

**EXAMINING THE CATHOLIC CHURCH'S ROLE IN THE REFUGEE CRISIS IN THE  
EASTERN REGION OF CAMEROON (BERTOUA), BY THE CARITAS CAMEROON,  
AND THE CATHOLIC RELIEF SERVICES, ON THE CHRISTIAN VALUES OF  
RECONCILIATION, EMPOWERMENT, AND TRANSFORMATION**

**BY**

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## ABSTRACT

*Rescue the weak and needy; deliver them from the hand of the wicked.* Psalm 82:4.

This piece of Research work is based on investigating the situation of the refugees from the Central African Republic (CAR) fleeing violence, torture, religious and ethnic segregation for safety into Cameroonian Eastern Region. The thesis explores and analysis the efforts by the Catholic Caritas in Cameroon, and the Catholic Relief Service in responding to the crisis specifically on the Christian approaches of Reconciliation, Empowerment, and Transformation. These three Christian values shall be utilized as the key theories in examining the efforts of the Caritas Cameroon and the Catholic Relief Services in addressing the phenomenon in question. It shall also look into the efforts made by some International partners like the UNHCR, the host country's efforts, some Non-governmental organizations, and a few faith-based organizations which are not Catholic based, like the Lutheran World Federation.

The thesis seeks to find responses to the refugee influx. I went as far as examining the implications of this influx on both a Positive and negative perspective to the host region and in particular and Cameroon in general. To some extent, I shall be critical in the discussion chapter on what the church, the Caritas Cameroon, the CRS, should promote in situations of injustice, suppression, and religious conflicts. All in all this piece of work seeks to investigate how diaconal the church can be through its organizations such as the Caritas, and the Catholic Relief Services, and also to see how Christian faith and service can be translated to people in distress and hopelessness.

## **DECLARATION**

I declare that this is my original work and has not been presented at any institution of higher learning for any award. All materials used from other sources have been cited and a comprehensive reference list provided.

## **DEDICATION**

This piece of work is dedicated to the persecuted, the marginalized, the homeless, and the hungry. Great is his faithfulness

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## **Abbreviations/Acronyms**

AU-African Unity

ACF-Action Contre la Faim

AB- Anti-Balaka

ADRA-Adventist Development and Relief Agency

AHA-African Humanitarian Action

BASC-Socio-Charitable Actions

CAR-Central African Republic

CRS- Catholic Relief Service

CMF-Christian Family Movement

CWA-Catholic Women Association

CAFOD- Catholic Agency for Overseas Development

CODAS- Coordination Diocesaine de Developpement et des Activities Caritatives.

EPC- Eglise Presbyterienne Camerounaise

FM- Focolari Movement

HIV- Acquired Immune Virus

IMC- International Medical Core

LWF- Lutheran World Federation

MF- Meninghetsfakultet

MINEDUB- Ministere d, Education de Base (Ministry of Basic Education)

MC- Methodist Church

NGO- Non-Governmental Organization

NMS- Norwegian Mission Help

PU-AMI- Premiere Urgence- Aide- Medicale

PU- Premiere Urgence

P.H.S.C- Presbyterian Health Services Cameroon.

RSD- Refugee Status Determination

UNHCR- United Nations High Commission for Refugees

UNICEF-United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund

UNESCO-United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization

UNDP-United Nations Development Program

UN- United Nations

WASH-Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

WHO- World Health Organization

WFP- World Food Program

YCW- Young Christian Workers

**Key words**

*Reconciliation, Empowerment, Transformation, Refugee, Relief, Apostolic Groups, Diaconia*

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## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **1.0. INTRODUCTION**

This chapter which is the genesis of my thesis shall open up by a review on the background problem in the CAR. It is important to get the root causes of the problem in the Central African Republic followed by a brief history of Cameroon which is the country that accommodates these refugees and Bertoua in the Eastern Region which is the principal host. Still within this chapter I shall describe who a refugee is biblically and quoting the United Nations description of a refugee. It shall also talk about the presence of refugees in Cameroon in general terms, and the various actors that are on grown to give assistance in various ways. And shall raise the research question, with hypothesis and shall finally end up with my objectives and my motivation.

### **1.1 A REFUGEE**

#### **1.1.1 United Nations definition of refugees**

Events following the Second World War prompted the United Nations to take a certain number of resolutions in order to handle international and internally displaced persons. The United Nations created the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) mandated to provide international protection to this category of people and supervise international treaties and instruments adopted and ratified to this effect. For the international protection of this category of people which we refer to in our work as refugees, the 1951 convention relating to the status of refugees and the 1967 protocol relating to the status of refugees are core instruments in this domain. These documents together with other international and regional instruments are reference guides to the international treatment and the handling of refugees worldwide. This document above all contains the UN definition of a refugee and further provides the rights and obligations of refugees in host countries.

The Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees (1951) is the key legal document which defines the status of a refugee, who he is, relevant legal obligations of the host State towards refugees and the rights of a refugee. Article 1 of the 1951 Convention defines a refugee as any person,

“...owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable, or owing to such fear, is unwilling, to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside of the country of his formal habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return it”.

This convention sets the juridical status of refugees and establishes the minimum standards of treatment including the enumeration of the basic rights to which they are entitled. However, regional instruments exist like the African Union (AU) Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa (1969) which provides a broader definition than that proposed by the UN in the 1951 Convention in its Article I. It defined, the term refugee as applying to every person who,

“Owing to external aggression, occupation, foreign domination or events seriously disturbing public order in either part or the whole of his country of origin or nationality, is compelled to leave his place of habitual residence in order to seek refuge in another place outside his country of origin or nationality”.

We can also find other definitions of the word refugee in the Cartagena Declaration on Refugees adopted in 1984 for Latin American States, and the Bangkok Principles on the Status and Treatment of Refugees (1966). It was adopted by the Asian-African Legal Consultative Organization.

### **1.1.2 Biblical approaches to the Term refugee**

The Bible in general terms does not really define who a refugee is. But it brings out various verses that describe who a refugee is. These citations are meant to educate and to remind humanity on protecting, empowering and accommodating persons who are persecuted and or marginalized. I shall use just a verse to give a biblical illustration about who a refugee is, and what rights the bible seeks to advocate for Refugees and persecuted persons. In Numbers chapter 15:16, it states,

“The same laws and regulations will apply both to you and to the alien living among you.

Therefore nations and communities are challenged by this single verse to respect the dignity and rights of its strangers.

## **1.2 The Problem of Refugees in the Central African Republic and Cameroon, and the Research Question**

The situation in the CAR never erupted because of Religious motives. Both Muslims and Christians lived in harmony, sharing and enjoying each other's culture, and rights over religious freedoms. Both diverse ethnicities enjoyed the rights to inter-marriages, and both Muslim, Christian and non-Christian children enjoyed the rights to education, shelter, access to health services, and each family had their own house to live in. This conflict has divided a people that lived peacefully along an ethno-religious line. Insecurity is rampant, poor nutrition and a hike in prices of basic commodities. Most of these refugees in the eastern region of Cameroon are willing to one day return home. How the Catholic Church through the Caritas and the Catholic Relief Services is responding in seeking for peace, so that there can be an improvement at the level of interaction with the indigenes and the refugees. This shall be more exemplified in the discussion chapters. Reconciliation, Transformation and Empowerment are Christian values that are expected to be applied by the Caritas Cameroon and the CRS to give meaning in the lives of these Refugees.

## **1.3 Legal context and presence of refugees in Cameroon**

Cameroon is a peaceful country situated in central Africa with a high degree of political stability. This is not the same with a majority of her neighbors who are constantly in Conflicts. These countries who are Cameroon's neighbors are Nigeria to the West, Chad to the North-West, the Central African Republic to the East, and Equatorial Guinea, The Republic of Congo, and Gabon to the South. These countries have been marked by insecurity in recent years which is a major reason for massive movement of people to safe places. Cameroon has maintained over the years an open border policy which enabled refugees to come into the country. A signatory of the 1951 Refugee Convention and its 1966 Protocol, the country has in 2005 made laws governing the entrance and livelihood of refugees in the country. Though Cameroon adopted this national Law, it is not implemented by the Cameroonian government. Instead it is the UNHCR office that

receives and makes decisions on Refugee Status in Cameroon. For instance the Article 7 of this adopted law states that, “No person shall be turned back at the border... to return to a territory where that person’s life, bodily integrity will be threatened.” (<http://www.refworld.org/docid/4a40d2a162.html>, retrieved 22.05.2015) Cameroon has become the number one destination for refugees fleeing conflicts in their countries for the past nine years as compared to her other neighbors.

The refugee population in Cameroon comes from neighboring countries as a result of the political instability existing in those countries. The largest refugee population in Cameroon comes from the Central African Republic and is estimated at 243.750 people according to a 2015 UNHCR country operation profile. The largest border Cameroon share with her neighbors is the Central African Republic frontier and it is very difficult for one organization alone to handle the influx on this side of the border. CAR refugees started coming into Cameroonian territory in 2006 running away from rebel forces in the country fighting with national forces. It was easier for the fleeing population to get into Cameroon from their own side of the border because of easy access and less control. Following instability and internal insecurity linked to the Boko haram insurgencies, and previous situations of political instability which hit the country some years back, many Nigerians have fled their country seeking refuge in Cameroonian territory. Today, the total population of Nigerian refugees in Cameroon is estimated at 24.182 as of December 2014. (UNHCR *REPORT MARCH 6<sup>TH</sup> 2015*)

#### **1.4 Actors present and relief work in the eastern region of Cameroon.**

Cameroon has become a host nation for refugees in the past nine years and refugees are settled in camps and villages of the eastern and northern parts of the country. This is because these regions serve as entry points for refugees into the territory. CAR refugees mostly enter the territory through the east while Nigerian and refugees from Chad enter through the north. With the influx, there is a demanding humanitarian situation in this area requiring the intervention of organizations local and international in order to grant Relief assistance to the population coming in. We can thus divide the actors operating in this region into three groups which are international, Christian and local actors.

### **1.4.1 Christian Organizations on site**

Not too many Christian Organizations are on ground in the eastern region of Cameroon in assisting these Refugees. The main Christian actors here are the CARITAS, and the CRS. These two organizations are all Catholic Christian organizations created in different countries, the former in Germany and the later in the United States of America for the purpose of giving relief to the poor, but my focus is the Caritas Cameroon and the Catholic Relief Service in Cameroon. The Caritas Cameroon and the Catholic Relief Service Cameroon are supported financially and materially also by the Caritas in Germany and CRS in the United States respectively. I can't go detail on this because I was not able to get in-depth information on specific like budgets. Although they are coordinated and operate in different ways, they all carry the same message and teachings, coupled with similar activities geared towards granting relief to the refugees and the needy in a holistic structure. Their works are visible in the domain of education by the provision of educational facilities and teachers for the education of refugee children, their participation in the construction of water points and the provision of better hygiene and sanitation conditions for refugees, and support to refugee families by the provision and distribution of food and clothes in various refugee settlement areas.

However, not only Catholic Christian organizations provide relief services to the refugee population in the eastern region of Cameroon and other parts of the country where there is a refugee problem. We also have here the Lutheran World Federation (LWF), which is a charity organization of the Lutheran church working in the provision of relief services to the poor and vulnerable. We can also point out here the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA), an organization of the congregation of Adventist churches which works and handle relief situations as the case with the refugee situation in the north and eastern regions of Cameroon just to name these few.

### **1.4.2 Inter-governmental and Non-governmental actors and relief work.**

There exist a number of international actors in the various regions working with refugees. The main international organization which is the coordinator of relief works for refugees in the country is the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). This is the United

Nations agency which has the mandate to deal with refugee activities in the world according to the 1951 Convention on the Status of Refugees. The organization before intervening to handle the refugee crisis set up a priority program which consisted in dressing up a list of basic things which needed to be done in order to begin with the hosting of refugees in Cameroon territory. It was essential that the refugees be provided with basic necessities like shelter, (this was possible through the construction of refugee camps in the regions), water, health services, education, Job opportunities, food and nutrition, necessary for the reception of refugees at entry points of Cameroonian territory and other services which will come later in order to insure the respect for human dignity.

However, the UNHCR is assisted in the task by partner organizations that are specialized in one or more of the domains detailed in its program plan relating to services granted to the benefit of the refugee population. In this light, we can name other international organizations who work in partnership with the UNHCR in Cameroon like the International Medical Core (IMC), which works in the domain of health and also carries out child protection activities, Action Contre la Faim (ACF), working in nutrition projects for refugees, Première Urgences (PU), which handles the management of mobile settlement sites of Timangolo and Mbile in the eastern region of Cameroon, the Cameroon Red Cross Federation which works in the distribution of basic necessities and follow up the education of children in the villages, Plan Cameroon, working in the domain of education, child protection and Care International who helps in mental health, water, hygiene and sanitation. These are some of the international NGOs operating in the region and the domains in which they work in order to render relief to the refugee population.

#### **1.4.3 Some Apostolic Groups in the Catholic Church that assist in Relief Work.**

With regards to the Refugee situation in the country, we also have local organizations which are individual and Christian. The Christian organizations which act at the local level are apostolic groups of the Catholic Church.

To begin, apostolic groups are small groups within the church and are found in various parishes in order to assure social cohesion and practically imitating the teachings of Christ to humanity, spreading Christian values and virtues, they imitate and possibly bring the local community

closer to Christ and his message to Christians. They also act in their various communities in solidarity in order to bring aid to Refugees, visitations to the sick at home and in hospitals, Counseling and praying with persons in traumatized situations, and contributing in the form of finance, food (distribution of rice and oil for refugee families), clothing and other services. They volunteer to participate in teaching, and the provision of health services during disasters and when there is an outbreak of an epidemic in the community. Amongst the apostolic groups which bring relief to refugees are: the Saint Vincent de Paul apostolic group, Saint Jude Thaddeus, the Focolari Movement, the Christian Family Movement (CFM), the Young Christian Workers, etc. Some of these apostolic groups are international, while some have their foundations within the parishes they belong. These are just a few of the apostolic groups I could get in contact with. In Chapter two we shall find a chart describing them.

### 1.5 A brief history of Cameroon, and the Eastern Region.

The map below illustrates Cameroon, its border Countries and the research sites.



Fig. 1: Map of Cameroon retrieved from <http://www.worldatlas.com/webimage/countrys/africa/cm.htm>

The Republic of Cameroon is a Central and Western African country which is bordered by Chad to the northeast, Central African Republic to the east, Nigeria to the west and Gabon, Equatorial Guinea, the Republic of the Congo to the south. Situated in the Gulf of Guinea, the country's coast line lies on the Bight of Bonny and the Atlantic Ocean. Cameroon is referred to as “Africa in miniature” because of its geological and cultural diversity and a home to over 200 ethnic groups. The country has had several colonial masters in the past. Cameroon is reputed for its relatively high political stability compared to other African countries notably her neighbors. Nevertheless due to corruption and poor management of its resources, many Cameroonians live in poor conditions and on subsistence farming. Certain areas of the country are neglected and poor in infrastructural development. This is the case of the Eastern region of the country.

The Eastern region of the Republic of Cameroon with headquarters Bertoua occupies the Eastern region of Cameroon and is bordered by the Central African Republic in the east and Congo to the south. It is the largest region in the Republic of Cameroon with 109,011 km<sup>2</sup> and the most sparsely populated. The region is poor in infrastructural development and the main activities here are logging, timber and mining. The region is rich in vast tracts of forests exploited by European and African companies. It also has a number of timber processing centers situated around Belabo, Dimako and Mindourou. Apart from these timber and logging companies, the economy of the region lies primarily on agriculture. The majority of the inhabitants of the region are subsistence farmers who grow main crops like Cassava, plantains and maize. Local farmers also grow many other crops like bananas, groundnuts, oranges, pineapples, yams just to name a few. The region has a dense forest which is the home of the tsetse fly and this insect prevents the raising of a large number of livestock like cattle. However, livestock are raised here by some farmers in small quantity for subsistence and we have among them pigs, sheep, goats, chicken, horses and donkeys. Nevertheless, the Livestock Development Exploitation Organization (LDEO) is in charge of a modern cattle ranch in the northeast of the region in a small village called Ndokayo. In the region, there is the existence of commercial crops like cocoa and coffee which are raised for profit in the areas of Abong-Mbang, Bertoua and Yokadouma. Tobacco is also grown in the plains north of Batouri.

