

Religion in Peace- building Initiatives

Indonesian Institute Mosintuwu
as a case-study



Master thesis Religion in Contemporary Societies
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Introduction

For years, western governments and institutions have seen religion as a hindrance for advancement in the developing world. Also, based on the idea that religion was bound to disappear when societies would reach a certain level of social and economic level, religion was often seen as irrelevant in development aid. Aid and financial support was mainly focused on basic human rights and allocated to economic progress.¹

However, the so called secularisation thesis turned out to be no longer viable; religion was and is for many what guides people's lives. This brought religion back on international development agendas.² Some organisations were willing to take religious backgrounds of developing countries and its inhabitants into account, and to recognize the influence of religion on development processes, but how this influence is exerted and how they should deal with this is still a question they puzzle with.³

Although this remains a vague and difficult question, it does not make it less important and relevant. Politicians, scholars, development workers and developing countries are increasingly interested in research on this subject and are benefited by it. By insight in and comprehension of the role of religion on development, aid could be much more fruitful.

The term development cooperation somehow replaced the terms development aid and development work, because the sector of development cooperation wanted to stress that donors and recipient countries or organizations are regarded as equal partners. This led to more focus on the particular interest of the recipients. However, their religious situation was often not incorporated, since it was seen as a hindrance of the development process.⁴

In *Religion in development*, Deneulin states that 'considering it [religion] as irrelevant, or as ideological indoctrination which has to be counteracted, is a strategy which is likely to jeopardize development efforts, if not fuel conflict.'⁵ She certainly makes clear what not to do, but what one should do in order to avoid conflict and stimulate development is indistinct. With her, many scholars, politicians and development workers alike struggle with this issue. I hope to contribute to this discussion with this thesis, which describes institute Mosintuwu as a case-study.

The starting point of this research is a question of *Mensen met een Missie*. This is a Dutch organisation which supports development organisations in the South.⁶ Institute *Mosintuwu* is such an organisation, located in Poso, Indonesia.

Mensen met een Missie embraces a rights-based approach, but keeps in mind the religious background of the areas and of the people they are working with. To do this in a satisfactory manner, they have to understand the place of religion in society and in the lives of the people. Therefore they

¹ Tyndale, W.R., *Visions of development, faith-based initiatives*, Ashgate, Hampshire, 2006, p.157.

² Boender W., Dwarswaard E., Westendorp M., *Religie en ontwikkeling, handreikingen voor de praktijk*, Knowledge Centre Religion and Development, 2001, p.8. http://www.religie-en-ontwikkeling.nl/documents/gfx/Praktijkboek/handreikingenvoordepraktijk_def.pdf. Last accessed on September 8 2013. See also Klein Goldewijk, B., *Religion, international relations and development cooperation*, Wageningen Academic Publishers, 2007, p.23.

³ Tyndale, W.R., 2006, p.168.

⁴ Haynes, J., *Religion and development, conflict or cooperation?*, Palgrave Macmillan, 2007, p.8.

⁵ Deneulin, S., Bano, M., *Religion in Development: rewriting the secular script*, Zed Books, New York, 2009, p.25.

⁶ The South is a term referring to countries in South America, Africa and Asia.

want to figure out how religion plays a role in the projects they support, and how these two relate to each other.

This 'what' and 'how' of religion are often vague, especially in countries one is not familiar with. Nevertheless, it is important to clarify this issue, since one wants to understand the background of the people and societies he is working with. This clarification, then, can facilitate development in an efficient and sustainable way. In order to clarify this, Mensen met een Missie asked me to do research in Poso, where I investigated institute Mosintuwu and its participants. By doing this, my suggestions can be helpful to both Mosintuwu as Mensen met een Missie, but also to development cooperation in general.

In Poso, there have been tensions between Muslims and Christians for a long time. Between about 1998 and 2001, violence in this region increased. The result was that hundreds of people were seriously injured and between three hundred and eight hundred people were killed. At least 3,500 houses, two schools and nine religious buildings were destroyed in twenty villages. More than 70,000 people fled from the region during the conflict.⁷

Mosintuwu works for peace and independence of the women of Poso on social, economic, political and cultural areas. Mosintuwu wants to create an environment where human rights and autonomy are respected. They carry out this mission through different activities for women and children, which are divided in four headings: educational, solidarity, empowerment and media. Examples of projects are the Women School and the Safe House for Women and Children. All these projects aim to bring the Christian and Muslim population closer together.

Mensen met een Missie supports Mosintuwu since it wants to encourage the participation of women in post-conflict society. Mensen met een Missie wants to get more insight in the question of how religion and religious motives of the participants can contribute to the mission of Mosintuwu. In order to gain this insight, Mensen met een Missie asked me to conduct fieldwork of two months in Poso. During my stay I specified my research question to the particular field of peace building. I formulate my research question as follows: *How can religion and religious motives of the participating women contribute to the peace process in the post-conflict situation of Poso.*

This main question is divided in three sub-questions:

- *To what extent are religious motives of women participating in the projects for women involved in the projects of Mosintuwu?*
- *In what way are religious motives used by Mosintuwu and the participants in the peace process?*
- *Is it desirable to strengthen the focus on religious issues in Mosintuwu projects, and if so how can this be achieved?*

Operationalization

In chapter one I will introduce institute Mosintuwu in its historical and religious context. I take into account the background of the conflict, the inhabitants of the area and the women who participate

⁷ Aragon, Lorraine V., *Communal Violence in Poso, Central Sulawesi: Where People Eat Fish and Fish Eat People*, Indonesia72, 2001, p. 47.

in Mosintuwu's programmes. I will also take a closer look at the different projects of Mosintuwu to get a better understanding of what Mosintuwu does and how extensive their reach is.

A note on terminology; throughout this research I will use the terms 'Muslim' and 'Christian' since this is unavoidable in describing the conflict and its actors, stakeholders and victims. As I will argue later in chapter three, religion is an important identity marker for the women in the Poso area, so also for them, the terms are frequently used. It reflects the primary division in society, but I will by no means ignore the uniqueness of people and the differences within religions.

In chapter 2 I discuss the question to *what extent are religious motives of women participating in the projects for women involved in the projects of Mosintuwu?*

'Religion' and 'religious motives' are no concrete concepts, so in order to draw conclusions concerning this question, these concepts need to be determined first. In the context of this study a functionalist and sociological approach of religion is used. Namely, it deals with the place of religion in society, the role of religion in the peace process and the value of religion in the lives of the women. It is problematic to give a definition of religion because, as Wils articulates it: "'Religion' is an invention that is not shared by all religions".⁸ Ideas about and the perception of religion differ throughout history and varies with location. In modern Western societies, differentiated subsystems have limited the influence of religion on society. Politics, science, art, psychology etc. are increasingly autonomous subsystems, while in non-modern societies these subsystems are much more intertwined with religion.⁹ Although it is outside the scope of this research to proclaim that Indonesia is a non-modern society, religion definitely has a strong cultural embedding. Instead of giving a definition of religion I hope with the following chapters I will be able to throw some light on the matter with this research.

In the course of this thesis, first I will describe the social and religious character of Mosintuwu. For this purpose I will describe Lian Gogali, the founder and driving force of Mosintuwu, show what kinds of activities are organized, for what purpose this is done and what Mosintuwu wants to accomplish. After this observation I will show how 'religion' is involved in the projects.

To assess the extent to which religion is involved in the activities of Mosintuwu I have studied some observable phenomena, like praying, religious rituals and religious language. Also, I have investigated the content of the activities: do they have religious themes, is the meeting in a church or mosque, are the speakers representatives of a religious organization? Besides the observations, I asked the women about these subjects in the interviews. I have asked questions about their desires and needs. From their answers can be inferred to what extent religious beliefs are important to them. I have also asked how important it is to them to let religion be part of the activities. The women describe their religious motives for peace and to what extent they played a role in their choice to join the Women School. I also asked the women why they decided to join the Women School and when, what they liked about Mosintuwu and what they thought was the best aspect. I also asked if they have any suggestions to improve the Women School.

I wanted to know if there was room to express their religious motives in the Women School, so for that reason I asked to what extent they (dared to) share their religious motives and in what situations, during class or outside the activities. Whether their motives to contribute to peace are

⁸ Wils, J.P., *Sacraal geweld*, Koninklijke van Gorcum, Assen, 2004, p.9.

⁹ Idem, p.13.

(mainly) religious will be determined from their answers to the above questions. In another question, I asked specifically if they had a religious motivation for joining. I also asked them what they thought about Mosintuwu as an institute for both Muslims and Christians and how they felt about working together and why.

In order to assess the religious motives I checked how 'Mosintuwu' got to know the motives of the women. I investigated whether the women (have to) make this known in advance, or that they discuss about it during meetings. Afterwards I investigated what Mosintuwu does with this information. Do the activities connect to these motives or do they derive from them. I also wanted to know in what way women can give space to their religious beliefs during the meetings, if there is any attempt to influence or use these motives.

In chapter 3 I will deal with the second sub-question *in what way are religious motives used by Mosintuwu and the participants in the peace process?* In order to answer this question, I have first examined what the goals of Mosintuwu are and how the religious motives of the women can contribute to the goals of Mosintuwu in an effective way. What the goals are have emerged from the interviews with Gogali and others who have designed the curriculum of the Women School. Furthermore, I have investigated the results of Mosintuwu up to now. To do so I interviewed both Gogali and the participating women about their experiences. I explored in what way the religious motives contributed to these goals and/or in what way they hindered to reach these goals. I also asked the women what they reached until now and what they still want to reach.

Chapter 4 discusses the third sub-question *is it desirable to strengthen the focus on religious issues in Mosintuwu projects, and if so how can this be achieved?* Since my presence in Poso was only for the short-term period of two months, it is hard to give any recommendations for Mosintuwu. However, some patterns can be discerned from the research data, which emerges from the suggestions for improvement the women gave in their interviews. The two main points were firstly a wish for a third batch of the Women School, and secondly more time to learn something about other religions. In chapter four I will discuss this more extensively and suggest some adjustments to make the programme even more effective and to reach more people in society.

Methodology

For this research the grounded theory method is used. This means that the first stadium of the research was collecting data. Then, this data was categorised and analysed. The analysis was verified against existing theories which lead to the creation of a new hypothesis.

In this research the data consisted of interviews, observations of the women and the meetings and documents of both Mensen met een Missie en Mosintuwu. By linking my analysis to other literature I postulate the hypothesis that Mosintuwu can make more use of interreligious dialogue in the Women School in order to gain her goals.

Method

To assess in what way religion is involved in the project and to what extent it is desirable to involve the attention for religious motives in the project, I have interviewed the participating women and Lian Gogali, the founder of Mosintuwu. Besides, I have attended most of their meetings during my time in Poso and asked the women about the previous meetings, to get a picture of the lessons and

in what way religion has a place in them. For this empirical research, the projects and the women of Mosintuwu will get a central place.

For investigating the activities, I interviewed the head of Mosintuwu about the purpose and mission of Mosintuwu, but I have also used documentation, among others the registration forms of the women. I have attended the activities and analysed what was happening, what the women did, how they responded to what was said and with whom.

Besides this analysis of Mosintuwu, I have also outlined a background of the history of the conflict and the identity of the two groups, Muslims and Christians. I will do this by looking at the identities and the profiling of the groups are and how they relate to each other. I will discuss the question in which way the two groups can be distinguished, on a social, political, religious and social level. Then, I will discuss which of these differences or agreements have played a role in the conflict and in what way. I will argue that it was not primarily a religious conflict, but that other factors have played an important role in the escalation as well.

To understand the importance of religion in the lives of the women I will discuss theories of identity, for example the theory of Haynes. Furthermore I will show that religion is important for the identity of the women, on both a social, civic and personal level.

The research has been both descriptive and exploratory. It is descriptive because there is both a description of the history of the conflict and of the organization Mosintuwu, and its activities. It is also explorative because the religious identity and motives of the women of Mosintuwu will be explored.

My aim was to collect various life stories of both Muslim and Christian participants. In two months I have gathered the stories of forty women, Gogali Giogali, the initiator of Mosintuwu and John Lusikooy, one of the research persons who helped design the curriculum. To bridge the language and cultural barriers the interviews were performed in collaboration with Winda Pontoh, an Indonesian woman who studied English. In some of the interviews Gogali acted as the translator, because of logistical reasons.

In short, the research has taken the form of fieldwork, where the necessary information is collected in two months through in-depth interviews, documentary research and observation of participants.

Relevance

When plans for doing research in Indonesia were crystallizing, I spoke about it with some of my colleagues from Amnesty International. I explained that I was going to explore whether religion can contribute to peace and if so, in what way. A bit cynical they asked: 'Contribute? Or do you mean how it complicates the peace process?'

This attitude typically represents the so-called secularist paradigm¹⁰, assuming that religion is an obstacle to peace or development in general, or seeing religion as no relevant subject for discussion. In this research I will argue that this secularist paradigm is no longer adequate. Instead, the relation between religion and development has to be taken into account. Religion and development can coexist in three ways; religion can have an impact on social problems, be the solution, or religion can be seen as a source of social problems. I will argue that the way Lian Gogali, the founder of Mosintuwu, uses religion as an instrument to achieve peace is a suitable and effective

¹⁰ Philpott, D., and Powers G., *Strategies of Peace*, Oxford University Press, 2013, p.1.

way of using religion. I will explain that this is so, because it is consistent with the experiences of the women, in which religion plays an important role.

Limitations

Of course I have made efforts to remain as faithful as possible to their stories, but the translation and my editing, inevitably, acted as a filter. Pontoh could have made some generalizations since she doesn't have a background in religious studies, so she might have missed some nuanced details. On the other hand, it is possible that the women might have kept something back, since Gogali is their teacher and they might not have wanted to be too critical.

Another factor that might have influenced the results is my own fulfilment of the research process. I would not at all describe myself as a Christian, but the women could have seen me as a such. Since I am an outsider to their religious beliefs and to the Indonesian society, I might have overseen nuances and details, or drawn conclusions too prematurely.

Organisational details

Throughout the years, *Mensen met een Missie* and *Mosintuwu* have had regular contact, mainly between Lian Gogali and Floor Schuiling, chief Asia Programme of *Mensen met een Missie*. Gogali was enthusiastic about this research initiative and was willing to receive me and provide access to the organization, the activities and the women who participate in the projects.

From *Mensen met een Missie*, I was coached by Floor Schuiling, Program Chief Asia Program. From the University of Utrecht I was coached by Welmoet Boender. The stay in Indonesia took place from mid-April to mid-June 2013.

For this research I have received the generous financial support of *Mensen met een Missie* (supporting me with a compensation of 1000 euro) and *Stichting Verenigde Utrechtse Theologische Fondsen* (sponsoring me with 1000 euro).

1. Introducing Institute Mosintuwu

In this chapter I will provide an overview of the relationship between Muslims and Christians in the area of Poso. Poso is located on the island Sulawesi, the fifth largest island of Indonesia. On this island Muslims and Christians have lived peacefully side by side for decades. As in the rest of Indonesia, the Christians formed a minority on this island, living mainly in Northern Sulawesi and in the area of Poso, Central Sulawesi. After the resignation of President Suharto in 1998, the tensions between the two religious groups increased, which led to conflicts in several places in Indonesia.



Image 1 The Indonesian Archipelago

This chapter briefly describes the events which contributed to this tension and led to an escalation of the conflict between roughly 1998 and 2001 in the area of Poso. Furthermore, I will discuss how religion played a role in the conflict. After this I will discuss the main attempts made by both the government and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) to improve the situation. In order to understand what Institute Mosintuwu has contributed to reach the religious groups and build a sustainable peace I will describe briefly what Mosintuwu is and what they do. The final part of this chapter provides a brief overview is given of the religious groups in the Poso area. Although there are some Hindus participating in the Women School, most of the participants, reflecting the composition of the population, are Muslim and Christian.

1.1 History of the conflict

1.1.1 Developments in Indonesia

Due to an economic crisis and on-going civil protests throughout Indonesia Suharto was forced to resign in 1998. The people demanded radical changes in three areas. In the first place there was need of a clear rule of law in order to counter corruption. Second, economic reforms had to be established. Thirdly, the national state had to be transformed to a democracy.¹¹ These changes were called *reformasie*. During the *reformasie* some of these goals were partly reached, but the changes also led to a feeling of insecurity. People often did not know what they could expect and what they could count on regarding the government. The struggle for political power caused a shift of power, not only to different parties, but also to different areas in Indonesia. The idea was that a decentralization of power could lead to more democracy. Jakarta was no longer the central point where all the decisions were taken. Instead, different governors got more responsibility to manage

¹¹ Scholte Nordholt, H., *Indonesië na Soeharto, reformasie en restauratie*, Amsterdam, Bert Bakker, 2008, p.70.

their own provinces. In practice this idea failed because the governors were not capable of carrying out their new tasks, so for many decisions they still depended on Jakarta. The uncertainty that resulted from this made people suspicious and be on their guard against 'the other'. This other was in first instance mainly defined as a political or ethnical other, but eventually this shifted to two religious communities which came to be diametrically opposed to each other.¹²

Besides, in the years following the reformasie, different religious communities came to live closer together due to urbanization and transmigration. People who were used to live in a more homogeneous religious context now had to deal with a more pluralist society. In several areas this led to religious tensions, in which economic and political interests also played an important role.

