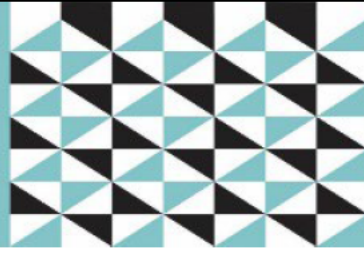


DURBAN UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY

**REDUCING YOUTH VIOLENCE: AN ACTION
RESEARCH PROJECT IN MASISI, THE DEMOCRATIC
REPUBLIC OF CONGO**

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MARCH 2025



Reducing Youth Violence: An Action Research Project in Masisi, The Democratic Republic of Congo

Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of Doctor of
Philosophy in Public Administration - Peace Studies in the Faculty of
Management Sciences at the Durban University of Technology

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DECLARATION

I declare that the thesis herewith submitted for the PhD in Public Management (Peacebuilding) at the Durban University of Technology has not been previously submitted for a degree at any other university.

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my family,
Kankindi Mucyo Asterie my dear wife,
our son Doctor Banzi A. Nathan and our daughter Neema Mucyo Lucie,
My mother who is there for my father and the Banzi family.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am deeply indebted to the Everlasting for all He has done for me. May His Name be praised through this work.

I owe a lot to Dr. Chrysostome Kiyala and Prof. Geoffrey T. Harris who accompanied me and supervised this thesis. Their guidance coupled with the scientific rigour to see me up to the task is really something I am not ready to forget as this is deeply engraved in my heart. Geoff was close to us during the challenging time of confinement and made easy our survival in Durban.

Dr. Sylvia Kaye welcomed us on the first day at Durban University of Technology and gave us valuable guidance during our stay in Durban and during the tough time of COVID-19. I met wonderful people in DUT, among them Prashna, Zakhile and Philani and they became part of my academic history. I really owe a particular word of acknowledgement to Professor Fr. Innocent Nyirindekwe for having allowed me to reach this far. Father, may Heaven bless you abundantly. I cannot forget the member of the Sapientia Catholic University of Goma, the executive board, my colleagues and the members of our peace circle. Thank you to Pawase, Pascal Muderhwa, Ulimwengu, Benite Ashime, Kaligala, Sister Daphrose, Pascaline, Mbusa, Aganze, Mpangirwa and Kashori.

The couple Babu and Francine and their two lively daughters made my first steps in South Africa a pleasure and a blessing. I keep their picture in my heart and express a big thank you to them. A warm thank you to my elder brother, Pascal, his family and my entire family for their prayers and support.

My fieldwork would not have been completed without the help of my research assistants: Rwaburindi Jean Bosco, Bahati Innocent, Hodari Vuningoma, Nyambatsi Christophe, Justin Pendo, Shadrack Kabatsi, John Bimenyi, Audace and all the people I cannot name here.

ABSTRACT

For more than six decades now, Masisi District in the Democratic Republic of Congo has been undergoing deadly conflicts. These conflicts have resulted in thousands of deaths, destruction, people displacements and hatred among people, in particular the youths. Furthermore, these conflicts were characterised by violence. The purpose of this thesis is to determine how to reduce violent behaviour among the youth in Masisi. The study first establishes the motivations behind youth involvement in violent acts and the impact of violence on the youth themselves and the communities. Then it provides solutions for the way out of violence by suggesting locally designed projects to promote peace among the youth and their communities. The main goal is to understand the youth behaviours and try to reduce violence. Specifically, the study aims at exploring the nature, extent, causes and consequences of violence in Masisi and to evaluate the impact of violence on the communities. In addition, the study aims at assessing the current initiatives put in place for conflict transformation. Finally, it provides suggestions for strategies and how to implement them in order to reduce prejudice; stereotypes and misunderstanding among the youths while evaluating the outcomes of the implemented interventions in order to improve the relationships and to curtail violence in Masisi. These strategies resulted from the conflict transformation theory as suggested by Jean Paul Lederach, the intergroup contact theory and the theory of change. This research is qualitative. Data collection was done through interviews with various actors and was coupled with observation and archival research. Therefore, primary and secondary data was used and was related to the situation in Masisi. The findings revealed that young people inherited historical conflict and that violence in Masisi has had serious and long-term repercussions. In addition, acts of violence and criminality are quite often hidden because of the inaccessibility of the district, therefore making it difficult to document the acts of violence or to eliminate them. Among other causal factors of violence, the findings identified the geographical setting and isolation coupled with an isolated population, youth unemployment, manipulation and exploitation among the motivations for violence. Moreover, the study established from the informants' narratives that violence is both a business and a game; there is a leadership vacuum and lack of role models with manipulation or exploitation adding to poverty in Masisi. In addition, the results indicate that the youths' voices are not heard; there is a strong feeling of hypocrisy among communities and a lack of social cohesion. The study found also that there is unfinished business on the youths' side and a need for peaceful cohabitation. Ethnic rivalry,

discrimination and exclusion are also among the causes of violence. Thus, efforts need to be made to reduce violence and bring about peaceful cohabitation, to improve the relationships among young people and put in place mechanisms to transform conflicts and change behaviours. This will help stakeholders to understand the youths' attitude and how to respond to their grievances and expectations. The study resulted in the creation of a youth association involved in farming activities and peace circles for the young people who act as peacemakers.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

ADF	Allied Democratic Forces
ADF-NALU	Alliance of Democratic Forces for the National Liberation of Uganda
AFDL	Alliance des Forces Démocratiques pour la libération du Congo [Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Libération of Congo]
AJPA	<i>Association des jeunes pour la promotion agricole</i> [Youth Association for Agricultural Promotion]
AR	Action Research
AWABELO	Association des Wanande de Beni et Lubero
BATNA	Best Alternative to a Negotiated Agreement
CAR	Central African Republic
CIRGL	Conference internationale sur la Région des grands lacs
CLPD	<i>Comité locale de Paix et de Développement</i> [Local Committee for Peace and Development].
CLPG	<i>Comité Locale de Paix et de Développement du Groupement</i> [Local Committee for peace and Development in the Chiefdom]
CNDP	<i>Congrès National pour la Défense du Peuple</i> [National Congress for the Defence of the People]
CNS	Conférence Nationale Souveraine [National and Sovereign Conference]
CPDG	<i>Comité de Paix et de Développement du Groupement</i> [Peace and Development in the Chiefdom]
CVR	<i>Commission Vérité et Réconciliation</i> [Truth and Reconciliation Commission]
DSCR	Document de la Stratégie de Croissance et de Réduction de la Pauvreté
FARDC	<i>Forces Armées de la République Démocratique du Congo</i> [Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of Congo]
FDLR	<i>Forces Démocratiques pour la Libération du Rwanda</i> [Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda]
FDLR-FOCA	<i>Forces Démocratiques pour la Libération du Rwanda-Forces Combattantes Abacunguzi</i> [Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda-Abacunguzi Combattant Forces]
FULB	<i>Forces Unies pour la Libération des Bantu</i> [United Forces for the Liberation of Bantu people]
HROC	Healing and Rebuilding our Communities

ICGLR	International Conference on the Great Lakes Region
IDMC	Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre
IDPs	Internally Displaced Persons
IKS	Indigenous Knowledge Systems
JRS	Jesuit Refugee Service
KAF	Kofi Annan Foundation
LDF	Local Defence Force
LPC	Local peace committee
LRA	Lord's Resistance Army
M23	<i>Mouvement du 23 mars</i> [M23 armed movement]
MONUC	United Nations Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo
MONUSCO	United Nations Mission for Stabilization of the Democratic Republic of Congo
MP	Member of Parliament
NPD	<i>Noyau de Paix et de Développement</i> [Peace and Development Cell]
OP	<i>Organisation Paysanne</i> [Villagers' Association]
PAR	Participatory Action Research
PARECO	<i>Patriotes Résistant Congolais</i> [Coalition of Congolese Resistant Patriots]
PDDRC-S	<i>Programme de Désarmement, Démobilisation, Reinsertion Communautaire et Stabilisation</i> [Disarmament, Demobilisation, Community Reintegration and Stabilisation Programme]
PPA-LCPI	<i>Programme présidentiel accéléré de lutte contre la pauvreté et les inégalités</i> [Accelerated presidential program to combat poverty and inequality]
PPNT	Permanent Peace Negotiation Team
RCD	<i>Rassemblement Congolais pour la Démocratie</i> [Congolese Rally for Democracy]
RPF	Rwandan Patriotic Front
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SFD	Sport for Development Programmes
TRC	Truth and Reconciliation Commission
UOP	Union des Organisations Paysannes
VRU	Violence Reduction Unit
WCC	World Council of Churches
WPDC	Wajir Peace and Development Committee
YIPR	Youth Initiatives for Peace and Reconciliation

PART I: GENERAL INTRODUCTION

The first part of this theses covers the general introduction and Chapter 2. Chapter 1 introduces the research topic, then gives the background of the research, the problem statement, the research questions and research assumptions, followed by the research objectives, the justification of the study, the key terms around the youths and conflict, the delimitation or scope of the study and the study outline. Chapter 2 provides an overview of the theoretical framework underpinning this study.

CHAPTER ONE: GENERAL INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

This thesis aims to understand the youth involvement in violence and conflicts in Eastern Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and eventually to suggest means and ways to get out of the cycle of violence that has already claimed millions of lives and incurred uncountable losses. The DRC has borders with nine other African countries in central Africa. This means that, on the one hand, there are cross-border populations and on the other hand, there is cross-border trade and human movement across the borders. The eastern DRC, bordering five countries, has welcomed people from Rwanda, Burundi, Uganda, Tanzania and Zambia. Some of these people were displaced by the colonialists from Rwanda to DRC and they were settled in the then Katanga province and Kivu Province. These people were brought into the country as labourers to work in the mining sites of Katanga or to work on farms and plantations owned by white masters. The need for labour compelled the white people to select people who looked strong, young and were capable of doing hard work. Other people came to DRC as refugees following conflicts in their countries especially from Rwanda, Burundi and Uganda, whereas others came as immigrants following famine in their countries or looking for greener pastures. It should be underlined that the non-organised movement of people made it hard for the newcomers to settle in peace as the autochthonous citizens found it hard to welcome them and live peacefully together. The issue has persisted from one generation to the next, with today's youth inheriting the challenges within their communities from their parents and forebears.



Figure 1:North Kivu Province, Democratic Republic of Congo. **Source:** Philippe and Karume (2019)

In fact, one striking fact is that through the people displacement, the colonialists needed to address the questions of identity or the nationality of these displaced people; the issue around land; and the irredentism they observed especially on the side of the Rwandese. According to the Ndlovu-Gatsheni et al. (2022), these questions would soon or later be sources of tension, conflict and violence. The current generation, especially the youths, has inherited these issues and are taking part in conflicts that started with their grandparents. Today, more than 60 years since the country gained its independence, these same issues have erupted and have claimed numerous lives in Masisi, in North Kivu Province.

Another source of conflicts or suspicions is the definition of a region or a district as an ethnic entity rather than a geographic entity. Striking examples are *Masisi* defined as a Hunde entity or district (*district des Bahunde*) and *Rutshuru* as a Hutu entity (*district des Bahutu*). People from other ethnic groups living in these districts feel discriminated against and are ready to claim their citizenship and right to live where it pleases them to do so. These districts should simply be defined as geographic districts within North Kivu Province and this should apply to

all provinces in DRC. Another dimension of this system of management is not to give too much power to local customary leaders by the central government as these leaders abuse their power when dealing with the community at grassroots. The youth born into such a setting feel proud of their district whereas others feel excluded, yet they also claim land within a district where they are not integrated. Just two years after the country gained its independence, conflicts erupted in Masisi with unforgettable violence that old people talk about with bitterness and on which the youth base the idea of revenge or of self-protection. The situation spun out of control for the central government in 1993 when open conflict erupted in Ntoto, Eastern Masisi. The conflict pitted the Hunde and Nyanga people against the Hutu and Tutsi, whom they marginalised by labelling them as Rwandese or outsiders. This happened during the Rwandan war that culminated in genocide. Some unfortunate features of conflicts and violence in Masisi are reflected by horrible and horrendous acts like slaughtering people and eating human flesh. This happened in 1992–1994 and it is still going on among young people who enjoy eating human flesh. The meat would be eaten cooked or raw; babies were mashed in mortars and girls and married women were raped. For decades, some of these stories have been kept secret or those who know them regard them as normal. Death and violence have become normal in the context of Masisi.

The issues of insecurity, of youth care, supervision or schooling, human rights abuse and criminality have never been addressed, and this kind of unfinished business has perpetuated the violence. Some recent examples are the death of more than 100–150 young people in April 2022 in one village and in one day but no media talked about them and no official leaders took the responsibility to look at the issue around their deaths. On 8 May 2023, a similar situation happened in the same village when a land slide killed numerous young people on a mining site. The situation went unnoticed. This confirms that Masisi is a place of darkness because what happens there quite often goes unseen. Since then, violence has taken hold to such an extent that the youth in the district have made violence a normal way of life. Many of them have dropped out of school; they do not want to work in their farms or to till the land and take guns and gang up against each other, looting, destroying and killing.

Another appalling situation lies in the failure of the central government to ensure people's security. According to Milemba (2019: 73–76), the Congo is undermined by violence and/or

violent actions in various sectors including the economic sector; very poor social living conditions or a very low level of wellbeing; the depreciation of the local currency undermining the household purchasing power; the loss of international credibility or trust; the infringement of human rights; a high level of criminality; political repression; and intolerance. Given the incapacity of the central government to ensure their security and protection, communities in various places have called upon their youth to ensure their security. They created what they call groups for popular defence or groups for self-defence. Their role is to ensure what Milemba calls privatised security.

Early in 1990s, the young members of these groups called themselves *Garde civils* or civilian guards as they watched over their civilian communities; later on, they were organised into groups called “Local Defence Force (LDF)” (Turner, 2007: 127). The youth work or walk day and night to ensure community security; they have no other paying job other than to take care of their living area. For their salary or reward, Milemba argues, they get what they call “means to buy batteries” for their torches at night. Households that have no young boys to move at night or that fear for the security of their sons must pay something in compensation. The boys use the money to buy a strong local brew that, according to them, gives them stamina to withstand the harsh and dangerous nights. According to Milemba, security is proportional to the level of violence that the youth can show. Around Goma town, these groups are famous in places like Majengo, Kasika, Kahembe, Mapendo, Katoyi, Ndosho, Mugunga, Mabanga-Nord and Mabanga-Sud, Bujovu, Katindo, Lac vert (Milemba, 2019: 73). One horrible thing is that after taking the deadly local brew, these young people become so violent and wild that whoever they catch at night is considered to be a thief and must be killed and quite often roasted or burnt alive then eaten. One unfortunate example happened in Kibwe, a suburb around Goma town where four men were burnt alive and the youth who killed them spent the whole day feasting on their flesh. This traumatising scene went unaddressed by anyone in the community or even in the local government. Moreover, easy access to firearms and other weapons without any alternative projects or programmes makes the youth violent in their living areas. This situation compelled me to look at the youth involved in violence and how one could contribute to reducing this violence.

1.2 Background to the Research Problem

Expanding on the concept of “security from below”, Collack and Pearce (2009: 11) state:

The spread of new wars in the Global South has highlighted the limitations of state security, but there are also growing problems of urban and rural violence in countries that had peace agreements and even in those which have experienced no war at all.

They add that “in its many forms, violence is increasing in urban as well as in rural areas, affecting the lives of millions of people, which produces a growing sense of insecurity that paralyses cooperative social interaction, decreases wellbeing” (Collack & Pearce, 2009: 13).

In their view, countries that have undergone wars or conflicts like DR Congo are also characterised by insecurity and violence. The question is to establish which kind of peace or security they need or would be effective and produce positive effects. Some peacemakers have tried the security from the highest leaders, the top-down approach, whereas others advocate the bottom-up approach. This is what Collack and Pearce (2009: 17) call “security from below” or from the people at the grassroots. For them, “security from below is a call to increase the capacity of people to think about their security and to define collectively the values and norms that should inform the state”.

For Galtung (2009), people are among the primary resources in building peace, and they should think about both their security and their conflicts. In that way, insecurity, like any other conflict, should be faced by collective initiatives based on moral values and rules that should guide whoever takes care of security. These initiatives should not be left to a group of uncontrolled young people as is the case in Masisi. Emphasising the idea of privatised security as announced by Luckham (2009: 7) asserts:

analysis of the sources of violent conflict in the developing world has shown that the violence is often market-driven, with participants responding to economic incentives, such as the contraction of employment opportunities for young men or access to ‘lootable’ or high-profit resources like conflict diamonds and drugs.

From the views above, it is clear that violence is real in Eastern DRC and in Masisi in particular and it is affecting the youth in a district that has experienced conflicts for decades.

In addition, violence has attracted people, the youths included, because it provides them an unlawful and criminal way to earn their living. Economically speaking, for the beneficiaries, violence provides security. This is where conflicts become complex and complicated in Masisi as they attract various known and unknown actors who have various motivations. In fact, in their paper, Muraya and Ahere (2014: 9) argue that “the complexity of the conflicts in eastern DRC stems from the fact that all actors have legitimate grievances but, at the same time, are responsible for extensive human rights violations”. While they may have legitimate grievances, the way the youths claim their rights is not conducive to peace because killing and destroying do not resolve the problem. Researchers within the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, (IDMC), present a dark portrait of the conflicts and their aftermath in the Great Lakes Region starting in Rwanda in 1994. These conflicts, through a spillover effect, spread to the Democratic Republic of Congo before it drew in countries like Burundi, Angola, Namibia, Uganda, Kenya, and Zimbabwe (IDMC, 2008: 9). What transpired from these conflicts is that they were motivated by the exploitation of natural resources and they had negative socioeconomic and political dimensions.

The entire Great Lakes Region was affected, and DRC was not spared. North-Kivu is among the most affected provinces because of its proximity to Burundi, Rwanda and Uganda. This province hosts hundreds of armed groups creating chaos. Internally, conflicts in DRC have various causes based on resources, human relations and issues of governance. The conflicts in DRC have resulted in “unspeakable human suffering” coupled with continuous traumas (Clark, 2003: 1). Talking about the causes of failure in DRC, Clark argues that the major causes are to be found in the historical dimensions, i.e. “the grant of independence itself, to an unprepared leadership; a culture of arbitrariness, oppression, and violence” are ingredients of a chaotic system that took place in this country and that has not improved. For Clark and for other researchers, the general continental trend was that people were lured and ruled by unpatriotic leaders motivated only by the need to control both resources and power. One would of course wonder whether all the generations of Congolese are deemed to fail to organise and pacify their country. Another tendency in the Congo conflict, Clark argues, could be the series of changes or transformations brought about by globalisation. This trend brought into play a new kind of actors, “non-state actors” or warlords cooperating with corporations and other companies trying to forcibly boost their wealth or income.

Another cause of the Congo collapse; according to Crawford (Clark, 2003: 3) was “the virtual withdrawal of American support for the Mobutu regime after the end of the Cold War”. To a leader who had been pampered for many years like Mobutu, this withdrawal was detrimental to the country. Furthermore, there were conflicts based on relationships, differences and interests are rampant and challenging in Masisi area. These conflicts took a critical turn in 1963 and have claimed millions of lives as they have destroyed infrastructure. The issue is that there is a deep-rooted mistrust, discrimination and violence among the communities and this situation is affecting the youth. Turner (2007: 118) found that “the Congo war of 1996 came to a North Kivu already in flames”, whereas other researchers like Mamdani (2001: 242) and Reyntjens (2012: 194–195) confirmed the idea that Kivu was the forgotten cradle of Congolese conflicts. In addition, Reyntjens (2012: 194) found that in Kivu, there are “wars in a war”. It is true that the war in Congo particularly in North Kivu has a long history based on inhuman atrocities but what is regrettable is that since independence, the Congolese government and the international community has forgotten these atrocities or nothing tangible has been done to end them. As a result, as I noticed, there is strong feeling of animosity among the ethnic groups, especially the Hunde and Nyanga against the Hutu and Tutsi. In fact, the prevailing situation in Masisi is based on a divided society where different ethnic groups are opposed to each other, and their opposition has affected the youth. The youth groups do not socialise or are not truthful in their socialisation and people have been compelled to live separately. Some of the youths were born and have grown up in this conflict situation and have inherited the violence that characterises their district.

The second aspect of this part includes dimensions of armed conflicts in DRC in general, in the eastern part of the country and in Masisi. In this context, the objective is to describe the armed factions that engage numerous young individuals or appeal to the youth in general. This entails examining their reasons or incentives for participating in conflict, their methods of operation and the resulting effects on individuals and their communities. Masisi has experienced and is still experiencing various conflicts with various actors and allegations.

The elements considered in the background are related and connected and show how they led to the problem I am going to isolate and exploit. The problem has its roots in history, in human behaviour, attitudes or relationships among communities. In addition, it is related to

the geographical situation or issues around land management in general on one hand and, on the other hand, it is linked to political or customary challenges or heritage embedded in the governance failure.

The current context in Masisi is thus influenced by both internal and external factors. To sum up, I should say that there are several issues that have not been adequately addressed in eastern DRC, particularly in Masisi. These issues include youth care, land distribution, and security.

1.3 Statement of the Research Problem

Violence by the youth in Masisi has been rampant through a protracted conflict and needs to be addressed. The conflicts and subsequent violence have claimed thousands of lives and rendered Masisi a very poor place, yet it has what it takes to be a very rich district. The youth have found no other means of survival but to join armed groups. For more than three decades now, people have embarked on conflicts that have become protracted in Eastern Congo. These conflicts have had negative repercussions on their wellbeing, on the interactions among communities and on their living environment in general. Youths find themselves in this conflict situation; some youths have taken part or are taking part in the conflicts and violence without clearly knowing why. The violence people are suffering in this area is quite often silent, hidden, sometimes undocumented, making it difficult to resolve.

Among the strategies to transform endless conflicts and violence, the government has adopted coercive power yet there are numerous armed groups that are equipping young people to fight. There are said to be strong networks or powerful politicians as well as organisations behind these armed groups making it difficult for the national army to eliminate them. On the other hand, NGOs and other institutions have also tried to bring conflicts and violence to an end but all their efforts have left the youth out of the picture. That is why overlooking the youth in the efforts to bring about peace and stop violence in Masisi increases the likelihood of more conflicts and more violence.

The eastern provinces of North Kivu, South Kivu and Ituri, are among the affected provinces that have hardly had any respite from conflict since the country's independence in 1960. According to Bucyalimwe (in Kankwenda et al., 2013: 65), conflicts started in Bukavu and

Goma in 1959 and 1960 following the strife by the ABAKO political party at Leopoldville, the then capital city. This strife began on 4 January 1959. The national army mutinied on 5 July 1960. Since those days, Bucyalimwe argues, the Kivu Province has been an unstable place. Members of the then political parties were involved in bloody conflicts. Among these political groups, there was the MNC led by Lumumba, the CERECA led by Kashamura, another CERECA wing led by Miruho while another led by Weregemere (Bucyalimwe, 2013: 65)

In 1962, several events intensified existing tensions in certain regions. In May of that year, the Provincial Governor, Jean Miruho, was suspended from office coinciding with the establishment of North Kivu Province. This situation inadvertently set the stage for ethnic conflict by grouping together historically antagonistic groups, namely the Hunde, Nande, Hutu, and Tutsi. Some members affiliated with Miruho sought to maintain their district within the larger Kivu Province, while others opposed him and advocated for an autonomous North Kivu Province. Consequently, in September 1962, inter-ethnic conflicts emerged in North Kivu, particularly in the Rutshuru, Masisi, and Goma regions, following Miruho's dismissal and the appointment of Benezeth Moley, a Hunde from Masisi, as his successor (Bucyalimwe, 2013: 66–67).

In 1964–1967, another rebel group, the Mulele led by Pierre Mulele, erupted in the then Kivu Province and Ituri Province coupled with an inter-ethnic conflict in the same North Kivu that was under the leadership of Denis Paluku, a Nande member of the AWABELO party. It should be noted that the conflict between Hema and Lendu in Ituri (Djugu and Irumu) erupted in 1964–1965; today in 2023, things these provinces remain under siege. Since 1962, the conflicts have involved numerous youth who were caught up in the area or by the events. Moreover, there are political events that opposed the Lendu farmers, against the Hema pastoralists, the major issue between them being land and power (Congo Research Group, 2021). Talking about the underlying factors that sustained conflicts in Kivu and in Masisi in particular, Reyntjens (2012: 17) identified various causes, internal and external. Among the internal factors, Reyntjens found that there is the Zairian failed state and a weak and irresponsible army. Moreover, alongside these factors, identity issues in Kivu, migratory pressures before, during and after colonial times, demographic strain, the

ambiguous status of traditional leaders, the prevailing political and economic situation in the region, and the country's geographical positioning, combined with tentative engagement with the West African Community, all serve as catalysts for latent conflicts that have proliferated in Eastern Congo (Reyntjens, 2013: 19–20).

Thus, this research focuses on the Masisi district which has been involved in conflict and violence for decades and where the youth are being raised in the boiling pot of misunderstanding. What they inherit is a culture of hatred, discrimination or exclusion, suffering, killing and violence. It is asserted that conflicts in eastern DRC started very long ago in 1885. However, I will not go that far and will start with the colonial era focusing on the current situation. It is a fact that what is going on in this geographical space has its origin in the historical time. That is why I will focus on the major events of the twentieth and the beginning of the twenty-first centuries with an emphasis on youth groups. More precisely, this study covers the period from 1990s to date. Some major global and local events from the 1990s especially in the DRC are discussed. Among these events, there were the end of Cold War, the beginning of the war in Rwanda in 1991 that had serious repercussions for the then Zaire, the national conference (sovereign), the war of liberation in Congo in 1996, the genocide in Rwanda in 1994 and the arrival in Zaire of millions of uncontrolled and unregistered refugees. However, this research work is a result of a long-term observation spanning four decades with a focus on forgotten types of conflict that have claimed human lives. No single day passes without people dying but no one talks about them.

In addition, my motivation has been shaped by various information from the media, the publications and discussions with knowledgeable people around the issues in eastern DRC and Masisi in particular.

Additionally, a deep exploration of the problem was held in 2015 with some members of armed groups or their relatives who could give an account of what was going on among the members of the armed groups, the crimes and violence they were committing and the subsequent probable consequences. Most importantly, the untold or hidden stories were appealing and needed to be brought to light. In addition to these people, I talked to politicians (MPs), church people, those in education and leaders from local NGOs around the issues of youth, violence and conflicts in Masisi. Thus, this study aims to understand the problems

around violence among the youths and issues of conflicts that have lasted for years in the communities in Masisi. The study suggests new options that would focus on the youth, their needs and strategies to get out of violence, to bring the youths together for communal activities to change their lives. More specifically, I employ the conflict transformation model and the intergroup contact theory to understand what the youth relationships should be; what they are and the gaps that have led to violence. In addition, the theory of change will highlight the process to be used to bring about the needed change in attitudes, behaviour and culture of violence for sustainable peacebuilding. The participatory action research (PAR) provided me with the opportunity to develop a strategy aimed at transforming the negative energy associated with violence into positive energy, thereby fostering improved relationships. These theories were integrated with a qualitative approach to gather primary and secondary data related to youth involvement in violent acts. My main objective is to evaluate the conflicts and subsequent violence on the part of the youth, to establish why they are taking part in violence and what the answer could be to what went wrong in their relationships in Masisi. It is in view of the above gaps in the literature and in the ways of looking at the youth's involvement in violence that this research raised the following questions and the related hypothesis.

1.4 Research Questions

This background compelled to raise the following interrogations as the basis of this study:

Question 1: what is the nature, the causes, the extent and consequences of current conflicts and violence involving the youths in Masisi District?

Studies analysing conflicts have provided a schematic approach to various kinds of conflicts (Galtung, 1996; Harris, 1998; Lederach, 1997) However their views seem to be limited to establishing the facts without giving an outcome that could be defined as the needed or positive peace. In addition, the family context or the environment the youth are living in and the care they lack has serious repercussions for their behaviour including a high degree of violence. In consideration of the empirical findings or the situations in countries that went through the given framework of conflicts, it is hypothesised that conflict analysis in Masisi is latent and/or protracted; it is caused by historical unfinished business and a lack of role

models in addition to mineral exploitation and land issues or land management. Therefore, violence could be linked to history and manipulation, to greed and grievances. Moreover, family and the living environment are very significant indicators of youth behaviour in Masisi and their actions will be an exact reflection of the place where they grew up. The question aims at assessing how the youths are participating in violent actions in Masisi. The issue here was to look at the way the youths are attracted into conflict, the motivational factors behind this involvement and to establish the youth vulnerability during armed conflicts and its repercussions and show how the youth are participating in violent action.

Question 2: How are protracted conflicts and violence impacting the youths in Masisi?

The globalisation model of reading the youth behaviour suggests that the changing social situation and the introduction of new technological tools coupled with the easiness in acquiring arms, the use and abuse of drugs are some of the misleading instruments affecting the youth. Moreover, in the case of Masisi, there is also absolute poverty becoming so serious because the youth do not work but want to survive, to eat and get married. This element makes them vulnerable to manipulation, exploitation and develops in them a sense of hopelessness.

Question 3: How effective are the current measures implemented to deter youth violence in North Kivu Province, Masisi District?

There have been conferences at various levels from national level up to the district one. According to the Intergroup Contact Theory and to Galtung, among the dimensions of conflicts there is lack of support by a leadership system or bad governance. However, a negative leadership or governance system cannot alone sustain a violent outcome at the side of the youth. Therefore, there was a need to look at the existing measures put in place to deter youth violence to be involved in violence in North Kivu province and in Masisi in particular. This study hypothesised that there are still lacking vital dimensions in the Peacebuilding processes in Masisi as far as the youth are concerned.

Question 4: What mechanisms can be implemented through action research to mitigate youth violence in Masisi?

Historically, there have been top-down approaches excluding the youths and there was no follow-up of these approaches. Yet, the living context in North Kivu Province and in Masisi District was strongly based on division among the groups or communities and the institutions like faith-based organisations or churches. The major aspect of top-down approaches was the use of coercive power characterised by the military interventions in 1963–1966 and 1993 in various operations, such as Kimya, Mbata, Sukola, and state of siege. There is a way to question the effectiveness of these operations or mechanisms given the current situation prevailing in Masisi whereby thousands of youths are very active in hundreds of militia groups. Therefore, the crucial question is what mechanisms could be put in place to curtail youth violence, stereotypes, mistrust and/or misunderstandings?

Question 5: What are the potential impacts of the action research intervention aimed at reducing youth violence in Masisi District?

The issue here is basically to devise means or types of actions that would tackle the root causes of violence into which the youth are dragged. This study has hypothesised that the first and major action is a true dialogue bringing youth from different ethnic groups together. In this study, I assumed ` that to reduce violence and conflicts and promote non-violence among the youth in Masisi there is a need to initiate some programmes that promote community-based peacebuilding with a particular focus on the youth. In addition, those initiatives should concern non-violent conflict transformation, and should reflect on different aspects of community-based peacebuilding and transformation among which the effects of conflicts and violence on the youth and society in general; and that involve the military activities within the conflict transformation programme, which should focus on peace and security, justice and equality as they should also be based on a deep analysis of power relations within the social system in Masisi and how to bring about a social change.

1.5 Research Objectives

The overall purpose of this study is to explore conflicts involving the youths in view of reducing violence and the root causes of the varied conflicts that sustain violent attitudes

among local youth population turning them against each other on the basis of ethnicity. From an action research perspective, the study aims at bringing the youth and other community members back to a life built on mutual trust and harmony. More specifically, the objectives of this thesis are,

- ✓ To explore the nature, extent, causes and consequences of violence and conflicts involving the youth in Masisi.
- ✓ To evaluate the impacts of conflicts, of chronic and destructive violence on people, on the youths and on their living environment in Masisi.
- ✓ To assess the current strategies or initiatives put in place for conflict transformation and to change the youth behaviour in Masisi and in the region.
- ✓ Using a participatory action research (PAR) design, to come up with strategies and implement them to reduce the prejudice, stereotypes and misunderstanding among the youth and their communities. The major strategic steps were to initiate dialogue circles then on a weekly basis the members plan an activity they would offer to their community or the surroundings.
- ✓ To evaluate the outcomes of the implemented intervention in order to improve relationships and to curtail youth's violence in Masisi.

Therefore, this study aims at highlighting the dimensions (nature and extent) of violence, the consequences of conflicts and violence on the youth and their communities, providing a framework for finding the way out of conflicts and violence through dialogue from below or at the grassroots level. It is my belief that this study is crucial to resolve the problem of youth violence as it is based on the bottom-up approach that has never been promoted by several peacemakers or interveners in the long-term conflicts in Masisi. The methodological approach based on youth participation also gave a plus to the particularities of this study.

1.6 Research Assumptions and Hypotheses

Assumptions and hypotheses are commonly used in qualitative research amidst ongoing debates about the relevance of “variables, assumptions, and hypotheses”. While DeRosia et

al. (2009) argue for the plausibility and viability of hypothesis-testing in qualitative research, Barroga and Matanguihan (2022) say that such practice may be complex and need to be clearer of the types of questions that may inform hypothesis-testing in qualitative studies. However Chigbu (2019: 1) provides guidance to novice scholars, including undergraduate and post-graduate students about the ways “to formulate and “test” hypotheses qualitatively using visual or diagrammatical approaches”. In a similar vein, Fredericks and Miller (1988) reflected on the possibility of testing hypotheses within qualitative research and ethnography, exploring whether hypotheses can be confirmed or supported. Fredericks and Miller (1988: 345) contend: “(1) hypothetical statements can be formulated to fit the qualitative research case, and (2) that in doing so, the purpose of qualitative research maintains its uniqueness as a distinct field of inquiry, separate from quantitative-empirical methods”.

The key assumptions highlighted in this study are established based on my experience and are supported by findings from other studies. The specific assumptions are as follows:

- I assumed that the recommendations from this study would enable the young people to bring about a constructive change of attitudes, perceptions and orientations in Masisi.
- Non-violent behaviours and non-violent communication are promoted in a transformed community. Thus, after the transformational processes, there would be a change in the content, the context and the structure of youths’ relationships in Masisi.
- The use of conflict transformation strategies, dialogues for peace would beget a change from negative energy to positive energy among the youths as they would beget creativity to contradictions among these youths (Galtung et al. 2013: 60). This, according to Lederach (2014) is the basis of conflict transformation.
- The outcome from this study would be the revival of the African and local traditional systems of conflict transformation based on dialogue, namely the *Baraza* culture, North Kivu Province of DRC. These are traditional forums for conciliation or reconciliation. In addition, community events (Colletta, 2003: 22) or the culture of working together would be revived. This is like community gardening or tilling the soil together in what is known as *Urudehe* or the former system of people from the same village working together or helping each other to dig for one of their members, to build houses together.

- People from Masisi, especially the youths would come to and work together to transform conflicts or what used to oppose them into positive and real actions for change and sustainable development.
- It was my belief that by the end of the intervention, the objectives would be achieved as the young men and women from different ethnic communities come together and dialogue over the prevailing issues in Masisi; try to find answers to endless conflicts opposing communities and in which they play an active role. In addition, the objectives would be attained through the meeting and exchanges. The coming together, sharing and dialogue would definitely be an indicator or a success story.

In addition, the youths will no longer take part in violence and will reconcile with one another and promote peace culture. They will be ready to apologise and to forgive for the wrongdoings. Among the actions that would tackle the root causes of violence into which the youths are dragged, the study will suggest the creation of a permanent youth group for peace through which they will learn to reduce prejudice, stereotypes and misunderstanding. In addition, in these groups, the youths will be invited to take part in community events together without discrimination or exclusion as part of building their destroyed community setting. These events will be building together and farming together on an acquired piece of land for the youths from the Catholic parish and work it out by the youth groups.

Finally, the transformation processes will promote healthy communities linked by sustainable relationships. More precisely, the health of these communities and these relationships will be defined by an increase of feelings of unity, togetherness and/or solidarity among the community members; the context will “strengthen social cohesion” as it will improve communication and develop a sense of collective consciousness (ESCAP, 2003: 22). Thus, effective dialogue will take place among the conflicting parties, especially the youths, in Masisi. The main hypotheses I posited are the following:

- The relationship among the youths entangled in hostilities in Masisi can be transformed if they are involved in agricultural activities as a communal project that they plan and see the produce.

- If the youths who are involved in hostilities participate in a productive agricultural project that impacts the wellbeing of the community, their relationships could be improved by interactions that would occur at various stages of the project when they start focusing on social or communal welfare.
- Violence is reduced in Masisi villages if the youths show their willingness to resocialise and to work with their current and former enemies, the Hunde and Nyanga working with the Hutu and Tutsi.
- The use of conflict transformation and the participatory action approaches would mitigate violence among the youths if the youths involved in violence are exposed to such programmes.
- Bringing the youths from different ethnic communities to socialise and to dialogue around what divides them and creates confrontations among them can ease tensions and restore fraternal and amical relationships.

These five hypotheses were tested via qualitative data build on the research problem that originated from research questions and objectives. The outcomes were backed by the literature and theories of conflict transformation; these results were observed in the field during the implementation of agricultural project I utilised as intervention model in action research.

1.7 Rationale of the Research

The Kofi Annan Foundation (KAF) posits some more keys facts as to why the youth should be involved in peacebuilding actions and recognises that “the overwhelming majority of those who join violent extremist groups are youth” (Kofi Annan Foundation, 2022: 5). However, according to this Foundation, there is also another big group of youth who can help to work for peace. “Therefore, empowering young people and elevating their voices is also becoming a higher priority worldwide” (KAF, 2022: 5) as it should be a priority in Masisi. The youth have energy and are creative to challenge the divisive speeches; they can mobilise other youth and the entire society for peace. I wanted to capitalise on their commitment and their capacity to build a peaceful world. I concluded that after decades of violence and conflicts,

we should start to educate our youths so that they can start to think and to look for alternatives, not just to kill. They should not think or only go the mighty way but instead they should learn to go the right way. There is an abundant literature about conflicts in Masisi. However, one striking thing is that this literature focused on historical, economic and political dimensions in general leaving aside the youths as important actors in the ongoing context (Turner, 2007; Mamdani, 2001; Bucyalimwe, 2012; Bucyalimwe, 2013; Vlassenroot, 2004). Various internal and external experts tried to find a solution to conflicts in Masisi. However, one surprising fact is that these actors seem to have focused on the political dimensions of the conflicts thus forgetting the youth groups in their initiatives. Yet, in different stages of conflicts, the youth are at the forefront of violence and wars. A study by Jourdan, based on “Being at war, being young: violence and youth in North Kivu” (Vlassenroot, 2004: 157–176) highlighted the features of conflicts involving the youth in North Kivu, the subsequent violence and impacts on the youth and society.

The main impact of the youth involvement in violence on their communities is abjection because the armed youth are making the law in their place, looting, asking for taxes and disturbing their villages. Community members are in total abjection or poverty because they have no easy access to their farms, and they are negatively exploited by the armed youth. Community members are traumatised by these armed youth who kill and torture whoever falls under their rules. This behaviour is happening because of the absence of the government leadership in the area; because of manipulation and because of greed and grievances among the youth. The armed groups are accused of being backed by the politicians or by neighbouring countries. So, in this condition, it is not easy to dismantle them.

However, it has been observed that the various initiatives to restore peace in the district through dialogues or coercion have not yielded any positive results. There have been peace talks at Mweso in 1993 initiated by the Catholic Church with local NGOs (CARITAS, Oxfam, ACODRI and GRACE). There have been the Goma peace talks initiated by the central government with the leadership of the armed groups operating in the eastern DRC. The then governor initiated the last dialogue at the provincial level in 2020. This dialogue session brought together representatives from different ethnic communities. The concluding report of this dialogue reveals that the initiative was a trial among the ethnic groups accusing

each other. In all the initiatives of dialogue, the youth have not been involved or given an opportunity to express their grievances. Somewhere, the traditional approaches of conflict transformation have been also forgotten in trying to bring about peace and peaceful cohabitation.

While youth violence is widely studied around the globe, their implication in violence in the DRC has mainly been limited to child soldiers whereas many other young people who are now adults in war-affected communities have been or are involved in hostilities. So, this research explains the motivation behind the youth's violence from the conflict transformation and intergroup contact dimensions while simultaneously attempting to find alternative approaches of settling without resorting to violence.

This study borrowed important insights from peacebuilding theoretical frameworks, namely conflict transformation theory developed by Galtung, Lederach and *Amani Mashinani* or peace at the grassroots promoted by Bishop Korir as a tool to deal with violent conflicts in divided societies like those in Kenya. The contribution of Bishop Koris is appreciated in the Kenyan context. It tried to answer the question as to why there is a specific choice of a problematic cohabitation coupled with prejudice and suspicions among the youth. For this study, the motivating factors are among others the destructive and chronic violence in Masisi area. This situation has been protracted and has taken too long to stabilise. In addition, history with human nature made conflicts a normal way of living with deep negative impacts on young people, on their attitudes and interrelationship and on their villages. It used the conflict transformation model suggested by Korir and known as *Amani Mashinani* or peace at the grassroots coupled with the *ubuntu* philosophy or the shared humanity that should guide the actors, especially the youths, involved in conflicts and violence in Masisi.

In a nutshell, all these tools have something in common, they are all people-driven and promote human rights, justice and the rule of law in order to transform society, encourage sustainable development and help the youth to halt violence. These dimensions are social inclusion and acceptance, economic growth, environmental protection and transformative education. The motivation behind this research was ignited by the timeframe of the conflicts that have lasted for several years as true protracted conflicts (Galtung et al., 2013: 62), their negative impacts and destructions that followed and their spillover effects affecting the entire

Great Lakes Region or pulling the youth. A major concern is that if nothing is done, Masisi and the region may become a thorn in the leg and will never allow the region to emerge from unending wars.

Another motivation is based on the geographical setting of our Great Lakes countries that have undergone different conflicts, whereas some of them like DRC, Central African Republic, Uganda and Rwanda are still struggling or coming out of long-term conflicts. So, I based my research on the historical and sociopolitical background to try to understand the youth involvement in violence in Masisi. The situation took a terrible turn in 1990s when young people were being recruited to join the Rwandan Patriotic Front, RPF, in Uganda so that they fight the then Rwandan government. This wave drew several young boys. The second wave is the 1996 when the *Alliance des forces démocratiques pour la libération du Congo* (The Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo-Zaire) attacked the then Zaire with some of the young people who had joined the RPF coming as soldiers. This gave other young people the taste of using guns to become powerful and rich through looting, pillaging and rape. That is the *kadogo* phenomenon or child soldiers. *Kadogo* is a Swahili concept meaning “the young one” or the “little one” as some of the fighters were as young as 12 years. In a country where the youth seem to have no future, then the context was ripe for them to join the armed groups. And so, it is today. In a very fragile and failed state like DRC, all the ingredients were ready to draw many young people into violence and conflicts. The main impact is poverty, because people who are naturally farmers and who used to live on what they produce, today have no access to their farms because of the armed youth living in the bushes. In some places in Masisi, people must pay weekly or monthly taxes for their security. Rape and killing have become a normal way of living.

The youths in Masisi despise education because they assume to have more power than those who have been in school alleging that their guns or spades are better than pens and pencils. The youth are arrogant, brutal and somehow wild. This is happening because the family and other traditional or political institutions have failed on their mission to raise their children, to provide them with a good education and to foster unity among different communities. The government has failed to protect people and secure the area. On the other hand, the strategies that have been used since the early days of independence proved to be top-down approaches

and coercive power (military and police interventions. These are like: the military interventions in 1963–1966 during the Kanyarwanda; the 1993; the different operations like the “Kimya Operation” during Mobutu time, Kimya means peace and currently the *Sukola operation*, Sukola meaning to clean up). Thus, this research aims at suggesting another transformational approach, the bottom-up approach through the PAR in order to build peace with the youth from Masisi District. The outcome of the approach I intend to use will be to enable the various social groups to create space for true dialogue, to listen to each other and find ways to improve their relationships.

Generally speaking, this research work examines the extent, causes and impacts of a forgotten type of protracted conflicts involving the youth. Moreover, the study investigates the strategies used to attain peace in society and to get rid of violence. It attempts to address various and intellectual gaps in existing literature on the youth and their actions in Masisi.

First of all, the available literature provides a rich analysis of the conflicts in Masisi but has focused on the political dimensions. However, these studies have been restricted in establishing the actors involved in the conflicts in Masisi. In addition, there has been always an agreed position that land is an issue in the Masisi saga. But little has been said as to how the current trend of making the district a vast farm for cows could be among the push factors for the youth to get involved in violence. Third, in relation to the research about peace and conflicts, especially in Masisi, little has been said or done for the youths. Most of the research focused on minerals or natural resources and issues around them (Kok et al., 2009), on relationships among the ethnic groups in general (Bucyalimwe, 2012; Bucyalimwe, 2014; Bucyalimwe, 2018; Mpeza et al. 2016; Ntirumenyerwa et al. 2019).

Briefly, this study targeted to build from the studies already available about the protracted conflicts of Masisi and to fill the missing aspect which is the youth who are an aspect that should not be neglected in the context of Masisi. This context is like a condition to many other situations within the conflicts prevailing in Masisi. The prevailing context in the research area started like a mere rural misunderstanding and local dispute. Initially, it called the central government to come in between some ethnic groups fighting among the Kivus and Ituri. However, the situation turned into a deadly spiral opening to the entire country, DRC and having international or external connections making it hard to understand or to transform. It

is evident that conflict started long ago, in 1930s with the coming of people in the area from the neighbouring Rwanda.

1.8 Understanding Key Concepts

Here, I identify and explain the major concepts that make up a framework of understanding the various conflicts and subsequent impacts on people's life especially the youth. These concepts are youth, conflict, violence and chronic violence, transformation or conflict transformation, peacebuilding and intergroup contact as a way of reducing violence.

1.8.1 Youth

Before explaining this concept, I would like to emphasise that in this study, child soldiers recruited in the conventional army or those minors taking part in the army have been excluded. My focus is on the young people who are or should be in the villages, those who are in the bush or who are taking guns to threaten their communities. The Report on Improving Intergroup Relations Among Youth Research Workshop (Hamburg, 2000: 7–8) identifies three categories or levels of youthfulness stemming from adolescent period to adulthood. For this report, taking the US example or subdivision, adolescence comprises three age groups:

early adolescence encompasses the biological changes of puberty as well as sexual and psychological awakenings, extending roughly from ages 10 to 14. Middle adolescence is a time of increased autonomy and experimentation, covering ages 15 to 17. Late adolescence, for those who delay their entry into adult roles because of educational or social factors, can stretch from age 18 into the early 20s. Each phase has a unique set of developmental challenges, opportunities and risks (Hamburg, 2000: 8).

The African Youth Charter refers to the chronological age factor to define a youth. Its signatories (African Union Commission, 2006: 11) agreed that “for the purpose of this Charter, youth or young people shall refer to every person between the ages of 15 and 35 years”. According to the African Union Commission (2006: 11), the concept of “minors” refers to “young people aged 15 to 17 years subject to each country's laws”. On their side, Bennett, Kaki and Nepal (2012: 5) talking about the “concept of youth”, state that “the

concept of youth” is itself debated and it is difficult to define the term “youth”. The authors refer to three factors to understand the concept of youth: the biological markers looking at the youth as a time period between puberty and parenthood; the cultural markers according to which the concept of youth refers to a given social role, rituals and relationships; and the age factor. For Bennett et al. (2012:5), “youth is a transitional phase from childhood to adulthood” or any person who is between 15 to 24 years old (p. 5). Answering the question “who is a youth?”, Abdullahi et al. (2016: 365) use a set of qualitative and quantitative criteria to identify youth. According to them, the concept of youth is used interchangeably with related concepts such as adolescents, young people, and youngsters (Abdullahi et al., 2016: 366). Furthermore, the use of this concept depends on culture, organisation or society. Referring to the United Nations Organisation (UN), the Commonwealth of Nations and the World Football governing body, the concept of youth has different variables. For the UN, youth encompass people aged between 15 and 24 years whereas for FIFA, the same concept refers to “persons between the ages of 17 and 20 years” (Abdullahi et al., 2016: 367). For some African Societies, youth is often seen as an age group between 15 and 39 years. The United Nations Security Council Resolution 2250 (2015) defines a youth as any person aged between 18 and 29.

Moving from the quantitative criteria to the qualitative ones or looking at the concept from the cultural and/or sociological aspects, the study looks at youth as “a stage of life between childhood and adulthood” (Abdullahi, 2016: 367). Adding to these aspects, Abdullahi et al. (2016: 367) assert that young people, as young as 13, “are often entangled in violent conflicts, especially in neighbourhoods that are disadvantaged”. This disadvantage could be related to sociopolitical issues like bad governance or social situations. Referring to other researchers like Ozohu-Suleiman, Abdullahi et al. (2016: 367) agree that youth are regarded “as the most active segment of any community population that determines the peace and stability of the community”. For some countries, like Nigeria, young people of various age groups take part in militia activities, such as the Bakassi Boys, OPC, and Egbesu Boys comprised 16 to 17 years, 18 to 19 years, 20 to 21 years, and 20 to 23 years (Abdullahi et al. 2016: 367). Talking about various categories of youths and their participation in disturbances in the community, Abdullahi et al. (2016: 6) give four typologies of youth groups according to the causes that compel them to take part in any given social disturbance. These are the

“coerced youth, revolutionary youth, delinquent youth and clientele’s youth”. These categories are involved in various types of violence including rapes, pillaging, theft, assaults, kidnappings and killings. In addition, they use discrimination, prejudice and stereotyping. That is why the remedies have to be looked at from the interrelationships between them and the subsequent transformations for a better life. For this study and from Masisi, people as young as 10, 12 or 13 take part in violence and atrocities; they are “easy to mobilise in communities where unemployment is high, and where social justice is absent and corruption thrives like in Nigeria” (Abdullahi, 2016: 368). So, in this study, I will use interchangeably the concepts of youths, minors and young people as the group of people aged between 10 and 35 years.

1.8.2 Conflict

Galtung (1958a: 7) argued that a “conflict is said to exist in an action-system if two or more values are pursued and they are perceived as incompatible or mutually exclusive”. So, the conditional aspects of a conflict are the values, the actors pursuing the values and the incompatibility or exclusiveness of the values. Defining “conflict”, Runde and Tim (2008: 21) argue that a conflict is “any situation in which interdependent people have apparently incompatible goals, interests, principles or feelings”. What is striking in this definition is reflected by the concepts “interdependent, incompatible, goals, interests, principles, feelings”. These differential concepts around the incompatibility aspect can result in conflict or misunderstanding, in any situation. That is why it is very important to distinguish between conflict as an incompatibility of interests and violence as armed conflict. In his study, Tillett (1991: 5) distinguishes various ranges or dimensions of conflicts among which are the intrapersonal, the interpersonal, the intragroup and the intergroup conflicts. In addition, there are value conflicts and international conflicts. He also identifies “manifest and the unmanifest conflicts” (ibid.: 9) that could be related to what Fisher et al. (2000: 6) called “latent and surface or open conflicts”. During conflicts, individuals may resort to exercising power, which can escalate to the misuse of authority, or they may seek to address the conflict through dialogue and interaction among the involved parties.

However, deepening the explanation, Tillett (1991: 7) argues that “one need would be seen as incompatible with another if meeting that need is thought to prevent, obstruct, interfere with

or in some way make meeting the other need less likely or effective”. In this way, “Conflict becomes manifest when one or more of the parties involved seeks to resolve the incompatibility by, for example, discussing, fighting, compelling the other to change, going to law, or seeking resolution” (Tillett, 1991: 7). Conflict does not have to become violent or to turn into armed conflicts. It needs to be well dealt with and managed, resolved or transformed. Nonetheless, in this study, these two terms, conflict and violence are used interchangeably. Nevertheless, it should be noted that violence has a negative feature of harming whereas conflict has a double face as it can be a “creator and a destroyer” (Galtung, 1996: 70).

Conflict, as Galtung (1996: 95) argues, is an incompatibility of goals or the inability to attain one’s goal because of a hindrance of some kind. Adding to this view, Ramsbotham et al. (2005: 27) argue that a conflict implies “the pursuit of incompatible goals by different groups. This suggests a broader span of time and a wider class of struggle than armed conflict.” A conflict can be any misunderstanding or disturbance preventing somebody to attain his or her need. It can also be any situation preventing two or more people to agree on a common goal or to fulfil their needs. Ramsbotham et al. (2005:78–79) establish three categories of conflicts related to major theories and/or frameworks: the internal conflicts that find their sources “within the nature of the protagonists”; the relational conflicts looking “for sources mainly in relations between conflict parties” (Ramsbotham et al., 2005: 79); and the contextual conflicts that locate the causes “outside the conditioning contexts” where conflicts stem from. Conflicts are well explained through these categories as intrapersonal, interpersonal, intrastate and interstate or international conflicts. All these types are internal, contextual or relational conflicts. What Fisher et al. (2000: 4) simply say that a conflict “is a relationship between two or more parties who have, or think they have, incompatible goals”. For Harris and Reilly (1998: 17–18), a “conflict is the interaction of different and opposing aspirations and goals in which disputes are processed, but not definitively resolved”. Through this definition, Harris and Reilly establish the source of conflict (interaction of opposing aspirations and goals); the outcome of conflict (disputes) and the response to conflicts processes and resolutions. A major factor in conflict is the scarcity of resources impacted by the time factor as there will always be conflict when two or more parties need the same resource at the same time, a case that leads more to competition than cooperation.

1.8.3 Conflict, Problem, Dispute and Competition

Even though people or researchers use these concepts interchangeably, Tillett (1991: 4) gives a clear difference among them. This limit appears to be based on the motivational factors and the subsequent reaction underlying each of them. According to Tillett (1991: 7), a conflict “exists when two or more parties perceive that their values or needs are incompatible”. In this way, needs and values are among the conflict triggers. Nevertheless, according to the non-violent conflict (NVC) school, needs do not necessarily cause conflicts; these are caused by the strategies used by parties to fulfil their needs. And, according to the NVC school, whenever the needs create conflicts, this implies that this is a strategy used in meeting other needs.

Ohana et al. (2012: 54) go further and identify two major points that help us to understand conflicts. On the one hand, conflicts are defined according to their “causative agents” like “material resources, power, values or feelings”. On the other hand, they are defined according to “the nature of the conflict parties, such as individuals, organisations or states”. Thus, Ohana et al. (2012: 54) define “conflict” as “a form of opposition between parties; an absence of agreement between parties; a way to solve social contradictions; a natural process in human social interaction”. They state that a conflict is “a disagreement through which the parties involved perceive a threat to their needs, interests or concerns” (Ohana et al., 2012: 56). Defining the ethnic conflict, Taye (2017: 42) argues that this “is a dispute between two or more ethnic/tribal groups caused by the politicisation of tribal identity by self-seeking politicians”. For this researcher, ethnic conflict is complex as it encompasses both political and social factors. Talking about “problem”, Tillett (1991: 4) asserts that “a problem can be resolved by management, by agreement on how something can or should be done”. As for a dispute, he argues that this occurs “when two (or more) people (or groups) perceive that their [goals], interests, or needs are incompatible, and seek to maximise the fulfillment” of their own interests or needs or achievement of their own goals often at the expense of the others. This may be achieved through bargaining or negotiating and is often reached through compromise (Tillet, 1991: 4). Tillett identifies three strategies to deal with conflicts; these are resolution, management and settlement. He states that a conflict is resolved, a problem is managed, and a dispute is settled. This way of looking at issues can be related to the

strategies given by Fisher (2000). According to him, the settlement is a strategy to face a surface or open conflict whereas the management is a strategy to deal with latent and surface conflict. Conflict resolution is a strategy used to deal with open conflict (Fisher, 2000).

1.8.4. Armed Conflict, Armed Group and Armed Movement

In a publication by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, SIPRI (2018: 36) “armed conflict” is defined as any conflict involving “the use of armed force between two or more state or non-state organised armed groups.” In addition, armed conflict “is defined as conflict causing 25 or more deaths in a given year”. From this definition, I can say that what is happening in eastern DRC amounts to “armed conflict” as the statistics of 25 deaths and more in a year are always witnessed. According to SIPRI, armed conflicts can be categorised as “intrastate armed conflict” on the one hand, and “interstate armed conflict” on the other hand. Both situations are somehow witnessed in Eastern DRC and in Masisi in general. McConnan and Uppard (2001: 290) explain what they call “non-governmental armed actors” as any armed group other than the state army. The two experts confirm that this concept includes the militia or all the groups that take arms opposing a sovereign government and that have not been approved by a legitimate government. Giving a historical approach of the “armed group” or “militia” in the old “Kongo”, Ngondzi (2013: 25) argues that before the colonial time, in the two Congo, Kinshasa and Brazzaville, there used to be groups around the king; these groups were known as the “royal guard” for the king’s security. They were known or called *Mbulu-Mbulu*. These ones were common around the kings in Kongo, Teke and Lunda kingdoms. Their duties were to watch over their land and to conquer other territories to expand theirs. In a way of the other, the *Mbulu-Mbulu* were organised groups around a recognised monarch or king even though they were private groups under the leadership of their masters. These groups were not or are not regular and recognised national forces serving the country. What Ngondzi refers to is similar to bodyguards in the modern world and are different from the armed groups found in Masisi. These guards are used to protect a warlord who is not a king, nor is he an official or recognised leader. Ngondzi compares the groups to defence forces or ministerial reserves (2013: 26).

Talking about the Ujamaa Project and giving the background to the situation of conflict in North Kivu Province, Stearns (2012:6) states: “the Ujamaa Project examines the roots of

violence, with the aim of providing a better understanding of all armed groups, including the Armed Forces of the DRC". In this statement, Stearns distinguishes two "armed" classes: the "armed groups" and "the Armed Forces". The first one refers to what a number of researchers identify as "militia groups" that means those unrecognised groups that aim at killing, looting and creating havoc, chaos and destruction in the places where they live. These are unlawful groups that oppose the legal and recognised authority of the central government. Armed groups are just "armed civilians" who decide to take up arms for various raisons. The second class or armed forces that Stearns describes is the national army, legally recognised and organised. In a press release numbered N.001/M23RENOVE/2024 signed at Rubare/Rutshuru on 22nd February 2024 by a certain Alias Micky Muhanuka as the M23 rebel group speaker, he referred to their organisation as both "armed group" and "armed movement", using the two interchangeably. A study by the African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes (ACCORD) (Kok et al., 2009: 21), also refers to the unlawful forces fighting in Congo as armed groups ACCORD distinguishes from armed forces that are the recognised and the lawful army. Based on these views, I also use armed group and armed movement interchangeably in this study. This refers to those numerous groups of armed people disturbing the eastern DR Congo (Turner, 2013: 13).

1.8.5 The Motivational Factors of Conflicts

Runde and Flanagan (2008: 25–29) found that in any given group or team, conflict is an inevitable fact. At the core source of it, these researchers find that "differences" in general are the prime motivational "sources of conflict". The elements of differences they put forward are "personality, preferences, styles, values and principles, knowledge and experience" (Runde and Flanagan 2008: 25–29), goals, cultural differences, interests and needs, unmet expectations and feelings of incompatibility among others. In one way or another, these are the building blocks of conflicts in teams or groups. Looking further in analysis, Kriesberg (in Bar-Siman-Tov 2004: 90) establishes four major conditions sustaining intergroup conflicts. First, one group thinks they have a "collective identity different from that of another group. Second, one group thinks that its living conditions are abnormal and could be a result of history. Third, one group assumes the other is the source of their negative conditions or grievances. Fourth, the aggrieved group believes that it can compel the other to change.

Therefore, the underlying causes of conflicts are identity differences, the results of history, grievances caused by others (us vs them) and finally imposing change on others or forcing them to change. On the other hand, for the World Bank (2005: 7) the causal factors of conflicts are the “ethnic and religious dominance rather than diversity”. These two are coupled with identity factors.

Similarly, for Harris and Reilly (1998: 9–10), there are two elements that go together and beget internal or intrastate conflicts. These are identity and resource distribution. From the identity perspective, people gang up as an identity group against a situation following their race, religion, culture, language, heritage or history. All these elements explain the identity aspect of conflict. In addition, Harris and Reilly (1998: 10) argue, the “proliferation of small arms has exponentially increased the intensity of identity-related conflicts”. On the distribution side, this implies the way resources are shared within a given community. The resources could be economic, social or political. There could be economic or political power, land or territory or employment. According to Harris and Reilly (1998: 9), these two factors, identity and distribution, define what is called deep-rooted conflict. This is reflected by the “combination of potent identity-based factors with wider perception of economic and social injustice”. Some factors like land, political power and ideology are the sources of deep-rooted conflicts. These researchers give some examples of countries that underwent identity-based conflicts during the last decades of the twentieth century. These are Russia (Chechnya), Northern Ireland, Israel, Afghanistan and Sri Lanka among others. Narrowing down the geographical scope, Olaosebikan (2010: 551–554) found that the causes of conflicts in Africa are mainly based on the “creation of arbitrary borders by colonial powers, the heterogeneous ethnic composition of African states and the resultant problem of ethnicity; an inept leadership; corruption and poverty”. McCandless and Bangura (2007: 45) also underline the causes of conflicts in Africa and list the following: land and natural resources; the role of the military in fuelling political instability; the issues around identity; the manipulation of ethnicity; and the colonial division of borders. Among the causes raised by various researchers, the colonial division of borders in Africa is a deep cause that has historical and trans-border repercussions that most decision-makers seem to overlook, yet this is an issue sustains serious bloody conflicts or raise conflicts with a very strong spillover effect.

Collier and Hoeffler (2000: 2) posit that rebellion and conflicts are caused by greed and grievances. Among the grievances, they distinguish “intergroup or inter-ethnic hatred, interreligious hatred, political exclusion, and vengeance” (Collier et al., 2000: 11–12). As a contextual factor, this type of hatred, Collier and Hoeffler argue, is observable in multi-ethnic and/or multi-religious communities (Collier et al., 2000: 12). Another causal factor, according to them, is political segregation or marginalisation. To these causes of conflicts, the researchers add economic inequality among communities where the rich exploit the poor (Collier et al., 2000: 12). Another cause of conflict is explained by history where the ongoing wars are related to the past history and motivated by the desire for revenge. This desire motivates one party to go to war or to engage in conflict (2000: 13). Going further and confirming what Collier and Hoeffler argued, Addison et al. (2000) look at the economic motivation behind African conflicts. As premise of their analysis, they assert that, in their complexity, conflicts are based on greed around natural resources and grievance as a result of poverty and inequality among people living in the same places. In this way, the views above add up to what Olaosebikan (2010: 551–554) identified as the causes of conflicts in African. These causes, Olaosebikan argued, are poverty, corruption, leadership crisis, ethnicity and land or border issues.

To sum up, the model based on grievance assumes that the major cause of conflicts is not economic sharing “but rather is a protest generated by objective grievances: ethnic or religious hatred, [income or land] inequality, oppression or historical vengeance”. As for the greed model, it “postulates that the cause of initial conflict is an economic calculus of relative military advantage, the government’s ability to finance defence expenditure, the scale of primary commodity exports, and the costs of rebel recruitment” (Collier et al., 2000: 13). In a nutshell, conflicts are sustained by the desire to get or to acquire something and/or the psychological behaviour linked to a given life situation. Still, this way of looking at the economic aspects or emphasising them seems to miss out the motivational factors in intrapersonal conflicts. Ramsbotham et al. (2005: 78–79) categorise the sources of conflicts as internal, contextual and relational sources of conflicts. These researchers build conflict “theories and frameworks” around the major aspects. The internal theories “locate the sources of conflict mainly within the nature of the protagonists” or the conflicting parties. On the other hand, the relational aspects “look for sources mainly in relations between conflict

parties”. The contextual aspects of conflict look mainly for the sources of conflicts “outside the conditioning contexts that structure the conflict and, in some versions, also generate the conflict parties themselves” (Ramsbotham 2005: 79). In addition, researchers assert that exposure to violence at an early stage and human contact can lead to violence and to unintended effects compromising social collaboration (Barnie et al., 2017: 2–6; Oduaran et al. 2020: 14763; Tolan, 2001: 234). The exposure to violence might be a forgotten aspect of conflict analysis. Kodmani and Chartouni-Dubarry (2009: 97), talking about “the security sector in Arab countries”, argue that a new concept of “human security” is taking shape in these countries given the situation most of them find themselves in especially by failing to face the issues of people at the grassroots. According to them:

The debate is growing across the region. International agencies are promoting the concept of human security and societies are awakening to the fact that their governments are failing to guarantee their physical security (when a natural catastrophe or accident occurs) and their basic needs (water, food, etc) (Kodmani & Dubarry, 2009: 97).

This, according to these researchers, could result in various consequences added to violence and conflicts. Among other negative impacts this situation could bring out in those Arab countries as well as to other countries, Kodmani and Chartouni-Dubarry (2009: 96) identified some sectors or behavioural aspects that could be affected like “the regional environment and its risks, fear of domestic instability due to a fragile social fabric or mere fear of the unknown in general.” To sum up, the above views confirm that conflicts could have several motivations or causes as well as multiple consequences for people and their environment, following the example of Arab countries presented by Kodmani and Chartouni-Dubarry.

1.8.6 The Nature and Extent of Conflicts

The World Bank (2005: 7) maintains that “conflict affects countries at all levels of economic development, but it disproportionately affects least developed countries or countries in economic stagnation”. The prevailing situation in Arab countries as identified by Kodmani and Chartouni-Dubarry (2009: 96–97) is no different from what prevails in other countries, especially in failed or rogue states unable to ensure any security to their people. On the other

hand, looking at the prevailing types of conflicts in Arab countries, Kodmani and Chartouni-Dubarry (2009: 97) argue that “since interstate conflicts are now rare and civil strife is common, security sectors of Arab countries have followed a general trend of expanding security and intelligence agencies at the expense of the military forces”. This means that security today based on the current situations calls for another transforming strategy that goes beyond the use of coercive power or violence, even though military power still plays the major role in the security sector for a good number of countries globally.

In Masisi, the issue of polarisation based on structural and ideological factors undermines intercommunity relationships and amounts to violent conflicts attracting the youths. The protracted conflicts reinforce the idea of differences among the youth from various ethnic groups while they push the youth to adopt clear and separate identity positions based on the “us” and “them” attitudes. In spite of different forums to create harmony and peaceful cohabitation among them, the youth are still divided, like the elders. The major characteristic of the nature of the conflicts among the youth in Masisi is that they have moved to totally opposite and extreme sides and have entered coalitions to destroy each other. This is achieved through armed groups or other identity-based coalitions. The youth organisations like RNYAK (meaning *Ressortissants de Nyakariba*) or “the youths from Nyakariba”; or the *Jeunes de Luke* or the “Youths from Luke” are some examples. These two groups comprise youths from the Kinyarwanda-speakers from Nyakariba and its surroundings or those from Luke and its surroundings, both places being in Masisi. These are among the features of polarisation which are the different mindsets and opinions of groups and consolidation of an identity based on the division between “us” and “them”. The major dimension of this division is the structural organisation; for example, the Hunde and proxies hold the customary or traditional power and hold that the others, especially the Kinyarwanda-speakers are foreigners. Moreover, there is the issue of minority and majority whereby the Kinyarwanda-speakers assume they are numerically the majority, and the others are the minority, politically speaking. These attitudes reinforce the distance between them, every group trying to defend their positions or their opinions. So, the youths consolidate their groups around these assumptions. In brief, the nature and extent of violence in Masisi could be hypothesised through the general damage they have caused to human life and the timeframe people have been living in these negative situations.

1.8.7 The General Consequences of Violence and Conflicts

Galtung (1996: 95) argues that conflicts can turn to “frustrations” whenever someone is unable to realise a goal and to some extent, when there are incompatible goals because of a barrier. Gates et al. (2012: 1715) talk about the consequences of wars or conflicts. Generally, they argue that “widespread violence and physical destruction” have negative impacts on people’s movement or transportation because they affect not only their means of transport but also impact the roads and bridges.



Figure 2: Building bridges¹ to unite the youths! I crossed this bridge when going to the youths. Photo taken by the researcher at Nyakariba, 2022

In addition, wars and conflicts destroy health and education facilities preventing people, especially those living in rural areas, from having access to proper health or good educational services. The focus becomes on military expenses, thus, minimising funds allocated to public care or health, education and poverty mitigation. The youths in Masisi are no exception to this situation; they are frustrated and traumatised by their experiences. In addition, Gates et al. (2012: 1715) argue that conflicts reduce “the efficiency of the public health resources” sectors. Moreover, “medical personnel tend to leave conflict zones if they can, leaving the poorest” (Gates et al. 2012: 1715) and the most vulnerable people at their own and poor fate.

¹I use the bridge as a symbol to represent the idea of reconciling rival groups of youths in Masisi. Action research intervention programme was utilized and a bridge to re-united the youths that have been separated by bitter rivalries and inter-group violence.

Apart from the health sector that is affected by conflicts, the education sector is also hindered by conflict: schools are destroyed and, not only there are dropouts, but young people or children also lose the will to join the schools; and teachers are killed or go into exile (Gates, 2012: 1716; World Bank, 2005: 13–28). It is a fact that conflicts create or increase poverty and hunger because the manpower is destroyed or killed; the lucky ones live in camps as internally displaced people. Those who are available or willing to work lack means, facilities and support.

Looking at the “macroeconomic costs of conflict”, Novta and Pugacheva (2020), confirming what Gates et al. earlier said, affirm that “conflict is a key factor that can hold back economic development” and that can lead “to economic losses that can persist for years”. They add that “conflict can also ignite large refugee flows and may affect the economies of countries, near and far, for an extended period of time” (2020: 3). The World Bank (2005: 7) called this phenomenon “development in reverse”.

1.8.8 Chronic Violence and Conflict Transformation

Talking about chronic violence, Collak and Pearce (2009: 18) gives a quantitative and qualitative view of this type of violence. For them, chronic violence refers to:

the context in which rates of violent death are at least twice the average for high-and low-income countries, respectively; where these levels are sustained for five years or more and where frequent acts of violence are recorded across several socialisation spaces, including the household, the neighbourhood, the school, intercommunity and the nation-state including disproportionate acts of violence attributed to state security forces.

This context or situation is related to the aspects of new wars or conflicts that are affecting the countries from the Global South. The above-mentioned disturbances are linked to “the growing problems of urban and rural violence in countries that had [post-war] peace agreements and even in those which have experienced no war at all” (Colak & Pearce, 2009: 11). Similarly, for Adams (2014: 6), chronic violence is an important but ignored experience of latent and destructive conflict. In this way, it is true that chronic violence can result from various causes ranging from “social inequality” to issues of governance and that it has

multiple consequences. She goes further and invites stakeholders to devise new ways to face this type of violence or destructive conflict. Adams (2014: 6) raises an important question about the trends people take or should take when confronted with chronic violence or its causes: “When the rule of law is—or becomes – deficient, how do affected populations govern themselves? Which practices are non-existent, or are destroyed or become illegitimate? Which practices emerge in their stead?” However, she draws two conclusions; first, that chronic violence takes a long time to deal with; so it must be addressed as a long-term phenomenon. Second, “Chronic violence must be addressed through intersectoral and interdisciplinary approaches” (Adams 2014: 8). This type of violence has a negative impact on people’s relationships and behaviours. It has long-term effects that can impact the attitude of future generations.

The youth are a vulnerable group. Chronic violence has devastating effects ranging between human destruction and environmental destruction using destructive power leading to conflict and constructive power leading to conflict transformation. Talking about the “the psychological effects of chronic violence on children living in South African townships”, Govender and Killian (2017: 1) underline major issues around continued experiences of violence and its impact on children. In these conditions, the children end up adopting violence as a mode of life and of approaching conflicts. However, research holds little support for this notion as violence has always been an individual choice. However, life experience of deprivation, discrimination and violence plays a big role in influencing the youth. In fact, there is a close relationship between past experiences and youths’ violent attitudes. In the case of Masisi, there is also an external manipulator. Nevertheless, the above idea neglects the choice factor that is an aspect of violence.

1.9 Research paradigmatic framework and theoretical frameworks

The inquiry relies comprehensively on the interpretative worldview for data collection, data analysis and data interpretation. Thus I employed multimethodology (Mingers 2001), which combines methods and interpretive paradigms for the purpose of attaining research objectives. The rationale for adopting this strategy is informed by the complexity of the problem such as the involvement of the youths and violence. The redress of this situation requires compounding strategy that merges multiple theories. The main theoretical

frameworks adopted here include intergroup contact theory, the conflict transformation theory and the theory of change to explain violence among the youths in Masisi, and peacebuilding theory.

1.10 Scope of the Study

This study takes place in Masisi, a district in the North Kivu Province in Eastern DRC. The DRC in general and the eastern part of the country in particular have been characterised by endless dynamic conflicts and violence. These have socioeconomic and political dimensions that go with the youth actions. Those are the aspects this thesis attempts to highlight. In addition, the study takes place in a very divided society where people think and act according to their ethnic groups, excluding others. Some groups assume they are autochthonous whereas they look at others as foreigners; some people assume they have traditional power and use it to pressure others whereas some other groups think they have both intellectual and political power that gives them an advantage over the others. The youth from these ethnic groups have also been caught up in these ideas and subsequent behaviours. These are the major focus of this research. Since conflict and violence have been rampant, dynamic and protracted in Masisi and based on historical facts, before independence in 1960 and after independence, young people were born and grew up in conflict and inherited violence. However, the study did not go back to the entire span of conflict time but started from 1993 when bloody wars erupted in Masisi and lead to the creation of hundreds of armed groups.

This is community-based research. It had to be conducted within the community and with the community. This implies that it involves the community members, particularly the youth in designing and implementing the suggested solutions. This aspect calls for a collaborative enterprise between the researcher and the youth or any other community member affected by the conflicts and violence. In addition, this inquiry is qualitative in design and was based on primary as well as secondary data. Data was collected using a guide and the available literature about youth, conflicts and violence in Masisi. A lot has been said or is being said about the prevailing situation there, various mechanisms have been suggested or used but the situation continues decline. Thus, this study tries to evaluate the gaps in previous studies and strategies.

1.11 Outline of the Thesis

This thesis mainly has five parts subdivided into 13 chapters. Part I includes Chapter 1 or the general introduction and the second chapter; they present the various experiences of the youths involved in armed conflicts. The introduction presents the background to the research problem, the statement of the research problem, the research questions, the major assumptions and the study objectives. These are followed by the rationale or justification of the study; the key concepts; the delimitation and scope of the study; the limitations of the research followed by the structure of the thesis.

Part II presents the literature review and is made of five chapters (2–9). Chapter 2 discusses the variety of conflicts nature, and the mode of involvement by young people in such conflicts; it further presents empirical cases of conflicts in different countries around the world; the immediate and systemic causes and consequences of those conflicts into which the youths are dragged, experiences of young people involved in hostilities; it finally assesses peace initiatives that have been undertaken to alleviate youths' involvement in armed conflicts. Chapter 3 presents the background to conflicts and violence in North Kivu and in Masisi. Chapter 4 provides a critique of the protracted yet forgotten conflict that has claimed millions of lives and has been going on for decades in Masisi. It argues that there is an epistemological basis for linking peacebuilding and conflict transformation theories to the Masisi youth context. Chapter 5 explores the various dynamics of conflicts in Masisi, their underlying causes and consequences. Chapter 6 examines the nature, extent and consequences of violence in Masisi; how these impact on the youths; the limitations of existing mechanisms to prevent violence and what needs to be done to improve intervention strategies to curb that violence. Chapter 6 presents the experiences of youth involvement in armed conflicts and conflict and local peacebuilding initiatives in Sub-Saharan Africa. This chapter highlights the nature, extent and consequences of violence. Chapter 7 presents the theoretical framework comprising the conflict transformation theory, the intergroup contact theory and the theory of change coupled with the PAR. It foregrounds the fact that this conflict has been really forgotten by various stakeholders in spite of its deadly aspects. Chapter 8 explores research theoretical frameworks that guide the overall process of data collection, analysis, interpretation and the argumentation; they are prominently used in the

discussion of the findings where there are correlated to the findings to substantiate the effectiveness of action research to help transform conflicts. The chapter foregrounds the theories of conflict transformation, peacebuilding and indigenous models to explain and design more realistic approaches to tackle conflicts and build peace among the youth in Masisi. The argument encompassed local strategies and regional initiatives.

Part III includes two chapters (9–10); they present research designs and methods and argue on the viability and the feasibility of the overall methodological approach involved in this thesis. Chapter 9 discusses the research design, which is PAR, coupled with the pilot study; it provides the preliminaries to the intervention conducted at Kitchanga, a rural place in Masisi and the outcomes of the pilot study. In addition, it tries to show the advantages of using PAR in this type of study; it gives the study context and process together with the study worldview. The study exploited the social constructivist and the transformative worldviews which support the challenges in using action research under interpretivism and the constructivism paradigms. Chapter 10 gives an overview of the research methods. This study adopted a qualitative approach. Here, the chapter presents the research processes based on the research site, the study population and sampling techniques, the data collection techniques and instruments followed by aspects of data analysis, validation, validity and reliability around the ethical considerations when conducting this kind of study.

Part IV includes two chapters (11–12); they are based on the field data and the general situation in Masisi. Chapter 11 is about the exploration of field data collection. Chapter 12 is about planning and implementing the intervention given the field situation. Chapter 13 provides an overview of the short-term outcomes following the intervention that was undertaken with the youths at Kitchanga. The results are thematically presented and discussed in line with the literature and the theoretical frameworks.

Part V includes Chapter 13 that presents the conclusions. The chapter provides a summary of the study and the study findings; it discusses the implications from the findings and makes the recommendations. The chapter gives also an overview of the limitations of the study and the areas for further study.

1.12 Conclusion

The first chapter of Part I looked at the motivational factor or the background behind the research topic of reducing violence among the youths in Masisi using PAR. The chapter set out the study problem, the major research questions, assumptions and objectives followed by the rationale behind this research and the delimitations of the study. The introductory part discussed major concepts that make up a framework for analysis as they are used in this thesis. These concepts are conflict, violence and transformation, peacebuilding and intergroup contact. The introduction established that violence is a serious issue among the youths and a problem that hinders a peaceful environment. In fact, according to Apivore and Choja (2020: 14765), violence is a global issue that creates chaos and deaths. However, it was concluded that violence as a choice should and can be avoided. Parties to conflicts should understand that what harms me will also harm you and that “what enhances me will also enhance you” (Galtung, 1996: 122). The following chapter presents the experiences of the youth involvement in armed conflicts and the local peacebuilding initiatives globally and in sub-Saharan African.

PART II: LITERATURE REVIEW

CHAPTER TWO

EXPERIENCES OF YOUTH INVOLVEMENT IN ARMED CONFLICTS AND LOCAL PEACEBUILDING INITIATIVES GLOBALLY WITH A FOCUS ON SUB- SAHARAN AFRICA)

One of the purposes of conducting a literature review is to explore a set of data in order to determine the existence of the problem being investigated and to address the research questions (Doolan and Froelicher 2009). The literature review consists of two main components: (1) a methodological approach to respond to research questions and establish research assumptions, and (2) discussion of the theoretical frameworks that guide the inquiry, preferably by reviewing existing theories and their effectiveness. The theoretical frameworks are reviewed after exploring the research questions in Chapter 6 and Chapter 7. The primary aim of chapter two is to examine the existing literature through a systematic research method to address the first four research questions, specifically:

- What are the nature, the causes, the extent and consequences of current conflicts and violence involving the youths in Masisi District?
- How are protracted conflicts and violence impacting the youths in Masisi?
- How effective are the existing measures used to deter youth violence to be engaged in violence in North Kivu Province and Masisi District?
- What mechanisms can be implemented through action research to reduce youth violence in Masisi District?

Snyder (2009: 333-334) argues that “a literature review can address research questions with a power that no single study has”. He further suggests that: “for a number of research questions, a literature review may be the best methodological tool to provide answers”. The review of the literature helps to identify the gap in existing knowledge, allowing for the exploration of necessary interventions to bridge these gaps. In this inquiry, the focus comprised both theory (literature review) and practical applications (action research). This

chapter provides a comprehensive examination of various facets of youth involvement in violence, particularly in the context of armed conflict, prior to delving into the background of conflict and violence in Chapter Three. This serves as the methodological approach to address the first four research questions.

2.1 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to portray evidence-based cases of youth involved in armed conflicts in the Sub-Saharan Africa, their organisation and operations and the impacts of these conflicts on the social fabric and on the general group relations. Moreover, the chapter highlights the consequences of the youth's involvement in conflict and concludes with examples of peace initiatives and their effectiveness. The chapter presents the nature, extent and the systemic causes of global conflicts with some cases as examples. Raleigh and Sam (2020) give an overview of the 10 significant global conflicts that were of concern in 2020. They confirmed that the world had become more violent than a decade earlier; what could be true even today. However, their study and analysis as deep as they are, left out hot spots like Syria, Iran, South Sudan, the DRC and the Great Lakes Region of central Africa in general. Adding to these views, Olaosebikan (2000: 549–550) gives some examples of conflicts in Africa since the independence. One striking feature is that the conflicts he presented are either intrastate or interstate conflicts over border issues or resource exploitation. Examples are like conflicts that took place in Sudan (1995–1990), in Chad (1965– 1985), Angola (1974–), in Liberia (1980–2003), Nigeria (1967–1970), in Somalia (1999–to date), in Burundi, in Rwanda and Sierra Leone (1991–2001). To these conflicts, one should add the militia movements in the DRC (1965 and 1970 and the current conflicts in the eastern part of the country). Examples of interstate African conflicts are like the conflict between Nigeria and Cameroon over the Bakassi Peninsula in 1970s; the conflict between Algeria and Morocco over the Atlas Mountains in October 1963; the conflict between Eritrea and Ethiopia (1964–1979); the conflict between Somalia and Ethiopia (1964–1978) over land issues “(the Ugandan desert region)”; the conflict between Chad and Libya (1980–1982); the conflict between Kenya and Somalia (1963–1967), the conflict between Uganda and Tanzania (1978–1979 that was politically motivated); and in the 2000s around the Mbingo island in Lake Victoria (Olaosebikan 2000: 550). These conflicts and crises as portrayed by

Olaosebikan and Raleigh, and Sam reflect strong political dynamics and land issues but their studies provide little information on the involvement of the youth, the gap that this thesis attempts to cover by looking at youth involvement in conflict and the subsequent violence.

2.2 The Nature and Extent of Global Conflicts

Youth violence is a fact of social life (Barnie et al., 2017: 1; Tolan, 2001: 236). This compelled other scholars like Rousseau to argue that “the type of community one lives in could be a major risk factor for [violence] involvement” (Barnie et al., 2017: 2; Oduaranet al., 2020: 14765; Tolan, 2001: 233). Barnie et al. (2017: 1) assert that “violence by young people is one of the most visible forms of social disorder in urban settlements”. However, the predisposing factors of youth violence allowed researchers to locate this kind of disorder in rural areas as well even though at the global level, things might be happening differently from the general assumptions. This section provides a review of some cases of conflicts and youth involvement in violence; the motivational factors underlying this involvement and social strife; their scope and nature of their impact on both a small and large scale. The aim here is to highlight the conflicts and the strategies that have produced positive outcomes in some war-torn communities.

On a different note, looking at the area of study, Autesserre (2012: 3) cautions that a few studies have reported the consequences of conflicts in Eastern DRC and relevant to intergroup contact and conflict transformation in Masisi, apart from some NGOs operating in this area like *Medecins Sans Frontieres* [Doctors without Borders]. She concluded that the conflicts in this area are among the “most underreported humanitarian stories”. Autesserre found that framing these conflicts within a “simplistic narrative” only connects the conflicts and resulting violence to three factors: illegal resource exploitation as the primary cause, sexual abuse as the most severe consequence, and leadership personality as a key determinant of efficacy in fostering trust among communities and motivating youth. For her, it is clear that NGOs or any other potential researcher did not directly bring out the significant contribution of personality characteristics to conflict transformation, yet it reflects the youth connection to conflicts. However, we cannot forget the research by researchers like Turner (2007; 2013), Mamdani (2001), Clark (2013) and several others who wrote about the Congo wars. Their research tends to focus on resources, but primarily on the underlying identity

issues that serve as the backdrop to the conflicts and violence in the Democratic Republic of Congo, particularly in its eastern provinces. In a report by the ACLED team (Clionadhet al., 2020), Raleigh presents “the ten conflicts to worry about in 2020” worldwide. Geographically, these conflicts are mainly located in the Sahel, Mexico, Yemen, India, Somalia, Iran, Afghanistan, Ethiopia, Lebanon and the United States. This geographical scope shows that there are conflicts in most parts of the globe, particularly in Africa, Asia and America. Nevertheless, one could add to this list some other ongoing deadly conflicts like those in Syria, in Israel, in South Sudan and in the Eastern DRC. Talking about the Sahel conflict, Clionadh et al. (2000: 3) highlight the “regional threat” as a spillover affecting countries like Cameroon, Chad, Niger (Tillaberi region), Burkina Faso, Mauritania and Mali. The conflicts that were witnessed in 2019 in these countries were mostly characterised by political violence.

2.3 Nature of Youth Involvement in Armed Conflicts

Here, the study looks at the way the youths are part of permanent militia groups or how they are called on during elections. However, I excluded the recognised criminal gangs to avoid any overlapping with the major research area which is based on the youths in their day-to-day life and interactions in their living environments. Some major examples were extracted from the youths in Ghana and in Rwanda. I have chosen these two countries for the particularities they offer: Ghana has similar conflict features to Masisi, because of the youths from various ethnic groups confronting each other. Their conflicts, like in Masisi, are based on land issues, customary power and political representation. In both places, Ghana and Masisi, the youth have organised themselves into armed groups to fight for their survival, for the protection of their ethnic groups and their land or rights. Two major groups have emerged in Ghana based on ethnicity. The first group is the KOYA group or Konkomba Youth Association founded by young Konkomba intellectuals in the late 1970s and bringing together the alliance of Konkomba, Nawuri, Basari and Nchumuru. They are opposed to the DAYA group or Dagomba Youth Association bringing together the Dagomba, the Gonja and the Nanumba ethnic groups. The major groups in these two alliances are the Konkomba who are landless and the Dagomba who own land and customary power. The same applies in Masisi where the groupings are made according to ethnic alliances around the Hunde who own land and

customary power and the Hutu who are considered to be landless and without any customary or traditional power. However, sometimes, these youth groups are also politically manipulated during elections to side with one or the other candidates. Ghana and Masisi have witnessed conflicts for decades, from as earlier as 1970 in Ghana and the 1960s in Masisi. The following table reflects these realities in the two places.

Table 1: Ghana and Masisi, two geographically different places, similar conflicts features

COUNTRY/ PLACE	ETHNIC GROUPS	ALLIANCES	UNDERLYING CAUSES OF CONFLICT	TYPES OF VIOLENCE	CONFLICTS TRANSFORMATION STRATEGIES
GHANA	1. Konkomba 2. Nawuri 3. Nchumuru 4. Basari 5. Dagomba 6. Gonja 7. Nanumba	1) Konkomba + Nawuri + Basari + Nchumuru against 2) Dagomba + Gonja+Nanumba 3) KOYA against DAYA 4) Intellectual Elite	1) Access to land and land disputes; resource distribution 2) Customary power 3) Local/Political representation (The Nanumba are the ruling class)	Structural and direct violence	1) The bottom-up approach (Looking for security from below) and 2) Dialogues or face-to- face meetings (The approach succeeded)
MASISI	1. Hunde 2. Nyanga 3. Tembo 4. Hutu 5. Tutsi	1) Hunde+Nyanga + Tembo against 2) Hutu +Tutsi 3) Youth organising themselves according to their ethnic origins 4) Intellectual Elite	1) Disputes over land 2) Customary power (The Hunde are the ruling class) 3) Local/political representation and exclusion	Structural and Direct violence	The top-down approach; Dialogues (Abilities to communicate and exchange ideas or to discuss over an issue) (The approach has failed)

Source: Compilation from Akpovire and Choja (2020. Op. cit.), and Barnie (2017, Op. cit.)

Another case of youth involvement in armed conflict has been witness in Rwanda, in central Africa during the 1994 genocide when millions of people were hacked to death by the Interahamwe groups essentially made up of the youth. This conflict occurred mainly between the Hutu and the Tutsi. The same conflict was witnessed in Burundi.

2.4 Empirical Cases of Conflicts and Youth Violence

At this junction, the study gives an overview of cases of conflict and violence involving the youths in the global context and in Africa in particular. In fact, according to Akpovire and Choja (2020: 14764), violence is a general situation affecting the world in various ways. It is not a phenomenon linked to a particular place, region, country or specific group of people. However, some places have witnessed more violence than others.

2.4.1. The Case of the USA

From surveys conducted in USA, Tolan (2001: 235) established that “one in 20 students carries a weapon regularly”. He adds that USA is one of the countries in the world with a high number of young men, particularly African American men who are known to be violent and show criminal behaviour wherever they are, “on the street”, in their relationships or in their families (Tolan, 2001: 234). In USA, violence is evident among the ethnic minorities, some cultural minority groups, LGBTQ, transgender women and civilians in general. According to Clionadh (2020), violence in USA is characterised by actions among the racial minorities and is manifested through political violence and demonstrations. Both Tolan and Clionadh agree that violence among American young people is related to anxiety, depression and post-traumatic stress disorder, aggression and the destruction of the social fabric. Tolan confirms what Barnie et al. (2017: 1) asserted that “youth violence is a fact of social life” that stems from insufficient supervision by parents. From an example based on the mass shooting at the Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida in USA (Bushman, 2018), a Commission was appointed to conduct investigations and produce “a report on youth violence”. The major task for this Commission was to investigate the issues of violence and to produce a public and scientific statement on the apparent risk factors behind youth violence according to the prevailing situation. This Commission issued a final report in March 2018.

2.4.2. The Case of Afghanistan

Conflicts were more violent in Kandahar, Ghazni, Helmand Province and Nangarhar before they spread throughout Afghanistan. They are mainly politically motivated and caused by insurgency. The actors are mostly the Taliban, an insurgent group that has recently captured

the country; the pro-government forces and the Islamic state of Khorasan among others. The type of violence basically targets government officials and civilians, especially women and young girls. The major feature of violence in Afghanistan is the targeted civilians. One may recall the “Operation Enduring Freedom initiated by the USA after 9/11” that aimed at destroying the Taliban organisation and the Al Qaeda in Afghanistan (Nye et al., 2013: 311).

2.4.3. The Case of Kumasi, Ghana

According to Barnie (2017: 1), violence among young people in Kumasi settlements is based on social disorder. It is a social fact as it results from the family environment where one lives. To this major cause of violence among the youth, Barnie adds other causes that could be the history of violent victimisation, social attention deficit, “hyperactivity or learning disorders, history of early aggressive behaviour, involvement with drugs, alcohol” (Barnie 2017: 1), and smoking tobacco among others. In addition, the youths’ violent conduct is a result of “poor behavioural control, deficits in social cognitive or information processing abilities, high emotional distress or history of treatment for emotional issues” (Barnie 2017: 1), antisocial beliefs and attitudes, exposure to family violence and conflicts, anger and frustration. Other predisposing causes of youth violence in Ghana are the high unemployment rate; imbalances in gendered roles coupled with a prevalent norm of male chauvinism; a high level of illiteracy and a socialised and tolerating culture that supports violence.

All in all, in Kumasi, conflict or violence is triggered by “inequity in societal resource distribution and allocation” (Barnie, 2017: 6). Like in the USA, the nature of youth violence in Ghana is reflected through physical fighting, which is the predominant form of violence, robbery or stealing, threatening and bullying, hitting, disrespect and sexual abuse (Barnie, 2017: 4). Furthermore, in both countries, there is unemployment that creates laziness and jealousy among the youth and leads to violence. This violence is manifested through noise making, rape, robbery, murder, stealing, drug addiction, sexual attacks and bullying (Tolan, 2001: 235).

2.4.4. The Case of Niger Delta and the Sahel Region

Talking about the Sahel, Raleigh and Sam (2020) focus on countries like Mauritania, Chad, Niger, Mali, Burkina Faso, Cameroon and Nigeria. These countries share some features. The

conflicts or violence threatening them are politically motivated. Specifically, there is cross-border violence in Burkina Faso, Cameroon and Mauritania; whereas there is insurgency in Chad, while there are militant networks, land laws, tax disputes and insurgency in Nigeria. In these countries, the actors involved in violence are the Jihadi, the Boko Haram and other Islamist groups, political rivals and local militia. Among the local militia, the Fulani youth operating in Nigeria, in Niger (in Tillaberi region), in Burkina Faso and Mali are the most dominant. There are also the Dogon creating havoc in Burkina Faso and Mali (Raleigh, 2020: 3). The particular aspect of conflicts and violence in the Sahel is the spillover risk of affecting the neighbouring communities (Clionadh et al., 2020: 3).

2.4.5. The Case of Ethiopia

Ethiopia is undergoing conflicts in the Tigre region. These conflicts and subsequent violence are politically motivated but also based on claims for ethnic federalism, ethnic strife, riots and ethnic clashes; competition over resources and guerrilla-style violence. In this country, violence involves the Oromo youth and university students, the ethnic group militias and young people from ethnically based federal states, those in Oromo-Somali zones, in the Amhara region and the political opposition movements. However, they also involve officials and the police force as well as the defence force. The Ethiopian conflicts pose the risk of country fragmentation.

There are other African countries that have witnessed bloody violence like in Rwanda with the 1994 genocide, Uganda with the Lord's Resistance Army; Central Africa Republic, Somalia, Liberia and Kenya although I did not focus on these cases.

2.5 Immediate and Systemic Causes of the Youth Involvement in Global Conflicts

Based on various systems, the current world is facing a multidimensional crisis affecting all the sectors of life which seem to have broken down. The socioeconomic, political and environmental systems are disrupted. This compelled Nye and Welch (2013: 49) to warn that "systems break down when they are no longer able to serve their intended purpose." The major purpose of the national political system is to take care of people, including the youth. The essential purpose of the traditional or customary system is to create harmony among communities; the crucial purpose of a family or a household is to educate and take care of the

household members. It is when these purposes are fulfilled that life becomes harmonious, “stable” and well organised. Talking about the causes of conflicts in the world, Nye et al. (2013: 2) argue that “people often disagree about what is just and legitimate. The result is a great gap between two basic political values: order and justice”. Order accounts for harmony and a peaceful setting while justice amounts to integrity, honesty, fairness, impartiality and truthfulness among other values. Among other causes of global conflicts, there is “technology”. Nowadays, technology “is putting into the hands of non-state actors’ destructive powers that once were reserved solely for governments” (Nye, 2013: 2). Indeed, technology is providing tools to control the minds and alongside technology, there is industrialisation producing weapons or guns that end up in the hands of militia and criminals in general. For Harris et al. (1998: 9), currently people are witnessing “intrastate” conflicts. And, for them:

Two powerful elements often combine in such conflicts. One is identity: the mobilisation of people in communal identity groups based on race, religion, culture, language and so on. The other is distribution: the means of sharing the economy, social and political resources within a society.

The major factors of global conflicts are thus identity and resource distribution. Bruckmeier (2014: 49), posits that the twenty-first century is characterised by various types of conflicts ranging from social conflicts to ecological ones. He argues that most of these conflicts “have to do with environmental problems” (ibid.: 48). In addition to the above, Novta and Pugacheva (2020: 5) assert that “over time, the nature of conflict has changed: there was more interstate conflict between World War II and the 1990s, and there has been more internal civil war since the 1990s”. Not only there was this kind of shift but also there was a geographical shift in conflicts where “the location of major conflict has also moved from the Sub-Saharan Africa in the 1990s to the broader Middle East region, especially since 2010” (ibid.). As a result, there has been a move from the well-known types of conflicts following the time and place dimensions or simply from the historical viewpoint. Nye and Welch (2013: 3) go further and argue that most of current conflicts have ethnic dimensions and, illustrating what Novta and Pugacheva said, they confirm that “after the fall of the Berlin Wall in November 1989, 220 armed conflicts occurred in 75 different locations around the

world. Nine were interstate wars, and 24 were intrastate wars with foreign intervention”. Going back to these historical factors, they try to predict where the current world is heading to. Their views are that conflicts are part of human nature and have always been part of human activities. However, Nye and Welch (2013: 3) add to the initial types of conflicts, the current kind of conflicts like the HIV/AIDS and climate change. I should also add the Covid-19 as a conflicting challenge to the world and the leadership crisis that seems to be a deep issue in most African countries. In any event, these types of conflicts have drawn many youths and have been coupled with violence, insurgency and mass killings especially in Africa (Annan, 2014: 1).

Looking at conflicts in Africa from “a global context”, Cilliers (2014: 5) gives the four types of conflict events recorded and classified by the Uppsala Conflict Data Programme from 1960 to 2013; “these types consist of events that have incurred at least 25 battle-related deaths per year and where a government” (p. 5) plays a role in the events. Among these types of conflict, there is the “Extra-systemic armed conflict”. This is a conflict involving organised state and non-state groups, outside the national territory; for example, between Rwanda as a country and FDLR as a rebel group operating from the DR Congo. There is also the “interstate armed conflict” involving two or more countries. An example has been witnessed in the DR Congo when thirteen African countries intervened in the conflict on the Congolese territory. The third type is the “internal armed conflict” where the government in power is opposed by one or more internal opposition groups without any intervention from other governments, such as the militia groups that oppose the central government in DRC. The fourth type of conflict is the internationalised internal armed conflict. This occurs when an established government of a state faces opposition from one or more internal groups, with involvement from other states on one or both sides. Once again, the DR Congo gives a good example of this case. Giving a general picture of the conflict trend in the world and in Africa, Cilliers (2014: 5) argues that:

since 2009 and 2010, armed conflict has increased again, including in Africa. This is a period roughly coinciding with the great global recession and the latter years of the War on Terror, during which armed conflict has, in particular, spread to Africa.

Studying the youth violence, Kumar et al. (2019: 212) assert that “several studies identified that the instability of community, quality of governance and income inequality can result in all kinds of violence.” From their position, it should be noted that among other causes of youth violence, the instability and/or disruption in the community, issues of bad governance and economic factors are push factors for violent behaviours or attitudes. However, initially, Kumar et al. (2019: 211) argued that the youth have power in that they are “enthusiastic, vibrant, innovative and dynamic”. This indicates that they have what it takes to change and improve a situation. Looking at the case of criminal acts through mass shootings, Bushman et al. (2018: 331) argue that “when mass shootings occur, people want to identify ‘the’ cause, especially because mass shootings tend to beget more shootings”. This behaviour has several different dynamics. Bushman et al. (2018: 331) identified two categories of risk factors influencing the youth behaviour and creating violence in urban as well as in rural areas. These are the personal risk factors associated with the individual, and environmental factors associated with social living conditions. To sum up these views, the table below links the causes of youth violence to related risk factors.

Table 2: The risk factors for youth violence in Masisi

PERSONAL RISK FACTORS	ENVIRONMENTAL RISK FACTORS
Gender: generally, males are more physically aggressive than females (Issues of masculinity)	Easy access to firearms: the mere presence of guns can also increase the likelihood of aggressive responses in social situations (social learning theory; family system theory; intergenerational theory)
Aggressive behaviour early in childhood: <i>early aggressive behaviour predicts later aggressive, antisocial, violent and criminal behaviour</i>	Social exclusion and isolation: Being regularly victimised or ostracised by peers or other communities is also a risk factor for youth violence (theory of emotional insecurity)
Personality and emotion regulation: this related to individual character or conduct	Family background and neighbourhood characteristics: coming from a family that experienced divorce, child maltreatment, domestic violence, being on welfare, having an unemployed and young mother or a father with behavioural problems... growing up in a neighbourhood dominated by persistent violent crime and other social and physical disorder, and experiencing violence directly can contribute to youths’ risk for violent behaviour. (family system theory;

	theory of emotional insecurity)
Obsession with weapons or death: having an intense interest or fixation with guns, bombs, or explosives; or simply the availability of light weapon	Media violence: high exposure to violent media in childhood is related to violence later in life, including criminal behaviour, spousal abuse and assault. (social learning theory)
Peer pressure or influence: imitation or intention to become like the others (self-esteem?)	School characteristics and substance use (social learning theory; intergenerational theory)
Life experience of violence in general: the youth who grow up in a violent setting become violent in their nature and relationships	Stressful events: there is a strong relation between stressful events and aggression. Stressful events make people angry, and can trigger aggressive and violent behaviour (theory of emotional insecurity; social learning theory)

Source: from Bushman et al. (2018: 331–333); McConanet al. (2001: 38–47)

Generally speaking, and according to Addison et al. (2000: 2), youth get involved in conflicts that stem from “greed, when substantial natural resource rents are involved; and grievance, especially when poverty or horizontal inequality across regions and ethnic groups is high” (Addison et al., 2000: 2). For them, greed and grievance are interrelated in a kind of vicious cycle that they present through a quantitative analysis. Thus, from a deep analysis, Addison et al. (2000: 2) provide a framework of the motivations for conflict based on economic factors. They identify additional conflict triggers associated with conflict actors, including the government on one side and the rebels on the other. Additionally, they consider factors such as their interests, and the prevailing conditions whether peaceful or chaotic (Addison et al., 2000: 3). In this way, these scholars raise the issues of structural violence and/or structural conflicts. At this level, one should not forget other pull factors linked to current conflicts, namely, social, ethnic and/or environmental dynamics.

On the other hand, Taye (2017: 42) looked at the political system and found that a federal political system could not work in sub-Saharan African states because “the socio-cultural set-up of the African states is so hybrid in terms of identity, language and religion that the existing social realities might not entertain the federal model”. Furthermore, according to him, in this part of Africa, identities are fluid, heterogeneous and hybrid. With individuals migrating and interacting across the continent, Taye (2017: 43) observed that their identities, cultures and languages become intertwined. Hence, federalism and its various territorial,

multinational and ethnic forms, such as “(symmetric or asymmetric; congruent or incongruent), the socio-cultural set-up of society, the degree of autonomy (given for sub-national government), the gravity of the regime’s totalitarian institutional structures, and the like” are other influencing aspects of conflicts (Taye, 2017: 44).

Taye (2017: 45) adds to what Addison and other researchers have identified as causes of conflicts in Africa by underlining identities, languages and belief as conflicts and violence motivators, in addition to greed and grievances. However, the general assumption is that conflicts are basically political. Adding his voice to the above, Chingono (2017: 117) confirms that the causes of conflicts in Africa lie not only in religion but also in ethnicity, resource sharing, territory or land issues, poor governance and the struggle for power. Narrowing down the scope to permanent conflicts in South Kivu, eastern DRC, Kä Mana and Gasanganirwa (2017: 250) found that conflicts are fuelled by youth unemployment whereby numerous unemployed young people spend most of their time harassing people, stealing and sometimes committing crimes and killings. There is also a high prevalence of promiscuity, drug abuse and the effects of a failed state where there is no rule of law; and the identity-based discourse coupled with manipulation by some politicians and local leaders. This is the case in some areas making what local people call “the Red Line” in places like *Chimpunda*, *Gihamba* and *Essence* that are among the suburbs around Bukavu town (Kä Mana & Gasanganirwa, 2017: 250–251).

In summary, it can be concluded that the underlying factors driving African conflicts are intricate and multifaceted systems. While some conflicts involve identifiable actors, their motivations, and organisations, in others, the methods of the involved actors remain unidentified. For the conflicts in Masisi, four types or categories of causes were established in this study.

2.5.1 The Macro-Causes or External Causes of Conflicts

Multinational companies operating in DR Congo to exploit minerals find it easy to operate in a troubled setting where the government authority is absent and where only warlords have a say. In this way, they manipulate the youth who get involved in violence by watching after the leaders’ business. That is the case in many areas in Masisi like in Rubaya and other

similar places. A good example of this situation is in Buleusa (Walikale) where militia groups like the Mai-Mai, the Interahamwe, the Nduma Defence of Congo-Renové (NDC-R) and the Congolese Armed Force or FARDC are found in the same place busy exploiting minerals. Another example is the coalition between Nduma defence made of the Nyanga and Hutu to fight the FDLR from Rwanda. According to Autesserre, the macro-causes of conflicts in DRC are much less important than other causal factors, especially past histories of violence between communities. Quite often, ideas of revenge also ignite the fire in some people who never forgot, nor did they forgive their neighbours for what they did to them. Scholars and researchers opine that foreign or neighbouring countries like Rwanda and Uganda just come into the Congo for minerals (Kok, 2009: 21; Turner, 2013: 21–22). Turner (2013) lists some of the external actors involved in the Congo conflicts like the USA, UK, France, added to African countries that believe they have a stake or a share in Congo.

2.5.2 The Politicians Protecting Their Positions and Interests

Politicians employ the youths during elections to intimidate people, to rig votes, to look after their farms and cattle and other properties. In different rural areas, some politicians appoint the youth to look after their properties and their wealth. Some have big areas of land where they keep cows or run other activities. In such places, they gather and manipulate the youths in the area to look after their properties. When the election time comes, the same politicians use the youths to secure or to rig the vote. In these cases, the politicians provide guns to the youths who turn into a militia group serving the boss.

2.5.3 The Past Histories of Violence or Revenge Among Communities

Tull (2005: 163) found that in order to understand the dynamics of Congo conflicts, there is need to understand the country's history and all its secrets. He asserted that:

The historical trajectory of the Zairian state is also of great relevance to understand the local conflicts in the Kivus for it was the outright paralysis of governance in Kinshasa since 1990 within the context of a blocked democratisation process that led to the conversion of long-muted tensions into violent intercommunal conflicts.

This view shows that conflicts or violence in Masisi and elsewhere in the Province are a result of a kind of revolt by people who are fed up with a negative situation and with endemic crimes and killings. Talking about the historical aspects of conflicts in the current Africa, McCalpin concludes that “finally, the history development of crisis and conflict in contemporary Africa is not a neat, linear process. Congo appears to be an appropriate case study of the nature and types of conflicts that are bedeviling Africa today” (McCalpin, 2003: 34). First of all, there is the history of colonialism that dominated the Congo during the twentieth century and that ended in a kind of failed independence. According to McCalpin (2003: 34) and Tull (2005:203), the Congo history has been characterised by what they call disorder and chaos. The colonial time was marked by exploitation of the Congo wealth and by people division, thus excluding unity among them because the country was then divided into 15 provinces isolated from each other. Thus, McCalpin (2003: 35) concluded that “these units were arbitrarily defined, beginning what became one of the Congo’s chronic problems: the arbitrariness of internal borders and the attendant problems for ethnic relations and interactions. The creation of a monolithic state destroyed the native polities”. From this chaos created by the colonial management resulted the spirit of discrimination and hatred among the hundreds of ethnic groups living in Congo. The North Kivu Province has been affected by this trend. The colonialists transferred people from Rwanda to the then Kivu and these people were relocated in Masisi.

2.5.4 Individual Motivations

Warlordism and masculinity, or the concept of belonging to a group, encompass traits such as loyalty, adventure and financial gain. Traditionally, young men are taught to safeguard their households, assets, and territories, ensuring the protection of their families and properties. However, in the case of Masisi conflicts, another dimension has emerged, and this is “the greed and grievance” factor. The youth without any model to emulate are following the wrong path of so-called political or other leaders who are manipulating them. Young individuals aspire to emulate their mentors, despite their poor examples. Those in positions of political or traditional authority prioritise personal gain and favouritism towards their own kin, neglecting the welfare of their impoverished compatriots. Through corruption and plundering, they amass wealth and achieve a heightened state of prosperity, enticing

individuals from lower socioeconomic backgrounds to pursue leadership roles with the promise of material gain. This pursuit of wealth attracts the youth, who view any means of attaining prosperity and material possessions as acceptable.

2.6 The Consequences of Youth Involvement in Conflicts

The consequences of youth involvement in conflicts or the conflicts impacts in general can also be termed as the various costs of conflict situations. Generally speaking, conflicts bring with them several consequences that bear personal, social, political and economic impacts. Among these consequences, there are death and property destruction, forced migration and displacement coupled with long-term refugee issues, social, political and economic damages; low or lack of productivity that leads to poverty, looting and crimes (Bruckmeier, 2014: 48–65; Gates et al., 2012: 1713–1722; Novta and Pugacheva, 2020: 6-10; Olaosebikan, 2010: 549–560; Richardson, 2004: 556–558). These consequences lead to a chain of issues like undernourishment or lower food security, lack of or poor education and lower school enrolment among others (Gates et al. 2012: 1713; World Bank, 2005: 68–70).

The repercussions of violence and conflicts on the youth engaged in armed conflict encompass several aspects: many of these young individuals have grown up amidst the turmoil of war, some residing in internally displaced persons (IDP) camps since birth, leading to feelings of despair, hopelessness and a sense of rebellion. Alongside these emotional responses, there is an overwhelming burden of trauma and suffering due to the loss of loved ones and property, resulting in intense grief and post-traumatic stress, which may manifest in violent behaviour. Furthermore, the youths' disengagement from agricultural and other labour activities underscores the profound impact of conflict on their daily lives and livelihoods. They remain idle and dependent and end up being a danger to their communities. These are the psychological effects of conflicts and violence. In this way, people and the youths are frustrated, traumatised and desperate. In addition to these psychological effects, poverty is another consequence of violence and conflicts. There is poverty as people no longer work on their farms. They rely on irregular humanitarian assistance. This results in malnutrition for children and sometimes for adults who are also affected. On the issues of discrimination, stereotypes and prejudice, social inequality, people do not trust each other, especially those from different ethnic groups.

Socialisation is impossible among the youth. It is from this kind of context that Richardson (2004: 556–558) distinguishes three types of impacts or consequences of protracted conflicts. According to him, there are the primary or direct costs of violent conflict which encompass the loss of belongings like houses, commercial establishments, factories, government buildings, roads, irrigation systems, infrastructure and casualties or deaths encountered during the violent conflict. In Masisi, landslides along the roads make them impassible; for example, from Nyamitaba to Muheto; from Muheto to Lushebere, from Muheto to Tambi; the roads have been replaced by very narrow paths used by pedestrians or motorcycles (one motorcycle takes three to four people ontrips of more than 200 miles). There used to be factories and several tea plantations especially at Mahanga, Tambi, Nyabura, Muheto, Mweso, Mokotos, Kahe. All these plantations have disappeared because of protracted wars. Schools, like in many places in DRC, have been destroyed or are poorly managed by the armed groups or lack teachers. The agronomy school at Mweso and one vocational school at Matanda, the Seventh Day Adventist school of Kanyatsi, the girls' school of Kilimani at Masisi headquarters; the secondary school in Burungu, are some of those that are no longer operating. The same applies to medical infrastructure that is not available. The government buildings in Mihanga have been overtaken by bush.

Then, there are the secondary costs of violent conflict. These are the costs related to sustaining military and police, the loss of local and foreign investments, the flight of capital and brains and trained manpower, loss of production and disruption of work. In Masisi, it is a fact that trained manpower like in agronomy, medical doctors, teachers are scarce because of lack of security. Even though the French NGO *Medecin Sans Frontiere* (Doctors without Borders) is trying to sustain the Mweso hospital and to help people, the health situation is still a challenge. In the Masisi area, the few military and police personnel have been assimilated into the armed groups.

Finally, the tertiary costs of violent conflicts comprise short-term to long-term economic impact or consequences of violent conflicts. They include all the socioeconomic disruptions and deprivations and the cases of traumatised people. The refugee phenomenon and the education disruptions fall under the tertiary costs because the refugee problem is a long-term issue (in security, in socioeconomic and political sectors) that needs to be addressed. The

uneducated youth is a long-term problem when dealing with the community or running a nation. Most of the youth are involved in armed groups without working on the farms; they have no initiative, they are uneducated and, in the future, this will give rise to uneducated generations causing heavy dependency load for external or international NGOs. In a quantitative analysis of “the macroeconomic costs of conflicts”, Novta and Pugacheva (2020: 3–5) also identified the impact of conflicts: the economic losses and/or economic collapses or the effects on real GDP per capita leading to immeasurable humanitarian suffering and refugee migration among others. In addition these effects, there is also the number of deaths or people killed. According to Novta and Pugacheva (2020: 5), “a country is coded as having experienced a conflict in a particular year if at least one hundred people were killed in battle that year for everyone million people in the general population”. In addition, they assert:

macroeconomic costs of conflict are not limited to only those countries experiencing conflict. Neighbouring and non-neighbouring countries can be negatively affected, through trade, refugee flows and other spillovers, that can continue to have effects over ten years or more following conflict onset (ibid: 7).

Experience shows that whenever there are conflicts or wars, the impacts are felt on a large scale in the socioeconomic and political sectors. Wars affect human relationships based on exchange in business or in social life in general; people become suspicious. In addition, wars compel people to move from their properties and go to live in places where their activities are quite often restricted by the new conditions. In this case, the displaced people have to rely on NGOs and other good Samaritans. In the Great Lakes Region, people have witnessed conflicts happening in one country affecting the neighbouring countries. This has happened with people from Uganda crossing to DRC, those from Rwanda crossing to the DRC following the genocide in their country; the same thing happened with people from Burundi crossing to the DRC or to Tanzania. This phenomenon is understood as the spillover effect of conflict which brings more suffering than advantages. The same situation is currently happening in North Kivu whereby people are crossing to neighbouring countries, Rwanda, Uganda and Burundi following the M23 war in the country.

2.7 Evaluating Peace Initiatives in Masisi

It should be noted here that the society of Masisi is strongly divided, spiritually, economically and politically. Spiritually, the most dominant denominations are the Catholic church, the SDA, the Baptist church and the Pentecostal church. There are eight Catholic parishes which are: Sake, Matanda, Masisi, Nyakariba, Kitchanga, Mweso, Birambizo and Bibwe. However, these have been closed since 2000 because of insecurity. The Burungu Baptist mission has been closed since 1996. The churches operate according to ethnic affiliations where people go to the church pastored by their kinship. This makes it difficult for the youths to unite and socialise if they are not from the same church. In addition, whenever there are conflicts and massacres in an area, it is difficult for religious leaders to raise their voices together because of ethnic relationships. Yet, religious interventions have succeeded in other countries that have experienced a similar situation to the Congolese conflicts. Examples close to DRC are that of Uganda and Kenya. There are even other models that succeeded in ending ethnic clashes involving the youths and that could be replicated in the DRC. Table 3 provides an overview of some of the successful models of conflict transformation or peacebuilding that have been applied in Kenya, Ghana and South Africa compared to what has been done in the DRC.

Table 3: Comparing conflict transformation mechanisms in four African countries and in Masisi

Countries Characteristics	Kenya	Ghana	South Africa	DRC (Masisi)
Nature of Conflicts	Violent ethnic conflicts	Violent ethnic conflicts	Protracted and violent conflicts	Ethnic, Protracted and violent conflicts
Ethnic / Racial groups involved	Marakwet, Pokot, Kikuyu, Kalenjin	Konkomba, Nanumba, Dagbon vs	Black people and White people	Hunde, Nyanga, Nande, Tembo vs Hutu and Tutsi
Models or tools for Conflict transformation	<i>Amani Mashinani</i> (Peace at the grassroots) and <i>Maridhiano Mashinani</i> (Reconciliation at the Grassroots)	PPNT (Permanent Peace Negotiation Team)	TRC (Truth and Reconciliation Commission)	Coercive power (various military operations: Kimya, Mbata, Mkuki, Sukola I & II) and BARAZA
	WPDC (Wajir Peace and Development Committee)	The Nairobi Peace Initiatives	“Healing of Memories”	Timid initiatives by NGO and the government
Content of the Model	Conflict transformation approach	To mitigate the effects of violence	To initiate and facilitate dialogue	To reconcile the communities
	To facilitate dialogue To mobilise clan elders	Bottom-up approach; to facilitate meetings and dialogues		Top-down approach

Source: Compiled from: Korir, C. (2009); Korir, C. and al. (2017); Opongo, E.O. (2020); Abdullahi, A.A. and al. (2016) and Olaosebikan, A.J. (2016)

2.8 Conclusion

This chapter presented the nature, extent and systemic causes of conflicts and violence with some cases from around the world and from African countries. In addition, the chapter gave

the consequences of the youth involvement in violence and the peace initiatives that have been tried in some places and in Masisi in particular. This chapter reviewed a sample of literary sources dealing with the youth participation in conflicts in various places. I briefly mentioned and related the major causes of the problem, then identified and highlighted the gaps and stated what this study intends to add. According to Pettigrew and Tropp (2005) and Hewstone and Swart (2011), Allport developed an influential theory known as “Intergroup Contact Hypothesis or Theory” in 1954, through which he categorised the conditions needed for reducing intergroup prejudice and mitigate violence or conflict, namely, communication, team building, leadership, coping and social skills. As such, efforts have been directed towards having groups with the necessary instruments for achieving peace goals. Thus, an investigation around attitudinal transformation was raised based on this literature to explain success or failure in some countries.

In this research, therefore, I believe that both ingroup and outgroup forces contribute to the differences and conflicts among the youth and hinder the success of any transformation activity. Thus, this study examines the causes, the nature, the extent and the consequences of youth involvement in violence and conflicts. However, so far, the reviewed literature has not shown a direct link between youth leaders and transformation outcomes. That is one of the points this study addresses. The next part of the study presents the literature review and gives an overview of the background to conflicts and violence that have been witnessed in North Kivu Province and in Masisi in particular.

CHAPTER THREE

BACKGROUND TO CONFLICTS AND VIOLENCE IN NORTH KIVU PROVINCE

3.1 Introduction

This chapter gives a portrait of North Kivu in its traditional division, and the population living there. In addition, the chapter establishes the actors involved in conflicts and violence, in particular the youths and the scope of their actions. Furthermore, the chapter presents the sources of their misunderstanding; the types of violence, the conflicts and their impact and it evaluates the strategies put in place for conflict transformation in order to change the youth's behaviour in North-Kivu, particularly in Masisi District. In this way, this chapter tackles the second research question on how the protracted conflicts and violence have impacted the youths.

The history of militia groups or armed groups is not new in the Eastern DRC. Stearns et al. (2013: 15) assert that the country history has been characterised by armed groups since 1885. According to them, such groups started forming long before the colonial time. What changed are their names and the extent of their operations. According to Muraya and Ahere (2014: 9) among the various and numerous armed groups currently operating in Eastern DRC, some are Congolese whereas others are foreign groups. Among the foreign groups, Muraya and Ahere confirm that some of them are backed by Rwanda et al. by Uganda in weapons, troops and territory.

Among the major features of conflicts in Eastern DRC, this chapter first highlights the opposing groups in different areas from north to south. In Ituri, tensions consistently arise between the Lendu and Hema communities, while in North Kivu, conflicts pit Kinyarwanda-speaking groups against other ethnicities, notably the Nande, Hunde and Nyanga. Meanwhile, in South Kivu, clashes occur between Rwandan and Burundian factions and other ethnic groups such as the Fulero and Shi people. Additionally, Morison (2003: 227) highlights the involvement of foreign sovereign armies, notably from neighbouring countries like Rwanda, Uganda, and Burundi, engaged in combat on Congolese soil. Second, the chapter presents various groups that have created havoc and involved thousands of youths, particularly in the

East and in Masisi. At this junction, the chapter provides an overview of the armed groups in the province followed by the presentation of Masisi and the armed groups operating therein.

3.2 The Portrait of Masisi

Masisi District is in the eastern DRC, in the North-Kivu Province, with high mountains. This district covers 4734 km² and is made up of 105 villages². Masisi is divided into two *Chefferies* (Chiefdoms) which are the Bahunde Chiefdom and the Bashali Chiefdom and two *Secteurs*, the Osso/Banyungu and Katoyi. The *chefferies* are divided into *groupements* which are smaller traditional entities that are making the chiefdoms. Here is the current Masisi customary subdivision with its *groupements* and their traditional leaders:

Table 4: Customary administration of Masisi

CHEFFERIES/CHIEFDOM	SUB-CHIEFDOMS	HEADQUARTERS	TRADITIONAL CHIEFS
BAHUNDE	Mupfunyi Karuba	Karuba	Muley Kubuya Eloï
	Mupfunyi Shanga	Bitonga	Wetemwami Muharuro
	Mupfunyi Kibabi	Kibabi	Ngendo Muhabura
	Mupfunyi Matanda	Matanda	Safari Lupfutso
	Ufamandu I	Kamuobe	Misati Mutani IV
	Kamuronza	Matcha	Primo Bitsibu
BASHALI	Bashali Mokoto	Kitchanga	Bashali
	Bashali Kahembe	Nyamitaba	Kayembe Indwe
OSSO	Bapfuna	Mukowa	Pfuna David
	Biiri	Kalinga	NguluBiiri
	Buabo	Mashaki	Mihingano Mushesha
	Banyungu	Burora	Mwatsi Mulamo
	Nyamaboko I	Busurungi	Kishala Mulengetsi
GATOYI	Nyalipe	Katoyi	Jacqueline Birusha
	Luindi	Luindi	Bahati Semahane

²Interview with Muley Kubuya Eloï, Traditional Chief, Mupfunyi Karuba at his Office, Karuba, 17th February 2023

<i>CHEFFERIES/CHIEFDOM</i>	<i>SUB-CHIEFDOMS</i>	<i>HEADQUARTERS</i>	<i>TRADITIONAL CHIEFS</i>
	Kambule	Kambule	Mandu Kanfomo
	Ufamandu II	Bitoyi	Muramba Bushinika
	Kibabi II	Muhairwa	Muhirwa Kitalaula
	Nyamaboko II	Kikoma	Kilonfu Mulewa

Source: Office of the Traditional Chief, Mupfunyi Karuba at Karuba, 17th February 2022

3.3 Population and Ethnic Groups in Masisi

Frankly speaking, the prevailing situation in the country and in Masisi in particular pose significant challenges in accurately determining the population figures due to insecurity and inaccessibility to various regions. It is very risky and impossible to reach some areas because of armed groups ruling the bigger part of the province. Consequently, the numbers available are primarily provided by international NGOs, although these may not fully reflect the true situation. Another factor preventing us from establishing the exact number of the population in Masisi is the presence of the former Rwandan refugees mingled with the FDLR, who do not allow easy access to the area where they live. They have mingled with the local population or autochthonous Congolese and in some places, they speak the local language so that it is not easy to separate them from the local people. As a result, establishing precise population figures for the district remains a considerable challenge.

According to Turner (2003: 112), “Masisi was sparsely populated” and hosted Hunde and Tutsi pastoral communities and later on, the Belgians brought in “Hutu from Rwanda to work on European plantations”. Adding to Turner’s information, Mamdani (2001: 240–241) establishes that people were sent to Congo from Rwanda in 1937 and 1942 all the way to 1948. The population history in Masisi has always been hotly debated. It is true that the Hunde and Hutu were found in Masisi long before the colonial time. Yet, researchers argue that historically, the Hutu and Tutsi arrived in North Kivu as earlier as in the fourteenth century when the Hunde and Nande arrived in the province in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries from Uganda. These communities have lived together since 1880 (Mpeza et al., 2016: 306–307). From this time onward, conflicts have existed in this province.

There is another wave, the second one, known as transplantation of Hutu and Tutsi who were brought in the Province by the then colonialists between 1927 and 1956 (Mpeza, 2016: 308).

When Congo gained its independence, these Hutu and Tutsi were given Congolese nationality like any other tribal group living in the country at the time. However, that was on political side whereas the social dimension shows that harmony was a mere dream. I should mention that all the ethnic groups fought together for their independence and some Hutu and Tutsi took part in the negotiations that led to independence as they took part in the first cabinets. These are people like Jean-Nepomucene Rwiyereka, Theodomir Nzamukwereka, Wilfrid Buchyanayandi, and Stanislas Gatabazi Murayi (Mpeza, 2016: 308).



Figure 3: Map of the Kivu Provinces. **Source:** Spiegel (2017)

In 1959, the third wave of people from Rwanda was a group of Tutsi refugees who arrived in Congo and were resettled in Bibwe and Ihula, both places in Masisi (Mpeza, 2016: 308). Currently, Masisi is mainly home to Hunde, Hutu, Tutsi, Nyanga and Tembo. The Hunde hold the customary power; the Hutu are farmers or agriculturalists; and the Tutsi are pastoralists. The Nyanga and Tembo are also farmers but not as much as the Hutu. Apart

from the Hutu and Tutsi who speak the same language (Kinyarwanda) and who are considered to be “Banyarwanda”, other ethnic groups speak Kihunde, Kinyanga and Kitembo. A nuance that should be added here is that in the local languages, “Banyarwanda” means “people from Rwanda” (“Banya” meaning “people from...”). As they say *Banyamasisi* meaning “People from Masisi” (Mamdani, 2001: 239). However, both *Banyarwanda* and *Banyamasisi* are pejoratively used to mean foreigners from Rwanda. And it is this meaning that causes confusion and fuels conflicts. It is important to emphasize that these identity-induced conflicts have been sustained by armed groups and foreign interventions from the neighbouring country.

3.4 Militia Groups and Systems of Youth Violence in Eastern DRC

Tull (2005: 97–98) provides a categorisation of armed non-state actors commonly involved in violence based on four major variables: the geographical scope, composition, scale, means and objectives. On the Congolese particular case, Tull establishes three types of armed non-state actors: insurgency movements, warlord groups and militias (2005: 97). According to him, “militias operate within the narrowest parameters in terms of the geographical scope. Being locally based social movements the actions of militias are limited to the sub-provincial level, usually not exceeding beyond several districts. (...) their spatial scope is usually, though not always, defined by social boundaries” (Tull, 2005: 97). Furthermore, this scholar argued:

Militias are armed organisations that are generally mobilised and sustained through ethnic identities. This, in turn, influences their operational scale for militias recruit male, and sometimes female, youths of their respective ethnic groups and hardly ever comprises more than 1,000 to 3,000 fighters (Tull, 2005: 97).

Thus, from this explanation, one can conclude that militias are armed groups operating at a local level and are limited by social groupings and the geographic space. They do not cover a very large space as this could lead to problems with controlling the conquered space. In addition, Tull (2005: 97) says, “depending on the settlement patterns in any given region, however, several militias of the same ethnic group may exist in one province.” Sometimes, the militias “operate both in territorial and in functional terms”.

Talking about the warlords, Tull (2005: 99–100) asserts that these are groups of informed people or elites who use their knowledge and skills to achieve economic objectives using violence and manipulations. The elites acting as warlords get advantages from their close relationships with the political leadership. They have financial means to sustain their groups or to recruit large groups of disciples and fighters from their own ethnic people. Their power also comes from the support they get from external parties, organisations, governments and business owners. This enables them to control vast parts of territories, markets and resources. The third category, according to Tull (2005: 100), is that of insurgencies or rebellions. These groups “seek to achieve political and economic power by conquering the state. Their national scope is one of the most important factors distinguishing insurgencies and warlords”. He makes it clear that for insurgencies, “while national ambitions may extend to the economic realm, economics are not a goal in their own right.” Insurgencies, Tull argues, aim most at political power than at economics aspirations.

From the above explanations, one can categorise the armed non-state actors operating in North Kivu Province and in Masisi in particular. Even though their agenda is not so clear, most of these violent groups are organised around ethnic loyalties in a narrow geographical space around their villages and without political ambitions. Their activities are based on looting, raping and working for external masters supplying them with firearms and ammunitions. Quite often, it is these masters who give them reasons or motivations for fighting. It is therefore clear that the groups operating in Masisi could be categorised as militias, on one hand and on the other hand, as warlords given their *modus operandi* and the scope of their actions. It is worth noting that armed non-state groups in eastern DRC are very dynamic and change the names, the coalitions and the *modus operandi* according to the objectives or to the prevailing sociopolitical and economic situations in the region. In this thesis, I focus on the local groups operating in Masisi and to some extent those foreign groups having an impact in the district. The more crucial interrogation was the relationship between the groups’ claims and the objectives of the manipulators or those who exploit the groups in protecting “their socioeconomic or political interests, including basic physical security” (Tull, 2005: 260). The Congo Research Group (2021) counted 122 militia groups in the Eastern provinces of DRC; these are North Kivu, South Kivu, Ituri and Tanganyika. The major groups identified are presented in Table 5.

Table 5: Militia Groups in Eastern DRC

PROVINCE	MILITIA GROUPS	STATUS
ITURI	Zaire –FPAC	Local
	CODECO-FCB	Local
	CODECO-BTD	Local
	CODECO-ALC	Local
	Chini ya Kilima-FPIC	Local
	FRPI	Local
	Mai-Mai Alaise	Local
	Mai-mai Simba Mangalibi	Local
	Mai-Mai Kyandenga MNLDK	Local
	Mai-Mai Barcelone	Local
NORTH KIVU	Mai-Mai Simba Mangalibi	Local
	Mai-Mai Kyandenga MNLDK	Local
	Mai-Mai Barcelone	Local
	ADF (Allied Democratic Forces)	Foreign Group/Uganda
	FLEC/NG	Local
	Mai-Mai Ngolenge	Local
	Mai-Mai Uhuru OAPB	Local
	Mai-Mai Shingo Pamba	Local
	Mai-Mai Mandefu	Local
	Mazembe APASIKO	Local
	Mai-MaiLeopards	Local
	Mai-Mai UPLC	Local
	APRC	Local
	Mai-Mai Ninja	Local
	FAP (Force d'Autodefense Populaire)	Local
	APR (Armée patriotique du Ruwenzori)	Mixt (Local and Foreign, Uganda)
	RNL	Local
	Mai-Mai Simba UPLD	Local
	Mai-Mai Simba FDS	Local
	Mai-Mai Kabidon FPP/AP	Local
	NDC-R/Guidon	Local
	Mai-Mai Jackson FMP	Local

PROVINCE	MILITIA GROUPS	STATUS
	NDC-R/Bwira	Local
	MAC	Local
	Mai-Mai Kifuafua	Local
	AFRC	Local
	Nyatura FPDH	Local
	Amka Jeshi	Local
	Nyatura CMC	Local
	FDLR-FOCA	Foreign/Rwanda
	M23 (mouvement du 23 Mars)	Foreign/Rwanda
	RUD-URUNANA	Foreign/Rwanda (from a split in the FDLR-FOCA)
	Nyatura Turarambiwe	Local/ Rutshuru
	APCLS	Local
	Nyatura FPPH	Local
	Nyatura GAV	Local
	Nyatura APRDC	(Currently Abazungu) Local
	Mai-Mai Kifuafua Maachano	Local
	Nyatura Bagaruza	Local
	Nyatura Musheku	(Currently Abazungu) Local
	UPDC Kapasi	Local
	Mai-Mai Kirikicho	Local
	Nyatura Kalume	Local
SOUTH KIVU	Mai-Mai Kifuafua	Local
	Raia Mutomboki Soleil	Local
	Mai-Mai Kirikicho	Local
	Nyatura Kalume	Local
	Raia Mutomboki Shabani	Local
	CNRD-Ubwiye	Foreign/Rwanda (from a split in the FDLR since 2016)
	JKK/CCCRD	Local
	Raia Mutomboki Mungoro	Local
	Raia Mutomboki Blaise	Local
	Raia Mutomboki Bralima	Local
	Raia Mutomboki Butachibera	Local

PROVINCE	MILITIA GROUPS	STATUS
	Raia Mutomboki Bipopa	Local
	Raia Mutomboki Hamakombo	Local
	Raia Mutomboki Lance	Local
	Raia Mutomboki Lukoba	Local
	Raia Mutomboki Ndarumanga	Local
	Raia Mutomboki Mabala	Local
	Raia Mutomboki Donat	Local
	Raia Mutomboki Walike	Local
	Raia Mutomboki Kazimoto	Local
	Raia Mutomboki Kabazimia	Local
	Raia Mutomboki Musolwa	Local
	Raia Mutomboki Charles Quint	Local
	Raia Mutomboki Kabe	Local
	Raia Mutomboki 100Kg	Local
	Raia Mutomboki Kimba	Local
	Raia Mutomboki Kampanga	Local
	Raia Mutomboki Bozi	Local
	Raia Mutomboki Le Fort	Local
	Raia Mutomboki Musumbu	Local
	Mai-Mai Malaika	Local
	Mai-Mai Makindu	Local
	Mai-Mai Rasta	Local
	Front national de Libération	Banyamulenge/Local
	Mai-Mai Buhirwa	Local
	Mai-Mai Ilunga	Local
	Mai-Mai Kashumba	Local
	Mai-Mai Kijangala	Local
	Mai-Mai Makanaki	Local
	Mai-Mai Mbulu	Local
	Mai-Mai Issa Mutoka	Local
	Mai-Mai Ruma/ZelaMbuma	Local
	Mai-Mai Mushombe	Local
	Mai-Mai Nyerere	Local
	RED-Tabara	Foreign/Burundians
	Mai-Mai Rushaba	Local

PROVINCE	MILITIA GROUPS	STATUS
	Mai-Mai Rene	Local
	Mai-Mai Réunion FPLC	Local
	Mai-Mai Ngalyabatu	Local
	Mai-Mai Mupekenya	Local
	Twigwaneho	Banyamulenge/Local
	AFP, aka Gutabara or Android	Banyamulenge/Local
	Gumino	Banyamulenge/Local
	Mai-Mai Mutetezi FPDC	Local
	Mai-Mai Bishake	Local
	Biloze Bishambuke	Local
	Mai-Mai Yakutumba	Local
	Mai-Mai Aochi	Local
	Mai-Mai Shoshi	Local
	Mai-Mai Apa na Pale	Local
	Mai-Mai Mulumba	Local
	Mai-Mai Alida	Local
	Mai-Mai Brown	Local
	Mai-Mai Mwenyemali	Local
TANGANYIKA	Mai-Mai Apa na pale	Local
	PERCI Nyumbaisha	Local
	Mai-Mai Eléments Katadaye	Local
	Mai-Mai Fimbo na Fimbo	Local
	PERCI John Majimbo	Local
	Groupe Mazout	Local
	PERCI Kaomba	Local
	PERCI Mpululu	Local
	Mai-Mai Eléments Mutono	Local

Source: Compiled from Congo Research Group, *La Cartographie des groupes armés dans l'Est du Congo* [Mapping Armed Groups in Eastern Congo] (2021:4–8)

Table 6: Militia Groups in North Kivu Province

PROVINCES	MILITIA GROUPS	LOCATION	STATUS/LOCAL OR FOREIGN
NORTH KIVU	Mai-Mai Simba Mangalibi	Manguredjipa	Local
	Mai-Mai Kyandenga MNLDK		Local
	Mai-Mai Barcelone		Local
	ADF		Foreign
	FLEC/NG	Eringeti	Local
	Mai-Mai Ngolenge	Eringeti	Local
	Mai-Mai Uhuru OAPB	Oicha	Local
	Mai-Mai Shingo Pamba	Beni	
	Mai-Mai Mandefu	Beni	
	Mazembe APASIKO	Beni	
	Mai-Mai Leopards	Beni	
	Mai-Mai UPLC	Beni	
	APRC	Beni	
	APCLS (Alliance des Patriotes pour un Congo Libre et Souverain)	Masisi	Local (Hunde Ethnic Group) Led by Mr Janvier Karairi Buingo
	Mai-Mai Ninja	Beni	
	Mai-Mai Charles	Rutshuru	Charles Bokande
	FAP (Force d'Autodefense Populaire)		
	APR (Armée patriotique de Ruwenzori)	Beni - Butembo	
	RNL		
	Mai-Mai Simba UPLD		
	Mai-Mai Simba FDS		
	Mai-Mai Kabidon FPP/AP	Bunyalenge	
	NDC-R/Guidon		
	Mai-Mai Jackson FMP	Vitshumbi	
	NDC-R/Bwira		
	MAC	Masisi	
	AFRC		
	Nyatura FPDH	Masisi	Local (Hutu)
	Nyatura John Love		Local/ created by Muhawenimana Bunombe aka John Love

PROVINCES	MILITIA GROUPS	LOCATION	STATUS/LOCAL OR FOREIGN
	AmkaJeshi	Kiwanja (Rutshuru)	
	M23 (Mouvement du 23 Mars)		Foreign group/Rwandese
	RUD-Urunana		Foreign/Rwandese
	Nyatura Turarambiwe	Rutshuru	Local (Hutu)
	Nyatura FPPH	Masisi	Local (Hutu)
	Nyatura GAV	Masisi	Local (Hutu)
	Nyatura APRDC (Now Abazungu)	Masisi-Rutshuru	Local, Ruki, Kinigi, Gatoyi, Mianja
	Mai-Mai Kifuafua Maachano	Masisi	Batembo ethnic group
	Nyatura Bagaruza	Masisi	
	Nyatura Delta FDDH	Rubaya (Masisi)	
	Nyatura Jean-Marie (Now Abazungu)	Mweso	
	Nyatura Musheku (Now Abazungu)	Masisi	
	UPDC Kapasi	Gatoyi (Masisi)	
	Mai-Mai Kirikicho	Walikale	
	Nyatura Kalume	Walikale	
	FDLR-FOCA (Forces combattantes Abacunguzi)		Foreign /Rwandese
	FDLR- RUD		Foreign/Rwandese
	CNRD-Ubwiyunge		Foreign/Rwandese

Source: Congo Research Group (2021: 4–8)

3.4 Situation of Militia Groups and Youth Violence in Masisi

According to Tull (2005: 18), violence in Africa and in North Kivu in particular, is “the most perceptible facet of the contemporary configuration of power”. On their side, the conflicts in Eastern DRC that Turner (2007) and Murison (2002: 227) called “the Congo wars” are multifaceted and have several actors or rebel groups and their masters with different motivations. Murison (2002: 227) lists some groups operating in the area as follows:

The conflicts are multidimensional in that they comprise many different rebel groups and splintered rebel groups from Congo, Rwanda and Burundi. The Congolese rebel groups

include the *Mouvement pour la Liberation du Congo* (MLC), the *Rassemblement Congolais pour la Democratie-Goma* (RCD-Goma), and the RCD - *Mouvement de Liberation* (RCD-ML), as well as the Mai-Mai. The Rwandan rebel groups include the aforementioned ex-FAR and the Interahamwe, and the Burundian element is composed of the *Front pour la Defense de la Democratie* (FDD).

The above corroborates the Report by GRIP about arms traffic in central Africa (Berghezan, 2002: 126). In fact, in this report, it is confirmed that even during the late Kabila time, there were two opposing camps in DRC, one on the side of the government and the other on the side of the opposition. What is notable is that alongside the Congolese army and troops from foreign armies (such as those from Angola and Zimbabwe aiding the national army), there were armed groups aligning with the Congolese forces. According to Berghezan in the aforementioned report, these included the Mai-Mai operating in North and South Kivu, the FDD from Burundi and the ALIR I composed of former military personnel accused of genocide in Rwanda, as well as ALIR 2 consisting of youth born and raised in DR Congo, albeit originating from Rwanda (Berghezan, 2002: 126). ALIR II is also accused of cooperating with the Congolese Armed Forces and the FDD from Burundi (Berghezan, 2002: 139). On the opposing side, there were the RCD from Goma, North Kivu and the MLC lead by Jean Pierre Bamba. These armed groups are still active in Eastern DRC. Arms and ammunitions were supplied by Zimbabwe, Angola and Namibia and South Africa (Berghezan, 2002: 127). Even combatants from these countries came to back the Congolese national army, here, the South African mercenaries, the Executive Outcomes (EO) (Berghezan, 2002: 130). The main feature of the militia groups is that they are all involved in “human rights violations, financial corruption, destruction, [and] looting” (Afoaku, 2002: 110). They are also committing acts of rape and other horrible sexual crimes. These are the current instances of violence the youth from all sides are perpetrating in the high mountains of Masisi.

Berghezan (2002: 140 -141) and Barlow (2007: 444–445) established relationships among the armed groups operating in Eastern Congo. These groups were by then the various Mai-Mai groups that are backed by the Central government, the RCD According to Congo Research Group (2021), there are several armed groups in eastern DR Congo, especially in

the Ituri, North Kivu and South Kivu Provinces. The Research Group has identified around 122 armed groups committing horrific violations of human rights (Congo Research Group, 2021; 3; Autesserre, 2012: 2). Some renowned warlords are Amuri Yakutumba, Guidon Shimiray, Michel Rukunda, Janvier Karairi and Katembo Kilalo (CRG, 2021: 8). However, it would be good to remember that militia groups in Congo keep on changing their names according to factors like new members joining them, new coalitions or the political situation in the Great Lakes Region or even their interests. An example is The Congolese Rally for Democracy [in French: *Le Rassemblement Congolais pour la Démocratie* (RCD)], also known as the Rally for Congolese Democracy, the *Congrès National pour la Défense du Peuple* [National Congress for the Defence of the People] (CNDP) and the M23 that finally are said to be one group with the same actors and backed by the same countries, here Rwanda and Uganda.

There are times when some armed groups come together and form a “coalition” according to what their interests are or who the enemy is or even what the kind of business they are fighting for. Generally speaking, there are three categories of armed groups operating in Eastern DRC and in Masisi in particular. The first group is made of foreign militia groups. These are groups that come from neighbouring countries or other African countries and are on the Congolese soil without opposition and create chaos in the country. Among these there are the FDLR, a group of former Rwandan refugees who came to the then Zaire in 1994 after the Rwandan genocide. The group includes former Rwandan army men and other young civilians who were born in Congo. Another armed group, the ADF/NALU is said to be a Ugandan group acting in Congo. The mystery around this group is that its history dates back to the Mobutu regime. At that time, people used to call them the Kasindiens because they were living or were operating around Kasindi. The only thing people knew is that they were from Uganda. In recent years, the ADF was headed by a certain Jamil Mukulu. In 2015, he was arrested in Tanzania and was replaced by Seka Musa Baluku. After this group had been joined by the national army for the Liberation of Uganda, NALU, both formed an Islamist movement currently operating from Mount Rwenzori, in the River Semuliki Valley in Beni. The ADF/NALU members are believed to have relationship with the RCD-K/ML of Mbusa Nyamwisi and even with some local chiefs. They have and are still committing horrible crimes and massacres. There are also groups from Burundi operating in South Kivu.

Another undetermined group is made of the *Mbororo* people. These are people who came to the DRC with their cattle and guns. Officially they are known as cattle keepers who are said to have come from Chad and crossed the Central Africa Republic and entered DRC by force, not as refugees but as cattle breeders looking for green pastures.

The second group is made up of local and known armed groups. These are groups officially organised, localised in known places and airing their claims. In addition to these groups, there are others made up of young people who get guns to threaten people for money or just for pillaging or looting. This group comprises crooks or criminals kidnapping people for ransom, sometimes killing them or raping girls and women. They live in villages or in the bush. At the beginning of the 1993 bloody conflicts, there was an unclear group calling itself *Bapili* or *Bangilima*. They were known for using traditional weapons like arrows and spears and they were known as human flesh-eaters. Later, it was established that these were made of the Banande youth that had come from Bwito in North Kivu. But the bigger groups from the Hunde, Nyanga, Kano and Tembo ethnic groups are indiscriminately called the Mai-Mai and are still known as that today (Bucyalimwe 2015: 364). On their side, the Hutu militia called themselves “Kibarizo” because that was the place from where the attack of the Kinyarwanda-speakers started with hundreds of people killed. Later, they changed and became *Abakobwa* meaning “the girls”; then they became the Combatants (Bucyalimwe, 2015: 364). In 1996, when the AFDL took over power, the then government recruited the youth from the armed groups, The Hutu Youth who refused to be recruited changed their name and became the Mongols and was led by Miganda Garaga and Habyara Shobora (Bucyalimwe, 2015: 364). Table 7 presents the new coalition known as *Wazalendo* of armed groups in Masisi and Rutshuru following the M23 aggression.

Table 7: Militia group coalitions in Masisi and Rutshuru following the M23 aggression

Coalitions WAZALENDO	GROUP LEADERS	COMMENTS
Group 1: APCLS	Karayire Buyingo Janvier	Group leader Hunde from Masisi
	Mapenzi Maike Fidele	
	Maheshe Shematsi Paul	
	Kapitula Elie	
	Akilimali Musonga Gabriel	
	Kayumbo Ngoy David/Kambuzi	
Group NDCR- RPRC	SimwerayMuisa Guidon	Group leader Nyanga from Walikale
	Mbula Matondi	
	Mashipe Kashira Desire	
	Bwira Chuo Gilbert	
	Shukuru Bulenda	
Group CMC/FDP	Kamanzi Ndaruhutse Dominique	Group Leader Banyabwisha from Rutshuru
	Mbitse Burebero Jacques	
	Bigabo Nsabimana	
	Niyonzima Janvier	
Group ANCDH	Wamushaba Nyamunya Jean-Marie	Group Leader Banyabwisha from Masisi
	Sauli Dunia Ndimubanzi Ignace	
	Dusabe Gashamari Delta	
	Kigingi Kotala Desire	
	Mungu Anahururuma Paulo Watiba Kagiri	
	Matata Mpumuje Selemani	
	Tuungane Gentil	
	Mahoro	
	Defendeur	

Source: The researcher

During a colloquium organised by the Pole Institute, a research centre at Goma, in September 2021, in his presentation about “Mapping the Militia Groups operating around Kitchanga”, Mwisha Kasiwa identified 29 militia groups in the area stretching from Kitchanga, Mweso all

the way to Pinga. He divided these groups into three major categories: the Nduma Defence of Congo-Renové (NDC-R), the APCLS and the *Coalition des Mouvements pour le Changement* (CMC). Among the actors or members of these militia groups, Mwisha lists the following: the educated and jobless youth; the uneducated and jobless youth; the demobilised and former members of the army; foreign rebels from neighbouring countries; the businesspeople and the politicians. There are also several groups operating in Masisi even though some of them are spontaneously created just to loot and commit other crimes. In the following sections, the chapter describes some of the major armed groups operating in North Kivu and/or acting in Masisi.

3.4.1 Nyatura CMC/FDP (Coalition Des Mouvements Pour Le Changement)

This is a coalition of three groups under the leadership of Benjamin Ndikuyeze, Dominique Ndaruhutse and Jean-Claude Habyarimana also known as Jules Mulumba Juvenal. This is a remnant of a Hutu group known as MAGRIVI (*Mutuelle des Agriculteurs du Virunga*) (Bucyalimwe, 2012) that was created in 1990. Thus, it is a coalition formed by the Kinyarwanda-speaking group aiming at protecting their people. Initially, the MAGRIVI had the feature of a political party and was an ethnic group organisation. When this was dismantled in 1993, the members tried to create other groups including the “Garde Civiles” (in 1992) who later became *aba combatants* or the combatant early in 1993. The “Garde civiles” and the “combatants” became the Nyatura.

Currently, the Nyatura CMC/FDP calling itself *Collectif des mouvements pour le changement/ Force de Defense du Peuple* [Coalition of Movements for Change/People Defence Force] is headed by Jean-Claude Habyarimana known as Jules Mulumba Juvenal. This coalition is involved in building schools, bridges and Health Centres in Buito. Schools: Kinyanguku Primary School, Linga Primary School at Tongo in Rutshuru Territory, Bushuhe village; La Fontaine Primary School in Rutshuru Territory, Buito Chiefdom at Tongo in Kanyatsi village. In the health sector, the armed group claims to have built the Muumba Muzito Health Centre at Bukombo Chiefdom, in Buito; the Kanyatsi Health Centre at Bushuhe/Tongo Village, Buito in Rutshuru; there is also the Mungoli Health Centre, at Kihondo in Buito; Mushebere Health Centre. In transport or communication, the CMC/FDP has repaired some roads: the road Kizimba to Bukombo linking Birambizo parish to

Kitchanga for 19 kms; the road linking Karambi to Mweso through Mushebere of 10 kms; the road between Rubeha to Kinyeguku all the way to Kihira (work in progress); the road from Birambizo to Mashango all the way to Katsiru; the road from Bukombo to Rusekera; the road from Mulimbi to Kanyatsi all the way to Makomalehe going to Mushabagwe (Tongo); the road from Busenene to Kanyatsi (in Tongo); the road from Butare to Buhambi (Tongo); the road from Kamodoka to Kashuga in Kihondo (Buito); the road from Kitunda to Kashuga in Kihondo. Moreover, bridges have been rehabilitated like the Rukuru bridge between Bishusha and Bukombo; the Muhongozi bridge linking Rutshuru territory to Masisi territory; the Bushobyio bridge; the Kashavu bridge between Birambizo parish and Kashavu village; the Matala bridge at Tongo; the Biruyi bridge at Tongo; the Bagarira bridge at Tongo; the Tucha bridge between Kivumu and Mushabagwe.

Table 8: Infrastructures built through CMC initiatives

PRIMARY SCHOOLS	HEALTH CENTRES	ROAD/COMMUNICATION	BRIDGES
Kinyanguku Primary School	Muumba/Muzito Health Centre	Kizimba to Bukombo	<i>Rukuru</i> (between <i>Bishusha</i> and <i>Bukombo</i>)
Linga Primary School	Kanyatsi Health Centre	Karambi to Mweso	Muhongozi between Rutshuru and Masisi
La Fontaine Primary School	Mugoli Health Centre	Rubeha to Kinyeguku to Kihira	Bushobyio
	Mushebere Health Centre	Birambizo to Mashango to Katsiru	Kashavu between Birambizo and Kashavu village
		Bukombo to Rusekera	Matala (at Tongo)
		Mulimbi to Kanyatsi to Makomalehe to Mushabagwe	Biruyi (at Tongo)
		Busenene to Kanyatsi	Bagarira (at Tongo)
		Butare to Buhambi	Tucha between Kivumu and Mushabagwe
		Kamodoka to Kashuga	
		Kitunda to kashuga	

Source: Field notes by the researcher

Another Nyatura militia group known as Nyatura FDDH or *Force pour la Defense des Droits Humains* or “Fighting Forces for Human Rights” is made of people calling themselves *Abazungu* or the “White people” and is very active at Ruki, Kinigi, Gatoyi and Mianja.

3.4.2 Mai-Mai Kifuafua

This is a Hunde militia group created in 2002. And it is located in Masisi and Walikale. It is estimated to have around 300 militia men who operate in villages like Remeka, Hombo and Busurungi. Its leader is Delphin Mbaenda. There are various Mai-Mai groups according to leaders or places where they operate. Sometimes, the Hutu initiate their own Mai-Mai groups to oppose the Hunde Mai-Mai groups.

3.4.3 The Nduma Defence of Congo and Nduma Defense-Renové, NDC-R

Initially, the Nduma Defence was a militia group by the Nyanga ethnic group. Later, they made a coalition with the Nyatura (Hutu) to fight the FDLR accused of creating insecurity, yet it is a foreign group from Rwanda.

3.4.4 M23 or *Mouvement du 23 Mars*

Stearns (2012: 9) identified three motivations behind the creation of the M23 armed group. These motivations are the elite’s interests, a weak or failed state based on very weak and dismantled institutions added to other local dynamics sustaining conflicts. The movement is known as The CNDP armed group. This group, led by Laurent Nkunda, operated in Eastern Masisi, from Kilolirwe, Kitchanga and Ihula. Later, the CNDP relocated and lived at Jomba, Runyoni and Mbuzi. After mediation by former Nigerian President, Olussegun Obasanjo and the Tanzanian former President, Benjamin Mkapa, the CNDP signed an agreement with the DRC government on 23 March 2009. Laurent Nkunda was arrested in Rwanda and the movement seemed to lose power. But a short time after, in April 2012, another movement calling itself *Mouvement du 23 mars* or the March 23 Movement was born with many members of the CNDP implementing the clauses and decisions signed by the CNDP. This group is said to be backed by the Rwandan army and is still very active in North Kivu Province. Currently the M23 group operate in most of the districts of the DRC’s North Kivu and South Kivu, in Rutshuru and a bigger part of Masisi.

3.5 The Source of Misunderstanding Among the Youths

According to Mpeza et al. (2016: 309), the misunderstanding among the Hunde, Nande and Nyanga on one side and Hutu and Tutsi on the other side started in 1962. This disharmony was politically motivated because these two groups, Hutu and Tutsi, were accused of the support they had given to Nationalist Political parties like the MNC/Lumumba and the CERECA which opposed the creation of the North Kivu Province. The Hutu and Tutsi elites who were in the local/Provincial government were dismissed from office and that was the beginning of the *Kanyarwanda* war (Bucyalimwe, 2013: 29–35; Mpeza, 2016: 309) that involved numerous youths trying to protect their “ethnic communities”. The negative and tense situation lasted until 1972 when the then Parliament passed a law (no 81–002 on 29 June 1981) about nationality, including the nationality of the people from Rwanda. In 1993, the then central government organised what they called the National and Sovereign Conference. This national forum fuelled the fire of hatred, attacks and killings, a hard time for the Hutu and Tutsi. The culmination of this all was the war in Rwanda that culminated in a genocide.

In their claim against the 1993 killings that they called genocide, in Masisi and Walikale, the elite Hutu and Tutsi underlined some facts that fuelled conflicts among the ethnic groups. Among these facts, they list: the discrimination and exclusion of Hutu and Tutsi from the National and Sovereign Conference on the claim that these Hutu and Tutsi are foreigners; the tribalisation or the ethnicisation (Wambua, 2017: 22–23) of the local administration whereby foreigners are excluded from the status apparatus; and the militarisation of the Province especially in Masisi to weaken the foreigners by all the means. This last point has been evident during various phases of the *Kanyarwanda* wars. In the 1962 war, the Hunde were supported by the national army. This army with the local administration has been accused of inflicting heavy taxes on Kinyarwanda-speakers, of arresting and torturing them (Mpeza, 2016: 311). On the 20 March 1993, the Kinyarwanda-speakers were massacred in the Ntoto Market where hundreds of people died. This, according to the complainants, happened two days after the Deputy Governor had toured the place and only two hours after the Deputy District Commissioner had visited the place. People were shot dead; others were hacked with machetes or killed with poisoned arrows. Other people were killed in churches or in their villages.

On 7 April 1993, a certain army Commandant named Bosomba with a group of 12 soldiers led a huge number of civilians and villagers (Hunde and pygmies) to attack Kibarizo, a place accused of being a Hutu and Tutsi stronghold. On that day, 322 people were counted dead including the 12 soldiers killed by the Kinyarwanda-speakers. The Hutu and Tutsi accused the then Deputy Governor, a certain Bamwisho (a Nyanga) and an army Officer named Misingi who was posted at Masisi. According to the complainants, there was a prepared plan to “massacre” Hutu and Tutsi (Mpeza, 2016: 311). This background shows how the youths inherited conflicts and violence; some were born during conflicts and have never experienced peace. They thus take part in hostilities and violence.

3.6 Conflicts and Their Impact on the Youths

Armed conflicts and violence have very serious consequences for the general population and on the youth in particular. On the side of the population, Tull asserted:

Within the survival economy, peasants producing for local markets saw their revenues constantly declining over years, be it for the proliferation of taxes or price controls. In addition, the deterioration of the road networks put serious obstacles on peasant farmers to transport their goods to local markets. Even worse, roads were a privileged site for plunder by greedy state agents which led, in some instances, to the wholesale evasion of roads by ordinary folk (Tull, 2005: 91).

Not only are there various conflicts in the area but also, the road infrastructure is another challenge to poor and exploited villagers. The conflicts, according to Tull, are based on state agents exploiting the farmers through plunder and various taxes exacted by numerous militia men. Yet, the armed people allege that it is for the security they are keeping in the area. Some youths are motivated by the spirit of revenge (McConnan and Uppard, 2001: 37). After their families have lost their belongings and properties, the youths find themselves desperate with no other way to turn. They are easily recruited or they join armed groups willingly. They become cruel and dangerous to their communities. For them, this is their only chance to survive or to express their desperation, frustration or disappointment in life, especially since all the mechanisms of protection have disintegrated (McConnan and Uppard, 2001: 41).

So many armed groups recruiting the youth in Masisi implies that the majority of the youth find themselves in one group or another. This has various consequences: the first one is poverty in their living area or the area of operation. All these young people need to survive but without working. So, they must loot and steal from the population. Yet no one is working on the farms for fear of the militia who live in the bush; no one owns a goat or a hen because most of them have been looted or taken by the same militia. What is currently happening in Masisi is that everyone going to the market finds armed people on his way and has to pay between 500 and 1 000 Congolese francs as tax, what they locally call *Ikibango* (MacConnan, 2001: 42; Turner, 2013: 166).

In addition, every household has to pay 1 000 Congolese francs to the armed people for their security. The armed groups allege that they maintain security for people and their belongings and people have to pay for the security they get. In some places, this security tax is called *Tuishi kwa amani* meaning “let us live in peace”. In other places, the tax is known as *Tuungane mkono* meaning “let’s put our hands together”. This is happening in places like: Kibarizo, Ikivuye, Kirumbu, Muheto, Tambi, Gahira, Remeka, Luki, Ufamandu. In addition, the youths are unable to afford the dowry to marry. So, they decide to rape women or marry them by force. They are aggressive and keep the idea of revenge.

3.7 Types of Violence and Youth Violence

According to Ho-Won Jeong (2017: 19), “peace research interests lie in uncovering the relationships between inequality, injustice and power asymmetry on the one hand and violence on the other”. These are the major dimensions peace research has to look at and that I highlight in this part of the thesis. Here, the chapter highlights the types of violence as they are to be understood in this thesis and are based on Galtung’s views. In fact, Galtung (1969: 171 and 183) distinguishes between three types of violence: structural violence, direct violence and cultural violence. From these three categories, stem other types of violence. Galtung (1996: 30) outlined different typologies and sub-typologies of violence because violence can affect the environment (ecocide), the person (suicide, homicide, genocide), society (culturocide), and the world. In addition, Galtung identified direct violence which is perpetrated by people acting individually or in groups. On the other hand, “structural or indirect violence is defined as built into the person, social and world spaces and is

unintended” (Galtung, 1996: 31; Jeong, 2017: 29–30). Moreover, he presents a model of violence in the shape of a triangle with the three tips of the triangle as direct violence, cultural violence and structural violence. The triangle could be presented in this way (Galtung 2013: 35).

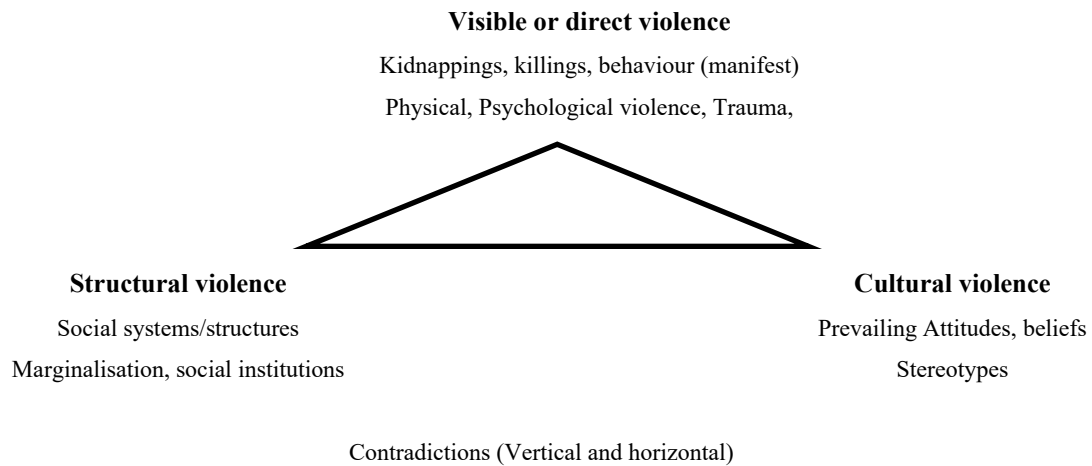


Figure 4: Triangle of violence. **Source:** Adapted from Galtung and Fischer (2013: 35–37)

First, direct violence is the visible type of violence reflected by physical or verbal attacks, killings or murder, kidnappings, torture and every action that affects the person who suffers it. Direct violence can be driven by structural injustices or social injustices. Galtung calls it “actor violence” and asserts that “actor or direct violence is defined in person, social and world spaces and is intended, by individuals acting singly or inside collectivities” (Galtung, 1996: 31). The situation in Masisi where the youth sometimes attack each other and injure or kill people from the other groups is an example of direct violence. Cases of recent killings in Kibugu where an old man was beaten to death because his son had joined a different armed group, or the lady killed in Mohanga by armed people who had come to look for her husband who was a teacher, are types of direct violence. Other cases are defined by the taxes or demanded by armed youth to villagers; this is violence directly suffered by the poor population. All these acts intend to do harm to the opponent.

Second, structural violence encompasses all types of violence that result from the social systems and that are translated into exclusion, marginalisation and contradictions in general. The customary social structures in Masisi deprived some groups of their “rights and ability to satisfy their basic human needs”. People from the royal family or those from the royal ethnic

group are called princes and need others to work for them in a kind of slavery. In Masisi, the youth or their relatives have suffered from discriminatory systems or in what Galtung defines as vertical structural violence. This is a system whereby the youth are politically repressed, economically exploited and culturally alienated. In this way, the youth are denied their freedom of movement and of speech, their wellbeing and their identity. Politically, the youth from one side cannot access some positions as the youth leaders must or should come from one ethnic group. The youth speaker in Masisi is a Hunde and in some areas dominated by the Bahunde, the local youth representatives are Hunde. This creates frustration among the others. Economically, those of the youth who work on the farm must pay taxes whenever they go to the village markets. The same applies to the motoriders who always have to pay taxes for the activity they are doing. Culturally, the youth from the Kinyarwanda groups have to learn Kihunde, the Bahunde language when on the other hand, the young Bahunde have also to learn Kinyarwanda and speak it whenever they find themselves in a Bahutu and Batutsi areas or groups. Some youth prefer to take names from neighbouring cultures like Mayanga, Ilunga or Kasongo just to hide their origin and survive among the other youth. There has been horizontal structural violence that is linked to the colonial era which separated people from the same culture and kept them in separate areas. This is the case of the Kinyarwanda-speaking groups in Congo and Rwanda, the Nande in Congo and Uganda just to name few. Finally, cultural violence is reflected by the prevailing attitudes, the beliefs and subsequent stereotypes and prejudices among people from the same groups or from different groups.

When applied to Masisi context, to youth and their involvement in violence, the triangle provides the following picture:

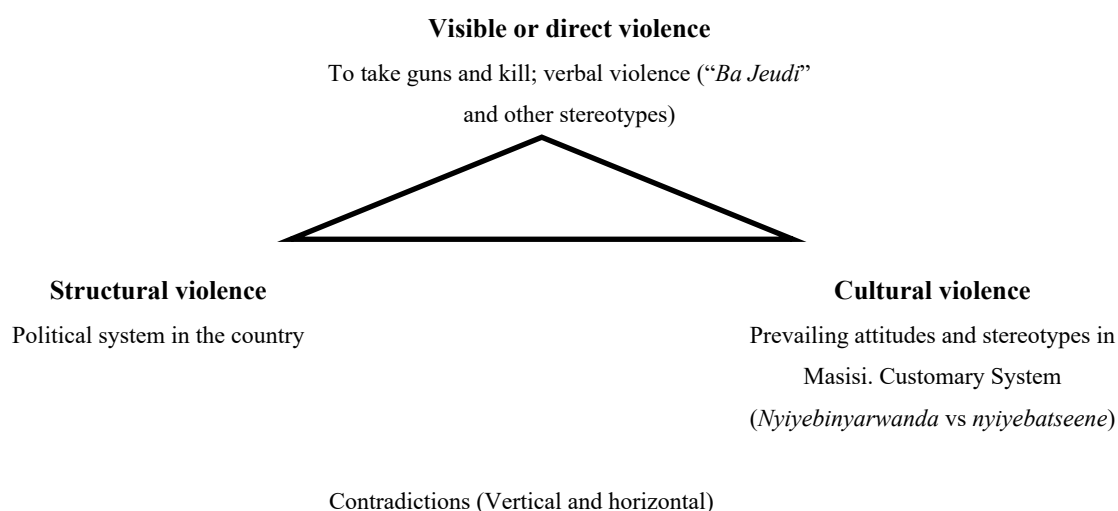


Figure 5: Applying Galtung’s Triangle of violence to the Masisi situation. **Source:**
Adaptation by the researcher.

The types of violence are explained in Table 9.

Table 9:Types of violence among the youths in Masisi and their characteristics

VIOLENCE	CHARACTERISTICS		YOUTHS INVOLVEMENT /ACTS	RESPONSES
Direct	Overt violence (physical violence)	Direct verbal or non-verbal strikes	Use of stereotypes like “ <i>Ba Jeudi</i> ” (The Thursday People, in Kitchanga)	Change conflict behaviours and parties’ behaviours
		Intends to harm the opponent	Violent acts like fights and abuse	
		Emerges as a response to experience of structural violence	Families or ethnic groups against one another	
Structural	An “anomic” society without the rule of law or any other social law (Born, 2005:	Deprivation of rights and abilities to satisfy one’s basic needs (vertical and horizontal structural violence);	Deprive the youth their rights to move, to speech, to freedom...	To remove structural contradictions and injustices among the parties
		could be manifest and	Discrimination, exclusions, to despise others, hate speeches	

	42–43) Creation of social structures (Physical or Psychological violence)	intended violence; poverty, denial of education,		
Cultural	Intention to harm or to kill (Psychological violence)	Used to justify direct and structural violence; could be manifest, intended or unintended violence.	To oppress others on traditional or economical basis	The youth should be helped to change their attitudes

Source: Compiled from Galtung (1969: 173)

Initially, Galtung (1969: 169) had given the major distinctions of violence and provided two types that are physical and psychological violence. He goes further and gives the components or typology of violence. I can summarise the typology he provides in this way:

Galtung establishes different types of violence with their sub-branches. These are the personal or direct violence, the latent, manifest and intended violence. From the above violence triangle, one can derive the conflict triangle and the response triangle. This latter provides the strategies that are appropriate or suitable for each type of violence. Put together in one triangle, the three triangles give this:

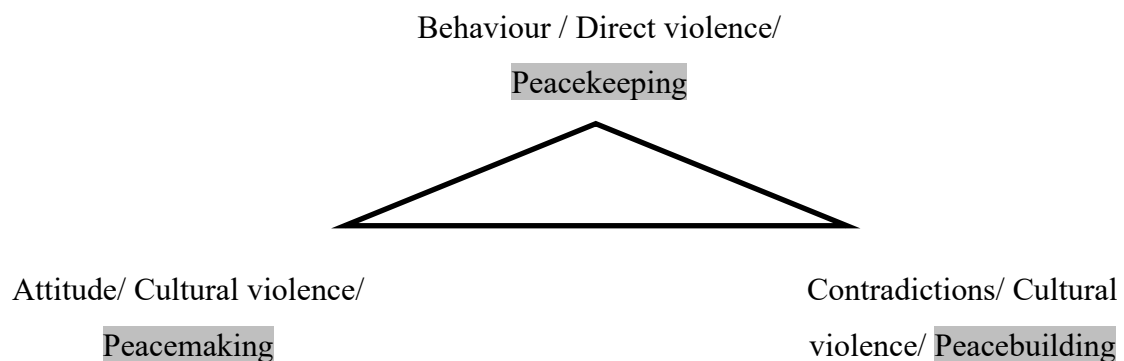


Figure 6: Combining the causal factors, the related types of violence and the responses.

Source: Adaptation by the researcher from Ramsbotham et al. (2005:10)

Going deep, Fisher et al. (2000: 4) assert that “violence consists of actions, words, attitudes, structures or systems that cause physical, psychological, social or environmental damage and/or prevent people from reaching their full human potential”. In this way, violence implies the use of force with bad intentions and results in negative outcome. According to Bennett et al. (2012: 5–6) violence is one of the ways to wage conflicts. For them, violence is: “the result when dialogues have not been effective to solve the conflict. Violence is a psychological or physical force exerted for the purpose of threatening, injuring, damaging, or abusing people or property” (Bennett et al., 2012: 6). Jeong (2017: 30) provides some examples of structural violence. These include elements like poverty, hunger, repression, social alienation, reduced quality of life, denial of educational opportunities, denial of free speech and of association, unequal life chances, inequitable distribution of resources and unequal decision-making power. They encompass the “inegalitarian and discriminatory practices” in general as lived in each society or context where there is oppression, manipulation of relations and discrimination, among others. In the case of the youth in Masisi, these dimensions can have detrimental effects leading them to frustration and despair or loss of hope in life; creating at the same time a conflict situation and violence. Adding to what others have said, Ramsbotham et al. (2005: 28) explain what they assume to be a violent or deadly conflict. According to them, this “is similar to armed conflict, but also includes one-sided violence such as genocides against unarmed civilians”. Here, they refer to the physical dimension of violence. In addition, for them the concept of violence includes “exploitative social relations that cause unnecessary suffering” (Ramsbotham et al., 2005: 29). An example of this kind of suffering is manipulation and/or child labour when they are inflicted on the young people. For the World Health Organisation (WHO) (2002: 4), violence is:

the intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person or against a group or community, that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, maldevelopment or deprivation.

The World Health Organisation distinguishes between three major types of violence. These are self-directed violence, interpersonal violence and collective violence (WHO, 2002: 13–

23). These types, in my view, do not reflect the real dimensions of violence. This is what Galtung (1996: 31) means when explaining the types and subtypes of violence, namely, direct, structural and cultural violence. In fact, according to him, direct violence is defined by its subtypes which are verbal and physical violence or any other type of violence that can cause direct or visible harm to the body, the mind or the spirit. In addition to direct violence, there is structural violence that encompasses violence at political, repressive and economic, exploitative levels. Finally, Galtung portrays cultural violence through its components that could be “religion, law and ideology, language, art, empirical formal science, cosmology” among others. There is also what the researcher calls the “intended violence”. This, Galtung argues, “can originate only in (human) persons, as individuals or inside collectivities, in social and world spaces; sometimes using natural, structural, and cultural violence” (Galtung, 1996: 31). In fact, according to the South Asia Partnership International (SAP) (2010: 20), physical violence implies any type of violent action. This could be rape, murder, kidnapping, physical mutilation or any action that can result in harming someone. Physical violence is also described as the intentional use of physical force with the potential for causing death, disability, injury or harm. Physical violence includes, but is not limited to, scratching, pushing, shoving, throwing, grabbing, biting, choking, shaking, slapping, punching, burning, use of weapons and use of restraints or one’s body, size or strength against another person. Physical violence could result in sexual or psychological harm. Other types of violence according to the SAP are domestic violence, political violence, psychological violence, sexual violence and gender-based violence among others (Gicali 2012: 42–46; Gonsalves, 2018: 163 - 164). For Pearce (2007: 16):

violence is somatic, it relates to the body. However, the debate on whether violence is best understood in a narrow sense as the intentional infliction of physical injury on the body of self or other or should be widened to embrace all ways in which human physical suffering is induced, has been ongoing for several decades.

According to Galtung (1996: 122), violence can be structural or direct depending on whether it relates to social organisation or is an intentional harm to self or to others. These aspects, structural and direct, discussed as conflicts and violence in this study, stem from these dimensions. Even though there are various types of violence, in this study, I focused on the

structural and direct violence because they are the major types witnessed in the study area. These types of violence can be a result of intercommunal or interpersonal relationships and a breach on one side of the relationship could immediately lead to conflict. That is where the transformational view comes in as a solution to conflicts and violence. As an example of violence, according to Galtung (1996: 40–41) and to Sanchez-Hernandez et al. (2020: 68), “Gender-based violence is defined as violence that men exercise against women in order to maintain control and domination over them”. The Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women defines this type of violence as any act of gender-based violence that results in physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or unjustified deprivation of liberty that occur in someone’s daily life. For Galtung, this type of violence results from the “patriarchy” as a social institution characterised by “male dominance” and what this latter entails as violence. This is the case in patriarchal societies in Masisi where there is a strong male dominance and where the youths are wrongly trained to exhibit their male supremacy or superiority. Adding to what Galtung and Sanchez-Hernandez portrayed as violence, Sohan (2012: 168–169) lists some types of violence. These are:

physical violence, verbal, visual and mental violence; violence against children, in families, in communities, in the streets, among religions, in international relations, among all groups of this planet including violence against our brothers and sisters, animals and violence which prevail at this moment in the world (Sohan 2012: 171).

Adding to that, violence is generated by inequalities among people. The above types of violence reflect or explain well the types of violence as presented by Galtung and the categories he establishes as direct, structural and cultural violence (Galtung, 1996: 30–31).

To sum up, all kinds of domestic violence, all social misunderstandings or political clashes, and all environmental mismanagement amount to violence. However, this study focuses on two types of violence: violence by the youth and chronic violence. About the concept of youth violence, referring to the United States Institute for Peace (USIP) (2010), Abdullahi et al. (2016: 368) caution that “the scope of the problem of youth violence is immeasurable because of its diversity.”

This context or situation is related to the aspects of “new wars” or conflicts that are affecting the countries from the Global South (Collak, 2009: 11). The above-mentioned disturbances are linked to the “growing problems of urban and rural violence in countries that had post-war peace agreements and even in those which have experienced no war at all” (Collack, 2009: 11). Similarly, for Adams (2014: 6), chronic violence is a vital but ignored phenomenon of latent and destructive conflict. In this way, it is true that chronic violence can result from various causes ranging from social inequality issues of governance and has multiple consequences. She invites stakeholders to devise new tools to face this type of violence or destructive conflict affecting the current world. Adams raised a critical question about the trends people take or should take when confronted with chronic violence or its causes: “When the rule of law is—or becomes – deficient, how do affected populations govern themselves? Which practices are non-existent, or are destroyed or become illegitimate? Which practices emerge in their stead?” (Adams 2014: 6). Furthermore, she draws two conclusions; first, she hypothesised that chronic violence is a long-term issue that calls for a particular attention from peacemakers. Second, Chronic violence must be addressed through intersectoral and interdisciplinary approaches” (Adams 2014: 6). For her, “chronic violence undermines social relations and provokes perverse social behaviour that is naturalised among vulnerable groups and becomes a perverse norm that can be transmitted intergenerationally” (Adams, 2014: 6). In Masisi, the youths are a vulnerable group. Chronic violence has had devastating effects that range from human destruction or killing to environmental destruction using destructive power resulting in conflict and its negative effects and constructive power leading to conflict transformation. It is in this way that Ramsbotham et al. (2005: 20) distinguish three types of power. The concept of power may be “the power to command, order, enforce—coercive or coercive power”. It can also mean “the power to induce cooperation, to legitimise, to inspire—persuasive or soft power” (Ramsbotham et al., 2005: 20).

Talking about the “The psychological effects of chronic violence on children living in South African townships” Govender and Killian (2001: 6) emphasise two major issues. The first is that continued exposure to acts of violence is likely to induce a process of learning and imitation, culminating in the acceptance of violent conduct as a dominant and normal mode of conflict resolution. However, research holds little support for this notion as violence has

always been an individual choice. In Adams' (2014) view, chronic violence can result from various other causes ranging from social inequality to governance with multiple consequences. They have human or psychologically devastating effects. Focusing on children in KwaZulu Natal, Govender and Killian (2001: 2) posit that life experience of deprivation, discrimination and violence plays a big role in influencing the youth. There are similarities as well as slight differences between the above view and that of Pearce (2007). In fact, there is a close relationship between past experiences and youth participation in the context of chronic violence. However, in the case of Masisi, there is also an external manipulator. Nevertheless, the above idea omits the choice factor that is an important aspect of violence. It is true that chronic violence has devastating effects as it destroys social relations and could easily be transmitted to future generations (Adams, 2014: 6).

3.8 Existing Mechanisms to Deter Youth Violence in North Kivu and Masisi

There are various mechanisms that have been or are used to deter the youth violence which should help the communities in Masisi to live peacefully. According to Tull (2005: 217), there have been numerous interventions by local NGOs and churches in North Kivu. Tull argues that there are more than 400 local NGOs with various programmes. Some are involved in activities like food security or health education while others offer services in environmental protection, promotion of women, human rights and micro-credits.

However, the question persists, and one wonders why and how conflicts and violence are still rampant in the area in spite of these NGOs and churches. Every ethnic group has a range of traditional mechanisms to deal with youth violence or conflicts in general. One should note that the traditional means of conflict transformation or stopping violence have never been used in this situation of Masisi. The reasons could be that because people do not trust each other, they cannot trust the solutions that can come from any traditional forum. In addition, every ethnic group has its own tradition and mechanism for conflict approach. So, there is no single or unifying mechanism to solve or resolve conflicts and to deal with violence. In addition, there is a lot of rivalry among the youths from various ethnic groups so that cooperation among them is almost impossible. On the side of the government, quite often, there has been the use of coercive power (Tull, 2005: 215). There used to be police and military operations to repress insurgencies or rebel movement or even youth rebellions. In the

1963 *Kanyarwanda war*, the national army intervened harshly in places like Nyakariba, Gahanga-Kise and Mokotos, Kibarizo and Kirumbu. When the 1993 war started in Ntoto, the then government organised various military operations to put an end to war. Among these operations, were the “Kimya Masisi Operation” or “Operation bring peace to Masisi”; “Mbata Operation” which means the “slap operation”; and the *Mkuki Operation* meaning “the spear operation”. Currently, there are the *Sukola I and II Operations* meaning “operation clean up or wash ...”. The “*Sukola II Operation*” is still going on in 2023. However, in spite of all the attempts to dissuade youth or other rebel leadership, the situation continues to deteriorate as violence and insecurity increases. The downside of this coercive power approach is that where the military power seemed to fail, the central government decided to reward people who committed crimes by including them in the army at a high rank whereby some of them became generals, while others became ministers or politicians at various levels. Then this attracts the youth who think that conflicts and violence are the best ways to become powerful, rich and get a position in the community.

There is a considerable literature around the conflict situation in Eastern DRC especially in the affected zones, about the youth recruitment and involvement in armed groups, M23 rebel and others, the crime and murders. However, elements of this literature are basically descriptions of the ongoing situations or narratives around the ongoing stories like the Kakwangura prison attack in Butembo that happened in the night of Tuesday, October 10th 2022 during which more than 800 prisoners fled from prison and two policemen guards in the prison were killed. The same night, a businessman was shot dead and another one was hacked to death with machetes in Ngungu. Most of the stories do not provide a way out of this situation or do not take the first step to go to the actors and show the way to bring this situation to an end. It is to this end that, in this thesis, some strategies will be presented and discussed in relation to conflict or violence transformation and intergroup contact for change. Among the suggested strategies to reduce violence among the youths in Masisi, there is, first of all, to address the unfinished business of the past related to history or stories about migrations, land grabbing and issues of traditional power. This strategy involves clearing the subconscious minds of young people of the experiences endured by their relatives, parents or themselves over the years. This clearing enables them to establish new relationships based on fresh foundations. This means the involvement of religious leaders in their churches, the

educators in the education syllabus, the psychoanalysts, the community leaders in their social forums, the local and international NGOs and civil society in general. Here, the task should be based on “healing the memories” of those who lost their relatives without burying them, those who were tortured, raped, mutilated and who have to live with the scars or sufferings in their heart. The youths have inherited these burdens.

Second, there is a need to develop the youths’ expectations of life, to give them good role models and lead them to think about what they can do with their hands, mouths and minds. Rather than expending their energy on weapons, they should wield hoes and cultivate the land. They ought to come together and engage in communal endeavours, such as clearing pathways to streams or constructing bridges to connect villages. It is important to support each other instead of resorting to stereotypes, negative language, or prejudices and to refrain from harbouring enmity toward other youth or communities. Instead, they should cultivate positive perceptions of others and avoid holding grudges or feelings of resentment. There is a need to build understanding and connections among them. Third, the community should help the youth with working skills through vocational training. The youths have energy and the will to do something good or positive for themselves and their areas. The community should capitalise on this energy and will and should guide the youth on the contribution they could make to their communities.

Fourth, the youths should be made part of the business of conflict and violence transformation and devise the means and ways to get out of violence and conflicts. The stakeholders, both civil society and the government, should come up with businesses or activities from which the youths can derive benefits and where they actively participate. Since the youths are unable to come up with their own businesses and are exploited by manipulators who involve them in conflict and violence, this approach could awaken them and lead them to be more creative and work for themselves. These could be farming activities like growing crops or breeding animals (goats, pigs or cows) since Masisi is an agro-pastoralist area.

Fifth, the community, civil society and government should help the youths with coping skills or lead them to use their skills and know that they can build houses and not destroy them. They can positively benefit from the forests instead of using them as hiding places; instead,

they could cut timber for housing. They need to be brought into communal activities and work together. The recent initiatives for peace talks were initiated from Thursday 30 July to 1 August in 2020. The then Governor of North Kivu Province, Mr Kasivita, convened a public dialogue under the theme *Dialogue sur la Verité pour notre propre avenir* or “Dialogue for the truth for our own future” around security and conflict issues. Members from different ethnic groups were invited to work out answers to grievances and various conflicts prevailing in the Province. Among the ethnic groups that were invited there were: the Hunde, the Hutu, the Kano, the Kumu, the Piri, the Twa or Pygmees, the Nande, the Nyanga, the M’Vumba, the Tembo, the Tutsi, the Talinga and the ethnic groups from other provinces.

The agenda was based on the following major points among others: the internal issues and their causes in each community; the communal strengths and weaknesses of every community; the complaints of each community against other communities; the communal contributions as a response to the underlying conflicts or violence and the right attitude to adopt for a harmonious and cohesive life. Instead of trying to find a common understanding of the prevailing situation in the Province, each group pointed accusing fingers to the others and what was meant to be a dialogue session turned out to be like a court session where the participants were accusing each other and where no one wanted to listen to others’ points of view. The dialogue initiative was a missed or failed opportunity to reconcile with each other. Among the final recommendations by different ethnic groups as it came out of the final report, I could mention the following:

Table 10: Various communities and their grievances during the 2020 provincial peace talks

COMMUNITY OR ETHNIC GROUP	GRIEVANCES OR CLAIMS
HUNDE	Politicians or the central government should not interfere with customary matters
	The local leader from Gatoyi should be replaced by a true son from this area
	To cancel all the title deed issued through CARITAS in Masisi
	To stop the KUBOHOZA phenomenon allowing the Hutu to grab the land from Hunde
	To involve the Hunde in land management and in education
	Rotation at the Provincial leadership

COMMUNITY OR ETHNIC GROUP	GRIEVANCES OR CLAIMS
HUTU	To eradicate the armed groups in North Kivu
	The Hutu should never again be assimilated to FDLR
	To repel the Governor's order preventing some people to move freely in North Kivu
	To stop the intoxication of people from other provinces against the Hutu
	To stop looking at Hutu as slaves in land management
	Rotation at the Baraza la Wazee leadership
	There should be communal equality in administration
KANO	The Provincial committee should be involved in customary conflict resolution
	To initiate agro-pastoral activities in Kano area
	To rehabilitate to Hombo–Walikale road
	To open a viable communication to help eradicate insecurity
	Strengthen the work of the “Baraza la Wazee”
KUMU	To demobilise and integrated the militia people into the national army
	To cancel the fake title deed got by fraud
	To involve the KUMU in the leadership positions
	To collect all the guns used illegally
	To re-instate the legal traditional chief (Mwami LE BON)
	People living illegally in the National Park should vacate
	To support the Baraza la Wazee at the grassroots level
	To replace the traditional chief (Mr BIGEMBE) from Gatoyi, Masisi
PIRI	To make the Bapere area accessible
	To rehabilitate the road between Bapere area and Walikale
	To rehabilitate the Manguredjipa airstrip
	To change the history according to which the Piri are born from Nande and pygmies
	To introduce the père language in education
	No interference of Nyanga in Piri issues
TWA (Pygmies)	To rehabilitate the road between Walikale – Goma and Walikale – Hombo
	The Provincial Assembly should confirm the autochthonous groups living in

COMMUNITY OR ETHNIC GROUP	GRIEVANCES OR CLAIMS
	North Kivu
	The Provincial leadership should be involved in conflicts and land issues affecting the pygmies in North Kivu (Issues of land)
	Issue title deed to pygmies (Issues of land)
	Dialogue between pygmies and the provincial government
	To consider the pygmies' grievances in the provincial agenda
	To involve the pygmies in the provincial management
NANDE	Peaceful cohabitation among the communities
	Stop stereotypes against the Nande community
	To initiate a true dialogue between the Nande and Hutu and true dialogue with other communities
NYANGA	To identify the unknown people living at BUOYE
	Representativity at the leadership level
	To rehabilitate the road Walikale - Goma and Walikale-Hombo
	To mission to Pinga
	Unknown people living at Buoye should vacate
	To initiate the Baraza la Wazee at Walikale (?)
	To demarcate the National Park in Bakano area (issue of land)
M'VUMBA	To sensitise people to cooperate with the national army
	To tighten the measure forbidding unknown people to move around the province
	To keep away from armed groups
	To create an observatory in the National Park and make a security team made of the civilian, the army and other officials to secure people when they harvest cocoa
TEMBO	To stop the Batembo slavery by their neighbours Hunde and Nyanga
	To create business centres at Waloa, Luanda, Ufamandu I, Ufamandu II, Kinene and Ibiro
	To involve the Batembo in leadership position
	Road rehabilitation from Kobokobo-Hombo-Remeka-Mbeshembeshe-Busurungu-Busurungu I – Mianga-Nyasi-Rubaya-Kikoma-Mahya-Mianga

COMMUNITY OR ETHNIC GROUP	GRIEVANCES OR CLAIMS
TUTSI	To repatriate the Tutsi who are refugees in neighbouring countries
	To re-instate the Tutsi traditional chiefs
	To eradicate the armed groups
	To abide by the agreements signed since 2008
TALINGA	To eradicate the militia in Beni
	To rehabilitate the road Mbau–Kamango
	To create an observatory in the national Park
	To involve the Talinga in the provincial leadership
CONGOLESE FROM OTHER PROVINCES	To request the leaders masterminding conflicts to present their grievances
	To involve the religious leaders in peacebuilding through evangelisation
	To invite people to forget the past

Source: Unpublished final report, Office of the Provincial Governor, 2020

3.9 the Shortcomings of Existing Approaches to Deter Youth Violence

The top-down approach or the coercive power used to coerce or dissuade the youth has never responded positively to the issues or grievances. These are armed youth who are used to guns; they have their own guns and can use them whenever it pleases them to do so. The youth have energy and are able to move among mountains and forests they know very well. In case of any attack by the national army, they know how to escape and hide in the forest. This makes it hard to dissuade them from their violent acts. Since the beginning of hostilities and the subsequent military interventions, there has never been any improvement or success. During Mobutu's time, the national army intervened in 1963–1965 during the Kanyarwanda war. It managed to stop the war, but hostilities still exist. During the same reign, there were military operations like the *Operation Kimya Masisi* or peace operation in Masisi. Because it had a military dimension or coercive power, it could not yield expected results as the military were said to have sided with a group against another. The same situation was repeated through the “Operation Kimya I and Kimya II” followed by *Operation Mbata* and currently “Operation Sukola I and Sukola II”. These are military interventions that use the power of guns. For the youth who have been exposed to firearms and who consider themselves like the

military groups, this strategy cannot work because whenever the national FARDC come, the youth rebels believe they can fight back as they are using the same tools or guns.

To date, the various mechanisms or forums are a combination of politics, modern mechanisms and “traditional approaches” to conflict resolution. An example is that of the LICOR (*Ligue intercommunautaire pour la Reconstruction du Nord Kivu*) or the Intercommunity Ligue for the Reconstruction of North Kivu that became the *Intercommunautaire du Nord Kivu* or “North Kivu Intercommunity”. This currently comprises Jerome Paluku Kandu who acts as the “President”, Professor Michel Akilimali who is the President of the Hunde community, Sebuliri who is the President of the Hutu community, Edouard Mwangachuchu who is the President of the Tutsi community and a member of parliament; Zelande Lupao who is the President of the Walikale Community; and Cuba L’Yanzenze who is the President of the Nande community. The people representing their communities are politicians or elite leaders. So, their coalition is somehow affected by politics and too many academic theories.

The 2020 “Dialogue for the truth and for our future” failed to include the youth or to listen to their grievances yet the youths are the ones involved in armed groups. Even though they are manipulated, they have a say and a contribution to make. This implies that the top-down approach does not expect any initiative from the grassroots, nor does it support it. Second, this dialogue was like a public hearing whereby leaders from various ethnic groups were accusing one another. Finally, this dialogue, instead of being a public and grassroots forum where the issues were sorted out, became an academic session where university professors and experts were given the floor to present theories from books. Table 11 gives an overview of the topics addressed.

Table 11: Presentations during the 2020 Goma Peace talks

PRESENTER	TOPIC/PRESENTATIONS
Aime Mbugheki (Lawyer)	“North Kivu, toward Peace and Sustainable Development: which leadership?”
Kitaka Kimbere (Lecturer)	Issues around intercommunity cohesion and traditional power
Professor Pigeon Kambale Mahuka	“Issues around land access and land management”
Professor Senzira	“Armed groups: sociopolitical and economic dynamics”
Professor Kennedy Kihangi	Security dynamics in the Great Lakes Region
Thomas d’Aquin Muiti and Omar Kavota	“Evaluation of Previous Dialogues”
Joseph Sebagisha Rubera (Minister)	“The Provincial Government: achievement after one year in office”
An Expert from UNDP	“Results of a survey about community cohesion”

Source: Unpublished report, Office of the Provincial Governor, 2022

3.10 Protracted and Forgotten yet Deadly Conflict

This chapter attempts to give an overview of the social and historical dimensions, extent, causes and consequences of conflicts in Masisi. As straightforward as these reasons may appear to be, the reality is that for over five decades, individuals have lost their lives due to these seemingly trivial causes, with violence and conflict becoming a regular occurrence. An evaluation of the context around the subsequent conflicts shows that Masisi District has not only lost human lives but also lagged behind in development even though it has what it takes to be at the forefront of development. The conflicts in this area are cyclical and are inherited by the youth who are mostly unaware of the complexity of the situation they are living in. They embark on a cycle of violence without any expectations of a bright future. The chapter presents empirical facts from research sites. These are based on the geographical settings or physical space of the place, how it is conducive to various agro-pastoral activities and how this aspect makes it a very coveted place; the socioeconomic aspects offered by the geographical position; and the cultural situation or the major causes of conflicts or violence. I also provide a picture of the various ethnic groups living in Masisi and the status of their relationships based on a divided society and a leadership vacuum.

Some violent and unfortunate events happened in various places in Masisi. On 14 January 2022, a man was beheaded at Kibironko village in Nyamitaba. The same month, 150 people

died at Rubaya and the fact went like unnoticed as it was not mentioned even in the local provincial media. In June 2022, an old man was beaten to death at Gatovu village in Nyakariba Parish just because his son has joined another armed group. On 24 September 2022, two people were brutally murdered; one, Mr Edward Habana, was the choir master. On this fateful day, he was beheaded; Mr Albert Nzahumunyurwa who was a catechist in the same village (Gatovu) was decapitated and had his feet cut off. These cases are just a drop in the ocean of killings in Masisi. In a paper published in 2012, Autesserre (2012: 4) cautioned that the causes—and to some extent –the consequences of conflicts and violence in the DRC could be overlooked by or through what she termed a simplistic narrative. She cautioned:

The international actors' concentration on trafficking of mineral resources as a source of violence has led them to overlook the myriad other causes, such as land conflict, poverty, corruption, local political and social antagonisms, and hostile relationships between state officials, including security forces and the general population.

As far as this is true, one can argue that conflicts and violence in Congo are analysed according to different variables reflecting the interests and actors to conflicts or that of the interveners. This is a simplistic narrative reducing the conflicts in Eastern DRC to mineral exploitation, ethnic rivalries and sexual abuse (Autesserre, 2017: 116). That is the mystery or the story of the conflict and violence in Masisi. People from Masisi and even those who read books about Masisi are aware that conflicts have always existed in this District. These conflicts mainly turn on citizenship or nationality, land issues, exclusion or discrimination.

3.11 Geographical Position, a History of Violence and Forgotten Conflicts

In Masisi, geography and history go together and are coupled with the issues of land. First of all, there is the history of displacement of people from Rwanda to Masisi. Some of them kept their village or clan names on Congolese land. In fact, in Masisi, there are villages or areas like: Gasiza, Kinigi, Gatovu, Kalongi, Butare, Kanzenze, Rwankeri that are also found in Rwanda. These are villages or areas where settled the people who have been moved from places of the same name from Rwanda. Other places are named after the clans living there and that have their next of kins in Rwanda. This is like *Kabarera* village where the Abarera clan lives. The physical situation plays a role in the prevailing conflicts in Masisi. First of all,

a geographically isolated space plays a big role in the conflicts and youth violence. The geography layout presents a mountainous region with a conducive climate for cattle breeding and farming. The road infrastructure is very poor making Masisi geographically and economically isolated. Communication and movements are not easy. The only means of transport is the motorcycle and the youths use these with ease. In addition, the place has been politically isolated. These isolations could explain why there is a long culture of discrimination, exclusion and violence. This implies the fact that there are no activities to keep the youths busy. So, this enables groups to network, to mobilise and to recruit the youths. People have lived in crises and threats coupled with manipulation.

3.12 Greed and Grievance Around Masisi: A Coveted Land

Masisi is located in Eastern DRC in a very mountainous area covering 4734 km². At the North, there is Rutshuru and Walikale Districts; at the west, there is Walikale; at the South, there is Kalehe District, in the East there is the Kivu Lake (Bulenda, 1979: 158). The area offers three different settings following their altitudes. The first one is the high-altitude places reaching 1 000 to 2 700 m. This is the southern part of the district and the central part and includes places like Kibabi, Mihanga and Matanda. The second section has an altitude of between 1 500 and 2 000 m high and includes places like Kirumbu, Nyange and Mweso. The third part of the district is made of lower than 1 500 m in altitude and includes areas bordering the lake and areas stretching from Osso up to Mweso (Bulenda, 1979: 158). According to Bulenda, the District of Masisi hosts two population groups, the Hunde and the people from Rwanda who are the Hutu and the Tutsi. The Hutu, Bulenda argues, came to Masisi in 1940 and are mainly farmers whereas the Tutsi are pastoralists (Bulenda, 1979: 158–159). The climate is good, and the soil is rich and very fertile with beautiful farms. Masisi offers several opportunities for farming. The natural beauty of Masisi attracts many people who lust over the green farms and who are looking for places to graze their cattle or to cultivate. Land is a very important asset in Masisi and the customary and political power are based on landownership. In the customary context, land belongs to the ethnic group represented by the *Mwami* or the King. According to customary practices in Masisi, the *Mwami* is the only possessor of land and who can give a portion of it to his officers or assistants or to whoever he pleases. The major assistants to the *Mwami* are the *Mpana*

Musingo or the political advisers whose role is to oversee the local chiefs and the land issues or management for farming or cattle rearing (Bucyalimwe, 1990: 42).

Masisi can be characterised first of all as a place defined by livestock and agricultural activities, where corruption, massive people displacements and uncontrolled migrations have had detrimental effects on local mechanisms of land distribution. This is exacerbated by weak political and traditional leadership systems. In this area, customary-held land in return for rent or payment of tribute to the representative of the *Mwami* has been and is still subject to disagreement. The big issue today should be to understand how and why for more than 60 years, the ruling leadership in DRC has been unable to take the responsibility and to provide a final answer to a situation that seem to be clear.

3.13 A Divided Community Against a Leadership Vacuum

For more than three decades there has been a very deep leadership vacuum that had been filled by the daring youths in armed groups. On the one hand, ethnic organisations or associations are networks of people who trust one another with ethnic leaders at all levels. These leaders, being the militia leaders, act in lieu and place of the government leadership. It is really difficult to establish a genuine or true and united leadership between the various communities living in Masisi (Hunde, Hutu, Tutsi, Nyanga...). People pay taxes to these armed groups leaders (*Indengerabuzima* for the Nyatura side). Principles like “nobody is watching” or “no one cares for us” or even “we are nobodies” are coupled with lack of guidance or leadership support that have influenced or affected the youths and plunged them into violence against each other.

3.14 The Failure of the Traditional Framework of Conflict Transformation

The traditional systems or frameworks of conflict transformation, here the Baraza and its components, seem to have failed to reconcile the warring groups as they have also misled society and they have ignored the youth in terms of conflict transformation, peacebuilding and the various experiences or energy they have. Through the “conflict resolution approach” the traditional systems have excluded the youth. From the above, one could conclude that the youths are not represented in peacebuilding. This lack of representation renders the adopted strategies, solutions or responses questionable, inappropriate or somehow obsolete about the

youths' needs and aspirations; about the knowledge of youths' experiences and life challenges or even about the youth's potentials.

3.15 The Youths Caught Between Competition, Manipulation and Dependency

There is a serious cultural divide between groups or people, and this opens the path to structural or cultural violence. The *Mwami* or customary king has the customary power and rules over the people living on his land. However, it has been observed that various kings ruled with injustice and have not applied the same rules to all the ethnic groups. Some were looked at like slaves. This opened the doors to negative attitudinal behaviours like prejudice, discrimination and mistrust.

In addition, some aspects of competition could be established at different levels. First of all, at social level, there is the traditional customary power. The Hunde, being the traditional power holders, felt that their power was threatened by the Kinyarwanda-speakers who wanted to have their own traditional leaders. These Kinyarwanda-speakers felt that they could no longer submit to a traditional system that regarded them as slaves. The Hunde youth fight to protect their customary power. An example is the roadblock at Kitchanga where the Hunde youth "force" every motorbike rider to pay 500 Congolese francs for what they call the customary logo, which is something that at the first sight does not make sense. It could be a source of violent conflicts and killing. There is also the monthly tax of 1000 Congolese francs known as *indegerabuzima* paid by villagers. The word *Indengerabuzima* means "life protector" to be paid to those protecting the villages. Second, the Kinyarwanda-speakers who assume they have wealth, and their children are educated and fight for a kind of "freedom" and for their identity. So, the youth take up arms to affirm their presence and protect their properties or to exact revenge. They also compel people to pay either for their security or as a contribution to the community wealth. These two trends can be perceived among the youth in Masisi.

Those from Kitchanga and Nyamitaba-Nyakariba mostly focus on political aspirations and are politically manipulated. The politicians, members of parliament or ministers, use them to protect their electorate or their properties. Most politicians have very large portions of land and cattle and they need people to look after their wealth. The youth are involved in these

tasks. On the other hand, the youth from Rubaya are mainly focused on mineral exploitation. Once again, the politicians and other businesspeople have their own mining sites where they use hundreds of young people for manpower or to work as security guards. In both cases, the youth are very violent. The youth come from various areas to look for money. They come from areas within Masisi, like from Mweso, Kibarizo, Nyamitaba, Muheto, Busihe, Lushebere, Matanda, Ngungu. Others come from Rutshuru whereas others come from South Kivu or even from Rwanda. It is alleged that among the more than 150 young people who died at one mining site at Rubaya, three of them had come from Rwanda.

Another conflict and violence factor affecting the youth in Masisi is the great sense of dependency on political leaders and businesspeople. This is what Huggins called “top-down dependency” whereby those at the grassroots or the unemployed youths have always to turn for help to those who have economic and political power (Huggins in Reyntjens et al., 2015: 24). For Tull (2005: 91), there has been a kind of “structure of economic dependency (that developed in Masisi and that) has greatly impoverished the local peasantry”.

3.16 Traumatic Experiences and Collective Traumas

The youth are among the most distressed and traumatised people in Masisi. Those among the youths who have been born since the 1990s witness unending conflicts, killings and atrocities that have negatively affected their lives. Even the societies where they live have never helped them to overcome the negative situations caused by the conflicts. For the youths, violence is a way of revenge or survival. The major factors of trauma and other stresses are historical or generational factors of trauma. This is caused by widespread social violence where a community rises against another one, or the youth from one community gang up against those youth from another community: the Hunde, Nyanga and Tembo against the Hutu and against the Tutsi. However, all the communities are affected in one way or another: the Hunde experience it as Hunde, the Hutu experience it as Hutu, the Tutsi experience it as Tutsi. The major cause of these traumatic feelings or conditions is community identity.

3.17 History and Unfinished Business: Unresolved Conflicts

History plays a very important role in understanding the situation in DRC in general and in the East in particular. Sociopolitical and economic situations are strongly rooted in historical

conflict, and the armed groups and other actors perpetuate this. The shifting of people from Rwanda-Burundi to Eastern DRC provinces started in 1920s. These two countries (Rwanda-Burundi) were overpopulated, thus, there was need to create space by taking some people to Congo where the space was available. On the other hand, the need for manpower compelled the Belgians to take it from where it was in abundance. That is when the colonialists created the *MOR* or *Main d'Oeuvre Rwandaise* which was a structure involved in selecting and moving the needed manpower. People were moved to the mining areas especially at Ituri to work for the Kilo-Moto Mining Company (*Société des Mines de Kilo-Moto*); others were taken to Maniema to work for the African Great Lakes Mining Company (*Compagnie Minière des Grands lacs Africains*) while others went to Katanga to work for the High Katanga Mining Union (or *Union Minière du Haut Katanga*). Another group, Ndaywel (2020: 909) argues, was taken to Masisi and Rutshuru for farming purposes. These views imply that those strong people, able to do manual labour in plantations were recruited or moved from Rwanda to the DRC; for example, the youth or young and strong adults. However, since they moved to other provinces, especially to Katanga province to work in mining sites, one should wonder why there are no myths about Banyarwanda in that Province. In 1948, the colonialists replaced the MOR by the MIB or the *Mission d'Immigration des Banyarwanda* (The Banyarwanda Immigration Mission). According to Leon de Saint Moulin (Ndaywel, 2020: 909), around 170 000 people were shifted to Congo between 1937 and 1955 and in 1957, 4 000 people were also resettled from Rwanda in Masisi and Rutshuru. Some points need to be made clear here. The first point is that the Banyarwanda were moved to different provinces (Ituri, Katanga and Masisi in Kivu). However, it is only in Masisi and, to some extent in Ituri, where the living situation has been characterised by suspicion, stereotyping and violent conflicts around land and social harmony.

The second point is the motivations to shift the Rwandese to the DRC where two causal motivations are given as to justify this act but that are a bit contradictory: the overpopulation and the need for manpower. One reason could have justified the move. The Banyarwanda issues have never been raised in Katanga. At this level, Mamdani (2001: 240) found a few reasons or a combination of motives that compelled both Belgians and Rwandese to move people from their country to other places. He talks about the “labour migration” for work in

mining (1928–1932 and 1925–1931). According to Mamdani, there were the labour migrants and the individual settlers who moved of their own volition. People were motivated by “overpopulation and famine” (Mamdani, 2001: 240). But, between these two groups, there is the issue of “transplanted people” that discouraged individuals from moving for labour and encouraged “entire families to move, with no thought of returning” to where they came from. The problem, here, is that this option was not well or clearly defined as it did not take care of the national status of the transplanted groups. A major question is to know why the Banyarwanda who were taken to the then Katanga province have never fought with the autochthonous people they found there. The assumption is that there are some dark forces or hands pushing the youth to violence.

3.18 Conclusion

This chapter provided the historical background of conflicts and violence in North Kivu Province in general and in Masisi in particular. The aim here was to provide a picture of Masisi as a coveted district, its population and the armed groups attracting numerous youths and operating in the province and in Masisi. In addition, the chapter established the conflicts violence and their impact as well as the limitations of the existing mechanisms to deter youth violence. The chapter also looked at the types of violence as established by Galtung. These are direct violence, structural violence and cultural violence. These are the kinds of violence that the youth have witnessed in Masisi. In addition, this chapter presented the mechanisms to deter violence among the youth as they are used in Masisi. It presents the shortfalls of these mechanisms and the protracted conflict as framed by Edward Azar.

Chapter 8 looks at the protracted and forgotten conflict involving the youth’s groups in Masisi. This conflict has claimed thousands of lives, and it is still going on in 2024. Various documents or archives have dated conflicts in Masisi in different time periods according to the writers, their affiliations or organisations and their objectives. However, in this study, I found three major causes of conflict and violence among the youth. The three causes all relate to manipulation. The major points raised here are the Kanyarwanda conflict, the lack of conflict transformation models and the crisis of leadership. However, I regard the conflict around Kanyarwanda as untrue because no one has proved the Banyarwanda to be a real problem in Masisi. Therefore, this allegation does not hold and hides the true aspects of a

deep-rooted issue (Bucyalimwe, 2013). The dynamics of conflicts in Masisi, their phases, the underlying causes and their consequences are developed in the following chapter.

CHAPTER FOUR

DYNAMICS OF CONFLICTS IN MASISI: PHASES, UNDERLYING CAUSES AND CONSEQUENCES

4.1 Introduction

The chapter highlights the dynamics behind the conflicts and violence in the research area; the regional, continental and national dynamics that should be taken into consideration in dealing with conflicts or violence; and the causes and consequences of conflicts and violence. It presents the social and historical background of conflicts in Masisi and the dynamics behind them. The chapter starts with the background and the phases of the conflicts and highlights a well-known conflict named after the targeted group, the Kanyarwanda conflict. In addition to these historical features of the conflicts, the chapter maps out the conflicts and the militia groups operating in this area. The underlying causes of conflicts are assessed according to their historical and political characteristics.

4.2 Types and Phases of Conflicts in Masisi

Three factors are worth mentioning here as they are related to conflicts in Masisi. First, there is structural violence or conflicts related to the use of customary or unequal power and the unequal control of resources. Second, there are the historical factors related to group relationships, the Banyarwanda people and the autochthonous people; related to misperceptions, stereotypes and other negative and repetitive behaviours. Broken relationships or relationship conflicts, structural conflicts and interest conflicts are observable types of conflicts in Masisi. Third, there is both internal and external manipulation of the youth and involving them in conflicts and violence. The customary power is in the hands of the Hunde ethnic group, from the top leadership to the grassroots levels.

In Masisi, there are no conflicts without the Kinyarwanda factor behind them (Baltus, 2015: 48–53; Bucyalimwe 2013: 108–110; Mamdani, 2001: 239–247; Turner, 2007: 117). First, the conflicts seem to have started with the transfer of people from Rwanda to the then Congo colonised by the Belgians. It is true that this transfer was very detrimental to the DRC and to

the people, especially those in the East. As a consequence, conflicts that erupted from the displacement of people have been very deadly with thousands of deaths and are still going on. Among the major conflicts that have been witnessed in Masisi at different periods of time, there is the conflict related to the Banyarwanda transferred to Congo between 1930s and 1950s. This displacement raised several unanswered questions on the side of autochthonous people found in the high mountains of Masisi particularly the Hunde, Nyanga and Tembo people. The issue was around land. Another puzzle around the Banyarwanda transfer to Congo is that the transferred groups were not refugees: they were called transplanted people. This implies that they were shifted from one country to another and immediately ceased to belong to the country of origin and became citizens of the receiving or host country. Politically, the situation has never been clear and socially, these people have never integrated well into the new settings.

Second, there were conflicts around the coming in of the Tutsi refugees from Rwanda in 1959. These refugees were relocated from Goma to Bibwe in Masisi where their sons and grandsons lived until in 1990s when they decided to go back to Rwanda. With them, conflicts around land and leadership erupted, particularly in the Bashali Kayembe Chieftaincy.

Third, in 1961, the term *Rwandophonie* erupted, used by a coalition made of Nande-Hunde-Nyanga to include all the Kinyarwanda-speakers living in Rutshuru, Goma and Masisi (Mujyinya in Mpeza et al. 2016: 82–84).

Fourth, the 1963 conflict that was termed *Kanyarwanda* set the Hunde against Banyarwanda. This was the first very bloody conflict witnessed in Masisi. Later on, other bloody and violent conflicts followed with the same motivations based on fighting people from Rwanda.

Fifth, the 1988 conflict that was politically motivated when the then Government organised a census aimed to identify the nationals and foreigners. This census was exclusively organised in Eastern provinces where the Kinyarwanda-speakers were supposed or suspected to be living.

Finally, in 1993, conflicts broke out in Ntoto, between Masisi and Walikale and set the Hunde group against the Kinyarwanda-speaking people. This continued with the coming in of the 1994 Rwandan refugees, exclusively Hutu and the 1996 AFDL war. However, Bucyalimwe

(2013: 100) disagrees with experts like Cyril Musila, Severin Mugangu, Roland Pourtier, Paul Mathieu that conflicts in Masisi and elsewhere in North Kivu should not be viewed as caused by or limited solely to the Banyarwanda, and they should not be called the Kinyarwanda wars. He found that these conflicts were both local and regional (Bucyalimwe, 2013: 108). The local aspect is reflected by the facts that some “visible actors” in these conflicts are the local communities; here Hunde, Hutu, Tutsi and Nande. On the other hand, Bucyalimwe argues, the regional side of these conflicts is reflected by the Tutsi issues have brought the North Kivu Province into the “geopolitical dynamics” since the country gained its independence. The point he made here is that one should not limit the conflicts to Banyarwanda alone as this is a narrow way of looking at a wide issue. On the other hand, one should not forget that the Banyarwanda have dominated and are dominating the general discourse in the conflicts that are creating chaos in the East, particularly in North Kivu and to some extent in the Ituri Province where they are called the Banyabwisha.

Turner (2013: 12) argued once that “relations between the Kinyarwanda-speaking Tutsi and Hutu of DRC’s eastern provinces and those of Rwanda itself are complex. Relations between the Congolese Kinyarwanda-speakers and their Congolese neighbours are complex too”. This complexity has been prevalent until today where the conflicts in Eastern DRC have somehow a “Kinyarwanda” aspect to them. When the Hutu Rwandese were transplanted by Belgians to Eastern DRC, namely in Masisi, they claimed for their chiefdom or a kind of autonomy. This was given to them in 1941 and it lasted until 1957. The Hutu Chiefdom called Gishari had its headquarters in Nyamitaba. The first impression is that this chiefdom was supported by the colonialists but was not supported by the local autochthonous people although they could not oppose it openly. Then, when the country gained its independence, the Belgians lost their power and the Banyarwanda (Hutu and Tutsi together) got into trouble. They first lost their Gishari Chiefdom then misunderstanding erupted among these Banyarwanda and other ethnic groups. These other ethnic groups were the Hunde, Nyanga, Tembo and Nande.

This was a conflict that broke down in September 1962 and lasted until November 1966 (Bucyalimwe, 2013: 15; Turner, 2013: 7); just some two years after the country’s accession to independence from the Belgians. The war started when the then provincial government was led by Mr Benezeth Moley, a Hunde as governor and Janvier Kahindo, a Nande as the

President of the Assembly. Turner (2007: 116–117) gives this account about the beginning of conflicts among the “Banyarwanda” and the others in Kivu and in Masisi in particular. He asserts:

shortly after independence, land disputes between Hunde and Banyarwanda led to violent clashes. Hunde had replaced the Hutu administrators put in place by Belgians. As a consequence, Banyarwanda started losing land, houses, shops, cattle and plantations. They tried to fight back to reclaim their rights. The resulting Kanyarwanda war, which lasted for two years, was the first sign of a spiral of unending violence at Masisi.

Three Hutu and Tutsi Leaders (Christophe Barigereka, Stanislas Gatabazi and Athanase Bizige) assert that conflicts against the Hutu and Tutsi erupted in 1962 and were related to political trends. Both these ethnic groups were accused by others of taking side of the MNC/Lumumba and CERECA political parties. These parties were opposed to the creation of the North-Kivu Province yet other ethnic groups were in favour of this creation (Mpeza, 2012: 309).

At the beginning of the Masisi conflicts, Turner states that there were two opposing ethnic groups, the Hunde and the Banyarwanda. However, what should be made clear here is that these Banyarwanda were mostly Hutu and few Tutsi. Second, the conflict trigger was—and will remain – “land issues” and issues around power. This trigger brought in the two opposing languages among the two groups. The Hunde language was/is *Bulongo ya baba* meaning “My Father’s land” (Bucyalimwe, 2013: 18; Mamdani, 2001: 242) whereas the Hutu language was/is *Naritemeye* meaning “I cleared this land myself” or “I did the groundwork myself”. So here, one is claiming the land he inherited from his father when the other one is claiming the land he was given by the colonialists and that he cleared himself.

However, a look at the land management in Masisi shows that there should be no conflicts around it. Historically and customarily, land is managed by the *Mwami* or the traditional king. According to Bulenda, in Masisi as is the case elsewhere, land is very important because it is from land that people get what they need for their survival. All their traditional as well as political organisations are based on land. However, the land belongs to the tribe or

the ethnic group under the leadership of a *Mwami*. It is he who gives the right to land and this could be permanent or for a short time. So, it is the *Mwami* who used to give the right to his people to manage land in their respective area. Later on, it appeared that these local chiefs abused their power by ignoring the *Mwami*. That is why to avoid any power within the supreme power, the *Mwami* decide to appoint two assistants, one known as the “Mutambo” to run the political affairs within their living area and the other one, known as the “Mpana Musingo” to manage the land issues. So, the “Mpana Musingo” could distribute land to people under their leadership, who in turn could also dispose of land at will up to the clan level. Each clan has a given number of hills they manage. These hills are called “Bitwa”. These hills could be shared among the clan members or families, making the “Kihanda”. In general, in Masisi, land is called “Buhunde” meaning the origin of “Hunde” people. The Buhunde is divided into *Bitwa*, or land owned by a clan, and the *Bitwa* is divided into *Kihanda* or piece of land owned by a family. This means that, with this subdivision in mind, everyone knows or should know the rules and regulations of land management in Masisi. The following table gives an overview of land division, on one side, and the people managing it, on the other hand.

Table 12:Land management in Masisi

LAND LEVEL	LAND MANAGER	LEADERSHIP
Buhunde (the entire customary or indigenous land, here, the entire Masisi is known as “Buhunde”)	Mwami (Traditional king)	Chiefdom Level
Bitwa (Clan portion of land; could be a hill or a group of hills hosting a clan)	Mpana Musingo (Assistant to the king)	Clan level
Kihanda (Family land within a “Bitwa” or a portion of land for one family)	Family head	Family level

Source: Adapted from Bulenda (1979: 159)

According to Bulenda (1979: 160), it is the Mwami who distribute the unoccupied land to whoever is in need, to a newcomer or to whoever is in his favour. However, the *Mwami* has to consult his assistants before he gives out any piece of land. In this case, whoever gets a

piece of land from the *Mwami* cannot sell it. Whoever uses land or acquires land from the Mwami has to pay tribute called *Mutulo* in kind. The *Mutulo* used to be a cow and a pot of local brew and was paid either annually or periodically. Bulenda emphasizes that when the Rwandese came to Congo, on the Hunde land, they were welcomed and compelled to follow the customary laws. These laws prescribed that if the Banyarwanda settled on hills inhabited by Hunde, they had to pay tribute to the local chiefs found there. But if they settled on vacant land or hills, they had to elect a representative according to their own custom, here the Rwandan custom. The representative was automatically the family or community leader. However, Bulenda explains, this representative ruled under a Hunde leader who acted as an intermediary between the immigrants and the king. Currently, all the political and customary power, including land, is in the *Mwami*'s hands.

Questions arise about the people who allege that they did the groundwork themselves, meaning they were given a vacant piece of land (by the colonialists or by the *Mwami*) and they cleared it themselves. This is particularly the case of those who were moved to Congo between 1938 and 1958, through the *Mission d'Immigration des Banyarwanda*, MIB (the Banyarwanda Immigration Mission) (Mamdani, 201: 242; Turner, 2007: 112). This puzzle has never been solved:

The Rwandan (and Congolese Rwandophone) version of the Masisi transaction has Rudahigwa negotiate the agreement with Kalinda and pay 24 000 (or 29 000) Belgian francs as purchase price or prime (i.e. bonus) for the land. (...) This version of events is incredible (Turner, 2007: 112).

Rudahigwa was the then Rwandan M.monarch and Kalinda was the Hunde monarch. When the Belgians colonised Rwanda, Rudahigwa was in place, whereas they appointed Kalinda. So, they had more power over this later than on the first one. Second, the version is not credible as they had nothing to negotiate with someone they had appointed, and they had nothing to pay for in terms of "purchase price". Whatever the case may be, the land issues added to the citizenship of the Kinyarwanda-speakers raised conflicts and violence in Masisi in the name of Kinyarwanda. However, as Mamdani (2001: 242) argues, the 1963 conflict or Kinyarwanda "was in reality a popular Banyarwanda uprising against abuse by Bahunde chiefs". Today, history is repeating itself: the youths who are being recruited or who are

fighting on the side of the M23 are calling their assault *Operation Rudahigwa* which aims at taking land through what people call the Balkanisation process or irredentism. This is based on the allegation that the great grandparents or some relatives lived on it. Thus, there has been always fear that the Banyarwanda would claim the Masisi District on the assumption that it belongs to their ancestors, or it used to be part of Rwanda.

As said earlier and according to Bucyalimwe (2013: 17), the so-called Kanyarwanda war had two dimensions: the local and the regional dimensions. At the beginning of the conflict (Kanyarwanda), two motives gave rise to the confrontations: the colonial legacy and the political misunderstanding. The Kanyarwanda was very bloody at Nyamitaba chiefdom in Masisi, which was the headquarters of the Banyarwanda Chiefdom, and spread to Muvunyi-Karuba and Muvunyi-Kibabi in Masisi before it crossed to Bwisha in Rutshuru. This was reflected in the hatred between the Hunde, Nyanga and Nande on one side and the Hutu and Tutsi on the other hand. This attitude still prevails in 2023. However, I do not fully agree with the fact that ethnic hatred still exists. This is because, on each ethnic side, there are people who promote peaceful cohabitation, even though there are only a few of them and they sometimes end in trouble or are killed as it has been the case to four Ministers, Antoine Mihio (a Hunde), Mungo Ruben (Hunde) and two Members of Parliaments Kashira Alphonse and Kayumba Antoine who were massacred in Masisi in August 1964 for having raised their voices trying to protect the Hutu who were being killed in big numbers (Bucyalimwe 2013: 21). Among the warring groups involved in the Kanyarwanda, there were the Hunde, Nyanga and Nande on one side against the Tutsi and Hutu on the other.

Another side of the story has it that when a certain Denis Paluku, a Nande and the then Minister of Agriculture in the Provincial Government proclaimed an autonomous Province of North Kivu, he was opposed by some other Nande (like him) and Hutu from Rutshuru. The Tutsi and Hutu from Masisi also opposed the idea of autonomy. Here the army had to come and take the side of the Hunde-Nyanga-Nande against the Banyarwanda accusing them of taking sides with the then Mulele Militia that was ravaging the Eastern part of the country. That is why many people died on the side of the Banyarwanda.

4.3 Mapping Conflicts Dynamics and Militia Formation in Masisi

As conflicts are dynamic and change over time, there is need to analyse and understand them using various tools like maps. The aims here are to understand the purpose, use and limitations of a conflict map. This is a visual tool used to show a conflict graphically and present the parties in relation to the conflict as well as to each other. The map could be used in the overall or general analysis, to analyse or to understand both the macro and the micro levels of conflicts: international, national, social, organisational and interpersonal conflicts.

Autesserre (2012: 2) highlighted the dynamics of conflicts in DR Congo. She identifies the internal dynamics as opposed to external dynamics. For the first category, she gives examples of “incendiary actions by domestic and regional leaders, grassroots antagonisms over land and power, and the persistence of corruption at all levels of the political and economic system”. Other researchers say that these dynamics are mostly around bad governance at all levels. To these dynamics, one can add unemployment especially affecting the youth who make up a large portion of the population and poverty and ethnic clashes that are rampant in the region. To the above dynamics, Autesserre (2013: 108) adds “the international efforts at building peace and democracy” that play a role in the deterioration of the country’s situation.

His views join those of Bucyalimwe when he confirmed that conflicts in Masisi or in North Kivu have both local and regional dimensions. It has been alleged that conflicts in the DRC, specifically in the Eastern regions are basically based on the weakness of the state, on competition for natural resources and on identity (Stearns, 2013: 23). However, Stearns observes that these allegations are weak by nature to give an account of the conflicts in this part of the country and to account for how armed groups claim their interests and rights or even mobilise their followers. A look at the conflict mapping in the region and in the DRC gives a complicated picture of conflicts that spill around with devastating effects both on the country and on the entire Great Lakes Region. Mapping the prevailing conflicts in this region implies establishing the types of conflicts, the actors, the issues, the underlying factors, the scope, the previous attempts at settlement, the conflict phases and intensity, the balance of power, the capacity and resources, and the state of relationships (Harris, 1998: 41–43).

Among the proponents of conflict mapping, Lederach (2014) and Harris et al. (1998) provided the techniques of conflict mapping. For them, conflict mapping provides the primary secondary and the interested parties with an overview of the origins or causes, the nature and the dynamics, and the possibilities for resolution of the conflict. The major elements of conflict mapping are:

- The conflict history, the origins and major events in conflict evolution. Here the task is to establish the history of the conflict regarding the attempts to transform it.
- The conflict context or setting. This is based on the extent and features of the environment where conflicts occur. These are the geographical settings, political structures and socioeconomic settings. The geographical setting of Masisi makes the area coveted by both cattle breeders or pastoralists and farmers. The weather is very good, and the soil is fertile for growing various produces. Masisi has various minerals attracting many internal and external actors looking for these minerals. In addition, there are thick forests that are the hiding places for armed groups.
- The spiralling or phases of the conflict: the patterns of escalation or de-escalation of a conflict; hostilities and damage to the other side. Here the issue is to establish the scope of the conflict and its effects, both within and outside the conflict area. In addition, could it be possible to identify the phases or steps of the conflict? Have there been variations in the conflict setting? The conflicts in Masisi went through various phases involving variables like actors or *modus operandi*. The first open conflict was witnessed between 1962–1965. The Hunde accused the Hutu of trying to create a “Rwandan territory on the Congolese soil” (Bucyalimwe, 2013: 11). Early in 1970, the then Zaire government issued identity cards. The situation was not easy in Masisi whereby the Banyarwanda had no right to these cards. Those created conflicts. In 1980, there was a census to establish who was autochthonous or a Zairean citizen and who was foreigner. This was only done in Eastern Zaire. Once again, the Banyarwanda in Masisi who found themselves excluded from this exercise created chaos and the exercise was stopped without any positive outcome. In the early 1990s, when the central government organised what was called the National Sovereign Conference in 1991–1992 (Harris et al., 1998: 269–272) which was a national forum to reassess the sociopolitical and economic situations of the country, again

some Banyarwanda, particularly Tutsi, were excluded from this forum on the basis that they were foreigners. The situation created conflicts at the grassroots, particularly where the Banyarwanda were found. In 1993, open conflicts erupted in Ntoto targeting the Banyarwanda groups. These conflicts that were followed by the Rwandan genocide added another Kinyarwanda variable to the Masisi conflicts. To sum up, I could say that these conflicts have always had sociopolitical aspects sustaining them.

- The precipitating events: like triggers, these are events that presage the dispute. For example, the state of relationships between the adversaries, the demographic dimensions related to groups displacement, the proximity to a conflict area, environmental changes and other sociopolitical changes. Among the triggers in Masisi conflicts, there are the coming in of foreigners and their desire to create a sovereign territory on Congolese soil; the claim for citizenship by these foreigners; the electoral times with the hate discourse; or the spillover effect or conflicts from outside like from Rwanda, Burundi and Uganda. Thus, the conflicts are politically or geostrategically or even globally motivated. Talking about conflicts in North Kivu, Autesserre (2012: 2) argues that “there are many reasons for the deterioration of the situation, notably incendiary actions by domestic and regional leaders, grassroots antagonisms over land and power, and the persistence of corruption at all levels of the political and economic system”.
- The conflict parties: those who are directly and indirectly involved in the conflict. Among them, there are the primary or main parties and the secondary parties who have an indirect stake in the conflicts and the third parties. Here the analysis should establish the different actors at all levels in the conflict by giving their identity groups, identifying the leaders, the mobilisation process, the alliances, the factions and the instigators. The conflicts take place within a relationship (alliances, close contacts, broken relationships, confrontation and intermittent links). The issues or points of disagreement are contrasting values, the root causes and the consequences. Here the purpose is to understand the issues involved in the conflict. In the case of Masisi, there are both internal parties or actors and external ones (Baltus, 2015: 59–61).
- The conflict regulation potential: the resources which may be used for limiting, managing or resolving a conflict. Among these factors are the internal limiting factors, the external

limiting factors and the neutral third parties. In brief, what are the underlying factors behind the conflicts (the needs driving each party)? What could be the fear behind the current situation?

Autesserre (2012: 4) asserts:

The international actors' concentration on trafficking of mineral resources as a source of violence has led them to overlook the myriad other causes, such as land conflict, poverty, corruption, local political and social antagonisms, and hostile relationships between state officials, including security forces and the general population.

It is true that in the DRC, people are busy looking for a share of the mineral wealth and forget the Congolese who are dying.

- There is also the process of stereotyping and mirror-imaging as another element in conflict mapping. This refers to the parties perceiving themselves as good, having superior qualities or seeing the other party as bad or even evil. This leads to rigid positioning, miscommunication and misinterpretation, which results in the “Us versus Them” syndrome. Moreover, there are the goals or objectives around positions, interests and needs and other dynamics. The conflict should be looked at as a dynamic process where things change in social systems and organisations. Conflict generally occurs for a reason and results from a positive cause for the people who are involved in.
- Finally, the techniques or strategies of conflict management. Here the task is to establish the capacity and resources available, the balance of power or the extent of the balance of power between the parties.

4.4 Underlying Factors of Conflicts in Masisi

Vlassenroot et al. (2016: 10) found that armed movements use two tools to convince the local people, especially the youths, of their reasons to fight. These tools are the historical marginalisation and safety (Muraya, 2014: 15; Vlassenroot et al., 2016: 10). For the first reason, people assume that they have been marginalised for a long time and excluded from the sociopolitical arena, from customary power and even political power. This is the grievance on the side of the Kinyarwanda-speaking people, Hutu and Tutsi. So, these ethnic

groups argue that they have been excluded from the management of their area and that they also need to be considered. As for security, they believe that they are under threat and that they need their own security over their land. Hence, there are discriminatory models of ethnicity that have characterised the Congolese society in the Eastern side of the country especially in Masisi (Muraya et al., 2014: 13).

About the security issues, the members of the Nyatura rebel group sometimes call themselves *Indengerabuzima*, meaning “the life savers” or the life protectors. In the areas where they operate, people have to pay taxes for their security. In some area like Kibarizo, Kivuye and Kirumbu, these taxes are called: *Lala salama* or “have a quiet night” whereas in other areas like Kinyana and Shanga, they call them *Appui a la sécurité* meaning or “Contribution for security”. In other places, they call these taxes *Tuunganemkono* or “Let us hold hands” or “let us get united”.

For Muraya and Ahere (2014: 15), “Ethnic identities in the Kivus have divided communities and aided the creation and propagation of armed groups.” Baltus (2015: 65) found, with other researchers, that placing the rebel groups around mining sites is a strategy to exploit minerals to the advantage of multinationals and other companies at a cheap price. In addition, Baltus argues that other armed groups survive on mineral exploitation. For Autesserre (2012: 1–3), the causes of conflicts and violence in Eastern DRC, especially in North Kivu are deeper and more serious than what is usually alleged, both at internal and external levels. According to her, there are more than what she termed ‘the simple narratives’ when researchers present the Congolese conflicts especially in the East (Autesserre, 2012: 3)

Another underlying cause appeared in the 1990s related to recruitment of the youth in Masisi by the RPF. Many young people were recruited and went to fight in Rwanda. This prompted others to use their youth to protect them and to protect their homes. Security, protection and integration are some of the motivating factors sustaining endless conflicts. That is why conflicts in Masisi are cyclical and bear a cyclical nature. The underlying causes of conflicts are summed up in the following sections.

4.4.1 Historical Factors: Transplantation and Migrations

To begin with, some serious historical facts are obscured by the malicious will of the leaders, the politicians and the general population when it comes to the truth about the causes of conflicts in Masisi. I highlight some of these facts, namely, the land issue and the groups that were in Masisi before the coming of the colonialists. At the core of conflicts and violence in Masisi, Stearns (2013: 24) found that suspicious and land issues were the main motivational factors.

About land matters, Mamdani (2001: 239–240) gives the following explanations:

the Kivu highlands had fertile land, a mild climate, and no tse-tse flies, an ideal location for white settlement. To prepare the highlands for just that fate, the fundamental law of 1908 made a distinction between “indigenous” and “state” land: all land actually cultivated by “natives” was declared “indigenous” and the rest was declared “vacant” and seized by the state. It did not matter that this “vacant” land was actually used for grazing, or hunting or foraging, as was the forest around Masisi by the local Bahunde people.

Two points should be made clear from these explanations:

- By the time the colonialists arrived in the then Kivu, they found indigenous people who were good keepers of the forest that they used for hunting. Under these conditions, it was difficult to talk about land used for cultivation. It is difficult for the Hunde people to cultivate the space they have when historically, they hardly ever cultivated an acre in the entire district they occupied. So, it was a tricky to talk about indigenous land. There was more state land than indigenous land. This is to say that the land issues are really just an excuse.
- With regard to the people and structural organisations, by the time the Belgians arrived in the then Kivu, they found the Hunde living with Hutu and Tutsi. All these people lived in harmony without land problems among them without any kind of discrimination or exclusion.

A report produced by the Ministry of Colonies in Brussels on 5th October 1936 on the land issues and the indigenous ownership of land clarified the differences between the indigenous land and the state land. It was clearly stated in this report that “indigenous land [was] that part that was really exploited, cultivated and used for a socioeconomic purpose”. However, according to this report, any piece of land or forest used only for hunting, fishing or translocation without exploiting it permanently was state land. The views in this report should guide the current generations living in Masisi in looking at the land issues. As earlier said, when the colonialists arrived in Kivu, they found the so-called indigenous people living without ploughing or undertaking any farm activities. Even if they were doing it, it was on a very limited scale.

Additional facts should be considered here. The reasons for the move of population from Rwanda to Eastern DRC have never been clear even though the common allegations are that Rwanda was overpopulated, so there was need to create space; others alleged that the colonialists wanted manpower to work in their plantations, stating that the people they found in Masisi (Hunde, Nyanga and Tembo) were lazy, stubborn and unable to work. One unfortunate thing is that the status of these people has never been clearly established until today, almost a century later. There are periodically attempts to exclude them on the basis that they are foreigners and have been foreigners for all these years. In 1959, when the Tutsi refugees arrived in Eastern DRC, in Goma precisely and were relocated to Bibwe in Masisi, they added another element of conflict to the existing one, based on suspicion over land. These were Rwandese whose number was added to other undesired Rwandese groups. If this second group comprised refugees, the first ones were not refugees according to the definition of refugee or according to the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees. The big question is why the Central Congolese government has never been able to determine once and for all the situation of these people. This is where politics plays a regrettable role.

4.4.2 Sociopolitical Factors: the 1959 and 1994 Refugees

Land issues and mismanagement coupled with bad governance and manipulation. According to Stearns (2013: 23), political interests and strategies bear much weight in group recruitment and mobilisation in the Eastern DRC. He came to this conclusion after an analysis of three armed groups: the CNDP, the PARECO and the Raia Mutomboki. In order to understand the

dynamics of endless conflicts in Eastern Congo, Stearns (2013: 24) suggests that one should refer to the social context behind the armed groups and their relationships with local chiefs or traditional leaders, political elites and local or provincial governments. According to him, the social context includes the sociopolitical ways that lead to mobilisation; these are migrations coupled with economic changes and elections.

Leadership failure, bad and exploitative political and customary leadership, and forgotten areas without road infrastructure are some of the ingredients that pushed young people to a kind of suicide through wars and violence. The youth were recruited to fight in neighbouring countries, Uganda and Rwanda and Burundi. Big chunks of land for farming have been transformed into land for livestock or for farm animals especially cattle leaving no space for farming. There was no political will and no technical capacity to deal with such issues as island problems, refugees or displaced people. Young (cited in Clark, 2003: 14 and 19) highlighted concepts like “leaderless” groups and “an early version of state failure” that characterised the postcolonial context in Congo (Vlassenroot et al., 2016: 10). This state of “leaderlessness” lasted a long time until people, especially politicians decided to involve the youth in the fight for positions and interests.

4.4.3 Economic Factors: Greed, Grievances and Unfinished Business

People know DRC as a wealthy country with plenty of mineral resources. That is why various powerful countries always want to come and exploit these minerals. In the case of failed or weak leadership, they use the local youth to exploit the minerals, to work in mines or to protect the mining sites. It is in this way that in their analysis, Lutchman and Naidu (2003: 60) argued that “some South African corporates have been accused of some unsavoury practices. A 2002 UN report to the General Assembly named 12 South African companies in a list of firms accused of looting mineral resources in the DRC during its recent civil war.” These two researchers even named some of the “accused companies” such as “Anglo American, Anglovaal Mining (Avmin), De Beers and Iscor”. Other researchers like Turner (2013: 16) agree that “International Firms” Were Involved in Exploiting Minerals In DRC.

4.5 Conclusion

Chapter 4 presented the types, phases, dynamics and background of conflicts in Masisi. The chapter also provided the underlying causes of violence. Conflicts in Masisi have their origins in history and migration events that have brought people to settle among local people who did not welcome them. Migrations coupled with what is known as transplantation are among the historical dimensions of conflicts and violence in Masisi. This situation created a deadly and protracted conflict known as Kanyarwanda. In addition, there are socioeconomic and political factors defined by power sharing, leadership vacuum, greed and grievances fuelling conflicts and involving the youths. The next chapter gives an overview of the nature, the extent and the consequences of conflicts and youth violence in Masisi. It explores how the youths get involved in violent acts.

CHAPTER FIVE

NATURE, EXTENT AND CONSEQUENCES OF VIOLENCE IN MASISI

5.1 Introduction

On Friday, 4 November 2022, two people were murdered at Mweso, in Bashali Mokoto Chiefdom in Masisi. One of them, Bahati Akili Jacques, a Hutu, was the Administrative Secretary to the local chief who is a Hunde. Following this killing, the Hutu youth burnt the chief's houses and those of his sons accusing them of the crime. Another victim who was shot dead on the same fateful night, Jean-Paul Banzira, was working for Handicap International, an NGO operating in this area. These murders were added to the 19 people who were killed on 22 October 2022 at Kilambo village in Nyamaboko Chiefdom. All the 19 deceased were Hunde. These stories are part of a cycle of violence that is often witnessed in Masisi. This introductory background is in line with Galtung's views of violence. In fact, Webel and Galtung (2007: 16) established a cycle of violence and its consequences in a conflict setting. They assert:

where there is hatred and violence there will be traumatising; of victims harmed by the violence, and of the perpetrators harmed by their own hatred and by having traumatised the victims; where there are trauma victims may dream of revenge and revanche, and perpetrators of more glory, deposited in Culture and Structure as values and interests and in History as vicious feedback cycles.

It is clear that hatred, violence and traumatising always go together where a community or its members nurture them. Whenever there is hatred, it triggers conflicts that can turn violent and the longer the hatred the deeper the trauma it creates in people. This reflects the context of the youths in Masisi who have been used to hate speeches.

Adding his voice to what Webel and Galtung argued, Lederach (cited in Anastasiou, 2008: 21) found that a conflict is never a static movement; rather it is "expressive, dynamic and dialectical in nature". Conflict starts through human relationships and perceptions; it changes according to human interactions/relationships, and it is shaped by the same actors who started it or are involved in it. In addition, Lederach and Anastasiou argued, conflict is shaped by the

social environment from where it started. In the entire Province of North Kivu as well as in Masisi in particular, there are various indicators or signs of violent conflicts. Among these facts, there is social polarisation based on structural social systems and ideologies leading to social fragmentation whereby people move to totally opposite sides and do not want to live together. In addition, according to Colletta et al. (2000: 55)

- weapons are in the hands of common citizens or civilians allegedly for self-defence;
- outbreaks of violence are caused by the presence of armed troops;
- people are kidnapped for noncriminal reasons;
- foreign experts or even for politicians and for civilians need to have money to afford armed escorts who are mainly the youth recruited within the communities;
- there is crowd violence or riots especially among the university students or other groups of professionals;
- raids and pillaging are carried out by uncontrolled youth;
- there are human rights violations;
- police or military interventions are used to contain public demonstrations;
- there are high levels of common crime, such as group theft known as *les quarante voleurs* or the forty thieves, robbery, acts of violence, organised crime, and murder;
- illicit trading is rife;
- there are roadblocks controlled by armed soldiers mixed with civilians or totally controlled by armed groups or civilians;
- armed troops patrol unsafe areas;
- education and health services delivery is disrupted;
- infrastructure and natural resources are destroyed;
- there is a loss of market and financial resources;
- refugees and displaced populations are established in the area.

This is exactly the picture of Masisi that most people describe as a no-go zone and the activities involving hundreds of youths. In this chapter, I examine the extent of conflicts where the youth are taking part; the impacts these conflicts have or have had on the youth and the mechanisms that have been used to curb these conflicts. In this chapter, I present the motivational factors of conflicts in general that reflect the nature, the extent and the

consequences of conflicts and violence in Masisi. Furthermore, I look at the mechanisms that have been used to deter the youth violence as well as their outcomes.

5.2 Causes of Violence In Masisi

According to several conflict experts, conflict is an inevitable phenomenon in an individual or among any given group or team aiming at self-destruction or at other-destruction (Galtung 1996: 70; Craig et al., 2008: 25–29). These researchers state that differences, incompatibilities or “efforts to harm or to hurt” in general are the major motivational sources of conflict. Among the elements of differences that they emphasise, there are “personality, preferences, styles, values and principles, knowledge and experience, goals”, cultural differences, interests and needs, unmet expectations and feelings of incompatibility, among others (Galtung 1996: 70; Craig et al., 2008: 25–29). In one way or another, these are the building blocks of conflicts in teams or groups. In Masisi, it has been established that ethnic groups are culturally different with different values and interests. Initially, the Hunde, Nyanga and Tembo were hunters who did not want to work or even till the ground. The Hutu are hardworking and farmers; they live on agricultural produce whereas the Tutsi are pastoralists or cattle keepers. The Hunde, Nyanga and Tembo need the forest for hunting, the Hutu need the land for farming/agricultural activities while the Tutsi need the place/land to graze their cattle.

Looking further in analysis, Kriesberg (in Bar-Siman-Tov, 2004: 90) established four major conditions sustaining intergroup conflicts:

- First, one group thinks they have a collective identity different from that of the outgroup. In Masisi, quite often, the groups base their conflicts on their identities. The Hunde assume they are autochthonous and hold traditional power and regard the Hutu and Tutsi as foreigners. Thus, the youth from these two sides have the same attitude.
- Second, one group thinks that its living conditions are abnormal and could be a result of history. The young Hutu and Tutsi think that the colonialists who brought their parents or grandparents to DRC are the sources of their trouble but they also claim their right to live there as they were born and grew up in Masisi. On the other hand, the young Hunde

maintain that part of their land is occupied by the Hutu and Tutsi. In addition, they think the traditional power is tampered with by the other group.

- Third, one group assumes the other is the source of their negative conditions or grievances.
- Fourth, the aggrieved group believes that it can compel the other to embrace the needed change.

Therefore, the underlined causes of conflicts are identity differences, the results of history, grievances caused by the others (*Us vs Them*) and finally imposing change on others or forcing them to change.

According to The World Bank (2005: 7), the contributory factors of conflicts are the “ethnic and religious dominance rather than diversity”. These are coupled with identity factors. In Masisi, the Hunde hold customary power and believe they are the leaders while the Hutu believe in their numbers and assume that they are the majority and oppose any kind of domination. Both groups use their position to despise the other and to mislead their youth.

Similarly, for Harris and Reilly (1998: 9–10), there are two elements that go together and beget internal or intrastate conflicts. These are identity and resource sharing. From the identity perspective, people gang up as an “identity group” against a situation following their ethnicity, religion, culture, language, heritage or history. All these elements explain the identity aspect of conflict as felt by the youth in Masisi. In addition, Harris and Reilly (1998: 10) argue that the “proliferation of small arms has exponentially increased the intensity of identity-related conflicts”. On the distribution side, this implies the way resources are shared within a given community. The resources could be economic, social or political. Economic or political power, land or territory, employment could be motivational factors in conflicts and violence.

According to Harris and Reilly (1998: 9), these two causal factors, identity and distribution, define what is called “deep-rooted conflict”. This is reflected by the “combination of potent identity-based factors with wider perception of economic and social injustice”. Some elements like issues around land, political power, ideology or access to resources maybe at the core source of deep-rooted conflicts. These researchers give some examples of countries

that underwent identity-based conflicts during the last decades of the twentieth century. These are Russia (Chechnya), Northern Ireland, Israel, Afghanistan and Sri Lanka among others.

Narrowing down the geographical scope, Olaosebikan (2010: 551–554) found that the causes of conflicts in Africa, DRC and Masisi included, are mainly based on the “creation of arbitrary borders by colonial powers, the heterogeneous ethnic composition of African states and the resultant problem of ethnicity; an inept leadership; corruption and poverty”. The youth find themselves caught up between the discussions and exclusion of autochthonous and foreigners, who owns the land and who does not, who is powerful and who is not. These are complex issues around identity, wealth and power. McCandless and Bangura (2007: 45) also highlight the causes of conflicts in Africa and list the following: land and natural resources; the role of the military in fuelling political instability; the issues around identity and manipulation of ethnicity and the colonial division of borders. Among the causes raised by various researchers, the “colonial division of borders” in Africa is a deep cause that has historical and trans-border repercussions that most decision-makers seem to overlook, yet this is an issue that has sustained serious bloody conflicts or raised violent conflicts with a very strong spillover effects like in Eastern DRC all the way to Masisi District.

Collier and Hoeffler (2000: 2) on their side, assume that rebellion or conflicts are caused by “greed and grievance”. Among the grievances, they distinguish the “intergroup or inter-ethnic hatred, interreligious hatred, political exclusion, and vengeance” (2000: 11–12). As a contextual factor, these types of hatreds, Collier and Hoeffler argue, are observable in multi-ethnic and/or multi-religious communities (2000: 12). Another causal factor, according to them, is political exclusion or marginalisation and democracies. To these causes of conflicts, the researchers add the economic inequality among communities where the rich exploits the poor. Another cause of conflict “dwells upon history: current rebellion is motivated by the desire to revenge atrocities committed during a previous conflict.” So “the desire to revenge” motivates a party to go the war or to engage into conflicts (ibid.: 13). This study establishes the same aspects sustaining violence among the youth in Masisi: ethnic and religious hatred, political discrimination, stereotypes and the wish to revenge among the youths. All this is coupled with political manipulation and a lack of leadership.

Going further and confirming what Collier and Hoeffler argued, Addison et al. (2000) investigated “The economic motivation for conflict in Africa”. As premises of their analysis, they assert that, in their complexity, conflicts are based on “greed, when substantial natural resource rents are involved, and grievance, especially when poverty or horizontal inequality across regions and ethnic groups is high” (Addison et al., 2000: 2; Collier et al., 1999). In this way, their views add up to what Olaosebikan (2010) identified as the causes of conflicts in Africa, mainly poverty, corruption, leadership crisis, ethnicity and land or border issues (pp. 551-554). In brief, the model based on grievances assumes that the major cause of conflicts is not economic “but rather is a protest generated by objective grievances: ethnic or religious hatreds, income or land inequality, oppression or historical vengeance.” As for the greed model, it “postulates that the cause of initial conflict is an economic calculus of relative military advantage, the government’s ability to finance defence expenditure, the scale of primary commodity exports, and the costs of rebel recruitment” (Collier et al., 2000: 13). In a nutshell, conflicts are sustained by the desire to get or to acquire something and/or the psychological behaviour linked to a given life situation. Still, emphasising the economic aspects seems to overlook the motivational factors of intrapersonal conflicts.

Ramsbotham et al. (2005: 78–79) summarise the sources of conflicts into three categories encompassing the different types or levels of conflicts. These sources are internal, contextual and relational sources of conflicts. These researchers build conflict “theories and frameworks” around the major aspects. The internal theories “locate the sources of conflict mainly within the nature of the protagonists” or the conflicting parties. On the other hand, the relational aspects “look for sources mainly in relations between conflict parties”. The contextual aspects of conflict look mainly for the sources of conflicts “outside the conditioning contexts that structure the conflict and, in some versions, also generate the conflict parties themselves” (Ramsbotham et al., 2005: 79). In addition, researchers assert that exposure to violence at an early stage and human contact can lead to violence and to “unintended effects” compromising social collaboration (Barnie et al. 2017: 2–6; Everett, 2013; Oduaran et al. 2020: 14763; Tolan, 2001: 234). The exposure to violence might be a forgotten area in conflict analysis especially when looking at conflicts that have lasted for many years like in Masisi in the North Kivu Province. Kodmani and Chartouni-Dubarry (2009: 97), talking about the security sector in Arab countries argue that a new concept—that

of human security—is taking shape in these countries given the situation most of them find themselves in especially by failing to face the issues of people at the grassroots. According to these scholars,

The debate is growing across the region. International agencies are promoting the concept of human security and societies are awakening to the fact that their governments are failing to guarantee their physical security (when a natural catastrophe or accident occurs) and their basic needs (water, food, etc) (Kodmani et al., 2009: 97).

This, according to these researchers, could result in various consequences in addition to violence and conflicts. Among other negative impacts this situation could bring out in those Arab countries as well as other countries, Kodmani and Chartouni-Dubarry (2009: 96) identified some sectors or behavioural aspects that could be affected like “the regional environment and its risks, fear of domestic instability due to a fragile social fabric or mere fear of the unknown in general.” Father Peter Balleis (2013: 6–7), the International Director of Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS), on his side, gave a summary of the motivational causes or dynamics of conflicts as given above and following the contexts in which the JRS operates in its mission to take care of refugees or displaced people. According to him, most conflicts are caused by persistent injustices, weak or rogue states, failed and repressive governments, negative exploitation of ethnicity and religion, and finally economic interests and external interferences. There is also the need to get or to keep power, greed and control over mineral resources. Here, Balleis gives an example of DRC among others.

5.3 Nature and Extent of Violence in Masisi and Youth Participation

Talking about the background to conflict in North Kivu Province of Eastern Congo, Stearns (2012: 7) once asserted:

the continuing violence in the Eastern DRC can be bewildering in its complexity: in the profusion of armed factions, the plethora of acronyms and the multitude of grievances that trigger outbreaks of conflicts—be they political, or ethnic; local, national or cross-border.

In fact, it is this complexity that is drawing the youths to engage in conflict and violence as they have no other choice than to join other combatants or the warlords in order to survive. Stearns (2012: 7– 8) adds that “local elites, especially in Kigali and Goma, have developed a stake in armed groups, which they believe maintain their interests—either directly, by providing protection to businesses and their personal political leverage”. To achieve this, these elites have to rely on the youth as actors on the ground.

There are several dimensions involved in the current situation in Masisi as far as conflicts are concerned. On the one hand, there are the sociopolitical dimensions while on the other hand, there are the economic dimensions. All these dimensions are fuelling conflicts as they are attracting the youth (Autesserre, 2011: 1–3; Born, 2005: 42). All these dimensions are based on a historical animosity, an exclusionary politics, resource sharing or competition, globalised and/or regionalised factors like conflicts in neighbouring countries, here, Rwanda, Uganda and Burundi. To these factors, I could add the need for revenge by the youths developing very aggressive and violent defence mechanisms. In terms of the social dimension, the discrimination by ethnic groups and living in an adversarial fashion have developed overtime a kind of hatred and hostility among them. The ethnic groups live in separate villages. However, in some areas they use the same markets or go to the same churches. For example, in Kitchanga, the Hunde, the Nyanga and the Hutu live together whereas the Tutsi live aside in a kind of camp. In Nyakariba and Nyamitaba, the Hutu and Tutsi live together. There is only one Hunde family of the local chief. He lives there alone while his family stays in Goma town.

A place like Rubaya is growing through the mining of the Coltan (Colombo tantalite) and it is a meeting place for people from various other provinces or even from neighbouring countries. However, the Hutu people seem to be imposing the rule of the game in this place. Presenting what a conflict could be, Galtung (1958a: 7) argued that a “conflict is said to exist in an action-system if two or more values are pursued and they are perceived as incompatible or mutually exclusive”. Thus, the conditional aspects of a conflict are the values, the actors pursuing the values and the incompatibility or exclusiveness of the values. Craig and Flanagan (2008: 21) assert that a conflict is “any situation in which interdependent people have apparently incompatible goals, interests, principles or feelings.” What is striking in this

definition is reflected by the concepts interdependent, incompatible, goals, interests, principles and feelings. These concepts of incompatibility can result in conflict or misunderstanding. That is why it is very important here to distinguish between conflict as an incompatibility of interests and violence as armed conflict. In his study, Tillett (1991: 5) distinguishes various dimensions of conflicts among which are intrapersonal, interpersonal, the intragroup and the intergroup conflicts as well as value conflicts and the international conflicts. He goes on and establishes the “manifest and the unmanifest conflicts” (ibid.: 9) that could be related to what Fisher et al. (2000: 6) called latent and surface or open conflicts. In conflicts, people may use power, including force leading to the abuse of power; right (or the law) or try to resolve it by interaction between the parties. In Masisi District, the parties are the youth from various ethnic communities taking part in inherited conflicts or conflicts that have erupted where they live.

Deepening the explanation about conflicts, Tillett (1991: 7) argues that “one need would be seen as incompatible with another if meeting that need is thought to prevent, obstruct, interfere with or in some way make meeting the other need less likely or effective”. In this way, “Conflict becomes manifest when one or more of the parties involved seeks to resolve the incompatibility by, for example, discussing, fighting, compelling the other to change, going to law, or seeking resolution” (Tillett, 1991: 7). One wonders what benefits the youth gain from the Masisi conflicts or the violence they get involved in. If greed and grievances, manipulation or any unfinished business are the motivational factors for them to get involved in conflict, what do they get at the end?

Conflict does not have to become violent or to turn into armed conflicts to be dealt with well and or managed, resolved or transformed. In this research, I used these two terms, conflict and violence, interchangeably. Nevertheless, I am aware that “violence” has a negative feature of harming whereas “conflict” is two-sided as it can be a “creator and a destroyer (Galtung, 1996: 70). Conflict, Galtung (1996: 95) argues, is an incompatibility of goals or an impossibility to attain one’s goal because of a hindrance.

In a report by the World Bank (2005: 5), it is asserted that “the term ‘conflict’ is used to refer to violent conflict including civil and interstate wars and armed rebellions”. In this way, the concept encompasses various dimensions. Adding to this view, Ramsbotham et al. (2005: 27)

argue that a conflict implies “the pursuit of incompatible goals by different groups. This suggests a broader span of time and a wider class of struggle than armed conflict”. A conflict can be any misunderstanding or disturbance preventing somebody from meeting their needs. It can also be any situation preventing two or more people to agree on a common goal or to fulfil their needs. Ramsbotham et al. (2005: 78–79) establish three categories of conflicts related to major theories and/or frameworks: the internal conflicts that find their sources “within the nature of the protagonists”; the relational conflicts looking “for sources mainly in relations between conflict parties” (Ramsbotham et al., 2005: 79) and the contextual conflicts that locate the causes “outside to the conditioning contexts” where conflicts stem from. Conflicts are well explained through these categories as the intrapersonal conflicts, the interpersonal, intrastate and interstate or international conflicts.

Swanström et al. (2005: 9) go further and assert: “a conflict is the result of opposing interests involving scarce resources, goal divergence and frustration”. They add that conflicts should not be defined simply in terms of violence (behaviour) or hostility (attitudes), but also include incompatibility or differences in approaches resolving a problem. Such a definition is designed to include conflicts outside the traditional military sphere and to bring in a psychological aspect (Swanström et al., 2005: 7). Moreover, Swanström et al. (2005: 9) refer to the views of other scholars who have defined a conflict “as a situation in which two or more parties strive to acquire the same scarce resources at the same time.” They finally summarise the definitions given by various people and argue that a conflict occurs whenever there are “perceived differences in issue positions between two or more parties at the same moment in time”. Fisher et al. (2000: 4) capture this by simply saying that a conflict “is a relationship between two or more parties who have, or think they have, incompatible goals.” Here, in the case of the study area, the scarce resources that could oppose the youths are the minerals exploitation in a place like Rubaya and land management in Masisi in general. For Harris and Reilly (1998: 17–18), a “conflict is the interaction of different and opposing aspirations and goals in which disputes are processed, but not definitively resolved”. Through this definition, Harris and Reilly establish the source of conflict (interaction of opposing aspirations and goals); the outcome of conflict (disputes) and the responses to conflicts processes and resolutions.

The major points in the way to perceive a conflict are around the scarcity of resources but also the time factor as there will always be conflict when two or more parties need the same resource at the same time, a case that will result in more competition than cooperation. The World Bank (2005: 7) upholds that “conflict affects countries at all levels of economic development, but it disproportionately affects least developed countries or countries in economic stagnation. Conflicts vary widely in their nature, extent, duration, range of contributory factors and the ways in which they impact education” (ibid.). The prevailing situation in Arab countries as identified by Kodmani and Chartouni-Dubarry (2009: 96–97) was not or is not different from what prevailed in other countries, especially in failed or rogue states unable to guarantee any security to their people. On the other hand, looking at the prevailing types of conflicts, Kodmani and Chartouni-Dubarry (2009: 97) argue that “since interstate conflicts are now rare and civil strife is common, security sectors of Arab countries have followed a general trend of expanding security and intelligence agencies at the expense of the military forces”. This implies that security today based on the current situations call for another transforming strategy that goes beyond the use of coercive power, even though the military power still has or plays the major role in the security sector from the Arab countries and in a good number of countries globally.

From the above, the major issue to look at is the features of conflicts in Masisi and the youth's stake in these conflicts. Violent conflicts have been witnessed in Masisi since independence in 1960. However, in 1993 the conflicts took a complicated turn. Inter-ethnic conflicts erupted with violence and animosity. This is the time when the war in Rwanda was going on, when the youth were recruited in various places in Masisi, especially in the eastern part of the district. The youth were recruited in places like Nyakariba-Nyamitaba, Mokotos, Birambizo, Lushebere, Katale-Karambi, Buito. In some contexts, the youth would go several miles to support their people. What can be seen today is that people have left their villages to look for shelter in other places that then become overpopulated such as Kitchanga, Nyakariba-Nyamitaba, Rubaya, Karuba, Masisi Centre, Sake and Goma town. In other places, people live in ethnic groups while others live in camps. The types of armed groups found in Masisi offer different features as these are initially ethnic groups that fight each other, and, at the other times, they are fighting together for what they believe to be the same cause. An example is found in Buleusa where the Mai-Mai, the FDLR and the NDC-R and

the FARDC are found together at mineral exploitation sites according to an NGO Informant who has access to the area (June 2022). Finally, the extent and nature of conflicts and violence involving the youths in Masisi range from the individual factors (like emotional and cultural factors) to group factors where non-state actors or armed groups try to fill in the vacuum created by history and by weak and bad governance.

5.4 Indicators of Violence Among the Youth in Masisi

In this study, the indicators of violence are the different signs or situations that reflect violence or could lead to violence in the study area. Colletta and Cullen (2000: 21) categorise these indicators into three primary groups based on their observable impacts on individuals, physical damage, and the nature of conflict. Among the indicators or signs of violence or violent conflicts in Masisi, one significant indicator is the highly hostile interaction between the youth and their communities. This is reflected by the number of individuals who have become physically disabled due to conflicts, as well as incidents of unlawful executions. In the case of Masisi, there are numerous notable cases, such as the elderly man from Gisovu who was tortured and executed in April 2022 because his son had joined another armed group; the two men who were beheaded in the same place Gisovu; a lady who was shot dead at Mohanga in May 2022, 19 villagers killed at Kilambo or the two people killed at Mweso early in November 2022. Another tragic case is the young university girl who was murdered at Kitchanga on 11 April 2023. Another indicator of violence according to its effects on people is the number of people mentally affected by conflicts or violence. Even though no study has been undertaken in this regard, I can confirm that people in Masisi are traumatised and mentally disturbed by the various scenes of violence they have experienced. The mass graves in or around their villages, the killings and daily torture have left deep wounds in their hearts that need healing.

Another indicator is the way violence has been adopted as a normal way of life and how it is used to solve issues. This is coupled with the number of young people joining the armed groups or those who left their villages to seek security in IDP camps or in other areas. In addition, the availability of weapons among the civilians allegedly for self-defence, in villages and in IDP camps is another indicator of violence. The unemployed youths living in these camps or in the villages use guns to earn their living. This situation goes with the

presence of refugees and displaced populations as another indicator of violence. The refugees are FDLR or refugee fighters from Rwanda and the Congolese who have been living in IDP camps for more than 20 years. Currently there are large IDP camps around Goma town, at Kanyaruchinya, Bulengo, Lushagala and Mugunga hosting displaced people from Rutshuru and Masisi following the M23 attack.

In addition, other indicators of violence are the outbreaks of violence created by the presence of numerous armed groups. More than 100 armed groups in the same area cannot go unnoticed or without violence. This outbreak of violence goes with high levels of common crime, murder and illicit trading. The growing of hemp in places like Kibarizo, Gahanga, Kise, Mitumbala and elsewhere in Masisi confirms these above allegations. Among other signs of violence, there is the multiplication of roadblock controlled by armed soldiers or armed group members at every corner of the muddy or bushy roads. These roadblocks are used to exploit and disturb the peasants or travellers. Between Goma and Kitchanga, there are roadblocks stationed at Mubambiro, Sake, Makombo, Kabati, Rushinga, Burungu and Kitchanga, spanning approximately 50 miles. Similarly, along the route from Goma to Masisi centre, roadblocks are encountered at Mubambiro, Sake, Mitumbala, Mushaki, Matanda, Oso, Kisuma, Katale, Lushebere and Kalinga, covering about 88 miles.

In Masisi, there are unsafe places where one cannot freely go like Muheto, Rwankeri, Tambi, Gahira, Kahanga, Kise, Ngungu, Gatoyi, Loashi, Nyabyondo, Mahanga just to mention few places. In these areas or villages and elsewhere, lootings and/or pillaging, killings and kidnappings are very common by these unemployed and idle youths. Furthermore, all the various armed groups are “organisations devoted to self-defence of the population”. They say they are protecting people and their land while in fact they are impoverishing these people. There is also the “extent to which infrastructures have been destroyed or the visible signs of violence on churches, schools and residential infrastructures causing troubles to education and health services”. The inability of the population to access market and commercial centres is an indicator of structural violence discernible in the destruction of the road infrastructure. The youths as the main manpower used to till the land and to take their produce to the local and even outside markets. Currently, they cannot move freely, they are not working, they have nothing to offer on the market. Some have been discouraged or disappointed by the

destruction of the road infrastructure. Other indicators are linked to “the nature of conflict” and are the duration of wars or conflicts in an area and the type of the groups involved in the conflict as fighters or manipulators. In Masisi, the youth from various ethnic groups took guns to fight for their identity, for their ethnic group or for some community leaders, politicians or businesspeople. And for more than thirty years, we have witnessed endless conflicts (Colletta, 2000: 21, 55).

5.5 Youths’ Stake in Violence in Masisi

The study established that in Masisi, the youth are caught up with various motivations to join armed movements or militia groups to find a way of surviving. For this last dimension, they agree to submit to politicians or other people who are financially well off and work to protect their assets in Masisi. This could be their farms and cows or even their mineral sites. As Stearns (2012: 8) put it about the armed groups, “while some emerged organically from the realities of rural life, others were deliberately created by local politicians, and still others were exploited to serve the interests of urban businessmen”. The current reality on the ground is that some groups are being manipulated by these politicians and businesspeople whereas others take guns just for pleasure of looting and stealing goods from the peasants. The difference between these two categories is that those groups in the service of politicians and businessmen are permanent whereas the others are just sporadic groups of thieves.

Firstly, they prioritise the protection of individuals’ interests and ensuring their security. Secondly, warlords maintain control over their village, believing it to be beyond the reach of higher authorities, with the state’s law not effectively enforced in their territory. Consequently, the youth acquire firearms and ammunition from various sources facilitated by their leaders. These weapons are obtainable through channels including procurement from military or police personnel stationed nearby. The firearms are then used to intimidate the local populace, effectively establishing the warlords as the sole arbiters of law in their communities. They rationalise their violent actions by citing the security they purport to provide. To sustain this system, households are required to make regular payments, either weekly or monthly, as dictated by village norms or the warlord’s demands.

Another unfortunate fact is that the armed youth are controlling education. Towards the end of the school year, during the final exams, they intimidate the inspectors and allow cheating. Here, the problem is that quite often these violent youth know people in town where they live and what they do and promise death to whoever opposes their rules of cheating in exams. They are the village judges and decision-makers. They dictate the laws and convict whoever they want. It is in this way that Stearns (2012: 9) raises a good question about this situation: “why did the peace deal not pacify the Kivus, while other areas, such as Northern Katanga and Ituri, have seen a sharp decrease in violence?” Stearns adds that “interpretations of the ongoing violence in the Eastern DRC variously stress grievances over land and identity, greedy local and international elites, or a weak and venal Congolese state”.

The youth participation in violent action is seen at various levels: rape, killings, torture like burning candles over a victim and let the burning wax fall on their victims. Another horrendous act is the use of what they call *akadiguzo*. This is a very sharp and small hoe with which they smash the victim’s head. So many young people are being killed with this dangerous weapon.

These warlords praise either their guns or the spade. They use the guns to make money and get everything they want from the poor peasants as they use the spade to get minerals and make a lot of money. Their say reflects this unfortunate reality when they want to mock the educated people. They just say: *uwizeyizeimbundacyangwaigitiyo!* meaning “The best school is the gun or the spade.” So, they are rude, brutal, arrogant and wild. Large numbers of them are found in places like Rubaya, Gatoyi, Kibarizo, Kirumbu, Nyange, Tambi, Gahira, Busihe, Kise, Kashebere, Mahanga among others.

5.6 Impact of Violence on the Youth in Masisi

Frustration and trauma are observable behaviours throughout the communities in Masisi in general and among the youth in particular as a result of protracted conflicts and violence (Galtung, 1996: 95; Gates et al., 2012: 1715). In this district, “widespread violence and physical destruction” have had a destructive impact on people movements or transportation because they affect not only their means of transport but also impact the roads and bridges. In addition, wars and conflicts destroy health and education facilities preventing people

especially those living in rural areas from having access to proper health or good education. The focus becomes on military expenditure, thus reducing funds allocated to public health, education and poverty alleviation. On their side, Colletta and Cullen (2000: 3–4) argue that:

violent conflict within a state weakens its social fabric. It divides the population by undetermining interpersonal and communal trust, destroying the norms and values that underlie cooperation and collective action for common good, and increasing the likelihood of communal strife.

The protracted conflicts in Masisi have really destroyed the social fabric and kept people separated without trust in each other including the youth. They do not cooperate, nor do they work together for any common good. In the health sector, conflicts have reduced the efficiency of the public health resources sectors. Moreover, medical personnel have been killed and those who have escaped such a fate have left the district, leaving the place to NGOs like “Medecin Sans Frontieres” in Mweso, Nyakariba and Masisi Centre (Gates et al., 2012: 1715). The education sector has not been spared by conflicts, the education sector is also hindered by conflict as schools have been destroyed and there is a high rate of dropouts. Young people or children lose the will to go to school and teachers have left for exile in safer places (Gates, 2012: 1716; World Bank, 2005: 13–28). According to Gates et al. (2012: 1716), the country’s situation has a meaning in the country’s fate. “Underdevelopment facilitates both the occurrence of conflict and undernourishment”. They also agree that conflicts create or increase poverty and hunger (ibid.: 1715). This is true because the manpower has been destroyed or killed; the lucky ones go into exile or to camps when they are not internally displaced. Those who are available or willing to work lack means, facilities and support.

Looking at the “macroeconomic costs of conflict”, Novta and Pugacheva (2020: 3), confirming what other experts earlier said, affirm:

conflict is a key factor that can hold back economic development and that can lead to economic losses that can persist for years. They add that conflict can also ignite large refugee flows and may affect the economies of countries, near and far, for an extended period of time.

There used to be practicable roads infrastructures in Masisi, schools, very large tea plantations and pyrethrum. All this has disappeared confirming the kind of “development in reverse” (World Bank, 2005: 7). Generally speaking, the experts of ICRC (2016: 7) present the consequences of protracted conflicts on human beings as follows:

in protracted conflicts, people have multiple and intersectional vulnerabilities and needs that affect different aspects of their lives. These needs extend over years and change over time during the conflict. People’s security and respect for their dignity remain essential needs, either continuously or episodically throughout protracted conflict, depending on changing patterns of conflict, threat and risk.

Among the risks that people may encounter during protracted conflicts, the ICRC (2016: 7) found that people can face “physical threats of death, injury, rape, sexual violence, exploitation and slavery, forced displacement, family separation, unlawful detention, summary execution, unlawful conscription and forced labour”. These are the common risks that are inevitable or unavoidable and that can affect the youth as well as their communities in the context of protracted conflicts. It is in this way that in Masisi, the protracted conflicts have had various impacts especially on the youth.

First, there are psychological impacts. The young people who were born during conflicts or who grew up in IDP camps have been traumatised and are stressed. They live in anxiety without knowing what the future holds for them. A good number of them have witnessed the killings or have killed; some of them have witness horrendous scenes of people eating human flesh or have also eaten it. They live with these pictures in their minds. In return, they become very violent, aggressive and wild. They have developed anger, hostility, depression and grief while others suffer from fear of relating to other youths. Moreover, some suffer from these “intrusive memories” of horrendous scenarios they have witnessed. This is the case of the youth in Masisi in general or those found in places like Kibarizo, Kirumbu, Gahira, Tambi, Kivuye, Kitchanga, Gatoyi, Luke, Loashi, and Nyabyondo.

Second, the security threat. The IDP camps have been in some areas for more than 20years, since 1995. So, the youths that were born in these conditions have not been given the opportunities to live like other young people. They feel isolated from normal social life. Life

in the camp is not easy; it makes the youth and their families very dependent on the NGOs' support. This kind of life makes them lazy, yet they need to live well and in good conditions. Another consequence is that there is an alarming rate of promiscuity and sexual activities in these places, with rape, violence and killing, early marriages and pregnancies. This situation is alarming in places like Rubaya and others. Table 13 gives an overview of IDP camps that have been in different places in Masisi for more than two decades now.

Table 13: IDP Camps in Masisi

PLACE OR ZONES	IDP CAMP	COMMENTS
RUBAYA ZONE	Kibabi Buporo	
	Kibabi Police	
	Kasenyi (toward Kinigi)	
	Katoyi	
MASISI ZONE	Katale	Hosting around 11.000 people (according to an NGO worker operating in this camp)
	Lushebere	
	Bukombo	18 kms from Masisi Centre when heading to Nyabyondo
	Kalinga	
KITCHANGA ZONE	Kahe	This is exclusively for Tutsi
	Mungote	This is exclusively for Hutu
MWESO ZONE	Mweso	Hosted on a land belonging to the youth association
	Rujagati/Kashuga	
	Kalembe	
	Malemo	
KIRUMBU ZONE	Kalengera	

Source : The researcher

There are other unnoticed or simply forgotten camps like: Mpati camp hosting around 20 000 people, Kitso/Bibwe, Bweru, Muheto, Nyange, Kivuye (in Ruhanga), Ibuga (Kashuga) and Busumba which is the most recently established camp. The main issue could be that these last IDP camps are in very unstable places where both local and international NGOs have restricted access. These camps reflect a clear example of structural violence as their long presence is related to dysfunctional leadership or government that is not playing its role of protector and security provider. That is why the youths try to fill in the gap resulting from years of irresponsible leadership or government.

Third, there are the moral and spiritual consequences. In places where schools and churches have been destroyed, where families are in extreme poverty and where parents have no say over their children, the youths do not respect any moral values and do not listen to the elders or the moral people. Pastors or priests have been killed and in some places like the Nyakariba Catholic Church and the Singa Baptist Church, hundreds of people have been killed in the churches. Table 14 gives an example of some Catholic priests who have been killed in Masisi District:

Table 14: Catholic priests killed in Masisi or from Masisi

Name	Place of murder	Year/ Date
Conrad Ndyanabo Bangushaka	Mutongo. He was the Parish Priest	13/12/1994
Benoit Nirere Cyitatre	From Masisi, killed at Jomba where he was the Parish Priest	15/11/1996
Emmanuel Nsengiyumva	Nyakariba	24/12/1996
Charles Kanyamanza	Nyakariba	24/12/1996
Paul Juakali Muhindo	Mweso	6/04/1999
Jean-Paul Kakulekalembere	Mweso	25/02/2015
Etienne Nsengiyumva Mutembe	Kitchanga. He was the Parish Priest	9/04/2018

Source: Bucyalimwe (2021)

This part of the story does not include the priests or sisters killed in other places like the two priests, Father Gatuku, Munyankuyo and Munyanshongore and one nun, Sister Laurentia who were killed at Buhimba; Father Richard Bemeriki (a parish priest killed at Jomba), or the four nuns who were kidnapped and disappeared in Jomba. This means that the youths in armed groups no longer listen to the stories of faith and do not expect anything from places like

churches or from pastors. During my field trips, I reached a parish where a warlord was preaching to the pastors in the convent. The strong man was accompanied by his wives and his armed bodyguards. I was not surprised to hear that he even fellowships in that Catholic Church that is, however, against polygamy.

Fourth, there are also the economic impacts sustaining poverty. The protracted conflicts and violence have destroyed the basic infrastructure, especially schools, churches, roads and health structures. So, most of the boys and girls do not get the benefit of schooling. Some get married at a very young age. At 12, a girl is already mature enough to be wife to a husband who is just 14. Hence, a serious problem affecting the youth is early marriages, early pregnancies and a great sense of irresponsibility. The uneducated youth use their guns to put pressure on families to give away (against their will) their daughters at an early age, some of them aged 10, 11 or 12. This exposes the young girls to risks to these young persons who are not mature or sufficiently physically developed to give birth.

As for their daily activities, without road infrastructure, the youth, as well as their families or households, are deprived of their farm incomes (being farmers) or even the off-farm incomes (salaries, business, any casual labour) as they are not working anywhere else. So rural food poverty has become real since there is no food production as it used to be. On the one hand, this has compelled the youths to develop a high sense of dependency as they rely on well-wishers and on international NGOs that supply food and medicine. On the other hand, at an early age, the boy takes a gun and become a nuisance to his village, raping women and demanding taxes; they want easy money without working to earn it. Youth make roadblocks everywhere just to ask for taxes. An example is the roadblock made by cattle herders between Rushoga and Matanda. Whoever passes must pay 1 000 Congolese francs and when asked why, they say that because the road goes through their boss's farm. Another example is for a group of youth before reaching Kitchanga who have erected a roadblock, and every motor vehicle must pay 500 Congolese francs for what they call "logo". Another roadblock is at Nyamitaba. Of course, there are many roadblocks everywhere in the province and the youth spend the day harassing people just looking for money. The youth do not care about education; they have no plan for development. They do not think about their future. They create exclusionary relations.

The land management is another issue related to the protracted conflict and affecting the youth. First of all, they grow a lot of marijuana that they smoke at their leisure. Masisi used to be an agriculture area, people used to grow both staple foods and cash crops like tea leaves at Mweso, Tambi, Gahira and Nyabura, coffee along the Lake Kivu side at Kirotshe, Minova and Bweremana and pyrethrum at Ngungu and Ruvunda. They used to supply for local markets and outside, to Goma, Kinshasa and Rwanda. Currently, they do not till their farms to grow food crops or cash crops and this creates poverty in their area. Second, people in Masisi used to have big portions of land to plough. Currently the trend has been to make farms for grazing cattle. This has reduced the size of farms for crops, putting land into the hands of very few people who have converted it into grazing space for their cattle, leaving the peasants, the youth included, without or any place to plant or with a very small piece of land to grow food. So, the youth find themselves jobless, yet they have some basic needs.

5.7 Evaluating the Mechanisms to Deter Youth Violence in Masisi

Mekonnen (2010: 101) argued that “little attention has been given to the role of African indigenous legal tradition in terms of its contribution to post-conflict transformation”. Yet, Mekonnen added, “several African societies have deeply rooted social and communal values of conflict resolution which can serve as a reservoir of wisdom in future transitional justice initiatives” (p. 101). These values should lead the peacebuilders trying to put an end to conflicts and violence in Masisi and in the Eastern DRC in general. Another view from Mekonnen (2010: 102) is that “post-conflict societies may face challenges of immense magnitude in their transitional period which include, inter alia, securing stability, achieving reconciliation, promoting justice and maintaining a smooth process of transformation”. These are among the pillars of peacebuilding. At the regional level, the International Conference on the Region of Great Lakes meetings and the subsequent resolutions to end violence and conflicts in the Great Lakes Region and in the Eastern DRC have been signs of good intentions but have never produced any positive or visible results.

A look at the traditional approaches to conflict transformation in general and their application can give an idea on the mechanisms as applied to the youth’s context or as used to deter youth’s violence in Masisi. I will also highlight the limitations of these mechanisms in responding to the youth involvement in violence. Here, the old or former Gacaca that has

been forgotten; the *Baraza la wazee* that has been politicised; and its pillars that are the different forum for education and conflict transformation in various ethnic communities.

The traditional approaches to conflict transformation have their strengths and their weaknesses (Boege, 2006: 11–15). Where the state has failed, most of the time these traditional approaches take over. This is like the *Baraza* that was introduced by the then RCDrebell group in Goma town in 1999 (Bucyalimwe, 2010: 287). Before the *Baraza* was introduced there was the *Commission Provinciale de Pacification* or the Provincial Peace Commission that was created by the then Birindwa Government in 1993. Its aim was mainly to reconcile the warring ethnic groups. This commission started on a hard (or a negative) note as it was politically motivated even though it tried to bring together the local initiatives for peace. In addition, the African traditional approaches “are not state-centric and hence credited with legitimacy”. These are traditional conventions and organisations that get support from the community members.

These mechanisms, Boege (2006: 13) asserts, “take the time factor into due account and are process-oriented” and quite often, these approaches focus on the process rather than on the results. They are also accused of being slow but they provide for inclusion and participation as they focus on the psychosocial and spiritual dimension of conflict transformation. More than reconciliation, which is among the aims of these approaches, there are also other aspects targeted like mental, spiritual and trauma healing in general (Boege, 2006: 15).

In North Kivu Province as well as in Masisi District, there are two categories of traditional approaches or local forum for conflict resolution. The first category was initiated in 1997 when the then President Laurent-Désiré Kabila came into power. This was the local or grassroots organisations for conflicts resolution. In fact, these organisations were known as *Chembe Chembe* or cells whereby people living in the same area were grouped into ten houses with one leader known as *Nyumbakumi* (meaning 10houses). This is the local chief at the first level or at the grassroots (or LC 1). Above the *Nyumbakumi*, there is the *Chef d’Avenue* or “the local chief” at the second level (or LC 2). This one deals with households on the same street (Avenue), or a given number of ten households. Above the LC 2, there is the local chief at the third level or *Chef de Quartier*. These three levels are also known as *Baraza* because these institutions act as places for arbitration among people living in the same areas.

They do not convict people, nor do they fine them but just they arbitrate whenever people have issues to sort out. It is when the issues get out of hand that they refer them to the police or to court. The second category of *Baraza* is the intercommunity forum known as *Baraza la wazee* or the elders' forum. These are ethnic leaders or wise people elected from each ethnic group to make the bigger board. The first mechanism that should be currently in use in Masisi is the initiation of youth forums or offices where the youth can meet and share their concerns or talk about their issues. However, the youth are not genuine in their sharing because the framework is not really conducive for them to open up to each other. This compels them to have an ethnic framework beside the group forum. This is the case at Kitchanga where there is the main or communal youth office but also other offices for youths from each ethnic group. All these offices are official and known but nothing is done to bring the youth to trust each other in a single forum.

There are ethnic forums that have been established for many years, since the ethnic groups started living together in suspicion. These are the *Gacaca* for the Kinyarwanda-speakers, the *Bushenge* for the Hunde, the *Kyaghanda* for the Nande and the *Bunakima* for the Nyanga, the *Lusu* for the Rega. In Masisi, the traditional approaches are discriminatory and exclusionary forums. Women and the youth are sometimes kept out of these forums. The youth are excluded from these forums because they are not among the elders. There are ethnic forums that are like traditional courts or schools to ensure good education for the children, particularly the youths. These are like training centres for education, for manhood or womanhood. The forums also encourage the initiation of peacebuilding programmes that are engaged in community-based peacebuilding and in NVC transformation. These programmes should be focused on peace, security, justice and equality.

To end the protracted conflicts and the youth violence in Masisi, there are questions that need to be addressed among which is to look at the strategies that have been put in place and how effective the strategies have been at all levels (starting from the grassroots level up to the national level) in promoting the rule of law against all types of violence in Masisi and in the North Kivu Province. Here the main focus should be placed on the mechanisms to transform conflicts, to mobilise the youth support to fight against violence, what should be done by the local leadership and the national government to stop youths acting with impunity, to ensure

accountability in regard to violation of human rights and violence. Moreover, there should be some examples of best practices or mechanisms or approaches to youth violence that have been used and that have involved the youth in the design, the implementation and the monitoring of post-conflict reconstruction, development and restoration of affected people. On 3 September 1997, the late President Laurent Desiree Kabila created another Peace Commission known as *Coordination de la pacification du Sud Kivu and du Nord Kivu* (Bucyalimwe, 2010: 293) or Coordination for the Peace of South Kivu and North Kivu.

In July 1998, the Kabila government initiated another commission for peace in North Kivu. This commission was known as LICOR, or *Ligue Intercommunautaire pour la Reconstruction du Nord Kivu* or Intercommunity Commission for the Reconstruction of North Kivu. The group was based in Kinshasa, and it was suggested that every ethnic group from North Kivu should be represented by two of its members within the LICOR: two Hutu, two Tutsi and two Nande, two Hunde and so forth and so on. Officially, the group had to bring a message of peace but behind the scenes, the same group had another mission: to create a rebel group and isolate the Eastern part of the country from the Kinshasa government. On 2 August 1998, the LICOR group proclaimed the RCD regime at Goma in a kind of coup d'état.

In addition to these initiatives, the central government had always used coercive power to deter youth violence or tribal violence. Coercive power was preferred to dialogue. Some examples are the military involvement in the Kanyarwanda war of 1963–1966 in Masisi and the 1993 war at Kibarizo. In 1993–1994, the then government decided to curb the conflict in North Kivu and in Masisi in particular by what it called *Operation Kimya* or “Operation Making Peace / Peacemaking”. This was followed by the *Operation Mbata* meaning “Operation Slapping”. This was in 1994–1995. This operation was followed by the *Operation Mkuki* meaning “Operation Spear”. All these operations were military operations where the military people were commissioned to go and make peace the hard way. Many people died until the youth decided to come in and protect their people. Currently, there is the “Operation Sukola II” after the *Operation Sukola I* meaning “cleaning” where the military have the mandate to rid the Province of the armed groups.

All in all, there have not been any visible initiatives targeting the youth in Masisi as such. There is the yearly *Amani Festival* by Kivu entrepreneurs and other external sponsors. This is a one-week festival that brings together thousands of youth mainly students for entertainment. This festival is organised in Goma town and never reaches the youth in rural areas especially in Masisi, yet it is in rural villages where there is too much violence and too many uncontrolled youths. Nevertheless, a dialogue was organised by the Catholic Church at Mweso (in Masisi) in 1993. The meeting brought around the table the local leaders or traditional chiefs, businesspeople, teachers and religious people. However, its recommendations were ignored as soon as the meeting closed the doors. There also have been peace talks in Goma where the leaders of armed groups, political leaders and other academics meet and discuss security issues.

In 2020, the Provincial Governor convened a forum that brought together the community leaders. It appeared that this gathering was more an opportunity for each ethnic group to point an accusing finger at the other. The shortcoming or the weakness in these sessions is that they mainly involve old people and not the youth. Secondly, those who took part are people who are masterminding conflicts and violence in rural areas. Third, the selection of the participants in these dialogues lacks transparency. Representatives of different ethnic groups should be selected to dialogue with the youth who are being manipulated upcountry or who are involved in violence and conflicts. Without their involvement, any dialogue is doomed to fail and to be counterproductive.

Another weakness is the place where the dialogue takes place; in Goma town or in other capital cities like Nairobi, Kampala or Addis Ababa. Most of the negotiators from the bush are so frustrated by the town and by the leaders that they do not clearly express themselves or express their grievances. This top-down approach yields no results that are felt or even implemented in villages or by the militia groups.

Another mechanism is to have a youth representative at the district level and the level of the group. The current district youth representative is a Hunde. The same trend has been observed where the different communities live together; in this case, it is a Hunde who is the youth representative. Currently the youth representative lives at Sake about 27 kilometres from Goma town and 88 kilometres from the Masisi District headquarters. At Kitchanga, the

representative is a Hunde. The negative side of this way of doing is that whenever a young Hunde is elected to lead other youth, those of other ethnic groups also elect their own representatives.

5.8 The Shortcomings of Mechanisms used in North Kivu and in Masisi

Generally speaking, and according to Boege (2006: 15), traditional approaches to conflict transformation or traditional mechanisms “do not terminate violence in the long term”; they often “contradict universal standards of human rights”; they have a limited sphere of applicability; they “are geared towards the preservation of the good old order” and finally they have free way to abuse (Boege, 2006: 15; Korir, 2009). Quite often, the top-down approach has been a major aspect of failure of the mechanisms used in North Kivu so far. Forgetting or excluding some actors like the youth and women has been detrimental to the outcomes of these mechanisms.

After the Birindwa Government initiated the Provincial Commission for Pacification, this commission suggested the militarisation of the Province as a solution to the prevailing conflicts in North Kivu Province. This implies the use of coercive power or military power. In a context where the military was not well controlled, this solution was dangerous as the military people could either turn against the civilians for their survival in the province or be easily corrupted by businesspeople or be misused by other people who had eyes on ruling the province (Bucyalimwe, 2010: 291).

5.9 How to Improve Non-Violent Actions to Curtail Youth Violence in Masisi

The answer to this question stems from the weaknesses of traditional approaches to conflict transformation as established by Boege (2006: 15). In fact, according to Boege, traditional approaches do not terminate violence in the long term. For more than two decades, wars and violence have been part of the daily life in Masisi. An example of the killings at Ngungu on the 9 August 2022, at Kishishe, at Kilolirwe and elsewhere explain this point. In addition, according to Boege, the traditional approaches “often contradict universal standards of human rights”. The judges or arbiters and decision-makers are old members of the community. The challenge, here, is that the youths feel excluded from the decisions taken in the leaders’ forums or when these decisions affect the young ones. Moreover, the traditional approaches

“have a limited sphere of applicability”. First of all, the approaches in the case of DRC and Masisi in particular, are community-based mechanisms that cannot be applied to the other groups. Boege (2006: 16) found that the approaches are focused on relatively small social issues, on a given group of families, ethnic organisations, villages or communities. In addition, the traditional approaches have proven themselves to be preservative. They are too static and stick to “the restoration of the good old order” (Boege, 2006: 17). They are fixed guidelines that apply only to conflicts that occur in a given community.

Finally, Boege found that the traditional approaches were open to abuse of power by the community leaders, especially in the context of the DRC where the state leadership has failed, and where institutions are weak and corrupt. Some traditional leaders or chiefs are easily manipulated or follow their own interests. Talking about the traditional approaches to conflicts and violence in the African context, Osaghae (in Boege, 2006: 17) argued that the relevance and applicability of traditional strategies have been negatively affected by the politicisation, corruption and abuse of traditional structures, especially traditional rule or leadership, which have delegitimized, in a steady way, the management of conflicts as constructed around them, and have decreased confidence in their effectiveness (Boege, 2006: 17; Stearns 2012: 9).

Given the above weaknesses on the side of traditional approaches to conflicts and violence, Galtung et al. (2013: 68) argue that “the more alternatives, the less likely the violence”. So, there is a need to devise various tools and means to face a conflict or to prevent or stop violence. Basically, these alternatives to violence or conflicts are dimensions of peacebuilding processes that have as a goal to change the human person caught up in violence or in conflicts. It is true that peacebuilding goes through a threefold process spanning between the short-term programme, the medium and the long-term programmes. These programmes have to address the root causes of violence and conflicts as well as their consequences. The short-term programme has to address the violent issues by assuring peace so that violence does not occur anymore. In the long-term programmes, peacebuilding has to address the wider causes of violence and conflicts and finally provide a sustainable peace based on justice, the rule of law and respect for human rights. Galtung (2013: 67) provides the following tasks that should be done to ensure peacebuilding: reconstruction or rebuilding

after violence; rehabilitation or trauma healing, collective as well as individual trauma healing; rebuilding infrastructure; restructuring the social systems of power and reculturing; initiating the negotiation or reconciliation processes that should result in reparation or restitution, apology, forgiveness and, if possible, punishment.

Looked at this way, peacebuilding processes are related to conflict transformation systems and call for collective cooperation and involve different members of society at all levels. They call for both internal as well as external parties to violence and conflict, international organisations, civil societies and politicians. These actors should work on aspects like reconciliation, arbitration, security or peaceful cohabitation, reconstruction or rebuilding infrastructure and ensuring sustainable peace and social change.

At this junction and in the case of the youth in Masisi especially at the grassroots level, there is need to have a look at the question and review the harmful traditional institutions and their impacts on the youth and their communities in general, especially the *Mwami* systems even though they have been in place for generations. Their way of relating to the grassroots has not been positive; those who are not from the royal family or the royal ethnic groups feel that they have been enslaved by the ruling family.

According to experts, the ways to curtail youth violence in Masisi could be to have a fully engaged and empowered youth. The empowerment should imply various dimensions among which are social and/or cultural empowerment. This is the role of the different cultural *baraza* where the youth should be educated, trained and given the social values that make them amenable to accepting the outgroup. This means that the youth need to be valued and recognized for what they are able to do and to achieve. To achieve this, there is a need to dialogue with the youth, to listen to them and devise means together to put an end to conflicts and violence. Second, the youths need political empowerment to learn their rights and those of the others and how to respect them. Moreover, the youth should be economically empowered; they should be trained to work for their own benefit and that of their community. In addition to this, the youth should benefit from various cultural and recreational activities to foster togetherness, collaboration and cooperation among them. This will promote peaceful coexistence and tolerance. However, these activities being part of the peacebuilding processes can only be possible in places where there are no hostilities and where there is the

willingness to cooperate and to reconcile. This dimension confirms the need for this study, to work at reducing violence among the youths in Masisi and build sustainable peace, change and development. Here, I emphasise the fact that both peacebuilding and conflict transformation work for the de-escalation of conflict or violence and the improvement of relationships among the groups. This is what is aimed at by this study on the youths in Masisi.

5.10 Conclusion

This chapter established the extent and nature of current conflicts and violence as it established the youth involvement in deadly conflicts and subsequent violence. In addition, the chapter addressed the causes of conflicts and violence coupled with the active participation of the youth and the impact of conflicts and violence on people and on the places where they live. In Chapter 5, I also looked at the traditional mechanisms together with the modern strategies that are put in place to deter the youth violence and the weaknesses of these mechanisms as they seem to have failed to produce positive outcomes or results. The chapter ends by suggesting ways to improve the relationships and the non-violent actions to limit youth violence in Masisi. The next chapter provides the theoretical framework underpinning the study.

CHAPTER SIX

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS

6.1 Introduction

This study employed a multimethodology approach (Mingers 2001), which combines methods and paradigms for the purpose of attaining research objectives. Addressing a complex issue such as youth involvement in violence necessitates a comprehensive strategy that leverages multiple theoretical frameworks. These frameworks include the Intergroup Contact theory, the Conflict Transformation theory and the Theory of Change to explain violence among the youths in Masisi, as well as the Peacebuilding theory. It is essential to explore the intersections and synergies among these theories within the PAR framework. These theories have the following elements in common: participation in setting a common target, action to achieve the target, new knowledge from experiences to act together for a communal change. This chapter establishes how conflict transformation and peacebuilding could be used as alternatives to avert violence and conflict among the youths in Masisi. It begins by emphasising the importance of conflict transformation and peacebuilding as preventive measures against violence and conflict, before discussing specific recommendations proposed by conflict transformation experts such as Lederach (2014).

A protracted conflict like the one in Masisi calls for strong mechanisms and needs a thorough transformation or attitudinal changes among the parties. Since conflicts started in Masisi, there have been attempts to respond, but all these attempts have failed to stop the conflicts and subsequent violence. This study presents and uses different theories of conflict transformation as they are appropriate to the contexts in order to address youth violence in Masisi. The various theories used here are the conflict transformation theory, the intergroup contact theory and the theory of change which are the approaches within the peacebuilding framework. It is asserted that peacebuilding focuses on actions that characterise different approaches of conflict handling. These approaches are conflict prevention, conflict management, conflict settlement and conflict resolution. Conflict transformation is different from the other strategies as it goes beyond them as it “envisions, includes, respects, and promotes the human and cultural resources from within a given setting” (Goetschel, 2009:

95). It is this setting that defines and predicts the outcomes of a peacebuilding process. In fact, peacebuilding, like conflict transformation, is a dynamic process that aims at preventing a return to violence. That is why conflict transformation is relevant to this study given the conflicts and violence among the youth and the subsequent relationships that need to be transformed.

The ongoing conflicts and subsequent violence by the youth in Masisi are multidimensional as they involve different actors, internally and externally, with multiple motives. These conflicts and violence also affect many people. That is why there is a need to look at them from a broader perspective in order to suggest suitable responses. From this way of looking at them, I referred to various theories and the approaches they provide as alternatives to armed conflicts and violence and ways to promote peacebuilding.

According to Lederach (2014: 4), “conflict transformation seeks to create a framework to address the content, the context and the structure of the relationships, to create a sustainable change and to restore communication among the parties to conflicts”. So, Lederach argues that transformation seeks to build healthy relationships and sustainable societies. More specifically, conflict transformation aims at creating a constructive and positive change. This should reduce violence, increase justice, respond to general problems and improve human relationships as it should promote inclusivity, reduce inequalities and tackle issues like youth unemployment, manipulation or exploitation. Specifically, here, I present the alternative ways to address conflicts and violence as applied to a case like Masisi and the youth participation in conflicts and perpetrating violence.

6.2 Alternatives to Armed Conflicts and Youth Violence

During a meeting with Geoffrey Harris at Durban University of Technology, he gave us some posters with strong and appealing words, one read like this: “people often say, there are no alternatives. But there are always alternatives!” (TAAA) – a famous saying used by Prof

Geoff T. Harris³. In a conflicting context that has taken years like in Masisi, people are right to think that there are no alternatives to what they are going through, to their sufferings, to their conflicts and violence. However, Harris concludes by giving a kind of hypothesis or a condition, “if you want peace, he says, work for justice”. Therefore, in this way, justice is another way to peace, one implies the other and they are both alternatives to conflicts and to violence. So, TAAA.

At this point, the chapter discusses conflict management, conflict resolution and conflict transformation strategies as alternatives to armed conflict that could be applied in various contexts including the prevailing conflicts in the Great Lakes Regions and in Masisi in particular. To the above alternatives to armed conflicts, the chapter discusses the strategies of conflicts transformation among which mediation, negotiation, arbitration, reconciliation and dialogue (Nyaluma, 2016: 221–379). Among other strategies or alternatives to armed conflicts, it highlights the results from processes like the *Comité de paix et de développement des quartiers*, CPDQ and the *Baraza la Wazee* in DRC; the *Gacaca* in Rwanda and Eastern DRC, the *Bushingatahe* in Burundi, the *Mato Oput* in Northern Uganda; the SFD or Sports for Development Programmes applied in other countries.

6.2.1 Conflict Transformation as an Alternative to Armed Conflicts

Transformation implies change. This could be positive when shifting from a negative point to an opposite point as it can be negative when shifting from a positive point to a negative one. Another aspect to look at in (social) change is the conditions or dimensions that sustain the change. These dimensions could be cultural (structural violence), political (structural violence), economic (structural violence), demographic (cultural violence) or technological (cultural or structural violence). According to Lederach (2014: 9),

Conflict transformation is to envision and respond to the ebb and flow of social conflict as life-giving opportunities for creating constructive change processes that reduce

³ Prof Geoff T. Harris is an Adjunct Professor in the Faculty of Management Sciences, Durban University of Technology (DUT). He has been teaching peacebuilding and nonviolence modules and supervising postgraduate students at the International Centre of Nonviolence at DUT since 2013.

violence, increase justice in direct interaction and social structures, and respond to real-life problems in human relationships.

For this reason, Lederach sees transformation as a way of bringing a positive or constructive change in a conflict situation, providing justice and social cohesion. What Galtung (1996: 89) reinforces when saying that conflict transformation aims at awakening the dynamism within any contradiction for making harmony because, as he finds it, if there is a contradiction in conflict, there is also a dynamic transforming power in any contradiction. And this power or dynamism can yield good result and change a conflict situation. For Ramsbotham et al. (2005: 29), conflict transformation goes deeper than conflict resolution and takes further steps in dealing with conflicts. They argue that “it implies a deep transformation in the institutions and discourses that reproduce violence, as well as in the conflict parties themselves and their relationships” (Ramsbotham et al. 2005: 29). As a strategy to face a conflict, transformation encompasses other strategies like prevention, containment, settlement, management and resolution. On their side, Fisher et al. (2000: 7) found that conflict transformation as a strategy “addresses the wider social and political sources of a conflict and seeks to transform the negative energy of war into positive social and political change”. Both, Ramsbotham et al. (2005) and Fisher et al.(2000) hold the same view on conflict transformation as they consider this kind of measure to address the general roots of conflicts according to their structural, cultural, political and economic aspects in order to promote a desired change among the conflicting parties whereas Shakti and King (1998: 228), in talking about conflict transformation, caution that “transformation begins on an individual level and moves out into the world”. There are various measures to address or to transform a conflict. They could be models that have succeeded in other conflict situations as they could be appropriate to each type of situation. Of course, depending on the goal one would like to achieve and the blocking situations resulting in frustrations, Galtung (1996: 95) found “three general formulas that also apply to the general theory of conflict transformation”. These formulas are withdrawal, compromise or transcendence. These are non-violent means of transforming conflict that have been exploited or suggested by other researchers or peacemakers.

Ackerman and Duvall (2000: 505), for example, in their book, *A Force More Powerful*, provide some cases of transforming conflicts in a non-violent way. They show how “people power in the twentieth century did not grow out of the barrel of a gun. It removed rulers who believed that violence was power, by acting to dissolve their real source of power: the consent or acquiescence of the people they had tried to subordinate”. For Kodmani and Chartouni-Dubarry (2009: 97), the major condition to respond to the security issues in Arab countries, is a solid understanding of the geopolitics and political economy of the Arab region. This understanding will help the interveners to shape suitable strategies to respond to the conflict situation prevailing in the Arab region in particular and to any other area, in general. Thus, before any intervention in a conflict area, there is need to understand the area and to get in touch with actors in conflicts prevailing in the area. This view could also well apply to the situation in the Great Lakes Region in Central Africa in general and in the DRC in particular. However, another aspect that needs to be emphasised in this understanding is the socio-cultural and structural aspects. Furthermore, looking at the Security Sector Reform, Kodmani and Chartouni-Dubarry (2009: 97) focus mainly on physical and –to some extent– on political security guaranteed by “intelligence agencies, military intelligence, police forces, the army in its domestic role and praetorian guards (republican, royal or presidential)”.

Kodmani and Chartouni-Dubarry (2009: 99) raise a critical question as to what should come first between the political change and the security reform. Another side of the question is whether both –political change and security reform– should be done simultaneously. Even though these researchers agree that the political transformation leads to the reform of security, they also recognise that the example of South Africa is inspiring where the two sectors, political and security- were changed at the same time –simultaneously – and across the country. According to them, however, any reform and especially political change cannot happen out of nowhere: there is need for a trigger, such as a crisis. This means that there is need for a starting point or people–here a trigger–for the security change to be efficient or beneficial to the people from the grassroots. Among the approaches, Kodmani and Chartouni-Dubarry (2009: 99) identified, there is the one that “concerns the investigations and trials for human rights violations, which potentially unveil the responsibilities as well as the operating mode of the various agencies”. This last aspect calls for a larger participation in security reform, an aspect of PAR oriented from below to the top leadership or a bottom-up approach.

More to the point, there is need to build trust among the people at the grassroots level, and the youth in particular, to help them overcome the “feelings of estrangement vis-à-vis the security” business; to overcome extremism and societal disintegration and social disintegration that is among the characteristic of failed states. Some examples of this kind of social fragmentation and privatisation of security sector are Sudan, Iraq and Syria among others (Kodmani and Chartouni-Dubarry, 2009: 100). The territorial fragmentation or disintegration coupled with the privatisation of security are also being witnessed in some countries in Central Africa or the Great Lakes Region where youth are being politically manipulated while the social fabric is being torn apart through regionalism, discrimination and ideas of Balkanisation in countries like the DRC.

Taking a leaf from the above researchers, McCandless and Bangura (2007: 44) suggest some strategies to address conflict and create a peaceful environment. The suggested strategies encompass employing dialogue, employing non-violent direct action and grassroots movements to foster social change, conducting problem-solving workshops, adhering to international law and using reconciliation and justice commissions, recognising the significance of gender, youth and business communities, as well as acknowledging the role of religion in peacebuilding, all aimed at preventing violent and deadly conflicts. The above views have some positive aspects that could be adopted and used in the Masisi context and some other aspects that cannot fit to the youth situation. Conflict transformation should start at an individual level.

For the case of the youths in Masisi, the process should start from establishing the motivational factors that make them go to the bush and take up arms. The transformational initiative should also take into consideration the sociopolitical and economic conditions in which the youths live in order to initiate the transformation process, bearing in mind that any positive change in these dimensions could bring a positive change in the youth attitude. The task here should be to look at the wider sociopolitical sources of conflict and how they push the youth to join armed groups as a result of manipulation, greed and grievance. More precisely, the use of dialogue, non-violent direct means and grassroots movements, workshops around security and peaceful cohabitation and human rights; justice and reconciliation; non-discrimination attitude... these could be the ways of bringing the youth

into peace business and peacebuilding. This thesis emphasizes the fact that these dimensions are lacking in the case of the youths in Masisi.

6.2.2 Peacebuilding as the Highest Level of Alternative to Violence

Ramsbotham et al. (20025: 30) look at peacebuilding as a higher step in making peace. For them, “peacebuilding underpins the work of peacemaking and peacekeeping by addressing structural issues and the long-term relationships between conflictants”. Their views are that peacebuilding is a step that tries to overcome the misunderstanding that fuel conflicts (Galtung, 1996: 112; Ramsbotham et al. 2005: 30). Bennett et al. (2012: 7–8) assert:

Despite the various definitions of the term peacebuilding, it is generally agreed that in order to create long-lasting peace and to prevent reemergence of violence, peacebuilding is important, and it consists of three dimensions. The structural dimension of peacebuilding focuses on analysing the root cause of conflict. It addresses the social issues that create conflicts and works on building social, political and economic foundations to achieve stable peace. The second dimension of peacebuilding focuses on relationship building where the effects of hostility during war and conflict are reduced. The relationships between the affected parties are renewed and strengthened.

According to Bennet et al. (2012: 7–8), there is a third dimension of peacebuilding that “focuses on the individual level. According to this dimension, if individuals are not able to undergo a process of healing, there will be broader social, political and economic repercussions”. Talking about peacebuilding as a wider strategy, Young (2010: 363) asserts:

not limited to economic aid or military disarmament, peacebuilding is first and foremost a specific form of social interaction between a host of different actors, with the ultimate aim of transforming conflict patterns and the behaviour of conflicting parties.

Hence, peacebuilding aims at restoring torn relationships and changing negative energies into positive ones. It is a step after a violent conflict or any kind of conflict. Globally, according to Young (2010: 363), a successful peacebuilding operation should aim at achieving the

following five major elements: a safe and secure environment, the rule of law, a stable democracy, a sustainable economy and social wellbeing. In this way, peacebuilding can be achieved in two ways according to the area of focus (Young, 2010: 364). The first one is the top-down approach to peacebuilding. Here the operation is focused on political elites and/or institutions. The second way is the bottom-up approach to peacebuilding. This approach posits the peacebuilding operation focus on civil society. This latter approach is related to what Lederach (1997) calls indigenous empowerment or what Lewin (cited in Kiyala, 2016: 311) presents as participatory action and what the IDC researchers present as security from below or from the grassroots. As said earlier, peacebuilding includes various aspects of conflict transformation starting from an individual healing, social security, socioeconomic and political stability and sustainability (ACCORD, 2008: 180–181).

6.2.3 Fostering Intergroup Contact as a Peacebuilding Strategy

Ways to encourage intergroup contact encompass the various relationships among parties when they meet each other. These relationships could be defined in different terms according to the parties' interests or goals. Hence the relationship among the groups shapes what Allport (cited in Francis 2002: 34–35) called intergroup contact. The question we may ask ourselves is: what are the youth's motivations in adopting negative attitudes towards each other? Their struggle aims at getting "physical safety, social safety, the means of discovering as far as possible, how or why particular events occurred, and the rediscovery of relative identities, with a degree of confidence which can allow for the admission of imperfections and diversity, together with an acknowledgement of interdependence and a return to the acceptance risk implied by trust" (Francis, 2002: 34). The youth need to be accepted in their communities and be integrated in every social activity. This implies the use of participatory action where the youth must play a major role in shaping their way out of the crisis (Francis 2002: 35). There is also a need to ignite their transforming power so that they can themselves be able to transform and work on the conflict situation. Two points are worth raising about "conflict transformation" and "attitudinal transformation". According to Francis (2002:26):

Conflict transformation embraces the different processes and approaches that are needed to address conflict constructively in different contexts and at different levels, in

the short term and the long term, including engagement in conflict as well as its management and resolution.

Thus, conflict transformation cuts across other conflict approaches like resolution, management and settlement as it goes deep to the roots of a conflict in order to provide a sustainable solution to it. Graf et al. (cited in Webel 2007:135) confirm this idea by saying that:

The aim of conflict transformation, peacebuilding, counselling and training initiatives is to empower participants to be able to escape this vicious cycle by reframing their goals. This should occur at the level of positions, at the level of interests, as well as at the level of basic human needs, in order to overcome the incompatibility of goals.

This means that in the research area, conflict transformation or the transformational aspect of any initiative should lead the parties, here the youth, towards “non-violence as an alternative” and as a strategy (Webel 2007: 137). According to Harris and Morrison (2003: 231), attitudinal transformation “implies a change in thinking and a fundamentally different way of looking at the world. It relies on human beings moving from “compulsion to compassion”. It assumes that people can adopt a common goal to live together on this planet. In the transformation vision war is considered outmoded.” Hence, according to transformationists, there is the “belief that violence can be replaced with humane behaviour. The transformation approach to the future hopes to create new images of reality which will then provide support for changing social institutions” (Harris& Morrison, 2003: 232)

6.2.4 Contemporary Theories of Conflicts Transformation

At this juncture, this chapter provides an overview of conflict transformation theories in the context of peacebuilding, by looking at the systems that encompass the activities and/or programmes that can deal with the root causes and the outcomes of violence and conflicts. These systems could help to bring about peace, to bridge the relationships and prevent more violence among the youths involved in armed violence in Masisi. The issue here is to look at the way contemporary theories of conflict transformation converge in sustainable peace from the contributions by the actors involved in conflicts and violence (the youths and how they reconcile with each other and agree to live in harmony).

Ramsbotham et al. (2005: 25) had a view about what they called major armed conflicts and confirmed that these types of conflicts “are hybrid struggles that spill across the international, state and societal levels”. As such, these conflicts call for a multidimensional approach to transform them. Peacemakers should consider all the dimensions or layers within armed conflicts. The ongoing conflicts in North Kivu Province and in Masisi in particular fit into this framework of protracted and challenging conflicts. Ramsbotham et al. (2005: 26) concluded, “conflict transformation, therefore, needs to operate simultaneously at all these levels, including vertical relations up and down across the levels from the grassroots up to the international, and horizontal relations across and between all the social actors involved”. In fact, Lederach as well as Ramsbotham et al. established three levels of intervention according to conflict parties: the top leaders, the middle level leaders and the grassroots. The three levels match the types of interventions encompassed in what these scholars termed Track I for the top level, Track II for the middle level and Track III for the grassroots level. There are others who came up with different theories for conflict transformation, but all their theories are oriented towards the context of peacebuilding. This compelled Ramsbotham et al. and Lederach to present the interventions on a pyramid shape that they termed a multitrack conflict resolution, on the one side or a pyramid on the other hand.

Among the scholars of contemporary conflict transformation, this chapter briefly presents: Edward Azar, Raimo Varyrynen, David W. Augusburger, Galtung and Lederach. In alignment with my research focus, the objective is peacebuilding. Their theories all converge towards peacebuilding and aim to instigate change in contexts marred by prolonged conflict, such as Masisi, where communities have endured significant suffering. This includes youth who have grown up amidst conflict and often find themselves drawn into armed groups.

6.3 Applying Azar’s Views to the Youth Context in Masisi

Azar (1983; 1990) undertook an analysis of protracted conflicts interstate conflict and made a conflict and peace research data bank while at the University of North Carolina, mainly focusing on “internal domestic data” and reflecting on the prevailing situation in his country of origin, Lebanon. He came up with the concept of protracted social conflict (PSC) in 1990. In his study of protracted conflicts, Azar established four conditional variables that explain the various conflicts among groups: the communal content or, in this case, a strong link

among the youths and their ethnic origin; the deprivation of human basic needs (e.g., in Masisi, the youths are deprived of their basic human needs like education, wellbeing, health, nutrition); the governance system and various role in governance. Somewhere, the governance leadership has failed to secure the youth and their communities in general; the position of international linkages/relationships. This international linkage has been negatively used or understood in the Masisi context whereby one group (the Kinyarwanda-speakers) has kept very strong ties with Rwanda and Burundi; what compelled others to look at them like foreigners. There is also a strong and clear intervention from these countries in Masisi issues or conflicts where individuals from these countries are sometimes found operating among the youths in Masisi. The four major clusters of variables as offered by Azar bear the contents of conflict transformation as they appear to be the preconditions for the transformational activities. I can sum up these clusters in Table 15:

Table 15: The four conceptual variables established by Azar

COMMUNAL CONTENT	DEPRIVATION OF HUMAN NEEDS	GOVERNANCE AND ROLE OF STATE	ROLE OF INTERNATIONAL LINKAGE
1) The Unity of analysis in PSC is an individual or identity group . Here: Ethnic, Cultural, Political, Economic. In Masisi, the youths from different groups are fighting for either their ethnic identity, for political or economic purposes	1) The source of PSC is • Grievances (unsatisfied needs) • Failure to address or to redress these grievances • Lack of security and lack of role models • Development needs • Political exclusion • Identity needs (cultural needs, language, naming...)	1) Incompetent, parochial, fragile, authoritarian and unprotective (local) government • An undelivering government, exploiting and using the youth • The youth are disappointed because their needs are not satisfied	1) A very close link with neighbouring countries, especially Rwanda, Uganda and Burundi (cultural, sociopolitical and economic links) • The youths from Masisi have relationships with those from these countries, they share ideas and are easily manipulated through sociopolitical ideas
2) Hate speech and stereotypes. collective accusation and collective	2) The youth need change in social structures or a change in traditional	2) All the people are not treated as equal citizens of the same country or	2) the neighbouring countries (as well as local elites) recruit the youth in

COMMUNAL CONTENT	DEPRIVATION OF HUMAN NEEDS	GOVERNANCE AND ROLE OF STATE	ROLE OF INTERNATIONAL LINKAGE
guilt: the youth are assimilated to: Mai Mai (Hunde, Nyanga, Nande) Interahamwe (Hutu) Foreigners (Hutu and Tutsi)	structures	the same district Some dominant groups use their state or position to maximise their interests	Masisi for their sociopolitical and economic agenda
3) There is a disarticulation between the state and the district leadership and society in general; the political leadership and the traditional leadership. The government takes side of one group against the other	3) Lack of road infrastructure; lack of development implies lack of opening to markets: the youth are disappointed by this lack of market access for their produce and remain idle or decide not to work. The societal needs are forgotten security, identity (history); recognition, acceptance... (Intergroup contact)	3) The ruling elite (Hunde, Hutu, Nyanga, Tutsi...) mobilise the youth for their group interests and identities (the communal content of the state)	3) Neighbouring countries intervene in Masisi just to recruit the youths for rebel movements as it has been witnessed during the RPF and currently in the M23 rebel movement where the youths are being recruited to join the groups. It alleged that every young person who agree to join the group gets 300 US\$
	In Masisi, no job or no work implies the risks of no peace	4) Power monopolisation by dominant individuals ("crisis of legitimacy")	

Source: The researcher

The above four clusters as established by Azar are the preconditions for transformation or conflict transformation.

6.4 Galtung's Perspectives on Conflict Transformation

Galtung's views (1969: 170; Galtung, 1973: 25) of conflict transformation go with the idea that conflicts have life-affirming as well as life-destroying aspects and are formed from

contradictions in the structure of society (see triangle of conflict). At this level, the study establishes a link between these views of conflict transformation and youth violence especially in the case of Masisi.

The major question here was to know how youth violence can be resolved or transformed through conflict transformation approaches and peacebuilding. In his theory of conflict transformation, Galtung considers conflicts and violence to have two opposing dimensions, a life-affirming or positive side on one side and a life-destroying or a negative side. These two dimensions are related to the misunderstanding and/or contradictions within the social settings and are reflected by human attitudes, behaviours and contradiction (Galtung 1969: 172). According to Galtung, contradiction that amounts to conflict is reflected by the actors' attitudes, their interests or needs and their relationships towards a given goal. Thus, in Galtung's view (1969: 169; 1973: 9–18), the incompatibility of goals or parties' interests could be transformed or resolved by transcending this contradiction that gave rise to conflict; by improving the conflict structures or by bringing more internal and external parties into conflict transformation. In Galtung's perspectives, conflicts are dynamic and are based on ever changing attitudes, behaviours and systems. From the conflict dimensions, Galtung presents conflict in a triangular form made of the attitudes, the contradictions and the behaviours of the conflicting parties.

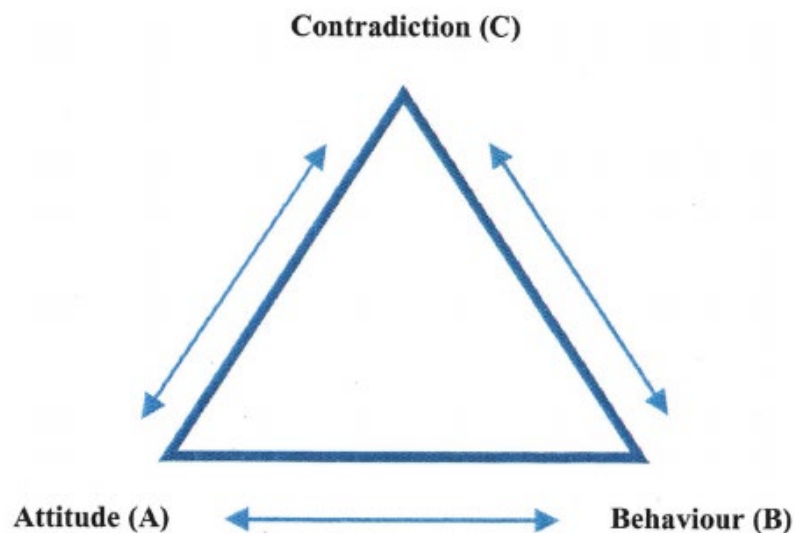


Figure 6: The triangle of conflict. **Source:** Galtung (2009: 105)

Contradiction reflects the causal factor of conflict as it shapes the incompatibility of goals or interests, or the parties' needs. In addition, contradiction can be based on the parties' relationships and all the related factors involved in these relationships. It is when these relationships become oppressive that the parties turn to conflicts or wars. Conflicts started becoming violent in Masisi when the youth became aware that among them, some were from the traditional ruling group whereas the others who came from the outgroups or the foreigners. In Masisi, the youth need consideration and recognition. Their violence is a claim for recognition; others need security and/or protection. On the other hand, attitudes are reflected by the images, perceptions, ideas and misperceptions that one party has of the other (Galtung, 1973: 95). The attitudes are triggered by emotions like hatred, panic or fear, anger and desire. One party can despise the other and through stereotypes the party can turn the other to mockery. In addition, the behaviour can take the form of welcoming, conciliation, rejection or hostility among others. In examples of violent conflicts like the prevailing conflicts in Masisi, behaviours appear through aggression, coercion, threats, killings, looting and raping.

As mentioned earlier, conflicts are dynamic, this implies, according to Galtung, dynamic mechanisms to respond to attitudes, to behaviours and to contradictions among the parties to conflicts. In clear, dynamic mechanisms should bring about a change by bringing down the conflicting behaviour, a change of attitude and a re-orientation of relationships. The three dimensions of conflict illustrate the types of violence. Galtung distinguishes three major types of violence:

- Direct violence. This implies a direct attack which aims to do harm to the other.
- Structural violence is a result of social or institutional organisations or structures that infringe on people's rights and their freedom or opportunities to respond to their basic needs. The structural violence goes hand in hand with discrimination, exclusion, stereotyping or repression of the other person.

In this case, Galtung (1973: 105) established two types of structural violence. The vertical structural violence that appears when a group is culturally alienated, economically exploited

and politically stigmatised. In this way, people are deprived of their freedom, they are prevented from enjoying their wellbeing and their identity is threatened. On the other hand, there is horizontal structural violence when people of the same identity or whose identity is compatible are forced to be separated or whenever people of incompatible identity are kept together.

Third, Galtung (1973: 105) maintains that cultural violence is a result of our traditions and cultures as lived in our societies. Cultural violence is based on all the norms and guidelines given by the community and that can sometimes be detrimental to the community members. The youth in Masisi are victims of these types of violence. The Kinyarwanda youth grew up in traumatised families and ended up being traumatised themselves. They have issues around their identity and for some of them, the families have given them that hide their Kinyarwanda origin. They decided to take Kiswahili names like *Mapendo*, *Mwangaza*, *Safari*, *Bahati*, *Sifa*, *Safi*, *Masumbuko* and like. In some areas, some groups have to pay taxes and to work like slaves for the royal families and relatives. This is vertical structural violence, according to Galtung. Historically, horizontal structural violence has been witnessed in Masisi when people were transferred from Rwanda to Masisi in DRC. These people have never been welcomed by the autochthonous people.

6.5 Lederach and the Conflict Transformation Theory

The discussion on Lederach's (2014) conflict transformation theory is a key component of this study as he presented it in his *Little Book of Conflict Transformation*. At this junction, I discuss the following three aspects or lenses of his conflict transformation theory and how they are useful to address conflict and violence among the youth and thus, bring reconciliation in the divided and socially-polarised Congolese society. Reconciliation in his perspective includes four important components and these are justice, truth, mercy and peace (Lederach, 1997: 23). These components bring other dynamics in his theory of conflict transformation and these dynamics are linked to law or legal system (justice and truth), religion (mercy and truth) and peace studies. Therefore, reconciliation as the end goal of transformation could result in constructive or disruptive outcome according to the angle from which one considers it. According to Lederach (1973: 24), reconciliation opens what he calls "the corridor of conversation" or a path to peace. His views are at the core of transformation,

intergroup contact and the theory of change as well as they are linked to participation and religion in conflict resolution and violence reduction (Lederach, 1997: 87).

Lederach (1997: 11) opines that “conflict is experienced as a disruption in the natural flow of relationships, in which we most often tend to focus on the immediate and visible problems and look for a solution to presenting problems without seeing the underlying causes and forces of conflict”. Here, the study looks at the immediate situations of youth population and their implications for human security and peacebuilding, how the youths’ attitudes can be changed for social wellbeing using Lederach’s theory of conflict transformation. Here, he argues that relationships are central to conflict transformation like they are vital to intergroup contact. His views are complementary to Allport’s opinion when he asserts that “conflict brings with it the potential for constructive change” (cited in Lederach 2003: 15). He further gives the opposing sides of conflict and argues that “conflict can move from being destructive toward being constructive” and concludes that “conflict transformation focuses on the dynamic aspects of social conflict” or the social interrelation at “interpersonal, intergroup and social-structural” levels (Lederach, 2003: 19–21).

Conflict transformation presupposes that the context must lead to change the minds and behaviour and build on existing knowledge and facts. In addition, Lederach (2003) asserts that violence reduction demands that we deal with the very issues and content of an incident of conflict and similarly address its underlying. He further avers: “[...] prescriptively, transformation represents deliberate intervention to minimise the destructive effects of social conflict and to maximise its potential for growth in the person as an individual human being, at physical, emotional, and spiritual levels (Lederach 2003: 21–25).

In short, transformation aims at reducing the distance among actors, reducing “poor communication” and promoting mutual understanding among groups, here the youth. That is why, in transforming relationships, the stakeholders should be involved in the process (Lederach, 2003: 26). He also opposes interventions that do not go to the core causes of conflict and that end up “without necessarily creating any significant constructive social change” (Lederach, 2003: 28). This research is about bringing the youth to “create a change in their situation from their perspectives, ideas, opinions, wishes” (Lederach 2003: 29–31). Hence, he adds that in dealing with conflicts and preparing the ground for reconciliation

and/or building peace, there are first essentials to look at and training to undergo so that the transformative operation gives the expected results. Nevertheless, “A transformative approach [...] suggests that training is less about the transfer of content than it is about the creation of a dynamic process involving key people who together focus on the realities of the conflict in their context” (Lederach, 1997: 178–179). Therefore, what he says about a transformative approach goes with the creation of a new environment that impacts people’s behaviour through a dynamic setting by involving key actors in the transformative process.

Furthermore, Lederach (2003) gives a technical view on conflict transformation. This later aims at reaching peace and as such, it is a continuous operation, a process. For him, conflict transformation sees peace not only “as a static end-state, but also as

a continuously evolving and developing quality of relationships. Peace work, therefore, is characterised by intentional efforts to address the natural ebb and flow of human conflict through non-violent approaches, which address issues and increase understanding, equality and respect in relationships (Lederach, 2003: 20–21).

It is in this same way that Fisher et al. (2000: 7) agree with Lederach. In fact, Fisher et al. present the transformative strategy as encompassing other strategies and as it goes deeper to “the wider social and political sources of a conflict and seeks to transform the negative energy of war into positive social and political change” (2000: 7).

In the same way, for Ramsbotham et al. (2005: 29), transformation is a strategy for dealing with conflicts and it has two major roles to fulfil and which are the cultural and the structural peacebuilding. Clearly, as a tool, transformation implies a deep change in organisations and in languages that bring about violence or create conflicts. It goes further and works on the parties’ relationships. So, the aim of transformation is not simply for the sake of doing it but it is about bringing people in conflict around a table, help them to focus on their general differences, their social situation or relationships so that they develop an answer to their challenges together. Lederach came to this conclusion, talking about his choice of peace and the message he wanted to convey to a peaceful generation: “I became increasingly convinced that much of what I was doing was seeking constructive change. Conflict transformation

seemed to convey this meaning better than conflict resolution or management” (Lederach, 2003: 21).

Given the tasks that conflict transformation has to fulfil, Lederach (2003: 21) affirms that “to reduce violence requires that we address the overt issues and content of an episode of conflict, and its underlying patterns and causes. This requires us to address justice issues. While we do that, we must proceed in an equitable way toward a deep change. People should actively participate in the process of taking decisions that touch their lives in different ways. Furthermore, the root causes of injustice must be tackled and addressed at all levels, both relational and structural. In this way, Lederach suggests that structural and –in to a certain extent –cultural violence should first be dealt with before transforming any given conflict. He adds that the tasks for the transformation process involve minimizing the negative consequences of social conflict. He asserts that “prescriptively, transformation represents deliberate intervention to minimise the destructive effects of social conflict and to maximise its potential for growth in the person as an individual human being, at physical, emotional, and spiritual levels” (Lederach 2003: 24). In addition, transformation is about how “people perceive, what they desire, what they pursue and how they structure their relationships interpersonally, as well as intergroup and intragroup. Conflict changes relationships” (Lederach, 2003: 24–25).

For Lederach (2003: 25), conflict poses some vital questions such as “how close or distant do people wish to be in their relationships? How will they use, build and share power? How do they perceive themselves, each other and their expectations? What are their hopes and fears for their lives and relationships, their patterns of communication and interaction?” In short, transformation aims at reducing “poor communication” and promoting “mutual understanding” among groups in contact. Hence, in transforming conflicts as well as working on relationships, nothing according to Lederach should be done without the stakeholders involved in the process. The major aspects involved in this transformation are non-violent advocacy for change, developing structures that meet basic human needs, and the involvement of stakeholders in decisions that affect them (Galtung 1996: 122; Lederach 2003: 26). In this way, Lederach (2003: 28) criticizes conflict transformation interventions that do not address the core of conflict, and do not create any observable and important

change. That is what this research is all about, to bring the youth to “create a change in their situation from their perspectives, ideas, opinions and wishes”. So, in Masisi, experts may have reached the conflict resolution level to end the undesired issues without reaching the transformational stage of conflict or to end something that is not desired and to build something we desire (Lederach 2003: 29–30). Transformation seeks to reach the central part of conflict (Lederach 2003: 31) by bringing the chronic violence to an end.

At the centre of conflict transformation, Lederach found that dialogue is the key way to bring about a positive change; dialogue is vital to justice and peace and at all levels of human life and social interrelationships, and he concludes that in conflict transformation, dialogue “is not the only mechanism, but it is an essential one” (Lederach, 2003: 21). Among other advantages, “conflict transformation” tries to bring to the surface explicitly the relational fears, hopes, and goals of the people involved and deals with them constructively (Lederach, 2003: 25). Talking about the “life course theory of violence”, Akpovire and Choja (2020: 14765) posit that the individual life history plays a major role in someone’s violent behaviour. This history could be based on events that one experienced during his childhood, peer pressure from schools or in the workplace, daily life in marriage, in retirement or at a given age. Here the major aspects to look at are the biological, psychological and social dimensions. Similarly, Ryan (in Sandole, 2009: 303–305) talking about “conflict transformation” gives the objective of this process and argues that “The first feature of transformation is that it aims for deep and profound changes in conflict situations that go beyond the limitations of traditional approaches”. Transformation talks about addressing the root causes of conflict. Therefore, it moves beyond the other strategies—resolution, settlement, management—and even beyond “the immediate issues to look at the broader environment within which violent conflict takes place”. Ramsbotham et al. and Fisher et al. hold the same views. Relating the transformation aspects to the PAR or to the concept of “security from below”, Ryan (2009: 304–305) found:

Most, if not all, of the transformation supporters emphasise the importance of working at the grassroots level, sometimes referred to as building local capacity. One reason for this is because the idea of a forced transformation seems to be an oxymoron. Another is that there is no “one size fits all” solution to violent conflict.

From this view, it is quite clear that there is no single answer to different conflicts and transformation as a process has to be adapted to each conflict or to its dynamics. That is why contributions from the grassroots and participation are essential for a successful conflict transformation.

6.6 Approaching the Youths' Violence Through Lederach's Lenses

Lederach and Maiese (2009: 7) distinguish three lenses in approaching a conflict. They perceive a lens in this context as a transformational tool to approach a conflict and note that conflict transformation is more than a series of specific techniques. It is about a way of looking and seeing that enables to understand any conflict that erupts among community members. These transformational tools are complementary or linked together as they enable us to approach the conflict from different but complementary dimensions. The three lenses established by Lederach et al. (2009: 7–8) are as follow:

- the lens that shows the immediate situation or the conflict as it unfolds and develop itself. In the case of the youths in Masisi, the issue is how they get involve in conflict and subsequent violence.
- the lens that shows beyond the current situation and goes into “deeper relationship patterns that form the context of the conflict” (Lederach et al., 2009: 7). Here the matter is to bring about the other actors in addition the youth and who take part in hostilities in Masisi, their motivation and the impact of their actions.
- the lens that “helps us envision a framework that holds these together and create a platform to address the content, the context, and the structure of relationship” (Lederach et al., 2009: 7–8).

These lenses applied to the youth in Masisi could be understood in this way: looking at the immediate situation (or the content): there is too much violence among the youths and killings in Masisi. This aspect calls for a mechanism to tackle the root causes of this violence. These mechanisms should be a true “violence reduction forum” as they should promote closeness and exchange by rebuilding healthy relationships and communities; they should restore communication and reduce inequality between the groups especially the youth; and they promote inclusiveness and tackle unemployment (Galtung, 2013: 13). The adopted

mechanisms should seek to create constructive changes by reducing violence. This would be possible only if attitudes, perceptions and orientations changed. These mechanisms should also increase justice and address the real-life questions in human relationships (Lederach, 2014: 9). These mechanisms, according to Nganje (2020: 123) should “promote sustainable peace, against the backdrop of changing conflict dynamics and a new peacebuilding discourse that valorised the local context, local initiatives and local agency in peacebuilding processes”. They should promote peacebuilding or security from below, from the grassroots.

Since there are local or grassroots initiatives or committees for peace, the mechanisms for local peacebuilding should really facilitate dialogue and mutual understanding among the youth. They should allow a constructive problem-solving through joint actions for preventing violence among them. These tools or means should bring about social cohesion and help to build a resilient society. It is agreed that the local people or communities, especially the youths living in a violent context have the strength or potential to deal with this violence more than any other external party (Nganje, 2020: 124). Hence, the youths in Masisi, from Kitchanga, Nyakariba-Nyamitaba, Karuba, Kamuronza, Mupfunyi Shanga or Rubaya should be the first participants in solving their conflicts and reducing violence in their districts. The three lenses can be summarised and applied as follow:

Table 16:Lederach’s lenses applied to the youth’s situation in Masisi

LENSES	CONTENT	APPLICATION
Lens 1: A tool showing the immediate situation and calls for immediate responses. PAR approach gives a view on the immediate situation in Masisi	To see the immediate situation (to look at the current situation of violent conflicts) Major questions: “what is the immediate problems that need to be solved and “what is the overall context that needs to be addressed in order to change destructive patterns of youth involvement in violence?” (Lederach 2008). The youth are involved in violence through armed groups. The entire district	Currently in Masisi, there is suspicion among the youth, fear, frustration, anger and ideas of revenge for some and defend the territory for other. There are too many murders and other types of violence. On the other hand, the youths are strongly manipulated and pushed to violence. In addition, the unemployed and idle youths need a response to their situation, to address their needs.

LENSES	CONTENT	APPLICATION
	is paralysed by violence. There is need to listen to the youths from Masisi.	
Lens 2: a tool that shows the “horizon of preferred future” beyond the immediate situation	To look beyond the immediate situations and to envisage an ideal situation that we wish to create by reducing violence among the youth. Major question: what are the “possibilities of what could be constructed and built”? What do I want to achieve? What is the “process structure” to achieve it? This is the transformation for change	The youths lack good role models. The opportunities are opened to the youths: through dialogues, they can overcome the divisions. The goal of this thesis is to initiate these opportunities.
Lens 3: To look at the link between the two first lenses and to envisage “the response to conflict as the development of change processes”	“Change processes,” Lederach (2008: 8) argues, “must not only promote short-term solutions, but also build platforms capable of promoting long-term social change”	The current situation is linked to the historical, the sociopolitical and economic dimensions of Masisi. There are also the external factors that fuel conflicts and violence in Masisi. The youth are caught up in these factors and need to free themselves.

Source: Lederach (2014.: 11–13)

6.7 The Intergroup Theory Towards Conflict Transformation

There is a phenomenon that has affected a group of people because of their race. A group is a social organisation made up of people of the same characteristics; same vision and mission working together to achieve the same goal. In order to do so, the group members must have a common vision, a common understanding of their common condition and promote the same programme. Hence, to understand what a group is, one needs to locate it in a clearly delineated situation with clear goals. Two types of groups should be identified in a conflict situation. These are the ingroup (us) to which one belongs and psychologically identifies with, and the outgroup (them) to which others belong or psychologically identifies themselves with (Bernstein, 2015: 347). The intergroup contact theory emphasises that group

contact is of utmost importance in reducing prejudice and promoting a more tolerant society (Everett, 2011: 323).

The aforementioned groups, namely the ingroup and outgroup, constitute newly explored areas in social psychology and are integral to the study of human relationships, as outlined by Allport, who delved into the dynamics of human relationships (Pettigrew et al., 2011: 271). Pettigrew posits that the quality of human relationships can either improve or deteriorate based on certain prevailing circumstances. He asserts that the intergroup contact hypothesis hinges on the principle of equal status within a given context. This implies that individuals should not harbor any unequal or hierarchical relationships, and their interactions should be characterised by cooperation rather than competition. Moreover, the group members in contact should share a common label and experience similar conditions for their interactions to be effective. Only under these circumstances can biases or prejudices be alleviated.

Second, another condition is common goals: the group members must pursue and work on shared goals. In this research, peacebuilding, intergroup contacts and behavioural transformation should be the youth's common goals. The third condition is the intergroup cooperation: the groups' effort put by the members in contact and striving to achieve the same goal must make them interdependent and foster cooperation and not competition among them (Pettigrew, 1998). Finally, authority support (Chinn, 2014: 62; Mayer 2008: 40) as another condition for intergroup contact implies that in whatever the group members endeavour to achieve, they need legal support from political, social and traditional leadership. It is further argued that groups or youth leaders must motivate and inspire their group members to live in harmony in the best interests of society. A critical duty of a youth leader is to constantly create good living conditions by bringing members to live and work together rather than as individuals. The leader should strengthen the group relationships by building trust and respect between the members of the ingroup and the outgroup.

Moreover, both Allport and Lederach underscored that the processes of conflict transformation and intergroup contact share several common elements, including: formal authority derived from an official capacity, enabling them to issue orders; power to administer rewards and/or penalties stemming from their ability to dispense valued organisational rewards or penalties directly or indirectly; expertise to facilitate and oversee

agreements between conflicting parties; and charisma or attractive qualities that enable community leaders to persuade or influence others. Additionally, these leaders should foster problem-solving approaches rather than exacerbating group divisions.

Hence, the four criteria of intergroup contact as hypothesised by Allport are based on effective communication, leadership, mutual trust, coping and social togetherness (Olayoku, 2017: 77-80; De Souza, 2019: 2). On the other hand, other scholars have suggested a fifth condition stating that the contact situation must have a friendship potential or enable the group members to be close to each other (De Souza 2019: 2; Lederach 2003: 23). Adding to these conditions, Schellhaas and Dovidio (2016: 10) found that “understanding the psychological processes that shape intergroup relations and sometimes fuel bias and conflict can help inform interventions to improve intergroup relations”.

For De Souza (2019: 7-8), humans are social beings. These beings define themselves as individuals and they do so by referring to the social groups to which they belong. Based on the social identity theory and the theory of self-categorisation, ingroup identification is: “an important part of an individual’s self-concept that affects attitudes and behaviours. Awareness of belonging to a social group leads the individual to think and behave in the way the members of the group do” (De Souza 2019: 7-8), all be it violently. In fact, Oduaran et al. (2020: 14764) found that “violence is a global phenomenon” embedded in human nature; thus, “group membership has serious implications for experience and behaviour. It also has psychological and social consequences for individuals. Ingroup identification is an indispensable construct to understand intra and intergroup dynamics” De Souza 2019: 7-8). Everything done within or for the community depends on the will of the opposing groups. Thus, when conflicts occur within or among communities, they affect the members personally, relationally, structurally and culturally (Lederach, 2003: 23).

The relationships between the groups—ingroup and outgroup – are closely linked to conflict transformation because “relationships are central” to conflict transformation (Lederach, 2003: 17). In the same way, they are vital to intergroup contact. Lederach’s (2003: 15) views of conflict when he asserts that “conflict brings with it the potential for constructive change” are complementary to Allport’s view of intergroup contact that is based on the transformative relationship that should characterise the human relationships. This confirms that “human

relationship” is one of the major pillars of conflict transformation and that “relationships are the heart of transformation processes” (Lederach, 2003: 17). Between the intergroup contact and the transformational approach lies the participatory action approach (PAR) that should lead to social or behavioural change. As Lederach (2003: 19) puts it, “conflict can move from being destructive toward being constructive”. Moreover, Lederach (2003: 21) concludes that “Conflict transformation focuses on the dynamic aspects of social conflict” or social interrelation at “interpersonal, intergroup and social-structural” levels.

A close look at conflict transformation and attitudinal transformation theory reveals not only the types of conflicts but also how to address them. As conflict transformation is primarily about conflict prevention, settlement, management, resolution and transformation and scheduling or planning of activities, one may assume that the outcomes of each strategy work well for harmony within the conflicting groups. This also entails regarding conflict first and foremost as an instrument by which to achieve certain social and common goals. In the literature, conflict transformation and the likelihood of reverse impact on the outside world or from human problems within society have not been given much attention or deep analyses especially when it comes to conflicted areas like the Eastern DRC. From this perspective, conflict transformation is one of the major remedies. This presupposes that conflict transformation should aim at creating conditions having “friendship potential”, the potential for coming together and being open to collaboration and harmony coupled with the attainment of a common goal. In fact, it is assumed that this approach stems from the conflict management method which involves using strategies and techniques to address and resolve disagreements, disputes, conflicts between individuals, groups or organisations in a constructive and effective manner. The points raised here are relevant to this study in the way that focus is not only on the technical aspects of positional change but also on the whole human aspect in conflict transformation.

It is further assumed that conflict transformation contexts should prompt changes in individuals' mindset and behaviour, as it relies on using grassroots knowledge to foster cohesion among community members, recognising that society is not merely a collection of individuals in conflict but also a network connecting people through myriad interactions, as

emphasised by Galtung (1996: 120), thereby highlighting the importance of nurturing these interactions to promote social unity.

6.8 Conflict Transformation and the Theory of Change

The theory of change, hereafter ToC, has its origins in the works of theorists like Kirkpatrick (in 1950s), Patton and Weiss among others. Basically, their work provided a methodological framework to relate and articulate various components of a community or social change programme. These experts gave the possible connecting steps among different activities to create a change programme. The major dimensions to look at in this programme are the sequence of the expected results from an intervention followed by the evaluation processes and strategies to confirm the outcomes. The works and publications by these experts have inspired various sociopolitical and humanitarian sectors.

Generally speaking, the ToC is an organisational tool for a desired change. As such, there are various types of change like strategic organisational change, people-centric change, structural change, remedial change, static change and dynamic change, among others. The ToC can be understood as a framework portraying or mapping out a series of activities to transform or to improve a situation. This series of actions requires some inputs that could be human resources, funds or other equipment. Scholars argue that change is basically a variation in the common way of doing things. First of all, the ToC needs essential elements to reflect a clear picture of success. It needs to identify the issue one is trying to address and the kind of interventions that are likely to produce the desired outcomes in the long term. These latter are the “preconditions” for the expected outcomes. The ToC “explains the process of change by outlining the causal connections in an initiative” and by showing the timely outcomes or the desired long-term goals. It is also based on a better planning action considering how the change or any expected impact will happen progressively in a given period of time. Among the preconditions to build up a ToC, there is the target group or the beneficiaries, the stakeholders, the development process and the expected change. The ToC globally aims at involving the beneficiaries in any given intervention, to empower them so that they own the intervention to improve their initial situation.

It is argued that a ToC should be trustworthy or reliable, based on previous experiences and stakeholders' insights or inputs, achievable, supported by the stakeholders or beneficiaries. They should be involved in designing and contributing to major aspects of the ToC. The theory should be testable by showing the indicators to assess it. That is why there are several types of evidence that are needed to build a reliable and effective ToC. These are the evidence of need or what the beneficiaries (the youth) really need; the evidence of context based on the experiences and the factors influencing any given intervention; and the evidence of effectiveness.

For this study, the starting project aims at reducing violence and conflicting attitudes among the youth while its intended impact is to minimise violence and conflicts among the youth. Anticipated shifts may manifest in the wellbeing of youth, their behaviour or engagement in violence and conflicts, alterations in attitudes and emotions towards others, and transformations in their relationships and interactions.

In order to reduce violence among the youth, young people need skills and to be motivated for working and living together. They also need to be sensitised about the beauty and the benefit of living together in harmony and in peace. That is why they need a supportive community. To achieve this, there is need for a series of talks with the youth and other community members. These are conditions that have to be fulfilled in order to achieve the desired goal. In this study, the major elements of the ToC diagram are articulated around the following points:

- a) An identification of the problem to address: the issue here is violence and how to reduce it and change attitudes.
- b) A description of the process to undergo and by which the ToC is developed, to identify the people who are involved and how. At this point, the change diagram should show what to achieve as long-term goal. To develop this theory, I will involve youth leaders, development experts and community leaders. At the long-term level, violence among the youth must be reduced for communities to live in peace and harmony. A “creative conflict transformation” is the needed strategy to bring violence to an end (Galtung, 1996: 34).

- c) A description of the intended impact. At the end of the process, the interventions should lead to reducing tensions, cleavage and discriminations, stereotypes, prejudice and violence among the youth.
- d) A description of the needs and the context. To achieve the needed outcome, there is a need for security in the study area, the willingness to dialogue from various actors or groups, understanding and cooperation among various stakeholders, mainly the youth. There is need for human resources for the LPCs, those taking part in the indigenous legal forums and the discussions with the youth leaders. These are considered as the major outputs that will create the desired impact.
- e) A description of the outcomes that will lead to the desired impacts.
- f) A description of outputs according to inputs like human, material or financial resources to achieve the goals and a description of how to work with other stakeholders.
- g) To indicate the timelines: when things will happen in the short, medium and long term.
- h) A description of critical or important assumptions.

Figure 7 shows how the ToC can be applied to the transformational programme.

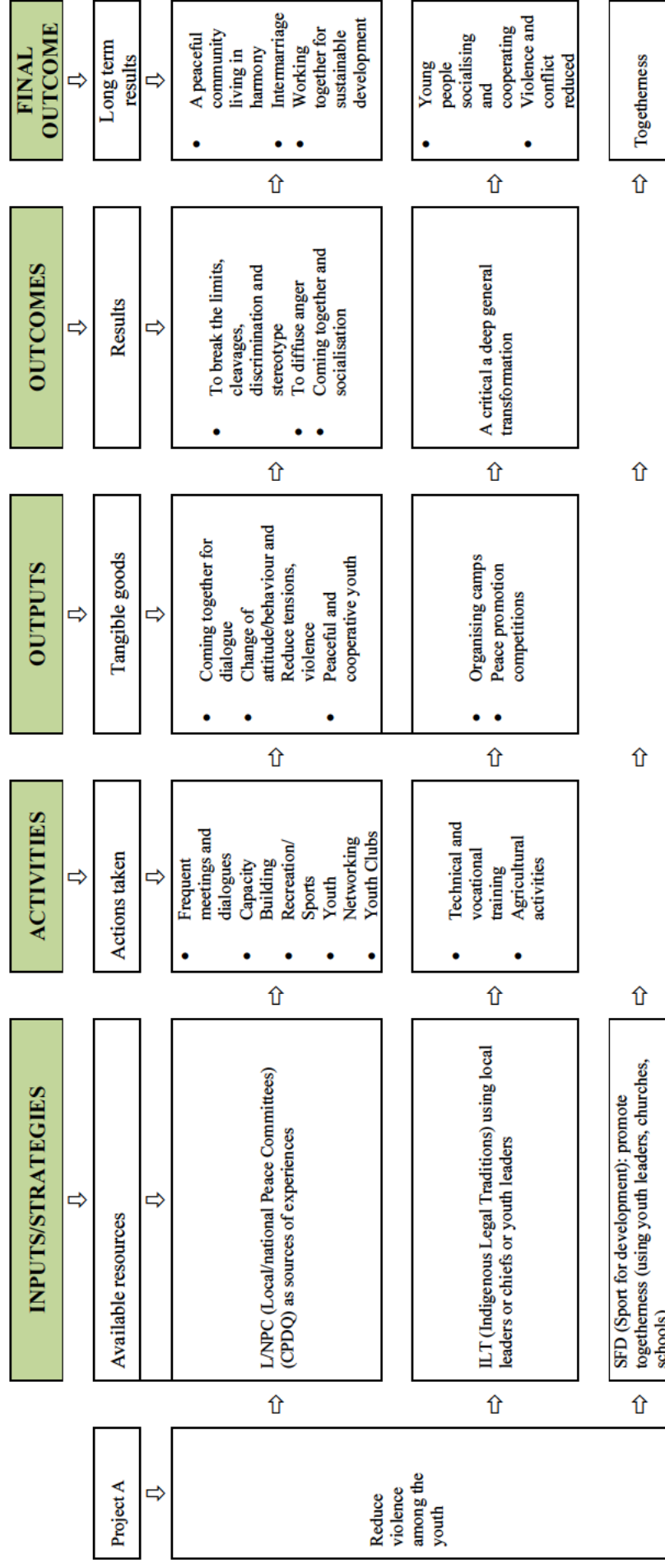


Figure 7: The ToC applied to the transformational programme. Source: The researcher

The goal or the aim of this research is to reduce violence and conflict among the youth in Masisi. The inputs are human, material or financial resources needed to achieve the goal or to bring out the outputs that are needed; for example, the LPCs that need to be revived or to be made operational and active at the grassroots and among the youth. There are also the ILTs. These are the traditional means of conflicts transformation that were formerly used among the communities at the grassroots in the study area. Finally, there is the Sport for Development (SFD) which aims at bringing together the youth from different warring communities.

For the activities to be conducted, these are different tasks that will be initiated to achieve the goal and bring about a change among the youth. These activities are like playing together (football) as they used to do; working together in farming or in building houses. The activities would lead to expected results which is violence reduction. As for the outputs, these are the short-term results that will come out of the activities. Among other results, there is the revival of the culture of dialogue, change of attitudes and a peaceful life. The above activities will definitely have impacts. The major impacts being reduced violence and conflict. The beneficiaries or the youth will implement the planned activities and run them. Attitudinal change in their context requires knowledge and awareness of conflict transformation according to the current situation as well as an understanding of the contextual process. The groups involved each have a distinct series of objectives and limitations which include protecting land, people and the group identity. These are factors that need to be understood even though they should not necessarily lead to endless conflicts. As a result of the peacebuilding process and a way of assessing the indicators of change and impacts on social relations and on the youth in Masisi, Table 17 gives an overview of the impacts or observable relationships among the youth in Masisi.

Table 17: The impact chain or relationships changes among the youths in Masisi

Variables	Short-term direct impacts	Mid-term direct impacts	Long-term impacts
Impact	1) Selected youths develop skills and courage for social changes in a positive way.	1) A larger number of youths become socially active through	1) The youth play their role in public life and unleash their full potential as change

Variables	Short-term direct impacts	Mid-term direct impacts	Long-term impacts
	They come together and socialise in Masisi. 2) A new culture of dialogue on general issues (socioeconomic and political issues) is initiated and increased in Masisi	participation in various communal activities. 2) Positive and constructive dialogue among the youths and the community on social issues (dividers and connectors)	agents within their communities. 2) Increased trust and collaboration among the youth and the community members reduce violence and change attitude and behaviour
Assumptions	Violence is reduced and the youth show their willingness and agree to resocialise and to work together.	Dialogue takes place among the conflicting parties especially the youths in Masisi.	Non-violent behaviour and non-violent communication are promoted in a transformed community.
Hypotheses	• The relationship among the youths entangled in hostilities in Masisi can be transformed if they are involved in communal project • If the youths involved in hostilities participate in a collective productive agricultural project that impacts the wellbeing of the community, their relationships could be improved • Violence is reduced if the youths show their willingness to resocialise and to work with their current and former enemies • The use of conflict transformation and the participatory action	All hypotheses based on violence prevention and peacebuilding theories	Transformation of relationships in deep-rooted conflicts and recurrent violence

Variables	Short-term direct impacts	Mid-term direct impacts	Long-term impacts
	approaches would mitigate violence among the youths if the youths involved in violence are exposed to such programmes • Bringing the youths from different ethnic community to socialise and dialogue around what divides them and creates confrontations among them can ease tensions and restore fraternal and amical relationships		
Unintended impacts	During the first contacts, some youths' members show no commitment to come together, to join other groups or are reluctant to do so.	The politicians or other community leaders as dividers come in to interfere with the process of dialogue for reconciliation.	The resumption of violent behaviours and misunderstanding among the youths in Masisi.

Verification of the indicators of change according to the intervention

Changes in:	Attitudes	Behaviours	Context or situation
Indicators	The youths take keen interest in the suggested activities (SFD, working together, PAR...) and suggest their own contributions, ideas and inputs. They overcome mistrust, discrimination and hypocrisy.	Youths increasingly take the lead in various activities and play the vital role of sensitising their peers to stop violent behaviours.	The youths develop alternative programmes to violence and conflicts and commit themselves to sustain them.

Source: The researcher

Talking about behavioural change, Lederach emphasises that behaviour has highly influenced the technical tools of conflict transformation theory. He maintains that this approach stems

from the conflict management methodology and is related to the non-communication approach of strategies and needs as causes of conflicts. In short, behavioural change should be given higher priority together with other human needs as they are complementary. So, conflict transformation promotes constructive change and vice versa. These viewpoints are relevant to this study in that focus is not only on the technical aspects of attitudinal transformation but also on the whole human aspect in conflict transformation. As Galtung (1996: 122) has put it, the major aim of this study should be “goal is structural change rather than to inflict defeat on any person” (Galtung, 1996: 122).

6.9 Religion as a Mechanism for Peacebuilding to Deter Youth Violence

During and after the Second World War, various actors, including the church or religious people took part in hostilities and in the struggle for peace. Peace associations were created to face the conflicts and subsequent violence as well as to bring back peace among the warring communities or countries. It is important to raise awareness on social issues, on relationships among people and how to deal with post-war consequences. These dimensions gave the raise of associations and/or organisations like “Church and Peace” (Amsterdam). This is an ecumenical association of different denominations working for peace. The corporate members are the Mennonite, Quaker, Church of the Brethren, Anglican, Baptist, Methodist, Lutheran, Orthodox, Reformed and Roman Catholic traditions. This is a meeting place or a space for reflection around conflicts and their transformation. It is an “inter-confessional” forum for dialogue and a forum for common projects and other services to communities. In addition to the “Church and Peace”, there is also the *Mouvement International pour la Reconciliation* and/or the “International Fellowship of Reconciliation” (France). Most of these associations were initiated by religious people, peace organisations or communities in general. In one way or the other, they play a role in peace training, reconciliation and peacebuilding. These among others are the pictures of the church playing her role as a tool for peace and love among enemies.

In their report, “Christian leaders across the world” (Rice, 2005: 16) argued that “the Church itself ought to be key indication of hope, a living alternative, infusing and challenging the social sphere with a more radical vision of God’s reconciliation.” Rice (2005: 16–17) added, among the church’s missions, what follows:

The church should also eagerly work for indications of reconciliation in society. These include: enemy leaders enter dialogue, violence stops, persecution is reduced, or hostilities cease; crimes and destruction by all sides are brought to light in a context of restorative justice; loved ones and the larger society learn the fate of victims; deeper truth around a painful history is appropriately and communally remembered; a state of tolerance is achieved where estranged groups agree to live peaceably; more just societal structures and practices emerge; children of hostile groups begin to go to school and play together; intermarriage increases across historic lines of separation.

It has been argued, however, that the church or religion in general is a double-edged sword which can save, on the one hand and on the other hand, it can kill (Kilonzo, 2009; Silvestri et al. 2015). However, Kilonzo (2009: 99) asserts: “Religious institutions are viable mobilising agents given that they comprise of citizenry who come from diverse backgrounds, and if well organised, might have an advantage over other civil organisations in the peacebuilding process”.

The only thing Kilonzo emphasizes is the immediate challenge is ensuring that these institutions are willing to go beyond partisan politics and engage their followers in the process of averting violence and building peace (Kilonzo, 2009: 99; Springs, 2015: 149). On their side, Merdjanova and Brodeur (2009: 2) note:

religious fluidity and diversity per se are neutral and can be viewed as a potential source for both positive and negative developments, depending on the geographical, economic, social and cultural context, recognising of course that what is positive and negative is itself very relative to the worldviews and interests of various individuals and identity groups.

According to them, religion and, to some extent, religious people have these two sides, the positive and the negative ones. They have, as religion does, the potential to bring communities together or to tear them apart. So, to achieve the task of bringing together or mobilising the followers and maintaining peaceful cohesion among them, religious institutions need to work in synergy, in coalition or through what is known as the interfaith

dialogue. This can be considered as a forum through which various challenges and social situations affecting the communities are debated and from which joint decisions are taken.

The interfaith dialogue has been recognised as a strong channel through which peace and peacebuilding can reach the world and be effective. That is why several organisations have “integrated religious peacebuilding” into their programmes or activities as well as institutions that are faith-based and that work for peacebuilding and peace in the world. Among these organisations, there are the Search for Common Ground and Mercy Corps that have adopted the religious peacebuilding in their works. In addition, the United Nations General Assembly has called “for interreligious dialogue and cooperation to promote a culture of peace” (Hayward, 2012: 4). On the side of the Catholic Church, individual bishops and bishops’ conferences have been active in mediation, reconciliation and peacebuilding. Among the Catholic organisations, there are the Catholic Relief Service, the Sant’Egidio and the Catholic Peacebuilding Network (Hayward, 2012: 4). Not only the Catholic Church but also other denominations like the Muslims, the Buddhists and the Quaker Church have their peacebuilding organisations operating for peace around the World. Among the Quaker peacemakers, I can name Kenneth Boulding, Elise Boulding, Adam Curle and George Lakey, even though in this thesis, I am not developing their theories or expanding on their work. There are other religious figures who were also involved in peace and peacebuilding and these are renowned figures like Martin Luther King Jr. Mahatma Gandhi, Desmond Tutu (South Africa) and Cardinal Laurent Monsengwo Pasinya (DRC). I can simply state that their work is a religious inspiration to peace studies programmes, mechanisms or agencies.

Hence, there are various mechanisms to deal with conflicts and violence. Additionally, there have been several tools used to bring about peace over violence. Religion is one of them even though it is said that “religion as double-edged sword” bears a side that can destroy and another one that can build. In his paper, Jegede (2019: 55) avers: “Religion is a cultural phenomenon, as such, it has played a dominant role in the socio-political organisation of man though out the course of history. As an institution, it has served to meet certain needs within the society”. However, turning to the Nigeria case, Jegede (2019: 54) argues that “without doubt, the greatest threat to peaceful coexistence, economic and political development as well as national security has always been religious conflict” and in this same case, two religious

sides have been created, Islam (90 million or 50% of the Nigerian population) and “Christians and traditionalists”. Jegede (2019) recognised that the two camps have been or are being used by politicians to oppose each other, yet religion is basically based on a relationship, a link established between two persons namely a human person and a divine person (Delhez, 2022: 57; Jegede, 2019: 56). Of course, here, I should say that religion is a space for harmonious and constructive relationships that should foster peace and peaceful cohesion among people.

In various regions of the world, religious leaders are known to be credible persons and understood in the community; they can sometimes and easily have access to various sectors or groups in conflict and promote dialogue, reconciliation, confidence and forgiveness. In addition, religious leaders can play this role without being partisan or looking at their own interests. In a peacebuilding process, religion or religious leaders can play an important role of empowering the weak in society or in any system like women, the elderly and in this case the youths. In addition, religion or religious leaders can develop or rebuild relationships and cooperation among former enemies.

There have been individuals as well as groups of religious leaders who play a commendable role in peacemaking and in peacebuilding. These are people like Bishop Théas, the founder of Pax Christi, who preached “the Gospel of peace” (Shannon, 1980: 59); Archbishop Desmond Tutu and Father Lapsley in South Africa, and Bishop Cornelius Korir in Kenya—all inspired the world with their message of peace. The example of Father Michael Lapsley just to mention this anti-apartheid activist in South Africa is appealing. Lapsley survived an assassination attempt in the form of a letter bomb while in Zimbabwe; he lost both his hands and an eye (Lapsley, 2021: 1). Currently, he is the founder and President of Healing of Memories Global Network. In 1998, with some of his friends, they created the “Institute for Healing of Memories” as a supplement to the TRC. Archbishop Desmond Tutu was the Patron of the Institute. In the DRC, for many years, the Catholic leadership was involved in conflicts resolution and in peacebuilding.

In this chapter, I look at religion or the Church as a meeting place for conflict mitigation or transformation, called to unite people from various background and different ages and I take an example from Bishop Korir in his model for conflict transformation and peacebuilding in

Kenya. Moreover, I present some examples of successful stories of religion as a peacebuilding instrument, where it has played a major role. These successful stories are based on two models of conflict transformation and peacebuilding. Here, I present two cases as examples, one from the Northern Uganda and the other from Western Kenya.

Secondly, I look at initiatives by religious leaders in isolation in the case of the Democratic Republic of Congo, followed by the Catholic Church initiatives in Masisi. Finally, the chapter concludes with the lessons to be learnt from different cases of interventions by religion and religious people. Here, I discuss religion, ubuntu, intergroup contact and conflict transformation to show their complementarity. However, in this chapter, three concepts will be used interchangeably: religion (not simply as belief), institution and church. The point of convergence between the three is the congregation or gathering of people aiming at moving in one spiritual direction in order to build peace.

6.9.1 Religion as a Unifying Space for Abantu and Ubuntu

Physically, the church is a meeting space where believers meet as humans to meet with God as the Supreme Being. In the Great Lakes Region, there are two characteristics reflecting these relationships, but both defined by *ubuntu*. First of all, the human *ubuntu*. In many Bantu languages, a person is known as *umuntu*. As such, the *umuntu* is defined by their inner characteristic or *ubuntu*. This concept defines a living individual by their inherent positivity, vitality and potential achievements through life's opportunities. Generally, the outcomes of ubuntu are perceived as beneficial. For instance, a person embodying *ubuntu* is expected to display kindness, compassion and other qualities indicative of genuine humanity. Kinyarwanda-speakers might express this notion by saying that someone *agira ubuntu* signifying their kindness. This trait is often evident in their visible demeanour and actions.

Spiritually, a human being is made of that power that makes him to be who they are compared to other human beings. What the Kinyarwanda-speakers say that *Akari Umuntu, kariundi (muntu)*. This means that what is true for a person is also true for another or what applies to one human being applies also to another, in other words, human beings are equal in their humanity. By so saying, they mean that the church or religion is a meeting place for those endowed with humanity or *ubuntu*. They gather in congregation to meet with someone

defined by his attracting *ubuntu* and that someone is God. For the Kinyarwanda-speakers, they say that God has *ubuntu* (*Imana igira ubuntu*) or put simply: *Ubuntubw' Imana* or “God’s *ubuntu*” referring to God’s mercy) not to say that God has the same characteristics as a human being but only to say that “He is merciful, He is the Supreme Being”. Yet, in the traditional belief system, they do not say that the gods they worship have *ubuntu*. So, by going to church or meeting through religion, people (*A-bantu*) go to meet with God (who has *ubuntu*). Hence, this *ubuntu* chain, uniting people among themselves and uniting them to God, is an important element that should prevent them from being violent, being mean to each other or killing each other. This is an important human dimension the youths should be trained to nurture in Masisi and elsewhere. I am not going deep into the *ubuntu* dimensions in this thesis even though what is going on in Masisi reflects a lack of *ubuntu* on the side of the youths in militia groups.

6.9.2 Successful Stories of Religion in Peacebuilding: ARLPI and Amani Mashinani

Hayward (2012: 8) reflects on “religion and peacebuilding”, looking at the “current challenges and future prospects” on the side of religion and her interventions in peacebuilding matters. She argues:

There is a pressing need for greater monitoring and evaluation of religious peacebuilding work—and peacebuilding generally—to understand better which interventions, led by whom and in which situations, have the greatest effect.

By saying so, Hayward recognises that religion has a role to play or has played a role in peacebuilding and that there is a need to reflect on this role or work that has been done. In addition, Hayward (2012: 8) remarks, “evaluating the work will require creativity and commitment, particularly for projects that seek attitudinal change (i.e., interfaith dialogue) or other intangible personal and social transformations”. In this way, religion and interfaith dialogue are ways or means for peacemaking and peacebuilding as they can help to defuse anger, hostility and interfaith tensions that are sources of violence. Interfaith dialogue is what is missing in conflict transformation and peacebuilding in DRC in general, in North Kivu Province and in Masisi in particular.

In his “reflections in the age of COVID”, Father Lapsley (2021: 71) talking about our “wounded humanity and planet and Christian witness as healing and conciliation in a multi-religious world” asserts that “the first step towards healing is recognising our woundedness. No human being fully escapes from woundedness, although degrees of pain and suffering vary hugely.” This is among the works of the church and church people to reveal to the followers both “their visible and invisible wounds” and, if possible, provide the way to heal the wounds. Some religious people have done it whereas others failed to come closer to the wounded people. Here, I have looked at two examples of success stories, one of the religious people who put their efforts together for peace (*Kacel pi kuc* meaning “Together for peace”) and another case of a leader who shaped a conflict transformation tool to bridge the broken relationships among communities. In the following sections, I discuss these two successful experiences of peacebuilding as lived or initiated by religious people; experiences that “show how religious peacebuilding can reduce and resolve conflict” (Hayward, 2012: 1).

6.9.3 Acholi Religious Leaders’ Peace Initiative, an Inspiring Example of Interfaith Leadership

One can agree with Merdjanova and Brodeur when they titled their book *Religion as a Conversation Starter* (2009). Not only can religion be an opener for dialogue during conflicting hard times, but it can also open or widen the dialogical space for various groups of different belief. This has been witnessed in different parts of the world through what is known as the “interreligious Dialogue for Peacebuilding” or the example of Acholi religious leaders’ involvement in Northern Uganda is really appealing. However, I tend equally to disagree with them that this is not always so, given what is happening or has happened in Eastern DRC where religious people have been killed, and others have been kidnapped or have disappeared. In some parishes like Nyakariba and Bobandana, the priests have been accused of taking part in armed conflicts by keeping and providing guns and ammunitions.

Talking about “Youth and Interfaith Conflict Transformation”, Patel and Meyer (in Omer et al. 2015: 471) define an interfaith leader as “someone who is equipped with the relevant knowledge (“interfaith literacy”) and skills of mobilisation and bridge-building to bring people of diverse religious and nonreligious identities together around issues of shared concern”. A strong example of conflict and violence reduction through “interfaith leadership”

has been witnessed in the Acholi land, Northern Uganda. They made what they called the Acholi Religious Leaders Peace Initiative (ARLPI), to involve themselves in the LRA conflict that was very violent. So the ARLPI is an interfaith peacebuilding and conflict transformation group created in 1997 and was a proactive response to the conflict and violence in Acholi. The motto in Acholi language is *Kacel pi Kuc* meaning “Together for Peace”. From this motto, one can easily notice that the organisation calls for togetherness first, not only that of religious leaders or faith-based organisations but also for all affected people in Northern Uganda and all other peacemakers. This gives a picture of an open peace door or forum. The first condition to achieve this is an interreligious dialogue followed by an invitation to other community members to dialogue about issues in dealing with conflict, here peacebuilding.

Religious leaders under the ARLPI forum describe their mission as an interfaith organisation as a commitment to peace and development and seeking to transform violent conflict by means of dialogue, negotiation, mediation and reconciliation, and promoting durable peace and development of the Northern Uganda region. This latter had been destroyed by years of bloody conflict and killings by the Lord’s Resistance Army (LRA) group led by Alice Lakwena first and then by Joseph Kony. The aims of the ARLPI, were to bring together the religious leaders from four denominations and their respective constituencies (Catholic, Anglican, Muslim and Orthodox) to participate actively and effectively in transforming conflicts and deal with the horrendous violence that were created by the LRA. In Northern Uganda, people were tortured to death, others had their lips cut off or sealed with padlocks whereas others had their hands or ears cut off. Initiatives and other negotiations by the government and the rebel group were unsuccessful. That is why religious leaders decided to play their part. In addition, these religious people work to build local capacities to facilitate communities’ reconciliation, social reintegration of ex-combatants and the develop the mechanisms to respond to conflicts that emerge within the communities and in a non-violent manner. That is their long-term goal, to create a sustainable and peaceful community. Among other goals, they wanted to raise awareness on conflict issues and peace trends in their region by conducting practical and oriented research and document on topical issues. Finally, they wanted to increase harmonious coexistence and social cohesion in the Acholi region and in their neighbouring communities. Their aim was to rebuild destroyed relationships among the

Acholi people and the LRA. The main activities of the ARLPI were sensitisations, mediation, dialogues, cross-border workshops, organising community peace and healing workshops, training in peacebuilding and conflict transformation. This was achieved through community debates, documentations and dissemination of peace practice and lessons learnt, publications, press released, advocacy campaigns, consultative meetings, focus group discussions; their major tools were mediation and dialogues. They expected to achieve a conducive environment for sustainable peace and development in Northern Uganda, precisely in Gulu, Amuru, Pader and Kitgum.

Religious leaders and their various “religions” or beliefs defend the sanctity of human life as all their faith calls for love and not to kill; they promote social justice, equality and fairness, transparency, responsibility and accountability and the dignity of every human person. Among their successes, one can mention:

- They managed to bring religious leaders from different denominations together and reflect on the conflicts and all kinds of violence affecting their area. Their ARLPI became a strong advocacy institution lobbying for peace. They really achieved unity in order to work together for sustainable development. In this way, they managed to meet Joseph Kony, the LRA warlord and negotiate peace with him.
- They advocated and contributed to the development of the Uganda Amnesty Act. This enabled some young LRA rebels to surrender and reintegrate the communities. Thus, religious leaders managed to change the attitudes of actors towards ending the war through the use of non-violent means, promoting the dialogue.

Finally, they empowered women in conflict transformation and issues like good governance, human rights and participation in peacebuilding following the UN security Council Resolution 1325. For their actions, they received international recognition especially for their credibility and labour for peace. They got awards like the Niwano Peace Prize from Japan (2004); the Peace Award of URI Africa from Ethiopia (2008) and the Paul Carus Award from Spain (2004). The ARLPI is one of the powerful testimonies that should be emulated and implemented in other conflict affected communities and in Masisi in particular. The way the religious leaders came together and called upon the LRA leader to ease tension and violence

in their area yielded positive fruit and allowed people in Acholi land to live in peace. The feature of the ARLPI is that of an inclusive organisation made of people who promote the local ownership of the peacebuilding processes, who speak on behalf of the local people and who are close to them. I could say that the ARLPI succeeded where the central government had failed to negotiate with Joseph Kony and to mitigate the negative effects of conflicts and LRA violence in Northern Uganda.

6.9.4 Amani Mashinani as a Model of Conflict and Violence Transformation

This is another successful story from Kenya. It is the peace initiative known as *Amani Mashinani* or “Peace at the grassroots” initiated by a Kalenjin Bishop who was then heading up the Catholic Diocese of Eldoret. Bishop Korir started the programme as a way of bringing together warring communities after many years of political tensions, mistrust and tribal rivalry in the Northern Rift Valley in Kenya. In this part of Kenya, violent conflicts had opposed the Kikuyu, Marakwet, the Pokot, and the Kalenjin communities (Opongo, 2020: 9). According to Bishop Korir (2009: 5), “the church cannot stand idly by while people are dying”.

Amani Mashinani is made of two Kiswahili words *Amani* meaning “peace” and *Mashinani* meaning “at the grassroots” (from “shina” meaning roots, “ma” plural and “ni” meaning “at” or “in”). The “*Amani Mashinani*” model took a conflict transformation approach based on the following crucial points. The parties, according to Opongo (2020):

- have to recognise the negative effects of conflicts.
- need to stimulate different actors to find alternatives to their differences or their grievances.
- need to help them to commit themselves to working toward social cohesion.

So the major point of the major point of the initiative (*Amani Mashinani*) is to facilitate dialogue without bringing the meeting to a discussion from where other types of conflicts could erupt. Bishop Korir introduced the *Amani Mashinani* by giving the background of the model. He asserts:

it was 1997 and my Diocese was engulfed in the ferocious turmoil surrounding the second multiparty elections after many years of dictatorial single party rule. Political authorities were sowing seeds of discord, dividing citizens along tribal lines and instigating terrible communal violence” (Korir, 2009: 1).

Among the Marakwet and the Pokot, violence was based on cattle rustling. One day, as the Bishop was moving around in his Diocese, he was nearly shot at but later, he learnt that he was spared because his Diocese had helped the warring people by providing them food during the famine. From this experience, Bishop Korir realised that the church could play a role in bringing people to find a peaceful way out of conflict and violence. That is how with his team, especially from the “Diocesan Justice and Peace Commission”, they approached the elders from the warring sides, Marakwet and Pokot, to start a dialogue between them. That is also how they started with peace seminars and training in neutral places. Initially, they trained a group of peacemakers from upcountry and trusted these trained people would “take the peaceful message to their villages”. But this approach of training “professional seminar goers” did not work as the villagers did not trust them. That is when, according to the Bishop, they “realised they needed to start again at the grassroots, to reach the actual perpetrators and victims of violence”. That is how *Amani Mashinani* was born from the village with villagers or “actual perpetrators and victims of violence” (Korir, 2009: 2).

Among the major activities undertaken by the mediators and the Marakwet and Pokot, there were discussions over various issues opposing them followed by development of “peace projects that would unite people around their common needs” (Korir, 2009: 3). It is through these projects that a school as well as cattle dips were built for the two communities. In addition, a “common watering place” was prepared to provide water for their cattle. Finally, they also “held a peace Marathon” through which the competitors from both sides ran together around their areas. These actions – the school, dips, watering place and the peace Marathon – helped to promote people interaction and opportunity to share. They helped them to bring back cooperation and trust between them. Finally, they build a church at Kapsait Hill where the Marakwet and Pokot meet for prayers.

Amani Mashinani as a conflict transformation and a peacebuilding model is “a step-by-step process” based on twelve major steps as given in the following table:

Table 18:The 12 steps of the *Amani Mashinani* Model of Conflict Transformation

STEPS	CONTENT	COMMENTS
STEP 1	Analysis, intervention and interruption	Analysing the context then “to discourage, contain and damp down the violence”. The clergy can use their moral authority to stop conflicts and violence. Question: has this been done in Masisi?
STEP 2	Protection, sanctuary and relief	Not only an intervention needs implementers but also these actors need protection like the people among which they intervene
STEP 3	One-to-one meetings	A snowballing kind of meeting whereby participants suggest other participants from their side to subsequent meetings
STEP 4	Small group to small group meetings	These are meetings of group leaders to set the ground for wider dialogue and negotiations
STEP 5	Sharing food	This is a tough task in Masisi whereby people despise each other and do not share
STEP 6	Intra-ethnic meetings	
STEP 7	Airing of grievances	
STEP 8	Preparation of agenda and inter-ethnic meetings	
STEP 9	Reporting back and caucusing with communities	A debriefing step, to come back to the parties and share with them about the progress made through the peace talks initiatives
STEP 10	Peace connector projects	Through the approach, to enable the parties to initiate unifying activities
STEP 11	Social contract	A concluding step for signing the agreements (to bury the war axe)
STEP 12	Monitoring and ongoing development of the agenda	A follow-up of the decisions taken during the group dialogue and negotiations to prevent the recurrence of violence

Source: Adapted from Korir (2009)

These steps are the major stages of conflict transformation and peacebuilding according to Bishop Korir. With the warring communities, they followed these steps to bring about peace and building peace among them. After the *Amani Mashinani*, Bishop Korir lead the

production of another peacebuilding model through another publication intitled *Maridhiano Mashinani* meaning “reconciliation at the grassroots” (Korir et al.,2017). This publication gives “the role of the church in building sustainable peace” in the affected area, here, in the northern rift region of Kenya. The introduction to Korir’s book contains these words:

reconciliation after violent conflict is a subtle, slow and often difficult process that is not just about ending observable fighting. It also involves communities recognising the worth of others, atone for injustice, heal wounds of the spirit and commit to building a non-violent, equitable and just society. While external actors can support it, sustainable reconciliation requires an intensive focus at the grassroots by faith institutions and local civil society to build relationships of interdependence (Korir, 2017: 1)

The Bishop provides the church’s mission as far as peacebuilding activities that can be undertaken by the church are concerned. According to him, “the church must aid in developing non-violent, inclusive, productive and sustainable economies, the church can especially help in educating people in a culture of peace” (ibid.: 45) He underlines the true catalyst role of the church during violent conflicts and even after. This is part of the Bishop’s experiences from the Kenyan context of conflict and violence. Among the success stories, Bishop Korir mentions the experience of Pokot and Marakwet farmers who decided to put their effort together and put up a cooperative in kind of dairy to collect milk form their cattle. In their initiative, they involved “women and youth, who are often excluded from community development projects” (ibid.: 47). In sharing the advantages of putting their effort together, the diary manager testified that business needs cooperation in order to grow. According to Bishop Korir, the manager “has learnt that in building peace you often need a common objective so that people come together and mingle together and meet together” (ibid.: 48).

From his experiences, Korir (2017: 48) concluded that “to overcome the old systems that were built on exploitation and enmity, one needs to create new opportunities to offer people livelihood, dignity, recognition and authority that do not rely on violence”. This experience could be emulated by others in other countries, especially in areas like Masisi where pastoralists with thousands of cows live in isolation.

6.9.5 The Isolationism Paradigm and Lack of Interfaith Leadership: A Challenge to Religious Pluralism

Two paradigms can work toward peacebuilding but cannot produce the same results. These paradigms are isolationism, on the one hand and religious pluralism on the other hand. The first one implies the fact that in a conflict situation, a religious institution acts or intervenes alone. This way of doing is the opposite of religious pluralism (Cornell, 1980: 212; Delhez, 2022: 58; Omer et al.: 2015: 471; Zahn, 1980: 233). Patel and Meyer (cited in Omer et al., 2015: 472) understand religious pluralism as “the active engagement of religious diversity to a constructive end”. More interestingly, they provide “three characteristics of a community characterised by religious pluralism”. These characteristics are respect for religious and non-religious identity.

In DRC where hundreds of ethnic groups and languages coexist, there are also many denominations with different identities reflecting the characteristics of a divided society. According to scholars, religious pluralism must be based on respect for all these identities and what they contribute to social or spiritual harmony among believers from various backgrounds. In addition to these aspects, the believers are free “to practice and express their distinctive identities” and should be accepted like that (Omer et al., 2015: 472) without necessarily doing harm to other through one’s belief or differences.

Another characteristic is reciprocally inspiring relationships. People sharing beliefs should reflect this through positive and constructive relationships. They should set good and inspiring examples; being an inspiration to the youth. In DRC and in the North Kivu Province in general, religion is first of all a matter of ethnicity. Relationships are based on kinship and ethnic affiliation. And so are religious institutions. This implies that there are no reciprocally inspiring relationships nor are there examples the youths can rely on. Religion is a meeting forum or place where people learn to reflect together around an issue affecting all the members or a group of them. As such, religion is or should be characterized by harmony, peace, understanding and commonality among others. In a country like the DRC with protracted conflicts and in a place like Masisi with hundreds of armed groups, any intervention for conflict or violence transformation needs a synergetic intervention involving various sociopolitical actors. Here, the church or religious people cannot be left behind. The

ongoing conflicts and violence affect both the believers and non-believers from every side. The youths taking part in the violence are members of several churches. Hence, there is need for a common understanding of the contexts that sustain violence and conflicts, a common response, action or reaction towards these contexts. However, that is not the case in the DRC and in Masisi in particular.

6.9.6 Religion and Peacebuilding Intervention in DRC and in Masisi

Religious groups in the Province and in Masisi have been divided according to social division or according to ethnic groups. A quick look at the major denominations gives this overview: the Catholic church and the SDA have been always accused of being for Rwandese, Hutu and Tutsi; the Baptist church that was accused of being a Hutu church that split into two groups, one for the Hutu (CEBCE or *Communauté des Eglises Baptistes au Congo Est* or Baptist Church in Eastern Congo) and another one for the Nande (CEBCA, *Communauté des Eglises Baptistes au Centre de l' Afrique* or Baptist Church in central Africa). Later on, the CEBCE got into another phase of conflicts between the group from South Kivu and that from North Kivu to be made of Rwandese and holding the church leadership (Tull, 2005:241 - 255). These conflicts gave two opposing concepts, that of the minority versus the majority. The Pentecostal church is for the Nyanga; the New Apostolic Church is for the Hunde who are the majority. Hence, religious leaders have failed to come together and unite before they call the youth to unite. They are working in isolation and opposition, or they are just promoting what Tull named the politics of the belly (2005: 241–245). Let us look at the case of the Catholic Church in her action for peace.

6.9.7 The Catholic Church During Mobutu Era

In August 1991, a national conference was opened at Kinshasa in DRC and lasted until December 1992. The conference followed popular pro-democracy demonstrations and anti-government strikes and pressure that led to the creation of more than 130 political parties in the country. This Conference was chaired by the Catholic Prelate Cardinal Monsengwo — a well-known Catholic figure. Even though this forum did not achieve much, at least, it opened the national political space to people who had been muted for long years; and the image of a

Catholic personality remained in the political history of DRC (Harris, 1998: 269–271; Tull, 2005: 219).

Later on, on 17th April 1993, a caucus of 11 Catholic bishops signed in Kinshasa a joint message intitled *Un effort supplémentaire pour sauver la nation* or “More effort to save the nation”. The message was addressed to “the Catholics and to all the well-wishers especially among the politicians” by then, the bishops highlighted some actions that hindered the way to dialogue. Moreover, they presented the following impacts of these actions: famine, burning of properties, forced displacements of populations, insecurity, chaos and murders or killings all over the national territory. They underlined that people had sunk into indescribable misery and a cycle of organised violence caused by politicians. In this same message, the bishops underlined the fact that the central government seemed to have given up or to have failed to secure people. They concluded by calling the politicians to dialogue. They explained the kind of dialogue that is needed. According to them, this dialogue implies respect and listening to the others, to promote the truth, to observe the agreements and keep their word.

On 16th December 1994, the then President of the Zairian Conference of Bishops signed a press release in the name of other bishops. In this communiqué, Bishop Ngabu reminded that the sociopolitical situation was by then worrying in the country. There was the politic of silencing people through brutal means. The bishop highlighted the fact that there was no peace in the country. In early 1993, the Catholic Church facilitated two reconciliation meetings at Mweso and the district headquarters in Masisi. The first meeting took place at ZTM Mweso from 25 to 28 November 1993, and was co-organised by the Catholic Church through the BDDOS, local NGOs ACODRI and international NGO, OXFAM. The second initiative was held at Masisi from 14 to 16 November 1994, and was initiated by a local NGO, GEAD and the New Apostolic Church. These initiatives aimed to address the same regional conflicts, involving similar parties, but employed different organisations for mediation and conflict resolution.

Early in 1993, the Catholic Church with some local NGOs (CARITAS, ACODRI, GRACE) and OXFARM tried once a conciliation process among the warring ethnic groups in Masisi. They first held a meeting at Mweso ZTM, and a second meeting was held at the district headquarters at Masisi. In these meetings, they invited the leaders from each group. One

feature of these initiatives is that they were kind of top-down approaches. Since then, no other initiatives from religious people or churches or even NGOs have been undertaken. Another strategy that has been used is the peace talks initiated at different period of time and by different people or organisations. This was the first peace talk that was initiated in the area. It appeared that these peace talks were basically piloted by the Catholic Church without other denominations. The arbitration was between the Bahunde and Bahutu. Among the participants, apart from members of these NGOs, there were priests from Mweso, Bibwe, Birambizo and Nyakariba; the members of Peace committees but especially the MAGRIVI peace committee from Kibarizo, the local traditional leaders. Among these leaders, there was the traditional chief from Kisimba-Walikale where the Ngilima armed groups are said to have come from. The traditional chief from Bashali Mokoto did not come and was represented by a certain Kahombo Muhanuka who was alone without any member of the Bahunde combatants. On the side of the Bahutu and Batutsi, they were represented by Leonidas Kakira, Banyangarwinshi, Ntahompagaze, Rwabulindi, Mpirire, Muhire, James and Dio. The major task assigned to this meeting was to diagnose the prevailing conflicts, to establish their underlying causes and to suggest the solutions.

The shortcomings of this forum can be summed up by the fact that not only it forgot to hold a session with the youth, to listen to them and find out why they get involved in violence and war but also it was looked at as only a Catholic initiative without other denominations. During Kabila's time, the Catholic Church put pressure on the then central government to hold fair and peaceful elections as well as to bring peace in the country. Unlike the *Amani Mashinani* (Peace at the Grassroots) or the *Maridhiano Mashinani* (Reconciliation at the Grassroots) by Bishop Korir in Kenya, there has never been a bottom-up approach or a true intervention by the Catholic Church or even a true traditional mechanism to peacebuilding in North Kivu or in Masisi or that was focused on civil society or people at the grassroots; a mechanism that involved women and the youth as they were following the Kenyan example of *Amani Mashinani*.

6.9.8 The Example of the Jesuit Refugee Service in Masisi

There have been interventions by the Catholic organisations like CARITAS and the Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) to transform conflicts or violence. This latter operates at Mweso and

Masisi Parishes in North Kivu (Balleis, 2013: 8). Their interventions mostly target the communities living in these two parishes. The JRS activities are based on reconciliation or to reconcile opposing communities. Their key objective taken like a motto is to recreate true relationships. According to Balleis (2013: 30), “reconciliation can be described as a journey—that can never reach its end but that can achieve a lot or a great work towards healing”. There are no two similar ways towards reconciliation. For JRS, the aim is a true reconciliation that rebuilds or ensures the human dignity for all. JRS endeavours to promote some vital values like compassion and forgiveness, hope, dignity, solidarity and openness, hospitality, justice and truth, participation (ibid.: 33).

According to Balleis (2013: 14), reconciling people in conflict is not an easy task. For him, this is a tiring, unpaid and sometimes dangerous task.

6.9.9 Lessons from Religious Interventions in DRC and in Masisi

Some points are worth mentioning here as lessons from the religious involvement in building peace in DRC in general and in Masisi in particular. The points are the initiative itself, the approach and the general context. The initiative was a very good and vital one. However, according to Delhez (2022: 41) “you do not solve a problem or respond to a conflict with the same tools that caused it”. Some religious leaders or parish priests took part in hostilities and their roles were noticed by the parishioners. There should have been a true interreligious dialogue aimed at peace and peacebuilding. This should be based on the approach: the hierarchical approach or top-down approach. The crisis is inherent to the Catholic system what father Delhez (2022: 41) referring to Daniele Herveu-Leger argues that the Catholic church worldwide is “suffering or sick of the Roman system”.

The context of intervention is that of an isolated “Church that has never gone on her knees, across the boundaries of our divided world” (Rice, 2005: 3); a church that humbles herself by washing the Christians’ feet and wiping their tears in Kitchanga, Bambo, Kishishe and elsewhere in Masisi. It appears that there is a lack of religious pluralism and interfaith leadership (Omer et al., 2015: 471). In the USA, they have the Interfaith Youth Core. Is this another example of interuniversity pastoral relationships? In this latter case, only Catholics from various universities in town formed the Catholic University Committee (*Communauté*

Catholique Univeristaire, CCU). So, no religious diversity means no interfaith cooperation (Omer et al., 2015: 472).

In his book about the dialogue of civilisations, Garaudy (1977: 154) argued that the true dialogue of civilisations (here, I could say of religions) can be possible only if I assume that the other person and the other culture are part and parcel of myself and living in myself and also reveal what is lacking in me. That is the *ubuntu* dimension reflected by the intergroup contact and a result of a conflict transformation process.

These words are a South African saying that *Umuntu ungumuntu ngabantu* meaning that “I am who I am because we are”. This in Kinyarwanda-speakers (from Rwanda) or in Eastern Congo is rendered by *Akari umuntuckariundi muntu*. This background in general and the church in particular should remind followers of this undeniable reality and fact. And as a condition for peace from the church and her leaders and followers, Gumbleton (Shannon, 1980: 227) highlights:

the work of the Christian peacemaker must start within our own society, to bring about its transformation, to make it a society of peace. Peace will beget peace, as surely as violence begets violence. When we are peaceful people we will begin to bring peace to other nations and among nations.

To sum up, Cornell (Shannon, 1980: 212) noted more than four decades ago that:

it must be admitted that the church has not used the full weight of its power and prestige in the cause of peace in our time, that its witness against war and for peace and justice has not been adequate to the needs of our day.

Gumbleton and Cornell present a peace orientation from the religious perspective. Gumbleton reminds us that, as Christians, we are all peacemakers and that we get peace according to the peace we give others. For him, peace has to start from individuals from the grassroots or society. However, from his perspective, Cornell noted that the church has failed to fight for peace, to keep peace or to claim for peace yet the church has what it takes not only to provide peace but also to advocate for it. Our time has been unfortunate on the side of peace, yet we have the church among us.

6.10 Conclusion

This chapter reviewed a sample of literary sources closely related to the youth involvement in conflicts in various places in the world. The chapter provided an overview of alternatives to armed conflicts and youth violence highlighting conflict transformation and peacebuilding as the best ways to deal with conflicts and violence. In addition, the chapter presented the intergroup contact as a strategy for peacebuilding from the perspective of some contemporary theories of conflict transformation. The chapter looked at some pundits of conflict transformation and how their contributions to the field could help in dealing with a situation such as youth violence. Finally, the chapter gives an empirical framework based on religion as a mechanism for conflict transformation and a potential best way to deter youth violence. In addition, the chapter gave an overview of some examples of religion as a unifying space and some successful stories from religion as a peacebuilding tool. These are the ARLPI used in Northern Uganda during the LRA war that ravaged the country; the second example is the initiative by Bishop Korir in Kenya under a conflict transformation model he called *Amani Mashinani* or peace at the grassroots. All these elements were related to the situation of Masisi.

This chapter looked at the role religion has played in the DRC conflicts and the role she can play in conflict transformation and peacebuilding. It has been found that the church is a meeting place for people who have the same feature or statute as believers, who share the same goal, who need support and to recover or strengthen their humanness (*ubuntu*). Their laudable work can inspire whoever tries to intervene in Masisi and in DRC. Another successful example is that of a Catholic religious figure who helped in answering to violence in Kenya from a bottom-up approach or what he called *Amani Mashinani*, peace from the grassroots. This is another way used by peacemakers to stop violence in DRC and in Masisi. It is in this way that a former Catholic Priest, Father Maganya beside Mr Rugenera who was a politician from Masisi tried to bring peace from the grassroots in Masisi.

However, the chapter highlighted an unfortunate fact that the Catholic Church seems to operate in isolation at the frontlines for peace in various conflicts in Congo, when one looks at the church's interventions. The chapter concludes that effective peacebuilding operations or violence reduction should be based on a bottom-up approach and include people from the

grassroots according to the local contexts. It is in this way that the theory of conflict transformation, the intergroup contact theory and the ToC connected to peacebuilding can also help to rebuild torn relationships and structures. The next chapter looks at how to advocate for peace and implement peacebuilding for personal and community transformation given the ongoing context in which the youth find themselves in Masisi.

CHAPTER SEVEN

GROUNDING PEACEBUILDING AND CONFLICT TRANSFORMATION THEORIES IN MASISI'S YOUTHS CONTEXT

7.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the mechanisms used in the conflict transformation framework and scales these strategies into the general conflict transformation, peacebuilding and indigenous and regional systems of approaching conflicts. The chapter gives some success stories of conflict transformation run elsewhere by NGOs or by LPCs. These are the results of activities by organisations like USAID, Mercy Corps, Search for Common Ground, the Indigenous legal tradition, the Permanent Peace Negotiation Team known as PPNT in Ghana, among others. The chapter concludes by examining other alternatives to conflicts that could be beneficial to transformation and peacebuilding in a conflicting context.

The purpose of both peacebuilding and transformation is to empower actors or peacemakers who are involved in handling conflicts in order to make peace. This purpose is to work on the roots of the conflict in a way that restores broken relationships, coexistence and cooperation. Lederach (2014: 1) gives two assumptions that make the ground to conflict transformation. The first assumption is that “conflict is normal in human realities” while the second assumption states that “conflict is an engine for change”. This is to say that conflict is part of a human life and it can result in positive or negative change. According to Boege (2006: 15), peacebuilding in the case of Masisi has to produce mental healing among other results. Boege discusses the issues that peacebuilding has to tackle among which are material reconstruction, memories and mental healing. Lederach (2014: 4) explains there through the lenses he provided to look at a conflict in its aspects in order to transform it. For him and in the Masisi youths' situation, any transformation should seek to create a framework to address the context, the content and the structure of the affected relationships among the youths and their communities and in order to create a constructive change. These are aspects that this chapter intends to examine.

7.2 Categories Impacted by Conflicts and Changes

Following Lederach's views of the impact of conflict on the affected areas and looking at youths and violence in the context of Masisi, the broad categories are discussed in the following sections.

7.2.1 Personal Level

When looking at the young people individually in Masisi, especially the ones I met and shared with, it is noticeable from their way of speaking or expressing their ideas that conflicts have had remarkable effects on them. Physically, young people have been wounded either by bullets, spears, arrows and other sharp weapons. In addition, the endless displacement from one village to another with trauma and suffering also have a physical impact on the youths individually. Some of the youth have lost their relatives or neighbours through a horrible death. All this has an emotional and spiritual impact on them. The majority of young people in Masisi do not attend school. Some face obstacles such as destroyed school infrastructure, long distances that make walking to school impractical, or a lack of perceived importance in education when comparing the lifestyle of intellectuals in their village to that of militia members or other businesspersons. Thus, the remedy to this situation, according to Lederach and to conflict transformation proponents, is to minimise the destructive effects of social conflict and maximise the potential for growth and wellbeing in the individual at the physical, emotional, intellectual and spiritual levels.

7.2.2 Relational Level

Conflicts in Masisi have created a deeply divided society with high level of stereotyping, discrimination, exclusion and suspicion. Residents of various communities tend to segregate themselves, even when residing in close proximity. Communication is sparse, and when attempted, it often escalates into violence. Addressing this communication deficit requires a concerted effort to reduce misunderstandings, enhance comprehension and address the fears and hopes intertwined with emotions and interdependence in relationships. This involves overcoming these barriers to improve conflict resolution and foster better relationships.

7.2.3 Structural Level

Three factors amount to cultural violence and conflicts. First, the traditional situation of leadership based on ethnic dimensions is among the strong roots of conflict relationships in Masisi. This situation reflects what Galtung calls structural violence. The youth find themselves caught up in this kind of life regarded as slavery for some and for kingdomship for others. Some are favoured while others are exploited, especially the poor people. Second is the weak system of governance. Third, is the situation where the youth want to become rich without working? The response to this structural dimension of conflict or violence could be dealt with via the traditional mechanisms such as *Bushenge*, *Bunakima*, *Baraza*, *Ikivumu*, and *Igisenge*.

7.2.4 Cultural Level

It is necessary to identify and understand the cultural patterns of that contribute to violent conflicts and develop meaningful means to respond to that from local cultural heritage. Lederach (2009: 9) looks at peacebuilding and conflict transformation as based on linear and circular processes. However, it “is a circular journey with a purpose”. Peacebuilding, as Lederach (1997) argues, merge different “functions, roles and strategies used by people at different stages of conflict progression, as also reflected by the pyramid he proposed as a tool to approach violent conflict”. In the case of this thesis, the purpose is to transform negative energy within the youths into positive energy, reducing violence among them.

7.3 Reconciling Divided Societies in Masisi

In his *Little Book of Conflict Transformation*, Lederach (2014: 4–8) suggests three most important lenses that constitute the foundation of his conflict transformation theory and the pillars of this study. In addition, I used the pyramid and adapted it to the situation under study. The pyramid as a tool can better serve my intervention planning, especially in showing the ways of local ownership of conflict transformation. The three lenses as suggested by Lederach will help to create a map for comprehending conflicts and violence prevailing among the youth in Masisi. A first lens is needed to see and understand the content of the immediate situation in Masisi: in the case of youth and violence in Masisi, the historical lens enables us to approach the protracted conflicts and violence in this area. The transplantation

of people from Rwanda to Masisi and the 1959 Tutsi refugees from Rwanda who were brought into Masisi are among the prime factors of conflicts and violence in this district. These two groups were looking for safety and land. Since then, the issues of land have been raised. The issue around land tends to be socio-politically manipulated and opens itself up to various interpretations and attitudes. The youth have inherited the old story of migration and people displacement. A second lens would enable us to see beyond the overt problems to determine the deeper patterns of relationships (the context).

The Hunde community suspected and accused the Rwandese of being invaders, which exacerbated tensions over landownership and posed a perceived threat to their traditional authority. In times of conflict in Masisi, Eastern DRC or the Great Lakes Region, youth from Masisi are often recruited to join armed groups, particularly in neighbouring countries like Uganda, Rwanda and Burundi. Recruiters entice these youth with monetary incentives, clothing (such as jeans and shirts), and footwear. The pervasive poverty and political instability compel youth to gravitate towards any opportunity that offers allure. Moreover, governance issues, coupled with the marginalisation perpetuated by traditional power structures, exacerbate conflicts and violence among the youth. The exploitation of minerals and land mismanagement further complicates the situation in Masisi. Additionally, conflicts arise from displacement camps where financially privileged individuals seize or sell land belonging to the internally displaced population. Lastly, a conceptual framework that integrates immediate circumstances with underlying relational dynamics—such as the role of religious leaders, elders and educators—could serve as a tool for fostering reconciliation in a divided society, as proposed by Lederach's (1997: 38–39) pyramid of peacebuilding. The pyramid looks like this:

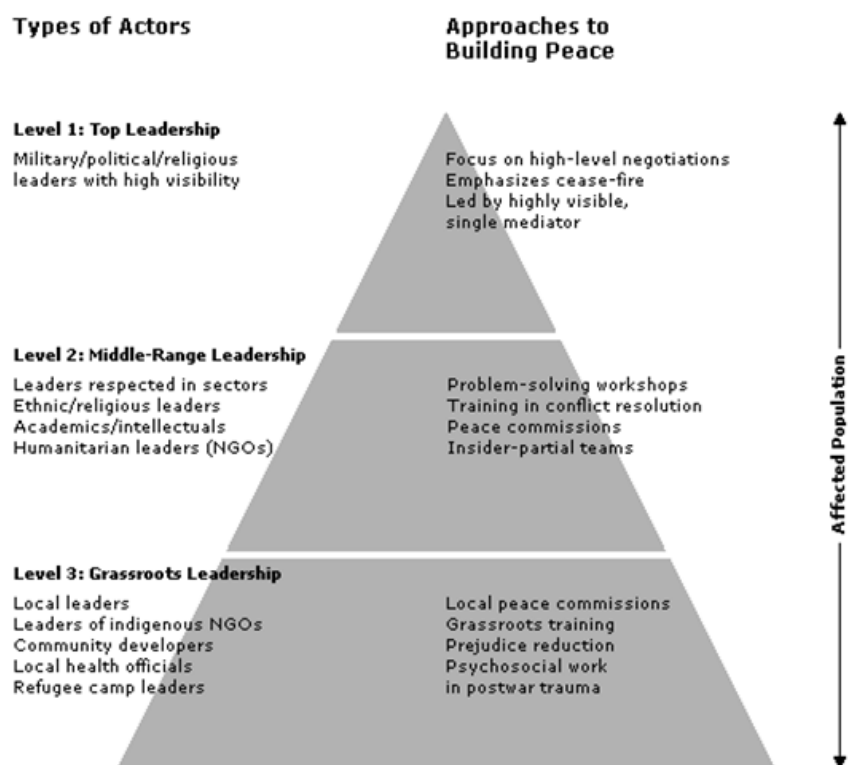


Figure 8. Lederach's peacebuilding pyramid. **Source:** Lederach (1997: 39).

An important question raised here is to know whether the pyramid as a tool can be applied to very complex and sensitive conflicts and violence like those going on among the youth in Masisi. First of all, there is a need to underline the fact that people relate and act on the basis of their actual and shared needs. When these needs are not met, this leads to direct or structural violence. When there is permanent and increasing instability, then people coalesce around collective interests (what they want rather than what they need). That is what is happening in Masisi: after decades of instability, the youth decide to bind together to protect their communal identity, their land and their rights.

7.4 Limitations to Lederach's Conflict Transformation Theory

In his book *Building Peace: Sustainable Reconciliation in Divided Societies* (1997), Lederach provides a view on actors' relationships and interventions in responding to conflict or violence. These relationships should be viewed at three levels made of the top class of actors, the middle-range leadership and the grassroots leadership.

At the national or international level, the first class or top leadership comprises the military and political leaders and the religious people with high visibility in the country or in an area. Actors in this class focus on high-level negotiations when needed and they decide on a cease-fire if time allows. Brought down to Masisi level, this top leadership class comprises international NGOs staff members in the area; parish priests, pastors, leaders of different ethnic groups, headteachers and teachers in rural schools, medical personnel in health centres where available, military chiefs and warlords. These are the people who meet to discuss security in their area. At the middle-range leadership, there are leaders of local NGOs and those of peasant associations, village chiefs and civil servants operating as agronomists, village counsellors and, in some cases, the warlords operating in the area. These ones act as arbitrators among villagers for petty issues. The third level or the grassroots level is made up of leaders of peasants' associations, farmers and breeders, elders, small business holders and, to some extent, the warlords in the village.

At each of these levels, efforts are made to address conflicts within their respective spheres. However, it is evident that warlords hold significant power throughout the district. Consequently, Lederach's pyramid tool (CTT) may face limitations within this context of socially fragmented communities marked by distrust and exclusion, where everyone assumes leadership roles. Religious leaders, for instance, often fail to cooperate unless they belong to the same denomination, whether Catholic, SDA or other Protestant sects. This division similarly affects schools where teachers from different institutions, whether private (Catholic, Protestant) or government-run, refrain from socialising outside of their respective contexts. Ethnic affiliations and personal interests frequently dictate people's actions. In the case of Masisi, there is a lack of communication between top-level and mid-level leadership, despite the latter being envisioned as a conduit between higher leadership and grassroots communities. Consequently, each level operates independently, exacerbating divisions. To foster unity in Masisi, particularly among the youth, the intervention of external mediators may be necessary.

7.5 Conflict Transformation and Peacebuilding Towards Violence Reduction

This chapter highlights the link between conflict transformation and peacebuilding as both are related to the research problem or the reduction of youth violence in Masisi. The section

discusses Galtung's perspectives on conflict transformation and links the conflict transformation to the peacebuilding approach as applied to Masisi District and the youth situation and their involvement in violence. The theoretical framework I discussed in this thesis, being the transformation theory, the life course theory of violence, the intergroup contact theory and the ToC are discussed within the peacebuilding theories. I discussed the interconnectedness of these theories in the perspective of peacebuilding and as they are relevant to youth violence reduction in the case of Masisi. In this section, I present the theories that sustain youth violence then the major theories that informed the study itself, the intergroup contact theory and the theory of conflict transformation. Here, the focus is put on four major theoretical approaches around the reduction of violence and conflicts among the youth. Various experts came up with different theories related to violence and youth violence (Fisher et al. 2000; Lederach 2003; Oduaran et al., 2020). In fact, there are different theories that could be used to explain violence and its dimensions. Oduaran et al. (2020) summed these latter in what they called the systems theory of youth violence. Through their work, they analysed interconnection of complex systems trying to explain human attitude and experience as they partake in various overlapping systems and encompass various theories. Their analysis gave the following diagram:

THEORIES OF VIOLENCE	EXPLANATIONS
Social Learning Theory	"People learn or become violent through observation (of acts or actions) that they may want to replicate"
Theory of emotional insecurity	Emotional insecurity is reflected by emotional reactivity to inter-familial conflicts (like fear, vigilance) and regulation or how an aggrieved person takes time to cool down and rejoin society
Psychological theory of violence	This theory "emphasises the specific characteristics of personality and interaction that lead to violence." Personality disorder leads to violence
Intergenerational Theory	Exposure: "Children who are exposed to violence at an early stage are likely to use violence in their adulthood"
Life course Theory	It brings out "the dynamics and interactive aspects of biology, psychology, and environment and change over time" according to various life events people have gone through in their lives
Reciprocal Theory	The properties of violence include negative emotional states (like shame,

THEORIES OF VIOLENCE	EXPLANATIONS
	alienation, denial, humiliation...)
Family System Theory	The family determines individuals' behaviour towards society in general
Social Identity Theory	People struggle for positive distinctiveness of their ingroup in comparison to the outgroups

Figure 9: The systems theory of youth violence. **Source:** Adapted from Akpovire and Choja (2020)

As mentioned earlier, I intend to use the conflict transformation theory, the intergroup contact theory, the ToC and the PAR. I first discuss each theory and interconnection among them to see how they could generate the same results for the youth, their involvement in conflicts and the answers as solutions to this participation. As major theories, I use the conflict transformation theory as announced by Lederach; the intergroup contact theory as presented by Allport and the ToC as the goal of this study. Actually, the end point in this analysis is to work towards attitudinal or behavioural change and even structural change for a peaceful society. However, this cannot be achieved unless the beneficiaries and the target groups are involved in determining the way out. That is why the study also uses the PAR as a tool for collecting views and taking action. All the above will be used as strategies to understand what is happening on the ground, how to approach it and how to promote a peaceful and harmonious community or how to make peace in a given system. The selected theories are relevant to my study as they bear the aspects of what experts of ACCORD termed as “peacebuilding dimensions”. These are: “the human security, the socioeconomic development, the human rights, justice and reconciliation; political transition, governance” and democratisation; and finally, coordination, management and resource mobilization (ACCORD, 2015: 44).

Conflict transformation theory implies a general transformation/change in sociopolitical situation, the human relationships and the economic context of a community. People have to be transformed as individuals and as group members in their general relationships; they have to change their minds and their perceptions toward each other. This has to do with their contacts and the way they relate to each other. Thus, the change is the objective of the youth interaction. In the case of the youth in Masisi, unless there is observable change in attitude or behaviours, peace will be elusive and quite impossible to attain. In the following section, I

give the details of conflict transformation through Lederach's lens, then the intergroup contact according to Allport, the ToC and aspects of the PAR in line with the youth violence in Masisi. According to Lederach, conflict transformation operates on four major categories on which the changes should be implemented. These categories, as presented by Lederach, are:

- The individual or personal level: at this level, a person living in a conflict setting is affected in his physical wellbeing, they lose their self-esteem; the person is also intellectually and spiritually affected.
- The relational level: here, people who used to live together peacefully and in harmony start to look at each other with mistrust and suspicion; they are not opened to each other; their "face-to-face relationships" change. In addition, there is a change on the side of their affectivity, their interdependence, expressions and communication or their general interaction. In this case, conflict transformation aims at minimising poor communication, maximising understanding and working on fears and hopes related to emotions and interdependence in the relationship.

In Masisi, the relationships have been deeply affected that in Nyamitaba-Nyakariba, the Hunde left the area and went to seek refuge in Goma and in other places. So, apart from the traditional leader who comes from time to time to check on the people, no other Hunde live there. In addition, according to the youths who are mostly "Hutu", that is a factor of fear because they suspect that the Hunde as well as the Tutsi could be preparing an attack. In Kitchanga, on the contrary, there are various ethnic groups living in the area. The youths have a common office for the youth. However, the youth from each ethnic group have their particular office where they meet for matters pertaining to their ethnic group. In Rubaya, all the ethnic groups live together but the youth, mostly "Hutu" are busy in mining sites; the "shi" are busy in petty business.

- At the structural level: at this level, the issue is to look at the way social structures, groupings and organisations or associations are formed or organised and impacted by violence and conflicts. Generally speaking, the issue is to look at the way conflicts and violence negatively impact the sociopolitical and economic structures.

- At the cultural level: this consists in identifying and understanding the cultural factors that fuel conflict and violence. In addition, the issue here is to understand how social customs and identities impact on the relationships and the solutions to conflicts and violence. At this level, conflict transformation focuses on the available resources for constructively resolving or transforming conflict and violent attitudes.

Lederach (2003: 17) argues that “relationships are central” to conflict transformation like they are vital to intergroup contact. His views are complementary to Allport’s opinion in asserting that “conflict brings with it the potential for constructive change” (Lederach, 2003: 15). He further gives the opposing sides of conflict and argues that “conflict can move from being destructive toward being constructive” and concludes that “Conflict transformation focuses on the dynamic aspects of social conflict” or the social interrelation at “interpersonal, intergroup and social-structural” levels (Lederach, 2003: 19–21). Conflict transformation presupposes that the contexts must lead to change the minds and behaviour of the parties and build on existing knowledge and facts. Therefore, it is true that in order to reduce violence, we need to go to its roots and deal with conflicts from their roots. That is why Lederach opines that “prescriptively, transformation represents deliberate intervention to minimise the destructive effects of social conflict and to maximise its potential for growth in the person as an individual human being, at physical, emotional and spiritual levels” (Lederach 2003: 21–25). I agree with the following perspective:

sustainable peace requires that long-time antagonists not merely lay down their arms but that they achieve profound reconciliation that will endure because it is sustained by a society-wide network of relationships and mechanisms that promote justice and address the root causes of enmity before they can regenerate destabilizing tensions (Lederach, 1997: ix).

In short, transformation aims at reducing the distance among actors, reducing “poor communication” and promoting “mutual understanding” among groups, here the youth. That is why; in transforming relationships, the stakeholders should be involved in the process (Lederach, 2003: 26). Lederach opposes the intervention that does not go to the core causes of conflict and that ends up “without necessarily creating any significant constructive social change” (Lederach, 2003: 28). This research is about bringing the youth to “create a change

in their situation from their perspectives, ideas, opinions [and] wishes” (Lederach, 2003: 29–31). Hence, Lederach adds that in dealing with conflicts and preparing the ground for reconciliation and/or building peace, there are first essentials to look at and a training to undergo so that the transformative operation gives the expected results. Thus, “a transformative approach [...] suggests that training is less about the transfer of content than it is about the creation of a dynamic process involving key people who together focus on the realities of the conflict in their context” (Lederach, 1997: 178–179).

So, as Lederach considers it, and in the context of the youth in Masisi, transformation should start at the grassroots in a bottom-up approach and involve all the social sectors. This aspect has been overlooked as the youth in Masisi are not involved in the conflicts transformation processes or forums to deal with all conflict issues in their areas. In the same way, for Ramsbotham et al. (2005: 29) “transformation” is a strategy for dealing with conflict and it has two major roles to fulfil: cultural and the structural peacebuilding. Clearly, as a tool, transformation implies a deep change in organisations and in terminology that leads to violence or creates conflict. It goes further and works on the parties’ relationships. Fisher et al. (2000: 7) present the transformative strategy as encompassing other strategies and as it goes deeper to “the wider social and political sources of a conflict and seeks to transform the negative energy of war into positive social and political change”. Furthermore, Lederach (2003: 20–21) gives a technical view on conflict transformation. This aims at reaching peace and is a continuous operation, a process. For him, conflict transformation sees peace not only “as a static end-state” but also as:

a continuously evolving and developing quality of relationships. Peace work, therefore, is characterised by intentional efforts to address the natural ebb and flow of human conflict through non-violent approaches, which address issues and increase understanding, equality and respect in relationships” (Lederach, 2003: 20–21).

In the same vein, Fisher et al. (2000) agree with Lederach. Given the tasks that conflict transformation has to fulfil, Lederach (2003: 21) confirms that:

to reduce violence requires that we address the presenting issues and content of an episode of conflict, and also its underlying patterns and causes. This requires

addressing justice issues. While we do that, we must proceed in an equitable way toward substantive change. People must have access and voice in decisions that affect their lives. In addition, the patterns that create injustice must be addressed and changed at both relational and structural levels.

In this way, Lederach (2003) suggests that structural and – to some extent – cultural violence should first be dealt with before transforming any given conflict. He confirms in saying:

we need to develop capacities to envision and engage in change processes at all levels of relationships: interpersonal, intergroup and social-structural. One set of capacities points toward direct, face-to-face interaction. The other set underscores the need to see, pursue, and create change in our ways of organising social structures, from families to complex bureaucracies, from the local to the global (Lederach, 2003: 21)

At the core of conflict transformation, Lederach finds that dialogue is the key way to bring about a positive change. Dialogue is vital to justice and peace and at all levels of human life and social interrelationships. Lederach (2003: 21) concludes that in conflict transformation, dialogue “is not the only mechanism, but it is an essential one”. Among other advantages, “conflict transformation” tries to “bring to the surface explicitly the relational fears, hopes, and goals of the people involved and deals with them constructively” (Lederach, 2003: 25).

In addition, Lederach (2003: 25–26) argues that prescriptively, “transformation represents deliberately intervening in order to gain insight into the underlying causes and social conditions which create and foster violent expressions of conflict”. On their side, talking about the life course theory of violence, Akpovire and Choja (2020: 14765) found that the individual’s life history plays a major role in their violent behaviour. This history could be based on events that one experienced during childhood, the peer pressure from schools or at workplace, daily life in marriage, in retirement or at a given age. Here the major aspects to look at are the biological, psychological and social dimensions. So, Lederach sums up these dimensions and argues that transformation seeks to help the parties in conflict to understand the cultural patterns that contribute to conflict in their setting, and then to identify, promote and build on the resources and mechanisms within that culture for constructively responding to and handling conflict. Thus, as an approach and a tool for analysis, conflict transformation

aims at understanding social conflict as it emerges from and produces changes in the personal, relational, structural and cultural dimensions of human experience. And as an intervening strategy, transformation works to promote constructive processes with the subsequent range of change-oriented goals.

Similarly, Ryan (in Sandole, 2009: 303–305) talking about conflict transformation gives the objective of this process and argues that “The first feature of transformation is that it aims for deep and profound changes in conflict situations that go beyond the limitations of traditional approaches”. Transformation talks about addressing the root causes of conflict. Therefore, it moves beyond the other strategies—resolution, settlement, management—and even beyond “the immediate issues to look at the broader environment within which violent conflict takes place.” Ramsbotham et al. (2005) and Fisher et al. (2000) hold the same views. Relating the transformation aspects to the PAR or to the concept of “security from below”, Ryan (2009: 304–305) found:

Most, if not all, of the transformation supporters emphasise the importance of working at the grassroots level, sometimes referred to as building local capacity. One reason for this is because the idea of a forced transformation seems to be an oxymoron. Another is that there is no “one size fits all” solution to violent conflict. Post-war in Iraq is not the same as post-war Germany. Account has to be taken of local variations and needs.

Conflict transformation as an approach is to be considered as complementary to peacebuilding and both are needed tools to curb the youth violence in Masisi. It implies a thorough change in the institutions, in human relationships, in social structures and touches the wider causes of violence and conflicts.

7.6 Indigenous Conflict Transformation System in Africa

This section contextualises the contemporary theories of conflict transformation and realigns them with the African indigenous mechanisms of conflict transformation. In addition, it showcases enhancing youth peacebuilding capacity to reduce violence. It is true that in each African country, ethnic groups have their own mechanisms of dealing with conflict and violence. I can recall the following examples: in Liberia, they have the *Palava hut*; in Sierra Leone, they have the *Fambultok*; in Uganda, they have the *Mato oput* or the *Nyono tong*

ngweno; in Rwanda, they have the *Gacaca*; in Burundi, they have the *Bashingatahe*. In DRC, the common mechanism is called *Baraza*, but different ethnic groups have different *Baraza* approaches (Wachira et al., 2014: 215–216). Of course, there is a clash between the traditional or African indigenous mechanisms of conflict transformation and the modern mechanisms of facing conflicts. At this juncture, the youth are challenged by the traditional ways of dealing with conflicts. A look at the contemporary theories and the African indigenous mechanisms of conflict transformation reveals that ending or reducing violence involves the increase of justice at all levels – social or cultural, economic and political justice (Lederach, 2014: 20–21).

At the source of African indigenous conflict transformation and peacebuilding system, there are the indigenous forums that are places where conflict and other disputes were solved or resolved. These are African indigenous conflict transformation and peacebuilding systems as structures whose proponents were the male elders, namely known as *ubuntu* and *Ujamaa*, the “African palaver” that could prevent large-scale violence and genocide. At the same time, these systems could have a cathartic effect on intergroup and social interrelations. At this level, I talk about two examples of African tools of conflicts transformation and peacebuilding systems that could be a source of reference for creating harmony and understanding among the conflicting parties. These tools or forums are the *ubuntu* and the *Gacaca* also known as *Baraza*. Generally, these are indigenous conflict transformation and peacebuilding systems that have proven to be efficient in bringing about justice and peaceful cohabitation among African people (Boege, 2006). According to Wachira et al. (2014: 20), “Ubuntu is increasingly interpreted as the essence of the African worldview and personhood, embracing the idea of “being a person through others”. [...] it encapsulates the notion that the individual finds expression and identity through his or her community”.

For the Kinyarwanda-speakers, *ubuntu* refers to the human characteristics as a being with or like others or among others. They have a say that *Akar’umuntukar’undi* meaning “what applies to one human being can also apply to another” in other words, “all human beings are the same”. On the other hand, for the Kinyarwanda-speakers, *ubuntu* can also mean kindness, being good-hearted. In Kiswahili, *ubuntu* is rendered by the concept *Utu* or *umutu* to refer to humanity. When the Swahili speakers say that someone has *utu/umutu*, they refer to human

characteristics or to his humanity. These characteristics prevent people from harming others, killing, being mean or selfish. What is lacking among the youth in Masisi is the *ubuntu*, *umutu*, *utu*, *ubumuntu* (in Nguni languages), which can be translated as a human person is a person only with others or a community. In instances where *ubuntu* lacks, the Masisi youths turn against each other. To kill a human being and eat human flesh, to rape, to burn an entire village, these are dehumanising features that reflect the loss of *ubumuntu*. The human characteristics keep people together or foster togetherness in what people call *jamaa* or “family”. This *jamaa* is characterised by what is called *ujamaa* or the essence of a family or what keeps people together in a structure called family or household. Therefore, *ujamaa* are those human characteristics reflected by the family starting with closeness and caring. *Ujamaa* is from Tanzania and was popularised by the former President Nyerere, but it has been also used in Masisi in the name of *Urudehe* or *Ururaro* as ways of coming together for communal good.

It is in this way that the African palaver used to take place in a common and well-known place, usually under a huge baobab tree or on the *Gacaca* or in the *Baraza*. These were traditional courts. Today, there is lack of reference or place, lack of the “word” to educate, lack of the *ubuntu*, *ubumuntu*, *utu* characteristics; there is a *jamaa* in crisis. The *jamaa*, *ujamaa* is a first *baraza* or source of wisdom, closeness, love, harmony, education, links to others...Conflicts and violence were settled in the *Baraza* or in the *Jamaa*. Today, the *baraza* has been politicised whereas the *jamaa* is in crisis due to displacement or refuge, poverty, peer influence among the youth.

In his research on “the potential of peace through the cultural resources within ethnic communities in North Kivu”, Biregeya (2020: 116–117) presents the African views about conflict transformation, social cohesion and peace. For him, social cohesion is a life requirement or rule for the saving of the life of the community. This requirement or rule aims at building and strengthening the social cohesion by using constructive dialogue. The African palaver is an alternative to conflict transformation by the committee of the elders. In general, the aim of the African indigenous system of conflict transformation and peacebuilding was not to establish the winner, but to reach a win-win solution and to reconcile the offender and the offended person or group. It is an excellent system for preventing large-scale violence and

even genocide as it extends to different ethnic groups. The system can be a reconciliation tool to bring together the youths from different communities like the Hunde, Hutu, Tutsi, Nyanga and Nande in North Kivu Province and in Masisi District. That is what I demonstrate in this part of the thesis.

There have been some examples of togetherness or African indigenous conflict transformation and peacebuilding systems that have kept people together in harmony and peace. In most of African communities, they had kings and their followers or helpers who were like referees in cases of misunderstanding. A *Gacaca* means lawn and any space covered by lawn. It also means a pitch covered by grass. Initially it referred to a meeting place, just to relax, to have a talk over an issue or to discuss. Sometimes and traditionally, it was a place in the village where villagers, especially the elders, used to meet in order to discuss matters pertaining to their village or to resolve conflicts that affected the villagers or among them. It was like a traditional court. It is known as such in Rwanda and in eastern DR Congo, especially in Masisi. According to Colleta and Cullen (2000: 46), the *Gacaca* in Rwanda was adopted after the 1994 genocide as a traditional mechanism for dispute mediation and distributive justice in the pre- and post-conflict eras. In addition, and according to the Rwandan Institute of Research and Dialogue for Peace (2003: 133), the *Gacaca* is a participatory justice system and an opportunity for the people at the grassroots to get involved in reconciliatory justice. The *Gacaca* as a traditional system of justice used to handle issues among people but that were not devastating like murder or rape.

In this thesis, I selected an example of the *Ujamaa* strategy or a policy for togetherness and peacebuilding. According to Boesen et al. (1977: 11), “Ujamaa is the Kiswahili word for the traditional kinship communalism existing in many rural communities in Africa”. This communalism or “Tanzanian socialism” was chosen by the then Tanzanian President, the late Nyerere as an “ideology” for his political party, the “Tanganyika African National Union” or “TANU”. Later, this ideology or Tanzanian Socialism was copied by other African countries, especially those neighbouring Tanzania like Mozambique, Angola and Zambia (Boesen, 1977: 11).

The major dimension of the *Ujamaa*, according to Boesen, was the promotion of rural development known as *ujamaa vijijini*. This “means rural development through a gradual –

but eventually complete – transformation of rural Tanzania into socialist communities” where everything is collectively shared and organised. The policy went on to mobilise villagers to engage in communal life, communal economic ventures and a villagisation and resettlement of Tanzania. So, for Nyerere and the Tanzanian people, *Ujamaa* was an ideology, etc. In *Ujamaa* philosophy, the ideal society is built up as a network of *Ujamaa* communities, “where exploitation of man by man has been abolished, and everybody recognises everybody else’s right to a fair share of the material and social benefits of the community but has corresponding duty to cooperate and contribute to the creation of these benefits” (Boesen et al., 1977: 12).

Other dimensions of the *Ujamaa* were “mutual cooperation” or social networking in a bottom-up fashion, from the village level to the national level and among nations. *Ujamaa*, according to Nyerere, had to be lived by villagers and even taught in schools. It was intended to lead to the development of the economic and agricultural sectors and the reduction of inequalities in all spheres of life.

7.7 Regional Efforts Inconflict Transformation and Their Effectiveness

Various protocols and meetings have been signed at the regional level among the countries in Central Africa or the Great Lakes Region. Among these, are the “protocol of non-aggression and mutual defence in the Great Lakes Region” of 14–15 December 2006; the Report of the Meeting of the ICGLR Defence and Intelligence Experts on the Negative Forces in the Great Lakes Region of 30–31 July 2012 signed in Karthoum, Sudan; and the “Declaration of the Heads of State and Governments of the member States of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR) on the Security Situation in Eastern DRC” signed during the extraordinary summit of the heads of state and government held at Addis Ababa on 15 July 2012. A quick look at each report gives an overview of “decisions of good intentions” that came out of different meetings. A serious gap in these meetings and subsequent reports is that they were all based on political dimensions without considering the social ones.

7.8 Effectiveness of Conflict Transformation in Reducing Youth Involvement in Conflicts

According to Ulimwengu (2020: 117), the African palaver system works well in homogeneous communities because it requires an environment based on mutual trust that one can only find among people they know well and trust. Also, every ethnic community has its traditions, customs, its history and beliefs. Ruiz-Mallen (in Nared et al., 2020: 6) posits that there are “two key aspects for the governance of urban resilience: inclusivity and equity”. She raises two crucial questions. These questions are around the identification of the “decision-making and planning” process and the people who shaped the decisions and their role. Another aspect of the question is the communication aspect based on the “the structures or tools for exchanging knowledge and sharing planning”.

According to Ruiz-Mallen (in Nared et al., 2020: 6), there is need to involve the general public and people from the private sector, those from civil society organisations as well as individuals in a transformational process to make it a success. Various strategies have been devised to mitigate violence by the youth and have yielded positive outcomes. In Nepal, for example, both NGOs and the communities have trusted the youth and have recognised that the youth are the “major components” in peace processes as they have a role to play and can positively or negatively influence peace. There are examples of success stories of youth organisations for peace that have been witnessed in Nepal where the youth have been empowered and networked together for peacebuilding in their districts (Bennett et al. 2012: 34). Most NGOs operating in the country have focused on youth problems and peace. Hence, the NGOs worked on training the youth by building their capacity for development and following their needs. Among the NGOs that came in Nepal to help the youth, there are various examples discussed in the following sections.

7.8.1 The Samriddhi Foundation

Its programme mainly focused on forming entrepreneurs’ clubs. The training basically aimed at impacting the skills-based training and the soft skills. In short, the training focused on providing vocational skills by helping the youth to engage in income-generating activities. On the other hand, the training helped the youth by enhancing their leadership skills,

involving them in societal questions, taking part in decision-making processes and conflict transformation. Youth were involved in positive activities in their communities like “helping drug users; clean up campaigns; [and] mediating small local conflicts” (Bennett, 2012: 33).

7.8.2 The USAID Nepal

The USAID worked on the “Education for Income-Generating Programme.” This aimed at helping the youth “access productive job opportunities” by giving them the needed skills. The major components of the programme were literacy training, technical and vocational training, agricultural productivity and enterprise training and providing them with scholarships.

7.8.3 Mercy Corps

Its programme in Nepal was the “Youth Initiatives for Peace and Reconciliation” (YIPR). This programme aimed at encouraging “youth participation in community reconciliation and decision-making processes”. The Mercy Corps worked in five districts namely Dang, Banke, Bardiya, Kailali and Kanchanpur. The major programme components were capacity building, networking between youth from various areas; bringing youth and adults together and fostering togetherness between them, and mobilising youth for community works. This NGO initiated youth forums and platforms, thus strengthening their networks and alliances.

7.8.4 Search for Common Ground (SFCG)

SFCG worked in the District of Terai under a programme called “Youth Participation in the Peace and Democratisation Process in Eastern Terai”. This was a one-year programme that was implemented in four districts namely Siraha, Saptari, Dhanusha and Mahottari. In addition, SFCG helped in partnership with local NGOs (Bennett et al., 2012: 37). This programme amounts to the participatory action used in this work. On another note, Bergmann (2020) gives an account of the violence perpetrated by armed forces in El Salvador. For a long time, the country had been ravaged by armed violence and, like any other Latin America and Caribbean country, the “homicide rate” was very high in El Salvador. In fact, El Salvador led the list which included Honduras, Jamaica, Venezuela, Colombia and Guatemala. Bergmann (2020: 32) turns an analytical eye to what he calls “the degree of organisation of armed violence” in El Salvador. Among the armed actors operating therein, he identified the

police, the armed forces and the gangs (Bergmann, 2020: 33). The well-known gangs call themselves the “Crazy Souls”; the “Masters of the Street” and the “Ñetas” and the “Sacred Tribe Atahualpa Ecuador” (Bergmann, 2020: 39). Among the people or the gangs creating havoc in El Salvador, there have been those as young as 13 years of age. Some members of the gangs are killed, and their death is quite often related to “drunken brawls, jealousy, debts and criminal activity in which they were themselves involved” (Bergmann, 2020: 36). The answer to the gangs’ misbehaviour and violence came through dialogue and negotiations through which “the gangs agreed upon and enforced a reduction in armed violence and developed mechanisms to manage disputes between them and to discipline members within each side” (Bergmann, 2020: 38). In general, a major part of the answer to violence came from awareness when the gangs decided to move from the problem to the solution. Bergmann (2020: 40) concludes by saying:

The most significant reductions in armed violence in El Salvador have come about when the gangs have mobilised to rein in the wars that they are tangled up in—most notably, by way of gang truces in 2012 and 2016, demonstrating, as these gangs have repeated in numerous joint communiqués over the years, that “just as we are part of the problem, we can be part of the solutions.

According to Bergmann (2020: 40), two major questions could be raised on dealing with youth violence. I borrow the following question from him: “How might we live with the youth but without the violence?” In addition, how can we help our youth to become peaceful and avoid violence? That is what this research is all about. The other side of the question could be “might we shift our focus from futile attempts to eradicate gangs to more realistic efforts to eradicate gang violence?” (Bergmann, 2020: 40).

There are more remedies in reducing youth violence and conflicts in the world. Among the efforts to transform conflicts in the world and their effectiveness, one can list the ILT; the local and/or national peace committees (LPC) and the Sports for Development (SFD) that have been tried in various countries.

7.8.5 The Indigenous Legal Tradition

Mekonnen (2010: 103–104) analyses the effectiveness of indigenous legal tradition mechanisms adopted by some African countries such as South Africa, Rwanda and Uganda. Other countries such as the DRC, Burundi, Somalia and Sudan could benefit from some aspects of the strategies that worked in these countries. The first three countries, South Africa, Rwanda and Uganda, experienced protracted conflicts that affected peoples' relationships and undermined their cooperation and collaboration and destroyed social cohesion. Some of them are still struggling to recover from the conflicts and to get rid of violence. Traditionally, there used to be indigenous forums for conflict transformation or resolution.

7.8.6 The Local and National Peace Committees

These committees are parts of what is known as the infrastructures for peace. These could be forums or organisations working for peace in an area. According to Oseremen and Majekodunmi (2017: 26), infrastructures for peace are “alternative approaches for violent prevention, conflict intervention and transformation” and these “have been found rewarding in addressing conflicts and violent menace”. These experts examine two infrastructures for peace: the formal committees that have been officially initiated by the government and run by the cabinet-level Ministry of Peace and the LPCs. The LPCs are initiated by “members of civil society and are scarcely recognised by government” (Oseremen et al., 2017: 28). Explaining these kinds of infrastructures or local and national peace committees, Oseremen and Majekodunmi (2017: 28) assert:

Local peace committees represent conflict transformation processes that use basic local peacebuilding methods. These are processes that engage local actors and use peacebuilding resources among others to defuse conflicts. They are useful local peacebuilding instruments. Local peace committees have been defined as conflict intervention structures that integrate both traditional and modern conflict intervention mechanisms to prevent and manage or transform intra-ethnic or inter-ethnic conflicts.

According to these experts, “Infrastructure for peace acts through ‘dialogue, promotion of mutual understanding and trust-building as well as inclusive, constructive problem-solving

and joint action to prevent violence’, to intervene and transform conflict” (Oseremen et al., 2017: 29). Describing LPCs as tools for conflict transformation, they add:

As infrastructure for peace, LPCs enable communication among protagonists to address potentially destructive rumours, fears and mistrust; mediate ongoing or new disputes to achieve joint problem-solving; facilitate reconciliation; strengthens social cohesion through local peace committees-facilitated dialogue—a necessary precondition for sustainable, collaborative and inclusive governance; prevent violence through joint monitoring, facilitate negotiations and joint planning for potentially violent events, including enabling local and national information flow so that local peacebuilding challenges can receive proper attention at the national level (Oseremen et al., 2017: 29)

It is necessary to discuss the concept of “infrastructure for peace” which could be linked to “dialogue” as suggested by the Pole Institute (2013: 30). In fact, according to experts in this Institute, dialogue is a life need and a vital way of raising awareness about the existing social problems together with the enabling opportunities to face those problems. In Masisi, as in other districts, there are LPCs even though they are challenged by numerous militia groups. In the African context, the LPCs were initiated or formalised early in 1990. Some African countries initiated the LPCs following their experiences of conflicts and violence or following the government’s failure to provide peace or to bring about reconciliation or peaceful cohabitation among people. Among the countries that adopted this mechanism are South Africa, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya and Burundi. According to Nganje (2020: 124), “local peace committees are founded on the premise that individuals in communities affected by violent conflict have greater incentives than any external actor to resolve such conflict.” Hence, the LPCs are crucial mechanisms that are based on the individual, the local contexts, local culture and/or local initiatives to make peace or “grassroots peacebuilding initiatives” and to promote peace or security from below (Collak, 2009: 11–19; Nganje, 2020: 123). On the positive side of the LPCs, these mechanisms are known to be inclusive, participatory and non-threatening forums that aim at promoting dialogue, social cohesion, mutual understanding, and, above all, drawing on “traditional African conflict resolution practices” to resolve conflicts.

Among the success stories of LPCs, there is the Northern Kenya experience or the *WPDC* initiated in 1995 by a group of women in reacting to violence that had been rampant in Wajir. The strategies these women used were mainly sensitisation campaigns and mediation among clan elders in order to make peace. Their initiatives helped people to make peace and to stop violence in the district. They were an inspiration to other districts in Kenya and they even helped in dealing with cross-border conflicts with Somalia and Ethiopia. Another example is the work of the *Kibimba* Peace Committee that was initiated in Burundi in 1994. This mechanism helped to bring together the Hutu people and the Tutsi; to rebuild trust and to mitigate the atrocities among them after decades of bloody conflict. LPCs were officially institutionalised in South Africa in 1991. These were ways to facilitate political transition and dialogue to build tolerance and to mitigate violence among the communities. Another success story is from Ethiopia. This country formalised LPCs in 2009 and recognised them as “part of the state’s conflict prevention and resolution mechanism” (Nganje, 2020: 128). In 2005, Ghana not only formalised LPCs but went a step further and incorporated them “into a national peace infrastructure” (Nganje, 2020: 125). This was following the conflicts between the Konkomba and the Nanumba over land and power issues.

The DRC adopted the “CPDQ”, a French acronym for *Comité de Paix et de Développement du Quartier* which is the national “Local Peace and Development Committee”. However, as Nganje noted, some of the above mechanisms lacked national support, others were not recognised or formalised and did not deliver the expected outcome. Other LPCs like the CPDQ, were only operational in urban areas and not in rural areas like in Masisi. There is also the CLPD or *Comité Local Permanent de Conciliation* or Local and Permanent Committee for Conciliation and the CDM or *Cadre de Dialogue et Mediation* or Forum for Dialogue and Mediation.

7.8.7 The Permanent Peace Negotiation Team in Ghana

Ghana offers a good example of ethnic issues on land disputes and power. There are several ethnic groups in Ghana as in other African countries, in particular in the Democratic Republic of Congo. In northern Ghana, the major groups are the Konkomba, the Dagomba, the Basari, Mossi, Nawuri, Bimoba, Nchumuru, Maprusi, Nanumba and Gonja among others. Two major rival groups are the Konkomba, the Nawuri, the Basari and Nchumuru on the one side while

on the other side, there are the Nanumba, the Gonja and the Dagomba. The young Konkomba intellectuals founded their own fighting group that they called KOYA, early in 1970s. The KOYA had to fight for emancipation, education, abolition of “outdated” customs, to stop paying tribute to local chiefs and to organise direct market access for the Konkomba produce (Maasole, 2011: 46–47; Mohamed, 2018: 57). On the other hand, the youth from the Nanumba and Dagbon group founded their fighting group called the DAYA.

Even though the Nanumba own land and customary power and the Konkomba are assumed to be landless, both groups used to live together peacefully in the District of Nanun. Tribal clashes became rampant between the Konkomba and the Nanumba but the most notable conflicts occurred in 1981, 1992, 1994 and 2002, pitting the KOYA against the DAYA. Several initiatives for peace were initiated among which the PPNT and the Nairobi Peace Initiative. The PPNT is a type of infrastructure for peace commissioned by the Ghanaian government on 12 April 1994 as an initiative to mitigate the effects of violence and conflicts among the ethnic youth groups in northern Ghana. This strategy was put in place following the Konkomba and the Nanumba war that occurred between 1994 and 1995 and that led to thousands of deaths (Mohamed, 2018: 81– 82) plus the state of emergency. Another initiative was the Inter-NGOs consortium and the Nairobi Peace Initiative that brought together members of civil society and the Community NGOs from the Northern Ghana. This initiative adopted the bottom-up approach and the face-to-face meetings to bring the warring groups together to talk about the issues of disagreement. The above models provide an overview of models of conflict transformation in the Table 20.

Table 19: Models of conflict transformation in three African countries

Countries Characteristics	Kenya	Ghana	South Africa
Nature of Conflicts	Violent ethnic conflicts	Violent ethnic conflicts	Protracted and violent conflicts
Ethnic / Racial groups involved	Marakwet, Pokot, Kikuyu, Kalenjin	Konkomba, Nanumba, Dagbon	Black people and White people
Models or tools for Conflict transformation	Amani Mashinani (Peace at the grassroots)	PPNT (Permanent Peace Negotiation)	TRC

Countries Characteristics	Kenya	Ghana	South Africa
	WPDC	The Nairobi Peace Initiatives	“Healing of Memories”
Content of the Model	Conflict transformation approach	To mitigate the effects of violence	To initiate and facilitate dialogue
	To facilitate dialogue To mobilise clan elders	Bottom-up approach; to facilitate meetings and dialogues	A bottom-up approach to enhance the truth and reconciliation process

Source: The researcher

7.8.8 The Sport for Development Programme

Le Crom and Martin (2019: 12) gave an account on one of the strategies to face conflicts and to bring about a change using sport. The SFD programme must be well directed (Sugden, 2006), locally grounded (Schulenkorf, 2010; Sugden, 2006), and clearly focused (Sherry, 2010) in order to produce desired or expected results. These conditions cut across the ToC, on one hand and on the other hand, they reflect the ground of the transformation theory, the intergroup contact theory and the PAR. In fact, nothing can be done for a given group of beneficiaries unless it is directed according to their needs and wish; as it cannot be fruitful unless it is grounded in the local context and clearly “focused” on the main aim or “around the intended outcomes” (Le Crom & Martin, 2019: 12). Hence, concretely, what is a SFD programme and what is its aim? According to Le Crom and Martin (2019: 13):

SFD, broadly defined as intentional use of sport, physical activity and play to attain specific development objectives in low-and middle-income countries and disadvantaged communities in high-income settings, encompasses many social development topics and has often been used in bringing together people of different races, religions, backgrounds and cultures. It has been recognised as contributing to various aspects of human development (social, physical, psychological, economic, political and cultural).

In this way, sport plays an important role in keeping the community members together, in equality and in peace. At the base of the programme, there is a need to move and learn from other cultures. Le Crom and Martin (2019 12) note:

the knowledge required to thrive in a multicultural world is underpinned by respect and appreciation of cultures other than one's own. Perhaps one of the best ways to gain this respect and appreciation is to engage with citizens of other countries, and sport can be a great platform for engagement. When managed properly, sport has the ability to cut across different domains such as language, religion, race and gender.

A success story of sport for unity and development has been experienced by Americans and South Africans:

a two-way sport-based exchange programme, funded by the US Department of State, was created and carried out in 2015–2016 between people of the United States and South Africa. One of the broad goals of the programme was to increase cultural adaptability among people of these two countries (Le Crom & Martin, 2019: 13).

Sport is one of such instruments that serve to bridge different social groups and adversaries with each other. In addition, as a diplomatic tool, sport can also be used as a starting point for communication, negotiation and dialogue between conflicting parties. In this way, people learn to adapt or to adjust to others' cultures as they socialise through sports. They created intercultural relationships and stimulated the understanding between nations. Another example of entertainment for rehabilitation or for conflicts transformation could be copied from the Budapest experience as it came out from the first International Meeting about "trainings in prisons" for inmates' reintegration or education.

The attractive aspect of the outcome of this workshop is the use of sports or drama (theatre) to convey a positive message to the prisoners. This strategy could also work for the youth in any given strife-torn context or country. However, Kä Mana and Gasanganirwa (2017: 254–255) have an opposite position and give an example of SFD or sport for peace in Birava, Bukavu, where since 2012, a catholic parish priest organises football matches involving teachers from local schools or elders from the villages or other groups. These researchers raise vital questions among which are: "Do people who spend some time around a football

pitch really get reconciled for the time spent together?” and “How could they have resolved their grievances just after a few hours watching a football game?” According to these researchers, after every game, the priest offered a cocktail to all the competitors after which they returned to their villages. In this way, these people did not have enough time to dialogue to talk about their grievances and to sort out vital issues (Kä Mana and Gasanganirwa, 2017: 255). Nevertheless, I think, all depends on the aim behind the game and how frequently the opponents meet for sport. This frequency could play a crucial role in healing the wounds and recreate the lost social cohesion.

7.9 More Alternatives to Conflicts

Presenting his “approaches to peace”, Barash (2000: 1) argues unchallenged that “there is no way to Peace (as) Peace is the way”; Gonsalves (2018: 161) affirms: “peace is the way; because it needs people to make it possible—often, young people”. These words challenge whoever wants peace through war or conflict and confirm that only peace begets peace. In addition, the words interrogate the conflict strategies from the prevention up to conflict transformation and to the needed change. However, even following Barash’s way, there is need for a change or a positional transformation among the conflicting parties. That is why Lederach, talking about “divided societies”, suggests and insists that the ideal way to bring about peace among them is to adopt a more transformative approach. For him, this crucial approach aims at creating “a dynamic process” that will bring together key actors or parties to conflict and lead them to focus on major points of the conflicts prevailing in their area (Lederach, 1997: 178). This basic aspect of the approach resembles participatory action from the fact that this latter approach aims at bringing parties together in order to talk about their grievances, to dialogue and settle their differences in a concerted manner.

Similarly, Barash and Webel (2002: 284–285) suggest what they call the “methods of integrative bargaining” or strategies to bring about peace. These are processes based on dialogue as the pillar of conflict transformation. Here, the processes should be inclusive (or non-discriminatory) and promote equity (Ibrahim et al., 2019: 27; Ruiz-Mallen in Nared and Bole, 2020: 6). These keys are some of the remedies for violence and conflicts in general. As wide as this approach is, it involves a deep change of attitude, behaviours and people or actors’ positions. McCandless and Bangura (2007: 44) were more detailed and suggested

other ways to make peace. Among the strategies or “means” to bring about peace, they suggest dialogue and the use of non-violent means; to work with and from the grassroots; to refer to the international courts like the ICC or ICTR; to use gender mainstreaming in peacebuilding and to use the truth and reconciliation commissions as infrastructures for peace.

There are strategies that may or may not have succeeded in various places when dealing with conflicts or violence but that have succeeded in other contexts. Gicali (2012: 24) lists some programmes that have been used in some sectors for prevention or intervention against conflicts. The programmes have been applied in Quebec, in the USA and in Europe. These programmes include The Anti-bullying Programme applied in Quebec, in Europe, in Japan and in USA; the Social Peace Curriculum; Community-Based Service; Children’s Creative Response to Conflict; Violence Prevention, Peace Builders; Child Development Project; Conflict Resolution and Peer Mediation. According to Gicali, these programmes are mainly meant for young people in schools whereas only few of them are meant for teachers and other staff members in schools. Going further on another note, for Mkandawire et al. (2005: 184–185), another solution to face African conflicts could be to build “trans-border language cooperation and continental unity”. For them,

within the perspective of a comprehensive policy of interstate cooperation, trans-border languages have a crucial role to play, particularly in diffusing border tension, because these languages constitute the common property of the people of the two nations. Furthermore, language is the element of culture par excellence and the means by which people with common cultural heritage express their common culture and ethnic identity. Trans-border languages can therefore be made to undergo the process of language development and used as the means of accomplishing the new perspective of bridges of cooperation at the frontier, specifically, as the vector of the new-found spirit of trans-border cooperation. Peace and harmony can be achieved by such use of African trans-border languages (Mkandawire et al. , 2005: 184–185).

Hence, languages, especially for trans-border peaceful cohabitation, can be used as connectors among people, cultures and nations with shared borders between DR Congo and Rwanda, Burundi and Uganda. By so saying, Mkandawire agrees with Le Crom’s views

(2019: 14) even though language alone seems to be insufficient in bringing back harmony and connecting the war-torn societies. Internally and in the case of Masisi as it is the reality in the North Kivu Province, the Kinyarwanda language still has problems as the Kinyarwanda-speakers turn to the Kiswahili as a unifying language. The language, according to experts, could be used as a tool for conflict transformation and, here, a way to bring the youth together.

An example that should be emulated is the initiative by 74 youth from the Great Lakes Region in Central Africa who met in Bukavu in December 2015. The youth came from Rwanda, Burundi and DRC as the hosting country. They met under the banner of a Regional Programme for *Trans-Border Dialogue for Peace in the Great Lakes Region* under the sponsorship of *Interpeace*, a Swiss NGO. They reflected on the issue of entrepreneurship as a remedy to unemployment among the youth and for them, entrepreneurship was also an approach to peacebuilding (Kä Mana and Gasanganirwa, 2017: 228). Through this forum the youth shared good practices from their respective countries. One aspect they reflected on and they adopted was about helping each other by putting some money together in a kind of “Marry-go-round”. This latter is called *Likirimba* in different provinces in DRC; *ibimina* or *ikibina* in Rwanda and Uganda and “*Mukwate*” or *Mulungano* in South Kivu. They also initiated some kind of Sacco or youth associations through which they learn to work in synergy. These latter are made by former child soldiers or those from militia groups (Kä Mana and Gasanganirwa, 2017: 288). The youth initiatives in Bukavu are comparable to those of women in the same area working for peacebuilding. A local NGO known as *Action pour la Paix et la concorde* (Action for Peace and Peaceful Cohabitation) backed women’s local initiatives in non-violent strategies for conflict transformation. They also came up with what they called *Cadres de Dialogue et de Mediation* or “Forum for Dialogue and Mediation”. This is a local initiative made of ten to twelve members selected from various sectors within the community. The members are selected from teachers, women groups, businesspeople, local leaders and religious leaders, youth leaders among others (Kä Mana and Gasanganirwa, 2017: 220). This research therefore assesses the youth involvement in violence and how efforts of youth groups can be integrated to achieve peace goals and bring about positive changes. The approaches used in this thesis reflect the following interdependence or complementary aspects through Table 20.

Table 20: An overview of major theories used in this study

Theories Factors	Intergroup Contact	Conflict Transformation	Theory of Change	Participatory Action
Actors/Beneficiaries	The youth or any parties or actors with a given purpose	Parties in conflict (youth) and Mediators	The youth in the community and the entire community	The youth as the main actors in conflict transformation
Core principal	Intergroup contact is essential to peaceful community	Positive because conflict Transformation is key to peace	Change is an essential outcome of good relationships and transformation	The youth are committed to implement the decisions they contributed to
Relation to conflict and Peace	Conflict like Peace occurs within a community where the actors are in contact with each other	Conflicts occur within communities and need to be dealt with by creating situations that lead to peace	Transformation should lead to the change of attitude, behaviours or minds, together with actions	To bring the youth together, there is need to create conditions that are conducive to togetherness, cooperation and peace
Timeline	A continuous process dimension whereby there is need for group members to know each deeply. This requires time together	Requires a continuous process to diffuse tensions and anger among the conflicting parties	Could be a three-step process: in short time, it implies to cool down; in the mid-time, it implies building new relationships and in long run, to increase trust among the youth	A process that requires togetherness if the transformation and the change have to be effective and efficient for lasting relationships among the youth
Methodology	Observe the four conditions by Allport; to identify opportunities for integration	To do a conflict sensitivity analysis by applying a conflict sensitive approach	To do a conflict sensitivity analysis (strengthen the connectors than the dividers	Reconcile conflicting youth; need for dialogue and agreements between the conflicting parties (youth) according to

Theories Factors	Intergroup Contact	Conflict Transformation	Theory of Change	Participatory Action
			among the youth)	their claims
Interdependence	Lack of the four conditions can be a major cause of conflict. This latter can be destructive if not well handled or transformed	A conflict not well transformed can be destructive and lead to very negative outcomes	Change is the higher outcome of true intergroup contact and transformation. Otherwise, lack of change implies lack of peace	When conflicting youth do not agree on a change, this can create the eruption of conflict at a higher level with a higher intensity
Conflicting interdependence	Changing power relationships and minimise negative group effects or influence	Cooperation, from “do harm” to “do good” position	Through conflict responsive initiatives, bring the youth to change	To work on conflict dynamics for achieving peacebuilding as conflict insensitive
Enforcing interdependence	Strengthening intergroup contacts will help to prevent conflict and reduce violence among the youth	Conflict transformation always goes to the root causes of violence and conflicts. So, it helps in bringing the youth together	When addressing to deep causes of intergroup conflict, the aim should be to change attitudes or behaviours that amounted to conflict or violence	PAR calls for moving from an adversarial view to an integrative approach to change and/or to peacebuilding

Source: The researcher

The fundamental challenge is to enhance communication among individuals, groups and communities so that obstacles in the way of improving interpersonal relations may be removed. Thus, this research work hopes that the way communication among various communities, integration of youth views and efforts was not effectively used to build a harmonious society should be highlighted in the case studies. This would be helpful in explaining the success and the shortcomings in the peace process in Masisi and the region. The expectation is that effective and efficient communication is manifested more among the youth groups. Members of ethnic groups may shy away from each other and make interaction

impossible. They may engage in hostiles criticisms and utterances against each other and attempt to block any opportunity of socialization, peace and reconciliation. They may remain in the defensive and not acknowledge each other's failures and limitations, or to some extent guilt. Thus, how the youth manage the interpersonal behaviour arising from different backgrounds is central to the investigation in this research work. I will investigate this further and find out how the youths living in hostilities could restore their past harmonious relationships.

7.10 Conclusion

This chapter highlighted the links between peacebuilding, conflict transformation theories in the context of the youth in Masisi and elsewhere in Africa. Among the main points it raised, the chapter presented the categories impacted by conflicts and change-driven conflicts. It also underlined the way to reconcile divided societies using the available strategies and the participatory action coupled with conflict transformation and peacebuilding in reducing youth violence. These are among the dimensions of approaching conflicts and violence as suggested by Lederach through the three lenses he provides in the outline of his *Little Book of Conflict Transformation*. The research provided an overview of some African indigenous conflict transformation systems including the *Baraza* system used in Eastern DRC and other regional efforts undertaken in Africa as well as in other countries in the world. These are the indigenous legal tradition (ILT), the PPNT used in Ghana, the Sport for Development and the LPCs. Other efforts to curtail conflicts have been made by organisations like Search for Common Ground, the Mercy Corps, USAID in Nepal and the Samriddhi Foundation. The next chapter highlights the research design and methods used to conduct this study.

PART III

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODS

Part III includes Chapter 8 and Chapter 9, and it is about the research methodology. Chapter 8 presents the research design and approach by looking at the way to achieve wellbeing, peaceful cohabitation and reduce violence among the youths. Chapter 9 provides an overview of the research methods.

CHAPTER EIGHT: RESEARCH DESIGN

8.1 Introduction

Mingers (2001: 241) supports using a combination of research methods and found that a combination is, without any doubt, a source of powerful and insightful research. He argues that first diversity (of methods) provides a wider range of knowledge traditions upon which to base research and theory. That amounts to methodological “complementarity”. In addition, Mingers (2001: 241) points out: “this complementarist position asserts that no one paradigm is superior, but that the individual rationalities should be respected within discipline as a whole”. Thus, no research design or approach should be considered to be “superior” to others so long as when appropriately used, they all provide reliable results and respond to research objectives. However, it is up to the researcher, to the type of the research topic or to the nature of data needed that the methods or designs are selected.

Generally speaking, the research objectives, the research questions and conceptual framework in this thesis lead towards a qualitative research. Referring to Mingers (2001) and to other scholars, in this chapter, I first present the research design which is participatory action research (PAR) aiming at a social change. I show how the use of PAR is important to understanding the issues around violence among the youth from the grassroots in Masisi. Furthermore, the study highlights the uses of PAR, the research process and worldview followed by the research paradigm and the challenges in using the action research under the interpretivism and constructivism paradigms in research. The chapter concludes with a view on the pilot study that was conducted prior to the major intervention. The pilot study aimed at

testing the research tools and assessing the feasibility of the study in an area under war like Masisi.

8.2 Participatory Action Research

The design used to conduct the experimental component of this thesis is PAR. In the context of broken relationships based on violence and conflicts among the youths in Masisi, the theories of conflict transformation, intergroup contact and the ToC coupled with the PAR had to adopt the same and common structure based first on an observation exercise leading to the exploration in order to establish the youths' needs or grievances expressed through violent acts. There was a need for the youths to all have a common understanding of the issue at stake, which was to reduce or to end this violence among them. This exploration was done through the youth's narratives or stories but the background to conflicting issues was based on field observations and discussions as evidenced by the photographs in this work. The second step was the planning and actions taken in achieving the set goal of reducing violence. To reach this level, there was need to create a context that enabled the youths to rebuild the relationships among them in order to be able to work together to implement joint action and reach the targeted goal. Here, conflict transformation theory played a role. At this level, there arose the need for collaborative assessment by the youths with my participation. The youths had to identify, to understand and to share the problem opposing them and leading them into violence. The intergroup contact theory played a role here as the group had to meet some conditions so that their joint actions would lead to the achievement of the goal. Third, there was need to establish a targeted goal that could bring the youths together and work towards it. This goal had to be based on inclusion and every participant's experiences of conflicts and violence. In the case of Masisi, the youths' experiences are based on the events they have witnessed, or the situation they are living in.

To sum up, PAR is about identifying a problem and its causes, and then taking joint actions on these causes in order to bring about change. Therefore, the conflict transformation theory fits well into PAR as both aim to promote a change in behaviours, in relationships and in communication. The aim is to promote non-violent communication, actively listen to one another, collaborate and cooperate in the action undertaken by the group. In addition, the change has to start with an individual with the transforming capacities or power he has to

approach the divisive issue and to understand the outgroup. It is in this way that this research triangulated the conflict transformation theory, the intergroup contact theory and the PAR.

This research adopted the PAR as a method of selecting informants, collecting data, implementing an intervention and a following up activities after the implemented intervention. Macdonald (2012) gives an overview of PAR from Kurt Lewin's work back in 1944 (Kiyala, 2016: 311). Lewin assumed that Action Research, hereafter AR, is a process through which people are motivated by the research and the outcome of the decisions to which they have been associated. For McDonald (2012: 36):

Action research is regarded as systematic and oriented around analysis of data whose answers require the gathering and analysis of data and the generation of interpretations directly tested in the field of action.

When viewed from this perspective, all tasks within AR, ranging from data gathering and analysis, must align with a specific course of action and be geared towards enhancing understanding and refinement of that action. According to McDonald (2012: 36):

Action research involves an action researcher and community or organisation members who are seeking to improve their situation. Therefore, action research is concerned with an agenda for social change that embodies the belief of pooling knowledge to define a problem in order for it to be resolved.

The above view reflects some important dimensions of AR which involve a group of participants working within a specific context. The aim of AR is to improve the context or to change the social situation of the participants. These steps are also underlined by experts like Freire for whom the approach, AR, should aim at “empowering” the communities about the problems they come across in their daily life. Here, the youth involved in violence need to be empowered to change their attitude and behaviour toward one another and thus need to be involved in “actions” towards any successful change. PAR call for various orientations or “models” within defined “political, economic, and social contexts” giving shape to models like the participatory rural appraisal and the participatory learning and action (PLA)” (Kiyala, 2016: 311; MacDonald, 2012: 39). AR as a type of qualitative research approach aimed at bringing together the researcher and the targeted community in order to identify and observe

a social issue, then to reflect on it in order to solve it or to mitigate its impacts on the community who should be invited to take an “active part” in the research from its early stage until the end of a research process.

As such, AR was found to be a flexible process that calls for teamwork. It allows freedom to both the participants and the researcher as they can easily direct the course of the research following the context, the timing and the informants. AR is fun because not only it requires the research to be conducted in an open place to socialise and to meet in a friendly setting, but it also allows the participants to express their feelings, views or to participate freely in the research in an informal environment. This approach involves teamwork as it involves collaboration between the researcher and the informants who will benefit from its outcome. Researchers have identified some AR components among which are the problem exploration; the reflection and planning of an intervention; the implementation of the intervention; and the monitoring and evaluation of the intervention in terms of its outcomes. In this study, AR is pertinent because it involves the youth of Masisi in the research process through various components. These components facilitate the following actions: exploring the issue of violence and conflicts with the youth; deliberating on potential interventions; planning them as youth initiatives; executing the interventions; observing and monitoring their progress; and ultimately evaluating the short-term outcomes resulting from the interventions.

The above actions reflect the participatory dimensions of AR. In education for example, Macdonald (2012) found that “PAR is variously termed as a dynamic educative process, an approach to social investigation, and an approach to take action to address a problem or to engage in sociopolitical action.” Stringer (1996, 1999) agrees that AR is of use in order to foster sociopolitical changes and calls for cooperative efforts. That is why in the case of the youth in Masisi, this study could not be a one-man-show as this way of doing research could be counterproductive in suggesting to the youth some solutions to their situation without their contribution. Consequently, as a result of a well-conducted PAR, the beneficiaries are empowered to own the results of the process which must be a change in their general situation. This implies that nothing can be undertaken for people or for a community without prior research and without the contribution of the stakeholders, here the beneficiaries. Thus, my study will help the youth in Masisi and their community in general to find a way out of

the chronic conflict situation that they have been engulfed in for decades by ways they will design themselves.

Answering the above question as to “why PAR in peacebuilding”, Kaye (2017: 3) asserts that AR “constitutes an effective method in peacebuilding and peace studies as it provides a systematic way of developing a theory, obtaining the necessary data and—with the participation of the respondents—developing and testing an intervention”. Koshy (2010) affirms that AR entails planning, observing and/or taking action, followed by reflection on the collaborative efforts of the researcher and participants regarding a pressing question. These views coupled with Lewin’s research and publications lead Bargal (2006: 369) to determine the eight AR principles. All these principles converge in an action for change that could be defined as acquiring new knowledge, “learning, emancipator, transformative, or participatory appraisal” (Kiyala, 2016: 315). So, AR is participatory as the beneficiaries or the parties to an issue also are active in a study. I would say that AR centres on three major conceptual pillars or phases: planning, action and observation. Action research reflects on what was initially planned and achieved. The end point of PAR here should be to empower the youths in making decisions or plans to get out of the conflict situation and to improve their wellbeing.

8.3 Why Use PAR in This Study?

Conflicts and violence have been a very serious issue in North Kivu Province and in Masisi for several years. They have claimed hundreds of lives. For example, in 2022, around 180 people died. Among them from January to October 2022, 150 died on one day at Rubaya, a lady was shot dead at Muhanga-Kibarizo, two young men were killed at a place called “Ku Piki” on their way to Nyabyondo; one truck driver was killed at Masisi and the young boy who killed him was burnt alive (mob justice); 19 people were killed at Nyamaboko Chieftaincy in Kilambo village; three people were killed at Gatovu and one man was beheaded at Kibironko-Nyamitaba. These are documented cases. These cases, among others, require a deep reflection and people involvement so that a solution to such violence can be found. The chapter looks at how PAR could be helpful to this study and to the youth as well as to the communities. In order to conceptualise the PAR, there is need to start with establishing the real problems among the youths, the suitable theory and then to do field

research. So, the process has “to start where the people are” with what is available or within their reach and that best suits their situation then to end with their participation and follow-up of the outcome. In addition, the research should have an action component (e.g., partnership with respondents mostly the youths, development of an intervention; research with them). For Creswell et al. (2007: 256), PAR is:

a qualitative research inquiry in which the researcher and the participants collaborate at all levels in the research process (participation) to help find a suitable solution for a social problem or any other problem that significantly affects an underserved community (action).

As such, PAR is an approach that brings together the action researcher and the beneficiaries around an action or a situation they would like to improve. As a process, MacDonald (2012) found that PAR is a democratic process as it gives room to the affected people to air their voices and participate in the research. Moreover, it is an equitable process as it equally values these people and regards them as equals. PAR is liberating as it provides freedom from oppressive, debilitating conditions. Finally, these scholars argue, PAR is life-enhancing as it allows the participants to unleash their potential in dealing with what affects them.

All in all, PAR leads to problem-solving through an authentic or genuine sharing over it. The aim of the process is to improve the situation and bring about positive changes. Since its implementation in 1960s, (Chivasa in Kaye 2017: 239–258), PAR as a research approach has been used by various researchers as evidenced through a compilation by Kaye and Harris (2017) among others. Their studies were oriented towards the use of the approach in “education and training”, in “healing and reconciliation”; in “restorative justice” and in “community peacebuilding”. From their orientation, it is understood that attitudinal transformation encompasses a set of objectives which may be fulfilled by implementing a series of strategies. There could be conflicts between these objectives with regard to groups, circumstances, times, resources, scope, quality and the constraints imposed on the groups. In this case, conflicts should be resolved through transformation by making the necessary tradeoffs or creating new alternatives. Subsequently, the responsibility of a conflict manager should generally be to help the group members or the youth to develop effective communications and mechanisms for conflict transformation.

The PAR has informed and guided this study and the intervention to undertake with the communities in the research area. Finally, what allowed me to bring together conflicts, intergroup theory, conflict transformation and the ToC is the fact that all of them are dynamic and changeable processes that focus on the relational aspect of conflict and seek to change.

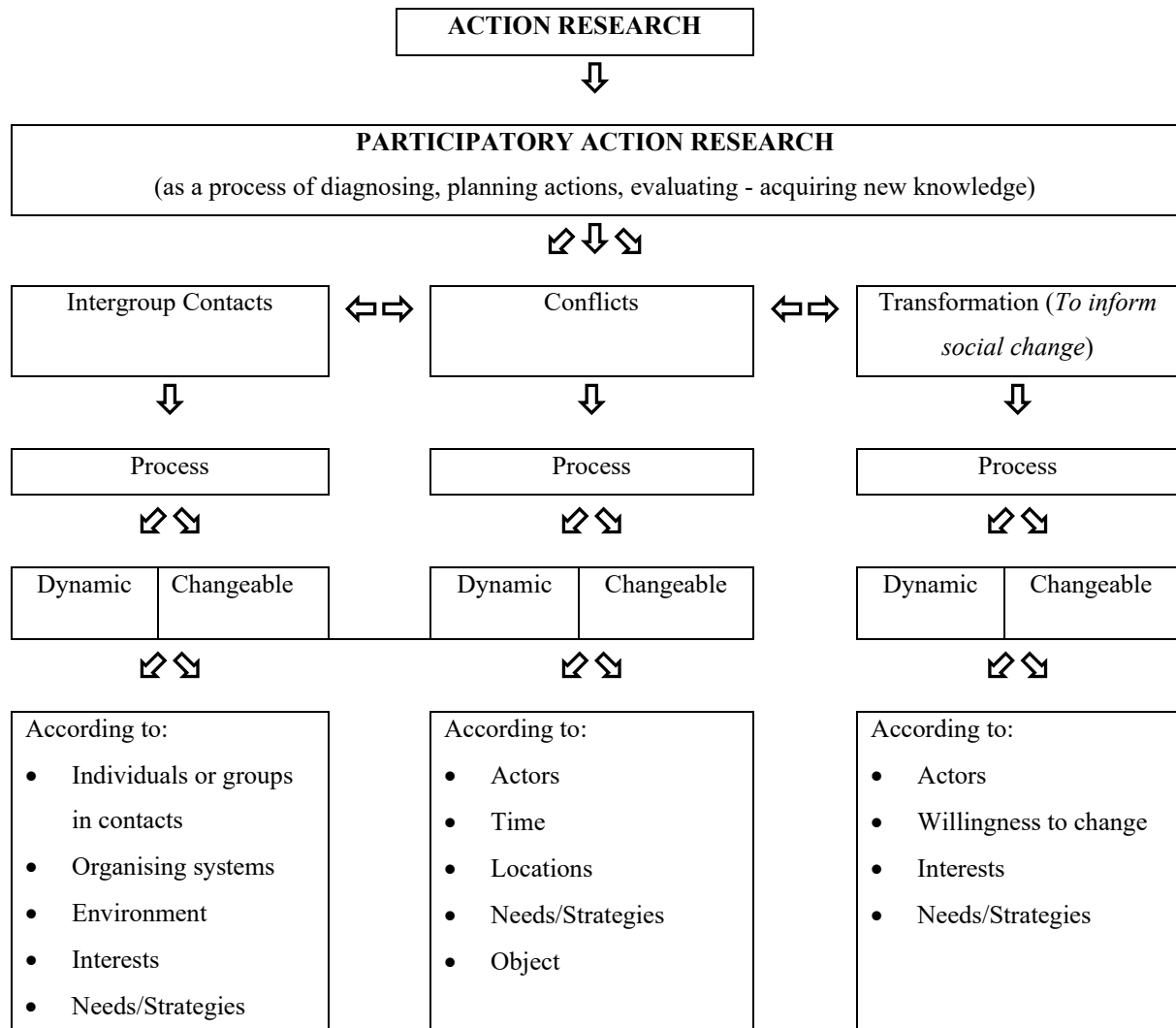


Figure 10: Links among PAR, conflicts, the intergroup contact and Transformation. **Source:** The researcher

The above diagram is supported by Lederach's views on peacebuilding as an approach to make sustainable peace. According to him, responding to these processes, one needs to borrow from "a process-oriented and context-responsive approach" (Lederach, 1997: x). This implies that in responding to youth violence in Masisi, peacemakers need to take into consideration not only the prevailing and current context (historic, political, social, and

economic) in Masisi but the wider situation in which the youths find themselves and the underlying causes of their involvement in conflicts. The responses to their issues have to be found in collaboration with the youth themselves; this aspect has usually been overlooked while trying to find an answer to violence and conflict in Masisi. In this case, I concluded that a successful approach that would bring peace, reconciliation and restore relationships among the youths is the one that focuses on transforming the conflicts as processes, looking at “the interdependent roles, functions, and activities” by or among the youths. The first requirement of this approach is to bring the youths together and listen to their grievances, their feelings and their views (MacDonald, 2012: 34).

Finally, using PAR in this study provided an opportunity to the local youth in Masisi to express their grievances and identify the push factors in violence. This also provided the youths with the opportunity to meet and talk openly about their issues in a familiar setting. This enabled them to start rebuilding the broken relationships among divided communities. Through an inclusive and participatory process, PAR enabled the youths and the researcher to analyse various conflicts among them and their communities through engaging different groups in a debate around deep causes of violence, the main actors of conflicts, the dividing factors as well as the unifiers.

8.4 Action Research Intervention and Evaluation Plan at Kitchanga

The sharing with the youths at Kitchanga yielded various ideas from both sides, me as a researcher and the participants as the beneficiaries. However, in order to be productive in our thinking, we had to be systematic in thinking and planning something that could at least be sustainable and beneficial to young people and their community. Thus, the first talk on the agricultural project took place on Monday 23 January 2023 and we spent more than 5 hours in discussion and sharing. There were 17 participants among which were 13 boys and four girls.

To start with, we had a kind of brainstorming about the prevailing context at Kitchanga and around this area. Our discussions took place when the M23 war started in the neighbouring district of Rutshuru. One section of Kitchanga is located in Rutshuru District and another one is in Masisi District. So, the youth were aware of the situation and some of them thought we

were there to take strategies to get involved in the war. On another note, the social situation in Kitchanga where people were suspicious of one another was not an easy task to deal with. Conflicts in the area had created IDP camps around Kitchanga, namely, the Mungote and Kahe camps. Kahe was exclusively for Tutsi people whereas Mungote was for other people, mainly Hutu people. So, with the youth, we had to be mindful of these two situations. The third issue was the upcoming elections and some of the youths thought I was there to campaign. We also had to be clear on that. As an older man, I was there just for purposes of the study, for research and to help them. It took a while and a lot of discussion to reach common ground and a common understanding that I was there for research, more precisely, PAR, which would involve all of them. In clearing the ground, the participants also had to understand that involvement should not be for the benefit of any specific ethnic group, and should be a common activity for everybody. Therefore, all the participants needed to understand that they must have the same goal in the activity to be selected. They also needed to understand that we needed someone among them to conduct the discussions whereas I was there just to help them with ideas and to chair the discussion so that the meeting would be orderly.

The second step was to identify the activity according to the skills and opportunities available in the area. It appeared that Kitchanga had various skills among young people; some of them suggested a football team but they had forgotten the girls among them who would not feel comfortable playing football. Other members even questioned what the aim of the football team would be, its objectives and what it would achieve. Three participants had live experiences that they shared. One of them was the youth leader in the Mungote IDP camp who also had organised agricultural activities with his peers in the camp; another one was the youth farmers' leader, and the third one was selling airtime and had a hair salon. The majority were not comfortable with this third option as they thought they needed first to learn the business of hair cutting before they could open their own salon. They also rejected this idea as they did not see that togetherness aspect behind the salon activity, according to the aim of our meeting. Another group suggested the activity of rearing pigs. This one was also discussed but did not attract them as they wondered how they would feed and take care of the animals. They rejected the idea. Then those involved in farming presented their ideas. They based their ideas on the availability of space to hire. Given the fact that Kitchanga is

surrounded by thousands of acres of farms that used to be reserved for grazing, the landowners were leasing out this space for agro-pastoral activities. Unfortunately, many cows had been exterminated by militias. Landowners give squares of arable land to people who would like to grow crops. A square is a piece of land of 30 by 30 meters for 10 American dollars. You hire it for one season and once you harvest what you put on the land then you stop using it. This idea was discussed and attracted the majority. In fact, they could even name some examples of people who were involved in these kinds of activities and how they were making money and supporting themselves. They liked the idea as it would keep them busy together ploughing, weeding and harvesting. In the discussions, I showed them that once they sold their produce, the income could be used for paying school fees for their siblings, medical fees and other basic needs.

With the discussions, they started getting more insight. Then, the discussion had to be taken to the third step, to look at the activities and their feasibility. Among the actions needed was to identify a suitable, easily accessible place where they can look after their crops, not far from their city. Then they needed to find money to hire the ground and buy the seeds. They also needed to appoint teams for different tasks: to look for a good plot of ground and talk to the owner, to do the ploughing, to do the sowing and weeding. The four girls in the first meeting, were chosen to take care of the last two. Three other members were designated to identify the plot and talk with the owner. The whole group was requested to look for money for hiring the land and buying seeds. At this level, they also talked about what they could grow. The discussion went on around onion, Irish potatoes and maize. On the first day, they did not decide what to grow and left it for the following discussion and the following day. So, the first groups were created and had to think about the next meeting which was scheduled for the following Wednesday, 25 January 2023.

On that Wednesday, we convened in the afternoon at 2:00 PM to gather feedback from those who assessed a piece of land and considered potential crops. By that time, our communication had reached other participants, resulting in a total of 21 attendees: 8 females and 13 males. Initially, 13 males and 4 females formed a primary group of young individuals who engaged with the discussion regarding the intervention. It is important to note that this participation does not reflect demographic trends, but rather stems from the reluctance of

some females to join group settings due to previous experiences of violence, particularly sexual assault. Those who had to look for the piece of land had found a place. The space was large enough, it was a plantation that was not in use as the owner had given up after he had lost all his cows. The manager told them that they could get any space they wanted; that is what they reported. One encouraging thing was that all of them were committed and on this day, six of them had already contributed 10 dollars even before anything was put on the programme. One of them told me that he wanted to show me how serious he was. They first decided to take five squares of land (30m x 30m x 5). Others said that they should wait and raise more than that as some of them wanted also to contribute. At the start, their target was to get 10 squares. As for what to sow, they decided to start with cabbage. After discussions, they all agreed to go for cabbage.

The following step was to plan the piece of land they needed according to their budget and how people would be working on the land. At the beginning they agreed that the boys would prepare the land, ploughing and tilling it while the girls would sow and take care of the plants. They decided also to mobilise their friends who did not attend the meetings. After a short time of sharing, we went together to tour the place that was not far from the city, just a fifteen-minute walk. The challenge they faced was to get enough materials, especially hoes and machetes, to work on the land. I wanted to know how a big city like Kitchanga could lack something like a hoe. Because of the endless wars they had experienced, they had lost those valuable tools; some had taken with them when they fled, and they had lost them. However, to encourage them and boost their morale, I promised that I would join them as a member and will send them my membership fee of 10 dollars monthly. I shared with them that I had to leave the following morning. That is when they decided to give a name to their group. One of them suggested to call it “Active Youth from Kitchanga” (*Jeunesse active de Kitchanga*) and he was appointed as the spokesman as he had suggested the group name. I left Kitchanga on Thursday, 26 January 2023. One week later, they sent me a message that they had paid for five squares (50 dollars) and had paid 10 dollars to the manager who provided the piece of land and used 10 dollars to buy seeds.

There are several insights gleaned from this initial phase. Firstly, the villagers were surprised by the initiative to come together and discuss topics unrelated to conflict or animosity. They

were eager to learn more about the individual behind this initiative. Secondly, the group demonstrated remarkable commitment and promptness in initiating the activity. This initial step can be viewed positively because, during our discussions, we criticised the culture of war and advocated for seeking alternatives to grievances, prompting them to embrace the concept of communal work. Despite facing security concerns at one point and experiencing challenges in selling their cabbage harvest, the group remained focused on their priorities. They decided to switch to maize cultivation for their second activity.

This first outcome of the intervention could definitely help to transform conflict among the youth because the pioneers were advocating for peace to others who had not joined the team. I received three phone calls from young men who just told me they were from Kitchanga and that they had got my number from a friend in what they were now calling *mradi*, a Kiswahili word for project. They wanted to know more about it, whether it was mine or whether there was an NGO behind it. I simply told them the *mradi* was theirs as they were the members. Their testimonies were encouraging in spite of the war.

8.5 Research Context and Research Process

It should be noted that the research context and the research objects are not static but dynamic. This implies that they keep on changing according to new events, to interests, new actors, to all the socioeconomic and political changes. Miles and Huberman (2003: 265–292) identified four aspects to consider in selecting the research sites or informants. The points are the research setting, the actors, the events and the process presented in Table 21.

Table 21:Major points in selecting research sites and informants

ASPECTS	QUESTIONS	EXPLANATIONS
Research setting	Where will the study take place? How is the current context?	Masisi (participants found in their natural settings or living place) and the prevailing violence, crimes and conflicts. At churches, schools, youths' offices or local leaders' offices
Research Actors	Who took part or was involved in the study? Identify the positive points in them and the potentials to contribute positively	Myself with participants in Masisi, youth representatives, Community members, local authorities, religious

ASPECTS	QUESTIONS	EXPLANATIONS
	to conflict transformation.	leaders, NGOs and other researchers. In addition, there are the research assistants
Research events	Protracted Conflicts and violence. What the actors know about the events or what have they done; their role in the events? Identify the actors' common views towards these events.	As researcher; former members of armed groups; relatives to the members of armed groups; leaders in the research sites; affected by the events
Research process	The nature of the events undertaken by the actors in the sites?	Interviews for data collection; providing information; readings

Source: The researcher

This study started with a systematic observation of facts on the ground or in Masisi. This observation was followed by the collection, classification and interpretation or analysis of field or literature data. The study established the relationship of causes and effects of events. To achieve this, the process I followed had to be rigorous, justified, appropriate, relevant and systematic following a logical sequence. The process also required control by establishing the relationship between a particular cause and its resulting impact. It needed to be verifiable, valid and based on empirical findings. These findings, derived from information gathered from informants, reflect their opinions, perspectives and life experiences. In this research, validity and reliability were fundamental concepts applied to ensure correct procedures were followed in collecting information from the informants. Attention was paid to the quality of measurement to ensure replicability and accuracy, despite the limited potential for replicating results in qualitative research. Also, both reliability and validity enabled me to mitigate as much as possible the effects of bias and subjectivity and be very close to objectivity.

8.6 Research Worldview: Social Constructivism and Transformative Worldviews

According to Creswell (2014), the term worldview means a basic set of beliefs that guide action. He confirms that worldview in research is a general philosophical orientation about the world that captures people's beliefs, the literature and what it says and the supervisor's guidelines. There are several philosophical worldviews and/or approaches that can be used in research work. There are, for example, positivism, phenomenology, the transformative

worldview, the feminist view, the participatory worldview, the qualitative or quantitative views, and the interpretive view of research. In my study, I adopted the transformative worldview and the participatory worldview (Creswell, 2014). This research work is descriptive, explanatory, exploratory and interpretive (Creswell, 2013; Corbiere et al., 2014: 6–7; Gonsalves, 2018: 163; Saunders et al. 2007: 143). This study aimed at describing the violent situation or living conditions of youth within communities that had suffered from long-term conflicts and their attitudes towards each other and towards the conflicts. Among the attitudes and behaviours adopted by the youths were discrimination, exclusion, stereotyping and getting involved in sexual assaults, torture killings and abuse.

As explanatory research (Saunders et al. 2007: 134 and 139), the aim was to explain why there was so much violence and why youth became involved in it; to explain why the long-term conflict resulted in negative attitudes among the youth and to give an account of what people thought about the context they were in. The study explains the relationship between the ongoing conflict in Masisi and the concomitant youth behaviour. Two aspects of the questions to be answered were “why” and “how” things were the way they were. Clearly, the conflicts begot frustration, despair and violence among the youth and this resulted in violence.

According to Saunders et al. (2007: 133–139), “an exploratory study is a valuable means of finding out ‘what is happening’; to seek new insights; to ask questions and to assess phenomena in a new light”. They establish “three principal ways of conducting exploratory research: a search of the literature or documentary activities; interviewing ‘experts’ in the subject; conducting focus groups interviews”. What I did first was to select the available literature about the historical and the theoretical aspects and the youth involvement in violence; second, to interview the experts and knowledgeable people about what was happening in Masisi; and third, to conduct focus group interviews and individual interviews with people from the research area. The aim was to explore the youth participation in conflict where people seemed to know very little and to examine the effectiveness of potential strategies to bring violence to an end. Here, the study tried to bring to light the hidden truth about violence and other complicated conflicts going on in Masisi. I used the snowballing sampling technique as used for exploratory purposes primarily where the first informant I met

pointed out other informants who could provide information about the youth and their role in violence and conflicts (Boncz, 2015: 26).

In conducting interpretive research, I delved deep into the informants' experiences and tried to understand or to interpret their behaviours and reactions towards the living conditions based on violence and conflicts. More specifically, I got in touch with informants' personal views or past experiences, ethnicity, biases, demographics, values, cultures, history, background, gender, socioeconomic status at the roots of their opinions and expressions. These aspects impact or may have an impact on the interpretations made in this study.

8.7 Research Paradigm: Interpretivism/Interpretive

The study paradigm is interpretive and falls under the constructive worldview. The matter here is to explain how knowledge is socially constructed or generated as this is what social constructivism is all about in contrast to the positivist worldview (Creswell, 2014). In the case of the youth and violence in Masisi, the matter was to understand how from history or the past and the current situation, the youth shaped their own history and ideas about others from opposing groups. Those from the other groups become enemies and should be excluded or killed. The primary goal of adopting a specific paradigm was to ensure adherence to certain values, mitigate bias, and maintain objectivity throughout the research process and in the final research outcomes (Kumar, 2011). The interpretivism paradigm also entails active involvement of informants or participants at every stage of the research, with their views, experiences, opinions, perceptions and ideas being considered within their true context. My own viewpoints were shaped by theirs, allowing me to comprehend the youth's circumstances and contexts through their experiences and how they articulate these experiences into a tangible narrative of their lives.

The interpretive paradigm is related to the commonly known techniques of qualitative data collection, i.e., interviews and observations beside the documentary research. It allows for the development of a close relationship with the informants through an open dialogue through which the meanings around an event are made. The interpretive paradigm fits well within the qualitative research methods. Interpretive views are based on the assumptions that the meanings from an event are shaped by the social context, the culture of people and people's

interactions or relationships. That is why the interpretive paradigm also fits well with the intergroup contact theory as well as with the conflict transformation theory. Scholars (Kumar: 2011: 14; Pettigrew, 2008: 193-195) have identified some guidelines based on interpretive views.

Firstly, there is a requirement to develop precise research questions and address them adequately. Secondly, this approach enabled me to adapt my orientation and interpretations throughout the research process in response to various contexts, circumstances and emergent situations. Additionally, both the research tools and findings underwent continual testing as the processes unfolded. This ensured adherence to ethical standards, particularly considering the study's inherent social and political dimensions, and ensured that the findings would be advantageous to the community without causing harm to any individual.

In defining constructivism, Nye and Welch (2013: 348) assert that constructivism is “an analytical approach to international relations that emphasises the importance of ideas, norms, cultures, and social structures in shaping actors’ identities, interests and actions”. Looking at “intrastate conflict” through the lens of constructivism, Nye et al. (2013: 207) confirm that “constructivists point out that ethnicity is not an immutable fact that inevitably leads to war. It is socially constructed in the sense that symbols, myths and memories can be altered over time.” As an example, these researchers point out the case of Rwanda where people who used to speak the same language, who have the same skin colour and who used to live together and intermarried from each side ended up killing each other on basis of mere differences based on “economic class difference” and the colonial legacy of difference. Thus, these views of differences raised issues of class. Thus, there were exploited classes and exploiting classes based on customary factors on one side and wealth and politics on the other (Boesen et al. 1977: 13). This is the case in Masisi where the two classes are struggling together in protracted and bloody conflicts. The exploiting class comprises local traditional chiefs, politicians and businesspeople exploiting and manipulating the youth for their own interests. On the opposite side, there is the exploited class comprising the youths in communities struggling to find a better way of life. Finally, in this study, I chose chosen to use among other qualitative designs, PAR, the case study and the narrative research and thematic analysis. Table22 gives an overview of these qualitative designs.

Table 22:Components of the qualitative design

Designs Characteristics	Narrative Research	Case Study	PAR
Types of Problem	The youth stories et al. (adults' stories) can help to understand the ongoing situations and the issues at stake	The case of the youth involved in violence and conflicts in Masisi	The youth involvement in violence really needs to be addressed to bring change to Masisi. The youth need to be sensitised
Discipline background	Life stories and other life experiences as narrated by the youths	Youth's own life experiences of violence and conflicts	How to envision the future from past experiences
Unit of Analysis	One young person, on one side, and youth groups from the research sites	Youth groups, their violent acts, the various interventions	People living in Masisi in their age or professional groups (youth, educators or teachers, religious people, parents...)
Data collection techniques	Documentary research, FGDs and in-depth interviews	Observations, documents or archival research, FGDs and in-depth interviews	Qualitative data collected through observations, FGDs and interviews according to the contexts/needs
Data analysis strategies	Content analyses, "restoring" what the informants say during the interviews or discussions	Content and Thematic analysis	To consider the youth and the community's views

Source: Adapted from Creswell et al. (2007: 241–242) and Berg (2001: 238–239)

8.8 Challenges in Using Action Research Under Constructivism and Interpretivism Paradigms

The crucial question here is to understand why AR was appropriate in this study. Saunders et al. (2007: 140) highlighted important aspects of the AR. Among them, there is “the purpose of the research: research in action rather than research about action.” The second dimension of AR is “the involvement of practitioners in the research and, in particular, a collaborative democratic partnership between practitioners and researchers”. In this way, the informants or

participants are “subjects or objects of the study” (Saunders et al., 2007: 141). Therefore, the study borrowed these aspects but also was supported by other research techniques like community involvement, participatory design, qualitative data collection and analysis. As for the research theories that supported the study, there are the transformation theory, the intergroup relation theory and the ToC. This latter is the major aim of the study, to bring about change in behaviours, attitudes and living conditions.

The PAR informed and guided this study and the intervention to undertake with the communities in the research area. As Saunders et al. (2007: 141) argue, “the strengths of an action research strategy are a focus on change, the recognition that time needs to be devoted to diagnosing, planning, taking action and evaluating and the involving of employees (practitioners) throughout the process”. PAR as a research design focuses on techniques that take into consideration the study population’s context, cultures, interactive activities and emotional lives. By using this approach, I planned and conducted research using suitable approaches and methods that assisted me in engaging the people at grassroots to share their history, grievances and concerns and to suggest the solutions. Specifically, the study purpose was to evaluate the impacts of conflicts, of chronic and destructive violence on the youth and on their living environment. It assessed the current strategies or initiatives put in place for conflict transformation in Masisi and the entire region. Finally, the research was designed to devise strategies to reduce the prejudice, stereotypes and other misunderstanding among the youth and their communities as it would bring various participants together to discuss and find the way out of the crisis.

The issue of participants’ accessibility was considered. The study took place in a context of conflict where some areas were not easily accessible or people, especially the youths, were not eager to respond to the research questions. They were suspicious and afraid to open up. The research topic was sensitive. The issues of confidentiality especially after dealing with people who confessed to having taken part in the hostilities called for coding techniques.

8.9 Piloting the Research Tools

The research guide was piloted in order to establish its validity and reliability before the study was conducted in Masisi, Eastern DRC. The methodology consisted of analysis by five

experts of the question guide which consisted of 10 items. The guide used was given to experts to comment on the ambiguity and the difficulties and relevancy of the questions to ensure construct, content and face validity. The pilot study was conducted in Mupfuni Shanga, a traditional subcounty located along the border of North Kivu Province and South Kivu Province. Mupfuni Shanga covers an area of 1 740 km².⁴

The purpose of the pilot study was to establish the respondents' understanding of the terminology used in the question guide; to check whether emotive questions were used as they could upset people during these times when a big part of their province was under occupation by the M23 rebel group. In addition, the pilot study aimed at checking whether leading questions had been used as they could bias the respondents' answers. Specifically, the aims of the pilot study were:

- To assess the practicality and feasibility of the study to be conducted in conflict settings. The major task was to evaluate how people understood the questions and how they responded following the conflicts, chronic and destructive violence they were living in.
- To assess the efficacy of the research instrument while addressing weaknesses and issues that could hinder the data collection processes and any intervention in the research area. In this way, the process increased the quality and credibility of the study.
- To evaluate the time factors, the resources and costs required for any interventions to be conducted in these conditions.

The assumption was that the clarity, the relevancy and the understandability of the research instrument would be established, and the question guide would yield needed and important insights from informants in order to understand the causes and the extent of violence in the pilot study area. Therefore, the validity and reliability of the used instrument and its replicability to other areas under security threats would be easily established.

⁴Interview with the Secretary of the Traditional Chief, at Bweremana, 8th August, 2023

8.10 Preliminaries to The Intervention Conducted At Kitchanga, Masisi

The study targeted people involved in social activities or those in local leadership positions; the youth in general and community members living in Mupfuni Shanga and who knew about conflicts and violence in their province. According to the Secretary in the Office of the local chief, the total population in Mupfuni Shanga is 65 182 people.⁵ This is a mixed population mostly comprising Hunde, Hutu, Havu and Tembo. It should be noted that the total population in Mupfuni Shanga is known unlike the populations in other entities which is not known because the armed groups make it difficult to determine the exact number of people living there.

The purposive sampling technique was used to select informants who were able to provide in-depth information through probing. The technique was preferred given the size of the population and thus using it eased the sample selection in terms of the time required as it gave an equal opportunity to each informant to participate to the study. Hence, identifiable people from Mupfuni Shanga made up the study population for this pilot study. The selected sample for the pilot study consisted of 25 informants who included farmers, hairdressers or barbers, builders, carpenters, cattle breeders, bikers, students, businesspersons and young people involved in selling airtime. These people were approached according to given characteristics like being a known resident of Mupfuni Shanga with knowledge of the area and its problems.

8.11 Procedure of Data Collection

I proceeded with making an appointment and was sought from the experts to evaluate the data collection instrument. The question guide was submitted to them to determine whether it met the study objectives. Second, a gatekeeper's letter was provided to the youth representative as a request for permission to conduct the study in Mupfuni Shanga. A covering letter accompanied the research instrument and explained the purpose of the study. The evaluated question guide was then directly administered to informants from the research area. The major strategy was to use Kobo toolbox in the Mupfuni Shanga and to bring the

⁵ Interview with the Secretary of the Traditional Chief, at Bweremana, 8th August, 2023

informants to express their opinion towards conflicts, violence and communal relationships. The data collected from both experts and informants was edited and decisions made on whether to use the instrument or not and how. The outcome of this study would enlighten further studies and interventions to be conducted in other areas.

8.11.1 Data Collection Instruments

Data was collected using an evaluation grid and a question guide. The guide was used to collect data from informants, which involved a face-to-face interview session with them on issues relating to people interaction, conflicts, violence and youth involvement in conflicts and subsequent violence as well as the solutions to be provided. This approach was preferred because it gave the respondents an opportunity to reflect on the research issues and allowed the researcher to probe for in-depth information.

8.11.2 Data Analysis

Content analysis and thematic analysis was used to edit the data and reorganise it into meaningful shorter sentences or themes. These were then presented as quotations in order to have a clear interpretation of the results, as explained by Vaismoradi et al. (2013) and Vaismoradi et al. (2016). These scholars acknowledge the existence of similarities and dissimilarities between qualitative content analysis and thematic. Both methods were applied in this inquiry. I employed thematic analysis to explore the themes that emerged from empirical data (focus group discussions and interviews), and content analysis to examine the themes embedded in literary sources.

8.11.3 Trustworthiness

According to Kumar (2011), “validity refers to the appropriateness of each step in finding out what you set out to.” Put simply, Kumar asserts that “validity is the ability for an instrument to measure what it is designed to measure”. Creswell and Miller (2000) summed up “the terms” around the concept of trustworthiness according to various researchers. These terms are not limited to “[...] a multiple array of terms similar to validity in the literature, which the

authors equate to same such as authenticity, goodness, adequacy, trustworthiness, verisimilitude, credibility, and plausibility”⁶ (Cypress, 2017: 257). The overall aim is to demonstrate that a given study is credible. This ensured that the used question guide yielded relevant and correct data.

Other aspects used to confirm the validity of the instrument and the data collected were data triangulation, informants’ triangulation, peer reviews and member checking. These exercises were preferred because they provided assurance that the data and conclusions had contributions from various sources and people, thus reinforcing their trustworthiness or credibility.

8.11.4 Replicability of Research

This refers to the fact that the results from a study could apply to another or be replicated to that study using the same procedures, sample and instruments. In this case, a second study can be based on the same methods as the first one but, this time with new data or research area and it will produce the same results. In the case where there has been replication in a second study, then the research results from the first study are said to be accurate, reliable and valid.

8.11.5 Ethical Standards Observed During the Pilot Study

Before the exercise of data collection, I underwent a TRREE training programme in research ethics evaluation and received a training certificate on 9May 2022. Empowered by this training, I could proceed with field activities at least in piloting my tools. I observed the key principles of research ethics (informed consent, privacy, confidentiality, and accuracy) during the pilot study. I provided full information to participants and disclosed the nature of the study, the risks and benefits that each individual participant would expect and put in place the mechanisms through which participants learned more about my research project. I abode by the ethical standards in social research and provide the opportunity to participants to be co-researchers as demanded by the prerequisites of participatory action research.

⁶ This argument is drawn from the works of Lincoln YS, Guba EG. *Nat Inquiry*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications; 1991; pp. 45-51.

Another ethical question was to know how confidentiality should be preserved after data collection from a very unpredictable area like Mupfuni Shanga. Informants were assured of confidentiality and that nothing in the work would bear any indication that could identify them. Moreover, they were given assurance that the data would be kept in a safe place only accessible by the researcher.

8.11.6 Rationale of the Pilot Study

In a conflict and violent setting, there was a need to ensure that the research process would be conducted to minimise risks to the researcher and to the informants. Thus, this study aimed at highlighting the trustworthiness of the selected instruments for data collection and the subsequent intervention.

In addition, in a hot place like Masisi with more than 250 armed groups and the M23 factor, it is not guaranteed that research can easily take place because of various factors, such as the researcher's security, the issues of trust between the researcher and the informants; and the issues of fear and anger on the side of informants. In addition, in a place where violence and killings are a normal way of life, it is not only risky to undertake any intervention but it is also uncertain that the undertaken intervention could be sustained or yield expected results. Finally, this research aims to suggest a transformational approach, the bottom-up approach. The study also aimed to match the literature with the reality on the ground, precisely from Mupfuni Shanga.

8.11.7 Results from the Pilot Study

Mupfuni Shanga is a customary entity located in Eastern DRC, on the border between North-Kivu Province and South Kivu Province. This entity covers 1,740km² and is made of seven sub-entities known as *Localités*. These sub-entities are: Bweremana, Kashenda, Bishange, Kabase, Kituva, Kiluku and Lutobogo. Mupfuni Shanga is mainly a farming area where people grow bananas, cassava, beans and coffee. For some villages bordering Lake Kivu, there are fishermen. Mupfuni Shanga is home to 65 182 people.

8.11.8 Types of Violence in Mupfuni Shanga

In Mupfuni Shanga, direct violence is visible and manifest, physical and psychological violence. This is lived through trauma, kidnappings, murders and other behavioural actions intended to harm others. Direct violence is the visible type of violence reflected by physical or verbal attacks, killings or murder, kidnappings, torture and every action that affects the person who suffers it. Direct violence can be driven by structural injustices or social injustices. Galtung (1996: 31) calls it actor violence and asserts that “actor or direct violence is defined in person, social and world spaces and is intended, by individuals acting singly or inside collectivities”. The situation in Mupfuni Shanga where the youth sometimes attack one another and injure or kill people from the other groups is an example of direct violence.

As for structural violence, it is visible through social systems of traditional power held by the Hunde people. Sometimes, people from the same family fight for traditional power and quite often their fighting results in killings or social disturbances. Their behaviours lead to manipulation by politicians and wealthy people. Cultural violence in this area is linked to the social systems of power sharing, inheritance, land sharing and use. Structural violence encompasses all types of violence that result from the social system and are translated into exclusion, marginalisation and differences in general. The customary social structures in Mupfuni Shanga have deprived some groups of their rights and ability to satisfy their basic human needs. People from the royal family or those from the royal ethnic group called princes need others to work for them in a kind of slavery. This is a system where the youth are politically repressed, economically exploited and culturally alienated. In this way, the youth are denied their freedom of movement and of speech, their wellbeing and their identity. Politically, the youth from one side cannot access some positions. Economically, those of the youth who work on the farms have to pay taxes whenever they go to the village markets. The same applies to the motorists or drivers who have to pay taxes to the youth to use the roads. Finally, cultural violence is reflected by the prevailing attitudes, the beliefs and subsequent stereotypes and prejudices among people from the same groups or from different groups.

8.11.9 Existing Mechanisms to Deter Violence in Mupfuni Shanga

There are various mechanisms that could be used to deter the youth violence or social violence and that should help the communities in Mupfuni Shanga to live peacefully. However, the question persists as all the informants confirmed that there have been no initiatives to reconcile people or to deter violence. They noted that even traditional means of conflict transformation or stopping violence have not been used in conflict situations in their area. The reasons could be that people do not trust each other or that they cannot trust the solutions that come out of any traditional forum. In addition to this, every ethnic group has its own tradition and mechanism to resolve conflicts. Thus, there is no single unifying mechanism to solve or resolve conflicts and to deal with violence.

8.11.10 A Way out of Conflicts and Violence

The pilot study indicated the necessity of cultivating the youth's aspirations for life, providing them with positive sociopolitical role models, and encouraging them to consider how they can contribute with their skills and abilities. Rather than squandering their energy on weapons, they should instead wield tools like hoes and engage in agricultural activities. They should collaborate on communal projects such as constructing bridges to connect neighbouring villages. Additionally, they should be trained in non-violent communication techniques, fostering mutual affirmation instead of resorting to stereotypes, negative language or prejudices that create adversarial perceptions of other communities. Encouraging them to harbor positive attitudes towards others and refrain from harboring grudges or resentment towards them is also crucial.

Second, the community should help the youth with working skills through vocational training and provide them with working skills. The youths have energy and the will to do something good or positive for themselves and their areas. The community should capitalise on this energy and will and guide the youth on how they can use it to their advantage and that of their society. Third, the youths should be called upon and get involved in conflict and violence transformation. The stakeholders, civil society and the government should set up businesses or activities to unite the youths. Since the youths are unable to establish their own businesses and are used by manipulators who involve them in conflicts and violence, the

approach of involving them in community activities could awaken them and lead them to be more creative. These could be farming activities like growing food stuff or breeding animals (goats, pigs or cows) since Mupfuni Shanga is an agro-pastoralist area. Lastly, the community, civil society and government should help the youths with coping skills or lead them to use their skills and knowledge to build houses and not destroy them, they can positively benefit from their forests instead of using them for hiding and cutting trees for timber; they need to be brought into communal activities and work together.

8.11.11 Summary of the Pilot Study

The pilot study tested the research instruments and their viability. This was done at two levels, first the experts' level and then at Mupfuni Shanga with informants with the same characteristics as all the people involved in conflicts and violence in various provinces in the DRC. According to the experts' evaluation, the instrument was successfully constructed without ambiguity and its items or questions were quite understandable. The pilot study also revealed some limitations related to the sociopolitical situations based on armed conflicts and violence.

Then the pilot study presented the results from Mupfuni Shanga, providing evidence of the nature and the consequences of conflicts and violence and how the youths take part in the conflicts and violence. The pilot study also established the types of violence as presented by Galtung. These are direct violence, structural violence and cultural violence. In one way or another, these are the kind of violence that people are living in form Mupfuni Shanga. In addition, the pilot study presented the mechanisms to deter violence among the youth.

Among the actions that would tackle the root causes of violence into which the youths are dragged, the pilot study suggested the creation of a permanent youth group for peace through which they could learn to reduce prejudice, stereotypes and misunderstanding. In addition, in these groups, the youths could be invited to take part in community events without discrimination or exclusion as part of building their destroyed community setting. These events could be built together and tilling land together. Basically, the following major outcomes were revealed: first, violence was reduced and the youth and their communities showed their willingness and agreed to resocialise and to work together. Finally, non-violent

behaviours and non-violent communication were promoted in a transformed community and effective dialogue took place among the conflicting parties, especially the youths in Mupfuni Shanga. The pilot study gave the assurance that the study in the main research site would be researchable through the planned approaches.

8.12 Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter was to highlight the major points of the research design and approach, the research context as well as the pilot study that was conducted prior to the intervention in the research area. The pilot study used the PAR where the participants, here the youths, took an active part in the research especially in giving shape to the intervention aiming at reducing violent acts among the youth in Masisi. The chapter also outlined the research approach which is qualitative. This matches the design and the research objectives together with the research questions sustaining this thesis. In addition, the chapter presented the research context in which the study took place and the processes the study followed based on a specific research worldview. This is the social constructivist and transformative worldviews that underpin conflict transformation and violence reduction among the youth. The last part of the chapter presented a pilot study that was undertaken to test the feasibility of the main intervention in Masisi known to host hundreds of militia groups and an endless war brought in by the M23 militia group. The research method is complementary to the research design and is based on field activities, the different processes for data collection and data handling or analysis. That is what the next chapter is about.

CHAPTER NINE: RESEARCH METHODS

9.1 Introduction

The research used various sources including both primary and secondary sources in trying to answer the four research questions and to understand the causes, the extent and the consequences of youths' violence in Masisi. This aspect also helped to evaluate the transformative mechanisms used to curtail the violence as well as to suggest the way out of conflicts and violence in Masisi. The major focus in my study was first to learn from history or the archival facts about conflicts and the youth involvement in conflicts and violence in Masisi since 1994 onward. In this way, this aspect of my research will be based on historical approach and informants' stories. Second, the aim was to learn from people at the research sites, those who took part in the violence and those who suffered the impact of conflicts and violence. So scholarly publications on youths and violence were revised including books, journal papers, theses, reports and internet sources on the theme under research. The information from these materials was useful as it provided the general context of youth and violence in the world, in Africa, in the DRC and in Masisi in particular. Finally, I reflect on the situations, the youth's stake in the conflicts and subsequent violence and from there with the study participants, to device means for conflict transformation. As a matter of fact, violence in Masisi has taken so high proportions that one needs highly selected techniques to understand the puzzling violence and conflicts.

The aim of this chapter is to describe the research methodology used in this thesis. This chapter highlights the research processes, step-by-step from the initial step of the research process or design up to the writing of the final result in form of this thesis. To achieve this, the chapter is divided into the following sub-points: first of all the major steps taken in the research process; a description of the research sites and the study population; the sampling techniques, selection and inclusion or exclusion criteria based on the non-probability sampling; the data collection techniques and the data collection instruments; the data compilation, coding and analysis; the trustworthiness of the research; and the ethical considerations to be taken care of in a very insecure context like Masisi.

9.2 Research Approach: Qualitative Research

Creswell et al. (2007: 236-238) describes three types of designs that are the qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods. Qualitative methods help to overcome the shortcomings of quantitative methods. These latter (quantitative methods) try to “explain the causes of objectively observable and measurable behaviour” and the “causal relationship between variables not processes”. In their views and presenting the research design, Creswell, Hanson, Plano Clark and Morales (2007: 237), assert: “Research design will refer to approaches to qualitative research that encompass formulating research questions and procedures for collecting, analysing and reporting findings”.

In a qualitative approach to data collection, the researcher has face-to-face contact with the natural or real word of informants; he interacts with them and gets first-hand information. Among the major features of qualitative research methods is that the researcher is in direct contact with the research participants or informants. In this way, data collection can be more informal, relaxed and relatively enjoyable. In addition, this encourages the subjects or respondents to actively participate in the study. For my study, data was gathered through observations, interviews and literature.

Another feature is that qualitative research methods aim at discovering and interpreting meanings people ascribe to their situations or events they are witnessing, explaining behaviours, opinions or perceptions. In this case, issues, questions or problems can be learnt in depth, and they can be examined in detail as the researcher is not restricted by specific questions because of the flexibility of the approach. Finally, the research framework and the research direction can be easily and quickly revised as new information is given by the informants. Thus, it has flexibility. However, among the limitations of qualitative research methods, the researcher can sometimes be biased as it can sometimes be difficult to maintain or to demonstrate rigour in the interaction with the informants. The researcher can sometimes be influenced by the research site or informants as he can also influence the informants. According to Miles and Huberman (2003: 477–478), these influences or bias can also impact on the data analysis.

Moreover, the quality of research strongly depends on the researcher's techniques or skills in data collection even though the volume of data collected makes the analysis and interpretation time-consuming as the research yields a lot of data.

Another negative side of the qualitative approach is that the research results are particular to a subject group as replication is very rare (Clancy 2002: 548). Hence, the results cannot be generalized to larger population or individuals because data is collected from a few cases or individuals. Qualitative research may not be well understood like quantitative research as it is hard to convince people of the importance of its contributions to science or to academia.

Among the designs in qualitative methods I used are in-depth interviews, focus groups or group interviews, oral histories to study perceptions, experiences and accounts of conflicts and violence by the youth or gathering historical knowledge as viewed by individuals. This methodological approach enabled me to highlight people's views, attitudes and beliefs concerning the various conflicts they had suffered or were suffering (Clancy 2002: 548). I focused on the youth in Masisi as a case study without looking at other parts of the North Kivu Province where there are reported acts of violence and criminality like at Beni, Rutshuru (Bunagana) or Bwito.

9.3 The Source of Qualitative Methods

About the origin of the qualitative research methods, Taylor, Bogdan and DeVault (2016: 4–5) argue that the qualitative research is “as old as recorded history”. However, they also explain that it was during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries that the qualitative methods came to be widely used and the “first piece that used it” was by LePlay in 1855 in his study on the “European families and communities” (Taylor et al., 2016: 4). The methods were then employed in Anthropology especially during field research. Among the pioneers in Anthropology, there were Boa (1911) and Malinowski (1932). The qualitative domain was then adopted by sociologists and was mostly used in American sociology (Chicago School of Sociology from 1910 to 1940 with “Participant observation studies in urban life”). The fact is that qualitative methods have never been isolated tools as Clancy (2002: 548) found a complementarity between qualitative and quantitative methods and assumes that the first “can

improve the accuracy and relevance of quantitative studies by increasing our knowledge of the generation of data and the identification of the appropriate variables to be measured”.

Various tools, approaches or designs, being qualitative or quantitative, have been shaped and provide methods of data collection, their analysis and interpretation. Tesch (1990) and Wolcott (1992) both provided more than twenty approaches that can help to fulfil a qualitative research task. They both present in a symbolic tree the major pillars of qualitative research. The picture of the tree as presented by Wolcott (in Miles et al., 2003: 20) reflects a good starting point of the approach, from the grassroots where he locates the research setting based on the day-to-day features of the sources of data. That is where the researcher starts the research action by experimenting with, inquiring about and examining the realities he encounters. This step goes with the building blocks of what Wolcott calls the archival strategies, non-interactive observation strategies, interactive observation strategies and ethnographic strategies. These different strategies are linked to various analytical methods among which Wolcott (in Miles et al., 2003: 20) identifies the content analysis, the narrative of life stories, history, biography, post-structuralism, phenomenology, field work, communication ethnography, discourse analysis, knowledge science and human ethnology among others. These strategies reflect the major activities of the qualitative research which are, according to Wolcott, to “observe, to interrogate and to analyse/interpret”.

In qualitative data collection, the researcher is in face-to-face contact with the natural or real world of informants; he interacts with them and gets first-hand information. Among the major positive features or advantages of qualitative research methods, are the following:

- ✓ The researcher is in direct contact with the subjects, the research participants or informants.
- ✓ In this way, data collection can be more informal and relaxing. This also encourages the subjects or the respondents to actively participate in research. Data is gathered through observations, interviews and readings. A qualitative research design offers a wide range of sources of data through which the collection is done in a natural setting where the issues took place or have been witnessed.

- ✓ Qualitative research methods aim at discovering and interpreting meanings people ascribe to the situations or events they are witnessing; explaining behaviours, opinions or perceptions. So, issues, questions or problems can be studied in depth.
- ✓ In these approaches, issues can be examined in detail as the researcher is not restricted by specific questions because of the flexibility of the approaches. Data collection is done with an analytical mind on the part of the researcher.

The researcher must stick to the informants' "meanings" about the issues under study rather than his own meaning or the meanings from the archives; even though he has to interpret what the informants tell him.

At the basis of qualitative research data, Creswell (2013), Tesch (1990) Wolcott (2009), and Marshall and Rosman (2016) establish various research designs that could be grouped into the traditions to collection of qualitative data. These traditions are the PAR, narrative, discourse analysis, phenomenology, ethnography, case study and grounded theory.



Figure 11:Community leaders discussing the types of conflicts in their area, Mupfunyi Shanga, 2021. **Source:** The researcher

This inquiry consisted in PAR as design and qualitative methods that comprised observations, in-depth interviews, focus groups discussions or group interviews, and oral accounts of violent events or gathering historical knowledge as viewed by the youths or by their community members. I adopted an action research design to seek to respond to research questions and achieve its objectives. These methodological approaches enabled me to highlight and understand people's attitudes and beliefs concerning the various conflicts and violence they had suffered or were suffering. This is community-based research or PAR. To sum up, the following table gives a survey of the qualitative methods, their strengths and weaknesses.

Table 23:Another view of qualitative methods

QUALITATIVE METHODS	
ASPECTS	COMMENTS
Designs	Narrative research, case study, PAR, grounded theory, phenomenology
Study objects	-Individuals (Narrative, phenomenology) -Processes, activities, events (Case studies, ground theory) -Culture-sharing behaviour (Ethnography)
Objectives/Focus	-Asking and answering the questions How? Why? -Aim at discovering and interpreting meanings, social behaviour, opinions, perceptions -Particular to a subject group or a domain, sector, person...
Data	-Uses primary data and secondary data in form of words -Derived from natural or ordinary events occurring in a natural setting -Collected in the researcher's proximity, in a specific context within a local context. -Data is rich because it is collected over a long period of time -Offers an explanation that goes beyond the "What" and "How many" questioning to turn to "how" and "why" things happen
Data collection Methods	-The researcher is in direct contact with the informants/participants -Data is gathered through observation, interviews and literature -Questions are open-ended and call for flexibility in response. The research can probe for more explanations of a answer by the informants
Strengths	-Issues, problems or questions can be examined in detail and in depth -The researcher is not limited or restricted by a specific question -Data collection can be more informal, relaxed and fun -The research framework and direction can be easily and quickly revised as new information is given (flexibility) -a pen and a paper could sometimes be enough to collect data
Limitations	-There is risk of being biased and it is difficult to maintain or to demonstrate any rigour. -There may be no replication of the results or, in other case, the replication is rare. -Results cannot be generalised to larger population or individuals because data is collected from a few cases. -The volume of data collected makes the analysis and interpretation time-consuming

Source: The researcher

9.4 Research Processes

Here, the chapter presents the steps in the research process. These are the topic discussion with the supervisors, submitting the research proposal and its corrections, the ethical training with a confirming certificate; field work; work with the supervisors and the informants. Table 24 reflects the major steps in the research processes as suggested by Kumar (2011) and McGrath et al. (2018).

Table 24:Operational steps of the research process as applied in this thesis

STEPS	ACTIVITIES	APPLICATIONS
STEP 1	Exploratory phases and formulating a research problem	There is too much crime, violence and conflict among the youths in Masisi. There is need to reduce this violence. This has not been given much attention by decision-makers
STEP 2	Planning research and conceptualising a research design. Dimensions to emphasise: is the design manageable, valid, workable?	Exploration and explanation the youth context in Masisi; their relationships/interactions. Need for interviews and observations to find answers to the research questions.
STEP 3	Constructing the instruments of data collection	Need for research tools: an observational form; a question guide for interviews and themes for FGD. Need to test or pre-test the instruments
STEP 4	Sample selection	Who will take part in the research, in order to minimise the bias and the gap in previous researches?
STEP 5	Writing a research proposal	The PG2 was drafted, submitted and corrected by reviewers according to the DUT suggested framework
STEP 6	Collecting data	Field work or archival activities to get information about the research questions leading to conclusions (from interviews, FGD, documents)
STEP 7	Processing and displaying data	Qualitative data to be collected for this thesis and analysed
STEP 8	Writing a research report	A final report

Source: Compiled from Kumar (2011: 30-35)

9.5 Research Site and Study Population

This study being a case study, I decided to include three places, geographically speaking. These are Kitchanga and Nyamitaba-Nyakariba in Eastern Masisi and Rubaya in central Masisi. Each of these three locations has unique histories, communities and activities. Kitchanga situated in the East, is a cosmopolitan site with a variety of ethnic groups, the Hunde, Hutu, Tutsi, Nande and Shi. In contrast, Nyamitaba-Nyakariba, located in the centre of Masisi, primarily consist of Hutu and few Tutsis and one household of Hunde. Rubaya, like Kitchanga, hosts various ethnic groups and has minerals, particularly coltan, which serve as significant attractions. These sites were selected according to their geographic position and their history of conflicts and violence.



Figure 12: With young people at Kitchanga, 2022. **Source:** the researcher

The universe is the entire population of any area under study. This universe is made up of all the people living in that area. In this study, the universe included the population of Masisi. The sample comprised the youth representatives, religious leaders, traditional leaders, school teachers and businesspeople from the research sites.

As for the population in Masisi, according to the CAID (or *Cellule d'Analyse des Indicateurs de Développement*, This is a centre created on 9th June 2015 by the Congolese government and working under the Office of the Prime Minister to provide statistics and other socioeconomic information from provinces to enable the decision-makers to plan their intervention accordingly in each province), the entire population of Masisi is estimated at 843 396 people living on 4 734 square kilometres in North Kivu Province (CAID, 2021). The Masisi District was created on 15 March 1935 and had its headquarters in Walowa Banyungu. The headquarters were moved to the current location in 1940. Masisi is surrounded by the District of Rutshuru and Walikale; to the north; the District of Kalehe to the South; to the East by the District of Rutshuru, the Lake Kivu and the District of Nyiragongo. To the west, it borders the District of Walikale (CAID, 2021). The CAID provides the following demographic distribution of ethnic groups residing in Masisi: Bahutu (50%), Bahunde, known to be autochthonous (20%), Batutsi (10%), Batembo (10%); Bakumu (10%) and Batwa (10%). The primary languages spoken in the region are Kiswahili (56%), Kinyarwanda (15%), Kihunde (20%), Kitembo (2%), and Kinande (2%). Primary data was collected from 60 informants who were purposively selected in the three selected areas, here, Kitchanga, Nyamitaba-Nyakariba and Rubaya. The study targeted the youth and people involved in conflicts and violence in Masisi. These included the youth leaders, the local government officers, NGO managers and the local community. It also targeted people who had been once recruited or had taken part in violence as they were identified through a snowballing process.

9.6 Sampling Techniques and Sample Selection: Non-Probability Sampling

Miles and Huberman (2003: 64) provide what they call the sampling parameters or the pillars that guide sample selection. The four parameters they provide are the settings, the actors or participants, the events and the processes.

For the sampling methods, I used purposive sampling targeting the key informants or those who were most likely to have the information I needed. This sampling technique was used to select respondents who would be able to provide in-depth information. Respondents were identified according to the preselected criteria. They were religious leaders and church members, teachers, youth representatives, students, nurses, businesspeople and armed group

leaders. They also had to be living in the research area and be knowledgeable about it. The total sample for the study included 60 respondents from various social sectors.

As initially said, the snowballing technique was crucial to this study given the situation on the ground with hundreds of militia groups and where most of the youth are involved or have been involved in armed conflicts, have guns or have used them. To reach some informants, I used snowball sampling since I was unknown in the area and I did not know the people from the research sites, Kitchanga, Nyakariba-Nyamitaba, Mweso, Kamuronza, Mufunyi Shanga and Rubaya. The first person I started with recommended another potential participant according to the study objectives and criteria. Snowball sampling is a selection technique used in exploratory purposive sampling. In this way, I asked the first contacted informant to provide the contact details of others who could respond to the research questions and provide the necessary data. All this was done to ensure geographical representation as the youth violence could vary from one side to the other with different types of problems. From Goma, I got contacts from friends and people from the villages. These contacts then led the researcher to other community members. The purpose of the research was explained to them, after which I asked for oral consent from them to conduct the discussions as most of them were reluctant to sign any document given the situations they were living in.

I needed four research assistants who should be knowledgeable about the sites, someone who knew the people, their culture, were aware of their behaviour and any other issue that could help to get data about the study or even points that could be detrimental to the research. These points were security issues or youth actors involved in leadership positions.

9.7 Qualitative Data Collection Techniques

Three categories of qualitative data were used in this study: data from observations and my research notes/notebook; data from the literature; and data from the informants at the research sites. Accordingly, among the qualitative data collection techniques, documentation (archival or literature research), observations (notebook), interviews and/or focus group discussions were used. These techniques aim at providing primary and secondary data.

9.7.1 Researcher's Field Notes

Most of the interviewees were uncomfortable with recordings or signing any document. So, I had to negotiate at least to take handwritten notes. These ones used to describe the results or major points of my observations, my personal observations, opinions and perceptions. In addition, in a diary, I gathered notes about the attitudes and points that were meaningful or that responded to my research questions or my objectives. However, the data was captured in an unstructured style based on general questions that called for informants' points of view. The issue of organising and interpreting them was time-consuming. However, this had a twofold advantage: first, to get to understand deeply some aspects of the informants' stories and to align them with the body or emotional language; second, to reflect as closely as possible the meaning the informant conveyed. The informants were asked the same questions even though some of them were talkative and expanded on their exploits describing their achievements in using guns.

9.7.2 Observations and Fieldwork

The first step before making any observation was to know what to observe, from whom or where and the needed level of accuracy or precision. Observation as a technique is based on collecting data about human activities or events in a natural setting and is an important component of descriptive and interpretive approaches. In this way, as a researcher, I had a face-to-face interaction with the informants who had experienced violence or had enough information about conflicts and violence in Masisi. In order to collect data using observation, the researcher can adopt two different positions, either as an external actor who observes different scenarios of events or people involved in the observed scenes. He can also participate in the observed situation. The second approach, participant observation, was advisable given the ongoing situation of conflicts. I had to avoid being isolated or being alone so as not to attract too much attention to my person or to be with dangerous people in a dangerous place. That is why I needed to accompany my research assistants as much as possible.

The first observation is that in the research sites the situation seems to be generally calm as people were moving around without showing any sign of worries or disturbance. Some could

be seen engaging in day-to-day activities such as farming, fetching water or looking for firewood. Key information collected through the research instruments included the causes, extent and impacts of conflicts and violence; the youth involvement in violence, the mechanisms used to face conflicts and violence and their effectiveness.

9.7.3 Documentary Research

Here, I went through the available literature about conflicts, violence and youth involvement in Masisi. Books, reports, photographs and any other material related to the research topic were perused. These materials provided secondary data (Corbierre et al., 2014: 13). The documents were selected following the nature of needed information and the availability of the documents. The information needed was around the conceptual and theoretical frameworks. The concepts were youth, violence, conflicts, intergroup contact, transformation and change. The theories used in the study were the intergroup contact theory of Allport; the conflict transformation theory of Lederach; the PAR approach and the ToC. The information about Masisi and its long-term conflicts was taken from the archives.

9.7.4 Focus Group Discussions and In-depth Interviews: Primary Data

In my research, primary sources were the informants or people who could provide the necessary information as they had lived at or had experience of the research sites. These informants were of particular interest because of their participation in the PAR in order to devise means and ways of bringing youth violence to an end. In this study, I took a care to respect the ethical requirements among which were avoiding harm to the informants, respect and justice (Morrow, 2013: 21). In fact, I was aware of the volatile and delicate situation at the research sites, the ways people lived with each other and the proliferation of militia or armed groups round the villages or within the villages; I was also informed of the relationships among people and the armed groups or among themselves. So, in order not to harm anyone, I had to be careful with the interactions and the wording. I also had to make sure that I did not attract too much attention to myself, being a stranger in the area.

The strategies used to collect data involved a brainstorming session with the groups of youths on the issues related to conflict and chronic violence in Masisi. This approach was preferred because it gave an opportunity to group participants to reflect on issues around suggested

themes or topics. I conducted five focus group discussions (FGDs) labeled from one to five. The first two groups (FGD1 with students and FGD2 with teachers) were held at a location designated as NBK. Two additional groups (FGD3 and FGD4) took place at a site referenced as KBM, while the fifth group (FGD5) was conducted at a location referred to as MBM.

At NBK, the first group (FGD1) consisted of 12 student participants, evenly divided between six boys and six girls. The second group (FGD2) comprised 15 participants, including 13 males and 2 females, all of whom were teachers. These FGDs were conducted on January 27 and 28, 2022.

At KBM, FGD3 included nine participants, all boys, while FGD4 had a total of eight participants, consisting of six boys and two girls. Participants in these discussions were youths from diverse backgrounds. These FGDs were held on January 23 and 24, 2022.

The fifth FGD (FGD5) took place on January 21, 2023, at MBM and included eight participants of various church affiliations. Among them, three were from the Seventh-day Adventist Church, two from the Church of Friends (*Église des amis*), two from the Catholic Church, and one from the Pentecostal Church (CPAC). All eight participants in this group were male. That made 52 participants. In fact, I assumed that starting with FGDs would give me some insights which I could follow up with individuals or face-to-face interviews. That is what happened as it was now easier to interact with individuals, some of whom had participated in the FGDS.

Prior to the FGDs, I had to introduce myself and to explain the purpose of the research before I obtained consent from the respondents. Since the district was still in the midst of a very deadly war, the informants were very reluctant to sign any documents especially as most of them were illiterate and were not so sure of what they had to sign for in spite of the explanations I gave them. Even those who could read and write were reluctant to sign a written document, so they only gave verbal consent, although some of them gave me their phone numbers in case I had additional information to ask them. That is why I sought verbal consent from them. Quite surprisingly, they were happy to be photographed and even had no opposition to having it published. Later on, I realised that they were right not to sign as a group of armed people who saw those papers with a strange logo reacted negatively even

though I explained that I was from Durban University of Technology from Mandela's country. At least, they had heard of someone called Mandela and there were some South African military men among the peacekeepers in DRC. Another reason for people's reluctance to sign any written documents that I learnt about later on is that before I got to them, there had been a group of people in their villages asking them to sign a petition to divide their province. Some people even died during this operation. Therefore, they were very reluctant to sign any document.

During the FGDs, participants were encouraged to talk to each other, to exchange and give their opinions on issues around conflicts and violence. However, the first sessions always appeared like court sessions where participants from a given ethnic group pointed an accusing finger at other groups. It was clear that I had to come in to guide the discussions, to remind them that I was not there as a judge, that I had no power, that I was there just to listen to them and find a way with them.

9.7.5 Face-to-Face Interviews

I conducted interviews with the following informants: youth representatives; local authorities; religious people, other representatives of local civil society; members of armed groups; educators and businesspeople. The data from these face-to-face interviews supplemented the information collected during FGDs, observations and archival materials. Semi-structured interviews and informal interviews were organized with informants from the selected sites. In addition, in-depth interviews were used as a method of data collection. These interviews had two main characteristics: they involved a face-to-face encounter with the respondents; and interviews sought to understand both sides' perspectives, the researcher and the informant. All in all, interviews offered strong advantages as they allowed me to access a wide range of primary data from the respondents. Specifically, the advantages they offered were:

- Questions could be explained, reframed and information could be supplemented. In case of misunderstanding, I could repeat the question or reframe it to make it understood by the respondents. In return, the respondents were able to supplement their answers to those gained through non-verbal reactions or through observation. Questions were open-ended.

- There was the possibility of probing the initial answers in order to follow up and ask the respondents to explain their answers by giving more details or to elaborate on what they had said.

Given the complexity of the situation to investigate and the geographical or sensitivity of the area, I had first to prepare the respondents before asking any sensitive question or to explain complex questions to them.

9.7.6 Telephonic Interviews

These are interactions that were used to get information and update it or to keep in contact with some informants from Masisi and to interact with those informants living in inaccessible areas like Kinigi, Buabo in Masisi South and Kagusa in Masisi North where militia groups were very active and very threatening. telephonic interviews were also conducted for a follow-up of the activities or in order to be updated about the situations in villages and cities in Masisi where the youths lived.

9.8 Data Collection Instruments and Compilation

Data was collected by means of an observation guide, an interview guide and focus group discussion for the qualitative side of the research. The instruments helped to explore and evaluate how the youth interrelate in Masisi and how they experienced conflicts and subsequent violence. Thus, the interview guide was designed in order to collect rich information from people about behaviour, experiences, feelings, attitudes, opinions and knowledge about conflicts and their impacts. The question guide included details about individual experiences and feelings about conflicts and violence, the psychosocial and economic situations, opinions and future perspectives, the coping mechanisms used to face challenges and other gaps within their environment. An interview guide was used in the face-to-face sessions on issues related to conflicts and chronic violence in Masisi, how the youth were involved and what their suggested solutions were. This approach provided the informants with an opportunity to reflect on events and allowed me to probe for in-depth information.

The questions were formulated in French, Kiswahili and Kinyarwanda which are the major languages spoken in the study area. They were addressed to the interviewee in one of these languages. The choice of a data collection tool (interview schedule or questionnaire) was based upon the following set of criteria:

- The type of population: people who had been in conflicts for more than three decades. The rate of literacy is very low for them to go through a questionnaire, to understand it and to respond even though it could be by ticking.
- The geographical distribution of the respondents: they lived together in villages and were not scattered over a wide geographical space. There were militia and crooks in farms and bushes making it hard for villagers to go farming. Hence, quite often, they were available in their villages.
- The nature of the study investigation: even though people had been in conflict or may have taken part in the hostilities and violence and had to talk about sensitive issues, vital information was obtained despite some reluctance from the participants. The prime objective of this study was to understand the causes of youth involvement in conflicts and to create change through PAR, especially through sharing their experiences of wars or conflicts in their area and the transformative mechanisms that could be used in resolving these conflicts. The research gave the community members an opportunity to talk about the conflicts they had experienced, or they were going through, and to suggest a way out.

On the technical side of data collection, I used the Kobo collect and Google forms since I could at least move with my phone as it was not easy to move with written papers through numerous roadblocks. For data compilation, I had to use a coding system. According to Saldana (2013: 3), “a code in qualitative inquiry is most often a word or short phrase that symbolically assigns a summative, salient, essence-capturing and/or evocative attribute for a portion of language-based or visual data”.

Among the disadvantages of the qualitative method, there is the fact that it allows the collection of a lot of data that is time-consuming to compile and interpret. That is the reason why there was a need to win now the raw data in order to keep the data that responded to the research objectives or questions and separate them from what did not answer the research questions. For data analysis, this study tried through thematic content analysis to establish the

meaning or content from what informants said. Frey and Kreps (1999), Krippendorff (1989) and Anderson (2007) found that thematic content analysis is an exercise aiming at decoding a given message included in a given instruments in a communication setting. In this case, the study had to stick to the meanings emerging from the interview notes taken during interviews. That is why qualitative thematic content analysis was done following the themes or categories that occurred in the responses of the informants or through written documents. This exercise starts with the literature about the youths and their involvement in violence. Another analytical method adopted in this study was narrative research. According to Autesserre (2012: 5), “the study of narratives permeates a number of disciplines, from its dominance in literature to its occasional use by interpretive social scientists. Simply put, a narrative is a story that people create to make sense of their lives and environments”. Thus, there is a need to establish what is said about conflicts and what exists but is not openly revealed.

9.9 Trustworthiness

This section presents the tools and ways that were used to ensure the collected data are credible, reliable, transferable, under stable and provide clarity to the thesis.

9.9.1 Validation

Creswell and Poth (2014: 255) suggest the “use of validation process for assessing the accuracy of the findings as best described by the researcher and the participants.” For them, validation is a “process involves a combination of qualitative research strategies—for example, extensive field time, thick description and closeness of researcher to participants”. In this way, the process of validation meets the PAR in such a way that both involve the “closeness” of the stakeholders in research. Various scholars have developed various concepts to reflect this process of validation such as “credibility, authenticity, transferability, dependability and confirmability” whereas quantitative researchers have associated the concept of validation with those of “internal validation, external validation, reliability, and objectivity” (which relate to quantitative research) (Creswell and Poth, 2014: 256).

All these concepts turn around the process of triangulation. This is a process of cross-checking the various components of research work in order to ensure the credibility that the

final work must reflect. As much as I agree with experts who coined the above terms around triangulation, I regard these concepts as similar to complementarity and expansion. According to Creswell and Poth (2014: 256), in a qualitative research work, one can triangulate the data, the sources, the methods, the investigators and the theoretical framework. According to Whittemore et al. (2001), there are four primary validation criteria which are:

- **Credibility:** are the results an accurate interpretation of the participants' meanings? Need to crosscheck with the research assistants every evening after fieldwork.
- **Authenticity:** are different voices heard? Need to ensure that different voices from different informants are heard.
- **Criticality:** is there a critical appraisal of all aspects of the research?
- **Integrity:** are the investigators self-critical? The ethical considerations based on the principle of "do no harm", maintaining confidentiality especially for people in a sensitive situation or people who confess to having committed crimes.

9.9.2 Validity

According to Krippendorff (2004: 313), "validity is that quality of research results that leads us to accept them as true, as speaking about the real world of people, phenomena, events, experiences and actions." Reinforcing what Krippendorff asserted, Saunders et al. (2007: 150) argue that "validity is concerned with whether the findings are really about what they appear to be about. Is the relationship between two variables a causal relationship?" So, validity is understood as the ability of a research instrument to measure exactly what it is supposed to measure. This means the ability for a research tool to respond to the research questions and the researcher's objectives. Thus, validity applies most to the research instruments and their formation and evaluation. According to Krippendorff (2004: 313), there are various types of validity as explained in the table below.

Table 25: Types of validity

VALIDITY TYPE	MAJOR QUESTIONS	COMMENTS
Face validity	Does the content of the items appear to be suitable to the aims? To look at the importance, simplicity and understandability of the questions. This is like the “gatekeeper” of other validities (Krippendorff, 2004: 314)	To look at the content validity ratio of different questions and how they have been rated by experts
Construct validity	Do the items measure the concepts that they are intended to measure?	The major concepts in this thesis are: reduce violence, youth, transformation, intergroup contact, change, action research
Criterion validity	Do the results accurately measure the concrete outcome they are designed to measure?	The suggested strategies for conflict and violence transformation and restoring the youth relationships match the content of the objectives: to reduce violence among the youths in Masisi
Content validity	Are the items fully representative of what they aim to measure? They generate information on their representativeness and clarity and help to improve the research instruments through recommendations from an expert panel. The questions are rated in terms of their relevancy and clarity	The elements within the research tool captured the aspects of the research: to establish the nature, extent and impact of violence/conflicts among the youth; to assess the strategies for conflict transformation; to suggest the way out of violence among the youths in Masisi

Source: The researcher through documentary research

Before fieldwork or data collection, the instruments for data collection, namely, the question guide for the one-on-one interviews and the themes for the FGDs were submitted to five experts for their appreciation or evaluation. The task required of them was to check and tell me whether the questions or items (themes) would meet to the research objectives and answer the research questions; thus, to measure what they were supposed to measure, namely, to understand the context of the research sites, the causes, the extent and the consequences of conflicts/violence; and the motivation for the youth to get involved in violence and conflict. In addition, the experts were asked to evaluate the importance, the simplicity and the “understandability” of the items within each instrument and to rate each item in terms of

clarity, relevancy and understandability and how the items matched the used theories and the research questions. In addition, the items had to line up with the intergroup contact theory, the theory of transformation and the PAR. Table 26 reflects their evaluation of the ten items on my question guide:

Table 26: The content validity ratio

Items	CLARITY	RELEVANCY	UNDERSTANDABILITY
Question 1	Very clear	Very relevant	Highly understandable
	Clear but needs minor revision	Relevant but needs minor revision	Quite understandable
	Needs some revision	Needs some revision	Somewhat understandable
	Not clear	Not relevant	Not understandable
Question 2	Very clear	Very relevant	Highly understandable
	Clear but needs minor revision	Relevant but needs minor revision	Quite understandable
	Needs some revision	Needs some revision	Somewhat understandable
	Not clear	Not relevant	Not understandable
Question 3	Very clear	Very relevant	Highly understandable
	Clear but needs minor revision	Relevant but needs minor revision	Quite understandable
	Needs some revision	Needs some revision	Somewhat understandable
	Not clear	Not relevant	Not understandable
Question 4	Very clear	Very relevant	Highly understandable
	Clear but needs minor revision	Relevant but needs minor revision	Quite understandable
	Needs some revision	Needs some revision	Somewhat understandable
	Not clear	Not relevant	Not understandable

Source: The researcher

All the above was done for evaluation, checking and quality assurance before fieldwork or data analysis processes were undertaken.

9.9.3 Reliability

According to Saunders et al. (2007: 149), “Reliability refers to the extent to which your data collection techniques or analysis procedures will yield consistent findings”. For them, when conducting a research activity and precisely when designing the research instruments and thinking about the data collection, the researcher should bear in mind some questions among which are:

1. “Will the measures yield the same results in other occasions?”
2. “Will similar observations be reached by other observers?”
3. “Is there transparency in how sense was made from the raw data?”

The major challenges or threats to reliability in my study could be informant bias. Sometimes, the informant could tell you what they think is right or just to please you as researcher. This also could be the case in an insecure setting like Masisi where people do not easily open up to each other or to strangers or people they meet for the first time. In this case, I had to ensure confidentiality and anonymity of informants or participants in the research. Linked to the above challenge, there could also be the informants’ fear of disclosing what they regarded as detrimental to their lives; for example, critical information related to armed groups or operations. Another challenge to reliability is that the researcher can make errors or be biased. Here, I tried to be honest and truthful as much as possible. Both validity and reliability are like guidelines that enabled me to take the needed measures to ensure that my conclusions or results were convincing, credible and/or trustworthy. Creswell (2009: 102) established eight validity strategies in research and data handling; among them, I used the following validity strategies:

9.9.4 Triangulation

According to Creswell and Miller (2000: 126), “triangulation is a validity procedure where researchers search for convergence among multiple and different sources of information to form themes or categories in a study”. For Yeasmin and Rahman (2012: 156):

triangulation is a process of verification that increases validity by incorporating several viewpoints and methods. In the social sciences, it refers to the combination of two or

more theories, data sources, methods or investigators in one study of a single phenomenon to converge on a single construct and can be employed in both quantitative (validation) and qualitative (inquiry) studies.

This being said, there are several types of triangulation: methodological triangulation; data triangulation (the use of various data sources like informants giving their stories or experiences about youth and violence in Masisi; the available literature, journals, books and theses) or theoretical triangulation. The major idea behind triangulation is the combination of methods, data, theories or sources. In this research, I combined different theories which are the theory of conflict transformation, the intergroup contact theory in conflict and violence settings; the ToC that is, in this case, the aim or the final point of the conflict transformation as both a theory and a strategy to face a conflict; and PAR as an approach to complement the ToC. Theoretical triangulation was beneficial in this study as it helped to look at the youths' violent behaviour from a wider view.

9.9.5 Member Checking

Member-checking is among the validation techniques that consist of bringing back the results to informants or participants to the research for validation, trustworthiness, credibility and accuracy of collected data. That is why this technique is known as “participant validation” or confirmation. According to Birt et al. (2016: 1803), “member checking covers a range of activities including returning transcript to participants, a member check interview using the interview transcript data or interpreted data, a member check focus group, or returning analysed and synthesised data as we do in SMC”. For members unable to read or write, the task involved reading to them so that they could confirm or correct or even nuance what I had recorded. In this case, Birt et al. (2016: 1805) assert, “the transcript of the first interview foregrounds the second interview during which the researcher focuses on confirmation, modification and verification of the interview transcript”.

9.9.6 Clarifying Biases and to Avoid Bias in Qualitative Research

The informants were invited to confirm the information collected according to their experiences and how they translated them to me. To avoid being biased in this research, I had to use the local language. The most spoken languages in Masisi are Kiswahili, French and

Kinyarwanda, especially at Kitchanga, Nyamitaba-Nyakariba and Rubaya. In addition, I had to review or check the findings with peers. This means sharing the primary work with informants, research assistants or other researchers in order to review the collected information following the objectives, the research questions and the results. Reviewing the findings with peers helped me to see things or points I missed, and to identify the gaps in my discussion that had to be addressed.

Another strategy to avoid bias was to call for alternative explanations using probing questions. This is one of the advantages of qualitative methods. This strategy goes with the verification of various data sources. Here the primary and secondary data were triangulated.

9.9.7 Use of Peer Debriefing

Debriefing is a process of bringing into research independent people who are supposed to be unbiased and without partiality or any particular interest (biased) in the inquiry or towards groups under study. The debriefing helps to support or strengthen the validity of the study. The people involved should be knowledgeable and qualified enough in research to have a say about the research questions and the background underlining them, the hypotheses, the motivational dimensions or rationale of the study. As such, the debriefing allowed me and my research team to identify the shortcomings in the data collected according to the research questions and the research objectives. In addition, the debriefing enabled me to avoid unethical procedures in the course of the research, such as recording or taking photos without prior consent from the informants or research participants; especially because the study areas were very sensitive as far as security was concerned and most of the informants needed to be assured of total confidentiality. Thus, it was essential to debrief the informants to ensure that they understood what information they provided would be used in the research report. This was done in order to reassure them that nothing would lead to their identification following their involvement in the research.

9.9.8 Use of External Auditors

Service from five external experts was sought to assess the research questions and objectives together with the research instruments, in particular the interview guide before it was pilot

tested. The assessment was about the wording and the ways informants could possibly understand the questions during interviews.

9.9.9 Spending Prolonged Time in the Field

This is an ideal and essential as it gives the researcher enough time to immerse himself in the entire context and culture of the people he is working with. However, in the case of Masisi where the situation was unpredictable and where anything bad could happen any time, it was not a good idea to spend prolonged time in a place or to do several trips through the bushy and dangerous roads or even to spend more than a week in a place. It was even advisable that no one should know when I was leaving a place as people often set up ambushes when they knew when someone was likely to travel.

There were a couple of don'ts that I had to abide by like being careful with people I encountered as I often became an object of curiosity and attention to villagers. Being from town implies for them having money or a source of money and this could have led to my being kidnapped for ransom. Kidnappings are more frequent in areas like Matcha, Kabati and Kilolirwe on the way to Kitchanga and Nyamitaba-Nyakariba. The same situation is witnessed in places like Mitumbala on the way to Rubaya. In these places, people are kidnapped, and their relatives are compelled to pay as much as \$200 000 dollars as ransom otherwise they are killed. I managed to make nine trips on these roads. Luckily enough, knowing the languages spoken in the areas, Swahili and Kinyarwanda, was an asset but not enough to secure someone in a dangerous place like Masisi with hundreds of armed groups. I could not spend more than four days to one week in a village.

9.9.10 Ethical Standards Observed in this Study

Any research requires some guidelines or principles that keep the research within accepted limits by society. At the base of every study or research, there are ethical considerations that guide the research, and the researcher should abide by them. Among the various ethical guidelines, there are:

- Human subjects' protection: this principle calls for the protection of the informants or the people who provide any information. The principle is known as *do no harm* principle and

requires the researcher to reduce the risks that could affect both the informants and the researcher but to maximise the benefits. Here the researcher is called to respect human dignity and to protect the informants' security and to protect oneself when acting in an unstable place like Masisi. Of course, by protecting my informants, I had also to protect myself by taking calculated risks.

- Another principle is objectivity, which implies avoiding or to minimising bias in conducting the research, in data collection or analysis.
- In addition to the above, there is the principle of honesty in communication, in reporting data, results, methods, procedures, publications or dissemination; not to fabricate, to falsify or misrepresent data.

Generally speaking, currently (in 2023) to conduct research in Masisi is a difficult and risky task that could be affected by different problems mainly related to security issues. These can undermine not only the work-plan but also the objectivity of the results and the believability of the research. These are some of the constraints that I had to anticipate before going to the research sites. Another challenge I noticed is that when using the PAR approach, sometimes the informants could abuse the relationship with the researcher as they may have wrong perceptions about him. In fact, a slight ethical breach could affect both the researcher and the informants because some of their feelings are very sensitive or they could be reminded of what they had gone through and could put someone in danger. Thus, in this research, I made sure that the ethical problems were mitigated or overcome as much as possible.

Among the requirements, a gatekeeper's letter or letter of information to individuals was prepared together with other needed documents to allow access to the villages. The documents include the informed consent form, the letter of information and the data collection tools. The major points to communicate or share with the gatekeepers are the motivation for choosing the site, the activities to be conducted during the research, whether the study will cause any harm or disrupt the ongoing activities on the site, what benefits individuals allowing access to the site would get out of the research. The documents were translated into Swahili, a local language used in Masisi, and also in French for the educated ones who could communicate in these languages. Thus, for ethical reasons, I requested permission to conduct fieldwork from informants before every interaction, especially to take

notes or a photo. Thus, I clearly explained the content and the purpose of the study even if it was not easy given the prevailing context.

Any question that could cause discomfort, embarrassment or regret on the side of the informants or even place them at risk of criminal, civil or legal responsibility or any kind of prosecution was avoided. In the research area, people have experienced or are still experiencing terrible violence. They are in stressful and unpleasant situations; some are traumatised and could refrain from answering some research questions or even taking part in the research.

The participants' confidentiality and anonymity had to be strictly observed. However, I was quite aware that some issues could be problematic to observe for some informants who could be identifiable through the research like parish priests, pastors or school headteachers where there is only one parish or one school or well-known businesspeople. This applied also to youths' leaders or choir leaders. Therefore, I used initials for both people and the places of meeting and, if need be, they were referred to as religious persons or educators only or simply opinion leaders without mentioning the parish or naming the place of interview. The four places of data collection and field interviews are indicated by the following initials: KBM, MBM, NBK and RBY-MM. These initials were made from two indicators, one which is customary and the other one which is geographical. The informants were also designated by their initials but put in a way that would not lead to their identification. They were designated by initials like: CMAK, PNJ, FBY, BBC, HVR, BLKM, JST, BDM, DUC, NIC.

Therefore, according to Bless et al. (2013), the study had strictly to abide by the following: non-maleficence or preventing instances whereby participants could be harmed; ensuring that the research was beneficial to participants as this is also an aspect of action research; allowing participants the freedom to choose to participate or not; justice (fairness and equal treatment of participants, no favouritism); fidelity (to remain faithful to the promises made to participants); respect for participants' rights and dignity; anonymity (avoid or erase any indicators that might associate participants with the information they provided); confidentiality or protection of information provided by participants, especially personal data.

Collected data was stored in a safe place in an office and was accessible by me alone. The data will be disposed of through fire or deletion five years after the completion of the thesis.

Participants were informed that they had the right to withdraw from the study at any stage and for any reason without consequences as their participation was totally voluntary. In case of a participant's withdrawal, counselling would be provided by a psychologist from the Catholic University of Goma, and the psychological wellbeing of participants would be part of the researcher's priority if needed. I conducted a cautious risk assessment and made a field research safety plan before any field activity. This meant considering the risk context in Masisi and remaining security aware throughout the fieldwork. The first step was to identify the risks associated with the study before going to the field and then to state the actions that would be taken to mitigate these risks. The major and basic safety measures or strategies were:

- To avoid solitary field activities while travelling to and moving around the villages. That is why research assistants were needed.
- To remain alert and stay aware of the surroundings especially about the prevailing situation and travelling warnings in effect in the study area. To achieve this, consultations were done with the motorcycle riders and NGO drivers who always use the roads.
- To check on reliable local public means of transport and reliable people. The most available form of transport was motorcycles. Thus, I asked people who were always on the road to Masisi to recommend a reliable person for the ride.
- The local contact points and available accommodation. For these, Catholic priests and parishes were the only reliable people and places. Contacts were taken from the Goma Diocese in town. Accommodation at the parishes goes between \$5 and \$15 while food is between \$3 and \$5. Contacts for teachers and youth groups were taken from the educational officers and from the provincial youth coordinators.
- To have a home contact with whom to communicate while out in the field. This had to be a reliable person from the university in Goma and a relative at home with whom I would permanently be in contact.

These five points were crucial to understand as researcher as one slight mistake could have very negative consequences. In a district well-known for wars and militia, it was essential to

remember all these points. People who ride motorbikes in Masisi check the situation every time before they travel. They know when to travel and when not to take that risk. So they are the best advisers in this matter. Staying at churches also was an unavoidable option as people still show some respect to priest or pastors and their properties.

9.10 Conclusion

This chapter presented the main research design which is qualitative, and the different components of this design as used in this research work. These were observations, in-depth interviews, focus group interviews and documentation. Qualitative data was collected or recorded for content analysis. The ethical considerations based on research ethics evaluation, the gatekeepers' letters, confidentiality, anonymity, requesting permission to take notes or to take a picture were respected. I was aware of the situation or the security issues for the informants and for myself in the research sites. Thus, I made sure not to do any harm to people I interacted with given the delicate situations of conflicts, insecurity and other violence they were facing. I also checked that the research instruments or items would answer the research questions and fulfil my objectives. The following part provides the field data and their exploitation. Chapter 10 provides the exploration phase of the research and the exploration of field data collection.

PART IV: FIELD DATA AND ANALYSIS

Part IV provides the field data and their exploitation in terms of presentation and interpretation. Chapter 10 presents the exploration of the research and the exploration of field data collection.

CHAPTER TEN: EXPLORATION OF FIELD AND DATA COLLECTION

10.1 Introduction

This chapter is intended to answer those questions raised to address the problem and the objectives set to achieve that. The conclusion will reflect the lessons to be learnt from the investigations I led between 2017 to 2019 as a consultant. I took part in a research project about peace in North and South Kivu. The project called *Solution pour la paix et le relèvement–Amani kwamaendeleo*, *SPR-AKM* (Solution for peace and development –Peace for development) was sponsored by the USAID that commissioned three NGOs to run the project. The three NGO were Management Systems International (MSI), International Alert and International Rescue Committee (IRC). The project was to cover seven territories which were Walungu, Kalehe, Kabare and Bukavu Town in South Kivu; Masisi, Walikale and Goma in North Kivu. The project global objective was to empower local NGOs and community organisations in peacebuilding, in peace research structures and local government in order to provide support inclusive communal processes helping to transform conflicts for peace in these targeted areas.

The project was run from 4th July 2017 to 30th June 2019 and used the ToC and the PAR. The first step was to mobilise the participants, then the fieldwork for data collection and finally the data compilation and presentation. During the data collection phase, the informants and the consultants identified 25 types of conflicts in the research areas but mostly the conflict around land. What struck me was the fact that among all types of conflicts and actors, the youths were given little attention and almost forgotten in conflicts and their dynamics. Among the conflicts dynamics that were highlighted, there were: security, environment, politics, economics and social dynamics. Even in these last dynamics, the youths were not really mentioned or involved. This was confirmed by other consultancy activities in which I took part in November 2021 that was conducted from Mugunga, LacVert, Kirotshe and

Bweremana commissioned by Mercy Corps or that one commissioned by the World Food Programme (WFP) in collaboration with CAAP-Tujitegemee which is a local NGO. The youths as an important dynamic of conflicts and violence were not given due attention in the study. Yet, in all the research areas, the youths are very actively involved in conflicts and violence.



Figure 13: A focus group discussion, conflict analysis session, Mupfunyi Shanga, 2022 (The researcher standing in pink shirt and a mask). **Source:** The researcher

These activities gave me an opportunity to get in touch with the reality in some areas in Masisi and I liked the participatory as well as the bottom-up approach that sustained the recommendations from the affected people who needed an answer to their grievances. From Goma town, I had discovered that the trends among the youths were to make small groups based on their ethnic identity whereby those from Nyakariba had their group called *Rnyak* or *Ressortissants de Nyakariba* (or Young People from Nyakariba); those from Luke in the side of Rubaya, had their group called *Ressortissants de Luke* (Young people from Luke) whereas those from Kitchanga had their group called the *Ressortissants de Kitchanga* (Young people from Kitchanga). The first part of this chapter focuses on the Kitchanga activities, followed by the background and a review of the youth groups and the major activities that were initiated in line with this study. The part is followed by a double-barreled and challenging

question raised by the youths in the field: “Who are you to come to us? Who are you to tell our stories?” The next section presents the interventions, and the challenges related to protracted conflicts that could hamper the sustainability of the activity. The challenges include numerous armed groups in the region added to the M23 cycle of violence. There are also political factors that hinder the smooth running of some activities in Masisi. These are among the major factors disturbing any positive initiative in the area. After establishing these factors, the chapter establishes that the first step towards the solution and an open path to peace is to bring the youths from different backgrounds together in order to work together, first, as a group working on one task and next, a permanent group working for peacebuilding.

10.2 Diagnosis of The Problem: Preliminaries to The Intervention at Kitchanga, Masisi

The first and inspiring source of this investigation is to be found in the observations I made in the research area during my consultancy when I had enough time and opportunities to see and listen to villagers, young and old, talking about conflicts and violence affecting them. It appeared to me that the youths were not involved in various peace forums or solutions to conflicts affecting them despite their involvement in conflicts and subsequent violence. Therefore, the first and foremost task was to establish safe strategies in order to have a sustainable intervention involving them. These strategies were based on a conflict sensitivity approach consisting of understanding the context where to implement the intervention; to establish the link between this context and the activities to be conducted and then to implement something that was in accordance with this link between the context and an appropriate intervention. This would help to mitigate or minimise negative outcomes and promote desired outcomes out of the intervention. So, before the main intervention conducted at Kitchanga, three other interventions were piloted in different areas and with different people.

The first activity was initiated in February 2021 at Bulengo. This is a renowned peri-urban area about 25 miles out of Goma town and that has become famous for hosting a large IDP camp. The pilot intervention there aimed at selecting the youths from various ethnic backgrounds and getting them involved in an activity that should unite them. So, 15 young people aged between 18 and 35 from Goma town were sensitised and were united in an initiative called *Programme Remettons-nous au travail des aujourd’hui* under its French

acronym P-RATA. *Remettons-nous au travail des aujourd'hui* can be translated as “Let us go back immediately to work” or simply a back-to-work programme. The English translation gave the acronym “B2W-P” or back-to-work programme. This programme brought together eight young Nande, one Tutsi, one Shi, four Hutu and one Kumu. Among them, there were five girls and ten young men. Three of them had just graduated from local university. The group was sensitised to put ideas together for an activity and they decided to grow spinach. This vegetable is among the staple foods used in Goma town. They rented two hectares of land where they grew the spinach. The aim of this experiment was twofold: first, to bring together young people from opposing ethnic groups so that they work on a common activity – by coming together, they could become peace ambassadors in their communities; and second, the experience brought together educated and uneducated people to create an occupation together instead of remaining idle and be a threat to the community.



Figure 14: With some members of the Peace Circle around the peace pole at La Sapiencia Catholic university of Goma, March 2023. **Source:** The researcher

In fact, it has appeared that unemployed young people are a threat to the province as they are easily manipulated and attracted by easy gain and militia groups. Therefore, the experience happened to be a success as the programme itself could be used as a motto to further

activities when inviting the youth to fold their sleeves and work for themselves and for society instead of being a burden to their communities.

The second initiative was introduced in May 2021 at *La Sapiencia Catholic University of Goma* where I work. This was to initiate a group of young students, girls and boys and train them as peacemakers in a society where hate speech, discrimination, stereotype and hatred in general have become part of daily life. The group was initiated as a pilot group to other groups that would be initiated later. Therefore, this first group comprised 25 university students who met every Tuesday just for one hour in what they called *Cercle de paix* or Peace Circle. Reflecting on the circle activities, one girl student named BRF expressed: “It is a good initiative as it brings us closer to each other and share our misunderstandings or our community issues”⁷ (*C’est une tres bonne initiative car elle nous rapproche les uns des autres et nous permet de reflechir sur nos incomprehensions et les problemes au sein de nos communautés*).

The idea of a circle came from the fact that no hierarchy should exist within the group, every member being valued and considered to be equal, so no one was at the centre; only their ideas, issues or anything that is good and that needs to be valued or discussed. The circle’s objectives were based on sharing experiences of coexistence, cooperation and conflicts and how they could transform their relationship. In addition, during their weekly meetings, the members of the peace circle shared experiences of peace and peacemaking; they talked about positive masculinity and how to become a peacemaker and affirm others even if they were not from one’s ethnic group. One student from the Hunde tribe, known as BAJ, declared:

The circle disclosed to us a secret that we are all equal, both boys and girls and that what girls do, boys can also do and even do better. I remembered the chefs in big hotels. Some of them cook even better than the ladies⁸ (*Le cercle nous a ouvert un secret selon lequel nous sommes tous égaux, les garçons comme les filles. Cela m’a rappelé les grands chefs cuisiniers dans les grands hotels. Certains parmi eux preparent même mieux que les femmes*).

⁷ Interview with BRF, at UCS-G, 23rd August 2023

⁸ Interview with BAJ, at UCS-G, 23rd August 2023

Among the areas of discussions within the peace circle, there were the experiences from Martin Luther King following an example of the *Groupe Martin Luther King* which is a local peace organisation; Gandhi and the idea of non-violence; non-violent communication and how to promote the language of empathy, love and avoid hate speeches. They also shared the experience from Masahisa Goi and his motto: *May peace prevail in the world*. From this experience, a Peace pole was erected in La Sapiencia Catholic university compound at Goma. Furthermore, members of the peace circle shared ideas of Kenyan Bishop Korir and his models of conflict transformation that he called *Amani Mashinani* or peace from the grassroots and *Maridhiano Mashinani* or reconciliation from the grassroots. They also reflect on the *ubuntu* philosophy of shared humanity, togetherness and living in harmony and peace. The peace circle membership was totally voluntary.

The idea behind this initiative was to bring young elites from a divided society together and lead them to reflect on the issues of peace which were needed in their context. One member was already a full member of the youth groups and took part in initiatives by *Never Again Rwanda* bringing together the youths from the Great Lakes Region particularly DRC, Rwanda and Burundi. She expressed her perspectives by stating:

This is what was missing among the youths in our area; a forum bringing them together, boys and girls, to talk about what is happening in our region. There are so many conflicts in our countries and these conflicts involve young people. We are together from different ethnic backgrounds and this is a positive aspect of the circle⁹(*Cela nous manquait nous les jeunes de ce milieu, juste un forum de rencontre pour les jeunes garçons et filles pour échanger sur ce qui se passe dans notre région. Il y a beaucoup de conflits dans nos pays et ces conflits attirent les jeunes. Nous nous retrouvons ici de différents groupes ethniques et c'est un aspect positif du cercle de paix.*).

⁹ Interview with GMM, at UCS-G, 23rd August 2023

In November 2021, five other members of the peace circle took part in the *Youth lab* organised by the Pole Institute whereas one girl member of the circle took part in a peacebuilding workshop organised at Nyarutarama, Rwanda in June 2023.

The third initiative was started in Nyakariba Secondary School where I arrived on 25 January 2022 and left on 29 January 2022. Nyakariba is about 70 miles from Goma town. The activity brought together young students from Grade five and six and their teachers. With the help of their late headmaster who selected 6 boys and 6 girls students and mobilised the teachers, I managed to have a four-day session with them to share about cohesion and relationships among people in their area, especially the youths, the nature, extent and causes of conflicts in their place and the way to initiate a peace circle in their school. Beside these 12 students, there were 15 of their teachers who agreed to join the group. The idea was really exciting, and it was a replication of the peace circle where the students and their teachers were briefly initiated to issues of conflicts and violence, conflict transformation, intergroup contact, tolerance, peace and social harmony



Figure 15: At Nyakariba Secondary School with the first group of the Peace Circle with the late headteacher (in yellow pullover). **Source:** The researcher. Photo taken on 28 January 2022

Unfortunately, after I left the village, the headteacher passed away. Fortunately, the parish priest was ready to take over the group and move with them as we kept phone contact.

The aim of these initiatives was to pilot the study and research tools, and it was an opportunity to involve the youths in activities of conflict transformation by creating groups of peacemakers who would contribute to reducing violence among their peers and in their areas. These are among the tasks of conflict transformation that aim at working on relational, spiritual and personal dimensions and, as Galtung argued, the aim of conflict transformation is peace and the capacity to approach conflicts in a constructive and creative way, without violence. Therefore, these initiatives were not isolated activities, but they were well-coordinated tasks to promote interpersonal contacts or relationships, to stir the youths' consciousness of *ubuntu* through transformation. The objective was to invite the youths to take the initiative to keep away from conflicts and violence. A boy member of the circle called Ntire (a maiden name) expressed his view by stating:

Even if we meet in classrooms, we have not got opportunities to talk about the situations in our villages or the misunderstandings among the villagers. The circle is like a door to answers to the problems we are witnessing (*Même si nous nous rencontrons dans les classes, nous n'avions pas encore eu d'occasion de parler des problèmes qui se passent dans nos villages ou parmi les villageois. Le cercle est comme une porte qui nous ouvre vers les solutions à ces problèmes que nous vivons*).¹⁰

The Nyakariba peace circle was the replication of the La Sapiencia Peace circle with the only difference being the first one was initiated in a rural area with secondary school students whereas the second one was initiated in an urban setting with university students.

10.3 The Kitchanga Experience Between Turmoil and Hope

I reached Kitchanga on 22 January 2022 with the aim of listening to the youths and sharing with them some ideas pertaining to this study. In planning a visit to Kitchanga to meet the youths, I had first to assess the context in general and my actions in order to establish and understand the real problem in the area and its causes. The problem was violence to be reduced among the youths. Once the problem was understood, the next step was to establish what needed to be changed in the youths or in their context. This had to do with the

¹⁰ Interview with NCK, at NBK, on 27th January, 2022

psychological or behavioural causes of violence but also, in the long run, to do with the socioeconomic situation. Once this was known, there was a need to decide on the strategies to be put in place in order to implement the activity, try them and see how the strategies could shape the intervention and provide enough evidence to evaluate the activity according to its objectives.

Basically, I had to identify the kind of youths I was going to meet there, what to tell them, the type of activity to undertake with them, its relevancy, its effectiveness or efficiency, its impact and the way to implement and sustain it. I faced many questions without clear answers given the prevailing situation in Masisi in general and at Kitchanga in particular. More specifically, I asked myself whether the objectives and the intervention design were really relevant and sustainable given the security situation and the prime needs of the youths there. Hence, for the intervention, I first established the targeted group, here the youths, both males and females. These would be the prime beneficiaries of the activity according to the study objectives. Therefore, they should be at the forefront of the intervention to be undertaken in their area. Next, with them, we had to set up the major goals and objectives for the intervention. The objectives were relational transformation that at the end should produce a transformed group of youths whose relationships are improved. In addition, the intervention aimed at determining together with the youths which activities, programmes or interventions could be effective in helping to bring people together, to reduce violence and, eventually evaluate their general costs. Thus, the task had among its goals to select a targeted activity that could be replicated in other areas.

The outcome coupled to these goals was to reduce the barriers among the youths and to train them to change their language and attitudes towards one another. The intervention had to provide an opportunity for dialogue and bring the youths close to each other, to help them to transcend the ethnic barriers separating them as Hunde, Hutu, Nyanga, Tembo, Tutsi. That is where ToC came in to support the study. In fact, the ToC is mainly a description of how a given intervention will produce needed results. It elucidates the causal mechanism by which a specific activity or programme will achieve its intended objectives. Thus, the ToC is predicated on a sequence of actions aimed at producing desired outcomes based on the contextual factors influencing their implementation, ultimately leading to the desired

transformation. In this case, the intervention's context was shaped by the geographical features and agricultural orientation of Kitchanga and Masisi in general, as well as the significant youth population available for the targeted activity. Conversely, the pervasive security challenges stemming from numerous armed groups and prolonged conflicts posed a formidable obstacle. In the context of implementing the targeted activity in Kitchanga, the initial objective was to unite the youth, engage in dialogue, listen to their perspectives, and involve them in a selected endeavour aimed at breaking down barriers among them and gradually mitigating the cycle of violence in the area. The subsequent task involved evaluating the impact of the activity on the youth and their communities to determine whether it fostered inclusivity rather than division.

At Kitchanga, in Masisi, the grassroots levels were in place. These were the local chief LC 1 level known as *Nyumba kumi* or ten houses. This is a local leader at the first level or in charge of ten households. There is also the local chief at the second level (LC2) called the *Chef d'avenue*. These two levels are also known as *Baraza* or grassroots forum for arbitration. In addition, there is also the *Baraza intercommunautaire* or the inter-community *Baraza*/forum comprising elected community leaders. However, for the year 2022-2023, the *Baraza* had not been functional in Kitchanga because some committee members had resigned having completed their term in office.



Figure 16: With high school teachers, Nyakariba Secondary School

(Photo taken by the researcher, 2022), **Source:** the researcher

At Nyakariba-Nyamitaba, they only have the *Nyumba Kumi* (or local chief in charge of ten houses) and the *Baraza* that was not also functioning due to security problems whereas, at Rubaya, the local leadership (LC1, LC2) and *Baraza* leaders were in place.

10.4 A Challenged Intervention

The intervention took place amid numerous challenges linked to a protracted conflict and the current general situation of war in Eastern DRC. Furthermore, many youths in Masisi were entangled in conflicts that turned violent because of ethnicity, the lack of income and unemployment. These were exacerbated by despair, mistrust among the youths and poverty, and their disfranchisement and exclusion from participation in decision-making processes during which their wellbeing was discussed. These factors have become the main drivers of conflicts and what sustained inter-youth violence. For an area like Masisi in general and Kitchanga in particular, where there has been deadly conflict for more than 40 years, it is

quite understandable that people are poor and just surviving on their hope for a better future that does not come. Poverty is so acute that the 24 members of AJPA had a problem of even getting hoes to use. It was a challenge for them to dig all together as the entire city or village could not provide for 24 hoes at the same time. So, they had to work in turn. Quite often, they turned to me and this was quite disturbing to be powerless and just with a pen and notebook. Another serious challenge was the roadblocks on the poor road from Kitchanga to Goma where armed groups and the national army had their roadblocks and accosted anyone who tried to travel. The lucky ones paid 500 or sometimes 1 000 Congolese Francs at every roadblock. This amount is too much for villagers. The unlucky ones were killed for less than a dollar.

The security issue was another big challenge. People had been living with armed groups for many years, and they were compelled to pay 1 000 Congolese Francs monthly for their security. This amount was for those who take care of the villages. There was no choice for anyone who lived in these villages. The armed people provided a monthly receipt for this security payment. However, it was very risky to move with this receipt in an area controlled by the national army. For them, whoever had this receipt was regarded as supporting the militia groups. Thus, one could be killed for carrying these receipts in an area controlled by the government military forces. This meant that it was difficult for the youths to supply their maize or any other produce to the town market or elsewhere as they could not easily move with it. On the other hand, villagers could not move in their areas without the security receipts as they ran the risk of being killed for not having it. Nowadays, Kitchanga and its surroundings are under the M23 leadership in addition several other armed groups. This makes control of the youths' actions very difficult because they are being recruited by one group or another.

10.5 Conclusion

This chapter introduced the intervention carried out in Kitchanga, Masisi. Prior to this intervention, I had established connections with individuals across various areas in Masisi in my capacity as a consultant, allowing me to gain insight into the realities faced by the local population, particularly the youth. Among the intervention experiences, I engaged in a farming activity with both educated and non-educated young people in Bulengo, as well as

initiated a peace circle at La Sapiencia Catholic University of Goma with university students. This latter initiative was replicated at Nyakariba Secondary School involving secondary school students and their teachers. Despite the challenges, the Kitchanga intervention was undertaken amidst turmoil, fuelled by hope from both me and the beneficiaries. The youth demonstrated a commitment to coming together, sharing experiences and collaborating on joint endeavours while reflecting on the challenges prevalent in their villages. These individuals, who appear to have lost hope in their lives, still yearn for support. Although they have the willingness to pursue positive endeavours, they lack confidence in their own potential. Today, observable dimensions of conflict transformation are being witnessed, and these are the relational change coupled with personal change. According to the youths, the relationships are mutually satisfying as the youths are ready to transcend their misunderstanding and differences. They are becoming tolerant of one another, there is hope that the time is coming for them to overcome their historical animosity. However, during a focus group discussion (FGD3), one participant raised an important point relevant to the objectives of this study. In fact, he said: “through these types of research, be our voice and air our ideas then do the follow-up”¹¹(*dans ces types de recherches, mukuwena balancer ma idees zetu na mufanye suivi.*) This means that the youths need an advocate, or they need to be heard, and that advocacy can be done through a clear and selected channel. Thus, young people in Masisi need a sustainable forum to air their voices.

The diagnosis of the problem substantiated the existence of conflicts and subsequent violence involving the youths in Masisi. These established facts led to the development of strategies that will help to reduce violence and make rival youths partners in peace and development. The chapter that follows discusses the planning and implementation of the interventions with the youths at Kitchanga and Nyakariba. The chapter gives an overview of the two activities undertaken in these two places, the first one being the agricultural activities with the youths at

¹¹Focus group discussion, PNJ, at KBM, 22nd January 2022. The young people who are not used to researchers or to see them in their area requested that researchers in the future, starting with me should be their advocates and talk for them. The follow up they are talking about is the check up on the side of the decisionmakers and to give the report to the grassroots or to people at the villages, the youth included.

Kitchanga and the second one being the organisation of the peace circle with the students at Nyakariba.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTING INTERVENTIONS: PEACE CIRCLES AND THE ASSOCIATION DES JEUNES POUR LA PROMOTION DE L'AGRICULTURE, AJPA

11.1 Introduction

The major problem raised by this study is that in Masisi, violence by the youths has become rampant through a protracted conflict and needs to be addressed. The conflict and subsequent violence claimed thousands of lives and rendered Masisi a very poor district yet with great potential. This chapter looks at some important moments in planning and implementing an intervention in places like Masisi known to be very dangerous because of conflicts and violence. Any intervention should be looked at three times for them to be efficient. These times are before the activities, during the activities and after these activities. The research objectives were to assess the nature, extent, causes and consequences of violence and conflict involving the youth; to evaluate the impacts of conflicts and of chronic violence on people, on the youths and on their environments; and to assess the strategies and other initiatives put in place for conflict transformation and to change the youths' behaviours using participatory action research. Finally, the study evaluates the outcomes of the implemented intervention in order to improve the relationships and to mitigate the youth violence.

The planning phase of this study has its roots in an interrogation as to why the youths in North Kivu and in Masisi in particular get involved in crimes, conflict and violent acts. This is the result of an observation I made in the North Kivu Province and in Masisi in particular. In Goma, the provincial capital, almost every month, groups of young people are on the street claiming that MONUSCO or the peacekeepers should leave because for more than two decades they have been in the province without any positive results according to the youths. At other times, young people are on the street claiming a deterioration in the economic situation based on the exchange rate between the American dollar and the local currency that is making life very hard; at other times, they are on the street claiming that school fees are high or that the rate of crime is high. Whenever the youth are on the street, they create chaos,

disturbing schools, markets and businesses in general and their actions often end with deaths. In rural areas, hundreds of militia groups operating there involve thousands of young people. The situation has become so appalling that it calls for a thorough understanding and a solution.

The first step was to understand the underlying motive behind this violence from the youths' perspectives to respond appropriately to it. Thus, this chapter gives an overview of the planning processes that lead to the implementation of two interventions. The chapter gives first the planning and implementation processes. At this level, some vital aspects had to be taken into consideration. The first aspect was to understand that a change is needed on the side of the youths and this has to be a constructive change that reduces violence, promotes justice, directs interaction and improves relationships in general (Lederach, 2014: 9). The mobilised youths needed to understand this aspect and discuss their role in any proposed activity. The second aspect was to establish what should be changed. In this case, the youths needed to understand that their behaviours are among the stepping stone in conflicts and violence and that there is need to change them. Third, the youths needed to be sensitised why change had to take place in their context. Finally, there was a need to determine who should take part in the change process and how should this be evaluated or how a follow-up should be done, when and by whom.

This chapter examines the effects of interventions or activities aimed at altering the behaviours of youths and diminishing violence among them. Due to the academic timeframe of the study and the long-term nature of the interventions, a short-term evaluation of outcomes was conducted instead of a long-term assessment. The central question guiding the evaluation process was whether the intervention in Kitchanga had clear objectives, was conceptually feasible and capable of producing the desired results, was practically achievable given the challenges posed by protracted conflicts and resulting violence in Masisi, particularly in Kitchanga. This chapter gives the background to the main intervention conducted with the youths at Kitchanga. It presents the impact or observations from the participants in these interventions. The study highlights a sensitive question that was raised by the youths at Kitchanga asking the researcher who he was to come to them or to tell their stories.

11.2 Informants' Profile and Bio-Data

The aim of the chapter is to give an account of the voices from different informants about their perception of violence, the types and motivational factors behind violence and the way to respond to it. Sixty (60) people took part in the study through interviews. Because of the sensitivity of some of their statements or messages and for ethical requirements, both their names and the research sites where the interviews took place were coded to refer to people and places as earlier indicated in Part III. The study established that there were several armies intervening in Masisi (and Rutshuru) apart from the Congolese armed forces (FARDC). There were armies from Burundi, Kenya, Uganda, South Sudan, South African and a white army just known as Wagner but who could even be from EO (South African) as their really origin is unknown by most of the people. These are added to the MONUSCO group made of Moroccans, the Guatemalan army and Uruguayan army among others. All these armies are in the same area with local militia groups. So, anonymity was a very big challenge as any fake name could match someone's name among the soldiers or armed groups operating in the area and lead to speculations. That is why I found it better just to use initials which, by the way, were from the informants' names that I was able to get and that I kept confidential. In the case of this study, I focused on the activities conducted at Kitchanga as the initiated peace circles were not evaluated in the context of this study, leaving this second evaluation for the future. Table 27 gives a survey of the informants:

Table 27: Informants from research sites

Places	Males	Females	Total	%
KBM	15	3	18	30
NBK	22	7	29	48
RBY-MM	4	2	6	10
MSM	7	0	7	12
TOTAL	48 (80%)	12 (20%)	60 (100%)	100%

Table 27 shows that 48 or 80% of informants were men whereas 12 or 20% were women.

Table 28: Sex and age cross-tabulation

SEX * Age Cross-Tabulation							
			Age				Total
			18–22	23–27	28–32	33 and more	
SEX	Female	Count	2	6	3	1	12
		% within sex	16.7%	50.0%	25.0%	8.3%	100.0%
		% within age	14.3%	18.2%	33.3%	25.0%	20.0%
	Male	Count	12	27	6	3	48
		% within sex	25.0%	56.2%	12.5%	6.2%	100.0%
		% within age	85.7%	81.8%	66.7%	75.0%	80.0%
Total		Count	14	33	9	4	60
		% within sex	23.3%	55.0%	15.0%	6.7%	100.0%
		% within age	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table 28 indicates that out of the total sample, 48 informants were men, comprising 80%. Within the male group, three individuals or 75.0%, were aged 33 years or older, while 6 individuals or 66.7%, fell between the ages of 28 and 32. Additionally, 27 men or 81.8%, were aged between 23 and 27 years, while 12 men or 85.7%, were aged between 18 and 22 years. On the female side, there were 12 female informants, constituting 20% of the sample. Among them, one individual or 25.0%, was aged 33 years or older, while three individuals or 33.3%, were between 28 and 32 years old. Furthermore, six women or 18.2%, fell within the age range of 23 to 27 years, while two individuals or 14.3%, were between 18 and 22 years old. Overall, the table reveals that 33 informants were aged between 23 and 27 years, accounting for 55% of the sample; 14 informants were aged between 18 and 22 years, representing 23.3%; 9 informants fell between the ages of 28 and 32, constituting 15%; and four informants were aged 33 years and above, making up 6.6% of the sample. This range of ages is in line with the set range of this study compared to the range provided by the African Youth Charter (2006: 11) defining a youth as every person between 15 and 35 years old and the United Nation Security Council Resolution 2250 defining the youth as a person of the age of 18 to 29 years old. In this way, the findings indicate that the majority of informants were between 18 and 32 years old with 55.0% being between 23 and 27 years old. These were followed by those who were 18–22 years making up 23.3% and those who were 28–32

making up 15.0%. However, the study found that there were those young boys who are less than 18 years old who are very active in conflicts and violence in Masisi. Even though I saw them and talked to them, I did not ask much about their bio-information.

11.3 Problem Diagnosis: Pre-Intervention Observations from the Field

The first time I met the youths at Kitchanga in October 2021, they were very suspicious and had many grievances, many requests and ideas. The first step was to shape the group to take part in the intervention; this was done through an open dialogue following the *Amani Mashinani model* and the intergroup contact conditions specially to bring people to share the same goal or vision, to express themselves freely and “bring forth one’s deep-rooted assumptions” (Opongo, 2020: 12). Of course, it was not that easy as the youths from different ethnic backgrounds pointed an accusing finger at one another. Finally, they agreed to initiate a group that would be called *Jeunes actifs de Kitchanga* or “Kitchanga active youths”. Later, through their discussion, they came to conclude that this label was too limited as it excluded other youths from other places within Masisi. Then, they decided to change it in *Jeunes actifs de Masisi* or Masisi active youths.

The second time I visited them was on 21 January 2022, and I spent four days with them. On this Saturday, I talked to various people, including the then parish priest, a lady working at the parish office and another one who had come to visit a priest. I also talked to some gentlemen in preparation for the Sunday sharing. The major assumption was that there was enmity and hostility among the youths and there were disagreements as the youth seem to have failed to undertake something essential together. Here, I look at two aspects: the situation before the farming intervention and the causes and consequences of hostilities among the youths in Masisi in general and Kitchanga in particular.

11.4 Before the Farming Activity: “Cat-And-Mouse Game”

Before the group meeting that I held with the youth in Kitchanga on 22 January 2022, I met individually with the then parish priest and two parish workers, a lady and a gentleman, about the youth life in their area. The priest gave me valuable insights about the youth relationships in his parish. According to him, these relationships were not good as they were based on suspicion, discrimination or exclusion. He added that the Tutsi had somehow excluded

themselves from other ethnic groups, notably the Hunde, the Hutu, the Nyanga and the Nande. So, from the first contacts, it was established that there were four groups according to the relationships at Kitchanga. The first group comprised the Hunde, Nyanga and Nande; the second group comprised the Hutu, the third consisted of the Tutsi and the fourth one comprised the Banyarwanda (here Hutu and Tutsi) as called by the others. At Kitchanga, young people from each ethnic group had their meeting places or their offices. Then there was a common place for all of them even though it appeared to me that this was for appearances only because the youth were not truthful to one another when they met in this group office.

The first thing I did was to identify and meet the group leaders, in particular the area youth leader. For the purpose of this research, I called him Gangi. Thus, I made an appointment with Gangi for a half-an-hour discussion. After I explained to him who I was and what I wanted to know, he opened up to me. About the youth relationship among the youths in general, Gangi told me without any hesitation that the relationships were negative and based on hypocrisy and suspicion. He had this to say: here people live in hypocrisy, they do not love each other. One participant stated: "*Huku batu habapendanake. Mwenye anapata ginsi ya kuuwa mwenzake anaweza muuwa bila kusita*" [Whoever gets an opportunity to kill the other can do it without hesitation].¹²

This gentleman Gangi, who is a Hunde, accused people he called Banyarwanda or Rwandese and he confirmed that relationships among these two groups were just hostile as they easily kill each other. Yet Gangi is a group leader who lead other youths. The Rwandese he was talking about are Hutu and Tutsi. I asked him whether there were activities they did together as young people like playing football or working together. The answer was categorically negative. I asked him whether there could be any activity he thought they could do together, but he just said no. To me, this first dialogue was a disappointment, but it stimulated me not to give up. I requested Gangi to indicate other young people I could talk to. He introduced me to another boy called Bolingo. Bolingo was a barber. About the relationship among the youths in general, Bolingo stated that young people were not genuine in relating to each

¹²Interview with Gangi, at KBM, 22nd January 2022

other. He declared this: “the young people here live like cats and dogs or cats and mice”.¹³In the picture of two animals known to be antagonistic, Bolingo confirms what Gangi had earlier said that relationships between people, especially the youths are very tense. On the one side, he talks about a dog in front of a cat while, on the other side, he sees the cat in front of the mouse. His image shows how people look at each other. So, people are just forced to live together like these two types of animals in hatred.

During a focus group session (FGD4) with a small group of eight people from the Hunde, Nyanga and Nande people, all the participants accused the Banyarwanda. The reasons were: the Banyarwanda always want to take our ancestral land (*banataka bulongo ya mababu!*); the Banyarwanda do not love us (*Habatupendake*); and another participant observed: “*Saa tuko na Banyarwanda, ni bacongolais, saa biko na ba ndugu yabo, banageuka barwandais*” [when the Banyarwanda are here, they are Congolese but when they are with their brothers, they become Rwandese].¹⁴

These informants point an accusing finger to others or other people they call the Banyarwanda. According to them, these Banyarwanda have two faces. The first one is what they show when they are with people who are not from their ethnic group. They show that they are all Congolese, meaning brothers and sisters. But when they meet with other Banyarwanda (from Rwanda), they change the Congolese face and become also Rwandese. This, in the eyes of the informants, shows a kind of hypocrisy among people.

It appeared that the issue of identity was really very serious among the youth from various groups. When requested to show me another respondent, Bolingo brought me someone he called his friend; his name was Shady. Shady sells airtime. When I asked a question about the relationships among young people in Kitchanga, he first laughed and said: asking me to go to those people is like asking a goat to swim in a deep lake. To me, it is like committing suicide and to them, it is to be daring (in Kiswahili, *Kuniambiya kwenda kwa bale batu ni sawa*

¹³Interview with Bolingo, at KBM, 22nd January 2022

¹⁴Focus group discussion (FGD4), at KBM, 22nd January 2022

*kuambiya mbuzi iende ku nager mu lake ya murefu sana. En tout cas, kwangu ni sawakuji suicider, nabo ni sawakujaribiyana!)*¹⁵

This statement reflects a high level of discrimination and hatred and the informant seems to show that it is impossible for people to socialise. The picture of a goat that cannot swim reflects his idea of impossibility for people to meet starting by himself speaking. Another striking thing in this statement as well as in the previous statements is that the three informants did not like to name the other group. They referred to them as “those ones” or “those other people” (*Bale!*). Bolingo even made a good comparison when he established that the two groups lived like cats and mice whereby one kills and eat the other. When I asked Shady to bring me another friend to talk to, he directed me to a certain Kapasa where he was repairing bicycles. About group relationships, he gave a comparison: “it is just like to put fire and water in the same container! You know that they cannot live together!”¹⁶ Then when I asked Kapasa about his friends, Shady, Bolingo and Gangi, he just said: “*those ones are people!*” meaning, they are human beings. (*Bale njo batu!*) What about the others? Kapasa just said that: “only God knows what they are!”. However, the word he used in Kiswahili refers to “those people” as “things”! (in Kiswahili, *Mungu njo anajuwa kama bale ni bitugani!*). In fact, in Kiswahili spoken in Eastern DRC, “*bitu*” is the plural word for “*kitu*”. This means “thing or object”. Later on, I came to know that among the four gentlemen, there were three Hunde and one Nande. This shows that they would not refer me to someone from the Hutu or the Tutsi group. It also shows that, generally speaking, the relationships among the groups were not good and not conducive to communal work as a group looks at itself as human beings and the others as things or animals.

On Sunday 23 January 2022, I meet a young girl who had come to the greet one of the priests. I was with my research assistant who could show me the people he knew. She was Jeanine, a single woman. I asked her how she related to other young people and whether she could get married to any gentleman from another tribe other than hers. She was straightforward and with hard words just meaning that “she cannot allow a Hutu boy to put

¹⁵Interview with Shady, at KBM, 22nd January 2022

¹⁶Interview with Kapasa, at KBM, 22nd January 2022

his dirty sex in her sex!” Her reaction confirmed my impressions that the relationship was not good among the young people. Then, I asked her what she could do for her people in Kitchanga and with whom she thought she could work. Her answer was: “everyone should keep his side and work with his people”.¹⁷ Jeanine’s answer reflects a kind of something impossible that cannot happen. These reactions showed how the intervention would not be easy as the girl’s answer reflected a kind of discrimination or exclusion of the “other” person if they were not from one’s own tribe.

11.5 Causes and Consequences of Hostilities Among the Youth in Masisi and At Kitchanga

I got in touch with a certain Bonane who worked as the young farmers’ leader. I asked him about the causes of hostilities in their area. According to him:

there are several causes. But the first one is the elders or the parents. They tell their children who to love and who to hate. Another cause is to be found at the Bahunde side. They are arrogant yet they are lazy. So, they just want to eat our muscles and our efforts as if we were their slaves.¹⁸

According to Bonane, one group is exploiting another just like slave. Furthermore, Bonane said: these dirty Hunde always say that we are Rwandese and that we are refugees. So, they want to take us back to Rwanda. (bino bihunde Hunde!). About the solution to these grievances, Bonane had this suggestion: “Let us respect one another!”. According to them, people do not respect each other in their relationships or in the way a group looks at the other.

He added:

Everyone should mind his or her own business and the only place where we should meet is the church and the market! When he talked about the market, I took the opportunity to ask him what he or his people should take to the market. His answer was: We are hardworking, and we are the only ones to produce and to supply to the

¹⁷Interview with Jeanine, at KBM, 23rd January 2022

¹⁸Interview with Bonane, at KBM, 23rd January 2022

market. So, they will need our produce because if we do not work, they will die of hunger!¹⁹

Bonane also used the same derogatory language as Bolingo, Shady and their friends. First of all, he avoided naming the other by tribe and just refer to them as “those ones”. Then, he looked at the others not as human beings but as things. However, the reasons for hatred were not so clear or deep even though every group member was reluctant to take the first step towards the others. I still hoped that peace and peacebuilding were possible and could be achieved in their area. I shared with another gentleman called Manu and asked him about the cause of enmity and antagonism among young people in their city. He said: “These dirty refugees always want to take our land by force”.²⁰

Through this reaction, it appears clearly that people hate each other. To a clear question about the reasons why they hate each other, Manu just gives a straight answer like a solution because he states the problem or its causes. He expresses his feelings and what he wishes: to see one group away from their area. When asked about the solution to this situation, Manu just said: Let these dirty refugees go back to their country!

What Manu did not realise is that if the so-called Banyarwanda left, there would be a gap somewhere in their relationships or their complementarity. For him: “if these dirty refugees go back to their country, we shall take over their properties”.

From the above observations, it is clear that each side is looking at an opportunity to defeat or suppress the other side completely. That is why conflicts and revenge are permanent in Masisi. Hence, I built my sharing with the youth on two dimensions, the complementarity in what human beings do and the fact that in every market, there must be a seller and a buyer. This entails the fact that even if it were possible that a group disappears to leave the other group alone, latter on people would feel like something is missing. The picture of the market shows that the producer always needs the consumer because no one can produce and

¹⁹Interview with Bonane, at KBM, 23rd January 2022

²⁰Interview with Manu, at KBM, 23rd January 2023

consume what he produced. That complementarity is needed and is the ground to social harmony among people.

11.6 The Intervention Planning Processes

I learnt a lot about their relationships, their conflict and violence. The first observations showed something positive as the youth agreed to meet and socialise, hold meetings and try to talk to each other. It was after I left them that they decided to name their group *Association des jeunes pour la promotion de l'agriculture* (AJPA) or “Youth Association to Promote Agriculture”. Their objectives were to get together in one association, share their experiences of conflict and violence that always divide them and work together for their mutual benefit. They also wanted to work for peace in their area and in other areas by inviting other youths to join hands in productive work. As a result of their meeting, the association was initiated in 2022 and started with 24 members among which were 19 men and 5 women. By August 2023, 16 members were still together and were active while nine other members had left because of the war started by the M23 and the chaos created by other armed groups roaming around.

The youths first hired seven squares of land. In their area, what they call a square is a piece of land measuring 30m². Since there were no cows on the farms, the farm owners gave out their land for farming and one square of land was hired for \$10 for one season. Later on, the AJPA members added three more squares. They had three choices in using their piece of land, either to grow cabbage, Irish potatoes or maize. They tried cabbages but found that the produce was not good, given the fact that the market was poor; they were selling a cabbage for 500 FC (Congolese francs) equivalent to 0.003 dollars. Finally, they decided to grow maize, and before the harvest time, the youths were happy with their crop.

Initially, the idea behind this activity was to come together and work on a common task and create jobs for themselves. Second, since maize is among their staple food, they found it an opportunity to provide food to their relatives and neighbours. In their area, maize can be eaten boiled or roasted or they can make flour and eat it as a kind of bread. They can also make porridge with maize flour. So, the activity was appropriate to their situation and could address food security in their living area.



Figure 17: Some AJPA members tilling the ground at Kitchanga and sharing food. **Source:** The research assistant 15 July 2023

Looking at the opposite side of violence, the thesis explored the youths' narratives and what came out of their stories. From there, with them, we could figure out what their needs were in terms of violence reduction and peacebuilding. I faced this double and touching question when I was sharing with the youths at Kitchanga. First of all, they were surprised to see an old man coming to them as a researcher. They confirmed to me that it was the first time they had seen a researcher in their area. Initially, they did not trust me in spite of the papers I showed them and what I told them. Most of them could not read. So, when I handed them my introductory letters, their attitude showed that this did not mean anything to them. Their attitude encompassed various implications, touching upon notions of might, right and energy. Primarily, the youth are accustomed to military or other coercive powers that have historically been employed to address their grievances and claims. Consequently, avenues for peacebuilding and constructive dialogue to mitigate conflicts and halt violence are obstructed, echoing Kohan's (2019: 4) Freirian perspective that "dialogue can only happen between equals". This perspective also underscores the importance of equality, as posited in Allport's contact hypothesis. Secondly, the youth perceive themselves as neglected or abandoned, with few entities, primarily NGOs, showing concern for their wellbeing. They harbour feelings of worthlessness, isolation and abandonment, viewing themselves as insignificant individuals

reliant solely on aid without contributing anything. This sentiment may explain the informant's opposition to outsiders coming to their village to work, as local youth are available and willing to undertake the same tasks. Participants suggested that local solutions should be sought by local people, a bottom-up approach as promoted by the conflict transformation, the intergroup contact theory and participatory action dimension of any intervention.

Another meaning through this question is that the youths felt they did not believe that someone was coming to listen to them. Initially, they thought I was a politician coming to prepare for the upcoming elections. This was confirmed by what they told me a message I received from one of them. The initial concern is that the sender is seeking advocacy or appears to be driven by a sense of dependency. They have become accustomed to working for individuals with authority or influence. On 30 July, I got the following message from the same young man: "Are you ready to stand as a candidate? It would be better to let us know in advance so that we get ready to work for you". Another side of the youths' question is that these young people are used to working for politicians who manipulate them. Hence, they perceived it as an ongoing opportunity to remain under the influence of those who exploited them. This is precisely why the intervention aimed to empower them to become self-reliant. One prevalent message conveyed through their questions was the need to identify who I was in order to narrate their stories or understand my role within their narratives. They had an abundance of insights to share about their circumstances, relationships, needs and the factors compelling them to join violent groups.

The above question and the youths' concerns raised the issues of power or capacity. This brings forth the question of who possesses the authority or willingness to approach them, listen to their concerns and take action. It must be someone who cares for them, respects them, embraces their diversity and accepts them as they are, as young individuals. This is in line with what Freire asserts that "to accept and respect what is different is one of the conditions for listening to others" (Kohan, 2019: 2). They were really curious about the ability of someone who was willing to approach the youths, who were considered outsiders and listen to them. Additionally, the youths' question brought up the issue of individuals who believed they were capable of addressing their own situations, even if it meant resorting to

violence. About their social position, one young man had this to say: “we, the youths have big responsibilities”. However, they were not given an opportunity to fulfil these responsibilities. Regarding their poor situation, one gentleman said that young people did not like to get involved in farming, especially those who had been to school. He put it this way: “Sometimes, someone completes his studies but he does see any future in schooling. He even finds it difficult to get involved in farming because once he harvests, people come and they determine a price for your produce”.²¹

The general situation prevailing in their area had discouraged many young people from working. This statement underscores the dissatisfaction of young individuals regarding the outcomes of their endeavours, particularly in farming. Insufficient road infrastructure compounded the issue, as there was a scarcity of trucks available to transport their produce after harvesting. Consequently, during each harvest, the limited number of buyers who visited dictated the price offered for their goods. Sellers were left with little choice, unsure if another buyer would appear. Consequently, they lacked motivation to engage in what they perceived as demanding work with uncertain returns. Despite their disheartenment, I collaborated with them to explore potential shared activities.

Basically, the intervention as presented in this study followed the process of grassroots peacebuilding as promoted through the *Amani Mashinani model* provided by Korir (2009: 9–18). This model, according to the Bishop, was inspired by the “ferocious turmoil surrounding the second multiparty elections” in Kenya in 1997. The turmoil was instigated by political authorities who “were sowing seeds of discord, dividing citizens along tribal lines and instigating terrible communal violence” (2009: 1). The *Amani Mashinani model* provides the following steps as peacebuilding model:

- ✓ Step 1: Analysis, intervention and interruption
- ✓ Step 2: Protection, sanctuary and relief
- ✓ Step 3: One-to-one meetings
- ✓ Step 4: Small group to small group meetings

²¹Interview with JNP, at KBM, 23rd January 2022

- ✓ Step 5: Sharing food
- ✓ Step 6: intra-ethnic meetings
- ✓ Step 7: Airing of grievances
- ✓ Step 8: preparation of agenda and inter-ethnic meetings

That is why, in the case of this study research, in planning the main intervention, some of the above points were borrowed from the model. The initial steps involved analysing and questioning the situation by engaging individuals who were either directly involved or impacted by it, aiming to gain insight and conduct a contextual diagnosis. From this diagnosis, the assumption was made that youths who were disillusioned and desperate might resort to violence as a means of expression, channelling their emotions and seeking attention from those willing to listen. The next step was to collaboratively plan a response with the future beneficiaries, addressing the behaviours or concerns of these youths. This entailed examining group dynamics, interactions and other relationships to devise an appropriate response to their expressed grievances, unhappiness or needs.

The third step was to mobilise a group or team to implement an action that could be an answer or the beginning of an appropriate answer. This was done at two levels, with young university students in Goma town and students from Nyakariba Secondary School in rural area. In this way, peace circles were initiated in these two institutions. The objectives of the circles were to train the youths in issues of conflict management and non-violence while training them to become peacemakers. In their circle, they needed to understand that there was no hierarchy, no one who commanded but just a guide, the members were all equal as human beings and as members and what united them was their humanity, harmony, cohesion and peace. In addition, the main activity to evaluate in the context of this study was initiated with the youths from Kitchanga. These youths created an association to work on farming activities. The fourth step was to listen to the members or participants who took part in these activities as a way of follow-up and a way to evaluate them. Their reactions from the participants were encouraging and the activities could be sustained in both senses. The entire process leading to transformation through the interventions can be understood through the following diagram:

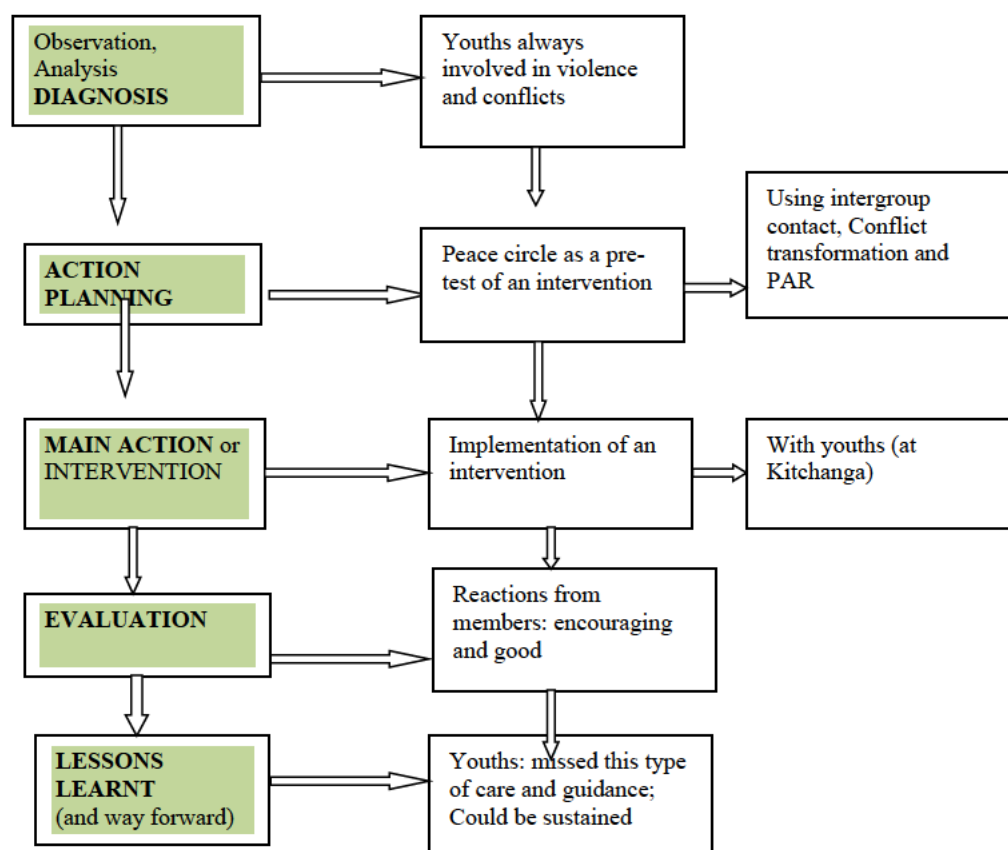


Figure 18: Process of leading transformation. **Source:** Compiled from Korir (2009)

The fifth step was to establish the lessons learnt from the two activities, that of the circle and the farming activity. In fact, it appeared that the youths were missing this kind of care and subsequent guidance given the way they showed their commitment. Participants in these activities expressed their satisfaction according to what they were learning and doing. Among the teaching, these words from Bishop Korir made sense to the youths and inspired them; Korir (2009: 3) told the warring groups in Kenya: “Let us look ahead, what we have lost we can recover, by God’s grace, when there is peace. Continuing fighting will only result in more loss”. This was among the messages to share with the youths as a starting point in transformation and peacebuilding.

11.7 Agriculture Used as Action Research Intervention

Two social aspects of intergroup contact should be looked at here; the social *categorisation*, *decategorisation* and *recategorisation* (Schellhaas & Dovidio, 2016: 11) and the impact of the intervention of the activities conducted at Kitchanga. This impact can also be evaluated according to the positive or negative effects of the intergroup contact through the intervention conducted at Kitchanga.



Figure 19: Moving toward a happy end. An AJPA member checking on the maize on the farm, Kitchanga, DRC. **Source:** The researcher, August 2023.

About social *categorisation* and exclusion, one informant coded as HVR gave the following examples:

The Tutsi always despise the Hutu and vice versa. Someone like Munyamariba is fighting the Hunde armed group called Raia mutomboki. Tutsi and Hunde do not come along with each other; a Tutsi cannot go to Gatoyi. The misunderstanding

between Mr. Duniya Bakarani and the Hutu shows that relationships are not good among ethnic.²²

Mr HVR confirms what other informants were saying about relationships among different groups. He even gives some examples of tribes like Hutu, Tutsi and Hunde or people like Munyamariba, a warlord who led a Hutu armed group.

Starting his peacebuilding efforts among war-torn communities, Bishop Korir noticed that his actions were really needed, and this study borrowed from him these words when he argued that “we realised we needed to start again at the grassroots, to reach the actual perpetrators and victims of violence. We needed to facilitate *Amani Mashinani*—peace in the village, not peace in urban hotels” (Korir, 2009: 4). Consequently, the AJPA initiative had to come from the grassroots, at least from the direct beneficiaries who were the youths. So, the impact of the interventions initiated through this study was in line with peacebuilding efforts starting from the real stakeholders of peace in their living context.

11.8 Conclusion

This chapter presented the intervention planning processes followed by the intervention as implemented by the youths at Kitchanga, the intervention background and how it was run by the members. The major inspiration came from the *Amani Mashinani model* implemented in Kenya by Bishop Korir during bloody conflicts between the Pokot and the Marakwet warriors; the Kikuyu and the Kalenjin. The model provides eight steps for peacebuilding, and I assumed that these steps would be beneficial in the Kitchanga case. The chapter described the impact of the intervention based on the way relationships improved among the youths and their communities at Kitchanga. A common question the youths asked and that could be asked to every researcher is around issues of power, first to come and listen to them and second to provide an answer to their grievances. The following chapter gives an overview of the key findings based on fieldwork, interviews, discussions and observations in the form of an evaluation of the short-term outcomes from the intervention.

²²Interview with HVR, RBY-MM, 2nd May 2022

CHAPTER TWELVE

POST-INTERVENTION OUTCOMES

12.1 Introduction

Chapter 12 presents the main findings and discusses them from the participants' views and according to emerging trends from the informants' words or stories. The study established the following themes from interviews and group discussions: violence as business or a dirty game; youths' manipulations by politicians; leadership crisis; the youths as a misrepresented voice; unfinished business; hypocrisy among the youths and among communities; and the need for peaceful cohabitation. Unfortunately, the evaluation process was conducted at a distance due to the deadly war going on in Masisi especially in Kitchanga, Nyakariba, Mushaki and in many other places. Some informants and members of the interventions had run away from their homes and were living in IDP camps; four AJPA's members from Kitchanga are currently living in the Mugunga-Rusayo camp whereas one teacher and one of his students are in Bulengo camp, the youth leader from Rubaya has also run away and is currently living in Goma. These together with other people who saw me in their areas keep on updating me about the situations in their respective areas while they reflect on the activities, they had started from Kitchanga following an evaluation guideline which was derived from the set indicators of success. The indicators as initially presented are the number of committed participants, how often they meet and what they achieved. For this evaluation, most of the contacts were by phone or just meetings with the few informants living now in IDP camps in order to clarify a point and to monitor the evaluation process.

The evaluation of short-term outcomes of the intervention is based on three times in order to appreciate the intervention efficiency. These times are before the intervention and subsequent activities, during the activities and after these activities. However, given the types of conflicts based on a number of factors that make these conflicts protracted or long-term and given also the numerous actors involved in the conflicts, the evaluation that results from the fifth research question does not look at the long-term outcomes of the intervention. Research question 5 in this study is stated as follows: what are the results from the transformative activities or behavioural change undertaken with the youths or by themselves in order to

improve non-violent actions to curtail youth violence in Masisi District? This question motivated the corresponding objective which was to evaluate the outcomes of the implemented intervention in order to improve the relationships and to curtail youth violence in Masisi. Thus, in evaluating the short-term outcomes, the study presents the above three dimensions: first the situation before the intervention; then the situation during the intervention and the situation after the intervention had been implemented.

12.2 Conflicts and Violence in Masisi Through the Lens of the Youths

The study sets out to explore the nature, the extent, the causes of conflicts and their consequences, particularly with regard to violence involving the youths in Masisi. It also intended to evaluate the impact of conflicts and violence on people, on the youths and on their environment; to assess the existing strategies or initiatives put in place for conflict transformation and in order to change the youths' behaviours. Furthermore, the study aimed at suggesting strategies and implementing them to reduce prejudice, stereotypes and misunderstanding among the youths and their communities. Finally, the research intended to evaluate the outcomes of the implemented interventions in order to curtail youth violence in Masisi. This study research adopted the content analysis approach to make sense of the informants' narratives. According to Krippendorff (2004: 18), "content analysis is a research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from texts (or other meaningful matter) to the contexts of their use". He adds that "as a research technique, content analysis provides new insights, increases a researcher's understanding of particular phenomena, or informs practical actions" (Krippendorff, 2004: 19). In this way, content analysis has a close link with PAR because both aim at a result which is an action. As such, content analysis starts from any given oral or written material that bears a meaning or a message. This material, Krippendorff (2004: 19) argues, could be a piece of art, images, maps, sounds, signs and symbols among others.

Generally speaking, thematic content analysis is based on two dimensions which are the research context and the data content. It is from these two that the major points or themes for analysis stem. In shaping the context and the content, the researcher has to go back to his research questions and objectives and look at the general trend emerging from the collected data in line with the questions and objectives. Then he must select the content and the related

themes trying to define the elements that illustrate a given theme. Thematic content analysis is basically an answer to the following guiding questions: why, what, how, who, where, when. These questions come from the data in order to get categories of meanings or themes (Berg, 2001: 183). The study established emerging themes from informants' stories, experiences, declarations and narratives in general. The task was not only to transcribe the wording but to go beyond what was said and find out the common points according to the context and the content of what was said. The identified themes were contextualised and analysed in order to make meaning from them following the study questions, the objectives and the assumptions. The study established the following themes:

- ✓ Violence as business or a dirty game
- ✓ Youths' manipulations or exploitation
- ✓ Leadership crisis
- ✓ The youths as misrepresented voices
- ✓ Unfinished business
- ✓ The sense of dependency
- ✓ Hypocrisy among the communities
- ✓ Low social cohesion and the power of ethnic identities
- ✓ Need for a peaceful cohabitation

In addition to these major themes, the study established sub-themes that resulted from informants' words and attitudes; these are:

- ✓ Frustrations
- ✓ Fear
- ✓ Disappointment
- ✓ Group competitions
- ✓ Historical social categorisation
- ✓ Traumatic life experiences
- ✓ Revolt and aggression

12.2.1 The Nature, Causes and Extent of Violence and Conflicts Involving the Youths

This was the first objective of this inquiry as it aimed to explore the nature, the extent, the causes and consequences of violence and conflicts involving the youths in Masisi. So, the first question was to look at the relationships and interactions among the communities and the youths in particular. Talking about the relationships among ethnic groups and the youths in particular, HVR²³ gave five examples illustrating the negative interactions or relationships. The first one was about resources or mineral exploitation at Rubaya whereby he explained the opposition between the SMB Company for Tutsi and COOPERAMA for Hutu, both of which were exploiting minerals. This, according to HVR, showed the way these two groups could not unite and work together. He recalled a case of several people who died at a mining site and the Tutsi were accused of killing them. The second example he gave was that the Tutsi despised the Hutu and vice versa. He said: The Tutsi always despise Bahutu. (*Batusi banapendaka ku negliger Bahutu et vice versa*).²⁴

Yet these people live in the same district even though they live in separate villages. The third example he gave was the fight between a certain Munyamariba, a Hutu, against the Hunde of the Raia Mutomboki armed group. The fourth example was that a Tutsi could not be in a Hunde area. He gave an example of a place called Gatoyi and said: *Mutusi hawezi fika Gatoyi* (a Tutsi cannot dare to go to Gatoyi). The fifth example he gave was about conflict between a certain Duniya Bakarani, a Tutsi, who was opposed to some Hutu. To emphasise the cyclical dimension of conflict and violence in Masisi, HVR concluded by saying: If you kill my father, I will also kill your father; meaning an eye for an eye. By saying that, HVR showed that he was still nurturing the idea of revenge. This idea has been discovered in many young people. During a focus group session at KBM, one of the participants said that conflicts and violence among the youths in their area are linked to customary power and land. Some people want power and fight to remove those in traditional leadership. One participant, BLKM, added that issues around power are caused by those who are not happy with this power. He asserted: “there are too many conflicts in this area because of power and land. There are those

²³For confidentiality, I decided to use initials that do not relate to the real informant's name.

²⁴Interview with HVR, at RBY-MM, 2nd May 2022

who think that they can remove the customary power. They forget that this power is given by God”.²⁵ He added that: “The traditional leader has already appointed the village chiefs, but these chiefs have never reached their villages.”²⁶ By saying this, the informant brings in the issue of traditional power that should not be part of conflicts.

Asked about the extent of violence, RBM had this explanation: every Wednesday, the rebels organise forced work on the road, and they give a receipt. Whoever is caught without this receipt is canded for thirteen minutes and has to pay one hundred thousand Congolese francs. Robbers and rapists are simply killed.²⁷ This story shows how life in the rebel environment is not easy and it reflects the way people are suffering in villages under the militia leadership. When asked about the causes of violence among the youths in Masisi, RBN said this:

the main cause of violence is poverty, unemployment, parents who are irresponsible and peer pressure. The parents’ irresponsibility is linked to poverty. Moreover, the youths do not want to study, they despise education because they do not see any future in education.²⁸

To these causes of violence, RBM added other factors maintaining the youths in armed groups. These factors, he said, are mainly linked to geography and to fear. He asserted that:

Among the causes of violence, there is a big forest where they can hide themselves. It is also impossible to leave the armed group once someone has joined because for those who quit, their parents have to be fined to pay the equivalent of two firearms equivalent to 300 dollars and five goats.²⁹

This gives a picture that is conducive to conflict and violence from the setting itself. The militia boys trust the huge forest where they freely take refuge. So, they know that whatever they do, the first place to look at is their place to hide. Their organisation is also a kind of business that one cannot escape from because whoever tries knows the consequences of this

²⁵Focus group discussion, at KBM, 23rd January 2022

²⁶Focus group discussion, at KBM, 23rd January 2022

²⁷Interview with RBM, at RBY-MM, 3rd May 2022

²⁸Interview with RBM, at RBY-MM, 3rd May 2022

²⁹Idem

act: to be heavily fined. Given the poor context that people live in, no one can leave the exploitative group. Thus, the militia activity appears like business. Expanding on the causes of conflicts and violence, MBM said:

About land issues, those big landowners are also actors in conflicts. A current example is that of 1000 villages that were forcefully vacated. Now, when someone is forced to leave his village without anywhere else to go, he has no choice other than to go to IDP camp. Then just imagine that a 25-year young person is unable to live in sheeting. He has no job and has never been to school. That is where conflicts start from.³⁰

He added and said that: it is communal manipulation that pushes the youths to get involved in conflicts and violence.³¹ Asked about the push factors or causes of violence that involve the youths, HVR accuses those who manipulate the youths and said: They use the youths! (*Banatumikishaka ba jeunes!*). He added saying: “the leaders are behind the youth violence. The youths have no position”.³² (*Bakubwa biko nyuma yabyo; ba jeunes habakuwake na position*). This indicates that they are easily manipulated. Talking about the extent of conflicts and violence in their area, PNJ said:

the problem in our area is that people hide their true face. Cohesion among ethnic groups is not good. There are those who think that people from other groups have no right whatsoever.³³

Asked about the relationships within the church in their area, JDD said: in our SDA church, I have never seen a muhunde in the choir; I have never seen a single muhunde being baptised in our church.³⁴ JDD added: “For example, in our SDA church, I have never seen a muhunde coming to fellowship in our church. People say that it’s a church for bahutu and Batusi”.

³⁰Interview with MBM, at RBY-MM, 3rd May 2022

³¹Idem

³³Interview with PNJ, at KBM, 23rd January 2022

³⁴Interview with JDD, at MBM, 23rd January 2022

About the relationships among people, the youths in particular, OBM simply said: “relationships among the youths are tense; the youths lied to each other even if sometimes they can share. They live in hypocrisy.”³⁵

The issue of hypocrisy in their daily life has been underlined by different informants in different places. In an interview with a militia group leader, MBN, about the relationships among the communities in their area, he just said: People deceive each other; their relationships are not good at all.³⁶ When asked to explain, he briefly added: when we are together, we show each other that everything is good but quite often, we deceive each other. This man, MBN is an armed group leader and a strong man in his area and he confirms that people in their place live in hypocrisy. About relationships between people or ethnic groups or even the youths; asked about his experiences of conflicts and the motivations fight, RJB gave this story:

During our war with people from the other side, people told us that we were losing because whenever they were killing one of us, they used to slaughter him and eat him. Then, we also decided to start eating whoever we catch, or we kill from their side. For eating human flesh, we used to slaughter a cow then we mix the human meat with the cow meat, and we give to the women to cook and we eat with bugali (cassava bread).³⁷

This unbelievable story coming from a witness shows the extent of violence in this area.

12.2.2 The Impacts of Conflicts and Violence on the Youths: A Sense of Dependency

The second objective of this study was to evaluate the impacts of conflicts and violence on the youths and what pushes them to violence. HVR gave an account on the youths in his area and said: “Most of the youths did not go to school. Others grew up like rebels. Others who are unemployed when they are unable to cope with life, they just join the armed groups.”³⁸

³⁵Interview with OBM, at MBM, 23rd January 2023

³⁶Interview with MBN, at NBK, 25th January 2022

³⁷Interview with RJB, at NBK, 25th January 2022

³⁸Interview with HVR, at RBY-MM, 3rd May 202

During a focus group discussion with the youths at KBM, they first showed me photos and revealed to me that those people in the photos are their bosses and supply what is needed to them. One participant, who thought I was one of the men on the photos, told me:

if you want us to work for you just tell us, we are capable of doing whatever you request of us. (showing people on the photos) All these people supply us with guns, and they call us whenever they want us to secure their goods when they send them. As you see us here, we all know how to use guns. Now, just tell us what you want from us.³⁹.

Talking about the actors in conflict and violence in their area, HVR pointed at the leaders, especially the politicians and he named them. He said:

It is the leaders who support violence. Mr Edgar for example brings the guns from that side (pointing Rwanda). Sometimes, a politician can call the local chief and tells him to look for ten young people for him⁴⁰.

HVR confirmed that himself has four machine guns, one pistol, one AK1 and one “SMGYI”. Asked about his friends or the youths’ behavior in general, he said: “*Ikimuntu cyabavuyemo!* meaning: “They lost the sense of ubuntu”.⁴¹

12.2.3 The Strategies and Initiatives in Place to Respond to Violence and Conflicts

The third objective of this research was to assess the current mechanisms put in place for conflict transformation and behavioural change on the side of the youths in Masisi. In addition, the research looked at the limitations of these mechanisms. Therefore, the informants had first to identify the mechanisms and then understand their positive and negative sides. Asked whether there were any initiatives or strategies that have been implemented in order to curtail youth violence, HVR said: if there are people who can get involved in these conflicts, they can end them (*kukepatikana batu bakuji investir mwabyo binawezaisha.*)

³⁹Interview with HVR, at RBY-MM, 3rd May 202

⁴⁰Idem

⁴¹Idem

About the strategies to end violence, HVR⁴²said:

if there were strategies, there could be some place to listen to the youths, the places where the youths meet and talk about some strategy to bring about peace. In addition to what he said, HVR asserted that these social forums should not be for one tribe because in this case, the youths are called to think together⁴³.

Unfortunately, HVR concludes that NGOs and even politicians have not done much. He commented: “we do not see any positive results from these NGOs; even politicians and elders have never tried”.⁴⁴

And when they were asked whether the church had taken any initiative in conflict transformation or reconciliation, JDD on behalf of the SDA church said: “I personally have not seen anything on the side of the church.”⁴⁵(*Personnellement, sikuonaka kitu upande wa eglise.*). Talking on behalf of the Pentecostal church, ABM said:

The church is in civil society, but church leaders fear the armed groups and the youths. According to KLM during a focus group session at MBM had this to say: there is lack of trust among people. People trust more solutions from outside than local solutions.⁴⁶.

Asked whether churches had done anything in terms of peacebuilding or any intervention to help the youths and church members to keep away from violence and conflicts, JDD had this to say: “the church is out of politics; that is why it is not involved in these issues of conflicts”.⁴⁷

Because people do not trust each other, they also do not trust in suggestions that anyone of them gave, especially when he was from an opposing ethnic group. These views from different young people reflect the extent of hatred and barriers among the ethnic groups in

⁴²Interview with HVR, at RBY-MM, 3rd May 2022

⁴³Interview with HVR, at RBY-MM, 3rd May 2022

⁴⁴Idem

⁴⁵Interview with JDD, at MBM, 23rd January 2022

⁴⁶Focus group discussion at MBM, 23rd January 2022

⁴⁷Interview with JDD, at MBM, 23rd January 2022

Masisi. The gap is so deep that it affects even the church where people are unable to meet for prayers or the initiated forums to respond to their issues are not trusted. However, these young people are sure that if there was an outsider who was willing to help them to end the misunderstanding, they would listen to him because they would assume that he would be a neutral person.

12.2.4 The Strategies to Curtail Youth Violence in Masisi

The fourth objective of this research was to come up with strategies and implement them to reduce prejudice, stereotypes and misunderstanding among the youths and their communities in Masisi. The answers from the informants reflect a diversion in strategies as the ones adopted were not direct responses to the youth's issues.

For HMD, there are people who gave out guns to the youths. He said:

people openly distributed firearms. They are doing whatever they can to sabotage the work of the Disarmament, Demobilisation, Communal Recovery and Stabilisation Programme (through its French acronym as PDDRC-S or Programme de Desarmement, Demobilisation, Relevement communautaire et Stabilisation) so that they can remain with the youths.⁴⁸

Asked about the strategies to end violence and conflicts in Masisi, HVR suggested that people should look for something that will unite them and then they work on it. He said: "People should look for something that unites them and everyone should feel a member of it without saying that this is a Muhundeor that is a Muhutu".⁴⁹

HVR explains the suggested strategies in practice and gives this account:

Let there be forgiveness. Politicians should seat and think about what they can do for the youths, like to initiate youth's clubs, to promote the culture of unity, to remind the youths that we are all brothers and sisters. Let us move in a new direction, let us share what we have. The youths should not leave aside those elders' ideas telling them not to marry

⁴⁸Interview with HMD, at NBK, 26th January 2022

⁴⁹Interview with HVR, at RBY-MM, 7th January 2023

from the other tribe. Once I decide to marry a Muhunde or Mututsi, they should not discriminate against me.⁵⁰

12.2.5 Violence as Business or a Dirty Game

This theme resulted from the question about the relationships among the youths and other stakeholders in Masisi. Here is a sensitive true story told by HVR when interviewed somewhere in Masisi⁵¹. One day as HVR was at his home, someone came to him with a deal. The man wanted HVR to eliminate an enemy who was in a house he showed him. He described the victim and wanted him to be killed. He paid the killer HVR. That night, he requested three of his friends to escort him, everyone with his gun. When they reached the place, HVR found that the man he was called to eliminate was his friend; he felt that he could not harm him or eliminate him. Then HVR advised the man to escape and that they would shoot in the air to show the boss that they had completed the job. That is what they did and shot in the air. The military men who were in the area thought that there was an attack and decided to check what was happening. Three of them decided to go and check where the shooting had come from. Unfortunately for them, from their hiding place, the killers had seen them and killed all three military men. This crime has never been followed up to know who committed it. So, no one was arrested. Later on, HVR was again involved in the death of more than 150 people and that is the time I encountered him, and he shared his exploits with me.⁵² Hence, he had been paid to kill as this is his business. On another note, during a focus group discussion one participant confirmed that even because of 10 dollars someone can be killed.⁵³

In fact, in Masisi, militia groups make violence as a part of their activities and business. They forced people to pay taxes for security. These were evidenced by the receipts they provided to villagers and what they call *Tuishi kwa amani* or “Let us live in peace” and *Tuungane mukono* or “Let us put our hands together”. These taxes, mostly equivalent to 1 000

⁵⁰ Interview with HVR, at RBY-MM, 7th January 2023

⁵³ Focus group discussion at NBK, 26th January 2022

Congolese francs, were collected by the Nyatura and Mai-Mai in the areas that they controlled. On their side, the M23 collected 10 dollars and issued a receipt to taxpayers. Some villagers showed me or simply handed me the samples of their receipts (in appendices to this thesis). There are also taxes paid at every roadblock made by the armed groups and the FARDC. These taxes vary from 500 to 10 000 Congolese francs for people who travel on motorbikes. However, the tax can be higher when someone carries farm produce like beans or potatoes. In areas controlled by the M23, for a truck, one has to pay between 350 and 700 dollars. Therefore, this is a kind of direct and/or structural violence the armed youths are involved in. The kidnappings are also another type of business people are involved in. Kidnappings are organised in such a way that most of the people who are kidnapped or killed have money or are suspected to have money. In this case, the family of the victim is forced to pay up to 200 000 dollars for ransom otherwise the victim is killed.⁵⁴ However, this kind of violence through kidnappings is witnessed in a wide network involving the youths and some people known as bosses who use them. Because the government failed to provide security to people, politicians, warlords and other crooks had become powerful and did as they pleased by manipulating the youths. In this case, this is structural violence as it is related to leadership failure.

Talking about the causes of violence among the youths in Masisi, RBN said this: “the major cause of violence are poverty, unemployment and irresponsibility of the parents and peer pressure. Parents’ irresponsibility is related to lack of means to cater for their families”.⁵⁵

One wonders why the youth think that the parents are irresponsible. The parents who are in a poor situation seem to have given up and have no authority over their children. But this could be because of a lack of support from the leadership.

12.3 Youth Manipulation or Exploitation: Structural and Cultural Violence

This theme appeared through informants’ stories as a response to how the youths are participating in violence and conflict in Masisi. The findings revealed that the youths have

⁵⁴Interview with RBN, at RBY-MM, 7th January 2023

⁵⁵ Idem

always been manipulated by politicians and other community members. However, this raised a question about whether it is manipulation or exploitation. Some politicians have vast farms where they keep cows or grow food like Irish potatoes. Hence, the youths find themselves in a kind of criminal network as Boege argued when he characterised today's violent conflicts as oscillating between "hybrid violent conflicts and hybrid political orders" (Boege: 2006: 2). Boege (2006: 2) went further and looked at what he called "war economies" or "the political economy of armed conflict" fuelling current conflicts and violence in places like Masisi. As a consequence, manipulation is a deliberate strategy to get the youths into the businesses. In addition, it was found that manipulation or exploitation is linked to structural causes which are lack of equal sociopolitical and economic opportunities coupled with poor governance or lack of governmental power at the grassroots. Furthermore, other structural causes are related to social organisation or structure. During the interviews, one thing kept on coming through the informants' narratives; this was that the informants worked for powerful people or politicians. About the youths' manipulation, CMAK said:

indeed, I find a contradiction, how come the young unemployed people are very well armed? It is true that there are questions that are taboo in our context such as who supplies armed groups with weapons and ammunitions.⁵⁶

These views are shared by the church members who took part in a focus group discussion on 21st January 2023. One participant said: in our village, the youths are unable to buy a gun, they cannot even afford to buy ammunition. So, where do they get them from? There must be a motivational force behind them.⁵⁷

The results indicate that there is lack of truth in the youth's relationships as they confirmed it themselves when they talked about hypocrisy that characterises their contacts and as was confirmed by two participants, HMB and BLK, during a focus group discussion session at KBM.⁵⁸ The intergroup contact led to negative outcomes (Pettigrew, 2008: 190), it increased prejudice, distrust and violence/conflicts among the communities and the youths in particular.

⁵⁶Interview with CMAK, RBY-MM, 7th January 2023

⁵⁷Interview with CMAK, at RBY-MM, 7th January 2023

In fact, the relationships in the Masisi context are among people of different status, here politicians, businesspeople and traditional chiefs on one side and the youths who happened to be powerless on the other hand. These relationships can only result in conflicts or manipulation. This manipulation results in great frustration and disappointment on the youths' part. The social indexation or categorisation (us vs them), losing properties and living in IDP camps for so long without any hope for a better future push the youths into violence. They are subjected to psychological violence and sometimes in physical or direct violence. This is explained by the consequences of their types of lives in poverty, with hunger, denial of educational opportunities and manipulation of relationships. These dimensions of violence have also been illustrated by Ho-Won Jeong (2017: 30) and confirmed by Ramsbotham et al. (2005: 28) when they talked about "exploitative social relations" as a type of physical violence. In the case of Masisi, the youth's exploitation results in a sense of dependency, laziness and violence on the part of the youths.

12.3.1 The Leadership Crisis as a Source of Violence

This aspect resulted from the motivational aspect of the youths' participation in violence. When asked the causes of endless violence in Masisi in general, CMAK replied: the youths have no role models to follow, they follow wrong models. Then they say to themselves that everybody who tried succeeded, why not me? Those who tried succeeded.⁵⁹

Here, they mean those who tried wrongly using guns or other negative means to get power over the community have succeeded. CMAK added and gave some examples of those who succeeded through violence:

In 1993, Those who tried got good positions. In 1996 with the AFDL, The Governor was from the AFDL; then the RCD brought people like Moise Nyarugabo, Alexis Tambwe Mwamba, Tango Fort and Gachaba who became a Member Of Parliament. It is the same with the CNDP. Some people are generals like Akili Mali, Mayanga and Rugayi. Later the M23 also brought other people. So, young people are in a dilemma:

⁵⁹Interview with CMAK, at RBY-MM, 7th January 2023

should we choose the army or non-violence? Young people are in a dilemma, They wonder between the army and unemployment what to take?⁶⁰

The leadership vacuum adds to what Olaosebikan (2010: 552) attributed to “inept leadership” when giving the causes of conflicts in Africa. According to him, the needed leaders should be guided by “the virtues of administrative tact, political tolerance and social justice”. Olaosebikan (2010: 552 - 553) adds that the leaders Africa has inherited from colonial time are characterised by weakness, corruption and a lack of patriotism. Moreover, he argues, “the attitudes of these rulers have sparked off widespread bloody violence”. The wrong rulers have failed to unite people. These are among the virtues lacking by the leaders in the community in Masisi and in DRC in general. The youths are abandoned to themselves, they lack direction and whom to turn to and their parents are irresponsible. That is why during a focus group discussion session, one discussant expressed a need or a request saying: *mwatuencadra*⁶¹, meaning “could youth please take care of us or look after us?” They added, talking about the politicians or members of parliament that they have elected: people we elected, instead of bringing us projects for development, they bring us firearms (*Abo twatoye, au lieu batuzanire ama projets, bakatuzanira ama armes!*)⁶²

Moreover, it was revealed that the leadership crisis reflected two types of violence in Masisi, structural violence and cultural violence. The structural element of violence is reflected by the politicians who take advantage of the unemployed youths to bribe them for their own interests. In addition, the cultural element of violence is reflected by the community members or elders who motivate the youths to fight for the communal rights and for their land.

12.2.2 Unfinished Business and Need for Role Model

When the youths grow up with rejection by the community or feel forgotten by people who should take care of them, they develop attitudes that are often aggressive or violent. This behaviour can be developed by an individual or a group of people. In this condition, the people look for protection or for someone who could replace the authorities, parents or

⁶⁰Interview with CMAK, at RBY-MM, 7th January 2023

⁶¹Focus group discussion, at NBK, 26th January 2023

⁶²Focus group discussion, NBK, 26 January 2022

someone to support them. In context of the youths in Masisi, this is reflected by the language or messages they use like.

Table 29: Sample for familiarity with the youths and need for support

Messages [French]	Meaning [English]	By	Place	Date
<i>Nous sommes bien papa, merci bcp papa</i>	We are all doing well, Dad, thank very much Dad	DKR	NBK	24 June 2022
<i>Merci beaucoup mon père. Papa nous étions à l'hôpital l'enfant était malade</i>	Thank you very much Dad. Dady we were admitted at the hospital; the kid was sick	DKR	NBK	29 December 2022
<i>Tuko sote vizuri papa</i>	We are all doing well, Dad	IRR	KBM	7 June 2023
<i>Bonjour papa Philippe</i>	Good morning Dady Philippe	IRR	KBM	13 June 2023
<i>Merci beaucoup papa</i>	Thank you very much Dad	IRR	KBM	13 June 2023
<i>Merci papa Philippe</i>	Thank you Dady, Philippe	ANM	KBM	11 June 2023
<i>Bonne nuit papa</i>	Good night Dady	ANN	NBK	23 rd July 2023
<i>Bonsoir papa. Habarizenu?</i>	Good evening, Dad. How is news?	DKR	NBK	27 July 2023
<i>Bonsoir mon vieux</i>	Good evening Dad	PNJ	KBM	27 September 2023
<i>Bonsoir vieux</i>	Good evening Dad	ANN	NBK	29 July 2023
<i>Merci aussi papa</i>	Thank you, too, Dad	ANN	NBK	29 July 2023
<i>Bonjour baba</i>	Good morning Dad	JBM	KBM	8 September 2023
<i>Merci Papa</i>	Thank you, Dad	GTT	RBY-MM	16 September 2023
<i>Nous avons l'envie de vous rendre visite</i>	We wish to pay you a visit	JBM	KBM	13 September 2023
<i>Bonjour papa</i>	Good morning,Dad	JBM	KBM	16 September 2023
<i>Jambo papa</i>	Hi Dad	JBM	KBM	21 September 2023
<i>Hukutuko bien kadogo mzazi nahuko ?</i>	Here we are doing well, Dad. How are you over there?	JBM	KBM	21September 2023
<i>Bon dimanche mzee</i>	Good Sunday, Dad	CMAK	RBY-MM	24 September 2023
<i>Bonsoir Papa</i>	Good evening, Dad	JBM	KBM	5 October 2023

The history of hatred and endless conflicts, violence and other words rely on a repeated history based on stereotypes.

12.2.3 The Youths as a Misrepresented Voice

The youths feel that they are not listened to. So, for them, taking guns is a way to call for attention so that adults would listen to them. Among other strategies adopted by the youths, there is extreme violence like killing, burning or destroying properties and looting. During a focus group discussion, they keep on asking me when I would be talking to politicians or other decision-makers to advocate for them. Among the recommendations, one participant said: Whenever you advocate for us, just give people our ideas or requests and do the follow-up (*Mukuwenaba balancer ma idees yetu namufanye suivi*).⁶³

By saying this, the young people want their voice to reach the leaders or those who could provide them with support. Misrepresentation renders the adopted strategies, solutions, responses questionable, inappropriate and somehow obsolete about the youths' needs and aspirations, about the knowledge of youths' experiences and life challenges, and about the knowledge of youths' potentials. The strategies adopted by the youths appear to be negative as they produce negative results in their communities. The traditional systems or frameworks for conflict transformation (*Baraza* and its components) seem to have failed and have misled society as they have ignored the youths or leaders in terms of conflict transformation, peacebuilding and the various experiences from the grassroots.

This situation of ignoring the youths' voices could be linked to lack of interest on the side of decision-makers who do not see what they can get from the youths. Their problems are just forgotten or simply ignored and gain no attention in the media and even in forums to deal with local and provincial issues. That is what Lederach (1997: 73) argued when he talked about various contemporary conflicts that are simply ignored when they do not get "the attention of CNN" or other media channels. Talking about the "Traditional approaches to conflict transformation" and giving their "potentials and limits" Boege (2006: 1) found that

⁶³Focus group discussion, at KBM, 22nd January 2023

conflicts and subsequent violence like in Masisi are no longer to be looked at in a conventional dimension because they are a mixt up of actors, issues and motivations.

12.3.4 Hypocrisy in Relationships Among Communities

People live together or have been living together for many years. One could wonder why they suddenly raise arms against each other and kill each other in a savage manner or how people can show such hostilities among them. Most of the informants confirmed that people are living in hypocrisy.⁶⁴ Hypocrisy goes with mistrust. During a focus group discussion, one participant had this to say talking about communal relationships: there is hypocrisy in this area. Whenever someone from a group dies, his people accuse the other group and say: it is these people who killed him⁶⁵. This came out from an interview with one young man who participated in the focus group discussion. He said: The relationships among the youths are very bad. There are ethnic conflicts whereby a group wants to dominate the others.⁶⁶

Most informants confirmed that the relationships among communities and the youths were superficial and lacked any sense of truth. Thus, this attitude is related to lack of trust among people living together and to external factors that caused misunderstanding among them.

12.3.5 Low Social Cohesion and the Power of Ethnic Identities

Conflict has created closed societies whereby people do not want or are reluctant to socialise. The essential problem is mistrust among ethnic ingroups and outgroups, stereotypes and discrimination. This is reflected in cases of killings or murders; roadblocks where young people restricted the movement of traffic and in some areas, they restricted access and created no-go zones. This is what Olaosebikan (2010: 553) confirmed when he argued that the leaders that Africa have never been “unifiers, chiefs in the true sense, who bind wounds, holds everything and everyone together, mobilise and motive their people, pursue a policy of inclusion rather than exclusion”.

⁶⁴Interview with MBN, at NBK, 25th January 2022

⁶⁵Interview with MBN, at NBK, 25th January 2022

⁶⁶Focus group discussion, at NBK, 26th January 2022

12.3.6 Need for Peaceful Cohabitation

Asked about the mechanisms that could help to bring about social cohesion and peaceful cohabitation, young people from different places aired their views. About any of the conditions for a needed change and development, HVR had this to say: people cannot develop themselves when they are still living in economic crisis without collaboration or understanding among communities.⁶⁷ As a strategy towards peace and peaceful cohabitation, HVR suggested: the youths should have meeting places where they are listened to, from where they can talk and share about what can contribute to peace.⁶⁸ He added: let there be forgiveness! (*Kukuwekukurumiyana*).

According to this gentleman (HVR), the youths in Masisi need a meeting place but also, they need to learn how to forgive each other. During a focus group discussion at KBM, one participant expressed the youths request and said: our request is that we should mobilise ourselves as youth because we are the first losers then we rally other young people and talk about conflict resolution. We should also call upon the leaders and talk to them about conflicts.⁶⁹ NHE who is a youth leader in one area gave me the motto for his group of young people and this is their motto: in the name of peace and development, Kayembe wants peace and nothing else than peace!⁷⁰ Kayembe is a traditional entity in Masisi.

12.4 The Study Findings in Line with the Literature and the Theoretical Frameworks

This part of the thesis gives an overview of the background and the research process and then discusses the results of the research questions, objectives and the reviewed literature about the theoretical framework, namely, conflict transformation using Galtung and Lederach's insights and its components which are behavioural change, to restore the relationships in a divided society. In this way, according to Lederach, Galtung and other researchers supporting the conflict transformation approach, conflicts can be seen as destructive or as constructive situations or events according to the way they are handled. The constructive dimension of

⁶⁷Interview with HVR, at RBY-MM, 2nd May 2022

⁶⁸Idem

⁶⁹Focus group discussion at KBM, 22nd January 2023

⁷⁰Interview with NHE, at NBK, 7th January 2022

conflicts, on the one hand, is reflected by negative outcomes from conflicts defined by destruction, violence and killings. On the other hand, the constructive dimension of conflicts is reflected by a change in people's behaviour, ways of living and positive relationships among them. This thesis refers also to the intergroup contact by Lewin and its four dimensions which have the same goals and equal status; the willingness to participate in the same activities and the support from the authority or the leadership. In the case of the youths in Masisi, the goals are peace, wellbeing, harmony and collaboration.

12.4.1 The Study Background and Process

Appendix P provides a broad overview of the study process from June 2019 to October 2023. The study findings revealed that there is economic, social and political inequality between various groups living in Masisi coupled with inequity in resources distribution and allocation, especially land. This study identified multiple causal factors of conflicts and violence in Kitchanga, Nyamitaba-Nyakariba and elsewhere in the district. As for the intergroup contacts model of Allport, the model provides four positive factors that can sustain a good intergroup relationship and contribute to violence and reduction of prejudice.

- 1) Equal status between groups or even group members working on the same goal without any competition among and getting leadership support. The establishment of equal status is the first step toward peace and group harmony. It is based on the fact that there is no hierarchical relationship among the group members and every member feels equal to others and valued like others at the same level.⁷¹ This was the idea behind the peace circles as initiated in educational institutions at La Sapiientia Catholic university and at Nyakariba Secondary School and the farming activities initiated at Kitchanga.

However, in a socioeconomic and political system, it has been challenging to establish this equity among the members especially in the African traditional societies and in Masisi communities where there is the traditional power or system that is quite often in clash with people's aspirations and will. In addition, for these traditional communities, there is the patriarchy system that makes it difficult to think of equity or even equality.

⁷¹Interview with BFR, at la Sapiientia Catholic University, 2nd July 2023

The success story from the youths from Kitchanga, however, is an illustration of this equal status among the members in the created groups and a sign of peace among them.



Figure 20: With students and their headteacher at Nyakariba Secondary School, 2022.

Source: The researcher

- 2) The common goals expressed by the groups in contact. The youths and other group members must work in collaboration with each other to achieve their shared goal. To have effective contact, group members needed to make an active effort toward a goal shared by group members. In the case of Kitchanga in Masisi, young people within AJPA had the same goals which were coming together; overcoming the stereotypes and discrimination; and working together for peace for development. They agreed to meet and decided to work in order to achieve their shared goals of change and this is being achieved through changed attitudes according to their statements. Hence, there is intergroup cooperation among the AJPA members towards reaching the same goals. The members shared with me their impressions and conclusions. The team leader, now living in Rusayo IDP camp shared his impressions with me and said: the programme was very important because it gave us the opportunity to meet as in one family. Young people must

work together in a non-competitive environment and in a group where everyone's ideas are valued and taken into consideration.⁷²

Another member, also living in refuge in Rusayo IDP camp, declared: "The programme enabled us to cooperate and to change the relationships among us. We were already happy with it. We hope that we will continue with it once there is peace in our area".⁷³

- 3) The third point is cooperation among the group members. From the beginning of the AJPA group activities, the members who turned up were helpful to each other. They tried to open up to each other and to discuss about their new group and its fate. The agricultural activities required them, boys and girls, to work together in a cooperative way. When I shared with John, one of the group leaders, about his impression and everyone's commitment, he had this to say:

For the first time, we witnessed young people from different sides working together, everyone as if it was in his father's farm or in his own farm. And this helped us because some of these young people started even calling for help to other members to help them in their particular farms.⁷⁴

His satisfaction was also shared by Buyingo when he said: 'this project was very important. Young people learnt how to be together and help one another instead of fighting for nothing. And this can help them even in the coming days in other works.'⁷⁵ (*Hii mradi ilikuwa ya maana. Babijana balijifunza kukuwa pamoja na kusaidiya mu kitu yamaana. Au lieu ya kuzozana bure. Ile kuwa pamoja na kusaidiyana inaweza hata kuwasaidiya mu siku za mbele mu kazi zingine.*).

This shows that intervention came at a good time and that the AJPA members understood the benefit of working together and cooperating for their own advantage as it is translated by these statements from the beneficiaries.

⁷²Interview with JPK, at Goma, 21st December 2023

⁷³Interview with AMK, at Goma, 21st December 2023

⁷⁴Interview with John, at Goma, 15th December 2023

⁷⁵Interview with Buyingo, at Goma, 20th December 2023

- 4) The fourth point in the model is the support of authorities or other leaders to ensure intergroup success and cohesion. This support of authorities also tends to lead to more positive intergroup contact effects because authorities can either establish or help to define norms and guidelines as to how the members should interact with each other without discrimination. This dimension, according to the youths, is still lacking or has been absent in the relationships in Masisi where most of the youths I met turned to me with a very long list of grievances and needs. It appeared, however, that the major needs were care, encouragement, motivation, positive inspiration and advocacy. These were lacking in their day-to-day lives. In their AJPA group, they were encouraged not to have a hierarchy as such but to appoint people to organise and take care of activities to be carried out. So, the two participants, Justin and Bimenyi, were not chiefs but just organisers.

The hypothesis is mainly based on the fact that ingroups that have more interactions with outgroups can develop more positive relationships and perceptions toward the members of each group as evidenced by the AJPA experiences or the back-to-work experiences. The assumption from the hypothesis is that direct and close contact between members of different social or cultural groups like those in Kitchanga can reduce prejudice, improve intergroup relations and promote mutual understanding.

Theoretical and strategic implications of the findings in reducing violence among young people in Masisi revealed that it was still challenging to meet the four criteria even though they are crucial in reducing violence, discrimination and stereotypes. This is because there are external factors to both the ingroups and outgroups that need to be clearly established. An ongoing example is that M23 rebel group that is creating havoc in Masisi and Rutshuru. The intervention indicated, however, that together, young people could achieve a lot and had a very important lesson to give to the community. The external factors hindering their achievement were linked to manipulation and manipulators who misused or exploited the youths and involved them in violence and other crimes.

Faced with unemployment, despair and frustration, the youths became violent and, in this way, violence on their side is a way of telling the community “look at us, we are here” (Butti, 2018: 342). In their own voices, the youths from Masisi confirmed that the manipulators are in every ethnic group and they have an eye on the youths for their own interests. They added

that sometimes the strategies that were used to take care of them, especially for those who were demobilised from armed groups or from the army, were not helpful at all.

From the intervention through the AJPA at Kitchanga and the peace circle at Nyakariba and at the University, it appeared that this study produced a positive transformation. This focuses on human nature reflected through *ubuntu*. The youths showed that they were flexible by moving from the former extreme position of hatred, mistrust and intolerance to a new point of understanding, forgiving and cooperation. This reflects the positive transformation and supports the assumption made at the beginning of the study that after the intervention, violence would be reduced, and the youths would show their willingness and agree to resocialise and to work together to initiate change and transformation.

12.4.2 Elements of the Intergroup Contact as Images of Failure

The four elements of intergroup contact as suggested by Allport are positive ways of achieving intergroup harmony and peace as they can lead to a negative outcome among the members of the group in contact. These elements are the same status, the same goals, group cooperation and authority support. The same status can be a shared identity without exclusion as is the case between the autochthonous and the so-called foreigners in Masisi. In this way, the study revealed that it could be challenging to talk about the same status or to bring the youths together in the same group as there were various ethnic groups of youths in Masisi. That alone was a source of difference or exclusion among the youths. Another dimension of equality was the categories or classes of people living in Masisi. The first category was the autochthonous people and the foreigners or refugees while the second category comprised the opinion leaders, such as politicians, religious people and local chiefs on one hand and unemployed and rural youths at the grassroots, on the other hand. These social divisions that amounted to socio-professional and political discrimination made it difficult to talk about equal status. The findings established therefore that in the Masisi context, intergroup contact has had detrimental effects on people and the youth lives as well as on their relationships. This is in line with the findings by Pettigrew (2008: 189–190) who emphasized the negative effects of intergroup contacts. Therefore, the findings indicated that violence is a youth expression of anger and a need for more or for something different from what they were getting from the leadership or the authorities who were supposed to support them. In

conclusion, regarding the status-related issues among the various groups involved in conflicts and violence in Masisi, the research findings reveal tensions between politicians and unemployed youths, conflicts between businesspeople and unemployed youths, clashes between autochthonous individuals holding traditional power and powerless foreigners, and disparities between the rich and the poor. Consequently, given these divisions, it proved challenging to reconcile their perspectives towards any shared objective.

Another dimension of equal status is the distance between young people and their parents who find themselves powerless in front of their children who use firearms. Parents were unable to educate their children given the situation they were in. That is what RBM called: *l'irresponsabilité des parents* (parents' irresponsibility)⁷⁶ or what Born (2005: 14) called family resignation. The negative effects of relationships between the groups in this context result from social, situational and personality factors as Pettigrew (2008: 190) argued. This was reflected in the youths' stories. Based on their origin, people from Rwanda and their current place of residence in the IDP camps, I met the youths from Mungote camp around Kitchanga and before reaching Mweso. Here, the location was a factor of discrimination and exclusion; thus, a motivation for violence. BLKM from this camp confirmed that the youths in the camp were armed and used their guns for robbery. He said it this way: "in this camp, young people have guns, and they use them to still or to take people's belonging by force."⁷⁷

The positive contact between the youths should result in a reduction of fear, violence, stereotype and prejudice. Moreover, this type of contact should build trust among the youths bearing in mind that "simple intergroup contact does not ensure that intergroup friendship will develop" (Pettigrew 2008: 193). There is thus a need for other factors to achieve an effective and positive intergroup contact. About intergroup cooperation, the study results add to the knowledge of behavioural change and integration by Runde and Flanagan (2008: 16) who mentioned the following: cooperation, collectiveness, joint decision-making, togetherness, cohesiveness, shared commitment and shared values among others. These are behaviours that could result from any intergroup cooperation. In the case of the youths in

⁷⁶Interview with RBM, at RBY-MM, 2nd May 2022

⁷⁷Interview with BLKM, at MBM 23rd January 2022

Masisi and the activity they initiated, the research findings suggested that to achieve intergroup cooperation, there was a need to promote these contacts among the youths as it appeared that they were lacking yet much needed. In this case, the study concluded that the intervention initiated with AJPA group could lead the youths to see their differences and conflicts as advantages and opportunities rather than barriers and traps (Runde & Flanagan, 2008: 16). The results with regard to intergroup cooperation showed that there was a huge gap between the ingroup and the outgroup.

As for the willingness to participate in the same activity or to fulfil the same goal, if people or particularly the youths are brought together, it should be possible for them to make peace and avoid violence. However, the study results revealed that in Masisi, the youths from different communities had never had the opportunity to come together for a developmental goal. A striking example was given by KBM where the youths had a joint office for the youths from various communities, Hunde, Hutu, Nyanga, Nande and Tutsi. But, in addition to this general office, there were separate offices for the youths from each community. This reflected a lack of trust among people and that the general office was only a pretence, to lie to international NGOs or to uninformed people. The study results indicated that there is more competition than cooperation among the groups in Masisi.

For the support from the authority or leadership, the findings showed that the social political actors had failed to guide the youths to peace. On the one hand, the families found themselves in abjection and unable to cater for the youths' needs; thus, in a weak position. As a consequence, they had nothing to say to the angry youths in need. On the other hand, the community elders gave the wrong message to the youths, namely, that they needed to protect their rights, their land and property. They motivated the desperate youths in this fight and violence. In the third case, the church leaders who were from one community or the other, took the side of their communities and pushed the youths into conflicts and violence in order to secure their areas. Often, they simply decided to live in isolation, stating that the church could not be involved in politics.

More clearly and as it was said earlier, from the grassroots level, parents or elders found themselves in a weak position where they had lost control over their children. Thus, the youths lacked the vital social guidance in their education from their parents and the elders.

This principle of *ubuntu* or *ubumuntu* should help the youths to respect life, to respect others, not to kill but to show empathy and love. The element they had lost or missed, here *ubumuntu*, needed to start from the grassroots and could not be acquired at formal schools. The school added to what the family or the environment provided for the child or the youths we are talking about. The whole activity of peace and peacebuilding needed to start from there. Unfortunately, one striking thing was that during the interviews and group discussions, the youths seldom mentioned the parents' roles in conflicts and peace initiatives, especially for some families who had been living in fear or in IDP camps for many years. On the side of educators or teachers, religious leaders and other community leaders or representatives, the findings revealed that they had also failed in their role. Some schools had been destroyed while at those that were spared, the teachers lived in very poor conditions and had nothing to tell the young students. In other parts of Masisi, the findings revealed that children had simply avoided going to school because of armed conflicts and fear of being abducted, kidnapped or recruited by militia groups. Other children simply found it fun or enjoyable to hold a gun and playing with it even if it meant killing a human being.



Figure 21: Young members of an armed group presenting their gun. **Source:** Photo by the researcher, taken in Masisi bush, March 2023

The available literature coupled with the findings indicated that there had been no joint efforts among religious leaders or churches to promote the same message of “forgiveness, proper deeds and actions, responsibility, patience, collaborative actions and solidarity; inclusivity; diversity; pluralism; and tolerance” as prescribed by Hayward (2012: 4) nor as had it been evidenced by the church youth interviewed at MBM during an FGD. In the case of Masisi, informants confirmed that there had never been “constructive religious peacebuilding initiatives” (Hayward: 2012: 5) like the ARPI activities in Uganda or that of Bishop Korir in Kenya, the study findings revealed that politicians have primarily engaged in manipulation, providing firearms solely to safeguard their own interests and assets, rather than initiating developmental projects for the benefit of the community. Consequently, this exploitation of the youth by politicians has contributed to the perpetuation of violence and

criminal activities in Masisi. It reflects a failure on the part of these leaders to engage with the youth effectively and implement positive change in their communities. As Lederach (2014: 17) suggests, this represents a missed opportunity to approach change both descriptively and prescriptively, thereby reducing animosity and fostering cohesion. In summary, in terms of human relationships, as advocated by Allport, the four factors essential for sustaining such relationships are lacking, as they have not provided the necessary context and conditions for fostering positive and enduring relationships.

12.4.3 Violence, Strategies and Challenge to Change

This section addresses Objectives 4 and 5 of this thesis. Objective 4 was to derive strategies and implement them in order to reduce the prejudice, stereotypes and misunderstandings among the youths and their communities in Masisi, using PAR. Objective 5 was to evaluate the outcomes of the implemented intervention in order to improve relationships and to curtail youths' violence in Masisi. These two objectives were assessed from the outcomes of the intervention in the short term.

This section presents the focus on change, what should be changed and the actors in the needed change. The point of focus in this thesis was the people-centric change defined by individual change starting with the youths and community change. More precisely, any intervention in this way should promote change in relationships among these groups. On the side of the youths in Masisi, observable outcomes should be behaviour and attitude. The findings indicated that in terms of behaviour, the youths have been frustrated by the sociopolitical and economic contexts they are living in. As for their attitudes, they are suspicious of the outgroups and do not trust one another. The youths from the Hutu and Tutsi side do not trust those from the Hunde-Nyanga-Tembo side. Initially, they were not willing to meet and share. But, the first level of change, as established by this study, is the individual level. Every group member, ingroup or outgroup, should understand his stake in the social situation and show willingness to change their attitude and behaviour.

On the other hand, the study unravels the issues related to traditional power. The findings revealed that there is traditional or structural situation where the Hunde assume they own land by virtue of tradition or custom; this makes them arrogant and they want to exploit the

outgroup especially the Hutu and Tutsi, by despising and excluding them. This is done in the name of traditional power that they hold. Therefore, the study established that this situation aligns with Galtung's triangle of conflict known as cultural violence that turned into structural violence. There is an interaction between behaviours and attitudes and this interaction results in conflicts and violence.

Furthermore, it has been observed that the youths in Masisi are manipulated by politicians and businesspeople for their own interests. Using Lewin's theory and Lederach's pyramid (1997: 39), the study established the following opposing groups, the first one made of politicians and people involved in business or the first level of the pyramid on one side and the second one made of the youths from various ethnic groups at the grassroots. The two groups are defined by opposing positions, interests and needs. In this case of Masisi, the study has demonstrated that the opposing groups have no shared interests. The Hunde traditional leaders and their young people want to protect their customary power and their land. The opposing group, Hutu and Tutsi, want to protect their properties, land and cows and other animals. The two groups fight for their identity and their sense of belonging to one district. Therefore, their interests and their needs are not shared. This opposition has become a source of conflict and violence among them involving the youths. So, the case of the youths in Masisi shows a huge gap between the levels of the pyramid as presented by Lederach.

There is no connection between the parties on the first level (the top leadership, the military, political and religious leaders with high visibility in the community) and the parties at the second level or the middle-range leadership. This level, according to Lederach, comprises religious leaders, ethnic leaders, intellectuals, academics and those working for NGOs. There is no connection between these two levels and the third or lower level made of the grassroots. This last level includes the local communities and local chiefs. The youths I met are included in this third level and are totally disconnected from other levels that not only do not listen to them but also do not involve them in managing the district issues. Consequently, the study concluded that the challenge to change results from this disconnection between the sociopolitical and economic levels and the non-shared interests and needs by the ingroups and outgroups living in Masisi. The disconnection based on inequalities is also explained by the fact that the local people, the youths and their communities are involved in conflict and

violence. So, everyone in Masisi, especially the leaders and a few young people are reluctant to change as they focus only on their individual interests and needs.

Another element sustaining violence among the youths in Masisi is that most of them were born and grew up during conflict given their age. Others were born and grew up in IDP camps. Therefore, they are used to being helped as displaced people and have never been trained to work on their own. During interviews, most of the youths, especially in KBM, confirmed that there are people living around the IDP camps who also move to the camps on the days there is food distribution. I noticed this trend in their statements that they needed support from visitors but the support they needed was general even for things they can do and achieve themselves like feeding themselves and fulfilling other basic needs. This has developed a sense of dependency in the youths where they rely on NGOs and well-wishers. Thus, when they lack support, they turn to violence as a way to survive. From observation and during an interview with a community leader, one can see that Masisi is more a place for cows than for people. This community leader confirmed to me that more than 80% of the land is for farms with cows. This, according to this leader, reduces the land where people could grow food. This situation added to their behaviour of being dependent which also creates violence and becomes a source of conflict.

Moreover, another aspect that sustains the violence and conflicts among the youths in Masisi is external intervention. During a FGD at KBM, when the discussants expressed confusion over why and how individuals from Ituri (another province in the DRC) were involved in their affairs, it indicated their acknowledgement of external intervenors in their region who they felt should not be meddling in their issues to such an extent. In response to this situation, the strategy was to establish a causal connection between the parties involved, including the youths and their communities, as well as the context. It was from this perspective that the study guided the youths from Kitchanga in selecting an activity aimed at mitigating conflict and violence among them. The challenge was to bring all the stakeholders, youths, politicians and other community members to support the activity. In fact, the study found that the prevailing conflicts and violence among the youths in Masisi need to be dealt with carefully especially because there are socioeconomic inequalities sustaining these conflicts.

To sum up, the prevailing context in Masisi, especially in Rubaya, Nyakariba-Nyamitaba and Kitchanga where conflicts, violence and life in IDP camps have existed for almost three decades has pushed the youths to join armed groups and as a consequence, they do not till the land as their parents used to do and, more than that, they create insecurity in the area and prevent farmers from doing their daily work.

12.4.4 Participants' Profiles and Views Toward Conflict Transformation

The findings in Table 27 and Table 28 show the participants according to their ages and gender indicate that there are more male participants (48 or 80%) than female (12 or 20%). This is related to the context of conflicts where women or young girls are suspicious of whoever comes to their areas. From their experiences of wars, they are not quick to respond to a call from an unknown person in the village. The few who took part in discussions, especially at KBM, were among the brave ones who decided to join their male counterparts. In addition, the results revealed that women and girls are busy with house chores for the families in times of conflicts when people fear to move to their farms and that issues about conflicts are men's businesses. The men have to look for the answer to violence. Asked about the mechanisms that could be used to curtail the youth violence in Masisi, CMAK had this to say:

The strategies to try are the following: first to deconstruct the ideas, we should no longer thank or reward young people who took part in the armed groups; we must consider the policy of major works such as opening roads, inviting young people to come and work; improve the conditions of the armies by paying them and improving their conditions in the camps, by giving them dispensaries... because their conditions are an ordeal. This will attract young people to no longer join armed groups but rather they will join the national army. It would also be necessary to reform the army, the police and the intelligence services. You should not bring whatever you lay your hands on.⁷⁸

This is in line with Boege's views (2006: 18) when talking about traditional approaches to conflict transformation, when he argues that this approach has yielded poor results.

⁷⁸Interview with CMAK, at RBY-MM, 12th March 2023

12.4.5 The Business of Conflict and the Game of Violence

This theme came as an element of the first objective of this thesis, to explore the nature, extent, causes and consequences of violence and conflicts involving the youths in Masisi. The findings from various research sites confirmed that most of the youths involved in violence have no formal education and being jobless or unemployed they use robbery and theft as a way to survive. This is a result of structural violence. Those of the youths who are educated or who have benefited from formal education are involved in leading armed groups. It appeared that the major causes of violence in Masisi are unemployment and laziness, illiteracy, manipulation and exploitation by politicians, businesspeople, rich landowners and the elite (educated people, teachers...), lack of parental guidance, frustration with social relationships. All these elements push the youths to violence.

The business dimension of conflicts and violence in Masisi is reflected by the armed militias' behaviour of asking for monthly taxes. Some armed groups have been asking for these taxes for many years if one looks at the samples given in appendices to this study (Appendix L and M). The M23 is doing the same, asking for \$10 monthly as evidenced by the sample of the receipt in Appendix L. During August and September 2023, the M23 abducted a group of young people from Rujebeshi, Burungu, Kitchanga and surroundings and recruited them as members of their rebel group. Those who did not want to join the group were released and compelled to pay \$50 every month.⁷⁹ Another kind of business going on during the harsh time of conflict was revealed during a group discussion at KBM, where the participants confirmed that at every harvest, the farmer has to pay 1 000Congolesse franc for each bag of 100kilograms of beans and whenever someone goes to market, he has to pay 1 000Congolesse francs for a receipt called *ipalata* giving access to the market.⁸⁰ This amount is payable to the local chiefs and the tax payers do not know where this money goes. This is added to other types of conflict the youths raised during a FGD that exists between the crop growers and cattle keepers and that implies land management. The crop growers work on their farms to grow what they need for food while the cattle keepers also need land and grass for their

⁸⁰Focus group discussion at KBM, 23rd January 2022

cattle. Sometimes, they graze their animals on the crop growers' plants which creates conflict among them. As a consequence, the crop growers decided not to work on their farms and prefer to remain in poverty.⁸¹

12.4.6 Young People as Instruments for Manipulation and Exploitation

The youths are caught up in poverty and the survival needs in a district that has been under various conflicts and violence for decades. Therefore, farming activities have been handicapped by this situation. That is why youngsters turned to whoever offers an answer to their poverty and their survival needs. This is done through manipulation of the youth by politicians, businesspeople, opinion leaders like pastors and so on. This was confirmed by an evaluation of child and youth participation in peacebuilding in Eastern DRC, a report by the Global Partnership for Children & Youth in Peacebuilding (2015: 16). In fact, this report asserts that in Eastern DRC, politicians and other people in leadership positions have an impact on the ongoing situation based on tensions and hatred; they use this negative situation to keep their privileges in a very poor environment where the youths are being misused. In the same way, the data from focus group discussions and interviews show that the youths are vulnerable because of their social situation defined by poverty, unemployment and they are desperate.

12.5 The Short-Term Outcomes

The fifth objective of this study was to evaluate the outcomes of the implemented intervention in order to improve the relationships and to curtail youth violence in Masisi. It was also assumed that by the end of the intervention, violence would be reduced and the young people would show their willingness to come together and agree to resocialise and work. The short-term outcomes are reviewed through the perspectives of the participants on the implemented activity, here young people from Kitchanga in particular who took part in the maize growing. This evaluation is based on the intervention design, the feasibility, the replication and the attitudinal change. All these dimensions were assessed from the beneficiaries' viewpoints.

⁸¹Focus group discussion (FGD1), at NBK, 26th January 2022

Talking about conflict transformation as a multidimensional task, Miall (2004: 17–18) argued that in evaluating conflict and violence, most tools or researchers focus on the causal factors of conflicts without establishing the link between the strategies to prevent conflicts and the causes of these conflicts. Miall (2004: 17–18) concluded by saying that “we still have an incomplete understanding of the impact of conflict transformation activities on conflict” and violence. According to him, this makes the evaluation quite complicated. However, evaluation, like monitoring, enables us to assess the impacts of an intervention according to observable changes in behaviours or the group’s environment in terms of the goal of the intervention. Therefore, evaluation can be conducted according to the intervention outcomes in order to improve future planning. For the evaluation process, there is a need to establish the factors that led to the success or failure of the intervention in attaining the set objectives and based on the experiences, to see how to improve the initial strategies and plans.

Regarding the intervention design, the primary objective was to induce behaviour change. It was agreed with the youths to engage in farming activities, initially focusing on cultivating cabbage, then considering Irish potatoes and ultimately transitioning to maize cultivation. Although the study's objective did not explicitly encompass economic dimensions, participants emphasised their necessity, as they were integral to the solutions for relinquishing arms and embracing agriculture. Consequently, multiple options were explored. Despite the ongoing conflict and insecurity, the feasibility of the activity was affirmed due to several factors: the youths' availability and willingness to collaborate, the accessibility of suitable land for cultivation, and the simplicity of the activity, which did not necessitate specialised skills or prior training. Moreover, the majority of the youths were already familiar with farming practices. To assess the activity and its subsequent impacts on maize cultivation in Kitchanga, an evaluation model was established. This goes with the types of violence and its motivational factors as found in Masisi and according to the targeted types of changes. The study established that there was a low social cohesion and deep-rooted feelings of ethnic identity. Thus, first and foremost, there is a need for a people-centric change either at the individual or the group level. Subsequently, the study identified the following components for evaluation: the farming activity's execution, its outcomes within the implemented context, its relevance, efficiency, impacts, effectiveness and sustainability, as well as the intervention's conception and preparation by young individuals, assessing its feasibility and testability.

Regarding potential replication, the activity demonstrated replicability and sustainability as it was initiated by the youths themselves.

12.5.1 The Participants: From Guns Holders to Hoe Holders

Before the intervention, it was really challenging and even impossible for the young people from different ethnic groups to meet, leave, and work together. During a discussion with the students at Nyakariba Secondary School, one participant categorically said: “There are no youth organisations”.⁸²

During the discussion, another participant added: “if there was an organisation taking care of young people, then violence can be reduced; or even if the government steps in to help the jobless youths, violence can be reduced”.⁸³ These views reflect the fact that the young people are aware that their conflict is not a permanent condition and that it can change or be changed any time. This, to me, is a good starting point to implement a transformative process in term of attitudinal change.

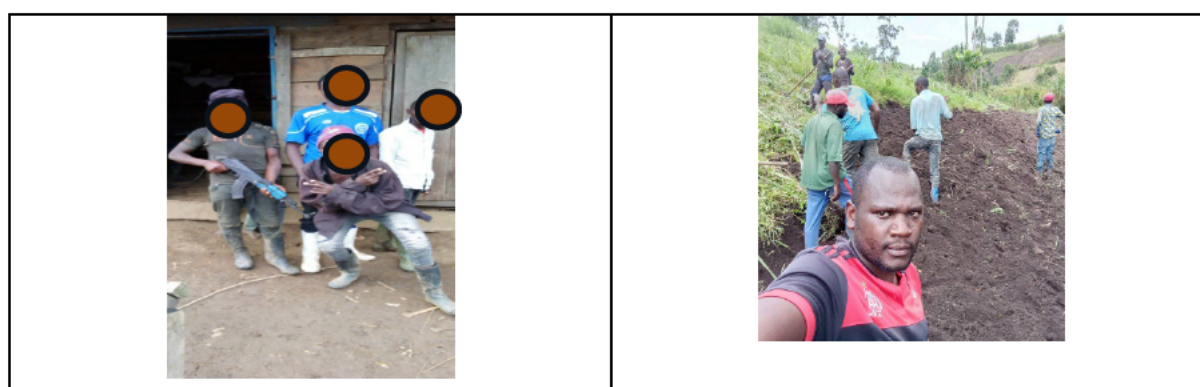


Figure 22: From gun holder to hoe holder (authorised by the youths)

Four young boys from an armed group at Masisi (23rd January 2023); and the AJPA members at work at Kitchanga (January 2023). **Source:** The researcher

⁸²Statement made by one youth at Nyakariba during FGD1, 23 January 2023.

⁸³Idem

After the youths from KBM had confirmed that all of them had used a firearm or owned one, the task that seemed quite impossible was to replace this tool with another one or to dissuade them from doing another productive job rather than looting or killing for survival. Their enthusiasm for holding or using a firearm showed that they had not considered other options or tools to use. The young people themselves were surprised by the change. Initially, they said that they could not spend their time burying their legs before they are dead. During a sharing with one gentleman, he said this:

I cannot spend the day burying my legs before I die.” According to these young people, when someone is digging using a hoe, it is like he is burying his legs. So for this young boy and for his friends, it was funny or ridiculous that a young boy would till the land when there is an easier way to earn a living.⁸⁴

Two elements came out of the activity with the young people at Kitchanga: they lacked someone to motivate them; and they despised farming because of the high level of dependency they had developed in them. Some of them had simply become lazy.

12.5.2 Lessons from the Fieldwork

Masisi is not a secure place for research, yet it has a lot to offer, culturally and scientifically. Empirically, the findings revealed that there is a history of violence and forgotten conflicts around Masisi which had been historically and geographically isolated for a long time. In addition, in Masisi, the physical or geographical setting plays a role in conflicts. Geographically, the study revealed that Masisi is isolated from the rest of the province or the country, without road infrastructure. Communication and movements are not easy. This makes it hard to access the region. This also enables people, groups or even countries to easily network with the youths and to recruit them for dirty business around minerals. Hence, when it comes to traversing the district, the youths are the most effective manpower, participants or networking agents. They possess the energy and enthusiasm to navigate the region tirelessly.

⁸⁴Statement made by Kashama, one of the youths at Nyakariba during FGD1, 23 January 2023.

As seen in Table 17 in this study which is about the impact chain or relationships change among the youth in Masisi, the short-term direct impacts should mainly be based on the changes in the youths' attitudes. The observable factors should be how the youths take keen interests in the selected activities and the way they contribute or commit themselves to these activities according to the inputs and the outcomes of the activities. That is why, as earlier said, evaluating the short-term outcomes of the intervention here implies establishing the relationships between the activities, the outcomes and the contextual situation which are the before the intervention, during the intervention and after the intervention.

The three elements—activities, results, contexts—are the variables on which the study and the subsequent ToC are based. Other criteria to look at are the activity's relevance, efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability. The first step here was to bring together a youth group to design and implement an activity. The intended result was to reduce the barriers or violence and its sources among these youths in Masisi. At this first step, 18 young people were brought together at Kitchanga and 29 participants were brought together at Nyakariba. Other participants were from Mweso (seven of them) and six from Rubaya. The evaluation was focused on the intervention at Kitchanga by the AJPA that was started by 24 members. These are young people who seldom met or who were very reluctant to meet before this study. Their impressions and language against each group was really negative. This aligns with the first step suggested by the *Amani Mashinani* peacebuilding model which can be used to analyse a given conflict situation, to interrupt violence or any negative situation and implement a positive activity. The young people who met were from ethnic groups found in the area, these are Hunde, Hutu, Nande and Nyanga. Unfortunately, there was no Tutsi as the Tutsi are mainly in the Kahe IDP camp. The activity the youths selected was to do farming activities together.

This was the second step while the third step was to evaluate the local contextual framework in light of the initial objectives based on the expected change according to the ToC. The objectives were, among others, to understand the ongoing situation in Masisi, to build the youth's capacity in responding to conflicts and violence; with the youths, to assess the impacts of mechanisms in place to mitigate the effects of conflicts and violence in order to change the situations. More clearly, the task here was to determine how the activity was

planned and implemented given the enabling factors to achieve the intended outcomes and based on the prevailing security situation in Masisi. The youths started by shaping a group and finding a uniting name, first trying the *Jeunesse active de Kitchanga* (Active youth from Kitchanga) then *Jeunesse active de Masisi* (Active youth from Masisi) as they noticed that the former was excluding other young people from other areas within Masisi. Finally, after they had defined the activity to do, they decided to call their group *Association des jeunes pour la promotion de l'agriculture* (Youth Association for the Promotion of Agriculture), AJPA or Youth Association to promote agriculture or farming. The idea of moving from *Jeunesse active de Kitchanga* (Active Youth from Kitchanga) to *Jeunesse active de Masisi* (Active Youth from Masisi) and from this latter to just *Association des jeunes pour la promotion de l'agriculture* (or Youth Association to promote agriculture or farming) is an indicator of its replicability as the youths confirmed it that their association is called to reach others without any discrimination or exclusion, without limiting it to any geographical place.

In addition, the results confirmed that there is a divided society in Masisi and a leadership vacuum to be filled by the daring youths. In this condition, it was apparent that it was difficult to establish a genuine or true united leadership between the various communities living in Masisi (Hunde, Hutu, Tutsi, Nyanga and Tembo). Moreover, these two factors, isolation and social division explained why it was challenging to support the youths and that there had been no authority support for what the youths are doing. The only support they received was from people exploiting or manipulating them and supplying them with guns.

In addition, the study indicated that there are ethnic organisations or associations which appear to be networks of people who trust one another, with ethnic leadership at all levels. However, even at these levels, there are divisions and misunderstandings among people from one ethnic group. The collected data identified the following associations: *Igisenge* and *Ikivumu* for the Hutu; *Umubano* for some Hutu and some Tutsi; *Igikari* and *Isoko* for the Tutsi; *Bushenge* for the Hunde and *Bunakima* for the Nyanga. These social or ethnic organisations keep members in a kind of isolation from each other. These two factors, isolation and social division, added to the presence of hundreds of armed groups make it difficult to document the nature and extent of violence going on in the area. Conflicts and violence are quite often hidden because of the inaccessibility of several villages. Sometimes,

it takes seven days on foot in a big forest to move from one village to another. Thus, it becomes more challenging to address the youth violence in such places. But I remain convinced that there are alternatives to violence as Professor Geoff Harris used to tell us. This study established that the principles or feelings like “no one is watching”, or “no one cares for us” or even “we are nobodies” may have affected or influenced the youths to turn to violence.

12.5.3 Positive Aspects of Intervention or Alternatives to Armed Conflict and Youth Violence

The task here was to look at the youths’ situation before the intervention and after the activities. However, given the academic time allocated to the study, I only reflect on the short-term evaluation while hypothesising that the intervention results could be sustained over the long-term. Here the task is to evaluate the impact of the intervention on the youth and on the community. The major transformational aspects to be evaluated have to be looked at from the four levels as suggested by Lederach through the three lenses: the first level is the individual level. At this level, one should remember that conflict and subsequent violence affect both physical and mental health, and emotional, intellectual and spiritual dimensions. That is why any intervention should aim at transforming or touching these dimensions.

At the individual level, the findings show that the youths in Masisi are vulnerable and dependent on external help. They live in poverty without working; some of them were born and live in IDP camps as evidenced by ENT who is the president of the youth farmer in one IDP camp where he was born in 2003. According to him, the intervention came as a new and needed experience of working in a new setting. He had this to say: this project was very important for me individually as it gave me new insights into working with our brothers with whom we were not in good term. It is good to develop it (*Hiyo mradi ilikuwa ya maana kwangu binafsi kwani ilinipa mafikiri ya kutumika na wandugu wetu wenyi tulikuwa hatuelewane. Ni ya muhimu tuiendeleshe.*).⁸⁵

⁸⁵Interview with ENT, KBM, 22nd January 2022

Another member, PNJ, explained this: “every member had already noticed the importance of the AJPA group and all the positive things to expect of it in the coming days. We were working together without looking at who is who”.⁸⁶

Thus, the first positive side of the intervention is that the young people spent time together working on a common activity and taking full responsibilities for the activity. Another advantage was that they got to know each other deeply. In addition, the transformation operation has to touch the relational level. In the case of Masisi, this level is based on social, economic and political disharmony. The third level is the structural level. Here the intervention should be oriented towards social structures, groupings or associations that can respond well to the attempts to curtail violence in the implementation area. The fourth level is the cultural level. Here the exercise was to establish the cultural structures that contributed or could contribute to the violence and conflicts among the youth. This section first describes the implementation site, Kitchanga in Masisi, then three indicators related to the ToC which are: the indicators of the implementation; the indicators of impact and the indicators of the outcomes.

12.5.4 The Evaluation Site: Kitchanga and its History of Conflict

The evaluation was done by means of a conflict overview. This first step was to analyse the conflicts that had been prevailing in Kitchanga, the various actors and motivations behind those conflicts, the transforming mechanisms that had been in use to mitigate or to resolve these conflicts, their general impacts and shortcomings. In evaluating the intervention, its activities and its outcomes at Kitchanga, the major points to take into consideration are presented as follows:

- Name of the group and the initiative: AJPA, meetings and farming activities
- Team leaders: Justin and John Bimenyi
- Main activity: growing maize
- The key successes, the challenges and impacts of the intervention on the side of the youths. This was reviewed before, during and eventually after the intervention and looked

at the changes, the change factors and evidence of change, the beneficiaries and the shortcomings.

The following aspects can be credited to the youths' activities at Kitchanga, the intervention site:

- ✓ The establishment of a group or a youth association, the AJPA. This was an important step as through the association, the youths could share their grievances and their issues and jointly plan activities that could be beneficial to them and to their communities.
- ✓ The coordination of the association. The youths chose a coordinator and his assistant. These two would serve as speakers for the group. However, the idea behind the association was not a hierarchical organisation. In fact, the major group principle is: Every member, a leader! (*Chaque membre, un leader!*). So, it is the responsibility of everyone to succeed and make the AJPA successful.
- ✓ Individual or personal support for activities undertaken by the association: this support was based on trusting each other (trust or building trust among the group members); helping each other, caring about each other, promoting love for each other. The AJPA is open to new members; the association welcomes them and helps them to integrate into the association. The association encourages inclusion and participation; it is open to everyone without any limitation related to gender, origin, belief, education or ethnicity. This dimension can help the youths to promote social cohesion in their area and elsewhere.
- ✓ Ownership: the group members are responsible and take responsibility for their own actions, decisions and activities.
- ✓ Creativity: AJPA as a team activity helps members to unleash their potential and their creativity in participating in the team's works or activities.
- ✓ Benefits or team advantages: the AJPA members contribute their efforts and ideas equally and in return they get what the association offers.

Finally, with a view to overcoming the weaknesses and abuses of the governmental and traditional structures and the social failure in conflict resolution where coercive power, win-lose solutions and approaches and indifferences were adopted, the AJPA members have revitalised the community peacebuilding structures (the youth groups) and built their capacity by ensuring the inclusion of different social and ethnic group, here the inclusion of the youths

from various or opposing groups. One good strategy they adopted is to use only first names and not family names when talking to one another.⁸⁷ The findings show that, by applying a win-win approach, based on research into a negotiated solution and the restoration of social cohesion, this method is in line with traditional practices whereby conciliation prevails over justice in courts. Thus, the youths were convinced that solutions to their problems and differences from the grassroots had to prevail over revenge, coercive power, justice and violence. The AJPA group and its activities are based around the following goals formulated in the form of interim results:

- ✓ Capacity building in prevention, management and transformation of inter-youth conflicts and violence.
- ✓ Stimulating or improving youth participation in a common activity for common good.
- ✓ Promoting agricultural activities in order to face youth poverty.
- ✓ Promoting social cohesion among the youths by reducing violence and other barriers among the youth.

12.5.5 The Indicators of Implementation: Impact and Change

The elements here came from the objectives 3 and 4 of this thesis. Objective 3 was to assess the current strategies or initiatives put in place for conflict transformation and to change the youth's behaviours in Masisi and in the region. Objective 4 was to come up with strategies and implement them to reduce the prejudice, stereotypes and misunderstandings among the youths and their communities. Therefore, the indicators of implementation had to be looked at in line with these objectives. These are indicators focused on the implementation of the activity in Kitchanga. The intervention had the following steps: first, to sensitise the youths and explain the activity, its objectives and the process to be followed. The youths or future members had to understand that it was their activity and that they were the ones to organise and run it. Then, they needed to understand that they would have to decide on the way to deal with the outcomes of the activity.

⁸⁷Focus group discussion (FGD3), KBM, 22nd January 2022

So, the activity undertaken had to be a true forum and a place of experience where the youths had to experience the benefit of being and working together, a forum from where they come out as changed community members ready to take part in the fight against violence, hatred, discrimination, exclusion, stereotypes and prejudice. In addition, they had to be ready to fight for justice, equity and equality, truth and all the values of the local and Congolese traditions, recovering their *ubuntu* and preparing to become true men and women needed in the community. The youths had also to understand that the activity should improve the poor and underprivileged's lives among them within their communities. To achieve this, there was a need to ensure that everybody was treated as a member of the group and felt that they belonged to that group and were accepted by other members. Throughout the activity, the members had to make every effort to adopt the leadership model by which they wanted to be led; they came together for a common goal and had to work for it in equality.

12.5.6 The Indicators of Impacts After the Intervention

These indicators derived from the visible results or impacts of the implemented activity on the youths, individually, in their community and eventually in their living areas. The young people from different ethnic groups who initially would not come close to each other and who decided to break the barrier through this activity were an indicator of the impact of the intervention. The first day I met young people at Kitchanga, they were nervous and were accusing one another. That was a very long day where we spent five long hours together, from 9 a.m. until 2 p.m. At the end of the discussion, they promised to talk openly and take the first step towards dialogue.



Figure 23:Focus group discussion (FGD3) at the youth office, Kitchanga, (I am third from right side, in blue gum boots). **Source:** The researcher. Kitchanga, 23rd January 2022

Tilling the land together was another sign of the beginning of change. At the end, one member of the LUCHA group told me that they even decided to use only their first names when talking to one another instead of their family names that would refer to the other's ethnic group. The LUCHA leader had this to say: nowadays, we only use first names in order not to use family names.⁸⁸This strategy allows them not to identify someone from his family.

12.5.7 The indicators of the outcomes

These results from Objective 5 of this thesis which was to evaluate the outcomes of the intervention in order to improve relationships and to curtail youth violence in Masisi are discussed in the following section. But at this juncture, I want to emphasise some strengths of the study: the agricultural project, the peace circle and the testimonies from the participants; one of them being an inter-ethnic marriage between a Hunde boy and a Hutu girl. These points are really encouraging.

⁸⁸Focus group discussion (FGD3), at KBM, 23rd January 2022

12.6 Discussion of Findings

The outcomes of the research are developed in this section where I merge the results of empirical study with the existing literature and information from the field that guided this work to establish the effectiveness of PAR. I reexamine the assumptions and hypotheses I formulated at the start after identifying the problem; then I move to determine whether the findings verify the qualitatively posited hypotheses. At the start of this inquiry, I assumed:

- This study would generate useful recommendations that would inspire a culture of peace to empower young people in Masisi to develop the capacities to construct peace via a change in attitudes, perceptions and orientations among antagonist youth groups in Masisi.
- Non-violent behaviours and non-violent communication would be promoted as means of transformed community where broken intercommunity relationships among the youths were restored. Thus, after the transformational processes, the prospects of lasting change and peace and violence would be enhanced among the youths in Masisi.
- The use of conflict transformation strategies, dialogues for peace would yield positive results and help to change negative energy to positive energy among the youth, to the extent that some of them would abandon their weapons and join the ploughing project. This would be a step towards conflict transformation. One touching testimony came from a young man from the Hunde ethnic group married a Hutu young girl which was most unusual. He confided to me how he was happy in his household and how he got on well with his in-laws.
- The outcome from this study would revitalise some African and local traditional systems of conflict transformation based on dialogue, namely the *Baraza* culture, North Kivu Province of DRC. We used these indigenous approaches to foster reconciliation and peaceful coexistence among the youths.
- Community gardening or tilling the soil together in what is known as *Urudehe* or the former system of people from the same village coming together or helping each other to dig for one of their members or to build houses together would be instrumental in the conflict transformation strategy we adopted.

- People from Masisi, especially the youths who worked together would understand the significance and necessity of living and working together in peace; they would rise above what divided them to focus on what united them and focus on the common good and contribute to sustainable development.

It was my belief that by the end of the intervention, the objectives would be achieved as the young men and women from different ethnic communities came together and dialogued over the prevailing issues in Masisi; trying to find answers to the endless conflicts impacting communities and in which they played an active role. In addition, the objectives would be attained through meetings and exchanges. The coming together, sharing and dialogue is one of the indicators that the goals of this research were achieved, and the five hypotheses were supported by its findings.

In addition, I suggested that the youths would no longer take part in violence and would reconcile with one another and promote peace culture after interactive engagement via the community project. This proposition was supported by the findings I table here, particularly the use of an agricultural project as an action research intervention which proved effective to transform deep-seated conflicts among the youths of Masisi and build peace. PAR yielded substantive results that I report in this work. They were ready to apologise to each other and to forgive one another for their wrongdoings and antisocial behaviour. Among the actions that we undertook to tackle the root causes of violence into which the youths are dragged, we developed permanent community youth groups for peace through which they will continue to learn to reduce prejudice, stereotypes and misunderstanding. In addition, in these groups, the youths agreed to take part in community events together without discrimination or exclusion as part of rebuilding their destroyed communities. These events were notably building together, tilling land together, acquiring a piece of land for the youths from the Catholic Parish and working on it together. The main hypotheses I posited are the following:

- If youths entangled in hostilities in Masisi engage in agricultural activities as a communal project planned and managed by themselves, it could transform their relationships.
- Participation of youths involved in hostilities in a productive agricultural project impacting community wellbeing may lead to improved relationships through interactions focused on social or communal welfare.

- Reduced violence in Kitchanga may result from youths' willingness to resocialise and collaborate with current and former adversaries, evidenced by group contacts and changed relationships among opposing youth groups.
- Implementation of conflict transformation and participatory action approaches could mitigate violence among youths if those involved in violence are exposed to such programmes.
- Facilitating socialisation and dialogue among youths from different ethnic communities to address divisions and confrontations may alleviate tensions and restore fraternal and amicable relationships. Through dialogue and discussions, participants from Kitchanga and other areas in Masisi, especially Nyakariba, recognised the negative impacts of conflicts and agreed to engage in communal activities such as farming and peace circles, an unprecedented occurrence.

These five hypotheses were tested via qualitative data build on the research problem that originated from the research questions and objectives. They were all supported by the outcomes I present here. These were backed by the literature and theories of conflict transformation. The overall results I observed in the field during the implementation of the agricultural project corroborated the theories of conflict transformation, peacebuilding and the ToC.

Finally, the transformation processes promoted healthy communities where there is social cohesion and friendly relationships among the youths and their respective communities. More precisely, the health of these communities and these relationships started being defined and sustained by an increased feeling of unity, togetherness and/or solidarity among the community members. Post-PAR showed a context where social cohesion was strengthened that will contribute to improving communication and developing a sense of collective consciousness. These results align with strong social cohesion envision by ESCAP (2003). Thus, effective dialogue that took place among the conflicting parties, especially the youths, in Masisi inaugurated an era of youth-to-youth peaceful engagement and collective commitment towards peace and development.

12.6.1 Azar's Views of Protracted Social Conflict and the Youth's Situation in Masisi

The findings drew knowledge from Azar's conditional variables (Bakare, 2021: 314–315) that explain or justify various conflicts and violence among the youths in Masisi and at Kitchanga in particular. Applying the four variables, the research results show that first of all, the relationships among the youths and their ethnic background or their communities were not conducive to peace. The youths inherited old situations related to conflicts that had taken many years, with some young persons having been born in IDP camps where they grew up. They were bitter, angry and desperate because of their living conditions. They had never had the opportunity to go to school or to work and had been deprived of good health conditions and even food security. They had even been deprived of their rights to work on their farms. They were subject to exploitation by politicians, businesspeople and other community leaders or included into armed groups. The youths from Nyakariba and Kitchanga confirmed that these circumstances had forced them into violence.

To sum up, the youths in Masisi had been deprived of their basic human rights and needs; these aspects amount to what Azar termed the communal content of people relationships and deprivation of human rights. This was presented in Chapter 2 of this thesis. This chapter introduced the variety of conflicts in general and as they were found in Masisi; it also assessed the peace initiatives that had been implemented or that could be put in place in order to address the conflicts in the North Kivu Province and in Masisi in particular.

Furthermore, the research findings indicated a failure of governance leadership to support the youth, with the state's role notably absent in providing necessary care and protection. This void had allowed external interventions to attract young people into conflict, violence, land exploitation and mineral extraction. Conversely, some Kinyarwanda-speakers maintained strong ties with Rwanda, serving as a conduit for external intervention aimed at fuelling conflicts and violence to exploit wealth in Masisi. Traditional or customary power structures existed in Masisi, alongside LPCs associated with the church, which strived for peaceful coexistence. However, the data suggested discontent among youths with traditional leadership and the perceived ineffectiveness of LPCs, while the church's influence contributed to community behaviours of discrimination and exclusion, fostering violence among youths. The underlying issues driving youth violence are multifaceted, encompassing

historical impacts, population influxes, land disputes, resource distribution and identity conflicts, with some youths from customary ruling factions exhibiting hostility towards perceived foreigners. Externally, individuals from Masisi orchestrated conflict for personal gain, such as protecting grazing lands or exploiting security concerns for political purposes, while others profited from creating armed groups, viewing conflict and violence as lucrative enterprises.

On another note, the findings underscored the multifaceted nature of violence in Masisi, necessitating involvement from various actors. Local community members, alongside local leadership and opportunistic individuals drawn to Masisi for its resources, play a role in this dynamic. However, given Masisi's rugged terrain and limited road infrastructure, youths emerge as pivotal actors in navigating the challenging mountainous landscape due to their energy and mobility. Presently, numerous NGOs operate in Masisi alongside a significant presence of armed groups, including peacekeepers (MONUSCO) and East African Community Forces, all of whom exploit the youths. The youths from Kitchanga corroborated these observations. Consequently, this underscores the imperative of transformation for the actors that are instrumental in peacebuilding. This transformation in Masisi must encompass all social categories, ranging from top leadership to grassroots levels, including politicians, traditional leaders, parents, religious figures and young people themselves.

In Masisi, there are four overlapping rules. First, there is the rule of law imposed by the central government, which is largely ineffective in providing security for the local population, particularly the youths. Second, there is the customary rule enforced by Hunde leaders, which has failed over the past 60 years, resulting in division, discrimination, grievances and anger among the populace. Third, there is the rule asserted by the youths themselves, whose voices have gone unheard by the established leadership and support structures at all levels, leading them to resort to violence as a means of expressing their grievances. Finally, there is the rule imposed by external parties who fuel violence for their own agendas. Conflict transformation and intergroup contact necessitate the transformation of these actors and their respective rules to foster peace and create a violence-free environment.

12.6.2 Transforming Conflict among the Youths from Galtung's Perspective

The aim of this study was to come up with strategies to deal with youth violence in Masisi. The findings indicated that there were differences among the youths as conflicts had affected the relationships among them as they had destroyed the social structures from the top leadership to the young people at the grassroots. Some of the youths (HVR from RBY-MM, MBN from NBK and AMN from KBM) recognised and confirmed that conflicts and violence had destroyed communities and affected the relationship among the youths. This perception is in line with Galtung's views when considering conflict as having a life-destroying aspect which, according to Galtung, is the negative aspect of conflicts and violence. Thus, this study achieved what various organisations both local and international failed to do, as Bishop Korir (2009: 9) asserted talking about the church:

the church is imbued with moral authority and can sometimes sway people to listen to their conscience and lay down their arms. Though risky, we can physically put ourselves between belligerents, making them think twice about their actions. We can reason with fighters, pleading with them to seek more peaceful pursuits.

This aspect is related to misunderstanding, contradictions and reflected by people's attitudes, interests and needs. They affected their relationships. However, during an interview with BBS, he gave an analytical overview of the contradiction among the youths in Masisi. He started with the events in the 1990s when bloody conflicts erupted in Masisi and hundreds of armed groups started mushrooming in the district. At that time, it was alleged that the youths from different groups, ingroup and outgroup, were opposed to each other. It appeared that the group Hunde-Nyanga-Tembo was opposed to the Hutu-Tutsi group. BBS observed that today, with the M23 war, the former enemies had coalesced into one group they called *Wazalendo* or the patriots. This, according to BBS meant that even in old days, these groups were truly not antagonistic. In addition, BBS concluded that these groups had never been a threat to the central government. This means that there was or there is a strong manipulating power behind the armed groups and, as Galtung opines, conflicts and violence erupt when relationships among the parties, here the youths, become oppressive. The findings revealed that in Masisi, conflicts became violent when some youths became aware that youths from the outgroup were from the ruling side and hold customary power whereas those from the

other side were foreigners. In this way, violence becomes a cry for security, protection and recognition as confirmed by the youths from KBM. Those from NBK were flexible and were ready to live with any group.

12.6.3 Transforming Conflict Among the Youths from Lederach's Perspectives

Lederach's theory of conflict transformation is key in this study as Lederach (1997) opines that transformation should lead to reconciliation among the conflicting parties. Reconciliation among the youths in Masisi has to be based on the four components of reconciliation as established by Lederach, namely, trust, mercy, justice and peace. The three lenses serve as transformative tools: the lens that examines the immediate context and causes of violence among the youths revealed that conflicts and violence in Masisi, particularly in areas like Kitchanga and Nyakariba-Nyamitaba, stemmed from mistrust and suspicion. This undermined relationships among young people and their communities, despite relationships being pivotal to conflict transformation and intergroup contact. The second lens helps to go beyond the immediate situation and go deep into the relationships that provide the ground to conflicts in Masisi. The study established that these relationships were really negative and tense among people. The third lens enables us to establish the framework that brings these conflicting relationships together so that one can work on them and bring about peace.

12.6.4 Reducing Violence Among the Youths According to the Youths' Lens

The findings indicated that in claiming their rights or in raising their voices, the youths had decided to use violence in order to respond to structural, cultural and direct violence instead of using peaceful means. Moreover, the youths in Masisi, from Kitchanga, Nyakariba-Nyamitaba and Rubaya did not understand that violence cannot resolve violence, but peace can. This is in line with Ackerman and Duval's (2000: 468) views when they assert that: "violence is not a learning tool, and military force is intrinsically negative: it can deter or diminish an enemy, but it cannot force people to embrace its agenda. Shooting your way to power may destroy the old order, but you cannot free your people until they give you their consent".

Thus, no one could free the youths in Masisi without their participation and their consent. The youths need to be involved in the search for responses and solutions to conflicts and

violence in Masisi, at Kitchanga, at Nyakariba-Nyamitaba and at Rubaya. Insights from the literature and data collected from the research sites indicated the existence of rules of engagement, which encompass various factors. These include the necessity of seeking a solution to the grievances and claims of the youths. Additionally, there must be interdependence among all stakeholders involved in conflicts in Masisi, such as politicians, businesspeople, autochthonous leaders, religious figures and youths. The youths must be willing to engage in discussions about peace, while leaders should manage opposition within their respective groups, whether ingroup or outgroup. Through PAR, elements of intergroup contact and conflict transformation, viable solutions can be sought. It is essential to initiate transformation at the individual level before extending to the group level or seeking external support.

It should be noted that conflicts and violence in Masisi are not religiously motivated. However, religion comes into this research because it could have been a good transforming tool to deal with violence and conflict. The study findings indicate that there had been isolated initiatives by the Catholic Church to mediate between the conflicting parties. However, participants in the study confirmed that there had never been concerted or joined initiatives by different denominations like the Catholics, the SDA and other Protestants and Muslims. As an answer to the lack of good leadership, Olaosebikan (2010: 557) suggests that “African states need committed and sincere leaders that will lead by example and who act as good, responsible and responsive fathers to all component sections of peoples in their countries so as to promote peace and harmony within the confines of their respective countries.”

Participants in the focus group discussion (FGD5) from these denominations (Catholic, SDA and Pentecostal) were not aware of any joint initiatives. The SDA and Pentecostal churches confirmed that they were not aware of any such intervention by their churches especially for the youths. Asked whether any young people from these churches had joined armed groups, they confirmed that some of them had joined the armed groups.

12.6.5 Intergroup Relation Theory, *Ujamaa*, *Ubuntu* and *Baraza* for Violence Prevention and Peacebuilding

Ujamaa, *Ubuntu*, *Baraza* and the intergroup relation theory are interconnected as characteristics or dimensions of a harmonious community. The intergroup relations theory posits that in order to build a peaceful and harmonious society, the members must be of the same status, have the same goals, overcome any competitive action and get support from the leadership level. These conditions are the same pillars that sustain a human family known as *jamaa* and defined by its inner characteristic or *ujamaa*. In fact, it appeared that people or even the groups in Masisi cannot claim to have *ujamaa* unless they feel and live their sameness as family members having the same status and the same social goal. That is why, in order to make their relationships strong and sustainable, they have to feel united with one another for the same purpose.

The glue that would sustain peoples' relationships within a *jamaa* is *ubuntu*. The two, *ubuntu* and *ujamaa* define a person individually or in general. *Ubuntu* defines the person as a human being endowed with the human characteristics while the *ujamaa* defines this person a human member of a harmonious group. So, both *ubuntu* and *ujamaa* are positive dimensions in human relationships. *Baraza*, on the other hand, can be understood as a meeting place for people sharing humanity or *ubuntu*. In the North Kivu Province as in most parts of DR Congo, *Baraza* is a meeting place where villagers, especially elders, meet to discuss social matters. Therefore, *Baraza* is a place where people meet to share wisdom, experiences and answers to social grievances. People also meet within their *Baraza* for mediation, negotiation or arbitration whenever there is a social issue or issues between people or groups. In this way, the first condition for people to meet in a *Baraza* is the willingness to be nurtured by elders' experiences and wisdom. *Baraza* can be a place to harmonise or to transform conflicts. This transformation is not possible unless those people who come together agree to follow the *Baraza* rules. Among these rules, there is respect, love, help and cooperation. These are some of the major rules guiding the *ujamaa* and *ubuntu* and on which the intergroup relationships are based. It is in this way that *ujamaa*, *ubuntu* and *Baraza* are strong pillars on which conflict prevention, conflict resolution or transformation can be based in places like Masisi. They are tools that could help in peacebuilding activities or in building social cohesion.

People, especially the youth, need to feel the same, to feel their needs and to show willingness to cooperate in order to overcome conflict.

12.7 Conclusion

This chapter presented the major research findings. First of all, the chapter gave an run-through of the 60 informants who took part in this study. Then, the chapter addressed the aspects of conflicts in Masisi through the young people's eyes. The following themes emerged: violence as businesses or a normal game; manipulation and exploitation, the leadership vacuum, the youths as misrepresented voices, a sense of dependency, social hypocrisy and low social cohesion and a need for peaceful cohabitation. The study established the following sub-themes: frustration, fear, disappointment, group competition, historical and social categorisation, traumatic experiences, revolt and aggression. About the effectiveness of the activity, this is achieving the planned results as the harvest is promising and the youths are happy. The intervention called for available resources from the youths who are running it themselves and who are optimistic about their work. Thus, the AJPA experience is promising and has had some beneficial psychological impacts according to its members: the youths who work together and who can share food together, which was not easy or even possible before the AJPA was born. The intervention adopted a bottom-up approach both in its conception and implementation as the AJPA youth members were left to shape it and run it; they were only under the guidance of an agricultural expert as I was just an observer.

Based on findings provided in this study, various results or impacts could be established. As a short-term direct impact, the selected youths took a keen interest in the farming activities and contributed to the activities by growing maize. They are developing skills and courage to work together for social change starting from their group in a positive way. At Kitchanga, the youths came together and socialised in what they called the AJPA organisation. This is the beginning of a new culture of dialogue around the conflicting issues and violence among them. Their weekly meetings on Wednesdays at Kitchanga and Tuesdays at the University are signs of willingness and a new era of dialogues and debates. The assumption initially made that violence could be reduced based on the youth's willingness and their agreement to

resocialise and work together has been confirmed by the AJPA experiences and the peace circles at la Sapiencia University and Nyakariba Secondary School.

As for the mid-term direct impacts, whereby it was proposed that the youths would increasingly take the lead in the initiated activity while playing the vital role of sensitising their peers to stop violent behaviours, a large number of youths are becoming socially active through participation in various communal activities. The peacemakers uniting in AJPA, working together and sharing their food while those at Nyakariba reflected on issues among the youth are an encouraging start on which to build hope for a peaceful society. In addition, positive and constructive dialogue among the youths and their communities is taking place as evidenced by the youth meetings at Kitchanga or Nyakariba. This fact was also confirmed by the meeting between some warlords and other armed youths which was a constructive encounter. This presages a promising future for peace. Even though this study did not have enough time to evaluate the long-term impacts and to see how the youths develop and sustain alternatives to violence and conflicts and the way they commit to sustain those alternatives, there are some promising signs of long-term impacts illustrated by the peace circles and the youths' commitment to play their role as peacemakers and to unleash their full potential for change. Three of the circle members, a boy and two girls, have taken part in regional activities organised by *Never Again Rwanda* in DRC, in Burundi and in Rwanda, from 2021 to October 2023.

In addition, there is an increase in trust and collaboration among the youths and the communities to reduce violence and change their attitude towards one another. This is evidenced by experiences from Kitchanga through the back-to-work programmes (B2W-P). In fact, non-violent behaviours and communications are being promoted in a transformed setting as it reflected in the AJPA success stories. Therefore, one can conclude that the issues of categorisation where people see themselves as autochthonous and others as foreigners, such as the Bahunde and Bahutu, is being addressed. The intervention is helping the youths to decategorise those living in their area and make a new category (recategorisation) of the AJPA members in one association or in one circle for peace. Part 5 presents the study's conclusions, its implications, the recommendations, the study limitations and recommendations for further studies.

PART V: CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND AREAS FOR FURTHER STUDIES

Part V of this research includes the recommendations, conclusions, the limitations of the study and areas of further studies.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

CONCLUSION, RECOMMENDATIONS, IMPLICATIONS, LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY AND AREAS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Part V, or Chapter 13 of this thesis concludes the study by giving a review of the research objectives and research questions, a summary of the study findings as related to the research questions and research objectives, the contributions or impacts this study has made to the participants and in terms of approaches. The chapter also reviews the implications and limitations of the study; the personal reflections and lessons learnt; the recommendations and suggestions for future study. These suggestions are based on the gaps identified in the literature about the youth's involvement in violence and on the approaches used in this research.

This research focused on the youths and the violence they are involved in Masisi, a district in DRC that has suffered from conflicts and violence for decades. The research is community-based research as it involved community members, especially the youths who participated in designing and implementing the research major intervention. Thus, the study was based on the principle of a collaborative enterprise between the youths, their community and the researcher. The problem investigated derived from violence by the youths in Masisi that has become rampant through a protracted conflict and needed to be addressed. The conflicts and subsequent violence have claimed thousands of lives, turning Masisi a very poor district. The purpose of this investigation was to envision realistic strategies that are capable of reducing violence among the youths concerned. PAR was used to achieve the following goals:

- ✓ Explore the nature, extent, causes and consequences of violence and conflicts involving the youths in Masisi in Eastern DRC.

- ✓ Evaluate the impact of conflicts and violence on the youths and their environment in Masisi.
- ✓ Assess the current strategies or initiatives put in place for conflict transformation and to change the youth's behaviours in Masisi and in the region.
- ✓ Propose strategies and implement them to reduce prejudice, stereotypes and misunderstandings among the youths and their communities, using the PAR design.
- ✓ Evaluate the outcomes of an implemented intervention with the youths in order to improve relationships and to curtail youth violence in Masisi.

The above objectives and research questions were encapsulated in the assumptions earlier formulated and based on the impact chain or relationships changes among the youths and their communities in Masisi. The assumptions were that by the end of the study and after the intervention, first, violence would be reduced, and the youths would show their willingness and agree to resocialise and to work together as a beginning of change and transformation. Second, non-violent behaviours and non-violent communication would be promoted in a transformed community. Third, effective and constructive dialogues would take place among the conflicting parties, especially the youths and their communities in Masisi.

13.1 Conclusions

13.1.1 Summary of the Study

The study was conducted in Masisi, North Kivu Province in Eastern DRC. The introduction presented the background to the research problem, the statement of the research problem, the research questions, the major assumptions, the study objectives and justification and the key concepts and the scope of the study. The following questions were posed: what is the extent of ongoing conflicts and violence involving the youths? How are the youths taking part in violent acts in Masisi? How are protracted conflicts impacting the youths? What are the mechanisms used to deter youth's violence in the North Kivu Province and in Masisi District and what are their shortcomings? How can non-violent actions be improved to curtail youth violence in Masisi District?

The research was based on the following theories: the conflict transformation theory as proposed by Lederach; the intergroup contact theory suggested by Allport and the ToC by Lewin, coupled with the PAR. According to Lederach's theory, transformation has to be located at four interdependent levels. These are the individual level, the relational level, the cultural level and structural level. The intergroup contact theory provides those contacts among antagonistic groups, here ingroup and outgroup, are efficient ways to mitigate or to limit negative perceptions, prejudice and stereotypes among the group members. These contacts can also help to promote peace when these members have equality, work towards the same goals, cooperate and gain support from the authorities. Lewin's change model was used in relation to the study goal in order to reduce violence among young people in Masisi. The findings discussing the theoretical framework were presented in Chapter 6 and Chapter 7. The findings in Chapter 6 suggest that conflict transformation and peacebuilding are alternatives to armed conflicts and intergroup contact should be promoted as a peacebuilding strategy. The chapter presented the views from proponents of conflict transformation looking at Lederach, Galtung and Azar's perspectives among others. Chapter 6 presented some aspects of religion as a tool for peacebuilding and a mechanism to deter youth violence. The findings indicated that religion is a meeting place where people—*abantu*— could foster their humanhood or *ubuntu* and this could help them to avoid violence. Chapter 7 presents empirical studies based on peacebuilding and conflict transformation theories. In addition, this study used the conflict resolution pyramid of Lederach as a tool to analyse relationships among the various actors involved in conflicts in Masisi. This tool together with the theories should lead to violence reduction and to peacebuilding among the youths in the research area, hence, helping to achieve the study objectives and answer research questions.

The evaluation of the short-term outcomes of the intervention was addressed by the findings in Chapter 12. After the first phases of the activity, it was time to reflect on the work done, its efficiency given its goals and the challenges that the members had to face. The first phases of the intervention were based on diagnosing phase or the identification of the problem among young people in Masisi and in Kitchanga in particular; planning an appropriate action in line with the identified problem; then acting and implementing it; evaluating the impact and the action results based on the intervention goals. The first phase concluded with the lessons learnt from the activity as it was implemented.

The study objectives were to establish the nature, extent, triggers and impacts of violence and conflicts involving the youths. Furthermore, the study aimed at evaluating the impact of conflict and violence on the youths and their environment while evaluating the mechanisms in place to deal with these, and finally, using the PAR to come up with a non-violent action that could help to bring the youths together and limit violence in the area. The five hypotheses were supported by PAR outcomes, and I observed that ploughing, planting and harvesting maize together leveraged a culture of peace and transformed enmity and hostilities among the youth groups in Masisi. Such interaction was impossible before the PAR intervention. Dialogue, *Baraza*, and other forms of dialogic institutions rooted in Kivu local culture convinced adversary groups of the importance of coming together and working together for the people's social welfare.

The study used data triangulation alongside four theoretical frameworks to investigate and comprehend the involvement of youth in violence and explore avenues for redirecting this involvement towards peacebuilding. These theoretical frameworks encompassed conflict transformation theory, intergroup contact theory, PAR and the ToC. Drawing insights from successful conflict transformation models across Africa, such as Amani Mashinani in Kenya spearheaded by Bishop Korir, PPNT in Ghana, ARLPI in Northern Uganda led by religious figures, TRC in South Africa and *Baraza la Wazee Intercommunautaire* in the DRC, the study uncovered those conflicts and violence among Masisi's youth stem from manipulation and historical grievances, resulting in weakened social cohesion. Furthermore, the study highlighted the often-overlooked voice of youth in peacebuilding efforts, despite their willingness and desire to contribute to peaceful coexistence. Notably, there exists a gap in traditional conflict transformation frameworks, with youth involvement proving less effective. Contributing factors to violence include the collapse of governance structures, leaving Masisi under the control of warlords and militia groups, as confirmed by many of the youths interviewed, some of whom admitted to either possessing or misusing firearms, leading to tragic consequences.

13.1.2 Answer to Research Questions

Finally, what are the answers to the research questions and the research objectives raised by this study?

- ✓ What is the extent, causes and consequences of current conflicts and violence involving the youths in Masisi District?

The study established that there were various causes of conflicts and violence in Masisi. In this district, it appeared that conflicts could be attributed to youth unemployment, poverty and their decision to protect their land. The study established also that conflicts and violence are exacerbated by the availability of firearms; there is also youth manipulation and exploitation by those who are in power or in business. The study established that in Masisi, violence has become a business where the youths act like brokers. The study revealed that those young people who were born in IDP camps or who grew up in a conflict-affected environment regard conflict and violence as a normal way of life. The study indicated that there is more competition than cooperation and that the gap between ingroups and outgroups was really wide and would take time to fill with interventions like the peace circle initiatives or an activity like that of AJPA. The consequences of conflicts and violence as established by the study are physical destruction of goods and numerous deaths, psychological effects, the destruction of the social fabric and broken relationships. Therefore, the initiatives through peace circles and the farming activities are some of the basic ways to respond to the causes and consequences of conflicts and violence among the youths.

- ✓ How are the protracted conflicts and violence impacting the youths in Masisi?

Answering the second research question about the impacts of protracted conflicts and violence on the youth, the findings showed that conflicts and violence have had negative impacts on the youth among which are a sense of dependency, despair and laziness. They lack initiative and are ready to follow whoever exploits them. These young people who were born and grew up in conflicts were affected by their conditions and tended to be violent. The conflicts and violence reinforced the separation and the gap between the ingroups and the outgroups as they made young people more suspicious of one another.

- ✓ What are the mechanisms being used to deter youths' violence in the North Kivu Province and Masisi District and what are their shortcomings?

When examining the strategies employed to address youth violence, the findings revealed a recurring oversight of youths in various conflict resolution initiatives. The study identified

several mechanisms and stakeholders attempting to mitigate youth violence. Firstly, it acknowledged that parents, often facing economic hardship, were unable to dissuade their children from violence. At the community level, traditional conflict resolution mechanisms were observed, but these were found to prioritise process over outcomes, exhibiting significant weaknesses. Government intervention predominantly relied on coercive measures, which proved ineffective in addressing conflicts and violence among youths. Additionally, the study noted the involvement of the Catholic Church in conflict resolution efforts in Masisi, with initiatives led by JRS and CARITAS, alongside other NGOs. However, despite these efforts, the study identified a sense of isolation and a lack of sustainable solutions. Consequently, it concluded that existing mechanisms had failed to effectively curb youth violence

- ✓ What mechanisms could be implemented in order to reduce prejudice, stereotypes and misunderstandings among the youths and their communities in Masisi?

From the initiated interventions, the peace circle in the educational sector and the communal activity of farming promoted by the youths themselves, the study suggested an activity initiated by the beneficiaries has more chance to become sustainable and to bear fruit. The AJPA experience and the peace circle at La Sapiientia Catholic University and at Nyakariba Secondary School are some of the ways that can be used to reduce prejudice, stereotypes and misunderstanding as these initiatives are the foundation of promoting closeness and dialogue among antagonist groups. The AJPA experience as a transformative activity and the beginning of behavioural change is a good example to emulate by groups in other areas as it can help to curtail youth violence in Masisi and elsewhere. The study suggested a bottom-up approach to resolving conflict from grassroots as a better approach than the top-down approach. The study cited the example of the *Amani Mashinani* model or peace at the grassroots that was efficiently used in Kenya. In addition, the study highlighted the religious coalition from the ARLPI example used in Northern Uganda by the Acholi religious leaders to deal with the LRA war. This study aimed to provide some ways and means to deal with youth's violence and hopes to have reached somewhere. This study confirmed that "there are always alternatives" to violence.

The findings from the transformative activities or behavioural change undertaken with or by the youths in Kitchanga reflect a positive outcome and could be replicated in other villages in Masisi in order to impact non-violent actions and to curtail youth violence in the district.

13.1.3 The Study's Main Contributions to Peacebuilding

Undoubtedly, this study successfully engaged with the youths within their everyday environment and facilitated their coming together, exemplifying a crucial aspect of peacebuilding: fostering cohesion. The groundwork for this social cohesion was laid through an initiative that originated at the grassroots level, mirroring the principles of Amani Mashinani aimed at reconstructing a society where members reconcile with each other. This study serves as a tangible demonstration of the application of Amani Mashinani within a context characterised by various militia groups, illustrating how simple tools such as a pen and notebook can facilitate the disarmament of militia members. This achievement aligns with the initial step outlined in the *Amani Mashinani model*, which emphasises the importance of community engagement: “while open conflict is still raging, the first step for those of us who want peace is analyse the situation thoroughly and then do everything we can to discourage, contain and damp down the violence” (Korir, 2009: 9). Reaching the youths in their area was not an easy task, nor was the outcome obvious. However, this calculated risk taken was an opportunity first to show the efficiency of the conflict transformation model and the ToC, on the one hand and on the other hand, to show that it was possible to reach the combatants and show them that there is another way of responding to violence. It appeared that many studies about conflicts and violence in Masisi have been done from a distance and that the answers could be general or theoretical. This study aimed at creating proximity with the beneficiaries at the grassroots. These participants confirmed that they had never seen a researcher in their area, especially during these hard times. During the study, I had first to assess the situation before moving to the field, according to the above provided framework. It appeared that it was the right opportunity to put conflict transformation in place and aim at a positive change.

13.1.4 Implications of the Findings

The implications of the research findings are based on the responses to main interrogations as to why it was necessary to talk about reducing violence on the youths' side in Masisi. The findings are relevant and significant for the youths and their community as these would be practically implemented not only in future studies but also by policymakers, the community leaders and the youths in general.

The basis of meeting the study objectives must be a cooperative attitude, togetherness and partnerships putting the youths at the centre of the initiative, mobilising them and listening to their voices, empowering them in order to enable them to participate in peacebuilding. The youths have energy and are creative enough to challenge the negative relationships leading to violence. This study is a starting point for the youths and their communities in Masisi to get involved in the Agenda 2063 aspirations. To respond to this involvement, the youths must be helped to regain their *ubuntu*, to respect each other's lives, respect human rights, promote inclusion and build a strong society with strong values and ethics. This research underscores the importance of placing youths at the forefront of initiatives as catalysts for mobilising their peers, demonstrating their readiness to collaborate towards common objectives. Such an approach holds the potential to profoundly impact both society and the youths themselves. Consequently, the findings of this study may have enduring methodological implications stemming from the integration of conflict transformation strategies aimed at enhancing interpersonal relationships, fostering unity and fostering social cohesion. These outcomes are indicative of the effectiveness of intergroup contact theory and participatory action research. On a societal level, the study has the potential to facilitate a deeper understanding of youths' perspectives, encouraging active engagement and inclusion in communal decision-making processes, in line with the principles outlined in the Global Compact on Education. Moreover, the findings could inform policymakers of the importance of providing avenues for Masisi youths to voice their concerns and aspirations. Through the intervention initiated within the scope of this study, there exists significant potential to positively influence both the youths and their community.

This thesis established peacebuilding as articulated around conflict prevention, conflict management, conflict transformation and post-conflict reconciliation. These are the major

components of peacebuilding operations. Therefore, peacebuilding is the improvement of human behaviour or attitudes, individually or in groups. That is why the study found a close relationship between three dimensions which are *ubuntu*, *ujamaa* and *violence prevention* among the youths in a context like Masisi. Fisher et al. (2000: 7) assert that conflict or violence prevention “aims to prevent outbreak of violent conflict”. In this way, violence prevention has to start from an individual who is party to a conflict; they need to understand that what they suffer, feel or miss can also be felt, suffered or missed by another human being. Another element that should guide the youths towards a good life among others is the fact that there can be no development in isolation. A human being as a social being is called to develop in a community, in an *ujamaa* and share the values, characteristics and requirements of the community. These aspects should guide the youths in preventing violence. Harming one another and everything one does to someone else has repercussions that could lead to violence and conflicts.

13.2 Recommendations

Given the complexity of the prevailing situation in Masisi and that is characterized by protracted conflicts and violence, no one could easily predict the end of conflicts and violence or even provide a remedy that could be perfect but there are several windows of hope and possibility for the youths. In order to reduce or even to eradicate violence and conflict in Masisi, the solutions should come from various stakeholders starting with the youths themselves, their communities and the government.

- The youths suggested what could be the recommendations for this research. Their first suggestion is based on a call they made to other youths that they should mobilise themselves for peaceful actions because they are the ones losing in the endless conflicts. To achieve this, they suggested more meeting opportunities to discuss the various issues in their context and to meet with the elders and opinion leaders.
- The answers to their grievances or to their conflicts should be found at the grassroots as the various armed groups are ethnically divided. So, there is need to sensitise the youths.
- They called upon the government to sort out the issue of IDP camps as these not only host many criminals but also there are many hidden weapons in the camps. In doing so, the government should also open the road infrastructure to enable the youth to access the

markets with their farm produce, thus being able to get and enjoy their income from farming.

- The youths suggested that the government acquire big portions of land from individuals who own vast tracts of land so that they can grow perennial crops to supply local communities and factories when these are set up. This will give the youths an opportunity to earn a decent income. In fact, the youth at Kitchanga accused the landowners who keep thousands of cows on big parcels of land. They talked about 400 hectares just for 10 young people who are paid \$5 each per month.
- The youths emphasised care and trauma healing following what they had seen or done in their lives. They talked about the youths from Kitchanga, Kahira, Bibwe, Lukweti and many other places.
- Therefore, based on what the youths recommended and in order to improve non-violent actions to curtail youths' violence in Masisi, I make the following recommendations to the government and to the civil society activists:
- Make the youths part of any negotiations for peace.
- Since they are not able to afford their own business, they set up businesses from which the youth can benefit. Such an initiative would enable the decision-makers and other community members to be closer to the youths, to listen to them and act with them.
- Assist the youth with working skills. The youths are energetic and ready to work. They only need care and guidance. Therefore, the government and society should help the youths with coping skills and provide them an opportunity to use their skills and know that they can build houses and not destroy them, use their hands to work and produce what is beneficial to them and their communities instead of using them to kill and destroy. The youths should be encouraged to develop their positive energy that leads them to love and to care for others. Negative energy leads to conflicts, violence and misunderstanding.
- Empower the youths with non-violent communication skills. Youth should be encouraged to work, to promote non-violent communication among themselves and in their environment. They should be encouraged to think positively about themselves and about others, to focus on common ground rather than their differences.

- Assist the youths to debrief the unfinished business of the past; to clean the subconscious mind of the negative experiences and everything related to violence that they have witnessed. Of course, it may take time because of what the youths have experienced or are currently experiencing.
- Educate the youths so that they can start to think and look for alternatives not to kill or to hate others. The youths should be educated to avoid going back to the primitive behaviours of cannibalism. “There are always alternatives” to violence and conflicts in dealing with relationships.
- Design peacebuilding techniques in order to address the various sociopolitical and economic questions that fuel conflict and violence. The transformative strategies should move the parties, here the youth, away from violence and confrontation towards positive participation, peaceful cohabitation, restored relationships and social cohesion.

These strategies should be adopted for the long term to prevent violence by promoting peaceful relationships and relational objectives and to promote a culture of dialogue through which the youths can express their feelings and discuss issues in order to build a transformed community-based constructive relationships. This, in the context of Kitchanga and Masisi in general will help to prevent future conflict and subsequent violence from re-emerging among the youths. The techniques designed should address the harm caused to the community by the youths and vice versa and should promote the conflict transformation system from the grassroots at the image of *Amani Mashinani* model, addressing the psychological trauma or healing at the community levels as well as at the personal level.

- Establish a committee aimed at dealing with issues around truth, peace, justice and reconciliation. The committee members should be appointed or elected according to their constituency in Masisi, their knowledge of the community’s culture and systems of conflict resolution. They should not be members of a political party, but they could be religious leaders, educators or teachers, businesspeople, lawyers, youths’ leaders or women leaders.

13.3 The Study Limitations

The weaknesses of this study are related to the following factors:

- emotional factors linked to human nature (fear of the unknown) and insecurity caused by the presence of countless numbers of armed groups and gangs in Masisi District, like in other parts of the Kivu provinces;
- geographical factors such as lack of good road infrastructure which limits access to different villages that have different experiences of conflict;
- multiple armed and unpredictable people in unpredictable situations;
- lack of information from some categories of people especially the IDPs. The informants confirmed that the IDP camps are a hideout of many criminals among the youths. In addition, it has been alleged that these IDP camps hide so many firearms that are used in crimes and other violence in Masisi. Approaching people living in the camps would have yielded more data and information about violence among the youths, their causal factors and how to stop violence.

The prevailing situation of insecurity and other dangers in Masisi and the Eastern provinces in general is not conducive to good fieldwork. It is really very risky to go to some villages or mountains where the central government is absent. Hence, it is hard or impossible to get data from these areas or even to know what is going on there. These no-go zones are like: *Tambi, Gahira, Nyabura, Busihe, Kahanga, Kahongole*, among others. On some roads in Masisi, there are acts of kidnappings against ransoms in a high amount of money or the kidnapped person may be killed. These unfortunate facts hindered data collection from most parts of the district. However, for some areas, I used phone interviews which helped in following up activities initiated as interventions at Kitchanga and Nyakariba. Therefore, some vital quantitative information would bring an insight to this study.

- On the methodological side, the PAR requirements in terms of FGDs and one-on-one interviews were sometimes hindered by participants or informants. Their behaviour was related to two factors: they had never before met a researcher and they were not used to PAR activities; and some of these young people who were born in conflict, had taken part

in hostilities and in killings. Therefore, they had long stories to tell and, in this case, the research as an observer could not stop whoever was talking; bearing in mind that these were armed people. Anonymity was essential given that the information some of them provided was very sensitive.

Despite enormous challenges I was confronted in the field to conduct the empirical component of this inquiry, my passion to do something good for the youths of my country was not deterred. I persevered, taking risks and managed to successfully complete this research of which I am pleased to present the outcomes.

13.4 Recommendations for Further Research

The study adopted the intergroup contact theory as part of the theoretical framework and applied the four conditions for effective intergroup contact as provided by Allport (cited in Pettigrew, 2008: 188). However, in his analysis, Pettigrew (2008: 189) established “four future directions for intergroup contact theory”. To displace these people was a conflict in itself and their integration process was another conflict. This aspect of history has never been elucidated to improve the relationships in Masisi. Another element is the customary or traditional leadership of the Hunde people holding the traditional power and considered the Hutu and Tutsi as foreigners. This element led to structural and sometimes direct violence despite living together in Masisi for almost 100 years. Further studies could deepen this historical dimension in order to open the path to true dialogue, peace and peaceful coexistence. This would help to overcome the feelings of threat and uncertainty that people especially the youths experience in their intergroups (Pettigrew 2008: 190).

The second aspect of the intergroup contact theory, as outlined by Pettigrew (2008: 189), involves a specific examination of the factors contributing to negative outcomes in intergroup relations. In the context of the youth in Masisi, these interactions are characterised by hierarchical dynamics, where individuals with political and economic influence hold power over those who lack resources or authority. Consequently, such relationships are prone to failure or negative consequences due to their exploitative nature and absence of authenticity. Consequently, genuine collaboration or reconciliation among the people of Masisi is hindered by the absence of truth, and to some extent, justice, love and mutual understanding, all of

which are essential elements of reconciliation as articulated by Lederach. Future research endeavours could delve into intragroup dynamics and explore the correlation between intergroup contact and adverse outcomes. In the case of Masisi, participants have likened these relationships to living in a state of hypocrisy.

Some of elements like national boundaries and issues around corruption appeared to be outside the scope of this study but they are still important issues to look at in order to understand and transform the Congolese conflicts especially in reducing violence in Masisi and its surroundings. Further studies could address these issues.

Lederach established three types of violence: direct violence, cultural violence and structural violence. Therefore, the question might remain as to whether the youths are involved in the same way in these types of violence. Further research could focus on a specific type of violence reflected by the youths' actions in Masisi and expand on it.

This investigation focused on young people in Masisi and initiated a pilot intervention in two educational institutions and an intervention with the youths at Kitchanga. This was a short-term activity for the purpose of this study. So, there is a need for a follow-up of this intervention to ensure sustainable peace. The post-intervention follow-up was not done because it was not easy to access the study areas because of the ongoing M23 war. It was also difficult to predict the outcome of the farming activity. A quantitative evaluation of the intervention would have given another picture of the initiative as the young people grew maize.

It is an unavoidable fact that conflicts in Masisi in general and at Kitchanga are affecting women and girls as well, yet women could play a positive role in conflict transformation in DRC. Unfortunately, their voices are forgotten. This thesis has not allowed space for consideration of the gender dimension in conflict transformation and to peacebuilding, yet this dimension has a very important place in peacebuilding. Further studies could bring valuable insights from this social category.

Moreover, in order to promote peace and sustainable peace in war-torn places like Masisi, peace education is needed. Future research could focus on the socioeconomic benefits of peace education and emphasise the major elements of peace education which are to promote

knowledge about respect for others and their culture; to love others as one loves himself or those close to him; tolerance, justice and equity.

Another area of research to understand the ongoing conflicts and violence in Masisi, and in the Eastern DRC, is to look at the “political economy of armed conflict” (Boege, 2006: 2). This kind of economy involves various actors in conflict with different motives. Therefore, when considering the Masisi conflicts, research could explore why the conflicts and subsequent violence have lasted for many years without any solution, in spite of negotiations and reconciliation sessions. Research could investigate the “criminal networks” that have emerged from the protracted conflicts and have claimed millions of lives.

Poverty was established as a causal factor of violence in Masisi. However, this study did not explore the link between poverty and the economics of peace. This economic dimension could be a basis for further research. It is clear that there are strong networks of armed groups and people masterminding crimes and violence in Masisi. This thesis did not clearly establish these networks of criminals and actors in conflicts.

Further research should establish the causative factors of violence and establish the link between poverty, manipulation and violence. The unemployed youths are poor and easily manipulated by whoever calls for their services. There is need to evaluate the economics of conflict, violence and war in general and the way people are making money and wealth by exploiting the youths through crimes and violence. These are aspects of structural violence and/or direct violence that go unnoticed (Galtung, 2011: 7). This thesis did not look at the human rights dimensions of violence as related to sustainable peace. The youths have been denied education or good education in several areas in Masisi, leaving them exposed to armed groups, crimes and other types of violence.

Furthermore, it is clear that youths and women have been excluded in peace talks and negotiations. There is need to look at this aspect and, if possible, to empower the youths and women. Further studies should evaluate the political and customary will in including and empowering the youths and women and involve them in peacebuilding.

With regard to proactive strategies to violence, conflicts and violence in Masisi have taken years to be dealt with and thousands of youths have been attracted by armed militia or groups

pretending to fight for their communities or for their properties. What is striking is the number of people who have been killed through violence and wars. Several attempts to transform conflicts have not produced positive results. Further studies could focus on proactive strategies to prevent outbreaks of further violence or conflicts as this thesis did not explore strategies for conflict prevention.

In Masisi, the youth's psychological needs are real. From their experiences of wars, killings and other brutalities they have witnessed or in which they were involved, most of the youths have been deeply traumatised and psychologically disturbed. This could affect them for the rest of their lives. Therefore, further research should focus on this aspect and suggest a way to help the affected youths while suggesting strategies to prevent others falling victim to the unpredictable situation of conflict in Masisi.

In order to go beyond the simple narratives about conflicts and violence in North Kivu Province and Masisi in particular, I decided to take a calculated risk and go to the grassroots in Masisi and listen to the youths' stories. However, risk levels limited my research as I had to assess the places before visiting them. So, there is need to go beyond simple narratives looking at "illegal exploitation of Congolese mineral resources as a significant cause of conflict and sexual violence as a terrible and widespread form of abuse" while looking at the "reconstruction of the state authority as an essential measure" (Autesserre, 2012: 3).

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Ethical Clearance



Institutional Research Ethics Committee
Research and Postgraduate Support Directorate
2nd Floor, Benoni Court
Gate 1, Steve Biko Campus
Durban University of Technology
P O Box 1334, Durban, South Africa, 4001
Tel: 031 373 2375
Email: irethead@dut.ac.za
http://www.dut.ac.za/research/institutional_research_ethics
www.dut.ac.za

29 August 2023

Mr B S Philippe
P.O Box 50 Goma
North-Kivu Province
DR Congo

Dear Mr Philippe

Reducing Youth Violence. An Action Research Project in Masisi, Democratic Republic of Congo
Ethics Clearance Number: IREC 295/22

The DUT-Institutional Research Ethics Committee acknowledges receipt of your notification regarding the piloting of your data collection tool.

Kindly ensure that participants used for the pilot study are not part of the main study.

In addition, the DUT-IREC acknowledges receipt of your gatekeeper permission letters.

Please note that **FULL APPROVAL** is granted to your research proposal. You may proceed with data collection.

Any adverse events [serious or minor] which occur in connection with this study and/or which may alter its ethical consideration must be reported to the DUT-IREC according to the DUT-IREC SOP's.

Please note that any deviations from the approved proposal require the approval of the DUT-IREC as outlined in the DUT-IREC SOP's.

It is compulsory for a student or researcher to apply for recertification on an annual basis. The failure to do so will result in withdrawal of ethics clearance. It is the responsibility of the researcher and the supervisor to apply for recertification.

Please note that you are required to submit a Notification of Completion of Study form together with an abstract to the DUT-IREC office on completion of your study.

Yours Sincerely

Prof J K Adam
Chairperson: DUT-IREC

ENVISION2030 transparency • honesty • integrity • respect • accountability
fairness • professionalism • commitment • compassion • excellence



Appendix B1: Request for Permission to Conduct Research

[Date]

The President of the Intercommunity Youth Coordination

Masisi District Coordination,

North Kivu Province

Request for Permission to Conduct Research

Dear XXX

My name is Philippe SEMIVUMBI BANZI, a PhD student in Management Sciences, Peace Studies. The research I wish to conduct for my doctoral degree involves “Reducing Youth Violence”; it is designed as action research.

I am hereby seeking your consent to involve the youths of your constituency in this study which aims at establishing the nature, extent, causes and consequences of conflict and violence involving the youth in Masisi, assessing the strategies in place for conflict transformation and to come up with strategies to reduce prejudice, stereotypes and misunderstanding among the youth and their communities.

I have provided you with a copy of my proposal which includes copies of the data collection tools and consent and/ or assent forms to be used in the research process, as well as a copy of the approval letter which I received from the Institutional Research Ethics Committee (IREC).

If you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me please contact me on +243 976 153 068; email: banzinat@gmail.com

Yours sinc

Philippe S

Student nu 87

IREC 295/

Appendix B3: Gatekeeper Letter (English)

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO

NORTH KIVU PROVINCE

NYAMITABA, 19th /01/2022

MASISI DISTRICT

BASHALI CHIEFDOM

No: 5072/BSEC/NYM/004/D22/2022

KAEMBE AREA

OFFICE OF THE REGISTRAR

NYAMITABA

CONCERN: Your Authorisation Request

Mr. Philippe Semivumbi Banzi

Dear Sir,

I acknowledge having received your letter of 01/15/2022, the subject of which is mentioned above in the margin and thank you for it.

Actually, given that the theme of your scientific research as contained in the above-mentioned letter is topical in our territory and that it is desirable that this research could contribute to the resolution of this scourge of juvenile violence in the district, you are authorised to make contacts with the youth and their organisations in the various local communities.

I wish you good work and success in your research.

Patriotic feelings.

The Registrar (signs and stamps)

MUJYARUGAMBA NTWALIRA Jean Pierre

Appendix B4: Gatekeeper Letter (French Version)

	REPUBLIQUE DEMOCRATIQUE DU CONGO
PROVINCE DU NORD – KIVU TERRITOIRE DE MASISI CHEFFERIE DE BASHALI GPT B/KAEMBE BUREAU D'ETAT CIVIL NYAMITABA	NYAMITABA, Le <u>19</u> / 01 / 2022 N° : 5072/BSEC/NYM/ <u>004</u> / D22 / 2022
OBJET:/ Votre demande D'autorisation.	A Monsieur Philippe Semivumbi Banzi, Monsieur,
J'accuse bonne réception de votre lettre du 15/01/2022, et dont l'objet est repris ci -haut en marge et vous en remercie.	
En effet, étant donné que l'objet de votre recherche Scientifique contenu dans ladite lettre est d'actualité dans notre Territoire et qu'il est souhaitable que cela puisse contribuer à la résolution de ce fléau de la violence juvénile dans le milieu, vous êtes autorisé à effectuer des contacts avec la jeunesse ainsi que leurs organisations dans les différentes communautés locales.	
Je vous souhaite bon travail et plein succès dans vos recherches.	
Sentiments patriotiques.	
L'OFFICIER D'ETAT CIVIL  MUJYARUGAMBA NTWALIRA Jean Pierre	



Appendix C1: Letter of Information: Invitation to Participate in a Focus Group Discussion



LETTER OF INFORMATION

Title of the Research: Reducing Youth Violence. An Action Research Project in Masisi, Democratic Republic of Congo

Principal researcher: Philippe SEMIVUMBI BANZI, Ph. D Student

Co-Investigator/s/supervisor/s: Dr Chrysostome Kiyala (PhD), Prof Geoff. T. Harris (Ph.D.)

Dear Sir/Madam

Good morning. I trust that you are doing well. My name is Banzi Semivumbi Philippe, a Ph.D. Student in Management Sciences specialising in Peace Studies at the International Centre of Nonviolence (ICON) at the Durban University of Technology in South Africa. I teach at La Sapiencia Catholic University in Goma.

We know that youth are often engaged in acts of violence in Masisi and other places in DR Congo. That is why I want to find out why this is happening and work with young people to help reduce this violence.

So, I would like to invite you to participate in this research. Participation in this project is completely voluntary, and you do not have to answer any questions that you do not want to respond to or do not feel comfortable about. If you agree to participate, you will be asked to be part of a focus group discussion with seven other people which will last about an hour. The discussion does not come with any direct benefit. I will treat everything that you say today with respect, confidentiality and anonymity. Do not mention or use your real names or known nicknames during the course of this study. This is to make sure that your identity remains anonymous.

Any information you provide shall be reported without using any identifiable name that points directly to you or any member of your family. I am the only person who will be able to determine the identity of the participants for this study.

This study does not involve any risks or bodily harm to you in any way as it does not require you to engage in any physical activities that may cause injury to you. If for some reasons you feel uncomfortable with the questions I shall ask you and thus unable to respond truthfully or sincerely, please you are very free to withdraw. Please note that participation in this study is voluntary and not compulsory, you may therefore feel free to inform whenever you wish to discontinue. Is that okay?

The community shall benefit from this research as it will help reduce violence and promote tolerance, and build peace, security and stability in Masisi territory. I shall make copies of the final findings of the research to the community leaders. You will not be paid for participating in the study, either in cash or kind as you will not incur any costs for participating in this study.

Information you provide to me is only accessible by me and to some extent my two supervisors who are in South Africa. I shall record our discussion, and this shall be stored on a password protected laptop which shall be accessible to me only. I shall destroy/delete the information within a period of five years during which period the necessary works with it might have been completed.

In the event of any problems or queries, please contact me on +243976153068, or my supervisor Dr Jean Chrysostome Kiyala (on +27 313733102) or the Institutional Research Ethics Administrator on 031 3732375. Complaints can also be reported to the Director: Research and Postgraduate support, Dr Nomcebo Ntombela, Email: researchdirector@dut.ac.za.

BANZI SEMIVUMBI Philippe

22064687 ; IREC 295/22

Appendix C2: Lettre d'information: Invitation à Participer à une Discussion En Groupe



LETTRE D'INFORMATION

Sujet de recherche : « Réduire la violence chez les jeunes. Un projet de recherche-action dans Masisi, République Démocratique du Congo »

Chercheur principal : Philippe SEMIVUMBI BANZI, Doctorant

Co-promoteur/Promoteur: Dr Chrysostome Kiyala (PhD), Prof Geoff.T. Harris (Ph.D.)

Cher Monsieur/Madame,

Bonjour.

J'espère que vous allez bien. Je m'appelle Philippe Semivumbi Banzi, étudiant au doctorat en Sciences de Gestion spécialisé en études de la paix au Centre international de la non-violence (ICON) de l'Université de technologie de Durban en Afrique du Sud. J'enseigne à l'Université Catholique La Sapiencia de Goma. Nous savons que les jeunes sont souvent impliqués dans des actes de violence à Masisi et ailleurs en RD Congo. C'est pourquoi je voudrais découvrir pourquoi cela se produit et travailler avec les jeunes pour les aider à réduire la violence. Je voudrais donc vous inviter à participer à cette recherche.

La participation à ce projet est entièrement volontaire et vous n'aurez pas à répondre à des questions auxquelles vous ne voulez pas répondre ou avec lesquelles vous ne vous sentez pas à l'aise. Si vous acceptez de participer, vous serez invité à faire partie d'un groupe de discussion avec sept autres personnes qui durera environ une heure. La discussion n'apporte aucun avantage direct. Je traiterai tout ce que vous direz avec respect, confidentialité et anonymat. Ne mentionnez pas ni n'utilisez pas vos vrais noms ou surnoms connus au cours de cette étude. Il s'agit de s'assurer que votre identité reste anonyme. Toute information que vous fournissez sera signalée sans utiliser des signes qui vous identifient directement ou

identifient un membre de votre famille. Je serai la seule personne qui pourra déterminer l'identité des participants à cette étude. Cette étude ne comporte aucun risque ni ne vous portera aucune atteinte physique, car elle ne vous oblige pas à vous engager dans des activités physiques susceptibles de vous blesser.

Si pour quelques motifs que ce soit vous vous sentez mal à l'aise avec les questions qui seront posées et donc incapable de répondre honnêtement ou sincèrement, je vous en prie, vous êtes tout à fait libre de vous retirer. Notez que la participation à cette étude étant volontaire, donc non-obligatoire, vous êtes libre d'informer chaque fois que vous souhaitez interrompre votre participation. Ca vous va comme ça ?

La communauté bénéficiera de cette recherche car elle contribuera à réduire la violence et à promouvoir la tolérance, à construire la paix, la sécurité et la stabilité dans le territoire de Masisi. Je ferai des copies des résultats finaux de la recherche aux dirigeants de la communauté.

Vous ne serez pas payé pour participer à l'étude, que ce soit en espèces ou en nature, car vous n'engagerez aucun frais pour participer.

Les informations que vous me fournirez ne seront accessibles que par moi et, dans une certaine mesure, mes deux promoteurs qui se trouvent en Afrique du Sud. J'enregistrerai notre discussion et l'enregistrement sera gardé sur un ordinateur portable protégé par un mot de passe qui ne sera accessible qu'à moi. Je détruirai/supprimerai les informations dans un délai de cinq ans au cours duquel les travaux nécessaires avec celles-ci auront été achevés.

En cas de problème ou de question, veuillez me contacter au +243976153068, ou mon superviseur Dr Jean Chrysostome Kiyala (au +27 313733102) ou le Responsable de l'Ethique de la Recherche Institutionnelle au 031 3732375. Les réclamations peuvent également être signalées au Directeur : Recherche et Soutien postdoctoral, Dr Vaneshree Govender on 0313732577 or au courriel : researchdirector@dut.ac.za.

Philippe SEMIVUMBI BANZI

22064687 ; IREC 295/22

Appendix C3: Barua ya Kujulisha : Mwaliko Kwa Kuhuzuriya Maongezi ya Kikundi
[Kiswahili version]



BARUWA YA KUJULISHA

Mada ya utafiti: “Kupunguza unyanyasaji wa vijana.Mradi wahatua za utafiti hukoMasisi, Jamhuri ya Kidemokrasia ya Kongo »

Mtafiti mkuu:Philippe SEMIVUMBI BANZI, mwanafunzi wa PhD

Mwalimu –Mwongozi: Dk Chrysostome Kiyala (PhD), Prof Geoff.T. Harris (Ph.D.)

Akina Bibi/ Bwana,

Salam. Natumaini kama mupo salama. Kwa majina naitwa Filipino Semivumbi Banzi na ninafanya masomo ya shahada ya juu kwenyi chuo kikuu cha Durban, Africa ya kusini. Kwa sasa nafanya utafiti kuhusu Kupunguza vurugu katiya vijana katika mtaa wa Masisi, utafiti wa hatuwa shirikishi katika Jamhuri ya kidemokrasia ya Congo.

Wewe ni mmoja kati ya watu walio chaguliwa ili uwezee kusaidiya katika utafiti huu ukitowa maoni yako kuhusu migogoro na vurugu zinazoendelea katika mtaa wa Masisi.

Unapokubali hayo, utajibu kwa maswali fulani fulani mbele ya mtafiti katika maongezi ya kikundi kwa mda wa dakika 45. Utafiti huu ni moja wapo wa mapashwa ya kupata shahada ya ngazi ya juu na umegaramiwa na chuo kikuu. Ndiyo maana hautalipishwa kitu chochote kama vile hautalipwa malipo yoyote kuhusu utafiti huu.

Hasara ama mazara yoyote kwako: utafiti huu hauna mazara yoyote, Kwa hiyo usiwe na mashaka kuhusu ushirika wako.

Kujiondowa kwenyi utafiti huu: unapokubali kwa hiyari yako kushiriki kwenyi utafiti huu uko huru kujiondowa kwenyi utafiti kila mara utakapo hisi kujiondowa. Piya, hakutakuwa na mazara yoyote kwa kujiondowa huko, bali kutakuwa na msaidizi ki afya kuhusu shida ama mazara utafiti huu utakapoweza kukuleteya.

Habari zote utakazo towa zitawekwa na siri kubwa mahali patakapo chunguzwa nami peke yangu. Vyombo vyote vilivyo ricodiwa ama vilivyoandikwa vitaharibiwa ama vitafutwa kiisha mda wa myakamitano.

Kuhusu malipo: Hakutakuwa na malipo yoyote. Unapokubali hayo, utajibu kwa maswali fulani fulani ama katika maongezi ya kikundi kwa mda wa dakika 45. Utafiti huu ni moja wapo wa mapashwa ya kupata shahada ya ngazi ya juu na umegaramiwa na chuo kikuu. Ndiyo maana hautalipishwa kitu chochote kama vile hautalipwa malipo yoyote kuhusu utafiti huu.

Ikiwa kuna maswali ama mashaka kuhusu utafiti, wasiliyana na Filipino Semivumbi Banzi kwenyi simu ya mkononi kunako nambari +243 976 153 068 ama Mwalimu mwongozi wangu Jean Chrysostome K. Kiyala, Tel. +27 313733102; Kiongozi wa utafiti kuhusu usaidizi katika kidato cha juu, Director: Research and Postgraduate support, Dr Vaneshree Govender, kwenyi nambari ya simu 0313732577 ama kwenyi baruwa pepe researchdirector@dut.ac.za. Asante kwa uwepo wako.

Filipo Semivumbi Banzi

(Nambari : 22064687)

IREC 295/22

Appendix D: Letter of Information: Invitation to Participate in a Face-To-Face Interview



LETTER OF INFORMATION

Title of the Research: Reducing Youth Violence. An Action Research Project in Masisi, Democratic Republic of Congo

Principal researcher: Philippe SEMIVUMBI BANZI, Ph.D Student

Co-Investigator/s/supervisor/s: Dr Chrysostome Kiyala (PhD), Prof Geoff. T. Harris (Ph.D.)

Dear Sir/Madam

Hello. I trust that you are doing well. My name is Banzi Semivumbi Philippe , a Ph.D Student in Management Sciences specialising in Peace Studies) at the International Centre of Nonviolence (ICON) at the Durban University of Technology in South Africa. I teach at La Sapiencia Catholic University in Goma.

We know that youth are often engaged in acts of violence in Masisi and other places in DR Congo. I want to find out why this is happening and work with youth to help reduce this violence. I would like to invite you to participate in this research.

Participation in this project is completely voluntary and you do not have to answer any questions that you do not want to respond to or do not feel comfortable about. If you agree to participate, you will be asked to have a face-to-face interview with me for about 45 minutes. The discussion does not come with any direct benefit. I will treat everything that you say today with respect, confidentiality and anonymity. Do not mention or use your real names or known nicknames during the course of this study. This is to make sure that your identity remains anonymous. Any information you provide shall be reported without using any

identifiable name that points directly to you or any member of your family. I am the only person who will be able to determine the identity of the participant/informant for this study.

This study does not involve any risks or bodily harm to you in any way as it does not require you to engage in any physical activities that may cause injury to you. If for some reasons you feel uncomfortable with the questions, I shall ask you and thus unable to respond truthfully or sincerely, please you are very free to withdraw. Please note that participation in this study is voluntary and not compulsory, you may therefore feel free to inform whenever you wish to discontinue. Is that okay?

The community shall benefit from this research as it will help reduce violence and promote tolerance, build peace, security and stability the Masisi territory. I shall make copies of the final findings of the research to the community leaders.

You will not be paid for participating in the study, either in cash or kind. You will not incur any costs for participating in this study.

Information you provide to me is only accessible to me and to some extent my two supervisors who are in South Africa. I shall record our discussion and this shall be stored on a password protected laptop which shall be accessible to me only. I shall destroy/delete the information within a period of five years during which period the necessary works with it might have been completed.

In the event of any problems or queries, please contact me on +243976153068 or my supervisor Dr Kiyala Jean Chrysostome (on +27 313733102) or the Institutional Research Ethics Administrator on 031 3732375. Complaints can be reported to the Director: Research and Postgraduate support, Dr Vaneshree Govender on 0313732577 or researchdirector@dut.ac.za.

Philippe SEMIVUMBI BANZI

22064687

IREC 295/22

Appendix E1: Consent Form



CONSENT

Full Title of the Study: Reducing Youth Violence. An Action Research Project in Masisi, Democratic Republic of Congo

Names of Researcher/s: Philippe Semivumbi Banzi

IREC Number: 295/22

Statement of Agreement to Participate in the Study:

- ☐ I hereby confirm that I have been informed by the researcher,
(name of researcher), about the nature, conduct, benefits and risks of this study-Research
Ethics Clearance Number: __,
- ☐ I have also received, read and understood the above written information (Participant Letter of Information) regarding the study.
- ☐ I am aware that the results of the study, including personal details regarding my sex, age, date of birth, initials and diagnosis will be anonymously processed into a study report.
- ☐ In view of the requirements of research, I agree that the data collected during this study can be processed in a computerised system by the researcher.
- ☐ I may, at any stage, without prejudice, withdraw my consent and participation in the study.
- ☐ I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions and (of my own free will) declare my self-prepared to participate in the study.

☐ I understand that significant new findings developed during the course of this research which may relate to my participation will be made available to me.

Full Name of Participant

Date

Time

Signature

/

Right

Thumbprint

I,

(name of researcher) here with confirm that the above participant has been fully

Informed about the nature, conduct and risks of the above study.

Full Name of Researcher

Date

Signature

Full Name of Witness (If applicable)

Date

Signature

Full Name of Legal Guardian (If applicable)

Date

Signature

Appendix E2 : Fomu ya Idhini [Kiswahili version]



Fomu ya idhini

Mada Kamili ya Utafiti: “Kupunguza unyanyasaji wa vijana. Mradi wa hatua za utafiti huko Masisi, Jamhuri ya Kidemokrasia ya Kongo”

Majina ya Mtafiti: Philippe Semivumbi Banzi

Nambari ya IREC: 295/22

Makubaliyano kwa kushiriki kwenyi utafiti huu:

Ninakubali kama nimepata maelezo kutoka kwa Bw. Philippe Semivumbi Banzi kuhusu hali, mwenendo, faida na hatari za utafiti huu,

Nimepata na nikasoma maelezo yote kuhusu utafiti na nikayaelewa na kuya kubali kupitiya kibarua kwa washiriki kuhusu maelezo na tamaduni yanayoambatana na utafiti kwenyi chuo kikuu cha Durban.

Nina uhakika kama majibu kutoka kwenyi utafiti na alama zote kuhusu kutambulika kwangu vitachungwa kwa siri na havitaonekana kwenyi utafiti huu.

Kufwatana na mapashwa ya utafiti, nakubali kama maelezo yote kutokana na utafiti huu yanaweza tumiwa kwenyi tarakilishi.

Piya, naweza kujiondowa kwenyi utafiti kwa hiyari yangu na bila kufwatiliwa.

Nimepewa mda wa kuuliza maswali na nikapewa maelezo kamili kuhusu utafiti. Kwa hiyari yangu nakubali kushiriki kwenyi utafiti huu.

Nimeelewa kama nitajulishwa matukio mapya kutoka kwenyi utafiti huu.

Majina ya anayeagana

Tarehe

Wakati

Sahihi

Mimi, Filipo Semivumbi Banzi, nahakikisha kama anayeapa amejulishwa kamili kuhusu aina, mwenendo na hatari za utafiti huu.

Majina ya Mtafiti

Tarehe

Sahihi

B.S Philippe _____

Appendix F1: Interview Guide



Candidate: Philippe Semivumbi Banzi

Research Topic: Reducing Youth Violence. An Action Research Project in Masisi, DR Congo.

Date:

Time: (Should not exceed 45 minutes) (From.....to.....)

Age: between

–18–22

–23–27

–28–32

–33 and above

Participants:

The participants will already be aware of the study from having participated in a FGD.

Interview questions will include

Facts about the situation in Masisi (Number of people dying because of violence, intercommunity clashes, youth movements, displacements, destructions, etc)

What the interviewee knows: (What types of violence are common in Masisi and in your area? Who are the youth leaders or mastermind in the violence, conflicts...)

Facts about past events: (What do you personally perceive to be the source of the conflict and violence?)

Feelings (How did you feel/or do you feel when witnessing a violent situation? What are the consequences of violence in this area?)

Attitudes or opinions: (What do you think about youth involvement in conflicts and violence in this area?)

Beliefs (What are your views on non-violent methods in solving violent conflicts in Masisi and in your area? What kind of support is offered by community members, leaders and NGOs to reduce violence in this area? How do you find this support or initiative? What do you suggest can be done by all stakeholders (Community members, parents, NGOs management, National leaders) to reduce violence among the youth and the communities at large?)

OBJECTIVES	QUESTIONS	COMMENTS
OBJECTIVE 1:to explore the nature, extent, causes and consequences of conflicts and violence in Masisi	How are the intercommunity relationship is Masisi? Explain. What are the causes of continuous violence in this area? To what extent would you say that there is social discrimination in Masisi or in the area where you live? If there is social discrimination in this area, in what form does it occur, which are the most common forms of social discrimination (stereotype, exclusion...)? Who are the actors in violence and conflicts in Masisi? What are the consequences of the protracted	

	conflicts and violence in this area?	
OBJECTIVE 2: to assess the current strategies or initiatives put in place for conflict transformation in Masisi and in the region	What have been done so far to mitigate violence or solve conflicts? How effective they were? What can be done by all stakeholders (from the grassroots to the high level of leadership) to reduce violence among the youth and the communities and reduce youth involvement in conflicts? In short term and in the long term? (PAR)	
OBJECTIVE 3: Using a PAR design, To come up with strategies and implement them to reduce the prejudice, stereotypes and misunderstanding among the youth and their communities	9. What can be done in order to sustain a peaceful cohabitation among the youth and among their communities? 10. Is there anything else you would like to talk about to improve the relationships in this area?	
OBJECTIVE 4: To evaluate the short-term outcomes of the intervention		See Objective 2, Question 7 (What has been done and how efficient was it?)

Appendix F2: Mada Ya Majadiliano[Liswahili version]



Mwanafunzi: Filipo Semivumbi BANZI

Mada:Kupunguza unyanyasaji wa vijana.Mradi wa hatua za utafiti huko Masisi, Jamhuri ya Kidemokrasia ya Kongo

Tarehe:

Mda: (haupashwe zidi dakika 45) (tangu saa..... mpaka saa.....)

Umri:kati ya...na...

–18–22

–23–27

–28–32

–33 na zaidi

Washiriki:

Washiriki tayari watakuwa wanafahamu kuhusu utafiti kutokana na kushiriki katika FGD.Maswali ya mahojiano yatahusu

Ukweli kuhusu hali ya Masisi (Idadi ya watu wanao kufa kwa sababu ya vurugu, kugongana kati ya jamii, mienendo ya vijana, kuhama makwao, uharibifu, n.k.)

Anachojiwa mhojiwa: (Ni aina gani za vurugu zinazotokea Masisi na katika eneo unamo kaa? Ni wanani viongozi wa vijana ao wapangaji wa katika vurugu na migogoro...)

Ukweli kuhusu matukio yaliyopita: (Je, wewe binafsi unaona ni nini ndiyo chanzo cha migogoro na vurugu upande huo?)

Hisia (Ulijisikiya/ama ulihisi je ulipoona hali yavurugu? Ni gani matokeo ya vurugu katika eneo hili?)

Mitazamo ao maoni: (Una maoni gani kuhusu ushiriki wa vijana katika migogoro na vurugu katika eneo hili?)

Imani (Je, una maoni gani kuhusu mbinu zisizo za kikatili katika kutatuwa migogoro ya kikatili huko Masisi na katika eneo unamo kaa? Ni aina gani ya msaada unaotolewa na wana jamii, viongozi na mashirika yasiyo ya kiserkali ili kupunguza vurugu katika eneo hili? Msaada huu ao mpango huu unaviona je?)

Je! Unapendekeza kitu gani kifayike na wahusika wote (wanajamii, wazazi, uongozi wa vikundi visivyo vya kiserkali, viongozi wa kitaifa) ili kupunguza ukatili miongoni mwa vijana na jamii kwa ujumla?

<i>MALENGO</i>	<i>MASWALI</i>
<i>LENGO 1: kuchunguza asili, kiwango, sababu na matokeo ya migogoro na vurugu katika Masisi</i>	<i>Je, uhusiano kati ya jamii uko je huko Masisi?</i> <i>Sababu za vurugu zinazo endelea katika eneo hili ni nini?</i> <i>Je, kwa maoni yako, unaweza kusema kwamba kuna baguzi wa vurugu katika eneo unaloishi?</i> <i>Ikiwa kuna baguzi wakijamiika katika eneo hili, ni kwa nini?</i> <i>Ni aina gani ya msaada unaozidi baguzi wakijamiika katika eneo hili?</i> <i>Ni kina nani wanaohusika katika vurugu katika eneo hili?</i> <i>Ni nini matokeo ya migogoro na vurugu katika eneo hili?</i>
<i>LENGO LA 2: kutathmini kikatili yoko au</i>	<i>Hatuaganizi licha chukuliwa kufikia sasaili</i>

<i>mipango iliyowe kwakwa ajili ya mabadiliko ya migogoro katika Masisi na katika eneo zima</i>	<i>kutatu amigogoro? Hatua hizo zimefauliwa</i> <i>Je, ni hatua gani zinazoweza kuchukuliwa (kuanzia ngaziza hini hadi ngaziza juu za u</i> <i>na jamii na kupunguza ushiriki wa vijana muda mrefu?</i>
<i>LENGO LA 3: Kutumia Utafiti wa Kitendo Shirikishi, Kupendekeza mikakati na kutekeleza ilikuwa kupunguza chuki, maneno mabaya na kutoelewa namiongoni mwavijana na jamiizao</i>	9. <i>Kuna weza kufanyikanini ilikuwa dumisha k</i> <i>na miongoni mwa jamiizao?</i> 10. Je, <i>kuna jambo lingine ungalipenda kuzungum</i>
<i>LENGO LA 4: Kutathmini matokeo ya mdamfuji ya vitendo saidizi</i>	

Appendix G1: Focus Group Discussion Guide



Researcher: Philippe SEMIVUMBI BANZI

Research Topic: Reducing Youth Violence. An Action Research Project in Masisi, DR Congo

Day & Date:

Time:

Number of participants:

I will start by introducing myself, then the participants will also introduce themselves. I will then state the purpose of the focus group discussion. I will thank the participants for their availability and will outline the discussion procedure: the ethical considerations and seek for permission to record or to take photographs throughout the session. Participants will be assured that all the recorded materials or photographs will be strictly used by the researcher only and will be kept in a safe place only accessible by him. The topic and questions will be formulated in Kiswahili. This is one of the major languages used in the research area, most people are not conversant with French.

Themes to discuss

Theme 1 (Probe questions) How are the intercommunity relations in comparison to the latent conflicts in Masisi? (About the research area and the sociocultural and ethnic relationships)

1. How are the interrelation situations in Masisi?
2. How are people views based on this relationship?

3. Do people have community activities that they undertake together?
4. Theme 2: How are the youth involved in these conflicts? (About Conflicts and violence)
5. What are the causes and the extent of conflicts and violence in Masisi?
6. What effects had the conflicts had on the interrelations in Masisi and how are the youth involved in those conflicts?
7. Why do the youth prefer to take discriminatory positions towards each other?
8. How are the issues of prejudice and exclusion among the communities and among the youth?
9. What and how are gender involvement or implications in the violence (any gendered dynamic involved in violence and conflicts)?
10. Theme 3: What types of conflicts transformation strategies have been applied in the area and how effective they were?
11. What have been done so far to mitigate or solve conflicts and violence? How effective they were?
12. What can be done by all stakeholders (from the grassroots to the high level of leadership) to reduce violence among the youth and the communities and reduce youth involvement in conflicts? In short term and in the long term? (PAR)
13. .Is there anything else you would like to talk about to improve the relationships in this area?
14. What can be done in order to sustain a peaceful cohabitation among the youth and among their communities?

Appendix G2: Muongozo Wa Majadiliano ya Vikundi [Kiswahili version]



Mwanafunzi: Filipo SEMIVUMBI BANZI

Nambari: 22064687

IREC 296/22

Wasimamizi: G.T. Harris, PhD na DK Chrysostome Kiyala

Mada: Kupunguza unyanyasaji wa vijana. Mradi wa hatua za utafiti huko Masisi, Jamhuri ya Kidemokrasia ya Kongo

Siku naTarehe:

Mda/Saa:

Idadi ya walio huzuriya:

Nitajitambulisha kwanza kwa waliyo mahali pa maongezi kiisha nitaomba kila mmoja ajitambulishe. Baadaye nitawaeleza mpangilio wa maongezi na umuhimu wa maongezi hayo. Nitawajulisha kama mimi ni mwanafunzi mtafiti wachuo kikuu yaani univasiti ya Durban katika Afrika yakusini. Nitawajulisha piya kicwa cha utafiti wangu yaani “kupunguza vurugu kati ya vijana katika mtaa wa Masisi, utafiti wa hatuwa shirikishi katika Jamhuri ya kidemokrasia ya Congo”. Nitawajulisha niya yangu katika utafiti huo yaani kuelewa zaidi kisa kya ugonvi katika mtaa wa Masisi na namna gani wakaaji wenyewe wanaweza kudumisha amani na kurudisha uhusiyano mwema naushirikiano katiyao ao kati ya makabila mbali mbali. Nitawahakikishia kama kila chochote kitakacho rekodiwa ama picha zote zita hifadhiwa madhubuti nazitalindwa nami mwenyewe. Maswali na mada zinazopashwa

kujadiliwa vita kuwa kwenyi lugha ya Kiswahili ikiwa ndiyo lughainayotumiwanawengimahali pa utafiti. Watuwengihawaelewikifaransa.

Mada zinazopashwakujadiliwa

Mada ya 1 (Kiingiliyo) Uhusianoupo je katiyajamiizinaoishikatikamtaawa Masisi kufwatananavuruguzinazoendeleakwamdarefu? (Maelezokuhusumahali pa utafitinakuhusumajadilianokatikajamii)

Uhusianouko je katiyamakabilayanaoishi Masisi?

Watuwanamaoniganikuhusuuhusianohuu?

Kuna shughuligani za jamiikatikamtaahuo?

Madaya 2: Ni ginsiganiwavijanawanavyohusikakatikamigogoronavurugu? (kuhusumigogoronavurugu)

Ni ninisababunakiwango cha migogoronavurugukatikamtaawa Masisi?

Migogoronavuruguhizo zina matokeoganikwenyiuhusianokatiyajamiikatikamtaawa Masisi? Wavijanawanajihusishavipikatikamigogoronavuruguhizo?

Ni kwaninivijanawanapendakubaguwanawaokwawao?

Swali la ubaguwajikatiyamakabilainaonekana je katiyawavijana?

Ni ginsiganijinsiainashirikishwakatikavurugu (swalilolotekuhusujinsiakatikavurugunamigogoro)?

Madaya 3: Ni ainaganiyahatua za mabadilikoyamigogorozilizotumiwakatikamtaawa Masisi nazimefaulunamnagani?

Ni hatuaganizilizochukuliwailikupunguzamigogoronavurugu? Zimefaulunamnagani?

Ni hatuaganizinazoweza kuchukuliwanangazizotezinazohusikanamigogoro (tanggungazi za chinihadingazi za juu)

ilikupunguzavurugukatiyavijanana jamiizaonapiyakupunguzakujihusishakwavijanakatikamigogoro? Kwa mda mfupi na kwa mda mrefu? (Utafiti wa hatua shirikishi)

*Kuna wazo lolote unalo wezakuongezeyakwa yale
uliyoelezakuhusukuboreshauhusiyanokatikaupandehuu?*

*Ni hatuwa gani zaweza kuchukuliwa ili kukamilisha utulivu wa amani inayo dumu katiya
vijana nakati ya jamii zao?*

Appendix H1: Consent Letter



CONSENT

Full Title of the Study: “Reducing Youth Violence. An Action Research Project in Masisi, DR Congo”

Names of Researcher: Philippe SEMIVUMBI BANZI

IREC 296/22

Statement of Agreement to Participate in the Study:

☐ I hereby confirm that I have been informed by the researcher, Philippe SEMIVUMBI BANZI, about the nature, conduct, benefits and risks of this study -Research

Ethics Clearance Number: IREC 296/22

☐ I have also received, read and understood the above written information (Participant Letter of Information) regarding the study.

☐ I am aware that the results of the study, including personal details regarding my sex, age, date of birth, initials and diagnosis will be anonymously processed into a study report.

☐ In view of the requirements of research, I agree that the data collected during this study can be processed in a computerised system by the researcher.

☐ I may, at any stage, without prejudice, withdraw my consent and participation in the study.

☐ I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions and (of my own free will) declare myself prepared to participate in the study.

☐

I understand that significant new findings developed during the course of this research which may relate to my participation will be made available to me.

Full Name of Participant Date Time Signature / Right

Thumbprint

I, Philippe SEMIVUMBI BANZI, herewith confirm that the above participant has been informed about the nature, conduct and risks of the above study.

Philippe SEMIVUMBI BANZI

Full Name of Researcher Date Signature

Full Name of Witness (If applicable) Date Signature

Full Name of Legal Guardian (If applicable) Date Signature

Appendix H2: Consent Letter [French Translation]



ACCORD

Sujet de Recherche : « Réduire la Violence Juvenile. Un Projet de Recherche Action dans Masisi, RD Congo »

Noms du Chercheur : Philippe SEMIVUMBI BANZI

IREC 296/22

Consentement de participer à l'étude en cours :

☐ *Je soussigné, confirme avoir été informé par le chercheur, Philippe SEMIVUMBI BANZI, au sujet de la nature, de la conduite, des avantages et des risques de cette étude- Numéro d'autorisation du bureau d'éthique : IREC 296/22*

☐ *J'ai reçu, lu et compris les informations ci-dessus par écrit (à travers la lettre d'information au Participant) au sujet de l'étude.*

☐ *Je suis informé (e) que les résultats de cette étude, y compris les détails personnels concernant mon sexe, âge, date de naissance, initiaux et autres identifiants seront utilisés de façon anonyme dans le rapport final de l'étude.*

☐ *Selon les exigences de la recherche, je consens à ce que les données récoltées dans le cadre de cette étude soient utilisées par le chercheur dans un système informatisé.*

☐ *Je pourrais à tout moment et sans préjudice aucune, retirer mon consentement et me retirer de la participation dans cette étude.*

☐ *J'ai eu assez de temps de poser des questions et (demon propre gré) me suis déclarée prêt(e) à participer à cette étude.*

☐ *Je suis informé (e) que tout nouvel élément trouvé pendant cette étude et qui aurait des liens avec ma participation me sera communiqué.*

Nom du/de la participant(e)

Date/Heure

Signature

Pouce droit

Je soussigné, Philippe SEMIVUMBI BANZI, confirme que le participant ci-haut nommé a été suffisamment informé de la nature, la conduit ainsi que les risqué de cette recherche.

Philippe SEMIVUMBI BANZI

Noms du Chercheur Date Signature

Appendix H3: Consent Letter [Kiswahili Translation]: *Fomu Ya Idhini*



Fomu ya Idhini

Kichwa cha utafiti : KupunguzavurugukatiyavijanakatikamtaawaMasisi, utafitiwahuwashirikishatikaJamhuriyakidemokrasiaya Congo.

MajinayaMtafiti: Filipo SEMIVUMBI BANZI

IREC 296/22

Makubaliyanokwakushirikikwenyikutafitihuu:

NinakubalikamanimapatamaelezokutokakwaBw. Banzi Semivumbi Filipo kuhusuhati, mwenendo, faidanahatari za utafitihuu, kufwatananamaelezonatamaduniyanayoambatananautafitikwenyichuokikuu cha Durban, nambari:

Nimepatananikasomamaelezo yote kuhusuutafitinanikayaelewanakuyakubalikupitiyakibaruwakwawashirikikuhusuutafitihuu.

Ninauhakikakamamajibukutokakwenyikutafitinaalamazotekuhusukutambulikakwangu, kuhusuaina, umri, tareheyakuzaliwa, jinavitachungwakwasirinahavitaonekanakwenyikutafitihuu.

Kufwatananamapashwayautafiti, nakubalikamamaelezo yote kutokananautafitihuyyanawezatumiwakwenyitarakilishi.

Piya, nawezakujiondowakwenyikutafitikwahiyariyangunabilakufwatiliwa.

*Nimepewa mdawaku ulizama swalinanika pewa maelezo kamilikuhusu utafiti. Kwa
hiyari yangunakubalikushirikikwenyi utafitihuu.*

Nimeelewa kamanita julishwa matokeo mapya kutoka kwenyi utafitihuu.

Majinaya anayeagana Tarehe Wakati Sahihi

*Mimi, Filipino Semivumbi BANZI nahakikishakamaanaye apaame julishwa kamilikuhusu aina,
mwenendona hatari za utafitihuu.*

Majinaya Mtafiti Tarehe Sahihi

Filipo SEMIVUMBI BANZI _____

Appendix I: Observation Guide



Researcher : Philippe Semivumbi Banzi

Number : 22064687 IREC 296/22

DUT- PUBL ADM-PEACE STUDIES		
OBSERVATION GUIDE		
STUDENT: Philippe S BANZI, 22064687		
Supervisor: Dr Jean Chrysostome K. Kiyala		
Co-supervisor: Geoffrey T. Harris		
Research Topic: Reducing Youth Violence. An Action Research Project in Masisi, DR Congo		
Day and Date		
Place	Kitchanga Kibarizo Nyamitaba-Nyakariba ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Rubaya ☐	
Timing of observation		
Descriptive notes	Reflective notes	Observations
Social interaction		

Nature of relationships		
Who are the social key figures and why? (Youth, elders, men, women)		People who attract most the other
Language and other signs (Body language)		
Physical environment where people live		
Meeting places		What are the most visited or busy places, by who and why?
Daily activities		

Appendix J1: Interview Guide

Interview Guide



Candidate : Philippe Semivumbi Banzi

Studentnumber : 22064687

Supervisor : Prof Geoffrey Thomas Harris

Research Topic: Reducing Youth Violence. An Action Research Project in Masisi, DR Congo.

Date:

Time: (Should not exceed 45 minutes) (From.....to.....)

Age: between

–18–22

–23–27

–28–32

–33 and above

I will start by introducing myself and the purpose of conducting the interview. I will thank the participants to avail themselves and being part of the study. I will then outline the research procedure; the ethical considerations and seek permission to use the tape recorder throughout the session. Respondents will be assured that tape will strictly be used by myself only and will be kept in a safe place thereafter. Questions will be. Types of data needed in this study:

OBJECTIVE 1: The causes, nature, extent and consequences of Conflicts involving the youth.

Facts about the situation in Masisi (Number of people dying because of violence, intercommunity clashes, youth movements, displacements, destructions, etc)

What the interviewee knows: (What types of violence are common in Masisi and in your area? Who are the youth leaders or mastermind in the violence, conflicts...)

Facts about past events: (What do you personally perceive to be the source of the conflict and violence?)

Feelings (How did you feel/or do you feel when witnessing a violent situation? What are the consequences of violence in this area?)

Attitudes or opinions: (What do you think about youth involvement in conflicts and violence in this area?)

Beliefs (What are your views on non-violent methods in solving violent conflicts in Masisi and in your area? What kind of support is offered by community members, leaders and NGOs to reduce violence in this area? How do you find this support or initiative? What do you suggest can be done by all stakeholders (Community members, parents, NGOs management, National leaders) to reduce violence among the youth and the communities at large?)

Appendix J2: Interview Guide

Dear respondent,

I am a postgraduate student from Durban University of Technology carrying out a research on “Reducing Youth Violence. An Action Research Project in Masisi, DR Congo”.

The overall purpose of my study is to explore and reduce the causes of endless violence attracting the youth. Specifically, using qualitative data within a participatory action research approach, the objectives of this study are: to explore the nature, extent, causes and consequences of conflicts and violence in Masisi; to assess the strategies or initiatives put in place for conflict transformation in Masisi and in the region; to come up with strategies and implement them to reduce prejudice, stereotypes and misunderstanding among the youth and the communities using a PAR design; to evaluate the short term outcomes of the intervention.

I request your participation by providing information as per the questions. All information given will be treated with confidentiality and will only be used for academic purposes.

Section 1. Demographic Information

Name: (Optional?)

Age (Give the range) (Optional)

–18–22

–23–27

–28–32

–33 and above

Marital Status.....

Profession :

OBJECTIVES	QUESTIONS	COMMENTS
OBJECTIVE 1: to explore the nature, extent, causes and consequences of conflicts and violence in Masisi	How are the intercommunity relationships in Masisi? Explain. What are the causes of continuous violence in this area? To what extent would you say that there is social discrimination in Masisi or in the area where you live? If there is social discrimination in this area, in what form does it occur, which are the most common forms of social discrimination (stereotype, exclusion...)? Who are the actors in violence and conflicts in Masisi? What are the consequences of the protracted conflicts and violence in this area?	
OBJECTIVE 2: to assess the current strategies or initiatives put in place for conflict transformation in Masisi and in the region	What has been done so far to mitigate violence or solve conflicts? How effective were they? What can be done by all stakeholders (from the grassroots to the high level of leadership) to reduce violence among the youth and the communities and reduce youth involvement in conflicts? In short term and in the long	

	term ? (PAR)	
OBJECTIVE 3: Using a PAR design, to come up with strategies and implement them to reduce prejudice, stereotypes and misunderstanding among the youth and their communities	6. What can be done in order to sustain a peaceful cohabitation among the youth and among their communities? 7. Is there anything else you would like to talk about to improve relationships in this area?	
OBJECTIVE 4: To evaluate the short-term outcomes of the intervention		See Objective 2, Question 7 (What has been done and how efficient it was?)

Appendix K1: Focus Group Discussion Guide



Researcher: Philippe Semivumbi BANZI

Student number: 22064687 IREC 296/22

Supervisor: Prof Geoffrey Thomas Harris

Research Topic: Reducing Youth Violence. An Action Research Project in Masisi, DR Congo

Day & Date:

Time:

Number of participants:

I will start by introducing myself, then the participants will also introduce themselves. I will then state the purpose of the focus group discussion. I will thank the participants for their availability and will outline the discussion procedure: the ethical considerations and seek for permission to record or to take photographs throughout the session. Participants will be assured that all the recorded materials or photographs will be strictly used by the researcher only and will be kept in a safe place only accessible by him. The topic and questions will be formulated in Kiswahili. This is one of the major languages used in the research area; most people are not conversant with French.

Themes to discuss

1. Theme 1 (Probe questions) How are the intercommunity relations in comparison to the latent conflicts in Masisi? (About the research area and sociocultural and ethnic relationships)

How are the interrelation situations in Masisi?

How are people's views based on these relationships?

Do people have community activities that they undertake together?

2. Theme 2: How are the youth involved in these conflicts? (About Conflicts and violence)

What are the causes and the extent of conflicts and violence in Masisi?

What effects had the conflicts had on the interrelations in Masisi and how are the youth involved in those conflicts?

Why do the youth prefer to take discriminatory positions towards each other?

How are the issues of prejudice and exclusion among the communities and among the youth?

What and how are gender involvement or implications in the violence (any gendered dynamic involved in violence and conflicts)?

3. Theme 3: What types of conflicts transformation strategies have been applied in the area and how effective they were?

What has been done so far to mitigate or solve conflicts and violence? How effective were they?

What can be done by all stakeholders (from the grassroots to the high level of leadership) to reduce violence among the youth and the communities and reduce youth involvement in conflicts? In short term and in the long term? (PAR)

Is there anything else you would like to talk about to improve the relationships in this area?

What can be done in order to sustain a peaceful cohabitation among the youth and among their communities?

Appendix K2: Mada Ya Majadiliyano [Kiswahili version]



Mwanafunzi: Philippe Semivumbi Banzi

Nambari: 22064687 IREC 296/22

Msimamizi: Mwalimu Geoffrey Thomas Harris

Kicwa cha utafiti: Kupunguzavurugukatiyavijanakatikamtaawa Masisi, utafitiwahatuwashirikishikatikaJamhuriyakidemokrasiaya Congo.

Siku natarehe:

Mda/Saa:

Nitajitambulisha kwanza kwa waliyo mahali pa maongezi kiisha nitamuomba kilammojakujitambulisha. Baadaye nitawaeleza mpangilio wa maongezi na umuhimu wa maongezi hayo. Nitawajulishakamamiminimwanafunzimtafitiwachuokikuuyaaniunivasitiya Durban katika Afrika yakusiniza. Nitawajulishapiyakicwa cha utafitiwanguyaani “kupunguzavurugukatiyavijanakatikamtaawa Masisi, utafitiwahatuwashirikishikatikaJamhuriyakidemokrasiaya Congo. Nitawajulishaniyayangukatika utafitihuoyaanikuelewazaidikisakyaugonvikatika Masisi nanamnaganiwakaajiweyewewanawezakudumishaamaninakurudishauhusiyanomwemakatiya oaokati ya makabila mbali mbali.

Maswali:

- 1. Ni kipikisa cha vuruguna vita katikamtaahuuwa Masisi? Causes za conflitsna violence katika mtaa huu?*
- 2. Waweza je kufasiriyaubaguzikatiyawakaajiwa Masisi? Ubaguzihuowaonekana je?*

2. *Ni vipi ubaguzi umeletamizoa na migo goroka katika mtaawa Masisi?*
3. *Ni hatu waganizi lizo chukuliwa likupunguza vuruguna migo goroka ama vita katika Masisi? Hatu wahizi zime saidi ya je?*
4. *Ni kitu gani kinaweza kufanyika ili mizozo, ugomvina vita vimalizike katika mtaawa Masisi?*
5. *Ni kitu gani kinaweza kufanyika ili kuwepo husi yano bora kati ya wakaaji wa Masisi hasa waviyana? Wewe binafsi unawazawaweza je kuhusika katika mpangowote wakupunguza mizozo, ugomvina vita katika Masisi?*
6. *Unafikiri kuna kitu kingine ungaliongezeyakwa yote hayauliosema?*

Appendix K3: Muongozo wa Majadiliyo ya Vikundi [Kiswahili version]



Mwanafunzi :Filipo Semivumbi BANZI

Nambari : 22064687

Msimamizi :Mwalimu Geoffrey Thomas Harris

Kichwacautafiti :KupunguzavurugukatiyavijanakatikamtaawaMasisi.

UtafitiwahatuwashirikishikatikaJamhuriyakidemokrasiaya Congo.

Siku naTarehe:

Mda/Saa:

Waliohuzuriya:

*Nitajitambulisha kwanza kwa waliyo mahali pa maongezi kiisha nitaomba kila mmoja
ajitambulishe. Baadaye nitawaeleza mpangilio wa maongezi na umuhimu wa maongezi hayo.*

*Nitawajulishakamamiminimwanafunzimtafitiwachuokikuuyaaniunivasitiya Durban katika
Afrika yakusini. Nitawajulishapiyakicwa cha*

utafitiwanguyaani “kupunguzavurugukatiyavijanakatikamtaawa Masisi,

utafitiwahatuwashirikishikatikaJamhuriyakidemokrasiaya Congo”.

*Nitawajulishaniyayangukatika utafiti huoyaanikuelewazaidikisakyaugonvikatikamtaawa
Masisi*

*nanamnaganiwakaajiweyewewanawezakudumishaamaninakurudishauhusiyanomwemanaush
irikianokatiyaoao kata yamakabilambalimbali.*

Nitawahakikishiakamakilachochotekitakachorekodiwa ama

pichazotezitatihifadhiwamadhubinazitalindwa name mwenyewe.

Maswalinamadazinazopashwakujadiliwavitakuwakwenyilughaya

Kiswahili

ikiwandiylughainayotumiwanawengimahali pa utafiti. Watuwengihawaelewikifaransa.

Mada zinazopashwakujadiliwa (Themes za kudiscuter)

1. Mada ya 1/Theme ya 1 (Kiingiliyo) Uhusianoupo je kati ya jamii zinazoishi katika mtaa wa Masisi upande huu kufwatana na vuruguzinlizokuwahukukwamdarefu? (Maelezokuhusumahalituliponakuhusumajadilianokatikajamii)

Uhusianouko je katiyamakabilayanaoishihuku?

Watuwanamaoniganikuhusiuhusianohuu?

Kuna shughuligani za jamiikatikamtaahuo? (Ma activites communautaires que les gens font ensemble)

2. Mada ya 2/Themeya2: Ni ginsiganiwavijanawanahusikakatikamigogoro na vurugu? (Kuhusumigogoro na vurugu) (ma Conflits na Violences)

Sababugani nakiwangochamigogoro na vurugukatikaupandehuu?

Migogoro na vuruguhizozinamatokeoganikwenyiuhusianokatijajamiikatikamtaahuu? Wavijanawanajihusijavipikatikamigogoro na vuruguhizo? (Consequences des conflits et violences)

Ni kwaninivijanawanapendakubaguwanawaokwawao?

Swali la ubaguwajikatiyamakabilainaonekana je katiyawavijana?

Ni ginsiganijinsinashirikishwakatikavurugu(swalilolotekuhusujinsiakatikavurugu na migogoro)? (Question de GENRE/Filles ou femmes...)

3. Mada ya 3/Themeya3: Ni ainaganiyahatuazamabadilikoyamigogorozilizotumiwakatikamtaawaMasisi na zimefaulunamnagani?

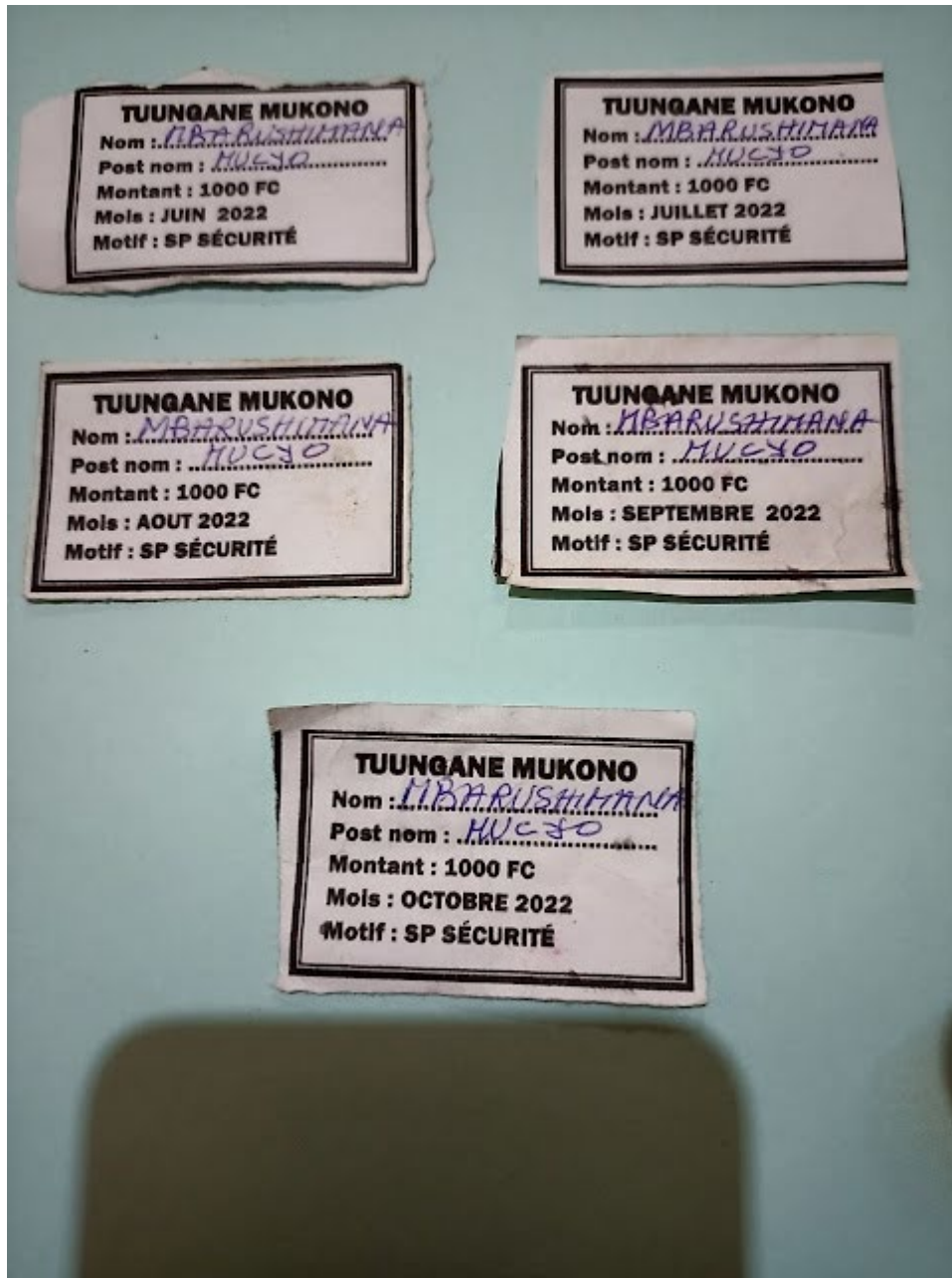
Ni hatuaganizilizochukuliwailikupunguzamigogoro na vurugu? Zimefaulunamnagani?

Ni hatuaganizinazoweza kuchukuliwa na ngazizotezinazohusika na migogoro (tngungazizachini hadingazizajuu) ilikupunguzivurugukati yavijana na jamiizao na piyakupunguzikujihusishakwavijana katika migogoro ? Kwamdamfupi na kwamdamrefu ? (Utafiti wa hatuashirikishi)

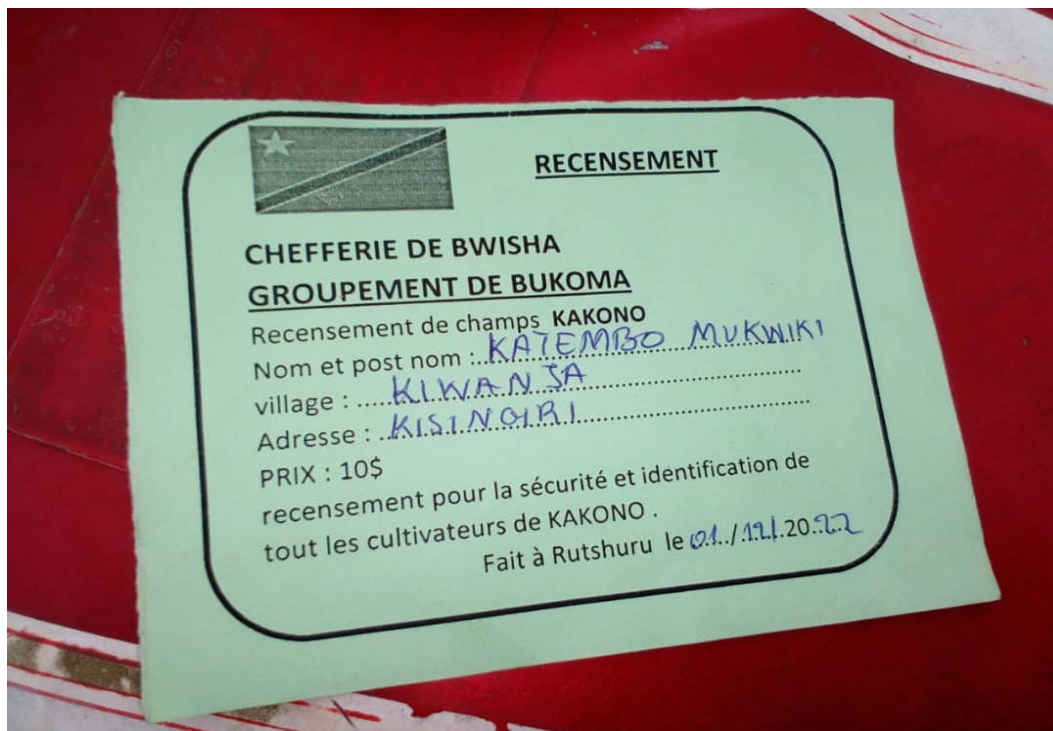
Kuna wazolote unaloweza kuongezeyakwayale uliyoeleza kuhusikuboresha uhusiyanoka upande huu ?

Ni hatuwa gani zaweza kuchukuliwa ili kukamilisha utulivu waamani inayodumu kati ya vijana na kati ya jamii zao ?

Appendix L: Sample of the Monthly Receipt Issued by an Armed Group in Masisi (June 2022 To October 2022)



Appendix M: A Sample of a Receipt Issued by the M23 (December 2022)



RECENSEMENT

CHEFFERIE DE BWISHA
GROUPEMENT DE BUKOMA

Recensement de champs KAKONO
Nom et post nom : KATEMBO MUKWIKI
village : KIWANJA
Adresse : KISINGIRI

PRIX : 10\$
recensement pour la sécurité et identification de
tout les cultivateurs de KAKONO .
Fait à Rutshuru le 01./12/2022

Appendix N: Turnitin Report

16%	14%	9%	8%
SIMILARITY INDEX	INTERNET SOURCES	PUBLICATIONS	STUDENT PAPERS
PRIMARY SOURCES			
1	vdoc.pub Internet Source		1%
2	Submitted to Durban University of Technology Student Paper		1%
3	professorbellreadings.files.wordpress.com Internet Source		<1%
4	researchspace.ukzn.ac.za Internet Source		<1%
5	ebin.pub Internet Source		<1%
6	core.ac.uk Internet Source		<1%

3 August 2024

Appendix O: Confirmation of Professional Editing



Blue Diamonds Professional Editing Services (Pty) Ltd

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Email: jacquibaumgardt@gmail.com

Website: www.jaybe9.wixsite.com/bluediamondsediting

16 May 2024

Declaration of editing

Reducing Youth Violence: An Action Research Project in Masisi, The Democratic Republic of Congo
by
Philippe Semivumbi Banzi

I declare that I have edited and proofread this thesis. My involvement was restricted to language usage and spelling, completeness and consistency. I did no structural re-writing of the content.

I am qualified to have done such editing, being in possession of a Bachelor's degree with a major in English, having taught English to matriculation, and having a Certificate in Copy Editing from the University of Cape Town. I have edited more than 500 Masters and Doctoral theses, as well as articles, books and reports.

As the copy editor, I am not responsible for detecting, or removing, passages in the document that closely resemble other texts and could thus be viewed as plagiarism. I am not accountable for any changes made to this document by the author or any other party subsequent to the date of this declaration.

Sincerely,

Dr J Baumgardt
UNISA: D. Ed. Education Management
University of Cape Town: Certificate in Copy Editing
University of Cape Town: Certificate in Corporate Coaching



Jacqui Baumgardt
Full Member

Membership number: BAUF001
Membership year: March 2024 to February 2025

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www.editors.org.za



Blue Diamonds Professional Services (Pty) Ltd (Registration Number 2014/092365/07)
Sole Director: J Baumgardt

Appendix P: Ethical Clearance

29 August 2023

Mr B S Philippe
P.O Box 50 Goma
North-Kivu Province
DR Congo

Dear Mr Philippe

Reducing Youth Violence. An Action Research Project in Masisi, Democratic Republic of Congo

Ethics Clearance Number: IREC 295/22

The DUT-Institutional Research Ethics Committee acknowledges receipt of your notification regarding the piloting of your data collection tool.

Kindly ensure that participants used for the pilot study are not part of the main study.

In addition, the DUT-IREC acknowledges receipt of your gatekeeper permission letters.

Please note that **FULL APPROVAL** is granted to your research proposal. You may proceed with data collection.

Any adverse events [serious or minor] which occur in connection with this study and/or which may alter its ethical consideration must be reported to the DUT-IREC according to the DUT-IREC SOP's.

Please note that any deviations from the approved proposal require the approval of the DUT-IREC as outlined in the DUT-IREC SOP's.

It is compulsory for a student or researcher to apply for recertification on an annual basis. The failure to do so will result in withdrawal of ethics clearance. It is the responsibility of the researcher and the supervisor to apply for recertification.

Please note that you are required to submit a Notification of Completion of Study form together with an abstract to the DUT-IREC office on completion of your study.

Yours Sincerely

Prof J K Adam
Chairperson: DUT-IREC

Appendix Q: Proof of registration 2024



PROOF OF REGISTRATION To Whom It May Concern

19-Feb-2024

It is hereby confirmed that the under mentioned person is a registered student at DURBAN UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY.

Surname:	PHILIPPE	First Names:	BANZI SEMIVUMBI
Student Number:	22064687	Qualification:	DPPST1 D PHIL MAN SCIENCES (PUB ADM -PCE STD)
Registration Year:	2024	Offering Type:	Durban Campus Full-time
Block:	POST-GRAD ANNUAL REGISTRATIONS	Period of Study:	study period 5
Department:	PUBLIC MNGT AND ECONOMICS	Faculty:	FACULTY OF MANAGEMENT SCIENCES

Subject	Description	PreReq/Exp	Block	Class Group	Offering Type	Exam Year	Exam Month	Cancel	Amount
	Registration Fees/Levies								3105.00
	P0 POST-GRAD ANNUAL REGISTRATIONS								
RSPM651	RESEARCH (5TH REGISTRATION)	P0	A	D1		2024	11	N	0.00
Subtotal:									3105.00
Total:									3105.00

* Subjects with Requisites will be cancelled if the requisite rules are not met in mid-year exams. Refer to Department handbook.

Outstanding Balance: 9012.00

Please verify and rectify the above registration details with the Faculty Office to avoid academic and financial penalties before the dates published in the General handbook.

Faculty Officer

Appendix R: The study process

#	Year/ date	Activities	Comments
2017–2019			
1.	June-July 2019	-Consultant, USAID/MSI, IRC, Int'l Alert. -Project: Solution pour la paix et le relèvement-Amani kwamaendeleo (Solution for peace and development-Peace for development) -7 territories in South Kivu and North Kivu	Use the PAR and the ToC (To get an idea of these two tools of research)
2021			
2.	February 2021	-Farming activities at Bulengo -Programme: “Remettons-nous au travail des aujourd’hui” (Back-to-work-Programme) -Farming activities (growing spinach)	15 young people (18–35 years) took part –8 Nande, 1 Tutsi, 1 Shi, 4 Hutu and 1 Kumu
3.	May 2021	Activities at La Sapiencia Catholic University of Goma -Peace circle	25 university students took part -Weekly meetings of Tuesdays
4.	23 rd June	Conflict scan at Kamuronza/Masisi	28 participants Community leaders
	26 th July	Conflict scan at Mupfuni/Karuba	25 participants
5.	4 th August	Conflict scan at Karuba/Masisi	25 participants
6.	5 th August	Restitution at Mupfunyi/Karuba	25 participants
7.	6 th August	Restitution at Mupfunyi Shanga	26 participants
8.	29 th September	Field works at Mupfunyi Karuba	25 participants
9.	26 October	Visit to Kitchanga -First meeting with the youths -First initiative : Jeunes actifs de Masisi (Masisi Active Youths)	23 participants
10.	November	-Consultant, -Mercy Corps -Development activities in Kamuronza and	An opportunity to reach some places in Masisi.

#	Year/ date	Activities	Comments
		Mupfunyi Shanga	
11.	December	-Consultant -WFP -Conflicts scan and resilience in Masisi (Mugunga, Lac vert, Kamuronza, Kirotshe and Bweremana)	An opportunity to reach some places in Masisi
2022			
12	January	-Kitchanga -Meeting with the youth -Initiation of “Association des jeunes pour la promotion de l’Agriculture, AJPA”	24 young people (19 males and 5 females)
	January	-Nyakariba Secondary School -Meeting with students and their teachers -Peace circle (Meetings on Tuesdays)	12 students (Grade 5 and 6) and 15 teachers
2023			
13.	January - October	Data collection and compilation	