Learning, Faith, and Sustainability in Kenya:
Considering the Work of Faith-Based Organizations

by Joanne Marguerite Moyer

A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies of
The University of Manitoba
In Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements For the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Natural Resource Institute
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THE UNIVERSITY OF MANITOBA

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Abstract

Sustainability, the work of building a world that is ecologically, socially and economically just, is essentially a learning process. To move more effectively toward this goal, a deeper understanding of learning is necessary. Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have come to play a significant role within the sustainability project, and thus form the context for much learning toward sustainability. Faith-based organizations (FBOs) are a significant but understudied segment of the NGO family. This research investigates learning among individuals within FBOs doing environmental and development work in Kenya, using the framework of Mezirow's transformative learning theory. The identity and function of these FBOs is profiled, highlighting the key role churches and faith-based agencies can play in effecting sustainable and holistic change in Global South countries, due to their rootedness in the community, the social capital they help produce, and the respect they receive from local people. Learning for sustainability is examined through interviews with participants from two case FBOs: A Rocha Kenya and Rural Service Programme of the East Africa Yearly Meeting of Friends. Attention to the context these organizations provide for learning highlighted the influence of supportive community, mentor relationships, teamwork, and training and evaluation structures. Learning outcomes covered a broad range of areas, with the highest proportion fitting within environment/conservation (e.g., linking faith and environmental concerns, and agriculture and birding skills) and community work (e.g., relating to people, managing groups, teaching and facilitation) umbrellas. Some transformative learning was experienced, mostly through learning in the instrumental domain. Key learning processes included observation and experience, training, practical application and learning from each other, highlighting the importance of embodied learning processes. Applying learning through action, both at work and in the home and community, was an important expression of learning for participants, though this expression was sometimes blocked by personal and social barriers that prevented the completion of the learning-action cycle.

Acknowledgements

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Background

1.1.1 The Sustainability Project

Global poverty and the degradation of the environment are two critical concerns facing today's world. While the global proportion of people living in poverty is lessening, income gaps both within and between states are widening; in 2008, about 1.4 billion people were still living in extreme poverty. This is a reduction from 1.8 billion in 1990, but it still constitutes 27% of the world's population (World Bank 2011b; UNDP 2012). In Sub-Saharan Africa, reductions in poverty have been minimal, and the poverty rate remains around 50% of the population (Moyo 2009; UNDP 2012). At the same time, the planet's environments and ecosystems are enduring increasing stress; climate change, water quality and supply, biodiversity loss, and deforestation are among the primary problems (UNDP 2008; UNDP 2012).

Poverty and environmental decline are inextricably linked. The most common approach to explaining their relationship derives from the World Commission on Environment and Development publication, *Our Common Future*, which stated that: "Poverty is a major cause and effect of global environmental problems" (WCED 1987, 3). Many poor people and nations are caught in a cyclical trap by which their poverty, and the resulting desperate focus on short-term needs, forces them to harmfully exploit the environment to achieve basic survival. At the same time, declines in the environment, upon which they often depend directly for their livelihood, prevent them from escaping their poverty (WCED 1987; Adams 2001).

Political ecologists provide a more nuanced treatment of the relationship, seeking to understand underlying causes by studying "...human-environment interactions in their historical, political-economic and spatial context" (Logan and Moseley 2004, 4). This approach highlights the political and economic structures that shape the relationship between poverty and the environment, noting for example, that under some circumstances, poorer populations serve as deeply committed sustainers of the environment, while under other circumstances, the systems by which they are constrained, often from the global level, drive environmentally destructive practices (Broad 1994; Logan 2004; Logan and Moseley 2004; Gray and Moseley 2005). Thus, the relationship between poverty and the environment is complex, and shaped by numerous interconnected factors.

Global society is compelled to address poverty and environmental decline by both practical and ethical imperatives, a complex and challenging undertaking. *Our Common Future* popularized sustainable development as the solution to these problems, asserting that: "Humanity has the ability to make development sustainable – to ensure that it meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" (WCED 1987, 8). While both the term "sustainable development" and its application have been subject to considerable controversy and critique, the ideal endures (Lélé 1991; Adams 2001).

The sustainable development concept has been criticized for being too general and too vague, allowing it to be co-opted by globalization and neo-liberal agendas. It has thus become another vehicle for imposing Western ideology and Western policy and economic

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priorities on the Global South. The ongoing commitment to economic growth enshrined

in the sustainable development project as envisioned by *Our Common Future* is also seen

as a shortcoming, compromising its ability to yield true environmental sustainability or to

address the root causes of poverty (Lélé 1991; Logan 2004). In response to these

critiques, many now employ the term "sustainability" as an alternative, which can be

defined as follows:

> Sustainability is a concept, a goal, and a strategy. The concept speaks to the
> reconciliation of social justice, ecological integrity, and the well-being of all
> living systems on the planet. The goal is to create an ecologically and socially just
> world within the means of nature without compromising future generations.
> Sustainability also refers to the process or strategy of moving toward a sustainable
> future (Moore 2005, 78).

The interlocking challenges of poverty and environmental degradation, and the response

through sustainability programs, form the context of this research.

1.1.2 The Role of Faith-Based Organizations

Since the late 1980s, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have played an

increasingly significant role in the sustainability movement. NGOs are "...formal

(professionalized) independent societal organizations whose primary aim is to promote

common goals at the national or the international level" (Martens 2002, 282). Although

organizations of this description have long been involved in public service activities

(Ward 2005), NGOs emerged in dramatically increasing numbers on the sustainability

scene within the last two decades due to a variety of factors. These include globalization,

neo-liberalization and shrinking states, demand for greater local participation and civil

society involvement in planning and decision making, advances in telecommunications,

and changing political contexts (Lewis and Wallace 2000; Berger 2003; World Bank 2005).

While the term NGO encompasses a diverse array of agencies, this "third sector" is believed to share certain unique traits that distinguish it from government and the market, and that are believed to enhance its effectiveness and efficiency in doing development, relief, and environmental work. Because they are generally motivated by values such as justice and compassion, rather than by profit or political agendas, NGOs tend to inhabit a moral space that inspires trust (Ward 2005; World Bank 2005). They are often more connected to local communities and can therefore access the needs and priorities of these communities, which allows them to advocate more effectively for the poor and marginalised (World Bank 2003; World Bank 2005). This often happens via global networks that can be rapidly mobilized for advocacy, education or media campaigns (e.g., debt relief, human rights, climate change). Finally, NGOs can be highly innovative, particularly those that avoid heavy bureaucratic structures and the constraint of orthodox thinking, allowing them to pursue alternatives to mainstream thought and action. An example of this is the development of micro-finance projects. This type of innovation is a vital quality in addressing the challenges of sustainability (Lewis and Wallace 2000).

NGOs also have inherent weaknesses, and may fail to deliver their best qualities. They struggle with overall effectiveness, standardization and associated obstacles to innovation, as well as accountability, transparency, paternalism, and their links to powers in the Global North (Lewis and Wallace 2000; Manji and O'Coill 2002; Dicklitch and

Rice 2004; Logan and Moseley 2004). Their relevance and significance, however, both

globally and on local levels, is demonstrated by the dramatic rise in their numbers, scale

and capacity, and the successes they have achieved in such initiatives as banning

landmines, debt relief, and environmental protection, as well as their dedicated work in

delivering a wide variety of social services (World Bank 2003).

Since their meteoric rise in the early 1990s, NGOs have been studied, analysed,

and evaluated extensively. These studies, however, have paid little attention to faith-

based NGOs. This particular group of NGOs has been active in public life for centuries,

but they were largely ignored by scholars and practitioners until recently, due in part to

Western perceptions of faith as a private matter that is both separate from and irrelevant

to public affairs (Berger 2003; Clarke 2006).

The founding of the World Faith Development Dialogue in 1998 by World Bank

president James Wolfensohn, and George Carey, the Archbishop of Canterbury, together

with other initiatives (e.g., Jubilee 2000 Debt Campaign, Micah Challenge), heralded a

growing recognition that FBOs constitute a significant cohort of the NGO vanguard,

contributing to both development and environmental initiatives (Harper 2000; Alkire

2006; Brown and Timmer 2006). In many parts of Africa, for example, Christian

organizations and agencies have long been involved in development work, driven by

charitable impulses and evangelical zeal, and to some extent by complicity with the

colonial machine (Bornstein 2005; Thaut 2009). This work began with mission stations

that offered schools and health clinics. Over time, the scope of FBO work has expanded

beyond education and health care to include agriculture, water supply programs, and

many other projects (Shao 2001; Tyndale 2006).

Significant FBO involvement in environmental work is more recent, spanning several decades only, but faith groups are taking a growing interest in these issues as well, engaging in diverse initiatives around the globe (Gottlieb 2006). While the term "sustainable development" became most widely known through *A Common Future* (WCED 1987), the importance of sustainability and sustainable societies was being promoted by the World Council of Churches for at least a decade before *A Common Future* was published, beginning with a conference in Nairobi, Kenya, in 1975 (Hessel 2011). Recognizing the interdependence of justice, peace, and ecological sustainability, the World Council of Churches has promoted commitment to environmental concerns through participation in international events, like the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro, and through various programs working to address climate change (FORE 2004).

In the United States, the Evangelical Environmental Network and the National Religious Partnership for the Environment have worked to influence public policy while engaging local congregations to embrace sustainable lifestyles (Kearns 1997; Shibley and Wiggins 1997). In Canada, various Christian denominations collaborate on justice initiatives through Kairos, an organization that includes various eco-justice issues in its agenda, focussing in particular on climate change and energy. Another interfaith organization in Canada, Faith and the Common Good, has spearheaded a "Greening Sacred Spaces" program. Faith groups are also actively addressing environmental issues in Sub-Saharan Africa, where an interfaith alliance of Zimbabwean Christians and

traditional practitioners has engaged in extensive tree planting projects (Daneel 2006), and the Faith and Earthkeeping Project, under the auspices of the World Wide Fund for Nature - South Africa, is promoting environmental protection, conservation and sustainable resource use at various levels (Conradie *et al.* 2001).

Given the growing role FBOs are playing within the sustainability arena, understanding how they work and what drives them is important. While they share many of the attributes, strengths and weaknesses of secular NGOs, FBOs are motivated by a distinctive set of values, have particular modes of operation, and hold a unique place within communities and the larger society (Berger 2003; Hefferan 2007). More research is therefore needed to fully comprehend the work they do.

1.1.3 Defining Faith and Religion

Faith and religion are delicate subjects that require careful treatment and clear definition of terms. Faith is often understood as the belief or acceptance of something that cannot be proven – like the existence of God – and is set in contrast to doubt. Studies of people within all major religions reveal, however, that faith has more to do with commitment and allegiance (Smith 1979): "...faith involves an alignment of the will, a resting of the heart, in accordance with a vision of transcendent value and power, one's ultimate concern" (Fowler 1981, 14). As Fowler unpacks this conception of faith, he notes that nearly everyone has a faith in something – a political ideology, the economy, the divine – whether she or he is aware of it. My research considers *religious* faith, that is, faith in the divine or the transcendent as expressed in a particular cumulative tradition that has grown through and continues to evolve within a particular social and cultural

context (Smith 1963; Thomas 2005). Religions are manifested as organized communities (Tisdell 2003) that share "...systems of belief, ritual, institutional life, spiritual aspiration, and ethical orientation that view human beings as more than simply their social or physical selves" (Gottlieb 2006, viii). In crafting a universal definition for these global phenomena, however, it is impossible to capture the vibrant diversity that characterizes individual religious communities and expressions of faith. Therefore, it must be recognized that religious practices and faith experiences vary widely across and within religions, denominations and communities.

1.1.4 Learning for Sustainability

Development and environmental work takes place within complex and unpredictable social, political, economic, and ecological systems, and often addresses problems that have no straightforward solutions (Lewis and Wallace 2000; Ludwig 2001). Consequently, this work requires creativity, innovation and flexibility, and is essentially a learning process (Myers 1999; Hailey 2000; Berkes *et al*. 2003; Blackmore 2007; Muro and Jeffrey 2008).

Learning for sustainability involves both learning new skills and knowledge (single-loop learning) and questioning and revising our understandings of the problems at hand, our solution strategies, and the values and worldviews that underlie these perspectives (double- and triple-loop learning) (Argyris 1997; Pahl-Wostl 2009). It also encompasses building trust and common understanding through relationships and the empowerment of all members of society to participate in the democratic transformation of their economic, political and social systems (Diduck 1999; Muro and Jeffrey 2008).

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Within the context of a FBO, learning occurs in both the individual and organizational spheres. This affords two distinct approaches to the study of learning: focussing on the collective learning process of the organization, or investigating the individual learning that arises from the particular context of an organization (Blackmore 2007).

In attempting to encompass both spheres of learning within the PhD study scope, one would risk undertaking an unmanageable project that would be difficult to focus. This study therefore emphasizes the individual sphere, because this is the locus of my personal interest in the subject. Furthermore, applying learning concepts to the FBO context is an exploratory exercise. Similarly, individual learning through non-formal or incidental processes has received scant attention in the literature. As such, it is logical to begin at the most basic level: as the building blocks of society, individual processes must be understood to comprehend related societal processes. Moreover, it is through the actions taken by individuals, whether alone or from within a collective, that broader changes aimed at sustainability will occur.

At the same time, I recognize that "...individual learning is a highly social process, often facilitated in a collective setting, dependant on concerted inquiry and action, or deeply embedded in specific socio-cultural practices" (Diduck 2010, 202-203). Accordingly, my focus on individual learning will include attention to the transitions or connections between the individuals and their social context, through the influence of context on their learning, and through the social impact of their learning as expressed in their actions. Figure 1.1 illustrates this learning complex, highlighting the study focus in red.

Figure 1.1: Spheres of Learning

context

action

Individual

learning

Collective
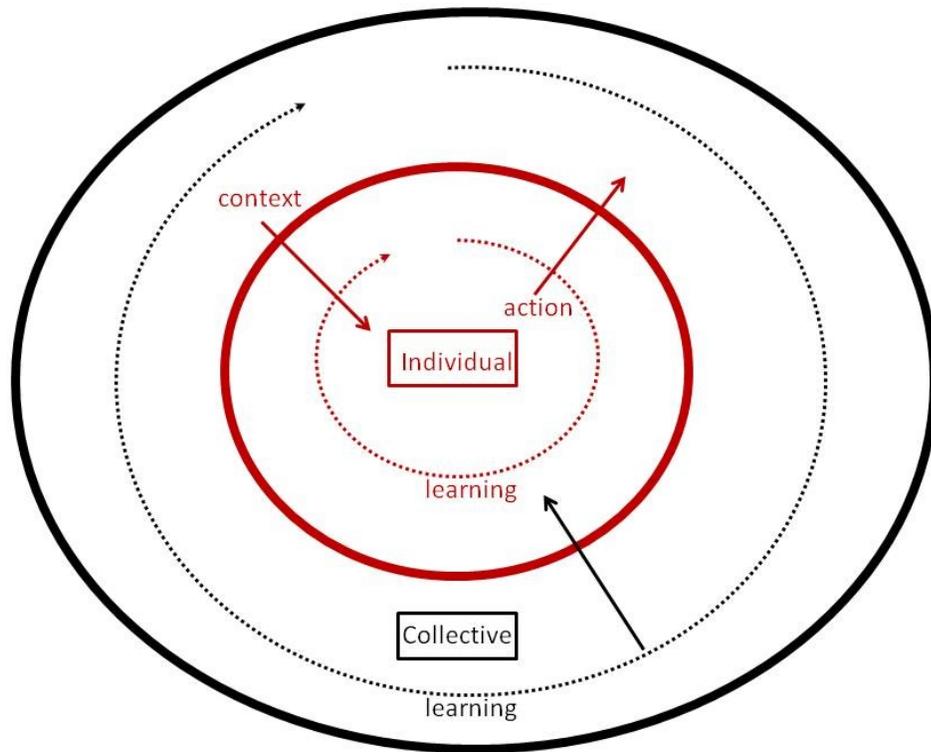
learning

The study uses transformative learning theory as its guiding framework.

Transformative learning theory is a dominant theory in the field of adult learning,

focussing on meaning-making processes of individual learners (Mezirow 1991b; Taylor

2007). The theory posits that through childhood learning and socialization, individuals

develop assumptions about reality and their life within it. These assumptions are

combined into complex systems that adults use to interpret and navigate their

experiences, particularly in new situations (Mezirow 1991b; Mezirow 2000; Cranton

2006). Learning occurs when these assumptions or interpretation schemes fail to explain a

situation and expectations are questioned (Mezirow 1991b; Cranton 2006). Learning may

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be instrumental (concerning the manipulation of objects or people), communicative (understanding others and making one's self understood) and ultimately transformative (involving an evaluation of premises and assumptions) (Mezirow 1991b). The learning process involves discourse and reflection "...by which previously uncritically assimilated assumptions, beliefs, values, and perspectives are questioned and thereby become more open, permeable, and better validated" (Cranton 2006, 2). The improved interpretation can then be applied to future decisions and behaviour (Mezirow 1991b).

Learning provides a useful lens for studying the activities of FBOs. These organizations have a unique approach to sustainability work, informed in their vision, mission, and activities by the values of their faith (Berger 2003; Hefferan 2007). This same faith can play an important role in childhood socialization and the development of individuals' assumptions about reality. At the same time, faith can also be a learning process in itself. As well, learning is an important impetus for social action, and FBOs regularly engage in action-oriented work. Dialogue and critical reflection can lead to transformed expectations about reality as it is and as it should be, socio-political empowerment, and subsequent engagement in political and social change (Sinclair *et al*. 2008). Approaching FBO research from a learning perspective promises to shed light on both the particular work of these organizations, and on the potentially unique learning processes that their members, as people of faith, undergo. As noted above, faith and religion are diverse and dynamic phenomena. Faith communities will differ in the measures they use to transmit and enforce their ethical orientations and related codes of conduct, and the degree to which independent practice, self-reflection, and critical

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thinking are encouraged or tolerated. All of these factors affect how individuals learn within these communities.

1.1.5 Kenya

Kenya is a country in East Africa where many of the issues described above intersect. Many Kenyans experience poverty, economic, and social inequalities, and health risks, particularly related to HIV/AIDS and malaria, all within the context of a steadily growing and increasingly youthful population (UNDP 2007; UNDP 2009). Drought, poor governance, population growth, and poverty also contribute to environmental change and degradation, presenting a significant challenge to sustainability in Kenya. Specific problems include deforestation, land degradation, biodiversity decline, and climate variability (ETC East Africa Ltd. 2006; UNEP 2009). At the same time, the church plays a prominent role in Kenyan society and often provides a key forum for social debate and political action (Karanja 2008; Mwaura 2008; Ranger 2008). Finally, Kenya is a "NGO heaven," as described by a long-time development worker in Nairobi. For both political and economic reasons, Kenya (and Nairobi in particular) has become the base for international NGOs in the region, and a multitude of secular and faith-based NGOs are also operating within the country. As such, Kenya is a fertile location for research in these areas.

1.2 Purpose and Objectives

The purpose of this research was to explore how individual learning emerges from the intersection of faith and the pursuit of sustainability within FBOs working in Kenya, East Africa. The research was shaped by the following objectives:

1. To describe the group identity and function of organizations combining a faith basis with sustainability work in Kenya.

2. To illustrate and compare how the social and cultural contexts formed by FBO communities within Kenyan society inform individual learning.

3. To document the transformative learning outcomes among individuals within FBOs.

4. To explore the processes FBO participants undergo when engaging in learning.

5. To examine and explain the relationships between individual learning and transformation, and the social action and social change that can emerge from them.

1.3 Methods

The research adopted a qualitative approach rooted within the social constructivist philosophical worldview. Social constructivism views reality as a multitude of realities that are both constructed and holistic, in which the relationship between the knower and the known is interactive and inseparable (Lincoln and Guba 1985; Guba and Lincoln 2005). The study used a comparative case study strategy, an approach that focuses on particular individuals, social groups, or settings to gain an understanding of their nature and function (Berg 2004). Aspects of the narrative strategy of inquiry, which uses storytelling or narrative as the "...organizing principle for human action" (Riessman 1993, 1), were also used for data collection and analysis. A variety of data collection techniques were used to access the process and meaning of social phenomena in context, and to capture personal reflections and perceptions (Yin 1984; Merriam 1988). The research was conducted in two phases.

1.3.1 Phase One

Data collection began with the development of a descriptive list of FBOs engaged

in environmental and development work in Kenya through an internet search and by building a contact network through snowball sampling (Berg 2004). Organizations' websites and publications, when available, were reviewed and analysed. This provided preliminary insights into the nature and function of the organizations. Qualitative questionnaires were administered to select FBOs to collect more detailed information on their work, and to assist in the selection of case studies. Finally, I conducted focus groups with the two case study FBOs to further deepen my understanding of FBO identity and function, and to explore learning at a preliminary level.

1.3.2 Phase Two

The primary focus in this phase was a comparative case study of two FBOs in Kenya: A Rocha Kenya in Watamu and the Rural Service Programme of the East Africa Yearly Meeting of Friends in Kaimosi. The cases were selected using purposive sampling (Merriam 1988; Berg 2004). Various data collection methods were used to triangulate and verify information (Berg 2004), some of which were described above. Document review of web-based and print publications and internal minutes and reports was employed. Participant observation within the organizations sought insight into the learning dynamic and the processes through which it occurs. Semi-structured interviews with staff and volunteers within the case FBOs targeted individual experiences of learning.

1.3.3 Data Analysis

The organization and transcription of data began in the field. In-depth analysis included coding with NVivo™ software, and some narrative analysis. The data were searched and coded for themes and patterns drawn from the literature and arising from the

data. Profiles and stories were created to describe, illustrate and analyse the identities and experiences of the participants (Polkinghorne 1995; Mankowski and Rappaport 2000; Berg 2004).

1.4 Organization of the Thesis

The thesis is presented in nine chapters. Following the Introduction, Chapter 2 presents the relevant literature that underpins this study. In Chapter 3, the approach to the data collection and analysis is described. Chapter 4 explores the identity and function of the FBOs that were investigated, considering the opportunities and challenges for FBOs doing sustainability work. Chapter 5 provides profiles of the case study FBOs and their work. In Chapter 6, individual learning outcomes are addressed, while Chapter 7 addresses learning process. Chapter 8 addresses the relationship between learning and action. The thesis concludes with Chapter 9, which summarises and synthesizes the findings, and considers them within the broader context of the literature and the sustainability project.

Chapter 2:
The Complex of Sustainability, Faith, and Learning in Kenya

2.0 Introduction

Kenya, as noted in Chapter 1, is a country where the various strands of this research – sustainability, NGOs, faith, and learning – intersect. This chapter begins by exploring the first three strands within the Kenyan context, detailing the country's development and environmental challenges, its religious profile, and the role that NGOs and FBOs are playing in addressing the former. This is followed by a discussion of faith communities' engagement with sustainability issues. The review focuses on Christianity in particular, because it is the dominant faith in both Kenya and the Global North, which sponsors many of the NGOs and FBOs working in Kenya. The discussion explores both the opportunities and challenges that people of faith and the groups and agencies they sponsor face when engaging in sustainability work. Finally, the learning process is addressed through transformative learning theory, describing the basic tenets of the theory, new and enduring debates, and the application of the theory in research regarding sustainability programs.

2.1 Kenya: A Country Profile

Environmental and development concerns are both pressing in Kenya, while NGOs and FBOs play a prominent role in addressing them. The country is located on the equator in East Africa (Figure 2.1). Many of its sustainability challenges are rooted in its history. Kenya's economic and social situation was shaped in its early stages by the Arab slave trade, which ended in 1873, and colonization, which disrupted political, social and

Figure 2.1 Map of Kenya
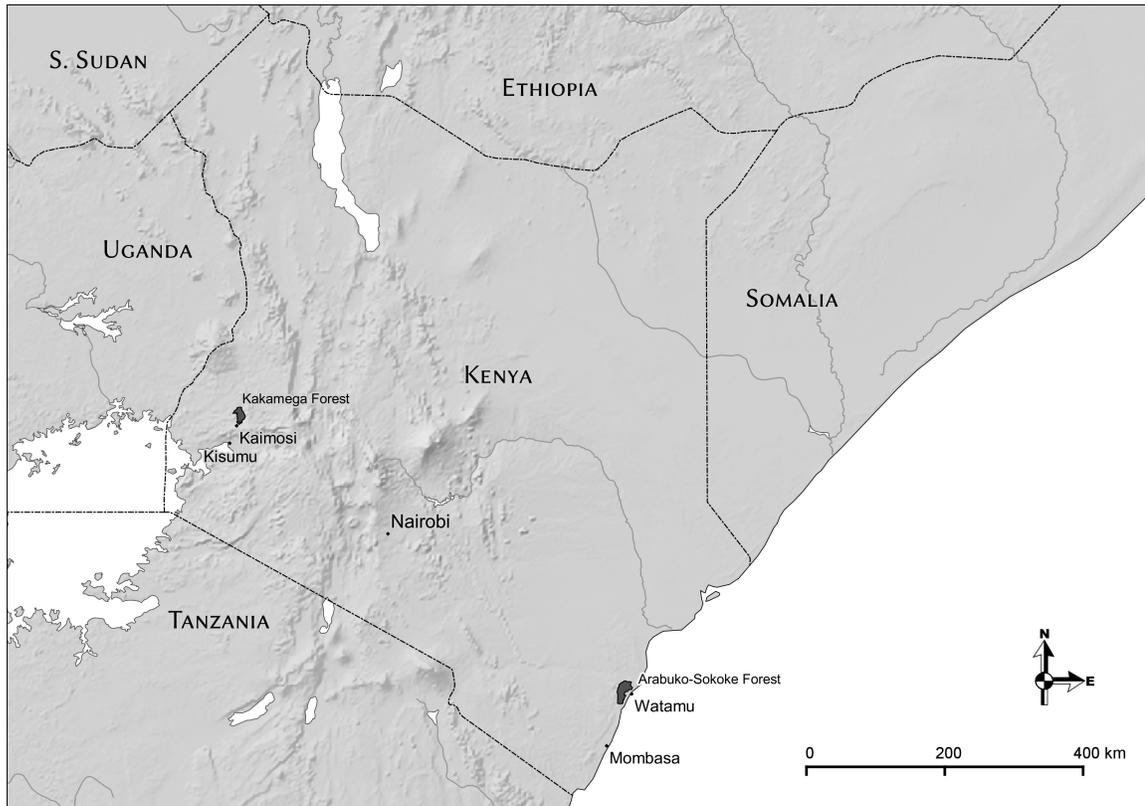
economic institutions, compromised local autonomy, and established inequitable

relationships with Europeans and other non-Africans. Colonization by the British also

exacerbated existing ethnic divisions, created classes of indigenous elites, and resulted in

the exploitation of resources at the expense of local people (Timberlake 1988; Thomas-

Slayter *et al.* 1995; Schwab 2001; UNEP 2002).

During the post-independence period, Kenya's political situation has been

characterized by increasing corruption and infringements on democracy, resulting in

growing instability (Karanja 2008). Kenya gained independence in 1963, following the

Mau Mau rebellion. During the 1980s and 1990s, the government introduced one party

rule, and was suspected of election rigging and corruption, increasing threats to democracy, and economic mismanagement (Schwab 2001; Karanja 2008). Tensions that began in those decades erupted when charges of election rigging in the 2007 presidential race sparked two months of violence in which over 1,000 people were killed and 300,000 people were displaced (Anderson and Lochery 2008; Wrong 2009). During the research period, six men were charged by the International Criminal Court for their leadership in instigating this violence.

2.1.1 Sustainability Challenges

In the 1960s, Kenya was the regional hub for trade and finance, and was considered a leader in the East African region (Thomas-Slayter *et al.* 1995; Vajpeyi *et al.* 2001). In the intervening decades, it has begun to lose its regional prominence. Like many other sub-Saharan African countries, the development phase that began optimistically in Kenya has stagnated and was even reversed to some degree during the 1980s and 1990s (Thomas-Slayter *et al.* 1995; Cheru 2002). Kenya's initial gains were built on coffee exports, but prices dropped in the 1980s. Economic decline was further compounded by the impacts of the oil crises of the 1970s, increasing debt, and structural adjustment programs imposed by the Global North and its multilateral institutions (Thomas-Slayter *et al.* 1995). Corrupt and avaricious government leadership and political and economic mismanagement have also played a role (Schwab 2001; Vajpeyi *et al.* 2001; Fahnbulleh 2006). In recent years, drought and the 2007 election violence have further crippled Kenya's economic progress (World Bank 2009).

Kenyans face many social, economic and development challenges. In addition to

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national economic decline, individuals experience poverty, growing economic and social inequalities, and health risks related to HIV/AIDS and malaria, all within the context of a steadily growing and increasingly youthful population (UNDP 2007; UNDP 2009). According to the United Nations' Human Development Index, Kenya ranks 143rd out of 187 countries, achieving a score of 0.509. This ranking places it near the top of the low development category, behind Swaziland, Bhutan, and the Solomon Islands (UNDP 2011). More development statistics are presented in Table 2.1.

Table 2.1: Kenya Development Profile

Indicator	Value
Population living in absolute poverty (% in 2005/2006)	46 [a]
Population living below $1.25 PPP per day (%)	19.7 [e]
Under-five mortality rate (deaths/1000 births)	84 [e]
Life expectancy at birth (in years)	57.1 [e]
Prevalence of malnutrition (% of children under 5 in 2009)	16.5 [f]
Population at risk of malaria infection (%)	70 [d]
Adult population infected with HIV/AIDS (%)	7.1 [b]
Population without access to improved water source (%)	43 [c]
Literacy rate (% of people over 15 who can read and write)	87.0 [e]
GDP (USD in 2010)	31,408,632,915 [f]
GDP growth (% in 2008-2009)	2.6 [g]
External debt stocks (% of GNI in 2010)	26.9 [f]

[a] KNBS (2008a); [b] NASCOP Kenya (2009); [c] UNDP (2009); [d] KNBS and ICF Macro (2010); [e] UNDP (2011); [f] World Bank (2011a); [g] World Bank (2011b)

Poverty, health, and national economic well-being are all affected by environmental factors. In Kenya, key environmental issues include the degradation of soil, water and vegetation resources, loss of biodiversity, poaching, and pollution (ETC

East Africa Ltd 2006; NEMA 2009). These changes are caused by a host of factors, such as population growth, urbanization, increased consumption, economic pressure, a dependence on agriculture and livestock for livelihood, energy demand, loss of indigenous knowledge and practices, skewed land ownership, and policy inadequacies regarding land tenure, ownership and management (UNEP 2002; ETC East Africa Ltd 2006).

Kenya's diverse landscapes afford high levels of biodiversity and Kenya ranks second in Africa for species richness for plants, birds and mammals (World Resources Institute *et al.* 2007). Its wildlife in particular is world renowned, however, both the size and distribution of wildlife have been declining since the 1970s. Species are threatened by habitat loss and degradation from deforestation and agriculture, as well as the introduction of foreign pathogens and parasites, mining, tourism, infrastructure, civil unrest, pesticides and hunting (Wong *et al*. 2005; ETC East Africa Ltd 2006). Despite the existence of 31 parks and protected areas, 50 Kenyan species are listed as endangered, amounting to 8% of all species, and 21 are critically endangered (Wong *et al*. 2005; UNDP 2011). Loss of biodiversity impacts both of Kenya's most productive economic sectors: agriculture and tourism (World Resources Institute *et al*. 2007; NEMA 2009).

Rapid deforestation is another ongoing concern in Kenya. The country is losing its forests at a rate 5,000 hectares a year, leaving only 6.1% of total land area forested. Since 1930, 65% of Kenya's original standing wood volume has disappeared (NEMA 2009; UNDP 2011). The primary causes are illegal logging, charcoal production, cultivation, and human settlements, and the majority of the harvested wood is used as fuel (ETC East

Africa Ltd 2006; NEMA 2009). Most of the remaining wood biomass in Kenya consists of bushlands that are integrated into agricultural areas. Closed forest only constitutes 1.7% of the landscape, and these remaining forests are threatened by encroaching human settlements and illegal harvesting (UNEP 2006; World Resources Institute *et al*. 2007). Deforestation results in soil erosion, loss of fertility, alteration in local climate and water, and changes in biodiversity. Distortions in the hydrological balance due to deforestation of major water catchment areas lead to an increase in the intensity and frequency of droughts and floods, while deforestation as a whole affects the availability of wood fuel (UNEP 2002; ETC East Africa Ltd 2006).

Deforestation in Kenya's so-called water towers – the Mau Escarpment, Mount Kenya, the Aberdares Range, the Cherangani Hills, and Mount Elgon – is particularly problematic. These high elevation forest watersheds collect and store water during the rainy season that is slowly released during the dry season, supplying many of the country's rivers. Landless people have been settled by the government in areas like the Mau Complex where they are clearing trees to farm. Recognizing the hydrological implications of this move – implications that reach into Tanzania and as far as Egypt – the current government has been working to remove these people. Since only some of the settlers have legal title to their land, deciding which settlers deserve assistance with resettlement makes this a politically delicate operation (Morgan 2009; Interim Coordinating Secretariat 2012).

Agricultural activity contributes directly or indirectly to 53% of the national economy, and 75% of the population depends on farming for its food. Most agriculture

consists of small, independent farmers, doing rain-fed agriculture on two to ten acre farms (Thomas-Slayter 2003; ETC East Africa Ltd 2006; World Resources Institute *et al.* 2007). As a nation dominated by agriculture, water and soil are also key environmental concerns in Kenya. Rainfall is marginal and unpredictable in terms of both amount and distribution in much of the country (World Resources Institute *et al.* 2007). Kenya experiences severe droughts on a regular basis, as well as frequent flooding, problems that are likely to be augmented by global climate change (UNEP 2002). Freshwater quality is also being affected by pollution from domestic, agricultural and industrial sources (UNEP 2002; Wong *et al.* 2005).

Many of Kenya's land ecosystems are fragile, particularly in mountainous and hilly areas and are therefore susceptible to soil erosion and desertification (UNEP 2002). Farming on marginal land, particularly when inappropriate soil management and agricultural techniques are used, contributes to soil damage (Timberlake 1988). In Kenya, only 8% of the land is classified as arable, but 38% of the land is used for agriculture (World Resources Institute *et al.* 2007; World Bank 2009). This leads to imbalances in population distribution, with as much as 80% of the population living on 17% of the land, while population pressure is causing unsustainable land use leading to land degradation (Wong *et al.* 2005; ETC East Africa Ltd 2006). Finally, coastal and marine environments are threatened by erosion and beach degradation, pollution, harvesting pressures, and damage to coral reefs and mangroves. This is both a result of and a threat to the tourism industry (UNEP 2002; World Resources Institute *et al.* 2007).

The need for development and improved environmental sustainability in Kenya is

undeniable. Historically, the government has failed to deliver these necessary changes, hampered by corruption and economic and political mismanagement (Kameri-Mbote 2000; Fahnbulleh 2006). At the same time, development initiatives from the Global North, spearheaded by multilateral development agencies, have produced less than stellar results, compromised in part by self-serving agendas and ideologies (Blaikie 2000; Hoogevelt 2002). Recently the Government of Kenya has developed a comprehensive plan to address these interlocking problems. Building on global initiatives, such as the Millennium Development Goals, *Kenya Vision 2030* "...aims to transform Kenya into a newly industrialising middle-income country providing a high quality life to all its citizens by the year 2030" (Government of Kenya 2007, vii), by targeting economic, social, and political pillars. NGOs are likely to play a prominent role in addressing the interlocking sustainability issues, having become a growing force in Kenyan society and politics in recent decades (Kameri-Mbote 2000). Whether NGOs will succeed where others have failed is yet to be seen, but as the discussion in section 2.1.3 will demonstrate, NGOs are playing a significant role in both the development and environmental domains of the sustainability project.

2.1.2 Faith Profile

The Christian church is growing more quickly in Sub-Saharan Africa than anywhere else in the world (Hanciles 2008), and Kenya fits within this trend. It is predominantly Christian, and the growth of Christianity is a prominent feature in Kenyan society (Karanja 2008; Mwaura 2008). A small Muslim minority exists as a legacy of the long time Arab presence on the coastline, while some of the population still practices

traditional indigenous religions (Table 2.2).

Table 2.2: Religious Distribution in Kenya

Religious Affiliation	Percentage of Population
Catholic	23
Protestant	48
Other Christian	12
Muslim	11
Hindu	0.14
Traditionalist	1.7
Other Religion	1.5
No Religion	2.4
Don't Know	0.16

(KNBS 2010b)

Christianity was first introduced to Kenya in 1844 by Anglican missionaries located along the coast. Various other churches arrived between 1895 and 1914, during which period the Christian mission expanded to the interior (Karanja 2008). After World War I, the profile of Christianity began to change. Amongst the mission churches, leadership started shifting from expatriate missionaries to African Kenyans, while other independent churches formed, such as the African Instituted Churches (AIC). AICs are large, enduring, and expanding phenomena, drawing from both Christian and traditional beliefs and structures (Karanja 2008; Mwaura 2008).

Between 1963 and 1985, the character of Kenyan Christianity shifted again as new

missionaries from the evangelical[1] and charismatic[2] traditions arrived from the United

States, planting new churches. At the same time, a charismatic revival swept through the

established mainline churches (Karanja 2008; Mwaura 2008). The proliferation of

evangelicalism continues into the present day; Kenya's evangelicals currently number

9.75 million people, which is 34% of the population (Karanja 2008).

     Kenyan Christians now divide into three main bodies: the Catholic Church; the

mainstream Protestant churches and their ecumenical bodies – The National Council of

Churches of Kenya, the All Africa Conference of Churches, and the World Council of

Churches; and the Evangelical Fellowship of Kenya (Karanja 2008). These church bodies

have played varying roles in political activism and democracy. The churches' initial

connections to colonialism hampered their contribution to grassroots activism and

democracy, but they also played a role in ending the slave trade. Later, mainline churches

made significant contributions in challenging single-party rule and militarism and

present-day evangelical churches are playing a more central role in the struggle against

presidential third termism. The church is a vital social arena in Kenyan society,

particularly in terms of promoting locally initiated social change, because it is often the

only functioning social network apart from elitist and corrupt political parties (Ranger

2008).

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[1] Evangelicalism "...is a form of Christianity that has been particularly marked by respect for the Bible, a stress on the atonement, an expectation of conversions and rigorous activity" (Bebbington 2002, 195).

[2] Charismatic Christianity is an evangelical subset that emphasizes the work of the Holy Spirit. Charismatics value spiritual gifts, such as healing, prophecy, and speaking in tongues (Warrington, 2002).

2.1.3 NGOs, FBOs, and Sustainability

In keeping with broader global trends, NGOs have become a growing force in Kenyan society and politics in recent decades (Kameri-Mbote 2000). Berger (2003) reports that over 200 new NGOs are created there each year. The political, social and economic factors underlying the global increase in NGO activity were outlined in Chapter 1. Specific factors in Kenya include "...poverty, civil strife, conflicts, internal displacements, and general degeneration of the socio-economic and political systems" (Kameri-Mbote 2000, 2).

Kenyan NGOs address a wide variety of social, developmental, environmental, and political issues, and have become central forces in working toward sustainability (see Table 2.3) (Kameri-Mbote 2000; UNEP 2002; Liston 2007). Most of the foreign development assistance received in Kenya is funnelled through NGOs, such as the Ford Foundation, CARE Kenya, Oxfam, Médecins sans frontiers, Pact Kenya, and Pathfinder International. These organizations address a broad range of issues, from peace and conflict to emergency relief, poverty reduction, family planning, capacity building, HIV/AIDS and other health concerns, and rural development. FBOs, such as World Vision, Catholic Relief Services, Heifer International, the Christian Children's Fund, World Concern, and many others also contribute significantly to this work (Ngumuta 2008). According to Liston's (2007) research, 74 NGOs active in Kenya in 2005 were registered as faith based; these are involved primarily in mission and development work.

As illustrated in Table 2.3, environmental issues figure prominently in NGO activities as well. Nairobi is home to the United Nations Environmental Programme

headquarters, which naturally concentrates related activity in that region. For example, the Environmental Liaison Center International (ELCI), also located in Nairobi, is an international network of NGOs working toward sustainability. It lists 115 member organizations active within Kenya (ELCI 2007).

Table 2.3: A Selection of NGO Activity Areas in Kenya

NGO Activity	# of NGOs	NGO Activity	# of NGOs
Education	645	AIDS	71
Health	641	Refugees	48
Environment	414	Nature Conservation	27
Water and sanitation	277	Food Security/Nutrition	24
Rural development	215	Forestry	17
Relief	204	Peace and conflict	15
Women	129	Wildlife	13
Population	110	Social Policy	6
Pastoralists/Arid Zones	105	Energy	2
Agriculture/Livestock	74	Fisheries	2

Compiled by Dr. Vanessa Liston from the 2005 National Directory of NGOs in Kenya (Liston 2007).

The important role that NGOs play with respect to the environment, natural resources, and sustainability in Kenya is illustrated by the work of the Green Belt Movement and its Nobel Peace Prize winning founder, Wangari Maathai. It began in 1977 as a women's grassroots tree planting project in response to deforestation, soil erosion, and water shortages. From this small beginning, it has grown into a network of over 600 community groups, caring for 6,000 tree nurseries. Since its inception, 30 million trees have been planted in Kenya. The organization's activities have expanded

beyond tree planting to include environmental education, advocacy, training, and capacity

building for women. These accomplishments were achieved despite the crippling poverty

that affects many Kenyan women, and often in the face of harsh government opposition

(Maathai 2006; The Green Belt Movement International 2009).

The role of the church and its related agencies in addressing environmental issues

is somewhat less prominent. A decade ago, Gitau (2000) stated that the churches in

Kenya are far behind in fulfilling their obligations for environmental sustainability. He

attributes this in part to the adoption of a belief in human mastery over nature, which is,

he deems, a misinterpretation of the Bible. While the church has become involved in

other political matters, Gitau suggests that a focus on saving souls and ecclesiastical

concerns has relegated the environment to a low priority position. Among the church

leaders he surveyed, however, it was widely agreed that "...churches have a critical

responsibility of [*sic*] assisting Kenyans to safeguard all aspects of the environment"

(Gitau 2000, 83). Despite the lack of a theology of nature and the other barriers

mentioned above, he did find some Kenyan churches that are engaging environmental

issues. In Thika town, the Catholic Church spearheaded political action in response to

industrial pollution during the 1990s, and environmental crusader Father John Kiongo of

Limuru Parish, Kiambu, has a tree nursery specializing in indigenous trees.

More recently, the Kenyan churches' engagement with the environment has

increased, led in part by some of the organizations studied in this research. For instance,

the Brackenhurst Conference Center near Nairobi hosted international conferences on

"God and Creation" in 2004 and 2006, with 250 participants at each (Care of Creation

Kenya 2012). The Micah Network also held its Global Consultation on Creation

Stewardship and Climate Change at Brackenhurst in 2009 (Micah Network 2012). At the

national level, in 2012, the leadership of the Anglican Church of Kenya committed to a

strategic environmental plan for the church, with facilitation from the Christian Reformed

World Relief Committee (Spaling 2012).

Local and international FBOs are also addressing sustainability issues. According

to Liston's (2007) research, only one of the 74 Kenyan FBOs in 2005 was also listed as

working on environmental issues. At the same time, many development programs include

environmental components, and as described in the ensuing chapters, other organizations

with religious affiliations that are not included in Liston's database are working with

environmental issues. This indicates a gap in the reporting of FBOs' sustainability

activities.

2.2 Faith and Sustainability

The FBOs listed above constitute part of a growing movement within faith

communities around the world to address environmental issues, locally and globally

(Gardner 2002). The following section considers in greater detail the relationship between

faith and sustainability work. The history and role of faith in development work and in

environmental work will be considered separately, followed by a discussion of some of

the challenges and opportunities that arise from the integration of faith and FBOs in these

fields. The section closes with a review of research undertaken to define and categorize

FBOs.

2.2.1 Faith and Development

The relationship between faith and the activities that are now associated with development reaches back to the very beginning of religious traditions. In both the West, and in sub-Saharan Africa, this history primarily concerns the Christian, and to some extent, the Muslim faiths. Ancient Judaism, the mother of Christianity and Islam, was deeply concerned with caring for the poor and its laws contain instructions for charitable giving and social practices to support the widow, the orphan, and the alien in the land (Isaac 1993). Both Christianity and Islam have absorbed this tenet of Judaism (Benedetti 2006; Hammond 2008). Eastern religions, such as Hinduism, Buddhism, and Confucianism, also promote charitable giving as a spiritual act. For instance, the Four Noble Truths of Buddhism include love and compassion to the less fortunate (Isaac 1993). Since Christianity is the faith most relevant to this research, this discussion will focus primarily on that historical relationship with development.

From its roots in Jewish concern for the poor, the Christian church continued to extol the virtue of charity. In the famous story of the "Good Samaritan," Jesus illustrated what it means to be a neighbour in the story of a socially despised Samaritan caring for a victim of highway robbery, ending the parable with the command to "go and do likewise" (Luke 10:25-37). Similarly, in a depiction of the final judgement, Jesus described the reward awaiting those who cared for others:

> Then the king will say to those at his right hand, 'Come, you that are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me (Matthew 25:34-36, New Revised Standard Version).

Early churches established institutions to care for the poor, and the sick (Isaac 1993). The church has also had a long history of involvement in education.

As Christian European nations colonized countries in Africa and around the world, they brought missionaries with them. The primary aim of missionary work was to gain converts to Christianity, but missionaries performed a great deal of development work as well. They established hospitals and schools, as well as other programs, such as water sanitation systems, to improve the lives of those with whom they worked (Bornstein 2005; Haynes 2007). This work was conducted in close association with the colonial powers, assisting in "civilizing" the colonized populations and providing a docile and trained work force (Thaut 2009). At the same time, it laid a foundation of educational and economic development that contributed to the eventual independence of these countries (Goody, 2003; Bornstein 2005).

By the end of World War II, states and societies had become less interested in the contributions of churches and their agencies. Western governments and development agencies came to see religious institutions as part of the problem, while emerging independent, post-colonial states resented the power and influence that churches had within their jurisdictions (Haynes 2007). Over the latter half of the 20th century, in which development became a vital international concern and grew into an enormous industry, faith-based development work was largely ignored. When recognized, it was generally seen as an obstacle to the development program (Baum 2000; Clarke 2006). Development was understood as a technical enterprise that took place within the realms of economics, and social and political sciences, and faith was irrelevant and counterproductive to this

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work. Religions were seen as divisive, irrational, superstitious, anti-democratic, fanatical, entrenched in tradition, and hostile to modernization (Tyndale 2006).

Faith-based development agencies persevered in their work despite these changes in the attitudes of the secular world toward them. This work was conducted through the continued work of missionaries, and through faith-based development agencies such as World Vision, CARE, Catholic Relief Services, and Oxfam (Barnett and Weiss 2008). While CARE and Oxfam now function as secular organizations, they have faith-based roots. These and many other mission and faith-based development agencies have provided humanitarian relief, refugee, health, education, agricultural, and economic development programs throughout the world. In Africa, 40 to 50% of all the health and education services are provided by FBOs (Goody 2003; Tyndale 2006).

It is now recognized that FBOs have been a driving force in development for many decades (Haynes 2007). The success of the Jubilee campaign to cancel unpayable debt in the world's least developed countries, for instance, "...demonstrated how powerful a force religious organizations could be if they chose to lobby together on a single theme" (Tyndale 2003, 26). Barnett and Weiss (2008), go further, arguing that "...it is Christianity and Christian faith-based organizations that so far have had the most significant influence on contemporary humanitarian action" (19).

These recognitions have grown out of a renewed interest by scholars, governments and mainstream development agencies in the work of FBOs, and other religious institutions, and their impact on development. This interest was instigated by several factors. One was the realization that despite expectations of growing secularization, the

world remains largely committed to faith and religion (Berger 1999; Thomas 2005). Another was the widespread failure to achieve development goals over half a century of "technical" development. Development practitioners are increasingly recognizing the human elements of development, including cultural and spiritual concerns, along with economic and material concerns (Thomas 2005; Haynes 2007).

This opened the door to the faith-based approach. Renewed interest in faith-based development began in the 1980s, with a special edition of *World Development* and some work by United States president Ronald Reagan, but it was in the 1990s that a dialogue seriously began. In 1998, World Bank president, James Wolfensohn, and Archbishop of Canterbury, George Carey, collaborated to form the World Faith Development Dialogue (WFDD). This initiative grew from a realization within the World Bank that a range of actors and interventions were necessary to make a serious impact on world poverty. Several gatherings were held between faith groups and development actors in the late 1990s, but by 2000, the World Bank decided to take a more cautious approach toward the faith-development dialogue and curtailed the WFDD's activities. The WFDD has, however, continued its work to some extent (Marshall 2005; Alkire 2006).

At the same time, other institutions were initiating similar studies. In 1992, the Canadian International Development Agency initiated a discussion with Christian NGOs and produced a report that outlined guiding principles for collaboration (CIDA 1995). The International Development Research Centre, a Canadian crown corporation, also launched an inquiry to "...better understand how our field of action relates to the spiritual and religious dimensions of human well-being" (Beemans 2000, viii), ultimately

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producing a book: *The Lab, the Temple and the Market: Reflections at the Intersection of Science* (Harper 2000). The United Nations Population Fund and the Inter-America Development Bank have also embarked on similar initiatives (Alkire 2006). Scholarly research on the topic of faith and religion has blossomed in recent years, indicating an increasingly established interest in dialogue and collaboration between faith and development (Candland 2000; Dicklitch and Rice 2004; Benedetti 2006; Clarke 2006; Hefferan 2007; Bradley 2009; Thaut 2009).

Faith-based development agencies are also working to refine and articulate their particular approach to their endeavours. Bryant Myers (1999) provides an example of this in his book, *Walking with the Poor*, in which he builds on his work with World Vision to outline a Christian approach to development. This approach is shaped by the Christian understanding of reality as described in the biblical story. Christian development can be described as striving for "...changed people and changed relationships..." (Myers 1999, 211) through "transformational development", which involves "...seeking positive change in the whole human life materially, socially and spiritually" (Myers 1999, 3). This model of development is conducted based on the principles of respect for communities, perpetual learning, striving for empowerment, and building community, and holistic development practice (Myers 1999).

