have the shared concern for helping the poor. However I was not able to interview any donors, so their opinion on this subject is lacking.

In my observation during the annual board meeting, future initiatives were from the local staff and not the representatives from Norway. This shows that the donors themselves were supporting the local initiatives and not their own agendas. This was expressed by Staff-1:

We have a good culture; we talk together with brother and sister from Norway. We come we talk, they are not donors and we are the receivers. We are Christian, we have the same vision, and from that culture we get a good structure. There will be a good change from it. (5.4.2)

However, even though they are able to implement their own agendas, they do still rely on the support from their donors to function.

6.1.4 Big Budget: “*The NGO sickness*”

One of the things that stood out to me, was the way that in the beginning, BLE wanted to start with a less amount of money than the government thought they could survive on (5.4.1).

Haynes makes a point that smaller amounts of money in developing countries are often preferable, they are easier to administrate, get better results and hinder corruption (Haynes 2007: 106). Here Board Member-4, said:

One of the things, which I call the “NGO sickness,” is that they use too much money for the purpose of the work. I think in lot of the cases the government official is not always putting a hold on how much money organizations use. What I think is important is to have a good knowledge for the expenses of things. What BLE did in the beginning, we had a benchmark the first 3 years with another organization to get knowledge on how much things costs. (5.4.1)

This also shows how the research and theory are cohering; in the way their small budget can hinder corruption.

This leads to the next point; Hopper says that another negative effect of NGO is the competition between NGOs working in the same sector (Hopper 2012: 171). The above point shows the willingness that BLE has to cooperate with other organizations, learning from them, rather than competing against them.

“Participation is inextricably linked with a central preoccupation of our age, namely achieving sustainability. Quite simply, sustainable development necessitates community participation.” (Hopper 2012: 160). The way BLE is contributing to a sustainable human development in Ethiopia by participating the guardians will be discussed in the next section.

6.2 Towards a Sustainable Human Development

The NHDR of 2014 states that Ethiopia needs an “inclusive growth for sustainable human development” (UNDP: NHDR Ethiopia 2014). I will be discussing how BLE is working towards this through focusing on training and education, and how that can contribute further to the benefit of sustainable human development in Ethiopia.

6.2.1 Contribution to National Vision: “*To be able to create a saving culture*”

In the National Human Development Report from 2014 it reveals how over 25 million Ethiopians are still facing poverty and vulnerability, in addition to this, the country ranks 173rd out of 187 countries in the latest UNDP Human Development Report (UNDP Human Development Report 2014: 162). The 2014 NHDR titled *Accelerating Inclusive Growth for*

Sustainable Human Development in Ethiopia, says how maternal child health care, un- and under-employment, low level of savings, illiteracy, and corruption are the main worries (UNDP: NHDR Ethiopia 2014: 96).

Human development is measured by the HDI and focuses on people, their opportunities and choices (UNDP: About Human Development 2015; Hopper 2012: 11). UNDP mentions that the most vulnerable are those living in extreme poverty (UNDP: HDR 2014: 2-3). Since Ethiopia is one of the poorest countries in the world, the most impoverished people in the country, such as those who BLE helps, need greater human development through increasing their opportunities and freedom. In the following I will discuss how BLE can contribute to better human development, while also including the notion of sustainability as Helen Clark states that its not only about eradicating poverty, its about staying there (UNDP: HDR 2014: v).

The theory makes a point against NGOs that they often are too project-oriented and not thinking about the effectiveness of NGOs in regards to the national vision of development (Lewis and Opoku-Mensah 2006 cited in Hopper 2012: 169). In the NHDR, mentioned above, they draw attention to the five problems that Ethiopia is having in achieving a sustainable pathway out of poverty. In addition to this, they come with three important keys for solving these issues (UNDP: NHDR Ethiopia 2014: 95-96). I will now discuss how BLE can contribute to these solutions.

The first solution introduced is providing basic social services that will have a long-term benefit for the poor. The research shows that BLE focuses on sustainability for the families through providing basic services like education and training. This will be discussed further in sections 6.2.4 and 6.2.5. I see this contribute directly to resolving the problem of high levels of illiteracy by providing education within the community.

The second solution recommends more support for the accountability of the local governance at the Kebele level. From my research, I discovered that BLE found it important to have a close relationship with the Kebele. This was also something the Kebele saw as a model for other organizations as Kebele-1 said: “(...) it is model for other organizations to work with the government.” (5.4) In regards to the problem of corruption that Ethiopia faces, I see BLE’s cooperation with the local government as a contribution to resolving this problem.

The third solution presented was to encourage the private sector to create more productive employment for the poor. It is clear that BLE is helping the poor to be employed by initiating income generating activities. This is helping to decrease the number of unemployed peoples in Ethiopia.

