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## *Faith Based Organizations as Instigators of Development: the contribution of Alfagems Secondary School in Morogoro (Tanzania)*

**Organizacje motywowane wiarą jako inicjatorzy wzrostu.  
Wkład szkoły średniej Alfagems w Morogoro (Tanzania)**

**Abstrakt:** Opracowanie stanowi próbę ukazania wpływu pierwiastka religijnego na wzrost, który dokonuje się w warunkach rozwijającego się kraju. Ze względu na liczne trudności w definiowaniu pola badawczego w punkcie wyjścia założono, że prorozwojową działalność Organizacji Motywowanych Wiarą (FBO) należy ujmować jako immanentną część społeczno-ekonomicznych procesów wzrostu. Wraz z wyznaczeniem określonego celu rozwojowego, członkowie określonej FBO zaczynają oddziaływać na swoich świeckich partnerów, a oddziaływania te pozostają pod stałym wpływem impulsów wyłaniających się z wnętrza sfery religijnej. Jak zostało to wykazane, działania te prowadzą do wymiernych celów (wyniki egzaminów państwowych).

**Słowa kluczowe:** rozwój i religia, Organizacje Motywowane Wiarą, szkoła średnia Alfagems, ks. Riccardo Ricconi, Tanzania

**Abstract:** The study attempts to capture the impact of the religious element upon the development of a developing country. Due to the range of difficulties in outlining the field of study, from the outset it was assumed that the pro-developmental activity of Faith-Based Organizations (FBO) is carried out as an immanent part of the socio-economic processes of development. As FBO insiders target a given

developmental goal, they start to act upon the secular proponents which are continually being reinforced from within the religious dimension. As indicated, this leads to measurable goals (the results of state examinations).

**Key words:** development and religion, Faith-Based Organizations, Alfagems Secondary School, Fr. Riccardo Ricconi, Tanzania

Periodic bursts of literature, regarding a specific area of interest, usually trigger a justified increase in interest. This is true in relation to this study, but only partially. Our initial interest emerged when having to face the various manifestations of the religious factor within the social conditions of a developing country. Thus, as we started the critical matching of the descriptions, within the literature on the subject, to the most visible facets of surrounding reality, we noticed a recurring regularity. Most obviously, the role of religion in development, mediated by both the institutions and individuals who declare that their engagement is inspired by religious faith, is marked by a peculiar ambivalence. This stems from the combination of two elements which closely permeate each other. One is oriented towards crossing the existential reality of people (religious) and the other is immanently tight but with various aspects of this reality (secular).

As the decision has been made to focus rather more upon the institutional facets of the involvement of religion in the dissemination of development, than on individual engagement motivated by religious faith, our attention has been attracted by Alfagems Secondary School. This was mainly due to certain plainly visible incoherencies - as we assumed - significantly affecting the organization of the school and the climate inside it. The first of the striking observations was the general lack of tidiness inside and around the school. This picture was difficult to align with its reputation as a place of academic excellence [Asantebwana 2014: 45]. Already, the very sight of its founder Fr Riccardo dressed in a piece of clothing resembling a Franciscan habit and usually walking barefoot, reinforced by the crude appearance of the school buildings, gave rise to an impression of austerity. Thus, it is difficult to take on board that it is here that there are working teachers who are so well-qualified and motivated that the education on offer stands out as being above that of other schools in the country [ibidem: 57-58].

In line with the gradually emerging perspective of the study, this and other incoherencies are recognised as not being incidental. They are the result of the

overlapping axio-normative order proper to both the constitutive – religious and secular - counterparts [Torry 2016: 2-7]. Thus, in line with our perspective, this school may be classified as one of those religious organizations that, by highlighting the indispensability of the role of the religious element, carry the name of Faith Based Organizations [Torry 2014: 19-20, cf. Michell 2017: 165]. The charm of this term must not misguide anyone, however, because the stress put on the religious element does not cancel out their second essential - secular - dimension. Therefore, by using this institution as an example, it is intended to demonstrate that the close combination of the religious and secular elements, despite the occasional eye-catching incoherencies, is the basic foundation of the exceptional quality and scope of the contribution to development delivered by religious organizations. This contribution gives a guarantee which goes beyond that which may be achieved when it is devoid of the religious ingredient, and only the rules of non-metaphysical rationality and empirical pragmatism are employed. This is because those rules, with all their instrumental purposefulness, are lacking the existential reinforcement that is needed for a proper entrenchment of specific projects into a given social environment. The religious provenience of FBOs enables that reinforcement because its natural area of operating lies in between what is strictly rational and what goes beyond pure rationality [Hovland 2008: 171-186].

When we recall the literature on this subject, at its starting point, we realise how it significantly stands out from that which preceded it. This was achieved through its systemic approach to the complexities and multidimensionality of the linkages joining elements of a transcendent and supernatural nature to that of a temporal and natural character. In addition to the fact that both, the religious and the secular, are the components being conceptualised as fully legitimate institutional counterparts, similarly as actors they are subject to two-sided inter-dependencies and inter-actioning [Dyck 2013: 8-9]. That way of perceiving them was not so obvious, a while ago, during the period of the unquestionable rule of the paradigm of secularisation [Wilk-Mhagama 2016: 290-291]. The systemic approach received its theoretical enrichment through the simultaneous attempt to observe the relationship formulated by both the religious and the secular element, from the standpoint proper to the discrete disciplines of theology, the humanities, and the social sciences. As unveiled by an analysis of the collective studies entrenched within this approach [Clarke and Jennings 2013, Carbonnier 2013, Boddie and Cnaan 2006, Marczevska-Rytko and Maj 2018, Koehrsen and Heuser 2020] they have adequately expanded the capture of the role of religion and religiosity in development, while enlarging the comprehension of the dynamics of psycho-social

changes. This dynamic is no longer perceived as being a series of activities, disconnected from the wider context of the socio-economic and political, but as fully human acts emerging out of the uniqueness of particular social groupings, with experiences marked by historical circumstances and cultural, anthropological, and moral determinants. Perhaps the most explicit profile in this regard was worked out by social anthropologists [Swantz, 2016].