2.2.2 Faith and the Environment

Like the preceding section, the following discussion will focus primarily on Christian engagement with environmental issues, since this research was conducted almost exclusively with Christian FBOs. It should be noted, however, that many other

faith groups are confronting environmental issues and have both resources and obstacles within their faith traditions with respect to these activities. For example, the emphasis on interconnectedness, nonviolence, and compassion found within Buddhism provides a strong impetus for sustainability. Hinduism also promotes simple living, nonviolence, and minimizing harm, and portrays nature as a spiritual teacher and helpmate (Branton 2006; Klostermaier 2007), while Chinese religions such as Confucianism are holistic and seek harmony between humans and the natural world or the cosmos (Kinsley 1995). At the same time, both Hinduism and Buddhism can be characterized by a spiritual self-absorption and separation from the world that can disconnect faith-based aspirations from mundane social and ecological justice issues (Kinsley 1995; Gottlieb 2006; Klostermaier 2007). Islam emphasizes responsibility and stewardship in a manner similar to Christianity and Judaism, and also shares with them many of the same obstacles to environmental concern and action (Branton 2006; Gottlieb 2006). As well, indigenous belief systems around the world contain a wide variety of ecological resources, some of which will be explored briefly later (Kinsley 1995; Branton 2006).

While the Christian church has engaged with its natural environment in various ways throughout the centuries, the current movement of Christian environmentalism began in the 1960s sparked by two primary factors. One was the growing awareness of an impending ecological crisis, impelled in part by the secular environmental movement (Fowler 1995; Kearns 1997; Hart 2006). Another was the need to respond to the "ecological complaint against Christianity", an accusation that Christianity is ecologically bankrupt and bears much of the blame for current environmental degradation (Fowler

1995). The ecological complaint was most popularly articulated by historian Lynn White, Jr., in his classic article "The Historic Roots of our Ecologic Crisis," published in *Science* in 1967.

White observed that the science and technology that provided the impetus and capacity to exploit the natural environment to a dangerous and global degree were developed in Western Europe and North America. These societies were shaped by the Christian faith. He therefore argued that basic beliefs within the Western Christian tradition, most notably anthropocentrism, other-worldly spiritualism, dualistic worldviews, and monotheism, allowed and even encouraged the development of science and technology in this destructive direction. Arnold Toynbee published a similar essay in 1972, emphasizing the effect of monotheism and its message that God has given the world to humans with licence to treat it as they please. Toynbee's remedy is to return pre-monotheistic pantheism such as that practised by the Romans and Greeks, and to look to eastern religions (Toynbee 1972). White's essay concludes with a call for reformation of the Christian faith, promoting the sense of kinship and respect for nature that was demonstrated by Saint Francis of Assisi, who championed the virtue of humility for humanity as a species (White 1967).

Since its publication, White's thesis has largely defined the perception of Christianity vis à vis the environment (Hitzhusen 2007), and much of the Christian literature concerning the environment, both popular and academic, begins with a discussion of White's analysis of Christianity, followed by a counter argument in some form. Critiques of the thesis include the lack of empirical evidence in subsequent

studies to link Christian belief with anti-environmental behaviour (Hitzhusen 2007; Proctor and Berry 2008), and its simplistic and narrow portrayal of Christian tradition and societal influences (Wilkinson *et al.* 1991; Fowler 1995; Hitzhusen 2007). Despite these critiques, and despite White's own conclusion that alternative views within Christianity are key to addressing the ecological crisis, the assumption that Christianity's influence is detrimental to the environment persists (Hitzhusen 2007). White's essay continues to shape Christianity's relationship with the environment, infusing theological discussions and calls to action with an air of defensiveness (Fowler 1995).

In response to heightening environmental concerns and enduring charges of ecological bankruptcy, Christian scholars and theologians have spent several decades combing through their scripture texts and theological traditions in search of resources for a Christian ecotheology. Ecotheology is

> ...an attempt to retrieve the ecological wisdom in Christianity as a response to environmental threats and injustices. At the same time, it is also an attempt to reinvestigate, rediscover, and renew the Christian tradition in the light of the challenges posed by the environmental crisis (Conradie *et al.* 2005, 282).

This is a vital exercise if Christians are to embrace an environmental ethic and incorporate it into their faith, because theological traditions, especially the Bible, are the foundation for Christian thought and action (Bouma-Prediger 2001).

Both within the Bible and the theological tradition, there are themes that support care for the earth and other themes that are less supportive, if not in opposition to it. The Bible primarily tells the story of God's relationship with people, but it is a complex

set of books written by numerous authors presenting a variety of messages. Within the academic and popular literature, however, one can detect an evolution of thought in the degree to which these materials are interpreted to support an ecological ethic. In the early 1990s, Fowler (1995) stated that there is no consensus regarding the ecological message in the Bible. In contrast, Gottlieb (2006) asserts with much greater certainty that "...the Bible endorses, at the very least, a set of cautionary general principles that far exceed the simple prudence of 'not wasting' and that teach human beings to recognize the value of the earth and act accordingly" (25). The editors of *The Green Bible*, affirm the Bible's relevance to current environmental concerns with even greater confidence:

> Our role in creation's care may be a new question unique to our place in history, but the Bible turns out to be amazingly relevant. In fact, it is almost as if it were waiting for this moment to speak to us. With over a thousand references to the earth and caring for creation in the Bible, the message is clear: all in God's creation – nature, animals, humanity – are inextricably linked to one another. As God cares for all of creation, so too we cannot love one dimension without caring for the others (Maudlin and Baer 2008, I-15).

In revisiting the Bible with a green lens, so to speak, many possible bases for environmental care and concern have been identified. The following outlines key biblical assertions (DeWitt 1995; Bouma-Prediger 2001; Hitzhusen 2007):

- God is the creator of all that exists: creation is valued, cared for, and reveals God's character (Genesis 1; Psalm 19:1-4).[3]

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[3] With any use of Genesis 1, one unavoidably risks entering the debate between creationists and evolutionists. While hoping to abstain from direct engagement in that debate, I do embrace the belief that the universe has an ultimate source, or a creator, and did not arise by chance. Based upon this premise, Genesis 1 is applied to answer theological questions regarding who that creator is, for what purpose the universe was created, and with what attitude. Scientific questions relating to how and when the universe and its components were formed, and how long this formation took, are not relevant to the research, and are therefore left to the discretion and conviction of the reader.

- Humans are part of the community of creation, but have a unique relationship with God that results in special responsibilities, including service and stewardship toward other members of creation (Genesis 1; 2:15).

- Jesus was the ultimate model of this service and stewardship: as God's son, he did not use this position of power for personal gain and privilege, but rather exemplified a simple lifestyle, teaching and serving, and ultimately suffering and dying for the redemption of creation (Philippians 2:5-8).

- Jesus' physical incarnation is an affirmation of the value of physical matter, as are the universal salvation he provides (John 3:16; Romans 8:18-25), and the visions of the future reign of God, which anticipate the renewal of the existing creation and the restoration of a cosmic harmony (Isaiah 11:6-9; Revelation 21-22).

These biblical bases for environmental concern are products of a modern revisiting of ancient writings, which involves both reinterpretation of standard texts and new attention to material that has traditionally been ignored. In contrast, the Christianity described by prominent theologians of recent centuries largely reflects the charges of the ecological complaint. The theological traditions within the Christian faith are, however, as diverse and complex as the Bible. Numerous scholars have revisited the works of Christian leaders through the centuries to evaluate them against the ecological complaint and to search for resources to build a Christian ecotheology. After engaging in such an exercise, Santmire (1985) concluded that

> ...the theological tradition in the West is neither ecologically bankrupt, as some of its popular and scholarly critics have maintained and as numbers of its own theologians have assumed, nor replete with immediately accessible, albeit long-forgotten, ecological riches hidden everywhere in its deeper vaults, as some contemporary Christians, who are profoundly troubled by the environmental crisis and other related concerns, might wistfully hope to find (8).

Despite the ambiguities of the theological tradition, and the complex messages and diverse interpretations of the Bible, a set of solid ecotheologies are beginning to

emerge, providing a unique motivation for environmental concern (Schaeffer 1970; Wilkinson *et al.* 1991; Bouma-Prediger 2001; Sleeth 2007). I say ecotheologies because there are several different approaches to Christian ecotheology and environmental practice. The following are four expressions of these.

Christian stewardship is one of the most dominant streams of Christian environmentalism (Kearns 1996). It is fundamentally biblical and theocentric: the entire construct flows out of a belief in God as the creator and a subsequent understanding of God's relationship with humans and other creatures. Creation's value comes from God, and humans receive both their creaturehood and their uniqueness from God. Their responsibility toward the rest of creation also derives from God, as illustrated in the call to stewardship found in Genesis 1. The failings in human societies and individuals that lead to environmental degradation are symptoms of a broken relationship with God and the rejection of God's good gifts, but through Christ there is hope for both the redemption of humans and the renewal and restoration of the earth (Bouma-Prediger 2001). This is the most common approach among evangelicals and Catholics, and Jewish environmentalism also tends toward a stewardship orientation (Shibley and Wiggins 1997). The term "creation care" is also gaining popularity as a description of this approach (Grizzle and Barrett 1998; Sluka *et al.* 2011), particularly amongst Christians who wish to emphasize their distinctive approach to the environment, and to differentiate themselves from secular and neo-pagan environmentalism.

The *eco-justice* approach is another stream, which emphasizes the link between environmental concerns and social justice issues such as poverty, environmental racism,

just distribution of resources, economic systems and power relationships (Grizzle and Barrett 1998; Kearns 1996; Rieger 2004). In North America, this approach is most commonly found in mainline Protestant denominations.

In the Global South, the eco-justice approach is expressed more widely across denominations. It connects to the liberation theology tradition that emerged from Latin America in the 1960s in response to poverty and underdevelopment, highlighting the particular concern for the poor and oppressed that arises from the Christian story. Brazilian Catholic theologian, Leonardo Boff, argues that poverty and environmental degradation are parallel crises, fuelled by the same forces: disconnectedness from each other and from the earth, and the quest for progress through unlimited growth. The remedy for both problems is building community and relationship by embracing the connectedness of the entire cosmos (Boff 1997).

Christian stewardship and eco-justice both fit fairly seamlessly into orthodox Christian thought, but a third approach, *creation spirituality*, pushes at the boundaries. Creation spirituality does not begin with the Bible, but instead uses cosmic evolution as a basis to build a sense of kinship amongst all components of creation and to combat problematic dualism in Western worldviews. Creation spiritualists focus on reorienting human self-understanding, situating the human as merely another member of a larger, dynamic whole (Kearns 1996). This approach tends toward pantheism, which has elicited critique and censure from more orthodox Christians. Many leaders in the creation spirituality movement have arisen from the Catholic Church, but many have also left, or received disciplinary action from the church hierarchy due to their

unorthodox views (Kearns 1996).

The final approach is sometimes omitted from lists such as this one because it is not exclusively a Christian approach. *Eco-feminism* has many expressions, some of which are Christian, some neo-pagan, and some without any religious association (Fowler 1995; Kearns 1996). Regardless of their affiliation, eco-feminists focus on hierarchies and dualistic worldviews which support the subjugation of both women and nature, leading to oppressive societal structures and destructive behaviour toward the environment. The association of women with nature and men with culture is exposed as a societal justification for male domination (Ruether 1997). Within the Christian rendering of eco-feminism, these dynamics are traced through biblical texts and church history, with the objective of breaking down hierarchies and replacing them with holism, interdependence and an immanent sense of God, leading to greater mutuality with the environment (McFague 1993; Ruether 1997).

The theological constructions and biblical interpretations described above have primarily emerged from the North American and European churches. Christian ecotheology is less developed in Kenya, as noted above, and in Africa as a whole. The church's responsibility to respond to environmental issues, and the need for corresponding theological work is, however, recognized (Gitau 2000; Muriungi 2009). At the same time, evidence of some ecotheological development and environmental activity within Christian circles on the continent exists. Ideas similar to South American liberation theology are developing across Africa, recognizing the ties between environmental degradation and the legacy of colonialism (and apartheid in South

Africa) and current political and economic inequalities (Ackerman 1997; Conradie et al. 2001; Daneel 2006).

A notable example is the work of a Zimbabwean reforestation project that was mentioned briefly in Chapter 1. This "war of the trees" is a joint initiative of the African Instituted Churches and traditional religion practitioners. Based on both traditional beliefs and Christian theology, abuse of the environment is deemed a sin, and salvation through Jesus, the wounded healer, is broadened to include ecological healing. These theological tenets are expressed through ritual and ceremony, particularly the tree planting Eucharist,[4] which features praise to the Creator, public confession of ecological sins, and partaking of communion while holding a seedling that will later be planted (Daneel 2006). The importance of ritual and ceremony in celebrating and expressing faith conviction, and relationships with the non-human world is common across Africa (Olunpona 2006).

Ethiopian Orthodox Christians also marry traditional beliefs with the tenets of Christianity. The most significant of these beliefs with respect to the environment is the conception of a world inhabited by both humans and spirits (Berhane-Selassie 1994). This is also common across African traditional belief systems (Bryant 1992; Kibicho 1992). Nature, for many Africans, is filled with "religious significance" (Bryant 1992, 69) and functions as a mediator, symbol and locus for the divine (Kibicho 1992). In

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[4] The Eucharist, or Communion, is a Christian ritual in which the participants drink wine (or grape juice) and eat bread in commemoration of Jesus's last supper before his crucifixion. The precise meaning of this act varies across denominations, but most generally, it is intended as an act of remembrance of Jesus' sacrifice and a celebration of the redemption that was achieved thereby.

Ethiopian Orthodox practices, these beliefs translate into a veneration of church

grounds, which then often provide habitat for wild animals. Ethiopian Christians also

continue to protect indigenous trees inspired by traditional beliefs (Berhane-Selassie

1994).

Both these examples illustrate the use of both Christian and traditional beliefs to

justify and support ecological actions. Based on available literature, it is unclear how

much these two beliefs systems have been integrated to build an ecotheology in Kenya.

There are, however, potentially promising resources within Kenyan traditional beliefs.

Gitau (2000) examined the traditional beliefs of the Kikuyu and the Maasai for

ecological tenets. Both view God as simultaneously transcendent and immanent, as both

creator and sustainer, suggesting a combination of both spiritual and the ecological

motifs. Humanity is understood to share its creaturehood with the rest of creation and to

be highly dependent on God. Respect for animals and plants is an important feature in

both cultures, and is expressed through the use of plants and animals in myths and

proverbs. Among the Maasai, this respect is expressed even more fully in the special

relationship they share with their cattle. All these beliefs may be used in various ways to

support the development of a Kenyan ecotheology.

2.2.3 Obstacles and Challenges to Faith-Based Sustainability Work

Despite the advances in religious environmentalism and the renewed recognition

of the contribution of faith-based development work, obstacles, and challenges still

exist both from within the faith and from broader society. Some of the objections to

religion raised by secular development practitioners during the 20th century are fair.

Faith communities may hold traditional ideas that prevent development, such as beliefs

and norms about gender roles that prevent the empowerment of women (Alkire 2006;

Khan and Bashar 2008). People of faith who are deeply committed to their worldview

and convictions may marginalise and ignore the beliefs and interests of others,

including those they are intending to help (Bradley 2009). Some faith-based agencies

may also favour members of their own faith in delivering services, or offer services

with pressure to convert to their faith (Goody 2003; Benedetti 2006). A focus on

proselytizing can distract and detract from development work, particularly when

working with people of other faiths, while links to Western imperialism may pose a

barrier to effective development (Thaut 2009). At the same time, the strong identities

that many faith groups maintain, and the history of conflict between different faith

communities, can impede effective collaboration (Bhagwat *et al.* 2011).

The values and beliefs of some Christians also remain an obstacle (Bhagwat *et
al.* 2011). Some Christians still assert that Genesis 1 mandates license for human

exploitation of the Earth (Grizzle and Barrett 1998; Klostermaier 2010). The "other-

worldly" orientation is another obstacle, translating in its mildest form into apathetic

indifference; since the earth is not their true home, its fate and that of its inhabitants is

not their concern (Fowler 1995; DeWitt 2000). When, however, this focus on heaven is

combined with an immanent expectation of Christ's return and the end of the world,

social and environmental concerns can be interpreted as counter to Christian hopes.

Based on the apocalyptic literature in the Bible (which is interpreted figuratively by

others), these believers expect cataclysmic environmental events to herald Christ's

return. Consequently, trying to improve the earth's conditions is seen as working against the ultimate goal of history (Fowler 1995; Conradie *et al*. 2001; Orr 2005). Some Christians continue to assert the God-given right of human beings to exploit the environment for their own gain; they cite economic costs against sustainability measures and dispute scientific claims (Toynbee 1972; Grizzle and Barrett 1998). They also dismiss environmental concerns as New Age paganism, an association they fear (Wilkinson 2000; Haluza-DeLay 2008). Some Christians also fear that involvement in social matters, like development, will compromise the primary mission of the church, which, in their understanding, is to spread the gospel and win souls for heaven (Mayotte 1998; Alkire 2006).

At the same time, involvement in social and environmental issues may compromise faith priorities (DeWitt 2000; Barnett and Weiss 2008). The left-wing ideology that often accompanies secular environmentalism also supports political measures that some Christians find threatening. For instance, some Christians perceive a troubling connection between promoting population control and support for abortion (DeWitt 2000; Hitzhusen 2007). Like secular NGOs, FBOs are susceptible to pressure and conditionality from donors and this may raise conflicts with their principles or faith-based approaches (Bradley 2009). Barnett and Weiss (2008) suggest that only small, highly idealistic humanitarian FBOs succeed in retaining their principles in the competition for funding (e.g., pacifist groups such as Mennonites and Quakers).

From a secular perspective, there is hesitance from some quarters to support engagement in the political dimensions of sustainability work by faith groups, Christian

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or otherwise. The Western belief in the separation of church and state runs deep; many

believe that faith should be practised in private and that faith groups should abstain

from engagement in public and political issues. Faith is still dismissed as irrational and

irrelevant, particularly in contrast to science (Gottlieb 2006).

In coming together, faith-based and secular groups are mostly challenged by a

plague of mutual misperceptions and misunderstandings (Gardner 2002). Despite the

work of the last decades, non-Christians sometimes still assume, based primarily on

White's (1967) thesis, that Christian beliefs are in opposition to environmental

sustainability (Oelschlaeger 1994). There are also lingering views of faith as an obstacle

to development (Baum 2000). For their part, some Christians are hesitant to work on

"worldly" issues with "worldly" people (DeWitt 2000). Differences in worldview,

language and concepts can also pose problems for collaboration, particularly with

regard to profound philosophical questions, such as determining the basis of truth and

locating the place of humanity within the universe (Gardner 2002; Tyndale 2006;

Bhagwat *et al.* 2011). Since the work of some FBOs is so new, and the work of others

has been long ignored, definitions are imprecise, and there is a poor understanding of

what they do, and how they fit into the broader work of sustainability in the public

sphere (Berger 2003; Sider and Unruh 2004; Hefferan 2007).

2.2.4 The Contribution of Faith to the Sustainability Project

Some obstacles remain to be overcome, but Christianity and other religions have

some positive and possibly vital contributions to offer society in seeking sustainability.

To this point, the discussion has been mostly focussed on the Christian faith and its

engagement with sustainability. This section, however, will refer more broadly to faith traditions as a whole, because other faith communities and their institutions offer many of the same resources that are found within Christianity. It should also be noted that while there are some anecdotal examples to illustrate the arguments that follow, much of the literature from which this discussion was drawn, particularly with respect to environmental work, is conceptual, reflecting a dearth of empirical studies on the practical application of sustainability work in a faith context. As people of faith, the authors are writing from personal experience, but for the most part, these claims have not been systematically tested or confirmed by empirical evidence.

In North America and Europe, where many people have cut their ties to organized religions, religious institutions may seem irrelevant, but globally, 80 to 90% of people belong to an organized faith. Religions therefore have an enormous audience upon which they can direct their influence (Gardner 2002; Gottlieb 2007). Religious institutions also have established organizations with experience and expertise in pursuing and effecting other forms of societal transformation. These resources, and the global networks within which they function, confer the ability to spread the message of sustainability widely, and to apply related actions with great effect (Gardner 2002; Berger 2003). They provide a source of funding and personnel, and also provide unique access to communities through the networks within their organizations (Tyndale 2003; Dicklitch and Rice 2004; Alkire 2006). They are stable and permanently rooted in communities and often hold a position of reverence and respect that gives them legitimacy, credibility, and trust (Dicklitch and Rice 2004; Kessler and Arkush 2009).

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Because faith communities are often the most functional social institutions in Global

South countries, they are important sources of social capital, helping communities to

build trust and cooperation, and facilitating collective action (Thomas 2005; Khan and

Bashar 2008).

Interest in religion as an asset for building sustainability has arisen in part from

the realization that the resources that have been employed for most of the last century

are insufficient for addressing the crises at hand – both developmental and

environmental. These have typically been technical, legal, and market approaches that

favour rationality and empirical knowledge. These disciplines are necessary, but alone

they are inadequate. Faith-based sustainability work can provide an alternative approach

that is more holistic, integrating the material and the spiritual. Development is about

more than just economic advancement, and faith-based initiatives have the capacity to

encompass the different facets of life that development touches (Tyndale 2006; Bradley

2009). Likewise, environmental sustainability requires more than science. Science is an

effective tool for uncovering the "...whats and hows of the universe" (Stuart *et al.* 2005,

1689), but it does not and cannot address the deeper questions of meaning, purpose,

values, and ethics (DeWitt 1995; Rolston 2006). Addressing the deep questions,

unpacking values, and negotiating between competing priorities requires ethical

discourse and "...higher methods of wisdom, love, compassion, understanding, and

empathy" (Orr 2002, 1459). Faith, along with art, poetry, and other activities that

engage emotion, creativity, responsiveness, and spirituality, can provide a forum for

applying these "higher methods" (Hitzhusen 2006).

From White (1967) onward, many have noted that the essence of the environmental crisis is religious, and religion is therefore a source of the solution, because it is one of the few human systems that can facilitate the discovery of "...our ultimate goals or our relationship to the cosmos and to unborn humans" (Christie 2002, 1467). Religion is powerfully effective in influencing loyalties, affections, convictions and solidarity, and therefore has the potential to elicit a faithful response to challenging struggles (such as sustainable living) that governments, corporations, scientists, and even activists may not be able to muster (Oelschlaeger 1994; Gottlieb 2007). As noted earlier, charity and concern for the less fortunate is fundamental to many world religions, and it is thus also a great motivator for development. Hope and Timmel (2003) observe that while such qualities are available from other sources, faith encourages and strengthens "...selfless hard work, cooperation, perseverance, commitment and courage" (95).

This ability to inspire commitment and mobilize support through fundamental values highlights the role religion can play in providing moral leadership (WCED 1987; Berger 2003; Rolston 2006). The crisis of sustainability is, at its heart, a moral issue (Kearns 1997). Religion not only has the capacity to engage moral issues in a way that science cannot, it is also "...a significant context for the formation, development and maintenance of values and behaviours" (Haluza-DeLay 2008, 79) for people of faith. Through interpretive stories about identity, origins, place, and relationships, religions provide frameworks for building an integrated moral vision (Conradie *et al*. 2005). When religious values are included in public education strategies, for instance, the base

of values to which people can connect is broadened, allowing new "converts" to environmental concern to integrate those concerns into an established language and value system, making the connection more personal and therefore stronger (Hitzhusen 2006).

Values and moral injunctions link to behaviour, which is ultimately what needs to change. Religions have extensive experience in facilitating personal transformation and self-discipline in individuals' daily lives (Oelschlaeger 1994; Rotich 2007). They are successful because they can communicate in language that will be evocative within their particular community, and they have the ability to connect abstract ideological frameworks with the practicalities of everyday living in a holistic way (Kearns 1997; Bhagwat *et al.* 2011). Several empirical studies support these notions. Kempton *et al.*'s (1995) comprehensive study of American culture identified religion (both institutional religion and personal spirituality) as one of three primary sources for environmental values and action, along with anthropocentric and biocentric values. Likewise, in testing their working model of environmental citizenship, Hawthorne and Alabaster (1999) found that religious affiliation was a very strong influencing factor in promoting pro-environmental behaviours. Finally, the successes of faith-based initiatives, ranging from civil rights lobbies, humanitarian aid, and the Jubilee project to eliminate debt, demonstrate their ability to mobilize their members to effective action (Berger 2003).

The power of religious institutions' influence can be explained to a degree by the resources they possess for facilitating education, inspiration, and engagement with issues (Ackerman 1997; Hitzhusen 2007). These are derived in part from the

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organization and expertise described above, which include structures, such as Sunday

School, sermons, and personal study disciplines, dedicated to educating and inspiring

their adherents. The previous discussion of biblical and theological consideration also

illustrates how new ideas can be infused into traditional texts and concepts, giving them

grounding and legitimacy (Gottlieb 2007). Furthermore, faith communities provide

forms of expression, through worship, ritual, and shared language, which allow people

to articulate and explore both the everyday practicalities and the deep questions that

sustainability entails on both an intellectual and an emotional level (Gottlieb 2007).

Although they often occupy prominent positions in the dominant culture, faith

communities also host critical prophetic voices that deliver sharp and measured

critiques of the status quo, while offering positive, creative, and joyful alternatives.

Religions have the language and authority to make people face uncomfortable and

unpleasant realities, and lead them through the transition to new ways of living

(Gottlieb 2006; Haluza-DeLay 2008). In the current context, this may be particularly

useful in helping to curb the rampant consumerism that defines Western culture

(Bouma-Prediger 2001).[5] Unlike most other institutions, religions can offer concrete

sources of alternative fulfilment in the form of community and spiritual goals, pointing

to the possibility of a satisfying life that is not built on material accumulation (Gottlieb

2006; Gottlieb 2007).

Hope is perhaps one of the greatest gifts that religions can offer to the

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[5] The Mennonite and Catholic churches are two Christian denominations that produce resources encouraging simplicity and gratitude (e.g. Schrock-Shenk 2002; Leddy 2002) and provide programs emphasizing simple living and voluntary poverty (e.g. various Mennonite voluntary service programs and the Catholic Worker Movement).

sustainability project. Environmental concern and development work are responses to a

crisis and are unavoidably defined by negative and discouraging realities. They also

demand a personal response that is difficult and sometimes harsh. Doom and gloom,

however, are poor motivators for social and personal change (Gottlieb 2006). Faith

narratives can provide a hopeful vision through which to engage the seemingly

insurmountable tasks that sustainability requires. The belief in a higher power who is

ultimately responsible for the fate of the universe can function both as a comfort and an

inspiration for weary practitioners, assuring them they are not alone and freeing them to

strive for faithfulness to the ultimate vision of the divine, rather than effectiveness in

single-handedly alleviating all of the Earth's ills (Hope and Timmel 2003; Stuart *et al.*

2005; Gottlieb 2006). For Christians like biologist Calvin DeWitt, the hope their belief

in God provides is the antidote to despair (Gottlieb 2006).

2.2.5 Studying FBOs

NGOs with faith or religious associations are on the rise (Berger 2003). After

many years of neglect, the academic community is beginning to explore this segment of

civil society to better understand who and what they are, what they do, and how they do

it. These studies consider FBOs with a broad range of agendas, often focussing

specifically on the social services sector.

Within these studies, the basic questions of terminology and definition are

somewhat contentious. The two most commonly used terms are "religious non-

governmental organization" (RNGO) and "faith-based organization" (FBO). While

these terms can be used interchangeably, I initially chose the term RNGO, following

Jeavons (2004), who suggests that RNGO is a more universal term, since faith is a particularly Christian concept that is not relevant to all religious traditions. In the field, however, I found that many of my research participants were uncomfortable with the term "religion". Since "religion" seems to carry more baggage for people than "faith", I opted to use the term FBO.

FBOs are formal organizations that have "...a central religious or faith core to their philosophy, membership, or programmatic approach (Dicklitch and Rice 2004, 662), operating on a "...nonprofit, independent, voluntary basis to promote and realize collectively articulated ideas about the public good" (Berger 2003,16). FBOs are generally distinguished from churches or missionary agencies that concern themselves more strictly with matters of faith, but some of their activities may overlap.

Various categories have been suggested to distinguish between different groups that fit within this description (CIDA 1995; Bradley 2009). The most comprehensive classification system is that presented by Sider and Unruh (2004). They identify five types of organization (Table 2.4) as well as an analytical framework within which their structure and activities can be assessed. These types are categorized according to their organizational characteristics and their program and project characteristics. Organizational characteristics include: their mission statement and other self-descriptive text; founding heritage; affiliation with other entities; selection of controlling board; selection of senior management; selection of other staff; financial support and non-financial resources; and organized religious practices of personnel. Program and project characteristics include: religious expression within the

organizational environment (building, name, symbols, etc.); the religious content of programs; the main form of integration of religious content with other program components (e.g. implicit, invitational, relational, integrated-optional, integrated-mandatory); and the expected connection between religious content and desired outcomes.

Table 2.4: Sider and Unruh's (2004) Typology of FBOs

Type	Definition
faith-permeated	"the connection with religious faith is evident at all levels" (119)
faith-centred	"were founded for a religious purpose, remain strongly connected with the religious community through funding sources and affiliation, and require the governing board and most staff to share the organization's faith commitments" (120)
faith-affiliated	"retain some of the influence of their religious founders (such as their mission statement) but do not require staff to affirm religious beliefs or practices, with the possible exception of some board and executive leaders" (120)
faith-background	"look and act secular, although they may have a historical tie to a faith tradition" (120)
faith-secular partnership	"a secular (or faith-background) entity joins with one or more congregations" (120)
secular	"have no reference to religion in their mission or founding history, and they regard it as improper to consider religious commitments as a factor in hiring or governance" (120)

Other analytical frameworks have also been developed. Bradley (2009) considers FBO activities based on two continua: the degree to which their identity and their practices are shaped by their faith; and how the latter translates into practice. Berger (2003) offers four dimensions through which the activities of RNGOs can be considered (Table 2.5).

Table 2.5: Berger's (2003) RNGO Framework

Dimension	Components
Religious	orientation
	pervasiveness
Organizational	representation
	geographic range
	structure
	financing
Strategic	motivation
	processes
Service	education/information
	relief
	social service
	salvation
	mobilization of opinion

The frameworks and typologies described above constitute fairly preliminary attempts at developing analytical tools for studying FBOs. As such, they are works in progress and still require refinement. Limitations notwithstanding, the typologies and frameworks provide guidance for developing data collection instruments and for formulating analysis tools. They also contribute to building a foundational understanding that facilitates the study of FBOs as platforms for learning, i.e. contexts and activities that facilitate and enable learning (Muro and Jeffrey 2008). As noted in Chapter 1, sustainability is itself a learning process. FBOs working toward sustainability may provide a rich forum for learning by virtue of the formative role that faith plays in the development of values and behaviours, through the educational

activities of religious institutions and agencies, and through the implementation of their programs.

2.3 Transformative Learning Theory

There are numerous approaches to conceptualizing adult learning (Finger and Asún 2001; Merriam *et al.* 2007), though few have been developed fully into a learning theory. Transformative learning theory is among the most prominent of these. It was developed by Jack Mezirow based on a qualitative study of adult women in college re-entry programs (Mezirow 1978). A learning theory focussing on meaning, it was developed within the philosophical context of contructivism, critical theory and deconstructivism in social theory (Mezirow 1991b). Mezirow built upon and synthesized the ideas of many prominent scholars, incorporating John Dewey's philosophies about learning from experience (Dewey 1997), Freire's use of reflection to achieve transformation (Freire 1972), and Habermas's insights into the domains of knowledge, reflective learning, and the mechanism of discourse to achieve personal and collective understanding (McCarthy 1984; Brookfield 2005; Hostetler 2008), among others. The result is a comprehensive theory that describes the fundamental processes of individual learning in a cogent and easily applicable package. As such, the theory is adaptable; despite its genesis within the domain of formal adult education, it is sufficiently universal to be applied to a wide array of contexts and activities. For example, there is a growing body of research applying transformative learning concepts to a range of sustainability issues (Diduck 1999; Kovan and Dirkx 2003; Fenstein 2004; Lange 2004; Hostetler 2008; Sims and Sinclair 2008; Sinclair *et al.* 2008). In adopting

this theoretical framework, I am therefore joining an established and growing research community (Diduck 2010).

Mezirow's transformative learning theory is the most widely cited and researched theory in the field of adult education (Tisdell 2003; Taylor 2007). It has been lauded as "...the most elaborate and intellectually the most solid conceptualisation of adult learning" (Finger and Asún 2001, 54). At the same time, while its basic tenets are stable and supported in the literature, aspects of the theory continue to be discussed and refined (Taylor 2007). For example, it does not take sufficient account of the role of context and the importance of non-rational ways of knowing, nor does it fully describe the connection between internal transformation and its external application in social action. Despite these shortcomings, the solid foundation provided by the basic tenets of the theory functions as a springboard for continued debate, dialogue and modification of the theory, an exercise that Mezirow himself has encouraged (e.g. Dirkx *et al.* 2006). Thus, within the context of this research, the gaps in the theory will be viewed as opportunities for scholarly contribution. Through this process, other theorists, both within (e.g., Dirkx 1997; Tisdell 2003; Lange 2004) and beyond (Dewey 1997; Freire 1972; Kolb 1984; Jarvis 2006) the transformative learning family, have been consulted.

2.3.1 The Theory in Outline

Mezirow describes adult learning as "...the process of making a new or revised interpretation of the meaning of an experience, which guides subsequent understanding, appreciation and action" (Mezirow 1990, 1). Through childhood learning and socialization, individuals develop assumptions about and interpretations of reality and

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their life within it. Based on past experience, we construct expectations about how

situations are likely to unfold and how we should respond to them. These assumptions

are combined into complex systems or meaning structures that adults use to interpret

and navigate their experiences, particularly in new situations (Mezirow 1991b; Cranton

and Roy 2003).

Meaning structures are developed at different levels of specificity. At the most

general, *frames of reference* form the larger view of reality (Taylor 2007),

encompassing the entire "...web of assumptions and expectations through which we

filter the way we see the world" (Cranton and Roy 2003, 88). They include cognitive,

conative, and affective dimensions (Mezirow 1997). Within these frames of reference

there exist more specific meaning structures. A *meaning perspective* is "...the structure

of psycho-cultural assumptions within which new experience is assimilated and

transformed by one's past experience" (Mezirow 1981, 6). These are "...broad, abstract,

orienting, habitual ways of thinking, feeling, and acting influenced by assumptions that

constitute a set of codes" (Mezirow 1997, 5-6). *Meaning schemes* are more immediate

and specific, constituting "...the constellation of concept, belief, judgment, and feeling

which shapes a particular interpretation" (Mezirow 1994, 223). They include cause and

effect relationships, roles, social action, self-identity, values, and connections between

feelings and actions (Mezirow 1985). Finger and Asún (2001) describe these concepts

by likening meaning perspectives to grammar, and meaning schemes to the sentences

that are built within a grammatical structure. Thus, a meaning perspective might be a

broad commitment to sustainability, or a belief that participatory approaches are the

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most effective for development and resource management. A meaning scheme, on the other hand, could be one's self-understanding as a Christian development worker, or the expectation that a consensus-based decision-making process will be time consuming but ultimately effective.

At any level, these meaning structures can become unquestioned and unconscious fixtures within an individual's construction of reality (Cranton 2006). They can be limited through incomplete experiences, the inadequacies of language, and a variety of distortions (e.g., socio-cultural, epistemic, and psychic), thereby providing an inauthentic perception of the world and potentially failing to guide effective responses to life situations (Mezirow 1981; Mezirow 1989). When meaning structures fail to explain a situation, we can either reject the situation as false, or question our expectations. It is through the latter that learning occurs (Mezirow 1991b; Cranton 2006). Adult learning and maturation are characterized by an ongoing process of reworking and transforming the components of an individual's meaning structures to contain more functional and authentic constructions of meaning (Mezirow 1978).

2.3.2 The Learning Process

Learning may be epochal or incremental (Mezirow 2000). Sometimes, the failure of a meaning structure results in an immediate and dramatic disorienting dilemma, leading to sudden insight about the inconsistencies within one's assumptions. In other cases, a series of small events, realizations and transitions results in the gradual revision of meaning structures (Mezirow 1981). While learning can be achieved by following different paths, Mezirow has identified typical phases that occur during the

process:

>(1) a disorienting dilemma;
>(2) self examination with feelings of fear, anger, guilt, or shame;
>(3) a critical assessment of assumptions;
>(4) recognition that one's discontent and the process of transformation are shared;
>(5) exploration of options for new roles, relationships, and actions;
>(6) planning a course of action;
>(7) acquiring knowledge and skills for implementing one's plans;
>(8) provisional trying of new roles;
>(9) building competence and self-confidence in new roles and relationships;
>(10) a reintegration into one's life on the basis of conditions dictated by one's new perspective (Mezirow 2008).

The evaluation and revision of meaning structures is achieved through two learning activities: critical reflection and rational discourse. These activities are similar in that both involve examining and testing beliefs and assumptions (Mezirow 1981; Mezirow 1994), but are separated into their individual and social manifestations.

Reflection at its most basic is "a 'turning back' on experience" (Mezirow 1998, 185). Critical reflection involves examining acquired assumptions and assessing their relevance and functionality against current experience, considering their origins, consequences, and nature. The reasoning and justification underlying why we apply certain meanings to reality and the validity thereof are explored (Mezirow 1981; Mezirow 1991b; Mezirow1994; Taylor 2008). Reflection is unique to adult learning (i.e. Mezirow contends that it is not a feature of childhood learning[6]), and it differentiates learning from assimilation, making it an essential part of the transformative process (Mezirow 1998). In Mezirow's conception of critical reflection,

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[6] Others, such as Cunningham (1992), deny this claim, arguing that individuals at earlier stages of development may also engage in critical reflection.

it is primarily a rational process, involving the logical assessment of reasons, and impartial, consistent, and non-arbitrary thinking (Mezirow 1998). Some of Mezirow's critics have challenged this description of reflection, suggesting that it also involves an array of nonrational forces (Cranton and Roy 2003; Dirkx *et al.* 2006). This debate will be explored further below.

Reflection manifests itself in different forms. *Content reflection* focuses on what has been done or the substance of a problem. *Process reflection* examines the cause or reason behind actions or the means of problem-solving. *Premise reflection* looks more broadly at value systems as a whole, questioning the merit and relevance of these systems and of a particular problem or activity within them (Mezirow 1994; Kreber and Cranton 2000; Kitchenham 2008).

Discourse is the process of testing the validity of beliefs, values, and assumptions through dialogue with others. Competing viewpoints are defended and evaluated based on logical assessment, evidence, and discussion, seeking consensus in a collective judgement (Mezirow 1994; Mezirow 1996; Mezirow 2003). In the course of this process, participants can temporarily appropriate the perspectives of others, evaluate them, and decide whether they are worth adopting. As such, it functions as a mechanism for exploring, testing, and solidifying new meaning perspectives (Mezirow 2003). The aim is not necessarily to convince others or to impose one's perspective upon them, but rather to reach an improved understanding by clarifying issues and possibly to approach conclusions based on shared ideas and interpretations (Mezirow 1996). Discourse of this nature is an idealized process, which is most likely to occur

under conditions in which the participants will:

> (a) have accurate and complete information;
> (b) be free from coercion and distorting self deception;
> (c) be able to weigh evidence and assess arguments as objectively as possible;
> (d) be open to alternative perspectives;
> (e) be able to critically reflect upon presuppositions and their consequences;
> (f) have equal opportunity to participate (including the opportunity to challenge, question, refute, and reflect, and to hear other do the same); and
> (g) be able to accept an informed, objective, and rational consensus as a legitimate test of validity. (Mezirow 1996, 170-171).

The process of discourse highlights the important role that relationships play in learning. Trusting interaction with other people not only facilitates questioning and exposes an individual to new perspectives and assumptions about reality, but also provides the support to adopt and apply transformed meaning structures (Mezirow 1978; Taylor 2007).

2.3.3 The Domains of Learning

Drawing on philosopher Jürgen Habermas's discussion of the different domains of knowledge, Mezirow identifies three distinct but interrelated domains of learning (Mezirow 1981). *Instrumental learning* is task oriented (Mezirow 1991b). It facilitates the prediction, manipulation, and control of events and environments, and fits within the realm of the empirical sciences (Mezirow 1981; Cranton and Roy 2003). *Communicative learning* involves understanding others and making oneself understood, by navigating within language, values, beliefs, and feelings (Mezirow 1991b; Mezirow 1997; Cranton and Roy 2003). Historical and hermeneutical disciplines are its realm, and it proceeds through interpretation and explanation rather than observation and empirical testing (Mezirow 1981). Finally *transformative learning* is the evaluation of

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premises and assumptions that results from questioning the products of instrumental and communicative learning (Mezirow 1991b; Cranton 2006). In his earlier writings, Mezirow used the term *emancipatory learning* to describe this search for self-knowledge, seeking to understand and examine oneself within the influences of one's social and cultural context (Mezirow 1981; Cranton and Roy 2003).

Transformative learning, or perspective transformation, is the essence of the learning process for Mezirow. This is the process of discovering the limitations and constraints of higher level meaning structures in explaining our world and the way we interact with it, and in response, reconstituting these assumptions and beliefs to better reflect the reality we experience (Mezirow 1981). The result is a set of superior meaning structures that are "...more inclusive, discriminating, permeable, and integrative" (Mezirow 1990, 14). The test of a superior meaning perspective is whether or not it works: does it produce beliefs and opinions that guide action effectively (Mezirow 2003)?

All learning at the adult level is transformative to some degree because it involves replacing or building upon an existing foundation. As illustrated in Figure 2.2, instrumental and communicative learning are often closely interconnected, occurring in tandem and mutually reinforcing one another. Development in either of these domains, such as the acquisition of a new meaning scheme or the addition of knowledge to an existing meaning scheme is considered learning. The learning process may remain within those realms, and therefore, not all learning involves a perspective transformation. Through the evaluation of higher level meaning structures, however,

learning in these domains can lead to perspective transformation (Mezirow 1996;

Cranton 2006; Merriam *et al*. 2007), which in turn should ideally result in a

transformation of action and behaviour.

Figure 2.2 The Learning Process
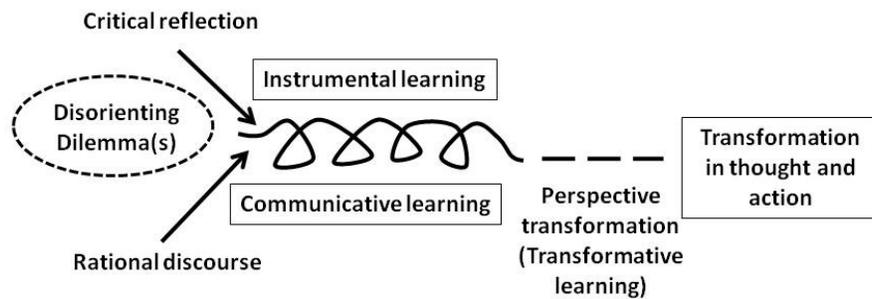
2.3.4 Critiques, Debates, and Theory Development

The basic concepts of transformative learning theory receive solid support in the

literature. Some of the details, however, continue to be debated and refined. The

following section will explore four of these ongoing areas of critique and development:

the role of context, attitudes toward instrumental learning, the rational and non-rational

nature of learning, and the relationship between individual perspective transformation

and social action and change.

The influence of social and cultural contexts on the learning process is an important area of contention. Mezirow's discussion of the theory contains few references to cultural and societal context. Clark and Wilson (1991) first raised this critique, claiming that these deserve more attention because context is key to learning. Mezirow's description of the learning process is too internal, they argued, leaving out the interaction between personal experience and the context in which it occurs. An example of this is the effect of power dynamics within socio-cultural situations that influences how people think and communicate, and affects their freedom to act and to change (McDonald *et al.* 1999).

Mezirow responded to Clark and Wilson by noting the central embodiment of culture and socialization in the theory as formative forces in the development of meaning structures. He also points to society and culture as sources of distortion within these structures (Mezirow 1989; Mezirow 1991b), although social interaction can also play a positive role through the exercise of rational discourse (Mezirow 1991a). Learning is both mediated by and expressed through cultural activities and conventions (Marsick and Watkins 2001; Tisdell 2003), but the roles of culture and context are largely implicit in the theory and their effect on the learning process still lacks explicit investigation (Scott 2003; Taylor 2007). For example, the effects of cross-cultural contexts on learning have been overlooked (Taylor 2007). The theory is ostensibly universal, but little application has occurred outside white, middle-class North American settings. Does it explain the learning processes of people in other social and

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cultural milieus (Sims 2008)? Merriam and Ntseane's (2008) exploration of how cultural context shapes transformative learning in Botswana demonstrated that the theory's description of learning processes and experiences largely corresponded with those of their participants, but recognized that this work just begins to address cultural context questions. Cross-cultural encounters are rich sources of learning, personal growth, and potential transformation (Montuori and Fahim 2004), but have not been explored with respect to transformative learning. Addressing the influence of context will extend the understanding of the learning process, while also contributing to the discussion about learning and social action, as context may act as a support or constraint to both learning and the application of that learning through action.

2.3.4.2 The Instrumental Domain of Learning

As described above, Mezirow (1981; 1991b; 2008) borrowed from Habermas to identify three domains of learning: instrumental, communicative, and transformative. Transformative learning, which is Mezirow's primary interest, is understood to develop from learning in the other two domains. While both of these domains have a recognized role within the theory, communicative learning seems to be favoured as the one that plays a more prominent role in transformative learning. The learning mechanisms Mezirow describes are evidence of this preference: critical reflection and rational discourse are both processes related to communicative learning.

This devaluing of instrumental learning has roots in the work of Habermas and his predecessors. Early members of the Frankfurt School were highly critical of instrumental rationality – "...the calculation of the most efficient means for achieving a

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given end or desire" (Finlayson 2005, 6) – and the way it has come to dominate knowledge in Western society. Science, technology, and rationality in general were associated with oppressive power. When Habermas joined the Frankfurt School, he worked to present a less pessimistic view of rationality. He distinguished between different domains of knowledge, demonstrating that there is more than one avenue through which to employ rationality (Habermas 1971). While he continued to critique science, technology, and related forms of rationality, particularly as they are manifested in the economic and political systems, he still recognized the value of the instrumental domain in society (Connelly 1996; Finlayson 2005). His main concerns in his theoretical deliberations, however, were social order and deliberative democracy, for which the communicative domain was the most relevant (Finlayson 2005), as manifested in his concept of communicative action (Habermas 1984).

Mezirow, like others who have built on Habermas's theories, inherited this preference for the communicative domain, though perhaps not justly. For instance, in his discussion of John Dryzek's application of Habermas, Blau (2011) argues that Dryzek takes an unnecessarily negative view of instrumental rationality, which does not reflect Habermas's own position. Similarly, some of Mezirow's definitions of instrumental learning echo the early Frankfurt School's negative views of instrumental rationality, emphasizing its manipulative and dominating functions (Mezirow 1991b). Mezirow is like Habermas, however, in wishing to diminish the hegemony of the instrumental domain in Western society by promoting communicative and transformative learning (Connelly 1996). Due to the communicative nature of its

learning mechanisms, many studies that apply transformative learning theory focus on communicative learning outcomes. Recent research, however, indicates that instrumental learning is also important to transformative learning, particularly with respect to sustainability concerns (Sims and Sinclair 2008; Marshke and Sinclair 2009; Kerton and Sinclair 2010; Sinclair *et al*. 2011), suggesting that more research should be applied to understanding the role of instrumental learning.

2.3.4.3 Rational and Non-Rational Ways of Learning

The primary debate regarding the process of learning centres on the degree to which it must be rational, particularly in terms of reflection. Mezirow, as noted above, originally developed a highly rational conception of critical reflection. He viewed it as a conscious cognitive process involving logical thought and reasoning (Mezirow 1991b; Mezirow 1998). Others counter that different processes, particularly emotional and spiritual processes, are equally important (Dirkx 1997; Kovan and Dirkx 2003; Tisdell 2008). Kovan and Dirkx (2003) explored the "inner work" of environmental activists related to transformative learning, and discovered a complex system of social, emotional and spiritual processes at play. They also noted a powerful connection between the spiritual and practical. Dirkx (2001a; Dirkx *et al*. 2006) terms this "soul work," stressing the unconscious inner self as a source of emotion and energy that drives learning. Intuition, imagination and emotion are therefore suggested to be important catalysts for learning (Cranton and Roy 2003; Taylor 2007).

In response to these challenges, Mezirow has acknowledged the need to understand better the role that emotions, intuition, and imagination may play in the

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learning process as a whole (Mezirow 2008). He also recognizes that the hegemony of rationality in modern western culture can be a distorting influence and thereby acts as an obstacle to learning (Mezirow 1996). Nonetheless, Mezirow maintains that while other forces may be at work, rationality remains an essential component of reflection, discourse, and learning, because its influence "...saves transformative learning from becoming reduced to a faith, prejudice, vision, or desire" (Dirkx *et al.* 2006, 133). While some view these positions as complementary, suggesting that learning is a holistic exercise of the head and the heart that involves both rational and extra-rational aspects (Cranton and Roy 2003; Dirkx *et al.* 2006; Sipos *et al.* 2008; Taylor 2008), the debate has not yet been resolved, and a clear understanding of the relationship between the head and the heart has not been established (Taylor 2007).

2.3.4.4 Social Action and Change

Mezirow (1991b, 12) defines learning as "...the process of using a prior interpretation to construe a new or a revised interpretation of the meaning of one's experience in order to guide future action". The purpose of learning is to acquire meaning structures that provide more effective tools for decision making regarding behaviour. Thus, action, like context, is embedded in transformative learning theory, but its inclusion in Mezirow's descriptions of the theory is also fairly implicit. Mezirow's primary focus is the evolution of internal thought processes; resulting activity is important but peripheral.

Mezirow drew heavily on the work of Paulo Freire and Jürgen Habermas in developing his theory. Freire developed literacy programs for the poor in South

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America, seeking thereby to help them gain liberation from oppression. His goal was conscientization, teaching his students to "...perceive social, political, and economic contradictions – developing a critical awareness – so that individuals can take action against the oppressive elements of reality" (Freire 1972, 19). The primary means of conscientization is praxis: "...reflection and action upon the world in order to transform it" (Freire 1972, 36). While Mezirow used Freire's work as inspiration for concepts such as disorienting dilemmas, critical reflection, and meaning structures (Kitchenham 2008), he disengaged the thought process from its expression in action, and avoided the revolutionary agenda for social change that is fundamental to Freire's purpose. Likewise, Mezirow is critiqued for his selective use of Habermas's ideas, presenting a vague understanding of the connection between learning, emancipation, and social action (Collard and Law 1989; Finger and Asún 2001).