The economy of the region is very poor depending mostly on the activities of timber and logging companies and agriculture which is carried out most of the time for subsistence. As a result of its poor economy, the region is poor in developments because it has been neglected by the central government. Regarded as being of little political importance coupled with the low level of development, the region has been titled “forgotten province.” Despite government efforts to improve healthcare services in Cameroon, most hospitals and clinics are situated in major towns of the region. With a thick forest and an equatorial climate, the region is a host to tropical diseases with malaria being the most deadly. With the poor distribution of healthcare facilities those living in small towns and villages do not have access to health facilities. This is why traditional medicine is still practiced in the east. Like healthcare centers, schools are fairly widely distributed but we have more schools in towns than in villages, especially secondary schools. Most children from remote villages have to walk several miles or live in big towns in order to attend school.

## **1.6 A BRIEF BACKGROUND OF THE PROBLEM IN THE CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC.**

The problem in the CAR never started as a Religious conflict. In March 2013, President Francois Bozize was ousted by a coalition rebellion known as the Seleka in a coup d’état. From then onwards, the countries security was deteriorating as the conflict intensified with the formation of mainly – Christian self-defense groups known as the Anti-Balaka militia group,(AB)opposing the Ex-Seleka militia, and Muslim civilians suspecting of supporting the Seleka coalition. The clashes between these two groups amplified the Crisis mostly in the West and Northwest regions. International, and home pressure as well as poor governance made President Djotodia to resign in January 2014, leaving the Muslim communities in various areas vulnerable to AB attacks in the vacuum left by fleeing Seleka. To restore some calm, the Mayor of Bangui Catherine Samba-Panza was installed as interim President. Pending election which has been slated for August 2015.It is feared that security and protection has to be stepped up in order to avoid further clashes like that in 2014. Since this conflict is on-going, there have been aspects of gross human rights violations committed on both sides including murder, mutilations, looting and the burning of homes, churches and mosques by both Christians and Muslims. With regards to these, there is

a high level of insecurity, general hike in prices of basic commodities, a general realization of food shortages, mal- nutrition, diseases and an excess in mortality rates for both women and children. According to the Norwegian Caritas (Project Report 06-06 -2014), which is operating in the CAR, on food security, livelihoods, protection and social cohesion,

“At least half of the population of 4.6 million has been affected by the Crisis, and over 930,000 people have been displaced within the country, 60 percent of whom are children. An estimated 39,000 citizens of other countries and 250,000 Central Africans have fled to neighboring countries, including many Muslim traders who no longer feel safe in communities where they have lived for generations”.

### **1.7 Research question**

The Influx of refugees is a great challenge to the church and the government of Cameroon.

What efforts is the Catholic Church through the Caritas Cameroon and the Catholic Relief Service doing to meet the current situation of Refugees from the Central African Republic(CAR)in the Eastern Region of Cameroon( Bertoua) , based on the Christian approaches of Reconciliation, Empowerment, and Transformation?

In order to better explore this question, I shall get to know if these relief service broadens its tasks to both Catholic and Non-Catholic Refugees, and if they operate within the Catholic teachings on a holistic Christian approach. I will also briefly assess the contributions made by other Christian Organizations who are not of the Catholic Church and how they approach this issue.

### **1.8 Hypothesis**

- i.** The Catholic Church seeks to carry out relief services to both Catholics and Non-Catholics.
- ii.** The Catholic Church through Caritas and the Catholic relief services is primarily concerned with the provision of possible means to facilitate a safe return of the refugees back home.

- iii. The Catholic Church seeks to promote reconciliation between the different religious communities through dialogue and inter –faith meetings.

### **1.9 Research objectives**

- i. To better explore the Catholic Church’s engagement in situations of Crisis on the Christian values of Reconciliation, Transformation and Empowerment, through the Caritas and the Catholic Relief Service in Cameroon.
- ii. To know how involved the Caritas and the Catholic Relief Services in Cameroon is concerned with Refugees, the needy, the Marginalized and the persecuted in our society, and how they relate the practicalities of Christianity to humanity.
- iii. To Challenge corrupt and tight- fist structures on the repercussions of violence and ethnic differences to the respect for human rights and dignity.

### **1.10 General motivation**

My motivation to research on the refugee issue in the Eastern Region of Cameroon, and using the Caritas Cameroon and the Catholic Relief Service as my case study is spurred by the fact that the church today seems to drift from practically translating Faith into action as Christ demonstrated in his teachings. Most churches pay more attention on fund raisings for internal decorations which is not very necessary, than looking at the situation of the oppressed, the sick, the vulnerable, the persecuted and those marginalized. How do we welcome a stranger? Do we consider those from different faiths as fellow brothers? These and many more pushed me to research on this refugee crisis in Cameroon.

## **CHAPTER TWO:**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **2.0 Introduction**

This chapter presents the methodology followed in carrying out the study. The researcher has discussed all the stages that were involved from data collection until analysis with adequate rationales given on the specific choices made. The chapter is organized under the following headings: location of the study, research design, target population, sampling technique and sample size, research instruments used and data collection and analysis procedures. In addition, reliability and validity issues are briefly highlighted and thereafter, a short summary of the chapter is given at the end.

#### **2.1 Location of the study**

The location of the study is centered in the centre region of Cameroon Yaoundé Precisely the Saint Josephs Anglophone Parish Mvog-Ada, and in the Archdiocese of Bertoua in the east which comprises of three Dioceses. These regions in Cameroon are composed of a predominantly Catholic Christian background. The rationale for choosing these areas as the research site is because most of the Caritas organizations and the Catholic Relief Services are present here, and the apostolic groups within the parishes in these regions are primarily concerned in praying with and providing material assistance to the refugees, and local inhabitants who are looked upon as destitute, the poor, the sick and those who suffer violence. The main churches found in these regions are the Catholic Church, the Eglise Presbyterienne Camerounaise (E.P.C), the Seventh –Days Adventist church, the Lutheran Church in Cameroon, and the Methodist church. Most of these churches are making their own specific contributions in assisting the refugees in one way or the other. But the researcher’s focal point was the Catholic Caritas and the Catholic Relief Services and their responses towards the refugee situation.

#### **2.2 Research Design**

A qualitative research strategy was adopted for this study because of the nature of the research topic. The researcher was interested in individuals’ perception of social reality (Denscombe,

2007; Creswell, 1998; Glesne, 2006) in regard to refugees specifically on the responses of the church in helping refugees integrate in the host communities. The influx of refugees is a great challenge to both the church and the government. The study sought to find out what the Catholic Church through its relief services, that is, the Caritas and the Catholic relief services is doing to meet the needs of refugees from the Central African Republic camped in the eastern region of Cameroon based on the Christian approaches of reconciliation, transformation and empowerment. Denscombe (2007) and Glesne (2006) argue that qualitative research methods require the use of narratives/words in collecting and analyzing information from the respondents. It is important to note that like in quantitative methods, qualitative methodology presents significant challenges to investigators who choose to go that way particularly in trying to understand human behavior and/or actions. Qualitative methods have become quite common in the pursuit of knowledge in social sciences. However, Bryman (1999, p.380) cautions that, “although there has been a proliferation of writings on qualitative research since the 1970s, stipulating what it is and is not as a distinct research strategy is by no means straight forward.” According to Creswell (2009), the qualitative researcher obtains data in the “Natural setting” of the phenomenon in question”. The investigator chose Yaoundé and Bertoua Parishes that deal directly with the refugees. The qualitative strategy is very effective because it relates to cases that are mostly of a social phenomenon, like in this case the refugee situation in the eastern region of Cameroon. Creswell (2007, p.37) notes that;

“Qualitative research today involves closer attention to the interpretive nature of inquiry, and situating the study within the political and, social, and cultural context of the researchers, the participants, and the readers of the study.”

A case study research design was used in the study. The rationale for the choice of a case study was that the researcher wanted to focus on a single case (Creswell, 2007; Glesne, 2006), that is, the Catholic Church and get in-depth understanding of its role. Denscombe (2007) and Bryman (2012) argues that case studies are employed in studies where the investigator(s) is not interested in generating research findings for generalization but rather to go beyond the general patterns that occur within a particular group/situation and have a deeper understanding of those patterns. A case study was preferred because the researcher was interested in obtaining data from a handful of apostolic groups with the parishes that give help to the refugees. Grbich (1999) posits

that case studies when designed well can provide powerful stories to illustrate specific social realities and they are the most appropriate means of designing and managing a study focus.

### **2.3 Target population**

The target population comprised of three Dioceses of the Catholic Church. The three Dioceses have many members that could not be studied wholesomely. It is not always possible to study the whole population due to scope of the study and resources (time, financial, personnel etc) available (Denscombe, 2007). As a result of this, the researcher narrowed down to a few cases within the two groups – the Caritas and the Catholic Relief Services to respond to the questionnaires and interviews.

### **2.4 Sampling and sample size**

According to Grbich (1999) sampling is the process of obtaining individuals or units for inclusion in a study. Sample size refers to the specific units/individuals that have been selected to participate in the study by answering questionnaires and getting interviewed (Bryman, 2012; Denscombe, 2007). Grbich (1999) asserts that qualitative investigators usually use non-probability sampling techniques when selecting research sites and samples. Purposive sampling was used to select the sample. Hoyles et al. (2002) argues that with sound consideration and good strategy, cases can be handpicked to form study units that are satisfactory to the needs of the investigator(s). In this study purposively selected the individuals that that were judged to be typical of the target population and those that would provide the needed information to answer the research questions. The research respondents in this study are predominantly Catholic Relief Services in Yaoundé and Bertoua, and also Catholic apostolic groups within these parishes whose objectives are geared on the Care for Creation. Most of these groups are based in Yaoundé the capital of Cameroon, and in Bertoua the main research site. For those groups that are far off, for instance the Caritas and apostolic groups in Abong-Mbang, and Yokaduma, information about their concern for refugees was gotten from the Archdioceses, and specifically from the Holy Ghost parish Bertoua through my correspondent Dominic Morfaw. He accepted to be identified.

These groups are reliable because of their attachment in rendering Christian services to the vulnerable, the sick and the hungry within the community. Though the Caritas and the Catholic Relief Services may have external sources of funding, their immediate support materially and

financially is provided by the local apostolic groups. Therefore a combination of data from these two sources can make for a reliable data, which can better answer the research question. These groups are more reliable because they practically prophesy the word of God both in words and in deeds. I can further say that my reason for selecting these groups is because they are geared towards a systematic diakonia within the parishes, the community, and for a general social care. And therefore their virtues and Christian values reflect the research question. There are several apostolic groups I did not contact for data not because they were not important but because they were specifically for evangelism.

## **2.5 Data collection instruments and Data sources**

The researcher made use of three approaches. The researcher used document analysis to try and get the general picture of what the church is doing. This picture could then be compared with the real situation on ground obtained from questionnaires and interviews. Documentary analysis can be very useful because they tell us what happened at a particular point in history (Denscombe, 2007; Bryman, 2012; Creswell, 2007). In addition to documentary analysis, the investigator developed a semi-structured interview schedule with broad items to explore. Semi-structured interviews are effective in collecting rich narrative stories about phenomena (Creswell, 2006). In addition, semi-structured interviews give the interviewer enough flexibility and room to maneuver and ask auxiliary/follow-up questions so that interviewees can clarify unclear issues (Bryman, 2012; Denscombe, 2007). The researcher also made use of the questionnaires. Short closed-ended questionnaires were developed. The aim of using the questionnaire was to support my interview guides that were not analyzed statistically. Each questionnaire comprised of 20 questions of which the last question was an open question. Groups of 4-5 individuals responded to a single questionnaire. Bryman (2012) argue that questionnaires provide effective means of collecting large amounts of data within a very short period of time.

The questions on the interview guide and the questionnaire basically were centered around the Christian values on reconciliation, transformation and empowerment. It requested these organizations and apostolic groups to give their own assessments on how the Catholic Caritas in Cameroon and the Catholic Relief Services do respond to the Refugee crisis in the Eastern Region of Cameroon on the basis of shelter, education, health care, food security, job opportunities security and safety, Water and Sanitation, and peace building. Each question on the

questionnaire had responses based on a likert scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. It was meant to express degrees of agreement or disagreement with specific statements. This questionnaire approximately required just 5 to 7 minutes for each group to sit, reflect and respond to the questionnaire. With respect to the interview guide, it composed entirely of 9 open-ended questions that needed the impressions of 2 Non- faith based organizations, whose responses are glaring in Bertoua and in Cameroon towards the refugees, and 3 Faith- based organizations of a non Catholic background. This interview guide approximately required the respondents a couple of 10 to 12 minutes in responding to the questions. Each interview guide carried a set of 20 questions based on the Christian approaches of Reconciliation, Empowerment and Transformation.

Most of the data was obtained from recent documents, reports and analysis from the information desk of the Caritas in Yaoundé, and that of Bertoua, and also consulting other researchers who have carried out similar researches such as Angela Clare Butel (2013) “Examining the Routinized Refugee Response in Eastern Cameroon” and also Mbuli Rene (2009) “Humanitarian Crises and the Management of Refugees in the CAR.” Reports of activities from some apostolic groups in the parishes were also utilized. The researcher also sought views of non- governmental organizations which do not have a Christian background in order to get their assessment on the Church’s responses through the Caritas and the Catholic Relief Services to the current refugee crisis in the eastern region of Cameroon. Prime sources of information were also gotten from the UNHCR recent reports. Brief Interviews on phones and emails from my respondents were also very imperative in the collection of data. The interviews were based specifically to Diocesan President of the Peace and Justice Commission, and to a Priest. The catechist to the St Joseph Anglophone Parish Brother Dominic Morfaw was constantly supplying me with documents and reports of the contributions of Caritas to the refugees. The Library of the Diakonhjemmet University College, the Menighetsfakultet (m.f) and the Municipal Library at Majorstuen (Dietchmanske Bibliotek) are sources of information on a wider perspective on how different Scholars have examined the Churches Responses on Refugee situations or Crisis.

## **2.6 How the Apostolic Groups Responded to the Interview Guides and Questionnaire**

As earlier mentioned, the questionnaires were used as a means to strengthen my responses from the various respondents, and the interview guide was to get an impression or comparison on how the work of the Caritas Cameroon and the Catholic Relief Services could be assessed. All in all, 5 interview guides were distributed, 2 were destined to non-faith based international organizations, and while 3 went to the Lutheran World Federation (LWF), the Norwegian Mission Help (N.M.S), and the Presbyterian health Services in Cameroon (P.H.S.C). Though there are other faith-based organizations working in Cameroon, I decided to choose these faith Services because of their presence and attention on the refugee issue in both the Northern and Eastern regions of Cameroon. I emailed 12 questionnaires to 12 apostolic groups within the parishes, 8 responded, while 4 preferred an interview in English and or French on phone.

*The Table Below Illustrates The Apostolic Groups That Responded To My Questionnaire And Interview Guide:*

<b>No.</b>	<b>GROUP NAME</b>	<b>Members/LOCATION</b>	<b>CHRISTIAN VIRTUES</b>
1	Catholic Charismatic Renewal (Visitation ministry).	220 – Yaoundé. 160 – Bertoua.	Prayers, Restoration of faith, visitations to the sick, Material and financial assistance to the Caritas Cameroon, and proclamation of the word.
2	Peace and Justice Commission	30 – Yaoundé 20- Dioceses of Bertoua.	Advocates for Justice, peace and Reconciliation, and the respect for human dignity.
3	Saint Jude Thaddeus Society	50 – Yaoundé 39 – Bertoua.	Upholds the Virtues of Saint Jude. Giving hope to the hopeless, and those in difficult situations.
4	Catholic Women Association( C.W.A)	300- Yaoundé.	Emulating the virtues of

		240- Bertoua.	Mary. Care, Counseling, and Prayers, Visitations, educating the girl child, Financial and material support to the church.
5	Saint Vincent De Paul Society	39 –Yaoundé.  32- Bertoua.	Promotes Social Justice, Practical Support to the needy, the less privileged and spiritual guidance.
7	Christian Family Movement ( C.M.F)	62- Yaoundé.	Upholding the virtues of the Holy Family of Nazareth, i.e. Joseph, Mary and Jesus. Family unity and inter-faith relationships.
8	Young Christian Workers ( Y.C.W)	200- Yaoundé.	Youths of the Church. Volunteers in Stewardship, Sunday school teaching, assist during times of crisis and disasters.

### **2.7 Procedure for Data Analysis:**

Upon obtaining the questionnaire and interviews I had to go through their responses over and over again. Together with the information I got from the phone calls, I picked important issues that were of interest to respond to the research question. The reason for making these calls was as a result of the fact that, most of the groups were reluctant to respond in writing, and the leaders preferred to briefly respond on phone. For those two groups which could not respond in

English, I could translate their responses in English. Data was grouped and discussed under the broad themes of reconciliation, empowerment and transformation.