On different Indonesian islands the tensions became more intense, which led to fights between Muslims and Christians in 1998. The biggest struggles were in Poso, Ambon and the Maluku Islands. In these places the people got more and more segregated and in some regions religious groups were entirely eradicated. Mutual distrust and retaliation strengthened these developments.¹³ The army has also been an influential actor in the developments of the conflict and in the way the conflict was perceived by the population afterwards. Later, the army was blamed more than once for taking sides and for supporting radical Islamic movements. Also, in order to show their importance for national safety, they have often omitted to intervene so that conflicts could easily escalate. Because of the failure of the army the different religious communities became more and more opposed. Scholte Nordholt explains how the conflicts were later explained as religious conflicts, although most of them arose by economic and political turmoil.¹⁴

1.1.2 Poso conflict

The aforementioned migration also took place in the area around Poso that, before the reformasie, was a protestant stronghold. Because of the migration of around 180.000 mostly Javanese Muslims who moved to this area, the Muslim population became a clear majority in the eighties of the last century.¹⁵ Because of this, and also partly because of the economic crisis, from which the richer Muslims seemed to suffer less, Christians felt increasingly threatened.

When the government of president Suharto collapsed, the political power spread from Jakarta to the outlying islands. Also in Sulawesi, power became something worth fighting for, and Christians and Muslims began to battle over local elections.¹⁶ In the period between 1998 and 2001 the violence greatly increased in central Sulawesi. The result was that hundreds of people were seriously injured and between three hundred and eight hundred people were killed. In the end, at least 3,500 houses, two schools and nine religious buildings were destroyed in twenty villages. More than 70,000 people fled the region during the conflict.¹⁷

In literature, the conflict is usually described as having four phases, distinguished by different locations, offenders and the scope of violence.¹⁸ The first phase lasted from December 1998 to April

¹² Adam, J., Ambon: The Clash of Civilisations revisited?, *De vrede voorbij*, Conflict Research Group, nr 371, 2005 <http://www.vrede.be/tijdschrift/92-nr371/455>, last accessed on July 15 2013.

¹³ McRae, D., *A Few Poorly Organised Men, Interreligious Violence in Poso, Indonesia*, Brill, 2013, p.21.

¹⁴ Scholte Nordholt, 2008, p.73.

¹⁵ McRae, D., 2013, p.18.

¹⁶ Griswold, E., *The tenth parallel*, Picador, New York, 2010, p.161.

¹⁷ Aragon, Lorraine V., 2001, p.47.

¹⁸ McRae, D., 2013, p.5.

2000. The occasion for the conflict was a murder at Christmas eve 1998, that coincided with the fasting month of Ramadan. On that evening the son of a Christian politician killed the son of an imam. The upcoming elections stimulated the escalation of the violence even more. Rumours went round in which the Christians were put under suspicion of organizing a coup to seize power. At long last the army acted to quell the violence¹⁹, but unfortunately they couldn't calm the tempers completely.

Around the time of the elections of 2000, in May and June riots arose again, which is called the second phase. This happened when the Christian governor of the province prevented the Muslim Damsyik Ladjalani to be appointed head of the district administration. During these riots at least 246 people, mostly Muslims, died.²⁰ Muslims entered the Christian quarter of Poso and left a trail of destruction. They burned down dozens of houses and churches. Because the protestant church was well organized, Christians seized the possibility to strike back hard. What followed was a series of retaliations which included the burning of houses, mosques and shops (see image 2). This time the army had more difficulties in maintaining the peace. Due to all the violence people fled to find a safer place. Christians went to the mountains around Tentena and the Muslims populated Poso.



Image 2: Burned Mosque in Poso Kota

In the third phase, between June 2000 and August 2002, the attacks and subsequent retaliations dragged on, so that around 100 people were killed. In this period large groups of mujahidin, 'people doing jihad', arrived to help the local Muslims. After the attacks of September 11th in America, there was international pressure to subvert terrorist activity so the international community started persecuting terrorists. The United States put pressure on Indonesia to trace and put to trial terrorist groups like Laskar Jihad. This was a relief for Christians, because although also some Christians were tried as terrorists, they were much less in number. Eventually, a peace treaty, named the treaty of Malino, was signed and a certain measure of peace returned to the area. This treaty was made by the governors of Central, Northern and Southern Sulawesi, but somehow different religious parties were

¹⁹ Scholte Nordholt, H., 2008, p.181.

²⁰ McRae, D., 2013, p.4.

not involved. For example the Central Sulawesi Protestant Church but also the Muslims who fled to South Sulawesi were ignored and therefore they were not convinced this treaty could bring peace.

The fourth phase started after the signing of the Malino treaty. Peace seemed to have returned, but throughout the following years several incidents caused the tension of the conflict to resurface. In May 2002 twenty-five violations of the treaty were reported, without any effective solution from the police. The Islamic terrorist organizations Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) and Mujahidin KOMPAK were still active for several years. In 2005 three catholic school girls were beheaded which caused a lot of commotion. Only in 2007 did the police do some large-scale raids in order to tackle the perpetrators of the beheadings and the offenders of other attacks.²¹ Until today, in and around Poso you can find enormous posters with photographs and names of wanted terrorists (see image 3). Because of the size and quantity of the posters these terrorists are also jokingly called terrorist poststars.



Image 3: Police poster in Poso Kota to promote the arrest of supposed terrorists

What is striking about the conflict in and around the area of Poso is that the government has belatedly taken action to halt the violence. Army and police support had a slow start and mediation efforts of the government between the Christians and the Muslims were not attempted immediately. Only after the peace treaty was signed, more soldiers were sent to the conflict area to ensure safety and stability. The government eventually arrested some suspects and collected weapons from inhabitants in order to preserve peace. However, these actions often had a negative impact. The population was suspicious of the police because of the amount of violence they had used. In addition to these measures, the government also set up three programmes to improve the situation.²²

The first programme was aimed at decreasing the unemployment of "potential violence users". The purpose of helping these people get work was that they not only got a better economic position, but also strengthened the economic ties between different communities. Many people

²¹ International Crisis Group, *Briefing for the New President: The Terrorist Threat in Indonesia and Southeast Asia*, 2008. <http://www.crisisgroup.org/en/regions/asia/south-east-asia/op-eds/jones-briefing-for-the-new-president-the-terrorist-threat-in-indonesia-and-southeast-asia.aspx>, last accessed on October 17 2013.

²² Lieben, A., *Religie binnen het conflict op Sulawesi*, 2010, p.16.

have criticised this, because in their eyes this was just rewarding the potential troublemakers. The second programme was the Cash Funding Programme. Violence perpetrators received a one-off payment so they had an opportunity to start a business. This programme too, evoked much dissatisfaction, because the population saw this as another reward for the perpetrators. Besides, in practice it turned out that only Muslims received this amount, and not Christian fighters. The third programme was targeted on education. In Poso the government established Islamic schools where children could have a better education. This was because they wanted to keep the children away from schools where they are taught a more radical form of Islam. Besides, the government also wanted to contribute in this way to the future perspectives of (potential) violence users. Later on, these three initiatives were adopted by local NGOs which didn't only offer these programmes to Muslims, but also to Christians.²³

One of the objections to the government programmes was that they were mainly focused on safety, economical progress and law enforcement and did not pay much attention to the more 'soft' sides of peace like trust and reconciliation. Another point of criticism was that women and children, who are most susceptible to the impact of the conflict, received much less help.

In the aftermath of the conflict several NGOs were set up, which were trying to satisfy the populations needs for mutual trust and tolerance. They worked on improving the relationship between the two religious populations. Unfortunately there are no figures for the number of people or the percentage of the population that participated in programmes of NGOs. It is clear that at least one organization is active in every village.²⁴ In the whole district posters were put up with texts like: "Peace is better than fighting".²⁵

According to Lian Gogali, the founder of Institute Mosintuwu, the conflict in Poso was an economic and political conflict in which religion is used or manipulated, by both individual politicians and the police and army, to maintain powerful positions. On both sides, these people invoke religious arguments to gain support. Gogali also underlines the role of the media in this process. The media was and still is a powerful tool to spread a hegemonic discourse and to maintain fear. Since the beginning of the conflict, the media had only portrayed killings and slaughter between Muslims and Christians in the Poso region, but during her research for her master's degree Gogali found out there were many other stories, like how people helped and rescued one another during the conflict. One thing she is teaching the women is that they have to be suspicious towards the media and they should not accept rumours indiscriminately.²⁶

A lot of women I have spoken with are or were a victim of the conflict. All of them, in different ways, suffered a trauma in that period. Some had to flee to ensure their safety and lived in fear and uncertainty for several years. Others have a more indirect experience, they heard the stories and felt the tensions, but did not experience the conflict up close. In all the interviews women display fear and a lack of mutual trust for people of other religions. Also some Hindus, originally from Bali,

²³ Global Security, <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/war/sulawesi.htm>, last accessed on July 15 2013.

²⁴ Lieben, A., 2010, p25.

²⁵ Maas, M., Vrede is mooier dan vechten, leren ze in Poso, *Volkskrant*, 29-01-2002, <http://www.volkskrant.nl/vk/nl/2844/Archief/archief/article/detail/635061/2002/01/29/Vrede-is-mooier-dan-vechten-leren-ze-in-Poso.dhtml>, laatst geraadpleegd op 15-04-2013, last accessed on April 15 2013.

²⁶ Interview Lian.

live in the district Poso Pesisir. They were not involved in the conflict, but nevertheless they of course also experienced violence and suffering. This group is often ignored in both peace negotiations and in religious dialogue afterwards. Because Mosintuwu is an institute for women of all different backgrounds, also the Hindus can, and do, participate.

Although the Malino peace treaty was signed, there is still much to improve in the relations between Christians and Muslims. Human Rights Watch is concerned about the growing intolerance towards religious minorities. In a report they write about the following: "The Indonesian government is failing to protect the country's religious minorities from growing religious intolerance and violence".²⁷ Despite the failure, or perhaps precisely because of the failure of the government, Gogali wanted to help the women and children in the area. The NGO that she has set up is Mosintuwu, which I will describe below.

1.2 Mosintuwu

Mosintuwu, meaning 'togetherness' in local language, started as an initiative to promote interreligious dialogue. Gogali wanted to build a school where she could teach tolerance, peace and people's rights. Mosintuwu primarily focuses on interfaith dialogue, as she sees this as a foundation for peace and for everything else that is important in Poso's society.

This focus on interreligious dialogue doesn't necessarily mean that religion is a much discussed topic in the programmes. Often I wondered why this initiative is called an interfaith organisation in the first place. As I will make clear throughout this thesis, Mosintuwu contributes not only to religious dialogue and peace, but to many other areas of development, like education, women rights and economic improvement.

The programmes Mosintuwu organises are for women and children, who are considered the most vulnerable in a post-conflict area. Five different programmes have been set up: the Women School, Women's Interfaith Organisation, Linkar Kasintuwu, Project Sophia and Sangar Mosintuwu. What follows is a brief description of the programmes. Later on in this thesis I will specify the means, the goals and the results of the programmes.

1.2.1 Women School

The women participating in the Women School are taking a series of eight courses which are training them in peace activism in both their homes and in the community. The Women School provides a place for interreligious and intercultural dialogue. The Women School focuses on two main targets. The first is the participation of Poso's women from different economic backgrounds and social statuses, especially within the various religious and ethnic groups of the Poso District. The second is that the women can learn together about gender issues and peace building across different ethnic backgrounds and religious beliefs, and then become promoters of peace and harmony in their communities, where they can play a significant role in a peace network.

The eight courses of the school's programme consist of *tolerance and peace*; *gender*; *women and culture*; *women and politics*; *speaking and reasoning skills*; *public service rights*; *economic, social, cultural, political and civil rights*; and *community economic management*. The sequence of the courses is designed to trigger three key stages in the process of empowerment of women in the

²⁷ HRW, <http://www.hrw.org/features/indonesia-rising-violence-against-religious-minorities>, last accessed on July 15 2013.

Women School, namely: first, dismantling of prejudice, suspicion, trauma and resentment against other religious communities and ethnic identities. Second, building trust in the women, as well as building mutual trust among women across religious and ethnic backgrounds. Third, establishing partnerships for issues as peace and economic, social, political, culture and civil rights in post-conflict in Poso. The period of the complete programme spans one year.

Each course is divided into three key stages, namely changing the way of thinking in terms of critical theories, familiarizing the students' new way of thinking, and practicing. The women use many different methods in the curriculum, which include group discussions, field trips, role playing, making short films, watching and analyzing films, lectures, and public debate.

In the time of this research Mosintuwu had the capacity for six schools with about seventy women in total. These seventy women formed the second batch. The first batch was started in 2010, the second batch in 2012. The schools are scattered throughout the district, one in Tentena, one in Poso Cota, two in Lage and two in Poso Pesisir.

1.2.2 Women Interfaith Organisation

When the women are graduated from the Women School they can take part in the Women Interfaith Organisation. The goal is that as the women are empowered through their training at the school, the Women's Interfaith Organization is a platform that offers trainings on how to organize, in order to prepare the women to transfer their knowledge and skills to the rest of their communities.

Currently there are three programmes within the Women's Interfaith Programme, the Bamboo Project, the Safe House Project and the Women and Politics Project. The aim of the Bamboo Project is to establish an economic community in which the women can participate. Plans are being made to set up a restaurant where the women contribute by working or supplying ingredients. The Safe House Project is a project for victims of domestic violence. For this project two villages, as test-cases, have a 'safe house', a shelter for women and/or children that are victims of domestic violence. The women participating in this programme receive a training in how to help these victims. Women and Politics is a project in which women can learn about politics and how they can run for political positions.

1.2.3 Linkar Kasintuwu

Mosintuwu is also member of a bigger movement, called Linkar Kasintuwu, meaning something like "circle of mutual support for life". This is a cooperation of five NGOs, including Mosintuwu, all active in the area of Poso. These NGO's are neither interreligious organisations nor partners of Mensen met een Missie. Together they organise meetings for their members or whoever is interested, but also for the persons or organisations who are concerned with the subject of the meeting, for example the police or journalists. During the research period in Indonesia I visited three of their meetings. One was about the Indonesia education system, one about safety in the Poso area and the last one was about women in politics.

1.2.4 Project Sophia

Besides the programmes for women, Mosintuwu also organised projects for children. According to Rinaldy Damanik, a Protestant pastor in Tentena, "the conflict had a huge effect on children".²⁸ He is

²⁸ Griswold, 2010, p.175.

the president of the Christians church of central Sulawesi. Since the fighting started, this church organisation has tried art therapy, giving children pen and paper to draw anything they want. Gogali affirms the impact of the violence on children, something she came across during her master's research. She encourages programmes for children, however, her objection is that most of the existing programmes are organised within the existing structure of segregated groups. Like the Women School, with Project Sophia Gogali aims to create a space where children of different backgrounds can come together, using a mobile library as platform and a dialogue mechanism for Poso's children in the post-conflict period. These children have lived separated after the conflict, they were segregated based on religion. Consequently, they maintain their own or their parents' vengeful feelings toward other communities. The Sophia Library creates possibilities for children to meet one another and starts friendships among them.

Project Sophia uses the idea of a mobile library so that more children can experience the joy and access to knowledge that books provide. Books help the children to dream, and to give shape to their dreams and ideas about a future peaceful post-conflict life. The mobile library is a library in a vehicle, moving from village to village. The library vehicle, which is also known as "the magic box", contains storybooks for children and teenagers, textbooks, drawing books, stationeries, puzzles, origami, Indonesian children movies, and children songs.

In short, in every place where Project Sophia is developed, the project can achieve the following objectives. First and foremost, it nurtures the children's interest and skills in reading books. Second, it provides a space where children can be themselves, with broad access and extensive support for children in several villages to read books. Thirdly, it provides a meeting space for children from various backgrounds to share, to support and to develop dialogue that will build a peaceful character for the young generation in the post conflict period. And last but not least, it creates an open space for intensive and massive communication across generations and between various ethnicities and religions which will allow dialogue to occur and ultimately will contribute to a joint effort in building peace.

1.2.5 Sangar Mosintuwu

This programme consists of art workshops for children and teenagers, including dance, singing and painting. These workshops are organised and given by teenagers themselves, in consultation with Gogali. This programme also has the aim to bring children of different backgrounds together.

1.3 Religion in Indonesia

To be able to understand the participating women and the role of religion in their lives I will describe briefly the place and importance of religion in the Indonesian society.

Much to the dismay of many devout Muslims, Soekarno decided in 1945 against the formation of an Islamic state. Instead, he adopted Pancasila, the ideological basis of the government. This term comes from Sanskrit and means "five principles". The first of these five principles is the belief in one God. With this first principle the government requires the people not only to believe in a god, but also to embrace a monotheistic religion.²⁹

Officially the government recognizes six religions, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, Protestantism, Catholicism and Confucianism. People of religious movements which are not included, such as the

²⁹ Ramage, D.E., *Politics in Indonesia, Democracy, Islam and the ideology of tolerance*, London, 1995, p.12.