Mezirow's failure to address the issue of social change is a common criticism of his theory (Collard and Law 1989; Cunningham 1992; Cranton 2006). A true transformation of the meaning an individual makes of the world should eventually result in an outward change in action and behaviour, a connection that Mezirow acknowledges (Mezirow 1981; Mezirow 1993). At the same time, he argues that social action should not be the singular focus of adult education, countering that education that seeks a specific action is indoctrination. Furthermore, behaviour is shaped by other factors and constraints and should not therefore be used as an indicator of transformation in meaning structures (Mezirow 1989). Rather, transformative learning aims to create "...the essential foundation in insight and understanding essential for

learning how to take effective action in a democracy" (Mezirow 2008).

While insight and understanding are pivotal tools for functioning in society, certain education programs, such as education for sustainability, do seek to effect social change and to inspire transformation in both thought and deed (Bush-Gibson and Rinfret 2010; D'Amato and Krasny 2011). Furthermore, Freire and others have observed that reflection and action are mutually reinforcing, and should always be pursued in tandem (Freire 1972; Heaney and Horton 1990). For these reasons, studies continue to explore the relationship between transformative learning and action.

2.3.5 Learning, Sustainability, and Natural Resource Management

Transformative learning theory was developed within the discipline of adult education and has primarily been studied and employed within that context, and within the classroom setting. Recently, it has also been increasingly applied to issues of environmental sustainability and natural resources management. Learning, as noted in Chapter 1, is integral to building a sustainable human society. Exclusively technical solutions are increasingly seen as insufficient (Selby 2002; Tucker 2008), while recognition of the need for profound personal and societal change is growing. In describing this task, Orr (2004) suggests that

> ...we will have to challenge the hubris buried in the hidden curriculum that says that human domination of nature is good; that the growth of economy is natural; that all knowledge, regardless of its consequences is equally valuable; and that material progress is our right (32).

Reconstructing societal foundations such as these will require a profound transformation of individual assumptions and frames of reference. Current wisdom also suggests that these changes are best achieved through participatory and democratic

processes, requiring education to facilitate public involvement in societal

transformation (Diduck 1999; Sims and Sinclair 2008; Marschke and Sinclair 2009).

Both collective and individual learning approaches are applied to guide and

study this endeavour. On the individual level, transformative learning theory is the most

commonly used theory for sustainability and natural resource management research.

Various educational programs promoting sustainability have employed transformative

learning theory in their evaluation (Fenstein 2004; Lange 2004; Sipos *et al.* 2008). It is

also being extended beyond the realm of education to examine personal commitments

to sustainability (McDonald *et al.* 1999; Kovan and Dirkx 2003), and to explore the

workings of participatory processes such as environmental assessment (Sinclair and

Diduck 2001; Sinclair *et al.* 2008) and participatory resource management programs

(Percy 2005; Sims and Sinclair 2008; Marschke and Sinclair 2009).

Social learning builds on individual learning, deriving a certain synergy from the

collective process, through which it can facilitate democratic involvement of various

publics in management decisions, build networks, and work to transform pivotal

societal values, attitudes, and beliefs (Diduck 1999; Keen *et al.* 2005). Scholarship at

this level tends to emphasize the tools and components of social learning, rather than

processes. For example, Keen *et al.* (2005) identify four strands of social learning for

environmental management, suggesting that it requires reflection, a systems orientation,

negotiation and collaboration, and participation or engagement. In another model,

Tàbara and Pahl-Wostl (2007) suggest that learning for sustainability should centre on:

(1) developing adaptive governing structures that (2) can manage energy and resources

for long-term goals, (3) promote necessary flows of information and knowledge, and (4)

facilitate the integration of the above factors to ensure that system changes remain

within sustainable thresholds. Taking a more process-oriented approach, Diduck *et al.*

(2005) build on the organizational learning work of Argyris (1977, 1997) and Senge

(1990) to identify barriers to double-loop learning in a resource management setting.

These include employing defensive strategies of action and ignoring unresolved

conflict; maintaining information and communication deficiencies; blaming external

agents; and a lack of systems thinking.

2.4 Summary

Learning for sustainability is at the core of this project. Like many countries in

the Global South, Kenya faces serious sustainability challenges in terms of poverty,

insecure livelihoods and health risk, and threats to the physical environment. Learning

provides the innovation, adaptability, and transformation that sustainability requires.

Through learning in various domains of knowledge, individuals, and ultimately

societies, can acquire technical skills to solve problems, improve communication and

learn to navigate conflict, and develop new conceptions of the world and their lives

within it. NGOs, and FBOs in particular, constitute a unique and increasingly relevant

vessel in which this learning can occur, and through which sustainability may be

pursued.

Chapter 3: Approach and Methods

3.0 Introduction

This chapter outlines in detail the operational procedures of this research, including the research design, the philosophical worldview, the strategy of inquiry, data collection procedures, analysis techniques, and measures for quality and trustworthiness. The purpose of the research, as mentioned earlier, was to explore how individual learning emerges from the intersection of faith and the pursuit of sustainability within FBOs working in Kenya, East Africa. To achieve this purpose, I used a qualitative design, guided by a social constructivist worldview, and employing a case study strategy of inquiry with narrative elements. A variety of data collection procedures and analysis techniques were used, as outlined below.

3.1 Personal Connections

This research project sits at the intersection of several significant pieces of my personal life. Since in qualitative studies the researcher is the primary research instrument, disclosing influences and experiences that may shape the data collection, interpretation, and analysis is imperative. This discussion outlines my position with respect to all aspects of the work.

My relationship with this research topic begins when I was seven years old and my family moved to Tanzania, East Africa. My father worked there for the Canadian International Development Agency for two years. Through this experience, I developed a strong emotional attachment to Africa. I also retain childhood impressions of this region that shaped my response to it when I returned. I am grateful for the opportunity

to revisit this experience with adult eyes, and to continue processing my childhood memories with the addition of new experiences and perspectives.

My interest and investment in studying FBOs grows out of my personal faith. I belong to the Mennonite branch of the Christian family, a denomination that formed during the Protestant Reformation of the 16th century, based on a commitment to discipleship, believer's baptism, the separation of church and state, and peace. As a member of this denomination, I am committed to its belief systems, worship style, and approach to missions and outreach. I was both challenged and enriched by working with research participants belonging to other branches of the Christian family that express its tenets differently. Though my own experience within the Christian family has been life giving, I am aware of the oppression that has accompanied Christian missions in other cultures in the past, and may still do so. Residential schools in Canada and racist missionaries I encountered in Africa as a child are only two examples of this. Consequently, I have conflicted feelings about missions programs; these feelings had little effect on the research, however, since the organizations with which I worked were not focussed on evangelism.

I am also personally involved with various FBOs engaged in environmental and development work. I have worked for the Mennonite Central Committee in Winnipeg developing educational material linking faith and the environment, and I recently joined the Peace Advisory Council for Mennonite Central Committee Manitoba. For several years, I have been serving on the council for the Mennonite Creation Care Network in Canada and the United States, and I spent several years on the advisory council for

Canadian Mennonite University's Braintree Creation Care Centre, which has now been closed. Through these activities, I have also built informal connections with A Rocha Canada. This background helped me relate to the research participants and to understand their experiences.

3.2 Research Design and Philosophical Worldview

The qualitative research design adopted by this study is defined by its inductive, naturalistic, and interpretive approach to studying social and human phenomena, and is used to explore the meanings that people construct from their experience of the world. It is context-specific, seeking data within natural settings and moving from these particulars to categories, patterns, and general themes. The researcher serves as the primary research instrument, interpreting what she sees, hears, and observes in a collaborative process of knowledge production with the research participants to generate a richly descriptive and holistic account of the phenomena under investigation (Merriam 2002; Denzin and Lincoln 2008; Creswell 2009).

The qualitative research design can be pursued from within an array of philosophical worldviews, including social constructivism, critical theory, pragmatism, and advocacy/participatory worldviews (Guba and Lincoln 2005; Creswell 2009). While these paradigms share many of the features that define qualitative research, each has a particular emphasis that guides research in a unique direction. Social constructivism focuses on meaning, positing that human beings construct subjective meanings to understand their experiences and the world in which they live. These meanings are constructed through the lens of social and historical perspectives, and are

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negotiated through human interactions (Creswell 2009). Shared meanings can emerge from these interactions, but because meanings are ultimately subjective, many different meanings can legitimately co-exist, and the single, objective reality that is the object of positivist and post-positivist inquiry is deemed irrelevant, and possibly non-existent, in the social realm (Guba and Lincoln 2005; Denzin and Lincoln 2008). Hence, social constructivists adopt a relativist ontology, speaking of multiple realities that can only be understood by studying phenomena holistically within their individual contexts using naturalistic procedures (Lincoln and Guba 1985; Denzin and Lincoln 2008). The aim of social constructivist research is to understand the meanings that individuals assign to their experience, and through this inquiry, knowledge is created collaboratively by the researcher and the research participants (Lincoln and Guba 1985; Denzin and Lincoln 2008; Creswell 2009).

The qualitative research design and the social constructivist worldview are appropriate to my research for several reasons. A research design and philosophical worldview must correspond with the researcher's personal conception of reality and of the research process. Within the realm of social research, I affirm the existence of multiple subjective constructions of meaning among individuals, producing a multitude of co-existing and equally legitimate interpretations of experience and reality. It is my natural tendency to approach the world inductively and through an interpretive lens. I also embrace the holistic, contextual, and collaborative approaches to research that are advocated by this worldview. I engaged my research participants as co-creators of knowledge, and sought an authentic understanding of their experiences and perceptions,

while acknowledging the contribution of my own perspectives to the research process.

Furthermore, the research design and philosophical worldview suit the purpose, objectives, and questions of the inquiry, which are shaped by Mezirow's transformative learning theory (Mezirow 1991b). Qualitative designs are the most common choice for transformative learning research (Taylor 2007), which shares the focus on constructions of meaning (through learning and human development) with the general qualitative design and the specific philosophy of the social constructivist worldview. At the same time, Mezirow was heavily influenced by both Jürgen Habermas and Paulo Friere in the development of his theory, and these authors have connections to both critical theory and advocacy/participatory approaches. This research participates in that legacy of working to build a better world through the contributions it is intended to make toward the sustainability project.

3.3 Strategy of Inquiry

3.3.1 Case Study

The research adopted a case study strategy of inquiry with narrative elements. The case study is "...an intensive, holistic description and analysis of a bounded phenomenon" (Merriam 1988, xiv). The phenomenon may be a program, an event, an activity, an institution, a process, an individual or a group of individuals (Berg 2004; Creswell 2009). This strategy is defined by its unit of analysis – i.e., a bounded, integrated system or phenomenon – rather than by its philosophy, approach, or tools of inquiry. Consequently, it can be combined with other strategies, such as narrative inquiry, as established below (Merriam 2002; Yin 2003).

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In addition to its unit of analysis, the case study strategy has several distinguishing features. Typically, a small number of cases are studied; the aim is detail and depth rather than breadth (Creswell 2009). A variety of data collection procedures are employed to achieve this, including documentation, archival records, interviews, surveys, direct and participant observation, and physical artefacts (Yin 1984). The case study is used to understand social and individual phenomena and problems holistically and within their natural context (Yin 1984; Merriam 1988; Stake 2005). As a research strategy, it is uniquely equipped to encompass complexity within social phenomena, and is often applied to understand processes rather than outcomes (Merriam 1988).

To be appropriately applied, the case study strategy requires an identifiable, bounded phenomenon or system to serve as the unit of analysis (Merriam 1988). The FBOs in my study provided naturally bounded phenomena in the form of agencies or institutions. Furthermore, case studies are generally applied where a phenomenon is difficult to distinguish from its context, and the components within the phenomenon are complex and interconnected (Yin 2003). The FBOs in my research, and the people within them, formed both the phenomena being studied and their most immediate context. The broader context of the FBOs, within their local communities and Kenya as a whole, was also difficult to separate from the FBOs themselves. Moreover, there were a variety of significant and inter-related constituents within the FBOs, including personal and collective expressions of faith, the work that grows out of this faith, and the learning that grows out of both the work and the expressions of faith, to name a few. Finally, case studies are best suited to answering "how" or "why" questions. Studies

that ask "what," "how many," "who," or "where," questions should be approached using strategies of inquiry from within the quantitative research design (Yin 1984; Merriam 1988). Central to this research is an exploration of *how* FBOs function and contribute to sustainability work, and *how* learning occurs within this context.

FBOs constitute interesting cases for several reasons. In and of themselves, they are playing an increasing role in the sustainability movement (Fowler 1995; Gardner 2002), a development that has received little scholarly attention creating a knowledge gap (Gottlieb 2007; Hefferan 2007). Furthermore, these FBOs presented a unique setting for potential learning. Typically, though not uniformly, transformative learning studies focus on a particular learning activity, such as an education program or course (Fenstein 2004; Lange 2004), or a public participation process, such as an environmental assessment (Sinclair and Diduck 2001; Sinclair *et al*. 2008) or a resource management program (Sims and Sinclair 2008). This study, following McDonald *et al*. (1999) and Kovan and Dirkx (2003), investigated individuals whose work or life commitment placed them in a position where learning is likely to occur. Disorienting dilemmas could be expected to arise from the context of their work and commitments through the meeting of various potentially incongruous communities to which they belong, particularly their religious communities and the environmental and development communities. Expatriates and Kenyans working together experienced learning through the meeting of cultures.

For this research, I employed an instrumental, multiple-case, descriptive, and interpretive study, with some exploratory elements. In instrumental case studies, the

case (ie. an FBO), facilitates the understanding of a broader issue or theoretical explanation, such as transformative learning (Berg 2004; Stake 2005). Transformative learning theory is well established and provides sufficient guidance to preclude the need for exploratory work on learning concepts. It is, however, a theory that holistically describes a process without necessarily specifying a predictive chain of causal relationships; it is therefore more descriptive than explanatory (Yin 1984). Several aspects of the theory continue to be debated, providing an opportunity to challenge and refine the theory, constituting the interpretive component, which involves developing conceptual categories or illustrating, supporting, or challenging theoretical assumptions or hypotheses (Merriam 1988). FBOs, however, have received scant attention in academic research and consequently there were some exploratory elements to this aspect of the study (Yin 1984).

While eminently suited to the nature and purpose of this research, the case study strategy is weak with regard to generalizability, a key process in theory building and a standard measure of research validity. Case studies focus on richness of data and understanding processes and complexity, thereby compromising breadth for depth. Consequently, case study sample sizes are not statistically representative and it can be argued that their results are not generalizable to broader populations (Hammersley and Gomm 2000). A research project's contribution to knowledge, however, does not necessarily rest solely in its potential for generalization. Profound insights can be gained from even a single unique case (Hammersley and Gomm 2000; Merriam 2002), particularly when exploring phenomena like FBOs that have not been studied

extensively. Knowledge from specific cases can also be applied to other contexts without generalizing to entire populations, a process known as transferability (Lincoln and Guba 1985). This transferral, however, is not executed by the researcher, but rather by the reader. The researcher endeavours – as I have here – to provide a sufficiently thick and detailed description of the case in question that the reader is able to determine its fittingness with respect to other cases (Lincoln and Guba 1985; Merriam 2002). Thus, rather than representing a broader reality directly, a case study may serve as a vicarious experience that offers insight as another possible construction of reality (Donmoyer 2000).

At the same time, theory development and refinement is an exercise in generalization, and must therefore be justified within this case study context. The generalizations and theories that are produced by qualitative case studies do not provide predictions about outcomes with probability-based certainty, but rather draw "...inferences about features of a larger but infinite population of cases from the study of a sample drawn from that population" (Gomm *et al*. 2000, 103). This type of generalization is routinely made from both real life and survey research, and can be legitimately applied to systematic case study research (Gomm *et al*. 2000). In qualitative research, the theories these generalizations produce serve as broad explanations or as lenses through which to view phenomena, rather than causal explanations that require statistical representation (Creswell 2009).

Several other weaknesses in case study research have been identified, such as a lack of rigour, bias through researcher subjectivity, unmanageable quantities of data,

and time and money constraints (Yin 1984; Merriam 1988; Hamel *et al.* 1993). While important to recognize, all these problems have been addressed in this work through careful planning and responsible research practices. Such concerns may also be addressed and even outweighed by the strategy's strengths, including the ability to encompass complex situations with multiple variables, to access personal meaning and capture details and nuances, and to provide a rich and holistic account of a phenomenon (Merriam 1988; Berg 2004; Platt 2007). Rigour was enhanced and bias controlled through the variety of evidence and the multiple sources and tools that were used, as discussed later in the chapter (Yin 1984; Merriam 1988). Finally, case studies are anchored in real life situations, providing a compelling and dynamic account of phenomena as they occur in context (Merriam 1988).

3.3.2 Narrative Inquiry

The use of narrative is an emerging strategy in qualitative research that focuses on story-telling both as a form of data and as a tool for analysis. The term "narrative" is often used in qualitative research to refer to any linguistic data of significant length, distinguishing it from short questionnaire answers and numerical data (Polkinghorne 1995). In narrative research, the term is used more specifically to refer to a story as a discrete unit, with a beginning, middle, and end, that involves events or action presented within a chronological framework, exhibits an internal structure and thematic organization, and relates meaningful personal or social experiences in context (Riessman 1993; Mankowski and Rappaport 2000; Czarniawska 2004; Glover 2004). Storytelling is a central and universal means by which people express, organize,

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understand, and make meaning of their personal and collective experiences

(Mankowski and Rappaport 2000; Czarniawska 2004). The essential thematic thread

that draws events, action, and characters together, namely the plot, is the means by

which this meaning is manufactured and displayed (Polkinghorne 1995). Stories help to

build identity and to connect people to the past, the present, and the future (Mankowski

and Rappaport 2000; Glover 2004). As such, narrative is a compelling approach for

qualitative studies with a focus on interpreting meaning-making processes.

The narrative strategy of inquiry can be divided into two primary types. *Analysis*

of narratives involves collecting data in the form of stories and then analyzing them for

themes, patterns, or categories. Typically, this type of analysis involves comparing a set

of stories based on a framework of features or criteria (Polkinghorne 1995).

Narrative analysis, in contrast, does not necessarily require data in the form of stories,

but rather data that consist of actions, events, and happenings that can then be

synthesized into a story, or restoried, through a collaborative process between the

researcher and the research participant (Polkinghorne 1995; Ollerenshaw and Creswell

2002). In this case, the restorying process, also known as emplotment, is itself a form of

analysis, as the story writers choose a thematic configuration to serve as a plot, situate

the characters and settings, order the events sequentially within that theme, and identify

causal connections between the various components to the ultimate outcome of the

story (Polkinghorne 1995). Narrative analysis is particularly suited to exploring "...how

and why a particular outcome [such as learning] came about" (Polkinghorne 1995, 19).

Both types of narrative inquiry are eminently suited to learning research.

Learning and storytelling are related processes, as both involve constructing, applying, and refining meanings and interpretations of the world in relation to human experience (Mezirow 1991b; Chase 2008). Furthermore, learning is a process that occurs over time and builds incrementally upon itself. Narratives are sequential in nature and narrative inquiry pays particular attention to the chronology of events within them, providing a holistic and effective means by which learning processes can be tracked. Traditional coding analysis tends to fragment data into discrete categories, losing the connected whole and thereby also destroying the chronological sequence. Narrative analysis in particular is able to hold all the pieces together in one holistic rendering of the data (Riessman 1993).

Since the narrative element of this project is held within the larger framework of a case study, I took an emergent approach to this part of the strategy of inquiry. Data collection procedures were designed to encourage storytelling for the analysis of narratives and to elicit data that could be used for narrative analysis through restorying.

3.4 Implementation of the Research and Data Collection Procedures

In keeping with conventional case study practices, this research relied on a range of data collection procedures (Creswell 2009). This allowed me to approach the research objectives from different angles and to collect data in different forms, providing a more complete and holistic picture of the case.

3.4.1 Phase One

The research took place in two stages. Phase One consisted of pre-trip preparation, and field research in Kenya, during January to March of 2010. The purpose

of this phase was to collect data to answer Objective One – the identity and function of the FBOs – and to select case study organizations for Phase Two. I began by developing a long list of FBOs that were operating in Kenya (see Group 1, Table 3.1). This work began in Canada by checking databases, such as the Kenya National Council of NGOs, the Environmental Liaison Center International (ELCI 2007), and Liston (2007), through articles (e.g., Ngumuta 2008), and through contact people within my research community's network with knowledge of Kenya. Once in Kenya, I expanded this list by perusing the Nairobi phone book and by recommendation of key contact people working in the FBO field. Basic information regarding mission, vision, general activities and contact details were collected for these Group 1 organizations.

The Group 2 organizations were selected from the long list for more detailed investigation. Several criteria were used to select the Group 2 organizations. I first identified the organizations that focussed specifically on environmental programming, or that included a significant environmental component into their development work.

Table 3.1: FBOs in Kenya

Group	Scope of FBOs Investigated	Depth of Data Collected
1	all faith-based organizations that were found	basic information about organizational identity, activities, and contact information, mostly collected through web-based document review
2	environmental organizations and development organizations with an explicit environmental focus	unstructured interviews, qualitative questionnaires, and participant observation
3	one environmental organization and one development organization with an explicit environmental focus	onsite observation, focus group, semi-structured interviews

Group 1		Group 2	Case Studies
A Rocha Kenya Adventist Development and Relief Agency Africa Exchange Aga Khan Foundation Anglican Church of Kenya, Community Church Services Beacon of Hope Brot für die Welt Care of Creation Kenya Caritas Kenya Catholic Agency for Overseas Development Catholic Relief Services Christian Aid Christian Mission Aid Christian Partners Development Agency Christian Reformed World Relief Committee Christian Relief and Development Association Church World Services Diakonia Kenya Dorcas Aid International Eastleigh Community Center	Focus Africa Hope Worldwide Kenya Interchristian Fellowship Evangelical Mission Islamic Relief Worldwide Jesuit Refugee Services Lutheran World Federation Lutheran World Relief Mennonite Central Committee Micah Environmental Network Kenya Mully Children's Family Norwegian Church Aid Rondo Retreat Centre Rural Extension with Africa's Poor Rural Service Programme Samaritan's Purse Servanthood and Light Development Foundation Suba Environmental Education of Kenya World Concern World Relief World Vision	A Rocha Kenya [a] [b] Aga Khan Foundation [a] Anglican Church of Kenya, Community Church Services Care of Creation Kenya [a] [b] Caritas Kenya [a] Catholic Agency for Overseas Development [a] Christian Reformed World Relief Committee [a] [b] Church World Services [a] Interchristian Fellowship Evangelical Mission Islamic Relief Worldwide [a] Mennonite Central Committee [a] Mully Children's Family Norwegian Church Aid Rural Extension with Africa's Poor [a] Rural Service Programme [a] [b] Samaritan's Purse Suba Environmental Education of Kenya [a]	A Rocha Kenya (ARK) Rural Service Programme (RSP)
40		17	2

[a] Qualitative Questionnaire; [b] Onsite visit to see programs in action

From within this group, I targeted FBOs with a high degree of pervasiveness and

intensity of integration of faith aspects in their organizational life and work, as

determined by an explicit statement of faith commitment, affiliation with faith-based

institutions, staffing criteria, and integration of faith practices and content into

organizational life and programming (Sider and Unruh 2004). I also sought to represent

a cross-section of FBOs, based on faith and church affiliation. The majority of

organizations identified were Christian; however, the two Muslim organizations that

were found were included in Group 2 to provide a small degree of inter-faith diversity.

Church affiliation was considered in terms of the different denominations within

Christianity, and the relationship of the organization with formal church structures –

some FBOs fit within the institutional structure of a particular denomination, while

others were loosely tied to individual churches.

3.4.1.1 Qualitative Questionnaires and Unstructured Interviews

I met with or had telephone conversations with representatives from all Group 2

organizations. I conducted a qualitative questionnaire (McGuirk and O'Neill 2005) with

12 of these FBOs. The questionnaire explored aspects of the function and operation of

the agencies that was not necessarily available in public documents, seeking in

particular to understand the links between development, the environment, and the faith-

based character of the organization. The questionnaire consisted primarily of open

questions (Appendix I), based on guidance from the FBO/RNGO literature (Jeavons

1998; Berger 2003; Jeavons 2004; Sider and Unruh 2004). It was performed either in

person, over the telephone, or by e-mail with a member of the organization in a

leadership position. The remaining five Group 2 FBOs were unable to complete the

questionnaire for various reasons, but I conducted unstructured interviews with a

representative from these organizations that covered some of the same material as the

questionnaire. These procedures add breadth to the data, providing an opportunity for

comparison across multiple cases and legitimizing generalization.

3.4.1.2 Document Review

The review of documentation formed an ongoing component of the study and was primarily used to collect background information about the FBOs. During the Phase One stage, it contributed to describing the general nature and function of FBOs, and was then pursued in greater depth for the two cases selected as case studies. Relevant documentation included agency web sites, publications (such as newsletters and promotional materials), meeting minutes, administrative and governance documents, and related media articles. These documents were searched for basic factual information, and included in materials for coding, if relevant.

Documentation is an accessible and unobtrusive source of information, but it must be used carefully. Since these documents were not produced for the purpose of the research, they were screened for both bias and relevance to the research topic. At the same time, they helped corroborate and supplement other data, while potentially raising new questions and leading to fruitful avenues of inquiry that could be pursued through other data collection procedures (Yin 1984; Merriam 1988).

3.4.1.3 Participant Observation

For four of the Group 2 organizations, I was able to make either site visits or participate in some aspect of their programming. These visits provided further insight into the function and character of the organizations, enhancing the final case selections.

3.4.1.4 Case Study Selection

The research ultimately consisted of the comprehensive study of two FBOs

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engaged in environmental and development work in Kenya. In studying two cases, I had

the opportunity for some comparison, facilitating a richer analysis. At the same time,

limiting the study to two cases ensured that the inquiry could attain the depth that is

desirable in case study research without acquiring unmanageable volumes of data.

A set of criteria was developed to assist in selecting cases that fit the

requirements of the project objectives and that promised to provide the best potential

for the richest set of data (Berg 2004). I selected FBOs that:

- had a significant affiliation with a faith community, e.g., were faith-permeated or faith centred (Sider and Unruh 2004);

- represented different faith affiliations, in terms of the denomination or faith with which they were associated, and in terms of the nature of their relationship with formal church structures, providing a diversity of contextual settings;

- were engaged in sustainability work as expressed through both their mission statement or other self-descriptive text, and their activities. Organizations were sought that combined both environmental conservation and development work. To better explore and compare the range of work that sustainability encompasses, I sought one organization with an environmental or resource management focus, and one that primarily did development work;

- were involved in work that facilitates learning in some way, e.g., public education, public participation processes, or community facilitation;

- expressed a range of cultural backgrounds and contexts to facilitate understanding the impact of cultural context on learning. I wanted one organization that had a significant cross-cultural element and one with a significant Kenyan contingent within its staff and leadership;

- had a critical mass of staff working in Kenya; and

- were interested in participating.

Once in the field, I quickly identified A Rocha Kenya (ARK) as an ideal case. It

is an environmental conservation organization with a strong Christian commitment that

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is engaged in community development and environmental education programs in schools and communities. It is the oldest and largest environmental FBO in Kenya, and employs a combination of Kenyan and international staff and volunteers. ARK is multi-denominational with few formal ties to institutional church denominations or structures. Based on this choice, I looked for a second case study that would contrast to ARK with regard to its faith affiliation, the focus of its activities, and its cultural profile. I selected the Rural Service Programme of the East Africa Yearly Meeting of Friends (RSP). Its focus is empowering rural communities through facilitation activities, which captures the educational element of the criteria. Environmental issues are incorporated into their development work through sustainable agriculture, appropriate technology with an energy saving focus, and tree planting projects. As the development arm of the Quaker church in Kenya, it is rooted within the formal structures of the church institution, and its leadership, staff and volunteers are primarily Kenyan.

3.4.1.5 Focus Groups

At the end of the Phase One field visit, focus groups with members of the two selected FBO cases were conducted. They functioned to provide insight into both the function of the organizations, and preliminary data on individual and collective experiences of learning to assist in preparation for Phase Two. Focus groups proved an efficient way to gather substantial data from numerous people at once (Morgan 1997). They also provided unique data, distinct from data acquired from either participant observation or individual interviews. A certain synergy emerged through the group interactions that triggered ideas, insight and memories that might not have arisen in a

two-way conversation or a less directed interaction (Morgan 1997; Stewart *et al*. 2007; Kamberelis and Dimitriadis 2008).

The focus groups were conducted during a fairly brief visit to each organization. I requested that a group of staff involved in programming be gathered to participate, and the participants were selected by a staff person. At ARK, there were five participants, and at RSP, there were 11 (Table 3.2a; Table 3.2b). I served as the facilitator for these focus groups, using a fairly structured schedule (Appendix I). This ensured that the group remained focussed and that all desired topics were covered, while allowing for spontaneity and synergistic group interaction to occur within those boundaries. The focus groups were approximately an hour and a half long. They were audio recorded by consent of the participants, and notes were also taken. Both focus groups were transcribed in full.

This research was approved by the Joint-Faculty Research Ethics Board of the University of Manitoba. All participants in the focus groups and interviews signed consent forms, in which they gave permission to be quoted. They were given the choice of using their real names or of selecting a pseudonym. While most chose to use their real names, some of the names used are pseudonyms. Both the ethics approval letter and the consent form are provided in Appendix II.

Table 3.2a: ARK Case Study Participants

Name	Gender	Nationality	Position	Duration of Employment
Colin Jackson [b]	Male	Britain/Kenya	Director	11 years
Roni Jackson [b]	Female	South Africa	Programs Coordinator	5 years
Henry Kigen [a b]	Male	Kenya	Centre Manager	3 years
Belinda Kigen [a]	Female	Kenya	Hospitality Manager	3 years
Stanley Baya [b]	Male	Kenya	ASSETS Coordinator	9 years
Tony Kanundu [a]	Male	Kenya	ASSETS Field Officer	3 years
Jonathan Baya [a b]	Male	Kenya	ASSETS Community Conservation Officer	8 years
Tsofa Mweni [a]	Male	Kenya	Environmental Education Officer	8 years
Albert Baya [b]	Male	Kenya	Field Assistant, research and monitoring	3 years
Lynton Baird [b]	Male	New Zealand	Volunteer (full time): research and monitoring and administration	4 months
Anna Baird [b]	Female	New Zealand	Volunteer (full time): environmental education and hospitality	4 months

[a] Focus Group; [b] Interview

Table 3.2b: RSP Case Study Participants

Name	Gender	Nationality	Position	Duration of Employment
Director [a] [b]	Male	Kenya	Director	19 years
Mary Juma [a] [b]	Female	Kenya	Deputy Director/ Supervisor of Programs	21 years
Kennedy Wangala [a] [b]	Male	Kenya	Information and Documentation Officer	6 years
Peter Mwanzi [a] [b]	Male	Kenya	Agriculture Officer	9 years
Everlyne Obongo [a] [b]	Female	Kenya	Health Officer	4 years
Edinah Isendi [a] [b]	Female	Kenya	Credit Manager	3 years
Wycliffe Maneno [a] [b]	Male	Kenya	Field Officer	11 years
Aggrey Mugasia [a] [b]	Male	Kenya	Field Officer	11 years
Peter A. [a] [b]	Male	Kenya	Field Officer	9 years
Shumbu [a] [b]	Male	Kenya	Field Officer	4 years
Henry Vulule [a]	Male	Kenya	Office Assistant, Agrovet shop	3 months
Dawn Reid [b]	Female	United States	Volunteer (full time): Kuwesa	3 years
Karen Bauer [b]	Female	United States	Volunteer: Friends Bringing Hope	5 years

[a] Focus Group; [b] Interview

3.4.2 Phase Two

Phase Two focussed entirely on the learning objectives within the two case studies. I was in Kenya from September 2010 to April 2011. I spent October to mid-December, 2010, with ARK, and January to early April, 2011, with RSP.

Interviews constituted the primary data collection activity during Phase Two. Interviews were conducted with individual members of the case FBOs seeking detailed personal perceptions, feelings, experiences, and the meanings they make of these (Seidman 1998). The interviews explored the identity and function of the FBOs and the various aspects of learning under investigation. Since much of the learning process occurs within an individual's inner life and cannot be observed, interviews were a key source of data. This procedure provided an opportunity to explore the research objectives in depth and detail.

The interviews were semi-structured, following a planned schedule of questions, but allowing for flexibility in wording and question order, for spontaneous questions to be asked in response to the interview content, and for the schedule to be adapted to the specific context of different participants (Merriam 1988; Berg 2004; Rubin and Rubin 2005). Two interviews were conducted with each participant. The first interview focussed on gathering background and contextual information, and ended by asking participants to think of a list of important things they had learned through their work. I supplemented this list with things they may have mentioned in other parts of the interview and in the focus group, if they had participated in it. Before the second interview, I transcribed the first interview and considered the list they provided. I chose items I deemed most relevant for further discussion in the second interview, favouring items that were specific to sustainability work (as opposed to learning administration or computer skills, for example). In the second interview, we systematically went through

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the list of learning items I had identified, and for each one, discussed what was learned, how it was learned, how it had been applied or put into action, and any barriers that may have prevented action. The full interview schedules are presented in Appendix I. While the number of participants differed between the two case studies, the number of learning items explored in Interview 2 between the two cases was about equal.

Interview participants were chosen purposively from within the case FBOs to represent a range of job responsibilities, nationalities and experiences within the organization, seeking a range of ages and a balance in gender. At ARK, a few staff had recently resigned, so I interviewed all the program staff, and two volunteers who were nearing the end of a six-month term and had previously volunteered for six months with A Rocha Canada, for a total of eight interview participants. At RSP, I interviewed all the program level administrative staff, the three program officers, four field officers, and two long-term American volunteers. There were a number of field officers from which these four were chosen. These were selected because they had participated in the focus group and worked in regions near the main RSP office, allowing for easier transportation. I interviewed 12 participants at RSP, making a total of 20 interview participants between the two organizations. All interviews were audio-recorded by consent of the participants, notes were taken during the interview by the interviewer, and all interview recordings were transcribed in full in the field.

3.4.2.2 Participant Observation

Within both of the case FBOs, I engaged in ongoing participant observation throughout the course of the study, participating in regular activities and programs

wherever possible. My role was primarily "observer as participant"; the participants were aware that I was observing them, and my participation was secondary to my role as an observer (Creswell 2009). The observation served as an exploratory measure to sharpen the focus of the interviews and the focus groups. It also gave me immediate experience with the organizations' activities and learning processes in context, revealing information that did not arise in the interviews and focus groups (Yin 1984; Merriam 1988; Creswell 2009). Furthermore, it allowed me to view the sustainability work of the FBO in action, by visiting projects they were undertaking, and witnessing educational programs they were delivering. Once I became familiar with the organizations' programs, I made a list of activities or projects I wanted to observe, such as bird ringing at ARK, and a protected spring at RSP, to ensure that I got a well-rounded picture of the organization.

Like many other qualitative data collection procedures, participant observation is highly subjective and therefore susceptible to bias. It must be undertaken in a critical and self-reflective fashion (Yin 1984; Merriam 1988). To facilitate this, I made detailed field notes, distinguishing as much as possible between what I observed and my interpretations of those observations. Brief jottings were noted during the observation period and typed out in full as soon as possible afterwards (Bernard 2006). I also kept a personal journal. At the end of the research period, I added relevant content from this journal into the field notes.

3.4.2.3 Document Review

Further document review was undertaken with the two case FBOs. Documents

included meeting notes, educational curricula, strategic plans, program reports, notes from training sessions, and administrative documents, such as RSP's Gender and HIV/AIDS Mainstreaming documents. The founder of the original A Rocha project in Portugal has written two books, which I read to gain an understanding of the wider context and history of the organization. Historical information about RSP was more difficult to obtain, although several books about the history of the Quaker mission in Western Kenya were available.

3.4.2.4 Journal Writing

In the original research proposal, I planned to select a small group of individuals who would be asked to keep a journal, reflecting on their experiences as a way of documenting their learning and reflection processes. Critical reflection is a difficult phenomenon to investigate because it is entirely internal and does not necessarily express itself in a manner that can be seen or observed. Kreber (2004) suggests journal keeping as one way to collect data on this aspect of the learning process. At the end of each focus group with the case FBOs during Phase 1, I explained the journal writing activity and asked for volunteers. Once I returned to Canada between the two phases, I worked by e-mail with contact people in both organizations to instigate this activity. At ARK, the two people who were supposed to be writing journals both resigned from their jobs before I returned for Phase Two. I tried to gather what they had written before they left, but was unable to do so. It is possible that nothing was written. When I arrived at RSP, I discovered that no one had in the end taken up the activity.

There are several reasons why I suspect this activity did not work. First, journal

writers were asked to write over a six-month period during which I was absent. Because

I was, in fact, on a different continent, I was unable to remind them regularly to engage

in the activity. Furthermore, the staff and volunteers in both organizations are very busy

and this exercise requires a significant time commitment. Finally, Kenyan culture is still

more oral and less written than North American culture, and the exercise may simply

have been inappropriate in this cultural context.

3.4.2.5 Feedback Workshops

At the end of my time with each organization, I presented a feedback workshop,

summarizing the data I had collected. Participants were given multiple opportunities to

respond to the material I presented, and were asked if the findings were faithful to their

experience, and if they had anything to add. I also asked questions that had arisen from

the data. At ARK, all the staff and volunteers who were interested were invited to

come, and over 10 people attended, including most of the interview participants. The

findings discussed were confirmed, and several lively discussions occurred that were

instigated by the research results and questions. Because RSP's staff is larger, I only

invited the interview participants to the RSP workshop. Only five people were able to

attend for most of the workshop. There was less discussion at this workshop, but the

participants confirmed the findings.

3.5 Analysis

Analysis was an ongoing process in this qualitative research, beginning the

moment the first data were collected. Analytical questions were asked, and patterns,

categories, and linkages were tentatively identified and recorded throughout the data

collection process, leading to intensive periods of analysis once the data were collected

and processed for analysis. Throughout the data collection process, I jotted notes on

ideas, trends, and questions as they surfaced. To prepare for the feedback workshops, I

summarized the content of each participant's two interviews into a summary profile

(Appendix III), then compiled the learning tables within these profiles into a master

table that was coded roughly for an initial analysis. I also read through all my field notes

and personal journals. After Phase One and each case study, I also prepared a research

report, detailing what I had done, and reflecting on the effectiveness of my data

collection tools and how the data answered my research objectives.

3.5.1 Coding

The coding and analysis process began in the field with the preparation of the

narrative profiles and the feedback workshop material. Through this process,

preliminary categories and themes were identified. Primary coding categories were

based on the research objectives, data collection tools, such as interview questions, and

categories derived from the theory and literature, including instrumental,

communicative, and transformative learning domains (Mezirow 1981; Mezirow 1991b;

Sims and Sinclair 2008), meaning schemes and meaning perspectives, and reflection

(content, process and premise) and discourse learning processes (Mezirow 1994;

Mezirow 1998; Mezirow 2003). Codes derived from the FBO and Christian

environmentalism literature included aspects of FBO typologies (Berger 2003; Sider

and Unruh 2004). Secondary coding categories were mostly grounded. The data were

coded with NVivo software (QSR International 2007), using both predetermined and

emerging codes. Then tables were created to synthesize categories and trace

connections between patterns and themes, through which interpretations and theoretical

applications were derived (Berg 2004; Rubin and Rubin 2005; Creswell 2009).

In the discussion of coding results in subsequent chapters, I have not quantified

the qualitative data collected through the data collection techniques outlined above.

Rather, I have given an indication of the level of support for the themes I present by

indicating if a majority ("all" or "most") or a minority ("a few") agreed. When I use

direct quotations from the participants in the results, these have been selected to ensure

that they capture the views of the participants that supported the point, unless otherwise

noted.

3.5.2 Narrative

Creating detailed descriptions is an essential component of case study inquiries

(Creswell 2009). I accomplished this through narrative analysis, synthesizing the

history, identity, role, and function of the organizations and their members in the

organizational profiles found in Chapter 5 (Mankowski and Rappaport 2000). With

regard to individuals, the narrative profiles created in the field helped me to retain an

image of the whole person through the fragmentation of the coding process and helped

to illustrate the sequence of events and the evolution of the learning processes

(Ollerenshaw and Creswell 2002). Short narratives are used in later chapters to illustrate

some of the participants' learning experiences.

3.6 Quality and Trustworthiness

The goal of social research is to shed light on a particular phenomenon in the

world and to provide solutions for social problems. Confidence in the success of this endeavour is derived from measures of quality and trustworthiness (Guba and Lincoln 2005). In qualitative research, these include maintaining consistency throughout the project, taking steps to collect and present faithful and authentic accounts of the research participants' constructions of their realities, and being transparent about the researcher's background and experience with regard to the research, as these will inevitably play a part in the co-created research product. Following Merriam (1988), Creswell (2009), and Lincoln and Guba (1985), various steps were taken to ensure these measures were covered, as outlined below.

Constant vigilance was employed in creating accurate transcriptions and in tracking codes so they were used and defined uniformly contributed to both consistency and authenticity. Discrepancies that negated or did not fit into the general analytical scheme were noted.

Triangulation: the use of multiple data collection procedures presented data from different angles, increasing the validity and trustworthiness of the data and the interpretations and conclusions derived from them. Five different data collection procedures (document review, qualitative questionnaires, participant observation, focus groups, and individual interviews) were employed.

Duration of field study: a prolonged stay in the research context improves the researcher's perception and interpretation of that situation and its people, increasing the credibility of the study. I spent nearly 10 months in Kenya, divided into two trips.

Clarifying bias: qualitative research is inherently subjective. Its quality is

improved, therefore, not by eliminating all researcher bias, but rather by openly

presenting the aspects of the researchers' background that may have informed their

interpretation of the data. This gives readers critical tools with which to approach the

research findings and forces the researcher to engage in self-reflection, which will

deepen her understanding of the data and her interpretations of it. I engaged in

disciplined journal writing while in the field to facilitate self-reflection, and a

discussion of my position with respect to this research is presented in section 3.1 above.

Member checking: the accuracy and authenticity of the research was confirmed

directly by presenting the research findings to the research participants in several ways.

All interview participants were given a copy of their narrative profiles, and if possible, a

digital copy of their interview transcriptions. They were encouraged to look them over

for inaccuracies and few noted any such inaccuracies. As described above, research

findings were also presented in a feedback workshop at each case study organization.

In using a *rich, thick description* to present my research data and findings, I

created a vibrant picture of the research context, improving the authenticity of the

readers' impressions of it and increasing their ability to assess the conclusions that have

been drawn. This description also facilitates transferability, allowing the readers to

determine whether the research findings are relevant to other situations.

Thesis committee and defence: these academic institutions and processes

provide an opportunity for peer-debriefing and external review, bringing new

perspectives to the work, further increasing the validity.

Chapter 4: FBO Identity and Function – Working for God and Sustainability[7]

4.0 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to identify and characterize the commitment to sustainability among FBOs in Kenya, especially in effecting it through religious and ethical social capital, connectedness to communities, and an integrated approach to development and environment. This is accomplished through a description of the identity and function of Kenyan FBOs, including an assessment of their strengths and challenges with regard to sustainability.

4.1 FBO Identity

This section describes what FBOs understand themselves to be and something of their character. The endeavour was guided by several FBO typologies in the literature, particularly Berger (2003) and Sider and Unruh (2004). The designation of "faith-based" for the NGOs in question was determined primarily by self-identification, particularly through self-descriptive texts such as mission statements. In choosing Group 2 organizations (Table 3.1), I attempted to cover a cross-section of denominations, including Catholic, Protestant, and Evangelical organizations (Table 4.1). I also sought organizations with a higher degree of religious pervasiveness. Two FBOs with roots in the Islamic faith are also included in this group. Both self-identify as Muslim FBOs in their mission statements although 70% of the staff for Islamic Relief are Christians, as are many of its beneficiaries, and the Aga Khan Foundation is essentially secular in its functioning and programming. For these reasons, and in

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[7] Major components of this chapter are drawn from Moyer *et al.* 2012, with kind permission from Springer Science and Business Media.

recognition of the overwhelming number of Christian FBOs, and the prevalence of

Christianity in Kenya generally, the discussion below is focussed primarily on the

identity and function of Christian FBOs.

Table 4.1: FBOs by Denomination or Faith

Denomination or Faith [a]	Organizations	Tally
Catholic	Caritas Kenya Catholic Agency for Overseas Development Catholic Relief Services Jesuit Relief Services	4
Christian (general) [b]	Beacon of Hope Christian Aid Christian Mission Aid Christian Partners Development Agency Christian Relief and Development Association Diakonia Kenya Dorcas Aid International Focus Africa Hope Worldwide Kenya Interchristian Fellowship Evangelical Mission Mully Children's Family Servanthood and Light Development Foundation World Concern	14
Christian (Inter/non-denominational)	Church World Services Micah Environmental Network Kenya Norwegian Church Aid	3
Protestant	Adventist Development and Relief Agency Africa Exchange Anglican Church of Kenya, Church Community Services Brot für die Welt Christian Reformed World Relief Committee Eastleigh Community Centre Lutheran World Federation, Department for World Services Lutheran World Relief Mennonite Central Committee Rural Service Programme (Quaker)	10

Protestant Evangelical	A Rocha Kenya Care of Creation Kenya Rondo Retreat Centre Samaritan's Purse Suba Environmental Education of Kenya World Relief World Vision	7
Muslim	Aga Khan Foundation Islamic Relief Worldwide	2
Total		40

[a] These categorizations were based on both self-identification by the organization, either in documentation or through interviews, and based on interpretation by the researcher. It should also be noted that most Kenyan churches have an evangelical flavour, which may also influence the nature of Kenyan organizations.

[b] Organizations in this category did not provide enough information for more specific categorization. They may therefore fit more accurately in one of the other categories.

All of the Christian organizations stated their faith convictions clearly in their mission statements or other self-descriptive texts, which are discussed in more detail below. Their relationships with religious institutions and structures, however, vary. At one end of the spectrum are organizations with very formal ties to their supporting church bodies, such as Caritas, which is the development arm of the Catholic Church in Kenya, and Rural Service Programme, which is the development arm of the Quaker Church in Kenya. At the other end of the spectrum, there are FBOs that have built relationships, mostly for funding purposes, with individual churches, but have no ties to specific church institutions or particular denominational bodies. Suba Environmental Education Kenya and Rural Extension with Africa's Poor are two such examples. Faith affiliations are also expressed in partnerships; many FBOs partner with churches as a way of reaching local communities, as well as other FBOs, and local community groups. They also work with secular partners, such as governments and international organizations (Table 4.2). FBOs get much, if not all, of their funding from within their

faith communities, but some also apply for government and other grants to support their work (Table 4.3).

Hiring policies vary; FBOs such as ARK and Mennonite Central Committee require a confession of faith from their employees, while others (e.g., Rural Extension with Africa's Poor, RSP) have no official policy, but have a staff consisting of people of faith nonetheless. In contrast, the Catholic Agency for Overseas Development and Caritas Kenya only require upper level staff or those who are doing fundraising to adhere to the organization's religious orientation, while FBOs such as Aga Khan Foundation, Church World Services, and Norwegian Church Aid hire staff based on skills and merit and have a staff representing various faith convictions or with no religious affiliation. When asked about their hiring policies, the latter organizations often seemed surprised or almost offended by the suggestion that they might discriminate based on religious affiliation.

Faith activities and signs of religious affiliation in the organizational environment, such as Bible studies and worship times, also vary. ARK has a mandatory weekly staff Bible Study, and an evening worship session on Sunday evenings to which staff, volunteers and patrons of their guesthouse are respectfully invited, though not compelled, to attend. Norwegian Church Aid also has weekly devotions, but these are interfaith activities that do not necessarily include Christian content. Prayer to open or close meetings is a feature in many organizations, while others, like the Catholic Agency for Overseas Development, have no worship or Bible Study, but restrict their faith activities among staff to training on Catholic Social Teachings.

Table 4.2: Partnerships

Partners	Number of Reported FBOs	Examples of Partnerships
Churches	11	• Care of Creation Kenya – Parklands Baptist Church • Caritas Kenya; Catholic Fund for Overseas Development – Catholic dioceses • Mennonite Central Committee – Kenya Mennonite Church • Norwegian Church Aid; Rural Extension with Africa's Poor – Africa Independent Churches
Other FBOs and church institutions (e.g., schools, seminaries)	9	• A Rocha Kenya; Care of Creation Kenya; Christian Reformed World Relief Committee; Rural Extension with Africa's Poor – Micah Environmental Network Kenya • Anglican Church of Kenya, Community Church Services – Coast Churches HIV/AIDS Initiative • Caritas Kenya – Catholic Fund for Overseas Development
Local Communities (including local schools)	8	• A Rocha Kenya – 8 schools surrounding Arabuko-Sokoke Forest • Mennonite Central Committee – Juja/Sister Luise; Menno Kids Academy; Hope Community; Utooni Development
Secular NGOs	5	• A Rocha Kenya – Nature Kenya; Turtle Watch • Care of Creation Kenya – Greenbelt Movement • Mennonite Central Committee – Excellent Development • Norwegian Church Aid – Kenya Climate Change Working Group
Government	7	• A Rocha Kenya – Kenya Wildlife Service; Kenya Forest Service; National Museums of Kenya • Mennonite Central Committee – Moi University • Rural Service Programme – Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock Development; Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources
International Organizations (e.g., Multilaterals, NGOs, foreign governments)	6	• Christian Reformed World Relief Committee; Mennonite Central Committee – Canadian Foodgrains Bank • Islamic Relief – European Commission for Food Aid; UNICEF • Norwegian Church Aid – ACT Alliance • Rural Service Programme – Bread for the World

Table 4.3: Constituency and Funding

Constituency	FBO
Independent/Kenyan	Mully Children's Family
Kenyan Denomination	Caritas Kenya Rural Service Programme
International Denomination or Faith Body	Aga Khan Foundation Creation Care Kenya Catholic Agency for Overseas Development Christian Reformed Wold Relief Committee Mennonite Central Committee Rural Service Programme
International/Ecumenical	Church World Services Norwegian Church Aid
International Individuals and Congregations	A Rocha Kenya Creation Care Kenya Rural Extension with Africa's Poor Suba Environmental Education Kenya

Funding Source	FBO
International Denomination or Faith Body	Aga Khan Foundation Catholic Agency for Overseas Development Christian Reformed World Relief Committee Mennonite Central Committee
International Individuals and Congregations	A Rocha Kenya Creation Care Kenya Church World Services Mully Children's Family Rural Extension with Africa's Poor Suba Environmental Education Kenya Rural Services Programme
International FBOs	A Rocha Kenya Caritas Kenya Catholic Agency for Overseas Development Mennonite Central Committee Rural Service Programme

International Secular NGOs	A Rocha Kenya Caritas Kenya Catholic Agency for Overseas Development Islamic Relief Worldwide Rural Extension with Africa's Poor
Multilaterals (United Nations, World Bank, etc.)	Aga Khan Foundation Catholic Agency for Overseas Development Islamic Relief Worldwide
International Governments	Aga Khan Foundation Catholic Agency for Overseas Development Christian Reformed World Relief Committee Church World Services

Unique aspects of FBOs often surface in self-descriptive texts, such as vision and mission statements, objectives and motivations. Vision and mission statements, or other self descriptions, were collected for all the Group 1 FBOs. These texts describe their intended actions and approach, the faith-based component of their work, and reveal some key words that provide insight into their identity. Of the latter, five words surfaced most frequently: *empowerment* (11 times), *transformation* (9 times), *partnership* (8 times), *dignity* (7 times), and *justice* (5 times). These words summarize both the approach and motivation of many of the FBOs studied. The emphasis on *empowerment*, *transformation*, and *partnership* indicate a commitment to helping people help themselves and to building projects on the basis of community priorities. Along with *dignity*, they also highlight an orientation of respect toward beneficiary peoples. *Justice*, a key concept in Judeo-Christian Scriptures, is an indication of motivation.