Nonetheless, when formal research procedures are applied, one may not only term religion and religiosity as independent or dependent, but foremost as having capricious variables [cf. Jarosz 2019: 71-73]. This stems from the correctly asserted observation by Bernard Grom who said that religion, as a causative ingredient of the psycho-social engagement of individuals and the dynamism of intra-group interfaces, is a factor intimately entwined with numerous related factors, exemplified by the social, demographic, economic, professional, and structural. It is difficult to estimate and measure exactly which one of these, at any given moment, is playing the more important role in a stipulated progress. This observation, with reference to our field of interest, can be extended by the problem stemming from the complexity of the phenomenon of religious observance itself. This complexity is responsible for the difficulties in pointing out which dimension of the religious element induces a given outcome: whether it is the axio-normative factor, enclosed for direct sensual perception, by being immersed within the inner layer of a religious institution, or perhaps the formal and material, the more tangible, as being a part of its organizational externality [Grom 2020, Cipriani and Prüfer 2021: 520].

In view of these conditions, subsequent descriptions of this study are going to be submitted from a holistic perspective [Deneulin, Bano 2019: 5]. On the one hand this perspective will facilitate the formulation of the variables operationalising the axo-normative and structural-organizational components of the investigated institution to form a case study (3). On the other hand, it will be flexible in so far as it will include the peculiar input of those transfers conducting the development that, although causative, is still not included sufficiently into research procedures [cf. Gifford 2015: 7-8]. The tasks of the study's components that will precede the case study are meant to expose the ambivalence of the elements, of a religious and a secular nature, reciprocally interfacing each other. This ambivalence expresses itself when it happens that an activity, bearing a feature of religious entrenchment, could be a part of an efficacious action within a purely secular sphere, even political. The same is true in that a purely religious involvement might entail making

use of the secular, that is, in the instrumental rules of a given branch of know-how (1). All of that is to harness the tools and methods of how to gain a realization of which given component of its broader religious mission has led to the formation of an FBO and which essence it will be attempting to determine (2).

### **1. The co-occurrence and permeation of the religious and secular elements**

To begin with, a small comparison will be made between two personalities who, at first glance, seem very similar. However, it appears that underneath the surface of this external similarity there are important differences. The first personality is the universally known charismatic politician, widely known as ‘the father of the nation’, the first long-term president of the country and author of the original version of African socialism, Julius Kambarage Nyerere. The second personality, although equally charismatic, is only known locally within the municipality of Morogoro. This is a Catholic priest, Riccardo Riccioni, renowned for his ascetic lifestyle as a friar, inspired by the spirituality of St. Francis of Assisi that was skilfully translated by him into charitable service.

The stereotypical image of Nyerere is his role in state-creating and fostering the development which emerged from his technocratic attitude based on the assumptions of modernity, skilfully adapted to local African conditions [Vorbich 2012: 282-289]. This attitude is one that can easily fit the paradigm of the theory of modernization, along with a debasing approach to religion and religiosity. This came to light when Nyerere did not hesitate to nationalise Church-run schools [Górka 2016: 306 – 310]. Although it was done on the pretext of equalising educational opportunities, if the scope of authoritarianism characterising postcolonial countries is included accurately, it appears that it was, in fact, one of the many steps aimed at submitting the subsequent aspects of socio-political life into the control of the mono-party system [cf. Bambwenda 2018: 124-125]. However, from the point of view of our study, the meaning of the decision for the appropriation of the schools, hospitals and other properties owned by the Church, including land, goes far beyond current politics, that is the implementation of utopian African socialism (*ujamaa* which in Swahili stands for familyhood). The reason for this stems from the establishment of a distinct pause in religious organizations manifesting their existence and activity. Namely, just as by the time of the nationalization a considerable part of Church properties and their organizations enjoyed complete freedom in exerting charitable work, so too with the phase of socialism, cemented by the Arusha Declaration (1967), not only did their liberty of action come into question, but even their very survival.

At this point, however, the strength of the religious element became apparent. As has been narrated by Ernest Mallya, in his comparison between related institutions of the third sector and those of religious lineage which not only had the ability to preserve their existence but also to become partners of the state in delivering services to the locations where the state could not reach. However, in his view their only advantage lay in the fact of them owning material resources which allowed them to deliver a range of services [ibidem]. Meanwhile, it seems that an indispensable role was also played by distinctive intangible assets, such as reputation and social legitimacy followed closely by trust, which were shared among enlarged circles of society. During this, let us say, survival phase, the dominant religious communities tried hard to come back into the educational sector. Nonetheless, this was by no means easy. Within the next phase, let us term it, of the rapidly progressing atrophy of the redistributive function of the state, which occurred, as already mentioned above, during the global crisis of the 1970s, there was a return of a significant number of school facilities, strained by the lack of adequate maintenance by the state administration, which coincided with the Adjustment Programmes whereby the socialist philosophy of top-down socio-economic management was replaced by the logic of the free market. The limits on public distribution, then imposed by the institutions of the international economic order, created a natural environment for the organizations of the third sector. As they started to take over the tasks that seemed to cross over the overstretched state budget and organizational capacity of central and local administration, the organizations of faith provenience could come back into the public scene with increased vigour. The catalyst for this return stemmed from within the new neoliberal approach to the democratising ideal that loosened a little the administrative and political control of the state, insofar as to undertake a much more progressive attitude towards pro-developmental action. Exactly within this process can be placed the origin of the Alfagems school and this will be the subject of our further interest below.

With recourse to what has been observed about Nyerere above, it might be inferred that the profile of the technocrat, instrumentalising religion and not valuing its developmental potential, does not explain his personality satisfactorily. To enable the unveiling of his complicated religious entanglement, there is the need for a slight enlargement of our viewpoint through the lens of a certain observation by Goran Hyden. It was made in his analyses of the permanent crisis of the institution of an African state. In his view the problem lies in the range of inconsistencies between the style of acting of African socio-political leaders and the principles of

Max Weber in his classical theory of bureaucracy. This is particularly evident when the actions which followed the script of 'big man rule' were stemming from the leaders' quasi-religious conviction about their own extraordinariness. It posited them towards a disparaging approach to some rules of the theory in question, for example the procedures or day to day obligations tied to the office they occupied [Ficek 2007: 178, Hyden 2004: 53]. Undoubtedly, the personal profile of Nyerere does not fall far away from this observation, particularly regarding the aspect that was evident in his quasi-religious mode of acting. This expressed itself in the style of his public self-presentation, frequently performed by him on the pattern of self-styled prophet<sup>1</sup> [cf. Górka 2016: 422, 425–428]. It was particularly evident during difficult moments triggered by him when imposing a political agenda which was unpopular in society, as exemplified by the decisions proceeding villagization [cf. Górka 2016: 420–421, Thomson 2010: 53–54].