## **2.8 Limitations of the study**

There is usually certain obstacles and complexities when it comes to coming out with concise and accurate information concerning issues of persecution and ethnic disparities in any social research work.

The first difficulty I had was getting in contact with a reliable and confident person as my liaison for data collection. Most of them began confidently, and after some time I lost contact with them. Many were reluctant until I had to scan and send my student identification card, before they were curious in helping me out. Even though I implemented certain ethical values in data collection such as respecting the integrity and the privacy of the other, some of the informants were like skeptical to release certain information's which they considered as private. Others politely refused to respond to some interview guides I sent to them. Though most of my informants were French speaking, and I speak French eloquently, I could easily translate the information in English to make it reliable and viable from the documents and reports forwarded to me by my contact person's Brother Dominic, who is the Catechist to the Saint Josephs' Anglophone Parish. Though French and English are official spoken languages in Cameroon, French is predominantly spoken in the Eastern Region of Cameroon.

The fact that not much literature has been published online about the massive influx of refugees in the eastern region of Cameroon, or on the role played by churches in bringing relief aid to the refugees in the east of Cameroon, has pushed me to contact those active in the field directly.

The poor communication net work in Cameroon made me to make several discussions on phone, while Skype interviews did not work at all. It takes approximately five hour's to drive from Yaoundé to Bertoua, and therefore I could only get information after a couple of weeks from my informants, and from directly on phone with the apostolic groups. Some of the groups within the St Josephs Anglophone Parish in Yaoundé that received the questionnaire could not respond as quickly as possible because of their meeting schedules. Information from Bertoua could get to my correspondent late due to the distance and poor communication net-work.

## **2.9 Reliability and validity of the study**

Reliability of the study refers to the capacity of the investigator to present findings of the study in a coherent, complete and meticulously confirmed aspects of the phenomenon being explored – the ability of the instruments to produce consistent results/outcomes (Grbich, 1999). On the other hand validity involved getting the reader of the study convinced that the materials presented accurately reflect the social phenomena being investigated, that is, the data/findings can be verified (Grbich, 1999). Data cross-checking was also done to ensure the collected data was complete. To ensure the results are valid, the researcher had to be reflective on the whole research process. Grbich (1999) argue that reflexivity clarifies how ones beliefs and values influence the process of data collection and analysis. For objectivity, the researcher had to clarify his own beliefs and values and to keep them under control so they don't influence the research process. Glesne (2006) asserts that it is important for the investigator to clarify his own bias in qualitative research projects. In addition, the researcher used triangulation of data collection tools (Glesne, 2006). Validity was also ensured by extensively discussing the core concepts of Christian relief mission. The researcher was not interested in generalizing the findings of this small scale study to the wider population. However, the main strategies and justifications identified in Caritas and Catholic Relief Service could be identified in other Catholic churches and other relief agencies.

## **2.10 Logistical and ethical issues**

Research involving human subjects need to be carefully conducted to avoid harming them (Bryman, 2012; Grbich, 1999). Grbich (1999) observes that being accountable in the relationship between the researcher and the human subjects is critical and that participant rights must be protected at all cost. All research participants should understand the nature of the study and willingly give their consent to participate. The researcher explained the whole research project to the researcher participants and thereafter asked them if they felt comfortable to take part. The research participants gave their consent by word of mouth and no written document was made. The investigator assured participants that the results of the study will be used specifically for academic purposes and anonymity and confidentiality will be ensured (Denscombe, 2007; Creswell, 2007; Grbich, 1999). No names of the participants have been used in the final report and the data were stored in a personal computer with a password known only by the researcher. Research participants were made aware that participation was purely on voluntary basis and that

they were not compelled to answer any question that they did not feel comfortable responding to. They could also withdraw from the study without giving reason at any time if they felt uncomfortable to continue participating. The researcher also indicated to the participants that should anything in the study change for example research objectives or methodology, they would be contacted and new consent will be sought (Grbich, 1999).

## **CHAPTER THREE: THEORETICAL APPROACH**

### **3.0 Introduction**

This chapter is going to identify various theories that I am applying in order to answer the research question. With regards to the question, I am utilizing the theory of reconciliation which simply looks at the creation of new relationships between individuals and the host communities and then followed by the empowerment theory which views the ability to manage ones surroundings and finally, the theory of transformation which talks about the ability to cope with mental and societal changes. These theories have been used because they owe great relationship with the research question. These three theories shall be further developed as concepts in the subsequent chapters in order to better analyze the research questions. From these theories we shall analyze and come to judgment on how the Catholic Church through its humanitarian Organizations specifically the Caritas and the Catholic Relief Services (CRS) in Cameroon respond to situations of Crisis that affect humanity.

### **3.1 The Theory of Reconciliation**

Reconciliation owes a great importance in the lives of people and nations who are victims to conflicts and Wars; because it is an instrument that is used in bringing together estranged and alienated parties together. Reconciliation in the Catholic Social teachings is regarded as a means in stopping further conflicts both within families, tribes, nations, and amongst individuals and their mind sets. Letty M .Russell (1993pg113) states that the adequacy of the life of a church can only be measured based on how it responds to the needs of marginalized persons for Justice, hospitality, and hope. In the Catholic peace and Justice Commission of my Parish, Reconciliation does not go alone without Recognition of faults, Forgiveness and Repentance. For Reconciliation to be complete, both the perpetrator and the victimized are involved. And therefore the Case of the Refugees from the CAR in the Eastern Region of Cameroon is not an exception. The perpetrators are to be granted the chance to confess to the victims, so that recognition, repentance and forgiveness can take effect.

As Kassmann (1998 Pg 42) suggests, “Christianity will have to find ways to speak about forgiveness and reconciliation as a precondition for breaking the cycle of violence in a way that the secular world can understand.”

The Church is called to be at the fore front in the practical process of reconciliation, justice and dialogue as a means to bind divided communities, healing and bringing Hope to the oppressed and the weary. It should be quick at responding to situations that demand a combination of spiritual come-together especially to communities and peoples that have experienced violence and Marginalization in various ways.

“The reconciliation called for presents two faces. One face is social. It has to do with providing structures and processes whereby a fractured society can be reconstructed as truthful and just. It has to do with coming to terms with the past, punishing wrongdoers, and providing some measure of reparation to victims. It must create a secure space and an atmosphere of trust that makes civil society possible. The other face is spiritual. It has to do with rebuilding shattered lives, so that social Reconciliation becomes a reality” (Schreiter, 2000, Pg4).

With the on-going Refugee situation in Cameroon, and particularly in the eastern region of Cameroon, the church is acting as a mediator in uniting to two groups of Faiths that have been fractured by waves of conflicts and violence. Forgiveness plays a vital role in this case because the perpetrator must be able to admit and confess to the victim, while the victim forgives and reconciliation can take place.

“Say what one will, forgiveness survives as a guiding principle in our lives. It remains an honored theme in culture, an element that can be the subject of what Catholic theologian Karl Rahner called the “selective retrieval” that must occur whenever people want to plumb a complex tradition (Worthington 1998 pg12).

In this case he implies that forgiveness can never be left out when it comes to redressing complicated issues of division in our societies. To my own point of view, pardoning someone for an offence brings hope for reconciliation to occur, and once the oppressor recognizes and confess his faults, there is an opportunity to rectify the wrongs of the past through reconciliation.

According to S. Wesley Ariarajah in his book “Axis of Peace”, the only means by which peace and reconciliation could be authentic is when people and nations rely on a nonviolence policy, so that human relationships could be effective. Therefore it is a task for the church to also intervene in not only verbally prophesying reconciliation, but to practically reconcile the people by uniting them in prayers and ritual. As already said above, reconciliation and peace can’t be sustainable if those involved are not punished justly.

“The creation of sustainable communities will not happen without a commitment to justice as a fundamental spiritual value on which we organize our lives and our societies.”(Hallman 2000 pg 73)

All in all the theory of reconciliation is a very vital ideology that churches should very much implement in their doctrines, so that people should be reconciled to one another, faiths regard each other as one body in Christ.

### **3.2 The Theory of Empowerment.**

#### ***Definition of Empowerment***

The word Empowerment is derived from the verb Empower. The Cambridge Advanced Learners Dictionary defines it as: To give someone official Authority or the Freedom to do something. But as per the Context of my research topic, I will prefer to use the free online encyclopedia dictionary definition which states that, Empowerment refers to increasing the spiritual, political, social, educational, gender, or economic strength of individuals and communities.

These Refugees from the CAR in the Eastern Region of Cameroon (Bertoua) are witnesses of physical acts of violence and torture in different ways. The Fear and psychological trauma that looms in the minds of these refugees is a concern for Counseling by the Caritas and the Catholic Relief Service, so that these refugees can be empowered and be strengthened to cope with their situation, and mix up freely in their new environment.

“Counseling is the skilled and principled use of relationship to facilitate self-knowledge, emotional acceptance and growth, and the optimal development of personal resources. The

overall aim is to provide an opportunity to work towards living more satisfying and resourcefully” (Lartey 2003, pg82)

The Challenging part of it is that the Church is also to take as its responsibility to empower these people so that they can define their destiny by themselves, and not depend on charitable acts for their living. In this case, they will regain their self dignity, poverty and the dependency on charity and the too many beggars along the market streets will be curtailed. Once a people are empowered, they can be able to criticize the corrupt policies implemented by their governments that is plunging the economy into a recession.

“During the uprising, we called for the return of democracy and demanded our rights. But I don’t remember any placard demanding human rights.” (Sandy Baron et al 2010 Pg49).Once the skills and dignity of a community is revealed, then they can be able to recognize their place in the society. Vocational training courses should be implemented so that personal skills and talents could be exploited. This helps to empower the refugees to be self –sufficient.

“Empowerment and diakonia are integral parts of being a missional church, people are emerging self-empowered for action , becoming subjects of their own destiny, and beyond being simply objects of aid and charity”(Diakonia as Christian social practice pg111).

The strength of empowerment could be positive in the lives of these needy and persecuted people if the church and state combine its efforts to unlock the talents of these refugees. Empowerment in a theological perspective is a driving force that inspires and liberates oppressed and hopeless persons to better enhance their personal skills within and makes them automatically included in the development and normal day to day lives of their environment.

Ofelia Ortega and Chris Ferguson article titled “Diakonia: Creating Harmony, Seeking Justice and Practicing Compassion”, says “Diakonia, as the Church’s ministry of Sharing, healing and reconciliation, is of the very nature of the church.... Diakonia in all its many authentic forms cannot be separated from the struggle for Justice and Peace, and is directly linked to the empowerment, transformation, and liberation of marginalized and excluded people in every community”

In the old Testament book of Genesis 1:26, it says “ Then God said, Let us make man in our image , in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air....move along the ground”. This biblical verse clearly spells out the authority that God empowers on all humans as his own image to take stewardship over everything on earth. Therefore the Church and its organizations such as the Caritas are called upon to empower communities and those undergoing exclusion to oppose those structures that are part of such acts. The pressure from the church shall surely paralyze such structures.

Graham Cray’s perspective on empowerment by St Paul is equally vital in analyzing this Theory in that: “Paul expected all Christians, rich or poor, weak or strong, to seek the advantage of others, to be “benefactors” seeking the things that benefit others. “All things are lawful, but not all things are beneficial. “All things are lawful, but not all things build up. Do not seek your own advantage, but that of the other” (1 Cor.10:23-24 pg 43). Paul tries to challenge us today and most especially Christian Organizations like the Caritas in Cameroon to render services to humanity without any expectations. He tries to get all involved in the Christian mission of caregiving and empowerment. As Emmanuel Y. Lartey(2003, pg 68) puts it ,empowerment brings back the values of one’s personality and characteristics, and encourages individuals and communities to think, act , and achieve freedom to participate in the day to day activities of the area that they find themselves.

### **3.3 The Theory of Transformation.**

#### ***Definition of Transformation***

The word transformation is derived from the verb “transform”, which means to change something. The Oxford English Dictionary definition says transformation is to change completely the appearance or character of something or someone, especially so that they are more improved. Taking in to cognizance the refugee situation in the Eastern Region of Cameroon, I will prefer the description of transformation by Diakonia in Context that says transformation as

“an ongoing process of total reorientation of life with all its aspirations, ideologies, structures, and values, it is a continuous process of rejection of that which dehumanizes

and desecrates life and adherence to that what affirms the sanctity of life and gifts in everyone and promotes peace and Justice in society”( 2009,pg 43).

Through this theory, Christian Churches and organizations are provoked not only to preach transformation but to translate it in reality. Faith in action is transformation. Most of these refugees saw their loved ones been slaughtered and killed by militiamen. Therefore through this theory the church is called upon to transform the hearts and minds of these depressed and traumatized persons, through counseling, Prayers, and a continuous general orientation in order to nurture their minds for a purposeful life filled with resilience. According to Steven M. Southwick et al (2012 pg 6), resilience refers to the ability to “bounce back” after encountering difficulty. This transformation should be substantial and reciprocal both in the lives of the refugees and the host community.

“In some places, poor farmers suffer because they are not given the ownership of the land they are cultivating. They are forced into buying overpriced products from the stores of the land owners, and must sell their own produce at prices determined by the landowners”. (Nordstokke 2000 pg. 38).

The church is challenged to be an example of change by implementing ways and means for dialogue, peace and Justice, through different parameters of advocacy, so that these people can quickly be integrated in a new environment. Therefore, creating a society where people respect each other, mindful of their religion, ethnicity, color, culture etc.

“Respectful interaction depends on intersubjectivity (Wiley, 1988:258), which has two defining Characteristics: 1. Intersubjectivity emerges from the interchange and synthesis of meanings among two or more communicating selves, and 2. The self or subject gets transformed during interaction such that a joint or merged subjectivity develops...The only form that can keep up is one based on face-to-face interaction.” (Karl E.Weick pg.113-114).

Transformation brings hope in times of hopelessness. Therefore the Catholic Caritas in Cameroon and other Christian relief services are injected by this theory to transform these fellow humans both socially, religiously, economically, and politically. The assistance by these

organizations should be transformative, so that a lasting change may be realized, and not like adding much pain to their burden.

“Effective service among the less privileged requires a significant degree of awareness and delicacy. Sometimes even the most innocent and well-meaning attempts to help inflict pain”. (Lupton 2011pg 147).

The process of transformation in the lives of these men and women fleeing persecution, torture and marginalization, must be developmentally oriented. The actors (Caritas) must speak prophetically against aspects of injustice and disrespect for human dignity and or violence in any form. As a Christian organization, its approaches in effecting a change must be of a theological context since its mission is to imitate the teachings of Christ. Transformation must be able to liberate and empower the weak against poverty and solitude. “It must be about restoring relationships, just and right relationships with God, with self, with community, with the “other”, and with the environment” (Myers.2011, pg 75).

“Transformation on a holistic Christian character represents the presence of Christ examples and actions on humanity. When the powerless are transformed into a blessing for their community by the grace of Christ, it provides a powerful sign of the reality of the coming kingdom.”(Cray 2007, Pg 43).

## CHAPTER FOUR

### THE CONTEXT OF THE INFLUX OF REFUGEES FROM THE CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC IN THE EASTERN REGION OF CAMEROON: SOME ACTORS ADDRESSING THE CAR REFUGEE CRISIS IN CAMEROON

#### 4.0. Introduction

The first local CARITAS organization had its foundation in Germany. It was created by a German Bishop Lorenz Werthmann in 1897 and it had as first name *Charitasverband für das Katholische Deutschland*, a name of German origin. The name is literally translated into English as Charitable Association for Catholic Germany. In 1916, the organization was recognized by the conference of Bishops as the union of diocesan charitable organizations but it lost its political and judicial authority during the period of National Socialism when Germany was divided into two. During this period, the organization went dormant and its activities were restricted. Nevertheless, it continued its activities during the period after the Union of the two Germanys and the organization regained its status as a legally constituted organization, its works together with its objectives being recognized. Following a World Eucharistic Congress in Amsterdam 1924 which brought together sixty representatives of twenty two countries, a catholic conference of charitable works was created. In 1928, the conference took the name of Caritas Catholic. This organization was approved by Mon Seignieur Montini who officially gave it the authority to handle all charitable activities undertaken by the Catholic Church at the international level. Consequently, the different Caritas associations started uniting from 1950 under the reign of Mgr Montini and the first international Caritas assembly took place in December 1951 with the support of the Vatican. In 1957, the conference took the name of *Caritas Internationalis* in order to reflect her international presence and today, it is present in 165 countries and territories. Caritas is a charity organization of Christian inspiration and it counts 165 members who are national charity organizations or an association of these organizations working with the support of their respective churches or a charity organization recognized by the Vatican committed to the progress and development of man. It is a worldwide network of Catholic humanitarian agencies.