Also, an important feature of IGA and how it can contribute to Ethiopia for an inclusive growth is the contribution to savings. From my research it was shown that BLE had been contributing to a saving culture among the guardians. This was affirmed by their banking books and as Board Member-4 stated it:

We now see that they are getting their own saving accounts and banking books where they can generate their own income. What I find remarkable is the way that we now see that they are saving. To be able to create a saving culture among the poor is very important. What we also want to see if this can have a ripple effect beyond this. When they get to a stage where they can be able to hire some other people to be part of the project, this will be crucial to create more working places in the area we are involved in. (5.3.6)

In the UNDP- Ethiopia 2014 Annual Report, it is mentioned that there is vision to see Ethiopia become a middle-income country by 2025. What I experienced from my interviews is that the guardians saw a country developing, with new roads and trains, but that rent and food prices are becoming higher (5.3; 5.3.8). A problem I see about the future is that as Ethiopia is reaching towards becoming a middle-income country, they are also driving prices higher, which in turn will effect the most vulnerable.

In regards to the theory that NGOs are not following the national vision for development, my research reveals that BLE is thinking about their national situation. They are caring for the poor, which the NHDR says that for the accelerating inclusive growth for sustainable human development in Ethiopia to happen there needs to be a deeper provision of basic social services that are benefiting the poor (UNDP: NHDR Ethiopia 2014). BLE is helping the poor by providing schooling for children and job training for the guardians. Another contribution I see is the way they support and promote the local government at the Kebele level. BLE is incorporating this by including the Kebele in their decision-making.

6.2.2 Sustainability: “*We have to break the dependency syndrome*”

We have to break the dependency syndrome: ‘I have a syndrome, I have to get money from the government or someone.’ Instead we believe that they have to work for themselves if they are okay, and are able to do that (Board Member-2; 5.3.5)

The research shows that BLE’s main focus is to create self-reliance and sustainable human development for the “ignored portion” of the community (2.5.2). In interviews with informants from the staff, the Kebele and the board, sustainable development was a repeating theme that was found as the main reason for their implementation of the development program IGA.

As the interviewees were asked about how they understood development, Board Member-4 referred to sustainable development when he stated, “good development is when you go from dependence to being independent.” (5.3.5). The way it was explained was how IGA can create a sustainable development to help people stand on their own feet in the future.

When speaking about the theory of sustainable development, Thomas Hopper argues that there are multiple understandings and approaches for the concept. This leads to how different countries have their own way of pursuing sustainable development (Hopper 2012: 219-220). In this case, Ethiopia’s government is perusing a sustainable human development in terms of the UNDP. I have chosen to look at the way UNDP has adopted the sustainable development and combined it with human development. (See section 3.1.3)

The way Bridge for Life has adopted sustainable development, is from the government. In my research, I found out that the Ethiopian government asked BLE how they are contributing to sustainable development and required them to come up with a viable plan.

As explained by Board Member-4:

(...) So for three years we have to have a sustainable strategy that have to be implemented in the program so the government asked us what kind of sustainable activity program do you have to support those children. And the we didn’t think before. (...) And then we discussed with BLE in Norway and people were eager to

know about the IGA program. So we choose to work in the IGA to be one of out sustainable program. (5.3.5)

This is the link between UNDP and BLE, that as the government views sustainable development through the eyes of the UNDP they then asked BLE to consider its sustainability, and BLE implemented IGA. In regards to the program BLE chose, Kebele-2 states, “The IGA is a really good program to get sustainable growth in this country.” (5.3.1)

6.2.3 Vulnerability: “*Our purpose is to obtain sustainability in the families*”

Banik assesses the way “vulnerability” is an important aspect of poverty. Vulnerability is related to the “risk today of being in poverty or to fall into deeper poverty in the future” (Banik 2007: 15). In the UNDP’s Human Development Report from 2014, Helen Clark states the problem:

If people remain at risk of slipping back into poverty because of structural factors and persistent vulnerabilities, development progress will remain precarious. The eradication of poverty is not just about ‘getting to zero’—it is also about staying there. (UNDP: Human Development Report 2014: v)

The report further seeks to understand that there needs to be a “close link between reducing vulnerability and advancing human development” (UNDP: Human Development Report 2014). The way they understand “human vulnerability” is linked to the prospects of people’s capabilities and choices.

BLE’s vision is to help the most vulnerable children in the community (2.5.1). They are also focusing on the family as a whole. The research indicates that they contribute to sustainable development through giving the parents training that will benefit more than one person, instead of only helping the children. They are focusing on something that will sustain, even if the project will end. This was taken from an interview with Board Member-4:

IGA is based out of our vision to help the most vulnerable children in the Kebele to attend school and be prepared for school through the preschool we are running. We wished to only have one child from each family in our preschool; the reason for this is

so that the guardians can take responsibility for the rest of their children through the income they make from the IGA. Our purpose is to obtain sustainability in the families for the children that are part of our preschool. (5.3.1)

Here I can see that they are not just trying to help vulnerable families come out of poverty, but also giving them the tools, through education, to continue living out of poverty by investing in the future generation.

6.2.4 Education: *“I don’t want anyone to experience what I did”*

Amartya Sen defines human capabilities simply as, “(...) the ability- the substantive freedom- of people to lead the lives they have reason to value and to enhance the real choices that they have” (Sen 2001: 293). He emphasizes that education is important to human capabilities in the way that learning and skill formation helps people to become more productive and contributes to their self-development (Sen 2001: 293). It was clear to me that BLE’s main focus was to help the poor by training the guardians and giving the children education. This was a very important factor for sustainable human development and was made very clear by Board Member-3:

(...) I don’t want anyone to experience what I did with not being able to attend school. Education has changed my life and made me into who I am today. Through education I see a hope for the future for the children of the poor families and that is the reason I wanted establish a project like this. (5.2)

6.2.5 Learning and Skill Formation: *“I wish to be an example for others.”*

So what is the benefit of education? Different scholars have discussed how education is an important “pillar” for the rest of the MDGs (Haynes 2007: 176). Education will benefit developing societies. This has been shown in research; for example, schooling farmers in developing countries lead to productivity and encouraged parents to send children to school (Hopper 2012: 85). This can be seen in BLE in the way IGA was implemented as a means to help the parents afford to send their children to school. By educating the parents in small business management, they also learned how to save and budget their finances, which makes it possible for them to send their children to school.

Drawing from Sen, Hopper points out 3 different points of what education can lead to:

1) Education can provide access to employment that will lead to taking care of individuals and their families (Hopper 2012: 85). When asking the guardians how they see IGA has contributed to their family and what were the main changes they experienced, they all agreed on how it had been very life changing for them and their families. As Guardian-3 mentioned, “Before we was not eating, only one meal a day. Now we eat three times a day. ...” (5.3.7).

This was also shown in the research on how many of the families have doubled their capital, and, in some cases, multiplied it even more. They all expressed how they see that IGA had contributed to not only themselves, but to the family as a whole. Guardian-2 also expressed it, “(...) I am having four people in my house, even my mom she don’t have any person to help her so it has been a really good help for her.” (5.3.7) She states that in addition to herself and her children, she was also taking care of her mother.

I can therefore see an important link between how teaching the guardians business training, is leading to jobs that takes care of the individuals and their families. Another point I would like to make is how two of the guardians expressed a concern beyond helping their family, but also their community. “If this program is successful I want to help people like street people that have less (...)” (5.3.7). Guardian-3 also states: “I wish to be an example for others.” (5.3.7)

2) The second point Hopper makes in the theory is how education can build up values like self-discipline, self-motivation and the importance of hard work (Hopper 2012: 85). The study shows how the guardians mentioned several times in the interviews the importance of education, but also that work was very important for them. The way I understand it, is that through IGA and the training, their understanding for the importance of work had been revealed to them. As stated by Guardian-2, “(...) If more people can work they don’t take their money to shisha places or qat places. If the days are long and they work long they will succeed.” (5.3.3)

3) Education can also lead to new opportunities and new ideas (Hopper 2012: 85). This was also pointed out in research by how the guardians now started to think out of the frame and more creatively. This was shown in the guardian's new initiative to go together and form IGA groups. As expressed by Guardian-4:

I also got the opportunity to join the IGA group program. (...) I hope we will do better, we already discussed and agreed so we are going to work. I hope we will be successful. (5.3.2)

I found this very important for in the way human development is being implemented by BLE. Through education and skill training the guardians are able to help more than just themselves, learn a good work ethic, and initiate new ideas to become successful.

6.2.6 Creativity: *“The potential may be helped to bring it out”*

The process of development – human development - should at least create an environment for people, individually and collectively, to develop to their full potential and to have a reasonable chance of leading productive and creative lives that they value. (UNDP HDR: *What is Human Development?*)

Drawing from this UNDP quote regarding human development, they state that human development should give opportunity for people to use their full potential. In relation to BLE, Board Member-4 stated, “We encourage them to work and engage in something they know from before” (5.3.4). Here he is sharing about IGA and the way the organization encourages the guardians to build a business around a skill they are familiar with. In this case IGA would be considered a contribution to human development. Board Member-1 also expresses:

Sometimes people have their own potential but the potential may be helped to bring it out and they can work on it and survive. So if their potential cannot come out they will be poor and no one helped them. (5.3.4)

I can see that the staff of BLE recognize the potential in the guardians and want to bring it out of them by offering opportunities to create their own businesses. An additional important factor I see, in terms of creativity, is how the guardians now have started their own initiatives

by going together and starting a larger business, as mentioned before talking about group IGA. For me this is an extension of an opportunity that BLE has given them. On the other side, I was not able to thoroughly observe the training portion of the IGA program due to time and size of this research, in this case I cannot speak to the quality of their training, but some points I will make is how the guardians expressed that they are still facing challenges like high rent costs, food costs for their families and in some cases animals, and lack of stable customers.

Drawing from this, I could say that BLE can contribute to the children's opportunities to have better lives and careers that surpass their parents, however this is a long-term concept that even though they may still be in poverty now, there is hope for change further in the future.

6.3 The Role of Religion in Development

There is poverty in Ethiopia, and we know that, the only thing is with Gods help to get out of it. People have to get work to get out of poverty. So I trust these two things God and work (Guardian-2; 5.5.4)

The role of religion is well debated in the theory of development, questioning the way religion is either a conflict or cooperation (Haynes 2007). Jeffrey Haynes, among others, stresses that despite growing secularization, religion seems to not lose its meaning (Haynes 2007). Fretheim and Mersland argue in the volume *Religionens Rolle I Bistand Og Utvikling* (2012)¹⁶ whether or not religion has an “added value.” This needs more empirical analyses with theoretical reflections and research that looks closer to one specific context and case (Fretheim 2012; Mersland 2012).

Therefore, in the next section I will discuss the empirical findings of the role of religion in BLE's development project IGA up against the theory presented in chapter 3.

In the background (2.2), Eide argues how religion has played an important role in Ethiopian history and politics (Eide 2000: 1). Even though religion has lost most of its role in the state, religion still seems to be very integrated in Ethiopians' lives, as confirmed by the high

¹⁶ In English: *The role of religion in development aid and development* (my translation)

numbers of the Muslims, Orthodox, and Evangelical Christians that are still growing, continuing to build churches and mosques around the country (Eide 2000: 34; Shinn 2013: 232, 158, 342).

Ethiopia's rich religious worldview was made clear to me through the empirical material that was gathered from Bridge For Life Ethiopia. It was confirmed that BLE's staff and board members are all personal Christians (2.5.6). As Christians, it was BLE's desire in the beginning to help the poor while also doing spiritual work, however according to the CSP of 2009, aid work and religion should be conducted separately. So because they were registered as an NGO not an FBO, they were forced to leave the spiritual aspect out of their work, however that does not change the fact that they are Christians (2.5.5).

The questions that remained are if this role of religion is having an affect on the organization, and is religion important for the guardians? These are some of the questions I will discuss in the following.

6.3.1 Targeting BLE's Values: "*They fear God so they help people*"

Wendy Tyndale states that faith-based bodies are responsible for several works of poverty reduction and human development, by contributing with income-generating programs, education and health among others (Tyndale 2011: 210-217). In this case BLE is also contributing, but can they also be considered faith based when they are registered as an NGO?

When looking at the different dimensions of NGOs, Borchgrevink mentions that NGOs differ according to their size, sector, target groups, forms of intervention and value base. The fifth dimension is about the value base of the NGO; whether or not NGOs are faith based, or motivated by humanitarian ideas or political ideology (Borchgrevink 2006: 257-258). In BLE's case, their value base is founded on their Christian faith.

What I found out from interviews with the guardians is that BLE is known in the community for being an organization that has a Christian foundation. This was expressed from all the guardians, as Guardian-1 said:

(...) Yes, they fear God so they help people. Under that God fear (...) I know they are Christians, because they go to church. And I know that the staff is Christian. I know because they go to church. Because they fear God they are working properly (5.5.4)

From the research, I understand that BLE is not doing any practical spiritual work, like evangelism, but they are still known in the community for being Christians, for instance when they are seen at church.

However, I cannot say that BLE is a “Faith Based Organization” because legally they are registered as a non-governmental organization with the Charities and Societies Agency. Though it can be said that their motivation and values are based on their Christian beliefs. In my research it is not my goal to discuss whether or not they are an FBO, but rather to see the effect of their Christian faith in the development work.

6.3.2 Compassion: *“I want to help the poor people, I feel my poor people”*

In a Christian worldview, believers see Jesus as a role model, where the fruit of the spirit is a sign of being like Christ (Hiebert 2009: 291). The way that love is used in the Bible comes from the word agape, which in practice means compassion or “suffering with”. This way of identifying yourself with those that suffer is clearly a spiritual matter that was shown in the research with staff and board members. An example of this was expressed from Staff-2 when he said, “I want to help the poor people, I feel my poor people” (5.5.1). The way he describes his feelings for his people was a repeating theme the staff brought up. In this case and through the other interviews I conducted, it is my opinion that compassion is an important part of the employees’ personal faith and work in BLE.

However, Tamsin Bradley (2011) questions if compassion alone can be an effective motivation for those in development work. She argues that compassion only brings a limited impact in the way people assume they are doing good work because they are motivated by compassion but really they are blind to the effectiveness, or rather ineffectiveness of their work. (Bradley 2011: 119)

This is an important view that she brings up; compassion by itself doesn’t make development work effective, but there must also be awareness to the actual impact of the work. Kebele-1

mentions how good fruit is not because of compassion, but because of discipline. He states, “If they don’t have discipline they won’t have good fruit. It’s a result of the discipline of the staff.” (5.4)

In this case I would say that BLE, is effective in their work because they have compassion but also because they have the discipline to see that the work is making an impact.

6.3.3 Biblical Values: *“With the word of God, we will be fruitful”*

BLE draws the ideas for its programs from the Bible. As stated by Board Member-4:

The idea of IGA and the use of “seed money,” is something that can be referred to as our paradigm and understanding of sowing and reaping in the New Testament and in the biblical understanding. We also see the importance of sowing the money in good soil, so it can bear good fruit. By following up the participants of IGA, we want to hinder the seeds from falling in bad soil, rather than being put to good use. The principle here is that to sow and reap is very important for us. (Board Member-4: 5.5.2)

It is shown that IGA and BLE’s implementation of it are rooted in Biblical values. They want to see that their investment into the guardians is something that will benefit and sustain, as referenced to “(...) sowing the money in good soil, so it can bear good fruit” (5.5.2). Another staff mentions how their principles for development are from the word of God, “Our principles and the word of God is a good principle of development. If we check ourselves with the word of God, we will be fruitful” (5.5.2). When comparing this to the theory, Barbour (2000) points to the way sustainable development and thinking about future needs is found in religious traditions. The importance of being good stewards and the value of investing in the future generations can be seen as sustainability. (Barbour 2000: 389)

Drawing from Barbour, it was made clear to me that the Biblical values in BLE, like the example of sowing into good soil so it can bear good fruit in the future, contributes to their desire to be sustainable and create a lasting positive development.

6.3.4 Motivation: “*The most important thing is the people’s heart*”

The quote below comes from Board Member-1 when I asked him about the personal motivation for starting BLE. He responded:

(...) I think the most important thing is the people’s heart. That they will support the needy peoples. So it’s difficult and challenges so I instead of having some kind of motivation like money or like that. The heart of the people can matter. (5.2.1)

It was made clear to me that the staff and board members were motivated to help people out of poverty, following Jesus’ example, more than they were to get economic gains. This was shown to me in the way many of them had sacrificed personally, like working voluntarily for months or being offered better-paying jobs. They preferred to be working with BLE’s projects and people.

The theory implies how in developing countries religious worldviews are an important matter (Haar 2011: 8). With the renewed focus that came on human development was also the emphasis on a concern for people and their opportunities. Haynes stresses how this includes a bigger concern for people’s spiritual life (Haynes 2007: 3-4).

The way this theory can be drawn to BLE is how their motivation was revealed. From the research it became clear to me that BLE had a highly spiritual motivation behind their work, even though they are unable do spiritual work. This was represented in several interviews. An example of this is stated by Board Member-3 when he explains the origin of the name “Bridge for Life” and how his personal faith is the motivation to his involvement with BLE:

It is my personal opinion that there are people in Ethiopia who are suffering and there are good resources here in Norway that can help them. But it needs a bridge that has knowledge to both the locals in Ethiopia and the locals in Norway. In this I can stand as a representative from Norway’s donors and also those that need the support, like a bridge between those continents. Further I want to say, as a personal Christian, Jesus stands between humans and God, and without him no one can come to the Father. This is also my own personal belief on how to live out compassion in practice. It is my Christian belief together with practical application. (5.5.1)

Jeffrey Haynes argues further that the issue separating secular worldview from religious worldview is with the question about what development is *for*. A secular worldview is more concerned about economic development while religious people will argue that there should also be concern about cultural and social dimensions like religion (Haynes 2007: 108). This raises the question, what does this look like when considering BLE, an NGO with faith as a foundation and motivation, doing “secular” development work, like focusing on economic development?

In this case BLE could be considered an exception to the opposing worldviews as it brings them together when it answers the question what development is for. It clearly pursues economic development with the IGA program, but it does so while also considering the religious social dimension.

6.3.5 Transformation: “*The change has to come*”

The change has to come, because there are many people that are poor and there are problem. Religious people should work. Even what religion they are from like protestant or orthodox, when the religious people are working there are good fruit and good result. (Guardian-3; 5.5.4)

Here there is a link to the theory about spiritual capital that is referred to in the section 3.2.3. Haar makes a point stressing how people who believe in an invisible world believe also in transformative powers, she argues therefore that since development and religion are about transformations, they are integral (Haar 2011: 14-15). The guardians mention this same concept as they draw a link between two things that will help people get out of poverty, work and God:

There is poverty in Ethiopia, and we know that, the only thing is with Gods help to get out of it. People have to get work to get out of poverty. So I trust these two things God and work (Guardian-2; 5.5.4)

On the other hand, Guardian-4 views work apart from religion:

I don't think work is of religion. Whether you are religious or not, you can work. Every person can believe what he or she wants. Work is work. Religion and work don't go together (...). (5.5.4)

However she does acknowledge that there is a role in religion to help the poor, referencing BLE:

(...) But of course religious laws helps the religious people to help poor people, that's why I think organizations like this is helping people like me. There is a role in religion to help poor people. (5.5.4)

Van der Well discusses Haar's point of integral development further, expressing how it helps people gain hope, strength, dignity and rights (Van der Well 2011: 356-357). I can see an interaction between the theory and my findings when the guardians say how God will help them to get out of poverty. A spiritual life is a means to get out of poverty. The staff also mentioned spiritual transformation. One of them said:

Yes, for me religion is very important in development. When we are in contact with the people your should have good personality. (Staff-2; 5.5.3)

My research shows that most of my informants viewed religion as an important part of development in the way it can transform people, which is in line with Haar's theory of transformative power. However I would say that it was also well known that religion could also do harm, which will be discussed in the following section.

6.3.6 Trust and Transparency: "You are working good work so may Allah bless you"

The informants emphasized how religious people were among the most trusted in the community. Guardian-1 confirmed this when she says "(...). The community has more respect for religious here." (5.5.4)

Guardian-1 continues:

This organization is an answer for our pray. Because there is one other organization, that is secular. And they abused the money; they had to close because of that. When it comes to BLE it was an answer to our prayer because the workers in BLE have God-fearing spirit and respect for the community. They are working honestly, they have integrity here. (5.5.4)

This was also something that the staff claimed was important, as shown when Staff-1 said:

We show them honesty and they want to be honest and productive back. Even the Muslim lady say “may Allah bless you.” “You are working good work so may Allah bless you.” They trust you, even the people that are Muslim. They give their kids to us, because they know we are motivated by God. (5.5.3)

In theory it was discussed how religious leaders were often among the most trusted in communities, this was shown in the *Voices of the Poor* research conducted by the World Bank (Tyndale 2011: 209). Again I cannot say that BLE is a church or an FBO, but still I can draw a conclusion that the research shows that they are trusted in their community, and that their religion is a part of it.

Yet, on the other side, this doesn't mean that religion always does well. Van der Well makes an argument for this, saying how religion can be both harmful and beneficial, and should not be accepted without criticism (Van der Well 2011: 356-367). This was also something that was reflected among both staff and guardians. Staff-1, expresses it well:

Yes, well as a Christian we can easily abuse our motives. It's easy to abuse money and power, but as Christians we have to trust each other. But if we are not working on it to change it can get challenge. (5.5.5)(...) Not all people can go to the word of the God. They can use religion as an advantage. For example they use it as an excuse to not be asked in situation. There are many people that can be corrupt and abusing property. They are using the religion as an excuse. Religion is a good transparency; you want your workers to have good strategy implemented according to the Bible, with pure heart and good work it will be successful. But not every one is working according to this truth. (5.5.5)

I can see clearly that religious leaders and religion is highly respected within the community, and in BLE's case, I would say they are respected in the same way. However the informants are also aware of the reality that religion can be abused, though I see this is not the case in BLE.

6.3.7 BLE Towards a FBO "*We will work on it*"

In the beginning I discussed the fact that BLE in many ways can be viewed as a faith-based organization, but that there is a contradiction because they are registered as an NGO, which restricts them from doing any spiritual work.

In an interview with staff and board they often mention how they found this challenging. As stated from Board Member-1:

We have the values to work (...) inside the organization, but legally known working on spiritual things are not aloud. You cannot do that one. But the values like helping the poor in a very king matter and lovely matter is appreciated with no problem.
(5.5.3)

He continues:

In our registration we planned to work on it, spiritual activity as one part as one department, but after the law, we are not aloud to do it because working spiritual is different from working in the secular world. So helping the children in physical activities are different that helping them in spiritual activities. So we have this category. We are forced to work not on the spiritual activity because we are NGO, because NGOs cannot work on spiritual things. So this is one thing also other challenge after register. But in our thinking that we will work on it. (5.5.3)

As the staff desired to work in spiritual work, but were unable to do so. They mentioned a new sister organization they are in the process of starting that will allow them to do spiritual work.

In this chapter I have discussed the empirical findings in comparison with the theory. In the following chapter I will present the conclusion I have drawn from this research.

7 CONCLUSION

The point of this research was to determine Bridge for Life Ethiopia's contribution towards sustainable human development in Ethiopia through the implementation of their program IGA and what role religion plays in this process. I have pursued this in the following way.

7.1 Towards a Conclusion

Within this research I had three sub questions that were focused on the informant's understanding of the role of religion in development, the importance of being a local NGO, and how IGA can contribute to a sustainable human development for the guardians. These sub questions will help contribute to answering the main research question for this thesis.

7.1.1 Importance of Being a Local NGO

The first sub-question is: *How do the informants understand the importance of being a local NGO?*

The research shows that being a local NGO was of great importance to the informants in the way that it contributes to the organization being sustainable. The informants reveal how with involving locals in all aspects of the organization they are contributing to their own sustainability. The agenda of the organization is locally driven which gives them the power to decide their own futures, rather than being told by people from the outside. It helps the participants to feel they have a voice and power to contribute with new ideas, like with the group IGA.

As a local initiative, they also work closely with the local government offices to give equal opportunity to people of all ethnic groups, religions, and genders. By being in close cooperation with the local Kebele, there is a trust relationship that has been built up between them, which is greatly appreciated by the government.

One problem the informants expressed about being an NGO is the competitiveness and the desire to grow quickly that can lead to more of a focus on finances instead of on the people. They shared how as a local NGO, their budget remains small; a testimony to the good work that can be done without requiring a large amount of money.

7.1.2 IGA's Contribution to the Guardian's Sustainable Human Development

The second sub-question states: *How can IGA contribute to a sustainable human development for the guardians?*

Before the Income Generating Activities program was applied, BLE only helped children in the community to go to school. The research shows that the guardians have been given an opportunity to stand on their own feet by starting a business from a familiar skill that has led to not just helping themselves, but the family as a whole.

The program educates the participants in various aspects of small business management, including the values of saving and work. By giving only a one-time start-up capital, IGA requires the guardians to become independent as they increase their income and build up savings. This contributes to the guardians self worth and being an example for others. It also contributes to their creativity, as they are able to expand their business in different ways, as they desire.

IGA helps the guardians to think selflessly in the way that BLE requires them to pay for their children to attend school from the income they generate. This is investing in the future generation, which is sustainable thinking and also helps the family go from dependency to being independent.

7.1.3 Understanding of the Role of Religion in Development

Lastly, the third sub-question is: *What is the informant's understanding of the role of religion in development?*

This can be divided into two parts, one being the position of the staff and board, and the other being the position of the guardians and Kebele.

The staff of BLE clearly views religion as an important part of development. As they talked from their own experiences, working in development as Christians, their work is based on Biblical principles and they see their faith has transformed them to become better people.

They expressed how, because of their faith, they were trusted more within the community, yet they were not blind to the damage that people who abuse religion can cause. Some also saw the benefits of working together with secular bodies with the ultimate goal of helping the poor.

On the other hand, the Kebele representatives shared an opposing view that religious and development work should be conducted separately. The Kebele's understanding represents the government's overall view of the benefits of separating the two. Examples of these are marginalization and the way that people will be taken advantage of by being forced to follow a religion in order to receive help. However, the Kebele, speaking about BLE, also expressed that they saw a benefit of religion in the discipline they showed.

The guardians expressed how religion was very important for organizations that are helping people especially when it comes to trust and how religious values lead people to doing development work.

7.2 Conclusion of the Research

Drawing from the three sub-questions, I will now answer the main research question:

What effect does the local Non Governmental Organization Bridge For Life Ethiopia have on the Sustainable Human Development in Ethiopia through their Income Generating Activities, and what role and function does religion have in this social development process?

In order to do this, I will divide it into two parts.

7.2.1 BLE's Contribution to Sustainable Human Development in Ethiopia

What effect does the local Non Governmental Organization Bridge For Life Ethiopia have on the Sustainable Human Development in Ethiopia through their Income Generating Activities?

The research shows that BLE contributes the sustainable human development in Ethiopia in several ways. The first theme I discovered was BLE's status as a local NGO. By operating at

a local level and engaging locals in all aspects of development, they are contributing to a more stable and long-term commitment. They partner with the local government office, the Kebele, to select participants for their IGA program, including people from all different backgrounds, ethnicity, religions and gender. However I see that there is an unequal representation of men and women participating in the IGA program, where more men could be included. BLE operates with a small budget, which, as stated in the research, has greater benefits because it is easier to control, allowing for more transparency and less corruption.

The main theme to discuss is that within Ethiopia, they are contributing to a sustainable human development by creating opportunities for people in poverty. They help the ignored people within the community, the poor and vulnerable, by focusing on more than one dimension. IGA provides business training and a one-time amount to build a business from a familiar skill. The research shows that the training in saving and keeping financial records has helped the guardians to be successful in starting small businesses that have led to double or more what they started with. In addition to this, only giving a start-up capital one time encourages and leads the guardians to go from dependency to being independent. By having jobs, the guardians also gain more self worth and understand the importance of hard work.

IGA also helps families to become self reliant by providing opportunities for the guardians, who, in turn are then able to send their children to school using the income generated. As the guardians increase the revenue, they are able to afford to send some, if not all of their children to school eventually without additional help or support from others. This is sustainable in the way they are creating self-reliance and how they are investing into the future of Ethiopia, the future generations, through education, which opens them up for more and better opportunities.

It is also important to point out the specific contribution to the human development of the guardians. They are given more choices, which increases their capability to think creatively. They also are able to implement new ideas, which were shown in the initiative of group IGA.

All of this that has been mentioned has lead to more sustainable human development within Ethiopia. However, it needs to be taking into account that it will take time and that the guardians still face challenges in their day-to-day life, with high rent, food prices and not always having costumers. This leads to how BLE continues to follow up with every guardian, even after five years.

7.2.2 The Role and Effect of Religion on BLE's Contribution

What role and function does religion have in this social development process?

The research shows that the organization's Christian values have had a great affect on the way they are helping the guardians. In this case, religion has been the main motivator and reason for why BLE is engaging in this work. The research states that the staff of BLE are not motivated by money to help the poor and vulnerable, but their Biblical values lead them to have compassion for the suffering.

Their faith, in some cases, guided the staff to not think of themselves or their own personal gains, but rather to sacrifice in order to continue working for BLE, as some staff gave up better paying jobs or worked voluntarily for a number of months before receiving any pay.

There is also an important link between sustainable human development and religion in the way they refer to the Biblical value of bearing good fruit for a lasting future, in addition to the concept of "seed money." They draw ideas and concepts from their faith and implement them into their work.

The research also indicates that for the staff, Christianity is important for their personal transformation. They see how the word of God will transform them, giving them dignity and good character, which they view as valuable in development work.

Even though BLE is not working in religious work directly, they still have an affect on the people they are helping. The research shows that within the community, there is more trust in organizations that are religious rather than secular. In BLE's case, the guardians know that they are Christians. Because of BLE's religious foundation, it was clear that the guardians, who are from different religions, trusted them in the way they sent their children to BLE's preschool and participated in IGA.

It is shown that religion is important in development work, and can be an important tool. However this cannot exclude the fact that people can easily abuse their motives or religious influence, or that religious motivation is all you need to pursue development work.

7.3 Outlook

Due to time and limitations I encountered, there were many aspects of the research I was unable to contribute to. Some interesting questions that arose will be addressed in the following for opportunities of further research.

The first suggestion would be, in order to determine further the impact religion can have on this development program, to compare a several secular organizations that are running IGA with organizations that have religious values, like BLE, that are also implementing IGA.

Another point of further research would be how IGA compares and contrasts with programs. In the future when the group IGA has been established it would be interesting to see how it operates in comparison with a well established financial service such as microfinance.

As I have written this research in 2015, the UN is now creating new development goals. It would be interesting to research further to see how organizations like BLE will contribute to these new goals.

Lastly, it would be interesting to see how the new sister organization BLE has plans to establish affects the role of religion in BLE's development work. It could also be looked at if the government or local Kebele views them in a new way or questions if they are marginalizing anyone due to the religious aspect. Also how it affects the donors, especially the secular donors.

I therefore submit these ideas for further research in the field of religion and development.

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Appendix 1: Interview Guide

(Staff, board and Kebele)

1. General information

- 1.1 Can you tell me briefly about your background?
- 1.2 What is your position in the project?
- 1.3 How did you get in contact with the project?
- 1.4 How long have you been part of the project?

2 General Information of Bridge for Life

- 2.1 Can you tell me briefly about Bridge For Life?
- 2.1 How did Bridge For Life begin?
- 2.3 What is the vision for the organization?
- 2.4 Can you tell me about the IGA project?

3. Personal motivation.

- 3.1 What is your personal motivation to be a part of BLE?
- 3.2 What do you think should be the most important motivation to do development work?

4 Development

- 4.1 How do you understand development?
- 4.2 What is the current situation in Ethiopia? What changes have you seen in the last years?

5 Income Generated Activities, Business

- 5.1 How does the Income Generating Activities project work?
- 5.2 What training do you give the guardians?
- 5.3 What results have you seen from the program?
- 5.4 Have you experienced any difficulties with the program?
- 5.5 What impact does the project have for the community?

6 Religion and development

6.1 What values would you say BLE are founded on?

6.2 Does religion have in part of the project? If yes: in what way?

6.3 Does BLE have any religious connections? Is yes: in what way?

6.4 Is the organization affected by the NGO law of Ethiopia, when it comes to religion? If yes: how?

6.5 Do the guardians come from different religions? Is there a dominant religion?

6.6 What is the dominant gender among the guardians?

6.7 Have there been any religious conflict in the work of the project?

6.8 Have your religious beliefs caused any challenges in the project? How?

6.9 What do you think about religion in development?

6.10 What do you think about separating development and religion?

Interview guide for the guardians

Personal question:

- 1) Can you shortly tell me about yourself?
- 2) How you did you get connected to the BLE?
- 3) How was your life situation before joining the IGA?
- 4) Can you tell my some specific changes?

About IGA:

- 5) Can you tell me about the business you started?
- 6) Can you describe IGA? What have you learned in the program?
- 7) Do you thing IGA is having an impact on the local Kebele? If yes, what kind?
- 8) Have you seen changes in the Kebele after BLE started? Is yes, what kind of changes?
- 9) Can you see any religious values in BLE's work? If yes, what values do you see?
- 10) How do you understand development in Ethiopia?

Appendix 2: The Horn of Africa



(<http://www.un.org/Depts/Cartographic/map/profile/horne.pd>)