Group 2 organizations were asked about their objectives in the questionnaire described for Phase 1. The goals of ARK and RSP workers were explored further in

focus groups. Objectives of the Group 2 organizations fall into three main categories:
1) environmental objectives, which consisted primarily of education and conservation;
2) development objectives, focussing on social justice, human dignity and needs, and
alleviating poverty; and 3) empowerment and capacity building. Other objectives
include coordinating and facilitating communities in reaching various development and
environmental objectives, providing a platform for learning, and "[...] transforming
individuals and communities through the Gospel" (Suba Environmental Education
Kenya).

The goals that were shared in the focus groups reflected the specific activities of
the two Group 3 organizations. ARK's environmental goals focussed primarily on the
conservation of habitats and species, while RSP participants had more divergent
concerns regarding growing trees, preventing waterborne diseases, mitigating the
effects of climate variability, and conserving fuel. Participants from both organizations
also emphasized changing attitudes and creating awareness through facilitation, training
and the dissemination of information. Development goals for both organizations
focussed on livelihoods and standards of living, particularly through training, equipping
and empowerment.

The faith dimension of FBOs' identities was revealed in their self-descriptive
language, in their motivations, and in a discussion about the influence of faith on their
environmental and development goals in the focus groups. In the self-descriptive texts,
FBOs declare the faith component of their visions and missions in several ways. On the
one hand, they are responding to a call or following a command, a mandate, or an

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example:

> Rooted in Christian values of love, reconciliation and justice [Lutheran World Federation] DWS respond to human need through out the world (Lutheran World Federation 2012).

> World Vision is an international partnership of Christians whose mission is to follow our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ in working with the poor and oppressed (World Vision International 2012).

Faith-based motivations reflected faith-based values, such as equity, compassion, tolerance, dignity, helping the poor and caring for creation. These values can be derived from the organizations' understanding of God. Self-descriptive texts described God as loving and compassionate, as the creator and owner of the earth, and as caring for both people and creation. The call or mandate may also be derived from Scripture. A number of biblical inspirations surfaced, from the story of the feeding of the 5000, to the creation story of Genesis as motivation for conservation, to the Parable of the Talents (Matthew 25) as a model for sustainability and stewardship:

> I am personally motivated by the creation story, and especially the words, when the Lord said, "Let there be trees, let there be sea, let there be day, let there be..." I am imagining just the Lord saying, "Let there be trees." And forest coming. "Let there be animals of the sea." And everything came in. I can imagine how the Lord was feeling and how He saw everything as He said, "Let there be trees, and let there be sea animals." I can imagine that, and that later in the creation, He made man, and that through man's existence now, we come later to see, just imagine being in a town or a place where there is a big dump place with these filthy things all around the place. Nobody wants to see that... So I personally feel motivated by that creation story, especially when He says He did this and it was good. He did this and it was good (Tony, ARK).

> Basing on biblical principles, we were mandated to take care of the earth [*murmurs of agreement*], which means everything that is on Earth, we are supposed to take care of it. So, as Quakers, we use that principle to take care of trees, take care of, use the rains, and actually make proper use of the environment for development (Wycliffe, RSP).

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For the Catholic organizations, Catholic Social Teachings are key. These are "...the

Catholic Church's ethical framework for analysing the economic, social and political

realities of the world we live in" (CAFOD 2010).

> FBOs also do their work as an act of witness, putting their faith into action by

> > ...manifest[ing] God's love in the world by upholding human dignity and
> > protecting the integrity of Creation (Norwegian Church Aid 2012),

> > ...demonstrat[ing] God's love and compassion (Adventist Development and
> > Relief Agency 2012),

and

> > ...shar[ing] God's love and compassion for all in the name of Christ by
> > responding to basic human needs and working for peace and justice (Mennonite
> > Central Committee 2011).

When asked about their motivations, the participants from Caritas quoted Acts 1:8:

"You shall be my witnesses," describing their work as a witness of the church's social

teachings.

> Finally, their work is an application or manifestation of a particular set of values

or principles in action:

> > [Aga Khan Development Foundation] is a contemporary endeavour of the
> > Ismaili Imamat to realise the social conscience of Islam through institutional
> > action (Aga Khan Development Foundation 2007).

> > Purpose: Promoting integral mission in Evangelism, Community Development
> > and Mercy (Relief and Welfare) – salting the earth and lighting the world (Mt.
> > 5:13-14) (Interchristian Fellowship's Evangelical Mission 2012).

> > World Relief is the story of the Church at work providing comfort to the world's
> > poor and suffering (World Relief 2012).

The expression of faith through action is an important motivation for the Mennonite

Central Committee workers: "From a faith perspective, this is fundamental to what God

calls us to do – to feed the hungry and to walk with the most vulnerable" (Terichow 2009).

Two FBO workers especially highlighted the importance of doing this work as people of faith. For leaders of both Care of Creation Kenya and Rural Extension with Africa's Poor, making Christianity relevant to both development and environmental work was paramount. Christians have lagged in responding to the environmental crisis, and this is something Care of Creation is working to address by training church leaders in Kenya about the biblical calling to environmental stewardship (e.g., Sorley 2009a). Similarly, Rural Extension with Africa's Poor uses examples from the Bible in teaching pamphlets on such wide topics as trees, caring for soil, work and dependency, and natural medicines.

In addition to these faith-based motivations, FBOs were also driven by practical motivations that reflect the many challenges Kenya faces, as described in Chapter 2. These include poverty, health threats, social concerns such as orphans, street children, gender issues and population growth, food insecurity and agriculture issues, land degradation, deforestation, climate change, and peace and security.

The practical work of these FBOs will be considered in the following section, but their self-description of their actions and how they are approached also reveals a dimension of organizational identity, particularly as it is described in vision and mission statements. Across the Group 1 FBOs, actions were described at various levels of specificity. A few spoke generally about doing relief and development or environmental stewardship and conservation. Many described their relief and development work in

more detail, declaring their intention to, for example "...improve living conditions and opportunities for the poor" (Aga Khan Development Foundation 2007), "...end poverty, injustice and human suffering" (Lutheran World Relief 2012), and "...respond to major emergencies, fight disease and poverty, nurture peaceful and just societies" (Catholic Relief Services 2012). Others highlighted the holistic dimension of this work, such as Christian Mission Aid, which aims to "...assist churches and communities in Africa to effectively meet the spiritual, social and physical needs of their people" (Christian Mission Aid 2012). Still others emphasized the justice and peace components of their work. Capacity building, empowering, teaching and sharing were also the focus for many FBOs.

4.2 FBO Function

The preceding section illustrated the identity of FBOs, describing who they are, their motivations and their goals. This section explores their function, looking at how the latter ideals and objectives are put into practice through the work they carry out.

FBOs in Kenya engage in a wide variety of projects addressing both development and environmental issues. The beneficiaries of these projects are chosen mostly by need (e.g., the poorest of the poor) or based on a particular geographical area where the organization operates. The reported practices challenge the assumption that FBOs will discriminate in favour of those who already belong to their faith community, or will require conversion to their faith as a condition for receiving services. Some organizations do target members of their own faith, particularly for educational programs that capitalize on shared values and beliefs, but a large number of FBOs state

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on their websites and in their publications that they do not discriminate in providing

services based on religion or faith. Others also stated this orally when questioned about

their practices and policies (Table 4.4). More than half of the Group 2 organizations,

however, partner with churches as a way of reaching communities. Further field

research would be necessary to verify these claims throughout the partnerships.

Approximately half of the Group 2 organizations approach their activities

primarily through facilitation, working through partners, such as community

organizations or local churches, or by seconding staff to other organizations. Slightly

less than half implement their programming directly, and a few do a combination of

facilitation and implementation.

Table 4.5 lists the activities of all Group 1 organizations. These are grouped

according to general areas and specific applications. The table indicates that FBOs offer

programs in a wide variety of sustainability areas. Within the 40 FBOs in Group 1, there

are at least 15 programs or activities reported that focus specifically on the environment

(biodiversity conservation, climate change, environmental assessment, waste), 71

activities focussing on development (governance, health, livelihoods and economy,

peace and justice, social issues), and 79 activities that integrate both environment and

development (agriculture and food, education/capacity building, emergency response

and mitigation, energy, forests, water). Certain activity areas receive greater attention

and coverage than others. These include agriculture and food, education/capacity

building, forests (particularly tree planting), health (especially HIV/AIDS), social issues

such as orphans and vulnerable children, and water (particularly access/harvesting).

Table 4.4: Religious Connections to Beneficiaries

Religious Connections to Beneficiaries	FBOs
Statement proclaiming no discrimination on basis of religion in publications (pamphlets, website, etc.)	Aga Khan Foundation Caritas Kenya Catholic Agency for Overseas Development Catholic Relief Services Christian Mission Aid Dorcas Aid International Islamic Relief Worldwide Lutheran World Federation Mully Children's Family Norwegian Church Aid Rural Service Programme
Oral statement indicating no discrimination on basis of religion (qualitative questionnaire, interviews)	Islamic Relief Worldwide Catholic Agency for Overseas Development Christian Reformed World Relief Committee Church World Services Mennonite Central Committee Rural Extension with Africa's Poor
Reported working with people of other faiths	A Rocha Kenya Aga Khan Foundation Anglican Church of Kenya, Community Church Services Care of Creation Kenya Caritas Kenya Interchristian Fellowship Evangelical Mission Islamic Relief Worldwide Norwegian Church Aid
Focus some aspect of their work on members of their own faith or denomination	A Rocha Kenya Care of Creation Kenya Interchristian Fellowship Evangelical Mission Suba Environmental Education of Kenya

Where available, examples of specific applications are listed in Table 4.5. To illustrate some of these specific applications, the following section presents profiles of four FBOs' activities, focussing specifically on those that encompass both development and environment.

Table 4.5: Representative Sustainability Activities of FBOs in Kenya

General Area (Number of FBOs engaged in area)	Specific Applications and Examples	Number of FBOs Engaged in Activity [a]
Agriculture and Food (18)	land use: soil conservation, erosion prevention; deep tillage	5
	crops: diversification, protection, use and storage, indigenous crops; seed banks; mixed and crop rotation	9
	livestock: species; management; over-grazing; dairy	6
	input and technology: irrigation; greenhouses; fireless cookers; pesticides	7
	diversification: bee keeping, fish farming	5
	organic farming	1
	horticulture	3
Biodiversity Conservation (4)	eco-tourism: mangrove boardwalk, tree platforms in forest; Arabuko-Sokoke Schools and Eco-Tourism Scheme (ASSETS)	1
	endangered species: research and monitoring	1
Climate Change (7)	adaptation	4
	carbon management: emission offsets, emissions trading; carbon sinks	3
	advocacy: international policy, youth engagement; national policy	3
	awareness raising	1
Education/ Capacity Building (17)	farmer training: workshops, demonstration farm; pamphlets	9
	orphans	2
	HIV/AIDS	1
	environmental education: with churches, in schools, creation care tour, camps about trees	6
	church-based education: Sunday School, seminars, pastor training, conferences	3
	literacy	1
	school support: funding, safe schools; teacher training, bursary program	3

Emergency Response and Mitigation (11)	famine/food relief	3
	tsunami	1
	community planning	2
Energy (5)	conservation: fireless cookers, jiko stoves	4
	alternative energy: integrated Jatropha Energy System	1
Environmental Assessment (1)	development projected assessed under *Environmental Management and Coordination Act*	1
Forests (12)	tree nurseries: greenhouse, seed bank	4
	tree planting: Easter Tree Planting Campaign; reforestation; Trees for Africa	12
	propagate indigenous species	4
	forest conservation: Arabuko-Sokoke Schools and Eco-tourism Scheme (ASSETS)	1
Governance (7)	leadership formation	2
	accountability	1
	democracy	2
Health (22)	HIV/AIDS: education, Voluntary Counselling and Testing, preventing mother to child transmission; widows and orphans	16
	sanitation	8
	malaria, TB, and other diseases	2
	maternal and infant: family planning, nutrition	3
	service provision: training practitioners; hospitals	2
	natural medicines	1
Livelihood and Economy (14)	micro-finance/micro-credit	5
	artisan projects	3
	marketing and value added for agriculture	2
	trade	1

Peace and Justice (9)	responding to 2007 post-election violence	2
	economic justice	3
	peace building	2
	human rights	2
Social Issues (19)	orphans and vulnerable children: good news clubs, guardian support groups, education support, health care, counselling; food, clothing, medication, shelter, protecting rights	10
	widows: building houses	2
	gender issues: women's groups	3
	recreational activities: sports, choirs	1
	street children	3
	youth programs	3
	female genital mutilation	2
	cultural exchange	1
	slums	1
	refugees	2
	child sponsorship	2
Waste (3)	recycling	1
	town clean-up	1
	re-use: creating products out of trash	1
Water (16)	access/harvesting: water pans, rooftop collection, dams, sand dams, boreholes, rainwater harvesting, wells	12
	storage: water tanks	3
	conservation and quality: protect springs, terracing	3
	provision: by truck	1

[a] These numbers are approximate, since more specific information was available for some organizations than others.

4.2.1 Tree Planting: Care of Creation Kenya

Kenya's forests constitute less than 2% of its land cover. Its standing wood has been depleted by about 65 percent since 1930, and its forests continue to disappear

rapidly (NEMA 2009; UNEP 2009). Care of Creation Kenya is working to slow these

trends by establishing a tree nursery on the grounds of the Brackenhurst International

Conference Centre near Limuru.[8] They have the largest collection of indigenous tree

species in Kenya, numbering up to 350 indigenous species, 500 species total, during the

rainy season. Seeds and seedlings are collected from across the country, raised in the

nursery and then sold or donated, especially to local institutions such as schools and

churches. Education constitutes an important piece of this work; the nursery is open to

the public and free advice is provided to people interested in starting their own

nurseries. Care of Creation staff also give presentations at churches and church

conferences about the magnitude of the environmental crisis in Kenya and the church's

responsibility to embrace and enact stewardship and sustainability principles.

4.2.2 Sand Dams: Mennonite Central Committee with Utooni Development Organisation

Eighty percent of Kenya's land is arid or semi-arid; rainfall is unpredictable and

water supplies are tenuous, making Kenya a net water deficit country (ETC East Africa

Ltd. 2006). Workers from the Mennonite Central Committee are supporting Utooni

Development Organisation in building sand dams in Machakos, south of Nairobi.

Utooni, a community development organization, was started by a local man named

Joshua Mukusya who, after fetching water in gourd as a child, promised his parents he

would find a better way. Sadly, he was shot and killed in September 2011. The first

sand dam is still holding water after more than 30 years, and the Mennonite Central

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[8] Since the data were collected, Care of Creation Kenya has moved to Moffat Bible College in Kijabe.

Photo 4.1: Care of Creation tree nursery

Photo 4.2: Sand dam built with Utooni Development in Kola (Wiens and Wiens 2012)

Committee has helped build over 300 dams in the intervening years. Utooni promotes a

culture of cooperation, requiring communities to participate in the building of their own

dams, and requiring individuals on whose land a dam is built to sign a contract ensuring

that anyone can take water from it. This work has improved the water and food security

of the local people, and also resulted in an increase in bird and insect biodiversity in the

area.

4.2.3 Climate Change Advocacy: Caritas Kenya and Norwegian Church Aid

Climate change and variability is an urgent concern in Kenya, particularly in the

face of recent droughts and unpredictable rainfall patterns (UNEP 2009). Caritas Kenya

and Norwegian Church Aid have taken leadership roles in climate change advocacy,

both within Kenya and on the international stage. Caritas representatives attended the

Copenhagen meetings in December 2009 as observers, supporting the Kenyan

delegation and helping delegates to understand technical issues. Within Kenya, they are

working to educate the public about climate change, customizing and simplifying the

message so that it can be understood at the village level. They are also working with

others to help in the development of a national climate policy, which as yet does not

exist. Various climate change mitigation projects fill out their climate strategy.

Norwegian Church Aid is also working on climate change mitigation and intervention

through alternative energy projects, aforestation, water management, and political

advocacy. Key to the latter is a youth programme, which has been active at both the

national and the international levels. The African Youth Initiative on Climate Change

named Norwegian Church Aid youth the NGO of the year in 2009 (Norwegian Church Aid 2010).

4.3 Successes and Challenges

All 12 respondents to the qualitative questionnaire reported that the community response to their work is largely positive. Organizations such as the Catholic Agency for Overseas Development, Caritas and Church World Services noted that they were trusted and communities appreciated the partnership approaches they take. Organizations involved in educational work, such as Care of Creation and Rural Extension with Africa's Poor, reported that people appreciate learning about their environment, and their relationship to the land and their everyday activities from a biblical perspective, having never been shown these aspects of the Bible before.

At the same time, FBOs face many challenges. Some are similar to the challenges one would expect any organization doing such work would face, such as limitations due to size, time, and funding. Care of Creation receives more requests for training than they are able to give, while RSP finds the area of need in their region to be larger than their personnel can cover. A few organizations noted that changing attitudes and behaviour is a long-term process, particularly when religious beliefs or cultural barriers and taboos create tension with the development or environmental message. A few also highlighted the challenges raised by poverty levels and climatic issues that impede agricultural activities, as well as political barriers, such as unsupportive environmental policies.

Some of the challenges that were reported by the FBOs were specifically related to their faith-based identity. One of these was the expectation that potential beneficiaries had of the organizations. ARK, RSP, and Rural Extension with Africa's Poor reported that because they are FBOs, people expect to receive free hand-outs and are disappointed when they discover that the focus of the organization is on education or empowerment. ARK and RSP staff also noted that they sometimes experience difficulty working with people who do not share their faith. This poses several different problems. Some secular organizations are suspicious of their faith basis and are consequently leery about partnering with them. In other cases, there is disagreement over how projects should be conducted, and sometimes ARK feels obliged to pull out of projects because its partners are not abiding by the values ARK is committed to uphold. This can result in a loss of funding. Most of the time, however, partnering with secular organizations works well, because even if their motivations are different, they are working to address the same problems. Furthermore, both ARK and RSP staff reported that while they are sometimes questioned about their ability to work with other faiths, they generally have good relations working with Muslims, and in RSP's case, people from other denominations.

FBOs may also face situations whereby funding, conditionality, or outside influences may challenge or compromise their faith identity or function, or their sustainability goals. I offer some comments in this regard for each of the Group 3 organizations. ARK has a strong sense of mission and integrity that it is committed to maintain. At this point, it receives most of its funding from individuals and

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congregations rather than governments or funding foundations. Its donors are thus

giving money because they support the work it is doing. Some ARK programs, such as

the Arabuko-Sokoke Schools and Eco-Tourism Scheme are partially self-funded.

RSP receives most of its funding from Bread for the World, another FBO, and

from government sources, both Kenyan and American. Because its approach is

facilitation based, working through community groups that set their own priorities,

communities and their actual needs play a significant role in setting the organization's

agenda. That different communities and community groups are engaged in different

projects is an indication that this approach is actually being undertaken. My observation

of a program evaluation process indicates that the major donors support community-

based agenda setting. Furthermore, one of the special programmes – Friends Bringing

Hope, which builds homes for widows and supports orphans – was created directly

from an observed need within the community, and donors were sought to address it. At

the same time, the basic services from which communities can choose may be

determined to some degree by donor priorities. Further research would be required,

however, to investigate how the donor-FBO relationship affects and potentially

compromises the effectiveness and uniqueness of FBOs.

For RSP, a primary source of outside influence and pressure appears to be the

church institution, rather than the donors. As the development arm of the Quaker church

in Kenya, RSP is tied to the institutional church and its activities must be approved by

church leaders. When RSP's approach conflicts with church policy or belief, the

organization's developmental goals may be compromised or conflict may arise. For

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example, through its community health program, RSP promotes the use of condoms for preventing the spread of HIV/AIDS, which the church opposes. This affiliation can also cause denominational difficulties, when people assume the organization only serves (or should only serve) Quakers, rather than the whole community, or when potential beneficiaries refuse to participate in community programs because they prefer to receive services from their own denomination's development organization.

ARK has no formal ties to any institutional church body, so it is not subject to such pressures. It does face other internal tensions, however, mostly in the form of resistance on the part of some Christians to the idea that conservation is a Christian concern. While Kenyan churches tend to promote a theology that focuses more on heaven than life on earth, they have proven increasingly open to integrating conservation into their Christian belief system. For most Kenyans, this shift is probably more driven by the pragmatic realization that their livelihoods are threatened by environmental destruction than it is by theology. ARK staff noted that resistance to integrating conservation into Christianity is primarily a problem in the Global North.

The literature notes that FBOs may also have advantages that their secular colleagues lack. Such advantages were apparent among the FBOs I studied. For instance, Berger (2003) and Gardner (2002) highlight the organization and expertise that exists within church structures. Churches and related institutions, such as seminaries, schools, etc., provide a network of structures that FBOs, particularly those belonging to the same denomination or faith, can easily tap to spread a message, to access beneficiaries, and to acquire resources. Care of Creation Kenya capitalizes on

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this advantage, using churches to promote and organize events. Catholic organizations

tend to work through the structure of church dioceses, which, the Catholic Agency for

Overseas Development reports, "[...] are well-structured for community outreach." RSP

field officers use church elders, along with local chiefs, as their entry point into

communities. FBOs working within less structured denominations also reported that

churches function as effective entry points to the community, easing access to target

beneficiaries and facilitating service provision to the entire community in need.

The rootedness of churches and, by association, faith-based organizations,

within communities is key. It helps to build the network between communities and

national and international organizations, and provides an important element of stability

in the relationship between community members and organizations that work with

them. This claim was supported by a Church World Services staff member working in

emergency response and development. Experiences working with both secular and

faith-based agencies addressing refugee needs, flooding, and drought have taught him

the value of investing in church structures and building their capacities. He notes that:

> The faith-based institutions are there. They were there before, they were there
> during the emergency, and they'll be there after that. The churches are going to
> be there.

As such, churches can provide useful information about community needs, such as early

warning data for recurring disasters. They can also offer unique insight into the effects

that development and environmental projects may have on the community, because they

will also be affected by whatever interventions are introduced. Both ARK and RSP staff

also noted that their ongoing presence in the community allows them to build

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meaningful relationships with their members, facilitating more effective provision of services, and exhibiting a commitment beyond short-term project funding cycles.

Another reason I observed that churches provide such good access to the community is the degree to which churches and religious leaders are trusted and respected in Kenyan society. Despite some anecdotal evidence of corruption within the church leadership, Kenyans hold faith, the Bible, and church leaders in high regard. Words spoken from a pulpit are taken seriously. For example, the founder of Rural Extensions with Africa's Poor explained their approach as follows:

> The basis of our stewardship programme is the fact that Africa is a spiritual continent and that what motivates people here in Africa is primarily the spiritual. There is a great respect for the Bible and even those who do not profess to 'be saved' or have a personal faith respect the Bible.

The importance and ubiquity of faith and spirituality in Kenya (and sub-Saharan Africa as a whole) (Mbiti 1991; Bujo 2003; Dicklitch and Rice 2004) has implications for sustainability work in that holistic approaches that incorporate the spiritual, the physical and the communal correspond with the African psyche and worldview. Holistic approaches are an FBO strength identified in the literature (Tyndale 2006; Thaut 2009) that was clearly evident among all the FBOs I studied. For example, Care of Creation notes in its Strategic Plan that its major action points, which have titles like "Planting God's Trees" and "Harvesting God's Water", were named in this way to highlight the connection between the divine and the human, the physical and the spiritual. Similarly, the education officer at ARK explained:

> If you want to capture the people, then you have also to look at them holistically: physically; you have to look at them spiritually; you have to reach them in all aspects of their life (Tsofa, ARK).

In evaluating the Arabuko-Sokoke Schools and Eco-Tourism Scheme, A Rocha founder, Peter Harris (2008) notes: "Without careful recognition of all the connections – social, spiritual, environmental and developmental – little progress would have been made" (79).

A holistic approach also appears in the integration of environmental and development programs. The combination of activities in Table 4.5 and the vignettes above illustrate this. In the focus group discussions about objectives, staff from both ARK and RSP agreed that on the ground, environmental goals and development goals cannot be separated from each other. While at the national level, people may talk about doing conservation without attention to development, communities want to see development benefits emerging from conservation projects.

> The community depend on natural resources for firewood, for meat, [for] sources of protein, for charcoal, for water, for medicine, and for many other things including ornamental plants, and so on. So, because people depend on these natural resources, then you need to integrate so that you do not compromise the natural resources because of the work of development. Development has to be done in a sustainable way, in such a way that you do not conquer the environment. Instead, you bring the two together and there is sustainability (Tsofa, ARK).

> If you don't bring in alternatives, and you go to the community and tell them, "Let us conserve Arabuko-Sokoke Forest. Let us conserve the mangroves" and so on, and you leave them at that, without giving them alternative, however much you talk to them and explain to them the beauty and the importance of conserving that resource, they will still turn, when you turn your back on them, they will go back and cut the trees for firewood. You have to think of an alternative. So you have to think development (Tsofa, ARK).

> Development is environment and environment is development. By that I mean without one, the other one cannot be there. So they correlate for development (Wycliffe, RSP).

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Faith is also relevant to sustainability issues on another level. With respect to environmental issues in particular, leaders and practitioners are increasingly recognizing that while there are technical, scientific, and political elements to addressing environmental problems, at the root of the issue are profound ethical decisions and worldview orientations that fit more into the realm of faith than they do into the realm of science, which has been the primary realm in which these issues have been engaged (White 1967; Christie 2002). Craig Sorley (2009a), the founder and director of Care of Creation declares: "The world today desperately cries out for sound Christian leadership on this topic" (33). Harris (2000) suggests that conservation is a matter of faith by its nature because "...people treat the world according to what they believe about it" (106). Another ARK worker described how by linking faith to the environment, an inward conviction is created that provides greater passion for the work:

> When you talk about dealing with faith, faith is not something that you can see, but something that is [ingrained?] within you, it's built within one's self. And as opposed to the other approach, where people are told, you do this A B C D, and scientific research and things like that, some people are bound to do it for the sake of others, and not to have a personal conviction that it's actually your responsibility. You are convinced that you are doing this because it's sacred, because it's something that is pleasing to God. So you will not be doing it because Tsofa said so, but you will be doing it with the conviction within you that this is the right thing to do (Henry, ARK).

While not all of the organizations articulated this link between faith and sustainability so explicitly, using elements of faith as a tool in their work is a common practice. For instance, they use the Bible as a means of teaching new development or environmental concepts or skills. Sorley (2009b) has written a book detailing how to farm "God's way" and Rural Extension with Africa's Poor publishes educational

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pamphlets using a similar approach. Church World Services reports sometimes using

the Bible to teach, while Interchristian Fellowship's Evangelical Mission reports using

"[...] biblical values to help people engage positively and to become drivers of their

own development".

A RSP worker described the effectiveness of using the Bible to train the

community:

> During our trainings we use verses from the Bible that talk about the
> environment, that talk about the trees, that talk about the foods and actually
> when you talk about the benefit that you get from trees and the benefit that we
> get from a conserved environment in a biblical way, then definitely it is better
> received than when you do not use the Bible. So we actually use the faith, the
> Quaker faith through taking examples from the Bible that talk about trees to
> strengthen our development activity (Peter M., RSP).

There are several reasons that might explain why RSP, Care of Creation, and

others find faith to be such an effective tool. One is the general relevance of faith, its

language, concepts, and consequent effect on behaviour to the development-

environment nexus. Another is the general ubiquity of faith in Kenya. By using the

language or conventions of faith, FBOs are communicating with people on a plane that

touches them deeply and that resonates with their way of engaging with the world.

A final strength noted by a few participants relates to hope, which is perhaps

one of the greatest gifts that faith can offer to the sustainability movement. As noted in

Chapter 2, faith can serve as a powerful antidote to despair in an area of work that is

defined by its apparently insurmountable problems and crises (Gottlieb 2006). Most of

the ARK participants revealed this aspect of doing conservation work in a faith context.

Roni, who previously worked in secular conservation, spoke extensively about this,

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noting how discouraging conservation work can be: "You can win a small battle locally, but you know that you're losing the whole war." For her, working on conservation projects within a Christian context with other Christians is profoundly encouraging. This comes from praying together about the work and knowing,

> [...] that God has given you a purpose to be here, and you are following what God wants you to do, which is to bring transformation wherever you are, and to let God use that and spread it and bring the change. And so, it's to be faithful in the small thing God has given us and knowing that God has a purpose and God's going to use it to change the world (Roni, ARK).

This sense of calling and purpose, the knowledge that the work is not being done by human power alone, and the powerful bond of communal prayer serve as defences against despair and sources of hope, enabling people to persevere.

4.4 Summary

These findings help to show the role FBOs in Kenya are playing in relation to the broader sustainability project. They reveal a diversity of FBO identities, as expressed in their relationship and affiliation with official religious structures, their hiring policies, and the way they integrate their faith into their organizational life and their programming. FBO function is expressed through their work, which encompass both the environmental and the developmental or human aspects of sustainability. Water, forests, agriculture, food, health, vulnerable populations, and capacity building constitute the main focus of FBO activities. As the latter focus suggests, their approach is often oriented toward partnership and empowerment. In this work, FBOs face challenges and capitalize on advantages that are unique to their faith-based identity. Key challenges relate to size, time, funding, expectations of beneficiaries, and some

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tensions in working with non-Christians. Advantages include the ability to connect to communities through church structures, to use faith as a tool in reaching, educating and communicating with people, and the hope that working in a faith context affords. The discussion in this chapter sets the broad context for FBO work with respect to sustainability in Kenya. The case studies, which are described in detail in Chapter 5, and form the specific learning contexts discussed in subsequent chapters, fit within this broader context.

Chapter 5: Case Study Profiles

5.0 Introduction

The bulk of the research, described in the chapters that follow, was conducted through two detailed case studies undertaken in Kenya. This chapter presents a profile of each case study organization to ground the ensuing discussions in their organizational contexts. The profiles cover the organizations' histories and geographical contexts, their programs and approaches, their faith basis, and their organizational and learning structures.

Before proceeding, it should be noted that my experience within these two organizations, and the relationships I built with them, differed in some substantial ways. A Rocha Kenya is an active community 24 hours a day, seven days a week. I was able to participate fully in the life of this community, through sharing meals, worship times, and meetings, as well as through informal, social interactions. At Rural Service Programme, I also lived on the compound, and interacted with the staff as much as possible during office hours, but these interactions were less intense than at ARK. At the same time, I had more opportunities to visit the communities in which RSP programs are conducted, and therefore saw more of their community work in action.

5.1 A Rocha Kenya

The story of A Rocha Kenya begins in England in the early 1980s. Peter Harris, an Anglican curate, and his wife Miranda, wanted to do work internationally. Because he was an avid birder, they began to dream about a Christian conservation project. This dream eventually grew into a field study centre and bird conservation project on the

Algarve Peninsula in Portugal. They named their project A Rocha, meaning "The Rock" (Harris 2000). In the late 1980s, an environmental studies student at Southampton University named Colin Jackson spent his Easter holiday at A Rocha, and was eventually convinced to return as an assistant warden. A Rocha was beginning to expand, and Colin, who grew up with missionary parents in Kenya, envisioned starting an A Rocha project there as well (Colin, ARK).

In consultation with Peter, Colin first spent a year in Bible college, gaining key theological background for doing conservation work from a Christian perspective. He was then employed at the National Museums of Kenya in Nairobi as an ornithologist, allowing him the opportunity to build connections in the Kenyan conservation community, and to travel the country and scope a suitable site for an A Rocha project. He settled on Watamu, a small tourist community on the Indian Ocean located near several key biodiversity areas (Colin, ARK) (see Figure 2.1).

The coast of East Africa, from Somalia to Mozambique, was once covered by a vast coastal forest, which has now almost completely disappeared. At 420km^2, the Arabuko-Sokoke forest near Watamu is the largest remnant. The forest contains numerous rare and endangered species, including the Golden Rumped Sengi, the Ader's duiker, the Sokoke Scops Owl, and the Spotted Ground Thrush. While the forest is legally protected, partially as a Forest Reserve and partially as a National Park, it is still threatened, primarily by illegal harvesting of wood, which is used as building material and sold as charcoal. Mida Creek is a tidal inlet containing a mangrove forest, and serving as an important feeding area for turtles, fish and shore birds. It is an important

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local source of food, but is being over-fished, despite being within the Watamu Marine National Park (ETC. East Africa Ltd. 2006; Harris 2008; Field Note 2010-10-05).

Given the richness of the landscape, and the coastal setting, this area is a popular tourist destination. Despite the influx of foreign tourists (and their money), little wealth is trickling down to the majority of the people. Coast Province had an absolute poverty rate of 59% in 2005/2006 (KNBS 2008a), and ARK staff reported that Kilifi District is one of the poorest in the country. Literacy levels are low at 56% in the rural areas of Coast Province (KNBS 2008b), and secondary and post-secondary graduation rates are also very low (Harris 2008).

ARK was registered as an NGO in 1999. It operates based on the five core commitments developed by the original A Rocha team in Portugal:

- *Christian:* faith in the God who created the world and entrusted it to human beings is foundational to what A Rocha does.

- *Conservation:* their work consists of conservation research and environmental education.

- *Community:* work is conducted by cultivating strong relationships within the organization and with the surrounding community.

- *Cross-Cultural:* working with diverse cultures, both locally and from around the world, provides insight and builds community.

- *Cooperation:* work is done in partnership with other organizations who share their commitment to sustainability (A Rocha 2012).

A Rocha staff have suggested they would like to add *Celebration* to this list of core commitments, noting: "We want to enjoy and delight in and be enthusiastic about creation" (Roni, ARK).

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Building on these core commitments, A Rocha approaches its work with a long-term commitment to the community and to building relationships. Projects are implemented with a sensitivity to community needs and inputs, focussing on empowerment through training and sharing ideas, rather than handing out money and material. The work is also conducted in a holistic manner, encompassing both the material and the spiritual, both people and the environment, and both development and conservation:

> It's about holistic transformation, so you're not just looking to fix people's environment, 'cause you know that's not enough. It's about bringing transformation to people and therefore transformation to what's around them. And unless you transform people, the environment won't transform (Roni, ARK).

The Christian dimension of the work is key to this holistic approach, for both the staff and volunteers, and for the communities with which they work. It provides a foundation for the conservation work:

> I think I realized that A Rocha as a Christian conservation organization, that conservation with a biblical basis to it is really almost the only way that conservation really, really makes sense. Because you're dealing with God's stuff and if you leave God out of the question, then you know, it's like, having a car without the engine in it, you know, you have to push it, and might get it somewhere, but it's not going to really move (Colin, ARK).

> We liked the holisticness of A Rocha. [It's] a really cool expression of how living in right relationship with God transforms everything, and affects how you treat people and how you treat the world. And to see that they actually had projects that demonstrated it's possible for people and the environment to live in harmony (Anna, ARK).

The holistic approach also frees Christian conservationists to engage their various passions in a fuller, more integrated way:

We've often had expressions of real relief, and excitement and joy from Christians working in conservation or who are passionate about wildlife and so on, and have struggled to find any home anywhere where that is respected and admired and encouraged and recognized as something godly (Colin, ARK).

Community conservation and environmental education work is undertaken using Christian ideas and the Bible to impart a message.

When we approach the community, we start to approach the churches and because it's clearly stated in the Bible that everything that we have belongs to our Almighty [...] So when you go to their home, you bring these biblical aspects, and to talk to them, giving them examples, and sharing with them those ideas that you have from the way we want to conserve, and the way that God really wants us to be careful on what he created for us (Jonathan, ARK).

According to Colin, this can be done openly, without offending anyone, even Muslims or other non-Christians because they refrain from preaching at them.

We can even quote Bible verses, we can talk about God the creator, and there isn't a single person there who will think that God is not the creator. There's no one who thinks that God didn't create the world, and that He didn't maybe give us that responsibility. People are used to hearing a lot about Christianity because there's so many Christians in the country and it's very widespread. And so we can be quite open, and even if there are non-Christians in a group, people don't mind (Roni, ARK).

Staff reported that approaching communities through churches and using biblical ideas is effective, opening a wider, more receptive audience than if they were rooting their work solely in science.

ARK became established at its current site, the Mwamba[9] Bird Observatory and Field Study Centre, in 2002. The Centre constitutes one of ARK's four main programs. In addition to housing the program offices, Mwamba provides accommodation for volunteers and some staff, researchers (both connected to ARK and otherwise), and

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[9] Mwamba means "rock" in Kiswahili.

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Photo 5.1: Mwamba office and communal area

Photo 5.2: View from the Mwamba flat roof

national and international guests. The latter are a source of income generation for the other programs. The Centre is also the nexus of ARK's core commitment to community, where all the residents share meals, washing up responsibilities, and to their degree of interest, conservation and Christian worship activities (Field Note 2010-10-06).

The other three programs are: research and monitoring; environmental education; and community conservation. *Research and Monitoring* occurs primarily in Arabuko-Sokoke forest and Mida Creek, as well as several other locations in the surrounding region. Staff and volunteers conduct regular surveys to monitor birds and trees in the forest, providing baseline information about the state of the ecosystem. Bird ringing is regularly conducted in various locations, as well as several different bird counts (Albert, ARK; Field Note 2010-10-06).

Environmental Education work focuses on primary schools surrounding Arabuko-Sokoke Forest. The program links into the Wildlife Clubs of Kenya, another Kenyan NGO, and sponsors community events such as beach clean-ups and tree planting. ARK is also working to train teachers and create curriculum materials, such as a Marine Manual for Coastal Schools, which was developed in collaboration with several other local organizations. Some educational programs have also been presented in church settings, including pastors' workshops and a course on God and Creation taught at a Bible college in Malindi (Field Note 2010-10-06).

Photo 5.3: ARK volunteer ringing an emerald spotted wood dove

Community Conservation is key to ARK's approach and vision, ensuring that the surrounding community is involved in and supported by conservation efforts. As ARK was initially being established, surveys were conducted in the villages around the forest, revealing that raising money for secondary school fees was the primary reason that people engaged in illegal harvesting within the forest (Harris 2008). Based on this knowledge, ARK developed the Arabuko-Sokoke Schools and Eco-Tourism Scheme (ASSETS) in 2001. Eco-tourism structures were constructed, including several tree platforms in the forest, and a board walk and bird hide at Mida Creek. Visitors are charged a small fee (about 2.50 CAD) to use the structures and this money goes into a bursary fund to which students from eight primary schools surrounding the forest can apply for assistance to attend secondary school. Beneficiaries' parents are required to

participate in Muvera, a parents' association that involves environmental education, and

activities such as developing tree nurseries, tree planting, conservation agriculture, and

alternative technologies (Field Notes 2010-10-05). Parents are also required to make a

commitment to refrain from illegal harvesting in the forest. In ten years, the program

had helped almost 400 students attend secondary school, and the community is

responding well (Sinclair *et al.* 2011; Sluka *et al.* 2011). At the same time, the

structures do not yet yield enough money to support the program entirely. The first

platform that was built in the forest in no longer in use because the surrounding area

dried up and the structure needs maintenance. There have also been disagreements with

park officials over the collection of fees. ASSETS graduate volunteers are collecting the

money at another platform in Gede Ruins, which is working well. To meet its budget,

however, the bursary fund currently receives additional money from Turtle Bay Beach

Club, A Rocha International, and other national A Rochas (Field Note 2010-10-05).

These programs are run through guidance from an advisory board consisting of

eight people, most of whom are Kenyan. Until early 2011, Colin Jackson functioned as

the director, as well as the head of the research programs. Shortly after the case study

research was completed, a national director was hired to consolidate the work being

done on the coast, raise funds, network with partners, and expand the program

nationally. Colin then became the Conservation and Science Director. In addition to the

directors, there are about seven program and administrative staff, seven centre staff

responsible for housekeeping, meals, and maintenance, and a continual flow of Kenyan

and international volunteers. Paid staff are required to affirm a Christian confession of

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Photo 5.4: ASSETS boardwalk through mangroves at Mida Creek

Photo 5.5: ASSETS tree platform in Gede Ruins
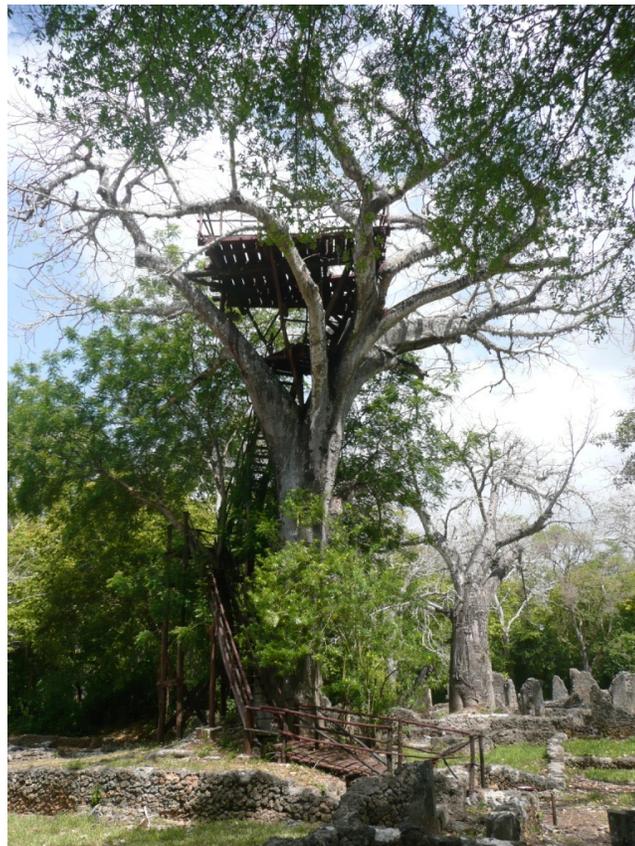
faith, but volunteers of any faith conviction or lack thereof are welcomed. The majority

of the staff interviewed became acquainted with ARK through friends or acquaintances,

or through international connections with A Rocha (Field Note 2010-10-06).

ARK is not formally connected to any particular church body or institution,

though sometimes relationships develop organically. They receive most of their funding

from individual congregations in the United Kingdom (mostly Anglican) and the United

States (mostly Presbyterian) (Colin, ARK). They have received some grants from

organizations like the Royal Society for the Preservation of Birds, the Global

Environment Facility and the United Nations Development Programme, which helped

to build the Mida Creek boardwalk (Colin, ARK; Field Note 2010-10-06). They also

partner with a broad group of secular organizations and government departments,

including: Kenya Wildlife Service, Kenya Forest Service, Kenya Forestry Institute,

National Museums of Kenya, Nature Kenya, Turtle Watch, Turtle Bay Beach Club and

other local hotels, and the Watamu Marine Association (Colin, ARK; Henry, ARK).

Within the organization, the emphasis on community is strong. For the Kenyan

context, the organizational culture is unusually flat. For instance, meals are eaten

communally, bringing guests, volunteers, and program, administrative and centre staff

all together. Dish washing duties are also shared. Furthermore, staff meetings are

conducted by a rotating chair and include time for all the staff to share (Field Note

2010-10-12). Many staff also mentioned the supportive environment that this Christian

community creates, where staff and volunteers truly care about each other as people. This is expressed particularly through formal and informal times of prayer.[10]

The community is also shaped by its cross-cultural character. The Kenyan staff come from different ethnic groups across the country, and they are joined by Colin and Roni Jackson (from the UK and South Africa), and volunteers and guests from all over the world. This mixture of people provides a stimulating source of learning, though not without occasional struggle and conflict. I observed people of different backgrounds and income levels co-existing with a surprising degree of trust, honesty, and good will. Henry noted that meeting people from different cultures was one of the highlights of his job, while Anna described the effect of living and interacting with Kenyans in terms of "[...] not being able to take my ideas for granted, and that everyone will understand me and that I'll understand them." Similarly, Stanley and Tsofa also both mentioned the importance of learning about different people through ARK. At the same time, conflicts and tensions inevitably arise when mixing such a diverse group of people. In one instance, I observed profound disagreement over the appropriate response to a situation, resulting in palpable tension for several weeks. They also struggle to make activities like Bible Study relevant, interesting, and understandable to a group with different languages and levels of education (Field Note 2010-11-28).

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[10] While most participants expressed an appreciation for ARK's intensive and intentional community atmosphere, they also noted that living in such intimate conditions is not easy. A few found the adjustment to intentional community life challenging, while others described the inevitable tensions and disagreements that arise. Anna also noted a difference in the community atmosphere between A Rocha Canada and A Rocha Kenya, speculating that the division between program and centre staff in Kenya were the source of this difference. In Canada, the program staff and volunteers shared the jobs that were done by the centre staff at ARK.

The faith component of the ARK community is deeply ingrained in the organization's culture and daily life. They begin their work week with a prayer time in the morning staff meeting, and an afternoon Bible study, for which attendance is required of all paid staff. A worship time, called Epilogue, closes the week on Sunday evening with an informal time of singing and reflection that is open to staff, volunteers, and guests. Prayer plays a significant role in these activities, building the community and giving a sense of care and support to the individuals involved. During staff meeting, and as the need arises, prayers are offered about staff members' personal concerns, work related issues (such as getting enough guest reservations, filling empty staff positions, or a difficult meeting or issue), and other national A Rochas (Field Note 2010-10-12). The important role prayer plays was obvious in my observations of the daily life of the organization and was shared in interviews by many participants:

> [...] without it, without the [type?] of prayer, there wouldn't be any way of keeping going for any length of time, because just the challenges and the setbacks and the destruction that you are faced with, the brokenness you're faced with would just break you (Lynton, ARK).

Praying together in this way:

> [...] gives you a far greater confidence in the outcome, and a confidence to move ahead with whatever you're doing without worrying so much with what the outcome really will be, because you can trust God for it. And that you know you're together on that with your colleagues (Colin, ARK).

The theological basis of the work is rooted in the conviction that creation belongs to God and it is good, as described in Genesis 1. Those who choose a life of faithfulness to God should therefore take care of creation. The concept of stewardship, or of being custodians of the Earth for God, is emphasized, though in a context of

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humility rather than domination. Jesus' work of redeeming the world's sin also inspires creation care work:

> But God loved us, and the creation so much that He sent Jesus into this world to be part of the creation, to experience being part of the creation, and to redeem the creation through death and ultimately the resurrection, which gives promise of new life, of the renewal of all things. And now we await that, but we live in the time of the already, but not yet, so we try to be faithful in living as if we were in the fully accomplished new kingdom, and thus try to live restored kind of relationship with creation (Lynton, ARK).

The idea that all work is worship, from washing dishes, to counting birds, to teaching environmental education in the community, is at the heart of ARK's theology. "God has relevance to all walks of life" (Colin, ARK), and given this belief, they try to include God in everything that they do, so that: "He is able to take action for us in a better and more effective way" (Colin, ARK). At the same time, their approach to evangelism and sharing their faith with non-Christians who participate in their community is gentle and invitational. The attitude I observed was a hope that by simply working alongside each other, people might be drawn to Christ.

The organizational structure of ARK was in a period of transition during the time I spent with them, from a small, very informally structured organization to one with more formal policies and procedures. One person described the existing organizational culture as one of distrust of structure and organization, speculating that this came from a fear that formal structures would interfere with the Holy Spirit's leading or that spending too much time in meetings would take time away from actually doing the work. There was, at the same time, recognition from the leadership that better organization was needed and steps were being taken in this direction, such as the

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development of more formal policies, and the hiring of the national director, who, it was hoped, would provide leadership in this regard.

The learning culture of the organization could also be described as informal, or more accurately, nonformal, though robust at the same time. In addition to the learning opportunities arising from cross-cultural interactions described above, I observed great enthusiasm and openness to learning amongst the staff and volunteers, and to sharing what was known or learned with others. A strong mentoring culture was apparent, in which, for instance, Colin taught other staff his birding skills, and they transferred these skills to other staff, volunteers, and even visitors. Activities such as bird ringing were open to anyone who wished to participate, and the experts took time to instruct the uninitiated to whatever degree they were interested. Colin was even planning to teach the Centre cook how to extract birds from ringing nets (Field Notes 2010-11-13; 2010-11-24). The organizational leadership valued personal, spiritual, and professional development amongst the staff and volunteers, taking time for Bible study, and encouraging staff and volunteers to pursue building skills in areas of interest that relate to their work. Their relationships and networks with other organizations, such as the Kenya Wildlife Service and the Watamu Marine Association, facilitated this professional learning.

At the same time, the degree of organizational structure at the time I was there may have been an impediment to professional development due to a lack of regular, structured opportunities to reflect on their work through evaluation. One of the policies they were in the process of introducing would involve more regular supervision and

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monitoring of staff activities by the staff themselves and by their superiors. They were

also working to be more intentional about staff training. Instead of figuring out who

could go when a training opportunity arose, they wanted to be deliberate in deciding

what training staff needed and then pursuing it, though they were also limited in this

sometimes by the cost of training opportunities.

5.2 Rural Service Programme

The Rural Service Programme of the East Africa Yearly Meeting of Friends is

the development arm of the Quaker church in Kenya. The church was started by the

Friends African Industrial Mission in Western Kenya in 1902. Sponsored by the Five

Years Meeting in the United States (now Friends United Meeting), the mission aimed to

witness to the abundant life in Christ, and their work encompassed evangelism, medical

care, education, logging, and building houses, roads, and a dam for a sawmill (Painter

1960; Kimball and Kimball 2002). The goal was to establish a self-supporting

indigenous church, which was achieved in the formation of the East Africa Yearly

Meeting of Friends in 1946 and its transferral to Kenyan leadership in 1963 (Painter

1960).