#### **4.1 Background to Caritas Cameroon**

Caritas Cameroon, better known under the name Office of Socio-Charitable Actions (BASC), was founded in 1971 to support the development organization of the Catholic Church of Cameroon and its supports socio-charitable Action Network diocesan committees. The main Caritas in Cameroon is situated at the capital of the country in Yaoundé specifically at the main cathedral of the capital. It is from here that the activities of the other Caritas in the country are coordinated at the levels of the diocese. It is however important to point out that, not all diocese in Cameroon have the Caritas organization. In the English speaking parts of the country, there exist several apostolic groups in the Catholic Church which carry out similar activities like that of the Caritas in the French speaking zones of the country. These groups operate independently raising funds by themselves and helping the local community when need arises.

With the situation and the massive influx of refugees from neighboring countries in the eastern and northern region of the country, and their demanding situation in the form of aid in different sector of life, Caritas Cameroon responded to this by opting to participate in a number of projects set up by the UNHCR directed towards granting relief to refugees. Caritas Cameroon to address these problems has created a business unit to help the local church to meet the needs of refugees. Funds of calls were made to cover their immediate needs, and assistance was distributed in the form of food and non-food products. Medical equipment was also provided. In addition, projects were designed to improve housing and temporary structures, but the water remains a priority for all. Caritas Cameroon is working to improve water supplies by building additional points of distribution, and organizes awareness campaigns on respect for the environment to protect water sources, forests and land. The localities of Batouri and Yokadouma have benefitted greatly from this water project which as aforementioned remains a priority. These localities witnessed the construction of 02 additional water points each situated at strategic areas like refugee camps and schools thereby increasing water supplies not only to the refugee population but the host community as well. Caritas Cameroon organizes community training in animal husbandry and agriculture. It ensures the well-being of people and the preservation of life and property.

#### **4.2 Catholic Relief Services (CRS) background and history**

The CRS as an organization that was created in the United States of America by the United State Council of Catholic Bishops in 1943 as an international humanitarian organization. Its objectives went from bringing relief to war displaced persons, by the distribution of food, clothing and medicine which were one of its first commitments. It further went ahead to be committed to other needy population around the world who suffered from one disaster to the other and its services evolved towards the provision of socio-economic development, healthcare, nutrition education, micro enterprise and agriculture. Today, the organization is present in many countries of the world amongst which Cameroon.

In Cameroon, Catholic Relief Services has continually adapted its programming to the changing circumstances of the country and to the needs of the Cameroonian people since their first programs in 1961. CRS started working in Cameroon primarily to reduce under-five mortality through child survival programs. The focus then shifted to enhancing food security in the northern regions of the country, where there was drought-related hunger. Later CRS transitioned to governance, health and HIV programming. According to a recent joint World Food Program and Cameroon government assessment, Cameroon has declined from a food-sufficient, middle-income to a food-deficit, low-income country. Our current focus is on supporting orphans and vulnerable children and community health (including water and sanitation). These actions and more can be pinpointed in the Eastern region of Cameroon where a huge refugee community has been settled by the UNHCR agency. Working hand in hand with other organizations which we are going to call partners for the purpose of our research, CRS accomplishes a lot of activities in rendering the lives of refugees and their stay in Cameroonian territory worth living.

#### **4.3 The Republic of Cameroon and its Relief Structures/Cameroon State Relief Structures.**

Cameroon has very large borders which she shares with a number of countries in the Central African sub region. We are referring to hear of Chad in the North, Nigeria in the South and, Central African Republic, Equatorial Guinea just to name a few in the East. Her relation with her neighbors has been relatively peaceful but for territorial conflict which opposed her to the Federal Republic of Nigeria over the Bakassi peninsula. Nevertheless, Cameroons neighbors register a number of instabilities which led to a large influx of migrants running helter-skelter from their countries of origin seeking refuge in Cameroon. In 1979, over 200.000 – 300.000

refugees seek refuge in Cameroon, from the same country in 1991 and 2008 fleeing violence between government troops and rebel forces.<sup>1</sup> Conflicts in Nigeria spurred an influx of about 17000 refugees into Cameroon.<sup>2</sup> According to a UNHCR (An international non-governmental organization working with refugees in Cameroon), Cameroon is grappling with the influx of over a hundred thousand refugees from the Central African Republic (CAR) and neighboring Nigeria.<sup>3</sup> The estimated number of refugees from a prior sensor by this organization in 2014 is, 241.096 (according to a UNICEF sensor carried out in November 2014)<sup>4</sup>, 243.750 for the UNHCR (numbers gotten as pair the month of January 2015)<sup>5</sup>. These refugees are hosted in 4 camps, 300 villages of the Northern and Eastern regions of Cameroon. Cameroon's reputation as a politically stable and hospitable country, its central location and shared borders with several neighboring states, its bilingualism, and cross-border ethnic ties between groups all make Cameroon a popular destination for those seeking refuge.

In the domain of relief, the Republic of Cameroon has carried out a number of actions through its ministries. Most often, the government reacts to disaster stroke areas by providing funds and food supplies and other basic necessities required by the population. The State has carried out a number of these actions in the past years notably in the Northern parts of the country where floods and other natural disasters devastated and rendered a part that population homeless and helpless. Till date, there is no program put up by the State in order to provide relief to refugees in the Eastern region of the country. What the State of Cameroon has set up is a kind of commission whose function is limited to the handling of refugee status determination, which is giving them or not permanent identification as refugees in the country. This is as a result of the law of number 2005/006 governing the status of refugees in Cameroon, which grants certain rights to refugees in the territory as far as they respect Cameroonian laws.<sup>6</sup> The law envisaged commissions as afore mentioned which were designed to decide on the eligibility of applicants

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<sup>1</sup> Nobel Peter; Refugee, law and development in Africa. Michigan Yearbook of international legal studies, 1982.

<sup>2</sup> Rene Mbuli; Humanitarian crisis and the management of refugees in Central Africa (A case study of Cameroon). Groninengen, Netherlands, 2009.

<sup>3</sup> UN integrated regional information networks report. 30<sup>th</sup> October 2013.

<sup>4</sup> UNICEF: Cameroon Humanitarian Situation Report, November 2014.

<sup>5</sup> UNHCR: Central Africa Republic Regional Response Plan, January – December 2015.

<sup>6</sup> The appellation of the Law stated is "Law n° 2005/2006" translated in English as "Law number 2005/2006" governing the status of refugees under Cameroonian law.

for refugee status and another to process appeals. This commission was designed to take over from the work carried out by the UNHCR in the determination of refugee status and notwithstanding the fact that a decree for the application of this law was put up, and commissions set up, it has not yet entered into activity.

#### **4.4 UNHCR Corporation Patterns, Figures, Laws and overall Management Applying to CAR Refugees in Cameroon**

UNHCR is a major international organization which has dedicated its services to rendering relief to refugees all over the world. The organization is present in many countries of the world today witnessing movement of population from areas where there is an internal or external conflict. The agency operates in many ways and has specific objectives to attain in each given situation. In 2007, the agency was involved in about sixty eight countries and the largest of its operations were carried out in Kenya, Malaysia, Somalia, and Yemen jut to mention the above.

The genesis of this activity can be traced as far back as the League of Nations in 1921 with the League of Nations High Commissioner for refugees. This body is the clearest precursor to the UNHCR, which is the shaping force in the refugee regime's activities in Cameroon today. This body handled refugee cases individually with a Commission set up for each particular case. Accordingly, in 1920 a High Commissioner was appointed solely to deal with cases of refugees from Russia and in 1933, the League established another High Commissioner for Germany.<sup>7</sup> When the League died after World War II, the UNHCR as we know it today sprang from the context and reacted to specific European problems. The work of the agency is guided by the 1951 Convention relating to the Statute of Refugees, and their narrow definition of what constitutes a refugee was expanded in the 1967 protocol which gives the agency legacy to assist in a wider range of situations. The 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees is the main instrument of action in the domain of refugees. In this convention to which over one hundred countries are signatories, we can find the definition of a refugee, the rights and obligations of refugee in the host country, and also the rights and obligations of the host country to refugees in their territory. On the other hand, the 1967 protocol is an additional document to

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<sup>7</sup> Loescher Gil; The UNHCR and world politics: A perilous path. Oxford university press, 2001

the 1951 convention which expands the scope of the work beyond the post second world war refugees. It expands the scope of application of the 1951 Convention to widen the group of people who can be considered as refugees. It is thanks to this mandate that the agency intervenes in the Eastern region of the Cameroon rendering services to displaced CAR population.

In order to accomplish her mission, the UNHCR works in cooperation with other local and national NGOs. This corporation pattern with other organizations helps in reducing the burden on the agency in handling displaced persons. The agency handles access to basic and essential services ranging from education, health, child protection, food supplies. The agency works here with organizations like Première Urgence (PU) which deals with the organization of mobile terminals and units in the organization of settlements and receiving refugees. In the health domain, we have the International Medical Corp which handles medical projects and projects on child protection; and still in the health domain the agency works with Africa Humanitarian Action (AHA), and Care International which works in projects of mental health, water and hygiene. In the domain of education, the agency works with Plan International providing child protection services and temporary teaching sites. In the domain of food safety, we have La Croix Rouge Française, Action Contre la Faim, and International Relief and Development. In addition, other local NGOs in the area such as the Diocesan Catholic Relief Services, and the apostolic groups, cooperate voluntarily with the UNHCR in the distribution of food items, monitoring and giving practical education on basic hygienic conditions. The Caritas Internationalis works directly with the UNHCR alongside the Caritas Cameroon on activities of community development. These organizations work together with other UN agencies to support the refugees in the eastern region of Cameroon.

#### **4.5 Relations between Relief Services Working with Refugees in the Eastern Region of Cameroon**

The Eastern region of Cameroon is a huge challenge to non-governmental organizations working with refugee. It is one of the least developed areas in Cameroon, poor in infrastructure and other basic facilities. To begin with, the first challenge NGOs face in this region is water points. There is the lack of water points for the local population and with the arrival of refugees; this makes the situation even worst. There is an urgent need in the increases of these water points in order to

serve both the refugee and local population in water supplies. Then, we have the situation of hospitals and health centers most of which are situated only in major towns of the region. Villages situated faraway from towns to benefit from these services have to travel long distances and many refugee camps are to be constructed in these villages as the host community. An urgent need for the construction of health centers and other medical facilities is imperative in these villages. Moreover, we have provision in food supplies, educational training and shelter through the construction of refugee camps in order to host the refugee population. The UNHCR is the general coordinator of activities dealing with relief and other services granted to refugees in the area. In order to meet with the challenges that lie ahead in the region, organizations rally themselves to work in different domains particularly in domains where basic survival facilities are absent and need to be provided. Identifying these areas, we are referring to health, education, clean water, nutrition and protection services like child and women protection. The NGOs working in this region offer relief services in one or more of the areas mentioned and this helps in making sure that a large amount of work and terrain is covered in order to satisfy the needs and demands of the refugee population.

The UNHCR covers practically all of these domains, such as water, health care, and education but it is concentrated with the determination of refugee status commonly known as (RSD – Refugee Status Determination) and the search for durable solutions in handling the crisis. The agency is at the center of the creation of refugee camps which accommodates and receives refugees in the Eastern Region of Cameroon. To this effect, the UNHCR has put up refugee camps in Meinganga, and Batouri not forgetting Garoua Boulai which is are all visible to anyone entering these small towns of the Eastern Region of the country. These camps are confectioned as temporary settlements for those who haven't got accommodation or a helping family in Cameroon. The partners of the UNHCR some of which were mentioned in the previous chapter assist in the relief given to refugees. They share their experiences including difficulties and challenges in order to seek for better ways to better handle the crisis in the region. Working in the same domain with similar objectives, this type of relationship which they entertain with each other is vital for the accomplishment of fixed objectives set by each organization and relief services.

## **4.6 General Consequences of this Influx to both the Host Region, the Local Inhabitants, the Refugees, and the Cameroonian Government**

A lot of refugees from neighboring countries have entered Cameroonian territory and this has led to an increase in the population of the country. This influx has had a lot of consequences to both the local communities, (those communities which host refugees), and the Cameroon government providing not only negative but also positive consequences. We are going to go through some of these negative and positive consequences in subsequent paragraph.

### **4.6.1 Positive Consequences of Refugee Influx**

The eastern region is very poor in infrastructural development and is known as the neglected region of Cameroon. The arrival of refugees saw some of the infrastructure of this region being boosted notably in the domain of health, education, sanitation and hygiene and the provision of water points. These are some of the positive aspects or rather consequences of the outbreak of refugees into Cameroonian territory notably in the eastern region of the country.

#### **4.6.1.1 Water and Sanitation.**

Before the arrival of refugees in the region, there was a need to increase the provision of water which is more visible in interior villages. Water has always been a major problem for the population of this region and the coming in of refugees is no arrangement to the situation. This will mean that water points will be disputed and conflicts will arise in the provision of water. In order to prevent this situation, the UNHCR set as one of its priorities the provision of clean and portable water by the creation of water points to the benefit of various localities like Gado, Yokadouma and Meiganga. The UNHCR is assisted in this task by technical agencies like MUTCARE which provides technical assistance in the construction of manual water pumps for the benefit of the refugee and local population.

#### **4.6.1.2 The Creation of Health Facilities**

The health situation in the region is left to be desired as major hospitals and health centers are situated in major towns. Villages in the interior are neglected and most turn to traditional medicine in order to be treated for one illness or the other. Others have to walk long distances in order to reach major towns for treatment; a voluntary worker in one of the apostolic groups said, many usually die on their way to the health centers due to poor roads and very long distances to cover. The coming of refugees set another priority for international organizations working in the

region. The creation of new health centers and volunteer doctors and nurses in order to reinforce medical personnel existing in the region is also of prime importance to the locals. All refugee sites are equipped with health centers and this is not only beneficial to the refugees but also the local population at large. The Catholic Church through the CRS has equipped its health Centers, while free medical consultations and antiretroviral drugs are administered to Refugees who are HIV positive and to the local inhabitants.

#### **4.6.1.3 Education, Hygiene and Sanitation**

The region also benefited from the creation of better sanitary and hygienic conditions for the refugee population. This was done in the way by building modern latrines close to classrooms to the benefit of a number of schools situated in the region. Schools like the Ecole publique de Lolo and Gari Gombo are beneficiaries to these sanitation necessities. Moreover, with the coming of refugees, there was a problem of overcrowding in schools. Many had difficulties to be enrolled in schools because of this overcrowded environment. It became necessary to find alternative ways in order to remedy this situation. It is in this line that some schools benefited from the construction of additional class rooms, and learning centers were created in refugee settlement areas. The education crisis was addressed in this way; furthermore, volunteer teachers were brought in by international organizations like Plan Cameroon came to replenish the need for the lack of teachers.

#### **4.6.1.4 Job Creation and an Added Labor Force**

The influx of refugees from the CAR in the Eastern region of Cameroon maybe regarded as a burden to both the host region in particular and the Cameroonian government in general. But if considered this way, then it is partially analyzed. The presence of these refugees has provoked an international concern to this less developed and least populated region. Therefore most Cameroonians who are job seeking are rushing to get employment in this region. There has been a tremendous socio-economic improvement in this part of Cameroon in the past four years. Branch offices have been created severally such as the UNHCR, UNDP, WHO, Caritas, PLAN Cameroon, just to name these few. Most of these organizations in the past could only be seen in the capital of Cameroon, or at the regional headquarters, or in an Archdiocese. The presence of these International and Non-governmental Organizations is to render assistance to the refugees and the locals in various dimensions. Amongst these refugees are skilled and unskilled persons,

with specific professional expertise on either Carpentry, teaching, Health care workers, technicians, Pastors and farmers. The local inhabitants benefit a lot from the skills embedded in these people. Some of these refugees assist as voluntary workers either as teachers and those of them who are Red crescents back home identify themselves with their Cameroonian brothers to help in the distribution of food and basic necessities to the fellow needy brothers. Pastors and lay preachers are allowed to read and translate to word of God in their own local dialect so that they feel at home and be comfortable. Many Cameroonian locals have gained indirect employment with many of these International Organizations and Non-governmental organizations operating in this region. Issues of community development in this region are specifically handled by Plan Cameroon, and this has created a means for employment by the locals, most especially university graduates and youths from the Catholic Young Christian Workers (Y.C.W). A French N.G.O, Premiere Urgence-Aide Medical Internationale (PU-AMI) is based in this region on medical care in refugee situations.

#### **4.6.1.5 Seed Variety**

Most Cameroonian Farmers in the Eastern Region have benefitted from a variety of seed species that have been brought over by the refugees. Likewise the Refugees who started arriving in the region in early 2005/ 2006 had to opportunity to enough land for greasing their cattle's and for planting crops that is making them self-reliant. The most domestic consumed food crop in the eastern region of Cameroon is Cassava of which about 75% of the population depends on it for their daily meal. The planting season in Cameroon begins from March, and ends in May, therefore though there have been shortages in the production and supply of domestic food crops, there are high expectations of a variety next harvest. Some of the refugees came along with them some preserved seeds for planting, such as wheat, maize and some vegetable seeds. The negotiations between the local government, the chiefs, the UNHCR, the LWF, and the CRS, for arable land for farming will make the refugees self sufficient and not only dependent on charity.

The presence of these refugees has increased Cameroons cultural diversity as the refugees have brought in different dialects , meals, modes of dressings, dances and worship which seems different from the usual ones common in Bertoua in particular and Cameroon in general.

Therefore these aspects have brought an additional value to the regions unity in diversity in particular and Cameroon in general.

#### **4.6.1.6 Strengthened Political and Religious Ties**

At a political level, the image of Cameroon is projected as a peaceful and politically stable nation that is responding holistically in respecting and responding rapidly in situations of crises and the protection of displaced persons. The presence of these refugees in Cameroonian soil has sparked the presence and action of faith-based organizations to practically relate biblical teachings and values to the needy and the suppressed. The CRS and the Caritas in the diocese of Bertoua and of Batouri were the first Christian organizations in this region to begin responding to the crisis in areas such as health care, food security, peace building and education. Its diplomatic relationship with the CAR has increased, as government officials from the CAR make frequent visits to the sites, and has created an open door for the different denominations to relate with those in the CAR. The Archbishop of Bangui, His Grace Dieudonne Nzapalainga and the Muslim Imam have affected several visits in Cameroon, seeking spiritual, material and a reconciliatory support from the Churches in Cameroon. Since majority of the refugees are Muslims from the Mbororo tribe, they easily mix up and Worship with their Cameroonian fellow Muslim brothers. On his Lenten message in March 2015, the Arch-bishop of the Yaoundé Jean Mbarga called on all Christians and parishes to dedicate the 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of lent for the collection of funds geared at supporting the Caritas and the CRS in Batouri as assistance to their task in giving hope and restoration to the lives of the refugees. Due to this crisis, there has been a quick inter-faith relationship in solidarity for assistance in various forms by different churches in Cameroon, and with the state, of which this is usually very rare.

#### **4.6.2 Negative Consequences of the Refugee Influx into Cameroonian Territory**

The consequences of refugees crossing the borders into Cameroonian territory did not only have positive consequences. Some negative consequences could also be pointed out notably to the host community.

##### **4.6.2.1 Conflict between the Refugees and the Host Communities**

The coming of refugees has generated conflicts with the host population in various domains. We have detected conflicts in land for agriculture and grazing which are the main issues of concern.

Majority of the refugee population were livestock and agricultural farmers in their countries of origin. At their arrival in Cameroon, they wanted to pursue the same activity thus using land belonging to the local community without prior authorization. Those who came over with their livestock often dispute water points and grazing land for the animals. These conflicts lead to tension between the local community and the refugee population.

#### **4.6.2.2 Competition in the Use of Infrastructure**

There exist a competition in the use of services like hospitals and schools as a result of the refugee population in the region. With overcrowding in schools, the local populations were not able to register their children in schools owing to the fact that, refugee children had been registered before their children. There is also the same problem in the health domain where the refugees overcrowd hospitals and health centers. Moreover, the local community is refused access to hospitals and health services constructed for the refugees.<sup>8</sup> These are some of the negative consequences of the influx of refugees in the territory.

#### **4.6.2.3 Insecurity**

When I communicated on phone with a volunteer worker with the Caritas Bertoua, she said there has been an absolute increase in the population, but she approximated male refugees to be about 60% while the female is about 40%. And amongst the 60% of male present just approximately 25% have acquired a level of education, i.e. university students, workers, or advanced and ordinary level holders. It is from this influx that the inhabitants believe that banditry and aggressions has increased due to unemployment. But according to the National institute of Statistics in Cameroon, the population of Bertoua is approximately 815,500, specifically Cameroonians. Demographically, due to this current influx of refugees, there is a hike in population, and this has given rise to human insecurity and crime waves. Amongst these refugees are some militia men of the Anti-Balaka and Seleka rebels who have fled the CAR, not to be identified. Due to poor living conditions in the Camps, some of these refugees stream into other urban towns like in Yaounde, and Douala, just to name these few, to seek for job and a better livelihood.

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<sup>8</sup> This information is gotten from a member of the Peace and Justice Committee of the dioceses of Bertoua who participated in various reconciliation sessions and activities between refugees and the local communities. This member of the Peace and Justice Committee refused to disclose his identity. He referred to himself as a sitting member of this committee its five years of date.

As they make their way into other urban areas and villages in Cameroon, there has been a sudden increase in crime waves, with reports of constant night aggressions and pick-pocketing. Main streets and city centers are packed full with beggars. This influx has caused a strenuous relation between the host dwellers and the refugees. An official of the local Red Cross in Bertoua indicated that it is very difficult to give an accurate number of Refugees in this region, because most of them have made their way into the urban areas while those in the camps suffer an insufficient humanitarian care and security. The constant aggressions by the refugees to host population have made the authorities to camp the refugees away from the indigenes. But even though the refugees still sneak pretending to go purchase basic items. The Bertoua principal prison is packed full to more than capacity and this has caused the Government to transfer inmates to nearby detention sites. Though the Cameroonian government and the local government authorities and the delegation of national security are putting everything in place to maintain security, there is still need for security to be heightened. When one tries to make a comparisons as per crime and banditry within the past 8years ago, there were no complains about overcrowded prisons, but today it is a major problem.

#### **4.6.2.4 High Cost of Living**

Food shortages and prizes hikes, coupled with water scarcity are major challenges in this area. While access to renting a piece of land for cultivation is equally very expensive. Local estate owners have increased their house rents because the unemployed who are mostly youths and university graduates are leaving other places to seek for job opportunities with the different organizations working in this area. For instance an 8sqm room that costs 8000cfa, is today at 12-15000cfa. A bag of rice that was bought at 13000cfa in 2009 is today sold at 19000cfa. And therefore a single family cannot afford to provide for a three square meal a day. Most basic needs like soap, salt, Cooking oil and wood are very expensive.

International aid packages from foreign donors like the U.N, the Caritas Cameroon, the CRS and that from the which is contributed by the apostolic groups in the local congregations, is insufficient when compared to the refugee population in need. The local inhabitants of this region live mostly on Cassava for food, and the Cassava leaf itself, it is locally known as *mkpem* but within the past five years the production is low while demand is high. Basic protein food

stuffs like meat, fish and prawns are extremely very expensive to purchase. Therefore most families that and refugees that can't afford for a balanced diet are forced to go fend from other sources or to consume specifically starchy foods for a very long period.

#### **4.6.2.5 Health Related Issues**

Housing and medical Care is very demanding. Most private hospitals are too expensive, and therefore most of the refugees run to the government hospitals which are equally full with insufficient beds to accommodate the sick. Due to mal-nourishments, children are the most vulnerable to be more affected when there is a resurgence of an outbreak. Some are treated from wounds due to aggression and foot soars due to long distance of travelling in the forest. Poor water supply and scarcity is causing fear and tension for an eminent epidemic out-breaks of both cholera and typhoid. Thanks to a partnership between the Lutheran World Federation (LWF), and the UNHCR, assistance to good water supply and proper sanitation will help create a sustainable livelihood for the refugees. The response to this situation by the UNHCR has been very enormous and rapid. The Cameroonian government has involved most of its sectors to assist the refugees. Most especially the ministry of public health in partnership with the Caritas in the Diocese of Bertoua( Codas) have had seminars on the training and capacity building of local health care workers in educating and sensitizing the locals and the refugees on basic hygiene and sanitation, and creating awareness on preventive sexual habits. Non- governmental organizations have not folded their hands with regards to the situation.

As earlier mentioned above cholera, typhoid, polio, measles, malaria, and sexually transmittable diseases are bound to reappear or to increase. Mobile sanitation materials (WASH) have been installed in the refuge sites in the east and the Adamawa regions at the entrances to prevent any spread of cholera in the camps. This has been provided in collaboration with the UNCHR and the Cameroonian ministry of public health. Furthermore 41,666 children less than 17 years of age who are resident in the camps are being assisted through health, nutrition, education and prevention interventions. (Courtesy Codas Bertoua.)

When we make a comparison with regards to a 2012 report by the WHO on the outbreak of cholera in Cameroon, 8 out the ten regions of Cameroon were affected, and of which the Eastern

region was amongst the first three most affected. Therefore with the recent influx of refugees in this region, it is very much feared that the epidemic and others like meningitis, hepatitis, diarrhea, yellow fever and HIV, which are considered as communicable diseases may increase or reappear.

#### **4.6.2.6 Strain Social Cohesion**

The purpose for accommodating refugees in camps is to seek for a better management of the refugee population, so that aid packages could get to the appropriate persons and to make sure that the refugees do not mix up with the locals, so in case situation back home get settled ,the refugees may be repatriated back to their country. “65% of the refugees in this region didn’t move along with their home identification papers, so identifying them after they must have left the camps is certainly a problem” ( courtesy Catholic Peace Justice Commission). The context of the refugees from the CAR in the east of Cameroon could be a major future problem when social interaction amongst the Cameroonian inhabitants in the east and the refugees is not promoted. Once education is not done about this, the local inhabitation will have the feeling that the refugees are invading certain economic opportunities which ought to be enjoyed by the locals. The perception the locals have on the refugees is that, they may in the nearest future be a hindrance to their social progress. The fact that these refugees share some similarities with the host country and region, for instance language, ethnicity, culture and religion, makes for the host country and partner actors to device quick ventures for local integration and social interaction amongst the refugees and the their host. At the moment, the local inhabitants can easily differentiate themselves from the refugees, and just this alone creates for segregation. The local inhabitants already have the impression that the inability to get unskilled jobs is as result of the presence of these refugees in the region.

#### **4.7 Conclusion**

In this chapter, I have given a brief insight of the refugee situation in the Eastern Region of Cameroon and a background to some of the main actors working there. Many are the challenges faced by NGOs in this region but the Catholic Church together with having a similar mission to other organizations working in the region has in addition a message of reconciliation and

advocacy, which will help in building a better relationship between the refugees and their past. In the next chapter, we are going to get into the insights of some of the programs carried out by the CARITAS and the CRS in the Eastern Region of Cameroon. We will be able through the developments that will follow in the coming chapter to portray the responses of Catholic relief services in reaction to the refugee situation in the country. Nevertheless, it will also be judicial to point out that, not only the Catholic Church alone works in offering services to refugees but that other religious organizations do participate charitably in this mission.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### EMPIRICAL DATA ANALYSIS

#### 5.0. INTRODUCTION

After having an insight to on the situation in the Eastern region of Cameroon and the organizations working in order bring relief to the dispersed, it is imperative for us to get into the activities of these organizations in the zone. The situation in the Eastern region of Cameroon is very demanding and it is mined by a lot of challenges which have to be overcome by the organizations working in the region. It is important to mention that, the UNHCR is the primary organizer of relief services in the region and it works in collaboration with other organizations in order to accomplish its mission as a relief provider. Together with her partners, they coordinate the activities in the region setting up primary objectives and rendering immediate services and basic necessities to those coming in. with the constant influx of refugees from the CAR, we motive that a lot has to be done and that, external help from other organizations, national and international is needed in order to manage the crisis effectively. Accordingly, other organizations which we have seen I the previous chapter bring in their contribution, in a grip of solidarity in order to help the displaced fleeing conflict areas in their home land.

However, our primary interest in this dissertation is the activities of the CARITAS and the CRS in rendering relief to the refugees in the Eastern region of Cameroon. We are going to run through a number of their activities and the services they offer to refugees in the in the region and also throw light to some of their partners, in this difficult task. While screening through the activities of these religious organizations, we are going to witness the values of reconciliation, empowerment and transformation applied by the organization in various ways in order to give hope to the refugees fleeing the homeland. Moreover, we are going to point out that other religious denominations contribute in one way or the other in bringing relief to refugees in the region. Added to this we have the government and the UN in their responses to the refugee crisis in the Eastern region of Cameroon.

#### 5.1 CARITAS Cameroon Responses to Refugees in the Eastern region of Cameroon.

In the advent of the CAR conflict, the CARITAS Cameroon showed its determination to participate in bringing relief to the displaced in the Eastern region of Cameroon. In order to take part in this humanitarian action, this catholic organization has always wanted to identify and set up its objectives in a coordinated manner on how to handle the crisis on their part. They were carrying out a prior analysis of the situation, identifying the needs of the displaced persons and pointing out the areas in which they can bring in support and relief to the refugee population. Early this year, the organization convened a meeting on the 26<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> of march with primary objective to analyze the situation and needs of displaced persons present in Cameroon, Nigeria, CAR and Chad, agree on the intervention propositions in relation to the capacity of the CARITAS present in Africa and the inter-agency plan of the UN agency for Central African Refugees, elaborate a work-sheet in order to implement these propositions, agree on the coordination mechanism and mobilize the solidarity and help of some major donors in the light of the proposed and adopted plan of action. The intervention of the organization in Cameroon and its Eastern region is centered on the provision of health services, education, food and reconciling the local population with the refugees in their cohabitation. These are the major areas of intervention heightened by the decision makers of the organization and an appeal made to other CARITAS organization and potential donors for sponsorship.

### **5.1.1 International Coordination of CARITAS Operative Works/Caritas Cameroon**

CARITAS is a Christian international organization operating on the domain of charity and rendering service to the poor and vulnerable. Their works are carried out without distinction to people of groups without distinction of race, nationality or religion. The organization is situated in every country of the world where there is a Catholic dioceses and coordination of these groups is carried out in Rome which is the big CARITAS. The CARITAS in other countries are the small factions of the big group and they work together in the various situations of relief.

Looking at the situation in the eastern region of Cameroon with refugees, Caritas Cameroon works at the level of diocese with the help of the other caritas at the national level. Before intervention, a meeting is held by the members of the organization in Yaoundé, which is the head of the Caritas Cameroon in order to evaluate the situation and determine what kind of help the organization can bring to refugees in the eastern region of the country. After this, word is sent to

the caritas of the different parishes of the country to launch a support program of assistance so that the Christians of their various congregations can contribute or volunteer in any way in order to meet the aim of the organization. After the response from the various parishes, what has been collected is sent to the Caritas of Bertoua, the region where the refugee crisis exploded and visits are organized in order to distribute and give assistance to refugees in various settlement sites.

### **5.1.2 Food Safety for the Refugees in the Eastern Region of Cameroon**

Cameroon's economy depends on agriculture and about forty percent (40%) of the Cameroonian population live the bar of poverty. With the situation in the sudano-sahelian zone, Cameroon suffers from permanent food crisis. Some of the reasons of this crisis is linked to the harsh climatic conditions, natural disasters in particular the region of the Extreme North where climate variations and conditions are very harsh with floods and droughts throughout the year.<sup>9</sup> With the conflicts witnessed by the Central African countries which include Nigeria, CAR and Chad and the influx of refugees in to Cameroonian territory from these countries, the organization targeted as primary objective the provision of food for the refugee population.

Over 40% of the refugee households are food insecure according to a WFP assessment in July 2014 as compared to 15% of the host population households. In the assessment, it is detailed that more female headed households are food-insecure in comparison to male headed households. Lacking the capacity and basic means to support their own food needs and or generate income to meet their food needs, it is important thee families be aided with food items. CARITAS in partnership with local congregations and the diocese of the region contribute in supplying whatever food items they can get to refugee families. This food stuff are usually got from the apostolic groups, contributions obtained from Christian donors either at the local or national level then distributed to the refugee families who are food insufficient. About 40% of the refugee population have benefited from these gifts which was possible through visits in some refugee camps notably Garoua-Boulai, Gado and Guiwayangamo.

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<sup>9</sup> Caritas Cameroon report on the refugee situation in Cameroon. Available at [www.explorercaritas.org](http://www.explorercaritas.org). This report brings out the food crisis existing in the region and some major causes of this state of thongs. It further precise that, the years ranging from 2010-2011 witnessed the worst food crisis of the county especially in the Northern region.

### **5.1.3 Educational Responses to the Refugees**

Access to education is very difficult due to the crowded nature of existing schools and the lack of qualified teachers. About 60% of the refugee populations are children of school age, some of whom have not been attending school before they left the CAR. It was also revealed that the number of children enrolled in schools is low because parents do not consider the education of their children as a priority. A UNICEF estimate carried out in 2014 showed that over 20,000 children of schooling age and adolescents from the CAR have arrived Cameroon since January 2014 and about half have not attended school for a long period due to the outbreak of the conflict in their country.<sup>10</sup> Many are thought to be witnesses to traumatic and moral degrading events and thus need psychological assistance. Many of these children have been at the forefront of atrocities committed by rebel forces in their country. This has painted a picture of terror in their minds and they live in fear traumatized by what they have witnessed.

In order to assist these children and those who are most vulnerable to regain normal life and build the best foundation for a better future, in collaboration with partners, the Catholic church with its relief agency devised programs beneficial to refugee children with limited access to learning and recreation by the provision of temporary learning spaces. With the help of volunteers from various Diocese and apostolic groups, Caritas Cameroon organizes recreational activities and educational concerts which enable children about 15000 children to regain a normal trend of life. They move on to volunteer in the teaching of basic subjects and participate in UNHCR and UNICEF educational training programs in order to better handle their task in bringing education and recreational activities to refugee children. Consequently, Caritas members participated in a training of 66 volunteer teachers from the East and Adamawa, organized by MINEDUB, UNICEF and PLAN Cameroon which took place in Bertoua from July 7 to 12, 2014 with technical support from UNESCO and UNHCR. Teachers were trained in education in emergencies and peace education, accelerated curriculum and taking psychosocial care and protection of children.

### **5.1.4 Reconciliation and Empowerment Activities**

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<sup>10</sup> UNHCR, Central African Regional Response Plan, January – December 2014.

It is important to establish and maintain good relations between the refugees and the host communities in order to enable continue access to social services. The Eastern region reputed to be poor in infrastructure, available health and educational services are already insufficient and inadequate. Caritas Cameroon carries out counseling sessions and awareness raising activities with both the refugee and host community in order to elaborate the benefits of a peaceful cohabitation and collaboration between the two communities. Through the teachings of Jesus Christ as a model, love for one another and the sharing of available resources should be encouraged between refugees and host communities. They teach the values of forgiveness and the joy of giving and receiving with the gospel as a guide line to spiritual healing. This counseling is carried out to the benefit of those who have lost their parents during the conflict or are witnesses to traumatizing scenes during the conflict. The refugee population in the east of Cameroon is divided into two; one the anti-Balaka and the other the Seleka, one being typically Muslim and the other Christian. Over 70% of the refugee population is Muslims and there exist an internal conflict between them and the Christian community a minority. Counseling helps to reconcile these two groups and install peaceful cohabitation in the community camps. We also have conflicts existing between the refugees and host communities over land, natural resources, grazing and others. The organization in order to do this works hand in hand with the peace and justice committee of the catholic church in Bertoua, with whom they carry out campaigns and regular visits to the various refugee sites training and educating them on peaceful cohabitation, reconciliation and love. In this way, the organization reduces the level of common and frequent conflicts in relation to access to land, agro-pastoral disputes, access to water and social services.

Empowering the refugee community drives towards the search for durable solutions in resolving the refugee crisis. These solutions aim at local integration in Cameroonian communities with the capacity of self-sufficiency. In the beginning services in terms of food supplies, medical and sanitation together with other basic necessities were distributed to the refugee population on arrival. But in a long term, regarding that this cannot be done forever, the refugee population will be required to integrate fully into communities with their own means of subsistence capable of taking care of their basic necessities in terms of food, sanitation just. This was reached through Agriculture where material for farming and seeds for planting were distributed to farmers and credits given to women in order to start small scale farming activities. However, this project

cannot succeed without the provision of land on which these activities could be carried out. Thus in collaboration with local authorities the Cameroon government and other NGOs, Caritas Cameroon assisted in negotiations to obtain fertile land for farming which will be made available to the refugee population for agriculture. NGOs have discovered that the best way to maintain cooperation between the refugees and host communities is to integrate the host community in humanitarian programs. In the locality of Garoua-Boulai, volunteers from this community were trained in hygiene and sanitation and they in turn were taken to the refugee camp in that area where they carried out activities in this domain explaining and teaching refugees under the supervision of the organization and their partners. This helps in resolve conflict and promote peaceful cohabitation between refugees and host communities because they come into contact through these activities and are able not only to educate them but also to witness their situation and share in their grief.

## **5.2 Catholic Relief Services Cameroon**

The CRS in Cameroon is a part of the CRS which originated in America created by a congregation of bishops for the purpose of carrying out relief services. It was created in Cameroon in 1961 with headquarters in Yaoundé quartier Bastos. It has continually adapted its program to the changing situation in the country since the launch of its first program which initially was to reduce under-five mortality through child survival programs. Today, it has evolved to handling the refugee situation in the eastern and northern regions of the country. The structure of the organization in the country is very simple. It is composed of a head office at the national level which is situated in the capital of the country, and at the regional level of branches which are found in regions where aid and relief if needed. Consequently, there is a branch of the organization operating in the eastern region of the country, particularly in Meiganga, and another operating in the north.

In their relief work, CRS Cameroon employs a number of workers without distinction of religion, race and sex. They also make use of volunteers who are mostly university graduates from various universities in the country and also people from catholic apostolic groups notably the Young Catholic Workers. Although women do not make up a majority of the working force of the organization which is mostly made up of males, their presence is however felt and they

can be estimated at 20% in the organization. In their works, the CRS works in collaboration with the Catholic Church in Cameroon. This enables them to make use of certain Catholic installations like hospitals, schools and other facilities which they can boost by providing volunteers for more efficiency. However, the CRS does not have a direct link with the other diocese in the country like the CARITAS which is found in every diocese in the country. Nevertheless, they carry out their activities in partnership with the Catholic Church in Cameroon.

### **5.2.1 Catholic Relief Service Cameroon Responses to the Refugees in the Eastern Region of Cameroon**

It was created with primary objective to render aid to the poor and needy, Catholic Relief Services carries out the commitment of the Bishops of the United States to assist the poor and vulnerable persons in times of need. This assistance is mostly done during disasters, internal and external conflicts where people are displaced just to name a few. This commitment is carried out with the motivation of the Gospel which preserves the sacredness of life and human dignity, fostering charity and justice in an embodiment of Catholic social and moral teachings. Thus, the CRS acts to promote human development by responding to major emergencies, fighting diseases and poverty and nurturing peaceful and just societies; and serve Catholics in the United States as they live their faith in solidarity with their brothers and sisters around the world.<sup>11</sup> In so doing, the CRS works with local and international Catholic institutions and structures as well as other organizations as part of the universal mission of the Catholic Church.

The foot prints of the organization, which is a commitment to assisting poor and vulnerable persons overseas on the basis of need and not creed, race or nationality is witnessed in the Eastern region of Cameroon, where a lot has been done for the refugee population in the region. This is evidenced by the operations carried out by the organization in various sectors continually adapting its program to the changing situation of the country in order to produce the best possible results. These sectors include health, education, water and sanitation, and microfinance. These

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<sup>11</sup> Catholic Relief Services, 2010 annual report from October 1, 2009 – September 30, 2010.

are they services provided by the CRS in a mist of accomplishing a mission of humanity and justice through charity and an embodiment of Catholic social morals and teachings.

### **5.2.2 CRS Response to Refugees in the Health Domain**

Health is one of the priorities of the CRS in the establishment of a relief program. The region of the East of Cameroon is poor in infrastructural development and the lack of basic social services is a visible result of its neglect by the authorities. In the villages in which refugee camps are erected, there are little or no health facilities available to the local population. Most health centers and few hospitals are situated in major town and villages situated in the peripheries dispose of small and ill equipped health centers. Most of these health centers cannot handle serious illnesses and are sometimes inaccessible to the villagers. Some villagers have to travel several miles in order to benefit from the services of these health centers. For example, in the small town of Ngam situated in the locality of Meiganga, we can count only 02 health centers which serve the people of that town.

The primary health care assistance program for urban refugees set up by the UNHCR fits into CRS strategy. The program focuses on the strengthening health care and delivery systems and improving access to quality health care to poor and vulnerable population. Together with their partners, the CRS participate in the setting up about eight health facilities in different refugee camp sites and volunteer doctors and nurses to take care of vulnerable persons. Most of these volunteer doctors and nurses are people who work in the catholic health centers and others are Christians from the parishes situated in and out of the region. Some apostolic groups like the Catholic Women Association (CWA), the Young Christian Workers (YCW), provide volunteers who assist in health care services for the refugee population. Such health care units can be seen in the villages of Gari Gombo, Lolo in Bertoua, Ngam and Gado in Meiganga and Betare Oya respectively. This program helps to save lives and provided quality services to the population assisted by doctors who give training to nurses and other hospital assistants in other to ameliorate health care services in the region.

Moreover, the CRS participates in collaboration with the Ministry of Public Health National AIDS Control Committee in order to give support and counseling to patients. The organization

put up a program which permits HIV patients to get access to antiretroviral drugs and families benefit from counseling in order to strengthen and give them hope for the future. The diocese of Bertoua is an active participant to the program set up by the CRS in the domain of health and HIV. With the clinics and health centers set up by the Church in this isolated region of Cameroon, they contribute to strengthen and render accessible treatment and medical support to the population. However, not only the refugee population benefits from these services, the local population is grateful for the additional services brought in by the organization in the health domain.

### **5.2.3 Provision of Clean Water and Sanitation.**

Another immediate necessity for the refugees in the Eastern region of Cameroon is the provision of portable water and sanitary services. In the Eastern region, finding clean water is a physical endeavor with no taps to turn on and more so, women and children have to walk several mile to the nearest river or stream in order to get water. This hinders the activities of the people in the region and easily spreads diseases such as diarrhea and cholera because of the absence of portable and clean water solutions. With the inexistence of clean and well-constructed toilets, the local population lives in a deplorable sanitary situation. This facilitates the infection of general water point like streams and rivers where the local populations get their daily supplies of water. In the light of this state of things, the CRS has integrated innovative water projects like the Diageo Water of Life with Diageo as major partner and other Dioceses to provide essential water services to the vulnerable population. These innovative water projects bring pumps, wells, troughs and toilets close to homes and schools. About ten (10) schools and their surrounding communities have benefited from these projects and the effects of these services are immediate and long lasting. Children go to school healthier and don't have to travel long distances to fetch water likewise women who can concentrate on other activities and spend less time in the search for water.

### **5.2.4 Responses in the Domain of Food Security**

Another important necessity in the region in a mist to deal handle the refugee situation in the Eastern region of Cameroon is the enhancement of food security. Cameroon has moved from a

food-sufficient, middle-income to a food deficit low-income country according to a recent joint World Food Program and Cameroon government assessment.<sup>12</sup> This report affirms that, there isn't enough food for families to eat not to talk of refugee families moving into the country. In order to curb this difficulty, the CRS has put in place a certain number of measures and has participated to facilitate the distribution food stuff to refugees which consisted in high nutrition grains and wheat products to give enough energy and strength to refugee. Most displaced persons and their families when they leave their countries of origin travel several miles without food and at their destination in the refuge country, there is a need to welcome them with hot meals and energy giving foods. Accordingly, food distribution is carried out at entry points for refugees in the Eastern region.<sup>13</sup> These entry points are small villages situated in the Eastern region some of which host major refugee sites in the region.

Responding to immediate need in food supplies is essential but thinking of a long term sustainability is crucial. The CRS thinks of providing a long term provision of food supplies to the refugee population which will permit them to be independent in terms of food and nutrition. To make this possible, the CRS works in collaboration with local authorities and local chiefs and communities to provide land which the refugees can use for agricultural activities. This program which was welcomed in some villages like Borgop and Yokadouma helped the refugee population to gain food autonomy by planting and harvesting their own crops. It also gave them a source of income because they could also sell some of the crops harvested and thus buy other necessities like salt, oil and soap for their households.

### **5.3 Other Christian Organizations' Responses**

The refugee situation in the Eastern region of Cameroon has attracted the attention of many NGOs international and national, and religious denominations trying to do what they can in order to give relief to the displaced. The Catholics are present with two international organizations who have worked in various areas of the world handling disaster situations. So too, the presence of other religious organizations can be pointed out in giving assistance in solidarity to humanity. Most of these religious denominations are UNHCR partners engaged in one or more of the

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<sup>12</sup> Obtained from Catholic Relief Services website at [www.crs.org](http://www.crs.org) on the 14th of March 2015 at 11:20 am.

<sup>13</sup> The entry points for CAR refugees into Cameroonian territory are situated at the Cameroon CAR border which include Bitoye, Bekoninga, Maro which are the most popular points of migration from the CAR.

programs designed by the agency in response to the refugee crisis in the Eastern region of Cameroon. We can mention here the Lutheran World Federation, and the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA).

### **5.3.1 The Lutheran World Federation Response to the Refugee Crisis**

The Lutheran World Federation (LWF), is the organization of the Lutheran Churches which handles and or participates in crisis situations where ever need be. In the outbreak of the crisis in the Cameroon, the LWF carried out an assessment of the situation and pointed out major targets in the implementation of a humanitarian relief strategy. They discovered that over 60 percent of the refugees are women and children with a high number of unaccompanied minors installed in 06 sites with limited assistance without any protection and assistance. The LWF facing this assessment calls for intervention in shelter, water, sanitation and hygiene, protection and psychological support to children, women and girls and social cohesion and support to the refugees and hosting communities with empowerment and self-reliance activities. Their intervention program is divided into three major points.

To begin, the first articulation of this program is the empowerment of refugee host communities through social cohesion. This program designed to promote peaceful co-existence and social cohesion between the host communities and the refugee population. This was carried out by creating peace building committees and carrying out peace-building campaign throughout the host communities. They also developed peace building projects carried out peace building education and conducted psychological training sessions to better empower the refugee host communities.

The second part of their program is focused on empowering refugees and host communities through agriculture, livestock production and environmental education. This program permitted to improve livelihood and self-reliance of the refugees in their host communities. This program was implemented by the provision of seeds, tools, watering canes, gardening tools, pesticides and small animals for the production of crops, livestock and home gardens. Moreover the Federation contributed in advocating for farmland, promote and support associations of small farmers, provide microfinance credits to women and organize sessions on environmental

protection. Many local communities and refugee population benefited from the prowess of this program therefore strengthening and empowering livelihood.

Finally, giving access to psychological support to vulnerable people like women, children and the elderly affected by the conflict or victims in their villages of origin or in sites and host villages. This enabled those suffering from traumatic experiences to be assisted and also reduce the number of cases concerning the violation of human rights especially the rights of women and children and also assist those affected. However, the organization is accompanied in the task of rendering relief to the refugee population by local and international partners of the Lutheran Church including, various parishes of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Cameroon who have organized and mobilized resources in items like cloths, money, food items and hospitals to assist refugees, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, and the Eglise Fraternelle Luthérenne du Cameroun and the UNHCR. This mobilization is done in the way of an appeal voiced out by the organization to local and international congregation to contribute in one way or the other to help the refugees in their flee. The gifts are then collected and sent to the organization in order to begin its mission in the eastern region of Cameroon with the available resources collected.

### **5.3.2 The Adventist Development and Relief Agency**

Like the LWF, the Adventist Development and Relief Agency is the humanitarian organization of the Adventist church working in relief and humanitarian services. The foundation of their action is based on the Gospel according to Mathew which preaches charity and points out that as God's precious creations, our treatment of each other is a direct reflection of the conditions of our hearts. The president of this organization further stressed that, if truly we wish to follow Christ footsteps, then our treatment and our care for our brothers and sisters on this earth is perhaps the most important sign of his spirit living in us.<sup>14</sup> Their humanitarian actions around the world is translated into 06 major points which are; Food for the hungry, Water for the thirsty; Welcome for the outcast, Covering for the vulnerable, Hope and healing for the sick and Freedom for the captive. Their intervention in the Eastern region of Cameroon is developed in these 06 major points.

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<sup>14</sup> Ministering to the least of these. ADRA annual report, 2013. Page 2. The president's message in the opening pages of this annual report.