Ahmadiyya's, are frequently victims of religious violence. However, even between believers of the recognized religions there are tensions, for example between Muslims and Christians. The Indonesian government is committed through its constitution and international conventions to the right to religious freedom. In Indonesia, religious freedom has been a right since its independence in 1945. In 2005 Indonesia also signed the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) which stipulated that no one shall be subject to coercion which includes freedom of religion. On basis of article 27 it provides that persons belonging to minorities are not denied the right, together with other members of their group, to profess and experience their own culture and religion.³⁰

The Indonesian government also adopted some laws that would ensure harmony between religious communities. An example is the decree from 1969, jointly issued by the Ministry of Interior and Religious Affairs. This decree was renewed in 2005 so that government officials of provinces and districts were instructed to promote harmony between members of different religious groups. Moreover, they had to support the communities by a forum they had established, called Forum Kerukunan UMAT Beragama, FKUB (Interfaith Harmony Forum). This forum had to encourage dialogue and cooperation between religious leaders and communities, to give attention to the aspirations of religious groups, to inform them about their religious rights and to formulate policy recommendations.³¹

However, despite the constitutional and legal guarantee of religious freedom, over the years there also has been policy that threatened this right. Examples include the establishment of the Ministry of Religious Affairs in 1946, the blasphemy law from 1965 and other laws and regulations at national, provincial and regency levels which have facilitated discrimination of religious minorities.

1.3.1 Islam

In Indonesia, almost all the Muslims are followers of Sunni Islam, although no specific figures are available. The two largest Sunni organizations are the Muhammadiyah and Nahdlatul Ulama (UN). Together, they count about 55 million adherents.³²

In the West, the image of Islam in Indonesia is colored by terrorist networks and bombings, including the infamous bombing in Bali. Partly because of their battles against the Christian minority, many people in the West claim that Islamism is ever increasing in Indonesia. On the other hand there are people who think that the vast majority of the population is tolerant and has nothing to do with radicalism. According to Scholte Nordholt both views are incorrect: there is clearly an element of Islamization, but that does not mean that this automatically leads to Islamism. By this he means that Islam is increasingly present in the daily lives of many Indonesians, but that most of them do not seek a political Islam.³³

About the popularity of Islam Nordholt says the following: "While political leaders hesitate to take action and economic uncertainty and corruption is the daily reality, Islam offers a moral guidance and a way of life that could address a new self-confidence". This confidence is propagated for example by Islamic clothing, but also by Islamic pop songs and stickers bearing the text I ♥ Islam.

³⁰ HRW, <http://www.hrw.org/node/113848/section/7>. Last accessed on July 15 2013.

³¹ http://www.clubmadrid.org/img/secciones/SSP_I12_FKUB_Indonesia.pdf. Last accessed on July 15 2013.

³² HRW, <http://www.hrw.org/node/113848/section/7>. Last accessed on July 15 2013.

³³ Scholte Nordholt, H., 2008, p.160.

After the resignation of Suharto, a decentralization of administrative power took place. This had to do with the idea that it would lead to greater democracy. Because of this devolution, at regional level more Islamic regulations developed. In 2007 there were 58 autonomous regions with regulations based on an Islamic morality. Herein, dress codes for women play a significant role, which has influenced the visibility of Islam. The introduction of elements of sharia in Southern Sulawesi is one example. Here, all the women in public service are obligated to dress according to Islamic regulations. Nordhold calls it "morality shari'a" 'because it is mainly directed against alcohol, gambling and prostitution'.

However, some political developments also have contributed to more radical forms of Islam. The political defeat of Islamic parties during the elections in 1999 has contributed to the growth of fundamentalist movements.³⁴ Among others, the organizations Laskar Jihad, Jemaah Islamiyah and MMI (Indonesian Council of Muslim fighters) were established in that time. During the riots around Poso, these three groups were aided the Muslim population in the fight against the Christians.³⁵

In recent years, these groups became more and more unpopular, because they used excessive violence. Because of their tactics and beliefs, they lost favour among local people, especially after the beheading of three Christian school girls.³⁶ Besides, the lack of funding, and the internal divisions over the meaning of jihad - is one justified or not to kill Muslims –made them collapse.

1.3.2 Christianity

Christians are the second largest religious group in Indonesia. They are a small minority of around ten percent, of whom about two-thirds are Protestant. In some places - old mission fields - Christians are a majority. The city of Ambon in the Moluccas is such a place, but many Christians also live in central Sulawesi live.

The largest Protestant umbrella organization is the Persekutuan Gereja-Gereja di Indonesia, PGI (Community of Churches in Indonesia). They represent about 70 churches. In addition there are two smaller Protestant organizations, the Persekutuan Gereja-Gereja than Lembaga-Injili Lembaga Indonesia, PGLI (The Indonesian community for evangelical churches) and Persekutuan Gereja-Gereja Penta Kosta Indonesia, PGPI (the Indonesian Pentecostal). As mentioned in the description of the conflict in Poso, the Protestant churches are well organized. The Catholics have united themselves in Konferensi Waligereja Indonesia, KWI (the Bishops' Conference of Indonesia).

There were also Christian militant groups that, as did the militant Muslim organizations, gave support on both the Moluccas and in Poso. The Christians wore red clothes, in contrast with the white-clad Muslim fighters.³⁷ There was also a small group of about 20 fighters who were dressed in black, who were called 'the black ninjas', killed Muslims and have caused a lot of damage in a short time. This group was led by Fabian Tibo, Dominggus da Silva and Marinus Riwu. The three of them were

³⁴ Idem, p.181.

³⁵ Idem, p.179.

³⁶ Griswold, E., 2010, p.162.

³⁷ Global Security, <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/war/sulawesi.html>. Last accessed on July 15 2013.

arrested in July 2000 and sentenced to death for their atrocities.³⁸ Tibo admitted to the killing of 40 people. In 2006, all three of them were executed. Yet another group were Christians away from Poso who helped without belonging to an organization per se.

These groups, both Islamic or Christian, were creating each other;³⁹ as one group grew more violent, the other responded in the same way. When one group was supported by people from the surrounding area, also followers from the other religion also came to help their fellow believers.

1.4 Religion in Poso

The Christians I have interviewed were all Protestant or Pentecostal. Pentecostalism is a Christian denomination which gives the personal experience of God a special place in their liturgy. The Muslim women said to be 'neutral' Muslims, or adherent of al-Khayrat. Dala'il al-Khayrat is a book written by a Moroccan Sufi in the fifteenth century. According to Gogali, this is the biggest Muslim organisation in central Sulawesi.

In Poso also Hinduism is represented. There is not a big Hindu community, and only a few Hindus are participating in the Women School. I interviewed two of them. Unfortunately, I don't have accurate data about the number of Hindus in the area, only about Muslims and Christians. In 2005 the population consisted of 37% Muslims and 53% Christians.⁴⁰



Image 4: A Muslim, Hindu and Christian woman leading in prayer during graduation day

³⁸ Griswold, E., 2010, p.173.

³⁹ Idem, p.176.

⁴⁰ McRae, D., 2013, p.18.

2. Religion in the Women School of Mosintuwu

Mosintuwu is a project that brings people with different backgrounds together. Especially after the conflict it is important to bring Christians and Muslims back on speaking terms. For this reason Mosintuwu provides a place for religious dialogue. In this chapter I will explain how this dialogue takes shape and in what way the religious motives of the women are taken into account.

In order to answer the first part of the main question *to what extent are religious motives of women involved in the projects of Mosintuwu?*, I will discuss in this chapter firstly how religion is embedded in the programme. I will do so on the basis of Gogali's religious motivations and her ideas about the role of religion in the curriculum of the school.

I will discuss in what ways religious dialogue takes place. From what Gogali told me and from what I have seen I will argue that the dialogue of life is the most prominent form of religious dialogue in de Women School. Furthermore, I will reflect on the attitudes of the women towards other religions and Gogali's approaches to promote a pluralist worldview.

The last part of this chapter consists of the religious motivations of the participating women for joining the Women School. It turned out that in order to understand their religious motivations, I had to determine first in what way religion is important to the women. I will clarify this in the section *Importance of religion*.

As stated in the introduction, for this study I have made use of a functionalist and sociological approach of religion. This is particularly important for this chapter since I investigated the place of religion in the lives of the women. In the sections about Gogali's and the women's religious motivations, I also hope to show the essentialist aspects of religion.

2.1 Gogali's religious motivation to set up Mosintuwu

During my time in Indonesia I came to know Gogali as a passionate and inspiring person. Although I won't devalue the help of the two others at the office and of the four facilitators, I consider Gogali the most influential actor by far to Mosintuwu the Women School and the women. Because her imprint on both the programme and the atmosphere of the Women School is significant I want to dedicate this text to her background and her dreams for peace.

Gogali grew up in a small, remote Christian village in Poso. For her study she left in 1997 to Yogyakarta, on the island of Java, to gain a university degree in Theology. She did not have plans for returning, but when her father suddenly died in 1999, she had to return to Poso for his funeral. On her return she found a different Poso. The place she had left behind was gone, and in its place was a region where Muslims and Christians were now pitted against each other. Members of her family died during the conflict and her sister's house was burned down by Muslims. The school she visited as a child was destroyed, Poso was in ruins. The boundaries between Muslims and Christians became increasingly distinct, and no one could cross those boundaries without threat of being killed.

She returned to Yogyakarta, which is the centre of pluralistic thought in Indonesia, to continue with a Master's Degree.⁴¹ She had joined two interfaith organisations during her time as a student and she underscored the importance of interreligious tolerance and understanding in Indonesia. But what she wanted to gain was direct experience in the field, not just understanding these issues in theory from the comfort of Yogyakarta. She gained a scholarship to return to Poso in

⁴¹ Interview Gogali.

2002 to do research on women and children who were living as internally displaced persons (IDP). She discovered the area had been flooded with outside *mujahideen* who were using Muslim conflict victims to provoke further violence and revenge in the name of religion. She became very interested in the abuse of religion in the conflict for political and economic purposes. She also became interested in the stories of women and children. Her experiences during that time, and the stories deeply impacted her to create Institute Mosintuwu.

The stories showed her a different view on the conflict. Since the beginning of the conflict, the media had only portrayed killings and slaughter between Muslims and Christians in the Poso region. But when she lived with women and children in refugee camps, she heard many different stories about how Muslims and Christians had helped each other during the conflict, how they had rescued one another. Stories like these were rarely told in the media.

The experience that she gained from conducting field research also served as a revelation for her to see that the people of Poso in the post-conflict period needed a comfortable and safe space to start a dialogue. She realised that this dialogue is important for rebuilding a peaceful life after the conflict. One has to put the past in perspective, break down prejudices and suspicion of other religious communities and deal with feelings of vengeance resulting from mutual violence so that the post-conflict generation in Poso can live in peace. "The dialogue is also important in order to prevent the two communities from being pitted and played off against each other for outside interests. The communities are vulnerable to this in the future, where those seeking their own interests can manipulate the vengeance and hatred of the past. The dialogue is equally important to develop stories of peace in the community so that they are not drowned out by the idea that the conflict in Poso is a religious conflict. Once these communities have processed the conflict and are able to move forward, the dialogue can also work to help Muslims and Christians work and fight together for their economic, social, cultural and political rights."⁴²

The stories she heard from the women she met in her research became the inspiration for her to return permanently to Poso from Yogyakarta, even though she knew she was facing social ostracism as she had newly become a single mother. But she could not stay in Yogyakarta and forget about the women and children in Poso. She was touched by the question women asked her during her research: "after you are done with your research, what will you do for the conflict in Poso?", and so she came home in 2007. She had a dream to establish an alternative school that teaches tolerance, peace and people's rights, because she saw women in Poso as the biggest untapped resource for religious tolerance and peace. In 2008 this dream became a reality, and she founded Institute Mosintuwu.

2.2 Design of the curriculum

Before Gogali started the Women School she did research in order to know in which villages she would start a school and which women could participate. Gogali chose four villages in four different areas; Tentena, Poso Kota, Poso Pesisir and Lage. From a geographical point of view different zones were covered, but also the different ethnicities and the related religions. In addition, people of the areas all had a different experience with violence of the conflict. In Tentena the majority of the population is Christian, consisting of both original inhabitants and refugees, who have experienced the violence up close. In Poso Kota, there is both a Muslim and a Christian community. This is the

⁴² Interview Gogali.

capital of the area which has the most inhabitants and where the political power is housed, which is part of the reason Gogali decided to start a school here. Christians and Muslims also both live in Lage, but here the first attacks on Christian villages took place. Some people fled into the jungle and lived for several years in refugee camps in poor conditions before they could move back to their homes. In Poso Pesisir, there are Hindus, Muslims and Christians. Here the violence took place later, so many people took the opportunity to flee to safer places in advance. These people returned when the conflict had subsided, so they mainly just heard stories of the violence.⁴³

From Gogali's research she picked twelve women with whom she discussed the design of the curriculum. They had three meetings in which they talked about the problems and needs of women. These meetings were joined by John Lusikooy, who is also a 'research person'⁴⁴ in the school. With the input of the women John and Gogali made the curriculum, consisting of six sections. After this they started the first batch of the Women School. Mosintuwu is a so called grassroots organisation, so the programme is better connected with the conditions of the women. Grassroots means that the organisation is set up with local people participating in the programme, so that they can develop initiatives and make decisions themselves, instead of the policymakers alone.

From the choices Gogali made, in regard to both the content of the programme and the locations of the schools, can be distilled that the Women School is invigorated on the specific history of conflict in the area. After the first batch, the first year of the Women School, Gogali figured out that other issues and problems also deserve attention. After an evaluation with the women, Gogali decided that she should change some parts of the programme. She added two new sections, called Speaking and Reasoning Skills and Public Service Rights, because she wanted to give the women some tools to speak with others about what they learn in the Women School. She also changed some of the topics, so that they better reflected the needs of the particular situations of the women in different areas. For example in Lage they discuss economic problems they face in their life as fishermen and in Pamona as farmers.

Gogali involves religion in the program of the Women School in different ways. The first way is that religion is integrated in the programme by talking about it, mainly during the first section of the Women School, *tolerance and peace*. The first section consists of seven modules: *people, religion and peace; see and know the difference; distortion of information and conflict: managing religions; tolerance in diversity; transformation of the conflict; acceptance of the difference between religious beliefs and the role of women in peace*. This section aims to transform the women's knowledge and awareness of the values of peace in every religion, introduce the meaning of the theology of religions, stress tolerance of the differences between religions and uncover the stories of women promoting peace during and after the conflict that have not been told before. The section includes methods that vary from lectures by religious leaders, visits to houses of worship, reflection, and discussion of the field visits. The women visit each other's praying house and discuss about their experiences. The first section is the only section where religion is treated as an integral subject. In other sections they do sometimes discuss about it, but only if there are questions by the women.

The second way is praying at the beginning of classes. The women brought to Gogali's attention that they would like to pray at the beginning of the lessons. So halfway through the first

⁴³ Interview Gogali.

⁴⁴ 'Research person' is the name for teachers in the Women School.

batch, the women started praying together before they started the course. At some of the meetings I have attended the women did pray together, but most of the meetings weren't started with prayer. When I asked some women about it, they said they only do it when someone remembers it. One woman in Lage told me that they never pray because they have never made an agreement to do so. So it seems that either it isn't part of a firm practice, or that having the possibility to do it is enough for some women, that praying isn't a high priority for them, or all of the above. I found this initiative of the women a very good example of how Gogali involves religion in the program of the Women School. Her intention is not to impose religious practice or thoughts on the women, neither is it to ignore the problem, but rather to use religion in a way that is suitable for these women. By responding to their initiative it suits the women's wishes.

The third way also was an initiative of the women, namely cleaning hundred places of worship. The women make appointments with churches, mosques and temples in villages in Poso area to clean both inside and outside. In this way the women get used to visit each other's praying houses and to talk with the priest or imam and their family.



Image 5: Christian women cleaning a Mosque in Tentena

The more pronounced way of dealing with religion in the first section has to do with conflict and with Gogali's idea of peace. She said that without this foundation of an interfaith movement, the next seven sections would be unable to establish peace between the women. Because of the conflict women are afraid of each other and do not trust each other. In order to work together in a fruitful way they first have to know about each other's religion and about each other's religious beliefs. By learning about the other religion they can discover that they do not have to be afraid. By seeing the perspective on the conflict of the other, they realise that the Poso conflict was not merely a religious

conflict and that it is not the religion itself that preaches violence. So by learning about each other's religion they can achieve peace.

In my interviews I found out that especially the visit to the praying houses had a deep impact on the women. Most of them had never visited a house of worship from another religion and some of them were really afraid to do so. Since some women told me they were afraid to even visit a Christian or Muslim zone, this must have been a big step for them. With pride some of the Christian women told me that they now know the imam and that they are friends with his wife. During their visit the priest, the imam and the religious leader of a Hindu temple explained them things about their religion. For example how they pray or why women and men should pray separately. In the following class they share and discuss their experiences.

After learning about each other's religions, other topics are treated to learn the women about social and gender equality. The other sections of the Women School are Gender; Women and Culture; Women and Politics; Economic, Social, Cultural, Political and Civil Rights; and Economic Community and Management. After the first batch, as mentioned before, they also decided to include a course that will train the women in the skills to speak in public so that it can help them convey their opinions. Gogali also decided to add a course on Public Service Rights, to make sure there was an increase in women's awareness of their role in the society and to make sure post-conflict developments does not become gender or religion biased.

My opinion is that at the Women School religion is mainly used as instrument to acquire peace. The women talk about religion and religious differences, but this is too short to treat the personal convictions and motives of women extensively. Besides, during the other sections of the programme religion is adduced only as a means, for instance about what should be the role of a religious leader towards victims of domestic violence.⁴⁵ Sometimes the women talk about their religious beliefs with Gogali, but as I understood from Gogali, this happens mostly outside the classes, in private conversations. Gogali tries to help them with problems arising from their and society's religious and cultural convictions, for example about the place of women in society or their role in their family. I think it will help the women to overcome problems when they discuss these issues together. So problems are made visible, they can look for solutions together and learn from each other. Besides, by talking about personal religious beliefs, the women can be stimulated to develop their ideas about religious values such as love, compassion, generosity or respect.

Discussing about religion and about one's religious beliefs is called intellectual religious dialogue. I think in the programme not much time is spent on this type of dialogue, but there are other forms of dialogue which get more attention in the Women School. In the following paragraph I will elaborate this.

2.3 Different forms of interreligious dialogue

Gogali subscribes to the importance of interreligious tolerance and understanding, and for that reason she stimulates interreligious dialogue at the Women School. Interreligious dialogue is a conversation or meeting between people of different faith traditions. This can be done at the level of the individual and of institutions. There are four different forms of interreligious dialogue. I will discuss these four forms and in what way they are present in the Women School. The first form is

⁴⁵ Workshop Saraswati.

called *intellectual dialogue*.⁴⁶ In this form of dialogue, people are in conversation or discussion, such as meetings or lectures. The aim is that people understand each other ('s religion) better. Why the conflict in Poso could so easily escalate, according to Gogali, is because although people of different religions lived together, they did not really know each other. Prejudices and misconceptions about each other's religions marked their relationship. For that reason Gogali pleads for intellectual dialogue as a beginning. This is why the Women School starts with the section of Tolerance and Peace, including the topics on religion. When the women learn they do not have to be afraid of each other's religion, they can overcome the conflict and work together on mutual trust.

Mutual trust can be gained with the second form of interreligious dialogue, the *dialogue of life*.⁴⁷ This form of the dialogue takes place in the daily lives of people. For example at school, in celebrating each other's holidays or in an interreligious marriage. The aim of this form of dialogue is improving the quality of life. After the conflict the different religious communities were more segregated than before. Many of them lived in Christian or Muslim villages or zones, schools were segregated and people of different religions were hesitant to get in touch with each other. Because of this Gogali thinks it is very important to contribute to this form of dialogue. At the Women School she provides a space where women can meet and get to know each other. They can share their daily-life experiences and when they become friends they can visit each other's celebrations, like Christmas and Eid al-Fitr at the end of the month of Ramadan. All the interviewees told me they are really happy and proud that they are friends now. That Mosintuwu contributes to their friendship is shown by the interaction during the meetings, but also in the text messages they send each other, the holidays they celebrate together and the time they spend together outside the Women School.

A third form of dialogue is the so-called *aesthetic dialogue*. An example of this form of dialogue is the collaboration of individuals of a different religion on a social project. The goal of this type of dialogue is to seek and achieve shared ethical values. An ethical value that Mosintuwu is looking for in the first place is peace. During the first section the aim is to build on peace between religious groups, followed by the intention to acquire peace between women and men, both in domestic spheres and in the community. An example of an activity is the cleaning of a hundred prayer houses. In addition to their normal Women School meetings they meet in churches, temples or mosques to spick-and-span the houses of worship.

The fourth and the last form is the *dialogue of the heart*. This dialogue aims to seek out the common experience of the divine. This can take place for example by praying together, like the women do in the beginning of their meeting. Praying together was their own initiative.

As we can see all the four forms are used at the Women School, but considering the meetings I have attended I regard the *dialogue of life* the most frequently employed. Only during the first section do they actually discuss religious topics, the intellectual dialogue. In the following sections religious topics are mentioned, but theological principles are not discussed. They talk about religion in order to address other problems, like domestic violence or gender inequality. That this is still seen as religious dialogue is clear from the interview answers, in which many women indicate that they are not necessarily talking about religion often, but that it is still an important issue because they all adhere to another religion.

⁴⁶ Bons-Storm R., Doorn-Harder, N., *Dubbele dialoog, vrouwen en mannen in interreligieuze dialoog*, Narratio, Gorinchem, 2012, p.26.

⁴⁷ Idem, p.23.

In conversation with believers of other religious traditions sometimes different views or opinions are brought to light within a religious group. Interreligious dialogue, in that case, leads to intra-religious dialogue. This happens a lot in the Women School where different forms of Christianity are represented. Pentecostal Christians find out about their differences with the protestants and vice versa. In the Women School of Pamona for example, all the participants are Christians, but members of different streams of Christianity.

2.3.1 Why interreligious dialogue?

To bring adherents or communities of different religions back on speaking terms and to strengthen a harmonious relationship, I consider interreligious dialogue essential. For a fruitful dialogue it is important to take into account the history of the relationship between the different religious groups. It is a necessity to explore or to know the history of the relation in order to continue on good terms with each other. During a conference on religious peace in South-East Asia in 2002, the history of relationships between religions in Indonesia was described as follows: 'All religions have indelibly engraved in their memories the wrongs and conflicts, and the hatred which now makes dialogue difficult. Without forgiveness and reconciliation there can be no dialogue.'⁴⁸ The conflict in Poso is the most discussed aspect of history at the Women School, because it contributed to the segregation of Muslims and Christians. Because of the findings of her master research, Gogali is convinced that the conflict was not a religious conflict but rather a political struggle for power in which religions were abused.

Gogali teaches this to the women because the acknowledgement of this different point of view is a significant step to get closer to each other. Many women mentioned during the interviews that they changed their mind about the conflict, since they now realize they are not opponents.

Although this development is, of course, most welcome for the process of forgiveness and reuniting, it appeared that some women went a bit further by concluding that Muslims or Christians had never even fought. The Christian Ibu Meystin, for example, told me: 'I used to think that during the conflict Muslims and Christians were fighting, but because of the Women School I know that Muslims don't want to use the violence. I don't know who were the offenders of the conflict, but not the Muslims.'

This opinion that Muslims and Christians were not the ones who were fighting is a manifest distortion of the truth since several people who have been tried for violent crimes during the conflict described themselves, and are considered, either Muslims or Christian. For example Ibnu Ahmad, who was imprisoned twice for waging jihad against Christians.⁴⁹ This might be problematic, because a twisted look at reality can lead to undesirable scenarios, for example when women figure out that some Muslims actually did fight. In that case, it is possible that all Muslims or Islam are blamed for that. Intellectual religious dialogue can prevent this, or redirect this to convictions more in accordance with reality.

In any case, at the Women School effort is made in trying to clear the air between the religions concerned. That these efforts are paying off is shown by the enthusiasm of the interviewees about how happy they are now they can be friends with women of another religion.

⁴⁸ Suzuki, K., Sarapung, E., *Asia, the Reconciler. Report of The Sixth Assembly of The Asian Conference on Religion and Peace (ACRP) Yogyakarta, June 24th-28th, 2002*. Indonesia, Seoul, 2005, p.51.

⁴⁹ Griswold, E., 2010, p.161.

2.4 Pluralism

That the women appreciate each other is of course a valuable development. However, what Mosintuwu is aiming for is sustainable peace. For this reason, Gogali has implemented some pluralistic thoughts in the programme, for example the idea that Muslims and Christians have the same God, something a lot of women have mentioned in their interviews. In this paragraph I will discuss what pluralism is, in what way this can foster peace, and in what way pluralistic thoughts are embedded in the Women School. I will argue that both Gogali and the women are positive about interreligious relationships and that they can be considered pluralists.

When one has a strong belief in the truth claims of their religion, one finds it hard to believe other religions can speak meaningfully about ultimate goals and about the true divine. Such absolutism and the intrinsically related denial of other religions complicated interreligious dialogue.⁵⁰ Truth claims and religious plurality are an interesting combination, and usually scholars distinguish three models to describe the relationship: exclusivism, inclusivism and pluralism. Exclusivism means that truth is exclusively founded in one's own religion. Inclusivism contains the idea that other religions can be accepted or appreciated, but will always be measured up against one's own religion, and not on their own premises. Since the acceptance of other truth claims requires a lot of commitment, interreligious relations are still quite complicated in the inclusive model.

Knitter describes two different approaches to pluralism, the mutuality model⁵¹ and the acceptance model⁵². The mutuality model assumes the universality of an ultimate reality and endorses the presence of this in all religions. Assuming that different religions are all expressions of the same divine truth, this model stresses the commonality of religions and of people, underscoring and looking for common grounds. The acceptance model recognises the religious differences but accepts these without argument. The differences are seen as a way to establish rich diversity and growth in one's own religion. Instead of looking for a common ground, differences are recognised and appreciated.

Although all these approaches are very helpful in categorizing different relations between religions or religious communities, they are not always very useful in describing the actual situation that exists between religious people. These approaches are considered from a theoretical point of view. They describe what people believe and how they evaluate other religions but do not pay much attention to what people's actual behaviour towards other religious people is. In my opinion one should keep in mind that people are often inconsistent, and haven't always thought their beliefs through. This is especially the case with less educated people, who do not have (much) schooling in theological issues. In my view, the way people looked upon other religions after the conflict doesn't have much to do with the truth claims of those religions, but more with the relationship with the people of those religions in the first place, both in social and political perspective. So what I am saying is that the actual relation between Muslims and Christians in the post-conflict situation made interreligious dialogue difficult, and not merely their exclusivist or inclusivist attitude.

At the same time, I presume that the women of the Women School can accept and appreciate their religious differences much easier because they experience that the other women are nice, friendly, pleasant, etc, so that they conclude that their negative prejudices about the other

⁵⁰ Wijssen, F., ed., *Religion, civil society and conflict in Indonesia*, LIT, Berlin, 2009, p.73.

⁵¹ Knitter, P.F., *Theologies of religions*, Orbis Books, New York, p.109.

⁵² Idem, p.173.

religion cannot be true. Their evaluation is based on their behaviour rather than on their cognitive notions. What I am saying is that they can appreciate the other religion, largely because they appreciate the individuals adhering to that religion.

When I asked the women to describe what they liked the most about the other religion, very often they mentioned that they just like the Muslims or the Christians. Firstly this indicates that they judge the other religion in terms of how they judge their believers. Secondly this suggests that they do not have a clear picture of what the doctrine of the other religion is, never mind the truth claims. However, respecting each other and therefor respecting each other's religion is only half of the story. Learning about and learning to appreciate each other's religion also strengthens the relationship between people, so it is an interaction between cognitive notions and behaviour.

I think we can say that many, if not all of the respondents are pluralists. Some women explicitly mentioned that they think Muslims and Christians believe in the same God, an aspect of the mutuality model. That differences can contribute to the flourishing of society is noted by Ibu Unita (Christian): "A rainbow with only one colour is no beauty. We need all the colours to make it beautiful. That is why we have to work together with all the religions."⁵³ This quote is an example of the acceptance model. Since Gogali has paid attention to the religious differences and the women report that they appreciate each other despite these differences, I consider the acceptance model as the predominant approach. Although Knitters theory is based on his Christian heritage and forms a framework for describing approaches within Christianity I assume it is also suitable for classifying the mental attitudes of the participants of the Women School. In any case, the women in my research are all amenable for interreligious relationships.

2.5 Importance of religion

During my visit in Poso, I noticed that Mosintuwu seems to concern itself mainly with social issues, such as domestic violence and human rights. I did not necessarily feel that religion plays a major role in the program, yet Mosintuwu is called an interfaith organization. How do we reconcile these different perspectives? On the question whether religion is a much discussed topic in the Women School most women I interviewed gave negative responses. Yet, almost unanimously they said that religion plays an important role in the Women School. To understand this apparent contradiction, I looked at how religion plays a role in the lives of the women to see how they appreciate religion.

In order to explore the importance of religion in the women's lives I asked them if religion is important to their life and in what way. Without exception all of the women responded approvingly, varying from 'important' to 'very very very important'. Regarding how religion is important to their life's, the women revealed three different patterns. The first pattern is that religion is important for their identity. This is among others apparent from the high value they said to give to "religion as tradition" and to what one of the interviewees called "religion as an organisation". The second pattern is that religion is important as a guideline in life. The third pattern is the pattern of religious experience. Although this is only mentioned explicitly by one respondent, it seems relevant to deepen out this motive, if only to show that there are motives which can play a role other than just the most general. In the following section I shall attempt to give a detailed analysis of these three patterns.

⁵³ Interview Ibu Unita (Christian Protestant).

2.5.1 Identity

The first patterns concerns the importance of religion for one's identity. One's self-description is a combination of different identities such as nationality, religion, community, gender, culture, family etc.⁵⁴ Religion is a powerful force to motivate people, especially after a conflict it is a significant identity marker. Religion has a great impact on social identity, since it is an important factor that makes the women feel they belong to a certain group. Not only the conflict had influence on this, other causes also have shaped their identity. In the following I will discuss this more extensively.

In Indonesia, every citizen is required to have a religion. In their passport is written to which of the five religions - Islam, Christianity, Hinduism, Confucianism or Buddhism - they belong. In fact, this is the first foundation for religion as an identity marker. A second reason why religion is important to the identity of these women is the conflict. Since that time Muslims and Christians and to some extent Hindus as well have lived as highly segregated groups. The women who were interviewed spoke of Muslim zones and Christian zones. Many women outlined that they didn't have any contact with people of other religions until they joined the Women School. Sometimes this was due to feelings of fear and revenge, but more often it was because there is simply no space where they could encounter one another.

Not only the historical events and the relationship between the religions have contributed to the status of religion as identity marker, also developments within one's religion have their influences. One of such developments is the role of religion as a tradition in the lives of the women. For some women the importance of religion is connected with the value of tradition. The fact that it is something they have learned from their parents and which they can teach to their children makes it something important. Not only does this make religion important, but it is also something they value in their religion, as something special they have learned from the elderly.⁵⁵ Indeed, some women indicate that their parents played a significant role in their religious education, in the same way they educate religion to their own children.⁵⁶ Some women who see religion as part of a tradition also explained that they understand that other people can have another religion. Ibu Radna's statement can be taken as example: 'It is OK that they follow the Islam, because it is what their parents have taught them.'

Another side of religion that is important to the women's social identity is the institutional aspect, for example gathering in a church or in a religious community. Many institutions are working along religious lines, like schools and media. The following citation serves as an example: 'The continuing influence of *Kompas*, the largest circulation broadsheet and published by Catholics, the Protestant *Suara Pembaruan* newspaper, and the Islamic daily *Republika*, indicate that religion is maintaining an important role in society, [...]'⁵⁷

Many of the women mention these organizational aspects as something that is important to them or as something they like in their religion. Activities with their religious community offer variety to their daily life but also gives them a feeling of belonging to something bigger. Two of the women I have interviewed were converted twice, from Christianity to Islam and back. Ibu Erni is one of them and she explained that she converted to Islam because of her marriage with a Muslim, but when her

⁵⁴ Haynes, J., 2007, p.84.

⁵⁵ interview Ibu Asna (Muslim).

⁵⁶ interview Ibu Meystin (Christian Catholic).

⁵⁷ Phan, P.C., *Christianities in Asia*, Blackwell publishing Ltd, 2011, p.72.

husband died she felt more comfortable with the religion of her own family.⁵⁸ Apparently it was necessary for her to convert to another religion when she wanted to belong to another group. This indicates that a religious organization has much influence on, or even shapes a group.

Finally, religion determines their identity because the church and mosque communities play a major role in the social lives of women. On my visits to the church I listened to the sermon, but the service consisted mainly of singing and praying together and wishing each other a happy Sunday. All in all a very social affair.

Not only does religion have organizational aspects, Ibu Lydia (Christian) goes even further to call religion an organization in itself. She describes it as follows:

'I see religion as an organization because it brings followers together to increase their faith, it can unite people. Muslims can also join our organisation, but then they have to convert to our beliefs. Religion is organised by people who have the same beliefs. The organization creates the conditions for us to profess our faith well. One of these conditions is the church, it is part of the rules of my organization. We need a church to improve our faith, because practicing is important. The church helps us to pray and in the church we can pray together.'⁵⁹

2.5.2 Guideline

Besides the fact that religion is important to the identity of the women, many women, both Christian and Muslim also mentioned that religion indicates direction in their lives, that teaches them about right and wrong, or at a more abstract level: "I cannot live without religion, there would be chaos." It appears to me that they consider religion as a supporting factor for morality, or even more: 'Without religion, we would have a messy life, because then we do not have principles about a good life'.⁶⁰ This conviction gives religion an influence on the civic identity; how to be a good citizen.

Other women who characterize the importance of religion in a way that fits this category described religion as a guidance to the right way. The right way they called patience, discipline, love, peace and respect. Once, a women referred to the Bible: 'The right way is written: I am the way to truth.'⁶¹ All these characteristics teach people how to interact with other people, and to live in a peaceful community.

They said to have read the Bible or Quran, but what the lessons of these books about good and evil exactly were, they often fail to pinpoint. Usually it remains something generic like 'tolerance' or 'love'. I figured out that most of the Muslim women had only read the Quran in Arabic, which made it hard, or even impossible for them to understand the teachings. Either way, maybe it is not the teachings that guide the women but rather their moral behaviour finds direction through their religious convictions.

This moral behaviour is not only shaping their civic identity and social life, but also creates better opportunities for their afterlife. This is a major theme in the life of some women, illustrated by the comment of Ibu Muti: 'Religion is important to me because it will save me at the end of my life. Then I can go to heaven.'⁶²

⁵⁸ Interview Ibu Erni (Christian Protestant).

⁵⁹ interview Ibu Lydia (Christian, Pentecostal).

⁶⁰ Interview Ibu Marian (Muslim).

⁶¹ Interview Ibu Merry (Christian Protestant).

⁶² Interview Ibu Muti (Christian Protestant).

2.5.3 Religious experiences

A religious experience, finally, can contribute to a more intense and personal relationship with God. Ibu Marlin told me candidly about her religious experience:

'In the beginning I didn't believe that God existed because I had so many problems. So when the church asked me to become a teacher I said no because I didn't believe. They said it was only a challenge, that I had to find God again. When I was in the church I didn't want to pray in front of the students, as they had asked, but suddenly I saw a light from the rooftop to my feet. I was the only one who saw the light, so I knew it was a sign. A sign from God to remember him.'

Religious experiences can form one's personal identity. In this case Ibu Marlin felt more connected to God, her religion and her religious community, which made her decide to teach at the church. She told me that after this event in 2005, she prays to God more often since she now feels a stronger bond between them.

2.6 Religious motivations of women to participate in the Women School

As I stated before, religion is very important to the women, their religious convictions to the classes. In this sense, their religious beliefs play a background role in their decision to join the Women School. Only some women explicitly stated that they had religious motivations for joining the school. Here I will discuss what their motives were, and show the motives of the women who said not to have religious motivations.

With 'motivation' the willingness is meant to perform a certain behaviour, the stimulus that causes people to do or to pursue something. In the case of religious motivation, a certain religious perception, teaching or experience is the stimulus. In preparing this research I somehow expected to hear different religious motivations for joining the Women School. For example the esteem of *ta'aruf*,⁶³ to get to know and help each other, and acknowledgment of *taqwa*,⁶⁴ God-consciousness, or other Islamic or Christian teachings about love, peace, tolerance, remission etc. Instead, I heard very practical considerations, like 'I was asked to join and I had no reservations for that'.⁶⁵ Other answers mainly had to do with 'learning more' and/or 'doing more'. Exemplary for the first category is the answer from Ibu Lina: 'I liked to join because I only finished my high school so this was a chance to get more education.'⁶⁶ Also the answer of Ibu Sunartin fits in this category: 'Because I wanted to have more knowledge and more activities.'⁶⁷ I investigated the application letters where the women had to explain why they wanted to join and what they expected to learn. Without exception, all the women indicated that they wanted to have more education. The answers to the second question were more diverse, but were mainly that they thought to learn about human and women rights.

To the question what their motivations were and whether they had any religious motivation, the women often gave different responses. Although the first question was often answered with practical motivation, they also described religious motivations in response to the latter question.

⁶³ Suzuki, K., Sarapung, E., 2005, p.14.

⁶⁴ Alexander S.C., ed. Mona S., *Encyclopaedia of the Qur'an*, Leiden–Boston, Brill, 2006, p.379.

⁶⁵ Interview Ibu Rosmin (Muslim).

⁶⁶ Interview Ibu Lina (Christian Protestant).

⁶⁷ Interview Ibu Sunartin (Muslim).

Although they could not give specific references from their respective holy scriptures, from their answers it was none the less clear they linked their religious motivations strongly with peace and love. Love and peace were thus seen as religious characteristics. By some, just learning about other religions was brought up as a motivation. 'I wanted to have more knowledge also about other religions.'⁶⁸

In addition to learning about religions, they answered that they wanted to know the women of other religions as well. They did not only want getting to know them, but also working together, becoming friends and caring about each other. This is reflected in the answer of Ibu Olfi: 'I wanted to become friends with Muslims and Hindus' and 'my religious motivation was that we have to love each other, so I also wanted to love Muslims'.⁶⁹ Sometimes the wish for peace is related to the idea that humans are all creations of God, but gets a practical interpretation. The women made clear that we are all human beings so we have to learn together to make it a safe and comfortable place. Such a view is shown in the sentence: 'My religious motivations are just that we as human beings have to work together.'⁷⁰ And in other words: 'Everybody is the same in front of God. I am not really into the bible, but I know about the teaching of equality. This equality refers to everybody, Muslim, Christians, Men, Women, we are all God's creation. So we have to work and live together without feelings of superiority.'⁷¹

Other motivations are more directly related to the post-conflict situation. Women wanted to join the Women School to weaken the segregation and make the people of Poso united again, like Ibu Asna said: 'After the conflict I wanted us to be united again.'⁷² Apart from the wish for reunion also one woman had the specific thought that joining the Women School could help her reducing the trauma of the conflict.⁷³

In many cases, the aspiration for reunion is not mentioned as a reason for joining the Women School but is nevertheless something they see as the result of the programme and something for which they hold great esteem. In the interview with Ibu Martince she told me she did not have a religious motivation, her only reason was that she was a house wife and did not have any objections against participating. When I asked her what she thought about Mosintuwu as an institute for all religions she answered me: 'Mosintuwu helped us in our peace mission. If there was a school only for Christians I would not have joined it because I believe we should do it together.'⁷⁴ This suggests that she has thought about working with Muslims before and that this was part of her motivation for joining. Anyway, her remark shows that she values the interfaith content of Mosintuwu, and many of the women with her.

In conclusion, instead of being a significant part of the motivations underlying participation in the Women School, the religious motivation of the women turned out to be of relatively minor importance. I noticed that almost all their motives can be summarized to one: obtaining a better life. This consists of a better education, more inspiring activities and above all, peace.

⁶⁸ Interview Ibu Yanti (Muslim).

⁶⁹ Interview Ibu Olfi (Christian Protestant).

⁷⁰ Interview Ibu Yanti (Muslim).

⁷¹ Interview Ibu Lina (Christian Protestant).

⁷² Interview Ibu Asna (Muslim).

⁷³ Interview Ibu Supina (Muslim).

⁷⁴ Interview Ibu Martince (Christian Pentecostal).

This observation, however, does not cover the whole story. Although their religious beliefs did not play a significant role in their choice to participate in the Women School, they did influence the way they gave substance to their participation and the content of the Women School. So the religious beliefs of the participants are influential and important and therefore should not be neglected. In what way one should take into account the religious beliefs of participants and beneficiaries of development organisations I will describe in the following chapters.

2.7 Conclusion

When Gogali returned to Poso, she saw her hometown in ruins. Why she wanted to stay was because she wanted to improve the situation in Poso, for the society in general and the women and children in particular. Her conviction was that in the first place the women should overcome the religious prejudices and the fear for each other's religion. This is why she paid a lot attention to religion in the first section of the curriculum.

In the rest of the year, religion is still a subject for debate, but more in an indirect way, namely the dialogue of life. In my opinion this is the most important form of dialogue in the school since the women are not used to 'life' with people of the other religion. They are thankful to have new friends and the friendships help to appreciate the other religion more. Concluding from their answers they don't have much knowledge about other religions, but being together and experience the other religion is for the women more effective in learning about other religions. This is, among other, drawn from the impact the visit of the praying house had on the women.

Religion is very important in the lives of women, so this provides a basis when they talk about their life's in the Women School. Besides, the valuing of religion in the programme of course has to do with the post-conflict situation. All women are raring to make peace between religious groups so they have to work on that together. In addition, they explicitly want to carry out that religion don't have to be an impediment to acquire this. They are therefore proud to have friends among other religions.

Religion has a widespread presence in society and in the life's of the women, but is meanwhile not very superficial. It seems like sometimes they don't really recognise the influence of religion in their motivations, maybe because of the obviousness of religion in their life's. At the same time are their motivations more practical then could be expected considering the place of religion in their life's and in society in general; they just want to have a better life.

Both Gogali and the women have a strong desire for peace. However, the programme doesn't focus on peace between the religious communities alone. As I will describe in the following chapter the curriculum also tries to contribute to development of other social problems.

3. In what way are religious motives used by Mosintuwu and the participants in the peace process?

For years, western governments and institutions have seen religion as a hindrance for advancement in developing countries. Development was associated with modernisation and secularisation. This is why development agencies have used secular pathways to reduce the scale of poverty and implement systems for justice and equality.⁷⁵ For a long time development strategies have focused on financial support, to achieve economic progress and to ensure that all people have access to necessary basics, like clean water, health care and education. These initiatives did not achieve the desired results mainly because of two reasons. Firstly, developing countries in the *Third World* were often supported only for the interest of the anti-communist West and secondly, the unwillingness of the elite in the developing countries to cooperate made it difficult to develop the country.⁷⁶ Recently, after the nineties, there was a turning point in the perception of development aid because people realized that firstly, secular methods are no panacea and secondly, that also faith based initiatives seem helpful.⁷⁷ *Mensen met een Missie* is such an organisation that supports a strong network of communities and organizations working from a faith-based motivation for social justice, like Mosintuwu.⁷⁸ It believes, like the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, (also known as the World Bank,) that to improve development outcomes, you have to involve societal actors, preferential grassroots organisations.⁷⁹

In this chapter I will discuss the second part of the main question *in what way are religious motives used by MOsintuwu and the participants in the peace process?* I have investigated how the motivation of both Mosintuwu and the participating women are used to achieve progress. The first field of development I discuss is the relationship between Christians and Muslims. For that reason I will describe Gogali's idea of peace and religious tolerance and how she wants to make use of this in order to achieve her goals. In the subsequent section I will describe what the other objectives of Mosintuwu are and how these goals are intertwined with religion. I will end with a preliminary conclusion to the question posed above.

3.1 Gogali's idea of peace and religious tolerance

The first section of the Women School is called *religion, tolerance and peace*. On tolerance, and even more specifically on religious tolerance, many thinkers have racked their brains. What exactly is it and what does Gogali want to teach the women?

Religious tolerance is intertwined with freedom of religion. The acknowledgment of religious freedom entails the idea that everyone is free to choose a religion and that one has to tolerate that. However, this concept of tolerance also has some negative connotations because it means that it is based on rejection but tolerance occurs by the grace of generosity. In that case, tolerance is not a sign of commitment but rather of disinterest. The question is, definitely in a post-conflict situation, is

⁷⁵ Haynes, J., 2007, p.1.

⁷⁶ Idem, p.7.

⁷⁷ Idem p.8.

⁷⁸ Website Mensen met een Missie, <http://www.mensenmeteenmissie.nl/content/mensen-met-een-missie> last accessed on July 24 2013.

⁷⁹ Haynes, J., 2007, p.10.

tolerance enough? Gogali thinks so because she links the term with respect and action, like good deeds and good communication. This is how she responded to my question how she sees tolerance:

‘During the Soeharto-time people in Indonesia had a misunderstanding of the concept of tolerance. Muslims thought that because Islam is the major religion they had the right and the power to decide what they would tolerate from other religions. And people of other religions went along with this, because they didn’t have any power and did not stand for their rights. In this way tolerance has some negative connotations, but I see tolerance in a different way. It has to do with respect. Tolerance is not only the thought but also the act. What I mean is that if you have respect for another religion it should be manifest in your behaviour as well. So tolerance is not something passive, but rather *active*. Not just condone the other or another religion, but show others that you tolerate them. Besides, a third aspect is communication. To ensure your good intentions, you have to keep communicating with each other. This is also part of showing your openness to others and your willingness to understand each other and to improve your relationship.’

Gogali tries to teach the women about tolerance in order to create a more harmonious environment, first in the group but ultimately intended for society.⁸⁰ During the lessons of the first section they do not discuss religious themes for tolerance or peace, but instead, Gogali has a more personal approach. Because the classes are small, around 20 women, Gogali creates a relaxed and intimate atmosphere. Within these conditions, the women come to know, trust and appreciate each other. By overcoming the religious differences in the first section, tolerance seems to be a natural side effect. This natural development is also discussed in the book of Jasper Schaaf, under the heading ‘if people know each other, they like each other’.⁸¹ Schaaf describes the opinion that if social conditions improve, dialogue and integration come naturally.

Many women told me that they have learned about some differences, like different ways of praying, but that they all have the same god, or the same purpose in praying to god. In this point of view, they realise that the differences are not really important, but what matters the most is that they are all human, and in this case, all women. I asked Gogali if Mosintuwu carries out the vision that all religions worship the same God. She told me that if the women told me that, they have learned this because it has been their own conclusion. “My school is not a place where we teach the women what they have to believe or what they have to think, but we discuss the subject together. This is one reason why we don’t have teachers, but research persons. These are experts on different subjects, so that they can explain a little bit, but most of the time we ask the women questions, we let them think and make their own decisions. So in case a woman tells you that we all pray to the same God, it is her conclusion from the discussion following the visit of the praying houses.”

Although the questions the research persons ask may be a bit suggestive - since almost all the women draw the same conclusions - it might be a suitable directive to increase tolerance. By showing the differences but also focus on what the religions have in common, the differences become less problematic. Vroom also endorses the importance of knowing the differences, he states: ‘Those who accept the otherness of others must, while seeking points of agreement, at the same

⁸⁰ I haven’t followed any lesson of the first section, so my considerations are based on the stories of the women.

⁸¹ Schaaf, J., *Godsdienstkritiek, respect en actieve tolerantie, Feuerbach herlezen*, DAMON Budel, 2010, p.81. In Dutch: ‘Als mensen elkaar maar leren kennen, mogen ze elkaar’.

time not neglect the differences.⁸² Knowledge about the differences is a remedy for disarray and fear and helps the women realize that the differences do not have to be an obstacle for a good relationship. By showing the beauty of diversity instead of ignoring the differences, it is more easy to tolerate others with different religious practices.

In the direction of peace, a step further than tolerance is appreciation. Many women said they appreciated other religions because they teach the same values, like peace and love. Since I do not have the feeling that they discussed the religious interpretation of these themes and because in the interviews they could not give examples of specific teachings, (of both their own religion as of other religions) I think this appreciation must be a result of the friendship that has developed between the women. As I argued in chapter 2,⁸³ the appreciation of other religions is above all a result of positive and friendly behaviour of the women. Like Gogali, Jasper Schaaf describes tolerance as an action as well. According to him tolerance, and the corresponding freedom 'presupposes respect for other opinions and listening skills but also an active attitude to be critical.'⁸⁴ This active attitude is required to start a conversation, but also a condition for fruitful dialogue in which people try to understand and tolerate each other. We have to see Gogali's comment 'tolerance and appreciation are actions' in this way. The women study together, talk with each other, show their goodwill, all of which contributes to tolerance.

With this paragraph I have shown how Gogali sees religious tolerance and how she implements it in the Women School. In chapter four I will give some suggestions for how she could do this in a more effective way. On the basis of the theory of Philip Cam I will state that religion can play an even bigger role in the way towards tolerance and peace. But first, I will continue with other objectives of Mosintuwu, because although Gogali pursues tolerance, it is not her only goal.

3.2 Objectives of Mosintuwu

What Gogali wants to achieve is to transform the women from victims to survivors into change makers.⁸⁵ This change can be made in different areas of development. The first is on the area of the religious conflict where a change has to be made in the interaction between religious groups. Another area is the role of women in society and the third one is the position of women in relation to their husbands. The last two topics do not seem to be related to religion but are an important topic to Mosintuwu as well because women are not only victim of religious violence, but also of domestic violence.

These development objectives are intrinsically related to human rights. The relationship between religion and human rights is sometimes shown to be quite problematic, resistance came both from human rights organisations who didn't want to get involved with religious matters and religious organisations, especially non-western, from ones who considered human rights too liberal and/or too individualistic. Some efforts have been made to make these human rights ethics more suitable for religions, like Islamic interpretations of human rights⁸⁶ and the Declaration of a Global

⁸² Vroom, H.M., *A spectrum of Worldviews, an introduction to philosophy of religion in a pluralistic world*, Rodopi, Amsterdam-New York, 2006, p.241.

⁸³ This thesis p.6.

⁸⁴ Schaaf, J., 2010, p.60.

⁸⁵ Interview Gogali.

⁸⁶ An-Na'im, A.A., *Towards an Islamic Hermeneutics of Human Rights*, <http://www.law.emory.edu/aannaim/pdfiles/dwnld32.pdf>. Last accessed on July 21 2013.

Ethics of the Parliament of the World's Religion.⁸⁷ Also, according to Bas de Gaay Fortman, 'the most urgent task now is to anchor human rights within diverse cultures'.⁸⁸ How Gogali is trying to reach this with the Women School will be discussed in the following section.

3.2.1 Change makers in a post-conflict area

There are two prevalent misconceptions about the relationship between religion and violence. The first is that from religion nothing is to be expected but violent conflict or a 'clash of civilisations'. The other misunderstanding is the opposite, that religions are in essence good, so they cannot contribute to violence.⁸⁹ The claims cannot both be true, but it is interesting to find out how the claims are related to the Poso conflict.

Some development organisations tend to 'ignore' religion in their method because of history, in which religion is often associated with violence and terror. Although this should obviously not be downplayed, it has not been proven that violence is an essential aspect of religion. According to Bouta, 'faith-based peace-building initiatives have contributed positively to peace-building, exemplified in four main ways. They can provide: (1) emotional and spiritual support for war-affected communities, (2) effective mobilisation for their communities and others for peace', (3) mediation 'between conflicting parties', and (4) a conduit in pursuit of 'reconciliation, dialogue, and disarmament, demobilization and reintegration'.⁹⁰

Especially this fourth point applies to the goals of the Women School. Gogali stimulates dialogue and with that reconciliation. With dialogue, she tries to make the more peaceful aspects predominate the violent. Gogali, and I with her, pleads for discussing religious issues instead of ignoring them. By taking the relation between religion and violence more seriously I consider it more effective to contribute to peace. This 'taking seriously' consists of discussing it, learning to understand each other's reactions and then learning to redirect it to something positive. An example of this is how Gogali tried to explain how religion was used for political purposes during the conflict.

Learning about each other's religious differences is an important step toward peace. David Little describes that 'the lack of respect for religious differences is of great consequence in dividing the country'.⁹¹ Although Gogali gives attention to the explanation of religious differences, it is sometimes hard for the women to comprehend, which indicates that it was an even bigger problem before they joined the Women School. The relationship between religion and violence is very complicated, and more attention to the specific situation in Poso should be given in other research, but the ignorance or misunderstanding of religious difference can easily turn into a lack of respect. Anyway, it is a positive development that the women can talk about religious differences in the Women School, although in my view this could happen more in order to achieve sustainable peace.

During the Women School the women do not only learn about each other's religion, but also about the role of the religious groups in the conflict. Gogali wants them to know that religious groups can be set opposite to each other, without religion necessarily preaching for violence and that this was what happened in the Poso conflict. Some women told me that now they know that the conflict

⁸⁷ Declaration of a Global Ethics, <http://globlethic.org/Center/kung.htm>, Last accessed on July 24 2013.

⁸⁸ Vroom, H.M., 2006, p.234.

⁸⁹ Little, D., *Peacemakers in Action. Profiles of Religion in Conflict Resolution*, Cambridge University Press, New York, 2007, p.429.

⁹⁰ Bouta et al. 2005, cited in Haynes, J., 2007, p.90.

⁹¹ Little, D., 2007, p.430.

was not a religious conflict, expressing statements like: “Muslims have never used violence”.⁹² Who in fact were the perpetrators, they don’t know. In some cases they say: “The only persons who are bad are the ones who have no religion”.⁹³ Noteworthy, this statement expresses the idea that ‘good religion only brings peace’. Barring the truthfulness, it can bring the women closer to each other, because they see that the other religion is good too. This can help them in having a relationship without remorse. Although this seems to be something good, it also seems to be as a postponing of the problem, because then the people without a religion are the bad guys.

By having friends among other religions, they can be a good example to the rest of society. This is something some women mentioned in the interviews, like Ibu Rosmin: ‘I am also a peace maker, because I give a good example to other people by working together with women of all religions’.⁹⁴ Another example: Ibu Martince said during a meeting her family was worried when she went to other villages because these were in Muslim zones. To their concerns she responded: ‘Don’t worry, I have a lot of Muslim friends there from the Women School, they will protect me’.⁹⁵ By showing that it is safe to go to other areas maybe more people will dare to do so. Bringing the women together and investing in close relationships between them can reduce segregation. That the role of women in the peace process should not be underestimated is also evident from the following quote: ‘Women issues are among the most important concern of ICRP (International Conference on Religion and Peace), as the process of reconciliation could not be achieved without the participation of women.’⁹⁶

Also the research person who helped with the design of the curriculum, John Lusikooy, values the great importance of the role of women in the peace process: ‘We use women, give them a role. Our experiences during the conflict were that men were not brave enough to enter public areas, but women did. Women were less disturbed by the conflict and also have opportunities to open communication, for example at the traditional market.’⁹⁷

⁹² Interview Ibu Radna (Christian Protestant).

⁹³ Interview Ibu Helmin (Christian Mennonite).

⁹⁴ Interview Ibu Rosmin (Muslim).

⁹⁵ Interview Ibu Martince (Christian Pentecostal).

⁹⁶ Suzuki, K., Sarapung, E., 2005, p.77.

⁹⁷ Interview John Lusikooy.



Image 6: Gogali and the women during their peace protest in Tentena

Gogali and some of the women have organised a few demonstrations. In February 2013 there was a demonstration for women rights and in November 2012 and June 2013 there were two peace protests. Although violence now is used mostly between a few terrorists and the police, that does not mean there is no conflict between the religious groups anymore. In Beyer's article he states that 'lethargy, passivity, isolation and silence' are also styles of handling conflict.⁹⁸ Considering the situation in Poso, where people still live in more or less segregated groups I regard it as incredibly meaningful that the women and Gogali try to break through this silence and speak out for peace.

However, to guarantee sustainable peace it is a necessity to talk about how to configure society and about each other's wants and needs as well. This is not only important to maintain peace but is equally important to adjust other social problems.

3.2.2 Change makers in social issues

'Faith-based organisations have a special role to play in zones of religious conflict, but their peace-building programmes do not need to be confined to addressing religious conflict only.'⁹⁹ This is a reason why Gogali also added other topics to the Women School. Women are not only victims of religious violence, but also of domestic violence. Peace is not needed between religious groups, but also in society in general and between women and men.

As in many societies, women rights are still in poor shape in Poso. Especially in a (post-) conflict situation the position of women should be of serious concern. According to Mary Condren, '[...] research shows that women and children now constitute the primary victims of war [...]'.¹⁰⁰ This is one of the reasons Gogali added sections on gender to the curriculum of the Women School. She wanted to increase women's awareness of their role in society and to make sure post-conflict

⁹⁸ Beyers, J., Religion, civil society and conflict: What is it that religion does for and to society?, *HTS Theological Studies*, 67 (3), art. #949, 2011, p.5.

⁹⁹ Haynes, J., 2007, p.90.

¹⁰⁰ Hogan, L., and Lehrke, D.L., *Religion and the politics of peace and conflict*, Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2009, p.126.

development does not become gender biased. For that reason matters such as gender, women and culture, women and politics and civil rights are discussed in the Women School. The social problems discussed in the Women School are among others poverty, low levels of education, criminalization of youth, gender inequality and domestic violence.

Although these issues do not necessarily have much to do with religion, they are part of the programme of an interfaith organisation such as Mosintuwu because they do have a relationship. There are three different approaches to look at the coherence between religion and social problems. Religion can have impact on social problems, be the solution, or religion can be seen as a source of social problems.¹⁰¹

- The story of Ibu Marlin (Christian) serves as good example of the impact of religion on social problems. During the interview she told me that she had already been unhappy for years. She had been married since she was only fifteen years old, but her husband was cheating on her all the time. With one woman he even had a child. She never wanted to divorce because she was afraid of what would happen to her and she was afraid of God, because she had promised him to remain with her husband until the end of days. No one in her village had respect for her because they saw her as his *bitch*.

The social problem in this case is that her husband treats Ibu Marlin disrespectfully, which not only leads to her feelings of sorrow but also to a bad reputation in her village. Religion has an impact on these problems because she is committed to a Christian interpretation of marriage, which makes her think she is not allowed to divorce. Because of the Women School she dares much more to stand up for herself. She talked about her problem with Gogali and then she realized that it cannot be God's intention that she is unhappy. Thus, she sent her husband outside of the house. He now lives with his parents, though she is still married to him. He has already asked her to sign divorce papers three times but she refused each time, to punish him. She said: "I will divorce him only then when he understands what he did to me. As long as he is not aware of this he maybe does it again to his next wife." The people in her village now have more respect for her, she said, but more importantly: "I am so proud of myself."

- As a solution to social problems, the church or other religious organisations can raise awareness of social problems, or can cooperate with welfare organisations. Especially when the government is inadequate in providing solutions, which is more or less the case in the Poso area, the work of religious NGO's becomes increasingly important. Also, 'at the local level poor governance, corruption, and poverty have led to many of the country's inhabitants to look to religion –instead of civil society – to resolve social questions'.¹⁰²

Religious or faith-based organisation does not always have to work by their own device only. Religion also can be used by the government as an expedient. For example by appropriating religion 'both in combating social problems and in ensuring that religions do not become deviant, but rather contribute to social cohesion'.¹⁰³

¹⁰¹ Hjelm, T., *Religion and social problems*, Routledge, New York, 2011, p.17.

¹⁰² Griswold, E., p. 201.

¹⁰³ Hjelm, T., 2011, p.5.

Marshall and Keough pose an interesting question in their research: ‘How can development agencies and governments constructively integrate interfaith groups’ perspectives on “poverty reduction” into their programs and policies when many faith groups do not view poverty reduction as the central question in the creation of more fulfilling, sustainable lifestyles?’¹⁰⁴ I am unable to speak in the name of "many faith groups" but at least I can conclude from what I have seen in the Women School that poverty reduction is one of the central issues. I attended three meetings in which the women learnt how to set up an economic community, and for the graduated women exist a programme called Bamboo project, which is concerned with this topic as well. With an economic community Gogali is aiming for growth of the economy and society and it should allow women to earn money independently and have financial control. Also in the interviews the wish for a better financial situation emerged in the women’s answers.

- Furthermore, especially after the attacks of 9/11, religions are also commonly regarded as a source of social problems, or even as a social problem in themselves. Religion is often described in a problem frameworks, for example in the media. In the situation of Poso, this approach can be seen in the perception of Christian women, who regarded Islam as a source of social problems because Islam prescribes jihad. After the conflict, people regarded each other’s religion as a threat to society because mujahideen and Christian combatants used excessive violence. Another commonly mentioned source of social problems is religious intolerance towards religious minorities.

All the social problems treated in the Women School occur in both communities, so why not tackle the problems together? ‘Edwards (2004:ix) reckons that no solution to social, economic or political problems in the 21st century is possible without civil society as a vehicle for change.’¹⁰⁵ Gogali’s idea is that, when the relationship between religious groups is mended, the women can work together to improve their social situation. During the Women School the women learn about public service rights and there is a section added to increase their speaking and reasoning skills, so that they can advocate women rights in society. The idea is that the women are actively engaged with (religious) organizations in their villages who are engaged with these issues.¹⁰⁶ To do this in a structured way, Gogali has set up the above mentioned Bamboo Project to counter financial problems, the Safe House project to help victims of, and protect women and children against domestic violence, and the Women and Politics Program to establish sustainable change.

3.2.3 Change makers in emancipation of women

As I previously reported, domestic violence is, as in many places around the world, a serious problem in Poso. To ‘promote gender equality and empower women’ is for good reason one of the eight Millennium Development Goals.¹⁰⁷ Domestic violence is among others, due to an unequal relation between men and women. To bring this relation back into balance, the women learn about human rights, which in this case, largely means women rights. Because of the high concern, Gogali has chosen to educate the women about this right after the section on religious tolerance.

¹⁰⁴ Marshall, Keough, 2004, p.10.

¹⁰⁵ Beyers, J., 2011, p3.

¹⁰⁶ Interview Gogali.

¹⁰⁷ Millennium development goals, <http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/mdgoverview.html>. Last accessed on August 16 2013.

The gender section is the second section of the Women School curriculum and consists of five modules, namely sex and gender, gender bias, violence against women in feminist perspective, domestic violence and method of protection on women. The gender section creates awareness of equality and the struggle for women's rights, including protection and the proper handling cases of domestic violence.

All the women I have interviewed are housewife's with a low level of education. Even so, emancipation of the women is an important topic in the Women School. Women often barely didn't leave their villages and some even rarely didn't leave their homes. Many of the interviewees told that they only worked in their house, for the children or on the land next to their house. The Women School has been of a great change in their live in many respects. Among others, they had another activity in the workforce, they went to other villages, came to know people of other villages, they made more friendships, learned about human rights allowing them to reflect their lives as housewives, and reflect their unequal position to men. In summary these lessons can be categorized into two topics, participation and emancipation. Many women indicated that what they liked the most about the Women School was that they have so many new friends and new experiences. Participation in society is important because meeting more and different people and visiting other places will open up new horizons.

Emancipation is needed in the first place because domestic violence is a huge problem in the lives of the women in Poso. In the scope of this research it was impossible to give this issue more attention, so I cannot give analytical substance to my findings, but all the women interviewed had experienced domestic violence, physically or mentally. Some has suffered violence themselves, other heard the stories from friends and family, or women in their villages. To solve this problem women at least should have a more equal position to men. Several examples showed me that this is still a far way to go. Both in their answers as in the way of answering my questions it is shown that they not yet have a full-filled place in society. For many, the Women School is their only side activity, and many never even had a solid education. For that reason it is hard for them to tell what they still want to reach or what they can suggest to improve the Women School. Some looked at me glassy, feeling uncomfortable that someone ask them about their opinion. Especially the question 'do you have any suggestion to improve the women school' made them stunned. When I asked what they still want to reach for themselves most of them answered with a wish for their family or their village. Only by asking supplementary questions, they gave 'conforming' answers. To talk about individual needs is quite alienating, so never mind individual rights. According to Wijzen this also has to do with estimation of individual rights in general. For years, especially during Soeharto's precedency, personal rights are considered subordinate to the developments of the society.¹⁰⁸

The repression of women is for example to see in the stories of women who were not allowed by their husband to participate in the Women School anymore. Unfortunately there was no time to verify these stories by the women who actually quit the programme, but at least Ibu Bea (Christian) told me about her experiences with her husband who didn't want her to attend the Women School. Ibu Bea was a member of the school in Lage. Her husband had prohibited her from going to the school because, as he told her, women should only work in the kitchen. However, she kept going to school because she wanted to keep learning from the school so she could become educated and convey her own opinions. Her husband demanded a divorce, but Ibu Bea negotiated

¹⁰⁸ Wijzen, F., ed., 2009, p.17.

with him and his family about the equality of women and men. She even took her husband to the school to discuss the School of Women. Finally her husband agreed and now she is actively encouraging and facilitating other women to follow the school. As I will plead more extensive in the final chapter, this example shows the effectiveness of the involvement of a man, in this case her husband, with the plans of the Women School. When he saw the school and understood why they have to learn these things, he could accept her choice and so supported her empowerment.

To strengthen the self-confidence and the will to stand up for yourself, Gogali and the other research persons not only teach about empowerment, but also create an atmosphere where the cohesion and solidarity ensures that women work together to overcome social injustice. An important lesson is that they are all women in the first place, and their religious identity comes second. Exemplary is the statement of Ibu Yanti: ¹⁰⁹‘Because of the Women School Christians and Muslims are no longer very different, we are all women.’

The subordinate position of women is also maintained by religious influence on society. In the interview with John Lusikooy, one of the research persons of the Women School, said: ‘There are religious perspectives of equality, like Esther in the bible, but most women in the holy books are victims as well.’ The story of Ibu Marlin who didn’t want to divorce because of her religious idea of marriage is another example how religion can be an obstacle for women to stand up for themselves. According to Gogali religion, or some patriarchal ideas of religion, can be a hindrance to the freedom of the women. But for her this is only an encouragement to talk about religion, because then she can explain how you can interpret it in a different way. Gogali believes this is the most effective way to succeed in her plans for change. According to Phan, these changes are made all over Indonesia: ‘[...] a gentle but firm feminism is gradually deconstructing Islam and Christianity both in their patriarchal cultures but also in their dogmatic tradition.’¹¹⁰

That the women become change maker is apparent from the stories they told me about the cases of domestic violence where they played a significant role. They helped the victims, talked with the concerned persons, and have put the case forward to the police, urging that they should take decisive action on this matter. When they work together they find the courage to advocate against the perpetrators and sometimes against the police who doesn’t want to take the case serious. Sometimes Gogali hears about such a case and asks women of these villages to take action, or sometimes it is the other way around. They discuss the case, sometimes in class, sometimes in private, and decide what is the best way to help the victim. When the women are graduated they can participate in the more structured program who deals with these issues, the Safe House Project. The graduated women can participate in the Safe House Project. For this project two villages, as test-cases, have a safe house, a place for women and/or children who are victim of domestic violence.