The mission was located at Kaimosi (see Figure 2.1), on an 850 acre plot

granted to them by the District Commissioner (Painter 1960). Kaimosi sits within the

highlands of Western Kenya, a few kilometres north of the equator, and about 40 km

from the city of Kisumu. The area boasts some of the most fertile soils and most

reliable rainfall within the country, making it highly favourable for agricultural activity.

The area has, however, become one of the most densely populated regions in Kenya: the

neighbouring Vihiga District, for example, with a population density of 1,101 people per km^2, is the most dense rural district in the country, while Hamisi District, within which Kaimosi is located, has a population density of 948 people per km^2 (KNBS 2010a). Locals told me that within these districts, the average plot of land for an extended family is half or a quarter of an acre. Consequently, the land is fragmented and overused, posing threats to food security (Rural Service Programme 2010). Local people also struggle with youth unemployment, lack of access to profitable markets, poor infrastructure, and health issues such as HIV/AIDS, malaria, typhoid and others (Rural Service Programme 2006; Rural Service Programme 2010). Deforestation is also a problem, leading to concerns about fuel shortages. Kakamega Forest, a 225 km^2 fragment of protected tropical rainforest is located nearby, and it suffers similar threats to those facing Arabuko-Sokoke Forest.

RSP was established in 1962 as the service department of the church. Its original purpose was to build permanent meeting houses and schools, and to promote material stewardship amongst farmers by encouraging them to set aside a small portion of land from which the sale of crops would go toward the Lord's Acre building project (Kimball and Kimball 2002; Rural Service Programme 2010). This work was funded by World Neighbors, an American NGO with faith roots. RSP has since expanded into an integrated program addressing a wide variety of needs, including family planning, farm economics, sustainable agriculture, and many others (Kimball and Kimball 2002). Though they are currently still a department of the East Africa Yearly Meeting of

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Friends, they are working to become legally registered as a NGO (Rural Service Programme 2010).

RSP is located within the original mission station in Kaimosi. Many projects are still concentrated within the Hamisi and Vihiga Districts, though it serves a broader population of about two million people, mostly in Western province, with some work in Nyanza and Rift Valley provinces as well (Rural Service Programme 2010). Its mission is "...to empower the poor and marginalized people guided by biblical principles through sustainable agricultural extension services, community health, appropriate technology and water and sanitation," and its vision is to be "...a sustainable organization with an empowered society" (Rural Service Programme 2010, 8).

Currently, RSP delivers its services through four program areas: community health, agricultural extension, resource mobilization, and special programmes. The *Health Programme* aims to promote preventative community health through work with HIV/AIDS prevention and treatment, malaria control, work with orphans and vulnerable children, and a water programme that is improving sanitation and access to clean, safe drinking water. Natural springs are protected with concrete structures and piping, as well as the planting of indigenous trees above the spring (Field Note 2011-01-13).

The *Agriculture Programme* works in numerous areas, including improved food production, livestock production, horticulture, marketing of crops and livestock, and natural resource management. RSP maintains demonstration plots and an agricultural input store near its office. In the field, it promotes agro-forestry, tree nurseries, organic

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farming, various soil and water conservation practices, crop and livestock diversification, the use of indigenous crops and livestock, planting fruit trees, bee keeping, and aqua-culture. Additional environmental conservation projects include Trees for Africa, which facilitates tree planting around churches, and appropriate technology, focussing on improved stoves and fireless cookers. The latter will become its own program in the 2011-2015 strategic plan. The program also supports Jivuye Farm, a dairy that raises money for orphans' programs while providing the community with milk and breeding good dairy cows to sell to farmers (Peter M., RSP).

Resource Mobilization is primarily focussed on diversifying the organization's funding sources, enhancing local contributions, and empowering the community. For instance, I was hosted in a newly constructed guest house that it is hoped will eventually become an income generating project. Also housed within the resource mobilization program is the Friends Community Development Savings and Credit Co-operative (FRICODEV). This program provides access to micro-credit loans and training in business skills, and has provided credit through 30 groups (Rural Service Programme 2010).

The *Special Programme* includes a variety of small, independent projects that are funded by specific donors, or respond to specific needs, like disasters. Friends Bringing Hope is funded and organized by an American couple, Karen Bauer and her husband, who raise funds and bring teams to help build houses for widows. They also provide funds for orphans' school fees. As of March 2011, they had built 24 houses (Field Note 2011-03-11). Kuwesa is run by another American, Dawn Reid, who has

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Photo 5.6: Protected spring in Mahanga

Photo 5.7: Mungando Farmer Field School's agro-forestry demonstration plot in Tiriki

Photo 5.8: Mungando Farmer Field School's improved stove
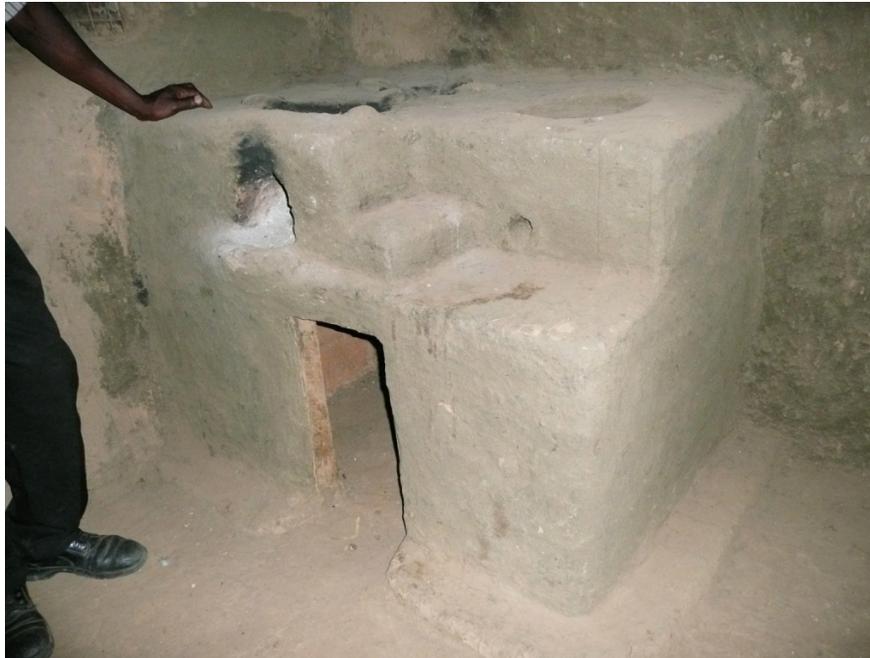
Photo 5.9: RSP guest house

settled in Kaimosi. She helps widows with sewing projects that are sold in the United

States. Other special programmes provide school fees and uniforms for needy children,

provide small loans for starting businesses, and respond to events such as the 2008

post-election violence (Field Note 2011-01-13).

For most of its history, RSP has approached its work through direct

implementation, providing services to communities as a package. Since the early 2000s,

however, they have been shifting their approach toward more demand-driven

facilitation. In 2006, based on recommendations from their evaluation consultants, they

began working through community-based groups (CBOs), such as farmer field schools,

youth groups, and widows' groups. RSP field officers help these groups to identify

problems they would like to address and to choose from the suite of programs RSP

offers. Field officers then provide training and guidance in implementing projects. They

currently work with 28 CBOs, and CBOs also work with each other. Through this

approach, RSP hopes to empower the communities (Field Note 2011-01-18).

The integration of programs allows RSP to provide a holistic development

package, and like ARK, they strive to meet both spiritual and material needs. While

their focus is primarily development, rather than preaching or evangelism, as a church

department, RSP works closely with the church structure. Local churches serve as

useful connections that RSP uses as entry points into communities. When introducing

RSP to a community, field officers go to both the chief and the church elders to explain

what RSP is doing and how the community could benefit. Despite this church-based

approach, they are able to serve the entire community, including non-Quaker Christians

Photo 5.10: A house built by the Malava Widow's Group and Friends Bringing Hope

Photo 5.11: Meeting of the Sabatia United Development Organization, a community group facilitated by RSP

and Muslims. They are committed to doing so, because "[...] we believe all people are equal in the eyes of God" (Director, RSP). Beneficiaries are chosen based on their level of need, targeting populations such as those with high HIV/AIDS prevalence, communities with many idle youth, and areas where little development is taking place (Rural Service Programme 2006).

RSP also does some teaching within churches, and staff find that their message is better received when they link it to the Bible. Staff indicated that the most commonly used verse, which supports their empowerment approach, is 2 Thessalonians 3:10-12:

> For even when we were with you, we gave you this command: Anyone unwilling to work should not eat. For we hear that some of you are living in idleness, mere busybodies, not doing any work. Now such persons we command and exhort in the Lord Jesus Christ to do their work quietly and to earn their own living (New Revised Standard Version).

They routinely pray with community members, and encourage them by sharing the word of God. They also sometimes use the Christian faith to overcome cultural taboos that are deemed problematic, such as the belief that women should not plant trees. Mary described her use of faith in her work in this way:

> I'm using my faith to tell people there is room for change. There is room to make people's lives improved, through different interventions.

> So people see: 'look, this is a Christian. He's doing this, so it must be right, maybe it is right.

> RSP is governed by an Advisory Committee with members drawn from 14

Yearly Meetings of the Friends church. The committee offers strategic leadership, formulates policies, oversees programs, and does some fundraising. The program is conducted by about 35 staff, including an extension officer each for the agriculture,

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health and credit program, and 14 field officers who work directly with the CBOs. Staff are hired by the advisory committee based on their qualifications. There is no official faith clause in the hiring guidelines, but all the staff are Christian and most found their positions through advertisements within the Quaker church community.

RSP receives 90% of its funding from religious institutions. Bread for the World, a German FBO, has been their primary donor since 1974. They also receive some support from Friends in the United States (e.g., Right Sharing of World Resources) and the Netherlands, the Government of Kenya (e.g., the Constituency Development Fund and the National AIDS Control Council), and USAID (Director, RSP; Field Note 2001-01-13; Rural Service Programme 2010;). In addition to the CBOs, RSP partners with local churches and schools, the Friends Theological College in Kaimosi, various government ministries, and the Kenya Agricultural Research Institute.

RSP appears to be well organized, with a clear chain of command, and an effective system of supervision, planning, and evaluation, as established through the documents I considered, the people with whom I spoke, and my observation of its operations. Field and program officers are required to write work plans and regular progress reports, which are reviewed by the deputy coordinator. The entire programme is evaluated by contract consultants every few years, and strategic plans are written for five year periods. These monitoring and evaluation structures provide helpful learning opportunities for both individuals and the organization as a whole. Full staff meetings

happen less regularly, likely because the field officers are spread over a large geographical area.

Staff receive regular training sessions in general techniques for community development and in specific skills that they can transfer to the communities, such as bee keeping or building improved stoves. Some of these trainings are done with the entire staff, sometimes in connection with the evaluation process, while at other times, individuals are sent to workshops at educational institutes. A few staff are pursuing college and university degrees, with some financial support from RSP. Finally, the organization facilitates field visits and exchanges with other NGOs (e.g., with other organizations that receive funding from Bread for the World). This commitment to staff learning is consistent with their emphasis on empowerment within the communities.

> You can see they have empowered me. They have given me the information, they have given me the knowledge, they have given me everything that is supposed to be facilitated in the field. So, without them going to the field, I can do it. I can do it on behalf of the organization in my area...So, actually, what they have done to me is actually what I am trying to extend to the community. I am now to empowering the community (Wycliffe, RSP).

Empowerment goes hand in hand with team work, which staff highlighted as a key characteristic of the organization. The different program areas work together in an integrated fashion, and the staff collaborate closely and support each other.

> Like here we have different departments, and under those departments, we are serving the community in terms of health, agriculture and let's say financial micro-credit. So these people, they need good health for them maybe to succeed in their businesses, or in micro-credit. And there are those who can't do business, let's say in terms of retail shops or businesses, other businesses, but they can be good farmers. And you know, nowadays, we say that we have to change our farming into agribusiness. So, there'll be need for teamwork with other maybe staff for us to achieve our goals (Edinah, RSP).

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Team work means, or what I believe in team work is moving together to achieve the objective and goals of the program. You must move in one line (Everlyne, RSP).

As a team, the staff described their organization as being like a family. Not only do they move together in their work, but they also support one another personally.

We cover each other and we go as one family. Not as health officer, agriculture officer, no, we just do this thing for the help and the betterment of the community, that is why we move as one (Everlyne, RSP).

Because we are Christian based organization, we have to do things according to our Christian values. So, we have to work with one another, we have to support one another, we have to help one another, in that if a staff is failing, you don't leave him to fail fast, but you help him to achieve, but not to fail. So as a team work, we work through all the objective to attain the set goal for the RSP (Kennedy, RSP).

One way this support is demonstrated is through prayer, though it is not practised as regularly as at ARK. However, staff meetings include times of prayer, and sometimes also a short devotional. Staff also reported praying for each other more informally. At one time, they had a regular time for devotions in the mornings, but had not been doing this for a while due to the pressures of their schedule (Everlyne, RSP).

Team work affords important learning opportunities as staff work together and learn from each other. Likewise, the facilitation approach allows them to learn from the communities, as they work together to achieve the communities' goals. One of the barriers to learning within the organization is the large geographical area that it covers. Staff located further from the office in Kaimosi may not have access to as many training opportunities in their area, and may not be able to travel to Kaimosi to attend what is offered there (Field Note 2011-03-11). Another shortcoming is a lack of archival information. While the planning and evaluation system currently in place is effective,

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documentation and records from previous years are disorganized, inaccessible or non-existent, preventing staff from benefiting from past knowledge and practices (Feedback Workshop).

The theological basis of RSP's work is summarized in its core values: "...respect for human dignity; empowerment of the poor and the marginalized; integrity, accountability and transparency; fairness, justice and equity; teamwork, commitment and professionalism; simplicity and service to the poor" (Rural Service Programme 2010, 8). Respect for human dignity and a testimony to the equality of all people (Friends United Meeting in East Africa 2002) are foundational to Quaker theology and to RSP's work.

> Quakers believe all human beings are equal. All human beings are equal. So, if we can have all the communities taking into consideration that all of us are equal before God, so it's our goal or our vision that we have a community that can have that harmony, that can have that cooperation, that can come together and work together as a community, whereby either we can help each other, helping each other in terms of problems and whatever. So that will keep us together (Peter A., RSP).

The idea of equality is linked to simplicity, another foundational testimony of the Quaker church in Kenya. It teaches that because people are equal in the eyes of God, "Material possessions and money, higher education or careers in government or management do NOT make persons more important than those with less" (Friends United Meeting in East Africa 2002, 3). RSP field staff use these teachings to guide their work with communities, helping them to "bend down" (Peter A., RSP) to the level of the community.

> That thing helps me that, when I go in the community, the word simplicity, I'm not supposed to go there and say: 'I am the RSP extension field officer.' No, I

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am to go there and say: 'I am your servant.' So that if the community sees me, they don't see me as somebody who is of higher class, you know (Shumbu, RSP).

Thus, in a spirit of equality, simplicity, and humility, RSP staff serve God by serving the community, imitating Jesus in teaching, healing, serving and empowering.

5.3 Summary

These two case study FBOs are both addressing sustainability issues rooted in faith convictions. ARK is a non-denominational, independent FBO conducting conservation work from within a committed Christian community, focussing on coastal and forest birds and their habitats. Through this work, ARK is challenging people to see the land and their faith in a different way by presenting conservation as a Christian concern. With just over a decade of work, results are beginning to show in the community, while the organization itself continues to develop and mature. RSP is much more established, having built over 40 years on the century-long relationship of the Quaker church with the local community. As the development arm of the Quaker church, it can most accurately be described as a church-based organization. RSP's work also builds on the centuries of Christian participation in development work, as it facilitates rural development with communities in Western Kenya. Both organizations aim to deliver holistic programming in a fashion that involves and empowers their beneficiaries.

Table 5.1 summarizes some of the key attributes of these two organizations as established through the data presented in this chapter. While most of these attributes are self-explanatory, it is worth noting that ARK's organizational strengths lie in its

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community emphasis and the relationships that blossom through it, particularly cross-culturally and through mentorship. These relationships provide a rich source of learning for its staff and volunteers. RSP has a strong organizational structure that provides extensive training in a wide variety of skills, and employs regular supervision and evaluation at various levels to monitor its staff and its programming. An effective teamwork approach exposes its staff to a broad range of development activities, providing another opportunity for personal development. The following chapters will describe the learning processes and outcomes of the members of these organizations, exploring how the various organizational cultures, structures, and activities shape that learning.

Table 5.1 FBO Characteristics

ARK	RSP
• operating for about a decade	• operating for over 40 years
• independent faith-based organization	• church-based organization
• cross-cultural: diverse Kenyan ethnic groups and other nationalities	• primarily Luhya Kenyans
• strong community atmosphere	• strong community atmosphere
• organizational structure still in process of being developed: evaluation processes irregular, training somewhat ad hoc	• strong organizational structure: evaluation processes, training programs
• strong learning culture, especially through mentor relationships	• teamwork approach exposes staff to wide range of knowledge and skills
• regular, weekly staff meetings	• irregular staff meetings
• regular, weekly worship, Bible study, and communal worship	• prayer important though not regularly structured

Chapter 6: Learning Outcomes

6.0 Introduction

The following three chapters will address in detail Objectives 3, 4 and 5, exploring the learning experiences of the participants from the case FBOs with respect to what they learned, how they learned it, and how it was translated into action. Discussion of how context informed this learning (Objective 2) will be woven throughout these chapters. This chapter will focus specifically on learning outcomes, providing a summary of the data collected within their grounded categories, followed by a discussion of how these results relate to the context of the two organizations, and concluding by applying the data to the learning domain categories outlined in Mezirow's transformative learning theory. As described in Chapter 3, a series of two interviews provided the bulk of information about learning. Additional learning data were collected through the focus groups and through participatory observation. In the following chapters, the discussion of learning outcomes was gleaned from all of these sources; the learning process and action materials come primarily from the second interviews.

Some of the general questions in the interviews elicited learning data without necessarily intending to do so. In the first interview, participants were asked to describe the highlights of their work experience. Participants from both organizations talked about learning as something that made their job enjoyable and fulfilling. The types of learning ranged widely from different skills to community work to interpersonal interactions and personal development, as illustrated in Table 6.1.

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Table 6.1 Learning Highlights

Participant	Description of Highlights Related to Learning
Albert (ARK)	• improving research and guiding skills • learning through interacting with other people
Lynton (ARK)	• birding skills: "Learning to ring birds and extract birds from nets."
Aggrey (RSP)	• agriculture skills: "It has also made me to be a very good farmer." • learning to interact with people in the communities
Henry (ARK)	• meeting people from other cultures: "You get to learn lots about people from different parts of the world and the experiences, just talking to them and helping them out where you can. It's been a very insightful part of my job, and I've really enjoyed it in a way."
Everlyne (RSP)	• learning from community members about their lives • exit strategies for community work
Director (RSP)	• how to approach community members • techniques for training communities
Peter A. (RSP)	• learning through interacting with the community
Shumbu (RSP)	• learning from the community, which helps him to "improve in my living"
Wycliffe (RSP)	• learning from farmers and the community
Peter M. (RSP)	• learning a lot and expanding his scope
Roni (ARK)	• creation care: learning to link Christianity and conservation together

The fact that learning was a prominent highlight that participants noted in these initial interviews emphasized for me the learning culture within both organizations (as described in Chapter 5), and the value that individuals within them placed on their personal growth and development. They appreciated the different opportunities and experiences that their work afforded them, and described this learning enthusiastically.

In fact, I was surprised by the abundance of learning outcomes participants shared in the first interview. These will be discussed in the following section.

6.1 Learning Outcomes

As indicated in Table 6.2, participant learning covered a broad spectrum of skills, ideas, attitudes, and personal perspectives. The categories presented in the table are grounded in the data, and show the breadth of data collected. Categories in bold are those that were mentioned with the greatest frequency by the interview participants (see section 3.5.1) and will be discussed in greater detail below. The other categories were mentioned less frequently and will only be described briefly. Categories that were only mentioned by one person, and therefore represent a minority experience, are indicated with italics.

6.1.1 Sustainability Framework

Learning within the Sustainability Framework included a variety of general concepts and skills related to development and conservation work. Participants from both organizations shared that they had learned about the *nature of development and/or conservation* work, noting that development is a long, challenging process, requiring patience, and that both development and conservation are integrated and holistic, including economic, ecological, and spiritual components. One ARK participant was pushed in her understanding of the *parameters of science and conservation work*, gaining a better understanding of what science can do, and realizing that there is scope within conservation work for those without scientific training. Members of the ARK leadership team had learned about *strategic conservation and development*, such as

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Table 6.2: Learning Outcomes

A Rocha Kenya	Rural Service Programme
Sustainability Framework	
• *nature of development and/or conservation* • *parameters of science and conservation work* • strategic conservation and development • administration • project management • *environmental education approach* • *importance of assessment and monitoring*	• nature of development and conservation • administration • project management • *peace and conflict*
Environment/Conservation	
• **environmental awareness/knowledge/appreciation** • **creation care** • *food* • global village	• environmental awareness/knowledge/appreciation
Skills	
• **agriculture** • *appropriate technology* • **birds** • *guiding* • *computer*	• **agriculture** • appropriate technology • health • *income generation* • *managerial* • *building a mud house* • *sewing and design* • *driving in Kenya*

Community Work	
• **community work (general)**	• community work (general) • doing community work as a church organization • development worker role or identity • impact of community work • **relating to people and managing groups** • nature of communities • approach: empowerment • approach: facilitation versus implementation • *approach: involvement and participation* • *approach: program integration* • *approach: alleviating poverty and sustainability* • approach: design, planning and evaluation • *methods: entry and exit strategies*
• *methods: teaching and information diffusion*	• **methods: teaching and information diffusion**
Interpersonal Engagement	
• communication • **relationships** • cross-cultural relationships • intentional community	• communication • networking • **teamwork and collaboration** • *relationships* • **Kenyan culture and society**
Personal and Faith	
• personal development • faith development • hope and prayer	• **personal development** • faith development

prioritizing their activities, the importance of legislation, and dealing with authorities.

Both ARK and RSP participants experienced learning related to *administration* and

project management, such as self organization, supervising others, strategic planning,

proposal writing, budgeting, and understanding donor cycles. Individuals also talked

about the *importance of assessment and monitoring* to know what is being achieved,

different approaches to *environmental education*, and teaching *peace and conflict* in relation to the 2007 post-election violence.

6.1.2 Environment and Conservation

Environment/Conservation (Table 6.2) was an important area of learning for ARK. A few RSP participants mentioned increased *environmental awareness, knowledge and appreciation*; however, for ARK participants, the highest proportion of learning occurred within this area. This learning ranged from general knowledge and commitment to environmental conservation, to specifics such as water conservation, habitat protection, and non-instrumental environmental values. The participants who indicated learning in this area also covered the spectrum of program and centre staff. The cook, for example, shared that he had known nothing about environmental issues before working at the Mwamba Field Study Centre, but in less than three months, he had become quite passionate, and was annoying everyone at home by telling them not to throw things out and to save water.

> Something that I came to learn here in A Rocha, I mean for all of the thirty-three years of my life, I have never thought of using water carefully, until I came here. Being back at home in the farm, you know, there is just plenty of water, so you never think about it. It's just like water will always be there. But when I came, even right from how we wash dishes, you know, in a basin, that's something I came to learn here, and you know, you can only use this little water, and it will be enough. So for me, that's something I've learnt here (Belinda, ARK).

> Before I joined A Rocha, I was working for Arabuko-Sokoke Forest as an education officer again, for three years. And I was working in a very different environment than that one that I'm in because I'm now in a faith-based organization. And this has really helped me to realize the value of natural resources, not looking at them from the economic aspect. That was what I used to do when I was working at the forest station. I would go to the community, and I would tell them, the forest is very important for me to get one, two, three, four, five, but I rarely looked at it from the point of that, well, there is value

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beyond the monetary or physical benefit that I get, and that has really changed me, because every time now I look at natural resources, I look at it from the beauty, from the stewardship, and also I look at it from the fact that it's a nice thing. I look at it from value [rather] than from the monetary gain (Tsofa, ARK).

I have come to love nature more, not only from the perspective that if we cut all trees, I mean, it causes desertification and things like that, loss of water, because that's true. But I have come to love nature because I have come to link it with my Creator. I love my Creator and I want to build on my relationship with my Creator, that is what now arouses the passion to even leave trees at home (Stanley, ARK).

As these quotations demonstrate, learning about the environment is closely related to *creation care*, which is the term that many Christian environmentalists prefer for describing their particular approach to faith-based environmental work. Some of the ARK staff who learned about creation care were already both Christians and committed conservationists, but they had never connected these two aspects of their lives before. In these cases, the learning was about integrating environmental concerns into their Christian faith, and understanding caring for creation as a faith imperative. For example, Roni had studied zoology and environmental and geographical science, and worked for the World Wildlife Fund:

I think maybe from my background, probably in terms of the environment, definitely came from a very dualistic sort of mind set in terms of Christianity and the environment. And I'd look around the landscape and say: wow! This is beautiful! But I never actually thought it mattered how I treated the environment, you know, given that it's God's creation [...] And that's what really changed my thinking, that first week I was in A Rocha, about creation care. That was how I learnt, the first revelation for me was that God created this stuff. It is His and He loves it, and He's created it for a purpose, and He's given us the mandate for care for it [...] I suddenly realized: this is beautiful, this is glorious, this God's, which is a very different way when you're seeing it as scientific story (Roni, ARK).

This creation care learning has deepened or transformed their understanding and approach to conservation work. For Roni, making the creation care connection helped her to apply conservation principles, such as recycling and water conservation, to her personal life.

For others, creation care learning and understanding caring for the environment as an important component of faith awakened a latent appreciation of the need for conservation. Both Albert and Stanley had a love for nature – in fact, Albert had been working as a guide in the forest for many years – but they had not necessarily made either broader or more personal connections to conservation.

> Funnily enough, I only knew about environmental conservation. I did not link it to my faith at all until I started sharing with Colin and hearing what A Rocha Kenya is about. But before that it was simply I loved nature, I loved animals and you know, but it didn't matter very much (Stanley, ARK).

> Before I joined A Rocha, I didn't know that we have the responsibility to conserve. That was not in my mind at all, at all. It's not until we were given the awareness from A Rocha that, if you are a Christian, there is a very big role in conservation. Because everything which was created by God was good. So, as it was good, then we as Christians we need to conserve, we need to take on what God created (Albert, ARK).

A final environment/conservation learning outcome was gaining an understanding of the *global village* in terms of seeing the connection between local and global environmental problems, such as local climatic variations and global climate change.

6.1.3 Skills

Skills (Table 6.2) were an area of learning that was widely experienced by participants from both organizations, and they gained increased ability in a broad range

of skills. *Agricultural* skills were the most prominent for both organizations, including: sustainable and organic agriculture (e.g., double digging); horticulture; passion fruit (e.g., grafting), tissue cultured banana and sweet potato production; tree nurseries; local poultry keeping; bee keeping (e.g., constructing hives, managing the bees, and harvesting and purifying honey); new technologies; and marketing. ARK participants were learning about Farming God's Way, a technique developed in Zimbabwe that links conservation agriculture techniques to biblical principles. *Appropriate technology* is linked to agriculture, and included learning how to build fuel efficient stoves and fireless cookers, and how to make charcoal briquettes.

RSP participants learned a variety of other skills required for their integrated programs in the community, including: *health* related skills, such as ministry regulations and clean water; *income generation* (e.g., sales and marketing); *managerial* skills (e.g., budgeting, bookkeeping, loan disbursement), *sewing and design* skills, particularly designing projects that exploit the beauty of African fabrics and that appeal to American consumers; *building a mud house*; and *driving* in Kenya. One ARK participant gained *computer* skills, another improved his *guiding* techniques, and many developing their *birding* skills.

Birding was the most frequently mentioned skill for ARK participants, particularly skills related to bird ringing, such as extracting birds from nets, identification and biometrics, and attaching rings. Not only were these skills new ones for many ARK staff and volunteers, the skills also fed into their environmental

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awareness, knowledge, and appreciation, and their understanding of creation care, as

underscored in the following quotes:

> I think something that I also came to learn when I came to A Rocha is about birds. I used to see birds, but I never took time to really get to know more about them. Just seeing birds fly and appreciate just maybe I have selective ones that are favourites. But when I came here, I now came to understand the deeper understanding of how they relate, especially the migrant birds, how they move across the seas and be able to come when it's winter. It's quite amazing and I was really moved by just that thought. And to see a very small bird be able to fly all those miles, and how engineered they are to know the navigation and be able to come all the way. And it's a way of appreciating God's wonderful creation (Henry, ARK).

> There is a big change in my life on the interest of birds itself. Because at least now I have learnt deeply the life of a bird, I really want to marvel it. Because it's not just a normal bird. That life of a bird is like me, yeah? And people who don't have that interest of birds, they would ignore a bird, but because now I have learnt that a bird, it will be born and then it will have all the challenges through its life, and by doing so, it is so dependent onto human activity. Like if you have some birds on your local area, they depend on your trees, because they get some berries or some insects, specific insects, and if you remove that, like even me, if I am cut off from getting our staple food here, which is maize, you see, that challenge. So, now I appreciate their life, not only just watching them, but I appreciate seeing them in nature [that] we are part of. They have life like me, and I've learnt this struggle that they go really into big challenges because of the human activities here, because their life is very dependent to human thing (Jonathan, ARK).

6.1.4 Community Work

Community Work (Table 6.2) was a specific skill area in which participants

from both organizations learned extensively. The highest number of learning outcomes

mentioned fit in this category. ARK participants noted various community work skills,

such as learning how to work and deal with people, listening, involving people, and

having clear agreements. The magnitude of community work skills mentioned by RSP

participants required a more specific analysis. RSP participants learned about *doing*

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community work as a church organization, particularly the strategic role churches can

play. They also learned about themselves, their *role or identity as development workers*,

and about the *nature of communities*. Development workers must be compassionate,

generous, tolerant and knowledgeable, while communities are dynamic and unique.

Furthermore, community work must have an *impact* in the community.

Given their close engagement with communities through facilitation activities,

skills in *relating to people and managing groups* were important for RSP participants.

These skills involved leadership, public relations, understanding the nature of the group

and meeting all the existing needs, managing conflict, and engaging in a culturally

appropriate manner.

> Apart from the skills, I've gained some knowledge concerning how to stay with the people [...] like how to talk to them. How to handle them according to their level of understanding, level of literacy, and their backgrounds (Edinah, RSP).

> When we say we learn psychology of people, we learn about their mental status, social status, spiritual status, and physical status. This helps me as a person to understand exactly what is in somebody. Then this one also helps me to know the way forward of a person. It also helps me to nurture and mould thoughts of people, or life of a person in general. Because I have understood the person, out of the weaknesses or strengths the person has. At least I am able to nurture and to verify. What is better for him and what is not better for that (Everlyne, RSP).

> And then another that I can say I have learned is that, I've learnt more on how to work with communities. Like when you go out to work with communities, you will find different people. People learn differently. People are different in many ways. [...] You know, working with communities, it's like, I have somebody who must do a lot of social psychology, you know, understand people, understand how a group of people behave, the group think, how do they work together. What brings them together, the cohesion, you know, that group approach. So it has really forced me to go into serious studies to understand groups. How do you work with groups? How do they behave? Why do they behave? How do you counter certain behaviours within the groups, you know, and it has really helped me learn how to work with people. Because you know, working with a human being is very challenging (Peter M., RSP).

RSP participants also described learning a variety of methods and approaches for community work. Using an *empowerment* approach, and understanding the distinctions between *facilitation and implementation* related to their recent shift in programming, as did learning about the importance of community *involvement and participation* in development. The importance of *program integration*, and general approaches to *alleviating poverty* and ensuring the *sustainability* of community activities were instructive for management level staff. Management staff and field officers alike had learned the value of *design, planning, and evaluation* when developing activities with communities, and also gained knowledge in *entry and exit strategies. Teaching and information diffusion* techniques were a key area of learning. These included learning techniques in training and teaching, such as giving examples and demonstrations; methods for convincing people to try something new; and learning how to bend down to their level and engage in two-way exchange:

> So, what I have learned is that, first of all, when you go to a community, you have to do a survey first and know how does that community live? How does it operate? What do they believe in? The taboos that surround the community on the issue you want to tackle. So that when you go back to the community, you bend down, you see, you bend down and maybe come to the ground and ask maybe if you can be told, they can tell you something how they live, how they go over their life, so that you give them time first to talk on whatever the issue is. So that after which, you will just find a place to chip in, and then you start narrating whatever you wanted to talk to them. Rather than coming and telling them, okay, we are supposed to do this and this and this. You cannot achieve (Peter A., RSP).

A key teaching technique was 'each one teach one,' a method of spreading information through a community by training community members to train others:

> I have learned that if you instill information in one person, that person can pass the information to the other. Then, if you want to develop something for

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development, then it means you will achieve your set goal out of that. Yeah, if you teach one person, it can pass to the next person and the information continues (Wycliffe, RSP).

Actually what I have learned about that system is that it saves times because if I were to actually go in the field three times or four times, I can only go there once. I instill information in one person, and that one goes ahead to instill in the other people. So it means it has actually assisted me to save time. Yeah. And another thing is, it has assisted me to reach so many people, yeah, indirectly. But indirectly, because there is always feedback on the same, then it means I have learned that by doing so, I can do a lot of work in little time (Wycliffe, RSP).

6.1.5 Interpersonal Engagement

Another area of learning that relates closely to some of the above community work skills is Interpersonal Engagement (Table 6.2). Participants from both organizations learned about *communication*, that is, general communication beyond the specifics of teaching. Under this heading, participants learned about the importance of communication, for instance, being clear about intentions and expectations, and communicating to help ease transitions, and they also learned communication skills, such as developing websites and brochures. A few RSP participants learned about *networking*, particularly in terms of cooperating with other stakeholders.

RSP participants also learned about *teamwork and collaboration*, a principle that was already noted in Chapter 5 as a key component of RSP organizational culture. Participants learned both the necessity of teamwork and how to work together:

The importance of team work, it strengthens one another and the community you are working with to achieve our planned goals (Everlyne, RSP).

I've also learnt that you need other people. Yeah. As you climb the ladder, you need other people, and they also need you. I think that may come on the point of team work. Yeah. 'Cause even as you look at our bodies, we have the head, the hand, the, the legs, the nose. One body, but they have to work together. If you miss the hand, if you miss the eye, it won't be complete (Edinah, RSP).

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I've learned about team work, in organization level, we need to work together. Agriculture person, a health person, and anybody else, so that when we are going directly in the community, when Peter is addressing about energy conservation, that is not the only problem. Everlyne should address health problems, so that when you go back in that community, you find all these programs have been addressed, and their knowledge about this and partly challenges being facilitated on that. You cannot work alone, so working as a team builds the capacity of each of us. It lifts each other, and it lifts the community we are working in, to see that we are able to be with this, and we can do this, and we are. Then also on team work on community level, it is very important again. Because it lifts up the capacity of the working of the groups together, in terms of skills, in terms of commitment of work, and in terms of sharing of the responsibilities within the groups (Mary, RSP).

Different aspects of *relationships* were frequent learning areas for both

organizations. Relationships in general were important for ARK participants in terms of

relating to others both within the organization and with other agencies.

Mwamba as a field study centre, it's a place where we have many different people from different areas coming, just to be able to live harmoniously with these people who come here every day. Every now and then leaving. It's not easy. It's not something that you can be dropped into a place and just adapt, but it has been good. Obviously not very easy from the beginning, but I think it is something that I have managed to do (Tony, ARK).

I've really learnt here in Kenya that all the work that they've done would be impossible without the relationships that they've formed. Like they wouldn't have this centre, they wouldn't have permission to get into the forest. All the fundraising that they've done, any sort of partnership that they've done with other organizations or communities has all been dependent on the good relationships that they've formed. That's probably been the most useful thing that I've learnt (Anna, ARK).

Cross-cultural relationships were instrumental in learning to relate to others at

A Rocha, both for Kenyans and international volunteers, broadening their perspectives

and sometimes challenging their assumptions:

And I think there is the cross-cultural aspect of A Rocha, which has really helped me to learn about different peoples of the world that we meet here at the Centre, which is, I think, something really positive [...] Yeah, I think getting to

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know different ways of thinking or doing things from many different cultures, it kind of broadens your horizons. You become a better decision maker, I think, than when you're only thinking along one way, because that's the way you were brought up, that's the way things are, and you don't know any other way of doing things. So I think other people from different cultures and learning how to do their things, I think it makes me make better decisions in the day to day activities, the things I do (Stanley, ARK).

Some ARK participants also talked about the challenges of living in an intense

intentional community and what they have learned in the process.

The primary relational aspect of learning for RSP participants was learning

about *Kenyan culture and society*, primarily on the part of the two American volunteers.

Both Dawn and Karen described many aspects of Kenyan culture, particularly with

respect to the lives of women, which they continued to work to understand:

There are other ways in which Kenyan women are not empowered. There is effectively an equal rights amendment in the new constitution, which should serve eventually, and I don't think this is coming tomorrow, to empower them to a greater extent. Women do not believe they own their own bodies, because in the culture they don't, at least married women don't. And they are expected to be continuous child-bearing machines, which really limits the other things you can do in your life, 'cause it takes your time and your energy (Dawn, RSP).

When we first started with Rural Service and their advice, we went around to just meet the widows' groups to find the needs. And oftentimes we came into houses and shelters that were kind of, at the beginning stages of falling in. But if they could have been re-mudded, and if they could have been re-thatched, the house could still be intact, maintained. And I did not understand how deep-rooted the cultural tradition was. And it really, I mean how culture over-rode; literally women would become homeless and their children because the house had to fall in and become soil [...] That is what happens if the man dies, because supposedly the man builds the house, even though the woman does all the work to maintain the house, probably does all the mudding process, it's on the man's compound, and maybe the man took one handful of mud and stuck it on the house, so he built it, she did the rest. He couldn't rest in his grave until that house became soil or something. Whatever the custom, it's been described to me many different ways. And of course, as an American, I looked at it, and I thought, this is a perfectly fine house, you just have to re-mud it, what's wrong

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with you? You know, you're choosing to let these people die, but the cultural custom was so deep-rooted (Karen, RSP).

Some of these cultural aspects they learned about were things they were hoping to help change, and others were things to which they found themselves forced to adapt in their work. Karen, for instance, had to change her mind about building new houses, even though to her, repairing existing houses made more sense.

6.1.6 Personal and Faith

The final area of learning is Personal and Faith. Participants from both organizations experienced *personal development* in various ways, such as recognizing their own abilities, adjusting to their work and learning perseverance, changing values, attitudes and priorities, and personal empowerment. This category, and especially the latter component, was of particular importance for RSP staff. Many staff emphasized how the skills and broadened perspectives they acquired through their work had empowered them and transformed their perception of themselves and the world.

> Empowerment, when I say I have been empowered, I can move. It is not the way I came here. At least there is a very big change in me [...] When I came here, I was just used to needles and syringes. So it also took me time to get used to field work [...] Yeah, because when I was in the hospital, there is a schedule. And we exchange shifts. I work from eight to noon. I leave. Somebody comes. Tomorrow I get there in the morning, I receive report. Noon I leave. But with a lot of monitoring sometime from the clinical officers, and doctors almost, hospital matron. So we used to work, always come, what have you done this, this, this. But right now, we are very responsible here. There is no need for us to wait for coordinator. What I know is what I am supposed to do in health, because we already have strategic plan. So, I can even assist myself and say: in January to June, this is what I plan to do in health. How much have I achieved? How much have I not achieved? And that one makes me become responsible for my work. And actually, it gives me a way forward, of doing other things (Everlyne, RSP).

It has broadened my mind. And now I can do other great things than the way I [was] before. Like, taking example of agriculture program, I've learned more of agriculture technologies, modern farming technologies. I've learned I can also practice. I have those training materials, I have read them, I understand them. I can also train to somebody with modern technology [...] I can practise even the health, how people living in AIDS, those guiding and counselling, I can practise a little bit, so it has broadened me (Kennedy, RSP).

Participants from both organizations also talked about *faith development*: growing in their faith; learning to link their faith to their work; including God in everything they do; and living and bringing up their family in a more spiritual manner. On a related note, a few ARK participants learned about *hope and prayer*, particularly the role they can play in building perseverance in the face of enormous environmental threats and not getting overwhelmed. This was discussed in greater detail in Chapter 4 (pages 133-134).

6.2 Discussion

The preceding sections considered learning outcomes according to grounded categories that arose from the data. In this section, I will consider learning outcomes within their organizational contexts and through the lens of Mezirow's learning theory.

6.2.1 Learning Outcomes in Context

Table 6.3 shows the learning outcome areas outlined above, ranked by frequency of the number of times items within them were mentioned by participants. Not surprisingly, the area of greatest learning for each organization corresponds with the main focus of their activities. It is interesting, however, to note that Environment/Conservation constitutes just over a quarter of the learning at ARK, while Community Work constitutes nearly half the learning at RSP. In general, learning areas

were more equally distributed at ARK. It is also somewhat surprising, given the

conviction with which participants from both organizations confirmed the inseparable

relationship between environmental and development work (see Chapter 4, page 131),

that Environment/Conservation appears at the bottom of RSP's list, and Community

Work appears at the bottom of ARK's. In ARK's case, only a small percentage of the

staff and volunteers engage directly with the community, and some of the learning

within the Sustainability Framework area touched on development issues. RSP

participants, on the other hand, revealed some environmentally-related learning within

the Skills area, but on the whole seemed to have integrated these two areas to a much

lesser degree, at least as reflected in their learning.

Table 6.3 Ranking of Learning Outcomes by Organization

ARK	RSP
• Environment/Conservation (26%) [a] • Interpersonal Engagement (19%) • Sustainability Framework (17%) • Skills (14%) • Personal and Faith (11%) • Community Work (6%)	• Community Work (46%) • Interpersonal Engagement (17%) • Skills (14%) • Sustainability Framework (12%) • Personal and Faith (11%) • Environment/Conservation (1%)

[a] Percentage of learning items from each organization.

As noted above, the learning at ARK covered a broader spectrum than the

learning shared by RSP participants. Learning among ARK participants was also more

profound, in that more of their learning was at the meaning perspective level, while the

great majority of RSP learning was at the level of meaning schemes and skills (Table

6.4).

Table 6.4 Distribution of Levels of Learning by Organization

Level of Learning	ARK	RSP
Meaning Schemes and Skills	57%	91%
Meaning Perspectives	43%	9%

This difference may be due to the fact that RSP staff are less likely to be exposed to disorienting dilemmas at the meaning perspective level because their context is a bit more isolated than ARK's, as outlined in Chapter 5. Most of the staff are Quakers belonging to the Luhya ethnic group, working amongst Quaker Luhyas. Furthermore, they are working on community and development issues that are widely recognised to be problematic, such as poverty, hunger, and illness, and that are longstanding concerns of Christianity. ARK, in contrast, is an international intentional community that in itself affords plenty of potential for disorienting dilemmas, through interactions between Kenyans and international staff, volunteers and visitors. Even the Kenyan staff come from diverse backgrounds within Kenya; during the research period, staff represented ethnicities including Giriama, Kikuyu, Kalenjin, and Akamba. Furthermore, conservation work is not a traditional Christian activity, and thus the work itself, as evidenced by the creation care learning described above, affords disorienting dilemmas. Finally, ARK's mandate, as defined in its five core commitments (see page 138) including conservation, community, and faith components, is broader than RSP's more focussed community development and empowerment mission.

6.2.2 Learning Domains

Drawing from the work of Habermas, Mezirow divides learning into three primary domains: instrumental, communicative, and transformative. Instrumental learning is task oriented, facilitating the prediction, manipulation, and control of events and environments (Mezirow 1991b; Cranton and Roy 2003). Communicative learning involves understanding others and making oneself understood in terms of language, values, beliefs, and feelings (Mezirow 1991b; Mezirow1997; Cranton and Roy 2003). Transformative learning is the evaluation of premises and assumptions that results from questioning the products of instrumental and communicative learning at higher meaning structure levels (Mezirow 1991b; Cranton 2006). The bulk of the learning in this study occurred in the instrumental domain, with learning also occurring in the communicative and transformative domains. As well, I created two new domain categories – "interwoven" and "introspective" – to capture the full range of learning within the data. Table 6.4 shows the learning domains with the most frequent learning outcomes associated with each domain. Both the domains and the learning outcomes are listed in order by frequency.

In the analysis process, learning was categorized as instrumental when it involved empirical knowledge, cause and effect relationships, problem solving, and predicting observable events. Understanding a state of reality, learning how something works, and learning how to do something were also considered instrumental learning. These criteria may push the boundaries of the definition of instrumental learning in the literature, but in keeping with similar studies, were considered logical extensions of the

definition necessary to accommodate the range of data collected (Kerton and Sinclair 2010; Sinclair *et al*. 2011).

Table 6.5 Learning Domains

Learning Domain	Highlights of Related Learning Outcomes
Instrumental	• skills • community work • nature of development and conservation • communication • personal development • administration • teamwork
Communicative	• community work • communication
Introspective	• community work • creation care • personal development • environmental awareness/knowledge/appreciation
Interwoven	• community work • communication
Transformative	• creation care • personal development

Learning was categorized as communicative when it involved understanding others through language, expressing and negotiating purposes, beliefs, feelings, and intentions, and resolving conflict. Learning at higher meaning structure levels that brought about a profound change in the individual's perception of self and the world and that resulted in profound change in behaviour was considered transformative. Because transformative learning flows from communicative and instrumental learning, all transformative learning was also assigned to one of the other domains.

As noted above, I created two additional domain categories. Some learning

outcomes contained both instrumental and communicative elements, which could be

identified as occurring in tandem. For instance, learning communication skills involves

both learning *how* to do something, and building understanding and negotiating

meanings with others. I called this the "interwoven" domain, and placed these outcomes

in the instrumental, communicative, and interwoven categories. Learning within the

interwoven domain was mostly about community work and communication, and

occurred somewhat more frequently among RSP participants.

As I was coding, I encountered some learning outcomes that were difficult to

assign to the instrumental and communicative domains. These I assigned to a category I

have named the "introspective" domain. Learning within this domain included learning

about personal faith, and personal learning about attitudes, beliefs, and identity at lower

meaning scheme levels that did not involve interpersonal interaction. By some

definitions of communicative learning in the literature (e.g., Cranton 2002), such

learning could be considered communicative. I, however, felt that developing and

understanding one's own beliefs, attitudes, and feelings, and being able to communicate

them to others and understand others communicating about their beliefs, were distinctly

different types of learning outcomes. Learning outcomes within the introspective

domain were primarily: environmental awareness, knowledge, and appreciation;

creation care; community work (especially development worker identity or role);

personal development; and faith development. Introspective learning was higher among

ARK participants than RSP participants.

Instrumental learning accounted for over half of the learning amongst participants in both organizations, with a greater degree of learning occurring in this domain for RSP. While instrumental learning occurred in all of the learning categories, skills and community work were the most prominent areas. Communicative learning accounted for approximately a quarter of the learning for both organizations. The learning categories that were mentioned the most frequently within this domain include community work, communication, relationships, and Kenyan culture and society.

Eight of the learning outcomes participants described qualified as transformative learning (Table 6.5). This accounted for a small proportion of the learning in either organization, though the number was slightly higher at ARK. This result is consistent with the depth of learning between the two organizations described above. Among ARK participants, learning about creation care and environmental awareness, knowledge, and appreciation was transformative; RSP participants' personal development learning was transformative in some cases. The transformative learning grew out of learning in the instrumental and introspective domains. The following profile illustrates an example of transformative learning that is typical of the transformative experiences described in the theory. Two more examples are provided further below.

Karen and her husband first came to Kaimosi from the United States to work as interim principals at the Friends Theological College, and they fell in love with Kenya during this year. Because they had helped to establish a dairy farm at the college, several years later, RSP approached them to initiate a similar project to raise money for

Table 6.6 Transformative Learning Outcomes

Participant (Organization)	Learning Outcome Category	Description
Albert Baya (ARK)	creation care	"[...] before I joined A Rocha, I didn't know that we have the responsibility to conserve. That's was not in my mind at all. It's not until we were given the awareness from A Rocha that if you are a Christian, there is a very big role in conservation. Because everything which was created by God was good. So, as it was good, then we as Christians we need to conserve, we need to take on what God created."
Henry Kigen (ARK)	creation care / environmental awareness-knowledge-appreciation / bird skills	"Initially, before I came to A Rocha, I never associated conservation with faith. I came to learn it here. That actually, it₌s a mandate that we are doing as a Christian [...] I can express how I₌d want to contribute to the environment through my faith. That when I participate in conservation activities, reaching out to people, I₌m actually serving God in that way, so it has changed now from before I came here, and when I₌m here now, seeing that actually Christians can even be good custodianships and good stewards for the conservation."
Roni Jackson (ARK)	creation care	"I was a Christian and a biologist and a conservationist my whole career, and I never really saw the link between the two [...] so I think that's been a real highlight, really grasping that theology and seeing it practically working out, and having something to share with others as well."
Stanley Baya (ARK)	creation care	"And you know it just clicked, like really, the Earth is not mine. It is not even meant for me. But God loves it and he takes care of it. Then that is when I realized my position in God's creation as a custodian, as somebody to take care of somebody's property, like it was put into my hands, as in, it was entrusted to me."
Stanley Baya (ARK)	faith development / creation care	"I have come to see the Creator behind the Creation." "But those flowers were also God's creation, God's painting. Just looking at creation, I feel like what God is saying about his majesty and splendour, like, see I have made all this."

Everlyne Obongo (RSP)	personal development	"And it has prodded my reasoning perspectives, it has changed me. I can even solve other problems, just instantly without informing the office. What we call empowerment."
Karen Bauer (RSP)	personal development	"My priorities have just changed, I guess, to what can I do to help someone else have a little bit more, and if it means I have to have a little bit less, that's okay. And maybe it means I have a lot less, because I just decide I'll spend it here."
Peter Mwanzi (RSP)	personal development	"It really has widened my thinking, my approach with community work, and I can say, at least how much in person, I'm not the same way I was before joining."

widows and orphans, providing them with a welcome opportunity to return to Kenya. In the process of developing Jivuye Farm, Karen met with many widows and heard their stories. She was deeply touched by their struggles and began Friends Bringing Hope in response.

