

JOINT LEARNING INITIATIVE *on*
FAITH & LOCAL COMMUNITIES

PaRD International Partnership on
Religion and Sustainable Development



(c) Arigatou International



FAITH ACTORS' INVOLVEMENT
PREVENTION, ELIMINATION AND
PERPETUATION OF ENDING VIOLENCE
AGAINST CHILDREN

SEPTEMBER 4

AGENDA

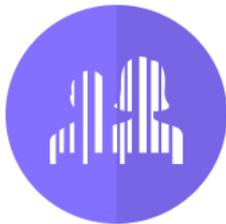
Introduction to Faith and Ending Violence Against Children Hub
– **Robyn Hagan**, World Vision International, JLI EVAC Hub Co-chair

Scoping Study Researchers

- **Carola Eyber**, Queen Margaret University and JLI EVAC Academic Co-Chair
- **Selina Palm**, Stellenbosch University
- **Q&A**
- **Discussion and next steps**

JLI LEARNING HUBS

Learning Hubs are dedicated to convening multi-sector collaborations increasing the **evidence of faith engagement** to inform and improve policy and practice between faith groups, humanitarian, and development communities



ANTI-
TRAFFICKING &
MODERN SLAVERY



ENDING VIOLENCE
AGAINST
CHILDREN



GENDER-BASED
VIOLENCE



REFUGEES

ENDING VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN LEARNING HUB CO-CHAIRS



- Carola Eyber, Queen Margaret University
- Rebeca Rios-Kohn, Arigatou International
- Robyn Hagan, World Vision International
- Neelam Fida, Islamic Relief Worldwide

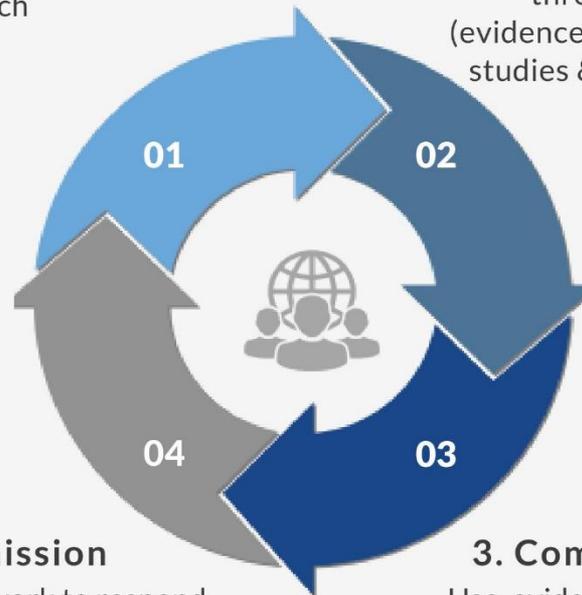
JOIN THE JLI EVAC HUB

1. Convene

Bring together experts from policy, practice, and research

2. Collect

Gather evidence on faith-based engagement through scoping (evidence review, case studies & interviews)



4. Commission

Joint hub work to respond to research gaps and collaborate on research

3. Communicate

Use evidence to inform and improve policy and practice

ENDING VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN SCOPING STUDY OVERVIEW



Dr. Carola Eyber
Queen Margaret University



Dr. Selina Palm
Stellenbosch University

Reasons for the EVAC Hub

- Religious communities are often at the forefront of the care and protection of children - care for children is a foundational focus for nearly all religious traditions (Robinson & Hanmer, 2014)
- Faith & religion is a spiritual resource for overcoming the effects of violence, abuse and marginalisation
- Religious actors can play critical roles in behavior change, service delivery, referral pathways and advocacy (Robinson & Hanmer, 2014) - tremendous moral and spiritual influence and vast networks
- Contributions of faith actors at the grassroots level are often undocumented
- Omission of religion or religious actors in the mass of documents on EVAC – secular/religious CP divide?
- Faith actors are also involved in perpetrating violence against children – Kyoto Declaration (2006)

Research aims:



1. The unique contributions of faith communities both in relation to ***ending***, as well as ***contributing*** to, violence against children, to understand their involvement in this sphere
2. The role and involvement of faith actors in formal and informal child protection systems to understand the potential for increased engagement



JLI ENDING VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN LEARNING HUB

Faith actors' involvement in the prevention, elimination and perpetuation of violence against children

LITERATURE REVIEW



JLI ENDING VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN LEARNING HUB

Faith actors' involvement in the prevention, elimination and perpetuation of violence against children

CASE STUDIES



JLI ENDING VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN LEARNING HUB

Faith actors' involvement in the prevention, elimination and perpetuation of violence against children

Findings from Experts Consultation (KII)



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April 2019

Collated by the Joint Learning Initiative on Faith and Local Communities

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April 2019

Selina Palm

JOINT LEARNING INITIATIVE on FAITH & LOCAL COMMUNITIES



TWO BRIEFS: RELEASED 4TH SEPTEMBER

Brief 1

A mixed blessing: the roles of faith communities in ending violence against children

Brief 2

Why faith? Engaging faith mechanisms to end violence against children



A MIXED BLESSING: ROLES OF FAITH COMMUNITIES IN ENDING VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN

SEPTEMBER 2019



BACKGROUND

This is one brief in a series of two¹ on faith-based action to end violence against children globally. These briefs are intended for faith actors, development practitioners, policymakers, and donors. Both briefing papers summarise key findings from a 2018 scoping study commissioned by the Ending Violence against Children (EVAC) Hub of the Joint Learning Initiative for Local Faith Communities.

This three-stage process reviewed academic and grey literature, called for case-study submissions, and carried out direct consultations with practice-based experts in this field. 172 documents were reviewed, 6 case studies were collated, and 14 experts were interviewed. The study explored the contributions of faith communities to ending violence against children² and their roles in wider child protection systems. It was published as a compendium of three interdependent reports in June 2019.³ The study adopted a multi-faith lens and covered a range of geographic regions and faiths as well as interviewing experts within Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Jewish, and Muslim contexts. Senior researchers in two collaborating academic institutions in the Global North and South conducted the work.

This brief highlights the potential and current roles faith communities play in responding to violence against children, as well as critically analysing some of the challenges for faith communities that emerged from the scoping study. Finally, it shares key issues for practice and policy, and recommendations for future research.

KEY FINDINGS

1. Faith communities are critical actors in ending violence against children. Faith leaders provide support to families and children and engage formal child protection systems locally, nationally, regionally, and internationally. They have crucial roles to play in the prevention and referral of child abuse cases.
2. Faith communities can also be complicit in and perpetrate forms of violence against children. They have a responsibility to publicly acknowledge and challenge this in all its forms.
3. Some faith communities assign children to a position of inferiority in comparison to adults, with fewer social rights and less legal protection. This is a root cause of violence against children. The contribution of faith communities in perpetuating these norms needs to be recognised and challenged.
4. Child participation is a key mechanism for sustainably changing these norms. This requires faith responses to move away from rescue and rehabilitation approaches to child-centred approaches that link protection and participation, as well as equipping children as active agents.
5. Secular and faith actors need to collaborate to develop comprehensive, multisectoral responses, build trust, and avoid the instrumentalisation of faith actors.
6. Violence against children takes on new forms constantly and its interrelated nature means faith communities need to understand and engage with some of the hidden and emerging forms of violence against children, if they are to be effective actors in prevention and response.

Brief 1: A mixed blessing: roles of faith communities in ending violence against children

How Faith Communities contribute to EVAC:

Emphasising Religious Beliefs and Traditions that Reduce Violence Against Children - with parents, in congregations & communities

Responding to Violence Against Children:

- Provide important, informal roles to bridge the gap between a child and the formal system
- Form a safety net for children who may fall through other systems of care
- Play a role in building resilience in children over many years as a regular presence in childhood
- Hold an ongoing role with perpetrators regarding counselling and accountability
- Work at all levels of engagement to prevent and respond to violence against children, from the level of the child, family, community, institution, and national/international advocacy

“Many religious leaders have moral standing, power and influence in their communities, and are also in touch with people throughout their lifespan. They often have access to isolated communities not served by others. Most also profess respect for the human dignity of the child, compassion, equality, justice and non-violence. These values are incompatible with violence against children and can form a unifying base for working towards ending violence against children”

(Female, Interfaith, global remit)

“We cannot be all things to all people, you cannot rescue every vulnerable person, every child with a disability, or that has been abused, we cannot do everything”

(Male, Christian, United Kingdom).

“They [religious leaders] are doing great works in faith communities ...but they need more capacity, as most of them are doing it from their experience...(t)hey will refer to the Bible...but they also need to know that there are cases they need to refer to other stakeholders...to know their countries’ laws about child abuse and neglect “

(Male, Christian, Tanzania)

Ignoring, covering-up and perpetrating violence

- Sexual abuse in religious institutions
- Justification of physical violence against children
- Covering up abuse perpetrated by faith actors (at all levels)
- Lack of awareness, knowledge, skills, resources as well as intentional to protect faith communities
- Faith-related child abuse (abusive application of demon possession-related practices, child sacrifice etc.)
- **BUT** also through the ways in which certain faith beliefs are interpreted, e.g. corporal punishment, early marriage etc.

Where are children in all of this?

1. Children are often designated as inferior to adults with fewer social rights and less legal protection = a root cause of VAC - needs to be recognised and understood by faith communities
2. Faith responses need to move away from a “rescue and rehabilitation approach” to EVAC which sees children only as helpless victims in need of adult assistance rather than also as active agents in their own right
3. Child participation & empowerment in faith communities forms a mechanism to challenge and combat violence against children

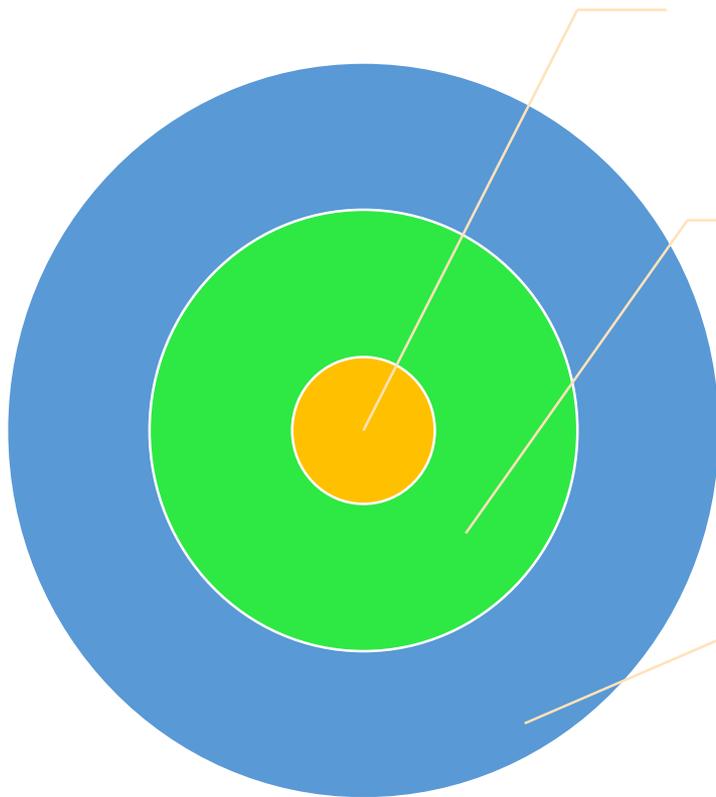
= participate fully and to be taken seriously as spiritual beings equally valued and respected

Brief 2: Why faith? Engaging the mechanisms of faith to end violence against children

- **1.** Faith communities' have potential to promote, challenge, and re-interpret religious beliefs and practices that contribute to violence against children, particularly those with a spiritual foundation or basis in religious texts.
- **2.** Faith traditions often mandate practical social action and service in relation to children, especially within education, care, and social support.
- **3.** Protective religious beliefs around care and protection of children in faith traditions can be harnessed to accelerate ending violence against children.
- **4.** Faith leaders must deal explicitly and constructively with entrenched harmful faith beliefs used to justify or underpin abusive adult/child hierarchies.
- **5.** Faith leaders must break the culture of silence and secrecy on hidden practices of child abuse and maltreatment within religious institutions and families and take steps toward preventative action.
- **6.** Faith actors should seek, where appropriate, to work with intra-faith, interfaith and wider child protection systems to prioritise child's best interests.

A unique contribution?

Spiritual capital - faith traditions uniquely draw on and engage faith resources and authority - through prayer, sermons, sacred texts and religious rituals. This can help transform beliefs and practices that underpin child maltreatment, reaffirming religious imperatives for protection and prevention and stand against moral normalisation or silencing of abuse.



Social capital - faith actors bring social influence, organisations, funds, buildings, people and motivation to ending violence against children. However, they are used by secular actors as instrumentally valuable only. This involves limited or no engagement with spiritual dimensions

Access capital - faith leaders as initial gatekeepers to local communities. Employed in token, one off ways by child related services to 'open the gate' only. They are not seen to play ongoing positive roles in ending violence against children. May be seen as a liability.

Critical issues



The interrelated nature of violence against children – multiple & intersectional vulnerabilities & marginalisation

Hidden forms of violence: children as perpetrators of violence; LGBT+ adolescents; online & digital violence; faith-related child abuse;

Gaps in our knowledge:

- Rigorous documentation of EVAC initiatives across multiple faiths
- Faith leaders & their role in CP systems
- Mutually respectful engagement & expertise between faith & other CP actors – how best to facilitate this

Going forward

- Local faith communities form important first responders at community and family levels – they need to be equipped to respond appropriately which requires meaningful partnerships with other sectors
- Involving children directly as participants was identified as a key part of many promising approaches at community level
- Increasing religious literacy of child protection sector
- Forms of EVAC that are being ignored: peer-to-peer, LGBT+, faith-related violences
- Limits of a Scoping Study: ‘mapping,’ a process of summarizing a range of evidence in order to convey the breadth and depth of a field, identify gaps
 - and there are many!

“What should not be taken away from the negative examples of religious practice is the polarized view that all religion (or a particular faith tradition or denomination) is harmful for children...For every disclosure of a priest or pastor found to have sexually abused children within their communities, there is a Christian medical professional or paraprofessional healing, rehabilitating, and comforting peoplewho are ailing and dying. As Islamic extremists are attacking girls attending school, there are imams in Afghanistan promoting girls’ enrollment and allowing mosques to be used as classrooms and centers for children’s activities. Although some Buddhist monks are wreaking violence on Muslim communities in Myanmar by killing, maiming, and displacing women and children, there are Buddhist monks throughout Southeast Asia taking orphans into the temples for food, care, and education and reaching out to the sick and the vulnerable in their communities”

(Robinson and Hanmer 2014 p.601)



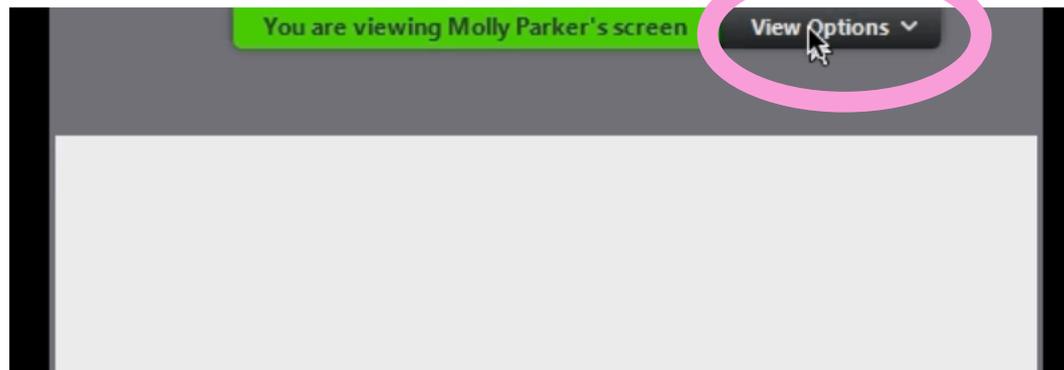
Q&A: CLARIFY RESEARCH FINDINGS

DISCUSSION

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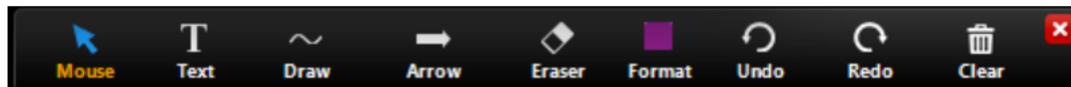
2. Click **Annotate**.



3. This will open the annotation tools.

4. Close the annotation tools at any time by clicking the X in the annotation tool bar.

Annotation Tools





I. WHAT RESONATED MOST FOR YOU?



WHAT DO YOU WANT TO LEARN MORE ABOUT?

WHAT'S NEXT?

18 MONTHS LEARNING SERIES: POTENTIAL THEMES

Poll: What webinar topics would you be interested in?

1. Faith communities addressing the contextual drivers of VAC (including family breakdown, GBV)
2. The use of 'spiritual capital' to end violence against children
3. Faith actors meaningfully engaging children (Child Participation and Protection)
4. Neglected/ignored forms of VAC
5. Interfaith initiatives for child protection
6. Faith actors as first responders to VAC (e.g., psychosocial support from faith perspective; recognizing, reporting, referring & preventing)
7. Faith institutions and their safeguarding approaches
8. Bridging secular/faith divides (countering instrumentalization of faith communities to assure sustainable partnerships that work for children; bridging gaps between local & national level advocacy)