The Perspective of the Local Church on Foreign Aid Efforts in South Sudan

How Church and Community Transformation has changed the people of Aweil East County

Master of Science Thesis

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Abstract

Humanitarian aid has a long history of successes and failures in fragile countries. One of these countries is South Sudan, where the approach called *Church and Community Transformation* (CCT) is used to help people transform and develop. Hereby, both the local church as well as the local community are trained to work together for a better future. This thesis sets out to find out what the impact and effectiveness of CCT is towards realising this transformation and thus solving community issues, particularly in the county of Aweil East, South Sudan through the eyes of the local church. This way, a new perspective can be given on how CCT is perceived by those who are closest to its implementation. With the help of semi-structured interviews, local faith actors who are involved in CCT are asked about their opinions on whether and how CCT has changed their community's issues.

The research shows how an overwhelmingly positive reaction is given by church leaders towards CCT, emphasising its influence in self-reliance, unity, a changed mindset, and development among others.

Key words: CCT, South Sudan, NGO, humanitarianism, perspective

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Abbreviations

CCM(P)	Church and Community Mobilisation (Process)
CCT	Church and Community Transformation
CFR	Council on Foreign Relations
CI	Church Involvement
CM	Church Mobilisation
ICC	Inter Church Committee
IDPs	Internally Displaced Persons
IM	Integral Mission Envisioning
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organisation
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
OCHA	Organisation for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN)
SPC	Sudan Pentecostal Church
UN	United Nations
VSLA	Village Savings and Loan Association
WFP	World Food Programme

1. Introduction

Approximately 400,000 people have been killed during the South Sudanese civil war (2013-2020) and almost four million people have been displaced or have fled to neighbouring countries (Council on Foreign Relations [CFR], 2021). Even after sanctions, negotiations and agreements, president Kiir and vice-president Machar violate their promises time after time. Additionally, violence of all sorts has not been quelled, even after the most recent peace deal in 2020 (Reuters, 2021). This conflict has caused large humanitarian needs, with OCHA (2021) claiming 8.3 million people – more than two-thirds of the total population – are in need of help. Next to the violence, it names food insecurity as the biggest threat as of 2021. Access to basic services was extremely limited, but through humanitarian assistance communities could be kept from falling into even deeper need (OCHA, 2021).

One way in which humanitarian aid has been provided, is through local actors ('localisation'), such as churches. According to the Pew Research Center (2015), about 60.5 percent of the South Sudanese population is considered Christian. The Roman Catholic Church, the Anglican Church and the Episcopal Church are the most dominant denominations within the country (Wilson, 2019). People take their faith seriously and look up to their faith leaders. Even more important, religious actors and institutions are "the most important peace actors in the country" (Wilson, 2019, p.2). Furthermore, Christian churches are considered important in dialogues, trauma counselling and humanitarian acts as well. Wilson (2019) underwrites their importance by naming their legitimacy, access and standing at the grassroots level as ways to bring transformative change to South Sudan. What they now need is additional support, tools and tips to stabilise areas which can be achieved through humanitarian aid. It is thus a much-needed effort to know how communities and churches can thrive during and after the current conflict situation in South Sudan.

Humanitarian aid can be given by a variety of organisations and institutions. However, even though there has been a growing acknowledgement of the role of local religious actors, not all humanitarian organisations give attention to this (Ager, Fiddian-Qasmiyeh & Ager, 2015). Tearfund is one of the organisations that does focus specifically on local churches, from various denominations, and organisations to tackle injustice and poverty (Tearfund, n.d.). Tearfund Netherlands, the internship NGO I am working for, works closely together with local churches in fragile states such as South Sudan. One of its most important approaches to battle the local

issues surrounding the conflict in South Sudan is called *Church and Community Transformation* (CCT). This approach focuses on the involvement of Christian churches and communities in the process of change, to help people raise themselves out of poverty and become resilient (Tearfund, 2019). In order to bring about this 'holistic' transformation the focus is on humanitarian response, community development, and advocacy and influencing (Tearfund, 2019). These points will be discussed further in combination with the notion of localisation. Finally, CCT is used in several counties in South Sudan. However, not every one of them has as much experience with the approach as Aweil East in Northern Bahr El Ghazal. According to the Dutch Relief Alliance (n.d.), the county is dealing with food insecurity, an economic crisis, and persisting protection concerns. At least since 2015, Tearfund has worked with people from Aweil East to change the living circumstances (Tearfund, 2016a).

1.1 SOCIETAL RELEVANCE

As is the case for any other research related to conflict, the societal relevance becomes clear quickly. Conflict causes a predominantly negative shift in economies, politics, societies and cultures. People are killed, displaced, abused, robbed, or violated in other ways. The same is true for South Sudan (CFR, 2021). Even though the violence in the country has not yet come to an end despite a peace deal signed in 2020 (CFR, 2021; Reuters, 2021), many people have tried to rebuild their lives.

Rebuilding one's life after conflict is a hard task to handle individually. This is why the CCT approach is used, as it is meant to give the lead to local churches and communities and help them address poverty in order to transform communities and make them resilient on a political, social, cultural and economic level. The issue, however, is that it is not known whether the implementation of the CCT is fully welcomed by local churches, or whether they just accept what international, mostly Western NGOs think is best for them. This is problematic, especially because the discourse of aid organisations directly influences the policies that are made and the resources that are transferred (Bakewell, 2000). Having an awareness of this discourse through the perceptions of locals could benefit further changes. Furthermore, it is not known if the churches and faith actors see any positive or negative consequences of the approach either in social, economic, political, or spiritual aspects. Little has been published by Tearfund on the results of its approach. This research could address these knowledge gaps and fill them in order to make local churches feel heard, maybe even change approaches that would fit them better, and give NGOs a better overview of what does and does not work. Additionally, not only Tearfund could use the approach but also make other NGOs, be they religious or secular, aware

of the importance of the local church in transforming communities with (or without) help of CCT. This way, both locals and internationals can strive towards better results for living in times of (post-)conflict and help people get out of poverty and become more resilient. So, even though the circumstances around conflict make it hard for people to thrive, based on the right approaches, the South Sudanese communities can at least better their situations.

1.2 SCIENTIFIC RELEVANCE

Research on the role of local (faith) actors in humanitarian initiatives has obviously been done before. For example, Nightingale (2012) refers to multiple studies that have shown that local capacities can make a significant difference to humanitarian responses. Gingerich and Cohen (2015) add that local actors are often the first responders to sudden crises; they can help in the most critical hours directly following a disaster. Furthermore, they understand the local contexts much better and remain within the community even after the INGOs have left. This makes their role in humanitarian response of great importance. Another study argues that development studies are increasingly seeing religious organisations as important actors of social capital by building networks between people and fostering trust between them (Deneulin & Bano, 2009). As Narayan, Chambers, Shah and Petesch (2000) put it, poor people tend to trust religious leaders and local faith communities more than their politicians. They also highly value the assistance they provide for the poor. The role of local faith actors can thus not be forgotten.

Even with all this information, there is still a lack of research on the role of all sorts of local churches in humanitarian aid in the case of South Sudan. As mentioned before, the country has a conflict-ridden past and present that needs good, scientifically-based humanitarian responses. Secondly, there is a lack of knowledge concerning the opinions and perspectives of the local faith actors. Most of the research conducted is about their role rather than their own ideas and feelings on the matter. Wilson (2019) gives examples, but these do not go into depth on their perspectives and were related to peace initiatives rather than other forms of humanitarian aid that this research focuses on. Lastly, the specific approach of CCT has not been researched before on a truly academic scale. It has only been mentioned in reports and policies, but a scientific research has not come to pass yet. Therefore, this research and thesis are of such importance, to fill a hole in the scientific knowledge of what works and what does not work in the field of peacebuilding and development in fragile states. Thus, through this research the goal is not only to look at the specific CCT efforts in South Sudan, but also, in the details, give more information on the role of the local church in humanitarian initiatives.

1.3 RESEARCH OBJECTIVE AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

For this thesis, the aim is to get an understanding of the perspectives, ideas, and assumptions of local South Sudanese, specifically Aweil East, churches and local faith actors of all denominations concerning the CCT approach as it is used by Tearfund Netherlands. Again, the goal of CCT is to build various kinds of relationships and get people out of poverty through a holistic transformation. What do churches see as the situation before CCT was implemented and how is it now? Do they only see positive consequences or also negative ones? What are their own ideas of what could help their situation? These are some of the questions that should come up. The objective here is to improve and develop the CCT approach in hopes of implementing more effective and efficient approaches for local churches in the future. This will be achieved by analysing and assessing the approach with the help of local faith actors in South Sudan who work or have worked with CCT. When the questions are answered, there is room for improvement and development on a local level in South Sudan but also on a(n) (inter)national level in other places where the approach can be or has been implemented. Through all of this, eventually, society can thrive in a post-conflict situation.

Based on the research objective, the main research question can be formulated as the following:

How does the implementation of the Church and Community Transformation approach affect the local communities' issues in Aweil East, South Sudan according to the local church?

To answer this research question, a few sub-questions have been formulated as well. These questions offer a look into the opinions and experiences of working with a specific approach used by an NGO that focuses on local efforts.

- What is Church and Community Transformation?
- What do local community issues in Aweil East, South Sudan look like according to the local church?
- What is the role of local churches in solving community issues in Aweil East, South Sudan?
- What is the perspective of different local churches on Church and Community Transformation efforts in Aweil East, South Sudan?

- How do local churches view the situation in local communities in Aweil East after the implementation of CCT?

To answer these questions, as discussed in Chapter 3 (Methodology), qualitative semi-structured interviews conducted between April and May 2021 were analysed for the last three sub-questions; the first sub-question is answered based on an analysis of relevant documents.

2. Theoretical Framework

Since the Church and Community Transformation approach has not been researched before, no academic publications can be found that deal specifically with this approach. However, aspects of the approach and related topics can be addressed. These indicators that are part of CCT are based on how Tearfund has specified them, namely as 'localisation' and 'advocacy and influencing'. In this chapter, theories surrounding these terms are addressed to provide a foundation for the interviews and subsequently answer the research questions. First, localisation and its indicators – humanitarian response and development – are reviewed, followed by advocacy and influencing. Afterwards, community issues and the role of local churches in aid are discussed. With all these indicators in mind, the conceptual framework has been outlined.

2.1 LOCALISATION

One important aspect of this research and CCT is working with and through local actors. Recently, a new trend has gained popularity among both scholars and practitioners: the role of the 'local' (Van Leeuwen, Nindorera, Kambale Nzweve & Corbijn, 2020). This phenomenon is part of the triple nexus: humanitarian, development and peace (Barakat & Milton, 2020). Nowadays, localisation is seen as an important tool to help those in need. Local actors are important in humanitarian aid and development, because of their local knowledge. They know the communities, the cultures, the struggles and often have experienced similar situations giving them ideas on how to approach certain topics and give external actors entrance to the local communities that they want to help (Autesserre, 2017). In this context, Barbelet (2018, p.5) gives a definition of localisation – even though it is considered a contested term:

> "The need to recognise, respect, strengthen, rebalance, recalibrate, reinforce or return some type of ownership or place to local and national actors."

This is a good description of the term, but Olivier, Wilson and Howard (2017, p.468) give a more in-depth explanation of localisation. They also define what local means and how this differs in every context:

> "A sustainable, socially-just process that facilitates healthy local communities, economies and environments through local governance, ownership, trade, and resource utilisation to meet essential needs within a radius of political, economic and resource dependence that is as small as practicable for any particular purpose, and that diminishes with distance."

