Research Article

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The power of belonging

Abstract: Coming from a Nordic environment, professionally working in teacher education, both authors engaged in developmental work and research in the Uluguru mountains in Tanzania. The research is carried out in a community-based organization for vulnerable youth, Mgeta Orphan Education Foundation (MOEF), which builds on principles of action learning and action research. We have followed and participated in the development of the organization since 2010, and this article builds on data gathered in 2016-17. We will show and discuss some of the transformations we have witnessed, mainly in the older members. The transformations seem to have an emergent character, and we examine further factors we have seen as crucial for transforming the lives of the young people in the orphan education project. Surprisingly, duty was a factor coming forth in the data. The youth perceived duty in a relational way, mainly caused by inner motivation nurtured by the example of their coordinator, Solomon, and by facing the continuous, emergent need for assistance in their local communities. Less surprisingly, belonging transpired as a fundamental factor. Previously, we have analyzed the transformational learning among the youngsters, and identified a set of transformational tools (Gjøtterud, Krogh, Dyngeland, & Mwakasumba, 2015). Building on the transformational tools, we have derived a model for Relational Transformation. Transformative action research is the approach we follow, and one aim of this article is to contribute to the understanding of the reciprocity of transformative processes in transformative research.

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> "A heart deep in love has no patience."
> Tanzanian Proverb

1 Background

Circumstances related to his family and his job as teacher educator brought Erling into the Uluguru Mountains 200 km west of Dar-es-Salaam, where he, together with the local extension officer Solomon Nicholaus, started a voluntary project with orphaned youth. Orphans got a dairy goat as a loan (when the goat had a female kid, the orphan should give the kid back to the project), material for a simple shed and training in goat keeping. When Sigrid, Erling's colleague, got involved in 2011, she met with orphans organized in groups located in each of the villages involved. In the groups, the youth were teaching each other, sharing experiences and finding solutions when problems arise with the goats. Solomon was their mentor, and he gathered the groups regularly so that the groups could inspire each other. He cared for them, and he expected that they should give back to the project. Hence, the groups decided how they would use their newly acquired knowledge and experience by teaching their neighbors, in local primary schools, and giving time to help build goat-sheds at schools or mold bricks for building a hostel. They also took the initiative to introduce goats to new groups of orphans, in areas where dairy goats were not part of the common livestock (Gjøtterud et al., 2015).[1]

The dairy goat project was a developmental project, run by principles of action learning, rooted in local traditions of farmer groups grounded in Julius Nyerere's

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[1] As the project grew, we started an education fund so that the project could also support further schooling, beyond lower secondary school. Along the way, we established the project as a Community Based Organization (Mgeta Orphan Education Foundation), and we funded a Norwegian sister organization organizing the donor activities (Mgeta Friends).

Ujamaa ideology encouraging sharing of knowledge to impact development (Ahmad, Krogh, & Gjøtterud, 2014; Jagire, 2014; Nyerere, 1968). Solomon is the local manager and coordinator of the project, collaborating with the authors in regular skype-meetings, and a few weeks a year when we were present, starting in 2010. Erling spent his sabbatical in Tanzania in 2014-15, while Sigrid spent three months in 2016-17. These have been periods of more systematic documentation and analyses. Between Erling's and Sigrid's sabbaticals, almost two years passed. What happened in the meantime?

As possibilities for employment in Mgeta are limited, it seemed crucial to try to create enterprises where the orphans could have a chance of employment after finishing school, to reduce the urban migration (Tacoli & Mabala, 2010). Hence, preparing for entrepreneurial activities had taken a lot of Solomon's time. Moreover, Solomon went for further education, causing him to be absent from the area in periods. Even though he was still a caring mentor for the orphans, he could no longer follow-up at all levels on a daily basis as he had before. On the background of the observed changes in the project, we wanted to explore how the orphaned youth sustained the project. The purpose of this article is three-fold, and we will explore:

1. Which material resources, human capacities and actions are decisive for the orphan's choices of engagement in and further development of the dairy goat project?

2. How we can model and synthesize the interaction between material resources, human capacities and actions in the further development of the project.

3. How the collaboration leads to hope and transformative processes in all collaborating parts.

First, we discuss the methodology and an outline of the methods used. Second, we discuss a set of transformative tools we identified as crucial for transformative learning. Thereafter, follows an overview of what we know and do not know about the effects of the project for the first 50 orphans who joined the project. In this section we point at some main challenges the orphaned youth faced. In the next section we outline and discuss the benefits the youth experience in the project, and answer research question one and two. We do this by narrating stories from the project, illustrating the transformations we have witnessed. Finally, we address the transformations we as researchers have experienced.