> I guess the trigger is, I can't imagine being raped, I've never had that experience. I can't imagine being beaten. I can't imagine all my possessions taken because I'm property, I'm not a person because my husband died and now I belong to the male family of my husband. I can't imagine these things because they're just unimaginable (Karen, RSP).

While she only spends several weeks out of every year in Kenya, doing this work – and particularly what she has learned about the lives of Kenyan widows – has profoundly changed her.

> Everything I do is about the next trip [...] When we were first married, we had plans for a new house. I don't care. I've lived in Kenya. Now I can have it, the house we have, let's just add a new piece, a new coat of paint, you know, let's sand the floors [...] Definitely, much more satisfied, I have so much more than I could imagine, definitely. Much happier now than when I was just working for corporate America (Karen, RSP).

Karen learned that she has enough, and others do not, and in response, she has shifted her life to work to bring enough to those who need it.

Several interesting points arise from the findings. The first is the need for an "introspective" domain, demonstrating a gap in the comprehensiveness of the domains, or the scope they cover. In some of the early iterations of the theory, Mezirow describes an emancipatory or self-reflective domain that

> ...involves an interest in self-knowledge, that is, the knowledge of self-reflection, including interest in the way one's history and biography has expressed itself in the way one sees oneself, one's roles and social expectations. Emancipation is from libidinal, institutional or environmental forces which limit our options and rational control over our lives but have been taken for granted as beyond human control (Mezirow 1981, 5).

In his later writing, Mezirow dropped the emancipatory domain, folding it into the transformative domain, which is described as resulting from learning in the other two domains. My data revealed learning outcomes about personal identity and beliefs that in some ways resembled what Mezirow describes as emancipatory learning, but were broader in scope, involving knowing and understanding oneself, in terms of values, beliefs, and self-perception. Mezirow's emancipatory domain is limiting in its focus on self-reflection specifically for emancipation.

At the same time, much of the learning in this introspective domain would be designated by some as communicative. It was, in a sense, about the things that one is learning to communicate to others, and to understand in others, but it was also unique in that it focussed inward rather than outward. The definition and use of communicative learning has not been consistent within the literature. In his seminal book, *Transformative Dimensions of Adult Learning*, Mezirow defines communicative learning as

> ...learning to understand what others mean and to make ourselves understood as we attempt to share ideas through speech, the written word, plays, moving pictures, television, and art (Mezirow 1991b, 75).

It involves intentions, values, ideals, moral issues, social, political, philosophy, psychology, education concepts, feelings, and reasons (Mezirow 1991b), but most of the literature is very clear that it involves these phenomena at the social level, where social norms are negotiated, which is the sense in which Habermas developed the concept (Mezirow 1981; Mezirow 1997; Mezirow 2008; Finlayson 2005). By these definitions, the learning outcomes regarding personal beliefs about the environment and faith, and regarding changes in self-perception and identity, were not communicative because they were personal, not social.

Others, such as Cranton (2002), do include this personal self-discovery as communicative learning, defining it as "...the understanding of ourselves, others, and the social norms of the community or society in which we live" (64). In empirical applications of transformative learning theory, such personal learning outcomes have also been designated as communicative learning. A review of applications of transformative learning theory in natural resource and environmental management contexts, for instance, revealed a wide variety of learning outcomes from empirical research that were considered as communicative learning. These included:

> ...insight into one's own values and interests, insight into the values and interests of others, shared values and goals, communicative strategies and methods, social engagement, organisation and mobilisation, increased confidence in questioning local cultural norms, increased self-confidence in one's own role versus the role of 'experts', and enhanced capacity to influence decision making (Diduck *et al*. 2012, 8).

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I created the introspective domain because I disagree with the broad application of the communicative domain these authors have applied. Much of the literature is clear in denoting the social component of the communicative domain, and I maintain that understanding oneself, and being able to communicate that understanding and to understand others communicating about themselves, are related but distinct types of learning. In a sense, the former could be described as communicative learning with oneself, but is not the same as communicating with others.

For these reasons, I suggest there is need for another learning domain, called the introspective domain. From the data in this research, it would include personal learning about attitudes, beliefs, values, identity, and faith. It could also overlap with Newman's (2012) "interpretive" aspect of learning, which he describes as "...help[ing] us understand what makes us tick. We identify our prejudices and predilections, our doubts and certainties, and our weaknesses and qualities" (51).

Another point of interest is the interaction between communicative and instrumental learning, as illustrated in the learning that fit into the "interwoven" category. While these two domains certainly describe mutually exclusive types of learning, they exist in a relationship that is often closely connected, working in tandem and informing one another. Learning communication and teaching skills, which many RSP participants described in detail, involves instrumental aspects like understanding particular teaching tools, such as visual aids, and learning to speak loudly and slowly enough. At the same time, it also requires an understanding of the "students'" background and context, and a sensitivity to the degree to which the "students" are

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absorbing the information being taught – an ability to read their reactions – which are communicative elements. Consider the following quote about learning communication, which contains both instrumental and communicative components:

> But now, when you're working with communities, when you are communicating to them, there is a lot of interaction, so it must be a two-way kind of communication. So what we are doing right now, like what I do it, in most cases it is a two-way communication. And then, another thing that has developed me is being eloquent, being clear, and you know, when you are training, like, a group of farmers, if you just make a slight twist, people do not get what you are talking about. So you are forced to make sure that you are audible, you are clear, you know, the message is well-organized, so that whatever you are trying to give to the people, there is no doubt about it (Peter M., RSP).

The learning a few ARK participants shared about the global village provides another example of the relationships between the two domains. Through interaction and sharing of ideas and experiences with other people (communicative learning), they developed a broader understanding of the state of the world, and the way that environmental problems relate to each other on the planet (instrumental learning). They then shared this change in perspective with others, continuing the communicative learning process. Sims and Sinclair (2008) and Marshke and Sinclair (2009) also found a significant interaction between instrumental and communicative learning in their investigations of participatory resource management in Costa Rica and Cambodia. Thus, instrumental and communicative learning, while distinct and unique, can be inextricably interconnected.

A final point of consideration is the importance of instrumental learning in this study, in terms of the large proportion of learning outcomes that fit in this category. These results agree with similar studies in which the bulk of learning that occurred fit

into the instrumental domain (Sims and Sinclair 2008; Marshke and Sinclair 2009; Kerton and Sinclair 2010; Sinclair *et al.* 2011). Such results are often met with a degree of disappointment (e.g., Sims and Sinclair 2008), as the theory tends to assume that communicative learning is more likely to lead to profound transformation and is therefore of greater importance (Mezirow 1978). As noted in Chapter 2, transformative learning theory has inherited a negative view of instrumental learning. In this study, however, transformative learning by participants from both organizations was most directly associated with learning in the instrumental and introspective domains.

At ARK, the learning about creation care and environmental awareness, knowledge and appreciation was the most transformative. At RSP, the transformative learning was about personal development, particularly the sense of personal empowerment described above. In both cases, this learning had introspective and communicative components in the sense that it concerned profound personal values, beliefs and senses of identity, and in some cases, these were learned through the sharing of ideas, beliefs, and faith convictions by others.

The learning outcomes that developed into transformative learning, however, were also largely instrumental. For ARK participants, practical knowledge about how the world works and developing hands-on skills in relation to this knowledge, especially birding skills, was pivotal to building a new set of values and beliefs about the environment and how it connected to their faith. Similarly, RSP participants developed their sense of empowerment and transformed self-identity through acquiring practical skills in a wide variety of areas. The two profiles that follow provide

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representative examples of the typical learning journeys experienced by participants

from each of the organizations, highlighting the instrumental elements.

Peter M. came to RSP from a job on a flower farm. He had a strong background

in agricultural work, which serves him well in his role as Agriculture Officer. His

primary responsibilities are to facilitate and train communities on food security and

nutrition, horticulture, and environmental conservation, and to oversee farming

demonstration plots, the dairy farm, and the agricultural input store. Because of the

program integration and teamwork that are foundational to RSP's approach, Peter's

skills set has expanded far beyond the realm of agriculture. This has profoundly

changed how he thinks about himself, which has affected how he approaches his work.

> Yeah, maybe when I look at myself as a person, yeah? Before I joined RSP, I
> was just an expert in agriculture, nothing else. I would not do any other. I had
> just knowledge in agriculture. Just go to the farm, plant, and do the ABCD,
> yeah? But now, working with RSP, I have expanded, I have acquired a lot of
> skills, yeah, in very many things. Like now in health. I can do an HIV test, yeah?
> Through working with the health officer, and working together with RSP. Issues
> to do with water and sanitation. Yeah, now I know how to protect a spring, I
> know how to test bad water, good water, you know. I have acquired that
> knowledge. Through issues to do with appropriate technology, yeah, I have
> learnt a lot of skills to do. How do you use enough fibre to make a basket, you
> know. How do you make a fireless cooker. Which other people do not have such
> information. So to me I feel, I've really expanded my scope. I've also gotten a
> lot of information on mobilizing resources. How do you mobilize resources, like
> for an organization? I've learnt on how to write proposals for donors, and you
> know, how to relate with the donors, and so on. I've also through RSP, I got a
> training on human resource management and now I know how to work with
> people, how to manage people, and so on. So that I've actually widened my
> scope of what I can do, my knowledge of the skills I have. I've also gotten a
> training on how to manage NGOs, non-governmental organizations, and I took a
> course with Kenya Institute of Management on how to manage non-government
> organizations and organizations in general. And at least I can say I can work
> with anybody anywhere, at least I have no problem. I know how do you run
> organization, how do you work with people, how do you organize whatever you
> are to organize and carry out activities. How do you start a project, how do you

run a project, what is the life cycle of a project, and so on. So, at least to me, I feel I have expanded (Peter M., RSP).

This long list, however, does not just constitute a grouping of new skills and abilities. It is an illustration of a more profound personal change:

Now when I look at myself, you know, there is a saying that goes, when you are narrow minded, you will not look at life in wholesome, yeah? Because of the narrow knowledge you have, the narrow mind you have. But now, to me, I feel I look at things differently, so technically, psychologically, I have changed. I look at things differently (Peter M., RSP).

Aspects of this change include having more compassion for the people with whom he works and a greater willingness to jump in and help with a broad range of problems, because: "I have learnt a lot. I've expanded my scope" (Peter M., RSP).

Henry has always been passionate about wildlife and conservation. While he has been a Christian since his childhood, he did not associate faith with conservation until he came to ARK. As Centre Manager, his primary work at ARK concerns the operation of the Centre, but he participates in conservation activities as much as possible, especially bird ringing. This is an activity that has had a profound impact on him, as he described in the following exchange:

HK: Of course, being in such a centre, which is a bird observatory and many bird activities, and people, when they eat, they look out and they see a bird, they mention something about the bird. When you are in a meeting, they see a bird, and they mention something about it [*laughs*]. And going out with them, mostly going out in the field when they are doing bird ringing or setting up nets in the forest or doing some bird walks, I have really enjoyed. And even feeling and holding the bird and someone giving the story that this bird would have flown from Europe up to here and, and such a tiny thing. Yeah, you really feel it. Because you can see. It's not like a story you are being told from a book. You can actually feel. You can hold it. You can feel, oh yeah, this is real. A bird of this grams flying this many miles. It's really amazing! It's really–
JM: So, a lot of that learning was much more, almost tactile,
HK: Yeah, exactly,

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JM: or sensory.
HK: yeah, yeah, yeah.

But this is not just an enjoyable experience. It feeds into the connection between faith

and conservation that he began to make through conversations with Colin when he first

applied for the job.

> I'm a firm believer [in Christianity], and I love animals, I love nature in general.
> And when you'd seen the difference between knowing, or having more
> knowledge in terms of what is around because previously you just sit down here
> with the birds and not bother even about the sound. You just know there are
> birds in the background. They are making nice sounds, but you are not really
> bothered. But now a bird singing, you try to think, or you get that urge to know
> which kind of bird it is. And in a way, it really built my faith in terms of
> thinking, if these little creatures have been put here for a purpose and if, because
> the biggest threat to these animals is vegetation. If the vegetation is going to be
> cleared in the manner that it's going to be cleared now, then you can be assured
> that in a few years to come, you might not have them. And I feel like I have a
> duty to what I can now [do] to protect these creatures for the future. So, I feel a
> bigger calling to be part of the conservation group (Henry, ARK).

The combination of the tactile experience with the birds, the accompanying knowledge

about them and their lives, and this sense of calling, has increased Henry's concern for

protecting habitat, both through his work with ARK and on his family's land in Western

Kenya. He and his siblings have set aside some of their land to remain as forest and

have also been replanting trees. He is also more conscious about the products he buys,

and is mindful of his water use and the disposal of his trash, and he has adopted a

gentler approach, considering those who engage in illegal activities that harm the

environment with greater compassionate and understanding.

As a researcher, the most striking realization of the link between the

instrumental and the transformative came when I first participated in bird ringing

myself. In the process of doing interviews, I had already heard Henry's story and that of

several others who also talked a great deal about bird ringing. I have never been particularly excited about birds because I find them difficult to see, so I could not relate to the experiences my interview participants were sharing about their birding activities. Then I was able to participate in a ringing expedition, and was invited to help by holding birds ready for the ringers and then releasing the birds when they were finished. I was surprised by how much the experience of holding a live, wild bird in my hands affected me, providing sudden insight into the experiences of my interview participants. I was also struck immediately by the fact that the communicative sharing of experiences or stories failed to convey this learning to me, but the moment I had the physical, instrumental experience myself, I understood.

Similar research has revealed that "...specific activities, practices, and projects are effective on-ramps to facilitate transformative learning" (Sims and Sinclair 2008, 165). My data suggest that instrumental activities and related learning not only provide a gateway to transformative learning, but in fact can play a pivotal role in instigating and driving transformative processes.

This discussion of instrumental learning should not lead the reader to assume that communicative learning was not an active part of the participants' learning experiences, both transformative and otherwise. Communicative learning was also at play, but was, in some cases, difficult to identify, and perhaps harder for participants to describe. The purpose of this discussion was not to downplay communicative learning, but rather to shine a light on the undervalued potential and importance of instrumental learning.

6.4 Summary

This chapter documented the scope of learning experienced by the participants, encompassing learning in the sustainability framework, environment/conservation, skills, community work, interpersonal engagement, and personal- and faith-related areas. The discussion addressed the ambiguity of definitions for communicative learning, necessitating the creation of a new learning domain, which I have called introspective. It highlighted the interconnected nature of communicative and instrumental learning, and argued that instrumental learning plays a greater role in leading to transformative learning than is often recognized. As will be seen in Chapter 7, the prominence of instrumental learning also correlates with the processes through which participants learned.

Chapter 7: Learning Process

7.0 Introduction

In this chapter, I consider the learning processes that were the foundation of the

learning outcomes that participants shared with me. The first section of the chapter

summarizes the learning process data, highlighting the processes that were mentioned

the most frequently or were important to transformative learning experiences. The data

are then considered in the Kenyan and local context, both organizational and cultural.

Finally, the discussion turns to Mezirow's transformative learning theory, comparing

the processes described in the theory with those that arose through the research.

7.1 Learning Processes

Table 7.1 provides a summary of the main processes through which knowledge

and skills were shared with and among the study participants. The categories presented

are grounded in the data I collected. Process categories that were mentioned frequently

or that were associated with profound learning experiences are bolded and will be

described in greater detail in the discussion below. Processes that were only mentioned

by one person are indicated with italics.

7.1.1 Learning through Embodied Experience and Activity

Overall, learning through embodied experience and activity was the most

prominent process area. I use the term "embodied" to signify an experience or activity

that involves an interaction of the body and its senses with other agents or objects.

Unlike interpersonal interaction, for instance, which could occur over the telephone or

by written correspondence, embodied learning requires physical, "hands-on" presence

Table 7.1: Learning Processes

A Rocha Kenya	Rural Service Programme
Embodied Experience and Activity	
• **observation and experience** • experimentation • **practical application**	• **observation and experience** • experimentation • **practical application**
Facilitated by Workplace	
• training	• **training** • supervision, evaluation, and planning • program or project evaluation
Interpersonal Interaction	
• **discussion and listening** • **from each other** • from community • *networking and exchange*	• discussion and listening • from each other • **from community** • networking and exchange
Personal	
• **personal reflection** • personal study	• **personal reflection** • personal study
Faith Related	
• **Bible Study and Epilogue**	• Christian influence

and engagement. *Observation and experience* was the leading learning process category for both organizations. It consisted of watching skills being performed, observing the environment or circumstances, and seeing how different aspects of the organizations functioned and how particular events and activities played themselves out. Sometimes the individuals were participating in the activities themselves and sometimes they were simply watching from the sidelines.

> *On learning about hope and perseverance:* I suppose it's more seeing it in other people, that the people here, despite the challenges have hope and persevere.

And that just by seeing, and they essentially know what's going to happen and continue to happen, whilst they try to stop it, and try to change people, they know that really that a great intervention is gonna, they won't be able to stop it (Lynton, ARK).

On learning the value of communication: Well, I think even the development of ASSETS has been one of them, in that we have seen how when we had meetings with people and explained what we're about, how later on, having had that meeting, even though it may have been one that we hadn't actually planned to have, just happened that actually it had positive knock-on effects. The people knew who we were, and as a result, they stood up for us, and they defended the cause when somebody else might have been querying it. Sometimes it's been meetings and relationships that have developed that you haven't planned or strategized for but they've happened. And then on the converse, there's times when we've found that we've hit a brick wall with people, come up with resistance, and often rumours about what we're doing or what we're trying to do, and realized aftewards is that the reason is that we never told people. We never gave them reports, we never had them round for meals and shared with them, and then, you know, so it's worked both ways. I've seen it working positively, and also seen the negative impact of not communicating (Colin, ARK).

On learning about Kenyan culture: Well, you just observe. I mean people aren't out there to conceal these things. You simply have to be observant when you're around people, or when you're in conversation with them. I mean you have to be sensitive to their responses to different things (Dawn, RSP).

On learning about experience as a learning tool: So, experience has made me learn very many things. And I'm still learning. So, from the experience, the activities we have done, the projects we have undertaken, I have learnt that having some experience in a certain field, in a certain issue, helps you. Because maybe I have undertaken a project, maybe in Bariton area. So the community in the Bariton area are the Kalenjins mostly. So, we have the other community, down towards here at Koitabut, they are the Kalenjins. So, whatever I have experienced in Bariton, will help me to achieve a goal in Koitabut, because the experience I achieve in Bariton will be a teacher onto me. I'll learn something from the experience in Bariton. So I'll take into account what I've learned in Bariton, and then carry the same information to Koitabut. Maybe the Koitabut people will not know that I have learned the same thing in Bariton. So through that experience in Bariton, I'll apply the experience I've achieved in Bariton to achieve a goal in Koitabut (Peter A., RSP).

This learning process contributed broadly to the entire range of learning outcome categories and domains discussed in Chapter 6.

The learning acquired through *experimentation* and *practical application* is even more embodied. Experimentation was applied especially to learning skills, like making charcoal briquettes and brooder stoves, farming, and figuring out which sewing and handcrafts projects were most teachable to widows. Practical application was a common learning process for both organizations, but especially RSP. It refers to the physical carrying out of tasks by the individual.

> When I'm learning about birds, then it's something that you hold in your hand and you learn. It's quite different from listening to someone and writing on a chalkboard. This is a physical, practical theory that you have something on your hand and you're seeing and you're discussing that. And then you put it into documentation, and then later you go and refer from the books and stuff. So maybe that's a unique thing which I think have really [*murmuring*] [...] But with this kind of learning, like ringing, it's quite different. Because it's more of a very practical thing. You just, you go and do it. You put the nets and you clear the bush, and then you catch the birds and you ring, you ring it, and then you subscribe. Things like that (Jonathan, ARK).

> Somebody had asked about the improved stove, but by that time, I didn't have that experience [...] So I came back to Mary and John, we talked with them. Then we just went outside the other side, and then we picked some bricks and we did a demonstration. Not only by mudding, but we just laid out how the structure of the improved stove. So they were showing me how to do it. So from there, we had to move to Masasa, that is another area. That is where we started to construct the first improved stove. Eh, so we constructed that. Then we just went on continuing, continuing, by improving it, seeing where we can add something to show that this thing is good. So that is how I started. That is improved stove (Aggrey, RSP).

> And then from learning, you see, when in class, you learn. But after coming, if you are now in the community, it's now when you can now apply the same, and also gather more information from the community to top up. [...] You see, you can be in a class, or somewhere, you just take theory, but how to do it practically, you cannot do it until you go in the field is when you can do it. So,

on the side of passion fruit, I have acquired that skill through that person
(Shumbu, RSP).

Practical learning processes also covered a broad spectrum of learning outcome

categories, though they were particularly important for skills.

7.1.2 Learning Processes Facilitated by the Workplace

Learning processes that were facilitated by the workplace were of particular

importance for RSP participants. *Training* is done very deliberately within RSP, and

appears to be effective, since it was the most frequently cited learning process for RSP

participants. This includes capacity building workshops for staff on community

development methods – eg., Participatory Integrated Community Development;

Participatory Learning, Participatory Budgeting, Planning, Monitoring, Evaluation and

Learning – and sending staff to local educational institutions for workshops on skills

such as bee keeping and sustainable agriculture. In addition, a few staff were pursuing

studies at the university and college level in programs directly related to their work,

such as project planning and management, community development, health care, and

information science. This learning process relates closely to practical application since

the teaching methods in many of the workshops involved actually carrying out the skills

or role playing. Training was particularly important for learning general skills, and

community work skills.

As described in Chapter 5, planning and evaluation at various levels is key to

the operations of RSP. *Supervision, evaluation and planning* on the individual level,

and *program or project evaluation* at the organizational level, were both active learning

processes at RSP. Given the prominent role they play in the organization, however, it

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was surprising that they were mentioned rarely when participants described a learning process for a particular item. Conversely, when asked directly about evaluation processes, participants described them and their benefits in detail. This, in addition to my review of documentation and my observation of the program evaluation that occurred while I was there, suggest that these are in fact important learning processes for RSP participants but for some reason – perhaps because they are so routine – they did not come immediately to mind in the discussion of learning in the interviews.

7.1.3 Learning through Interpersonal Interaction

Learning through interpersonal interaction was important for both organizations, but in different ways. After *observation and experience*, learning *from each other* was the most frequently mentioned learning process for ARK participants. This was often manifested in mentoring relationships that transferred from one person to another. Peter Harris at A Rocha Portugal was a mentor to Colin, especially in terms of understanding creation care and developing birding skills. Colin acted as a mentor for various staff and volunteers on both these subjects, including Albert, Henry, Roni, and Stanley.

> Interesting, it took me a little while whilst in Portugal to understand the relevance of Christianity to the environment. So it wasn't something that I had naturally sort of thought of and dealt with, and handled [...] It would have been in Portugal that I made that link, really, as I listened to Peter speak about it, and as we discussed it and so on, that I think it was there anyway in me an un-sort of-uttered way, you know. I hadn't really sort of voiced it as such, never really thought it through. I knew it was God's creation and that it was important to look after it, but I'd never really thought through the logic and the biblical passages and so on that were there (Colin, ARK).

> When I first met Colin, we had a discussion of what his job was. What vision he had and we had quite a lengthy chat about that. And it was at that time when he mentioned about care for creation. I knew about conservation, I knew it makes sense. But I did not connect it to my Christian faith at all. But it's when he

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started mentioning it, then I started thinking about it [...] So pretty much from Colin I got the passion, then, he also helped me with some learning materials. That aside, we had many discussions with Colin specifically about this, and I would raise an issue and we would discuss it in length, about what I thought, you know, the questions. I had questions, like, one of the issues is where the Bible says: "I have given all this into your hands," in Genesis. And God says: "I have put all this into your hands." And the question was: then does God care about how I use it, because He knows that I can do this job, because that it why He has given the job to me. So does it matter how I do the job, if He has given it to me. You know? Something like that. And we discussed that with Colin, and to realize actually it matters, He cares the way I do the job He's given me (Stanley, ARK).

Tsofa and members of the board also shared their expertise in working with communities with Stanley. Another important aspect of learning from each other is the cross-cultural exchange that occurs at ARK, challenging and deepening the perspectives of those involved. Learning from each other at RSP was less prominent, and occurred primarily in relation to the teamwork model through which they work, and through informal training and formal supervision.

Discussing and listening is obvious in some of the quotes illustrating learning from each other, and these are closely related processes. Discussing and listening was also important for ARK participants in a variety of learning areas, and occurred during interactions within the organization, and beyond.

Some of these things, I think it's talking to community members, just finding out from them how they respond to different things. It's listening to accounts of what has happened as a result of informing or not informing them of things, including them in activities. It's listening to researchers who study things and discovered one thing or another from it. And it's just getting a bit of a better understanding of human nature, and human understanding, and what people expect. That's kind of an important one (Colin, ARK).

Sometimes that process may require other colleagues or the [same?]-minded people to think together. Yeah. And that has, in my own perspective, helped me a lot in terms of exchanging ideas and think out of the box (Henry, ARK).

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And another way I learn about even what's going on around here is asking and chatting to people, who explain, to hear from people what they think and what's going on. And that really has helped us hugely, just having people share problems and issues that I would never, ever have known in my wildest dreams that are going on. And then it helps completely us knowing, learning from others. Learning what they're thinking and how they perceive things, and where they're at. That, I find is crucial in just helping run the organization (Roni, ARK).

The regular meetings they have, including staff meeting, Bible Study and Epilogue, provide ample opportunity for discussion, as well as in less formal settings, like shared meal times.

For RSP participants, the primary means of learning through interpersonal interactions was *from the community*. Many participants talked about the importance of approaching communities with an attitude of humility and being prepared to learn from them, even as they went in to train and teach. This attitude is in keeping with the facilitation and empowerment approach adopted by the organization, and with the Quaker testimonies of equality and simplicity.

It's just simply participatory. You involve the community when you want to do an activity, you let them do, you don't go there and behave as if you are a know-it-all, you let them do. As they do, you will also learn something that is new to you. They also learn something that is new from your side. So it is a two way learning, a two way learning process. You learn from them as they learn from you (Peter M., RSP).

Then also, you know, working within the community, you learn a lot, you experience a lot. Sometime you meet, or you just learn that you have never even seen or heard of. And sometimes you even interact with the people, sometimes of more experience than what you, so you learn from them also. You learn from them also. And also, you know, the community, ones who work in the community, work with these people. Sometimes, things that you are seeing within the community, or that you are learning within the community, can also change your family into a better. You admire, maybe you might go into a compound of somebody, you admire that compound, how it is arranged, how it is planned. And also, that is also a learning process to you, eh? So, you admire

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and you can do it. Or you admire it and you go and train people of that in a different place (Aggrey, RSP).

I have been able to learn, we can have certain concepts that have been invented by the community members. I have also been able to gain from them, because we can't just say that RSP is impacting knowledge to community members. But there are some areas where we also learn from the community members. There are some issues basing on the cultural background, basing on the customs, basing on the beliefs, basing on their ethics, we have also been able to learn certain issues that are also beneficial to me personally (Director, RSP).

A range of learning was acquired from the community according to participants, and each is included in the list of learning outcomes in Chapter 6, Table 6.2. These include new skills and techniques (e.g., keeping local poultry, grafting passion fruit trees), ideas for improving programs and items (e.g., fuel-efficient stoves), and methods and approaches for working with communities (e.g., teaching and training techniques). Participants also learned from communities about their concerns, interests, beliefs, customs, and culture.

Finally, *networking and exchange* describes learning that occurred through interaction with other practitioners. While some of these opportunities occurred more informally, RSP initiates exchanges and field tours with other organizations working under the same funding donor to facilitate the sharing of knowledge amongst employees, as described in Chapter 5 (page 161).

7.1.4 Personal Learning Processes

Personal learning processes included *personal reflection* and *personal study*. Personal reflection was an important process in both organizations, though slightly more so for ARK participants. It was often a process that worked in tandem with embodied learning processes (especially observation and experience) and interpersonal

learning processes. Participants had some difficulty describing reflection processes, and

often the existence of a reflection process was more implicit in the interview than

stated. It was also mentioned more often in response to the question in which

participants were asked to describe their general learning processes. Much of the

reflection that was articulated involved working through a problem, whether it was a

new idea that the participant needed to understand – building appropriate technology or

a particular work program – or trying to understand another person or situation.

> I think I ponder a lot generally. Like if I'm excited about a certain theme, like say now this Farming God's Way concept, it's constantly there. I'm thinking about it all the time. Every time I get a chance, I'll be reading my manual, seeing what the ideas are there. Thinking constantly, how do we apply this here to Mwamba (Roni, ARK).

> Yeah, or maybe I go and find something, there is a need somewhere, or maybe the community members are coming up with something. I'll have to sit down and really think, how about this thing? How will I face it, or how will I come about with it (Edinah, RSP)?

> Sometimes I think about how best can we do away with this dependence syndrome that is really costing to some of us. I also think what do people feel, when they have no clear way forward in their lives. How do they feel? [...] There is a time when I just sit, I think of these things. Especially when we are from the field. And I meet very [*word inaudible*] scenarios or cases. Actually, when I go back, at times, I feel: how do these people survive without this and that? How is their on-going? I start asking myself. So, sometimes, it gets me when I'm just resting, or even when I am on duty, or when I go through the strategic plan that we have. I feel maybe we could not have done this, or we could have done this, and relieved this (Everlyne, RSP).

> For me it is different. It is not like when you want to go and do. What I do, I make priorities of these challenges or anything that come before me. I'll make a, I'll make a list of it. And try to prioritize which one should I address first. After I've given a thought, because when you prioritize, you think about it [...] Yeah, then when I choose what I should address first, looking at the consequences, the negative part and the positive part of it. Then I come with a conclusion, and automatically, you know, it will [guide?] you. However how big the problem is, however how big it has been wrestling on you, when you reflect on it and think

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about it, then answering immediately, sometimes it helps. So prioritizing. Making priorities (Mary, RSP).

Personal study, through reading books and pursuing information on an individual basis, is closely related to reflection and often provides a basis for reflection:

> What I have also been doing, I have been reading books. And making a lot of comparison between different communities in different countries. For example, I have been reading books on farming communities, for example, in areas like Zimbabwe, how do farming communities carry out their farming activities in Zimbabwe. In comparison to how it is being done in Kenya, in comparison to how it is being done in India, in comparison to what is being done in Bangladesh, in comparison to what is being done in German, in comparison to what area, you know, in different countries. So that, you know, I get all those different ideas. See how I can harmonize and come up with best practices. Harmonize different ideas from different countries, dealing with different issues, harmonize them, and come up with my own new brand (Director, RSP).

7.1.5 Faith-Related Learning Processes

Faith-related learning processes were not frequently mentioned by participants from either organization. For some RSP participants, there was an element of the Christian nature of the organization that contributed to their learning, but they often had difficulty articulating what it was. A few ARK participants noted the important role *Bible study and Epilogue* played in learning at the organization:

> Well, I see that both [A Rocha Canada and A Rocha Kenya] value spending work hours having Bible studies, which I haven't seen in other places. It seems like that's tacked on as extra somewhere, squeeze it in. But in both places, it's sort of a key component of what they think is important. So, learning more about the scriptures, I think, is important in both places (Anna, ARK).

These activities were particularly influential with respect to learning about creation care:

> In the Bible study, sometimes we'll have just a theme on creation care, and we'll go through different scriptures on caring for creation. Otherwise we're studying

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the Bible, and if a creation care thing comes up, we can bring it into the Bible study (Roni, ARK).

So it was actually much later, after I had joined A Rocha, and we had several Bible studies about this topic, and I listened to Colin speaking to other people, be it visitors, or in a Sunday evening meetings, we call them Epilogue, and the way he explained it so nicely that it dawned to me, that actually it is indeed my responsibility to care for God's creation. Particularly this bit in Psalm 24 that said: "The Earth is the Lord's and everything in it" (Stanley, ARK)

This is significant primarily because it contributed to much of the learning that was transformative at ARK. Bible study and Epilogue provide platforms for learning from each other through listening and discussing, and provide stimuli for reflection.[11]

7.2 Discussion

This section begins with a discussion of learning processes in the context of the organizations and in the broader Kenyan context. It then considers learning processes through the lens of transformative learning theory, beginning with general processes and triggers, which are largely supported by the data. I then discuss the two learning mechanisms the theory describes: critical reflection and rational discourse. Critical reflection remains difficult to study empirically, and the data presented some forms of reflection that push the rational boundaries set by the theory. Discourse highlights the communal aspect of the learning process for both organizations, which exhibited some of the ideal conditions for rational discourse in surprising settings, such as Bible study. The section concludes by discussing the importance of embodied learning in this study and the associated gap in the theory.

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[11] As mentioned above, ARK leadership team was struggling to make Bible Study relevant and accessible to the diverse mix of centre staff, program staff, and international volunteers. A few participants expressed frustration with Bible Study times, indicating that this balance was not being achieved. One volunteer was concerned that creation care topics were not covered frequently enough, and that centre staff in particular were not sufficiently familiar with these ideas.

7.2.1 Learning Processes in Context

Table 7.2 shows the learning processes ranked by the frequency of the number of times they were mentioned by the research participants. ARK's primary learning processes are a combination of embodied processes and interpersonal interactions, along with personal reflection. RSP's primary learning processes are training, which has a strong embodied element, and a combination of embodied processes and interpersonal interaction. Thus, for both organizations, embodied processes are very important, though to a somewhat higher degree for RSP, while interpersonal interactions play a bigger role at ARK. One explanation for these findings may be the structure of the organizations and the activities they do. ARK has far more frequent meeting times and a smaller, closer knit community, with several of the staff and volunteers living at the Centre. RSP staff have fewer meetings, and spend much more of their time disbursed among the communities doing their work with them.

Table 7.2 Ranking of Learning Processes by Organization

ARK	RSP
observation and experience (45%) [a] from each other (41%) personal reflection (31%) discussing and listening (24%) practical application (21%) personal study (19%) training (17%) Bible study and Epilogue (8%) experimentation (7%) from community (5%) networking and exchange (2%)	training (45%) practical application (34%) observation and experience (28%) from community (27%) personal reflection (21%) from each other (14%) networking and exchange (12%) personal study (12%) discussing and listening (7%) program or project evaluation (7%) experimentation (6%) supervision, evaluation and planning (5%) Christian influence (3%)

[a] Percentage of learning items from each organization. Because more than one process may be involved in a single learning experience, percentages do not add up to 100.

Another explanation for these differences may be cultural. ARK staff and volunteers were a mixture of Kenyans and Westerners (Europeans, North Americans, New Zealanders), and regularly host visitors from around the world. Half of the ARK participants were Westerners and the other half were Kenyans who regularly interact with Westerners. RSP staff, on the other hand, were all Kenyan, and the two American volunteers did not necessarily interact closely with the other staff on a regular basis. As I conducted interviews and interacted with people throughout the course of the research, I noticed that Kenyans, particularly those who had less exposure to Westerners, were generally more at ease and articulated better when talking about practical matters – what they do – than they did in sharing their thoughts or ideas. For example, when asked about their faith in Interview I, many of the RSP participants talked about their church involvement and their family connections rather than the beliefs, theology, and journeys to faith that most of the ARK participants shared.

My observations of and conversations with RSP participants about their learning processes, and their own descriptions of how learning occurred best in communities, suggest that embodied learning may be a favoured mechanism of learning in the Kenyan cultural context. Diouf *et al.* (2000) collected similar findings on preferred learning processes in farming villages in Senegal. At the same time, they note that hands-on, practical learning processes are also advocated for adult learners in Western contexts. They conclude that basic learning processes may not differ significantly across cultures. Merriam and Ntseane (2008) studied tranformative learning processes in Botswana and found that their participants worked through their learning internally and did not engage

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much in rational discourse. They make no mention of embodied learning processes.

While a comparison of my case studies might suggest that Western-style learners may

favour a wider variety of learning processes, and Kenyan learners favour embodied

learning more exclusively, the data is insufficient to be conclusive. These are the sorts

of questions that must be pursued further to understand cultural implications on the

theory.

7.2.2 General Processes

According to the original theoretical description of the learning processes,

learning occurs when assumptions or interpretation schemes fail to explain a situation

and expectations are questioned (Mezirow 1991b; Cranton 2006). This "disorienting

dilemma" is followed by a series of steps leading to learning that may be epochal – as

in, a sudden insight – or incremental, through a series of transitions (Mezirow 1981).

Disorienting dilemmas certainly played a role in triggering learning for participants in

this research. Sometimes the trigger was a deficiency or a problem: something (e.g., a

program or an activity) was not working; there was a need that required addressing

(e.g., poverty or environmental degradation); or the individual identified a gap in his/her

knowledge that s/he desired to fill. For other learning experiences, the trigger was

encountering something new or something that had changed. For example, RSP

participants talked about seeing communities doing new things or doing things in a new

way. Some of ARK participants were struck by changes or contrasts in the environment

over time or in different geographic locations, which triggered learning. Participants

from both organizations also encountered new ideas and situations through cross-cultural interactions.

Learning was not, however, always triggered by a disorienting dilemma or a disconnect between expectations and reality. It was also sometimes triggered by successes or convergences. Participants talked about successful programs or approaches from which they realized the efficacy of a particular approach. Learning among ARK participants was also triggered by the convergence of two ideas that they already held, but had never put together before, or by a deepening of knowledge that brought about a change or intensification in attitudes and values. The latter two triggers were mostly associated with creation care: bringing together environmental concern and faith; and an increasing knowledge of and relationship with nature leading to increased appreciation and concern for the environment. This is in some ways similar to Lange's (2004) *restorative learning*, through which adult learners did not adopt new perspectives and principles, but rather reaffirmed and returned to the values of their youth that had been submerged in adulthood. Dramatic, epochal learning events were more closely associated with this type of trigger, where the individual suddenly connected two previously separate ideas in a new, synergistic way. The more incremental learning process, however, was more common.

7.2.3 Critical Reflection

In the original proposal for this research, I hoped to look specifically at the critical reflection process in detail. Because the proposed journal writing activity did not work (see Section 3.4.2.4), I obtained less data on reflection than originally

anticipated. As recognized elsewhere in the literature (Kreber 2004), it is difficult to

gather data on reflection because a researcher cannot access the inner mind where it

occurs. Because it is abstract, ephemeral, and sometimes subconscious, it is difficult for

interview participants to remember and describe it. While some evidence of reflection

did surface in the interviews, more often I could only guess that reflection was

happening based on the learning that was described. It remains somewhat troubling that

such an important element of the theory is so difficult to observe empirically.

Some reflection was, however, accessible. Critical reflection is defined as

"...conscious and explicit reassessment of the consequence and origin of our meaning

structures" (Taylor 2008, 6). Mezirow (1998) emphasizes the rational element of this

exercise: "...on the basis of information available, [one] assesses reasons logically and

reflects critically in order to achieve the best foreseeable consequences of an action"

(187). He divides reflection into three categories: content, process and premise. Based

on the literature (Mezirow 1994; Kitchenham 2008) and my data, I defined these three

types of reflection for analysis as follows:

- *content reflection*: considering what and how; reflecting on what was done or how
  things are at the meaning scheme level;

- *process reflection*: considering why; reflecting on the cause or reason of action at the
  meaning scheme level; and

- *premise reflection*: reflecting on value systems at the meaning perspective level.

Predictably, the vast majority of reflection was content reflection. This

corresponds with the high degree of instrumental learning and embodied, practical

learning processes. Some process and premise reflection did occur, and was closely

associated with learning within the introspective domain and with transformative learning.

Some reflection that people described did not fit into any of these three categories. There were two types of reflection of this nature: reflection that was not entirely conscious; and reflection that was deeply personal and emotional, associated in some ways with the newly created introspective domain category. The latter typically related to matters of faith, particularly prayer:

> Prayer more so, like the journalling and prayer together at its best does that [facilitates learning] very much. Like I journal about the day before and see what the issues were and what arises to be prayed about, so that will often be work related stuff. And then pray through it, and yeah [...] It keeps me open to learning (Anna, ARK).

> Well, I go for walks on the beach, and if I'm on my own, then I can often pray and just discuss things with God [...] And then also quiet times, I like to journal what I feel God saying and what I'm saying to God, and scriptures that come up so that I can even go back later and read over those things, 'cause I don't know, I'm sure everyone's different, but for me, God works very much in themes. So, you know, for even weeks or a month or something, He'll be talking about the same issues over and over again. Every time I hear a scripture, every time I'm praying, those things come up. Like maybe it's living differently, or it's joy, or it's letting our lives reflect the glory of God, and God seems to just remind me of those things wherever I look, so I think writing down what I'm thinking and what I feel God saying in quiet times and just spending time listening to God and reading the word, but I find that if, any time I'm not busy, and on my own, even sometimes I'm working on the computer and I'll just pause for five minutes, and a lot of thoughts will come in, and I'll be discussing with God, you know, and praying about them, and I don't know. It's quite ongoing (Roni, ARK).

Prayer is an important form of meditation for Christians, and members of other faith traditions. While it is not necessarily critical in the sense that Mezirow describes, it is still reflective and plays a role in learning and personal development. There are several ways in which prayer fulfills these functions: the process of deciding *what* to

pray about; the process of framing an issue or request when bringing it to God or meditating on it; and the process of listening for God's answer.

The spiritual component of transformative learning has been hotly debated in the transformative learning literature, particularly in terms of the degree to which conscious and rational reflection is key to the process (Dirkx *et al.* 2006). Proponents of more holistic learning processes argue that while the cognitive, rational component is important, transformative learning also encompasses affective, symbolic, and spiritual pieces (Tisdell 2003; Cranton and Roy 2003). Integrating these processes fully into the mechanisms of the theory, however, remains an ongoing process (Taylor 2007).

7.2.4 Rational Discourse

As illustrated above, learning through discussion and interpersonal exchange occurred frequently in both organizations. The most common settings in which these processes occurred were staff meetings at both organizations, Bible study at ARK, and through community facilitation activities at RSP. These processes are captured in the theory by the concept of rational discourse, defined as "...dialogue in which we focus on content and attempt to justify beliefs by giving and defending reasons and by examining the evidence for and against competing viewpoints" (Mezirow 1994, 225). A set of ideal conditions for discourse have been developed (see page 63); when applied to the discourse activities within the organizations, they provide insight into the nature of these interactions.

Some of the conditions are concerned with the type of information available and the discourse participants' ability to assess it objectively. These conditions are more

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difficult to meet in any of the contexts described above, in which the participants came from different backgrounds, education levels, and types of expertise. They did not all have access to the same information, and due to their different backgrounds, would not necessarily have the tools to weigh evidence for and against it.

Other conditions concern the degree to which participants are able to engage in open, equal, participatory, and reflective exchanges about the subject at hand. This condition was largely met in most situations I observed or heard described. The rotating chair and valuation of each participant in ARK staff meetings encouraged equal participation and open sharing. I attended fewer RSP staff meetings, but these were also highly participatory, particularly the meeting following the program evaluation, in which the director was actively encouraging all the participants to share ideas and to think of a broad range of alternative ideas.

The discourse that took place at ARK's Bible studies is an interesting case. The organization was struggling to create an activity that was accessible, relevant, and meaningful for a group of people with different languages, different cultural and faith backgrounds, and different degrees of facility with theological discussion. The fact that this was such a concern demonstrates a desire to create the kind of open forum that rational discourse requires, and sometimes, it seemed to succeed. The Bible study was not structured as a teaching session, but rather as a discussion, in which a Bible passage was read (usually in both English and Swahili), and then discussion questions were presented. The ensuing discussion pushed participants to consider both the meaning of

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the passage and how it translated to their personal lives. This involved a degree of reflecting on presuppositions and their consequences.

Similarly, in facilitation sessions with the community, an imbalance existed between RSP field and program officers and the community members, where the RSP staff were the trained and educated experts. At the same time, the facilitation approach allowed the officers to approach the communities with an openness to their ideas, desires, and particular knowledge and expertise. Many field officers spoke extensively about learning the importance of humility, transparency, and the ability to "bend down" when working with communities. This highlights the relational aspect of discourse that is necessary for several of the ideal conditions to exist. Freedom from coercion and open participation require trust and cooperation.

7.2.5 Embodied Learning Processes

So far in this section, I have addressed the two primary mechanisms of learning presented in the theory, but have not covered all the learning processes that arose from the data. Apart from the reflection that is stimulated by observation and experience, embodied learning processes have yet to be addressed. These processes, including observation, experience, practical application, and experimentation, were the most frequently cited learning processes for participants from both organizations. Yet apart from a general recognition that learning is instigated to make meaning out of experiences (Mezirow 1991b; Cranton 2006) there is little in the theory to capture such learning activities.

The importance of *doing* and *experiencing* surfaced at the end of ARK's

feedback workshop, when several participants started discussing the role of these

processes in learning. Roni wondered:

> [i]f you can really learn something until you've fully done it yourself. Like
> Farming God's Way – you can learn about it in a book but until you've really
> done it, it won't make sense (Roni, ARK).

Colin agreed, noting that it is the same with birds:

> You need to experience it fully (Colin, ARK).

Roni suggested that

> [...] doing it completes the learning, puts it inside you (Roni, ARK).

Colin countered that learning is never really completed,

> [...] because you're still always learning (Colin, ARK).

Roni agreed and suggested that doing *consolidates* learning. Doing – and touching,

feeling, seeing, hearing – appear from both this discussion, and the findings described

above, to be significant components of the learning process.

Based on the findings, it appears that embodied learning can occur in at least

two distinct ways. The first is the physical application of an activity. This is crucial to

learning new skills, whether they are skills accomplished with the hands, like building a

fireless cooker or ringing a bird, or more interpersonal skills, like communication and

teaching. But learning skills, though vital to the work of these organizations, is not the

ultimate focus of transformative learning theory, which is concerned with deeper, more

life-changing learning (Mezirow 1978; Merriam and Ntseane 2008).

The second way that embodied learning occurs is more relevant to the transformative domain of learning. It involves a less tangible but seemingly direct relationship between physical actions and sensory experiences, and the emotions, values, beliefs, and self-perceptions that constitute higher level meaning structures. A physical, sensory activity can transform our perspectives in a profound and transformative way. The impact of encountering birds when participating in ringing is one example. Stanley's description of his first experience snorkelling is another:

> I have come to see the Creator behind the Creation. Like when I went snorkelling in the ocean [...] And my immediate reaction was not like, wow, this is beautiful and different world, but what just hit home was: what an amazing Creator. 'Cause that is exactly what I felt like. I would never have imagined there was so much. But I've come, even looking at a flower. There is that verse that says, when Jesus picks a flower and says, look at this beautiful flower, even King Solomon in all his splendour was not dressed like this. That speaks to me better now than before, because it feels like, you know, imagine even King Solomon never dressed up like one of these flowers. But those flowers were also God's creation, God's painting. So I think just looking at creation, I feel like what God is saying about his majesty and splendour, like: see I have made all this (Stanley, ARK).

There is, in this quote, a combination of reflection, study, and physical experience. It is impossible to tell from this data if the physical action can lead to deeper level learning on its own, but it is clear that without the physical activity, the learning experience would be significantly different, if it would exist at all. Activities such as the one Stanley describes here were operational in nearly all the transformative learning that participants shared. Kovan and Dirkx (2003) observe that there are "...complex social, emotional, and spiritual processes involved in deep inner work and the processes of transformative learning" (114). Dirkx (1997; Dirkx *et al.* 2006) calls this "soul work".

It appears from my findings that embodied experiences and activities sometimes connect into these profound extra-rational learning processes.

While other extra-rational aspects of transformative learning, such as the spiritual component mentioned above, have been discussed extensively in the transformative learning literature, embodied learning processes have received less attention. There are, however, a few examples where some form of embodied or action related learning has surfaced. In his paper on learning intercultural competency, Taylor (1994) noted that people in new cultural contexts sometimes adapt by simply doing what works in their new context without really thinking about it. More recently, Sipos *et al.* (2008) built a model for transformative sustainability learning by integrating head, heart, and hands. They suggest that to prepare young adults to engage in the social and environmental problems of today's world, university programs must engage their cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains. Similarly, environmental educators describe using experiential and embodied learning processes within a transformative learning framework (e.g., Fenstein 2004; Lange and Chubb 2009; D'Amato and Krasny 2011). Finally, Nohl (2009) found that

> ...transformative learning processes may also be initiated by *spontaneous action*. In the spontaneity of action, novelty finds its way into life, gains momentum, is respected by others and reflected by the actor. In this way a learning process gets off the ground that yields a radical and sustainable transformation in the life story of people (288).

In Nohl's model, transformative learning follows these steps: initial spontaneous action, unspecified reflection, inquiry and learning, initial social recognition, renewed

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spontaneous action, renewed social recognition, biographical self-reflection (Nohl 2009).

While these examples show that some within the transformative learning family are considering the role of embodied and active learning processes, they are mostly quite recent and still scattered. A more integrated conversation is needed to bring some of these ideas together and to introduce them into the theory discussion. It is not necessary, however, to reinvent the wheel. Other learning theorists have already developed ideas from which this discussion can draw insight, some of whose work is used in the literature cited above.

Nohl (2009) draws deeply from the work of John Dewey, which also provided a basis for Mezirow's work. Dewey is the father of learning from experience (Dewey 1944; 1997). He argued that: "Thinking is the accurate and deliberate instituting of connections between what is done and its consequences" (Dewey 1944, 151). He recognizes that the senses are the means through which we experience experiences, and are thus central to learning, particularly when sensory moments are given meaning through emotional perception and cognitive consideration (Dewey 1958).

Kolb (1984) built on the work of Dewey and other experiential learning experts to suggest that experiential learning is "...a holistic integrative perspective on learning that combines experience, perception, cognition, and behavior" (21). Concrete experience, along with reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation, are the foundational pieces of learning (Kolb 1984). Jarvis (2006) also works toward a holistic understanding of learning, as an interface between the internal

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and the external. He describes three ways of transforming experience: through thinking, doing, and feeling. In this process, the physical and sensory elements of experience are key, as "...the transformation from the sensation to the meaning (from the body to the mind) lies at the heart of the mystery of learning" (Jarvis 2006, 43).

The importance of experience and embodied activity is also recognized as key to learning within the sustainability and natural resource management fields. Fazey *et al.* (2005) advocate learning by experience as foundational for adaptive management, an approach recommended for situations of uncertainty. They argue that applied practice, particularly practice that is characterized by variation, develops expertise that is adaptable. Similarly, Krasny and Roth (2010) apply activity theory (Engleström 2001) to show how environmental education can build social-ecological resilience.

> Activity theory allows us to understand how not only the (human) subjects come to be changed in the process of action, but also how changes come about in the SES [social-ecological system] that the students constitute and inhabit (Krasny and Roth 2010, 554).