These definitions show the problem that has been part of humanitarian aid; international actors ought to make a shift to allow for more local humanitarian action since the system has often excluded local actors (Barbelet, 2018). For a long time, humanitarian aid and development worked through a top-down system that was mainly driven by Western, Northern countries (Gingerich & Cohen, 2015). Furthermore, local knowledge has long been ignored and denied (Macrae, 2008; Telford & Cosgrave, 2007). The Global Humanitarian Assistance Report 2020 (Development Initiatives, 2020) shows how in 2019 only 2.1 percent of the total of international humanitarian assistance was sent directly to local and national (non-state) actors. For a long time, one of the causes of the ignorance was due to liberal peacebuilding. This concept was instituted with the belief that liberal, democratic societies tend to be more peaceful and conflict-ridden societies should thus implement certain procedures given to them by international organisations or Western countries (Joshi, Lee & Mac Ginty, 2014). Mac Ginty and Richmond (2013) recognize that liberal peace is not reconcilable with the local turn where Northern intervention in the South is no longer right or just. Through the localisation agenda, the idea arose that power imbalances were to be redressed by empowering the affected population and local humanitarian actors (Roepstorff, 2020). In reality, however, the agenda has only been implemented to a limited extent. This is most likely caused by the refusal of the few dominating actors to yield power as well as the failure to include adequate local partners during an emergency (Roepstorff, 2020).

Even though localisation has its advantages, some scholars argue that there are also significant disadvantages. For instance, neutrality and impartiality of local actors could be questioned in the case of armed conflicts, as well as the implications for humanitarian action (Schenkenberg, 2016; Wall & Hedlund, 2016). They do not have a strong adherence to humanitarian principles as (international) organisations have. Moreover, "corruption, religious and ethnic affiliation, as well as local power plays are feared to detrimentally impact the humanitarian response" (Roepstorff, 2020, p.288). Roepstorff also adds that the already scarce funding system might even become scarcer with the increased competition due to local actors. In conclusion,

localisation has shown itself to be needed in the humanitarian world, despite its negative elements.

For this thesis, four indicators of localisation are used that are presented in the so-called Grand Bargain, which still functions as a guideline for organisations such as Tearfund: partnerships, capacity, financial resources, and coordination (Humanitarian Advisory Group, 2019; Olivier et al., 2017; Schmalenbach, 2019). These four indicators have been pointed out by humanitarian stakeholders as the most important for a shift towards localisation in their countries (Schmalenbach, 2019). They are considered to be the 'baseline' in localisation work in order to provide structure and measurement. An illustration of these indicators can be found in Table 1.

Partnerships	Partnerships between international and local/national actors are genuine and equitable.
Capacity	Strong local/national actors able to design, manage and deliver effective people-centred humanitarian response programmes
Financial resources	Local/national humanitarian actors have increased access to international and national funding
Coordination	Local/national actors have greater presence, influence and leadership in humanitarian coordination mechanisms

Table 1: Localisation Frameworks (Schmalenbach, 2019)

In accordance with the triple nexus mentioned before, developmental and humanitarian issues will be discussed in the next paragraphs. Peace will be put to the side, simply because the CCT approach is not concerned with this area.

2.1.1 Humanitarian response

After the Second World War, the number of humanitarian NGOs grew extensively. Aid globalised through advances in transportation and communication and shifted to 'less developed' countries, which is also when the term 'Third World Countries' came into being (Rysaback-Smith, 2015). This growth has also been connected to an increased need for aid following the colonial era, as well as the increasing globalisation and the proliferation of natural and man-made disasters (Rysaback-Smith, 2015).

Over the past decades, humanitarian aid has gone through several changes in the past decades. In order to better understand the way humanitarianism is implemented today, one must look at its history. Since the late 1980s, the scale, scope and significance of humanitarian action have expanded significantly (Barnett, 2005). Barnett (2005) names two main changes: 1. Humanitarian aid has become politicised, and 2. The organisation of humanitarianism has been

institutionalised. These two aspects challenge the long-standing definition of humanitarian aid: "The impartial, independent, and neutral provision of relief to those in immediate danger of harm." (Barnett, 2005, p.724) In the case of Tearfund, they see humanitarian response as an answer to rapid-onset disasters and protracted crises, both man-made and natural disasters (Tearfund, 2019).

Since humanitarianism has also expanded its view on the activities that organisations can participate in, one being the restructuring of social relations, some actions are now deemed political (Barnett, 2005). For example, neutrality focuses on refraining from any action that could benefit or disadvantage particular parties in a conflict (Rysaback-Smith, 2015). However, by including human rights, economic development, democracy promotion and the building of well-functioning states, there is no possibility to stay clear of choosing a side. Furthermore, cases such as Kosovo and Afghanistan have shown that organisations could no longer claim to be neutral, nor independent. In these countries, humanitarian agencies "were funded by the very governments that were combatants and thus partly responsible for the emergency" (Barnett, 2005, p.724).

Concerning the institutionalisation, in the 1990s humanitarianism became a field that was becoming rationalised and aspired to develop through standardisation, methodologies and procedures as well as becoming bureaucratised (Coyne, 2013; Barnett, 2005). This was a consequence of the need to be perceived as legitimate and effective. Furthermore, these processes also introduced accountability towards both donors and recipients, which in turn meant that policies of the agencies were to improve and become more professional (Barnett, 2005). However, becoming institutionalised and standardised has also drawn more attention to its problems. For example, Barnett (2005) states that this process has left organisations even more vulnerable to external control. Money through donors has been the most important control mechanism used for humanitarian agencies. They can make threats but also force agencies to submit to coordination mechanisms in humanitarian action that are highly political and threaten the neutrality and independence of the organisations involved (Barnett, 2005). Thus, there is enough reason for humanitarian organisations to be worried about the collapse of their principles in the hands of the state.

As discussed before, the humanitarian system has been critiqued for its top-down and Western/Northern-driven approach as well as its ignorance of local knowledge and denial of local ownership (Barakat & Milton, 2020). This critique is fitting, since local actors are more effective in humanitarian operations due to their cultural knowledge and intimate relationships

with vulnerable groups within conflict-affected communities (Ward, 2020; Tanner & Moro, 2016). Furthermore, as Barakat and Milton (2020) point out, the spread of conflict has led to the shrinkage of humanitarian space, meaning that humanitarian actors can often only work through local NGOs and other local actors. Sadly, their role often goes unrecognised. Local humanitarian actors often do not have the capacity to take over much more of humanitarian aid since they lack the experiences and skills needed for technically difficult interventions (Healy & Tiller, 2014). Lastly, international NGOs also worry about these local actors not fully complying with humanitarian principles established in the international spheres, such as neutrality (Duclos, Ekzayez, Ghaddar, Checchi & Blanchet, 2019).

Humanitarianism can be divided into three phases that often overlap: relief, recovery and resilience (Maynard, Parker & Twigg, 2016; Tearfund, 2019). When these have been applied, development plans can more easily be implemented in communities (Manyena, 2009). Firstly, for relief practices, the aim is "simply to save lives" (Quintanilla et al., 2014, p.58). This includes food, water, shelter, and health care as emergency provisions. However, the exact priorities differ from crisis to crisis.

Secondly, recovery is the phase that starts after immediate large-scale threats have diminished. The goal here is to provide support in order that communities can rebuild their lives (Quintanilla et al., 2014). According to Quintanilla et al., this would, for example, include the cleaning of debris left by disasters, reconciliation efforts between different groups, transitional shelters, and temporary education programs for children. Furthermore, Mazurana and Scarlett (2012) argue that spirituality, and thus indirectly religion, play a positive role in humanitarian crisis recovery. For example, the hope for a better future after disasters gives victims strength, hope, self-esteem, and a better way to deal with past traumas if their faith is strong.

Lastly, resilience refers to "the ability to anticipate, withstand and bounce back from external pressures and shocks" (Ager et al., 2015, p.1). In this case, the emphasis is on self-organisation and internal capacities and capabilities rather than on an external provision of aid (Chandler, 2015). There is a focus on local practices and pragmatism rather than objective and universal laws (Juncos, 2017). Resilience could include the rebuilding of roads and buildings, training for teachers and health professionals, support for traders and farmers, and the strengthening of (local) justice systems (Quintanilla et al., 2014). Local faith communities play a special role in resilience. They can use their local networks and their shared identity to "mobilize, coordinate, register, train, console, encourage and help resolve conflict" (Ager et al., 2015, p.15; Hilhorst, 2018). This approach builds on the already existing ways in which local communities tend to

cope with disasters and shocks and has thus been proven to strengthen resilience. This also explains why NGOs have turned more towards the local in resilience-building.

In conclusion, humanitarian efforts can have both a positive and negative side and constitute a wide array of actions. So, in the case of CCT, it is important to remember that humanitarian aid can look differently in different contexts and cannot have one specific implementation plan for every region or country.

2.1.2 Development

Another part of localisation as well as one of the three types of intervention used by Tearfund is development, specifically within a conflict situation. After the Cold War, terms such as Third World, development and underdevelopment grew in popularity within modern society (Rysaback-Smith, 2015). Countries were now more often defined by either one of these, giving way to the ideas of the Global North and Global South with all presuppositions included. In modern humanitarian aid, there has also been a shift from short-term aid provision and mitigation of suffering to development provided by 'developed' countries (Rysaback-Smith, 2015).

This development ought to be understood in the light of Tearfund's goals. In order to measure CCT and its influence on development correctly, the definition of development should also have the same origin. In this thesis, therefore, a combination of the following definitions is used:

> "[Sustainable development] is the idea that the future should be a better, healthier, place than the present" (Blewitt, 2008, p.1)

> "[A] holistic concept of sustainable development has emerged in which economic, ecological, social and political factors need to be simultaneously considered." (Tacconi & Tisdell, 1993, p.1)

The latter definition focuses on the holistic aspect of development, which is the same term used by Tearfund. It also shows a sustainable approach, which matches Tearfund's emphasis on sustainability (Tearfund, 2019). For the NGO, a tool is used to measure this development, or so-called 'holistic change', called the LIGHT Wheel (Tearfund, 2016b). The indicators are

living faith, social connections, personal relationships, emotional and mental health, physical health, stewardship of the environment, material assets and resources, capabilities, and participation and influence (Daehnhardt, 2020). In Appendix 3 these indicators used by Tearfund are expanded upon. In the code tree, the LIGHT Wheel is selected as an indicator, but as becomes clear in Chapter 5 (Results), the indicator overlaps significantly with other indicators and is thus mentioned rarely on its own.

Interestingly, development has been globalised rather than localised. This is due to technological advancements which gave head offices more power over field offices, in the process of which certain aid approaches got the overhand (Eyben, 2011). However, acknowledgement of the local in development has been brought about by the recognised importance of understanding local political dynamics and local ownership (Barakat & Milton, 2020). Political analysis is fundamental to effective development, but this goes against the globalised and generalised implementation of policies that was used before. So, on the one hand there are those who emphasise the interrelatedness of issues and solutions, while others cheer on multiplicity of local knowledge (Barakat & Milton, 2020). However, within conflict situations this debate is less strong as there has always been an acknowledgement of the local and participation as integral factors in fragile contexts such as conflict (Barakat, 2005). In reality this has not been enough; it has caused projects to be badly implemented without the help or involvement of locals, which meant that no real sustainable changes were made in fragile contexts.

Since the local has made its advances, community development has become a widespread term for the improvement of the quality of life and overall community well-being. Even though many definitions are used, simple but broad definition of community development is used:

> "A process [with the goal of developing] the ability to act collectively. [It is also] an outcome: 1. Taking collective action and 2. The result of that action for improvement in a community in any or all realms: physical, environmental, cultural, social, political, economic, etc." (Phillips & Pittman, 2014, p.8)

In combination with this definition, some indicators used for community development in this thesis are defined through its implementation by Tearfund in various countries that are in dire need of aid (Tearfund, 2019):

- Food security, livelihood and economic empowerment via self-help groups.
- Local value chain development and conservation farming.
- Sexual and gender-based violence and sexual and reproductive health and rights.

These add to the needs and desires that local communities themselves indicate they want to strive for and can be considered additional.

Additionally, the topic of religion has long been neglected in the field of development studies and development policy (Lunn, 2009), partially due to the separation of church and state in the West. However, this only reflects the cultural and historical processes in Western states rather than the reality of newly independent countries (Deneulin & Rakodi, 2010; Clarke, 2007). After a few decades, academics seem to have noticed this discrepancy and there has been an increase in material published on religion and development. Haynes (2007, p.53) shows that religion "has maintained or even increased its public profile in many parts of the developing world". For instance, heads of state and high-ranking politicians often show their religious allegiance by making high profile public gestures. The importance of religion in development is reiterated by the theory that in the 21st century development will largely be shaped by religion. Even the United Nations, World Bank, International Monetary Fund (IMF) and other agencies have been engaging with religious representatives and groups to better understand how they can contribute to development (Lunn, 2009). From a religious standpoint, development is seen as more than materialistic growth, but should pertain "a range of goals linked to better holistic development in a human-centred sense" (Haynes, 2007). To achieve this goal, Haynes names the collaboration of development agencies and local faith groups and communities, to first learn to cooperate in reflecting on growth, development, and poverty. Haynes (2007, p.62) names three ways in which religion plays a positive role in development: "by (1) giving life metaphysical meaning and hope of well-being, (2) helping mould individual and group behaviour in relation to culture, way of life, and work, and (3) facilitating development of positive social, developmental and political values that encourage community cohesion".

On the other hand, religion can also have a negative influence on development. For example, it can be the instigator of division within communities. It can be misused and bring forth religious extremism, incite violence or encourage women's subservience. It then excludes others and undermines the goal of socially and developmentally constructive goals (Haynes, 2007).

In the case of churches, the Christian religion plays a significant role in development. As Deneulin (2013, Ch. 4) describes, "Mission lies at the heart of Christianity", where the message of salvation is to be proclaimed to the whole world by its followers as well as to care for others.

Even though Christians have not always adhered to these ideas, many have tried to influence the way human life should be approached, such as through health and education services (Deneulin, 2013).

Religious expression and its relationship with the local community as well as with development is unique in every context. This means that no simple answer can be given for these relationships and all the problems that arise. However, the literature has clearly shown that the role of religion in development is and has always been crucial (Lunn, 2009). So, in order to shape development for the communities rather than the organisations, it is of utmost importance to include religion and give it a voice among many.
Furthermore, development has shown to be multi-faceted. For this research, a combination is used that is drawn from earlier paragraphs, containing concepts as sustainability, holism and community to clearly define development in the framework that fits the CCT approach.

2.2 ADVOCACY AND INFLUENCING

Next to the humanitarian and developmental side of CCT, one last aspect is advocacy and influencing. NGOs mobilise, represent and articulate people's interests and concerns at the local, national and international level of decision-making (Jordan & Tuijl, 2000). In the case of Tearfund (2019), this translates into influencing the Dutch public towards a more just lifestyle, inspiring other communities to develop innovative ideas for their own communities, assisting churches and partner organisations in their advocacy and lobby plans, and lobbying among Dutch policy makers for change and a stronger funding position. This is all done to bring about structural changes on a societal level. In publications, such as Bridges (2010, p.1252), advocacy is defined as:

> "Activism that is undertaken to influence stakeholders so that tangible changes can be obtained for the benefit of an affected population."

Even with this definition in mind, the role of NGOs is still contested, ranging between a narrow service delivery role and an advocacy role (Jordan & Tuijl, 2000). Some NGOs focus more on the former, while others focus on the latter, but both agree that advocacy work is increasingly becoming an integral part of the role they play in civil society.

The definition shows a pursuit of political engagement by humanitarian organisations that has come up in the 1990s (Bridges, 2010). As shown before, this politicisation of humanitarian aid does have its consequences: for example, NGOs might experience more animosity in conflict-ridden countries if they have political views that go against the dominant ideology of that country or challenges the sovereignty of that state (Abiew, 2012; Pupavac, 2006). Both the humanitarian workers' safety as well as their impartiality, neutrality and independence might be damaged (Abiew, 2012).
On the other hand, seeking help from the media in order to influence the broader public is also a well-used tactic by NGOs. The infamous 'CNN effect' explains how the media influence politicians and their view and actions in foreign aid relief (Olsen, Carstensen & Høyen, 2003). So, if humanitarian organisations manage to bring out information via the media, they will indirectly reach and influence politicians and policy makers and thus bring about change for their state of interest.

Advocacy is also implemented on the local level. Another aspect comes into play here that is part of advocacy, namely, to help weaker communities with their self-respect, self-confidence, integrity, and mutual trust in order to develop a healthy community (Jordan & Tuijl, 2000). So, there is also a fight against 'cynicism and despair' among weak communities when they have to deal with massive political and practical obstacles that limit their chances of development.
Some NGOs are more negative about their role in advocacy for communities. Jordan and Tuijl (2000) point out that many NGOs think that local communities are able to represent themselves. However, local spokespersons are often tied to their local geographical space where they live and thus unable or reluctant to leave when there is a threat. They also don't have good access to political arenas either. This makes the role of networks by NGOs significant for their representation, because without NGOs, it would be hard for local communities without means, knowledge and established avenues to articulate their problems and interest to the United Nations and other organisations (Jordan & Tuijl, 2000).

This political engagement also has a relationship with specifically religion. Both the UN and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights would not have existed today without the political involvement of Christian churches (Nurser, 2005). Deneulin (2013, Ch. 4) even proclaims that Christianity "has had significant political dimensions and an overwhelming influence on political processes in developing countries" as well as an important role in pro-democracy movements around the world, even if this sometimes led to division within churches.

Furthermore, many religious organisations and churches have participated in civil societies and engaged in advocacy campaigns, such as the Jubilee Campaign for debt relief and Make Poverty History (Deneulin, 2013).

Next to churches and communities' roles in advocacy, faith-based diplomacy has also had an impact on conflict settings (Johnston, 2003). For example, during the final phase of the civil war in Mozambique the Catholic lay community mediated, contributing to the subsequent peace agreements (Deneulin, 2013). According to Johnston (2003), this type of diplomacy is helpful and can resolve conflicts in five situations:

1. Conflict in which religion is a significant factor in the identity of one or both communities.
2. Conflict situations in which religious leaders can be mobilised to facilitate peace.
3. Protracted estrangement between two major religious traditions in a conflict that transcends national borders.
4. Third-party mediation in conflicts where there is no particular religious dimension present.
5. Extended paralysis of action due to realpolitik (pragmatic cost-benefit analyses, rather than ideology and ethics), such as the pope's faith-based intervention in Cuba in 1998.

Together, these points show that faith-based diplomacy has a part to play in a wide range of situations and should thus be taken seriously in the advocacy debate.

This section has shown the roles of NGOs, local communities and churches in advocacy. Since NGOs can help support local communities and churches have a significant role to play in the political arena, the collaboration of these three players is more than obvious.

2.3 Community issues in South Sudan

As a consequence of the conflict, the local church in South Sudan, and its communities have been impacted by various problems: displacement, insecurity, gender-based violence, declining physical health due to limited water and sanitation, and poverty (Gourlay, Swamy & Daehnhardt, 2019). Displacement has its own consequences as well. People lose their land because they have to flee, and other communities suddenly need to host large numbers of displaced and/or recently returned people. Furthermore, communities suffer from limited livelihood opportunities, marginalised formal employment opportunities for women, and weakened family resilience in cases of protracted crisis and sudden shock, such as the loss of

cattle (OCHA, 2018). Furthermore, in 2020 communities were hit by the "triple shock of intensified conflict and sub-national violence, a second consecutive year of major flooding, and the impacts of COVID-19" (OCHA, 2021, p.4). Lastly, intercommunal violence due to community grievances is still one of the biggest forms of violence present in the country today. Overall, communities in South Sudan currently undergo an extreme amount of pressure and issues that cannot easily be solved.

2.4 THE ROLE OF LOCAL CHURCHES IN SOUTH SUDAN

South Sudan is considered a Christian nation, with most of its people belonging to the Roman Catholic Church, the Episcopal Church or the Anglican Church (Wilson, 2019). As mentioned before, churches and their actors can play significant roles in foreign aid. In the case of South Sudan, not much is known about the role of this specific group.

One report by Gourlay et al. (2019) goes into depth about the church in the country. The churches have been involved in long-term peace negotiations and forming unity among communities. Additionally, they were key for the independence of South Sudan and therefore have authority and represent the local communities. Gourlay et al. (2019) go on: they provide relief and shelter in times of crisis, give spiritual teaching, raise awareness for social problems and injustices in order to stimulate long-term peace. They thus had an important role in nation-building, which has now evolved towards peacebuilding and the goal to alleviate suffering in all areas of life (Breidlid & Stensland, 2011). According to the same report, the church is also actively engaged in the following: healing on a physical, mental and spiritual level, giving psychosocial support and advocating for the vulnerable, development of education, health facilities and economic prospects. Moreover, they bring awareness to controversial subjects from a Christian perspective, and teach unity, forgiveness and reconciliation among others (Gourlay et al., 2019; Blanchard, 2014; Breidlid & Stensland, 2011). Breidlid and Stensland (2011) add that the local church is often the only indigenous non-governmental actor present in local communities, which makes their role in (local) peacebuilding even more prominent. They also advocate and argue for an active role for the church in grassroots peacebuilding as they are integral to communities and are often fully trusted, which they have gained by suffering *with* the people during the civil war. Furthermore, church leaders live and work in these rural places resulting in well-established networks in the communities (Breidlid & Stensland, 2011).

On the other hand, Breidlid and Stensland also mention negative sides of the church in South Sudan. As with wider society, corruption and nepotism can be part of church life as well as an

involvement in ethnic politics due to denominational borders along ethnic and political lines. Furthermore, as mentioned earlier, religious institutions can also incite violence or animosity among groups instead of unifying them (Haynes, 2007).

In conclusion, even though there are gaps in church involvement, these aspects make a logical choice to place the local church at the heart of humanitarian, developmental and peace processes.

2.5 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The various concepts discussed before will be researched based on the following scheme.

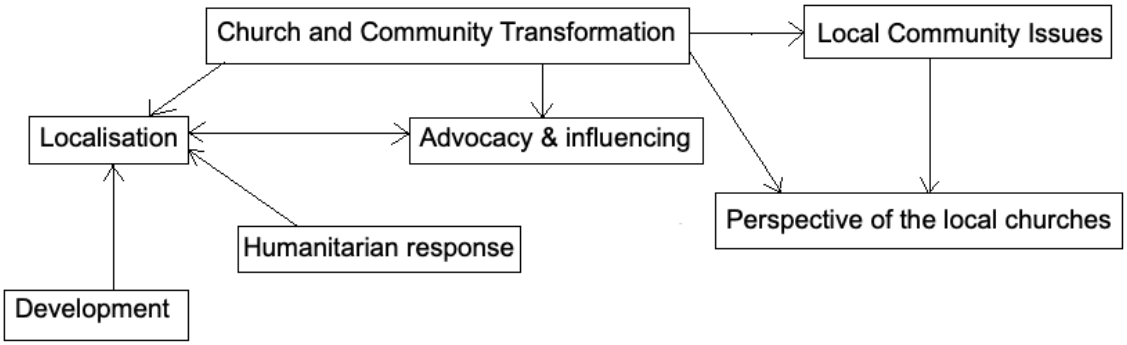

Figure 1: The Conceptual Framework

As Figure 1 shows, the main variables are Church and Community Transformation and local community issues. While CCT is an independent and fixed variable, local community issues are considered dependent on changes perpetrated through CCT. The two variables directly connected to CCT – localisation and advocacy and influencing – are both influenced by CCT. If implemented well, CCT can help develop and strengthen the two variables. Additionally, the CCT approach does stay the same, but both variables can be brought forth more in the approach than the other. However, they can also influence each other since by giving more power and tasks to the locals, they will be able to also play a bigger role in influencing others and being advocates. This also happens the other way around.

Development and humanitarian response are part of localisation but either one of them can be emphasised more than the other, based on the context in which the approach is implemented. Consequently, this would indirectly affect how local community issues are approached through CCT. The other variables do not necessarily cause differences in each other, meaning that, for example, localising more does not mean that there will suddenly be less humanitarian response

or more development. However, more humanitarian response does mean that people are more dependent on relief, thus causing them to not focus on localising their efforts. Part of development is also that people take on more tasks on their own, thus becoming more localised. Finally, the perspective of the local church is influenced by local community issues and CCT. When the issues are high, but CCT is also working well, the perspective on CCT will be positive. If CCT is not working well and the community issues are high, there will be a negative view of the approach.

3. Methodology

In addition to a theoretical framework, there is a need to pinpoint the methodology, methods and techniques used in this research. Without these three, it can be hard to defend one's research as reliable and trustworthy (Bryman, 2012).

3.1 Type of Interviews

This research focuses on the experiences and perceptions of local church actors in South Sudan on working with the CCT approach. If one wants to use subjective measures, thus experiences, perceptions, opinions, et cetera, qualitative research is most suitable (Bryman, 2012). A qualitative approach can give a personal touch to the sometimes more sensitive topics addressed, meaning that there is more room for feelings. Since the research questions do require more than numbers, qualitative research is more than obvious for all the questions.

Furthermore, as part of a qualitative research approach, the data has been collected through mainly semi-structured interviews as well as through a document analysis. Using interviews gives way for people to express their opinions and give ideas with the knowledge of how they behave and what tone they use. Semi-structured interviews were chosen as they not just provide structure and a form of standardisation, but also give the respondents the freedom to express themselves and even discuss valuable information that would otherwise be left untouched. This structure has been ensured by using a topic list (see Appendix 2), which has been designed with the help of the conceptual framework. The concepts used have thereafter provided indicators, and thus questions, included in the list. Afterwards, both the answers of the interviews and the documents have been analysed, using a code tree. This tree, which provides a structural approach to determining similarities, is further discussed in Section 2: Interview Details.

The aforementioned makes the research design deductive. Even though a deductive approach is more common for quantitative research, this thesis does not align with that idea. In order to provide an overview of the perceptions of local churches on CCT, one should first figure out what CCT is and how this has been perceived so far in documents and reports. Next, one can look at if this is reiterated or not with the churches through the interviews.

Lastly, a case study design had been chosen to fit the research purpose. This has been chosen, as this type of design can use the CCT model to explore whether it applies in the real world as

well. Furthermore, since the issue is quite novel and concerns the specific case of South Sudan, the case study design comes closest to what is needed for this research to be successful. As said before, interviews with local churches have thus been conducted. Unfortunately, since at the time COVID-19 was still in full force, there was no possibility to do fieldwork in South Sudan. The pandemic only allowed for online interviews.

3.2 Interview Details

After the type of interviews was set, it was crucial to identify the number of interviews as well. Qualitative research leaves room for this number, making it hard to make prior choices. Even though it could not be said beforehand whether five or fifteen respondents should be approached, the goal was to have the number of people within this range participate in the research. As Guest, Bunce and Johnson (2006) have shown, saturation occurs within the first twelve interviews, but even basic elements were already present at six interviews. Conducting less interviews than the goal of this thesis would thus not be a problem. Eventually, a total of nine interviews were conducted, eight of which were completed. This issue is further discussed in Section 3: Limitations.

The timeframe for the interviews was between the end of April 2021 and the beginning of May 2021. This was mainly chosen because within that period CCT facilitators and church leaders came together in trainings, making it easier to interview each one of them. It also coincides with the new strategies discussed within Tearfund surrounding CCT, meaning that there were multiple people from both Tearfund South Sudan and Tearfund Netherlands involved to approach during this timeframe.

The interviews were held in the county of Aweil East in South Sudan through online interviews. This region was chosen because CCT has been used there for multiple years, making it easier to find people who have experience with the approach. More specifically, the people who have been interviewed play an important role in those local churches in Aweil East that are currently using the CCT approach or are planning to do so. Respondents could be church leaders but also congregants who are closely involved in the CCT plans. So, people from all parts and places of the process were involved and could give a detailed overview to answer the research questions. They were selected regardless of their ethnicity, denomination, role in the church and CCT, or gender. However, as Table 2 shows, only males were interviewed. This is also further discussed in Section 3: Limitations. These interviewees have been approached through Tearfund Netherlands, its contacts and by use of the snowball effect as well.

Participant	CCT/Church Role	Area	Sex
Respondent 1 (R1)	Facilitator/Church Elder	Aweil East	Male
Respondent 2 (R2)	Facilitator/Catechist Teacher	Aweil East	Male
Respondent 3 (R3)	Facilitator/Nurse	Aweil East	Male
Respondent 4 (R4)	Facilitator/Youth Leader	Aweil East	Male
Respondent 5 (R5)	Church Council Leader	Aweil East	Male
Respondent 6 (R6)	Bishop	Aweil East	Male
Respondent 7 (R7)	Payam Director/Catechist Teacher	Aweil East	Male
Respondent 8 (R8)	Pastor	Aweil East	Male
Respondent 9 (R9)	Bishop/ICC Chairperson	Aweil East	Male

Table 2: Characteristics of Interviewees

Lastly, the interviews have been recorded through the record option on Skype. With all the interviews combined, four hours and twenty minutes of audio were recorded. These files were transcribed verbatim to make sure that as little context as possible would be missing. After the audio was transcribed, they were categorised according to the code tree. The code tree, as shown in Appendix 1, has been based on the literature in the theoretical framework. The codes are divided into several parts and sub-parts based on both this framework and the (sub-)questions proposed in this research. For example, localisation, humanitarian response, development, and advocacy and influencing were determined to be main concepts within CCT, thus selecting these as 'parent nodes'. For localisation, four indicators were selected that, according to another source, could be considered the baseline for localisation work (Schmalenbach, 2019). These indicators became 'child nodes', and so on. This way, answers that were given by interviewees could be categorised as neatly as possible. Coding, using NVivo, took place in two phases: open and axial coding. Once the entire text was coded, themes, similarities and overall conclusions could be drawn in Chapter 5 (Results). This eventually led to answering the sub-questions and subsequently the research question.

3.3 LIMITATIONS

Even though nine interviews were conducted, one was not as adequate as the others. Every one of the interviewees knew about CCT and was sent by their church, but the interview with respondent 6 (R6) was not finished. This meant that less information could be given by them about questions that were not asked yet. Furthermore, as seen Table 2, only men were interviewed. This was not done on purpose, since some women were also mentioned as having the same knowledge and roles as the men. However, it is not clear why they could not be interviewed. Possibly, women did not want to be interviewed or they did not speak English. This also leads to another issue: people could only participate if they spoke English, which

could limit the kind of information that was given. It could also limit in that this was neither the native tongue of the respondents, nor of the interviewer, which could have resulted in misunderstandings or someone being unable to provide all information that one has. Lastly, the interviewer is linked to Tearfund. Even though this was not specifically mentioned during the interviews, it could still have made people cautious of what they wanted to say.

However, these points are not enough to consider this research inadequate. For one, as shown by Guest et al. (2006), basic elements are present with six interviews, and saturation happens *within* the first twelve interviews. So, there is no need to think that 'eight-and-a-half' interviews is not good enough to draw conclusions from. Secondly, even though women could have other experiences with CCT than men, the goal was not to find out a gender difference, but rather what people with roles within the church and CCT think of the approach. This could, however, be a next possible point of research. Thirdly, the language problem is not as big either. Again, this research does not focus on diversity but on opinions, ideas, and perceptions. In this case, people gave very similar answers, so if one would have a hard time expressing themselves, it was often well expressed by other interviewees. Finally, concerning, the linkage between the interviewer and the NGO, people are always cautious during interviews as they are aware that what they talk about will not remain private. Furthermore, all the respondents were enthusiastic and seemed vulnerable as well as sincere in their responses, knowing that the information they would give out would be used to help them further in the CCT process.

4. The Context of Church and Community Transformation

In order to answer the main research question, there is a need to first answer the sub-questions. The first one is, "What is Church and Community Transformation?" and will be answered subsequently based on documents provided within Tearfund. Since CCT has been first implemented by Tearfund and since it has not been part of the academic debate within the field of human geography and conflict studies, it is necessary to lay out its most important aspects in order to better understand the context in which this thesis is written.

CCT refers to the involvement of local churches together with community members in meeting the needs of their communities with the help of local resources (Tearfund, 2019). These resources can be natural, but also cover knowledge, abilities, capital or relationships. The goal is to show people their potential and to inspire and support them to realise their vision for the future. According to Tearfund (2019), four aspects need to be supported and strengthened in order to establish change: a changed mindset, ownership, inclusion, and cooperation. The changed mindset refers to having a better understanding of one's role, capabilities and possibilities that can impact their situations. For ownership, the goal is to give the responsibility for initiatives to those involved instead of to external parties so they will be able to become independent and self-sufficient. This involves the management and use of local resources, which increases the resilience of the community in times of crisis (Tearfund, 2019). Thirdly, inclusion alludes to the involvement and appreciation of marginalised groups without making discriminatory distinctions. This way, everyone has the chance to realise their full potential. Lastly, cooperation is encouraged between different levels and persons, such as individuals, governments, local structures, faith communities, et cetera. Through cooperation, the previously mentioned resources can be shared for people to gain the ability to influence or change political, legal, and economic systems (Tearfund, 2019).

In addition to these aspects for change, three forms of intervention are sought after which have already been discussed in the theoretical framework in Chapter 2: community development,

humanitarian aid, and advocacy and influencing. All of these involve the help and ideas suggested by the local churches and communities.

Lastly, the CCT approach is considered an umbrella term. CCT consists of four approaches that are implemented in different ways. It depends on the case to determine whether they are implemented and in what intensity. They are differentiated in the following ways:

- Integral Mission Envisioning (IM)
- Church Mobilisation (CM)
- Church and Community Mobilisation (CCM)
- Church Involvement (CI).

The IM refers to churches and Christians proclaiming and living out their faith in Jesus Christ throughout their lives (Tearfund, 2019). This is seen as an overarching goal that is implemented within the other three approaches.

CCM has the goal to help "churches inspire and build the capacity of citizens to identify issues in their community and […] mobilise their own resources [and community] to address issues such as health, water and education" (Flowers, 2016, p.3; Tearfund, 2019). In this case, the local church cooperates with the local community. CCM, formerly known as Church and Community Mobilisation Process (CCMP), is also the most common approach used in the field. This is because here the processes of development and aid are here shared between church and community, thus realising localisation more thoroughly. Furthermore, CCM is sometimes referred to as CCMP, PEP or Umoja.

CM focuses on helping the local church to identify and respond to needs in the community with the help of service provision or capacity-building (Tearfund, 2019). The major difference between CM and CCM is that within CM the community is less involved, giving most leadership to the church and this is not shared between church and community.

Lastly, CI results in an organisation that leads and involves the local church in its work and activities. This organisation also identifies the needs and cooperates with the participants. CI is used in single interventions by the church, but can also function as an introduction for the church to the other approaches (Tearfund, 2019).

To answer what CCT in Aweil East looks like in practice, interviews were held. In the interviews, the respondents got the chance to show their perspective on CCT in their own communities and to give an overview on who is involved and what CCT looks like in their communities. This will be fully discussed in the Chapter 5: Results.