The inherence of that quasi-religious factor, within his personal political profile, makes that of Nyerere appear similar to the public profile of Fr Riccardo, at least partially. It pertains foremost to leadership aspect of the profile. Although both were grounded in alternative departure points (secular and religious), at the end of the day, in both cases of leadership engagement, their lasting imprint was marked by the religious element.

As already signalised, despite the unveiled external affinity of both, Fr. Riccardo began with the spirituality and theology which oriented him in the opposite direction to that of Nyerere. Namely, to fulfil in the best possible way this part of the pastoral mission of his religious denomination (Roman-Catholic Church), that is a charity, he equipped the school, run by himself, with the modern instruments and methods of education and management. In effect, for relatively low fees, the educational offer delivered by him not only stands out but exceeds the attainment of other public and private schools [Rweyemamu 2016]. This is testified by the

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<sup>1</sup> The astonishing power of prophet and thinker styled images, once created for current political discourse, has preserved its enchanting power: Nyerere „epitomized what Plato termed as a philosopher-king who combined great intellectual prowess with a healthy disdain for material wealth and ostentation; a man who could not be bought by money and who lived like what Tanzanian writer Jenerali Ulimwengu recently described as <a fakir when the lesser mortals of his age hid their philosophical emptiness and intellectual nakedness behind Rive Gauche suits and Hollywood villas>.” [Wanda 2020: 5]. Bringing all of these paeans to reality, must be said, that as adherent of Roman-Catholicism Nyerere stood out as above-average personal piety, indicated by day to day Mass attendance, good knowledge in actual Church's doctrine, especially social.

results of the official state exams run at the end of the school<sup>2</sup>. In addition, there is the possibility of further educational development for children coming from the lowest societal rungs; because of the standard delivered by the school, there is a realistic chance of them successfully passing the national examinations, which opens for them the gates of tertiary level institutions, thus creating undeniable added value [cf. Rweyemamu].

The comparison provided exposes the complexity of the mechanisms determining the processes of development. Telic elements of developmental projects, so frequently adopted from the outside world, remain in tension with the autotelic elements of local cultures. Thus, what is marked by the idea of modernity and progress, based on scientific abstractness and the broad scope of disclosed perspectives, interacts with what emerges from within traditional cultures, together with their endogamous orientation to direct, locally limited, interpersonal relations and ties [Jarosz 2014: 122-124].

The emerging perspective gradually discloses the added value of religion-formatted institutions. It draws from the participation of religious bodies, carried out simultaneously within both settings: the pre-modern and the modern [cf. Gifford 2015: 11]. And this is due to the specificity of religion, derived from the most distanced times, as it continuously progresses her tradition based on carefully collected and stored historical records. There then emerges, from this tradition, a message that concerns present times, a message that concerns both the purely spiritual and supernatural issues as well as the temporal and natural. However, it is done in such a way as to hold open the prospect that transcends into the ultimate future of an afterworld, which basically has only a spiritual and supernatural character [cf. Kulisz 2021: 104-120].

According to the description of the self-perpetuating actions of religious institutions, which aim to facilitate their further proliferation, they not only extend in time maximally but also coherently entwine elements of both a spiritual and material character. Precisely because of the entwining of these counterparts, the process of the self-manifestation of religious institutions is directly related to the processes of general social and cultural development. Both remain in a relationship of two-sided inter-dependence and inter-action. However, religion, as the greater

<sup>2</sup> Yearly, The National Examinations Council of Tanzania delivers secondary level examination results at <https://onlinesys.necta.go.tz/>. Data from this portal will be used to indicate the quality of education offered by Alfagems on the background of neighbouring schools.



inner part of a given psycho-cultural background and socio-political ethos, used to play the initiating role within the entire developmental processes. It is through her mediation that the epistemological and methodological frames of collective action were formulated, fostering the continuity of growth. This is demonstrated by Thomas Woods in the case of the processes of the consolidation of modern science as a specific type of knowledge framed by Medieval Christianity, more precisely the scholastic [Woods, 2005: 67-114]. In similar vein, Lucyna Chmielewska brought closer the instrumental role of the biblical concept of the covenant that has been playing its part within the process of shaping the axio-normative basis of modern political philosophy. As specified by her, it was during the era of reformation when this notion was denoted, as both a secular and religious concept, thus creating a bridge allowing the transformation of an estate system, based on birth descent, into the class system. And this became possible because, even before the legitimacy of the theory of social contract, more and more dimensions of public life were based on social relations sustained by an agreement and a commitment. This culminated in the rationally grounded axiomatic assumption about the necessity for ruled people to legitimise a given political authority [Chmielewska 2021: 21].

Nonetheless, the role of religion does not exist merely in establishing the underlying basis of societal functioning, it also encompasses the functioning itself. Therefore, along with characteristic of modern society for the unprecedented increase in the density of social relations, there then followed their further crystallisation and consolidation leading to a mushrooming in the setting up of various types of social organizations and institutions of public interest, including religious organizations. They became a part of a picture that was facetiously remarked upon by Piotr Sztompka when he said about contemporary people that 'they not only cannot survive without organizations, but they are not even able to die without them' [Sztompka 2012:157]. Also established religious bodies (churches, religious associations, sects), responding to in-depth socio-political transformations, have developed differing types of modernized and professionalised activities. While the dynamism of societal differentiation and modernisation has challenged their time-honoured status within both public and individual spheres of secularising societies, so too have they specialized in conducting the subsequent elements of their mission. Starting with that geared to reinforcing the vitality of conscious and active participation within the liturgical acts of a cult (local community of worshippers), it was then followed by the socialisation of religious faith (missionary organizations) and, following on from those, by the focus upon charity. As specified by Malcolm Torry, regarding the latter, despite it all still being linked

to the central element of religion, that is, the liturgical worship, they actually go beyond the essentially religious sphere by providing different types of services to the general public, and not only to fellow sharers of the same creed [Torry 2014b: 51–53]. With all the vagueness of the term FBO, one must bear in mind that, when specifying its type of engagement, it could possibly be placed in the charity sector, rather than the missionary. However, in practice, both are intersecting and interacting, as will be pointed out in the instance of Alfagems school. The remainder of the study will be an attempt to clarify the concept of the FBO.