Just as described in the section *change maker in social issues*, women can be a role model to other women in society. By helping victims of violence they show that women have rights to and that women can fight for their rights. In one of Gogali’s organisation descriptions she states that Female students are now actively engaged with religious organizations in their villages about these issues.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁹ Interview Ibu Yanti (Muslim).

¹¹⁰ Phan, P.C., 2011, p.73.

¹¹¹ Interview Lian.

How many women are exactly doing this is unknown, but I've talked to a few women who talked about the classes they gave for example in the women community of the church.¹¹²

3.3 Conclusion

This chapter started with the question *In what way are religious motives used by Mosintuwu and the participants in the peace process?* I showed that Gogali wants to obtain (religious) tolerance, but not only as goal but also as a means. When tolerance prevails and a good atmosphere is created, the women can work together on other issues, like social problems. As I described, religion can be both a hindrance and a stimulus to the development of these issues. For Gogali, difficulties can be remedied when you discuss it. Religious thoughts or dogmas can be an obstacle for (personal) development, but by discussing them and figuring out how they influence the women's lives and society, they can be transformed into something positive.

I have described in this chapter that in the Women School the women mainly discuss social issues and human rights. As I noted in the introduction to this thesis it is questionable whether one should call Mosintuwu an interfaith organisation since they address such diverse topics which are not always close related to religion. Religion, social problems and human rights, however, are firmly intertwined.

In order to obtain sustainable peace it is necessary to learn about human rights, a substantive vision of a good society and pluralism because all three issues are approaches that complement each other in pursuing religious harmony in society.¹¹³ Human rights are necessary but insufficient for a discourse about religious freedom in Indonesia. The particular context of the country, a rejection of Western individualistic liberalism for years, creates the need for a different discussion about human rights in order to guarantee religious freedom and religious tolerance. A successful multicultural and multi-religious society embraces religious and cultural differences, but also recognizes the problems and tensions they produce. These problems can be redressed when the religious convictions and the problems they engender are discussed. Also the solution to create a healthy and good society is based on dialogue.

¹¹² See for example interview Ibu Karthini (Christian Pentecostal) and Ibu Anni (Christian Protestant).

¹¹³ Wijzen, F., ed., 2009, p.17.

4. Is it desirable to strengthen the focus on religious issues in Mosintuwu projects, and if so how can this be achieved?

This chapter is a modest evaluation of the method Gogali uses in the Women School. As concluded in chapter three, talking about, and giving attention to religious issues is seen as a way to obtain personal and social development. Here I discuss whether a better approach exists and whether there is a better way in using or omitting religion to reach these goals. In short, I handle the question *is it desirable to strengthen the focus on religious issues in Mosintuwus projects, and if so how can that be achieved?*

The first part of this chapter consists of an analysis of the education on tolerance in the Women School, based on an article of Philip Cam, published in the book *Religious Tolerance, Education and the Curriculum*. Thereafter I discuss a possible discrepancy between the needs and wishes of Gogali and the women. Also I will talk about the problems in their society which get less attention in the Women School but are still important for a healthier society, like religious freedom. After this I give some suggestions for both partnerships and expansion. In my view this is necessary to carry out the ideas of Mosintuwu to larger parts of society and not only to the women of the Women School.

I hereby like to explicitly state that I only stayed in Poso for two months, which is by no means long enough to be able to define a better curriculum or a better method. My suggestions therefore have to be seen as reconsiderations for Mosintuwu in particular and for development cooperation in general. My suggestions mainly emanated from the interview question whether the women had any suggestion to improve the Women School. Other propositions are taken from answers to other questions, for example what they still want to reach, but I make this clear in the particular paragraphs.

4.1 Educating on tolerance

In a post-conflict situation where followers of different religions live very segregated, it is expedient to bring people together and learn them about (religious) tolerance to secure peace. From what I have seen and what I have heard the women do tolerate and even appreciate each other. But still, they couldn't make clear what it was that they liked about the other religion. The question what they liked best in other religions, proved to be difficult to answer. Often they said something like "Muslims are very nice" or "Christians are very helpful." Their comments remained at the level of persons instead of religions. I am still wondering if this is enough for a lasting peace between the two groups.

It seems to me that it would be good to give more attention to religion so that they can not only tolerate specific Muslim friends but also other people from a different religion. On the other side, the issues the women mentioned as important have more to do with human rights and domestic violence. Maybe these issues are on this very moment more important than religious tolerance.

Either way, even if it is not the most urgent target, it is still important to educate the women about religious tolerance, not only for the women themselves, but for the good of society. Even more so since regulations in Indonesia have provided that religious education at schools is given by a teacher

of the same religion the pupils adhere to.¹¹⁴ Instead of learning together, pupils will have religious education separately, which interferes with religious dialogue and tolerance. Because of this tendency, it is even more important to give attention to religious tolerance in initiatives like Mosintuwu.

Also, in a post-conflict situation religious education is particularly needed to create tolerance. According to Wijzen, religions can have different ideologies which divide them from each other; ideology of isolation, hostility and competition. But in order to find ways out of the conflict, the people have to comprehend the ideology of partnership to bring them together. After a conflict, people of other religions are often seen as enemies. To transform this attitude, religious education is needed to teach the people about connecting components. In this way it is possible to address their ideas and beliefs to a more cooperative ideology.¹¹⁵

One approach to this transformation is to encourage respect for religious differences, and with it an embracing of diversity.¹¹⁶ To teach about tolerance is to teach about respect, acceptance and appreciation. The problem is that this sometimes is contrary to certain individual freedoms, namely the right to not accept or not appreciate beliefs or behaviour of others. An alternative approach is better knowledge and understanding of other religions, but not necessarily appreciation of the differences, as the key to greater tolerance.

Education on tolerance is equally important to guarantee religious freedom. As explained before, in Indonesia one has to follow one of the six approved religions. Religious freedom is thus already limited to only these religions by law. This is a problem for atheists, Baha'is, Jews, Ahmadiyya's and followers of indigenous religions which are not accepted. These people experience a lot of hatred and violence. Also in the interviews some women gave answers that gave rise to the question how far their religious tolerance reaches. A lot of women think that religion teaches mankind how to be a good person, that morality results from religion. People without religion are quickly excluded to be regarded as good persons. This point of view is articulated in the comment of Ibu Helmin: 'The only persons who are bad are the ones who have no religion'.¹¹⁷ Some formulated it more positively: 'Because my religion teaches us to love others, not only Christians but also other religions'.¹¹⁸ In this comment it is made clear that a positive attitude is aimed at people with a religion, and so atheists are excluded. On the other side, more open and tolerant thoughts for all humanity were also pronounced, like the quote from Ibu Marlies: 'The intentions of Mosintuwu are not only for one religion, but love for everyone'.¹¹⁹

Given the increasing violence and intolerance against religious minorities all over Indonesia, it is worth considering spending more time on this subject. Human Rights Watch has written a research in which they describe the situation of religious minorities: 'It is [attacks] part of a growing trend of religious intolerance and violence in Indonesia. Targets have included Ahmadi (the Ahmadiyah), Baha'is, Christians, and Shias, among others'.¹²⁰ I think the women in Poso can learn a

¹¹⁴ Education law No. 20/2003. Zuhdi, M., *Religious Education in Indonesian Schools*, 2005, p.6. <http://conference.nie.edu.sg/paper/new%20converted/ab00167.pdf> Last accessed on august 16 2013.

¹¹⁵ Wijzen, F., ed., 2009, p.163.

¹¹⁶ Coleman, E.B., *Religious Tolerance, Education and the Curriculum*, Sense Publishers, Rotterdam, 2011, p.41.

¹¹⁷ Interview Ibu Helmin (Christian Mennonite).

¹¹⁸ Interview Ibu Helmin (Christian Mennonite).

¹¹⁹ Interview Ibu Marlies (Christian Protestant).

¹²⁰ HRW, <http://www.hrw.org/node/113848/section/4>, last accessed on August 28 2013.

lot more about religious views regarding tolerance, compassion, humanity and human rights. The combination of interpersonal attitude and intellectual endeavour should, according to Coleman, lead to more tolerance, and in the end result in peace between religious groups.¹²¹ In the Women School, the interpersonal attitude is well developed, but they could work on the intellectual comprehension.

On the other side, some people are pleading for less focus on religion and religious views in the peace making process. Haynes concludes that 'peace can be often promoted most efficiently by introducing peace-building components into more traditional relief and development activities.'¹²² In this case it is not necessary to educate women about religious tolerance, but rather steer a course that pays more attention to general development issues, like social and economic growth. This approach corresponds more to the course Gogali is taking, with facilitating lessons about public service rights, economic communities, women and politics etc.

In my opinion, as argued before, it is still important to educate the women about religious tolerance. In the book *Religious Tolerance, Education and the Curriculum*, Philip Cam describes four programmes on reforming education (by the title of his objections to the current education system).¹²³ Here I will discuss these four programmes and how they relate to the programme of the Women School.

- The lack of open intellectual questions

Cam claims that the art of questioning should get a more prominent place in the education system. Students are taught facts and figures as answers to questions instead of learning to ask questions as a way to a solution. He states that 'nothing could be more important in regard to educating for tolerance than to have students learn the art of questioning in connection with inquiries into their own understandings and differences of opinion, particularly in regard to social problems and ethical issues'.¹²⁴ The advantage of asking questions is that truth claims are less likely to be taken for granted, and that one can be open, or ask open questions to truths of other religions.

In Mosintuwu there are interactive lessons, with room for discussion, but that is something else than learning to ask questions as a means to a solution. Especially regarding tolerance Mosintuwu could still take some steps. The stories of the women indicated that they were open to the beliefs of others, but more in an indifferent way than that asking questions had made them more open-minded. With this I mean that some of the women told me that they thought they all believed in the same God, but they didn't have any thoughtful arguments for this, or questions about this truth claim. Making questionable your own beliefs increases the likelihood of being open to other beliefs, since they are equally supported (or not supported) by evidence.

- The prevailing concern with unique right answers

Cam describes the problems of this point as: 'Practical problems normally present us with alternative possibilities and no such thing as the unique.'¹²⁵ With this he means that teachers should use exercises where there are more good answers than just one. With this he teaches students to think about issues where different people give different responses. Also with this lesson, the student will

¹²¹ Coleman, E.B., 2011, p.56.

¹²² Haynes, J., 2007, p.90.

¹²³ Coleman, E.B., 2011, p.60.

¹²⁴ Idem, p.61.

¹²⁵ Ibidem.

become more open-minded. This is important for religious tolerance, because then one can deal better with different opinions and worldviews. Being critical towards these different points of view is good, not only towards the other worldview, but also towards your own. As Cam says, ‘this approach is not endorsing ‘anything goes’’ and is helping breaking down persistent thoughts which impede a good relationship.

This way of asking questions is embedded in the method of Mosintuwu, although it might be that the women are more often asked questions than they are asking them themselves. Gogali told me that she calls the teachers research persons, because they are not telling what is ‘the truth’ but are explaining what their expertise is and let the women think about their own opinion. Also, during the classes they discuss a lot of practical social issues, where of course there are more right responses than one. The women are encouraged to think about the issue and discuss it afterwards.

- **Emphasis upon individual rather than collaborative learning**

As mentioned in the two previous improvement suggestions, discussion is very important in the education on tolerance. Discussion is needed for moral inquiry, to find suitable answers for problems and to give alternative ideas. In order to develop some significant idea or proposal, Cam says, ‘we need a source of alternative conceptions, suggestions or strategies’.¹²⁶ For this, we need other people, and learn together instead of individual. The advantage of this method is that people become used to give reasons for what they say and to expect the same of others.

The latter is, ironically, beneficial for the independence and self-confidence of the women of the Women School, because it gives them the opportunity to think and create a personal opinion, and to speak out for themselves, something the women are not used to. Gogali is already using this approach in different sections of the programme. In my view, she could make more use of this in the section on religion and tolerance, though. I haven’t taken part in a meeting during this section, but from what I have heard from the women is that they mostly listened to the imam and priest but that there was little time and space for their own story or for an extensive discussion. My advice would be to seriously consider more class discussions on this topic, since this is desirable for stimulating religious tolerance.

- **Mistaken Approaches to Values Education**

Because values are embodied in our commitments and actions, Cam argues that we cannot teach students to be tolerant just by imparting content. With values education Cam means education about what students should value. This is not merely a matter of instructing what to value and what not, or teaching what are the current and historical values. What should be done is to make the students cultivate good judgment. This is especially important in or after a conflict over values. Cam describes good judgement as ‘distinguishing more- from less-acceptable decisions’.¹²⁷ In doing so, different aspects have to be taken into consideration, like different decisions and their consequences and the progress of making decisions. In short, good judgement is an inquiry. Students can be guided in this inquiry, so that it can be a joint inquiry wherein students can reflect on their own and each other’s decisions. Making this process together is what Cam calls the way to ‘truly social intelligence

¹²⁶ Coleman, E.B., 2011, p.62.

¹²⁷ Idem, p.63.

that keeps us within the limits of reasoned toleration'.¹²⁸ This process requires some practical skills, like listening to each other, finding the source of the disagreement, taking into account others backgrounds, opinions and interests, and in general becoming more emphatic and communicative.

Again, with this adjustment, Cam pleads for discussion and reflection. In respect of the post conflict situation, Gogali should give attention to the motives and choices people made during and after the conflict, and what other choices could have been made. From the interviews I understand that the women have been taught that it was not a religious conflict. The women would probably understand the history, but by not going deeper into this, they still don't understand why people did what they did, and even more important, how people have to act in future conflicts to safeguard and support tolerance. Understanding each other's decisions during the conflict can also help to be able to forgive each other, which can bring people closer together.

4.2 Deviation between Gogali and the women

Gogali succeeded very well in creating a relaxed and intimate atmosphere at the Women School. This helps to ensure that women can discuss their problems, that Gogali can discuss what she wants and that they can make comments and suggestions debatable. Although this opportunity is created, there still are some incongruities between the needs and wants of the women and the method of Gogali.

The first point is that some women quit the programme. I don't have actual numbers, but it should be around 10%, since the classes started with 20 women each and ended with one or two less. This implies that the course differed from their expectations, but in any case, there is something that did not suit their wishes or circumstances. As far as I know, most of these women had conversations with one of the facilitators from the Women School about their motives to stop, but I couldn't figure out what it was exactly. I talked about this with Gogali and she told me that there are other women organizations that provide money for their participation, seemingly from Jakarta. If this is true, it is understandable that women join these organizations instead of Mosintuwu, given the scale of poverty of the area. Also, the women I interviewed told me that sometimes women quit the Women School because they are too poor. In the time they attend classes, they also could have worked on the land and earned money instead. One woman told me that her friend had stopped because she was no longer allowed to go by her husband. This all seems like practical motivation for women to stop, or even to not participate at all. Nevertheless, for this latter category, it might be interesting for Gogali to investigate if this is the only reason or that perhaps also that they are not open to the concepts of Mosintuwu and how this attitude can be influenced.

All the women who joined the Women School endorse the ideas of Mosintuwu, yet had some suggestions to improve the school. Many of them spoke out a wish for a third batch, but I will discuss that later more extensively.

What I figured out was that eight women found the time spend on the religion topic too short. Or, to be more precise, they didn't find the time or space to talk about their religious beliefs. They explained that when they visited the praying houses, a priest or imam was talking about their religion, which made them think they couldn't talk about their personal thoughts. At the meeting after the visit they could talk about this, but since this is at the early phase of the programme they

¹²⁸ Coleman, E.B., 2011, p.63.

didn't feel comfortable enough to do this. I don't suppose the women necessarily want to spend much more time on discussing their religions, but it might be an idea to talk about it once more in a more advanced stage of the programme, when the women know each other better.

A suggestion that was often heard was that the women wanted to have more activities for all the women together. I consider this a good idea because in the first place the women would feel even more connected and special to be part of a peace movement. Besides, with joint activities the women can create a better visibility, which is good for several reasons. When other people become aware of the movement, then they get in touch with the pluralist thought of Mosintuwu. Also when people know what the women learn they can contact them when they need advice or help. In this way you can also reach more women when you need interested women while starting a new batch. In short, these joint activities help when you want to strike a positive note and propagate that religion doesn't have to be an obstacle for friendships among religions or for peace.

4.3 Partnerships

In *religious education in context of plurality and pluralism*, Antone states that religious educators have to remember that they are not alone in creating a change of mind-set in society. In fact, he said: 'they can work collectively and more effectively with others, including practitioners of other faiths and other disciplines.'¹²⁹ Jan Lock, too, argues that organisations in the South have to cooperate with partner organisations. Otherwise, according to him, they cannot survive in the long run because of (financial) pressure on development organisations.¹³⁰

Partnerships can be made in different categories, with the government, with religious organisations and with other welfare organisations. Mosintuwu has limited collaborations among them, but in my opinion it is better to do this more and combine and strengthen their efforts.