In conclusion, CCT encompasses a wide variety of options for churches and communities to establish change within their communities and themselves. The focus of the approach is on developing a relationship between the two groups, which often overlap, and make them self-reliant. With this chapter in mind, having answered one of the first sub-questions of this research, answers can be given to the other questions.

5. Results

In this chapter, the results that give answers to the various sub-questions will be discussed. These questions have all been answered with the help of nine interview respondents from Aweil East who are involved in the local church and the CCT process. First, local community issues in Aweil East will be discussed, followed by the role of local churches and an overview of CCT in the region. Lastly, the perspective of the local church on CCT is displayed.
The codes that were used during the coding process have been divided into themes. This means that not every code is applied individually, but rather some have merged while others are left out to make the text clearer, more readable and more relevant.

5.1 Local Community Issues

To answer the sub-question, "What do local community issues in Aweil East, South Sudan look like according to the local church?", a few questions have been asked. It becomes clear immediately that issues are all intertwined. Every issue affects another challenge, and the other way around. This is why some issues overlap, while others are discussed separately.

It turns out that most issues could be said to revolve around food insecurity. People do not have the adequate possibilities to gain access to food. One reason mentioned is the war. People are scared to go to the places of cultivation in the highland as it is controlled by Sudanese Arabs who, according to respondent 3 (R3), have been killing people for a long time there. The war in and of itself has caused poverty, as work life is suddenly disrupted by the conflict. Even though all respondents say that the war in South Sudan has not affected their state, some parents have left and were killed during the war, leaving behind orphans (R5). It is hard to provide an education for these orphans, since they would rather spend their time finding food on the markets than sitting in school banks. In this way, poverty is the cause of a stark deficiency in basic needs. As parents cannot afford food, children are malnourished and need professional care to get them back to the right weight, but no hospitals or health facilities are close by because the community cannot afford this. The food insecurity has also incited men to look for food as the main providers of the family. They try to find food either directly or indirectly by looking for a job, leaving no room for other activities or opportunities.

One of the more obvious ways in which food insecurity came into being, was through land infertility. Most respondents argue that this is the main way in which the food insecurity increased. The flooding in these areas of cultivation has had a negative influence on the fertility of the land, making it almost impossible to farm in these areas. This idea is reiterated by one of the respondents:

> "In our community, some part of the community is lowland […], which in the rainy season […] may sometimes destroy some crops there." (R4)

The soil cannot heal in these areas, making it even harder to practice farming and find good, fertile ground to cultivate.

In connection to food, one last, but not unimportant issue is relief dependency. According to most respondents, men and women are "sitting under trees" (R7), just waiting for organisations to provide them with food, water, et cetera.

> "Most of our vulnerable people are just depending on the relief food, like from WFP […]." (R2)

> "[Community members] were thinking that the NGO […] [would bring] bottles or water pumps, or they were to come again to renovate [the pumps]. […] They wait, they wait [until it's] time for WFP to distribute food […]. And they are staying without houses, waiting for the external support." (R5)

There have also been struggles concerning unity between communities, clans, tribes and churches:

> "South Sudan has [had the] war within itself for many years, and [there were] great disputes between tribes and tribes, clans and clans." (R2)

People have had a hard time seeing themselves as one entity, making reconciliation, unity, and development as a community hard to achieve.
Lastly, illiteracy and lack of education for boys and girls, men and women alike, have been mentioned by multiple respondents.

> "The main challenge was that […], our people were not well educated, […], let's say about, 90% is illiterate." (R1)

According to another respondent, this was caused by the war. Having no education to build on, this also leads to the previously mentioned relief dependency. Obtaining knowledge gives people hope to escape from their current situation and thus causes them to feel like change is possible – "their eyes are opened" (R1) and holistic change as part of development is achievable.

An issue that was expected to gain more attention was COVID-19. Only two respondents mentioned the virus as a problem, but they did not see it as one of the main challenges for the community. It is suspected that this is due to other issues being more prevalent and threatening in the eyes of the respondents.

5.2 Role Local Churches

Another sub-question of this thesis is, "What is the role of local churches in solving community issues in Aweil East, South Sudan?". This can also be answered by referring to the interviews.

As addressed in the theoretical framework, churches have a significant role to play in the local community. Much of this is repeated in the interviews, both as a response to the earlier questions asked about issues in their own communities as well as to what activities the local church organises for their community. Since CCT and the church work together very closely, many activities taught by CCT come into the community through and with the help of the church. Its main role, according to the interviewees is raising awareness. Secondly, the local church helps with network building, closely followed by economic prospects, reconciliation, and spirituality. Lastly, some also mention education as a way the church is involved. Little is said about the implementation of forgiveness programmes between community members, or about providing relief through physical, mental, and spiritual healing.

By spreading information as a means of raising awareness, the communities are able to tackle some of the issues they are dealing with. One of the most important pieces of information given out by churches, is about the impact and usage of CCT:

> "On Sunday when [the church leaders] are preaching, they also pass the same message of CCT to the Christians. So, some of the people will understand [this message] and they will change themselves. […] Through churches, I think [CCT] will just be spread, simply because in the church, there are many people [who] may come from different areas and if you pass this information to them, they will also take it and pass it to their locality." (R2)

As R2 argues, the church is an important mediator between the message of CCT and the wider community. By passing on information in sermons as well as during Bible studies – with people subsequently spreading it further – CCT could reach more people than just via organised trainings. If more people in the community know about CCT, there is more chance they will develop as a community. Furthermore, this also can lead to higher probabilities of sustainability as more people are motivated to keep working on themselves and protect their surroundings.
An example of the message CCT is spreading through churches is given by R3. People tend to waste their time doing nothing, while CCT promotes people to transform their mindset into a self-relying outlook of life, eliminating their ignorance. People need to know that "they have power, they have resources" (R4). With the knowledge and skills gained through the church, people are able to build houses, schools and education centres with the church, help the poor and vulnerable, and share this newly gained capacity with others (R8, R9). Indirectly, this capacity building thus also makes people develop economically.

Other ways in which awareness is raised in the church, has to do with hygiene and sanitation promotion. Many people are unaware of the risks and dangers of bad hygiene, causing them to fall ill and needing to go to clinics or hospitals. Especially with COVID-19 spreading globally, there is a need to campaign in the localities to prevent people from contracting the virus (R9). Next to this, the community is also trained regarding gender-based violence and how women and girls are affected by this, mentally as well as physically. Having knowledge of this subject can prevent future violence and can help victims to get the help and support they need.

As said before, the church helps to form unity, mainly by building networks. First, it has to be noted that multiple respondents agreed that churches themselves also needed unity programmes, not just the community members. Prior to the help offered by CCT, some would see each other as enemies, not wanting to stay in the same room. However, nowadays churches have another approach. Some of the respondents are even part of the so-called Interfaith Council

of Churches or Inter-Church Committee (ICC), where the Roman Catholic Church, Sudan Pentecostal Church (SPC), Seventh-Day Adventist Church, True Church of God and other denominations work together and help each other in times of need. R3, although not having mentioned the ICC, gives a similar example:

> "After CCT the time which we are in now, when those of SPC have something to do in their church, we could intervene as the Catholic Church to help them. When a Catholic church has something to do, those of [another church denomination] or Seventh Day Adventists, they could intervene to help on what they're doing." (R3)

R2 mentions that because churches now collaborate, they are working for the sake of the community rather than individuals. They no longer neglect certain clans or vulnerable people, but treat their locality's people equally.

Not surprisingly, churches networking with each other has inspired and motivated the community to also unite. People follow the example of their church leaders and if they show a willingness to work together with those who are different, the local community notices this and often will unite with other community members as well. Interviewees witness people of all church denominations cooperating because they can see themselves as one body under Christ, sharing common goals and values. In a way, this is also linked to reconciliation as this feeling of commonality is often necessary to rebuild what was broken.

> "When people are in pain and then you come and call those people, 'sit down and settle that problem', we could even tell them that, 'My brother, this is your brother. This is your sister. This is your, father. This is your uncle'. Those kinds of things, you could even tell them that CCT says [that] you work together as brothers and sisters." (R3)

What the interviewee is talking about here, is being brothers and sisters in Christ, as Galatians chapter 3, verse 28 and Matthew chapter 12, verses 48 to 50 describe it. This narrative is referred to as 'relationship building' by CCT and is also part of the LIGHT Wheel, emphasising that people are related to each other and should thus build on their relationship. Obviously, this can be hard in some cases when, for instance, murder, gender-based violence or other forms of violence stand in the way of reconciliation. However, when these are mentioned by interviewees, they seem convinced that CCT had united churches and communities. Later on,

R3 goes on about the CCT intervening through the church, again focusing on the religious motivation for reconciliation.

> "[We try to tell people to] live the Word of God, and then [they] should even go and practice, […] because God does not want you to kill your friend, God does not want you to steal each other's properties. […]
> You could [have] them [read] out of a verse [in the Bible], […], when you give them some verse in the Bible then they could even understand you better, what you have been explaining to them. […] It could help in reconciliation when people are hurting, CCT can even help through Bible." (R3)

The spiritual dimension is thus of importance for community members to understand why specific principles are good and bad, making the role of the church crucial in communal recovery and development. Spirituality, as shown, can be linked to reconciliation efforts, but also plays a role in broader life for the community members. The church gives sermons, organises Bible studies, witnesses to people and administers the sacraments. This is also connected to the 'living faith' aspect of the LIGHT Wheel, as people are given spiritual food. Furthermore, according to R7, the Bible has a particular status that can change people's knowledge and vocabulary, thus indirectly helping educationally.

One last form of unity is between church and community. As addressed before, church and community are currently seen as one and the same within CCT, mainly because the community mostly consists of church members. This could form an obstacle to reconciliation instigated by the church, as it won't appeal to people who are not Christian and do not feel motivated by Christian morale (R3). However, those who do not belong to a church can still profit from CCT in other, more indirect ways.

Under the umbrella of unity, church and community are learning to cooperate and see themselves as one, needing each other to thrive.

> "So, when [the church and community] are working together, [they] can preach the Gospel together and have holistic development by working together in the school, […] in the churches, in the road and together, they will share a way or eradicate the poverty out in the community, because when the community is strong, the church will be strong. When the church is strong, the community is strong. That is why I see it's very important to work with the community and the church." (R8)

In conclusion, the local churches in Aweil East take on several roles in the communities that CCT facilitators have used to transform the locals.

5.3 The Role of CCT

The third sub-question answered through the interviews is, "What is the perspective of different local churches on Church and Community Transformation efforts in Aweil East, South Sudan?" In order to give a full overview, it is important to first answer what the communities where people were interviewed look like after the implementation of CCT. This is done in response to the following question: "How do local churches view the situation in local communities in Aweil East after the implementation of CCT?". In Chapter 4, dealing with the context of CCT, four approaches within CCT were named. Of these, the interviewees all mention Church and Community Mobilisation (CCM) as the one used in their program. This illustrates that the goal in these areas is to share aid and development between church and community rather than just the church. Sometimes Integral Mission Envisioning (IM) is also referred to since it is part of all the other approaches and thus means the message of CCT is also spread through the Christian faith.

5.3.1 The Pro-Active Community

Firstly, advocacy as a part of CCT is often emphasised during the interviews. Especially the development of self-confidence and fighting against cynicism and despair are visible in the respondents' answers. People tended to do nothing, feeling hopeless in their situation, waiting for external help. CCT rebuilt that confidence and hope for a future, feeling motivated to change their situation by themselves. According to multiple respondents, this also involves a certain level of realisation that the problems they are facing can be solved. Furthermore, this realisation comes into being through CCT facilitators providing the right knowledge, tools and skills.

> "[The community members] said that, yes, we have realised that we don't have schools and our children are just loitering around in the market. Let us go and construct a school for children, for all parents and for the street children to learn. As we are speaking now, there is a school for orphans and street children in Warawar that is called Santa Maria Nursery and Primary School. It is just the work of the CCT facilitators and the community, because they came together and they unite, and they know that they have some challenges that are facing them, and they want to solve these challenges." (R2)

R2 gives a perfect example of the community seeing a problem and deciding to solve this themselves with what they have. They acknowledge their resources and capabilities, making it possible to help each other develop and thrive. R5 also says the following:

> "Before CCT, the community were saying [that] the churches belong to the pastors […]. But when CCT came, they realised that the churches belong to them […]. It is these people, people praying in the church, […] they discover that churches belong to [the] community […]." (R5)

The community has taken ownership of their own church. This is ownership in a somewhat literal sense, but ownership could also be interpreted differently. Some have taken ownership of their own well-being and solving their own problems, as shown before. They are no longer depending on others, but working together and cultivating their own vegetable gardens, "to empower themselves" (R5). In the case of R8, this even involves helping the clergy of the church execute their tasks.

Self-confidence and ownership lead to the closely connected term of self-reliance. Through trainings, people are able to use their newly attained knowledge for self-reliance. The community no longer needs anyone's help to survive but can thrive on their own. They have proven this with the building of schools, renovating their own boreholes, opening their own shops, and keeping their own vegetable garden.

5.3.2 The Inclusion of Community Members

Another theme that respondents have talked about is inclusion. In some cases, the opinions vary on who is involved and included. The goal is to include everyone, both church and community. But sometimes, not everyone wants to be included in the CCT process. This can have various reasons, most self-evident being that one does not have the same religious beliefs. In this case, working together with the church is not as appealing. However, the involvement of the community is of importance for CCT, as the approach cannot be used without their presence. In order to solve the problems faced by the community, it first needs to tell the facilitators what they need. Thus, the community members are asked to have an active role in decision-making. Furthermore, according to several respondents, the role of community members in decision-making came only after the CCT trainings, showing how the approach tries to involve the locals.

> "There are some of the communities […] that need to be described, analysed, and […] you make decisions together, […] including the community themselves. [Facilitators want] information that needs [the] community to be involved in order to [make] an informed decision. So, it definitely involves community." (R4)

One of the participants even claims that CCT was able to help transcend group differences in order to cooperate for their own well-being:

> "In our society, our culture is not balanced. It is actually designed in a way that some specific groups are [more] affected. So now, […] in our church, these people are also involved in it – like, women are now part of decision-making, especially the ones in the church. They can decide, for example if they want to sell a cow; if you really want to sell a cow to a family, the women can decide which, which cow […]. But in the past, the men can just pick a cow and sell it without ever telling a woman or his wife. They [can all] decide. Also, they decide what, what project could we do in the church. Here we have a project in the church now that we want to do, […] all of us contribute, both male and female. You contribute, and then, at the end of the day, now we come out with the one voice […]. In my diocese, we agreed that we are building a store and it was a participatory discussion [between all] of our church and then we build a store, a local store using our own local resources." (R9)

Furthermore, most of the people interviewed are positive about the involvement of the community and notice that members are now more involved in the lives of the community and in their own lives than before CCT was implemented. This also has consequences for resilience. Once people feel motivated to start new projects, work together and become self-reliant, there is a higher probability for them to survive crises such as flooding and conflict. As R8 suggests:

> "CCT can help [the community], the church themselves to protect themselves […] in the crisis by staying together, praying together and can do some resilient works, […] like to [encourage] people to go for farming, to help the gardens for the church, encouraging people to work as a group in the farm […]. This is how it can help the church to test or to start standing strong in the crisis through the prayer, support to each other, having farms to support the work of God." (R8)

Interestingly, concerning involvement, some participants argue that men are often reluctant to cooperate, meaning more women than men are involved in CCT trainings and implementation strategies:

> "If you go and call men, the men […] will say that 'no, this is just a waste of time. [I'm not going to] listen to CCT and whatsoever, and you will not provide me with, with food, then why do I go on waste my time? Let me go and look for a job in order to feed my kids'. Women are the only people [who] can be found everywhere and they are the people that can accept this to be there." (R2)

> "There are some of the things that, do not get men's [motivation] to participate in CCT more than women. So, women, of course, participate more in CCT […] than men. That was because men, most of the men, they have other roles that do not give them [motivation] to, to participate." (R4)

R4 continues by saying that men need to be aware that they also have an important role to play in understanding CCT and putting it into practice. If women are the only ones using CCT, the approach cannot move ahead as steadily and quickly.
Not everyone agrees with this statement as some feel that both men and women, church and community leaders are involved equally (R5). R9 adds that everyone within the church is involved during awareness messages for gender-based violence.

One aspect that has helped with the expansion of CCT throughout the region is the influence of community members. Through their stories and apparent capacity as well as physical growth, others who have not been in contact with CCT before, are motivated to try this approach in their own lives. An example of this is given by R2. He mentions how a woman in his area who was involved in CCT, had a husband who did not want to bother with the approach. However, because of her understanding of CCT and its positive consequences, she was able to convince her husband to be involved and change their lives physically and spiritually. By physical development, it is meant that they can access resources they need to experience good physical health, such as being able to access food, shelter, and water. Spiritual development refers to having hope, attending church more often and being part of the religious community as well as using their spirituality in such a way to impact their community in a positive manner. These

aspects are also in line with the LIGHT Wheel in its focuses on influence, physical and mental health.

Even though respondents are convinced of the involvement and inclusion of community members, little is said about leadership roles. Only R6 says that everyone, men, women, and youth alike, should be able to take on leadership roles. However, it is not completely clear what this would look like, and whether this is actually happening in the church at this moment in time. In the case of the other interviewees, leadership does not seem to be on the agenda, especially for the vulnerable; the focus should rather be on participation of the local community. Most often people already involved in the church are sent out to become CCT facilitators. CCT thus does not seem to have an outstanding effect on changing hierarchies in place, and small groups like Bible studies, gardens, et cetera are not mentioned as having a specific leader. The participants in the interviews show more interest in the cooperation between community and church and involvement of both, not so much where specific people stand within the pecking order.

Lastly, there is no clear political influence that CCT members have gained due to their trainings. One reason that is given is that this is not a goal of CCT, but the goal is to help the community and the church to get into the (local) political arena.

5.3.3 The Community's Capacity

In the previous section, participation and influencing were discussed. To influence someone and to better your own circumstances, you need knowledge, tools, and skills – in other words, capacity. This is one aspect of CCT that is prominent when talking to the interview participants. They highlight the importance of trainings, but also pens, books, and groups such as Village Savings and Loan Association (VSLA) where people save money together so they can later take small loans from those savings (R1). CCT is not meant to provide food or water, but will do this indirectly as the trainings offer knowledge to obtain these (R3). Local available resources such as soil, trees and grass are named the most often as tools that people could use. Among the respondents, these resources are seen as a way for people to meet their needs, thus providing a form of direct security. According to them, there are a lot of resources available to the local community, but, as mentioned before, the locals did not realise the potential behind these resources they could use for their own benefits.

> "Through CCT, one of the objectives is that they empower people to [transform] their situation holistically and using God-given resources. […] This is one of those objectives to help people. They reform their mindset. You know, people, they have a lot of resources, but [they don't see that] these resources could be used to develop their own churches and also their community […]." (R9)

Furthermore, farming and operating a business are also mentioned as skills that could help people develop:

> "It's all about the skills of farming. They have the skills of farming, and they have the skills of business, because nowadays when you wake up in the morning, you'll find that everyone is busy [working in those] small businesses. It is because of the knowledge they gained from the training and from […] the people who influence them. Because if you get knowledge, you may go and influence the other person who could not get knowledge." (R2)

R2 shows how receiving trainings made people knowledgeable about farming and business operation, thus developing skills in these areas that could influence their lives as well as those of others through capacity-sharing. Strikingly, this also shows that not everyone needs to follow the trainings directly but can learn from their peers and community members who have given the example. This idea is adhered to by R2, as he acknowledges that the capacity is still not on the level that he hoped it would be. Later on, he states that women who will get their knowledge and skills from the trainings will influence the rest of their family by sharing.

Interestingly, R9 gives capacity a cyclical layer: once church leaders and members receive skills, they can develop their own selves, after which they will be able to provide for and invest in their own church – they become a resource to both church and society.

Oftentimes, there is an overarching belief that capacity has grown, but not enough yet. The respondents mention a limit in people's knowledge due to limited trainings or bad introduction, causing a lack of understanding (R1; R3). According to R8, this has led to a lack of understanding between community and church, each believing the other's actions are not benefitting them (R8). Additionally, R2 sees the low number of men involved as a problem for adequately developing the capacity. They, as discussed earlier in this chapter, are more invested in the general food insecurity, so most information sharing goes through the women.

5.3.4 Partnerships and funding

The previous section gave a rundown of what capacity looked like in Aweil East according to the local church. In this paragraph, financial resources and partnerships will be discussed. Partnerships are not getting too much attention by the interviewees. Most respondents answer that they do not have partnerships other than Tearfund and therefore limited financial resources. Four respondents talk about other partners, but their roles are significantly smaller than that of Tearfund. Sometimes, they only help for a limited period of time – mostly relief-related – due to limited funds and then leave, giving no long-term support or solutions (R5). Among others, this concerns awareness trainings related to COVID-19 or humanitarian response. The partnership with Tearfund contains CCT, but also projects such as VSLA and Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH). Furthermore, the community works through their own groups, such as interfaith councils, but also a small organisation known as the Christians for Immediate Change and Development Agency (R5).

As mentioned before, there is no funding of the local community. According to some respondents, CCT is funded by Tearfund, while others do not mention any form of external funding (R4, R5). However, most do agree that they fund the most significant amount themselves as a community. One way the church and community get their funding is through programmes such as VSLA and by having small businesses, but also fundraising, for example during church conferences (R5). These events can help in constructing new buildings the community needs. The funding they receive from Tearfund is limited; Tearfund will only support them financially in certain circumstances, while most of this external help is through guidance, materials, and trainings. This could also explain why some say that they do not get funding. Respondent 9 summarises it well:

> "Whatever comes from our partners, whatever comes from friends, it should be something that's kind of supplementary or something to complement what we already have or what we are able to mobilise locally. And that is the spirit […] that we want to see. So, at the end of the day, the church will be self-relying, self-supporting […]." (R9)

This self-reliance results in, among others, church and community constructing their own schools, roads, stores, and vegetable gardens. This is caused by motivation and input, not by funding from NGOs. The idea of CCT is that people discover their 'God-given resources', and this is also the case for Aweil East.

> "There are some things we do by ourselves, but there might be one thing or two things that we cannot [afford] and […] this is the time that we […] run to our partner, to Tearfund. Whenever they agree, if it's possible, we do it. When they fail, we fail." (R1)

> "We are not depending on the fund we get from Tearfund, but we depend on the commitment that we have together with our participants. If there is need for fund, then we come together as facilitators and participant to discuss, 'how are we supposed to get the fund?' And we get the fund […] without the Tearfund." (R2, personal communication, April 29, 2021)

Interestingly, R1 and R2 both talk about a certain kind of independency. R1 shows that there are situations where help is needed from Tearfund that could make a difference, while respondent 2 argues that participants solve this financial problem completely by themselves. This financial independency is in line with what is said before about people taking ownership of their own situations and making their lives better without waiting for external help.
Furthermore, having ownership of their financial situation, among others, makes their resilience stronger as people are prepared for crises. It also helps in the case of sustainability; it is easier to survive as a community when you have already learned how to take care of your own needs. This financial independence also generates a proactive role for the community in contributing in order to fulfil their spiritual needs.

