

Terms of Reference (TOR)

for JLI Learning Hub on Mobilisation of Local Faith Communities

January 2018

1. About JLI

The Joint Learning Initiative on Faith and Local Communities (JLI) is an international collaboration on evidence for faith groups' role and contributions to local community health and wellbeing and ending poverty.

Our Vision: Full and appropriate engagement of the capacities of faith groups in community health and well-being through effective partnerships with public sector and secular entities, as well as among faith groups themselves.

Our Goals:

- Build cross-sector, multi-religious, interdisciplinary, collaborative learning platforms to gather robust evidence for capacities, activities and contributions of faith groups
- Understand the drivers of attitude and behavior change for policy makers and practitioners relating to engaging with faith groups
- Deliver smart communication to policymakers and practitioners to transform the quality, and effectiveness of partnerships between faith groups and secular development and humanitarian entities

For more information about JLI Learning Hubs, governance, and information resources please see [the JLI website](#).

2. The Mobilisation of Local Faith Communities Learning Hub

The Mobilization Hub aims to be an active learning community of academics, policy makers and practitioners at the global and local level building action and policy oriented evidence on mobilising local faith communities.¹

Hub Objectives

Evidence and Research

¹ Local faith communities (LFCs) are defined as local faith figures, informal local faith and worship communities, faith networks, local faith-influenced organizations and national faith-influenced organizations.

- Identify gaps in knowledge on effectiveness and methodologies of mobilising local faith communities through landscape or scoping report.
- Collate and gather evidence from members on effective local faith communities (LFC) mobilization methodologies and contributions of LFC to community development and humanitarian needs.
- Commission new action and policy focused research relevant to mobilisation hub shared goals.

Communication and Advocacy:

Communicating, disseminating and utilising findings to support practitioners as well as engage and influence donors and policy makers.

Framing questions for the Hub are listed in the [appendix](#) and will be refined further through the first phase of the Hub.

Any research conducted would be expected to adhere to academic values and principles including respect for academic independence, a focus on academic excellence and an aspiration to develop practical recommendations based on evidence generated by research.

Hub Background

In 2013, the Mobilisation of Local Faith Communities Learning Hub (MLFC Hub) grew out of a learning exchange among diverse faith-based and academic organizations whose work centered around the support and mobilization of local faith communities and their leaders. The initial members of the Hub are [listed on the JLI website](#). Members found that they shared a common goal of building the capacity of local faith communities as agents of change for the wellbeing of their own local communities. They were fascinated to learn about each others' approaches to the work, and the evidence for its effectiveness. New collaborations and partnerships emerged from these initial meetings.

They met for a two day retreat hosted at CAFOD in London and facilitated by Cathy and Rick James to explore their commonalities and differences, and to share information about their activities, impacts and challenges. They developed a collaborative [Theory of Change](#) to examine assumptions about what success looks like and how local faith communities contribute to change; and specifically analyzed the role of faith.

The Hub met again, along with new members, in December 2016 at Trinity College Dublin. for a two day exchange of information about LFC mobilization activities and in depth discussion of evidence. Christo Greyling, World Vision joined Catriona Dejean as Co-Chairs. Members made detailed presentations of their work, feeding a lively learning exchange. In spite of variation in approaches there was tremendous common ground, along with a marked increase in research and program evaluation activities. Detailed information about the December 2016 meeting and presentations [here](#).

The consensus was that the Hub should continue to serve as a platform for learning exchange on the mobilization of LFC, with a focus on evidence.

3. Hub Operations

Leadership

The current co-chairs of the JLI Learning Hub on Mobilisation of Local Faith Communities are:

- [Catriona Dejean](#), Tearfund, Head of Impact and Effectiveness
- [Andrea Kaufmann](#), World Vision International, Director, Faith Partnerships | Faith and Development

Expectations of co-chairs

The Hub chairs guide the learning and sharing amongst the group on an on-going basis and provide leadership for any work outputs from the Hub. Hub co-chairs will participate in periodic evidence review calls with JLI Knowledge Manager and Coordinator. Hub co-chairs are expected to participate in Cross-Hub Learning Exchange calls, and coordinate with other Hub co-chairs to ensure complementarity where possible.

Specific expectations:

- Set strategic **goals and direction** for the Hub. Work with JLI Leadership and members to make sure that the objectives of the Hub are achieved, membership onboarding and work plan is in place
- **Membership:** Suggest key members to assure inclusive group of experts as members of the Hub. Use best efforts to make the Hub relevant and valuable to members so that they will prioritize participation and contribute to a valuable learning exchange
- Lead an active **learning community** by facilitating exchange of information among members; encourage members' contribution to the knowledge base of the Hub, including period presentations of their own work, and sharing of reports and case studies, both published and unpublished, eg research reports, programme evaluations, structured interviews and case studies
- **Communicate** Oversee and encourage quality communication of evidence from the Hub including up to date on-line resources on JLI site, policy briefs, papers, talking points and powerpoint presentations summarizing the best evidence from the Hub. Actively seek opportunities to present the hub work and provide leadership to dissemination of the evidence produced by the Hub to appropriate policy makers, networks, professional gatherings, journals and conferences
- Oversee the development of an ongoing **research strategy** focusing on key gaps in knowledge identified by through the work of the Hub. Identify research partners to lead follow-on research, field partners to collaborate, and potential donors to support the research

Expectations of Membership

JLI Learning Hubs include practitioners, policymakers and academics. Membership of the JLI MLFC Hub is international and open to any member with expertise and interest in evidence for the mobilization of LFCs, from global south and north, drawn from the worlds of academia, policy and practice. It aims to have members from a diverse faiths as well as secular groups [Current members here](#)

Expectations of Members

Learning Hub members will participate as both holders and seekers of evidence in the shaping of the Hub, including the development of research questions, the process of evidence gathering, and providing oversight and contributions to the preparation and editing of the case studies. They also contribute actively to the ongoing learning exchange, sharing their own work and flagging new related resources

Specific expectations:

- **Membership:** Join the MLFC Hub through the [registration form on JLI's website](#). Ensure as far as possible that the most suitable person(s) in their organisation is/are engaging with the Hub, while acknowledging flexibility needed with organisational changes in focus and staff changes.
- **Learning Community:** Share existing learning on key thematic areas (studies, reports, case-studies etc.), through the Hub web page and meetings, and engage with the insights shared by other members . Members are expected to present their own work from time to time to Hub members
- **Communicate:** provide feedback on policy briefs, papers, talking points and powerpoint presentations summarizing the best evidence from the Hub. Seek opportunities to present the hub work and provide leadership to dissemination of the evidence produced by the Hub to appropriate policy makers, networks, professional gatherings, journals and conferences
- **Research:** participate in research identified by Hub. Complete surveys relating to the work of the Hub including to frame the Hub's overarching areas of focus and research questions or circulate calls for submissions and surveys to networks

Hub Member Benefits

- Access to latest evidence
- Ongoing Learning Community & forum for presenting own work and learning from others
- New cross-sector collaborations and partnerships
- Useful communications tools which can be adapted and branded to own work

JLI Support

JLI through its Knowledge Manager (KM) and Coordinator provides support to the MLFC Hub, coordination and linkage to other Hubs and to the JLI Leadership. JLI also provides limited financial support for hub core funds and research assistance for the Scoping report.

Key expectations of KM:

- Coordinate member engagement (emails and surveys)

- Facilitate, and support learning exchange community. This may include but is not limited to JLI discussion forums, tailored hub email communications, and various social media platforms.
- Draft tailored evidence informed talking points, presentation templates, and relevant synthesis formats for review from Hub Leadership
- Manage and ensure accessibility of web resources and dissemination to members and JLI network
- Assist with research funding applications, including serving as financial intermediary where useful

Convening Venues & Hub operations:

- Learning Hubs operate virtually
- Meetings are generally by conference call and Zoom, initially once every two months (TBC), and actively collaborating over a three-year period.
- Hub decisions will be made with the co-chairs and majority member input.
- MLFC Hub will as much as possible ensure complementarity with other JLI Hubs

Hub members use the hub website as a place to share existing learning and collaborate with other members on events, resources etc: lfc.jliflc.com. Communication is through email, but may occasionally post relevant information on the hub website. Hub activities will be conducted in English with materials translated in other languages if necessary.

4. Hub stages

The JLI Learning Hub vary in the length of their operation according to the wishes and energies of the members The MLFC Hub plans to run through the end of 2019 and the stages of a hub are (roughly as follows):

- 1. Case study review:** a review case studies will be conducted of ‘what is out there’ and ‘what is being done’ with regards to local faith communities
- 2. Learning and sharing:** Ongoing learning and sharing of existing analysis, research, debates and evidence relating to key thematic areas and trends within the Hub, to encourage collective learning, dialogue and influence and identify future opportunities for collaboration.
- 3. Research:** based on questions and gaps identified from case studies, funding would be sought for specific projects, each led by an academic partner (not necessarily the Co-Chair). The Hub’s role will be to identify funding opportunities and encourage Hub members to do the same so that research gaps can be addressed. The Hub may also link members from academia, policy and practice in research collaborations, as other JLI Hubs have done in the past.
- 4. Dissemination:** The policy and practice implications of the research would be fed back as learning to members, to digest internally, further other collaboration, and also be used in advocacy to wider policy, practitioner and academic communities.
- 5. Public Outreach:** The broader implications of the research would also be shared widely with interested public audiences, including through media outputs, contributions to online fora, and relevant public events.

6. Hub sustainability: It is anticipated that the Hub will help form partnerships and relationships that would endure beyond its official lifespan. If members so wished, discussions can occur about how to continue such a platform beyond its JLI lifespan.

5. Hub timeframe & outputs (approximate)

Stage 1. Mapping and Case Studies

- TOR finalised
- Members post resources on the web-based Hub page (lfc.jliflc.com)
- Hub PowerPoint presentation developed
- Synthesize and analyse the strengths and weaknesses of case study projects and develop into slides & other useful outputs

Stage 2. Learning and sharing (across the project timeline, 2017-2019)

- Hub continues to meet with members sharing other learning potentially through webinars and new projects at meetings and virtually via website.
- New Hub members continue to join and sharing learning.

Stage 3. Research stage (over course of 2nd & 3rd years of the hub, 2018 - 2020)

- Based on research questions - collaborations / partnerships will be encouraged between potential funders, research institutions and other JLI members, to address these areas and undertake discrete pieces of research. Other members can feed into this in terms of case studies, reviewing, assistance to find funding etc.

Stage 4: Dissemination (over course of 2nd & 3rd years of the hub, 2018-2020)

- JLI Hub on MLFC research is disseminated amongst members and also other external stakeholders.
- Co-Chairs and Hub Members share insights from the mapping & research at public fora
- Paper(s) submitted to peer-reviewed journal. Religious leaders and actors will be consulted to review and endorse key papers.
- Learning is internalised as well as discussed in the hubs.
- Learning is showcased at high level events to inform policy and practitioner discussions.

Appendix I

Themes:

- a) Types of evidence needed, power and politics, local & instrumentalization,
- b) bridging capital (i.e. how LFCs engage with others in the broader community for development goals),
- c) monitoring and evaluation (i.e. how we measure and report on LFC mobilization),
- d) bonding capital (i.e. building the internal capacity of LFCs), and
- e) efficiency and effectiveness (i.e. supporting LFCs to be effective, not just efficient, and how local work can be scaled-up).

Full list of questions can be found [here](#)

Framing questions:

- Is the faith-based approach distinguished by enhanced goals (understanding of **the integrated person**)?
- What is the convening power of theological reflection for social issues?

Community level:

- What do we know about **the interests of LFCs**? What do they say they need?
- How do **politics and power** shape LFC positions locally, as well as dynamics between LFCs and international FBOs?
- What are LFC experiences of **instrumentalization**?
- How do we **communicate** evidence better – both horizontally and vertically and both from FBOs and from LFCs?
- How do we design **learning methods** for LFCs that understand the role of faith, is not extractive, and generates information that is useful to communities?
- What is the **cost/benefit** of working with LFCs? What is it specifically about LFCs that can enhance impact and, equally, what are examples of weaknesses of LFCs?

Organisational level:

- What works and what does not work for **organisational processes** and building and using theories of change?
- Does mobilisation help **sustainability**?

System wide:

- How does the JLI MLFC Hub support points of interaction to **strategically identify examples from the organisational and local to bring to the global**?
- What is the best approach to **operationalizing accompaniment**? Different models are currently used: 1) intervention (equipping communities to deliver); 2) church mobilisation and theories of change; 3) Channels of Hope (church mobilisation *and* some more theological reflection); 4) equipping and mobilizing the community through political organizing; 5) leaving people alone.