4.3.1 Government

Tolerance has much to do with the attitudes of individuals and groups in society, but equally important is reforming political, legal and social institutions. This doesn't necessarily have to happen at the level of national politics, but it is good to involve the local politics in the plans of development and the issues playing a role in society. In cooperation with four other NGO's, in the name of Linkar Kasintuwu, Mosintuwu has had some meetings with the government. I attended one meeting with the head of police of the district to discuss the safety in Poso and what could be done to manage the protection of women and victims of domestic violence, for example.

Working with the government also has another positive aspect. Ibu Alser articulated it thus: 'Maybe we can work together with the government. Then they can get to know us, and we can work on our relationship so that they could help us when we need the government.'¹³¹ This 'need' can for example be in the form of protection during peace protest. Besides, success of development cooperation depends on links with wider changes relating to governance. In the end, development has to reach all parts of society, not only the women of the Women School.

¹²⁹ Antone, H., *Religious education in context of plurality and pluralism*, New Day Publishers, Quezon City, 2003, p.98.

¹³⁰ Lock, J., ed. *Ontwikkelingssamenwerking nieuwe stijl, naar een christelijke visie*, Prisma/Shaker Publishing, 2010, p.24.

¹³¹ Interview Ibu Alser (Christian Protestant).

As an objection it is sometimes said that governments don't want to, or cannot work together with faith-based organisations because they cannot choose to favour one religion above others. But in this case, Mosintuwu is an interfaith organisation, so this may not be a problem.

4.3.2 Other welfare organisations

Partnerships with other welfare organisation can provide practical benefits, among others by sharing experiences, local knowledge and leadership skills. Nightingale writes the following about this cooperation: 'Where partnerships bring local knowledge and experience together with humanitarian expertise in a working relationship that is collaborative, risk sharing and inclusive, they can deliver better emergency aid, and more resilient development in the long term.'¹³² Since the conflict took place a few years ago, emergency aid is not needed anymore, but cooperation is also fruitful and durable for the years that follow.

Mosintuwu is a member of a bigger movement, called Linkar Kasintuwu, existing of four other NGO's. During my stay I visited three of their meetings. One was about the Indonesia education system, one about safety in the Poso area and the last one was about women in politics. In my view this partnership is a very effective cooperation to reach more people and put pressure on the government to accommodate their wants and needs.

4.3.3 Religious organisations

In the field of religion and development there is much speculation as to whether it is desirable to cooperate with churches, mosques or other religious organisations.¹³³ The advantages and disadvantages are dependent on ideological and organisational grounds. These grounds are different in every situation, so it is necessary to be aware of this before one starts a cooperation. Do the religious beliefs match; does one maintain things the other fights against, like gender inequality etc.?

Nevertheless, in the case of Mosintuwu, to me it seems a step in the right direction to work together with religious organisations. Since the churches and mosques in Poso have large followings, it is good to have them involved. If there are reservations, it might be an idea to start with small activities, for example the peace protests. When these actions are organised by both Mosintuwu and religious institutions you can find more supporting capacity in society, and more people who like to join the activities. This is true for the activity of the prayer house cleaning, the protest marches and maybe others. This would be a good way of profiling your organisation in society and passing on the ideas of pluralism and tolerance. For sustainable development you need more people than only the women of the Women School. As Haynes states it: 'Success of development aid depends on active collaboration among poor people, the middle class, and other groups in the society.'¹³⁴

And last but not least, working with religious institutions can also provide some practical benefit. They often have a large number of motivated volunteers, they have room for activities and they might have experiences with organising activities and mobilizing people. This last point is important for the next paragraph where I will talk about expansion, in my opinion an important issue for improvement.

¹³² Nightingale, K., *Building the future of humanitarian aid: local capacity and partnerships in emergency assistance*, 2012, p.2. <http://www.christianaid.org.uk/images/building-the-future-of-humanitarian-aid.pdf> Last accessed on August 24 2013.

¹³³ Boender W., Dwarswaard E., Westendorp M., 2001, p.36.

¹³⁴ Haynes, J., 2007, p.10.

4.4 Expansion

As I might have made clear, Gogali is a very inspiring and enthusiastic person, who is doing a great job with Mosintuwu, especially with the Women School. This is the programme of which I have seen the most, but as described in chapter one, Mosintuwu consists of a few more programmes for both women and children. Since the second batch of the Women School is now finished, Mosintuwu focuses more on the Women Interfaith Organisation, the programme for graduated women, instead of starting a third batch. I have discussed a lot about this with Gogali. We disagree, because I consider it more important to continue the programme of the Women School and reach more women, and to continue the work in which you are good and in which you already booked good results. I know that for this, and certainly for the two programmes, it is a question of money since she needs funding. I think the best solution would be to take on an employee or intern, who can both help out with acquisition and with other substantive issues. This might save hours a week, as an extra employee could do the public relations and help with carrying out the vision and mission of Mosintuwu.

With a man extra there is a possibility to start a third batch, but also to have supervision on the women who finished the Women School, so that Mosintuwu doesn't lose these women out of sight. The plan is that the women who finished the curriculum are able to begin a movement of equality in their domestic environment. According to me it is too soon to make this step, because the women need more education and self-confidence, and more women need to be educated to actualize this movement. For this reason it is important to keep the women connected to Mosintuwu.

My suggestion is to start a third batch and let the women of the first and second batch play a role in the background, for example in organising and/or participating in activities for all the women, like the cleaning of the praying houses or the protests. It might be an idea to make groups of volunteers who can organise activities, like workshops or lectures for the other women, or who can do public relations, like promoting activities and writing about activities for the newspapers. In this way women can learn in groups how to organise activities for Mosintuwu, so that maybe later they can do this for their own community.

The wish for a third batch is not only my personal aspiration, also a lot of the interviewees spoke out their wish for a third batch. Some explicitly asked for a new school, but others just mentioned that they hoped other women can also follow the Women School. According to their stories it is very much needed and desirable that other women also learn about human and women rights.

A very different direction of expansion lies in the fact that development is needed not only for women but also for men. Not only women should learn about (religious) tolerance and human rights, but also men. On educating tolerance Coleman writes that 'another approach would be to promote the importance of respecting sameness, that is, common citizenship, or if one wishes to cast the net wider, common humanity.'¹³⁵ Gogali promotes 'sameness' by focusing on 'being women', but in my view, you can also expand this to 'being human'. In this respect, also men can be part of the movement. This is also stated by Nelly van Doorn-Harder. In the introduction of *Dubbele dialoog, vrouwen en mannen in interreligieuze ontmoetingen*, she writes that both men and women should

¹³⁵ Coleman, E.B., 2011, p.41.

contribute to interreligious dialogue, because with their different perspectives and expertise dialogue will gain in effectiveness.¹³⁶

Besides, Gogali started a programme for women and children because she considers them to be the most vulnerable in a post-conflict situation and because they are the most untapped resource for peace. In the struggle for more gender equality and a tolerant society, however, eventually also men have to learn about human and women rights. To make a change in their attitude and treatment of women, men should learn about the consequences and the impact of their behaviour.

4.5 Conclusion

In my attempt to answer the question *to what extent is it desirable to strengthen the focus on religious issues in Mosintuwus projects, and if so how can that be achieved*, I discussed both practical and substantive suggestions. My general conclusion is that in the programme of the Women School, Gogali could focus more on religious aspects of peace. In the previous chapters I hope I have made clear that the Women School is an exceptionally good way to bring women of different religions together and create a special relationship among them. Since this is very effective in the process of peace, I and many other women are sharing the wish that other women also could participate in the programme. For this reason I mentioned some recommendations for partnerships with other NGO's and religious organisations and expansion in general.

To the question if more time is needed to talk about religion to make peace, my answer would be with an emphatic yes. To the question if it is needed in the programme in general I would be a little more doubtful. In the long-term, it would definitely be of use, but for now I noticed that in the lives of the women and in society, many other problems are of great concern. Since religions is so important in the lives of the women, in my opinion you could also make use of religion to tackle these problems, but only as part of the solution. This is not in the scope of this research, so this might be a suggestion for further investigation. In the Poso situation, I consider Gogali able to deal with this issue.

My emphatic yes is formed by my conviction that the women should learn more about each other's religion. More knowledge could help to lift peace out of the personal atmosphere. I have the feeling that peace between the women is built only on their personal contact. Nevertheless, to create sustainable peace between communities, there is more needed than a simple 'I like this Muslim woman'. To tolerate or appreciate stranger followers of the other religion, knowledge and comprehension about their religion is needed, more than the women have now.

For this reason, the women should also learn more about religious tolerance. If the women become conscious of the importance of religious tolerance for peace, it will make it easier for them to carry it out. In this way it becomes more plausible that the effort for peace and the ideas about tolerance can be transmitted to society.

¹³⁶ Bons-Storm R., Doorn-Harder, N., *Dubbele dialoog, vrouwen en mannen in interreligieuze dialoog*, Narratio, Gorinchem, 2012, p.5.

Final Conclusions

The starting point of this research was a question from the Dutch organisation *Mensen met een Missie*. They had the assumption that in an interfaith organisation like *Mosintuwu*, religion plays a significant role. They faced the question whether their comprehension about this was deep enough. How can one understand the role and the influence of religion in a peace-building process? It was my rewarding task to investigate that.

In this thesis I have described in what way, on what levels and by what means religion is used in the programme of the Women School. In the following section I will summarize my findings, and draw some final conclusions. I will do this on the basis of the three sub-questions, corresponding to the chapters two, three and four.

- *To what extent are religious motives of women participating in the projects for women involved in the project of Mosintuwu?*

Because *Mosintuwu* is called an interfaith organisation it goes without saying that religion plays a role in the projects of *Mosintuwu*. As expected, the women told me that religion fills an important place in the Women School. However, from my observations I was hard put to draw the same conclusion. To understand this contradiction, I realised that I first had to explore the religious beliefs of the women and the place religion has in their lives. Their personal religious background proved to be an important influence on their experience of the lessons. This finding made me conclude that for development organisations it is important to take into account the religious belief of the participants in order to make development cooperation more suitable and thus more fruitful.

The specific history of Poso, more particularly the conflict, caused Muslims and Christians to live segregated for years. The Women School is a unique opportunity to reunite adherents of different religions. The Women School stimulates interreligious dialogue. As I argued in chapter two, the dialogue of life is the most used. Being, talking, and studying together is considered by Gogali as the most fruitful dialogue for peace.¹³⁷

All different forms of dialogue have their possibilities and limitations. The dialogue of life is important but its limitation is that the women do not comprehend each other's religious beliefs. For that reason I think Gogali can make more use of the intellectual dialogue. Only during the first meetings they talk about each other's religions. I have noticed that during these meetings the women learn about religious differences, but in my view they do not learn enough. Vroom argues: 'We must discuss the role of religion and differences and different value systems, for too many clashes relate to these differences and the neglect of these differences is a major cause of serious conflict.'¹³⁸ As we have seen in the Poso conflict, the disregard of differences was not the cause of the conflict per se, but has contributed to the escalation of it. This is why I think it is necessary to talk more about each other's religion and religious differences.

Besides, talking about one's personal religious beliefs can also lead to a change of mind-set. An example of this is the story of Ibu Marlin who changed her conception of marriage after she learnt different interpretations of biblical stories. These topics aren't discussed publicly in the group, and

¹³⁷ Interview Lian

¹³⁸ Vroom, H.M., 2006, p.251.

that is a pity. I am convinced that it would be valuable to not only use religion as an instrument, but also to discuss it as a theme.

- *In what way are religious motives used by Mosintuwu and the participants in the peace process?*

Religion is in the Women School primarily used as an instrument to gain development, but still often only to increase physical well-being (like financial independence and safety) and not the women's spiritual well-being. Instead of promoting spiritual values such as generosity, love, respect and compassion, Gogali focuses more on economic and political perspectives of the women. She wants to start an economic community because she is convinced that economic growth will reduce the chance of another conflict, but ignores the notion that it also can work the other way around, that these human values can reduce the risk of further violence.

Peace is not the only aim of Mosintuwu, development is also wanted in the fields of human rights, gender equality, women participation etc. As I have described in chapter three, religion can influence these fields in three different ways; it has an impact on social problems, can be the solution, or is a source of social problems. I hope by now I have made clear that in the Women School religion is used in such a way that it provides solutions.

During my research I came to understand that the impact of religion on the peace-building process is hard to investigate on its own, since it is closely related to other social problems. For example, when women have to think together about how to protect children, then this is both a question for safety and for peace, since the women of different religious backgrounds can work together. For this reason I expanded this chapter with the description of the influences of the Women School on human rights in general, women rights and women's emancipation.

Also in these fields of development, religion plays a significant role. Gogali uses religion to solve personal and social problems. Again, this happened mostly by using religion as an instrument. Also for these problems I think it would be desirable to talk more about the women's personal experiences and convictions, and discuss them classically.

- *To what extent is it desirable to strengthen the focus on religious issues in Mosintuwu's projects, and if so how can this be achieved?*

With this third and last sub-question I wanted to suggest some improvements for the peace-building process. Mainly, my criticism is that more time should be spent on intellectual dialogue, and especially on discussing religious differences. I have argued that although the Women School is a wonderful project and the women really seem to like each other, sustainable peace is not guaranteed when the appreciation is only on the personal level of the participants. More comprehension about each other's religion and religious beliefs is desirable, perhaps even needed.

Not only for peace, but also in other areas of development, it seems to me that it would also be favourable to take into account the personal beliefs and convictions of the women more. This would help to overcome prejudice and other barriers for development, for example the emancipation of the women of Poso.

Besides this substantive suggestion, I also mentioned some practical improvements. These suggestions are for Gogali to consider. Maybe I can shed light on issues she has not thought about, but perhaps she knows better what will work for the women and the society she is living in and working at. The suggestions I gave were to try to make a cooperation, with other religious

organisations, NGOs or even with the government. Another suggestion was about expansion, since Mosintuwu's main driving force is the input of Gogali. Although her input is enormous, this makes Mosintuwu and the achieved results vulnerable. Perhaps both Gogali and Mensen met een Missie can take this into consideration.

These three sub-questions led to my main question:

How can religion and religious motives of the participating women contribute to the peace process in the post-conflict situation of Poso.

During my research I came to understand that this is a very difficult question but also very interesting to investigate. It is difficult because religion, religious motives and other deep-seated feelings arising from the conflict are not always very apparent. Besides, they are closely related to other aspects of development in general, such as the motivation for a better life, social and economic growth and safety. I soon discovered that I could not answer this key question as I did not make time to investigate these issues too. It was also an interesting question because I was curious about the personal stories and motives of the participating women, but more importantly, because I and development organisations want to make development cooperation as fruitful as possible.

I hope I have made clear in this case-study that religion can play a constructive role in a peace process. In Mosintuwu it did mainly because Gogali used it in a way so that the women could appreciate each other and appreciate each other's religion. In my view the latter is mostly a result of the former, and so this appreciation might not be sustainable enough to create peace at a larger scale than only inside the Women School. Religious differences and personal religious beliefs should get a more central place in the Women School. This will contribute to peace and harmonious relationships among adherents of different religions, but could also help in letting them work more together in their struggle for improvement in other fields of development.

Discussion

With this research my aim was to contribute to the field of conflict resolution and to the discussion about the role of religion in development in general. In the last few years religion researchers in this field already concluded that more comprehension about religion is desirable in order to increase the effect of development cooperation.¹³⁹

With my hypothesis that more intellectual interreligious dialogue could help to achieve these goals I only filled in a small piece of the puzzle. In order to understand the role of religion and how to use it for development purposes much more research has to be done for several reasons.

The first reason is that only in and around the last few decades people did come to understand that development cooperation has to shift its focus on the interests of the participants and beneficiaries of the development organisations in developing countries. These interests include religious beliefs, traditions and perceptions. This change of focus means that research can be done to direct this cooperation in a more suitable and effective manner.

¹³⁹ For example see Klein Goldewijk, B., *Religion, international relations and development cooperation*, Wageningen Academic Publishers, 2007, (p.324) and ter Haar, G., *Religion and development, ways of transforming the world*, Hurst & Company, Londen, 2011, (p.3.)

A second reason why further research is desired is because religion and religious beliefs differ over time and place, and is also variable per individual. In the case of Mosintuwu, the participants were Muslims, Hindus and Christians, who shared a history of conflict, suspicion and fear together. In other situations and places, the participant can adhere different religious, can have other problems and can have a different mutual relationship. Research is thus an on-going process.

A third reason why more research is useful is that also the situation and the goals of development organisations can differ. In the case of Mosintuwu, Gogali told me that in the second batch she already spent less time and paid less attention to the role of religion in the conflict because she thinks society has moved on. In the years following the conflict she thought that talking about this could very much help society to overcome the barrier between Christians and Muslims, but now she thinks people are more benefitted by working together on social problems. These changes require new approaches and new insights.

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List of Images

Image on front page: Women during a lesson of the Women School in Lage.

Image 1: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/asia-pacific/1719964.stm>

All photos are taken by Lisanne Boersma.