## **2. Identifying the essence of the concept of FBO**

As signalled by the above ambiguities, associated with explications of the content correlated with the term of FBO, they have been manifested in the scale of difficulties accompanying the definition of this concept itself. From an analytical point of view, the various assorted definitions, characterised by a raised level of generality and high abstraction, is highly unsatisfactory. Usually within this situation the elements that form both sides of a concept, in our investigation the religious and developmental, are amalgamated together in quite broad-ranging terms.

No one, therefore, ought to be surprised that a sizeable group of authors, in contrast to that not very fertile approach, decided to undertake subsequent efforts aimed at enclosing the essence of the concept at stake in the form of an operational definition, as the initial step of the research being conducted. One of commonly utilised ways of working it out was pegged, at its outset, upon abandoning yet another attempt to create a definition which followed a specific definitional formula. Instead, in its second attempt, it strove to take hold of the contents reflecting the constitutive features of the organization in question. This is a path that was taken by Elisabeth Ferris, who elaborated the following traits of the FBO: as having ‘affiliation with a religious body, a mission statement with explicit reference to religious values, financial support from religious resources, and/or governance structure where selection of board members or staff is based on religious beliefs or affiliation and decision-making processes based on religious values’ [Ferris 2005: 312].

Yet another approach, although starting from a generical definition at its departure point, was delivered in such a way as to facilitate the further specifying of the contents creating this definition, in order to gain the desired level of operational utility in the research. In principle, this attempt does not go far beyond dealing with the features of the institution in question, but it does help to specify them

more precisely. The merit of this attempt lies in skilfully taking advantage of the content-related background of the organizational sociology. Owing to that, for the first time it became possible to define the various types of organizational units forming a broader religious community/association (as Church). This was followed by distinguishing the types of engagement of the organizational unit under investigation within their developmental agenda. That theoretically and methodologically entrenched handling has enabled the differing smaller organizational units, that form a given entire religious organization, to be placed in order in a vertical perspective. In top-down view they present themselves as demonstrated representative and apex bodies, followed by charitable development organizations, closely followed by missionary organizations and eventually ending with radical and illegal terrorist organizations [Jennings 2014: 360].

In turn, the application of a horizontal perspective facilitates the identification of the specificity of the services delivered by the analysed entities. This specificity derives from the commonly shared convictions of the members of the given organization in question towards the inspiring role of religious faith. If this is ascribed considerable meaning, then it can be expected that its direct daily experience, together with the religious teachings, will play a decisive role in the functioning and efficacy of a given organization. If there is ascribed, however, a rather more relative role to the same experience and teachings, then the functioning and efficacy will be exacted by a combination of religious and non-religious values. Besides, the very specific direct context of a given organisation, playing the decisive role in determining the unique plights to be resolved as well as the resources that can be used to figure them out, the key role in the specifying, functioning and agency of the given organization in question is foremost its religious tradition. As correctly noted by Julia Berger, the organizations entrenched in some traditions are more prone to defining themselves in strictly religious terms (Christian, Islamic) while others tend to opt for more socio-culturally imbued self-identification (Judaic, Buddhist) [Berger 2003:19].

Another important aspect of organizational involvement, on which a religious faith imprints its mark, expresses itself in its attitude to the receivers of its developmental agenda. At one end of the extreme are placed such organizations which, apart from providing given services or products, would also strive to attain a purely religious outcome, for example religious conversion. More or less subtle proselytising is the most common feature of such an agenda and it might be related, but not necessarily, to another important aspect, that is to the exclusiveness whereby the distribution of

the services and products is confined only to members of a given religious community or denomination. At the other end of the extreme are placed those organizations that focus only upon the provision of commodities and services without prioritizing extra gain in the form of adherents being attracted to their creed. An activity which is organized in this way is most frequently accompanied by inclusiveness in its attitude to the recipients of the developmental agenda, with each individual being confident he can count on the assistance provided by an organization regardless of his religious affiliation [Jennings 2014: 361].

Although the author, of the denotations of the notion in question, presented quite a broad list of factors that can undermine the research utility of the matrix formed by them, it can still serve, as he himself asserted, as an irreplaceable source for approximating varying types of organizations scattered within a faith sector [Jennings 2014: 361- 362]. The most serious difficulties, in grasping the essence of a given faith related organization, are associated with the dynamic of the two-sided exchanges that take place within its local and wider surroundings. This dynamic requires an altering of the mode of comprehending the role of the religious element itself, within a changing socio-cultural and economic context, similarly the mode of understanding the evolving trajectories of the changes continuously transforming these contexts. The point lies in that it is here that the meaning of a current stage of secularization, modernization and differentiation becomes revealed, specifying a given societal encirclement.

From the point of view of this study – attempting to seek the essence of the FBO within an entanglement of religious and secular elements - specific shortcomings are becoming revealed. Namely, while placing the foremost stress on the subjective aspect of the entity in question, associated with its axiological and normative underpinnings, it does not leave much room for the exploration of the objective aspect of the same entity, which relates to various forms of its activity. As well as the act of entering the organization into a specific segment of the public and social realm, it must also follow the logic of the mode of operating which is proper to this segment. In addition, in preparing its development agenda, the same organisation strives to do it each time by responding to the current state of the socio-economic processes. It certainly might be said that the socioreligious activity of a given organization, which relies on faith, is determined by the reasonably harmonious amalgamation of the lofty purposes, of the spiritual and moral orientation of this organizational unit, and the mundane needs that are filling subsequent levels of Maslow's pyramid, as existential security [Wood 2003: 388–389].

As gradually it becomes self-disclosing, the essence of the scrutinised concept of the FBO is specified by the acts of adequately adapting the methods and tools for acting within the religious and moral values discussed so far. Thus, when characterising this *instrumentarium*, the high level of specialization and professionalization entails the dilemmas that are not always seen in proper perspective. Namely, the juxtaposition of the transcendental values, going beyond what is terrestrial and temporal, together with instrumental and utilitarian values that are immanently grounded within the existential dimension of human existence, entails conflict that ought wisely to be approached in such a way that it is resolved by skilful adjustment to the current state of the societal surroundings. What is at stake here is the further development of the religious identity of a given organization, on the one hand, and the socio-economic instrumental efficacy in the market of delivered products and services, on the other. Any lack of compromising equability, between both distinguishing aspects, leads either to the loss of the socio-cultural transparency of a given organization in the eyes of society (too much stress on axio-normative aspects) or to the gradual loss of the sharpness of the religious element (too much stress on technocratic aspects). In both cases the functional purposefulness of a given organization becomes debased [Michell 2017: 165].

Given the difficulties, as presented, to close let us briefly focus on the modes of activity that are characteristic to the institutions in question. From an ideational point of view, it must be admitted that, as closely as possible, they follow the principles of instrumental rationality. Hence, a continuous striving is undertaken to make adjustment, of a religious orientation, to a given organizational entity, to meet the requirements of the specific professionalised area of activity. In this respect, the rules of functioning within certain structural determinants, as well as the operating methodology of a given procedure, ought to be put into practice. For instance, in the case of Alfagems school, the teaching delivered in the classroom must follow the rules of modern pedagogy, accompanied by sound factual knowledge, in accordance with the academic criteria of the given subject. Therefore, in line with the standards of the theory of management, each one of the structures or operational modes of the FBO ought to be in place, as is the case in any other (secular) organization. Of course, as far as the extent of the specialized competences of those involved in their completion are considered, all of that will be affected by the recognition of the scientific grounding of a specific organizational structure and the procedure for performing a given operation. These procedures will be closely followed, with due acknowledgment of the autonomy of the specific type of professionalized operation, within its own boundaries. These boundaries

are between the strictly specialised activity of a professional expert and the activities of a person whose involvement is inspired mainly by religious motivation, as in the case of a volunteer [Pessi 2009:932; Martens, 2002: 279, 282].

### **3. Tracing the dynamics of the multi-layered development launched by Alfagems**

From the descriptions scattered within the preceding parts of the study, certain insights into the functioning of Alfagems school can be acquired, similarly into the life of its founder Fr Riccardo. These are to be supplemented by two interviews made with Fr Riccardo himself, with members representing the management of the school, participatory observation, and a review of school documents. Then, using the technique of bricolage they will be augmented by delivering further information from the resources deemed as carrying the most suitable informative value at that moment.

Fr Riccardo is a Catholic priest who, after leaving an order of Capuchins in 1978 and being incardinated into the Diocese of Morogoro, has worked at establishing a new religious association dedicated both to mission and to charity. As the principal orientation of that new community is very close to the Franciscan spirituality at the heart of Fr Riccardo's motivation for establishing it - in accord with ideal of inculturation - it is a more than adequate adjustment of the universal profile of the religious mission of Catholic Church to the socio-cultural requirements of local conditions. As specified by the charismatic founder himself, the point lies in giving testimony to a life entrenched in the evangelical virtue of poverty, but poverty closely adjusted to the surrounding socio-economic conditions.

Fr Riccardo possesses two charisms closely related to each other. As stipulated in the previous paragraph, he is the founder of a religious community known as Ndugu Wadogo wa Africa (Little Brothers and Sisters of Africa) that derives its subjectivity from its affiliation to the Morogoro Diocese with its status as a public association of the faithful. Moreover, as has been indicated elsewhere, he is also a founder of Alfagems school, with its primary orientation being secular and, owing to its affiliation to the Morogoro Diocese, having the status of a Catholic school. Hence, although elements of religious formation, including religious instruction, are also a part of the school curriculum, this part of the overall educational process is considered as one of the elements integral to shaping the individual personality of the students. As the adherents of a specific creed, they have the right to receive instruction to deepen their religious knowledge, as stipulated by the country's legal regulations. In this regard, as has been made clear to

us on a few occasions, the school sticks strictly to the government administrative regulations. The only problem, which arises from time to time, is associated with the lack of qualified teachers for the religious instruction of students from another religion or denomination. In such a case, students from a specific religious group are exempted from the religious education classes. Just to properly contextualise this problem, it should be added that around 40% of students are Catholics, 25% are Muslims, with the remaining members being of different protestant denominations. It is to the latter that there is difficulty in providing lessons of religious education. Taking all of that together, it must be noted that the linkages between both of the organizational entities, the Little Brothers and Sisters of Africa, and Alfagems School, are impinging on the uniqueness of the functioning of the school and the quality offered by its educational services.

To complicate matters, but only slightly, it is necessary to balance the clearly stated policy of the school management with the essential secular orientation of the school to provide the knowledge and capabilities useful in the development of the secular life. Apart from the afore mentioned lessons of religion, provided in accord with state stipulations, from our exploration of the school we discovered other organised religious events. There are two Holy Masses which occur within its facilities, one obligatory on a Sunday and a second not obligatory on a Friday. We should add that this obligation is limited to Catholic students. Apart from that, the school gives space for various religious groups, such as the associations of Franciscan Youth, Tanzanian Young Catholic Students, liturgical altar services, and choirs from various denominations. The activities of all of them could be treated as an extension of the socialization functions of the school, where they are a legitimate component of holistic socio-cultural socialization.

However, this situation, as painted, is changed if and when we take into account the openness of the school to those willing to join the liturgy of the Eucharist whenever it is celebrated. The presence of people, coming from outside of the school, makes it a place of pastoral and evangelizing activity which is carried out in the style of inculturation proper to the spirituality of Fr Riccardo. In this regard, the school takes on a missionary character. An essential role is played here by Riccardo's striking preaching and dedication to the cause of the poor, celebrated by him and his closest co-operators. Within this layout, the two orientations of the school, religious and secular, still give the impression of being arranged as on two separated tracks. However, for the external observer, the consciousness of the participants in these activities of a religious nature and open to the general

public, present themselves as being marked by the strong conviction that the acquiring of pro-developmental secular skills and virtues is closely related to the in-depth experience of religious faith, as if they were flowing from the more or less direct contact with transcendency, mediated by personal prayer and communal rituals. Perhaps this conviction has the most important pro-developmental effect? It underlies the personal choices of acting in accordance with the rules, leading to self-improvement and to undertaking actions which generate the necessary skills and capabilities, especially soft capabilities such as orientation towards the realization of measurable ends, punctuality, persistence, and self-efficacy. These soft capabilities in turn determine the individual to acquire skills of the hard character, foremost being the knowledge offered by taught subjects.

After all that has been said about the Little Brothers and Sisters of Africa, as well as Alfagems School, it is necessary to say that while both preserve their autonomy towards each other, still they remain related to each other. This is through the mediation of their founder. While he is forming the religious identities and personalities of the members of both branches of the religious community, not one from the religious association participates within the work of the school. At the same time, the functioning of the school seems to be impossible without his subtle guidance, persistent direction, and modelling supervision. What seems to be instrumental stems from the experience he has acquired during his formation work within his religious community, a greater length of time than his managing of the school that was established in 2007. From the former engagement, the possibility of getting in-depth familiarity with the personalities of candidates formed by him to the religious life, does facilitate him for school management. As the latter is embedded within an environment dominated by the type of relationships oriented towards values rather than at means, and this finds its reflection in individual attitudes that are community-centred, the overall school governing must rely on an adequately shaped strategy. Its subsequent steps need to be based more on direct management of interpersonal communication and an interactional dynamic characteristic of small groups, rather than merely on formal procedures and highly standardised proceedings. Despite these dependencies, the school management takes place within the domain of secondary rather than primary relationships. And this is due to the much more formalised environment of the school than within the environment created within the community of the Little Brothers and Sisters of Africa, as required by the country's educational system and by the professional rules of modern education. However, the in-depth knowledge regarding the acquisition of basic ways of the reasoning, valuing and acting of individuals within



the closer and wider environment of the school - enabled by the role continuously played by Fr Riccardo within both settings - could be a factor in the greater than average educational attainments of the school. Because Fr Riccardo managed to encompass, within his perspective, the experience of external (European) and internal (African) psycho-social conditions, undoubtedly it helps him effectively to manage the school functioning. Within the layout of a religious environment arranged by him, the community being formed by him serves as a suitable locus for collecting necessary observations, experiences, and reflections. And then all of them find their utility within the area of school management.

If both the religious and the secular endeavours could be seen as interesting experiments, then they ought also to be conceived as a creative attempt at transforming the ineffective tools for inculcating Christianity into the reality of local socio-cultural conditions that were in use during the colonial era (accommodation) into those more adequate to the requirements of contemporary conditions (inculturation) [Jarosz 2014: 125-126]. It is therefore an inculturation experiment par excellence. It transforms the ineffective tools of the past into those more suitable to the requirements of today. A particularly sensitive part of this transformation refers to the replacement of the ambiguous entailment of the Church and State administration, as it was practiced during the colonial past, into interactions initiated at the elementary level of socio-cultural subsoil. In this respect, the status of the organization of the third sector creates the possibility for a grassroots initiative that expresses itself in that organizational inventiveness of Fr Riccardo which emerges from his direct relationships with the members of the congregation founded by himself, on the one hand, and the people forming the closer and wider environment of the school, on the other [Mallya 2010:140-142].

Just how far the status of the institution in question has changed is indicated by the consequent and consistent financial policy pursued under the leadership of Fr Riccardo. During the era of the patronising distance of the faith-related charitable initiatives from the everyday life of served communities, which was mainly caused, as stipulated above, by maintaining close links with the government, with the typical educational initiatives being entirely or at least partly rendered due to external sponsors. Under the influence of the inculturation ideal of Fr Riccardo, the school relies on its own source of income, that is coming from the fees paid by the students. In this situation the necessity for inventiveness becomes more apparent, the fees of the school being very low, as signalised in the initial part of this study and now it will be get further elaborations. Well, in accordance with the

information obtained by us, students of the ordinary secondary level are paying 500,000 Tanzanian shillings (100.000 Polish zł) per year while those in Advanced level secondary school paying 600,000 Tz sh (120000 Pl zł) per year. This amount is higher when we compare it with public schools where in according to the national law there are no school fees but in practice there are the so-called 'minor contributions' of slathers, hoes, desks and chairs, buckets, and brooms which can cost up to 100,000 Tz sh (203 Pl zł) are necessary.

However, the amount of school fees paid at Alfagems secondary is cheaper compared to other private schools, be it secular or non-secular. It is actually equal to the amount paid in the cheapest level of nursery school, as the normal amount paid in prestigious nursery schools in Morogoro ranges between 1,200,000/= and 1,800,000 (2,435 - 3,652 Pl zł) per year. The amount of school fees paid in private secondary schools in Morogoro is between 2, 200,000 (4,463 Pl zł) (for example La Miriam secondary school) and 2,765,000/ (5,610 Pl zł) (Kitungwa Adventist secondary school) per year. Therefore, the lower amount of school fees at Alfagems, together with the quality of education given, enables the school to be the best choice especially for the poor families who cannot afford to enrol their children in prestigious schools.

Teachers are the particularly important group from the point of view of the overall educational process, yet in Tanzania they are also the most vulnerable. This is not only because many of them have not acquired academic professional competences. The gravest problem lies in their weakened motivation to fulfil their curriculum duties. Their main reason for becoming burned out is that they are not paid sufficiently to ensure their own existence and that of their families. Sometimes their pay is delayed, and some have difficult conditions at work, especially those working in rural areas. The financial stability and decent work conditions offered by Alfagems school undoubtedly institute a solid base for their engagement. Nonetheless it must be pointed out that this stability results not so much from a notably higher salary - because within entire country the salary of a newly qualified teacher with a degree, inside both public and private settings, varies at the level of 600.000-700.000 Tz sh (1,217-1,420 Pl zł). The key role in ensuring stability is played by the regularity of payment and that entire sum being given at once and not in separated instalments. However, to be in line with current situation it must be admitted that this regularity has been shaken during the last few months and the stipulated amounts are not certain anymore. This is caused by the employment of the manual economy control characteristic of the presidency of John P. Magufuli (1959-2021).

Because of the policy, initiated in 2015, the government administration had not hired graduates of teaching colleges during the entire five years. Put simply, the recruitment of new staff had not taken place; in the case of teachers leaving, either the remaining staff were meant to fill the gap, or the classes were combined. As, after the change of leadership at the top of state management, the decision was made to overcome this plight. Many more recently educated teachers have been employed during recent months but this has not yet balanced the unprecedented disproportion between supply and demand. Meanwhile, the private sector schools have started to make use of the malaise caused by the government and they are employing newly qualified teachers. However, the bad news is that they have been offered a salary of only 400.000 Tz shillings (811 Pl zł).

Returning to the school in question, suffice it to say that by meeting the basic social security requirements this allows the school management to set some requirements for newly selected teaching staff. As we were informed, the primary principle underlying the process for the recruitment of new staff, referring, to all types of jobs that need to be done, expresses itself in general fitness for duty. The generality of this role might be seen as meaningless; however, when adequately adjusted to the socio-economic context of a post-socialist country it preserves its value. And it is exacted by the fact that within a number of related institutions, individuals, in not-infrequent cases, find employment just for employment's sake, not to be effectively working, or they are on the payroll but only fictitiously as ghost workers [Bambwenda 2018: 145]. The principle to be followed refers to religious values and focuses on the moral decency of a given candidate that stems from his religious engagement. However, for the school management it does not matter which religion or denomination a given individual practices. The teachers are selected according to these rules and are later supervised not only by using set Tanzanian procedures (e.g. class hospitalizations or pupils' evaluations) but through their day-to-day direct contact with Fr Riccardo they are motivated to do good work.

The passage of time will indicate if this transformation of the general method of working with people will be helpful in attaining one more deeply anchored within the Christian tradition and from within the personalities of the believers, rather than in indifferent and superficially engaged adherents, as was characteristic of the colonial phase of conveying evangelization and providing pastoral care. Time will also show how far elements of his charism will be taken over by the members of the religious community formatted by Fr Riccardo, with them working within

developing charity works in general and educational endeavours in particular. Indeed, the expansion of the Alfagems is now being carried out with the new facilities registered as owned by the community, not the Morogoro Diocese. It could be assumed that all school responsibilities are gradually going to be taken over by members of the community. Indeed, some of them are already being educated in Jordan University College, placed within the close neighbourhood. But will they be able to integrate the founder's charism to such an extent that their educational endeavours will be managed as is presently done by the founder himself? In other words, are the schools to be led by them going to ensure more than average results during the state examinations as is the case at present?

Let us leave for a while the person of Fr Riccardo, and the potential continuators of his mission, to turn for a while to the adduced performance of the school founded and managed by him. Starting with its ordinary level examination results; in 2019 among 240 students, in division there were 34, in division two there were 130, in division three there were 67, and in division four there were 9 with no failures. In 2020, among 221 students, in division one there were 98, in division two there were 109, in division three were 13, and in division four there was 1 with no failures. In 2021, among 230 students, in division one there were 55, in division two there were 138, in division three were 31, and in division four there were 6 with no failures. The results of the advanced secondary from 2019 to 2022, were as following: in 2019 among 329 students, in division one there were 88, in division two there were 130, in division three there were 103 and in division four there were 6 with no failures. In 2020, among 331 students, in division one there were 41, in division two there were 209, in division three there were 80 and in division four there was 1 with no failures. In 2021, among 338 students, in division one there were 54, in division two there were 183, in division three there were 95, and in division four there were 5 and 1 student failed (0,29%). In 2022, among 346 students, in division one there were 40, in division two there were 185, in division three there were 115, and in division four there were 5 and 1 student failed (0,28%).

To further our analysis, it is necessary to compare it with the performance of secular schools with similar and varying criteria. It is important to understand that secondary schools in Tanzania are generally categorized as either public or private schools. However, in these two major categorizations, there are other categorizations as well. First, public schools can be either schools for special talented students or Ward owned schools known as Shule za Kata. In special talented schools, students have the privilege of adequate access to learning and

teaching facilities while the latter suffer from inadequate of the same. Moreover, private schools, can be categorized as secular schools and non-secular schools. It is thus necessary to compare the performance of Alfagems secondary school with other schools identified by the above criteria. Luckily, Morogoro has all categories of the identified schools, and it was easy to pick a school randomly from the listed schools based on identified criteria. In this regard, Kilakala secondary school is used to represent public schools for especially talented students, Morogoro secondary school has been used to represent Ward owned schools or Shule za Kata, and Ngunya Open school center has been used to represent private secular schools.

To begin with Kilakala secondary school (public school for talented students): Ordinary secondary level results, in 2019 among 69 students, in division one there were 48, in division two there were 14, and in division three there were 7 with no division four or failed students. In 2020, among 86 students, in division one there were 69, in division two there were 13, and in division three were 4 with no division four or failed students. In 2021, among 88 students, in division one there were 77 and in division two there were 11 with no division three, four or failure students. Coming to Advanced level secondary results, in 2020 among 98 candidates, in division one there were 61, in division two there were 30 and in division three there were 7 with no division four or failed students. In 2021, among 111 students, in division one there were 63, in division two there were 42 and in division three there were 6 with no division four or failed students; and in 2022 results among 123 candidates, in division one there were 92, and in division two there were 31 with no division three, four or failed students.

In Morogoro secondary school (in category of Ward Owned Schools/Shule za Kata), Ordinary secondary level results of consecutive three years are as follows. In 2019 among 290 candidates, division one there were 54, in division two there were 72, in division three there were 44, in division four there were 89 and there were 31 failed students (10,68%). In 2020, among 305 candidates, in division one there were 35, in division two there were 73, in division three there were 47, in division four there were 119, and there were 31 failed students (10,16%). In 2021, among 511 candidates, in division one there were 49, in division two there were 109, in division three there were 115, division four were 211 and there were 27 failed students (5,28%). Regarding their Advanced secondary level results, in 2020 among 260 candidates, in division one there were 13, in division two there were 164, in division three there were 80, in division four there were 2 and there was one failed student. In 2021, among 183 candidates, in division one there were 27,

in division two there were 99, in division three there were 53, in division four there were 3 and 1 student failed (0,54%); while in 2022 among 220 candidates, in division one there were 31, in division two there were 134, in division three there were 53, and in division four there were 2 with no failed students.

The final school, for the purpose of comparison, is Ngunya Open school center (private secular school). Their Ordinary secondary results from 2019 to 2021 were as follows. In 2019, among 90 candidates, there were none in division one, in division two there were 2, in division three there were 10, in division four there were 72, and there were 6 failed students (6,66%). In 2020 among 94 candidates, there were none in division one, in division two there was 1, in division three there were 7, in division four there were 79 and there were 7 failed students (7,44%). In 2021, among 88 candidates, there were none in division one or in division two but in division three there were 10, in division four were 73 and there were 5 failures (5,68%). However, in their Advanced secondary education results, in 2020 among 93 candidates, in division one there were 4, in division two there were 61, and in division three there were 28 with no division four or failed students. In 2021, among 97 students, in division one there were 14, in division two there were 69, in division three there were 13 and in division four was 1 with no failed students. In 2022 among the 109 candidates, in division there one were 5, in division two there were 75, in division three there were 28, and in division four there was 1 with no failed students. From these results there emerges a picture in black and white of Alfagems to be as one of the public talented secondary schools, maintained consistent outstanding results. And this refers to both ordinary and advanced secondary levels.

Bearing these presented comparisons in mind, let us turn back to the main character owing to whom they were attained. It is necessary to say that the objectivization and further instrumentalization of the charismatic method of Fr Riccardo needs to be subject to critical reflection that would produce the body of coherent guidance and instructions in the form of written manuals and elaborations.

Exactly this way of proceeding was adopted by the Polish Pallottine missionaries working in neighbouring Rwanda. Attempting to manage the problem of an orphanage that was exacted by the genocide that took place in 1994, it was developed within a parishes programme and run by them, sponsoring the education of orphaned children and named the Heart Adoption Programme. As the programme arose out of immediate need, it was in its initial state meant to give

the most necessary assistance to satisfy basic needs. However, with time it became extended into a much more precisely elaborated undertaking aimed at attaining long term goals of an educational, nurturing and formative character. The dynamics of this transformation is reflected in the profound empirically grounded study of Zbigniew [Babicki 2018] who, drawing on the theory and practice of Catholic social pedagogy, conceived the models of acting meant to further the professionalization of the existing programme. An analogous study focused on the phenomenon of Fr Riccardo's educational activity not only would facilitate a better understanding of this phenomenon but also it would allow the continuing improvement to his methods for the upbringing and education of children. Furthermore, our continuing research could be helpful in planning the extension of its empirical dimension. Indispensable descriptions stretched along the line that separates the religious and secular aspects of the explored organizational unit are intended to be obtained by adopting the analytical framework of Berger [2003: 23-34] as she made this the direct subject of her interest in faith sector organizations affiliated to the UN quarter in New York. The substantial merit of the study - adapted to the conditions of our locality - is to capture the dynamism of the couplings between the religious beliefs and personal religious commitment of the members of a particular faith sector organization and its structural set up (organizational dimension), and its modes of operating (strategic and service provision dimensions).

### **Conclusions**

Drawing to the closing part of our study necessitates recourse to what has been stated at its outset. Progressing the advancement of research, focused on the role of religion in development, is accompanied by the still unresolved dilemmas of a theoretical and methodological character. Difficulties with the adequate capturing of the phenomenon of religion, within humanities and social sciences, arise from religion itself as it is a phenomenon partially immersed within terrestrial reality and partially goes beyond this reality into of what is inconceivable. This imprints its marks on definitional difficulties in grasping the essence of the concept of the FBO, the same being true of operationalising the variables for empirical research.

Being not entirely satisfied with the research that had been done under the influence of the paradigm of secularization, that excessively reduced the role of the religious element in carrying development forward, we tried to set the procedures for our research in such a way as to become more inclusive towards the religious

element, not easily tangible but effective. It was therefore assumed that making use of a holistic perspective would facilitate exposing the impact of the religious factor, as entwined with other determining factors of psycho-social agency. However, a relaxation of the procedure as indicated presented the risk that our descriptions would remain inconclusive. Being perfectly aware of this, we are intending, however cautiously, to arrive at the following inferences: the religious element factually influences the processes of carrying the secular agenda within the school of Alfagems. Religious faith is manifested at different levels of the day-to-day existential experience of the main school participants. Especially, it refers to Fr Riccardo who, apart from being a leader of the new religious community created by himself, is also as the school's founder who determines the trends of its operation. However, as the empirical part of the study discloses, his engagement in the developments forming the school's day-to-day reality is motivated by religious faith embedded within the multitude of intersecting relationships with others in the school. Some of them have a purely religious character and some of them are purely secular. The former refers to advancing the religious teachings, and the moral attitudes and virtues stemming from them. Those of a secular provenience have a purely managerial character and are reinforced by a carefully thought through management strategy for organizing the frames for the actions of the professional teachers. Therefore, the school, while being inspired by religious faith, also draws from the most contemporary patterns and practices of scientific knowledge. Thus, this exemplary faith sector institution delivers a good quality of education to relatively poor students.

In line with the direction of our descriptions and their explications, the pro-developmental actions in the school are closely related to acts of a religious character. For example, Fr Riccardo's fluency in developing contacts stems from his experience when founded his congregation. The religious element exerts its influence when, motivated by faith and a sense of religious morality, individuals take action in the secular sphere, and they are able skilfully to adjust to their professionally obtained activities, such as teaching in class or managing the issues of the school.

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