

## SUMMARY: The Evidence for Religious Groups' Contributions to Humanitarian Response

The evidence briefs and further resources for the WHS and beyond can be found on our online information platform: <http://jliflc.com/whs>

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The Joint Learning Initiative on Faith & Local Communities (JLIF&LC) has worked collaboratively with its members and other partners worldwide to collate and review the evidence on local faith communities (LFCs) and religious engagement in humanitarian response. The resulting evidence briefs follow the five core commitments from the UN Secretary General's report "One Humanity,

Shared Responsibility." The briefs contain key messages and actions that provide evidence-based insight into LFCs and religious engagement in humanitarian response for the World Humanitarian Summit (WHS) and beyond. In summary, the key messages of the briefs are presented below with an example of a recommended key action. Further evidence and actions are provided in the full briefs.

<p><b>EVIDENCE BRIEF 1: Engaging faith communities to meet the needs of people living in conflict</b></p>	<p><b>CORE RESPONSIBILITY 1: Global leadership to prevent and end conflict</b></p>
<p><b>Key Evidence</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Analysis highlights the importance of resisting oversimplification of the relationship between religion and conflict and indicates opportunities for both political and religious leaders, as well as for interfaith action.</li> <li>• Through their bonding, bridging, and linking capacities, LFCs can act early and effectively for conflict prevention. They also sustain their engagement for the long term.</li> <li>• Faith actors develop responses and solutions both with and for the people affected.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Exemplar Policy Action</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase religious literacy amongst all actors involved in humanitarian action and use the lessons learnt from multi-faith and interfaith approaches to support engagement across religious and community divisions.</li> </ul>
<p><b>EVIDENCE BRIEF 2: The role of religion in upholding humanitarian and human rights norms</b></p>	<p><b>CORE RESPONSIBILITY 2: Respect Rules of War: Uphold the norms that safeguard humanity</b></p>
<p><b>Key Evidence</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The norms codified in human rights and humanitarian law are also identifiable and upheld within multiple religious traditions.</li> <li>• Religious resources and discourse provide mechanisms to monitor and hold persons accountable for human rights violations.</li> <li>• Faith-based humanitarian actors generally adhere to Core Humanitarian Standards.</li> <li>• In a context of calls for greater localization, all actors – both international and local – need to show greater awareness of barriers to neutrality and impartiality.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Exemplar Policy Action</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Integrate LFCs into a new global watchdog to systematically track and make transparent trends of serious violations in the interests of identifying persistent perpetrators and fighting impunity.</li> <li>• Document lessons learnt and fund further research into faith-based partnerships that advocate for IHL and actively promote their realisation on the ground.</li> </ul>

The **Joint Learning Initiative on Faith & Local Communities** (JLIF&LC) was formed in 2012 as an international collaboration on evidence for faith groups' activities and contribution to community health and wellbeing.

JLIF&LC brings together international humanitarian and development organisations, UN agencies, academic institutions and FBOs and religious bodies for collaboration. Together, these groups generate and communicate robust evidence to policy makers and practitioners to transform the quality, effectiveness, and impact of partnerships between faith groups and the humanitarian and development communities.

JLIF&LC works through Learning Hubs (LH); three Learning Hubs, under the leadership of Alastair Ager, Queen Margaret University, Edinburgh, collaborated in the production of the Briefs: Resilience LH, Gender-Based Violence LH, and Peace and Conflict LH. For more information, and to join a JLIF&LC Learning Hub, please see: [www.jliflc.com](http://www.jliflc.com)

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**EVIDENCE BRIEF 3: LFCs are key actors in empowering and protecting girls and addressing GBV**

**CORE RESPONSIBILITY 3: Leave No One Behind**

**Key Evidence**

- In spite of complex interrelationships between faith, culture and gender, faith actors are making positive differences in prevention of GBV and care of survivors.
- Given their authority and influence in local communities, it is vital to engage with religious leaders for GBV prevention.
- Faith communities can provide practical support to GBV survivors, including counseling, shelter, medical referral, and mobilising and advocating for other key institutions to do the same.

**Exemplar Policy Action**

- Equip religious leaders to respond practically in the implementation of the 'International Protocol on the Documentation and Investigation of Sexual Violence in Conflict' and the Call to Action on Protection from Gender-based Violence in Emergencies.

**EVIDENCE BRIEF 4: Engaging local faith communities for sustainable capacity for prevention and response**

**CORE RESPONSIBILITY 4: Changing people's lives: From delivering aid to ending need**

**Key Evidence**

- LFCs are frequently core to local systems of humanitarian response and resilience to crisis.
- LFCs add value to preparedness and risk reduction strategies by encouraging community action, framing religious narratives to build preparedness and risk reduction, and harnessing their material assets.
- Opportunities for partnership with LFCs in the humanitarian system are often missed, but best practices for more effective engagement are now emerging.

**Exemplar Policy Action**

- Ensure that WHS commitments towards localisation of humanitarian aid include FBOs and LFCs as part of local and national CSOs and NGOs.

**EVIDENCE BRIEF 5: Investing in humanity means supporting LFCs work in reducing the impact of crises**

**CORE RESPONSIBILITY 5: Financing: Invest in Humanity**

**Key Evidence**

- LFCs invest significant resources in risk reduction and crisis response.
- LFCs are the local institutions that can mobilise the public to promote peace and stability.
- New financing mechanisms are required to support these crucial local capacities provided by LFCs.

**Exemplar Policy Action**

- Recognise and support existing LFC investments by improving channels between Zakat – and other mechanisms of financing from religious groups and networks – and the international humanitarian system.