

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background

Global inequality is one of the most complicated dominant challenge in the existence of international system. Inequality occurs around the globe through various scope such as political, economic, social, and cultural. Political inequality can be described as an unequal opportunity towards political right or to affect the policy decision. However, the form of social and cultural inequality is also very familiar in the manifestation of racism, gender inequality, and discrimination towards the disabled and helpless groups. In this thesis, I want to highlight the economic inequality that refers to the lack of ability to fulfill basic needs and affect the quality of human's quality of life.

Economic inequality between the wealthy groups and less sufficient groups are found not only in developing states, but also in developed states – even greater gap. The reveals of Oxfam's report in World Economic Forum 2020 shows ironic facts that the wealth of 2.153 billionaires (richest people in the world) are equal to the wealth of 60% world population.<sup>1</sup> The least advantage groups from this economic condition are girls and women who suffer from unpaid 'households work' that keeps the society going and cannot enjoy the reward of those energy-taker works.<sup>2</sup> Poverty in general can be defined as the condition of people that lives

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<sup>1</sup> "World's billionaires have more wealth than 4.6 billion people," Oxfam International, January 20, 2020, <https://www.oxfam.org/en/press-releases/worlds-billionaires-have-more-wealth-46-billion-people>

<sup>2</sup> Oxfam International, "World's billionaires."

under the minimum borderline or lacking their basic needs such as food, nutrition, and clothing from other population.<sup>3</sup> But more than that, the lack quality of living in terms of education, health, and self-development can also be indicated with poverty. According to World Bank, the global poverty rate in 2015 is 735 million people who live under \$ 1.90 (international poverty threshold) per day.<sup>4</sup> In Indonesia, the latest data of 2019 showed that there were 25.14 million people or equal to 9.41% of the population who suffered under national poverty threshold which is around 1.9 million rupiah per month.<sup>5</sup>

In liberal perspective, inequality is a collective conflict caused by the lack of cooperation and openness among international actors that only can be addressed through collective actions. As optimistic as it is, liberals believe that the active participation in democracy and open economic system can help to create interconnectedness among states and reduce inequality.<sup>6</sup> Liberals always aim for positive-sum game where both parties will benefit even though asymmetrically which means developed countries will help transfer their capital, knowledge, technology to the developing countries with the help of international organizations or other non-state actors.<sup>7</sup> The important highlight on human from a liberal point

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<sup>3</sup> "Poverty," Encyclopaedia Britannica, August 25, 2006, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/poverty>

<sup>4</sup> "Poverty," The World Bank, accessed February 20, 2020, <http://povertydata.worldbank.org/Poverty/Home>.

<sup>5</sup> "Persentase Penduduk Miskin Maret 2019 Sebesar 9,41 Persen," Badan Pusat Statistik, July 15, 2019, <https://www.bps.go.id/pressrelease/2019/07/15/1629/persentase-penduduk-miskin-maret-2019-sebesar-9-41-persen.html>.

<sup>6</sup> Scott Burchill, *Theories of International Relations*, 3rd ed. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 59.

<sup>7</sup> Theodore H. Cohn, *Global Political Economy*, 6th ed. (United States: Pearson Education, 2012), 94.

of view encourages individuals to be actively engaged in becoming the agent of change because there is goodness in human's heart and that human inalienable rights should be protected from all inequality. Liberals value the cooperation between states and non-states actors including multi-national corporations, international non-profit organizations, religious groups, and other components of civil society.

As the world's largest religious group, Christianity through its churches and non-profit organizations, indicate a significant impact on the world development.<sup>8</sup> Many have seen that religious driven charity or community development is more effective because it transforms holistically (not just spiritually, but also economically and wellbeing) based on their moral values; loving neighborhoods. For example, International Care Ministries in Philippines, a Protestant organization concerning on ultra-poverty society, collaborate with local pastors to regularly train and assist thousands of households to get education, increased income, and wellbeing. Their programs succeed to increase the household income by 106%, decrease serious illness/health concern by 28%, and increase spiritual and mental development by 43%.<sup>9</sup> In United Kingdom, Church Action on Poverty partnering up with 360 churches to seek justice for the poor through campaigns, petition, programs, and give food to more than 6.500 people in UK.<sup>10</sup> Even the United

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<sup>8</sup>Conrad Hackett and David Mcclendon, "Christians Remain World's Largest Religious Group, but They Are Declining in Europe," Pew Research Center, April 25, 2017, <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2017/04/05/christians-remain-worlds-largest-religious-group-but-they-are-declining-in-europe/>.

<sup>9</sup> "Our Work," International Care Ministries, accessed September 14, 2020, <https://www.caremin.com>.

<sup>10</sup> "What We Do," Church Action on Poverty, accessed September 14, 2020, <https://www.church-poverty.org.uk/what-we-do/>.

Nations and World Bank hold special conferences to discuss about poverty with religious groups and leaders because the significant impacts of Christian churches and charity organizations are effective to help the reduction of poverty.

In the dynamic of Indonesia's large diversity, Christianity holds an acknowledgeable portion as the second largest religious group with 23,5 million people.<sup>11</sup> The percentage of Christians in Indonesia is mainly located in West Papua, Kalimantan, and North Sulawesi.<sup>12</sup> Although conflicts among religion in Indonesia do still exist, especially between Moslems and Christians, the Christians' contribution and representativeness keep increasing such as in government institutions, increasing number of large churches, and other developmental activities. For example, in the current COVID-19 pandemic situation, the government distributes the social assistance for the poor through churches and charity groups.<sup>13</sup> Given the data above about condition of Indonesian citizen living in poverty and the growing Christianity in a moderate Indonesian society, the eagerness of Jesus' believers to fulfill their calling and become the witness of God's glory becomes one hope to the future of inequality reduction.

To give a clear image of Christian organization's involvement in international development activities, this research will examine the performance of Wahana Visi Indonesia as a Christian humanitarian organization that has been operating since 1963 to help poor people and those who suffer from disasters by

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<sup>11</sup> "Christianity in Indonesia," Indonesia Investments, accessed September 15, 2020, <https://www.indonesia-investments.com/culture/religion/christianity/item249>.

<sup>12</sup> Indonesia Investments, "Christianity."

<sup>13</sup> OHH Dayasos, "Bansos Sembako Presiden Jangkau Komunitas Keagamaan Terdampak Covid-19," Kementerian Sosial Republik Indonesia, May 10, 2020, <https://kemsos.go.id/bansos-sembako-presiden-jangkau-komunitas-keagamaan-terdampak-covid-19>.

looking at how their programs support the development and how their religious identity contributes to the success of their mission in the rural areas.<sup>14</sup> Wahana Visi Indonesia is the subsidiary of World Vision International that has been nominated as the world's largest Christian humanitarian organization.<sup>15</sup> In observing Wahana Visi Indonesia's performance, this research will interpret it with one of the Christian international development concept: transformational development.

Collective actions have been taken by states, intergovernmental organizations, and nongovernmental organizations to reduce the poverty and achieve equal development globally. For instance, as the largest intergovernmental organizations, United Nations has determined Sustainable Development Goals for 2030 with the first goal is to eradicate poverty which requires coordinating and assisting member states to create better policies, and be committed to promote education through UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs.<sup>16</sup> The presence of the largest development bank, The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development by World Bank, aims to provide financial solutions including loans, knowledge sharing, and technical assistance for middle and low income countries to help them fight their poverty problems.<sup>17</sup> The progress has been clear, the awareness has been spread, but there are still a lot of works to do for this equalization. The role of non-state actors such as businesses and NGOs (including

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<sup>14</sup> "Our Vision and Values: Life in All Its Fullness", World Vision, Accessed February 23, 2020, <https://www.wvi.org/about-us/our-vision-and-values>

<sup>15</sup> David P. King, "World Vision: Religious Identity in the Discourse and Practice of Global Relief and Development," *The Review of Faith and International Affairs* (Fall 2011): 23.

<sup>16</sup> "Ending Poverty," United Nations, Accessed February 21, 2020, <https://www.un.org/en/sections/issues-depth/poverty/>

<sup>17</sup> "International Bank for Reconstruction and Development," The World Bank, Accessed February 21, 2020, <https://www.worldbank.org/en/who-we-are/ibrd>

faith-based organizations) have increased significantly as the complementary of states to support social welfare.

Throughout the history of international development, many have realized that development does not only require material development per income or GDP percentage, but also intrinsic components behind it such as education, health, gender equality, and environment.<sup>18</sup> The concept of transformational development proposed in the book of Bryant L. Myers, ensures that the development is done holistically in terms of physical, mental, social, and spiritual. It emphasizes on human-centered transformation to achieve two goals: 1) to restore the sense of identity, dignity, and vocation of every human and 2) to restore peaceful relationship with God, oneself, others, and the environment.<sup>19</sup> As part of Christian approach to development, it believes that the sustainable holistic transformation based on human's heart, supported by the significant role of churches, civil society, and other actors, aims to achieve the peaceful state identic to the Kingdom of God where everyone can function as what God created them to fulfil.<sup>20</sup> It does not merely focused on the gospel or Christian Truth of salvation nor the physical material development, but also balance of both in order to encourage people to be fruitful, contribute to the society, and create peaceful community. Therefore, the explanation of Wahana Visi Indonesia based on their experience seen in the case of cultural revitalization in Alor, East Nusa Tenggara, is necessary to give an insight

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<sup>18</sup> Sakiko Fukuda Parr, "Theory and Policy in International Development: Human Development and Capability Approach and the Millennium Development Goals," *International Studies Review* 13 (2011): 126.

<sup>19</sup> Bryant L. Myers, *Walking with the Poor: Principles and Practices of Transformational Development*, 5th ed. (New York: Orbis Books, 2016), 177-83.

<sup>20</sup> Myers, *Walking with the Poor*, 175-99.

on the holistic development it has achieved in many Indonesia's community and encourage our optimist perspective on the hope of inequality reduction efforts. The case of cultural revitalization in Alor is chosen because it perfectly explains the success story of transformational development practiced in the society and the geography factor where Alor which located in Nusa Tenggara is known as the underdeveloped area in Indonesia.

The values foundation of Wahana Visi Indonesia is in line with transformational development, that is to promote the rights of children to live in its fullness and follow the example of Jesus as their Savior who loves everyone including the poorest and oppressed. They also become the platform for their donors not to just enjoy excessive lifestyle, but to give material and financial contribution for a greater purpose God has set. Therefore, in this research, I do not intend to promote a single religious faith in respect to other religious beliefs, but simply emphasize on how a Christian humanitarian organization with their values can give a great impact for the poor society and this explanation can raise reader's awareness to contribute to economic activities for the sake of the society.

## **1.2 Research Question**

Based on the explanation above, this research will explain: How Wahana Visi Indonesia as a Christian humanitarian organization can reduce poverty in the society in ways which are different from other NGOs?

## **1.3 Research Objective**

The objective of this research is to analyze the performance of Wahana Visi Indonesia as the direct involved actor through data and information on how they contribute on the poverty reduction efforts specifically in the cultural revitalization in Alor, NTT and how they are differ from any other NGO in promoting holistic community development.

## **1.4 Research Contribution**

The finding of this research will explain the effort of Wahana Visi Indonesia in resolving this global ongoing challenge as a Christian humanitarian organization that has successfully developed local communities in Indonesia. This research will also analyze how the Christian and humanitarian values of Wahana Visi affect their programs. The development efforts will be seen through the perspective of transformational development which incorporates sustainable development with the Christians values. Transformational development analysis that taking place in Indonesia will be the significance of this thesis. The explanation exposed in this research is expected to encourage all the readers and NGOs to keep working on reducing the inequality that still happens around us, because I believe that every contribution matters and collective contribution will result in greater impact and hope that we can make things better. Therefore, I dedicate this research not just for

International Relations scholars and academicians, but also general readers to be more aware and willing to improve inequality issues.

### **1.5 Structure of Thesis**

As written above, in this first chapter, I explained the general background behind this thesis by pointing out the poverty or economic inequality that occur in Indonesia, how this developmental issue becomes the concern of global actors, and also by raising the significance of transformational development theory in analyzing this issue. I highlight the significance of a Christians humanitarian organization in this case study: Wahana Visi Indonesia. In the second chapter, I will elaborate the knowledge foundation of this thesis through literature review and deeper theoretical explanation. The important concept that will be addressed are liberalism as the grand theory used in this thesis, global development, and faith-based organization on reducing global inequality.

Proceeding to the third part of this thesis, I will explain the methodology used to gain reliable data and information for this research. In the fourth chapter, I will combine the information gathered and analyzing it through the perspective of transformational development. We will look deeper into the inclusive sustainable development that Wahana Visi Indonesia has built in a specific case, cultural revitalization in Alor and its accomplishments. Lastly, I will conclude the result of this research and focus on how Christian humanitarian organization can help reduce the issue of poverty in Indonesia and give several recommendations for the future research.