The ADRA like other Christian organizations handling the refugee crisis participates in similar programs. Food for the hungry and water for the thirsty are all basic needs required by the refugee population and the local community to survive. ADRA is participating in the creation of water points such as wells and mechanical water pumps and other sanitary services. They term this “wells for freedom”, further pointing out that over each day, women all over the world spend a total of 200 million hours collecting water, time they could devote to learning a skill or starting a small business.<sup>15</sup> This is why ADRA works with local communities together with other partners to provide accessible water which in turn improves every facet of life. With an urging need in food security, and the increasing refugee influx from the CAR, ADRA also assists in distributing food items on a periodical basis to the refugees.

Organizations work to provide similar services in response to the refugee crisis. Most fit into a program which has already been put in place by the UNHCR who is the major coordinator of relief activities in the region. At the beginning of UNHCR intervention in the Eastern region of Cameroon, the organization established domains of priority in a program which it established in order to give assistance to the refugee population. This program consisted in the provision of settlement sites, health facilities, learning, hygiene and sanitation and the distribution of food items. Most organizations working in this region fit into one or more of these programs working in partnership with the UNHCR. Moreover, the Christian organizations in the region work in close collaboration with their local churches in the region and come to supplement the already existing services offered by the local churches. They bring in expert knowledge of field experience in order to better handle the crisis providing good results. Nevertheless, they come in with their own strategy and planning on how to handle the crisis stressing on basic and immediate relief than can be provided to the refugees and finally seeking long term or durable solutions in order to render the displaced autonomous and accepted by the host communities.

#### **5.4 Cameroon Government Response to the Refugee Situation**

The total number of CAR refugees in Cameroon is 241,096 registered as of November 2014.<sup>16</sup> Faced with this situation, the Cameroon government has had to react in one way or the other in

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid, p. 3.

<sup>16</sup> UNICEF Cameroon Humanitarian Situation Report. December 2014.

response to this difficult situation in order to handle the situation. Their participation has been witnessed in the implementation of protection and security services through its ministry of Public Security, and contributions of the Ministry of Public health in the programs like vaccination campaigns and HIV and Aids related sensitizations and counseling.

#### **5.4.1 Cameroonian Government Assistance in the Protection of Refugees in the Eastern Region of Cameroon.**

In order to address the refugee crisis in its Eastern region and accommodate the newly arrived refugees, the government of Cameroon made available 06 sites in the Eastern region; Moborguene, Gado Bazere, Lolo, Mbile, Timangolo and Yokadouma, which hosted about 40,656 refugees from the CAR and two other sites in the Adamawa region with a total of 11,326 people. Nevertheless, about 67,096 refugees live outside the sites including 10,838 at the entry points and 56,258 in 308 host villages.<sup>17</sup> However, the Cameroon government requires that refugees from the CAR and Nigeria for security reasons should not live close to the borders. The level of insecurity is even greater at the borders than in the interior parts of the country. It is easier for rebel factions to enter one or more villages situated at the borders and attack refugees fleeing from the conflict in their countries. Most of the time, the displacement and transport of refugees and aid is done under supervision and escort of the Cameroonian army. Moreover, rebel groups can also settle and mingle with the refugee population on noticed if they settle at the borders. Identification will thus become tricky determining who is a refugee or not. Furthermore, as a means in the provision of settlement sites for the refugees entering the Cameroonian territory from the East, the Cameroon government assures a certain degree of protection to the vulnerable entering her territory by providing army escorts for refugees being transported.

#### **5.4.2 Government Contributions in the Health, Sanitation and Education Domain**

In collaboration with the UNHCR, the government of the Republic of Cameroon works to improve on the already existing infrastructure in the Eastern region. Known as the abandoned region of Cameroon, the Eastern region is reputed of its poor infrastructure and lack of adequate services. At the educational level, the schools here are in majority over crowded crippling with

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<sup>17</sup> Act Alliance; preliminary appeal: Relief to CAR refugees in Cameroon. August 2014.

students from various parts of the region including refugee children. Moreover, the schools are in desperate need of learning material, benches and teachers to drill the pupil and educate them as well as those of other regions of the country. In collaboration with the Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education, the UNHCR together with other partners contribute in the construction of class rooms supported by government projects and the provision of learning material to the pupil. Teachers are also recruited to teach in remote areas where the four walls of a basic classroom do not exist.

In the health domain, local and international NGOs together with the government work in various projects in order to resolve some of the health problems encountered by the refugee population. Some camps are attacked by epidemics like diarrhea, meningitis, which ravaged the population. The Ministry of Health, Social Affairs work in collaboration with the UNHCR in order to provide and distribute emergency supplies, water and sanitation equipment together with essential drugs and vaccines to the refugee population. The Ministry of Public Health also carried out an AIDS program setting up a committee in charge of carrying out screening and counseling in order to support HIV infected persons. With partners like the CRS, antiretroviral drugs are delivered to patients and they benefit from treatment that is controlled and followed by doctors available. Other government agencies who respond to the crisis in the region and work in collaboration with the UNHCR and other partners include, The Ministry of Economy, Planning and Regional Development, Ministry of External Relations, Ministry of Territorial Administration and decentralization, and the Ministry of Water Resources and energy just to name a few.

### **5.5 The UNHCR and other NGO Responses to the Refugee Crisis**

In order to meet the demands of this challenging situation, the UNHCR together with other partners developed a regional refugee response plan for the neighboring countries to Cameroon including Chad, CAR, Democratic Republic of Congo and Republic of Congo. In 2014, a revised regional refugee response plan was based on plans to meet the needs of a beneficiary CAR refugee population of about 306,500. In the outbreak of this crisis, the provision of life saving services such as water, sanitation, shelter and health care are the key priorities of the agency.

Receiving the refugees requires a lot of preparation and so, the UNHCR runs refugee sites in the Eastern region of the country which provides shelter and accommodation to displaced families. These sites are equipped with basic necessities such as water, sanitation facilities health care and educational or recreational services to permit children between 03-22 years of age who make up about 40% of the refugee population to be educated. An example of such recreational facilities can be seen the refugee camp of Gado Badzere where UNICEF, a UNHCR partner together with governmental and non-governmental organizations provide ready to use food, sanitation, training and child training recreational services. These child training centers help to educate, protect and heal children at refugee camps in the Eastern region of Cameroon. This is done through recreational activities like sports, learning how to play musical instruments, games and other activities which permit children to be active in learning. With the overcrowding in schools as a result of the continuous influx of refugees into the region, response to education has been setup in 04 refugee sites, Mbile, Lolo, Gado, and Timangolo of the Eastern region of Cameroon. In partnership with Plan Cameroon, UNICEF has established about 30 temporal learning sites and child protection centers. Children from 03-18 years will attend education in these sites and 55 teachers are already active in the sites. Back to school campaigns were not only launched in the camps of this region but as well as that of the Adamawa region. About 4,317 children in the sites of Borgop and Gado have been screened and management committees for the program have been established in order to orientate and control attendance of teachers. Added to this, 36 animators were recruited and trained in awareness raising and education in order to work with pre-school children. This program comes to aid those children who are not able to receive education as a result of overcrowding in the schools situated in the region.

Health and nutrition issues are very critical in refugee camps due to the outbreak of epidemics severe cases of diseases like HIV/AIDS, diabetes and hypertension. There is also the need for pre-natal care, safe hygienic delivery conditions and other reproductive health care conditions. With the absence of the vaccination of many refugee children, there is the high risk of the outbreak of epidemics such as measles, and polio which have already been highly experienced in counties hosting refugees. Thus, there is an urgent need for all refugee children from 0-15 years to be vaccinated from polio and measles. With the help of UNICEF and other international NGOs like, International Medical Corps, Médicale Internationale and Croix-Rouge Française, a

response plan to control measles and polio was setup. This resulted in the immunization of 108,000 children aged from 06months-15 years among which 41,000 were refugee children from Yokadouma, Garoua-Boulai, Kette and Ndele.<sup>18</sup> With a completion of a campaign launched on the vaccination against polio, 97% of children 0-11 months and 125% of children 0-59 months were vaccinated.

The UNHCR together with her partners intervene in various sectors of relief to refugees and they also work to find durable solutions in the resolution of the crisis. One of the main activities of the refugee agency is refugee status determination (RSD) which is handled by the UNHCR in the absence of government intervention.

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<sup>18</sup> UNICEF; Cameroon Humanitarian Situation Report, August 2014.

## **CHAPTER SIX:**

### **GENERAL DISCUSSIONS OF THE FINDINGS**

#### **6.0 Introduction**

This chapter presents the general findings of the study presented in the previous two chapters. The author has categorized the discussions into different themes that reflect the different activities done by the Catholic relief service and the Caritas in conjunction with the other developmental agencies supporting refugees in Eastern Cameroon. The author takes a theological perspective as a point of departure in discussing the findings of the study within the broad themes of reconciliation, empowerment, and transformation. The central issues highlighted in the discussion revolve around the obligations and the values of the church in responding to the refugees in regard to reconciliation, empowerment and transformation. As will be discussed in the chapter, the findings of the study indicate that the Catholic church through its agencies is involved in provision of food and enhancing food security for refugees, provision of recreational and educational services, provision of medical supplies, clean portable drinking water among other activities aimed at reconciling different groups, empowering them and transforming their lives.

#### **6.1 Reconciliation**

For efficiency and sustainability of intervention measures, good mutual relationships and trust must exist between the refugees and the host community. Any form of suspicion is likely to curtail the efforts towards cohesiveness and social stability. The Caritas Cameroon has been on the forefront of promoting reconciliation among refugees themselves and then with the host communities. It is still noted that amongst refugees are the two factions i.e. the Anti-balaka, and the Seleka militias, though they don't possess physical weapons, there is still some aspect of anger and hatred in their minds. The diocesan Peace and Justice Commission together with the Caritas in Bertoua are playing a great role in peace building negotiations, and education with the refugees themselves and their host environment. Priests and Pastors in this community preach and implement peace rituals during church services as a means to unite and to remind both the host community and the refugees that as humans we are one created in God's image and likeness. Psychosocial counseling sessions have been provided to the refugees to enable them

come to terms with their situation. It is always important to advocate for peaceful and harmonious coexistence among the community. The Caritas has been on the forefront in holding awareness raising activities that promote harmonious living with one another. The CRS Cameroon is in conjunction with the ministry of health providing counseling services that are necessary for healing, forgiveness and reconciliation.

Basically, the church's activities related to reconciliation are symbolic in nature based on theological principles. The church sermons held in the refugee camps and the host community churches involve enlightening groups on effects of violence and the value of loving one another as a brother or sister. Rituals such as greeting one another in church regardless of individual differences and partaking of the Holy Communion symbolize peace. Although the Caritas and the Catholic relief service are trying to help reconcile refugees, it is argued that they need to up the game in ensuring the local communities are sensitized so they can receive and accommodate refugees without problems. Essed (2004) argues that refusal or reception of refugees in host communities presents significant challenges for social policy makers and the practical realities in those countries.

Promotion of inclusive education in the Eastern Cameroon is another dimension in which the Church is promoting reconciliatory efforts. By having both Muslim and Christian children from both refugee and host communities attend same schools, they potential barriers that might bring divisions could be broken. Through its justice and reconciliation commission, the Catholic Church need to be on the fore-front in promoting peace and justice by opposing social and political structures that oppress and marginalize groups in the society. Hallman (2000) asserts that sustainable just communities cannot be achieved if we are not committed to ensuring justice prevails in our undertakings. Justice need to a central guiding principle in all activities aimed at reconciliation particularly with refugees. Russell (1993) states that the responsibility of the Church is measured by the degree it responds to the needs of the marginalized and of those in need within the society.

In the gospel of Mathew, Jesus Christ himself highlights the Ten Commandments to his disciples. Perhaps the most important and relevant commandment in this case of promoting peace and living together as brothers and sisters is that of loving your neighbor as you love

yourself. The teachings of the gospel underscore the importance of loving one another and sharing available resources among the refugees and the host communities as Jesus himself did. The operations of The Caritas and the Catholic Relief as a church agency is build on humanitarian values of helping the poor and the vulnerable groups particularly during times of need. This agenda is pursued in combination with the Christian values as a source of motivation. Human dignity, justice and service to humanity are central themes in the gospel teachings as they were promoted by Jesus Christ himself.

The issue of insecurity and competition for resources has prompted some tension between the refugees and the host communities. Reconciliation is needed to avoid frequent conflicts that might result due to groups competing for the already overstrained resources. The main goal of reconciliation is to enable refugees integrate in the host community and live together as one people. Schreiter (2015) has argued for two faces of reconciliation; social and spiritual. At the social level, refugees need to reflect on the structures and processes of the fractured society and find ways of reconstructing them based on truth and justice. Wrong doings must be fully recognized for the groups to move ahead. The second face involves spiritual healing. Shattered lives must be rebuilt based on the principle of forgiveness. Worthington (2008) contends that forgiveness is a very crucial guiding principle of humanity that is embedded in every culture. One central element that must be emphasized within the discourse of reconciliation is forgiveness. There cannot be reconciliation of any form if people fail to embrace forgiveness. Forgiveness precedes reconciliation. Refugee groups must be willing to forgive one another to enable the reconciliation process happen.

Drawing on Daud's (2009) recommendations on food security for displaced persons, it is important for relief service agencies to help refugees start income generating activities to supply their own basic needs. Daud in his study found out that displaced women needed to be empowered to start small income generating businesses as a sustainable long term solution for ensuring food security. The provision for emergence relief services cannot go on forever. There is a great need for the refugees to be empowered economically so they can fend for themselves in the long run. This agenda can only be possible if refugees are fully integrated into the local community so they can take part in communal life activities like any other Cameroonian. This

will enable refugees to do business, get employment, do farming to name but a few economic activities to make them self sufficient. According to Diakonia principles, empowerment is integral to church mission and individuals should be helped to gain capacity of determining their own destinies (Ham, 2014).

## **6.2 Empowerment**

The findings of the study indicate that both the Caritas and the Catholic Relief Service are primarily involved in the provision of relief food to the refugees as a short term solution. Emergence relief services are quite important to help refugees start new lives when they arrive in the host country before long term interventions are sought. Usually, refugees have to walk for long distances from their homes once they are displaced and at times, they can go for days without eating and drinking. It is an important step for the two agencies to welcome refugees by giving them something to eat and drink as they start their life in a new country that presents new challenges and opportunities.

However, the impeding challenge is how to ensure food security for refugees. Gallegos (2011) has investigated food security for refugees in Australia and argues that refugees face great challenges related to purchasing food, preparation and consumption in the host countries/communities. Gallegos has observed that lack of familiar food, income, poor transportation and inefficient food distribution channels contribute to food insecurity within refugee communities. There must be effective and sustainable ways of ensuring refugees are self-reliant in terms of food security. The situation of food security in Eastern Cameroon makes it a little difficult to maintain food security because the local inhabitants are themselves at risk of food insecurity. This part of Cameroon being one of the poorest in the country does not have sufficient food supply. The situation is acute among refugees with 40% are at risk of famine compared to 15% of the local communities. Daud (2009) investigated problems that displaced women face in meeting their basic needs. The findings indicated that displaced women survive in very dilapidated conditions such as low income, illiteracy and many dependants and must work hard to earn a living for themselves and the dependants.

Daud (2009) strategies that displaced women employed for survival included buying food on credit, getting help from neighbors, relief assistance from charities, skipping days without eating and the like. The findings of this study indicate that the church has initiated measures through CRS to facilitate distribution of high nutrient food to refugee families. However, the CRS immediate relief service response in the provision of food is a short term solution that cannot be sustained for long. It is important that developmental agencies and charities as well as religious organizations focus on long term sustainability of projects that can make refugees self-reliant. This finding resonates well with the findings of Daud (2009) and Galleogos (2011) who have investigated challenges in food security for refugees and displaced persons. These authors have argued that relief service agencies need to reconsider their approaches and focus on long term solutions. CRS works closely with local authorities to provide refugees with some small portions of land they can use for growing food crops. This initiative appears to be slowly empowering refugees to be self-reliant in food provision not only for family consumption but as a source of income generation as well. The income generated from selling some of the food harvested can be used to buy other household requirements. Economic empowerment is a key tool for refugees to revive their livelihoods. It is argued that the church needs to come up with a sustainable micro-finance assistance where refugees can obtain credit facilities to enable them run small business so they can be self-reliant other than relying on relief aid that could be at times be unreliable.

In addition to economic empowerment, refugees need to be socially and politically empowered. Most refugees do not know their rights when they flee to host countries. In principle, refugees need to access social amenities in the host countries like any other citizen of that particular country. They need to be educated on their rights so they can stand up for themselves. Vocational training and creation of awareness through advocacy talks, meetings and workshops could be important in this respect.

To sum up, it is necessary to empower refugees spiritually and support them psychologically so they are able to recognize the opportunities available in the host communities. Essed et al. (2004) have argued that due to trauma as a result of witnessing loved ones being killed and losing properties, many refugees fail to see opportunities around them. They are in these situations unable to assess their environment and take initiatives to change their lives. Refugees can easily

integrate in the host communities if they can access available resources and income-generating activities, credit facilities and access to business licenses. Traumatized individuals require spiritual and psychological support to enable them come to terms with their new situation and look for appropriate means to continue with their lives. This resonates well with Lartey (2003) who points out that empowerment enables individuals to achieve freedom to participate in normal life activities regardless of the situation they may find themselves in.

### **6.3 Transformation**

Education is an important tool in transforming populations particularly in the current knowledge societies. It is necessary to provide education to all populations regardless of their backgrounds to liberate them from difficult situations. In this study it was established that local schools do not have enough capacity to accommodate all refugee children most of who did not have access to education in CAR because of the ongoing civil conflict as well as parental ignorance on the value of education for their children. Results show that at least 60% of the refugee population represents school age children who have a right to education in the host country although most of them did not have educational experiences back home. Provision of education is critical element if there has to be social change in the society. Social change in transforming societies ought to be an important issue within refugee communities and the host communities. How do agencies and host communities receive and deal with refugees? Refugees arrive in host communities with talents and capacities that can be tapped to transform societies. Essed et al. (2004) contend that appropriately designed plans for refugees need to combine aid and development so as to contribute to the successful process of social change.

The church in conjunction with other agencies have provided temporal learning spaces for these children to offer educational as well as counseling services to enable them overcome the traumatic events witnessed in CAR. Caritas is actively involved in the provision of recreational and educational activities such as concerts to enable the children regain normalcy. It is always important to have long term plans while helping refugees and education is one of the basic rights that they are entitled to in the host countries. Refugees can stay in camps for years and if not given quality education, they are bound to continue relying on getting support throughout their lives. Education empowers and transforms people and their lives not forgetting their

communities. The Caritas and the Catholic Relief Service in collaboration with UNHCR, MINEDUB, UNICEF and PLAN Cameroon have helped the church in offering educational and recreational services through training. For, instance church volunteer teachers have been trained by MINEDUB, UNICEF and PLAN Cameroon to help teach children. To ensure the educational services provided are relevant and responds to refugee circumstances, the teacher training curriculum is centered on emergence education, peace education, psychosocial care and child protection.

Health and sanitation are critical aspects in refugee camps that could threaten the lives of refugees and host communities. Refugee camps are usually congested and are known for having health care problems and poor sanitation facilities. The provision of water, sanitation and health care facilities could prove decisive in this case. As mentioned earlier in the previous sections, the refugee camps are located in a least developed region with poor infrastructure and social amenities. Water is a problem in this area and due to congestion in refugee camps, this poses a security treat. Women and children have to walk for long distances to fetch water from rivers. Lack of clean drinking water in refugee camps is a threat to the health of refugees. The probability of diseases breaking is heightened by the virtue unhygienic conditions brought by lack of water. Sanitary facilities are also a problem in the refugee camps. There are no clean and well-constructed toilets/latrines. This combined with inadequate water supply complicates the situation.

The Catholic relief service aims at strengthening health care provision and delivery systems to the refugees. In Collaboration with other relief service agencies, the CRS has set up health facilities and facilitated availability of volunteer doctors and nurses. These health facilities involve distribution of antiretroviral drugs to refugees who are infected with HIV. Although the facilities were initiated to cater for the needs of the refugees, the local communities have benefited immensely because the organizations activities are based on non-discrimination principles. The purpose is to provide humanitarian services to those in need both in religious as well as in secular environments.

The CRS is working in hand with other developmental agencies and has initiated water projects in the area to help improve the sanitation and general well-being of the refugees together with the

locals. CRS has provided water pumps, dug wells, and built toilets in homes and schools. A number of schools have benefited from the projects initiated by CRS. Women and children do no longer need to fetch water in rivers that are kilometers away. As a result, children have time to attend school and women can utilize the time in doing other activities to enhance their livelihood.

There has been Christian responses and action particularly on societal cohesion. Social cohesion is important in any society because there must be peaceful coexistence of groups, that is, among refugees themselves and also between refugees and local inhabitants. The church together with other agencies have established peace building teams and committees that are charged with the significant responsibility of ensuring there is peace among the different groups. LWF has been on the forefront of this agenda. Peace building is important because it helps individuals to heal and reconcile with their situations. It also can lead to forgiveness and reconciliation if it is done in a systematic manner. LWF peace building projects revolve around peace education and psychological training that are aimed to empowering refugees and hence giving them authority to determine the destiny of their new life. Another way the LWF has used to transform the lives of refugees is through agriculture and environmental education. Refugees and local communities have benefitted from the free seeds, farm tools; farm chemical and the like to enable them grow crops for increased food security. They have also been provided with animals to start livestock rearing projects. This has been coupled with the microfinance credits given to women to give them financial stability in doing small businesses to help themselves and their families. This seems to be transforming the social, emotional, economic lives of the refugees and the host communities. Myers (2011) observes that transformation should ensure that refugees are liberated from their pain, trauma and hatred against one another.

To conclude, Essed et al. (2004) have investigated refugees in relation to transforming societies and have observed complex dynamic processes involved between refugees, policy makers and agencies in reconstructing livelihoods and transforming societies. Agency is critical in transforming societies. There cannot be productive social transformation if refugees are not granted agency and instead are viewed as passive victims of civil conflict who are there to receive aid. Dzeamesi (2008) asserts that refugee camps are always secluded and enclosed areas strictly for refugees and agencies helping them and basically lack basic social amenities and

economic development infrastructures. Drawing on Dzeamesi findings, refugees can contribute significantly in transforming their communities. This can be achieved when they are building their capacity socially spiritually, socially and economically. The harness their capacity, concerted efforts and commitment by different agencies and host governments is critical.

#### **6.4 Chapter Summary**

The author in this chapter has tried to make sense of the activities and actions of the Catholic Church in response to CAR refugees in Eastern Cameroon. Although the study focused on the Caritas and the Catholic Relief Service as agencies of the Catholic Church, the discussion has also touched on the activities done by other developmental and relief agencies such as UNICEF, LWF, UNHCR, MINEDUB, PLAN Cameroon as well as the government's role. These activities have been discussed under the broad themes of empowerment, transformation and reconciliation.

## **CHAPTER SEVEN:**

### **SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH**

#### **7.0 Introduction**

This chapter presents a short synopsis of the main findings and the conclusions drawn from the study. The chapter closes with suggestions for possible research areas that could be explored in more elaborated and large scale research projects that could lead to more empirical evidence of the activities of the Church, developmental agencies and governments in helping refugees settle in host countries.

#### **7.1 Summary of Main Findings**

The study aimed at exploring the activities done by the Catholic Church through the Caritas and the Catholic Relief Service in responding to CAR refugees' situation in Eastern region of Cameroon on the Christian Values of Reconciliation, Empowerment, and Transformation. The main findings of the study were;

The Caritas and the Catholic Relief Service provides relief food, Education, and health care facilities although there is a problem with sustainability. Relief aid is important as an initial assistance given to refugees when they are in a host country. However, relief aid should not be viewed as long term assistance extended to the refugees. More innovative strategies aimed at empowering refugee communities need to be devised so that the Refugees can be self independent, and their dignity restored. For example establishment of micro-finance to enable refugees operate small scale businesses that can help them provide their own basic need without depending on relief aid.

The church's efforts in reconciling different groups are basically spiritual. These include the church rituals and Biblical teaching based on Christ's love for humanity. The church needs to expand its scope of the activities to include pragmatic strategies outside the theological boundaries.

Last but not least, it is a little difficult to clearly identify the activities done by the Catholic Church through Caritas and Catholic Relief Service in regard to transforming the society. The activities done by the church cuts across all the three themes; empowerment, transformation and reconciliation and can be explained under any of the above themes depending on the lens that one decides to perceive them. Broadly, transformation seems to be an automatic process which is as a result of successful empowerment and reconciliation strategies.

## **7.2 Conclusion**

It is the moral responsibility for not only agencies and developmental organizations to help refugees but also politicians and policy makers. The actions and inactions of political organs and policy developers influences the livelihoods of refugees to a larger extent and determines whether integration is smooth or not. However, the complex nature of the political and policy dimensions of accommodating refugees in the host communities and countries should not be underestimated. The dynamic nature of the political environment and policies related to refugees in most cases derail the developments and implementation of approaches that could lead to successful integration of refugees in the communities and countries in question.

Those working with refugees should be committed to broader social change, and helping refugees is part of that. They should not view the assistance that they offer refugees as an end, but as part of the means to achieving social change that will bring about a more just society where everyone's human rights are respected, regardless of their national, ethnic or legal status.

## **7.3 Suggestions for Further Research**

I feel that it could be productive if investigations are done to establish the role of the church not necessarily the Catholic Church with regards to the situations in the Central African Republic. This is important because the civil conflict is still ongoing and chances are that there will be still an influx of refugees in Cameroon. It is also critical to explore the relationship between the Catholic Church, international relief aid agencies and the government of Cameroon in responding to emergencies such as receiving refugees. The relationship is important because it determines the scope and quality of the assistance refugees receive in a country.

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**Appendices**

**Appendix 1: Interview- Guide**

**Questions:**

- 1. What is your impression about the provision of shelter by the Catholic Relief Services?

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- 2. Famine is top priority in times of conflicts, what can you say about the Catholic Relief Services in feeding the hungry?

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- 3. The East is considered an abandoned region in Cameroon; to what extent does the Catholic Relief Services face the challenge of assisting the refugees get jobs?

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- 4. Integration is of prime importance when it comes to strangers, what is your perspective on how the church reconciles these people with the host community?

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5. “Water is life”, to what extent can you assess the church’s approach in water provision?

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6. Health Care is equally a principal issue, what is your impression about the ‘caritative’ services of the Catholic Church to this effect?

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7. Education is a paramount concern to the refugees, how do you assess the church’s concern for education?

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8. To your own view how can you describe the level at which the church partners with other churches and organizations to assist these refugees?

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9. In general terms, how can you scale the church’s caritative (diaconal) approaches on Reconciliation, Transformation and Empowerment?

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## Appendix 2: QUESTIONNAIRE

### RESEARCH QUESTION:

What efforts is the Catholic Church through its relief services doing to meet the current situation of refugees from the Central African Republic living in the eastern Region of Cameroon, based on the Christian approaches of reconciliation, transformation, and empowerment?

### Case Study:

The Catholic Caritas Cameroon and the Catholic Relief Service. (CRS)

The reason for selecting the Catholic Caritas and the Catholic Relief Service Cameroon, is for me to get an in depth approach on how the Catholic Church faces situations of crises through its humanitarian organizations.

My thesis shall be structured within the Christian values of Reconciliation, Transformation, and Empowerment. But I shall operationalize these themes for a simpler understanding.

1. Reconciliation: The creation of new relationships between individuals and the local communities around by the refugees.
2. Transformation: The ability to maintain mental or physiological and societal changes.
3. Empowerment: The abilities to manage ones surroundings.

N.B. This questionnaire is distributed to the following respondents.

1. The Catholic Relief Services in Yaoundé.
2. The catholic Women Association St Josephs Anglophone Parish, Mvog-Ada Yaoundé
3. Caritas Norway Oslo.
4. The Catholic Charismatic Renewal Prayer group Yaoundé

5. Brother Dominic Morfaw of the St Joseph's Anglophone Parish.
6. The Catholic Information Service.
7. Non-Governmental & humanitarian Organizations Yaoundé
8. The Focolare Movement.
9. The Catholic Peace and Justice Committee.
10. The St Jude Thaddeus Prayer Group.
11. The St Vincent de Porres Group.etc.

I ask you kindly to return the questionnaire by **12 February** by email (or by fax if that is easiest: + 47 22 45 19 50; write Att: Hans M. Haugen). Your response is decisive for my research for a master thesis in Diaconia and Christian social practice. You shall just choose to tick or circle on each statement which answer agrees with your operations. I will inform you about the findings of my research. Thanks in Advance.

For any questions, please contact me: [motitilouise@gmail.com](mailto:motitilouise@gmail.com) or my supervisor, Hans Morten Haugen: [haugen@diakonhjemmet.no](mailto:haugen@diakonhjemmet.no)

1. Our organization serves specifically Christians

A. Strongly Disagree. (B). Somewhat Disagree. (C) Do not agree or Disagree (D) Somewhat Agree (E) strongly agree (F) Do not know

2. We seek to work independently, in order to avoid too many conditionality's and coordination meetings

A. Strongly disagree. (B). Somewhat Disagree. (C) Do not agree or Disagree (D) Somewhat Agree (E.) Strongly agrees. (F). Do not know

3. Gender equity and equality is hundred percent respected in our organization.

A. Strongly disagree. (B) Somewhat disagree (C) Do not agree or Disagree (D) somewhat agree (E) strongly agree. (F) Do not know

4. Our assistance is coordinated with Catholic Communities

A. Strongly disagree. (B) Somewhat disagree (C) Do not agree or disagree (D) somewhat agree. (E) Strongly agree. (F) Do not know

5. Water is a great need to the refugees, and this is a major priority in our operations

A. Strongly disagree. (B) Somewhat disagree (C) Do not agree or disagree (D) somewhat agree (E) strongly agree. (F) Do not know

6. We do provide for shelter to the needy people

A. Strongly disagree. (B) Somewhat disagree (C) Do not agree or disagree (D) somewhat agree (E) strongly agree. (F) Do not know

7. We do provide education to the Refugee Children

A. Strongly disagree. (B) Somewhat disagree (C) Do not agree or disagree (D) somewhat agree (E) strongly agree. (F) Do not know

8. We seek to facilitate job opportunities to the refugees

A. Strongly disagree. (B) Somewhat disagree (C) Do not agree or disagree (D) somewhat agree (E) strongly agree. (F) Do not know

9. Safety is a basic issue in the lives of the refugees, and we seek to meet these needs

A. Strongly disagree. (B) Somewhat disagree (C) Do not agree or disagree (D) somewhat agree (E) strongly agree. (F) Do not know

10. We assist with any health problems of the refugees

A. Strongly disagree. (B) Somewhat disagree (C) Do not agree or disagree (D) somewhat agree (E) strongly agree. (F) Do not know

11. We have regular provisions of food to the refugees

A. Strongly disagree. (B) Somewhat disagree (C) Do not agree or disagree (D) somewhat agree (E) strongly agree. (F) Do not know

12. The refugees hope to one day return home, and we work to prepare them for this

A. Strongly disagree. (B) Somewhat disagree (C) Do not agree or disagree (D) somewhat agree (E) strongly agree. (F) Do not know

13. Forgiveness and mental healing are long term process in the lives of the refugees, and we prioritize it

A. Strongly disagree. (B) Somewhat disagree (C) Do not agree or disagree (D) somewhat agree (E) strongly agree. (F) Do not know

14. We seek to enable the refugees to create new relationships (interactions) in order to live together

A. Strongly disagree. (B) Somewhat disagree (C) Do not agree or disagree (D) somewhat agree (E) strongly agree. (F) Do not know

15. We seek to enable refugees who traditionally are farmers to improve their farming skills

A. Strongly disagree. (B) Somewhat disagree (C) Do not agree or disagree (D) somewhat agree (E) strongly agree. (F) Do not know

16. We experience that many of the refugees have problems to interact with other refugees that have another faith than their own

A. Strongly disagree. (B) Somewhat disagree (C) Do not agree or disagree (D) somewhat agree (E) strongly agree. (F) Do not know

17. The refugees are generally looking with favor upon the armed militias from their own faith background, arguing that more persons with arms will improve the overall safety when returning

A. Strongly disagree (B) somewhat disagree (C) Do not agree or disagree (D) somewhat agree (E) strongly agree (F) Do not know

18. The refugees sincerely believe that the Central African Republic needs a new approach of living together across faith boundaries, and that the militias must be disarmed

A. Strongly disagree (B) somewhat disagree (C) Do not agree or disagree (D) somewhat agree (E) strongly agree (F) Do not know

19. We see that the lives of the refugees is improved due to Christian assistance

A. Strongly disagree. (B) Somewhat disagree (C) Do not agree or disagree (D) somewhat agree (E) strongly agree. (F) Do not know

20. If you have additional comments on your work or on the Christian values of Reconciliation, Transformation, and Empowerment as related to your work, please add them here: