



NORWEGIAN
SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY

“We Have to Look for Peace in Our Country”

An empirical study of the Peace and Reconciliation program run by the Protestant Church Network in the Democratic Republic of Congo

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The people who walk in darkness will see a great light. For those who live in a land of deep darkness, a light will shine. (Isaiah 9:2 NLT)

ABSTRACT

The objective of this thesis was to discover more about how local agents, in this case the local churches, and foreign agents, such as mission organizations and other non-governmental organizations can contribute to creating sustainable peace through non-violent means and be important contributors in the process of holistic peacebuilding. The research question for this study is: *How does the protestant church network, the Église du Christ au Congo, consider the impact of the Peace and Reconciliation program, in their quest for sustainable peace in the Kivu region in the Democratic Republic of Congo?*

The Peace and Reconciliation Program is a program that works towards the repatriation of Rwandan refugees and combatants living in the Kivu region of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). If these two groups are repatriated, it will most likely result in a significant improvement to the current situation in the volatile Kivu region. The living conditions of the local population could be expected to become more stable and secure. The protestant church network, the Église du Christ au Congo (ECC), operates the Peace and Reconciliation program, making use of local churches found all over the countryside.

The study finds that through the use of existing local structures, such as the church network, there is great possibility to do peacebuilding in an influential way. Through this program, the ECC is making a contribution in reconciliation work, both in practical ways and also through its position of being a non-violent approach towards the issue of Rwandan combatants and refugees in the Kivu provinces of the DRC.

The study contributes to existing theory about peacebuilding and reconciliation, and how civil society can contribute in such work. The study shows that close relations between leaders of the civil society and leaders at the grassroots level are beneficial. In the study it is also revealed that Christian spirituality can be a motivating factor and influence in peacebuilding. The study also contributes to the theory of non-violent methods for transformation of violent cultures into cultures of peace. Finally, the study contributes to the present research on the capacity of churches in the Great Lakes Region in peacebuilding.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Oh, Congo, what a wreck. It hurts to look and listen. It hurts to turn away.

-Philip Gourevitch

A small dream about going to Congo has turned into this thesis. At the end of this work Gourevitch statement seems somewhat fitting, as it has been painful to gain information of the situation in the Democratic Republic of Congo, and hear the stories from people living there. Yet, it is only partially true for me. Even though there have been much pain, it has also been a rewarding work, cause despite allot of despair, I have through this study also gained insight in the hope the informants have and the light that shines in this land of deep darkness.

Seeing this task completed, there are many who I am grateful towards for help and support. A great thanks to: The informants, heroes and peacemakers in Congo, for sharing your everyday stories. My supervisor for great advises, for your availability, and all the digressions with fun, laughter and mission-talks. My parents for reading through it all, and engaging in a theme so far away from their own respective fields. My friends and co-students at MF, it would not be the same without you and the (long) lunch-breaks. My British friend Carol for great help with the grammar. Ingrid, for receiving me with such hospitality in Bukavu, and all the conversations and good inputs regarding the thesis throughout the fieldwork and lastly PYM for allowing me to write about the program, and for the practical help. Thank you!

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ABBREVIATIONS

AFDL	<i>Alliance des forces démocratiques pour la libération du Congo-Kinshasa</i> (Eng: Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo)
CELPA	<i>Communauté des Église Libres de Pentecôte en Afrique</i> (Eng: Community of the Free Pentecostal Churches in Africa)
CEPAC	<i>Communauté des Eglises de Pentecôte en Afrique Centrale</i> (Eng: Community of the Pentecostal Churches in Central Africa)
CNR	Commission Nationale pour les Réfugiés (Eng: National Commission for Refugees)
DDR RR	Disarmament, Demobilization, Repatriation, Reintegration and Resettlement
DRC	The Democratic Republic of Congo
ECC	<i>Église du Christ au Congo</i> (Eng: The Church of Christ in Congo)
FARDC	<i>Forces Armées de la République Démocratique du Congo</i> (Eng: The Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of Congo)
FDLR	<i>Forces démocratiques de libération du Rwanda</i> (Eng: The Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda)
FIB	Force Intervention Brigade
ICRC	International committee of the Red Cross
IDP	Internally displaced person
IRC	International Rescue Committee
LRA	Lord's Resistance Army
M23	<i>Mouvement du 23-Mars</i> (Eng: The March 23 Movement)
MFA	The Norwegian Ministry for Foreign Affairs
MCC	Mennonite Central Committee
MONUC	<i>Mission de l'Organisation des Nations unies en République démocratique du Congo</i> (Eng: the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo)
MONUSCO	<i>Mission de l'Organisation des Nations unies pour la stabilisation en République démocratique du Congo</i> (Eng: the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo)

NGO	Non Governmental Organizations
PYM	The Pentecostal Foreign Mission of Norway
RPF	Rwandan Patriotic Front
TRC	Truth and Reconciliation Commission
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

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1 INTRODUCTION

This thesis is an empirical study of a Peace and Reconciliation program run by the protestant church network Église au Christ au Congo (ECC) in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). In the following is my personal concern for choice of topic and the main topics given. The research question for the study and five sub-questions are presented and the methodology for the research is briefly introduced. The present available literature on the theme, and the main literature used in the thesis are given, and lastly is the following structure of this thesis is presented.

1.1 Personal Concern

During my studies of religion, human rights, development, missiology and cross-cultural communication have the field of peace studies become of interest. As I was introduced to the concept of peacebuilding as a way to see sustainable peace established, and reconciliation as an approach within peacebuilding I desired to learn more about this. Therefore when choosing the subject for the thesis, I decided to use these theoretical concepts as a starting point. I also wanted to approach these concepts in a holistic way.

At the same time I also desired to write about the Democratic Republic of Congo, a country that have caught my attention, as the local population has been suffering for decades due to war and mismanagement. Especially the eastern parts of the country are amongst the worst places on earth for women and children to live in. In such a region the need for peace is great, but the challenges are also numerous.

The Pentecostal Foreign Mission of Norway (PYM) has in in cooperation with the Christian umbrella organization for most protestant churches, the *Église du Christ au Congo* a program. This initiative, *Programme Paix et Réconciliation*,¹ is a peace and reconciliation program that seeks to contribute to the repatriation of Rwandan combatants and refugees still present in the Kivu-provinces through awareness-raising. The program takes use of the already present church structure, with churches all over the region². Due to the two interlinked reasons mentioned above, I chose to have the program as the object for the empirical study in the thesis.

¹ Hereafter referred to as 'the program' or 'the Peace and Reconciliation program'

² The photo on the front page is from one of the many churches in the region and was taken by me during the fieldwork in January 2014.

My goal with the research is to discover more about how both local agents, in this case the local churches, and foreign agents, such as mission organizations and other non-governmental organizations (NGO) can contribute to bringing sustainable peace by non-violent means and be important contributors in the process of holistic peacebuilding. Through study of the program, and by using different theories about peacebuilding and reconciliation, the research will be a contribution towards a holistic understanding of peace-work and mission work within the discipline of social science. For further research there are several areas of interest. As the study is regarding the specific situation in DRC it would be of interest to do research of other conflict regions so see if the findings are coherent with the research done here in order to make more general principles. There is also scope for more in-depth research of different elements within the program that were not covered by this study.

1.2 Main Topics in the Thesis

1.2.1 Peacebuilding

Peacebuilding is as mentioned above one of the key concepts that form the theoretical framework for the thesis. The theory and praxis of peacebuilding have arisen within three interrelated fields: (1) international peacekeeping, (2) conflict resolution and peace research, and (3) as part of development theory. These three different disciplines have all added knowledge to what today is understood as peacebuilding (Bercovitch and Jackson 2009:169-71). Peacebuilding is due to the three interrelated fields that have influenced the concept now a comprehensive approaches that involves multiple activities such as conflict resolution and reconstruction, nation-building or sustainable development (Bercovitch and Jackson 2009:172). It is as well a holistic approach that seeks to transform political, economic, and social structures that initially contributed to violence so that structures that support peace is built (Darweish and Rank 2012:2). The process of peacebuilding can operate on both a national level and at the grass roots. Through this multidimensional work, sustainable peace and reconciliation can be established and sustained (Darweish and Rank 2012:3).

1.2.2 Reconciliation

Reconciliation can be understood as an essential part of peacebuilding (Darweish and Rank 2012:6) and is the approach that is weighted within peacebuilding in the research. Peacebuilding is a holistic and comprehensive process that needs to reach all levels of society therefore reconciliation is important, as the needs in conflict-ridden societies are also very

present on the relational level. Reconciliation is the process that occurs between the people involved in the conflict, where humanity is restored (Schreier 1998:15). It is difficult to move on before the past is dealt with, this is what reconciliation seeks to do.

In addition to how the concept is understood within peacebuilding, reconciliation can also be understood within a missiological context. The missiological approach places significant emphasis on forgiveness and that reconciliation is both social and spiritual work (Schreier 1998:112). This understanding of reconciliation is also included in the thesis due to the relevance as the research is of a church program.

1.2.3 The Democratic Republic of Congo

Important background information is the Democratic Republic of Congo as it is the country the program is placed within. DRC is known as one of the world's most war-torn places today. The North and South Kivu, two provinces in the east have been especially exposed to acts of war. Even though the overall situation in the DRC is better than some years back, the people in Kivu are still living in the wake of war, and are struggling with the subsequent implications (Prunier 2009:46-47). Women have been and still are being raped as a weapon of war and children are forced to become child-soldiers (Speed and Vestvik 2009:10).

One of the largest difficulties in the country is the presence of foreign military groups in South and North Kivu. One of these groups is the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (in French: *Forces démocratiques de libération du Rwanda*) (FDLR). In the beginning, the FDLR was mainly made up of the *Interahamwe*, the perpetrators of the Rwandan Genocide, who fled to the forest of the Kivu together with many other Hutus after the genocide³. The Peace and Reconciliation program have aimed their work toward the FDLR.

1.2.4 The Pentecostal Foreign Mission of Norway

The Pentecostal Foreign Mission of Norway (PYM) is the facilitator of mission work within the Pentecostal movement of Norway. They have their own department for development work, and have projects in 50 countries (PYM undated:12-13). PYM has been engaged in the DRC since 1922. Missionaries have been present during all these years except two periods when the wars were at their worst. The work that PYM has had in Congo has been partially

³ Leraand, D. (2013, 27 December). DR Kongos historie. Cited the 30 July 2014 from: http://snl.no/DR_Kongos_historie

mission work and partially development work. They have built churches that have also facilitated institutions as schools and hospitals. The churches are gathered under the description, *La Communauté des Église Libres de Pentecôte en Afrique* (CELPA), and are found in all of the eleven provinces of the DRC⁴.

1.2.5 Peace and Reconciliation Program

One of PYM's projects is the *Program au Paix et Réconciliation*. The program is operated through the umbrella organization for most of the protestant churches in the DRC - *Église du Christ au Congo* (ECC). The program has been receiving support from the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) but the support was stopped in May 2013. The program has continued running, but with low intensity because of the lack of means. The Mennonite Church Council (MCC) has supported the program somewhat since 2012, especially with food distribution to the Rwandan refugees.

The aim of the program is to repatriate Rwandan Hutu combatants and refugees that fled from Rwanda after the genocide in 1994. They now live mostly in the provinces of North Kivu, South Kivu and Maniema. The combatants and refugees are living without any rights in the DRC such as education or health care. They survive by looting villages for food and other items that they need. Therefore repatriation benefits both them and the Congolese people.

The program works through engaging the local churches present the provinces. This is done through workshops and seminars, where also other local leaders and the local population are invited. The seminars and workshops sought to educate the local leaders on how they can participate in promoting the message of repatriation to the Rwandans. They carry out different awareness-raising activities among the Rwandans such as handing out leaflets about repatriation and through radio. The work of the program has also to some extent done advocacy toward the Rwandan and Congolese government as well as toward the top-leaders and persons of influence within FDLR.

1.3 Research Question

This thesis is about peace work as it addresses the situation in the Kivu provinces, and how the Peace and Reconciliation program contributes to establish sustainable peace through working for repatriation of the Rwandan refugees and combatants. The research question for

⁴ PYM. (2012b, 16 October). *D.R. Congo*. Cited the 20 July 2014 from: <http://pymworld.com/d-r-kongo-2/>

the study particularly examines what the informants see as the impact of the program. The research question is:

How does the protestant church network, the Église du Christ au Congo, consider the impact of the Peace and Reconciliation program, in their quest for sustainable peace in the Kivu region in the Democratic Republic of Congo?

In order to answer the research question I have outlined five sub-questions. These are based on different themes and elements that I have found especially interesting with the program. I will in regard to these questions in a larger degree give my own evaluation of the coherence of the answers according to theory and relevance. The sub-questions are:

- What are the benefits of the program in being a local initiative?
- What role have the local churches played in peacebuilding?
- How does the program promote reconciliation?
- In what ways does the program specifically contribute in the quest for sustainable peace?
- How can spirituality influence peacebuilding and reconciliation?

1.4 Method and Material

The epistemological position held in this thesis is interpretivism meaning that the social world is understood through the interpretation of its participants (Bryman 2012:380) the implication is that I sought to understand interpretively rather than scientifically. The ontological position in this thesis is constructionist, meaning that the social properties are outcomes of the interactions between individuals (Bryman 2012:380). The application of this will be that instead of believing that social phenomena and their meanings exist without a relation to the social actors, the social actors are those that continually create and construct the social phenomena, which is also always in constant change (Bryman 2012:33). So in the research, the social phenomenon that happens is a result of the social actors, and they are linked together. It is not possible to study the one without studying the other.

The study is qualitative research. The research provides in depth knowledge about this program and its impact in the provinces but is not necessarily possible to quantize. The main research method is interviews; both semi structured and group interviews. In addition to this I have recorded what I refer to as conversations. These were planned meetings with people where people they shared their story, and I also done some observation. The fieldwork was done in Bukavu, DRC and surrounding areas in January 2014.

1.5 Literature

Today, there is an increasing amount of research concerning all the major themes in this thesis. I have chosen to base my understanding of peacebuilding upon the following: *Conflict resolution in the twenty-first century* (2009) by Jacob Bercovitch and Richard Jackson, *Peacebuilding and reconciliation* (2012) edited by Marwan Darwish and Carol Rank, and *Building Peace: Sustainable Reconciliation in Divided Societies* (1997) by John Paul Lederach. I have also used *Civil Society, Reconciliation and Conflict Transformation in Post-War Africa* (2006) by Andrew Rigby as the article give a more contextual approach toward African Society in peacebuilding.

As reconciliation is understood both as an approach within peacebuilding, and within a Christian context I have used several different scholars. Within the scope of peacebuilding I have used *Embracing a Threatening Other: Identity and Reconciliation in Northern Ireland* by Cecilia Clegg and Lederach, which was referred to above. Robert Schreiter has a more missiological understanding of the concept and he has written several books including: *The ministry of reconciliation* (1998) and edited *Mission as ministry of reconciliation* (2013) together with Kund Jørgensen, which have provided the foundation for understanding reconciliation within a missiological perspective.

What has stood out to me through the work undertaken is that there is a vast amount of literature available about the DRC and the Great Lakes Region in general. However, there are very few texts examining the role of the local churches in peacebuilding. I have found one article *Churches and Peace-building in Eastern DR Congo and Northern Uganda* (2008) by David Jordhus-Lier and Einar Braathen who have written specifically about churches in the eastern part of DRC and Uganda. There is also one published report about the program. I have used both the aforementioned articles to compare with my findings. In addition to this, it has also been made known to me that a book about the churches is due to be published in the near future. This thesis adds a new and unique contribution to the collection of research presently available in so far as it is an in-depth study on one specific program involving local churches and because of the specific theoretical framework it is based within.

1.6 Structure of Thesis

The outline of the structure and content of the continuing chapters is as follows:

Chapter 2 gives an introduction to the choice of methods adopted. I look at research ethics and methodological appraisals in the analysis. I also give an outline of the field studies, how this was planned and how it was executed.

Chapter 3 gives the necessary background information for the thesis. The most important events DRC's history is presented, in order to understand the contemporary conflicts and wars. The present situation is also accounted for. In addition to this, is PYM and its work in the DRC further explained, and the program's work methods and structure clarified.

Chapter 4 gives an account of the theoretical outlook and position of this thesis. The concepts of peacebuilding and reconciliation are explained.

Chapter 5 presents the interviews. To give the interviewees a voice of their own, they will be presented within different thematically categories.

Chapter 6 is a discussion of the findings. The findings are discussed in light of the theory purposed in chapter 4 and in light of other relevant aspects.

Chapter 7 is the conclusion of this thesis. By answering the research question and the sub-question I will come to a conclusion based on the findings and discussion in the previous chapters. I also give account of the contribution of the thesis and suggestions for father research.

2 METHOD

This chapter provides an introduction to the research traditions that the study is based within and the research methods that have been used. Details of how the sampling was carried out and challenges and limitations that occurred during the fieldwork are explained. I also discuss the trustworthiness of the study and how the analysis has been carried out. Lastly some ethical considerations are dealt with.

2.1 Qualitative Research

The research is done within the discipline of qualitative research. Alan Bryman gives three distinctions within this discipline. Firstly, the relationship to theory is inductive as theory is generated through research. Secondly, the epistemological position is interpretivist, as it stresses to understand the social world by examining the way the participants understand the world (Bryman 2012:380). Thirdly, as the ontological position is constructionist, the social phenomena are understood as something that is repetitively accomplished by social actors (Bryman 2012:710). Concerning the inductive position is the work in the thesis not straight through inductive. As Bryman note, it is not rare that the abductive reasoning is used, meaning that the researcher moves between the theory and research more easily than in a strictly inductive method (Bryman 2012:401).

The study is grounded within the discipline of social and cultural anthropology. As social and cultural anthropology is about seeking to understand human behavior, this is used as the framework. From this the concepts of peacebuilding and reconciliation are understood and form the theoretical framework for the study. As the research question shows, my interest of the study is the informants' point of view on the impacts of the ECC program in the quest for sustainable peace.

2.2 Research Methods

2.2.1 The semi structured interview

Throughout the fieldwork, seven semi-structured interviews were conducted. Bryman states that semi-structured interviews are one of the most normal approaches within qualitative research. It allows flexibility, as the order of the questions may be changed and

complimentary questions may be added during the interview. Because of this flexibility, it has become a well-used method in qualitative methods (Bryman 2012:469).

I found this method very helpful. I used an interview guide⁵ in all of the interviews, but I found it most expedient to use it quite loosely. During the interviews I also found it beneficial to make some changes, as there was considerable variation among the interviewees both with the degree of involvement in the program and position in society. In addition to this, as the fieldwork evolved I also gained more understanding, which led to me remove some question and add others.

2.2.2 Group interview

Secondly, some group interviews were also conducted during the fieldwork. Catherine Marshall and Gretchen B. Rossman states that the advantage of group interviews is that they are often more comfortable for the interviewees, which can result in attaining better information from the informants. The interaction between the participants can lead them to inspire one another and fill in on each other's answers (Marshall and Rossman 2011:149).

I did two large group interviews with eight participants in each. The first group interview was conducted in Bukavu at the regional office for Civil Society. The second group interview were carried out in the field, in a area two hours outside of Bukavu, meeting with different local leaders in an area where the FDLR and Rwandan refugees have been and to some extent still are present. In addition to these I did also two other interviews with two participants. These interviews are in way neither semi-structured nor group interviews, but I have chose to categorize them as group interviews. During these interviews, there were times when both participants answered the questions as well as times when they decided between them who should answer, depending on to whom the question was most relevant.

2.2.3 Observation

Data was also collected through observation with field notes being written. There is a distinction made between overt and covert observation (Bryman 2012:433). As Pål Repstad argues, there can be gradual transitions between the two (Repstad 2007: 40). During the fieldwork, I made it well known why I was present and what I was doing research about, so

⁵ The outline for the interview guide is included in appendix 2.

the observation was primarily overt. Still, in all the situations, my objective was not always possible to make know, therefore was it also sometimes covert.

Another distinction made is that there is a difference between passive and active observation, where active observation means that one is participating in the activity that is carried out to a greater or lesser degree (Bryman 2012:446). Most of the observation notes that I took were from general observations done as I lived and moved around in Bukavu, which make the observation mostly passive. However, I did also take notes from what I saw in meetings, which were set up for me. Since I, the researcher had to contribute actively through asking questions and being apart of these meetings this observation was active.

2.2.4 Other information

Information for this study has also been extracted from six conversations. These were not specifically semi-structured interviews, and are therefore classified as conversations. The conversations were planned in advance and were organized in such a way that the participant firstly shared their own narrative and then questions were asked in continuation. Each conversation was recorded with consent and the participants were informed of the objective of the conversation.

2.3 Sampling

In this study is purposive sampling used as the method to sample the informants. Purposive sampling is the normal approach in qualitative research (Bryman 2012:428). In comparison to quantitative methods, the individuals are not chosen randomly, but on the basis of their ability to give relevant information that can answer the research question (Bryman 2012:418). As my knowledge regarding the Peace and Reconciliation program was limited in the beginning I relied on the leaders of the program to find informants for me. They suggested a plan of people they thought I should meet. This plan had a variety regarding the informants. Through broad network of the leader of the program I was able to both meet local partners and representatives from MONSUCO and from the governmental organ CNR. Initially, I followed the plan, however as I learned more about the program, I arranged other interviews that could be relevant and add value to the study. In total about one third of the interviews were sampled by me.

A consideration regarding the sampling is as the program coordinator sampled two-thirds of the persons I interviewed and it is therefore worth mentioning regarding trustworthiness. This does not arguably make the findings less valid but it is conceivable that the findings do portray a more positive view of the program. Most likely he did not find people he knew would portray the work of the program in an unfortunate way. Still, as it is normal with purposive sampling in qualitative research as one sought to find the most profitable informants, and as I sought to find out the impacts of the programs work, I find the sampling suitable. As I also sampled some of the interviews myself, the variation is broadened. Repstad also addresses this way of doing research. It is a normal principal according to him, to go out quite broad and then narrow it in as the research develops (Repstad 2007:55). I have also made some comments in the analysis in chapter six if I have found the answers regarding the programs efforts unrealistic and “to positive”.

2.4 Circumstances and Limitations

With every study there is a need to assess the quality of the study. The assessment of quality can be done through different approaches according to Bryman. There are quite strict ways of reviewing quality in quantitative methods, while the measurement in qualitative research differs some, as the methods in quantitative studies is hard to apply on qualitative studies (Bryman 2012:389-393). Therefore, trustworthiness is a supplementary way to assess quality, dealing with the issue of reliability, generalizability, validity, and objectivity (Maxwell and Rossman 2011:40). These are used in the assessment of the study. In the following I am discussing the different circumstances and limitations that have influenced the study and in the end is the trustworthiness reviewed.

2.4.1 Research in a different culture

It is acknowledge that when research is done in a different culture, this can affect the study. There can be cultural factors that are unknown to the researcher, and can therefore affect the relationship between informants and researcher (Kvale and Brinkmann 2009:156). With this in mind, I made effort to get to know the culture before the fieldwork. Nonetheless I might have overlooked some elements, which could have had an influence on my relationship with the informants. Another aspect is the nonverbal communication that can be overlooked or misunderstood by the researcher (Kvale and Brinkmann 2009:156). Throughout the study and

analysis it is therefore conceivable that I have overlooked or misinterpreted elements as a result of culture differences.

Language barriers can also be a challenge when doing research in a different culture. As Swahili and French is mostly used and I speak neither all interviews except two were translated from French to English. Steinar Kvale and Svend Brinkmann write that it can be a challenge to make sure that the translator are not adding his own opinions in the interview. The translator should therefore if possible be a professional who is culturally acceptable but not a friend or a relative as this can increase the risk of the translator having his own agenda (Kvale and Brinkmann 2009:156). In the interviews, three different translators were used; two were employees within the program and one was external. My review on the basis of the interviews is that the interpreters appear to have translated quite well. The experience of the interviews conducted was that in the two interviews that were not translated it was certainly much easier to have a conversation or dialogue, whereas, in all the interviews where a translator was used I found it necessary to just ask open question and then let the interviewees answer quite freely without interruptions. All in all, I would still argue that the research material is valid, it just need to be kept in mind when reading through it, that it have been translated.

2.4.2 Informant bias

As some of the primary data accumulated for the study is from the interviews, it is important that the answers given are valid. Any bias that the participants may have had could have influenced their answers and should therefore be considered. A bias that I experienced during the fieldwork was that the informants often thought I was closely connected with PYM and that they financed the trip. With this in mind, I tried to explain that this was not the case and explain my goal with the study and relation to PYM.

A second bias is regarding the connections that the interviewees have with other western people doing research. I experienced several times that the interviewees presented written or oral recommendations that they asked to be passed along, or that they requested advocacy for. With this in mind it is arguable that the answers given can have been “politically loaded” or worded so that they would speak in their advantage. As the Norwegian support has been put on hold, this factor is especially relevant. In addition there are two other biases that are related to those mentioned above. One is that there is always a risk that people will give the answers that they think I want to hear, and the other is the danger that the informants, given their

involvement in the program, wanted to “paint a nice picture” of the program. My impression is still after analyzing the interviews that the answers seem to be true and representative based on observation and other sources.

2.4.3 The safety situation

Another important aspect is that this study was done in Bukavu and the surrounding areas. The Norwegian ministry of Foreign Affairs does not recommend travels to this area. Even though the city of Bukavu is regarded as relatively safe, the surrounding areas are unsafe and the overall situation in the eastern provinces in DRC is unstable. This created some limitations for what research could be done, especially outside of Bukavu. Therefore only one interview was done in a district two hours drive outside of Bukavu. However as some of the interviewees traveled to Bukavu to meet me and some was presently placed in Bukavu as a result of instability in their home villages led to that the final group of interviews happened to be evenly spread as to people from the city and more rural places.

2.4.4 The trustworthiness of the study

Granting all this I would still argue that the data that I have collected and the study are trustworthy. I find that there is coherence internally between the different interviewees. The interviewees vary much concerning involvement in the program and the position they hold in the society, still the answers seem to be coherent on most parts with a natural divergence. In addition to this as I stayed in Bukavu for three weeks, also through observation I see coherence between the interview and observation. Another important part regarding trustworthiness is in this case the aim of the study. The research question is concerning what the interviewees see as impacts in their quest for peace. It is about their response to what they see, and I believe that through the research and the following analysis, I have discovered this successfully. The research is also, in light of the preceding paragraphs transparent so that the reader is informed of different aspects that could have influenced the research.

2.5 Thematic Analysis

The analysis of the material is done through a thematic analysis. A benefit with thematic analysis is as Repstad states that it can be aimed more directly at the research question (Repstad 2007:131). In the analysis I saw this as the sub-questions are closely related to the themes discussed in the analysis.

A thematic analysis is according to Bryman that through that the research identify the core themes of the material and use these in the analysis (Bryman 2012:13, 579). This often happens in a fluent way, Marshall and Rossman states that in qualitative analysis the process of collecting data and analyzing often go hand in hand, and Bryman argue that through thematic analysis one often finds themes and subthemes while reading and re-reading the transcripts (Marshall and Rossman 2011:149, Bryman 2012:579). I found that most of the themes that I have kept already was discovered during the fieldwork. As I did not have much knowledge of the program beforehand I therefore started the research quite wide, but as the fieldwork developed themes of interest became clearer. Some of the themes were not identified before late in the analysis, as I suddenly discovered some new connections and saw the transcriptions in a new way.

2.6 Ethical Considerations

When doing any kind of research it is important that the ethical considerations are taken into account. There are four different categories that can be used as an ethical framework: “(1) is there harm to the participant, (2) whether there is lack of informed consent, (3) invasion of privacy and (4) deception involved” (Diener and Crandall cited in Bryman 2012:135).

Throughout the study these considerations have been kept in mind. The interviewees were informed about the research and assured that their identity would be kept anonymous. In addition to this they were also informed that recordings would only be used for transcription and deleted afterwards. The transcriptions of the interviews will also be deleted when the research program is completed. The Norwegian Social Science Data Service has approved the study. The study is as well not on a personal level, some personal narratives was shared, and off cause it is personal in the regard that it is interviews with people how live in the Kivu's where the situation is very unstable, but the details in the interviews are still not of a very sensitive matter. By being anonymous it is also not possible to link political comments or comments of another character toward the informants.

3 BACKGROUND

Background information is important. Both the history of the DRC and the reasons for the conflict in the Great Lakes region need to be taken into account in order to understand what the informants see as the impacts of the Peace and Reconciliation programs efforts for sustainable peace. The complex history of the DRC and its conflicts are not always easy to get a grip on. In order to make it somewhat easier I have explained the main events to give the reader an overview of the historic events and their implications. In addition, a presentation is given of the Pentecostal Foreign Mission of Norway, the Norwegian partner to the Peace and Reconciliation Program. Lastly, ECC and the Peace and Reconciliation Program are presented in detail to give the reader a good understanding of how the program is operated, and what the main activities are.

3.1 Understanding the Conflict in the Great Lakes Region

3.1.1 The Great Lake Region

The Great Lake Region⁶ is the name used in this study for an area within Africa made up by the following four countries: Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi and The Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). These nations border different lakes including Lake Victoria, Lake Kivu, Lake Edward and Lake Tanganyika that constitute parts of the Rift Valley Lakes that are the reason for the name⁷. Within these neighboring countries there have been several conflicts, which have had an impact on the region as a whole. The conflicts can be traced back to colonial times where in Rwandan and Burundi the ethnic groups Hutu and Tutsi were discriminated against⁸. The UN Department of Political Affairs writes this about the region on their webpage:

⁶ The name 'the Great Lake Region' is also used more vastly including, Tanzania, Kenya and sometimes also Zambia, Malawi, and Mozambique in the south and Ethiopia in the North (US Department of State, undated). Map of the Great Lake Region found in Appendix 3

⁷ U.S. Department of State. (Undated). *About the Great Lakes Region*. Cited the 15 August 2014 from: http://www.state.gov/s/greatlakes_drc/191417.htm

⁸ Sikenyi, M. (2013, June). *Challenges of Regional Peacebuilding: A Case of the Great Lakes Region*. Cited the 16 August 2014 from: <http://www.beyondintractability.org/casestudy/sikenyi-great-lakes>

Africa's Great Lakes sub-region which has been plagued by decades of political instability and armed conflicts, porous borders and humanitarian crisis, along with tensions over natural resources and other potentially destabilizing factors.⁹

Within the Great Lakes region is the provinces of North and South Kivu found. They are part of what is often referred to as eastern DRC¹⁰. This study has an emphasis on the Kivus, but it is important to note that whilst the focus of the study is within a specific region, it is within the context of a large and complex web of conflicts that extends beyond the national borders of the DRC itself. The Kivu provinces are bordered to the north by Uganda and in the south by Rwanda and then Burundi. The impact of the Rwandan genocide is of particular emphasis since the Peace and Reconciliation Program in the Kivus is working towards the repatriation of Rwandan Refugees and the military Hutu-combatants with its origin in Rwanda.

In the following sections, the history of the DRC is presented in order to give insight into the key events and background for the conflicts seen today. The story of the DRC is one involving much suffering for the local population. There has been much mismanagement on the part of the government and the conflicts seen today cannot be understood without an understanding of the historical background. Included in this historic review are a thorough presentation of the FDLR and the UNs engagement and a synopsis of what is regarded as the present situation.

3.1.2 The history from colonial time up to 1994

The history of the DRC and the different ethnic groups living in the country goes thousands of years back and much could be said about it (Reybrouk 2011:24-33). I will start with presenting some key events beginning from the late 19th century when the Congo was colonized and continuing up to 1994. In 1870 the Belgian King Leopold II first set his eyes upon the Congo. With help from the British explorer Henry Stanley he tried to make the Congo basin his own¹¹. This was completed in 1885 when the colonial powers were dividing Africa amongst themselves. King Leopold claimed the Congo as his own and named the land

⁹ UN Department of Political Affairs. (Undated). *Great Lakes region*. Cited the 15 August 2014 from: http://www.un.org/wcm/content/site/undpa/main/activities_by_region/africa/pid/24261

¹⁰ Map of the Democratic Republic of Congo found in Appendix 4

¹¹ BBC. (2014, 16 July). *Democratic Republic of Congo profile*. Cited at <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-13286306>

the Congo Free State (Stearns 2011: 7). At that time over 200 different ethnic groups were gathered in the grand land in the middle of Africa¹². The Great Lake Region has had porous borders¹³, and this can be understood when 200 different ethnic groups are gathered in one land.

The rule of King Leopold did not benefit the Congolese population. During his reign there was a large demand for latex¹⁴ of which Congo became the main supplier. The local population was forced labor and the riches did not benefit them. Jason Stearns writes:

Colonial officers created a draconian system of forced labor during which they killed or mutilated hundreds of thousands and pushed millions of others to starvation or death of disease. (Stearns 2011:7)

In 1908, King Leopold was forced to give up his Free State and the Belgian government became the new head of the Congo (Stearns 2011:7). The Congo Free State was given a new name, the Belgian Congo, which would be one of several name changes in the following century (Reybrouk 2011:20). The rule of the Belgian government was not much different to that of King Leopold. It was marked by extensive exploitation of natural resources in the Congo without benefit to the local Congolese population and without development of a strong Congolese State (Stearns 2011:7).

The Congo received its freedom on June 30th 1960 from the Belgian colonial power¹⁵. It was renamed again, this time as the Republic Congo (Reybrouk 2011:20) and after a long awaited shift from the years of mismanagement and bad government. The population was looking forward to a change for the better (Speed and Vestvik 2009:174). However, such hopes were in vain since poverty and corruption did not end with the decolonization. The Congolese state was very weak and there was a general lack of education among the citizens hindering the situation from improvement¹⁶. Patrice Lumumba was established as the first prime minister

¹² Barnwell, R. (Producer). (2013, 19. November). Dan Snow's History of Congo [documentary] London: BBC Two. Cited the 1 August 2014 from: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b03cwn1m>

¹³ UN Department of Political Affairs. (Undated). *Great Lakes region*. Cited the 15 August 2014 from: http://www.un.org/wcm/content/site/undpa/main/activities_by_region/africa/pid/24261

¹⁴ In the Congo there was much latex, this was used in order to make cars and bicycle tires. Due to the rubber-demand that exploded in the 1890s Congo became the key supplier for Latex (Stearns 2011:7).

¹⁵ Leraand, D. (2013, 27 December). DR Kongos historie. Cited the 30 July 2014 from: http://snl.no/DR_Kongos_historie

¹⁶ Barnwell, R. (Producer). (2013, 19. November). Dan Snow's History of Congo [documentary] London: BBC Two. Cited the 1 August 2014 from: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b03cwn1m>

and Joseph Kasavubu as the first president, but neither kept their position very long. Lumumba was first dismissed by Kasavubu and later murdered supposedly with the involvement of both the US and Belgium. In the following years, Belgian troops were sent to protect the Belgian citizens and a UN troop was sent in to help the Congolese state to establish order¹⁷.

Mobutu Sese Seko seized the opportunity of the weak state and in 1965 he staged a military coup in which the then president Kasavubu and prime minister Tshombe were overthrown¹⁸. In the years that followed Mobutu established an autocracy. He formed his own political party, and made a new constitution which gave the president executive power, and in 1970 he was reelected as president, with no opposing candidates. He also renamed the country; the new name was Zaïre¹⁹. His rule of the country lasted 32 years (Stearns 2011:7). Stearns describes Mobutu's in the following way:

Mobutu's rule, although initially popular, paved the ground for Zaïre's collapse. By the 1980's, Mobutu [...] was increasingly paranoid and distrustful of his government and army; fearing dissent from within the ranks of his single-party state, he cannibalized his own institutions and infrastructures. Political interference and corruption eroded the justice system, administration and security services [...]. (Stearns 2011:7)

Nevertheless, what would end the autocracy of Mobutu was the genocide in Rwanda and the events, which followed it (Stearns 2011:7-8).

3.1.3 The genocide and its ramifications

On the 6th of April, 1994 the plane of the Rwandan Hutu-president Juvénal Habyarimana was shot down. The Hutu-militia accused the Tutsi guerrilla the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) of the murder of Habyarimana and launched an attack on the Tutsis (Reybroek 2011:375). In the following months over 800,000 Tutsis and those referred to as 'moderate Hutus', were slaughtered (Speed and Vestvik 2009:174). After the genocide ended²⁰, the remnants of the

¹⁷ BBC. (2014, 16 July). *Democratic Republic of Congo profile*. Cited at <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-13286306>

¹⁸ BBC. (2014, 16 July). *Democratic Republic of Congo profile*. Cited at <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-13286306>

¹⁹ Leraand, D. (2013, 27 December). DR Kongos historie. Cited the 30 July 2014 from: http://snl.no/DR_Kongos_historie

²⁰ The genocide, its reason and its implication are vastly and are not in its full presented here. I sought to give an overview to give background for the reader as the research material is presented and analysis.

deposed Hutu regime fled to the surrounding countries, including the DRC (Speed and Vestvik 2009:174). Almost two million Hutus fled over to the DRC as the RPF invaded Kigali, the capital city of Rwanda in July, 1994. Women and children together with members of the former Rwandan army escaped and established bases in Eastern Congo. The *Interahamwe*, the perpetrators of the genocide, established a new military group that was eventually known as the FDLR, the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda²¹.

The genocide in Rwanda has had great consequences for the DRC, particularly the Kivu provinces, which are still to this day heavily affected and wrought with conflicts. Still, one could argue that the genocide was not the overall cause but rather a catalyst for the situation in the Kivus today. Gérard Prunier argues this:

Let me be clear: the Rwandese genocide and its consequences did not *cause* the implosion of the Congo basin and its periphery. It acted as a catalyst, precipitating a crisis that had been latent for a good many years and that later reached far beyond its original Great Lakes locus. (Prunier 2009:xxx1)

So even though the genocide cannot be named the as the reason for the conflict in the DRC today it was certainly a catalyst for what is seen today. Especially in the east of the country as the refugees and combatants still live there, 20 years after. The Peace and Reconciliation program works directly towards improving the negative consequences of the genocide, the genocide is still of importance in that regard. It has had a major impact at a national level due to the strained relations between the governments in Rwanda and the DRC. It has also had a particularly significant impact in the Kivu provinces for the local population. The Hutu-Tutsi conflict is according to Prunier still not resolved and this is also part of why the different rebellions are found in the DRC (Prunier 2009:285).

The Kivus have been particularly exposed which Prunier also addresses:

The Kivus, North and South, were not simply two provinces of Zaire. They had been an essential factor in the 1960s revolt against the Leopoldville government; they were an extension of the ethnic and political problems of Rwanda; they were a zone of high-density population with demographic and tribal contradictions of their own[...]. It was easy to predict the impact of one and a half million refugees with an extremist political leadership, plenty of

²¹ Leraand, D. (2013, 27 December). DR Kongos historie. Cited the 30 July 2014 from: http://snl.no/DR_Kongos_historie

weapons, and a history of recent genocide when they suddenly burst upon this fragile human environment. (Prunier 2009:46-47)

As shown above the genocide did lead to the Hutu regime and refugees fleeing to the Kivus and that has had a significant impact. The Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR) was formed and is the largest group of foreign-armed militia present in the DRC today (MONUSCO, undated). According to MONUSCO there is an increasing amount of Congolese citizens included in the group, but the majority is still made up of the Hutus that participated in the genocide, Rwandan refugees and children who have now grown up and joined the group. It is estimated that there were about 2000 members in the group in 2009²².

3.1.4 Mobutu's fall and continuation of instability

A series of events happened in the following years that ultimately led to Mobutu being deposed in 1997. A rebellion led by Laurent-Désiré Kabila was launched in 1996 and moved from the Kivus towards the capital city of Kinshasa. The rebel force was a coalition of five different groups and was named *Alliance des forces démocratiques pour la libération du Congo-Kinshasa* (AFDL). It was supported by Rwanda. During the rebellion in 1996 surrounding countries got involved in the conflict²³. Due to the huge scale of involvement in the conflict, it has often been referred to as Africa's world war²⁴.

As Kabila gained power, he showed himself to be just as bad as his predecessor. He declared war on those who had fought together with him to take power in the first place. This led to a new war against the Rwandan forces and especially against a people group of Tutsi descent living in the Mulenga district in the east. Once again surrounding countries got involved in the war, with many regional features. In 1999, the Lusaka Ceasefire agreement was proposed and all parties agreed to it. The United Nations deployed the *Mission de l'organisation des nations unies en république démocratique du Congo* (MONUC) to observe that the peace agreement was followed. Unfortunately, the peace agreement was not upheld²⁵.

²² MONUSCO. (Undated). *The Foreign Armed Groups*. Cited the 13 August 2014 from: <http://monusco.unmissions.org/Default.aspx?tabid=10727&>

²³ Leraand, D. (2013, 27 December). DR Kongos historie. Cited the 30 July 2014 from: http://snl.no/DR_Kongos_historie

²⁴ Gérard Prunier has written the book *Africa's world war* (2009). He argues for the term Africa's world war due to the numerous countries that have been involved.

²⁵ Leraand, D. (2013, 27 December). DR Kongos historie. Cited the 30 July 2014 from: http://snl.no/DR_Kongos_historie

The situation did not improve much in the years following the millennium. Resentment towards president Kabila increased and led to his assassination in January 2001 by one of his own security men. His son Joseph Kabila became the new president. In contrast to his father he was more reconciling toward the Congolese population. He made it legal to establish other political parties. In 2002 he also managed to come to a peace agreement with Rwanda and Uganda where they were supposed to pull out their respective military forces from the DRC, however this didn't happen. In the election held in 2006 he was elected democratically and he continues to hold his position today. With the democratic election and transition to peace at the end of 2006, the DRC went from war to peace. However, the transition to peace did not influence the situation in the eastern parts of the country. In the following years the Kivus were affected by instability due to repeated threats from the government of Rwanda and the presence of the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), a militia from Uganda²⁶. In theory the situation could have improved with the peace agreement and peacekeeping forces in the DRC, and in most of the country the situation is to a small extent improving while the war in the east is still raging. Rwanda has had reason to feel threatened due to the presence of the FDLR in the DRC and therefore have there been done repeated efforts by Rwanda in various ways to get rid of the FDLR²⁷.

What should also be mentioned is that the riches in the Congolese soil are certainly an issue within the conflict. The armed groups that are in control of different mines earn millions of dollars. Through trading conflict minerals such as, gold, tin, tantalum and tungsten they earn a vast amount of money that does not benefit the Congolese population at all²⁸.

3.1.5 The engagement of United Nations

The United Nations has been engaged in the DRC since the peace agreement of Lusaka was signed in 1999. The operations of the UN in the DRC have been the UNs largest

²⁶ Leraand, D. (2013, 27 December). DR Kongos historie. Cited the 30 July 2014 from: http://snl.no/DR_Kongos_historie

²⁷ Leraand, D. (2013, 27 December). DR Kongos historie. Cited the 30 July 2014 from: http://snl.no/DR_Kongos_historie

²⁸ Enough project. (Undated). *Conflict minerals*. Cited the 5 August 2014 from: http://www.enoughproject.org/conflicts/eastern_congo/conflict-minerals

peacekeeping force in the world, as well as the most costly. The present contingent in the DRC is around 25,000²⁹.

In the beginning the work of MONUC was first and foremost to see that the Lusaka Ceasefire agreement was upheld as explained previously. The MONUC force eventually received an expanded³⁰. In July 2010, MONUC was renamed and was then called the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO), the name switch was made as there had been changes regarding mandate. The UN Peacekeeping writes on their web page about the new mandate:

The new mission was authorized to use all necessary means to carry out its mandate relating, among other things, to the protection of civilians, humanitarian personnel and human rights defenders under imminent threat of physical violence and to support the Government of the DRC in its stabilization and peace consolidation efforts.³¹

The engagement of the UN in the DRC has not been without turbulence and mistrust. There have been established reports that peacekeeping soldiers within MONUC/MONUSCO have committed sexual abuses against the local population. This has led to mistrust among the local population, since the one who is supposed to be protect has become an additional threat. According to the UN, the exploitations have decreased over the last years^{32,33}.

3.1.6 Military approaches in the conflict solving

In 2009 two military operations were carried out against the FDLR, Umoja Wetu and Kimia II. The first was a joint operation with the Rwandan and Congolese army while the latter was implemented with the support of the UN peacekeeping force. Many have heavily criticized these military approaches as the damage on the local population is arguably higher compared

²⁹ UN Peacekeeping. (2014, 30 June). *Peacekeeping Fact Sheet*. Cited the 15 August 2014 from: <http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/resources/statistics/factsheet.shtml>

³⁰ Leraand, D. (2013, 27 December). DR Kongos historie. Cited the 30 July 2014 from: http://snl.no/DR_Kongos_historie

³¹ UN Peacekeeping. (Undated). *MONUSCO Mandate*, Cited the 10 September 2014 from: <http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/missions/monusco/mandate.shtml>

³² Fleshman, M. (2005, April). Tough UN line on peacekeeper abuses. *African Renewal*. Cited the 16 August 2014 from: <http://www.un.org/africarenewal/magazine/april-2005/tough-un-line-peacekeeper-abuses>,

³³ UN News Centre. (2011, 27 July). *Sexual abuse allegations decline against UN peacekeepers in DR Congo and Liberia*. Cited the 16 August 2014 from: <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=39164#.U-9igku-rG8>

to the amount of FDLR soldiers who actually get repatriated³⁴. Therefore, there is a continuing discourse on what measures should be put in place against the FDLR.

In the conflict have also the UN been directly engaged through military approaches, as the Force Intervention Brigade (FIB) was established within MONUSCO. On 28th March 2013, the General Secretary authorized that a military offensive brigade within MONUSCO should be established. This was done so that the FIB could support the Congolese army FARDC in a military offensive towards the many rebel groups in eastern Congo³⁵. At the end of 2013, the then largest rebel group M23³⁶ (the 23 March movement) was defeated by a joint offensive by FIB and FARDC. The M23 had at that time controlled the city of Goma and surrounding areas in North Kivu³⁷. The end of M23 stabilized North Kivu somewhat but as is written on Insight on Conflict there are still several areas for conflicts:

From the beginning of 2014, the FIB carried out offensive operations against other armed groups in North Kivu. While the situation in this province saw noticeable improvements, by mid-2014 more than 25 armed groups were still active across Eastern DR Congo, with major hotspots of conflict in northern Katanga, Ituri and South Kivu³⁸.

The shift in the UN peacekeeping force with the FIB has also led to changes in FDLR's role. With the defeat of M23, the FDLR is now seen as the largest foreign military force present in the DRC³⁹.

³⁴ Human Rights Watch. (2009, 13 October). *DR Congo: Civilian Cost of Military Operation is Unacceptable*. Cited the 15 August 2014 at: <http://www.hrw.org/news/2009/10/12/dr-congo-civilian-cost-military-operation-unacceptable>

³⁵ UN Department of Political Affairs. (Undated). *Great Lakes region*. Cited the 15 August 2014 from: http://www.un.org/wcm/content/site/undpa/main/activities_by_region/africa/pid/24261

³⁶ The M23 rebel group is made up by mostly Congolese with a Tutsi origin. The group was founded after a mutiny within the Congolese army. It is acknowledge that the group has received support from Rwanda. Their name M23 refer to a peace deal from March 23, 2009 made with the Congolese government. (BCC, 2013).

³⁷ Insight on Conflict. (2014, June). *DR Congo: Conflict Profile*. Cited the 15 July 2014 from: <http://www.insightonconflict.org/conflicts/dr-congo/conflict-profile/>

³⁸ Insight on Conflict. (2014, June). *DR Congo: Conflict Profile*. Cited the 15 July 2014 from: <http://www.insightonconflict.org/conflicts/dr-congo/conflict-profile/>

³⁹ Mueller, T. (2014, 5. February) After M23, it is time to focus on DR Congo's FDLR rebels. *Daily Monitor, OpEd, Commentary*. Cited the 15 August 2014 from: <http://www.monitor.co.ug>.

3.1.7 Present situation in the Kivu provinces

Today the situation in the DRC is as mentioned earlier in general somewhat better than previously. However, the damage inflicted on the country in the mid-2000s is significant. On Insight on Conflict the situation is evaluated as follows:

During the mid-2000s, Congo was often referred to as the world's most neglected humanitarian crisis. In 2007, a survey by the International Rescue Committee (IRC) put the death toll of the Congolese conflict at 5.4 million, making it the world's deadliest war since World War II. This equates to approximately 45,000 deaths every month since 1998⁴⁰.

Ingrid Samset gives an account of the specific situation in the eastern parts:

After the end of the internationalized civil war in 2002, larger scale violence in eastern DRC [...] was concentrated in several zones. Mostly within the Kivus and Orientale. [...] from 2003 until the end of the decade, the people of the Kivus and Oriental mostly lived in a situation of 'no war, no peace' (Samset 2012:230).

As Samset gives account, can the situation for the Kivus be claimed to be one where there is neither peace or directly war.

The country is in much need of development and change towards more peaceful relations. There are 2,6 million internally displaced persons (IDP) in the DRC today. The large number of IDPs is among others caused by the threat of the FDLR and opposing military operations⁴¹. Many refugees have been forced to flee numerous times due to instability. Many Congolese people have also been forced to flee numerous times. There are 67.51 billion⁴² people in the DRC and 71.3 percent of them are living underneath the poverty line, even though the land is lush and fertile⁴³. The situation in eastern DRC, in the Kivus is particularly unstable. United Nations News Centre wrote in 2012 how they found the situation in the Kivu provinces "tense

⁴⁰ Insight on Conflict. (2014, June). *DR Congo: Conflict Profile*. Cited the 15 July 2014 from: <http://www.insightonconflict.org/conflicts/dr-congo/conflict-profile/>

⁴¹ UNHCR. (2013) *2014 UNHCR country operations profile - Democratic Republic of the Congo*. Cited the 15 July 2014 from: <http://www.unhcr.org/pages/49e45c366.html>

⁴² The World Bank. (2013). *Data: Congo, Dem. Rep.* Cited the 16 July 2014 from: <http://data.worldbank.org/country/congo-dem-rep>

⁴³ The World Bank. (2005). *Data: Congo, Dem. Rep.* Cited the 16 July 2014 from: <http://data.worldbank.org/country/congo-dem-rep>

and fragile”⁴⁴. Séverine Autesserre makes this very clear in her commentary on the situation in the eastern parts of DRC:

Life conditions in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of Congo have deteriorated significantly since the end of the transition to peace and democracy in late 2006. Each year, the people of the eastern provinces feel less secure than the year before. There were more people internally displaced in 2010 than at the end of 2006. Armed groups including the Congolese armed, relentlessly commit horrific violations of human rights. The Congo has dropped twenty places (from 167 to 187) in the Index of Human Development, officially becoming the least developed country on earth. Overall, the current conditions for the populations of the eastern Congo remain among the worst in Africa. (Autesserre 2012:202-203).

As Autesserre argues, not only was the condition in the eastern region of the Kivus not improving but it was actually deteriorating. She wrote this in 2012. There has been one significant change since this, namely the defeat of M23, which has led to some improvement but the present situation is not stable,

The causes for the conflict in eastern Congo are many. Koen Vlassenroot gives three overarching reasons for the conflict. Firstly he draws attention to the “nature of the Zairian State”, the following implications of Mobutu and his reign. Secondly is the conflict due to ownership of the land in the Ituri and Kivu provinces, this is a problem on both a local, national and international level. He lastly point to the problem of citizenship (Vlassenroot 2004:42-45). These three reasons are important to understand the conflict. The DRC in general was not a strong state beforehand and the history has influenced the conflict found today. There is also the aspect of land control, which applies to the neighboring countries as well as the many local and foreign militia groups, which each seek to take control of their own territories. As shown above in the historic review, the DRC has been a site for many foreign arms groups as the state has been so weak. This has caused much damage to the local

⁴⁴ UN. (2012, 17 December). *Situation in Kivu provinces of eastern DR Congo remains 'tense and fragile'* – UN spokesperson. Cited the 15 August 2014 from: <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=43789#.U-t-ala-rG->

population as well as increased political tension between Rwanda and the DRC⁴⁵. The last aspect is with regards to citizenship and is in relation to the Hutu-Tutsi ethnic issues.

All these different factors, Congo's history and the conflict in the surrounding areas has led to the situation found in the land today, especially in the eastern parts. There are some improvements, but as cited above there are still many IDPs and the land is under developed. This is a population that has been living with wars for a great many years, all of which have had a negative impact on the region. This has led to a great need within the area for peace and reconciliation approaches.

3.2 The Pentecostal Foreign Mission of Norway

The Pentecostal Foreign Mission of Norway (PYM) is the Norwegian partner of the Peace and Reconciliation Program and has been involved since the commencement of the program. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Norway (MFA) has financially supported the program from a budget within the Department of Peace and Reconciliation. This support has then been channeled and administered through PYM (PYM 2012a:20).

The Pentecostal Foreign Mission of Norway (De norske pinsemenigheters ytre misjon) is a non-profit organization that functions as a coordinator for mission work on behalf of the Pentecostal churches in Norway. They have around 100 active missionaries working in 50 countries where PYM has projects (PYM undated:13). These projects are very often funded by support given from different governmental departments administered through PYM therefore all such projects are directly legally accountable to PYM (PYM undated:13). This goes for the Peace and Reconciliation program as well.

The vision for the development sections within PYM is to help individuals and the community to develop themselves and the society they live in. This vision is seen through the way they are always working with local partners and aim to work among the poor and marginalized (PYM undated:12). PYM is counted the third largest mission facilitator in Norway (PYM undated:13).

PYM has had a long engagement in the DRC. The first missionaries were sent out by PYM in 1922, and missionaries have been present since then except from some years when the wars

⁴⁵ Insight on Conflict. (2014, June). *DR Congo: Conflict Profile*. Cited the 15 July 2014 from: <http://www.insightonconflict.org/conflicts/dr-congo/conflict-profile/>

were at their worst. Through the long-term mission work they have established churches in every province in the DRC. These churches, named La Communauté des Église Libres de Pentecôte en Afrique are referred to as CELPA churches. The CELPA churches are widespread, and found all around the country. In many of the villages where the Peace and Reconciliation program has been in operation, many resources have been provided through CELPA churches ⁴⁶.

The missional involvement of PYM in the DRC does not only consist of evangelistic work, such as building churches. They have also been actively involved in development work. This has included establishing schools and hospitals. CELPA run 400 schools today through which more than 100,000 children are received schooling up till today. CELPA also runs three large hospitals and 100 smaller hospitals and health centers. Social work and community development constitute an equally important part of the churches work⁴⁷.

3.3 Presentation of the Program

Before going any further, I will give an explanation of the Peace and Reconciliation program which is the object of study in this thesis. The information presented is based on three different sources in order to give an accurate presentation of the program.

The documents used are two documents published by PYM and the information on their webpage about DRC, a report published in 2009 which is written by an external and on internal consultant and an information circular⁴⁸ of the program given to me during the fieldwork. As I also spent three weeks in Bukavu, I have gained additional insight through observation, interviews and just spending time with the program's employees; therefore the information presented is also to some extent verified through what I saw whilst doing research in the DRC.

⁴⁶ PYM. (2012b, 16 October). *D.R. Congo*. Cited the 20 July 2014 from: <http://pymworld.com/d-r-kongo-2/>

⁴⁷ PYM. (2012b, 16 October). *D.R. Congo*. Cited the 20 July 2014 from: <http://pymworld.com/d-r-kongo-2/>

⁴⁸ During the fieldwork was a information circular given to me. This is referred to as (ECC undated), but is not possible not get a hand on. The information is used as a contribution to the other information that I have regarding the program. It must be highlighted that I have kept in mind, when referring to the circular that it is ECC's own presentation of the program, and in such a way not neutral.

3.3.1 Église du Christ Au Congo

The *Église du Christ Au Congo* (ECC), is the Peace and Reconciliation program's national partner and it is they who operationally execute the program. The ECC is an umbrella organization that brings together most of the protestant denominations in the DRC. In South Kivu 20 different denominations are members. The largest two are CELPA and CEPAC (*Communauté des Église de Pentecôte en Afrique Centrale*), the Pentecostal churches started by Norwegian and Swedish missionaries (Boëthius and Ånderå 2011:10). There are around 1400 local parishes in North Kivu, while there are 2400 in South Kivu (ECC undated). The ECC did not have their own parishes until recently, with some being formed over the last couple of years (Boëthius and Ånderå 2011:10-11).

The ECC, which was originally supposed to represent the denominations at a national level, was also given responsibility to oversee schools and other programs run by the parishes. The ECC eventually started doing social and community development programs such as The Peace and Reconciliation program. Rev. Josué Bulambo Lebelembe is the Vice-President of the ECC in South Kivu. He is also the head of the Peace and Reconciliation program (Boëthius and Ånderå 2011:10-11). There was during the fieldwork ten employees in the program.

3.3.2 Background

The local church initiated the program in November 2006. Because of the ongoing war in the area the church saw a need to do something to contribute to pacifying the region. The ongoing unstable situation was harming people living in the villages and the church witnessed much harm and suffering inflicted on the local population, especially on women and children (ECC undated). Rev Lembelembe, the program leader stated:

“The Church cannot accept that our women are raped and that the people lives in insecurity. If the FDLR is demobilized, there will be no reason to keep other military groups in the field in the region, and so peace and security can be restored” (Boëthius and Ånderå 2011:10).

The program is an effort to improve the living conditions for the local population.

PYM supported this initiative and through support from MFA the program received funding up until May 2013. Within MFA there is a department for peace and reconciliation work. This department provides support annually for various projects that are working towards peace and reconciliation. Support has been allocated to the program since its inception and up to the

present day, however the program is currently subject to a larger evaluation by MFA to determine whether work should continue. (PYM 2012a:20/ ECC undated).

The latest status, received from the program advisor in PYM, Stig Stordal, was that the 7th phase of the program was completed in August 2014. The program will now be evaluated by MFA and the future is not sure. The signals from MFA imply that the project should either be put under another funding arrangement or possibly be ended (S.Stordal, personal communication, 26 August 2014).

One of those who have served as a consultant in this process is Kåre Lode. He works for the Center for Intercultural Communication of Stavanger and has had previous experience in peacebuilding in Mali⁴⁹. The program also has a number of other church partners in Europe and North America, one of which is the Mennonite Church Council (MCC) (ECC undated). Since 2012, MCC have supplied financial support for food-provision to the refugees, which are given out during workshops where ECC come in contact with the refugees. So the involvement of the MCC is foremost with regard to the humanitarian aspect (Interview with missionary from MCC, 2014).

At the beginning of the program, efforts were made to create connections with other churches in other countries. The program involved the National Councils of the Protestant Churches of Uganda, Burundi and Rwanda and other ecclesiastical organizations in the continent. These connections have been sustained to various degrees. An emphasis on good contact with churches has been an important principal within the program. During what the program leaders describe as phase 1 of the program, several meetings were held with local, national and international organizations within and outside the church (ECC undated).

3.3.3 Objective and activities

The program's objective is to contribute to repatriation of the FDLR through various ways and by this improve the living conditions of the local population. ECC write in their own presentation that the objectives are as follows:

The objective pursued by the church is development and application by the churches, of a realistic strategy for the return of Rwandan refugees and combatants, of foreign-armed groups located in the DRC, in their respective countries.

⁴⁹ An article of his experience from Mali, "Trust, Faith and Peace. A story about Reconciliation in Mali" can be found in *Mission as Ministry of Reconciliation* (2013) Ed. Rorber Schreiter and Knud Jørgensen.

It is also to contribute to the fight against violence, exactions and human right violations decried, and allows the restoration of normal economic and social life expected in the areas where the groups are (ECC undated).

In the information leaflets four activities are identified as areas that the Peace and Reconciliation program is working on. The program seeks to work for (1) identification of the armed groups and where they are located. This requires obtaining up-to-date statistics of how many combatants and refugees there are and where they are located according to themselves. (ECC undated). H el ene Bo ethius and Sigve  nder a praised this work in their report of 2011. The refugees in the DRC are not found in refugee camps, but they are either living with the locals in villages, are detained as hostages of FDLR, or are dwelling in small groups in the forests. Due to this there is a need to locate them. ECC estimated through their work that there were about 90,000 combatants and refugees in the area whilst MONUC suggested there were 23,000 in 2006. ECC's estimate has since shown to be more accurate than that of MONUC as over 60 000 has been repatriated since the (Bo ethius and  nder a 2011:19-22).

(2) Sensitization⁵⁰ is another important activity within the Peace and Reconciliation program. Through raising awareness within the local population, amongst Rwandan refugees and combatants, amongst church leaders and other political, national and international leaders, the program seeks to work for stabilization in the region (ECC undated). The sensitization in the program is carried out through one-day seminars or workshops around the countryside. In these seminars and workshops, local community leaders such as traditional chiefs and pastors are invited to attend together with lay people. They are taught such things as how to identify a refugee, what to say to them about repatriation and the situation in Rwanda, inform them of the help they can receive through the church, and the life they can expect when they return home. There is an emphasis on not promising them more than what is actually real (Bo ethius and  nder a 2011:23-24). In the work of sensitization radio is also used in order to get the message out to refugees and combatants. These radio messages include testimonies from those who have already been repatriated in order to encourage others to follow suit. They also hand out leaflets with information of how to repatriate (Bo ethius and  nder a 2011:25).

The aim of contacting refugees and combatants found around the countryside is done in order to contribute to seeing them (3) demobilized and repatriated or resettled, which is the third

⁵⁰ In the thesis is sensitization and awareness raising used interchangeable. The seminars and workshops that are held is part of the sensitization work as the local population is taught up in the technics of sensitization and can pass the message onwards.

objective (ECC undated). When the refugees are sensitized and choose to voluntarily repatriate, or combatants choose to voluntarily put down their weapons, they are sent to assembly points. The assembly points are not operated by the Peace and Reconciliation program, but the program seeks to assist refugees and combatants to reach them safely and to connect them with churches in Rwanda (Boëthius and Ånderå 2011:24). The two provinces North and South Kivu are divided into several axes, which each have their own animator, in 2011 there were 7 in South Kivu and 2 in North Kivu. The animator functions as a contact person between the local population, the government and the UN. If for example the local pastor comes in contact with some refugees in the market place that would like to repatriate, he contacts the animator, who will take responsibility for getting the refugees to an assembly point where the UN and other national bodies then take over the process (Boëthius and Ånderå 2011:23).

(4) The program also seeks to do lobbying and advocacy at a political level (ECC undated). This aspect of advocacy and lobbying is the most difficult element to quantify and define within the program, both in terms of what they have done and in what influence the work has had. Much of the advocacy efforts are too sensitive to be put into print, however, the employees and Lode were able to show to some results that could be published in the evaluation report (Boëthius and Ånderå 2011:28-29).

The latest statistic from the program show that there have been repatriated 19 430 refugees and 1626 combatants so far through the efforts of the program. In total have 21 065 Rwandans been repatriated directly through the ECC program⁵¹.

⁵¹ The statistics was obtained during the fieldwork in January 2014. The numbers are after the 6th phase was completed. The program has completed the 7th phase 31 august, but the statistics of the 7th phase have not been made know to me.

4 THEORY

The theoretical perspective forms the framework for this thesis and the structure that the research is understood within. It is therefore highly important. The key theoretical concepts are peacebuilding and reconciliation. Different aspects and characteristics of these concepts will be explained below, but first the discipline of social and cultural anthropology will be addressed as this is the overarching discipline the theory of peacebuilding and reconciliation is understood within.

4.1 Social and Cultural Anthropology

The theoretical foundation for the study is based within the tradition of social and cultural anthropology. Social and cultural anthropology is according to Tomas Hylland Eriksen a holistic approach tackling the different areas of human society, as he explains it in such a way, saying that: “social and cultural anthropology has the whole of human society as its field of interest, and tries to understand the connections between the various aspects of our existences” (Eriksen 2001:1). Anthropology looks at many different themes and subjects that are related to the human life and society. It is therefore appropriate to understand peacebuilding and reconciliation within social and cultural anthropology. Some areas of interest within social and cultural anthropology are: the social person, civil society, religion, politics and power, modes of thought, and ethnicity (Eriksen 2010:7-10). In the study all these subjects are relevant.

Kedarnath Dash divides anthropology into what he calls five related subdivisions which all address different areas (Dash 2004:1). ‘Socio-cultural anthropology’ is one of these areas, which Dash describes as:

Socio-cultural anthropology which emphasizes the similarities and differences of social organization and structure of the societies found throughout the world and applied anthropology deals with solving practical problems in human relationships under a variety of natural and cultural conditions. (Dash 2004:2)

What his definition provides, in addition to Eriksen’s definition, is the emphasis of applied anthropology for solving practical problems. This definition gives a good foundation for the theory of peacebuilding, which will be presented in the next section. Within anthropology, peacebuilding can be understood as one specific application for solving problems in human

relationships. And the specific areas of the social person, civil society and religion are especially addressed.

4.2 Peacebuilding

Peacebuilding forms the theoretical framework for this thesis. With its holistic nature and comprehensive approach I have found it suitable as the theoretical foundation. It includes many different praxis and principles that are arguably easily applicable for the empirical study. My chosen perspective of the concept is addressed below.

4.2.1 The origin and history of peacebuilding

Peacebuilding is quite a new concept and term, which has been formed by the following three interrelated fields: international peacekeeping, especially through the United Nations (UN), conflict resolution and peace research, and theories of sustainable development. These three areas have all contributed to how peacebuilding is understood today (Bercovitch and Jackson 2009:169).

In 1992, the report *An agenda for peace* by the UN-secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali was published. The report addressed the need for a more holistic way of establishing peace, and criticized peacemaking and peacekeeping operations for being too narrow. Through this report, the concept of peacebuilding was first introduced. Boutros-Ghali argued that there was a need to find and identify ways that would lead to more sustainable peace:

Peacemaking and peace-keeping operations, to be truly successful, must come to include comprehensive efforts to identify and supports structures which will tend to consolidate peace and advance a sense of confidence and wellbeing among people (Boutros-Ghali 1992:15).

And from this report, peacebuilding was proposed as a solution. Two interlinked reasons have been distinguished to explain this change of direction within the UN concerning peace-work. Firstly, it was a result of decades of violent conflicts that needed more than just simple solutions for peace to be sustained (Darweish and Rank 2012:2-3). Secondly, within the UN system there was an emerging focus on the need for approaches to be holistic and include issues of gender, human rights, development and human security (Darweish and Rank 2012:2). In 2000, through the Brahimi-report, the UN paid increasing attention to peacebuilding, as this report recommended the need for better-defined strategies and also specific tools for peacebuilding (Darweish and Rank 2012:2). There has been a change in the way the UN perceives violence, and how they consider it most suitable to stop conflicts. This

change has been from a linear and simplistic understanding to a rather comprehensive one, which is much more integrated (Darweish and Rank 2012:2). One can already just by reviewing how the UN has influenced the concept of peacebuilding, see some important assets within peacebuilding. Especially relevant is the need to include many different approaches, and to understand that complex conflicts are often in need of complex solutions to see peace established.

The second area that has contributed to the present understanding of peacebuilding is conflict resolution and peace research, especially the following three contributions: (1) the concept of structural violence of Galtung has played an important role. The concept refers to many areas that create injustice in the society, such as political structures, laws and other systems (Darweish and Rank 2012:3). Injustice within these structures is understood to repeatedly lead to violence. There is therefore a need to solve such underlying causes of violence, the root of the conflicts. Based on this, the concept of peacebuilding should reform these structures to create sustainable peace (Bercovitch and Jackson 2009:169). (2) From conflict resolution and peace research, the relational dimension of peacebuilding finds its origin. This has been applied through scholars such as Lederach who emphasize reconciliation as an important approach within peacebuilding, and the relational dimension as an essential part of reconciliation (Darweish and Rank 2012:3, Bercovitch and Jackson 2009:169). (3) The third contribution from peace research is the importance of understanding the different levels of society and how a comprehensive approach is required to reach all layers. Darwish and Rank argues this:

Peacebuilding is a comprehensive, continuing process that is bottom up but also addresses society at all levels, from grassroots to middle-level actors and at the national and international levels (Darwish and Rank 2012:3).

From peace research there are also several aspects that are relevant. Peacebuilding is a relational process, which includes reconciliation as a part of it. In addition to this, peacebuilding should have regard to all layers of society and this will be made clearer below.

Lastly, the concept of peacebuilding is influenced by sustainable development theories. The contribution from development theories is due to the great physical needs that exist in war-torn societies. Therefore peacebuilding needs to include development work as well. Darweish and Rank explain this connection in such a way: “development, reconstruction and relief were

seen as critical in war-torn societies – societies emerging from violent conflict need to meet immediate humanitarian needs” (Darweish and Rank 2012:3).

Drawing on the origin and history of peacebuilding, there are several elements that I found important when forming the theoretical framework for the thesis. Through an understanding that peacebuilding should be both holistic and comprehensive, there is a need for both meeting physical needs through development work and in working on the structural reasons and causes of the conflict. The relational dimension should not be forgotten, and the approach of reconciliation within peacebuilding addresses this specific dimension.

4.2.2 Chosen perspective on peacebuilding

A definition that I find advantageous within peacebuilding is Lederach’s definition where peacebuilding is defined in such a way:

I suggest that “peacebuilding” is more than postaccord reconstruction. Here “peacebuilding” is understood as a comprehensive concept that encompasses, generates and sustains the full array of processes, approaches and stages need to transform conflict toward more sustainable, peaceful relationships. The term thus involves a wide range of activities and functions that both precede and follow formal peace accords. Metaphorically, peace is seen not merely as a stage in time or a condition. It is a dynamic social construct (Lederach 1997:20).

What this definition adds to what has been said so far is an understanding of peace as a dynamic social construct. Through understanding sustainable peace as a dynamic social construct, peacebuilding should be implemented in such a way that this dynamic social construct of sustainable peace is generated. I find this to be at the core in understanding peacebuilding. There needs to be structures that generate sustainable peace. Peacebuilding is practical and includes many approaches, as well being holistic in a way that peacebuilding is more than just these concrete measures to enhance peace. This is the chosen perspective on peacebuilding.

In continuation of the definition, there are four principles that Bercovitch and Jackson state are at the core of what peacebuilding should include. They state that as the concept of peacebuilding is quite new, little is commonly agreed upon, but four principles can be singled out. These four principles form what one sees as a general consensus for peacebuilding, and are: (1) In peacebuilding there is a need for some sort of foundation for initiating the process of peacebuilding. Without some sort of peace, and with ongoing violence and insecurity it is

difficult to do peacebuilding. (2) Peacebuilding also needs to be practiced by external stakeholders. This means that without actors from the outside, peacebuilding is not possible according to Bercovitch and Jackson. (3) But Bercovitch and Jackson also imply that peacebuilding must be generated from within, with a strong local ownership to be able to succeed. (4) Lastly peacebuilding should be holistic. It should reach all levels of society and have a clear vision for prioritizing what should be done first and last (Bercovitch and Jackson 2009:173).

Sustainable peace is an essential term within peacebuilding as it is the essential goal of the process. Peacebuilding is not just about seeing peace for a period, not just creating a temporary ceasefire, but establishing peace in such a way that it is self-sustaining. Sustainable peace in this thesis is understood as follows:

Sustainable peace goes beyond signing of an agreement. While the cessation of hostilities, restoration of public security and meeting basic needs are urgent legitimate expectations of people who have been traumatized by armed conflict, sustainable peace requires a long-term approach that addresses the structural causes of conflict, and promotes sustainable development, rule of law and governance, and respect for human rights, making the recurrence of violent conflict less likely. (Nuremberg declaration on Peace and Justice 2008)

The ultimate goal in peacebuilding is establishing sustainable peace, which means that violence is ended, and is unlikely to reoccur.

4.2.3 Structure of leadership in peacebuilding

The role of different levels of leadership is an aspect I would like to highlight within the theory of peacebuilding. Lederach provides valuable insight into the role of leadership in conflict areas and how different levels of leadership have different roles and different ways of contributing in building peace (see figure 4.1). He distinguishes between top leadership, middle-range leadership and grassroots leadership. These three groups all have different roles in solving conflicts as shown in figure 1 (Lederach 1997:37-43). According to Lederach it is the middle-range leaders who have the greatest potential, especially due to their capacity to keep processes going for a long time (Lederach 1997:60). This is due to their capacity in building a sustainable infrastructure. This is based on how he sees contemporary conflicts. At the end of his conclusion he writes:

[B]uilding peace requires a comprehensive approach to contemporary conflict. We need a conceptual framework that helps us envision the overall picture and moves us toward specific

action and activity. Our challenge is to find strategic and practical approaches that help establish an infrastructure for sustainable transformation and that take seriously the immediate and deep-rooted needs of divided societies. (Lederach 1997:152).

Lederach finds the middle-range leaders suitable to do peacebuilding as they are able to influence and involve the two other categories of leaders. In addition to this, the citation above shows that Lederach calls for a solution which creates an infrastructure of sustainable peace.

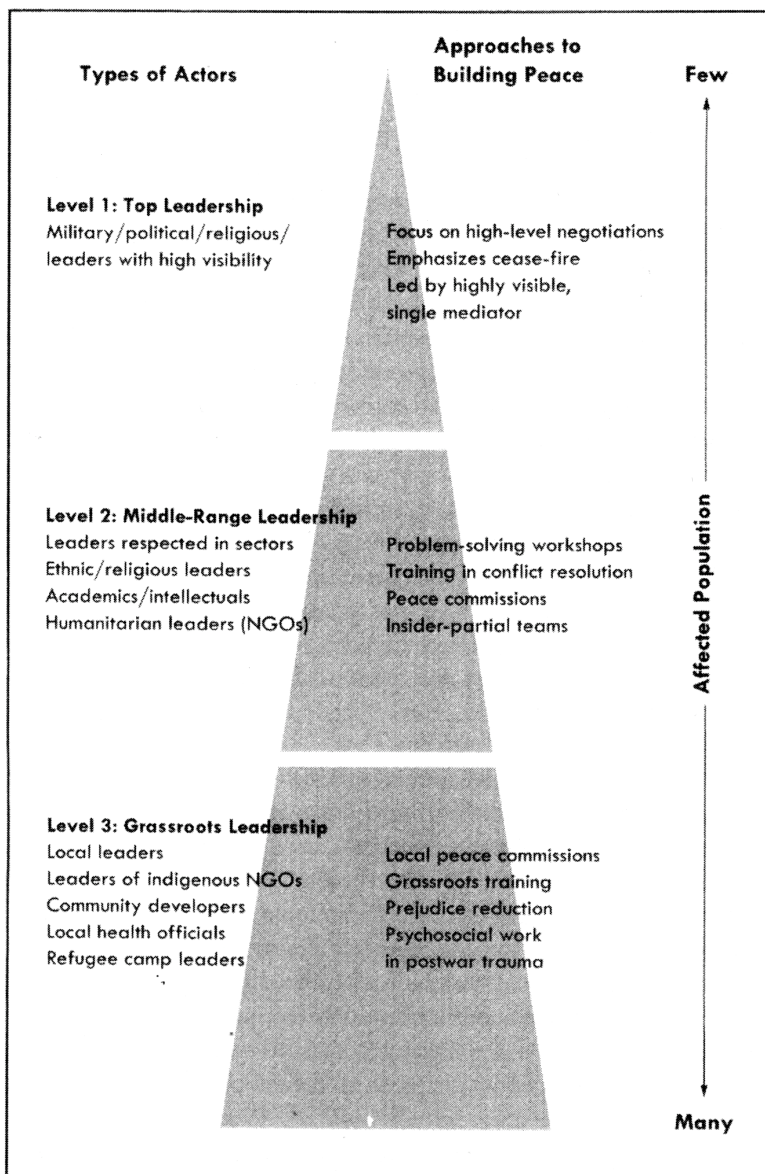


Figure 1: Actors and Approaches to Peacebuilding, (Lederach 1997:39)

4.2.4 The use of non-violent means

The aspect of non-violence is the last I would like to highlight with regard to peacebuilding. As explained previously, peacebuilding has been developed in order to tackle today's conflicts comprehensively. According to Bercovitch and Jackson, the conflicts of today are highly complex and solutions must therefore be aimed towards solving the underlying causes (Bercovitch and Jackson 2009:1). Lederach also says in his definition of peacebuilding that one must tackle the underlying causes of conflict (Lederach 1997:20). A non-violent approach can be one way to tackle the underlying causes and it is therefore included in the theoretical framework.

According to Galtung theory, violence is distinguished as being either direct or structural (Galtung 1996:2). With structural violence, underlying structures can be changed through non-violent means. Mudida says that in order to tackle the structures of violence one should use non-violent means. He argues this is the best solution long term in order to change the culture where the structure of violence has its stronghold (Mudida 2014:51). He points out that violence leaves no assurance of persistent changes saying that:

Non-violence can be understood as a basis for social organization based on the principle that the organization of violence is itself undemocratic and inequalitarian. It recognizes that the removal of an elite by assassination or other violent means does not guarantee a real change of structure (Mudida 2014: 51-52).

In other words violence does not necessarily solve violence and in the end it does not contribute to implementing social changes in the society. In contrast Mudida emphasizes that the aftermath of a non-violent approach is reconciliation (Mudida 2014: 51).

Mary Jegen also argues for non-violent approaches, as she writes that in the end "violence is often an expression of a deep, unhealed wound" (Jegen 2004:30). She emphasizes that using non-violent approaches can heal wounds:

Active nonviolence is often an expression to heal rather than to injure or destroy, requires a commitment to restorative justice and a decision to forgive – that is, a decision not let a past injury determine present and future attitudes and actions (Jegen 2004:30).

In such a way reconciliation is closely related to non-violence, and will be addressed in the following paragraphs.

4.2.5 Towards an understanding of peacebuilding

In this study peacebuilding is understood as a process that seeks to establish sustainable peace. This is done through many different approaches, one of which is reconciliation. Peacebuilding should be a holistic process and should reach all levels of society. Therefore one approach will not necessarily be enough to see sustainable peace established. Through the understanding of sustainable peace as a dynamic social construct, the role of peacebuilding also becomes much more relational, since there is a society that needs to be engaged in this social construct. Reconciliation, as an approach within peacebuilding can be understood as part of this. Other important features with peacebuilding that I would like to emphasize are the role middle-range leaders can play in the engagement of the community and in building and maintaining infrastructure. Lastly, peacebuilding should also be working directly with the roots of the conflict and changing the structures of violence. This is important in order to see sustainable peace, since if the structures are not changed the danger of conflict reoccurrence is much more likely.

4.3 Reconciliation

Building on the foundation of peacebuilding, reconciliation can be seen as an approach within peacebuilding, which especially seeks to focus on the relational aspect. Lederach argues that reconciliation is central within peacebuilding (Lederach 1997:24). In this thesis reconciliation is the approach chosen within the framework of peacebuilding.

4.3.1 Individual and social reconciliation

Reconciliation was originally related to relationships being restored between individuals (Hazan 2009:256). Today reconciliation is seen as something that can happen at many different levels, such as political, social and individual. Pierre Hazan writes about the changes that have occurred in the understanding of reconciliation saying that:

[T]he definition of reconciliation has gradually changed. It is no longer applied only in the field of individual relationships but is used increasingly for collective situations, especially where peoples or communities are involved in peacebuilding, or in the aftermath of internal or international conflicts (Hazan 2009: 256).

This development is important, as it creates a broader understanding of what can be regarded as reconciliation. Reconciliation is something that can involve the community as a whole.

In this thesis, an emphasis is placed on social reconciliation, but as Schreiter argues, social and individual reconciliation are not completely divided since individuals need to be reconciled in order for social reconciliation to happen. Individual reconciliation is defined as the healing of victim's humanity that has been damaged while social reconciliation is a reconstruction in the society, where the moral order is re-established (Schreiter 1998:111-12). Schreiter expresses this connection of the two in such a way:

For social reconciliation to be successful, there must be reconciled individuals present to help give leadership to the process, as well as a cadre of people who understand the meaning of individual reconciliation. Individual reconciliation helps nurture and strengthen social reconciliation, but social reconciliation cannot be reduced to individual reconciliation (Schreiter 1998:111).

The understanding that some but not all individuals need to be reconciled in order to see social reconciliation happen is the way in which reconciliation is understood in this thesis. The emphasis of reconciliation is also first and foremost on the social level rather than the individual level.

There are three key elements in social reconciliation according to Schreiter; it is a (1) process (2) of reconstruction (3) of the moral order. Firstly, by process, it is important that the entire population is engaged. As conflict, war and violence affect everyone, the processes of reconciliation should engage the whole community. In relation to peacebuilding theory, there is also an emphasis placed on engaging the local society. Secondly, Schreiter uses 'reconstruction' to stress that it is not as if no form of community existed before, but it is about reconstructing the society that was there before but is now war-torn (Schreiter 1998:112). The second principle adds something new concerning peacebuilding when reconciliation is understood as an approach within the concept. It is not about necessarily creating something new, but to find a way back to the old, making necessary improvements to that which what was wrong in the first place. Thirdly, with the 'moral order' the spiritual part of reconciliation is addressed as Schreiter says:

Reconciliation is a moral and spiritual work. Social reconciliation, in undertaking that work, has to use the social means available to achieve its goals. It must demonstrate a morality that will ground civil society. It uses the rule of law in the reconstruction of society is especially important when law has been used to legitimate violence and to create lies (Schreiter 1998:112).

This aspect that Schreiter brings forth here includes two important components. Firstly, it is interesting to see how he addresses reconciliation as spiritual work. The spiritual work comes out of his religious worldview, and addresses a highly relevant aspect. What can religion bring to the table regarding reconciliation? This aspect is addressed further in section 4.5. The second aspect is how he considers reconciliation concerning morality. When it comes to peacebuilding and reconciliation post conflict, it is necessary to re-establish moral order.

Clegg provides further relevant insights of social reconciliation. In the article *Embracing a Threatening Other: Identity and Reconciliation* (2008) she suggests a model for understanding the different levels of reconciliation. Clegg argues that there is a clear need to understand that to be able to create sustainable peace, reconciliation needs to happen both in society, politics and in one's personal life (Clegg 2008: 81). By including politics Clegg adds to Schreiter's understanding of reconciliation. In her definition of social reconciliation, she also highlights that instead of focusing on the importance of justice, a focus on relationships is more important:

Societal reconciliation is about managing the group to group level of society. It focuses on people, in their corporate aspect, learning to share a formerly contested space and is more concerned with the relationship than with justice per se (Clegg 2008:83).

As social reconciliation is different from individual reconciliation, the need for justice decreases as it is happening on a social level and not an individual level. Clegg argues that a key to establishing sustainable peace is through societal reconciliation (Clegg 2008:81).

4.3.2 Diversity within reconciliation

The process of seeing a society reconciled is a long-term process that can span over generations (Darweish and Rank 2012: 4). It takes time to see desired changes in society. Reconciliation has changed from what it was first perceived as, not only regarding individual reconciliation, but also in the fact that it has become more grounded in being a bottom up method of transforming society through local actors. Hazan explains this:

Reconciliation began to be interpreted by the UN and human rights NGOs not only as a 'top-down' process, but also as a 'bottom-up' process, ie one that could be initiated by civil society Hazan (2009:258)

In addition, the process of reconciliation can look different in different conflicts due to the distinct nature of every conflict. Both Hazan and Schreiter address this. Hazan writes: "The

definitions of reconciliation must of course be adapted to the specific characteristics of each society” (Hazan 2009:260). Schreiter suggests that one needs to ask the following two questions to understand the distinction in every society: “what does reconciliation mean in the specific context and who are the actors in the reconciliation process” (Schreiter 1998:105). So it is important to note that the reconciliation process and its duration may look very different from one country to another.

4.3.3 Four components in the reconciliation process

In *Building Peace: sustainable reconciliation in divided societies* (1997), Lederach suggests four components that he finds important in the understanding and praxis for reconciliation (Lederach 1997:30). These four are truth, mercy, justice and peace (see figure 2). These components all represent different aspects that should be present reached towards in the process of reconciliation. Truth is understood as the need for acknowledgment of what wrongdoings have happened. Mercy is thereafter to let go of what has happened, to allow for a new beginning. Justice is seen as the need to establish what is right and reconstruct the society, and lastly peace goes hand in hand with justice as the people experience wellbeing as a result (Lederach 1997:29).

In Lederach’s understanding of reconciliation he emphasises that reconciliation is about building relationships, saying that “[t]he relational dimension involves the emotional and psychological aspects of the conflict and the need to recognize past grievances and explore future interdependence” (Lederach 1997: 34). Lederach also states that reconciliation is not only something that should happen immediately after conflicts, but argues that it is beneficial in conflict resolution as well.

Thus, reconciliation is not limited to the period of post settlement restoration. Rather, reconciliation is seen as providing focus and a locus appropriate to every stage of peacebuilding and instrumental in reframing the conflict and the energies driving the conflict (Lederach1997: 151).

This is the position in the thesis as well. Reconciliation can be a source in solving conflicts and is not just a process possible to see after the conflict.

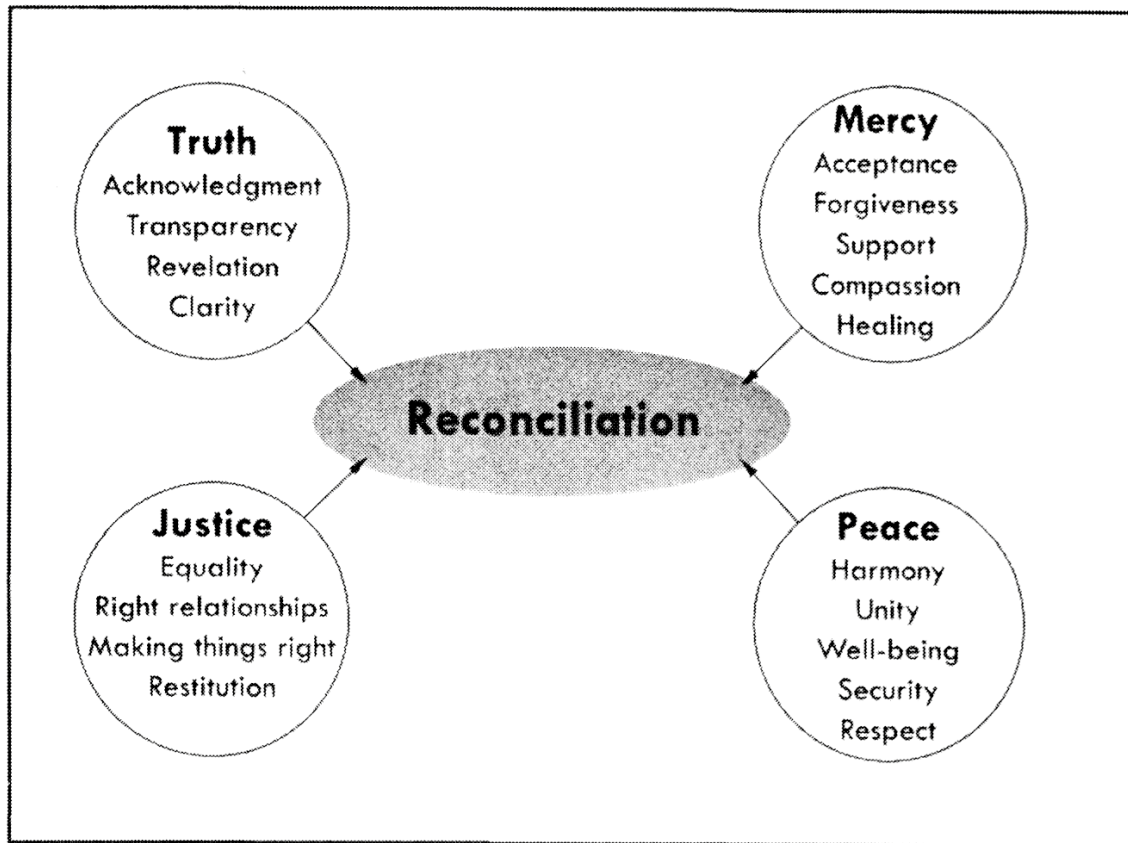


Figure 2: The Place Called Reconciliation, (Lederach 1997:30)

4.3.4 Forgiveness, a debated aspect of reconciliation

Within the concept of reconciliation, the aspect of forgiveness is somewhat contested. Clegg argues that forgiveness is essential in a personal reconciliation process at the individual level, whilst in social reconciliation it is not, and in these cases, she argues that co-existence is what one should realistically strive for (Clegg 2008:83-85). Schreiter's arguments are somewhat different, his definition of forgiveness is: "a decision to no longer be controlled by the effects of past deeds done, and to choose freely for a different kind of future" (Schreiter 1998:124). Therefore, whilst this can only be fully practiced by individuals, he suggests that a society can use pardon or amnesty in order to move on (Schreiter 1998:124). Lederach uses the term mercy, when he refers to forgiveness. He emphasizes that forgiveness is needed in order to be able to let go and move on (Lederach 1997:29-30). In summary, I argue that forgiveness of some sort is an important part of the reconciliation process because as the theory implies, people need to be able to put the past behind them and move on. It is important to understand that forgiveness within reconciliation does not imply that one legitimizes the iniquity, but

rather that forgiveness is a necessary step to move on. The theory of reconciliation also demonstrates a holistic approach, which is about establishing truth and practicing forgiveness.

4.3.5 Towards a understanding of reconciliation

Reconciliation is understood within the thesis as a process which happens at both a personal and a societal level. This is a process that contributes to establishing sustainable peace in society. Through re-establishing the society and enabling relations to be healed, it is possible to co-exist and go on living together after conflict. Reconciliation is not only limited to being a post-conflict process but is also seen as a positive process that can contribute in the conflict resolution as well. It is also necessary to understand that reconciliation can have different expressions due to the diversity of each conflict.

4.4 Civil Society, Conflict Transformation and Reconciliation in Post-war Africa

To sharpen the theoretical outline further, Rigby's article *Civil Society, Reconciliation and Conflict Transformation in Post-war Africa* (2006) provides an understanding of the role that civil society can play in facilitating reconciliation in post-conflict African societies. His article provides some excellent concepts, which can be used in the theoretical framework in this thesis.

4.4.1 Conflict transformation

According to Rigby conflict transformation can be defined as an activity that is carried out in a constructive and non-violent way to transform destructive and armed conflicts. Conflict transformation typically addresses either (1) how the people understand their own cultural dimension or that of others who are involved in the conflict or (2) institutional and structural foundations of the conflict (Rigby 2006:47). As conflict transformation theory is not far from peacebuilding theory, the two concepts are understood as one and the same in the thesis. Through Rigby's definition, some specific elements are highlighted. He emphasizes that transformation happen through non-violent means, addressing the structural foundations for the conflict. This way of working towards conflicts is seen as especially important within the thesis.

4.4.2 Reconciliation of broken relationships

Rigby understands reconciliation as one of the key dimensions within conflict transformation, which is particularly focused on restoring fractured relationships. This is in line with what has been presented previously, however, he adds a conceptual perspective. He argues that the reconciliation processes can involve both (1) initiatives that have an intention to change the socio-economic and political institutions, which facilitates the restoration of relationships, and (2) embracing initiatives that seek to change people's perception of their former enemies as well as themselves, so that it is possible for new constructive relationships to grow (Rigby 2006:47). These definitions provide valuable insights for understanding African conflicts as he states that reconciliation can contribute to changing people's views about themselves and their enemies. This is an important contribution to what has already presented. Reconciliation theory is also about changing people's attitudes and perceptions towards one another. It is especially important that reconciliation leads to human security. For people to be able to have a future they need some sort of reassurance. Rigby writes:

[P]eople must experience a degree of personal and collective security sufficient to reassure them about the future actions of former wrong-doers. [...] Hence, a fundamental dimension of any reconciliation work must be aimed at countering the resort to violence and fostering nonviolent means of managing conflict, helping to transform a culture of violence into a culture of peace and reconciliation (Rigby 2006:49).

In addition to creating security, Rigby also addresses the need for fostering non-violent means in reconciliation work.

4.4.3 The role of civil society

Over the last years, civil society has been seen as a great strength in relief, reconstruction and development work. As it exists between the domestic sphere of the family and the state, it has the potential to influence in a positive way. The reason for this is that it can be both a vessel and a voice for those at the grassroots, and also be part of decision making, or at least influence decision making at the top-level of society (Rigby 2006:50). Rigby also states that civil society is seen as being able to enhance and strengthen democracy. Three reasons are given for this. Firstly, its proximity to the grassroots level is seen as an advantage as it is able to draw knowledge from the locals about the opportunities and obstacles for reconciliation. Secondly, drawing on Ledarch's theory, Rigby explains how civil society can influence both upwards and downwards and being in between the grassroots and the state, it is able to act as

an intermediary. Thirdly, the placement of civil society is favorable because it can start initiatives that the state would have more difficulty in doing because of a lack of mandate or political will (Rigby 2006: 50). Rigby also adds to Lederach's theory by highlighting that civil society has an advantage in being able to go where the state cannot.

4.4.4 Towards an understanding of the connection between civil society and reconciliation

The connections that Rigby makes between civil society and the influence it can have in conflict transformation through reconciliation are aspects that I find important. There is a need to transform conflicts from within through holistic approaches. Reconciliation should include working directly towards resolving the conflict. It should seek to transform the conflict through non-violent means, and it should seek to transform the culture. Civil society has been seen to be a great resource for this type of work, especially in the African context.

4.5 Reconciliation in a Christian Context

Reconciliation has now been explained as being part of the concept of peacebuilding. It has been explained within the framework of social science and peace studies. One can also see reconciliation in light of Christianity, as a concept understood within Christianity. This understanding of reconciliation broadens the perspective, as there is a spiritual dimension included and the concept of a divine power. This spiritual dimension is often omitted in western worldview, or at least limited to a personal level. However, in African culture it is much more integrated into society and culture, and for very many people, the question is not *if* you believe, but rather *what* you believe (Strand 2011:20). With this in mind I have included the Christian understanding of reconciliation.

4.5.1 A biblical foundation for reconciliation

Pang writes about the biblical foundation for peace and reconciliation in the article *Peace and Reconciliation: Biblical Themes in the East Asian Context* (2008). The concept of peace has a central place according to Pang. He argues that the core message of the Bible in its whole is the reconciliation process between God, humans and the rest of creation. Therefore the concepts of 'peace' and 'reconciliation' are central as well as the concept of 'justice' (Pang 2008: 51). Drawing from this, one can understand the foundation within Christian thinking for peace and reconciliation since these subjects can be linked directly to Jesus's purpose in coming to the earth.

In *Reconciliation as Reconstruction of wounded and unjust society* (2013) Dowsett also points to some additional features in the Bible that create grounds for the concept of reconciliation in a Christian context. Dowsett adds that with grounding in the book of Revelation, a Christian has the hope of a new world. The promise of a new world can be of comfort in a war-torn world with much suffering. The promise of a new world can be motivational as there is hope of a better future and even if this does not come about here and now, there will come a day where everything will be made new (Dowsett 2013:102).

Another aspect that Dowsett addresses is that the theology that reconciliation begins with God as he first reconciled us and it is through this reconciliation that we can be reconciled with one another (Dowsett 2013:102-103). The manifestation of this is through Jesus, who is referred to in the Bible as the Prince of Peace (Isaiah 9:6) (Dowsett 2013:103). Dowsett uses his life as an example, pointing to the way he lived, and claiming that he is the ultimate source for peace:

[N]ot only is Jesus the Prince of Peace, making enemies friends, he is also the one by whom and through whom people can be at peace within themselves, with their families and neighbours, with those different from themselves, and with the natural world (Dowsett 2013:103).

So the biblical understanding of reconciliation is that the process of reconciliation firstly starts with each person becoming reconciled with God through Jesus Christ. Other forms of reconciliation can hence spring forth.

4.5.2 Mission and Reconciliation

Building on the biblical understanding, there are also more practical theories of reconciliation through a missiological understanding. In *Mission as Ministry of Reconciliation* (2013) Schreiter addresses how reconciliation can be seen as both “a model *of* and a model *for* mission” (Schreiter 2013:9). In the thesis, mission is understood as: “the participation of the people of God in God’s action in the world” (Cardoza-Orlandi 2002:45).

Schreiter argues that there is a new paradigm shift within the field of mission. Firstly, there was a shift because of the decolonizing of the world. Secondly, the situation around the world, with conflicts, wars and genocide, generated the need for a different approach in mission (Schreiter 2013:10-14). His arguments are in line with how peacebuilding theories arose due to the changing situation around the world. What the missiological theory of reconciliation

adds is that reconciliation in a Christian context is both vertical and horizontal. Vertical is the reconciliation between man and God and horizontal is the reconciliation between people. The horizontal process has been especially emphasized in this new understanding of mission, as the vertical process has always been central. This horizontal reconciliation can be a process between groups or individuals (Schreiter 2013:10-14). Reconciliation as mission should therefore include both the horizontal and vertical dimensions in order to be holistic.

From this, Schreiter proposes five principles with grounding in the biblical perspective. These principles should be the foundation for reconciliation: (1) Reconciliation is essentially God's work. (2) Healing of the victims is the first step in the process of reconciliation. (3) Both the wrongdoers and the victims need to be made into new creations. (4) Both victims and wrongdoers can experience suffering, and there is a need for releasing this suffering. Here the example of Christ on the cross is an important picture. (5) The process of reconciliation will not be completely fulfilled before God has reconciled the whole world in Christ (Schreiter 2013:14-17). Here one can draw lines back to Dowsett and Pang's theory, by understanding that reconciliation is God's work. This is a narrow understanding that may be difficult to implement outside a Christian context, however it addresses the spiritual aspect of reconciliation and the need for a superior being to intervene and create or be a source for reconciliation. Schreiter points out that there is also a practical side that goes hand in hand with the spiritual work of reconciliation, however through a Christian context, the role of God is essential:

The state can set up commissions to examine the wrongdoing of the past, but it cannot legislate the healing of memories. The state can offer amnesty or mete out punishment to wrongdoers, but it cannot guarantee forgiveness. Social reconciliation sets up conditions that make reconciliation more likely, but those conditions cannot of themselves effect it (Schreiter 1998:4).

Based on a Christian understanding, reconciliation requires the intervention of God. The spiritual dimension of reconciliation is essential.

In *Mission as Ministry of Reconciliation*, Jørgensen defines six different perspectives on reconciliation: (1) Reconciliation is firstly in Pauline theology about being reconciled with God, and from this, peace can be created between enemies. (2) It is an integrated part of mission and of the church. (3) Reconciliation is concrete, visible and tangible. It is not just a concept to be talked about, but it is about deeds in action. (4) There is a need for vulnerability.

As God became a human, we also need to bow down, and it is through this vulnerability that reconciliation can flow. (5) The church should be a reconciling community. (6) There are different doors to reconciliation such as truth commissions and it is the responsibility for every church (Jørgensen 2013:322-330). These aspects Jørgensen addresses are important as they highlight how active reconciliation is in a missiological understanding. There are ranges of concrete activities that can be put into action, so the concept is not only a theoretical understanding.

4.5.3 Reconciliation and Spirituality

The last distinction that I would like to make regarding the theory of reconciliation in a Christian context is the connection between reconciliation and spirituality. According to Segura there are clear links between reconciliation and spirituality, and Segura states that: “Christian spirituality is, by essence and by definition, one of reconciliation” (Segura 2013:268). He explains this further from his understanding of Jesus’ attitude, saying that:

The ministry of reconciliation that brings peace is an indispensable dimension of Christian mission. This ministry involves a spirituality that configures Jesus’ key attitude, mainly those having to do with his incarnation: the ability to lower himself, to empty himself (kenosis) and from that position of weakness, to grant us his peace and his reconciliation. A weak spirituality (one emptied of all absolutistic claims and of ambition for power) is a prerequisite for the fulfilment of the reconciling mission. (Segura 2013:268).

One sees how Segura perceives reconciliation by highlighting Jesus and his key attitude. He argues that if one should strive to become more like Jesus, then one can arguably also work towards reconciliation. I would argue that to understand reconciliation in light of spirituality the concept of divine intervention must be captured. Juan Driver gives a good explanation for this:

This spirituality is also expressed in hope, and consists of believing in something that seems impossible – the reconciliation of human beings among themselves and with God, in a radical life together that is characterized by justice and peace. (Driver, cited in Segura 2013:268-269).

So one of the differences in understanding reconciliation within a Christian context is that spirituality is seen as a source of hope, for believing in the impossible. In such a way the Christian understanding is both radical as Segura describes and helpful, at least based on the theory.

4.5.4 Towards an understanding of the Christian perspective of reconciliation

In the thesis the concept of reconciliation is understood as something that has its grounding in the Bible. Reconciliation begins with God, as he becomes reconciled with humans. Then reconciliation should happen on the horizontal level between people. Mission, which is understood as God's people participating in God's work can easily be seen as reconciliation work, and this is not only theoretical, but it is also practical. The spiritual dimension can be a source for reconciliation. What is also worth highlighting is that in capturing the aspect of spirituality, one also captures key attributes that are necessary for reconciliation to happen.

4.6 Summary

With a basis in cultural and social anthropology, the concepts of peacebuilding and reconciliation are understood. Peacebuilding is understood as a holistic and comprehensive approach to establish sustainable peace. The concept has been formed through the influence of the UN, peace research and sustainable development. An important contribution from these three is the need to address the structural causes for the violence. Another aspect I find important is the emphasis that local engagement local ownership must be present in a successful peacebuilding operation.

Within peacebuilding, reconciliation is seen as one approach. This approach is chosen due to the way it addresses the relational aspect. Social reconciliation is especially highlighted as being important. In both peacebuilding and reconciliation, the role of middle-range leaders, and civil society is seen as essential. They have the possibility to both work with those at the grassroots level and with the top-leaders in war-torn societies.

The connections that can be found between reconciliation, conflict transformation and civil society, especially in Africa is also shown through the theories of Rigby. Here one sees how the civil society is able to carry out initiatives more effectively than the state due to its neutral political position, knowledge of issues at the grassroots level and its central position between the grassroots level and the top-leaders.

In addition to this, reconciliation can also be understood within a Christian framework in connection with mission. Here the need for reconciliation with God is essential as well as the need to understand the spiritual needs of people, not only the physical needs. The Christian understanding of reconciliation adds to theory, as the spiritual aspect is included.

5 MATERIAL

During my fieldwork in Bukavu, DRC in January 2014 was 13 interviews conducted. The main content of these are now presented. The quotations below are singled out to give a good overview of what was expressed in the interviews, and the presentation also seeks to give the interviewees a voice of their own before the analysis in the next chapter. Before the interviews are presented, a short presentation of which the interviewees are will be given by dividing the interviewees into three categories.

5.1 Presentation of the Interviewees

In total 13 interviews were conducted, this include the semi-structured interviews, the group-interviews and the conversations with follow-up questions. All the interviewees are anonymous, but it is still beneficial to have some idea of who is saying what, therefore the interviewees are distinguished into three different categories⁵².

The first group consists of the programs employees. It could also be appropriate to refer to them as civil society leaders or middle-range leaders, due their position in the society. Three interviews were conducted with people in this category. One group interview with two participants and two semi structured interviews. Each informant in this group is given a name⁵³ that starts with the letter A. This group is also sometimes as a whole referred to as ECC as they all are apart of ECC.

The second group is the local population who are involved in the program in their respective communities. These are people who have taken part in the program through workshops where they have been taught the techniques of sensitization, and who voluntarily contribute. When they come into contact with refugees and combatants in their local communities, in their day-to-day lives, they are able to pass on the message of repatriation. The group consists of local pastors, traditional chiefs and local representatives from the Civil Society. They can therefore be seen as grassroots leaders, and when referred to as a whole, are they called grassroots leaders. There were four different interviews carried out with people in this group, with a total

⁵² A full overview of the interviews, participants and type of interview is found in appendix 1.

⁵³The names that the informants are given are Swahili names. I have chosen to give them that to keep the paper more authentic.

of 12 participants; two group interviews with eight and two group with two participants in each, and two conversations. These interviewees are given a name that starts with the letter B.

The last group is the program partners. The group includes a wide spectrum of partners from the national government for refugees, CNR, a representative from MONUSCO/DDR RR, one Norwegian missionary from PYM, one from the Mennonite Central Committee, a Congolese leader for women's work and The Civil Society in Bukavu. In total six interviews were conducted with people in this group. These are given a name that starts with the letter C.

5.2 Importance and Challenges with the Program

The first theme to be considered is what the informants saw as the importance of the program and the challenges with it. The informants with their different position gave some understandings of what they found important with the program, as well as many challenges that they faced in their efforts to see sustainable peace.

5.2.1 Importance of the program

The interviewees were asked what they considered to be the importance and impacts of the program. By one of the partners, Chima, he stated the program was their first partner.

From the 64000 that have been repatriated, the majority came from ECC. So in conclusion among the national partners we have ECC is the first.

Of the 64000 that have been repatriated, Chima, states that ECC have contributed with the majority, which shows the important role that at least the one of the partners think of the program.

Adego, one of the program employees sees the program positively, since through the program at least something is being done.

I am happy that we have done something. We have helped the combatants to understand that the life they are living is not a good life. This life as they will kill the one who come in, is a sin. We talked to the Rwandan refugees that it would be better for you to go back to Rwanda because it will not be good for you to live in the forest. They were giving us 'you have to talk to Rwanda'. So they must improve the conditions for us to come. This is what justified the aspect of lobbying and advocacy in this project. In order to go and meet with those who have some influence on the Rwandan government so that they may just understand the situation.

The church also needed to collaborate with the other churches of the region. Fortunately for us they accepted our initiative, and they helped in making lobbying and advocacy.

The fact that they are doing something results in raising awareness among the Rwandans. The refugees and combatants get information about the situation in Rwanda and what could be a better life for them with access to education and healthcare rights. Adegbo also points out the role of advocacy, and that this can be seen as an impact.

In the interviews, there were also some more reluctant answers, as one of the partners, Chunk, states below:

Can we quantify it? No. Can we really qualify it, only to say that it is good, it's generally good. So I have to be excited about the individuals, and we will see, I think long term this is also really helpful for the pacification of the region.

Despite the fact that Chunk is more reserved concerning the impacts of the program, he still argues that the program is good, and also states that the impact of the program can be helpful for the pacification of the Kivu-provinces, which is a powerful statement.

5.2.2 Challenges regarding resources

The program clearly faces some obstacles, working toward FDLR that are a group that have caused much harm for the local population. When the interviewees were asked what challenges they face in their work for peace, the answers came quite quickly. And these three areas clearly stood out: resources, access and security. Chima addresses two of these: "These are the challenges we face, the lack of sufficient means and the difficulty of having access to the refugees." (C1) The challenge of access is due to the fact that the refugees and the combatants are hiding deep in the forest which makes it difficult to locate and reach them. Many of the interviewees, and in different ways mentioned the lack of resources.

In one of the group interviews, Babajide states:

Another problem you meet is when you have taken contact with a refugee, you exchange phone numbers, you give him yours and he gives you his number. Normally it is not the same day of sensitization that the refugee will repatriate. He tells you "I understand and I will call you". But perhaps on the day he calls you it will just make a "bib" and unfortunately on that particular day you don't have the air-credit and when he gives several "bibs" to you and you don't call him back, he will simply give up the idea.

Berko continues:

Another problem is that the Rwandan refugees are always too demanding. Once we have taken contact with him or them, they will start to ask you for everything, “I don’t have shoes, I don’t have clothes, I don’t have, I don’t have” afterwards you are not able to satisfy all their needs so that is also a serious problem.

So during the communication between the local inhabitants and the combatants and refugees, they face a lack of means both in the process of repatriation and in meeting physical and practical needs. As highlighted above, it may be something as simple as they do not have enough credit on their phone to be able to call the refugees back. This is an indicator of the level of poverty in the villages, where many live underneath the poverty line.

The informants also explained that the lack of security in the region is problematic.

Bambidele explains it in this way:

Another problem is that the work we are doing is very dangerous, because we are working with people that have guns.

Many of the informants underlined the ways in which the work they are doing is threatened by the dangerous positions they put themselves in.

5.3 The Church Network

One of the programs key resources is the local churches found all around the countryside. These churches and their pastors are able to facilitate local workshops and act as a first contact point for the refugees and combatants who want to repatriate. The churches are regarded as trustworthy within their communities and are respected by both the local people and by the Rwandans. The role of the church often came up as a discussion point in the interviews both through specific questions asked and also just unintentionally through the conversations.

5.3.1 The local churches

The role of the church was often described as two-fold. Baako promoted the way in which the church both prays and actively engages itself in the work of sensitization:

The role of the church can be a double one, on the one hand the church prays, or is praying for God to open the door for these refugees to be repatriated. On the other side, the church make sensitizations through contact, because among the refugees and combatants there are those who preach and with whom we have regular contact and when we are in contact with them we also

exchange ideas, and show them the necessity for them to be repatriated, and some of them are open at that particularly moment, because they know that they are in the church and the church can not betray them. When they are ready to live we accompany them. We give them food and then we lead them on how to pass through this ECC-program.

Here Baako explains there is a spiritual side to the work, namely prayer. The church helps through praying for 'open doors' that the refugees and the combatants can be repatriated through. Then there is a practical side of their work including sensitization and such things as food provision. This work is made easier due to the fact that the refugees feel safe with the church.

Adego also describes the churches approach as a two-fold but from a different perspective than Baako. Firstly he describes the role of the church as being politically neutral with the Bible establishing the code of conduct and secondly he emphasizes the importance of the closeness the church has to the Rwandans since they are all living in the same community, in the local villages.

The first advantage working with the church is that it is not political we are not involved in politics. They have the Bible as the code of conduct. They have the love and compassion they received from God. And it is those churches that live together every day with the combatants and the refugees. Because most of those combatants are members of one of those churches, and when they are near the churches, pastors meet them easily. And the churches have a good message to the combatants, a message that is clear. Now thanks to church I can reach where the Monusco cannot reach, where the UNHCR cannot reach, because the people of Monusco firstly think of their own life and their security. And before going somewhere they first have to ask for provision from their country to go in case they are exposed.

The church is local based. It is not an outside party that comes to implement a program or introduce their own political agenda, Adego highlights that it is of great benefit to engage the local church in being the foundation of the program. The church is both considered trustworthy and close which is very helpful in the meetings with the combatants. In contrast MONUSCO being part of such a big organization as the UN has to adhere to more restrictions in terms of what they can and cannot do. This point is addressed further down.

Another aspect that was spoken of during the interviews was the spiritual power that ECC holds that other non-religious organisations do not. One of the program partners, Chima puts it in this way:

We have the power, but the power we have is the political power. ECC also have a power that is a spiritual power. ECC have control on different parishes, churches. Sometimes ECC have churches, were we as government don't have government. [...] The fact of ECC being spiritual is a positive fact because it allows ECC to have contact both where there is political power and where there is spiritual power. When we heard that ECC had a repatriation program, we thought it would be very important to start a partnership. That was very important for us. It happens that ECC brings a lot of refugees here for repatriation, and we deal with the technical aspect of screening and after the screening and we find out that it is positive and the refugees are repatriated, and this is why we say that among the other partners that we have, this is the main one.

Chima gives a thoroughly account of the spiritual power that he sees the ECC have. As he states, ECC have churches and parishes where the government is not in place, and due to these features he finds the partnership with them highly important.

In another interview the role of the church was described as fruitful because of the work they do in collecting data and in spreading Christian values which promote forgiveness and love.

Bongani states:

The church is doing a great work, because when the church sends its animator to the field to collect the data related to the human rights violation and the church collaborate with the local chiefs in such domain. It is now up to the church to give the report to whom it concerns. Because after the church have received all the data from us, from the community, it is now up to the church to send it to the UNHCR, ICRC and many other organization as advocacy as those organizations can start making actions on what the church proposes. Yes, also the church use to give, to distribute in the military camps in the FDLR camps, some pamphlets on how to love your neighbor, on how to behave with your neighbor, so it were just a kind of preaching either they may or may not imply what they read but in fact the church have made them rich, have they received the gospel through those pamphlets.

And Bosede continues and highlights:

Especially the message of forgiveness

Bongani adds in the completion:

and the love of the neighbor.

The informant sees the benefits of the church and the work that the church does with collecting data regarding human rights violation. They highlight how through this data

collection, the church may also be able to do advocacy. Here the informants also point out the roles of the Christian values and how these are spread through pamphlets and sermons, which they find important.

5.3.2 Trust

Drawing on the previous section, one important feature in the program is the trustful relationship between the church and the Rwandan combatants and refugees. This area was addressed in the interviews. In general it was emphasised that the church has credibility and is trusted within the local communities. This impacts positively on relations with refugees and combatants. Bongani expresses this in one of his statements:

Another fact is that most of the refugees or combatants have more confidence in the church for their repatriation because they know that if I am repatriated through the church, it cannot just make something bad on me, it will protect me up until I will reach where I am going, so there is trust in the church.

Here Bongani describes how the church through just being the church is trustworthy and the Rwandans believe they will not be put in a difficult position through it.

Abioye highlights how trust is also built up due to good relations with the church in Rwanda.

And they come to us because we have contact with other churches in Rwanda. So when we bring someone people for repatriation, those people that we are in contact with, they do the follow up. And that gives them confidence to come into us because they know we shall give them to other churches and they will give them the follow-ups.

The relationship between the churches on the Rwandan and the Congolese side of the border creates the possibility for the program to operate on both sides of the border. This eclectic side of the church is addressed by Abioye's statement above and is seen as an important part in the trustworthiness the church carries in this program.

This trust is not just generated from the church itself per se, but also through the trustful relationships formed by individuals who are Christians. Chizoba describes this below:

Another method is the one where we are working together with the church and with the program that Bulambo is in charge of. To go together with them, to use the channel of church to join the pastor because those who are affected in the area of FDLR, they are ones that even have contact direct to the FLDR. They are the ones who the FDLR believe. The confidential relationship between the pastor and the FDLR because they are Christians.

To clarify, most of the FDLR members consider themselves Christians, and this is why Chizoba explains that the relationship between the FDLR and the local pastors becomes confidential in nature. He also here gives account of why he finds it important with the partnership with ECC as they have the churches.

Chunk also addresses how it is not only pastors but also local community leaders who are considered easier to trust than outsiders.

So information is the most important thing, and transmitting that information through the pastors and local leaders also gives credence. It is easier to believe your pastor than I don't know, a Pakistan's MONUSCO soldier.

This statement is made in the context that there are many different NGOs in the DRC. Chunk explains that when information is communicated through local people, credibility increases and trust is more easily created. It is the Congolese helping Congolese and Rwandans and according to Chunk, the people from your own community are easier to trust than foreigners in uniforms.

5.3.3 MONUSCO

The UN is present in the Kivu-provinces in several ways. This includes the DDR RR program operated by MONUSCO for combatants and UNHCR that take hand of the refugee repatriation. The UN plays a significant role in the work of repatriation, however have the work especially of MONUSCO been contested. They are accused for not doing their job concerning the peacekeeping operation, for violations against the local population and also for being too passive as a result of their mandate. The interviewees were asked what they thought about MONUSCO. Most did not speak very favorably about them or the work they are doing in the provinces.

Bosede and Bongani was two of those, Bosede sad that:

So the problem with Monusco is that they are limited to their mandate, so there can happen a situation where people are troubled and they say this is out of our mandate and we can do nothing.

And Bongani continued:

Now the population says, "So you simply came here to observe how we are being killed, what is your role?"

Here the informants are problematizing MONUSCO and especially their lack of mandate. This is because there have been incidences where combatants have attacked villages, and although MONUSCO has known about it they have not intervened because they are not allowed to use weapons. Therefore they are perceived as lacking impact among the civilian population.

A representative from MONUSCO addressed this difficult reality:

Our job is not easy, because according to our statute of UN–Staff, we cannot go anywhere, you see that is the problem, we cannot go anywhere, because we have the procedure of retraction, we cannot go into the dangerous places. We cannot go out when our contingent, our UN-force cut gives us the security, so we cannot go out, but the combatants are in dangerous places, not accessible. But we must do our possible to join them.

MONUSCO are bound by different statutes and regulations that make it difficult for them to intervene. MONUSCO was also criticised in the interviews for not doing more active work concerning the combatants. Abioye explained this:

In regard of the strategies of work, there is a great difference in the way we work and Monusco work. Monusco just broadcast a message on the radio and send flyers. But they don't meet them face-to-face. And the message they broadcast or write on flyers, don't answer the questions they [the combatants] have.

Due to their limitations regarding safety Abioye argues that Monusco is not able to work in the same way as the church works and the informants criticize them because they don't meet the combatants face to face. In other words the work they do is not sufficient according to what is regarded as necessary.

Another contrast between the UN programs and the ECC program is that the latter is regarded as a grassroots initiative whereas the former are not. Chunks addresses this aspect in the following statement:

So it is a Congolese answer to a Congolese problem. Often we tend to come from the West saying this is how you do it, this is how you do mediation, how you do peacebuilding or peacekeeping, and we kind of bring in the solutions to their problems. I'm happy that in this case my understanding of how this problem started is that it was the Congolese churches that said we need to come up with a way to deal with this problem and this is one way we can go about doing it. [...] Taking advantage of the network being everywhere, taking advantage of the trust there is in the church. Taking advantage of the fact that a lot of the combatants are in

fact Christians and even if they're not protestants we are able to communicate in a way that would be difficult for foreigners to do. [...] So that all gives some pretty big advantages its not to say that Monusco doesn't play a role or that their DDR RR program doesn't play a role, but they have a lot of things that are problematic for them. Though they have a lot of money they are in general working to sensitize from an outsider perspective, they also have been involved in military operations and are currently involved in military operations against the FDLR. So it is very hard for one officer to go and do outreach to go and say "oh please turn yourself in" and another officer of Monusco and FIB is attacking them some that is one of the problems that they have that the church here doesn't have.

So the ECC programme has advantages just by being a local initiative enabling it to gain more credibility within the local community. The UN and MONUSCO are by its nature unable to operate at the grassroots in such a way. The interviewees also address weaknesses with MONUSCO, notably the ambiguity of being involved in both peace work and military operations.

5.4 Reconciliation

As the title of the ECC program reveals, the aim of the program is both to achieve peace and reconciliation. The latter will be considered in this section. Through both raising awareness and repatriation work, the program seeks to establish reconciliation. Throughout the fieldwork several themes related to reconciliation and its impact were addressed in the interviews by the informants.

5.4.1 Sensitization

One of the key methods applied in the is sensitization. FDLR combatants are informed about the present situation in Rwanda, how they can be repatriated and what the process of repatriation will look like. This is carried out in several ways including workshops and seminars for local inhabitants, leaflet distribution and face-to-face meetings with combatants. Among the interviewees, the employees of the program especially discussed this part of the work.

Abioye explained the work of sensitization as follows:

We train them [local leaders] through seminars, when we reach a place, we call the pastors, we call the people in charge of the civil society, we call the chiefs, we meet with them, and then we talk about the project, we tell them that we are the church, and we give them our objective,

and we give them our strategies, and that if you meet those people you can tell them that we are a church and we can facilitate their repatriation.

It is through workshops that the local community is engaged. Abioye explains how the first step is to make contact with local leaders in different sectors and invite them to the seminars and workshops. The next step is that those who have attended seminars and workshops will pass on the information to refugees and combatants present in the area. This is natural since such local leaders are in regular contact with combatants and refugees who are living in the same community or in the surrounding forests.

Pastors are also, as mentioned above, invited to join the workshops. Adego gave further explanation about the information, which is given to pastors:

We share with the pastor these three objectives. We tell them that we have to look for peace in our country. They were also created like us, and our brothers, the Congolese are also suffering. When we tell that to our pastors, that gives them the courage of going and meet them [the combatants]. And when we do seminars with them that is what we tell them. [...] The church has a mission, has a mission of pacification, making the pacification of the country, because the church is above the rulers.

So Adego highlights that it is through emphasizing the church's calling to bring peace, that pastors are encouraged to join the program. In doing so, the pastors will be helping to pacify the region.

There is also another aspect to the sensitization work that came up in the interview with Abioye. During workshops the animator for the respective area is often introduced so that local leaders, pastors and other local stakeholders know who he is. Abioye explains:

And if we have our animator there, we introduce him for the local population and say you can meet him. We give all the contact of the animators. And we tell them that if they get a FDLR they can bring him to the animator. And if he is in the house you can call the animator and he knows what to do. We also call the chief of the police. And we also call the national army. And we tell them that if they see our animator with a FDLR they should not harm him.

This illustrates the way in which relations are built up in the repatriation process. A connection is formed between local people and the animator and in addition to this Abioye explains how this also then facilitates contact with local government institutions such as the army and the police, which can then ensure the safety of the combatants wishing to repatriate.

During the interviews, some challenges were also mentioned regarding sensitization. One of the local leaders in the group interview, Bamidele explained that one group of the Rwandan refugees and combatants are particularly difficult to sensitize:

Another challenge in this concern of the peace and reconciliation program is that as it was sad before there are those radical Hutu of 40 and beyond who don't like to hear about people talking about reconciliation.

What Bamidele shares is that this group of combatants who are reluctant to hear about repatriation are those aged 40 years or older. This can be understood since the genocide in Rwanda happened 20 years ago and makes those who are 40 years older or above possible committers of the genocide. As they may have been directly involved in the genocide they are likely to be put to trial when they arrive back in Rwanda.

Adego also raised another challenge. In the early phases of the program it was also challenging to come in contact with all the combatants:

In the beginning it was not easy to get contact with the Rwandan combatants. Because they had no confidence, they had no confidence in anybody because of their security. But as long as we went on with the sensitization they understood, they understood that we are a church, and as a church we don't have hidden agendas. But when we were going to do sensitization in an area, we organize a workshop with a pastor of the church. And give our message of that we are the church and we are ready to help all that are ready to repatriate. We will accompany you up to your country. And when you are in your country we have other churches that will receive you there.

So when the program was first initiated gaining trust was a challenge and combatants, according to Adego, feared for their security. However, Adego also explained how consistency and continuation of the work enabled the combatants to gain more confidence since misconceptions disappeared and trust was gained.

5.4.2 Need for reconciliation in the society

The need for reconciliation in the area has risen out of the specific conflict and the damage it has inflicted on society. In the interview with Adego he gave account of why he saw there to be a need for reconciliation in the area:

On the one hand reconciliation of the Congolese among themselves and Congolese with the combatants, but also reconciliation of Rwandans with their country. There were moments with

serious problem between the Rwandan refugees and the Congolese population. When they saw a Rwandan, it was like they saw a criminal because of all the exactions they committed. Due to this, we tried in our workshop to explain to people that not everyone in Rwanda is a criminal. There are innocent among them. They are God's creatures who were forced to leave their country and come here and live so you need to accept them. Because everyone may become a refugee some time, and the refugees need to be treated with dignity. That is what we tried to do. [...] So this is one aspect we got in Congolese side. But on the other side we also try to bring, to have those Rwandan make up their mind. Say that there is justice and there is truth, which need to be said in the future. Because in reconciliation we need to say the truth, to say that justice is necessary, and those who took part in the genocide, who know that one day they will face justice. So we ask them to pay attention, when they are making exactions. We say this both to the refugees and the combatants and also help them to be repatriated in a peaceful way.

Adego points to at least two needs for reconciliation in the Kivu-provinces. Firstly, he gives special account for the need for reconciliation between the Congolese people and the Rwandans, since the Rwandans have done numerous exactions towards the local population. This is addressed through emphasizing that anyone could become a refugee at some point and that these people regardless of their status are nonetheless "God's creatures". Secondly, Adego expresses it is important that the Rwandans "make up their mind", that they are sensitized so that the repatriation becomes more likely.

5.4.3 Impacts of the program regarding reconciliation

In the interviews some impacts of the program were mentioned. There was a variation in how positive the informants were regarding impacts, but all mentioned some aspects that they found positive.

One of the impacts according to Bamidele is the gradual change of mind the Rwandans undergo when they receive the message of peace and reconciliation:

Ok, you know the refugees are not all the places at the same time. So we profit from the presences in a particular place to pass the message of peace and reconciliation. Because also there are some of them who don't like to be repatriated, but when they are there we give the message of peace and reconciliation and it reforms them and pushes them to somehow change their position.

Bamidele describes here what the process can look like when the refugees receive the message of repatriation. Even though they don't necessarily accept it at first it seems that there is a gradual adjustment.

Batunde another local leader explains how he has seen a great change in his local area:

There is a very big difference today if we compare ten years back, 2003 and 2004. We may say that today we have more peace than we had back then.

The big difference that Batunde sees is specifically in his own local region where there has been much damage caused by the FDLR.

Throughout the study the impacts of reconciliation were accredited to several different reasons. Chica explains how she found that the church had a big role in establishing reconciliation:

The church played a very big role in order to make the reconciliation, preach people on forgiveness, reconciliation, and they sensitized the Hutu people for their voluntary repatriation and this had a capital impact.

According to Chica, the church's role in reconciliation is communicating about forgiveness and reconciliation through preaching as well as also sensitizing the refugees which leads to repatriation.

Abioye also gave a description of what he sees as the impacts of reconciliation:

The population happen to accept the Rwandan. The population is ready to help with the sensitization of the Rwandan. There are areas where we invite the Rwandan refugees together with the Congolese in the workshop, they exchange, and they talk to one another. Sometimes there is a kind of shock but as long the discussion is going the tension is decreasing and the people are accepted. This is why you can go in some areas, there are some Rwandan how are already integrated and that pastor attended some of our workshops here. And we also organized another workshop there. And asked him, "those Rwandan how are living together with them, are they aggressive or not?" "No they are not aggressive. They live together." "Do they like to be repatriated?" He said "no they have their farms and they have their activities." There are those how even married our doctors. "Have you celebrated weddings in churches?" "Yes, we have got several marriages between Rwandans and Congolese." Glory to God, if there is a good cohabitation, it's a good reconciliation.

The example that Abioye gave shows how the program has had results. Firstly, he addresses that there is a change of attitude amongst the Congolese population towards the Rwandans in the process of sensitization and repatriation work. Secondly, he also states that there places where the Rwandan and Congolese are living in peaceful cohabitation, and Abioye finds this good.

In addition to the impacts mentioned above, several of the grassroots interviewees appreciated what they had been given through the workshops carried out by the ECC, Bongani was one of those who expressed this:

I would like also to add we have had different types of workshops in capacity building, at this where we are at ECC we have been trained in how to sensitize the refugees on the voluntary repatriation.

The people at the grassroots seemed to be thankful for the workshops that had been held. As Bongani adds in a continuation of impacts is he mentioning this as an impact that he finds important.

5.4.4 Forgiveness

Within reconciliation, forgiveness is an important element in moving forward. The program works in various degrees in this respect. Chica shares below how willingness to forgive varied greatly during the workshops carried out:

Yes there is some who say “ok, we forgive” but there are some others who say “we can never forgive the Hutu because of what they have done to us”. We came to a village, where the Hutu killed all family members except one. Now in order for us to convince that person that you have to forgive, that was not an easy task. It was very difficult for us to convince him. ...
... Yes, there is another village where we went where all the women were raped by the Hutus. In addition to this they became victims of AIDS, and for us to convince those people that they had to forgive the Hutu, is until now not easy. They have now psychological problems, cause now if they see a military uniform they are traumatized. Yes we started with the territory of Mwenga. In a village the Hutu looted many things, they burned a lot of houses. But after our sensitization, people understood that they had to forgive. Because they understood without forgiveness they cannot do anything. And if we go on thinking and reflecting about what happened, they cannot develop and they cannot go forward. In Shabunda for example in a village called Musonga. 50% accepted, and 50% other : no.

Due to the harm that is inflicted on the population, Chica believes it is not always easy to convince people to forgive. However, she explains that through further reflection and thinking the victims are sometimes able to move on and forgive.

5.5 Non-Violent Means

The program operates in a non-violent way. This approach was discussed in the interviews in the context that the program is reaching out to a rebel group who have carried out numerous exactions in the DRC and who are accused for committing the genocide in Rwanda.

5.5.1 The combatants

The program is centered on raising awareness among combatants about the present situation in Rwanda and how they can be repatriated through the church. But due to the fact that the FDLR and the refugees have close relations, the program is also in contact with many refugees directly and has experienced that many of them also agree to voluntary repatriation. The relations between the combatants and the refugees were addressed in the interviews. Adego explained the interconnection between the two:

First of all, our target was the combatant. [...] If the combatants decide today to leave and go back, automatically the refugees will follow because they depend on the combatants. And most of the time, where there are a great number of refugees, there is always some combatants for their security. This is why we thought; if we after we met a lot of combatants, it is easier to meet the refugees as well.

The primary target in the program is, according to Adego, the combatant. However since they are often found in the same places as the refugees to provide protection, he argues that meeting one group also means meeting the other.

Another perspective also came up in the interviews. Here a distinction between the older and younger generation was made by Berhanu:

So the majority of those who are returning as far as the Rwandan refugees are concerned are less than forty because those who are forty and beyond they are suppose to take part in the genocide and are afraid to repatriated, to face justice. So the majority of those who are repatriated are children and women

As it is 20 years since the genocide a new generation has been born and grown up in the woods of the Congo. It is not that difficult for them to repatriate because they cannot be put

on trial for participating in the genocide, however the older generation is more difficult to convince to repatriate due to the fact that they might be put on trial, as they may have been involved in the genocide.

5.5.2 Impacts of the program

There were in the interviews also some impacts that they saw regarding FDLR and non-violent means. One of the things that were emphasized concerning the impact, were how the program is aimed at the FDLR, and how that is considered very good, Abioye addressed this:

And another thing is that when we reach the FDLR we raise their awareness and make them leave, and then the local population of that place salute us. Because they can go back and do agriculture, and do commercial activities, and they can do the farming, and they can walk a long distance without meeting any challenge. And that population thank us when we do their repatriation. [...] For example they went and raped women. Someone can make a project that shall treat the raped women, they can treat those who were raped, but FDLR can come and rape others, so the problem keep coming back. [...] So we solve the problem at the root. And the population is very thankful when we make the repatriation.

According to Abioye, the Peace and Reconciliation Program deals with the roots of the conflict. This is important and helpful for the Congolese, so that they can recommence a normal way of living. It is also of great importance to the Rwandans due to it increasing their possibility to live a better life with opportunities to do agriculture work and have rights that they don't have in the DRC.

In the group interview with grassroots leaders outside Bukavu the decrease of violence and rape was discussed as a positive impact of the program, Baako explains:

The first positive impact of the project is that the rate of the violence and rape has decreased. And this is helping the population to start their normal activities. As we pointed that out before the project helps to diminish the number of the refugees through repatriation. And by repatriation the exactions also are decreasing.

Batunde followed after Baako, saying that:

Another positive thing is the testimony those who are repatriated though the church here give to their relatives or brothers how are still in the forest, because after they have been repatriated, considering the conditions in which they are repatriated they talk to the other, "if you want to be repatriated, please pass through the church, you will be well treated", that also give a positive image of the work we are doing.

The informants say that they see a decrease of violence and rape through the work of the program because the perpetrators are repatriated. This means that locals can start living their normal life again. Another aspect is that the repatriation of a few people opens up the way for the repatriation of many more as the word gets round about successful repatriation stories amongst former combatants and refugees.

5.5.3 Violence versus non-violence means

The program promotes a solution to a violent conflict with non-violent means. This was by many seen as an important approach and perceived as a good way for the pacification of the region.

Abioye found this fundamental, as he argues that violence would not be the solution:

The FDLR problem can't get a solution through violence. The solution is raising awareness coming from Congo, and a dialogue from Rwanda. People can think that violence can solve the problem but it will not [...] The way of reaching them and succeeding is not by hitting them by violence. It is through raising their awareness. That is the big difference between our program and the government and MONUSCO.

According to Abioye, there is a need for non-violent work through raising awareness. He considers this as the best way for creating peace. He continues in the quotation below by addressing how violence will just lead to more damage:

If they use violence the Congolese population will suffer, and that will make them go deep in the forest. But where the FDLR is, you can walk and a FDLR can be hidden one meter from the road, because it is a forest. And Monusco cannot fight because it is a forest. It is not possible. Even the plane, the drone cannot see because it is a deep forest. That is why violence cannot work. It is only non- violence means, raising their awareness, telling that that they are also people that cannot live like that. They could go back home, there are also other people that already went there. And they can cross the border without any difficulty. They should not be afraid because we are the church and that is why we get more refugees than Monusco. Our non-violence means. That is it. But Monusco gets a lot of money.

Abioye shows how violence would only force the FDLR further into the woods, which makes it very difficult to reach them, with or without violent means.

An informant from the UN, Chiboza also argues about how violence is and would only continue to hurt the Congolese population.

Yes, I think it is a very advantage for us that we don't use violence because what we in French call 'domesticcouleur', because anytime when we organize the operation to fit the FDLR we have the very important movement of population, local population and the refugees. Local population. Because the FDLR they are together with the Congolese population, you see when we organize the operation to go to the FDLR; the Congolese population will be directly concerned. We have the FDLR they are the mission of FDLR, and the first mission is to protect the Rwandan refugees. When we attack the FDLR you must know you attack the refugees position. [...] When we attack them we attack directly the refugees as well. That is the big problem.

According to Chiboza, it is not only the Congolese who risk being harmed, but also the refugees if violent means are used to fight the FDLR because they live together with the combatants.

Non-violent means also stands in line with the Christian faith and biblical conduct as was raised by Chunk:

“Yeah, so, for me personally [...] as a Christian, I think we are called to be non-violent peacemakers so I'm excited that there is a project that is dealing with a armed group in a non-violent way. [...] I'm glad that there is other options, that I can be part of a program that is offering, or first of all recognizing their humanity first of all, saying that yes there is a possibility for you to change, it is not just we are going to kill you. ”

Chunk argues how the humanity of the Rwandans, both combatants and refugees is recognized and through this they are given the possibility to change their life and create a better one.

5.6 Spirituality

In most African cultures an understanding of spirituality is important as their worldviews tend to be much more holistic than those found in the western worldview. Therefore spirituality was naturally talked about in the interviews as well. Some aspects of spirituality have already been touched upon in the preceding sections but in the following section, some specific citations are singled out in which spirituality is directly discussed.

5.6.1 Motivation

In the interviews the informants were asked about their motivation for doing this work. The first thing that many highlighted was that they yearned for peace in the area, and through the program they commented that they were able to make a direct contribution. Another driving

factor was the compassion they felt for those suffering. One of the employees in the program, Adego described it in such a way: “The motivation was only peace; we wanted to contribute to the living conditions of the population”. He believes the need for peace is the essential motivation for participation in the program, and once peace was established another motivation would be improving living conditions for the locals.

Another employee, Abioye, gave three points to explain his motivation for working in the program.

First to look for peace in our country. Because bringing them back to their homes is the foundation for peace in our country. Secondly to forgive them. Because they live hardship. [...] And us as Christian we are not at peace when we see people live like that. So we do all we can that they can leave us like human beings. And that is why we go and do that. To feel pity for the Congolese who are suffering because of their presence here. Our women are suffering. [...] So to feel pity for the Congolese who are suffering we also go to meet them and tell them to go back. Those are the three main reasons. And that is why we go and say anything that will happen have to happen.

Abioye emphasizes the need to build peace, the need to forgive and the need to have mercy. These three things are according to the informant motivation enough to put himself in dangerous situations or as he puts it: “anything that will happen have to happen”.

Secondly, what also happened in the interview was that the informants shared stories to explain the situation and why they are working in the program. These narratives were either about suffering they had experienced themselves or suffering others has experienced due to the war. Adego shared the following story:

We received fifteen women, who came from the forest, they came to greet us, but in very pitifully way. They where smelling very bad, covering themselves with clothes. They where sitting, and crying, and when we started to talk with them, some of them could no longer speak because they where traumatized. But they told us that they were used as sexual slaves in the bush. [...] Some of them when they were standing up to go, it was wet where they had been sitting because they were urinating, because there was no way for them to stop. And these were people with fistula. [...] My self, I was traumatized.

Adego tells a story about some women he met who had fled from the forest where they had been held in captivity by a rebel group. This story had a great impact on him, and he experienced being traumatized after being in contact with people who had experienced so much wrongdoing. Adego continues:

We are treating the consequence, we are treating the psychological trauma, but where are the perpetrators of this, what should we do? We need to go to talk to these people so they will stop these exactions. But how can we implement such a project. Who can go in the forest and meet those people. It is a challenge. But we sad we have to sacrifice our self because if nothing is done people will go and die.

The transgressions that had happened to these women, motivated him in working to directly remove the cause of such crimes. And as Adegbo says, that is reason enough to sacrifice him if needed in order to see peace established in the area.

5.6.2 The Bible as normative source

In the interviews, the interviewees sometimes used the Bible to explain and legitimate what they do. In the citation above about sensitization, the biblical motivation is also shown.

Abioye was one of those who addressed this. He gives account of some of the advantages of the church:

[B]ut the advantaged with the churches is that we pray together. They understand our message because we are also from the church. And we go we meet easily with those people. And sometimes they are ready to take risk that other cannot. This is advantage because they understand us easily. They are led by the love of God and the love of the neighbour. But also they have peace in their area.

The reasons that he mention is how the church come together and prays. He also addressed how they more easily can come in contact due to them being the church and the Rwandans are often Christian. In addition to this is also here showing of it is “the love of God and the love of the neighbour” that drives them further. This shows the spiritual dimension, how this is something that both legitimize and make their work according to themselves easier.

The work they do is not without challenges. This was brought up during the interviews. Abioye talked about the dangers involved and how specific Bible verses encouraged them to keep going despite the dangers:

[A]nd you feel the danger. It is like a small thing and then you die. Still we go to meet them because we know we are not politicians so we have the courage. Our objective is nice and it is our courage that sends us to go to them. We know that if we die we know that the Bible says happy are those who go and look for peace. So that is why we have the courage of going there because it is not easy at all to meet the combatants.

Abioye is referring to a part of the beatitudes. Through the citation one can see how this is used to legitimize and motivate them to keep “looking for peace” even though they do face challenges and danger.

The legitimation of the program’s work was also tied up to the need to see the humanity of the Rwandans. Adego explained this when he talked about how the program was started:

The church said that we have a mission to understand. Cause humans wherever he is regardless of his tribe, regardless of what he is. He needs life. He has the right to be accepted like a human being regardless of the condition. Because he is not the one how decided to come here to be a refugee. If he is integrated with him self, and stops him by doing harm and help him to live in good livings conditions.

Adego finds it important to see the refuges as human beings who have a right to be accepted and a right to have life. Each person has value. This can be understood through a biblical worldview.

6 ANALYSIS

The research question for the study is: How does the protestant church network, the Église du Christ au Congo, consider the impact of the Peace and Reconciliation program, in their quest for sustainable peace in the Kivu region in the Democratic Republic of Congo? Five topics are discussed in order to answer the main research question. Firstly, the impact of the program in being a local initiative, and its structure are addressed. Secondly, the influence and use of the church-network in the program is examined. Thirdly, the way reconciliation is promoted through the program will be considered. Fourthly, the role of the program as it works through non-violent means in the quest for sustainable peace. The fifth theme presented is a discussion on what impact spirituality can have in such work as this Peace and Reconciliation program. Through addressing and discussing these different themes I will reveal what the findings of the research are.

6.1 It is the Citizens who Make Peace

The heading above has been extracted from a quote by Harold Saunders. He states that: “while diplomats and politicians may agree on peace accords, is it the citizens who make peace”⁵⁴. Saunders quotation is interesting. Is it such that the citizens themselves are those who make peace? If so, how does one engage them, and what about other approaches? He expresses a need for local ownership in the process of peacebuilding, and highlights that in the end, it is the citizens who actually make the peace. One can also argue that whilst local ownership is important, it is also of importance to engage leaders at various levels. Lederach argues that especially middle-range leaders have an advantage position in peacebuilding (Lederach 1997:60). In the following section the findings from the research regarding the aspects of leadership, local ownership, and local conflict resolution are presented. This section will address the structural side of the program.

6.1.1 Middle-range leaders

The research shows that the program leaders have shown a great capacity to sustain the work even though they have faced many challenges. In spite of a lack of funding and threats and dangers the ECC leaders have kept going regardless in order to build peace.

⁵⁴ H.H. Saunders, *A Public Peace Process: Sustained Dialogue to Transform racial and Ethnic Conflicts* (New York, 1999)

In the theory of peacebuilding, Lederach argues that it is especially middle-range leaders who can have an essential role in peacebuilding (Lederach 1997:41-42). The reason for this is that middle-range leaders have the ability to create good contact both upwards to top-leaders and downwards to people at the grassroots level. Middle-range leaders are also beneficial as they have the ability to keep up the work for a longer period. This is due to their ability to build and sustain an infrastructure for peacebuilding (Lederach 1997:51,60). The managers of ECC's program include several pastors who are well known figures in society. They can therefore be understood as middle range leaders, based on the criteria of Lederach.

I would say that there is consistency between the theory and findings regarding how the middle-range leaders can be of influence in peacebuilding. One reason for this is that they are able to continue the work for longer periods of time. In May 2013 the programs activities were put at risk when support from MFA was stopped. This issue was addressed in the interviews with the employees. One of the interviewees explained that after this happened, there were times when they used their own means in order to complete the repatriation process for refugees and combatants who took contact with an animator. But challenges were mentioned concerning the trust they had built up because when the funding stopped it was more difficult for them to be as present as before. In the face of these challenges they have kept going. I find their ability to continue working is an important finding building on Lederachs theory that middle-range leaders have the capacity to keep up the work.

Aid and development work in the DRC have according to David Van Reybrouck become a normal way for people to make a living in the eastern part of the country. There are numerous NGOs operating in the area. Reybrouck problematizes because whilst such NGOs often have large budgets, little of it benefits the local population (Reybrouck 2010:430). If the motivation to run projects were money instead of helping people, then as Reybrouck writes, I would say it creates unwanted effects. Amongst the employees of the program there seemed to be a genuine interest in building peace in the provinces. This motivation is made clear by their actions in continuing the work despite a lack of finances. Having a career and money is clearly not what appears to be driving them.

According to Lederach, another aspect with middle-range leaders is that they often have relations upwards towards the top-leaders and this makes their work easier (Lederach 1997: 41-42). It was revealed that the program partners were very positive in general towards the ECC and their efforts with the program. Both the informant from the governmental partner

CNR and the informant from MONUSCO expressed great gratitude for the ECC and the Peace and Reconciliation program. The CNR stated that they considered the ECC as their most valuable partner in the repatriation work. The ECC have thus managed to become a recognized partner in the Kivus with their Peace and Reconciliation program. Understanding this within the theory of Lederach, these middle-range leaders have a special advantage in such a way. Nonetheless, they have also faced challenges. During one of the interviews, an employee shared that it had been necessary to keep a low profile due to hostility from an organization doing similar work as the program. There is potential here for the ECC to build good relations with other organizations to promote rather the value collaboration rather than competition.

The findings show that just as Lederach argues it is beneficial to have middle-range leaders leading and initiating peacebuilding and reconciliation. In addition, I would also suggest that the program leaders could also be categorized as religious leaders in this specific program. Andrea Bartoli gives four reasons why religious leaders can be influential in peacebuilding both at the grassroots level, locally and nationally: “(1) knowledge of language and culture, (2) access to firsthand information, (3) political expertise and (4) long-term vision” (Bartoli 2004:158). In unstable and unclear situations, they often operate with high efficiency (Bartoli 2004:158). I would claim that the influence of the leaders in the program is not only possible to understand through them being middle-range leaders in light of Lederach theory. One can see that as they are religious leaders, the characteristics purposed by Bartoli seem to explain the influence the program leaders have. My research shows that as Bartoli argues, the program leaders do indeed have long term-vision. They yearn to see peace established. Also as locals operating in their own country, they know the culture and language.

The program leaders are influential, and this is in line with the characteristics pointed out by Lederach. They are able to influence top-leaders, and they have shown their ability to keep up the work, despite challenges. Their influence is not only explained by being middle-range leaders but also because they are religious leaders, and through the points that Bartoli makes, one can understand the influence that they have is significant. The rise of peacebuilding came due to a need for a more holistic approach. The program leaders seem to demonstrate a holistic way of working. They are both in contact with top-leaders and are also working together with national partners such as the UN and CNR, the national organization for refugees. Nonetheless, there is room for improvement regarding the leadership of the

program. The tension described between ECC's program and other collaborative organizations would benefit from being addressed and resolved.

6.1.2 Local ownership

Another aspect regarding the structure of the program is the involvement of those at the grassroots level. The research shows that there has been broad engagement among those at the grassroots level. Grassroots informants seemed to have a significant level of ownership. In the group interview undertaken in the village outside Bukavu, they were asked how they came in contact with the refugees and combatants and what methods they used in order to convince them to repatriate. The answers came very quickly from almost all of the participants. From this, I see that there is local ownership regarding the program.

One of the four general principles for peacebuilding is the need for local ownership. Peace needs to be something that comes from within (Bercovitch and Jackson 2009:173). Wellbeing and confidence among the people are also highlighted by Boutros-Ghali as being important in peacebuilding (Boutros-Ghali 1992:15). This is achieved as the local community is engaged and given ownership of the process. Ultimately, it is those who are living in the region that need to sustain peace.

Whenever the program leaders initiate work in a new area, they always contact the local leaders first. One of the employees, Abioye, explained this procedure. Upon arrival in the new place, they gather the local leaders, representatives of the local bodies within the civil society and local pastors. They share their motives and what they are going to do. By informing the leaders, they also try to involve them. For example, they often ask the local pastors to share a devotional before each seminar starts. It seems that these methods are working as the interviews reveal that there is indeed local ownership at the grassroots level.

Local ownership is essential in any project that aims to enhance peace. The study reveals that there is clear engagement at the grassroots level. Since the program is a church program, the local pastors are particularly engaged in the work, but other local leaders are also included. This creates ownership at least at the leadership level of the grassroots. Lederach states that grassroots leadership is important as these leaders are part of the local population, they live in the same conditions and have the same day-to-day struggles' (Lederach 1997:42). This local ownership is key within the program. So much harm has been inflicted on the local population by the FDLR and other rebel groups that it would be hard to try and force local people to

work for the voluntarily repatriation of a group that has inflicted so much pain on them. The program would not have credit if the local people didn't willingly choose to support the work and actively engage themselves in it.

Nevertheless there is room for expansion when it come to local ownership. The book *Kvinner bærer halve himmelen* (2009) (Eng: Women carry half of the sky) by Jan Speed and Endre Vestvik addresses the important role that women have in the Congolese society. They farm the land, they make food, and generally work very hard. The book examines the sexual violence which is sometimes inflicted on the women. In order to bring reconciliation and see peace established women need to be more involved. Since it is women who are often the greatest victims, they should also have a larger role in peacebuilding as I see it. I spoke mostly with men regarding the program and therefore argues that there is a need for greater engagement among the women at the grassroots level. I acknowledge that there are cultural differences and that the gender roles are different, but I would still argue for a greater emphasis on engaging women in this peace and reconciliation program. In the Kivus there are many programs and projects that have a focus on women but as I see it they should have a central place in any peacebuilding process. This include the Peace and Reconciliation Program.

To summarise, I have found that the local leaders have ownership of the methods used in the program, and this is important, as it is they who have to work in direct contact with the refugees and combatants. They seem engaged in the program and in using the methods that they use. I think the way in which the program employees take time to involve the local leaders is important in creating this ownership, and believe that this can explain the ownership present. Also, the tools given to local people at the grassroots to help them handle their everyday life are arguably of great importance. What I believe is lacking, however, is a greater involvement of women, those who have been some of the most harmed due to the extensive use of sexual violence. There are other projects which have a focus on women and sexual violence, but I believe it would be beneficial for the EEC program to also include women to a greater extent.

6.1.3 Local conflict resolution

In this section, I would like to present the way in which the program has sought to address one of the causes of the conflict seen in the Kivus today. The research has shown that it was due to the harm inflicted on the local population by the FDLR that the ECC leaders initiated

the program. They developed a program that was aimed at sensitizing combatants so that they would agree to voluntarily repatriation. I find it an important finding that the program is so directly targeted towards one of the greatest issues in the Congolese conflict.

In the theoretical understanding of peacebuilding it is important that any peacebuilding program works toward changing structures that repeatedly lead to conflict. Transformation should be sought in the social, economic and political spheres (Darwish and Rank 2012:2) Conflicts in contemporary society are according to Lederach often very complex and multidimensional. Therefore holistic solutions that tackle the structural causes are important in peacebuilding (Lederach 1997:xvi). Because the program is aimed at addressing the causes of the conflict, one can say that it is a peacebuilding initiative and that it is about dealing with structures that repeatedly lead to conflict and changing these structures.

Autesserre highlights how the situation in the DRC lacks local conflict resolution when it comes to peacebuilding efforts. She criticises the UN of having a tendency to forget this important aspect of the work, focusing too much on large-scale operations instead of supporting local conflict resolution work (Autesserre 2006:1-29). In light of this statement, the programs role is of great interest. The Peace and Reconciliation program is a local conflict resolution effort. Therefore, one can both see it is an answer to a very concrete need, but also it can demonstrate why such initiatives are important.

Another finding in the research is that Rwandan refugees were asked what they believed was needed in order for them to agree to voluntary repatriation. Abioye explained this: “They [the refugees] were saying to us ‘you have to talk to Rwanda, so they [Rwandan government] must improve the conditions for us to come’. This justified the work of lobbying and advocacy undertaken by the program”. From this, I see that they also involved the Rwandans in order to meet their needs. The program’s aim is to repatriate the combatants of the FDLR back to Rwanda. However, so far, they have repatriated more refugees than they have combatants. Because the relationship between the combatants and refugees is very close, the program does in praxis also work with refugees. Many of the refugees are either wives or children of the combatants, but some are also hostages of the FDLR. It appears that they find it important to repatriate them both.

Rév. Prof. Abekyamwale Ebuela Abi is a Congolese scholar located at the Evangelical University of Africa in Bukavu. He is not involved in the program, but was interviewed during the fieldwork. With his Ph.D. in reconciliation and peace work he has valuable insights

with regards to the theory as well as firsthand knowledge of the situation in the Great Lakes Region. When asked about what can be done to establish peace in the region he expressed the need to identify the actors of wrongdoings and argued that there should be a categorizing of what places are in greatest need for help, he says:

To establish peace in this region, there has to be done a lot. So for me, I think you can go from peace to development, but also vice versa, you can go from development to peace. Sometimes the development can help to get to peace, and sometimes peace is necessary to do development work. But as for the work of constructing peace in the region, first we have to identify who are the actors and find out the areas of where these trespasses were done and then you make a hierarchy of where it were worst and then downward. (Rév. Prof. Abekyamwale Ebuella Abi)

Rév. Prof. Abi argues that there is a need to understand who the actors are and where the trespasses are done. He also included the dynamic process between peace and development. How these are linked, but that it varies what should come first. in the peace. In terms of the program, this is exactly what has been done. The presence and activities of the FDLR have been identified as one of the causes for the conflict and ECC have targeted them in their work.

I see that there is therefore consistency between the theory and the research because the program is aimed directly towards one of the sources of the conflict. It is positive that ECC have sought to understand the Rwandans perspectives in order to make the best possible alternatives for them so that they can persuade them towards voluntarily repatriation.

6.1.4 Conclusion

The Peace and Reconciliation program is a program led by middle-range leaders employed by the ECC. The implication of this is that it means the program is able to maintain good contact both upwards and downwards. This is in line with theory regarding the influence middle-range leaders can have. The leaders have shown an ability to keep up the work and have good work ethics. When it comes to local ownership, which is also highlighted through theory as being of great importance, one can see that through the way those at the grassroots talk and describe, this is in place. What I do find lacking, however, is engagement amongst women. As I see it, it would be beneficial to involve them, as they are the ones who have suffered the most. To involve the greatest victims is important in any peace and reconciliation initiative. Finally, it is to be commended how the program's aim is directly connected to making an impact on the causes of the conflict. In peacebuilding theory it is necessary to address structures that

repeatedly lead to violence and conflict. So by tackling the presence of the FDLR the program is on the right track.

In the opening paragraph of section 6.1, I referred to Saunders comment about how it is the citizens themselves who make peace. Throughout the preceding paragraphs the strengths and weaknesses of the Peace and Reconciliation program have been identified. It has been shown how local leaders at different levels are contributing to peace, and that they are working in a beneficial way as they address the cause of the conflict.

6.2 The Local Church is the Hope of the World

The programs work is organized through the structure of churches and parishes in the Kivu region. Church-buildings are used for seminars and workshops. The pastors preach to both Congolese and Rwandans every Sunday. The churches and the pastors' houses are sometimes used as shelters for refugees and combatants that are on their way to assembly points. The peace efforts that the churches have made in the Great Lakes Region have attracted attention. Some research has already been done about the role of the churches in general⁵⁵. I will now discuss the findings of my research regarding the local churches and how the informants reviewed the use of them. The word 'church' represents much more than just a building. It is also a congregation in a local society, with a pastor making an active contribution in the local society.

6.2.1 Non-political

The research shows that one of the advantages of using churches in the program is that they are not seen as political. One of the employees expressed that he considered this to be the program's main benefit. In the Great Lakes Region, the conflicts are loaded with politics. The tension between Rwanda and Congo is recurrently high, and this is founded in conflicts due to disputes over ownership of land and ethnicity. With the political situation in mind, it becomes more understandable why the informants felt that the church not being political was an advantage.

⁵⁵ The article *Churches and Peace-Building in Eastern DR Congo* (2013) by D. Jordhus-Lier and E. Braathen (2013) addresses the use of local churches in general, and is not specifically concerned by the ECC-network, which this study is.

In *Civil Society, Reconciliation and Conflict Transformation in Post-war Africa*, Rigby explains the role that a civil society can play. He argues that the civil society in Africa is better suited to carry out initiatives where the state lacks political will or official mandate. The civil society with its autonomy has a greater potential (Rigby 2008:50). Since the program is non-political, it has a greater opportunity to implement initiatives. This is understandable and positive from a theoretical point of view.

Reybrouck explains some of the dynamics within the conflict. He refers back to how it was in 2004, however the issues are still the same today. In 2004 the president in Rwanda, Paul Kagame, feared a counterattack from the Hutu that had fled to the DRC. He was afraid that the Hutu militia hiding in the forests of the Kivus were planning to attack and take power in Rwanda. Because of this he gave support to the Congolese Tutsi in acts of war, and has also been involved numerous times since in supporting militias on Congolese soil to protect Rwanda's interests (Reybrouck 2010:427-428). In a situation where the political landscape is so complex, a non-political church is an important actor, but since their work is aimed at the FDLR it is impressive that informants talked as much as they did about the non-political aspect. I found it surprising that the churches managed to stay politically neutral when working with such a matter of tension.

The research did show that the ECC was not completely spared. Some of the difficulties and challenges the employees faced included mistrust due to the ECCs work with the FDLR. The employees told stories of how people would say to them; "you are cooperating with the FDLR and receiving money from them". The ECC employees also faced challenges in gaining trust with the FDLR. They explained that they faced accusations from the FDLR that they did not have pure motives. One can therefore see that despite the churches non-political status, they faced challenges with political undertones. Rigby argued that a civil society has greater potential to implement projects, which this initiative can be an example of. Nonetheless, that does not mean that they won't face any challenges concerning the political aspect.

Jordhus-Lier and Braathen have written about the local churches in the peacebuilding processes in the Great Lakes region. They address this political aspect regarding the churches. What they write is that while the churches describe themselves as neutral, it should be highlighted that the church network is involved in "national political processes, legitimised as an attempt to put pressure on diplomatic processes and peace talks" (Jordhus-Lier and Braathen 2010: 112) My reasoning from this is that the church-network is not as non-political

as it claims to be, however, they do manage to be a voice that is understood as neutral despite their involvement.

The church-network seems to be a needed actor in the midst of political chaos. In one way it manages to stay neutral in the politics and at the same time be a clear voice, which arguable make them political. In this regard the church-network in general and the program specifically has potential that could be increased. I see unreached potential for the church network to take a greater place in the political sphere. In this specific conflict it could be an important voice in several issues, not only the FDLR problem.

6.2.2 Trustworthiness

Another factor that the research revealed about the church was that people at the grassroots level and partners often said that there was great trust in the church. The program employees stated that this trust had made their work easier. The informants also said that Rwandan refugees and Rwandan combatants had more trust in the church than in other actors working for repatriation.

Rigby addressed how the closeness between the civil society and those at the grassroots level is very important in the African context. This was also addressed with regard to the middle-range leaders but Rigby adds to this by addressing how this closeness positions the civil society to do peacebuilding (Rigby 2008:50). This factor may be one of the reasons for the trustful relationships developed through this particular program.

This became especially apparent in the research when the interviewees were asked about their views on MONUSCO. MONUSCO does some similar work as the ECC program in terms of awareness raising and repatriation of Rwandan combatants. In one of the group-interviews with two local chiefs, one informant expressed his frustration towards MONUSCO regarding their lack of involvement and help: “So you [MONUSCO] simply came here to observe how we are being killed” (Bongani). This statement is due to the lack of mandate MONUSCO have to use weapons, which is challenging for the locals as they expect protection. During the fieldwork I heard this issue addressed several times. The UN was criticized for not interfering when needed. Jordhus-Lier and Braathen addresses how church leaders both at the grassroots and middle-range levels have shown a capacity to create social mobilization (Jordhus-Lier and Braathen 2010:112). Perhaps this also can explain why the churches have gained such

great trust among the population. The church is present and engaged in helping as opposed to the government or the UN force that has a turbulent reputation.

The church is not only highly respected by the Congolese people but according to the informants the Rwandans also find themselves safe in the church. Many of them are Christians and are part of the churches found around the countryside. The relationship between some of the pastors and the FDLR members was described as a confidential relationship. The interviewees state that the programs work is moving forward because of the trustful relations that are present. The combatants and refugees trust the church for their repatriation, and believe that they will not be hurt or be exposed to danger through them. All these aspects work together to build a trust in the church, which is both present and reliable. Bartoli also touches upon the role religious leaders can have in peacebuilding. He argues that one of the reasons Christian leaders have the influence they do is due to them being “at ease with many actors” (Bartoli 2004:158). In the programs work, it seems beneficial that they take use of the present relationships.

I find the trustworthiness that the church has built up in the region as being important. This adds to its advantage in being non-political. In the theory closeness to those at the grassroots level is seen as important, but arguably, the trust that the churches have is also of great importance and adds to the theory in that regard.

6.2.3 The church structure

Another aspect with the churches is their presence all over the region. My findings show that the informants find this to be very important. A representative from the national government addressed this: “sometimes ECC have churches where we as a government don’t have government”. The ECC operates through the existing structure of churches found all over the countryside. These structures of churches have remained in place, despite war and turmoil, while the government, as the informant shares, has had great difficulty in maintaining their structures.

Rigby gives three distinctions for why he finds the civil society advantageous in peacebuilding. He argues that they have knowledge, that they can influence both upwards and downwards and that they can go where the state might not be able to go (Rigby 2006:50). In the context of the Kivu regions in the DRC, it is not just a lack of political mandate that limits

the state from access but it is also due to the lack of governmental structures in the rural places outside the city.

Braathen and Jordhus-Lier specifically address the well-established structure of civil society in the Kivus. They emphasize how the churches are grounded within the structure of civil society. The structure, known as *la Société Civile* (Civil Society) consists of ten different dominions, including a religious domain. The church dominion is the most viable within the structure according to Braathen and Jordhus-Lier. During the wars have the Civil Society in general and the churches in particular kept up this structure (Braathen and Jordhus-Lier 2010:111,116). This seems to be part of the explanation for the appraisal of the Peace and Reconciliation Program's use of churches.

One of the challenges the interviewees mentioned was the lack of means. This was especially addressed by the grassroots leaders in the group interview in a village outside of Bukavu. They explained that sometimes if a refugee called, they were not able to return the call due to them not having credit on their phone. Even though the program works within given structures in the region, is it not without challenges such as this one. When the DRC is measured on the Human Development Index, the country is ranked 186, with only one country underneath⁵⁶. Another interviewee from the grassroots level stated that he would like the program to give him a salary for the work he was doing. This is one of the program's challenges – encouraging participation from people at the grassroots level who already have a shortage of means.

The program seems to benefit from the church structure already present around the countryside. The churches have persisted where the government have not. Still, there are challenges within these structures that could be addressed and solutions should be sought were they to receive finances again.

6.2.4 Development work

The last finding regarding the churches is the way in which they also are involved in development work. During the interviews, both the programs employees and the grassroots leaders explained the help that the church gives. The employees are helping in several ways.

⁵⁶ In the ranking are there 8 countries un-ranked, due to lack of data. HDR. (2013). *The Human Development Index*. Cited the 1 September 2014 from: <http://hdr.undp.org/en/content/human-development-index-hdi-table>

When the war was waging at its worst, they distributed food in local communities through the pastors. Food supplies are also distributed each time the program runs a workshop and also occasionally when contact is made with refugees. The refugees are often in poor health because of their lack of food and medicine. The grassroots leaders are also helping, through giving of their own supplies.

When the concept of peacebuilding arose, it was influenced by sustainable development theories. Because war-torn societies are also in great need of development and relief work, this is included within the concept of peacebuilding, which seeks to be holistic (Darweish and Rank 2012:3). Therefore relief work and development work can also be understood as part of the peacebuilding process.

The idea of the engagement of civil society in development work is quite a new idea that arose in the 1990's. The goal was to strengthen the civil society, and through this help to create good values, human rights, democratization and good governance (Borchgrevink 2006: 264). Throughout the cold-war period, the role of faith-based organizations increased, and one of their special features was involvement in new areas such as social interests and human rights that were not usually regarded as important within normal church life (Haynes 2007:214-215). The ECC program is an example of this. As a church-network they are engaged beyond their normal activities as a church-network.

The church and its involvement in development work can also be seen from another angle. Since the end of the 19th century missionaries have been in the Congo (Reybourk 2012:53). Because of the large missionary activity in the region, this has led to the widespread establishment of churches. Smaller churches receive support through mother churches, which gives them the ability to implement aid interventions, and development projects (Jordhus-Lier and Braathen 2010:112). So the church structure is not only an advantage because it is present where the government is not, but also because it is a vein for aid, as seen through the Peace and Reconciliation program. Rév. Prof. Abi underlines this:

“Like in Congo, churches have a particularly chance. For example in the churches, churches have schools, we have hospitals, we have possibilities to create and implement projects”.

(Rév. Prof. Abekyamwale Ebuella Abi)

So there is much more coming out of the churches than church buildings, institutions such as schools and hospitals are founded. During the fieldwork, one of the missionaries explained to

me that the church has a solid identity in being an institution that initiates and implemented development projects.

The part-takers explained how the Rwandans often came and looted the villages. They use violence to force the local population to give them food. Because the Rwandans are living under terrible conditions their way of getting food is by stealing from the local population, who are not living in abundance themselves. Therefore one can out of the theory of peacebuilding see why development work is also important in peacebuilding. In order to establish sustainable peace, one should tackle all aspects, and in the DRC poverty is a clear obstacle to be overcome in this process.

The churches are involved in development work. This can be understood both from the perspective that they are actors within the civil society and also through the understanding that the churches in the DRC have been shaped by the identity of being an active church that is involved in relief work. Since poverty is a great challenge, both among the Congolese population and the Rwandan refugees it is understandable that development work also needs to be included.

6.2.5 Conclusion

Bill Hybels, the founder of Willow Creek Community Church, in Chicago, is the man behind the statement used as the headline of this section. ‘The local church is the hope of the world’ This is a quotation from part of the vision for the church he is leading⁵⁷. As his church is located in the US I would guess that he did not have the ECC churches in mind when he made this statement. However, the Peace and Reconciliation program that the ECC runs can demonstrate that this is also true in the DRC, just in a very different context. The churches in the DRC have many advantages, being politically neutral, trustworthy, widely present and contributing in a holistic way.

The churches in this program strengthen the process of peacebuilding. It is evident that the church has a nearness to the grassroots. The local communities trust them and so do the combatants and the refugees. It may be reasonable to say that it is easier for the church than for the state to implement such projects due to its political neutrality. The church is credible and trustworthy while both the government and the UN are critiqued for their lack of

⁵⁷ Willow Creek Community Church (Undated). Cited the 4. September 2014, at <http://www.willowcreek.org/dupage/get-involved/membership>

involvement that validates the citizens' lack of trust in them. The statement, 'the local church is the hope of the world', has relevance in the Congolese case as the church has been mobilized even throughout the wars and this shows why it is trusted by the locals and brings them hope.

6.3 The Long Road to Reconciliation

Reconciliation as a concept and method has been developed and is now seen as an important approach within peacebuilding, which especially addresses the relational aspect. In the study reconciliation as an approach within peacebuilding is emphasized. The road to reconciliation can be a long road. It is not done in a moment, and the results might not be apparent at first, they rather grow over time. In the program the aspect of reconciliation is present in several ways, both on a social level and on an individual level. In the DRC a Truth and Reconciliation report has been completed. But in contrast to what has been done in South Africa, the report has been called a failure both from voices within and outside the country (Savage 2006, Mould 2012). To what degree the ECC program is promoting reconciliation is now addressed in light of theory.

6.3.1 Need for reconciliation

The research shows that the informants see several needs for reconciliation in the society. One of the employees identified there is a need for reconciliation within the Congolese population itself. There is also a need for reconciliation between the Rwandan combatants and refugees and the Congolese population. There needs to be reconciliation between the Rwandans and their own country and finally reconciliation for children who have been born out of sexual abuse committed by Rwandan combatants. In such circumstances, these children are left with no rights in the society.

Schreiter argues that it is important to understand that reconciliation work will always have different local expressions due to the distinctive nature of every conflict. He therefore proposes two questions in order to distinguish what needs a society has (Schreiter 1998:105). The questions are: "[1] What 'reconciliation' means in this context and [2] who the actors are in the reconciliation process" (Schreiter 1998:105).

By tackling the second question first, one can ask who are the actors in the reconciliation process in the Kivus? The findings of the research indicate that these actors include the local

population, the refugees, the combatants, and children born out of sexual abuse. The actors in the society are broad, there are not just two parties that need to be reconciled with one another and then it is done according to the research. When there are so many needs for reconciliation between different parties as there in the Kivus it becomes quite complicated. In Clegg's definition of social reconciliation she writes argues that it is more important to focus on the relational part than on justice (Clegg 2008:83). Most of the actors have been wounded and some of them have caused much harm as well. By using Clegg, it would be recommended in the Kivus to focus on moving forward and finding ways to build a better life instead rather than placing undue emphasis on justice. I can understand that in order to move on, it might be the easiest way. However, as I see it this need to be an attitude also arising from the grassroots in order for it to be sustainable.

The other question that Schreiter asked was 'what does reconciliation mean in the specific context'? As stated previously there are many actors involved in the Congolese context. It seems that in order to achieve reconciliation there is a greater emphasis placed on repatriation of the Rwandans, than there is facilitating close conversations between the Rwandans and Congolese. I find this an important distinction in this context. The normal reconciliation process seems to be two parties coming together and finding new ways to live together. However in this case it seems better to solve problems by trying to get one of the parties repatriated back to their home country.

Rév. Prof. Abi reviewed the need for reconciliation somewhat differently saying that:

I understand reconciliation in two ways. I understand it both in a religious way and a societal way. So according to me societal reconciliation is an extensive effort and takes long time. It has different steps. In Congo, I would say reconciliation is the harmony or cohesion of the victims of the war and the wrongdoers. So when the authors of the conflict and the victims come to cohesion and harmony, they turn the page, and begin another life, the social cohesion that is when I can say there is reconciliation. So it is not that what's happened has been forgotten or not taken place. It is just that instead of taking revenge, you refuse to do so. From the religious point of view, the reconciliation indicates the personal meeting with Jesus Christ. This meeting reconciles the man with God. This reconciliation leads to that of the man who are not other than this suitable place of meeting with God. (Rév. Prof. Abekyamwale Ebuela Abi)

Rév. Prof. Abi makes some interesting points. According to him there is a need to bring together the victims and wrongdoers. It is important to forgive instead of taking revenge. The

Peace and Reconciliation program appears to only partially deal with this. In a way, the program does work towards creating ‘harmony’ since as the combatants are repatriated more peace is restored in the region. However the ‘cohesion’ of the different parties does not happen since the Rwandans are primarily leaving the country and going back to Rwanda.

There seem to be several needs for reconciliation in the society, both among the Congolese and in relation to the Rwandan. What I find lacking in the research is the voices from the grassroots concerning what they find necessary.

6.3.2 Forgiveness as a part of the reconciliation process

The aspect of forgiveness is a well-debated theme within the theory of social reconciliation. In the study employees are clear in expressing their thoughts regarding this. They find forgiveness important. In an overall review of the material I gathered, I noticed how the employees’ attitudes toward the Rwandans were friendly and positive, which can be understood because they have forgiven them.

In the theory of reconciliation there is a lack of coherence among scholars. Schreiter finds forgiveness an important part of reconciliation on the personal level, but purposes that on a social level the society can use pardon or amnesty, instead of punishment (Schreiter 1997:64,124). While Clegg’s statement about reconciliation is that co-existence is enough on the societal level. Her understanding is that there does not need to be forgiveness on a social level, but only at the personal level (Clegg 2008:81-84).

Chica was one of the informants who argued strongly for forgiveness. She is sharing about a workshop they had on forgiveness:

“[P]eople understood that they had to forgive. Because they understood without forgiveness they cannot do anything, and if we go and think and reflect about what happened, they can not develop and they can not go forward”

Chica’s understanding is clearly that forgiveness is essential to move forward. She is not precise in whether she is talking about forgiveness at an individual or social level, however I would nonetheless argue that her statement portrays a way of thinking where forgiveness is central regardless of whether it is at a personal or social level. This is in line with Schreiter’s thinking. What I question concerning this way of thinking is can one demand or expect the local communities to forgive when they have been harmed by the presence of combatants and refugees? If this cannot be asked of them, then reconciliation would seem to be just a

theoretical concept, which in real life is impossible for most people to implement. However, if the process is understood as the only way for change and followed then it can be seen as a way of helping create sustainable peace inside and out.

Clegg makes a different argument. She sees forgiveness as paramount at the individual reconciliation but highlights that it is not needed at the societal level. She believes through her findings that co-existence is more realistic (Clegg 2008:81-84). When the local people share stories of violations in so many ways, aiming for a life in co-existence with no more violence may be more realistic. I understand the argument that forgiveness does not need to be part of the reconciliation process. In one of the interviews, an example was given of successful co-habitation in one of the villages:

They live together.” “Do they like to be repatriated?” He said “No, they have their farms and they have their activities.” There are those how even married our doctors. “Have you celebrated weddings in churches?” “Yes, we have got several marriages between Rwandans and Congolese.” Glory to God, if there is a good cohabitation, it’s a good reconciliation.

This give an example that co-existence can be possible. The informant he draw lines between good cohabitation, which lead to good reconciliation.

In *Peacebuilding, Healing, and Reconciliation: An analysis of Unseen Connections for Peace* (2011) Geneviève Parent writes about the connection between healing and reconciliation in peacebuilding. In the abstract of the article, the article is described as follows:

The article examines the effects of this distinction between healing and reconciliation is disconnected, peacebuilding produces experiences of secondary victimizations that undermine peace (Parent 2011:379).

She argues her case by emphasizing that the need for wounds to heal is essential in any reconciliation process. If healing is excluded, it might even hinder reconciliation (Parent 2011:379-380). While healing and forgiveness is not the same thing, healing can be understood as being in connection to forgiveness. I believe that the need for healing is important in order to move on. One of Parent’s interviewees stated: “To heal is learning how to live with one-self and being able to live with dignity” (Cited in Parent 2011:380). In order to see a change, for sustainable peace to be established there should be an emphasis on healing both at the social and individual level.

Through the research one sees examples on forgiveness and the position held by the informants, particularly one of the partners and the employees. The role of forgiveness in the program is not clearly distinguished but it seems, as this is important for them. Again, what I find lacking is the grassroots position in this. Based on Schreiter, he suggests that the society can give amnesty or pardon. I believe in which case that this need to come from the voice of the grassroots. I therefore find that it would be beneficial if they could influence in a larger degree how the reconciliation process would look like.

6.3.3 Sensitization and workshops

In the research, another aspect of reconciliation was highlighted. The spread of information through sensitization work, and seminars and workshops was seen as being important. Chica addressed this and talked about how the church was contributing to reconciliation through their seminars. She believed the way the church came and preached a message of forgiveness, was very important.

From theory, reconciliation can be understood as reconstruction of the society (Schreiter 1997:112). In according to Schreiter the whole society should be engaged in the reconstruction process over a period over time. It is also highlighted in the theory that in such war-torn societies it is also often necessary to reestablish moral order (Schreiter 1997:111-112).

Through the research it seems that the sensitization work and workshops can be seen as reconciliation efforts according to this theory. In a way the ECC is creating a new moral order through the work undertaken and the values diffused. I believe the program managers could benefit from having a wider understanding of the important role these seminars can have. In the research it seems as if their first and foremost focus is on promoting the message of repatriation. There are other aspects such as changing culture and spreading values which there is a much greater possibility for them to carrying out at the same time, rather than only focusing on one objective. I would recommend they do not only aim their work at removing the cause of the conflict but also to use their structures to increase reconciliation through the spread of values.

Rév. Prof. Abi explained some of the roles he sees that the churches can play in reconciliation efforts:

So churches should be good means to spread the message of reconciliation in the different structures, schools, hospitals, etc. Like for me, I'm thinking in this way, to meet God in the neighbour as I said before is an important message in the church, and if this message will be taught to children and they will grow up with such a message, which is a big role that the church can play. So once pastors and church leaders are trained and have now the true vision of peace and reconciliation, because they have been transformed, they can play a big role in the peace and reconciliation process. For reconciliation and peace in our region, we need to go through churches. (Rév. Prof. Abekyamwale Ebuela Abi)

He addresses the educational side that churches can have in encouraging peace and reconciliation. This role is due to pastors and church leaders that have "the true vision of peace and reconciliation". Schreiter also states that there needs to be some key people such as leaders who are reconciled. They can then lead their community in a social reconciliation process (Schreiter 1998:11). In the ECC program I consider the leaders and the employees as being such key people. Based on their attitude and their willingness to work toward and with the FDLR shows a reconciled attitude. I would highlight this as a positive side of the program's work, the leaders that can show the way to reconciliation.

The program has some influence in the culture through the already established structure of sensitization and workshops. However, I believe that it would be beneficial for employees to have a higher awareness of the extended opportunities that exist to influence ways of thinking and through the already existing structures, make an even greater contribution reconstructing the society, establishing reconciliation and restoring moral order.

6.3.4 Glimpses of reconciliation

The research has shown that there have been glimpses of progress when it comes to reconciliation in the Kivus. The program employees have reconciled attitudes towards the Rwandan refugees and combatants and there are signs of reconciled parties living in successful co-existence in the area.

Lederach's figure⁵⁸ of reconciliation addresses the following four principles: truth, mercy, justice and peace. The first aspect, truth, means that there needs to be acknowledgment and statement of what has really happened. When the truth is established, it is necessary to have mercy so that wrongdoings can be forgiven. The third and the fourth aspects, justice and

⁵⁸ The figure 2 *The place called reconciliation* can be found on p.53

peace, are closely related. Justice is understood as reconstruction or reestablishment of the society and peace is understood as security and safety (Lederach 1997:29).

In 2004 a Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) was officially established in the DRC, but due to the instability in the country its work did not commence until 2005. The report published by this commission has been deemed a failure due to several factors. These include both lack among the leaders, and a lack of transparency in the way the report was formed (Mould 2012:63-65). According to Tyrone Savage and Kris Vanspauwen, there needs to be a balance in terms of how much truth is revealed in order for it to be beneficial:

[...]the need to balance the two pursuits sensitively, the need to consider how much truth is needed for victims to gain a sense of justice, but also how much truth the DRC can bear in order to maintain peace (Savage and Vanspauwen 2008:392).

Savage and Vanspauwen seem to address a nerve. As the trespasses are multiple, one can see that the establishment of it all may just increase instability. This is a ambiguity with the conflict and solution of it.

In the research phase of this study many of the interviewees gave me letters or recommendations that they asked me to bring back to Norway. They wanted me to either give them to the government or use them to carry out advocacy for them. This tells me that there is still a need for recognising the truth of the DRC's situation. In recent years there have been numerous reports of violations against the citizens and yet the conflict is still often referred to one of the forgotten ones in the contemporary world. The aspect of truth in general and in the program should be emphasized.

The second principle that Lederach puts forth is mercy, which is the term he uses to also comprehend forgiveness among other themes (Lederach 1997:29). The research highlights how the program employees appear to have forgiven the Rwandans because they express that there is a need to feel compassion towards the Rwandans, and make clear that their intentions are to work for their good. Such attitudes could not exist had they not forgiven them the harm and pain caused to themselves and their Congolese co-citizens. These attitudes may not however be representative of people at the grassroots level who have been the most damaged by the presence of FDLR. Lederach does not make a distinction between individual and societal in his reconciliation theory but this distinction is present in Schreiter's theory. He states that for societal reconciliation to happen, there needs to be some reconciled individuals.

In the program there seem to be at least some reconciled individuals due to their neighbourly love towards the Rwandans (Schreiter 1998:111).

The two last principles to be discussed are justice and peace. These can be seen as two phases, which come after truth and mercy, because justice in this case is understood as restitution and peace is understood as restoring security in the society (Lederach 1997:30). As the repatriation of Rwandans continues these two features will be seen more and more as it is clear that the repatriation work is contributing in the pacification of the region. In such a way, the program is making a contribution to reconciliation.

An important feature with ECC's efforts of reconciliation, I believe is found in the concrete efforts toward the FDLR. In a way, through the reconciled attitudes of the employees, they are leading way for the society in a social reconciliation process. Therefore, one see a impact by the effort of the ECC, just by addressing this cause and through that, are they contributing in reconciliation-efforts.

By using Lederach's figure for reconciliation, I find that the research reveals that the program has helped in the reconciliation process to some extent. The employees seem to have merciful attitudes towards the Rwandans that are filtering downwards towards the local population. The programs work through the churches has contributed to the pacification of the area, but there is still work to be done, such as working more on establishing the truth concerning violations that have been done.

6.3.5 Conclusion

The program's name includes the title reconciliation, and it is one its great aims to see reconciliation in the region. It seems suitable to make a distinction between the employees and those at the grassroots level when addressing reconciliation, as the situation for those living in the rural places is far worse than those living in the city. Nonetheless, there are glimpse of progress in reconciliation amongst both groups. The contribution of the program's sensitization work and the workshops has potential to progress the reconciliation process. There could be a benefit in placing a greater emphasis on establishing the truth. In some ways the perpetrators are just removed from the area, without any interaction between the victims and wrongdoers, therefore is it important that other forms of justice be implemented and also that there is truth about the exactions that have happened. One can also argue that there is a

need to forgive and also to acknowledge the importance of healing in order for the victims to be able to move on, nonetheless this have to be part of the wishes' of the grassroots.

6.4 From a Culture of Violence to a Culture of Peace

Congo is often described as the worst place in the world to live as a woman or a child. The war and conflicts have been going on for several decades. In such a place the question of sustainable peace is both delicate and sensitive, but also very important. A solution for the Congo and the Great Lakes region will most likely include many different approaches being taken at many different levels of society. Even though the conflict on the whole requires many different approaches, the question to be considered in this study is how the ECC program contributes towards sustainable peace. Does the program contribute to transforming the culture 'from a culture of violence to one of peace'⁵⁹? This aspect will be discussed in light of the non-violent means used in the Peace and Reconciliation program in order to establish peace. How is the non-violent aspect influential in establishing sustainable peace?

6.4.1 The use of non-violent means

The Peace and Reconciliation program uses non-violent means in a violent culture to work towards the voluntarily repatriation of the FDLR. The research shows that the leaders of the program see this as an important feature within the program. Abioye articulated that: "The FDLR problem can't get a solution through violence". He states that there needs to be awareness raising in the Congo and good dialogue with Rwanda in order to solve the problem. An informant from MONSUCO, expressed himself in a similar way during one of the interviews, and also argued that the use of violence would only harm the locals and the refugees further.

Using violent approaches to solve violence are to be questioned. Mudida argues that through a violent approach, one cannot be sure that the necessary structural changes will happen (Mudida 2014:51). Galtung separates understanding of violence into two; there is direct violence and structural violence. The latter is all the different systems found within the society lead to violence (Galtung 1996:2). In order to see sustainable peace, these systems need to be changed. By using Mudida, the non-violent approach can be one proposal to solve conflict.

⁵⁹ The headline is abstracted from a quote by Andrew Rigby in "Civil Society, Reconciliation and Conflict Transformation in Post-war Africa" (2006:49).

When the fieldwork was conducted in January the situation in the Kivus was in change after the M23's defeat through a joint operation between FARDC and FIB in November 2013. The FDLR were supposedly the next group that would be tackled⁶⁰. With this in mind the subject of non-violent means versus violent means was a current topic of debate for the informants. Some of the informants emphasised that it would not be possible to see peace without non-violent means aimed at the FDLR. This was argued because they found the collateral damage on the local population too large based on earlier military approaches as well as the fact that the location of the FDLR in the deep forests presented a unique challenge.

In an advocacy briefing published in 2013 by Patrick Maxwell for MCC, (one of the program's partners) the need for non-military strategies were argued as necessary in order to fight the FDLR⁶¹. This is explanatory due to the damage already seen in the local population through earlier military approaches and due to the structures and ways the FDLR is organized. The damage of earlier military operations was rendered as such:

[O]ver 130,000 people were displaced and 1,800 homes were burned. In total, the cost for each demobilized FDLR combatant was one civilian killed, 1.5 houses destroyed, and 100 people forced to flee. (Maxwell 2013)

Maxwell states that the damage inflicted on the local population far exceeds the results when it comes to repatriation carried out through a forced military approach. With one civilian killed and 100 people forced to flee the result is not impressive. But through rather increasing the existing non-violent measures run by the government, Monusco/DDR RR and the ECC church program in focus, Maxwell argues that a solution can come. From the research I gained a clear understanding of the impact military solutions can have on the local population. The informants therefore emphasize the need for non-violent measures.

The fact that military approaches have a damaging effect on local communities is only one reason that non-violent means are preferred. Another is the Christian worldview. The findings emphasize that as Christians, the employees believe that non-violent means is in line with their faith. Most of the actors involved in the program and those living in the Kivu region are Christians. One of the partners expressed that he was thankful for this. He considered it greatly important to be involved in a program where the humanity of the FDLR was acknowledged. Jegen argues how one should understand that violence is an expression of

⁶⁰ When writing this in August 2014, there have still not been any large military approaches toward the FDLR so far. In January, it was much more tense as many suspected this.

⁶¹ The advocacy briefing is found in appendix 5

wounds. Therefore, non-violent means are better enabling these wounds to be healed (Jegen 2004:30). Jegen states this from a Christian viewpoint, however one can also see how this view is also in line with Galtung's theory about the need for changing the structures of violence.

In a report of UNESCO, *UNESCO's Programme of Action – Culture of Peace and Non-Violence* (2013) are aspect purposed in order to see more peace established. One of aspects are “non-formal education” (UNESCO 2013:14). The program has a possibility to contribute to the non-formal education. As there is already a platform through the workshops and seminars. Through these can they contribute to increase a culture of peace, and are to some extent already doing it.

Galtung refers to Gandhi and his non-violent posture as an example for using non-violent means. Gandhi's belief system was centred on discovering the good in every religion, and also made a distinction between structural violence and the humans behind the violence. Galtung also uses Christian viewpoints to argue his case. In the church there is a clear distinction between the sin and the sinner, another way of explaining the distinction he makes (Gandhi 2004:142). Perhaps one can find a key in the church's understanding of there being a difference between the sin and the sinner. Is it this distinction that enables this program to focus on the humanity of the FDLR, separating the crimes committed from those who committed them? Through non-violent means, the FDLR-combatants are persuaded towards repatriation instead of being forced through military means. This non-violent approach adopted by the program can be seen as a first step in the process of transforming the culture from a culture of violence into a culture of peace.

I would argue that the use of non-violent means can also be understood in a broader context. It is not just being argued that this specific problem with the FDLR is difficult to solve through military approaches but rather that conflicts cannot be solved by violence in general. It is emphasized that it is more important to address the structural causes for violence, and change them to make peace possible. Paul Hiebert (2008:205-207) addresses this ‘myth of redemptive violence’ in *Transforming worldviews – an anthropological understanding of how people change*. He argues that there is a myth in the present worldview that says violence is the solution for violence. There is a spiral of battles, one battle after another. And therefore peace is never in the centre, just on-going battle. In light of such a line of thinking, I would suggest that based on the answers given by interviewees, the ECC program represents a

change in thinking that violence can stop violence. Through being a non-violent program, it is instead a vehicle for transformation in the culture confronting the myth of redemptive violence, which has led to recurring wars.

6.4.2 Conclusion

Non-violent means are effective in peacebuilding for several reasons. An important distinction with the ECC program is that it is a non-violent program tackling an area that with reason could also be addressed violently. FDLR have committed many violations against the Congolese population and Rwandan refugees who are kept as hostages. The reason for tackling the issue of the presence of FDLR in a non-violent way can be understood from two perspectives. The first of these is that non-violence is the best solution in this specific conflict, due to A) the harm a military approach would inflict on the already damaged local communities and B) the difficulty of accessing the FDLR in the forests. The second perspective is based on a wider view that it is best to change and address the structures in society that cause violence. Whilst this second perspective was not specifically mentioned by interviewees, I find it of great importance in the pursuit of establish sustainable peace. Another aspect I see is the educational value of running a non-violent program. There is potential to influence and impact a whole way of thinking that peaceful approaches are more effective. I would argue that this is one of the most important features of this program. They choose to engage Rwandans in repatriation in a voluntary way and in doing contribute to the pacification of the region. Removing the FDLR in a non-military way could arguable be seen as one step forwards in the process of transforming a culture of violence to a culture of peace. Finally, I see the great potential the program has in having an expanded understanding of how non-violent means can influence the culture. Were it to fully embrace this and apply this strategically in its ways of working, the impact on culture could be increased.

6.5 Blessed are the Peacemakers

The headline “Blessed are the peacemakers” (Matt 5:6, NIV) is found in the gospel of Matthew in the Bible. It refers to the call for Christians to contribute to peace and points to the blessing that follows in doing such work. The last theme to now be discussed is the role of spirituality in influencing peacebuilding. The leaders of the ECC are Christians and the program operates in a Christian country where Christianity through both many catholic and

protestant churches stands strong. In this program the role of the protestant church is especially addressed.

It should also be understood that the DRC has a culture where religion plays a more decisive role and it is much more integrated into the culture and its worldview than in the western world. Development work and peacebuilding initiated from western countries often lack the important aspect of religion. In my study I sought to identify what spiritual motivation lies behind the work they are doing and to what extent this influenced the work.

6.5.1 Biblical values

In the research, one of the findings was that biblical values are used to legitimize the work of the program. The language of program employees and participants alike was characterized by reference to Christian values in legitimizing the work.

From a theoretical point of view, there is a biblical reason to talk about concepts such as peace and reconciliation. Pang gives account of this. Both in the Old and New Testament, the Hebrew word for peace - *shalom* - is used repeatedly, and the concepts of peace and reconciliation are central in the Bible (Pang 2008:51-53).

So when the informants communicate, they have a strong foundation when they argue points, which are drawn from values and concepts in the Bible. One of the employees Abioye gave three reasons for their search for peace: “We tell them that we have to look for peace in our country, they [Rwandans] were also created like us, and our brothers, the Congolese are also suffering”. When Abioye states, “they were also created like us” one can understand it in light of a Christian understanding that all human beings are created in the image of God, and that everyone has value.

Pauline Kollontai gives an explanation of the role religion can play in peacebuilding. She talks about the way religion can create a system, saying that:

Religion provides a system of meaning and a framework for action. Religion constitutes a normative system which ‘when accepted, serves as a directive for how each individual believer should live his/her life’ which is presented as the will of a divine transcendent being whose laws, commands, and teachings appears to give life meaning and a framework in which to live. (Kollontai 2008:64)

What I see from this is that the ECC program therefore has an advantage in being a church program. If the UN tried to raise the same values perhaps it would not be as influential since religion can provide a framework from which values are understood and applied. This does require, however, that the people who hear and receive these values are part of the same normative system. The research implies that whilst there is now significant engagement in the programs efforts, there is still great diversity of involvement among those at the grassroots level.

It is also possible to see some negative features with religious actors in peacebuilding according to Kristian B. Harpviken and Hanne E. Røislien. They mention several features that can have a negative influence. For example, when religious peacemakers not are open and inclusive. There is also the risk that religious peacemakers will receive both personal threats and threats towards their whole organization (Harpviken and Røislien 2005:4). In the ECC program, there did not seem to be discontent against them as religious actors, and any resentment came down more to rivalry and competition than anything. However, it is possible that if the research had been wider, and I had been in contact with people of different faiths or from different congregations, attitudes toward the program may have been reflected differently. An important element in any religious peace initiative is that there is openness in order to create bridges between different parties in a conflict and make sure that exclusion does not become a catalyst to a new conflict.

In an interview with Bosede and Bongani, they emphasised the significance of the message of peace and the importance of preaching forgiveness and neighbourly love. These values can be important in peace efforts. Marc Gopin gives reason for values in religions that can advantageous, saying that:

[W]orld religions have a reservoir of pro-social values of profound subtlety and effectiveness that, if utilized well, could form the basis of an alternative to violence in coping with conflict or coping with devastating injury (Gopin 2000:10).

The pro-social values Gopin is referring to may include the values highlighted by Bosede and Bongani. So this is also an aspect with the program being in a Church-program. An example of this can be seen as Pang writes that there is often a need for one or two parties to make sacrifices in the process of reconciliation (Pang 2008:51). Then forgiveness and neighbourly love are values that can contribute in such a way.

The biblical values that the program uses to legitimize their work are also reflected in the way they reach out in a friendly way towards the FDLR, a criminal group that has inflicted much harm on the local population. It is evident in the way the informants talk about the Rwandans that values such as the equal worth of each human being are present.

6.5.2 Spiritual power

Another aspect of spirituality in the program is what one of the informants referred to as a “spiritual power” (Chima). The aspect of spiritual power was revealed in the research as being a beneficial side of the church’s work. It seemed they had great influence by being the church. This spiritual power was addressed both with regards to the local population and with regards to the FDLR.

The theory implies that spirituality can influence the processes of reconciliation. Segura argues that Christian spirituality should essentially be understood as a spirituality of reconciliation. In this understanding he highlights the need to empty one self for another, becoming like Jesus. Segura characterizes the lifestyle of Jesus as one from a position of weakness, where he chose to become weak and lowered himself. According to Segura, this should portray spirituality of Christianity (Segura 2013:268).

Jørgensen emphasizes that the reconciliation in a Christian understanding is an active effort (Jørgensen 2013:330). Perhaps this is part of why the informants describe a “spiritual power”. The program makes active efforts of peacebuilding and reconciliation through its many activities.

The informants also emphasized that the pastors pray and this open up a door for refugees and combatants to be repatriated. Baako was one of those who emphasized this, saying that: “The role of the church can be a double one, on the one hand the church prays, or is praying for God to open the door for these refugees to be repatriated”. This also can be an explanation of the “spiritual power” that the informants see the church have.

Another interesting view regarding spirituality was through a comment made by one of the program’s grassroots leaders who explained that the employees and pastors working for the program were respected by the FDLR as they were “men of God”. In other words, by belonging to the church, the men were accredited as having spiritual power, which gave them credit and influence.

In light of my research, the findings regarding spiritual power are interesting. Christian leaders and lifestyle varies much in the region. Rév. Prof. Abi addressed this:

A great problem we especially have in East Congo and the Great Lake area is that some people think that they can kill people and still be saved. People, they pretend to be hesitant, but they still want to fight other people. This is the big challenge of Eastern Congo, Rwanda and these countries in the Great Lake region. So people think they are Christian but if they where Christian they should not be involved in wars and the killings. (Rév. Prof. Abekyamwale Ebuela Abi)

Even though the spiritual aspect is arguably important in peacebuilding and reconciliation, and especially in this context since the region is so influenced by religion, there is another dimension to be aware of. The degree of people's participation and way of living according the Bible varies, and therefore influences to what degree spirituality makes an impact. As well as the paradox of there being Christian leaders who are doing a important work for peace, while there is also Christian leaders who do the opposite.

Segura argues that spirituality is about lowering one self. In a way the ECC leaders lower themselves when they approach the combatants. The FDLR and the refugees are outcasts in society, they don't belong in the Congo even though they have they been living in the DRC for the last 20 years.

6.5.3 Spiritual motivation

The last aspect I would like to highlight with regard to spirituality is what I have called spiritual motivation. Especially among the employees I found a willingness to sacrifice much for this cause. They expressed that they would go as far as necessary in order to create peace in their country, even if it meant sacrificing their own lives.

Dowsett addresses this. She gives account for the influence that hope can have. The Christian understanding of hope is not only for a better future in this world but also the hope of an eternity (Dowsett 2013:102-103). The statements made by the employees could possibly be understood in light of this. There is a spiritual motivation; both for improvement here and now but also knowledge that in the end everything will be good.

The study also reveals the compassion the employees have for the women and children who are suffering so much in their communities. This may also be a motivating factor in the work.

Bartoli has a valuable insight that can be used to explain this willingness that the employees show:

Many Christian who have grasped this difficult truth have, in turn, attempted to follow the Way of the Master who tells us: “ You have heard that it was said: ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy’. But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be children of your heavenly Father, for he makes his sun rise on the bad and on the good, and cause the rain to fall on the just and unjust (Bartoli 2004: 161).

Bartoli is referring to the history of Christianity but the verse he is referring to found in Matthew 5, 43-44, is still relevant for understanding the motive of the employees today when they say that what they are doing is worth the fight, if it can bring peace to a suffering population.

Driver refers to another aspect - that spirituality can also make way for both hope and faith for the impossible (Driver cited in Segura 2013:268-269). The situation in the Kivus is not impossible to solve, but with recurring violence for decades and bad government since colonial times it is clear how deeply it is affecting the population. As I see it, employees have a spiritual motivation to act that is founded from a biblical perspective. It can also be understood as a response to the suffering that they saw. So there is on one hand a spiritual motivation, as when one informant refers to the verse in Matt 5:6 about the blessing of being a peacemaker, and on the other, there is a motivation driven by the pain and suffering witnessed and the conviction of the need to do something.

6.5.4 Conclusion

From the discussion in this section, I see several benefits of spirituality within the ECC program. There are arguable advantages to being a church program especially in the area it is located. Through it being a normative system, it is easier to implement values of peace. There is an impetus that forces the reconciliation process forwards, especially among the leaders is this seen. The Christian lifestyle of the Christian program leaders is reflected in the values they have. They have hope for a better future, and the goal in front of them has such weight that they are willing to die in order to see change for the better. The spiritual dimension can be hard to grasp, but through the research it is shown that this is an important aspect for the informants, and an important aspect for those who are involved in the program.

7 CONCLUSION

My goal with carrying out an empirical study of the ‘Peace and Reconciliation’ program operated by ECC, was to reveal more about how local churches, mission organizations and other actors involved in peace-work can contribute towards establishing sustainable peace and reconciliation through the holistic approach of peacebuilding.

The study has clarified some of the impacts of the program in the Great Lakes Region. These have been presented through the analysis in chapter six. In order to answer the main research question, I will first answer five sub-questions that address the following subjects: the influence of the program in being a local initiative, the role of the local churches, the process of reconciliation, the degree to which sustainable peace is established and the influence of spirituality. I will then answer the research question: How does the protestant church network, the Église du Christ au Congo, consider the impact of the Peace and Reconciliation program, in their quest for sustainable peace in the Kivu region in the Democratic Republic of Congo? As a final note, I will highlight how the study contributes to the existing area of research and present some new areas of interest for further research.

7.1 Towards a Conclusion

7.1.1 Benefits of the program being a local initiative

The first sub-question is: what are the benefits of the program in being a local initiative? Local church leaders in the Kivu-provinces initiated the program because the church could not remain indifferent to the exactions that were happening in the region.

The research shows that one of the benefits the program has in being a local initiative is that it provides a concrete solution to a concrete problem which is faced in local communities. The harm that has been inflicted on women and children in the villages due to the presence of the FDLR was the ECC’s motivation to take action and initiate specific work towards addressing this issue.

Another benefit shown through the research is that the ECC has managed to mobilize the local churches. The churches have a major role in their local communities and this has been well taken advantage of by the Peace and Reconciliation Program. Through it being a ‘church

program' it already has grounding in the society and the research clearly shows that this makes it very effective.

Building on this point, the research shows that engagement and ownership of the program at the grassroots level is important. Local leaders are involved and it is through these leaders that the objectives of the program are carried out including sensitization work that can lead to repatriation of Rwandan foreign combatants and refugees. This local ownership is of great importance since the local population are the ones who will establish peace. However the research showed that this level of engagement and ownership was not so prominent amongst women and should be increased among them.

7.1.2 The local churches role in peacebuilding

The second sub-question is: What role have the local churches played in peacebuilding? There are several aspects that the research has revealed regarding this subject. Firstly, the research shows that one of the important functions of the local churches is that they are politically neutral in what seems to be a complicated and tense conflict that is highly politically loaded. This seems to be an important factor in why the local church has been so influential in the region through contributing to peacebuilding.

Secondly the fact that churches are present all around the countryside is another important element revealed through the research. Many of the ECCs partners addressed this benefit. In a society where the infrastructure and the governmental structure has been so damaged the church has been standing firm throughout the wars and has been able to help people.

Not only is the church a strong presence in the region but the research also reveals how it has created and sustained trust. This seems to ease the work that the ECC carries out as it gives them favor amongst the local population, as well as amongst the FDLR and refugees. This element of trust is interesting in light of the fact that there are examples of corruption and pastors turning into rebel-group leaders in the region.

Another important role of the church found in the research, is how biblical values are promoted. By religion being a normative system, and as the Bible can be a source of influence as it is seen as a divine voice. The church leaders can more easily spread values such as peace, reconciliation and forgiveness.

7.1.3 Promotion of reconciliation

The third sub-question is: How does the program promote reconciliation? The program uses different measures to respond to the needs of society and some of those measures contribute to facilitating reconciliation in the area.

The research reveals that one of the ways in which the program contributes towards reconciliation is through enabling repatriation. This causes the situation to improve in the region, and peace to be increased. This is then fertile ground for reconciliation. The research also shows that the employees become more encouraged to carry out reconciliation through their own changed and reconciling attitudes.

The program promotes reconciliation through sensitization work and workshops carried out in the provinces. The messages transmitted are about forgiveness and loving your neighbor. So as awareness-raising is carried out, these Christian values characterize and underpin the work. As mentioned in the previous section, values founded in the Bible can be a source of influence for people.

The efforts of reconciliation could with advantage be more grounded in the local society. While there seem to be ownership toward the program in general, is there lacking the voices of the grassroots in how the reconciliation process should look like.

The last aspect to mention is more hidden, but it is still shown through the research. I think that beyond the methods and concrete means used to create reconciliation there is also an overarching element that promotes reconciliation. This is in acknowledging the humanity of the FDLR combatants and refugees. The program does not consist of the use of military means or force. They work through non-violent means and this arguably plays a very important part in the promotion of reconciliation. On a larger scale I would argue that such an initiative is in itself promoting reconciliation, just by reaching out with a helping hand to the Rwandan refugees and combatants.

7.1.4 Contributions in the quest for sustainable peace

The fourth sub-question is: In what ways does the program specifically contribute in the quest for sustainable peace? The research highlighted several areas in which the program makes a tangible contribution in the quest for sustainable peace. The tangible contributions are closely linked toward the answers of the preceding sub-questions.

The first contribution the program makes, is that it mobilizes local churches and other grassroots actors in establishing sustainable peace. Through teaching sensitization methods and spreading important knowledge and key values, the program empowers and equips the local population with peacebuilding skills. Ultimately it is those at the grassroots level who then take ownership of the peacebuilding process. Still, with regard to this, the ECC have potential to implement this thinking and work in a more compressive way.

Another vital contributing factor is that the program specifically targets one of the primary reasons for the region's instability - namely the FDLR. The research shows that through reaching out to this foreign arms group and seeking to reduce their presence through effective repatriation, progress is made in establishing sustainable peace in the region.

Finally the research reveals the significance of using non-violent means instead of a military approach. Within a worldview where the myth of redemptive violence is present, it is a strength when a program such as this is able to work with and influence armed combatants towards peace in a non-violent manner. The result of this is beyond just the numbers of repatriations, it actually contributes in transforming the whole culture from violence to peace.

7.1.5 Influence of spirituality in peacebuilding and reconciliation

The last sub-question is: How can spirituality influence peacebuilding and reconciliation? The study focuses on a church program in a part of the world where religion plays a decisive role and one can see through the research how spirituality has a definitive influence in the work carried out.

The research highlighted that common respect for a divine power existed at the grassroots level, amongst the program leaders of the program and amongst the Rwandan refugees and combatants. Therefore the values of peace and reconciliation were legitimized and accepted through a common understanding of the Bible as the normative system. In a way the Bible seems to act as a moral compass within a culture that has experienced much mismanagement.

There are certainly many practical roles that the church plays as previously explained, however what is evident through the interviews is how the spiritual dimension of the church is as important. This comes in the form of prayer and also through the spiritual power that religious leaders have. The reason that the churches are trusted is partly accredited to the way in which such leaders are acknowledged as men of God. Therefore it can be understood that

the spiritual power the church possesses is a contributory factor in peacebuilding and reconciliation.

Another aspect is that spirituality seems to contribute as a motivating factor in the work for peace and reconciliation. The conflict in the Kivus is highly complex and deeply rooted. In the quest for peace there are many obstacles and challenges. However, it seems that the informants find motivation from the Christian message for doing this work. Several employees expressed that they were willing to sacrifice their life for this cause. Therefore spirituality is evidently a deeply motivational feature.

7.2 Impacts of the Program in the Quest for Sustainable Peace

The answers to the five sub-questions provide a means to answer the main research question, which are: How does the protestant church network, the Église du Christ au Congo, consider the impact of the Peace and Reconciliation program, in their quest for sustainable peace in the Kivu region in the Democratic Republic of Congo?

The research shows that the Église au Christ au Congo (ECC) considers the impact of the program as significant. This is apparent among all the groups of informants: the employees, the partners and those at the grassroots level. There is agreement about the program's positive impact in the region and a common motivation to continue working for peace in the region.

Some tangible results can be seen from the research; the number of repatriated refugees and combatants indicates the quantitative impact, whilst the empowerment of the local population through seminars and workshops indicates some of the qualitative impact. In evaluation of the program, some of the statements given regarding these results seem somewhat ambiguous. Nonetheless, the program does appear, overall, to have a positive influence on the peacebuilding process that the country is so desperately in need of and positive impacts are verified in the analysis.

A key of the impact of the program is the engagement of leaders at different levels. Although it is middle-range leaders who lead the program's work, it is operated primarily at the grassroots level. The research shows how beneficial this is because of how the influence and capacity that the middle-range leaders have is embraced and at the same time those at the grassroots are engaged and have local ownership of the program's work. It is a lack still in the program in seeing more women involved. The voice of the grassroots in what they find important in a reconciliation process is also lacking.

The impact of the program in bringing about reconciliation can be understood in two different ways through the findings. The ECC gave examples of areas where they have seen reconciliation take place or where there is progress towards it. The employees seem to have a changed attitude towards the Rwandans, especially the refugees, which enables them to be more reconciling. The Christian values of loving ones neighbor and forgiveness play an important role, and these values are embedded through the programs sensitization work and workshops. It seems that most of the pastors and church-leaders have a strong faith and through application of biblical values live out the Christian lifestyle of loving their neighbor and practicing forgiveness. In addition to these points, I would also argue that the program contributes in bringing about reconciliation, not only because of the approaches used, but also due to the fact that they are implementing such a program, they are thereby carrying out an act of reconciliation. In a non-violent way they are stretching out a hand, working both at the grassroots level as well as at a national level through advocacy and building relations across borders, in a very politically and ethnically tense conflict that has repeatedly created war. The target group for the program is the FDLR, a military rebel group that has inflicted much damage on the local population and yet the methods the church is using against them are non-violent.

The research shows that the extensive use of churches is an important feature of the program. In the research it is shown that it is important for the ECC and those at the grassroots, and in particular the program's partners have cherished the use of the churches. The ECC has shown capability in reaching into areas and building trust where the government and the UN have failed. The churches in the DRC have shown themselves to be very strong even though there has been suffering and damage. There seems to be unlimited resources in the church for doing this kind of work. It is present everywhere, and it has credibility. With such grounding in the society it not strange that the church is also able to function as an actor in peacebuilding.

From the efforts of mission work have many churches been founded in the Kivus. An unseen fruit of the mission is shown in the study as the churches play such a significant role in bringing peace and reconciliation to the region. An area initially outside of the normal church-domain. The churches seem to be beacons of light in a dark and chaotic situation. My findings show that the church manages to a large degree to stay neutral in the tense conflict. It has managed to be standing firm amidst the chaos of mismanagement and war of so many years. The use of the church structure is the core of the program, and this is what makes the work

possible, due to how it is recognized and trusted and because of the authenticity that the church carries.

The quest for peace in the Congo is not fulfilled, but through this program some progress can be seen, and the program has the potential to establish even more peace. By being a locally rooted program, operated through an already present structure, it makes a worthy contribution to the pacification of the Great Lakes region.

7.3 Contribution of the Study

My research is an empirical study that seeks to give a holistic presentation of a Peace and Reconciliation program operated through the local churches in war-torn Congo. It is possible to see several beneficial factors that can be implemented into other contexts and conflicts.

Firstly, the study highlights that closeness between those at the grassroots level and middle-range leaders is an important element. Engaging grassroots leaders creates local ownership. This is an important finding, which supplements current theory and can be of relevance in further peacebuilding programs.

Secondly, the study points to how the influence of spirituality is an important feature of the program. This aspect is seldom highlighted through studies, but this research reveals more about the role spirituality can have in peacebuilding and reconciliation.

Thirdly, this study is a contribution to the existing theory of applying non-violent methods to transform violent cultures into cultures of peace. The myth of redemptive violence has through this study been contested. This study can now be added to research contributions which argue that to fight 'the violence' through a non-violent approach is often the best way.

Lastly, this study adds to the existing research on the capacity of churches in the Great Lakes Region in peacebuilding. The study has revealed some new points in connection with spirituality and biblical values that have not been mentioned in earlier studies.

7.4 Suggestions for Further Research

Throughout working on this thesis, I have identified several areas which would be of great interest for further investigation. The following three areas particularly stood out.

Firstly, I would suggest that it would be of interest to do further research about the use of non-violent means in areas where there are recurring armed and violent conflicts. Especially to review how non-violent means can contribute to transforming these cultures of violence into cultures of peace.

Secondly, I found in the research that spirituality can contribute in a positive way to peacebuilding and reconciliation, and would suggest that further research about this topic be carried out within different disciplines, including both peace research and missiology.

Lastly, I also find the role of reconciliation within this program interesting. I would suggest that a further area of research could be how churches and local initiatives such as this can be important contributors in bringing about reconciliation, and how one can sought to engage the grassroots in a larger degree in these processes.

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Appendix 1: Overview of the Interviews

EMPLOYEES IN THE PROGRAM

- | | |
|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| ○ Employee nr 1
Employee nr 2 | Group Interview (2 participants) |
| ○ Employee nr 3 | Semi structured interview |
| ○ Employee nr 4 | Semi structured interview |

PART TAKERS FROM THE GRASSROOTS

- | | |
|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| ○ Local leaders in the district | Group Interview (8 participants) |
| ○ Traditional Chiefs | Group Interview (2 participants) |
| ○ Local Pastor nr 1 | Conversation |
| ○ Local Pastor nr 2 | Conversation |

PARTNERS

- | | |
|--|-----------------------------------|
| ○ Representative from PYM | Semi structured interview |
| ○ Representative from MCC | Semi structured interview |
| ○ Representative from CNR | Semi structured interview |
| ○ Representative from MONUSCO DDR/RR | Semi structured interview |
| ○ Representative from CELPA-Women Activities | Semi structured interview |
| ○ Representatives from Civil Society in Bukavu | Group Interview (10 Participants) |

Appendix 2: Interview-Guide

The interview-guide underneath was the original interview-guide. In praxis I found it necessary to change allot and vary in what questions due to the interviewees' position and knowledge that varied widely.

1. Current situation/ General information

- 1) How is the current situation in the provinces?
- 2) Information about the ECC – CELPA
- 3) Can you tell me about the peace and reconciliation program?

2. Reconciliation

- 4) How do you understand reconciliation?
- 5) Are there any traditions in the culture and society for reconciliation?
- 6) Have reconciliation happened here in the province?
- 7) Is there anything that need reconciliation ...
- 8) If we look more closely on the peace and reconciliation program, have that lead to reconciliation?

3. Sustainable Peace // Holistic peacebuilding

- 9) How do you understand peace?
- 10) How can peace be established in the Kivu-provinces?
- 11) Are there divides in you culture?
- 12) Do you think the people have hope for a better situation?
- 13) What about Monusco?
- 14) Do you think the program have made an impact?
- 15) What results have you seen the program have?

4. Meeting the combats

- 16) Have you personally been involved in conversations with the combats?
- 17) Have you gained their trust?
- 18) How do you convince them?

19) Have you heard how they experience the repatriation, and especially coming back to Rwanda?

20) Is there a relation to the Congolese government?

5. The refugees

21) What emphasis do you have on the refugees, in relation to the emphasis on the combats?

22) Have you personally been involved in conversations with the combats?

23) Have you gained their trust?

24) How do you convince them?

25) Have you heard how they experience the repatriation, and especially coming back to Rwanda?

6. Justice

26) What is justice for you?

27) How do you evaluate the situation for justice in the province?

28) What is in your point of view justice concerning the ex-combats?

29) What is morality?

7. Religious Actors

30) Is the role of you being religious actors affecting the work?

31) Are your own personal faith motivating you?

32) How is the church network working?

33) What is your long-term vision?

34) Have the gospel played a role?

8. Civil Society

35) What connections does the org have to the state and the government?

36) Do you do diplomacy on the higher level?

Appendix 3: The Great Lakes Region



Map No. 4004.1 UNITED NATIONS
January 2004

Department of Peacekeeping Operations
Cartographic Section

Cited the 16 August 2014 from <http://www.un.org/depts/Cartographic/map/profile/glr.pdf>

Appendix 4: The Democratic Republic of Congo



Cited the 16 August 2014 from: <http://www.un.org/depts/Cartographic/map/profile/glr.pdf>

Appendix 5: Advocacy Briefing by the Mennonite Central Committee ⁱ



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3 December 2013

Advocacy Briefing: Nonmilitary Strategies Needed to Confront FDLR

The presence of the *Forces Démocratiques de Libération du Rwanda* (Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda, or the FDLR) has long been one of the key drivers of conflict in the Great Lakes region of central Africa. With its roots in the Interahamwe militias that carried out the 1994 Rwanda genocide, the FDLR carries huge symbolic importance within Rwanda. Within the Congo, the FDLR has committed massive human rights violations and has contributed significantly to the destabilization of the provinces of North and South Kivu.

With the defeat of the M23 rebel group by the Congolese army (FARDC) supported by the MONUSCO Force Intervention Brigade (FIB), multiple sources indicate that the FDLR is to be the next target. However, it is unlikely that the FDLR will be defeated through the same tactics as were used against M23. Previous efforts by the Rwandan and Congolese armed forces to destroy the FDLR have caused massive suffering to civilian populations – both in the initial offensive and in later reprisal killings by the FDLR – and have failed to significantly impact the FDLR's capacity for violence.

Since 1994, Mennonite Central Committee has been working with the *Église du Christ au Congo* (ECC), the umbrella organization of the Congolese Protestant churches, in support of peace in the Kivus. Through their *Programme Paix et Réconciliation* (PPR) and the trusted networks of the Congolese churches, the ECC has over the past seven years facilitated the disarmament and repatriation to Rwanda of nearly 2,000 FDLR combatants and over 19,000 civilians. MCC recommends that MONUSCO and the Rwandan and Congolese governments work through local partners such as PPR to expand and support existing disarmament programs as a nonviolent, nondestructive means of addressing the FDLR threat.

The FDLR, the M23, and the tragic history of military solutions

The organizational differences between M23 and the FDLR, as well as the history of military efforts against the FDLR, call for a nonmilitary solution.

Despite its foreign support, the March 23 Movement was a relatively young armed group at the time of its defeat. M23 officially began in May 2012, and lasted just nineteen months before its defeat by the FARDC and MONUSCO's FIB. The FARDC/FIB force was the first well-organized offensive ever deployed against the M23; it was also the first time that international pressure forced the M23's foreign backers to curb their support. The M23, though formidable, never developed a capacity for self-sufficiency.

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Although the FDLR cannot equal the M23's battlefield capabilities, they have proven their resilience time and time again. The FDLR survived the *Umoja Wetu* and *Kimia II* joint military operations of 2009 with comparatively minimal losses. Lacking M23's foreign support, the FDLR is instead financed through the illegal minerals and timber trade and through donations from the Hutu diaspora. Their finances are thus quite resilient and are not subject to diplomatic pressure, as was the case with M23.

Differences between the military strategies of M23 and the FDLR pose problems as well. The M23 consistently fought as a conventional army. They took and held strategic positions, and attempted to set themselves up as authority figures in the towns they captured. In M23-occupied territory, a visible distinction existed between civilians and soldiers. By contrast, the FDLR exists as a highly mobile guerrilla force, and only rarely can they be distinguished from the civilian population. They avoid main roads and prefer rural, forested, and/or mountainous areas to major population centers, making a traditional military solution difficult.

History has shown that the FDLR is capable of surviving a conventional military attack. Past campaigns against the FDLR, including the *Umoja Wetu* and *Kimia II* military campaigns (waged respectively by a combined FARDC/Rwandan Defense Force operation and a UN-supported FARDC) failed to inflict much damage on the FDLR. Indeed, according to a 2009 International Crisis Group report, the FDLR suffered total losses of fewer than 500 soldiers as a result of *Umoja Wetu*, roughly 400 of whom were disarmed and repatriated. Just a few dozen were killed in the fighting. *Kimia II* was slightly more successful, bringing the total number of disarmed FDLR combatants to 1,243.

Meanwhile, these military operations caused massive suffering, displacement, and death to the DRC's civilian population. Both the FDLR and the FARDC specifically targeted civilians that they suspected of supporting the other side. A Human Rights Watch report indicates that 703 civilians were killed by the FARDC during the period of *Umoja Wetu* and *Kimia II*, while the FDLR was responsible for another 630 civilian deaths. At the same time, over 130,000 people were displaced and 1,800 homes were burned. In total, the cost for each demobilized FDLR combatant was one civilian killed, 1.5 houses destroyed, and 100 people forced to flee.

Opportunities

Field interviews and past demobilization efforts indicate that many FDLR soldiers are open to the possibility of disarmament and repatriation to Rwanda. A "generational gap" has been observed within the FDLR: older combatants, especially those directly involved in the 1994 genocide, may not be willing or able to return to Rwanda; however, younger fighters tire of the harsh life of a rank-and-file guerrilla and are more open to demobilization. In many cases it is not loyalty, but rather disinformation and coercion from senior officers that keep FDLR foot soldiers in the jungle. While efforts must be made to bring to justice those FDLR officers wanted for crimes of genocide, a successful nonmilitary strategy will take note of, and exploit, this generational gap.

Moreover, the recent success of FARDC and the FIB against the M23 represents a significant motivation for disarmament. MONUSCO sources indicate that since the defeat of M23, over 1800 members of various militias have voluntarily demobilized. FDLR soldiers at all levels, up to and including top commanders, are rumored to be weighing their options for disarmament as well.

In the current context, the most successful strategy will be one based on trust and face-to-face relationships. The *Programme Paix et Réconciliation* of the *Église du Christ au Congo* has, for the

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past seven years, been carrying out a successful demobilization and repatriation project with the FDLR. The PPR staff work through existing church networks to meet with combatants in an atmosphere of trust, within which they can educate guerrillas about their options for demobilization and dispel the myths that often surround the process. (For example, some FDLR soldiers are under the impression that they will be burned alive if they return to Rwanda. Though false – Rwanda boasts a robust reintegration program for former rebels – this represents a powerful motivation to stay in the jungle.) To date, the PPR has facilitated the repatriation of nearly 2,000 FDLR combatants – almost twice as many as were demobilized in *Umoja Wetu* and *Kimia II* combined.

Recommendations

The time is ripe for an expansion of the existing church, governmental, and MONUSCO disarmament programs, supported by local and foreign NGOs. A sustained military offensive against the FDLR would serve only to unite them against a common threat; moreover, a botched FARDC/FIB attack could destroy what little credibility the UN still possesses. A trust-based outreach and disarmament program, combined with targeted arrests of those individuals wanted for crimes against humanity, presents a unique opportunity for positive change while upholding justice and the rule of law.

With the endorsement of the *Programme Paix et Réconciliation* and the Congo and Rwanda/Burundi MCC programs, we therefore recommend:

- That the UN expands its current Disarmament, Demobilization, Repatriation, Reinsertion, and Reintegration (DDRRR) program, especially in areas near known FDLR territory;
- That the UN work with the Rwandan and Congolese governments to identify and arrest those FDLR combatants wanted for genocide or crimes against humanity; and
- That the UN, donor nations, and the DRC government facilitate and partner with Congolese churches and NGOs to support and expand existing efforts for voluntary disarmament and repatriation of FDLR combatants.

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Bukavu, DRC
December 3, 2013

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