> "[When] we request a priest to come to baptise [in] a certain church, the Christians, now they want to contribute, to [repair] the car of the priest to go there, to [perform] a baptism. [The community wants] to contribute […], they bring tires […] to the priest to be there. […] The community, they are the ones supporting priests right now. (R5)

The priest is now supported by the community, again showing how church and community are able to work together.

In conclusion, there are limited partnerships next to Tearfund and people contribute a significant amount by themselves through programmes and fundraising. Once more, it illustrates that CCT realises a certain level of autonomy and financial independence as well as a community spirit to solve problems.

5.3.5 External Humanitarian Aid

The last indicator concerns humanitarian response. Among the participants, this aspect of CCT is rarely mentioned. One possibility for this could be that aid is provided indirectly, as R3 argues, "CCT cannot give direct food, but CCT gives knowledge": people do not get food or water directly, but are motivated to find and buy it themselves. However, CCT has helped with people taking ownership of boreholes, learning about the importance of water and hygiene through WASH, and referring them to clinics or hospitals especially during the pandemic (R4, R8, R9). So, some action is taken under CCT, but few respondents talk about this.

Furthermore, recovery is not high on the list in Aweil East, since there is nothing to recover as everything still had to be developed. Some people did suffer from floods, the war and communal fighting, making reconciliation efforts necessary. As shown in the section dealing with the role of the church in CCT, reconciliation mainly plays out through the church. According to respondents, the focus is on seeing each other as one body, one family (R2). Special trainings are given to help facilitators bring about reconciliation among people (R1) and it is believed by some respondents that the spiritual aspect has been the main instigator for true companionship and communal bonding.

> "CCT can help in recovery. […] You could even tell them that CCT says [that] you work together as brothers and sister. By then you could [have them read from] a verse [in the Bible], so that they could even understand you better, […] when you give them some verse in the Bible then they could even understand you better what you have been explaining to them. […] It could help in reconciliation when people are hurting, CCT can even help through Bible." (R3)

This shows that the Bible can be a source of comfort and understanding towards those who appear to be different.

In conclusion, the question of what Aweil East looks like after the implementation of CCT has been answered. People are motivated to change their own lives and take control of their future. They realised that they are the ones who need to solve the problems and not the NGOs they were often waiting for before. The community and church work together in order to better their circumstances and are therefore able to fund themselves and construct buildings such as schools, stores and businesses. For Aweil East, CCT seems to have changed the community's outlook on life, (re)gaining their self-reliance. This explains why the issue of humanitarian

response remained rather undiscussed: the main goal in not relief work, which often stems from a dependency-driven mindset, but self-reliance, self-confidence, motivation, and ownership. In that sense, CCT has changed the mindset of the people from Aweil East.

5.4 Perspective of Church Leaders

The second question that was asked will make it possible to answer the sub-question of this research, "What is the perspective of different local churches on Church and Community Transformation efforts in South Sudan?" Obviously, the rather positive overview given by the respondents already in the previous section concerning what CCT looks like in Aweil East leaves little to the imagination. However informative these are, they were quite indirect manners of showing their outlook on the CCT approach. There are also direct ways in which the participants voice their opinions which will be discussed next.

Overall, respondents are extremely positive about their experience with CCT. R1 even says that CCT has no negative aspects and that nothing from CCT should be removed, they need the whole package. One of the most prominent ways respondents show their confidence in CCT, is through its sustainable character. They have confidence in their own ability, and that of others involved, to keep using CCT long after Tearfund has left: they will survive (R1). R4 summarises this point well:

> "I think […] if [Tearfund] leaves us to do CCT alone, then I think we can do CCT alone, because we are already trained, are already envisioned and we have [understood] the process and we'll take it to the other people. I think we can do that, without a doubt. […]." (R4)

Additionally, R2 and R3 also express their conviction that they will be able to survive and take care of themselves.

> "[We] are not depending on the fund we get from Tearfund, but we depend on the commitment that we have together with our participants. If there is need for fund[ing], then we come together as facilitators and participant to discuss, how are we supposed to get the fund? And we get the fund without, without the Tearfund. So CCT will survive, forever." (R2)

> "We take the ownership [of CCT] with our community […] and continue with using this knowledge we have, which we have […] received from Tearfund, that CCT cannot even die. We have taken the ownership of it, and we are now using it. (R3)

Here, as illustrated previously, ownership is an aspect that the community needs. As they have taken ownership of their own circumstances and resources, they have also been able to take ownership of CCT.

Moreover, even when asked about the negative sides of CCT directly, the respondents do not give a negative view of any of the parts of CCT itself, but rather of access to the approach. Therefore, the number and length of trainings is what most respondents speak about. R1 emphasises that the CCT trainings should reach "a lot more people" than it does right now and R3 would like the approach to reach other communities within Northern Bahr el Ghazal. Trainings should last longer, so that CCT can be studied well (R7; R8). The trainings referred to here, are both those for facilitators as well as for the communities and churches. This shows his positive outlook on the approach, but also shows that he finds a need to spread it across a larger area. Additional to the trainings, R5 advises NGOs to work with CCT more. He argues that NGOs and UN agencies are working through other developmental projects, but they are not as 'strong' as they need to be. This is why they should support CCT projects, as these make people feel empowered and helps the community members to no longer wait for external help but to change their situation themselves, as has been said multiple times before. Thus, the trainings are seen as valuable for communities. R2 reiterates this:

> "[…] I can manage to spread this message within Aweil East, but in case there [are] enough, [financial] resources, then it should not be Aweil East, but I can go all over South Sudan and I can even reach outside South Sudan. Because CCT has no limit. […] CCT is good to be in every location. I wish if CCT was [practiced] on all over South Sudan, then this country would not have erupted. It would not have continued for many years. This destruction would not have been there." (R2)

He shows an overwhelmingly positive reaction towards the approach – "CCT has no limit" – even believing that South Sudan would have had less or even no impact from the civil war. R4 appears to agree, since he argues that food insecurity and the war would stop if people would understand CCT and build relationships among themselves, saying that he thinks South Sudan

will be a better country because of it. R9 believes that involving more people will help them to use their own minds and develop on their own. They could realise how many resources they have that are to be used.
Furthermore, many of the interviewees talk about being transformed. People are changing their mindsets and they get to build things together to better their situations, even being able to buy cars, stores, and such (R5). R5 also says that spiritual development has taken place due to CCT. People are coming to church more often and attendance is increasing.

Among the positive responses, some other suggestions are given. Firstly, transport seems to be a problem. This comes close to the desire to spread out the trainings. There is a need to have good roads and transport facilities:

> "[…] People may walk a long distance, something like four to five hours on [foot]. And if you are a trainer, you are a facilitator and you want to go on and train others, [you may walk to work for] five hours. Then you may come back for another five hours. That could be a whole day on [foot]. So, I have to recommend that, if possible, transport facilities could be available so that they […] may make a long distance to be short." (R2)

Furthermore, not only trainings are far, but churches as well. R5 sees a need for churches and communities to share their experiences, but the distance and lack of specific facilities is making this hard. He shows how these exchange visits helped their own community to be inspired by others.

> "Something [that is] missing is exchange visits. Like when we started here, we were taken to the place where the CCT is existing well. We were taken here to a place called Kajokeji in Central Equatoria, [there] CCT was existing [for] more than nine years. When we [went] there, we saw the impact of CCT. And then we came back to practice in our locality. So now there is a need for, for other organisations who are responsible, who implement the project of CCT, to make exchange visits, to take people to exchange visits. We, even we as CCT practitioners, we cannot do it alone without other partners. (R5)

Next to transportation, participants also suggest handing out more materials. R3 specifically mentions teaching materials that could be used during the trainings on knowledge and skills through group work and presentations, such as flip charts, marker pens, stand boards and stationeries. He believes that these could be used to transform others. Furthermore, R2 thinks more CCT manuals are needed for the facilitators, since the number of facilitators is growing.

> "And in our area, it is very hard for, for us to go and copy and make [a] photocopy. We don't have photocopy machines. We don't have computers for doing this and they are in the town but moving from the village to the town is very hot. So, it is another problem. And we recommended that, if possible, then, CCT manuals could be printed to be available in the location where people, where our facilitators are." (R2)

Another material that is mentioned by one of the respondents, is the Bible. CCT training includes Bible studies, meaning that Bibles are needed to gain knowledge on certain areas.

> "Some of our people now, those who have smartphones, they use smartphones to get Bible verses. But those who do not have a smartphone, they do not get Bibles to read. And Bible sharing, it is very hard for us. […] One group [of] almost about 20 or 10 people may have one Bible and that is all, but they are not available in the market to [buy]. Even if we continue on, even if we […] contribute our own resources to go and buy Bibles, we cannot get them. They are not available in the market to be bought." (R2)

Next is the involvement of tribe leaders. Interestingly, R7 is the only one who brings this up even though it seems like having community leaders involved is a logical step:

> "[The] CCT program will spread to all the community if we involve the chiefs and Boma administrators where the churches are. If they are aware of this program, I think CCT will here [in] all the communities." (R7)

CCT is focused more on church leaders rather than community leaders, which makes sense for the approach itself. However, chiefs and low-level administrators could reach people that the church could not, thus spreading the message of CCT even further.

Finally, three of the respondents suggest that community members are an important reason why CCT cannot thrive (R3). They can be unmotivated and relief-minded. According to R8, as people are relief-minded, they are used to getting tangible items. Since CCT is not tangible and they cannot take it home, they see no reason to believe it will support their needs. R4 even thinks that if community leaders and members do not welcome the process, CCT has a minimal chance of success.

Thus, the input of the community is important for the survival of CCT: the community needs CCT and CCT needs the community.

5.5 SUMMARY

To summarise, the results have given answers to multiple sub-questions within this research. Interestingly, there is no true disagreement between the respondents. Some highlight one part, while others emphasise something else. First, local community issues in Aweil East are shown to be diverse but connected. Food insecurity due to the war and flooding seem to be the biggest issue, but no education, poverty and a lack of basic needs are all discussed during the interviews as well. Furthermore, relief dependency and lack of unity are mentioned as problems that are affecting the local community.

Secondly, the role of local churches is deeply ingrained in the communities in Aweil East. Their main task is raising awareness about CCT and health-related issues. They have also shown to be important in building networks between churches, between church and community, and between community members, thus unifying and reconciling different people. This also has the consequence that people start collaborating more, for example during building projects for schools, stores, and church buildings. A more obvious role for the church is that they help people in their spiritual walk, which has consequences for how people act around each other and how they see their own position within the wider community.

Thirdly, CCT has changed significant aspects in community life. People's mindsets are changed, they feel more motivated and want to take ownership. They also appear to be more involved in both church and community life and cooperate with each other. People feel like they can take control as well as develop with the knowledge and skills they have been given through CCT trainings. They are no longer financially dependent and strive to be completely self-reliant, which means that several community issues could be solved.

Lastly, the local churches see the process of CCT in a favourable light. The respondents are convinced that the approach has changed the outlook of their communities for the better and have only a few comments for improvement. These comments are not about the content of

capacity, but rather on materials, trainings, and involvement that is needed so CCT, and thus the communities, can prosper.

With these findings in mind, the answer to the main research question is given in the next chapter.

6. Conclusion and Discussion

In this chapter, both conclusion and discussion are discussed. After answering the main research question, a reflection for the academic debate is given. Subsequently, the results of the research will be discussed and interpreted. Thereafter, limitations, contributions and recommendations for further research will be listed.

6.1 Answering the Main Research Question

Since all sub-questions have been expounded upon, the main research question can be answered. To recap, the research question is as follows: "How does the implementation of the Church and Community Transformation approach affect the local communities' issues in Aweil East, South Sudan according to the local church?"

The most outstanding trend among interviewees was sincere and utter optimism about the role of CCT in their communities. They had hope for the future and felt like a true change of mindset, and eventually community development, was possible through this specific approach. According to them, people were able to change their lives, regain control, start businesses, and become independent.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, the main community issues regarded poverty, food insecurity, relief dependency, disunity, and lack of education. By following trainings, people could gain skills and knowledge on how to use the local available resources and by starting businesses, people were able save money and thus buy food. Furthermore, the capacity trainings helped people to start vegetable gardens together to obtain food. These ways, the community is no longer dependent on external help. Self-reliance and independence were promoted and supported. With their new mindset, they were also able to build churches and schools to stimulate education for children. Lastly, CCT provided tools for churches to help develop unity among and between their church and community members. This also presented itself through multiple committees and councils that members are a part of to stimulate unity, as well as by helping each other in times of need.

This overwhelmingly positive view as well as the hope suggested by respondents that CCT will expand throughout South Sudan, leaves no question that CCT has made a real and significant change in the lives people in Aweil East. Community issues are undoubtedly not dissolved at once, but first steps are made to build a community that works together, feels confident,

motivated, and thrives because of their own choice for change. In conclusion, as R2 said, “CCT will survive, forever”.

6.2 Reflection

This conclusion fits into the academic debate, as the church has an important role as both a religious institution as well as a local actor, thus supporting what has been researched before. In the case of Aweil East, religious leaders are trusted by their communities, thus providing a leeway for CCT to work through. Furthermore, strengthening and acknowledging the local through CCT has proven to be a relatively effective tool. These points thus show that there should be even more attention given towards the role of local actors, or more specifically, local faith actors. Their role is of utter importance for the development and sustainability of the local community in South Sudan.

There is now even more reason to believe that local knowledge and involvement are valuable, as this research has also proven that local actors and religious affiliation do not need to have a detrimental impact on humanitarian response, even though Roepstorff (2020) claims it does. Furthermore, in Chapter 2, Paragraph 4 (The Role of Local Churches in South Sudan), it is mentioned that not much is known about the role of the local churches in South Sudan. Therefore, this research has also shown what roles the church in Aweil East picks up and which ones it does not. The focus in the state is mostly on unity and networking, which is mentioned by multiple authors among others, but there is less focus on providing relief and shelter than Gourlay et al. (2019) argue.

Finally, in Chapter 2, Paragraph 1.2 (Development), Haynes (2007) argues that religion can have a negative influence on development. However, this research has proven that the local churches were not an instigator of division, but rather of unity after using CCT. Furthermore, they helped rather than undermined social and developmental goals by cooperating, building, and raising awareness.

6.3 Interpreting Results

The results of this research were clear and quite homogenous, as no bad word was said about CCT inherently. Community issues seemed to be solved through CCT, according to local church leaders. From these results, a few interpretations can be drawn. First, this was different than what was expected. CCT proved to be different than many other approaches, as it is used to give control back to the church and community. However, there was an expectation that more

participants would respond negatively to the approach, if only on one side. Secondly, some aspects of CCT remained quite unspoken. For example, one would expect the respondents to talk more about recovery and resilience, all part of the humanitarian response. Before the interviews it seemed logical that these were lacking and thus would get attention through CCT, but people did not appear to be invested in these indicators. This could be explained by there also being less conflict in Aweil East, unlike other areas of South Sudan.

Interestingly, the theoretical framework, concerning community issues, did cohere with some of these issues, but not all of them. For example, displacement was not mentioned once, probably due to no real conflict having taken place. Women's formal employment was also not discussed, even though this was another problem that communities in South Sudan have to deal with according to OCHA (2018). COVID-19 was barely mentioned, even though the community members do get awareness trainings on the pandemic. Lastly, intercommunal fighting was only referred to once in the interviews as something from the past, even though both the theoretical framework as well as previously self-obtained knowledge suggested otherwise.

Eventually, the results have shown that local church leaders and CCT facilitators are content with how CCT is being used and would only like to spread it further. They have also shown that pessimism towards every approach used in other, 'underdeveloped' countries, is not necessarily seconded by those who actually experience working with the approach. Lastly, the results, especially the positive changes in communities, give hope for a better future for the people in Aweil East.

6.4 LIMITATIONS

As this research contained many steps to get answers on multiple questions, it makes sense that flaws would occur during the process. In addition to the limitation concerns raised in Chapter 3 (Methodology), some aspects can be pointed out afterwards that could have advanced the research. One thing that might be missing in this analysis, is that there was no fieldwork. There was no chance to look at the context people live in and to get to know them to better understand their answers. Behind a screen, without seeing each other's faces due to bad networks, it can be hard to interpret words and meanings correctly.

Additionally, since most of the participants were interviewed after another participant, they could have discussed some of the questions beforehand. This can cause the next person to give answers in the same way or omit certain observations they have had, thus only giving one side of the story.

6.5 CONTRIBUTIONS

The main goal of this thesis was to get and understanding of perspectives of local South Sudanese churches concerning the CCT approach. Improving and developing CCT was another goal in this research. The hope is that this thesis has proven to be helpful in improving and developing CCT, even if only because it shows that what is done is brought into positive light by the participants and recommendations that are given by them, such as more trainings and materials, can be implemented relatively simply.

6.6 FURTHER RESEARCH

Church and Community Transformation has not been academically researched before, making this thesis the first of its kind. This is why it is recommended to go more in-depth on the subject through several aspects. Different churches are working on different levels within CCT – some are just starting while others have already used the approach for several years. It could thus be interesting to look at whether church leaders react differently towards CCT in different stages of the project. There could also be a focus on a different group as interviewees: vulnerable people and women. Both have been relatively underexposed in this thesis and in the interviews, even though they could have completely different perspectives on CCT and how it has or has not changed their situation.

Further research could also focus on how more men can become involved in CCT, since they were less eager to come to the trainings according to some. Do they need other types of trainings, do they need other stimulants, et cetera?

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Appendices

Appendix 1 – Code tree

I - Church and Community Transformation
1. Localisation
    a. Partnerships
        i. Long-term agreements
        ii. Roles and responsibilities
        iii. Transparency
        iv. Negotiations
        v. Programmes
    b. Capacity
        i. Strengths
        ii. Gaps
        iii. Capacity-sharing
    c. Financial Resources
        i. Funding actors
        ii. In/direct funding
        iii. Local possibilities
    d. Coordination
        i. Presence/representation
        ii. Influence
        iii. Leadership
2. Humanitarian Response
    a. External help/cooperation
    b. Relief
        i. Food
        ii. Water
        iii. Shelter
        iv. Health care
    c. Recovery
        i. Reconciliation initiatives
        ii. Transitional shelters
        iii. Temporary education programs
    d. Resilience
        i. Rebuilding roads and buildings
        ii. Training for teachers and health professionals
        iii. Supporting traders and farmers
        iv. Strengthening the local justice systems
3. Development
    a. LIGHT Wheel
        i. Living faith
        ii. Social Connections
        iii. Personal relationships
        iv. Emotional and mental health
        v. Physical health

vi. Stewardship of the environment
vii. Material assets and resources
viii. Capabilities
ix. Participation and influence

b. Sustainability
c. Holism
d. Community

4. Advocacy and Influencing
    a. Local
    b. Political

II - Local Community Issues

1. Displacement
    a. Land loss
    b. Hosting IDPs
2. (Food) Insecurity
3. Violence
    a. Gender-based
    b. Intercommunal
4. Limited water and sanitation
5. Poverty
6. Limited livelihood opportunities
7. Women's formal employment
8. Flooding
9. Family resilience
    a. Loss of cattle
    b. Conflict
10. COVID-19

III – Role Local Churches

1. Peace negotiations
    a. Reconciliation
    b. Forgiveness
2. Unity formation
    a. Networks
3. Authority and representation of locals
4. Provide relief
    a. Healing
        i. Physical
        ii. Mental
        iii. Spiritual
    b. Education
    c. Economic prospects
5. Spirituality
6. Raise awareness

IV – CCT in General

1. Positive view on CCT
2. Negative view on CCT

APPENDIX 2 – TOPIC LIST

The interviews were conducted in a semi-structured manner. This means that not every question was asked per respondent, nor that it has necessarily been taken from the list below. The questions proposed in this topic list function as main questions to get the ball rolling but are certainly not the only questions possibly asked during the interviews. Moreover, not every question is asked in the manner mentioned below, but it is made sure that all necessary information is obtained.
Before the interview, I have asked questions concerning their privacy, anonymity and the terms and acceptance of their participation in the interview. It is also made clear to the respondents that they are not talking about their denomination, but about the local church they are a part of. Furthermore, it has been asked what their knowledge is on CCT: it could be that they knew different terms. The same goes for other, more technical terms such as resilience and advocacy. These have been avoided for the sake of the interviewees.

Introduction Questions

1. What county are you from?
2. What denomination are you part of?
    a. What is the name of the church?
3. What is your role within the church?
    a. What do you do here?
4. What is CCT according to you?
5. How long has CCT been implemented in your community?
6. What is your role within CCT?
    a. What does this look like?

Situation in Community

1. What are the main challenges in your community?
    a. What problems were specifically present before the use of CCT?
    b. In what way has COVID-19 influenced these problems?

Role local churches

1. What role does your church play in solving these issues without the help of CCT?
2. What other roles does your church play in the local community?
3. What role do other churches or religious communities play within the CCT approach related to your church?

CCT Questions

1. What activities are implemented in your community?
    a. Who is involved?
2. What have you learned (knowledge/skills/tools) from CCT?
    a. How are you applying these as an individual and a church?
    b. What changes have come to your life, family, and church by being involved in CCT?
3. Do you have any partnerships?
    a. What do these look like now (after the implementation of CCT)?

Localisation

4. What does the church's capacity look like after CCT?
    a. What are the strengths and weaknesses?
    b. Is capacity sufficiently shared with others?
5. What does your funding look like after CCT?

a. Who funds you?
    i. Is this direct or indirect?
    ii. Is this local or not?

Humanitarian Response

6. How does CCT help the provision of food/water/shelter/health care?
    a. In what ways not?
7. How does CCT help reconciliation/return of people/temporary programs?
    a. In what ways not?
8. What part does recovery play in your church's CCT programme?
9. What part does resilience play in your church's CCT programme?

Development

10. What does development look like through CCT in your community?
11. How does CCT affect the sustainability of development in your community?

Advocacy and influencing

12. How has CCT helped your church and community's influence in the local arena?
    a. How has it hindered your influence?
    b. Do you think everyone feels accepted and included?
        i. Are their contributions valued?
        ii. Does the community have a role in decision-making?

General

1. Overall, what is CCT's biggest positive/negative impact on your community?
    a. Do you see any opportunities for improvement?
    b. What would you suggest your community needs more (or less) of?
2. Do you have anything to add on what you've told about CCT? Suggestions?)

APPENDIX 3 – THE LIGHT WHEEL

Living Faith	Everyone has access to the resources they need to grow and develop personally and spiritually and to live out their faith/spirituality in ways that impact community and society positively.
Social Connections	Everyone feels empowered to contribute, together with others, to creating and developing positive community and societal change
Personal Relationships	Everyone demonstrates a commitment to building and sustaining loving, equitable and affirming relationships that enable the common good and manage disagreements and conflict constructively.
Emotional and Mental Health	Everyone feels hopeful and positive about the future and that they are able to handle future shocks, stresses and uncertainties well
Physical Health	Everyone can equitably access the resources they need to experience continued good physical health and well-being.
Stewardship of the Environment	Everyone contributes to creation care, helping one another understand and develop sustainable natural resource systems.
Material Assets and Resources & Capabilities	Everyone can responsibly and equitably access the resources and skills they need to create and sustain their livelihoods.
Participation and Influence	Everyone feels accepted and included and that their contribution to community/society is valued. Everyone is able to participate in empowering processes and systems that influence decision-making about the future.

(Tearfund, 2016b, p.9)