2 Methodological considerations and outline of the follow-up project

Transformative research is not a methodology but rather an orientation towards research, the aim of which is to contribute to a more just and equitable world (Malcolm, Gopalb, Keanec, & Kyle, 2009, referring to Bennet deMarris, 1998, p. 65; Mertens, 2016). Therein lies an assumption that research actually can contribute to a more just and equitable world, or the orientation carries a hope, that such research is possible. Such a hope motivates our research, aiming at community development through addressing a group of vulnerable youth. Freire (1992/2014) states that hope is an ontological need, and he says that hope is imperative as a foundation for change, but hope is not enough, it needs to be coupled with practice. The hope to reduce the number of street kids is a driving force for us as well as for the orphans: "One of the tasks of the progressive educator, through serious correct political analyses, is to unveil opportunities for hope, no matter what the obstacles may be" (ibid p. 3). The dairy-goat project seeks to unveil opportunities for hope.

In accordance with Participatory Action Research (PAR), the project builds on democratic principles (Fals Borda, 2001; Swantz, 2008), where the orphans themselves, in collaboration with Solomon, take responsibility for the development of the project. The structure of the organization (MOEF), founded on the goats financed by external donors, has provided the orphans with a possibility to develop transformative tools to act and influence their own and their communities' future (Gjøtterud et al., 2015). This is in line with Passfield (2012, p. 200) who argues that "action learning and action research are proactive by nature – creating futures rather than reacting to turbulence with indecision and inaction". The youth themselves analyze their situation, solve problems, plan and carry out activities, give and receive feedback from each other and other community members, in cycles as in Participative Action Learning and Action Research (PALAR) (Zuber-Skerritt, 2015). The authors have participated in discussing, planning and reflecting on actions taken, have recorded the process in diaries and minutes from meetings and have translated the orphans' records. In addition they have conducted interviews and attended meetings with the youths. This article builds on data gathered in the period November 2016 to March 2017, deriving from meetings with various orphan groups, a general meeting assembling 70 project members, follow-up interviews of the group initiating the general meeting, and several meetings with Solomon.

Choosing to work with the vulnerable youth (orphans) can be seen as a deficit approach to development, where groups become targets for help because they are perceived to be in deficit – poor or other ways disadvantaged, in contrast to an asset-based approach (Missingham, 2017). It is true that we chose to work with a vulnerable group of youth, and that the reason for doing so was that we saw a young population deprived of necessary means to develop their potential. At the same time, we also assumed that access to a primary asset could enable them to grow and become resources in their communities. Hence, we argue that the transformative research approach we adopted was asset-based, in more than one perspective. A grounding principle is that we aim at giving a "fishing pole rather than a fish." A question in need of thorough consideration was what asset that could serve as a fishing pole in this particular community. Initially, dairy-goats became the answer.

The youth, many are young adults, participated in the project voluntarily. Graham, Powell and Taylor (2015) states that it is important to involve children in research. In this case, the children researched their own situation, whereas we as researchers have tried to learn from their efforts. The youth gave their consent to our research into their processes, although it can be difficult, as Graham and Powell (ibid) point out, to ascertain they fully understand what they consent to. We tried to ensure that they knew through oral discussion and written statements, and by presenting our findings and reflections. As researchers, we are ethically bound to protect participants from physical, emotional and social harm that might result from the research (ibid. p. 337). The project gives hope for a better future, but no guarantee. Hence, the project might cause emotional stress. Still, we regard this as a risk necessary to take.

Continuously, the authors research our practice as developmental researchers (Marshall, 1999; McNiff, 2013), trying to find ways to improve our practice, but also to become aware how the research influence us. We affect the lives of a group of vulnerable youth through the collaboration with Solomon, as they influence us. This article aims at exploring the mutual influence.

3 Transformative tools and transformative learning

In our previous article, we presented what we found to be transformative tools for self-transformation (Gjøtterud et al., 2015, p.14):

- Access to resources that makes change and improvement possible
- Acquiring skills to utilize resources for change and improvement of the situation
- Sharing of knowledge and skills that are meaningful to oneself and others
- Vigor and realization of own and others' ability to manage situations through action
- Contextual and applicable analytic capacity; analyze situation, plan, find measures, carry out actions, evaluate results and their consequences - both alone and together.

These transformative tools both comprehend access to physical resources, individual capacities, skills and acting ability, communicative willingness and skills and analytical abilities. We derived the transformative tools from what we witnessed in the project, within a Tanzanian rural context. Hence the tools are culturally sensitive to the Tanzanian transformative learning history (Konate, 2007), where the former president and Babu wa Taifa (Father of the nation), Julius Nyerere, had a central position. According to Ntseane (2012), studies of traditional East and South African value systems and learning has revealed core values as interdependency and collective responsibility, unity of spirit, mind, and body, and emotions in learning as well as life experience and wisdom. These values differs from a prevalent late modernity emphasis on individualization, both related to self-reflective identity management and cognitive and constructivist approaches of learning (Giddens, 1991; Piaget, 1952; Sennett, 1998; Sousa, 2011).

In accordance with the East and South African value systems mentioned above, Dewey's social and democratic constructivism and relation-based experiential learning (Biesta, 2013; Dewey, 1916/1997; Krogh & Jolly, 2012), we think that transformative learning originates from inter-subjectivity and humans' bodily relations to the world. Our approach to transformative learning both comprehends sensitivity to emotions as a core force and drive for action, and acknowledgment in human beings' individual and cooperative capacity to change actions and patterns of actions, based on experiences. Also, we mean that people, alone and together, have unique potential to transcend their current patterns of understanding through thinking and reflection. In this way, our approach to transformative learning connects Freire's idea of social change relying on group-based conscientization and Mezirow's focus on an expansion of consciousness and mental schemes that develops independent thinking (Freire, 1970/2000; Mezirow, 1997). Hence, we incorporate recent elaborations of transformative learning including the significance

of emotions and experiential learning (Taylor & Cranton, 2012).

In our view, transformative tools are assets for realization of transformative learning. We realize that there might be many material, psychological, cultural and structural barriers that prevent the potential for transformative learning and transformations in general. The barriers differ. In Tanzania, the scarce material resources and lack of societal infrastructure are huge hindrances. Despite all the hindrances, we have seen some positive results, and in this article, we will use the transformative tools to discuss the orphans' perceptions of their benefits from participation in the project, the further development of the orphan project as well as our transformations.

4 What happened to the first 50 to join the project?

Before going into the benefits many experience in the project, we will give an overview of the first 50 members, and some main challenges we have identified. In 2012-13 we registered 50 (31 female, 19 male) orphans who had received goats or were waiting to receive goats, and we interviewed more than half of them. From interviewing Solomon and by meeting with the Morogoro-group (orphans who at the time lived in the city to finish secondary school) (Dec 2016 – Feb 2017), we gleaned the following information about these first 50 members (Table 1).

Four of the students finished vocational education supported by the project. One of the girls moved when she married, one girl worked in a shop in the city and remained a goat-farmer in Mgeta, while the third girl now is employed in a sowing business created by the project. The forth, Bosco, worked for a while as a teacher at the

vocational school, then in a poultry business in the city, before he moved back as a farmer in Mgeta.

Six of the girls had become mothers; some were married, while we only have information about one father now living as a family man. One of the orphans died from Aids.

What does this information tell us? About half of the members of this first group, we either have no record of, or they have moved to one of the cities, being part of the urban migration in Tanzania (Tacoli & Mabala, 2010).

Many girls become mothers at an early age, and more females than males become underpaid workers, while more boys are recorded as farmers, and go on to improve their grades[2] or continue with college and university education. This points to the fact that we cannot claim that all members benefit from the project in the end. On the other hand, we cannot say that they do not either. As we have no previous records, the orphans' words, along with Solomon's experience, is the indication we have of fewer street-kids. We know there are more orphaned youth finishing secondary school and finding skilled jobs.

Still, finding jobs in Mgeta is hard. As agriculture is the main source of income for 98% of the population in Mgeta, depending on natural conditions that follow the rainy seasons, the farmers grow, harvest and sell tomatoes, salad or potatoes, all at the same time. Hence, products flood the mountain center market and wholesalers from the cities push the prices down. Before harvest-time, poverty reigns with under and malnutrition. The dairy goat, the uniting resource asset we chose, cannot fully satisfy the basic need of the member. Therefore, the orphans have tried to find other sources for supporting themselves by seeking (under) paid jobs in the cities, by wanting further education and by going after different

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2 There are more girls than boys being supported for schooling by the project, but they are not among the first 50 members

Table 1: Overview of the first 50 members to join the project

Occupation		Comment
Hotel, shop, house-girl in a big city	14	10 females. Most are in underpaid jobs known for exploitation.
Farming in Mgeta	7	5 males
School in Mgeta	6	
Other work in Mgeta	3	
School in Morogoro	6	Support from the project to finish secondary school
College/University	4	3 males
Other	2	One married, moved to another district, one nun
Lack information	8	6 females

agricultural enterprises or other self-employment. When the uniting asset to a lesser extent unifies the members because it is not as beneficial as we thought, it is necessary for them to join forces to enhance the conditions for the goat keeping or find new uniting resources. Uniting resources are conditions for the sustainability, in a society where the welfare system is inadequate and the income minimal.

When arriving in Mgeta in November 2016, we attended meetings where orphans reported worries about many dead goats, and low participation in some village groups, partly due to a situation with less systematic mentoring (Minutes from meeting in Nyandira Dec. 2016). Low attendance in some groups and death of goats were factors threatening to undermine the project. In addition to the problems of finding jobs, and problems with the goats, the schools have few teachers, hence passing secondary school is hard.

5 Benefits from participating in Mgeta Orphan Education Foundation

The Morogoro group, initiated, and planned a general meeting, together with Solomon. They saw it as a necessary step to gather all participants so they could discuss the challenges mentioned above, share the beneficial experiences and the way forward, in the true spirit of participatory action research. Thomas said: "It is of no use for us sitting here (in Morogoro) discussing matters concerning the orphans in Mgeta, they need to do that themselves." (Planning meeting Morogoro 21.01.17) Nearly 70 members of MOEF gathered a Saturday in February 2017.

In the meeting, the youth identified five main categories of benefits that we have named: Concrete support, education and learning, belonging, strengthened self-esteem and finally action competence. In this section we will discuss the benefits, but first we present the five categories as the orphans presented them:

Concrete support: the goat-keeping project, small Sacco – possibility to make small loans, Hostel building and a possibility of having new guardians.

Education and Learning: Learning skills and knowledge for life by sharing experiences through project meetings. Learning about collaboration, how to solve problems and other valuable knowledge. Support for education - sec-

ondary school in town, vocational school and study-tours to town. This all leads to personal growth.

Belonging: Being together, uniting, giving mutual support, loving and caring for each other, regarding/valuing/respecting/protecting each other. Expression of empathy through assisting each other in practical matters.

Strengthened Self-esteem: Liberating self-reliance, feeling empowered, now they have a healthy/good identity in the street, community members want to learn from them, so they feel valuable. They have become role models for others in the village. The project influence and encourage members to reach their goals. "You get to know yourself and know who you are." Reduced number of street-kids.

Action competence: "We are pushing for development where we come from, and others can learn from us." (Thomas, Luale Feb. 2017)

In excepts from one category, *belonging*, the orphans' statements relates directly to the transformative tools we identified in our previous paper (Gjøtterud et al., 2015). The categories are interrelated. The dairy goat, as asset or resource, is a key for orphans' acquiring of knowledge and skills, for group formation and cooperation, for experienced usefulness and subsequent application of action learning. They influence their communities and feel valued. The positive feedback is strengthening their vigor and self-esteem. Two years back, we were surprised to learn that the goat itself was far less important than we had thought (ibid). Goats get sick, and they die, they do not yield as much milk as hoped; hence, they are less of an economic asset than we had anticipated. On the other hand, the goat turned out to be the core uniting factor, and a center for learning valuable skills and gaining knowledge they can use in other farming activities, but also for teaching. Now, as then, the goat was the heart of the orphans' relational and learning community. The goat is the phenomenon of shared attention and care, which is bringing the youth together to form relationships and thereafter act (Krogh & Jolly, 2012; Skjervheim, 1974). The individual orphan's benefits from goat keeping seems to rely on and intertwine with cooperation with others.

Two years ago we were further surprised to learn the importance of the village groups. We should not be that surprised realizing the Tanzanian saying "Mtu ni Watu," which means, "a person is people." The Arusha Declaration (Nyerere, 1968) stresses the extended family as a core Tanzanian societal institution, which emphasize belongingness, connectedness, community participation, and

people-centeredness. A similar *Ubuntu* worldview and value orientation characterizes neighboring African countries (Ntseane, 2012, p. 283). The group members elaborated how they had learned to collaborate, by developing groups, networks, and the organization, and how systematic mapping of challenges and discussions of actions to handle the challenges, for instance within entrepreneurship and agriculture, had enabled them to improve enterprises and management of common activities. Due to lack of material resources, many actions are hard or impossible to implement alone. Also, many heads are better than one. Through development and expansion of knowledge and skills, the orphans experienced to get roles and assignments as leaders and as agents for change in their communities.

Both the relationship to the goat and the empowering function of organized cooperation relates to belonging. Belonging stresses the significance of forming and caretaking of relationships and nurtures attitudes and core values as compassion and empathy. Empathy means to see and acknowledge the Other, but also to act from such a relational point of departure (Buber, 1937).

A uniting resource, the dairy goat, and a structure to form relations and learn together facilitated by a caring mentor are transformative tools leading to a change of identity and belonging. The participants expressed that they felt liberated, empowered and aware that they had become role models. Self-esteem grows because sharing experiences leads to a feeling of being of use. Furthermore, learning something useful from others strengthen their ability to solve problems – both their own, in the family and the community. Increasingly, they become aware of who they are and who they want to be. They feel supported and capable of reaching some of their own and shared goals. "Confidence in themselves is indispensable

to their struggle for a better world," says Freire (1992/2014, p. 124). The transformations seem to foster self-efficacy together with a sense of care for others. Belonging, when realized, appears to be the main transformational force, while the resource, the dairy goat, is the uniting theme and object for transformational action learning, fostering expansion of mental schemes and consciousness (Mezirow, 1997; Taylor, 2009).

Alongside the above factors identified as causing personal growth, the orphans, through connecting and belonging, recognized the deep value of respect and love. They have learned to respect and love each other, they have met our respect and love, and they have earned respect from their neighbors. These young persons were amongst the most vulnerable in surroundings where resources are utterly scarce. Hence, they were deprived of all means necessary for growth. Freire (1992/2014, p. 142) writes that "what the rejected ones need – those forbidden to be, prevented from being – is not our tepidity but our *warmth*, our solidarity – yes, and our love, not a mistrustful one, not a sloppy love, but an "armed" love." Hope and love drive us in the struggles to improve the situation for these youths, so full of potential, who have been born into a situation deprived of material goods needed to lead a dignified life.

Sharing experiences in the general meeting seemed crucial for raising a renewed awareness, in new as old members, of the profound value of participating in the village groups.
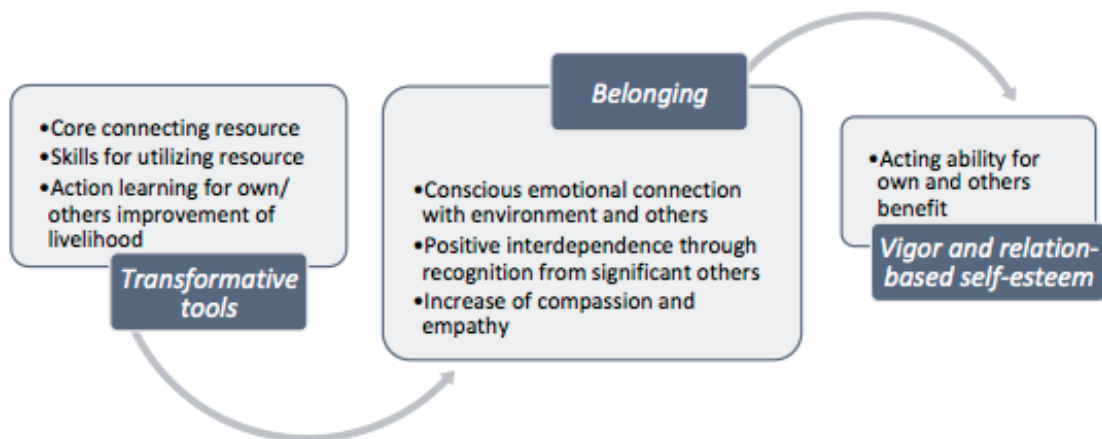

Figure 1: Belonging as catalyst of transformation

6 Responsible leaders – meeting the challenges

The following examples show how some of the young adults took charge in the organization, using what they had learned in order to meet the challenges they had identified

6.1 Co-researchers

Emmanuel tells the story of how he and Eston decided to visit Bunduki, walking for several hours, where they met with seven orphans (Meeting in Nyandira Dec. 2017). They were curious to investigate the difference in goat performance in Bunduki and Tchenzema, two villages located in different climatic zones. Moreover, they wondered if belonging to the group had increased the students' academic performance. Curiosity was one motivating factor; another was their wish to share their knowledge. Their self-initiated investigation revealed that disease and death in the goats were an even bigger problem in this village than elsewhere in Mgeta. The living conditions in Bunduki are even harsher and poorer. There was nowhere to buy medicine for the goats. Their inquiry set off an initiative to create a store and hence a job for one of the orphans who had finished school. Despite some depressing news regarding the goats, they also learned that all the orphans were now moving to Form III, this was not the case previously and indicates that belonging to the group raised the academic performance.

While still living in the village, Emmanuel and Eston conducted research with their neighbors (goat-farmers) and developed skills for action research (Gjøtterud et al., 2015). As members of the Morogoro-group they took responsibility for supporting a new group of orphans and investigating effects of the project, on their own initiative. Their records were meticulous. Hence, reports, oral and written, were accurate and provided valuable information for discussing whether the goat was still a valuable asset, or if other assets should be considered.

6.2 Teaching

One of the challenges identified, was access to teaching resources. One story from the night before the general meeting, is an example of how the orphans utilize their knowledge to support each other.

A group of orphans arrived at the Hostel in Luale from another remote and isolated village. This group had not previously met the other village groups. Older members came from the cities, and they were all to spend the night at the Hostel together with the girls living there. Four of the older youth from the Morogoro-group organized groups where they taught Swahili, math, and history. The orphan-teachers demonstrated that they were aware that they possessed knowledge valuable tor fellow members, and they showed insight and empathy for the visiting orphans by utilizing their knowledge. Organizing the learning groups both means that they acknowledge themselves as resourceful and that they see and acknowledge each other. They use the potential of positive interdependence through planned activities (Johnson, 2003). By organizing such peer teaching, they constructively meet the challenge of shortage of teachers in the area. The newcomers expressed the high value of sharing knowledge in this way; they seemed delighted.

6.3 Role-models and providers

On meeting the Morogoro-group (21.01.17), Sigrid asked the attendants what they wanted for their future. Each one of them talked about their duty to the communities from where they come. Emmanuel expressed their responsibility to go back so that younger brothers and sisters could benefit from what they have received and learned. Previously Emmanuel (conversation in 2015), when asked if the goats provided him with money, revealed that he gave the milk to sick, old women in his village, and rather tried to make a living in other ways.

Onesmo stated that his life had been full of challenges, but coming to Morogoro had widened his capacity to deal with problems, and he saw it as his duty and responsibility to share this capability with the villagers - with the young, as well as the elders, to better the situation.

Joanna, Hannah, and Lucrencia (newer members), when asked about the girls' perspective, emphasized the importance of education:

> Due to the climate change, it is becoming even harder for girls to take care of the farms and the children, staying home. Therefore, education is imperative. We should influence other girls in the villages, not only the orphans. (Joanna)

> People in the village look at how we are performing. (Lucrencia)

Listening to their discussions about duty, about gratefulness for the opportunities provided and about their awareness of their abilities, Sigrid noted:

> I can hardly believe what I am hearing. They are so wise, so responsible, so ethically aware. They are also very systematic; they are contributing to sustaining MOEF – active co-researchers – they are pretty much self-going! At the same time, the structure given by Solomon is crucial! (21.01.17)

The youth expressed their sense of duty to give back through social responsibility, they were aware of their responsibility and value as role-models.

6.4 Entrepeneurship

When the participants revealed that the benefits of dairy goats were less than anticipated, the Tzenschema- and Morogoro-groups, actively engaged in establishment of Macadamia nut and avocado nurseries in surrounding villages. On the world market, Macadamia are among the most expensive nuts, and in Tanzania there is a market for nuts and extracted oil. In addition to assist other orphans and help neighbors, Emmanuel has managed to buy about 20 Macadamia trees for his own farm plot. Thus, he combines social and individual entrepreneurship. Thomas functions as an extension officer, even though he mainly stays in Morogoro to finish upper secondary school. The villagers continuously call him for advice related to planting, grafting, and management of Macadamia and Avocado trees. Furthermore the youth initiated a poultry

project to increase possibilities for quick income, as the trees are long term investments.

This is an example of how the youth find and test out alternative core resources for improvement of their livelihood. Hence, they continue to develop not only MOEF, but the communities where they live and belong. In the next section we will discuss the transformations we have witnessed in the older orphans, who has committed to the work for seven years.

7 Relational transformation

The stories above shows that the orphans' vigor and relational-based self-esteem have different expressions. Through inquiry and action learning, some engaged orphans searched and tested out alternative supplementary income-generating resources. Also, they continuously tried to improve the dairy-goat keeping. Their efforts also clearly express a conscious and directed social responsibility. Several orphans have emphasized their wish to repay and return their received support and gained knowledge and skills to their home villages and local communities. They have transformed and become responsible citizens, taking actions for change in their communities. The help they have received and hope for a better future has motivated dutiful actions, contributing to the organization and the communities. Carrying out the duties has strengthened the bonds between the members, between them and the organization and the communities,
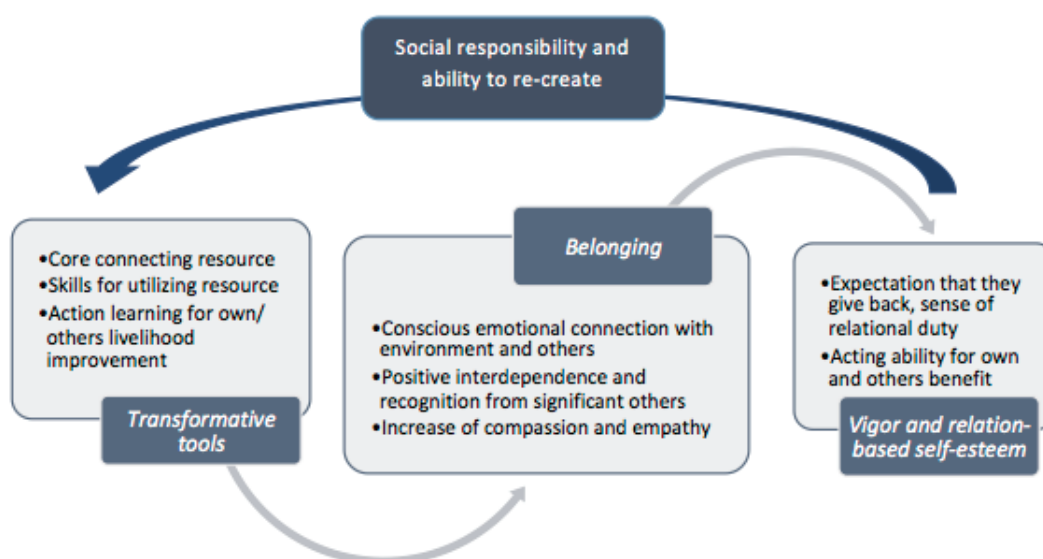

Figure 1: Relational transformation

and hence fuelled the motivation. Commitment has had a motivating effect.

We have visualized the dynamic process, argued above in Figure 2.

Figure 1 shows how orphans' adaption of transformative tools, action learning linked with access to a goat and training in dairy-goat keeping, developed their sense of belonging and compassion, and also vigor and relation-based self-esteem. The extended model above includes the expectations that they can give back, and adds two factors that seem to increase orphans' capability to manage and master changed conditions, in other words their transformative ability. Thus, transformative tools combined with belonging can release the ability for *creative problem-solving* and *leadership based on social responsibility*.

A relational understanding of duty seems to be at the heart of East African ethics (Ntseane, 2012). There is a Tanzanian proverb saying; "rights without duty is like a hoe without a shaft." "A morality of duty is one that requires each to demonstrate concern for the interests of others" (Standford Encyclopedia of Philosophies 2010).[3] Following this line of thought, the expectation that the youth should 'give back,' seems to be another key factor for transformation. The expectation is a way of recognizing the others' ability and value. When the youth take responsibility, they gradually seem to internalize the normative expectation of "giving back" as their inner motivation. The social recognition by their peers and neighbors mirrors the growth of their social responsibility. Raised relation-based self-esteem and liberation follows from their actions, but also a self-expansion in line with the concept of self-actualization, characterized by self-realization, conscious presence, orientation towards tasks and others, empathy and love (Maslow, 1971).

8 Transformative research and mutual transformations

The model in Figure 2 shows the transformative process of the orphans. Solomon has a major role, by mentoring the process. The first years his role was fundamental, as he was the coordinator, the teacher, and the caretaker. He organized and nurtured the inner cycles of the model. We (the authors) supported Solomon's job firstly by representing and recruiting donors that provided the goats and the salary for Solomon. Secondly, we brought our outside per-

spectives and knowledge to the discussions continuously leading to improvements in the organization. Thirdly, we helped document the process, by analyzing the orphans' reports and minutes, and by recording discussions and dialogues with Solomon. Our analyses, coupled with Solomon's and the orphans' analyses, created new understandings of the situation and enabled targeted actions.

Since we wrote the previous paper from the project (Gjøtterud et al., 2015), both Solomon and we have gradually moved out from the inner cycles, which are now mainly driven by the members themselves. Still, we provide financial resources sustaining the process through an organization of donors. In our opinion, the striking and overwhelming contrast between the material affluence of the North and the Tanzanian rural poverty and scarcity of resources do not defend a definition of sustainability that presupposes Northern withdrawal of financial support after a certain project period. In addition to organize financial support, we can add knowledge, for example about market possibilities for products from Uluguru Mountains outside Morogoro district and Tanzania. Because we can add knowledge and keep on analyzing the endeavor, theorizing and creating models for understanding, we believe we can support the orphans, and Solomon, in their struggle to sustain and develop the organization. With the growing responsibility of the youngsters, our role has changed. Still, we do not disappear. The fact that we keep coming back and stay committed is an expression of love and hope.

Our commitment is also motivated by a relational understanding of responsibility answering to the demand coming from the face of the other, in Levinas' (1991) terms: "Responsibility is, in fact, a relationship with the other, in his very alterity" (p. xix). A Nigerian Proverb states that; "to do one's duty is to eat the prized fruit of honor." What a beautiful way of viewing the privilege of being able to pay back and make a difference. Similar to the youth who accept help and enable themselves to become honored givers, we have embraced the opportunity to involve ourselves in transformative research. What a gift it is to be allowed to collaborate with the youth and witness the changes we see in them, what an honor to be able to play a small part in their transformative processes.

The need we see calls for action, while the transformations we see in the youth fills us with hope. Witnessing how the young person's care for an love each other, how they take responsibility in their communities instead of staying victimized, empowers us. Mertens (2016) argues that "[i]n order to promote research that helps address wicked problems, the researcher's role needs to be expanded in terms of social responsibility." Responsibil-

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3 https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/african-ethics/

ity though, should not spring from guilt. Freire (1992/2014) writes that in his experience whites often act from strong guilt when working with blacks. "And if there is anything that annoys those who suffer discrimination, it is to have someone dealing with them in a guilty tone" (p. 142). When working with the vulnerable youth in the mountains, we do it out of love, and we hope an armed love, which is what Freire emphasizes as crucial. Love then holds transformational power on both sides. The orphans feel safer when they feel loved, we become empowered when love motivates our work, and we see love as a result of our efforts.

The needs that meets us are overwhelming, and we find comfort in the words of Marcus Aurelius (2012) when he says: "To not be overwhelmed by what you imagine, but just do what you can and should" (p. 64). Knowing that we do what we can, is liberating and ignites the hope that the Tanzanian proverb will prove right: "Little by little a little becomes a lot." The emancipation we see in some of the youth has a liberating influence on us. The transformations are relational and social responsible as we are together and mutually responsive to the environment.

can supplement dairy goat keeping as income-generating activity. The power of belonging also seems to foster compassion for others through social responsibility. Besides caring for each other by taking responsibility to sustain and develop MOEF, the orphans emphasizes the value of the social duties in the villages and the local communities through their actions.

Furthermore, we have discussed how the orphaned youth, in their struggle under harsh conditions, influence us and motivate our commitment, transform our sense of duty to honor and give us *hope* for a more equitable future. Tanzania has a long tradition of treating strangers as brothers and sisters (Jagire, 2014). In our role as researchers, we have felt embraced and included. On the other hand, we do not share the lives of the orphans. We do have a return ticket to Norway and an unjust material wealth. This sets us apart. This is also a reason why we can't ignore the call by the other's face and responding to that other (Levinas, 1969). Despite the unjust differences in our material conditions we are united as human beings, we share some time and space, and contribute to each other's transformative processes.

9 Concluding summary

Figure 1 elaborates our previously developed framework for transformative tools (Gjøtterud et al., 2015). Analyzing the further development in dairy goat project, we have explored the transformational power of belonging and discussed how belonging is emergent when groups are formed around an asset-based interest – here the goat. Belonging expresses a core human capacity, the ability to relate to and connect with the physical world and fellow humans. The positive interdependence in the groups strengthen the sense of belonging by the positive feedback that they receive from each other as well as other community members when they utilize their acquired knowledge to the common good in the village.

Figure 2 models how the transformative learning has motivated the orphans to act, or we believe that the transformative learning incorporates the *willingness* to act, to change the living conditions, as Mezirow (2009) emphasizes. The empowerment of the Mgeta orphans both seem to comprehend development of their ability to re-create income-generating projects and social responsibility. Using action learning, the orphans have analyzed their situation in collaboration with all MOEF members. Based on the situation analysis they have found new ways to maintain the goat project and new resources (agroforestry) that

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