Learning through embodied activity and experience is an accepted approach within the broader learning literature, both for adults and children. Its value is also recognized for sustainability issues in particular. The prominence this process played in the learning experiences of my research participants is therefore not surprising, and it suggests that these various discussions should be brought together and that this type of learning process should be better integrated into transformative learning theory.

7.3 Summary

This chapter outlined the processes through which participants learned. Learning processes included embodied experience and activity, processes facilitated by the

workplace, interpersonal interaction, personal processes, and faith-related processes. Some of these, such as personal processes and interpersonal interaction, corresponded with the learning processes described by the theory, namely critical reflection and rational discourse. Others introduced new processes to the theory, in particular embodied experience and activity. The significance of learning by doing is not new to the broader learning literature, and will be discussed further in Chapter 8 with respect to the role that action, both personal and social, plays as an expression of learning.

Chapter 8: Learning and Action

8.0 Introduction

The ultimate goal of learning is to guide action (Mezirow 1991b). Societal change through individual and collective action is also an imperative of sustainability (Jucker 2004). Yet transformative learning theory has long been criticized for its insufficient attention to this link between learning and action (Collard and Law 1989; Finger and Asún 2001; Cranton 2006). This chapter explores the process of translating learning into various types of action. The first section describes the different types of action or application that participants undertook in response to their learning. In recognition of the fact that contextual and other factors can prevent learning from being applied, the second section describes barriers participants experienced in applying their learning. The final section considers the theoretical implications of this data.

8.1 Application of Learning

In the learning segment of Interview II, participants were asked about the result of their learning, that is, how they had put their learning into action or how it might have changed them. Their answers to these questions have been divided into six general categories that were grounded in the data (Table 8.1). Two of these categories – anticipated action and personal change or transformation – will only be discussed briefly because they do not involve the kind of active responses to learning that need to be understood further in the theory, or that will meet the needs of sustainability. Anticipated action is only intentional, and personal change and transformation involve an internal response to learning that has not necessarily progressed to an external and

active expression. The remaining categories, which are explicitly active and thus have

more potential to contribute to sustainability, will be explored in more detail.

Table 8.1 Responses to and Applications of Learning

Learning Application or Response	Description
anticipated action	• intended future action
personal change or transformation	• change in attitude (more specific and superficial: meaning scheme) • change in belief or values (broader and deeper: meaning perspective) • change in personal perspective or experience
personal action	• applying learned skill in work • applying learned ideas in work • applying learned ideas in home life • applying learned skills in home life
social action	• sharing new skills with others • sharing new ideas with others • contributing skills in society • applying learning with others in organization
collective action	• groups of people applying learning together
social change or transformation	• learning and social transformation in workplace • evidence of social change in community

Anticipated action constituted the action a participant intended to carry out in

the future. This category was particularly relevant for the two ARK volunteers from

New Zealand who were thinking about applying what they had learned at ARK, and in

their previous six-month volunteer term at A Rocha Canada, to the A Rocha

organization with which they are involved in New Zealand. *Personal change or*

transformation is similar in many ways to learning itself. It consisted of changes in

beliefs and values (i.e., meaning perspectives), particularly among ARK participants,

changes in attitudes (i.e., meaning schemes), and changes in personal perspective or

experience, particularly among RSP participants. This constituted a large proportion of participants' descriptions of their responses to learning or how learning had affected them.

8.1.1 Personal Action

Based on the data, *personal action* was defined as a single person acting on something they learned. This action may have been on their own or in relation to other people, but in the latter case, was considered personal action if the action did not involve transferring the learning in question to the other people. For example, applying learned teaching methods occurred in a social situation, but those skills were not what was being taught, so that was considered personal action. Personal action included applying a learned skill in the work setting and at home. Both ARK and RSP participants learned agricultural skills, for instance, which they were applying at work – in demonstration plots and through facilitation with communities – and at home on their own shambas or farms.

> Yeah, at now my place, I can also apply. Like, now, forestry. I have also a tree nursery at my home. Like when it comes to tissue cultured bananas, I have really performed it really well. Sweet potatoes [...] And also modern farming technology, from the farming point of view. And also, I have managed also to do some dairy farming through the agriculture officer (Kennedy, RSP).

Participants from both organizations applied the whole range of skills they learned in their work.

Personal action also included applying learned ideas (i.e., the action was not exactly the same as what was learned, but rather grew out of it) in the work setting and

at home. For example, Edinah is applying principles she has learned about interacting

with communities in her work:

> Let's say, initially, I could just go to a group, and maybe I could just say, I've come here, we do this and this, and anybody with shares, can you start share contribution and loan repayment, and then I leave, I come back. And maybe that person who is repaying, or that person who is at least paying the shares, she needs some knowledge about how to manage her business. Maybe he needs some knowledge about how he can maximize profit. Or how he can start a business. But if you at least find some time for them, at least do some capacity building, it will help you to understand that these people really need some education or need some advice in their businesses or in their social life (Edinah, RSP).

Karen, on learning about the cultural traditions in Western Kenya concerning houses

and widows, put her energy into building new houses for widows, even though there

appeared to be houses that could simply be repaired and used. On the home front,

Albert and Jonathan are planting trees as an expression of their learning about

environmental issues and creation care:

> If I'm to say we need to conserve the trees, because these are God's creation, so we need to conserve the trees. And if I'm now to give an example of conservation, I think for the guys, the community around, they will not know actually what the meaning of conservation is. So, for me, if you come at my home, I've got lots of indigenous trees. I'm planting lots of indigenous trees. And that's indigenous trees is just to let them know that God created these with a reason, and I don't want them to be cut. So, I'm just leaving them alone (Albert, ARK).

> I have my own wood, I have casuarina, I have *Gmelina arborea* , I have some indigenous which are, I planted and some I don't even cut. I'm taking care of them in my plot, because now I've realized there is very little indigenous trees to where people have settled, and it's only Arabuko-Sokoke Forest, which is now also declining, because people are so dependent on that forest. So it's unless people have theirs and take care that, then it will be a big problem for us, and even for the birds (Jonathan, ARK).

Similarly, Henry and Stanley are paying more attention to their personal consumption, in response to learning about the global village and creation care:

> The other factor that also I have come to learn is to be conscious of what I use. I ask myself, is it necessary? If it's something that I can avoid, then I better stop it and use an alternative. Yeah, and particularly here is water. Water is quite a precious commodity now, and that's why even in our washing up and all that, we try to have a system that would conserve water as much as possible, being a very precious commodity (Henry, ARK).

> It has, certainly, it has changed. The way I used the resources that I have, including water, electricity, my money, is different, because I now see that actually these are things that God has given me. He's put me in charge of His own property. Because I even look at what I earn, my money as God's property. He's put them into my hands I use properly. So it has changed me quite a lot [...] To begin with, the way I use water at home personally, I have learned, you know, to use it well, economically. Because I have piped water in my house, but I know there are many people who do not have. Now the thing is, that is, I used to see, like water is very cheap, I can pay for it, so I can use it the much I want. Now, I realize actually that should not be the attitude. Even if it is cheap, I can afford it, I still have to use it properly well, and not waste it. I should not waste it. Even with my money. However much money I have, it doesn't mean that I can just waste it on things that do not matter, just because I can afford them. I have to look after it as God's gift, you know, to use it for the best purpose that God has intended it for (Stanley, ARK).

The different types of personal action were emphasized in different ways by participants between the two organizations (Table 8.2). ARK participants were largely putting ideas into action, both at work and home, while RSP participants were mostly applying learning at work, particularly their skills. This reflects the emphasis of teaching in the two organizations: RSP staff receive a great deal of training in skills related to their work, while ARK staff and volunteers devote a regular portion of their work to Bible study and other activities that involve the discussion and generation of ideas.

Table 8.2: Ranking of Personal Action Types by Organization

ARK	RSP
• applying learned idea at work • applying learned idea at home • applying learned skills at work • applying learned skill at home	• applying learned skill at work • applying learned idea at work • applying learned skill at home • applying learned idea at home

8.1.2 Social Action

Social action was defined as a single person acting in a way that functioned to transfer what he or she had learned to other people. This links to Mezirow's (2008) notion that learning provides an essential basis for individuals to participate in democracy. Social action occurred both in the course of the work day and outside work as well. In both organizations, social action involved sharing new skills and knowledge with others:

> There are some other students who normally come here for attachment, those students they don't go to Colin. They come for Colin, as A Rocha, but if they come here, because Colin is a very busy guy, and they want to know birds, they want to know bird ringing, they want to know all the thing, I'm being given those guys to be with them, to teach them on how to identify birds, and how to do some bird ringing, on how to put some data in computer, all this, and how to collect the data, uh, maybe on the field (Albert, ARK).

> In most places, when that person doesn't know how to make it, I just go and do it. I do the demonstration with the community members. You know, we are empowering the community members to do it by themselves. Like, right now, I have got two women, eh? Do you remember where we went the other time? Kamarembe. There are two people I have trained there who are now constructing the stoves. They can do it. It is like an income generating activity. It is earning them a lot of money. Because now they are constructing the brooder stoves (Aggrey, RSP).

> Okay, we have conferences [...] So, during those conferences, on the side of energy conservation, what we usually do is to find out the energy conservation devices and ferry them to the conference venue. It doesn't mean that if I have a topic or no. I just carry the energy conservation to the venue. Maybe we plan

with the office so that they ferry the energy conservation material to the venue. So, during the intermingling of the delegates at the conference, wondering, oh, how does it work? How does this work? How does this work? So this one is a safari jiko, or a charcoal jiko. We have seedlings, tree seedlings around so that they can, you find that, at least, a bunch of them buying trees, buying the energy conservation, so it, intermingling with the members of my church, showing them what to do (Peter A., RSP).

I have been approached by different communities, and different churches. For example, right now, I am being utilized by different churches, different denominations in formulation of strategic plans for different denominations. To date, I've been able to formulate around thirty strategic plans for different denominations. I'm sharing my knowledge with other communities (RSP Director, RSP).

Social action also involved sharing new ideas with others, particularly at ARK:

I have now tried to come up with this issue of maintaining nature by planting indigenous trees back, and especially to our local area where people are targeting indigenous trees for building, indigenous trees for fuel wood, and it has been really a challenge. So I've been talking to some of the local communities, and come up with tree nurseries and with alternative wood, like exotic trees which grow faster, if they need wood (Jonathan, ARK).

And at church, sometimes I get opportunities to preach at church, or lead service, and those are opportunities for me to share some of my beliefs and motivations about caring for creation with the whole church. So it gives me that opportunity (Stanley, ARK).

At RSP, Karen and Dawn responded to some of the things they learned about Kenyan culture by challenging Kenyans about it:

Ask questions, have them try to come up with answers, also maybe talk about like, a couple of years ago, there was this great article in the Daily Nation, about women who were standing up to their culture, community, saying: we don't want to be inherited, we don't want to be cleansed, we don't want this to happen. And talking about, did you see that article in the Daily Nation, and do you think there's people in this community that can stand up to, you know, whoever. It's kind of like, even though we don't deal with female circumcision, but you know, how does that change other than awareness (Karen, RSP).

Social action also encompassed using new skills and ideas in a way that contributed to society at large, for instance, Colin has been advocating for more legislation, having gained an appreciation for its value:

> But I think that's why we've gone for trying to contribute to management plans and regulations and whatever sort of protocols we can in terms of conservation action and sites and so on. 'Cause we've seen that once you've got that framework in place, then you can hang things on it much more easily (Colin, ARK).

8.1.2.1 Social Action through Being an Example

In discussing learning-related action with the participants, a particular form of social action was frequently described. Taking learning that they received and passing it on to others was a prominent theme, particularly for the Kenyan participants. Repeatedly, participants described their actions in terms of being an example or being a model to their community or their family. This phrase surfaced both when participants were talking about action arising from learning, and when they were discussing their sustainability activities. Note the italicized phrases in the following quotations:

> Like the Farming God's Way. Now, because to our area, we were not really aware. We were not aware on the Farming God Way. And before it was introduced now, I started a very small plot, *as an example*, and it did do well. It did do well, that now for the coming year, I'm expecting to increase that portion [...] It's not very big. It's a small area, and I'm expecting for the next year to expand it again, like forty by forty. Because the only thing is, it is just *an example* to the other people. Now I've heard, like from other people, that they want to do that (Albert, ARK).

> I have a farm and *is the model*, and is coming up nicely. It's coming up nicely. I wouldn't have known that it was nicely until I had my friend speaking about it, and we talked at length and then he said he wants his to like mine, so already I know it's becoming up *a model*. And I'm not really satisfied yet, but if you are satisfied, I want to do even more than that (Jonathan, ARK).

When I talk about some small business, I'm talking about sustainaibility. Both in the groups and also in program planning. I said, you can't sing a song which you are not also involved in. *You need also to be an example* again. So that after here, I don't beg. I can get some little (Mary, RSP).

I have trees I have planted. There are trees he [Mary's husband] has also planted. Both of us, we have planted. And I don't say I have employed somebody to do it, even if there is somebody to assist me, I must put mine first, so that we do both of us. And as a result of that, I think we have gained some change in cultural barriers. *We have become as like an example* (Mary, RSP).

Yes, the same techniques, the same trainings, or the same projects that I do in the field, I try to practice them at home. Why? You have a community, you have been teaching him or her how to come up with maybe a tree nursery so that we can conserve the environment. So, when he comes to your home, *you have to be a model*. So, at home I have a tree nursery, I have a vegetable garden. I plant trees so that I can be a good model to the community. So, all the activities that [*words inaudible*] the community, I try to practice them at home (Peter A., RSP).

You see, when you are serving the community, when *you are to live by an example*. So, when you train the community on banana plantation, how to manage, where you are coming from, you are also to ensure that there is a several stems of banana, well managed. Well managed. So if somebody whom you are training in the community comes at your place, and sees that plantation, he admires, eh? For example, when you are training on bananas, you are to ensure that there are some stems of banana, very healthy (Shumbu, RSP).

This desire to be a model appeared to be instigated by a strong sense of service to the community, by the awareness that one cannot teach something one does not do oneself, and a sort of evangelistic zeal to share knowledge in the community. There was an assumed imperative that those who have gained learning and knowledge should share it with others. There was also a sense that it was their responsibility as staff within these organizations that served the community to extend this role beyond their work hours.

Comments about engaging in action to be a model or example rarely arose from the Western participants. For some of these participants, there was no community in Kenya to which they could serve as an example in this way. Furthermore, they may have felt less able to assume that role in a foreign society, from which they were separated not only by culture, but also by living circumstances:

> Yeah, and Canada was more close to home, you know, just the way we were living there could be more equivalently applied to how we can live in New Zealand. Where here it's so different. And in Canada you can live prophetically to the other Canadians, where here we're living in luxury, so we're not living prophetically at all in the reality here. We're not living like Kenyans (Lynton, ARK).

8.1.3 Collective Action

Collective action refers to groups of people applying learning together. Collective action may require both individual and social learning, and builds on both personal and social action. RSP participants shared more of this kind of action than ARK participants did, likely because they are more broadly involved in the community. This type of action largely involved the participatory development and training activities in the communities. For example, after learning how to make improved stoves, Aggrey has assisted in making more than 100 stoves (personal action). He has also trained community members to make them (social action):

> There are two people I have trained there who are now constructing the stoves. They can do it. It is like an income generating activity. It is earning them a lot of money (Aggrey, RSP).

Now these community members are constructing stoves together (collective action).

In the community with which A Rocha works, parents of ASSETS beneficiaries

are taught by Jonathan about conservation. Together, they maintain tree nurseries, from

which they take trees to plant on their farms.

> I visit the community, we meet at a specific area, and the area is the school
> where is benefiting from the ASSETS program [...] Then when I get there, we
> start discussing the issues affecting Arabuko-Sokoke Forest and Mida Creek,
> then if they come up with issues, we try to address them to the best I can, and
> also to make them participate in addressing the issues. And the number one
> issue is the need of fuel wood, timber for building, most necessities the local
> community that would need. And then I bring to them alternatives, like to make
> them understand that population is growing, the forest is small, that cannot
> really support. Now to come away from that is now to understand this first and
> then to come up with tree nurseries whereby they could plant their own trees for
> firewood, for building, alternatively from the use of the indigenous trees from
> the forest (Jonathan, ARK).

8.1.4 Social Change and Transformation

The ideal result of the combination of these levels of learning and action is

social change and transformation. Evidence of such transformation surfaced

throughout the research. The introduction of RSP's improved stoves is transforming the

community in several ways:

> Then also it has made community members, they are not using a lot of fuel.
> Now, less, firewood too, but they can prepare enough food for their families.
> Then also it has reduced the accidents (Aggrey, RSP).

The stoves have also transformed gender relations, as men are now participating in the

cooking chores (Field Note 2011-01-19). In RSP's community, attitudes and practices

related to sex are also changing:

> I mean, it's just like this generation has been lost to AIDS. But we have children
> now who are growing up more protected. I was speaking to grade school
> children today about life skills and things to do with their lives and so on, and I
> mean, this was pre-kindergarten up through the eighth class, and the principal
> said: oh, and please talk about AIDS. I was flabbergasted with a group that

young, because that's not the usual in Kenya, but it's becoming the norm (Dawn, RSP).

Furthermore, widows are gaining confidence, self-respect, and security by building houses together:

> It makes them feel somebody values them, so if somebody values them, they need to value themselves. It builds up their confidence, hopefully it transforms them to feel equal in a society that wants to keep women property (Karen, RSP).

Around Arabuko-Sokoke Forest, more children are attending secondary school: in 2010, 378 students had been supported by the ASSETS program, of whom 144 had graduated (Sluka *et al.* 2011). Ten of these graduates have attended university, an opportunity which is very rare for young people in that part of the country (Field Note 2010-10-05). Tree planting has also increased, and community members are developing more positive attitudes toward the forest and a better understanding of conservation (Sinclair *et al.* 2011; Sluka *et al.* 2011).

8.2 Barriers to Action

The data show that the degree to which learning is put into action is affected by circumstances that encourage or discourage action. As part of the series of questions in Interview II about learning items, participants were asked if there were any barriers or obstacles that prevented them from putting their learning in action. These barriers were coded into categories that are grounded in the data, depicted in Table 8.3. Items in bold are those that were mentioned most frequently and these will be discussed in greater detail below. Barriers that were only mentioned by one person – representing a minority experience – are indicated with italics. A few participants also responded that they could not think of any barriers. It should be noted that RSP participants tended to list

general barriers to their work and did not always associate them with the specific

learning being discussed. ARK participants were more likely to describe barriers that

related directly to the learning item.

Table 8.3: Barriers to Putting Learning into Action

ARK	RSP
Situational	
• no control over circumstances	• no control over circumstances • climate • time or distance
Cultural and Demographic	
• culture • *education level and language*	• **culture** • education level and language • gender and age
Financial	
• **limited resources** • level of need • *dependency syndrome*	• **limited resources** • **level of need** • **dependency syndrome**
Personal and Interpersonal	
• personality • interpersonal interactions • **people's attitudes and perceptions** • relying on the actions of others • *different approaches* • *politics* • *spiritual warfare*	• *personality* • interpersonal interactions • people's attitudes and perceptions • relying on the actions of others • different approaches • **threats and fears of change** • politics
Organizational	
• **busyness and distractions** • overwork • lack of follow up	• *overwork* • *jack of all trades, master of none* • *lack of leadership*
Not Applicable	
• no barriers	

Situational barriers included existing situations over which people had *no control*, like the density of the population in the area, or the fact than an exotic species had already been introduced. There were also issues concerning the effect of the *climatic variations* on agricultural activities, and impediments of *time or distance*.

Cultural and demographic factors were common concerns for RSP participants, particularly *cultural barriers*. In working with communities, RSP staff frequently encounter cultural traditions or practices that conflict with or impede their work. For example, among the Luhya, there is a taboo against women planting trees.

> One of the barriers is that when you come to environmental conservation, I said in the last interview, cultural barriers also became a problem [...] because culture, they are saying, if a woman plant a tree, the husband will die (Mary, RSP).

RSP staff are working to change some of these traditional beliefs by demonstrating the benefits of tree planting and showing that women can plant tree without endangering their husbands. The field officers must also schedule their activities carefully to avoid important rituals, like circumcision. Participants from both RSP and ARK also talked about the challenge of living outside the status quo, whether that be western consumerism or expectations for family size in Kenya. Demographic factors – *education level*, *language*, *gender*, and *age* – presented difficulties in teaching and in initiating some activities.

For both organizations, the greatest barriers to action noted were financial, particularly *limited resources* within the organizations. This included lack of funding (both organizational and personal), limited staffing, and staff capacity, and lack of

infrastructure and services in the area. These limitations prevented people from carrying

out learning through the organization's activities and in their personal lives.

> Well, I think just a very technical thing would be having the right staff and the right finances to be able to get transport, get people out there into the community, and train people up. That you know, we envisage we'll have a manager of appropriate technology and then two extension officers, so we need staff members. And then obviously putting them through all the training themselves so they're fully on board, and then they go out into the community [...] Again always, finances. Like you can see a vision, but you have to wait for the finances to make it happen. You have to wait to recruit the right people, you have to buy in, which is quite exciting, because now, you know, we've got a lot of these new ideas, and it seems everyone's excited in the management team, people are excited about it (Roni, ARK).

> Yeah, sometimes is you only lack of those resources. Yeah, to initiate those projects [...] And also I don't have a big farm. So that small farm, for me to diversify so many things is also hard (Kennedy, RSP).

> That I have really encountered, sometimes you go, you want to get information, because I do not have a lot of reading. There are no libraries around, yeah? And maybe something that I'm talking about is something that is technical, is under research, and you know, getting information is difficult. So when you go in the field and you talk, I want to impart the same information to community members, sometimes somebody would want to challenge, you know (Peter M., RSP).

The obstacles of limited resources were exacerbated by the *level of need* that is

to be addressed, both in terms of poverty and threats to the environment.

> There's so many challenges and so many things that need to be sorted out. And I think that's one of our burdens that we have to bear here in Kenya as A Rocha Kenya. I think many of the other A Rocha projects around the world don't have quite such pressing, or so many such pressing, almost desperate, conservation issues. 'Cause there's actually more partners around and people who've got the skills and abilities and a bit more reason around (Colin, ARK).

> I suppose it is the hope and prayer thing, 'cause it's [*word inaudible*] to be pessimistic. And faced with both environmental degradation, brokenness, and also organizational issues and brokenness that, kind of just find that overwhelming at times (Lynton, ARK).

Yeah. You know there is a lot of demand for all those things, but you know, it is hard to do them all together in the community (Edinah, RSP).

Another obstacle, as I have said, is because of the poverty. The varied poverty indexes. Because you can go somewhere, you find that the poverty index is approximately 78%. Now, to tell that person that you are need to be empowered. He looks at you and said, how, and when, because it will take long for him to get empowered. Eh, he's hungry now (Wycliffe, RSP).

Dependency syndrome develops from a combination of deep need and a learned

expectation that others will take care of you. This impedes work with the communities,

particularly when using an empowerment or facilitation approach. It also breaks the

flow of learning, as community members are less likely to engage in activities and

therefore miss the opportunity to gain new skills from them.

And also sometimes, you might go into the community, somebody tells you that he wants you to construct that improved stove. So he'll just put that clay there, everything there, then he walks away. So, because you have gone there, he has paid some little money, now he thinks that that work is yours. You do it, and you leave it. Those are part of the difficulty I find. So, you find that when that improved stove starts cracking or getting spoiled, this person will just blame you. Whereby, he was supposed to be there when you were constructing it. Then you explain to him how to take care of the improved stove, but since he was not there, then he won't even take care. Those are some of the problem that we find in the community (Aggrey, RSP).

When, in applying my knowledge, my learning, my experience, you know, there's some community members who still think when you go to them, you have a package, yeah? You are bringing things to them. So it's still, because you want to work with them, yeah? You share, whatever you are doing, you do them with the community members. They still want to look at you as an expert, somebody who is just bringing things to them, you know (Peter M., RSP).

The first thing is that, most of the people in the community, when you tell them, if you want to do something, you are to give, or you are to do it by yourself, they want you to give. For example, some of them, they are after hand outs. So, if you are not keen enough, and advise that person accordingly, you'll find that you'll not be moving, because that person will be always in need of a hand out, of which I don't have. Mine is just to give a technical advice (Shumbu, RSP).

Different personal and interpersonal barriers were impeding action on learning for participants from both organizations. Some ARK participants talked about aspects of their *personalities* – like introversion and cynicism – preventing them from applying things they had learned. The general challenges of *interpersonal interactions* were sometimes an issue for members of both organizations. More specifically, they talked about the obstacles raised by other *people's attitudes and perceptions*, which presented difficulties in conveying a message and convincing others of the importance of certain work or to participate in activities.

> The barriers is things to do with, I would say, the perspective people have. We have people who are just interested in development and what they are able to gain from the environment. To the extent that they don't really care. Chopping out trees and putting up new plantations which they've not even been proven whether they'll be viable or not (Henry, ARK).

Similarly, the necessity of *relying on the actions of others* – official decision makers, family, community members – can prevent actions from being implemented. A few participants were also frustrated by the *different approaches* other people sometimes adopted, which pushed these people or organizations to pursue different priorities, or contributed to dependency syndrome amongst the communities with which they were working.

There were several interpersonal obstacles that related especially to situations of conflict. There were a constellation of barriers concerning *fears, threats, and change* that affected RSP participants in particular. Essentially, many people fear change or the unknown (especially in the communities, but also among the staff), and those bringing in such change were sometimes threatened.

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Especially when you want to impact new ideas. There is always that resistance to change as usual. And people refer it to fear of the unknown. You know, because those new ideas and approaches, they have never been put into practice with certain communities and certain individuals. So there will always be that fear that, you know, because you know something that they have already practised (Director, RSP).

Political strife was sometimes a problem, both within committees and communities, and from the elected officials. Finally, one participant mentioned *spiritual warfare*, which she felt was challenging the Christian work of the organization.

Organizational barriers consisted primarily of *busyness and distractions*, particularly at ARK where staff were tempted to engage in a wide variety of activities and struggled to do them all well.

Now, in a way I shouldn't really be saying this, because I'm not really good at practising what I preach in this respect. I know the theory but it's something I do struggle on to carry out, simply because of the amount of things that I end up doing, that often communication, writing a letter to somebody or going to see someone is ousted by deadlines and whatever (Colin, ARK).

I think the nature of our work as a hospitality centre as well as doing the conservation work is a massive distraction to the overall work. I think it's very easy to get distracted into the hospitality side of things and sorting out stuff for guests rather than focussing on the actual conservation work, [*mumbling:* that we're meant to be doing?] (Colin, ARK).

Similarly, a few participants complained of *overwork*, and the inability to master skills, because there were too many different activities being attempted, resulting in being a *jack of all trades, master of none*. Finally, there were some issues within the organizations related to a *lack of follow up* and a *lack of leadership*.

These barriers highlight the importance of contextual factors in influencing the degree to which people are able to put their learning into action. Context, however, can also facilitate action. Participants were not questioned directly about factors that helped

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them to put their learning into action, but a few of them talked about this. Henry was supported by being in a community with similar ideas that was doing activities he could plug into. Everlyne emphasized the capacity building and training provided by the organization that helped her to learn in a way that allowed her also to apply that learning. Similarly, the Director of RSP described how the evaluation process and related training helped him to understand and act on the value of participation in development work.

8.3 Discussion

As noted in Chapter 2, the downplaying of social action and social change outcomes in transformative learning theory is one of its primary critiques (Cranton 2006). Action is foundational to the theory in the sense that the function of learning is to guide action and decision making, and in his later writings, Mezirow recognizes the importance of action, stating that: "Transformative learning focuses on creating the essential foundation in insight and understanding essential for learning how to take effective social action in a democracy" (Mezirow 2008, 30). Yet in describing the desired end of learning, Mezirow still focuses primarily on personal change and transformation rather than action outcomes. He is leery of championing specific actions as an end goal of learning, because this would be indoctrination. He also argues that contextual factors affect a person's ability to carry out intended actions, and therefore actions cannot be a reliable indicator of learning (Mezirow 1989). Therefore: "Action in transformation theory means making a decision, not necessarily an immediate behavior change" (Mezirow 1994, 226).

In the context of sustainability, including both the environmental and development components, the entire enterprise is striving toward particular social goals. As such, social change through personal, social, and collective action is the desired end goal of related learning. It cannot be assumed, however, that individual transformation of consciousness will lead to transformation of individual behaviour or societal realities (Schugurensky 2002; Gravett 2004). Thus, there is an urgency within the sustainability project to move learning responses beyond transformed consciousness and intentional decision making to effective action. This urgency, and a related sense of responsibility, was obvious in the way participants spoke about the application of their learning, as highlighted by the emphasis placed by many participants on being a model or example to their community. In the RSP feedback workshop, Mary, talked about how development and learning are both about facilitating change in people; it is a process, not of commanding, but to change "slowly by slowly". Peter M. agreed, observing that learning is all about behaviour change and development is all about behaviour change (to general agreement amongst the others). Through development, he noted, they conserve what is good, and discard what is not. In general, acting on the learning that occurred seemed to be an obvious outcome of learning for the participants in this research: "When you have knowledge, you have to practice it, yeah?" (Peter M., RSP).

The focus on societal change was so intense that it was sometimes difficult to get participants to describe their personal barriers to their learning because they jumped immediately to describing factors that prevented others they were trying to teach or

share their learning with from adopting these new ideas or practices. When this was

raised in the ARK feedback workshop, Roni responded that this might be so

> [...] because that's on the forefront of our goal here at ARK, to see other
> people's behaviours changed (Roni, ARK).

The relationship between action and learning was a continuing theme throughout the

workshop. A conversation ensued about whether learning can happen if it does not lead

to action. Roni noted that learning can be a very long term process, because of all the

internal and external barriers that prevent both learning and action from taking hold.

Colin added that this is why ARK is committed to having a long term presence in the

community, and that is why they are working to change not only behaviour, but also

belief systems. The discussion concluded with the thought that learning by doing, or

embodied learning, might overcome barriers better than learning by thinking, and the

importance of combining thinking and action was recognized.

A similar conversation took place in the RSP feedback workshop, in which

participants were asked about the relationship between the training they are given and

putting what they are learning into action. Peter A. said that they must convey the

message from training to the community and that the learning process is not complete

until the training and the application in the community are linked. Shumbu emphasized

that it is their duty to go into the community to apply skills in the community, while

Aggrey said that they need to have full knowledge themselves to teach others. Mary

returned to the idea of action by saying that practical application adds value, meaning

that acting or doing helps them to learn more. Peter A. illustrated this by talking about

how they can learn a new technology in a workshop, but the community may

understand it differently than they were taught in the workshop, so they learn from that. When teaching in numerous communities, they get multiple perspectives on what they learned in the training.

Beyond the importance of action and learning for sustainability, there is a more broadly applicable reason for paying attention to action with respect to learning. In the preceding chapters, I have described the importance of instrumental learning and embodied learning processes for learning both in terms of adopting necessary skills and in terms of more profound personal transformation. As such, the action that expresses something learned can help to solidify, intensify, or extend a learning process. For example, Stanley has applied his learning about creation care by sharing about it at church. And this has extended his learning:

> They help me to learn a lot. Even preaching helps me learn. It's when you are sharing a message, preaching, or speaking to people about your faith, your belief, or about what the Bible says, is when you learn more yourself [...] Sometimes when I have said something, that's when it really makes sense. I'm like, wow, it's true! It's very true that you get converted by a message you are delivering (Stanley, ARK).

The mutually reinforcing relationship between learning and action is captured by Paulo Freire, who saw action and reflection as a continual and mutually reinforcing process. He describes dialogue, for instance, as having

> ...two dimensions, reflection and action, in such radical interaction that if one is sacrificed – even in part – the other immediately suffers...When a word is deprived of its dimension of action, reflection automatically suffers as well; and the word is changed into idle chatter, into *verbalism*, into an alienated and alienating 'blah'...On the other hand, if action is emphasized exclusively, to the detriment of reflection, the word is converted into *activism* (Freire 1972, 75-76).

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Thus,

> ...from a Freirian perspective, it can be argued that transformative learning is really transformative when critical reflection and social action are part of the same process...education is understood as praxis: reflection and action upon the world in order to transform it (Schugurensky 2002, 63).

Richard Rohr, a Franciscan priest and founding director of the Centre for Action and Contemplation, gives even greater power to action and engagement as the key elements for personal transformation, downplaying the role of cognitive processes like reflection even further.

> Call it pragmatism if you will, but we tend to find out if things are true or false by engagement *with* them instead of thinking or theorizing *about* them. True action never permits the delusion that we will always understand everything. The advantage to this hands-on approach to life is that it can often serve as its own corrective, if we are willing to learn and listen. It can keep us humble and growing and trying again, or we can remain forever in our heads with utterly untested theories and theologies (Rohr 2003, 69-70).

> [I]n the final analysis, we live our way into a new kind of thinking, while we in the West have always thought we could think our way into a new way of life. You have to run with your own feet to a place where you haven't been before – to a new place. You have to leave the world where you have everything under control, where everybody likes you, and head into a world where you are poor and powerless. And there you'll be converted despite yourself (Rohr 2003, 113).

In the context of learning for sustainability, therefore, action and working toward social change are important for reaching the goals of development and environmental conservation and restoration, but they also contribute to the personal expression and solidification of learning. "Transformative action is both source and consequence of transformative learning" (Heaney and Horton 1990, 91). From the description of barriers presented earlier in this chapter, however, it is clear that there are factors that prevent this cycle of learning and action to flow. In the cases studied in this

research, these barriers arose from various sources, including the physical and social environment, the organizational context, and the personalities of the participants. Given the importance of action to both the learning process and to sustainability, overcoming these barriers is imperative.

While this research did not specifically investigate factors that support or catalyse action, several themes were suggested by the findings. One theme is the importance of learning relevant skills. As discussed earlier, Mezirow (1978) does not focus on this type of skill-related instrumental learning because his concern is transformative learning, which is assumed to derive primarily from learning in the communicative domain (Mezirow 1978). My findings, however, revealed that instrumental learning, such as skill building, can contribute to transformative learning and action. Furthermore, acquiring necessary skills helps individuals move from a change of consciousness and a decision to act, to the actual implementation of behaviour. The application or change reported by participants who experienced transformative learning fit generally into three categories: an internal shift in attitude that transformed their experience of a particular situation or activity; sharing new ideas with others; and engaging in new activities, as outlined in Chapter 6 above. The latter application often required employing new skills and instrumental knowledge, such as farming in a different way, planting indigenous trees, careful use of resources and waste disposal, and even relating to people, such as people living with HIV/AIDS, in a different way. In many cases, participants would not have been able to engage in these activities without training of some kind.

Transformative learning only accounted for a small portion of the learning shared by participants. The vast majority of the learning, and associated action, was in the instrumental domain. Participants from both organizations received training in activities such as bird ringing, sustainable agriculture, appropriate technology, and community development. It can be expected that they would have been less able to engage in action without this training, and that their action would have been less effective. Everlyne described how training provided after program evaluation allowed her to implement what she had learned about entry and exit strategies:

> From the recommendation after evaluation, they also gives us a way forward. There is a document, they give and brief on every department. And they also brief the staffs. They have staff meeting that we are being briefed on every department. And when we are being briefed, we do it as a program, not a health officer, not agriculture officer. With their input, we came out with one document, that now we go and implement on the field. Because actually, we have to go by the rules of the donors. After evaluation, they recommend the strategies we go through, and they take to donors. So whatever we do here, it is also reflected there. That's how we work [...] we are always trained. Different consultants comes from Nairobi to assess and give us more inputs on every department (Everlyne, RSP).

Another catalyst for action recognized within the literature is community support. Mezirow (1993), acknowledges this in his most action-conscious paper:

> Adult education for social action involves three phases in a process: (1) creating an awareness of the need for change by critical reflection and the introduction of new perspectives, (2) encouraging affective learning leading to a feeling of solidarity with others committed to change and (3) facilitating instrumental learning about how to overcome situational, emotional or knowledge constraints on action (189).

Similarly, Gravett (2004) discovered that:

> ...continual supportive relationships and a supportive environment seem to be essential when people are trying out new roles (Taylor 1998; Mezirow 2000) so that problems encountered may be addressed in time, and successes celebrated,

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thereby reinforcing new perspectives, and strengthening competence and self-confidence in new roles (269).

This also links to the issue of context:

> Context is especially relevant in explaining the connections between individual and social transformation. For instance, a supportive social environment, a social reality that is susceptible of transformation (i.e., a viable collective project), and a sense of community are important elements in creating the conditions for social transformation (Schugurensky 2002, 62).

These statements correspond with Henry's description of being in a community of people with shared ideas that was engaged in directed action and how this helped him engage in action:

> So, it's when I was here is when I'm seeing all these things around me, I think: oh, I think I can help in this manner (Henry, ARK).

More broadly, participants in both organizations emphasized the supportive and caring environment their organizations provided for them, which was key to allowing them to do their work. At ARK, this was manifested in the community emphasis, and the practice of communal prayer, while at RSP, the most evident expression was the teamwork model through which they work. For both organizations, the level of need they are trying address, and the limited resources with which they are trying accomplish their work, are enormous barriers, but together, they are empowered to try.

Having this community support encourages individuals to change their actions or engage in new actions. Community is also an accountability forum in which individuals can challenge each other on the degree to which they are faithfully living out values or commitments. This was particularly obvious at ARK where cross-cultural interactions brought out inconsistencies in the status quo of different cultures, as

described in Chapter 5. Finally, collaborative engagement can help to transform barriers

over which individuals by themselves have no control or insufficient capacity to effect

change. For example, some ARK participants spoke of a desire to dispose of waste in a

less harmful fashion but could not do so because infrastructure was lacking. At the

same time, ARK was collaborating with the Watamu Marine Association to begin a

recycling program for plastics in the area. In RSP's context, traditional beliefs and

practices, and more recent social developments, such as dependency syndrome, were

enormous barriers that would have been insurmountable for an individual to address. As

a group, though, they had the critical mass to begin transforming community

expectations about development and facilitating them in empowerment models.

Working with other organizations with similar approaches, and sharing their techniques

through exchanges and mutual training pushed these efforts even further.

The necessity of working toward action through learning processes is

unavoidable:

> If the analysis is correct that (a) we need to move toward ecojustice and
> sustainability, and (b) our current situation is unsustainable, any learning that
> doesn't lead to individual behavioural and therefore social change is not
> successful. Yet this societal change cannot be prescribed: Ecojustice education
> should develop the capacity for change, rather than imposing a particular type of
> change on pupils or students (Jucker 2004, 22).

Finger and Asún (2001) suggest that there is no solution to the sustainability crisis

except through individual and collective learning, through which we must "learn our

way out" of the destructive systems and practices we have created. Yet, Mezirow's

concern about indoctrination remains. How can enduring learning for sustainability that

leads to significant individual and societal change be achieved while avoiding

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imposition and prescription? While it will seem counterintuitive to those whose experience with religion and faith communities has been largely authoritarian and legalistic, this research demonstrates that working at these issues within a community of faith, using the theology, language, and practices of faith, is one way this can happen. Some faith practices, like prayer and Bible study, can facilitate critical reflection, though in a form that is somewhat different than Mezirow envisioned. Likewise, collective Bible study can provide a platform for rational discourse. By introducing sustainability learning into the broader framework of a personal faith, it can be integrated fully and almost seamlessly into an individual's meaning structures. Finally, the community of faith can provide the impetus, the organizational capacity, and the necessary support and training for moving beyond meaning perspective transformation to meaningful action, as an individual and in society.

8.4 Summary

This chapter addressed the vital though understudied question of translating learning into action. Action occurred at the personal, social, and collective levels among the research participants, but was hindered by a variety of barriers, particularly the insufficient resources with which they were trying to address enormous need. The findings illustrate how action in this context is both a response to this need, and a response to the learning in itself. It also helps to consolidate and deepen learning. Barriers to action can be overcome, in part, by capacity building and the acquisition of skills, and through supportive communities. The connections between learning

outcomes, processes, and action will be considered further in the context of faith communities and sustainability work in the final chapter.

Chapter 9: Conclusion

9.1 Learning, Faith, and Sustainability: A Context for Research

The impetus for this research lies in the ongoing need to build a world with greater ecological integrity and social and economic justice. Of the many different forces that contribute to this massive project, I focussed on adult learning – a key driver of individual and social change (Finger and Asún 2001; Orr 2004; Muro and Jeffrey 2008) – within the context of faith-based NGOs. The vital force that NGOs have become within the sustainability project is undeniable, but the significant faith-based cohort within that family has until recently been largely ignored and understudied (Berger 2003; Sider and Unruh 2004). Therefore, this research sought to explore how individual learning emerges from the intersection of faith and the pursuit of sustainability within FBOs working in Kenya, East Africa. As a developing country facing significant environmental and developmental challenges (ETC East Africa Ltd 2006; UNDP 2007; NEMA 2009) that are being addressed by an abundance of NGOs and FBOs (Kameri-Mbote 2000) within a strong culture of faith (Karanja 2008), Kenya was an ideal location for this work. Transformative learning theory (Mezirow 1991b; Mezirow 2008) provided the theoretical framework from within which learning was considered.

9.2 Research Objectives: Conclusions and Contributions Summarized

The first objective of the research was *to describe the group identity and function of organizations combining a faith basis with sustainability work in Kenya.* Findings related to this objective contribute to the small but growing literature on the

increasing role FBOs are playing in working toward sustainability (Gardner 2002;

Dicklitch and Rice 2004; Bradley 2009; Bhagwat *et al.* 2011), answering the call for

scholars to "...analyze, chronicle, advance, publicize, and when necessary, criticize this

movement and its various manifestations" (Gottlieb 2007, 90). The research findings

outlined in Chapter 4 describe the variety in types of faith affiliation and detail how

these affiliations influence the mission, programming and daily practice of the

organizations (Hefferan 2007; Haluza-DeLay 2008). The results demonstrated that

while FBOs face some unique challenges, they offer significant strengths in terms of

access and influence within communities in contexts such as Kenya's. Further thoughts

on the function of FBOs within the sustainability project are provided in section 9.3.1.

The second objective was *to illustrate and compare how the social and cultural

contexts formed by FBO communities within Kenyan society inform individual learning*.

This objective speaks to a recognized gap in transformative learning theory concerning

the role that social context plays in learning (Clark and Wilson 1991; Cranton 2006;

Taylor 2007). By considering learning within the specific contexts of two FBOs, and

applying it within a non-Western context, the research provided numerous opportunities

to observe and analyse contextual factors. Factors within the FBOs that contributed to

learning (and the ability to put learning into action) included supportive communities,

mentor relationships, teamwork, and solid training and evaluation structures. The

impact of organizational context on learning will be discussed further in sections 9.3.3

and 9.4.2.

The third objective sought *to document the transformative learning outcomes among individuals within FBOs*. This objective provided an opportunity to highlight the types of learning that are relevant to sustainability activities, which included the sustainability framework, environment/conservation, skills, community work, interpersonal engagement, and personal and faith learning outcomes. I also explored the domains of learning provided by theory (Mezirow 1991b; Mezirow 2008), demonstrating the interwoven nature of the domains and the importance of the instrumental domain (Chapter 6). An introspective domain was added to encompass personal learning that did not fit into the other domains. This introspective learning, along with instrumental learning, laid the foundation for the transformative learning that occurred.

The fourth objective was *to explore the processes FBO participants undergo when engaging in learning*. Through the data collected for this objective, the research continues and extends the debate about the degree to which learning processes are entirely rational and cognitive. Others have suggested that learning must include spiritual and emotional components (Cranton and Roy 2003; Kovan and Dirkx 2003; Cranton 2006). My findings agree with these arguments and also suggest the importance of embodied learning processes (Chapter 7). In addition, training provided by the workplace was the primary learning process for RSP participants, and interpersonal interaction instigated learning for participants from both FBOs. Critical reflection remains difficult to study empirically (Kreber 2004), while evidence of

discourse highlighted the communal aspect of the learning process for participants in both organizations.

The final objective sought *to examine and explain the relationships between individual learning and transformation, and the social action and social change that can emerge from them.* The relationship between individual transformation and social action is not adequately explained in the theory (Cranton 2006; Taylor 2007; Sims and Sinclair 2008). Since sustainability is grounded in social action and change, active application of learning outcomes is key to the purpose of the research. The results revealed action to be an integral expression of learning while simultaneously contributing to the learning process by consolidating learning outcomes. Action responses to learning took the form of personal action at home and at work, social action that extended individual learning to others, and collective action that built on personal and social learning, and individual and social action, to move communities to collaborate. For Kenyan participants, social action was often manifested in a desire to be an example to people in their communities; this was a key expression of their learning and their roles as staff at an FBO. While action is not an explicit priority in transformative learning theory, in the context of the sustainability project, it is important both in so far as it moves society closer to its sustainability goals, and as a way for individuals to express and consolidate their learning. Finding ways to overcome barriers to learning, such as teaching relevant skills, and building supportive communities, is therefore imperative. In section 9.3.4, learning outcomes, processes, and applications are considered further in the context of learning for sustainability.

9.3 Broadening the Discussion

The previous section summarized the research objectives and the basic conclusions that were drawn for each. The following section integrates different components of the research – sustainability, faith, NGOs and learning – to draw links between the findings and the broader literature, building conclusions and raising new questions.

9.3.1 Faith and Sustainability[12]

In reflecting on the identity and function of FBOs and the role that faith can play within the sustainability project, there are two aspects of FBO work I wish to highlight. One is the perception, which is present in the literature (Goody 2003), but which I encountered to a greater extent in casual conversations about my work, especially with people in North America, that FBOs discriminate in their work. Specifically, a perception exists that they only help members of their own faith, show favouritism to them, or provide services on the condition that beneficiaries convert to their faith. This is a grave criticism that has historical basis, and may still be relevant to some FBOs today. It is an important critique for this research because of the potential for FBOs to skew and undermine the sustainability project.

I was not able to observe the provision of services closely enough to determine if this sort of discrimination was taking place on the ground, but based on the self-reported practices of the FBOs I studied, such practices are not nearly as widespread as some people assume. As mentioned in Chapter 4 (Table 4.4), many of the organizations

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stated explicitly on their websites and in other publications that they do not discriminate in this way. Others that I interviewed gave similar statements orally. While many organizations work through church structures, they claim that this practice allows them to reach the entire community. Given the widespread practice of faith in Kenya, and the weakness of other social institutions, it is credible that working through churches and church structures is a legitimate way to reach those most at need, whether they participate in the church or not. Some organizations do target Christians specifically for their work, but these are organizations, like Care of Creation, which are doing education work and are using church leaders as disseminators of a message and agents of change throughout the community.

A second point concerns the potential of churches, and by extension FBOs, which have an obvious link to churches, to act as social resources in the sustainability project in countries like Kenya. The Global North has become largely secular and does not always recognize the fundamental importance of faith, and its ideas, practices and institutions in other parts of the world. The church (or mosque, or temple) may be the only functioning social network in a Global South community, and its potential for connecting to people and providing a nexus of organization should not be dismissed (Haynes 2007; Ranger 2008). Organized religion, or faith communities, can function as channels for building social capital; through shared values and convictions, collective activities, and fellowship, members of these groups build social connections, trust, cooperation, and systems of reciprocity (Thomas 2005; Khan and Bashar 2008). In the questionnaires and unstructured interviews, many FBOs reported using local churches

to access community members, either to provide services or to deliver an educational message. The existence of an organized structure through which people in need can be accessed, information can be gathered, and services can be dispersed is central to action on the sustainability project.

Furthermore, in countries like Kenya where faith is taken seriously, movements that require profound change in thought and action, such as sustainability, are being successfully executed through religious channels, as the examples in Chapter 4 and the case studies in Chapter 5 reveal. As suggested in Section 2.2.4, faith can influence loyalties and convictions in a unique way (Oelschlaeger 1994; Gottlieb 2007). In part, this is because faith engages people on a moral level, and sustainability issues, particularly on the environmental side, are in essence about morality. As the results show, faith not only has the capacity to engage moral issues in a way that science and technical approaches cannot, it also plays a role in shaping and driving both values and behaviour by providing a framework through which values, beliefs, and experiences can be woven into an integrated moral vision, such as creation care (Conradie *et al*. 2005). Because faith traditions have extensive experience in facilitating personal transformation and self-discipline in individuals' daily lives, the moral vision that is nurtured through the work of these FBOs is likely to blossom into action and behaviour change as it relates to sustainability (Oelschlaeger 1994).

The power of faith-based initiatives to encourage transformative action related to the environment and development is even greater in a place like Africa where religion, faith, and spirituality are ubiquitous. The Christian church, for instance, is

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growing more quickly in Sub-Saharan Africa than anywhere else in the world (Mwaura

2008). In Kenya, the ubiquity of faith and religion is seen in the common practice of

prayer to open and close meetings, in shop names (e.g., God's Will Hair Salon; Glory

Chemists), and slogans, like "God is Able" and "Glory be to God", pasted on public

transportation vehicles. These examples illustrate that, unlike much of the faith that is

practised in the Global North, the African expression of religion is not segregated from

the rest of life. "[T]he belief that there is harmony and mutual interdependency between

the spiritual and physical, and between the individual and social realms" (Isaac 1993,

19) is at the very heart of the African worldview. Thus, the delivery of sustainability

programs through organizations that are able to marry the physical and the spiritual is

both appropriate, and likely to succeed:

> [B]y working with church leaders to explain conservation issues in a theological language that they can relate to, we find that we are able to bring an environmental message which is more likely to be accepted by Christian communities than a message from a secular conservation group which does not touch on its spiritual relevance. Once Christians are convinced of the link between conservation and faith, they are often highly motivated to act and do something about it even if they were not particularly interested before (Sluka *et al.* 2011, 113).

The holistic approach that many FBOs adopt goes beyond the integration of the

spiritual and the physical discussed above, but also incorporates the marriage of

development and environmental concerns. For several decades, practitioners in

development and environmental conservation have been trying to overcome the conflict

between economy and environment and to integrate these two global concerns. The

publication of *Our Common Future* is a testament to this endeavour (WCED 1987). At

the same time, approaches to development that are empowering, relevant, and culturally

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appropriate have been sought. The FBOs I observed in Kenya provide hopeful examples of how these goals can be achieved. Community groups are increasing their agricultural yield, practising water conservation, and decreasing their dependence on a fragile forest as outlined in Chapters 4 and 5. Church leaders among the groups I studied are recognizing the importance of the environment, both practically and theologically, and carrying the message to their congregations, who are planting trees. Teenagers are able to attend secondary school through money raised by ecotourism. Church groups are supporting governments at international climate negotiations. All of these embody an integration of the whole person – material and spiritual – and the whole community – human and natural.

It is not my intention to suggest that FBOs are perfect or that they are superior to or more effective than secular sustainability organizations. Rather, the results show that FBOs have innate strengths, unique contributions, and helpful lessons for advancing the sustainability project as a whole.

9.3.2 Learning, Faith, Tradition, and Community

Applying transformative learning theory, which is firmly rooted in Western, secular philosophical thought, in the context of communities of faith within the African culture, provides opportunities for new insights. The findings revealed several aspects of learning that contribute to thinking on the theory. One of these is the necessity of creating an introspective category when coding for learning domains. While the learning outcomes that were assigned to this domain were not all concerned with faith, faith-related learning was one of the main types of learning that did not fit into any of

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the domain categories (e.g., instrumental and communicative) provided by the theory. Personal identity and beliefs are closely related to faith, whether one is "religious" or not.

Several learning processes can also be highlighted. Bible studies were shown to be a potential opportunity for rational discourse, particularly when they promote open and equitable participation and encourage questioning and reflection. While I do not claim that these conditions will exist in all Bible studies, church services, or equivalent activities in other faith traditions, the findings from this research demonstrate that they can exist, thus encouraging discourse and transformative learning. Similarly, prayer can be a vehicle for critical reflection, by which the individual works through questions and challenges in conversation with God.

Applying the theory in these contexts also raised some questions. These thoughts arose as I reflected on the theory in the context of the data and results, and in the context of my personal experience of faith and the experience of faith I observed in my research participants. The process of trying to understand Kenyan culture, particularly its more traditional elements, also contributed to these reflections. For me, these questions address some of the basic philosophical assumptions of the theory.

In his early writings, Mezirow (1978) portrays culture quite negatively, describing it as a force that "...facilitates or inhibits movement toward maturity by dictating the tempo of change and by providing or denying opportunity for people to take the meaning perspectives of others" (106). This is especially the case for traditional cultures, where authority figures are prominent. In contrast, he argues that critical

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reflection and rational discourse are necessary learning processes because they ensure

that learning does not involve assimilation (Mezirow 1998). Both Kenyan society and

the social world of faith could be described as traditional cultures. Elders, family, and

church leaders are highly respected in Kenya; these authorities are granted greater

influence in teaching and decision making. Churches are also traditional in many ways,

and depending on the particular faith community, can also be quite authoritative. Thus,

I questioned how the dim view the theory takes of authority and tradition can be

reconciled with communities that value tradition and respect authority, particularly in

light of the learning outcomes and processes my study revealed.

While the negative view of tradition and authority seems to assume that they are

both rigid and cannot abide any challenge or change, many traditions evolve and adapt

over time. In his exploration of moral theory, for example, MacIntyre (2007), illustrates

this capacity for change in the concept of a living tradition, which he describes as "...an

historically extended, socially embedded argument, and an argument precisely in part

about the goods which constitute that tradition" (222). The Christian church can be

understood as a living tradition that adapts to new ideas and social situations, and

develops new conceptions of God and of itself over time (Armstrong 2009). Some

pockets within the church body may be more resistant to such change than others, but

the potential for change exists. This capacity for internal argument and adaptation was

apparent in RSP's context, both in the dialogue between RSP and the Quaker church

about condom use, and in the organization's work to change cultural taboos against

women planting trees. In the latter case, RSP was gently employing the Christian

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tradition to challenge the cultural tradition; learning occurred through a meeting of, and dialogue between, two different traditions.

Likewise, authorities are not always dictators of thoughts and ideas, but can serve as guides and mentors while engaging in dialogue. For instance, at ARK, Colin served as an authority on creation care, not by forcing others to adopt these ideas, but by presenting new ideas, inviting people to think about them, and serving as an expert to answer questions and provide guidance. By these examples, it appears that transformative learning can occur and is relevant within contexts of tradition and authority. While I suspect that Mezirow is referring to less flexible forms of tradition and authority in his critical statements (Mezirow 1996), these distinctions need to be made.

There is also a strong individualistic current running through the theory, assuming that individual autonomy is a final end of learning; learning is a process of self-emancipation (Mezirow 1981). Kenyan culture is more communal and does not necessarily ascribe to individualistic goals (Mbiti 1991; Avoseh 2001). The African answer to Descarte's maxim, "I think, therefore I am", is the proverb, "I am because we are; we are because I am" (quoted in Tisdell 2003). From my observation, Kenyans take pride in this difference between their culture and the West, seeing their culture as more caring and friendly. Faith communities can also be deeply communal, as seen in the intentional community emphasis of A Rocha, in Kenya and internationally, or in my personal background within the Mennonite church. This raises the question of whether transformative learning is relevant in a setting where the individual is given less

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prominence and the community is raised up. Conversely, community may also increase the chance for social action to occur.

Individuals within these communities still need to make meaning of their experiences, and they still benefit from revisiting and revising assumptions that may be distorting their interpretation of their experiences within their reality (Jarvis 1993). In fact, one might argue that one of the reasons for the existence of faith communities is to build a social arena in which this work of seeking and understanding meaning can be done together. The purposes for which community-minded individuals embark on such learning endeavours, however, may emphasize contributing constructively to their community more than achieving their own personal emancipation (Avoseh 2001; Merriam and Ntseane 2008). As such, they will still be learning from within the instrumental, communicative, and transformative domains, and they will still engage in discourse and reflection, but their goals might be different.

Clark and Wilson (1991) noted that Mezirow does not account for the value assumptions in his theory that come from his own context. This research highlighted some of these context-specific value assumptions – such as the role of authority and tradition, and assumptions of individualism – that may need to be questioned and refined, particularly when applying the theory outside its own cultural tradition. Based on these considerations, my preliminary conclusion would be that transformative learning theory is flexible enough to be applied to these different contexts, with some modification and clarification. Ntseane (2011), considering transformative learning theory from an afrocentric learning paradigm, came to a similar conclusion. The

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learning domains need to be expanded to include learning in the realm of faith. The roles that authority and tradition can play within the learning process, both negative and positive, need to be recognized. Finally, an openness to community-minded ways of being and learning would make the theory more relevant to broader social and cultural contexts.

9.3.3 Learning, NGOs, and FBOs

Based on my reading of the NGO and learning literatures, I suggested that NGOs can serve as platforms for learning (Section 2.3.5), and my findings demonstrated that this can certainly be the case. In both of the case FBOs, abundant opportunities for different kinds of learning were available to, and exploited by, staff and volunteers.

Informal learning was present in numerous ways in both organizations. This is the spontaneous, unstructured learning (Merriam *et al.* 2007) that happened when chatting over a meal with someone from a different country, working on an integrated program team, ringing a bird, or interacting with a community member. Both organizations brought together people with different interests and areas of expertise, providing them with ample opportunities for informal sharing of skills and ideas. The cross-cultural interaction that took place at ARK, and the broad exposure to communities experienced by RSP staff also created opportunities for informal learning.

Non-formal learning is usually defined as "...organized learning opportunities *outside* the formal education system" (Merriam *et al.* 2007, 30). The training workshops and exchange visits that were so prominent in RSP participants' descriptions of

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important learning processes are a prime example. ARK, with its smaller capacity, was not necessarily able to offer as many workshops to its staff and volunteers, but they did take advantage of opportunities that arose in the region and recognized a need to be more deliberate about seeking out necessary training for their staff. Their Bible study times were also an important non-formal learning opportunity, providing a setting to consider faith issues in general, and to integrate faith and conservation in particular.

While formal learning, that is, the learning that takes place in institutions and classrooms (Marsick and Watkins 2001), is less often associated with learning in the NGO arena, opportunities for participation at this level of learning also arose. Numerous RSP staff were pursuing university or college degrees while performing their jobs, with the blessing and a small amount of financial support from the organization. For the most part, these programs were supporting the work the staff were doing and their participation in them was thus facilitated by the NGO. Staff from both RSP and ARK also served as instructors at colleges and universities, contributing their own expertise to the training of future practitioners.

Two features of these organizations that struck me as particularly conducive to learning are at least to a degree connected to their faith basis. One is the supportive environment that participants from both organizations described, noting how people cared about each other and prayed for each other in a way that, at least in many of their experiences, did not happen in secular organizations.[13] This support creates an

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[13] It should be noted that a few of the participants, representing both organizations, stated that they had not observed a difference in the degree of support and community they experienced between faith-based and secular working environments.

environment in which people are willing to become vulnerable, and thus more open to questioning and learning. Transformative learning processes, such as reflection and discourse, can be unsettling and difficult (Bush-Gibson and Rinfret 2010), and thus require a safe setting in which to be pursued. As mentioned in Chapter 8, a supportive community can also assist them in overcoming obstacles that may impede their ability to apply their learning in action.

The other feature is the space created by these organizations for their staff and volunteers to consider those deep questions that the literature notes are key to addressing sustainability issues (DeWitt 1995; Rolston 2006). At ARK in particular, staff and volunteers were encouraged to consider larger sustainability issues, the forces that create them, and relate these back to their personal lifestyles and faith commitments. This linking of sustainability with faith and personal life seemed to be a powerful combination for both learning and action for these participants.

> Environmental nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and other 'spontaneously emergent associations' in social movements are among those actors seen as strengthening the lifeworld, and hence, promoting democratic civil society (Walter 2007, 252).

The faith component may enhance an NGO's ability to facilitate resistance to the colonization of state and economic systems into everyday social life.

9.3.4 Learning and Sustainability

Learning was chosen as the subject of this research because of the role it can play as a driver toward sustainability (Finger and Asún 2001; Orr 2004; Muro and Jeffrey 2008). Transformative learning theory provided a theoretical framework for understanding learning, and was selected because it is one of the most comprehensive

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and prominent learning theories in the realm of adult learning (Tisdell 2003; Taylor 2007), and because there is an established body of literature applying this theory to sustainability and natural resource management issues (Diduck 1999; Kovan and Dirkx 2003; Lange 2004; Sims and Sinclair 2008; Kerton and Sinclair 2010). At the same time, transformative learning theory was developed within a more formal adult education setting, and there are consequently ways in which this application can push the boundary of the theory, simultaneously highlighting aspects of learning that are relevant to sustainability.

The stated goal of transformative learning theory is to

...transform problematic frames of reference (mindsets, habits of mind, meaning perspectives) – sets of assumption and expectation – to make them more inclusive, discriminating, open, reflective and emotionally able to change. Such frames are better because they are more likely to generate beliefs and opinions that will prove more true or justified to guide action (Mezirow 2008, 26).

The goal of sustainability is more specific and directed, aiming to "...create an ecologically and socially just world within the means of nature without compromising future generations" (Moore 2005, 78). Some suggest the only way we can achieve this goal is by learning our way out (Finger and Asún 2001); learning not only generates necessary knowledge and understanding about the physical and social worlds in which sustainability must be pursued, but it also enhances adaptability and attention to underlying worldviews and values that shape responses to life situations (Orr 2004; Keen and Mahanty 2006; Merriam *et al.* 2007; Muro and Jeffrey 2008).

These two sets of goals have areas of overlap, particularly in terms of evaluating and modifying assumptions, values, and worldviews. At the same time, learning for

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sustainability has particular needs to serve the specific ends it seeks. My results

highlighted the importance of both instrumental learning and embodied learning

processes. These two pieces are connected, as instrumental learning often occurred

through embodied learning processes. This suggests that these aspects of learning are of

particular importance with respect to sustainability because sustainability is a project

that marries the personal, the social and the physical worlds. The necessity of

understanding both the natural environment and the built environment and their

relationships to each other, and of transforming these relationships, demands

instrumental learning and the processes through which it is acquired.

The negative view of instrumental rationality in the early Frankfurt School, as

described in Chapter 2, derives in part from its critique of capitalism and

industrialization, and their effects on human societies (Finlayson 2005). Sustainability

is working to transform some of these same forces; however, this transformation cannot

be achieved by discounting instrumental ways of thinking and doing. Rather, our

understanding of instrumental rationality needs to change. While recognizing its

potential for manipulation and control, we need to employ instrumental learning to

understand the world in which we strive to live sustainably, and, in concert with

communicative learning, find the best ways to rebuild our social systems and human-

environmental relationships to reflect the values of sustainability.

My findings suggest (see, in particular, Chapter 7) that embodied learning

processes, along with reflection and discourse, will play an important role in this

process. The absence of these embodied learning processes in the theory to this point is

perhaps symptomatic of the Cartesian duality that separates mind and body, and favours mind over body. Scholars and practitioners from a wide variety of fields are working to overcome this duality, including anthropologist Tim Ingold (2000), educator David Selby (2002), and Richard Louv (2008), chairman of the Children and Nature Network. They demonstrate through their work the wholeness of the human experience, its interconnectedness with both the social and physical environments, and consequently, the inextricable relationship between sensory experience and cognitive learning. Louv (2008) and Fazey *et al.* (2005) call attention to the particular importance that hands-on, practical experience and activity play with respect to sustainability issues.

As discussed in Chapter 8, social action is another aspect of learning that pushes the theory when it is applied to sustainability issues. The theory seeks to improve assumptions and expectations so they can serve as better guides for both individual and social action (Mezirow 2008), but does little to facilitate the link between learning and actual implementation through action. The theory and my results agree that barriers exist, both within individuals and in their social and cultural contexts, which prevent action. Thus, implementation of learning in action is not a fair indicator of whether learning has occurred (Mezirow 1989). Because social action and change are at the heart of the sustainability project, learning for sustainability must work not only to transform assumptions and expectations, but also to empower learners to overcome these barriers. This requires learning processes that not only consider personal assumptions, expectations, and habits, but also address social systems that need change so that action can be employed (Diduck *et al.* 2005; Tàbara and Pahl-Wostl 2007).

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In general, learning for sustainability needs to be defined more broadly than simply personal awareness and the refinement of meaning structures. The distinctions made between different types of environmental education illustrate the different levels and dimensions of learning that are required: for example, "environmental adult education" teaches facts, data, and theories about the environment; "adult environmental education" involves acquiring skills and changing personal behaviour; "environmental adult education" involves learning about environmental issues at the social and political level; and "environmental adult transformation" seeks to transform individual worlviews and actions (Bush-Gibson and Rinfret 2010). Learning for sustainability must be holistic, including basic skills and knowledge, awareness of broader political, economic and social issues, consideration of values, beliefs, and worldviews, and an impetus to act at these various levels, personally and collectively (Jarvis 2006; Muro and Jeffrey 2008). Likewise, learning processes must allow space for reflection, discourse, and active exploration and expression. Employing learning to "...create an ecologically and socially just world" (Moore 2005, 78) thus requires a broader range of learning outcomes, domains, and processes than simply generating "...beliefs and opinions that will prove more true or justifiable to guide action" (Mezirow 2008, 26).

In section 2.3.3, I presented a diagram that models the learning process according to transformative learning theory. This figure was not designed as a model to test, but rather as a visual aid to help myself to understand the theory and to direct my readers to the initial understanding of learning I took into the research. Based on the

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data collection and analysis, I have revisited this model and developed several new figures to reflect my current conception of learning as shaped by my research experience. These should not be taken as definitive, but rather as attempts to illustrate new ideas, thus acting as invitations to further discussion and research.

Figure 9.1 is an attempt to capture the interconnected nature of the learning domains. In Figure 2.1, this was depicted through the twisting motion of the learning line. Here, the figure tries to show that almost all learning will have aspects of the instrumental or the communicative, but some learning may be more one than the other. In the inner rectangle, one can imagine learning as a horizontal line that can occur at different points on the vertical axis. Thus, if the learning line is in the middle of the rectangle, instrumental and communicative aspects exist in equal measure, while learning that occurs at the top is primarily instrumental. The broken line that marks the outside of the rectangle demonstrates that learning from either of these domains can potentially flow out into the wider transformative domain.

In Figure 9.1, I did not attempt to include the introspective domain category that arose from the data because it is a newer idea and requires more data and consideration, but I will provide a tentative and speculative illustration of how it might fit into the domain family. Since in many ways, the introspective domain mirrors the communicative domain, I have depicted it as a parallel or subset to communicative learning, as shown in Figure 9.2.

Figure 9.1: The Interconnected Nature of Learning Domains
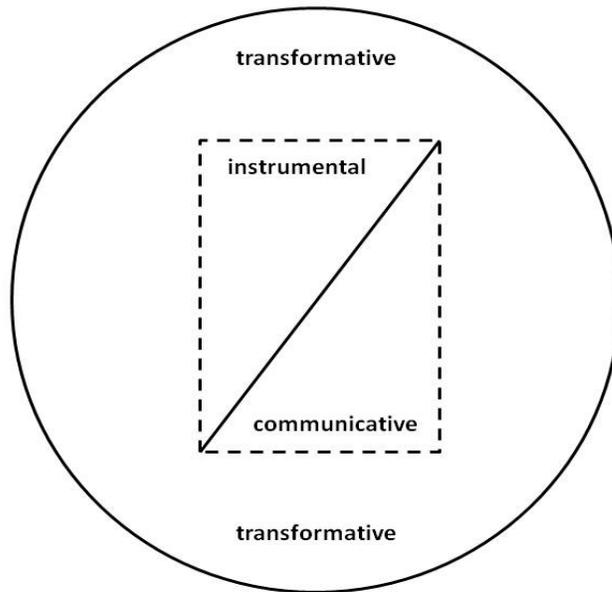
Figure 9.2: Positioning the Introspective Domain
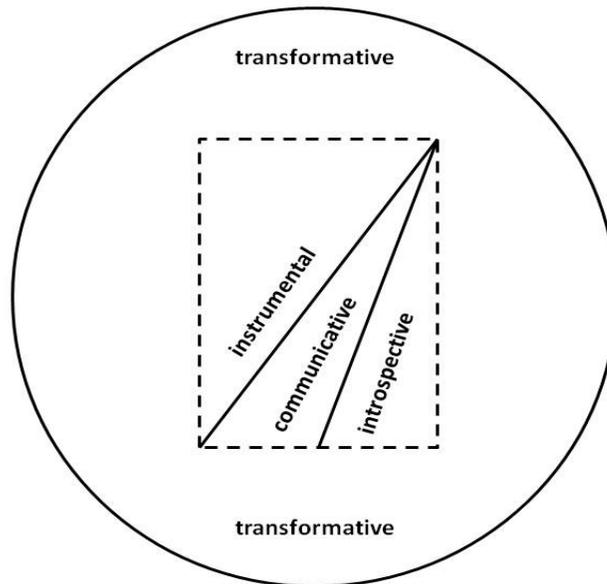
Finally, Figure 9.3 illustrates the learning process. I have included a broader range of learning triggers, learning processes, and outcomes to reflect my findings. Of particular note is the addition of embodied activity along with reflection and discourse. The process is depicted in circular form to emphasize the cyclic nature of learning, especially the interplay between action and learning. Thus, the action that is applied in response to one learning experience may become the experience that triggers a new learning experience. Two paths exist on the left side of the cycle to indicate that some learning is transformative, but not all. The barriers box emphasizes the reality that not all learning can be applied in action, and that this impedes the successful completion of the learning cycle.

Figure 9.3: The Learning Process Revised
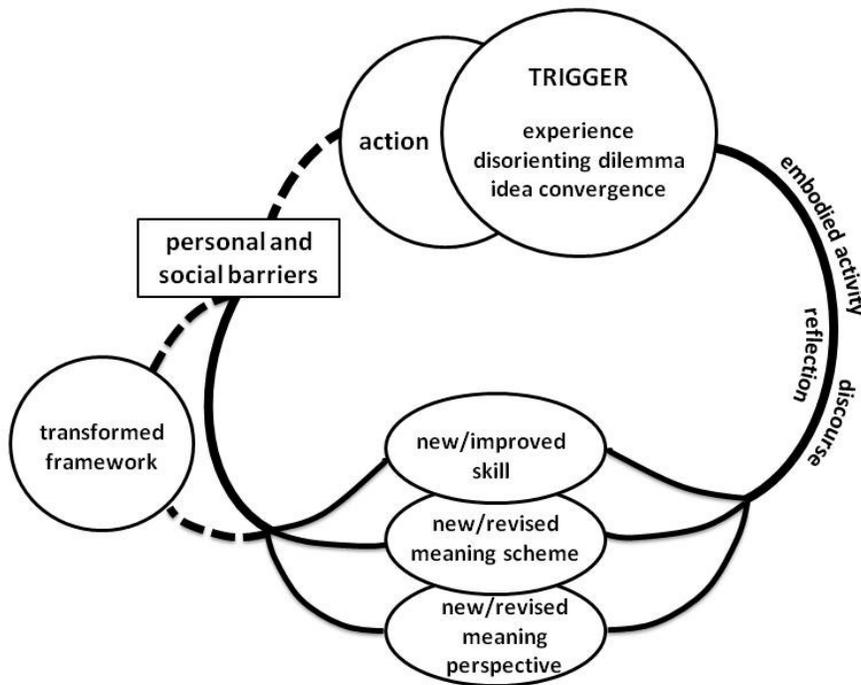
9.4 Recommendations

Several recommendations from the research have been implied by the preceding discussions. In the following section, I will outline specific recommendations pertaining to ideas and directions for future research regarding both the work of FBOs and learning for sustainability. I will also offer some practical suggestions for promoting learning for sustainability in FBOs.

9.4.1 Further Research

There are several ways in which the FBO research could be extended. Due to a lack of time and capacity, this study did not compare the FBOs to secular NGOs doing similar work; however, to obtain a clear understanding of the unique contributions offered and challenges faced by FBOs, a comparative study would be useful. This study only had minimal contact with the beneficiaries of the FBO programs. To further confirm the findings about such issues as discrimination – or lack thereof – in the provision of services, the impact of FBO work, and the general relationships that community members have with the various organizations that come to serve them, follow-up research could focus on community beneficiaries and their perceptions of FBO work in their communities. In work that preceded this research, Sinclair *et al.* (2011) studied the beneficiaries of ARK's ASSETS program and found no discrimination by faith. Thus, some work has already been done in this direction, but there is potential for further investigation. Finally, this work could be extended to different global contexts. Of particular interest would be to investigate the role of FBOs

in North American or European contexts. What role do they play in societies that are largely secular and where other social and political institutions are much stronger?

There are also various learning strands that could be pursued in further research. One of the most notable is the question of capturing reflection in the learning process empirically, and the potential of using journal writing to do this. This portion of my research did not work, but I still see potential for the use of this data collection technique. I suspect the reason it did not work in this research is a combination of circumstance, poor administration of the technique, and possibly a degree of cultural inappropriateness. I suggest that this technique be tried again, but following some suggestions to improve the approach. First, I would test and refine the technique in a culture that is more oriented to writing than is perhaps the case in Kenya. It is also important to choose the journal writers carefully, ensuring that they are people who naturally express themselves in writing, because if they are not, they probably will not complete the exercise. For this reason, initiating the journal activity after a relationship has been built with the research participants is probably advisable. Another alternative would be to have the participants speak their reflections into an audio recorder. The ability to keep in contact with the journal writers and ensure that they are writing would also be helpful. Having them write for a short, intense period may increase the likelihood of the exercise being completed, but if it could be successfully executed, a longitudinal study would also provide rich data.

The findings from this study highlighted the importance of instrumental learning and active, embodied learning processes for learning in the sustainability field. These

are ideas that have received little attention in the transformative learning literature and could be pursued further. Many questions remain to be answered, such as: what particular role does instrumental learning play in building toward transformative learning? How do embodied activities interact with reflection and discourse to drive learning? Can embodied learning processes result in transformative learning independent of reflection and discourse? One avenue through which these question could be pursued is looking at the empowerment of communities that are experiencing sustainable development through facilitation models such as those offered by RSP. In meeting with some of the community groups with whom RSP works, I noticed a great sense of pride and accomplishment as the members displayed their projects to me. This approach seemed to be transforming their sense of themselves as poor, helpless, dependants, to empowered individuals who can take control of their destinies and participate in improving their lives, and the transformation seemed to come from their participation in the development activities.

The learning-action cycle is also an important area for further study. This links to embodied learning processes, since sometimes action can be both a learning process and an expression of, or response to, learning. More work can be done to explore the barriers that prevent action from taking place, and the factors that assist learners in overcoming these barriers. Links can be made here between individual learning and social learning.

This research focussed on the individual sphere of learning (Figure 1.1), but there was widespread evidence in the learning process data of social learning (e.g.,

learning from each other, learning from communities). There is therefore opportunity to scale up to the collective sphere of learning. Research could consider the processes and contextual factors that affect how learning is embedded in and transmitted through the collective within FBOs. The existence of learning networks between FBOs, secular NGOs, government agencies, and other organizations could also be investigated.

9.4.2 Practical Recommendations

Based on the learning process strengths identified in the two case studies, I offer a profile of an organization that encourages learning for sustainability. These recommendations can apply to FBOs or other organizations. A learning organization should provide opportunities for embodied engagement with the natural world so that staff can develop the skills, the knowledge, and the relationship with nonhuman world that sustainability requires. It should also provide opportunities for interaction with communities for all staff, whether they are involved in this aspect of the work or not. Providing space for staff to engage with aspects of the work that is beyond their specific area of focus is also important for learning from each other and for getting a holistic picture of the work that is being done. Organizations should provide training to give staff the capacity to act on learning they have acquired, both at work and beyond, and they should cultivate a supportive environment that creates a safe place for staff to be challenged. Structures for evaluation and supervision, peer learning, and mentoring are key to learning. Finally, by providing space for discourse and stimulation for reflection (like ARK's Bible study, Epilogue, etc.), organizations can encourage staff to learn not

only the practical skills required for their work, but also to consider the broader values and beliefs that are the foundation of their work.

9.5 Concluding Thoughts on Learning, Faith, and Sustainability

David Orr (2004) has stated that: "The crisis we face is first and foremost one of mind, perception and values; hence, it is a challenge to those institutions presuming to shape minds, perceptions, and values" (27). Faith communities are institutions that work to shape minds, perceptions, and values, and by that consideration alone, they have a role to play in the sustainability project. At the same time, questions persist regarding their capacity to promote learning and engage in critical thinking. This critique has been raised in a variety of settings, including my candidacy exam before embarking on this research. While some faith communities can be rigid and find self-critical practices threatening, as a whole, most faith traditions do change and adapt in response to current issues and changing social contexts, as noted above in the discussion about tradition and authority. In fact, Smith (1963) prefers the term "cumulative tradition" over religion, because it captures the reality of this interaction of past and present experiences of faith within a collective, an idea that resonates with MacIntyre's (2007) concept of a living tradition. It is through this process that faith traditions remain relevant within their larger societies, and this process requires both critical reflection and rational discourse.

The development of Christian ecotheologies as described in Chapter 2 is one example of faith communities encountering a disorienting dilemma and responding by critically rethinking their biblical and theological foundations, and thus, also, their

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behaviour and practices. This process can be seen on a more personal level in the transformative learning experiences of some of the ARK participants as they moved into an understanding of and commitment to creation care. On the whole, the participants with whom I interacted were open to new ideas, with respect to both their work and their faith. Admittedly, the process of critical reflection is somewhat different when a supreme divine authority is included in the mix, because rationality, logic, and deliberative discourse are not the only bases for consensus. But ultimately, it is individuals and communities that must discern God's will, and in the absence of those rare divine provisions of stone tablets on mountain tops, this is usually accomplished through study, reflection, community discourse, and praxis. Perhaps the important question is not whether faith traditions can engage in reflection and discourse, but rather how those of secular and faith persuasions can engage in respectful and meaningful discourse within the context of democracy (Habermas 2008).

This thesis has demonstrated the relevance of faith communities and related agencies to the sustainability project in Kenya, where Christianity is deeply established within the social fabric, and other institutions are often weak or untrustworthy. But does this role translate to broader contexts? What about a society like Canada's, which is largely secular, and which has a wide array of functioning social institutions? As noted in the introduction, there are a variety of FBOs engaging sustainability issues in North America, and while further research is necessary to assess the nature and extent of their role, I would like to close by mentioning some examples of faith-based initiatives that are occurring in my own community at the time that I write these pages. On Earth Day

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2012, an ecumenical group in Winnipeg planned a Consumption Sabbath Tent Revival meeting, which included a demonstration walk down a major street, and a worship service near the grounds of the provincial legislature. Another ecumenical group – Spirit and Energy – is forming to address energy issues in Manitoba, through a combination of political advocacy and spiritual practice. Finally, an event entitled "Creation in Peril: What People of Faith Can Do" brought together individuals from various faith communities to discuss addressing issues of environmental decline and climate change from within a faith context.

Events such as these provide interesting opportunities for engagement and learning about sustainability. The Consumption Sabbath, in particular, brought together people from different churches, and from a wide variety of perspectives and personal commitments to sustainability. Several participating churches cancelled their regular service, while others strongly encouraged their congregants to attend. The event included devoted commuter cyclists and families who took the bus for the first time. This mix of people provided a rich opportunity for sharing and learning.

While this is just an anecdotal list of events in one community, it may signal a shift in how people engage with environmental issues. In a political climate that is increasingly hostile to environmental concerns, people are seeking other avenues to express their values and beliefs. Walter (2007) notes that

> ...the maintenance of democratic civil society is premised on the ability of its citizens to creatively organize channels of communication, action, and defense in the face of corporate and state threats to the lifeworld. That is, social movements create counterpublics and counterknowledges challenging the hegemony of dominant corporate and state discourses (259).

These events indicate both the potential for faith communities to serve as counterpublics, and the need that people of faith feel to express their opposition to dominant discourses from within their story of faith and through activities that speak to the whole person, rational, physical, and spiritual.

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Appendix I: Data Collection Tools

Qualitative Questionnaire

Date:_____

Name of organization:_____

The purpose of this questionnaire is to explore the identity and character of your organization. Because it was designed for use with a wide range of organizations, the relevance of the questions may vary; please answer to the best of your ability. In the interest of capturing the diverse experiences of different organizations, some questions have been asked more than once in different ways. If you feel you have already answered a question, feel free to refer to an earlier answer. If you need more space for any of the answers, please use the back side of the page. Thank you for your time and consideration.

1.   What are the primary objectives of your organization?

2.   What are the basic strategies or programs used for achieving these objectives? (If you have a prepared document – ie. annual report, strategic plan – which outlines this information, please feel free to attach it).

3.   What are your organization's achievements with respect to development and environmental sustainability?

        a.   Or, how is the community responding to your work?

4.   What is your organization's philosophy of sustainability? (i.e. how do you define sustainable development or what is vision of development and environmental integrity?)

5.   What are the primary motivating factors for your organization's work?

6.   Please briefly describe the history of your organization. (e.g. How and by whom was it founded? When was it founded?)

7.   Who is your supporting constituency? (e.g., church conference, congregations, individuals, etc.)

8.   Where is your supporting constituency primarily located?

9.   What is the geographic range of your organization?

10.   Who are your beneficiaries and partners?

       a.   Are there religious connections with your beneficiaries and partners?
             Please describe.

11.   How many employees work for your organization?

       a.   In Kenya?

       b.   Elsewhere?

       c.   How many are involved in program related activities?

12.   How many volunteers work for your organization?

       a.   In Kenya?

       b.   Elsewhere?

13.   What is your hiring policy with respect to the religious affiliation or faith
       conviction of your employees?

14.   Please briefly describe your organizational structure. (e.g. chain of command,
       decision making process, etc.)

15.   Please describe your organization's affiliation with religious institutional bodies
       (e.g. formal/informal ties; funding sources; source of personnel; accountability
       to constituency, etc.)

16.   Please briefly describe how your organization's religious affiliation is integrated
       into your organization's work.

17.   How does religion or faith commitment influence the strategies/processes of
       your organization's day to day activities?

Focus Group Schedule

<u>Preamble:</u>
Welcome to today's focus group and thank you for coming. My name is Joanne Moyer. I am a doctoral student at the University of Manitoba in Canada and I am researching work of faith-based NGOs doing environmental and development. I am focussing on how people learn through working within these NGOs. Learning is the process of gaining new knowledge, ideas or perspectives which help us to understand our experiences and to know how to act in future situations. The purpose of this focus group is to discuss your experiences working with the Rural Service Program.

Before we begin, I would like to let you know that I would like to record the session for accuracy and ease of data analysis. Is everyone okay with this? If you do not want to be recorded, please excuse yourself. In our discussion, we want to hear everyone's perspectives; please say what you think and don't worry about what you think I might want to hear or what your neighbour thinks. Please speak clearly and try not to talk at the same time as anyone else. I will try to ensure that everyone gets a chance to speak and will intervene if the conversation gets too far off track. And finally, to respect the confidentiality of your fellow participants, everything shared within the group should stay within the group.

<u>Introduction:</u>

• To begin, I would like everyone to introduce themselves by going around the circle and saying your name, your position in the organization, how long you have been working here, and what you do in your job.

<u>Organizational Identity:</u>

• What are your organization's goals for social and economic development? (write goals on pieces of paper individually)
>   - [RSP terminology: "socio-economic empowerment"]

• What are your organization's goals for environmental conservation? (write goals on pieces of paper individually)

• [share and pile sort goals]

• What is the relationship between these sets of goals? [Have paper, markers, in case people want to draw.]
>   - Could you do one without the other? Why or why not?
>   - How is this relationship expressed in your daily activities? What does it mean as you do your work? Can you think of an example of something you did recently that showed this?

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• How are these goals informed by your religious beliefs, values, and principles?
    - How is this expressed in the work your organization does?

• What are the advantages/strengths in bringing these three things (environment, development, and faith) together?

• What are the obstacles/challenges in bringing these three things (environment, development, and faith) together?

Learning:

Now we are going to shift a bit and talk about learning. As I said at the beginning, learning is the process of gaining new knowledge, ideas or perspectives which help us to understand our experiences and to know how to act in future situations. There are lots of different ways that we learn. For example, we can learn how to do things and about how the world works; we can learn how to communicate and relate to people; and we can learn inside ourselves in terms of what we believe and how we perceive ourselves and the world around us.

• What have you learned from doing this work?
    - This week? This month?

• What triggered this learning? How did it happen?

• How have you applied what you learned?

• How has [name of FBO] affected (either positively or negatively) your learning?
    -What kind of training have you received, formally or informally?
    -How does the organization help or hinder you in improving in your knowledge and skills?

Conclusion:

• In a couple of sentences, how would you describe your experience working with [name of FBO]?

• [provide summary of discussion so far.] Is this an adequate summary of today's discussion? Is there anything you want to add or change?

• The purpose of this project is to study how learning emerges from the work of FBOs focussing on sustainability through both development and environmental projects. Is there anything that has been missed in today's discussion?

[introduce journal writing activity]

Interview Schedules

Interview I: Situating the interviewee

Thank you for agreeing to do this interview. My name is Joanne Moyer and I am a doctoral student at the University of Manitoba in Canada. I am researching the work of faith-based NGOs doing environmental and development work, focussing on learning in these sustainability activities. I am interested in your learning related to your work at [A Rocha/RSP]: what you have learned, how you learned it, and how it has changed you. Today's interview will focus on your personal experiences working with [A Rocha/RSP] and your journey in coming to this work. Throughout the interview, if you want me to repeat or clarify anything, please ask. Also, if there are any questions which you would prefer not to answer, let me know and we will skip to the next question. As we go through the questions, please feel free to pause and take a moment to think about your answers if you need to. Do you have any questions before we begin?

Work:
• Can you tell me about the work you do here? What do you do over the course of a day? A week? [modify for journal writers]
• Overall, what has been your experience working with [A Rocha/RSP]?
      -What are highlights of your experience?
      -What are lowlights of your experience?

Background:
• How long have you been working for this organization?
• How did you come to do this work? What was your journey to this job?
• Have you done other jobs before this one? What were they?
• What is your educational background?
• What is your religious/faith history (briefly)? [be conscious of relationship with interviewee and sensitivity of question]
• What motivated you to get into doing this work?
      -Has your motivation changed since you started doing it? In what ways?

Goals, Objectives, and Faith:
•If s/he participated in focus group: during the focus group, I asked some questions about your goals in your work. You said...(re: development goals, and environmental goals). Is there anything you would like to add to that?
OR
•If s/he didn't participate in the focus group: What are your goals in your work? What are you hoping to accomplish? What difference are you trying to make?
      -for development, for the environment?
• How are these goals informed by your religious beliefs, values, principles? How do you connect your faith/religion to your work on sustainability issues?
      - How is this expressed in the work you do?

• Have you ever experienced any kind of conflict or struggles in doing environment and development work in a faith context? Within yourself? From other people in your community? Can you think of a specific example? What happened? How did you work it out?
• Have you ever worked in a secular NGO? How did it compare to working in a RNGO? Similarities? Differences?

Learning:
• I'll give you a moment to think about the next question. I would like you to tell me a couple of the most important things you have learned doing this work. Remember, learning can happen in different ways: how to do things, how the world works, communicating and relating to people, change in perspective, deep personal transformation, etc. So, what are skills that you've acquired, knowledge you've obtained, new perspectives you've gotten?
>   -[give them time to think and write them down if they want to. Then have them list the learning outcomes. If they struggle, prompt with what they said about learning in the focus group. Prompt to think about when they first starting working there, and also things they may have learned later.]

So, now what's going to happen is, I'll go back, I'll transcribe all of this. Then, I'll look through this list of things that you've said you've learned, and also see if there's anything else that came out about learning in the rest of the interview. And then, in the next interview, I'll choose a couple of these and we'll go through and I'll ask you to describe in more detail what it is that you learned about that thing. What was the process of learning it. How you've put that learning into action or how it has changed you. And maybe what are some things that make it difficult or that prevent you from putting it into action. So that's what we'll do for a good part of the next interview. So, if you have time, in the intervening time, to look over that list and think about it a little bit, you can do that.

Conclusion:
• In this interview, I've been trying to get a sense of your background and your experiences working for [A Rocha/RSP]. Is there anything important that I missed or a question that I should have asked you?

General Narrative Questions
- Have you ever been in a situation...
- Tell me what happened
- Would you describe a time when...

Interview II: Learning

Thank you for agreeing to do this interview. Today's interview will pick up on some of the experiences and thoughts you shared in the last interview, focussing specifically on your learning. Again, I am interested in your learning related to your environmental/development work at [A Rocha/RSP]: what you have learned, how you learned it, and how it has changed you. Throughout the interview, if you want me to repeat or clarify anything, please ask. Also, if there are any questions which you would prefer not to answer, let me know and we will skip to the next question. As we go through the questions, please feel free to pause and take a moment to think about your answers if you need to. Do you have any questions before we begin?

Review:
• In the first interview, we talked about your work here and how you came to be here. Is there anything you would like to add?

Unpacking learning outcomes, processes, and application:
• At the end of our last interview, I asked you to list things you have learned doing this work. Now we are going to go through some of them and talk about what exactly is it that you learned. What was the process of learning it? How have you put that learning into action? And then what might be some barriers or obstacles to putting that learning into action?
  -[go through selected learning outcomes asking the following]
  -What did you learn?
  -Can you tell me about how this learning came about?
    -Was it gradual or did it happen all at once?
    -What triggered the learning? A person, an event?
    -How did you learn ___? What was the process? How did you work
  through it?
  -How did this learning change you? How have you put it into action?
  -Are there barriers or obstacles that made it hard to put this learning into action?

General learning process:
• Thinking about learning processes in general, different people learn in different ways. I'm interested in if you're aware for yourself, what are the ways that you learn well, things that you might do to help yourself process a problem or work through a question?

• What questions/issues/problems are you wrestling with within your work on environmental/development issues? Or what is your greatest challenge?
  -How are you working through these question/issues/problems? Talk to people? Journal? Reading? Experiment with new ways of doing things?
  - Are there particular times when you really think about them?
  - How/what do you think about them?

-Have you resolved the problem? How?
-How has the resolution affected you work? Have you changed how you act or behave as a result? In what way?

• Are there things you have learned that it has been hard to put into practice?
-What made it difficult?
-Have you been able to overcome the difficulty? How did you do it?

Beyond learning:
• Could you tell me a bit about how you spend your free time? In what ways do these activities influence your work?
• What kind of faith or church activities do you participate in?
-At work? At home?
-Do these practices ever affect how you engage with your work? Examples?
- Do the practices help you to learn? Do they ever hinder learning?
• I would also like to know how you apply environmental sustainability and development into your life.
-What issues do you think about and try to apply in your daily life? Food, energy/fuel, waste management, water consumption and conservation, other personal choices?
-How does this relate to your faith activities?

Evaluation:
• Do you have formal or informal processes which encourage the organization or individuals within it to evaluate their work?
- Please tell me about the evaluation process.

Learning in Kenya:
• I've been asking you all kinds of questions about learning. I'm studying learning, but I come from a very different culture from here right, and so, part of what I'm trying to understand is ways in which learning in Kenya might happen in a different way than it does in Canada. I'm wondering if you can tell me anything about what might be typical about the way that people learn in Kenya. Not necessarily schooling, but even thinking about how the community learns, is there anything that you can share about things that might be unique about learning in Kenya?

Conclusion:
• Before we conclude, is there anything that you would like to add, or any question that I should have asked that I didn't?

[check regarding revealing his/her name or using a pseudonym.]

Consent Forms

Ethics Blurb for Questionnaire

You are invited to fill out this questionnaire regarding the work and character of your organization. While the organization may be named in research reports, your personal identity will remain confidential. By filling out and returning this questionnaire, you are indicating that you have understood to your satisfaction the information regarding participation in the research project and agree to participate as a subject. In no way does this waive your legal rights nor release the researchers, sponsors, or involved institutions from their legal and professional responsibilities. You are free to withdraw from the study at any time, and/or refrain from answering any questions you prefer to omit, without prejudice or consequence. Your continued participation should be as informed as your initial consent, so you should feel free to ask for clarification or new information throughout your participation.

Questions or concerns can be directed to:

Joanne Moyer (principal researcher):

John Sinclair (thesis supervisor):

This research has been approved by the Joint-Faculty Research Ethics Board of the University of Manitoba. If you have any concerns or complaints about this project, you may contact any of the above-named persons or the Human Ethics Secretariat. A copy of this consent form will been given to you to keep for your records and reference.

Focus Group Consent Form

Research Project Title: Learning, Faith, and Sustainability in Kenya: Considering
the Work of Religious Non-Government Organizations

Researcher: Joanne Moyer

Sponsors: Social Science and Humanities Research Council of Canada
Manitoba Graduate Scholarship

This consent form, a copy of which will be left with you for your records and reference, is only part of the process of informed consent. It should give you the basic idea of what the research is about and what your participation will involve. If you would like more detail about something mentioned here, or information not included here, please feel free to ask. Please take the time to read this carefully and to understand any accompanying information.

Project Description

The purpose of this research is to explore how individual learning emerges from the intersection of religion and the pursuit of sustainability within religious non-governmental organizations (RNGOs) working in Kenya.

Sustainability is global society's response to the interconnected reality of widespread poverty and environmental degradation. Sustainability is a learning process, and to move more effectively toward this goal, it is important that we not only learn better techniques and approaches for working toward sustainability, but also that we understand how learning occurs so that we can learn better. Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have become a significant force within the sustainability project in recent decades, and as such, form the context in which much of this learning occurs. The religious NGO segment of the NGO family is often overlooked by researchers. This research aims to shed light on the role RNGOs are playing in working toward sustainability while investigating the learning processes that occur within them.

Participant Involvement

You are invited to participate in a focus group which will explore your experiences working within an RNGO. The session will last between 60 to 90 minutes and will involve participating in a group discussion, led by the researcher, with your work colleagues. You will be asked to reflect on some of the goals and activities of the organization and the learning that occurs through the work you do within it. The session will be audio recorded and written notes will also be taken.

Anticipated Risk

I do not anticipate that your participation in this research should expose you to any risks beyond those you experience in the course of your work and daily life.

Confidentiality

To protect your identity, you will be given the opportunity to choose a pseudonym. This name will be used in all research reports, presentations and publications. Your true identity and raw research materials (such as interview tapes, transcripts and my research notes) will only be available to me, my research assistant and my thesis supervisor. You may, however, choose to have your real name used if you prefer.

Feedback

This type of research is an interactive process. I plan to share my ongoing analyses and conclusions with you, by giving you copies of interview transcripts and written narratives for your comment, and through a final focus group in which I will present my ideas to you for comment. A briefing note summarizing the research results and providing recommendations will be produced for your organization.

Your signature on this form indicates that you have understood to your satisfaction the information regarding participation in the research project and agree to participate as a subject. In no way does this waive your legal rights nor release the researchers, sponsors, or involved institutions from their legal and professional responsibilities. You are free to withdraw from the study at any time, and/or refrain from answering any questions you prefer to omit, without prejudice or consequence. Your continued participation should be as informed as your initial consent, so you should feel free to ask for clarification or new information throughout your participation.

Questions or concerns can be directed to:

Joanne Moyer (principal researcher):

John Sinclair (thesis supervisor):

This research has been approved by the Joint-Faculty Research Ethics Board of the University of Manitoba. If you have any concerns or complaints about this project, you may contact any of the above-named persons or the Human Ethics Secretariat. A copy of this consent form will been given to you to keep for your records and reference.

I, _____, consent to participate in this research:
      Participant's Name (printed)

_____

Participant's Signature   Date

I consent to be audio recorded:

_____

Participant's Signature   Date

Please check one of the following:

I consent to the use of the following pseudonym in the thesis report, publications and presentations:

_____

Pseudonym   Signature   Date

OR

I consent to the use of my real name in the thesis report, publications and presentations:

_____

Participant's Signature   Date

Witnessed by:

_____

Researcher and/or Delegate's Signature   Date

Interview Consent Form

Research Project Title: Learning, Faith, and Sustainability in Kenya: Considering the Work of Religious Non-Government Organizations

Researcher: Joanne Moyer

Sponsors: Social Science and Humanities Research Council of Canada
Manitoba Graduate Scholarship

This consent form, a copy of which will be left with you for your records and reference, is only part of the process of informed consent. It should give you the basic idea of what the research is about and what your participation will involve. If you would like more detail about something mentioned here, or information not included here, please feel free to ask. Please take the time to read this carefully and to understand any accompanying information.

Project Description

The purpose of this research is to explore how individual learning emerges from the intersection of religion and the pursuit of sustainability within religious non-governmental organizations (RNGOs) working in Kenya.

Sustainability is global society's response to the interconnected reality of widespread poverty and environmental degradation. Sustainability is a learning process, and to move more effectively toward this goal, it is important that we not only learn better techniques and approaches for working toward sustainability, but also that we understand how learning occurs so that we can learn better. Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have become a significant force within the sustainability project in recent decades, and as such, form the context in which much of this learning occurs. The religious NGO segment of the NGO family is often overlooked by researchers. This research aims to shed light on the role RNGOs are playing in working toward sustainability while investigating the learning processes that occur within them.

Participant Involvement

You are invited to participate in a series of two interviews which will last 60-90 minutes each. The second interview will take place at least a week after the first one. These interviews will explore your work in Kenya, the journey which brought you to doing this work, and the learning experiences that have arisen from it. Written notes will be taken during the interview, and they will also be audio-recorded if you agree.

Anticipated Risk

I do not anticipate that your participation in this research should expose you to any risks beyond those you experience in the course of your work and daily life.

Confidentiality

To protect your identity, you will be given the opportunity to choose a pseudonym. This name will be used in all research reports, presentations and publications. Your true identity and raw research materials (such as interview tapes, transcripts and my research notes) will only be available to me, my research assistant and my thesis supervisor. You may, however, choose to have your real name used if you prefer.

Feedback

This type of research is an interactive process. I plan to share my ongoing analyses and conclusions with you, by giving you copies of interview transcripts and written narratives for your comment, and through a final focus group in which I will present my ideas to you for comment. A briefing note summarizing the research results and providing recommendations will be produced for your organization.

Your signature on this form indicates that you have understood to your satisfaction the information regarding participation in the research project and agree to participate as a subject. In no way does this waive your legal rights nor release the researchers, sponsors, or involved institutions from their legal and professional responsibilities. You are free to withdraw from the study at any time, and/or refrain from answering any questions you prefer to omit, without prejudice or consequence. Your continued participation should be as informed as your initial consent, so you should feel free to ask for clarification or new information throughout your participation.

Questions or concerns can be directed to:

Joanne Moyer (principal researcher):

John Sinclair (thesis supervisor):

This research has been approved by the Joint-Faculty Research Ethics Board of the University of Manitoba. If you have any concerns or complaints about this project, you may contact any of the above-named persons or the Human Ethics Secretariat. A copy of this consent form will been given to you to keep for your records and reference.

I, _____, consent to participate in this research:
    Participant's Name (printed)

_____
Participant's Signature   Date

I consent to be audio recorded:

_____
Participant's Signature   Date

Please check one of the following:

I consent to the use of the following pseudonym in the thesis report, publications and presentations:

_____
Pseudonym   Signature   Date

OR

I consent to the use of my real name in the thesis report, publications and presentations:

_____
Participant's Signature   Date

Witnessed by:

_____
Researcher and/or Delegate's Signature   Date

APPROVAL CERTIFICATE

December 17, 2009

TO: Joanne Moyer   (SSHRC)
            Principal Investigator   (Advisor J. Sinclair)

FROM: Wayne Taylor, Chair
            Joint-Faculty Research Ethics Board (JFREB)

Re: Protocol #J2009:142
            "Learning, Faith and Sustainability in Kenya: Considering the Work
            of Religious Non-Governmental Organizations"

Please be advised that your above-referenced protocol has received human ethics approval by the **Joint-Faculty Research Ethics Board**, which is organized and operates according to the Tri-Council Policy Statement. This approval is valid for one year only.

Any significant changes of the protocol and/or informed consent form should be reported to the Human Ethics Secretariat in advance of implementation of such changes.

Please note:

- If you have funds pending human ethics approval, the auditor requires that you submit a copy of this Approval Certificate to Kathryn Bartmanovich, Research Grants & Contract Services (fax 261-0325), **including the Sponsor name**, before your account can be opened.

- If you have received multi-year funding for this research, responsibility lies with you to apply for and obtain Renewal Approval at the expiry of the initial one-year approval; otherwise the account will be locked.

The Research Ethics Board requests a final report for your study (available at: http://umanitoba.ca/research/ors/ethics/ors_ethics_human_REB_forms_guidelines.html) in order to be in compliance with Tri-Council Guidelines.

Bringing Research to Life

Appendix III: Analysis Tools

Narrative Profile Summary

Name:
Organization:
Position:

Education:

Other jobs:

Job description:

Duration of post:

Journey to Job:

Highlights:

Lowlights:

Free time activities:

Sustainability activities:

Faith Journey:

Faith activities:

Motivations:

Goals and Objectives:

Faith connection:

Tensions/struggles as faith-based:

Comparison to secular:

Learning	Process/Trigger	Application/ Transformation	Barriers

Personal Learning Processes:

General Barriers:

Other Notes: