



**Joint Learning Initiative
on Faith & Local Communities**
Strengthening Evidence-Based Faith Engagement

2023 ANNUAL REPORT



MESSAGE FROM BOARD CHAIR



Dear Friends,

On behalf of the Board of Directors I am delighted to introduce another Annual Report on what has been a bold and brave year for the Joint Learning Initiative.

Our learning network is anchored in the experience of grassroots leaders across international regions, which draws on specialist input from researchers and practitioners in the field of religions in development. Collectively, we continue to witness the critical issues of

extreme poverty and climate change in a complex and contested global landscape. JLI's work with its members recognizes the interconnectedness of these challenges. We collect and share knowledge and learnings as evidence evolves, bringing impact to the work of faith communities as they implement solutions to address the issues.

UN data indicate that despite significant progress in reducing global poverty rates, millions still live in extreme poverty, lacking access to basic necessities such as food, clean water, and healthcare. The escalating climate crisis poses a threat to both human well-being and environmental sustainability. JLI's need to advocate for an integrated approach that recognizes the linkages between local movements and local faith communities to end poverty reduction and climate action is now. Building on work grounded in 2022 and 2024, the Board Directors aligned JLI's strategy to focus on JLI's State of the Evidence and Fair and Equitable efforts as strategies to strengthen partnerships between local faith actors, governments, religious and international organizations.

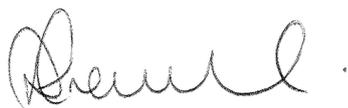
Responding to the call to decolonize development, we are prioritizing localized programme design work that promotes the lived experience as research equity to advance the SDGs into the next generation. With the

urgency of environmental chaos, we cannot wait for another generation to pass. JLI will continue to partner with existing and new members to pursue collaborative approaches, multilateral cooperation, and innovative solutions for a more equitable and sustainable future for all.

Thank you as ever to my fellow board members for their continued efforts to ensure that JLI faithfully works towards its vision and purpose.

We especially thank Kirsten Laursen Muth, who stepped down in June 2023. Kirsten gave three years of faithful, supportive and creative leadership as CEO. We are extremely thankful to Maurice A. Bloem who, in August 2023, stepped into the role of Interim President/CEO with the extraordinary support of the Church World Service Executive Leadership team.

Dionne Gravesande
Board Chair

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dionne Gravesande", followed by a period.

ABOUT JLI

JLI VISION

We are a learning and evidence network of researchers and practitioners. We build fair and equitable spaces to create and share evidence on religions in development and community work. We are dedicated to strengthening partnerships between and amongst faith and non-faith actors, internationally and locally.

Our Goals

- **Fair & Equitable Approach:** By embedding fair and equitable approaches across all our research, evidence, learning and partnerships, JLI is actively challenging asymmetries of power in knowledge and evidence within religions and development.
- **REAL (Research, Evidence, Accountability & Learning):** JLI is a leading global provider of research, evidence, learning and capacity sharing that strengthens practical religious engagement strategies for faith and development actors, both locally and globally.
- **Member & Network Engagement:** JLI is recognized as a broad network of diverse international and local (faith) actors, researchers and practitioners, providing a platform for intersectoral and multi-stakeholder engagement that advances religion and development knowledge and learning.

JLI NETWORK

We are a global multi-faith and multi-sector network. We have members from local and international, faith-based and secular development and community organizations, religious networks and academic institutions.

Today, the JLI network has more than 1100 members from 106 countries.

JLI TEAM



Maurice A. Bloem,
Interim President/CEO



Dr. Olivia Wilkinson,
Director of Research



Rima Alshawkani,
Finance & Operations
Director



Sadia Kidwai,
Fair & Equitable
Coordinator



Dr. Jennifer Philippa
Eggert, Senior Research
Fellow



Florine De Wolf,
Programme Associate



Melissa Crutchfield,
FPCC Global Manager
Joined June 2023



Alejandra Albizu, FPCC
Coordinator Latin America
& Caribbean Region
Joined May 2023



Alvin Andanje, FPCC
Coordinator Africa Region



Noor Ur Rehman, FPCC
Coordinator South Asia
Region
Joined May 2023



Gabrielle Matlock,
Fellowship Program
Manager



Mira Neaimeh, Middle East
Regional Coordinator
Joined June 2023



Hannah Ekekwe,
Communications Specialist
Joined October 2023



Kirsten L. Muth,
JLI CEO
Through June 2023



Zainab Chamoun
Middle East Regional
Coordinator
Through March 2023

MESSAGE FROM INTERIM PRESIDENT/CEO



Dear Friends,

In these times of unprecedented challenges, the world finds itself at a pivotal moment. Now more than ever, the urgent work of the Joint Learning Initiative on Faith and Local Communities underscores the pressing need for humanity to come together in action against the backdrop of a global polycrisis. As we navigate this complex web of interconnected crises, the barriers to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals become more daunting.

Yet, our collective duty remains: to nurture both humanity and our planet. JLI strengthens the connection between religion and development— and our work has never been more critical. It reflects our conviction that embracing a multitude of perspectives not only deepens our understanding but also enhances the impact of our work.

We are not merely building a network. We nurture a vibrant global community united by a dedication to explore and enrich the intersection of religion and development. It is a place where the diversity of thought and belief is not just welcomed but valued deeply, contributing to the expansion of our collective insights and the enhancement of our collaborative impact. Our goal is to create an environment where each member—whether staff, partners, or supporters—feels a profound sense of belonging and is recognized for their contributions. We forge connections that respect the essence of every individual and each community. Through equitable, fair, and inclusive collaboration, we seek to discover paths that resonate with the aspirations and values of our community members, enabling them to engage to the extent they choose. This approach reflects the true spirit of a

community: a place where individuals are acknowledged for their strengths and knowledge, supported by a network of solidarity that strengthens our collective resolve to address global challenges.

Our journey, as depicted in this annual report, highlights the significant progress made by our hubs and the valuable insights derived from the State of the Evidence report, among other accomplishments. These successes shine as beacons of hope, demonstrating the transformative potential of faith-informed approaches. Investment in JLI's work is as critical as the work itself. The more we learn and amplify the power of working with faith actors in the humanitarian space, we can significantly contribute to ensuring that all human beings will have voice, choice and agency. Facing these challenges, we are reminded of the importance of solidarity and the power of our united vision. Thus, this report is not merely a recount of our past efforts but a rallying cry for increased collaboration and support. Our goal is not just to sustain but to broaden the scope and depth of JLI's impact.

As we move forward, let us be inspired by the core principles of spirituality that underpin our mission: the belief in the power of unity, the strength of faith, and the infinite possibilities of collective action. To all our staff, partner organizations, and supporters—your steadfast commitment, generosity, and faith in our cause form the foundation of our success. Your engagement energizes our determination to push forward, to innovate, and to continue making a meaningful difference in a world in dire need of healing and hope.

With gratitude and solidarity,

Maurice A. Bloem
Interim President/CEO

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Maurice Bloem". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, stylized "B" at the end.

FAIR & EQUITABLE APPROACH

In 2023, we expanded our work on the Fair & Equitable Approach, which seeks to transform JLI's research and partnerships by challenging unjust power dynamics in knowledge production in religions and development.

This year we continued to support the work of JLI's existing Regional Learning Hubs in East Africa, Syria, and the Middle East, as well as supporting the establishment of two new Regional Hubs in South East Asia and Southern Africa. JLI also began work on creating a set of Guiding Principles for a Fair & Equitable JLI - a framework for implementing fair and equitable practices across the JLI.



East Africa Hub on Governance, Peacebuilding, and Local Faith Actors

Hub Leadership



John Okanga
(TAABCO, Kenya)



Professor Fredrick Ogenga
(Peacemaker Corps
Foundation Kenya)

In January 2023, the co-chairs of the East Africa Hub, John Okanga and Professor Fredrick Ogenga took part in the Hidden Peacebuilders Network research planning and networking meeting in Bujumbura, Burundi. During the meeting, they presented the work of the East Africa Hub, receiving valuable feedback and strengthening networks with colleagues from East Africa, Europe, Latin America, South and South East Asia.

In May 2023, the East Africa hub held an online roundtable for Hub members exploring the role of religious communities in post-election reconciliation in Kenya. Hub members Dr. Seith Abeka (University of Nairobi), Nyambura Mundia (Usawa Inc.) and Siyama Ismail (The Muslim Centre for Peace and Reconciliation) opened the conversation by sharing their experiences working with Christian and Muslim communities in Kenya during recent political instabilities. Hub members were then invited to share their experiences of the issues across the region.

Alvin Andanje (JLI's FPCC Coordinator, Africa Region) was in attendance and summarized many of the key points addressed during the session in [a blog post on the JLI website.](#)

Throughout 2023, the East Africa Hub continued to collaborate on the Hub's first scoping study report "Bridging the Gaps: The Work and Evidence Generation of Faith Actors on Peacebuilding and Governance in East Africa". In preparation for publication, and in line with JLI's commitment to fair, equitable and participatory research methodologies, the East Africa Hub will convene a series of Listening Dialogues in early 2024 to facilitate discussion among Hub members about the report's findings, prior to publication of the report in 2024.



Two happy women in a garden. Image Courtesy of Church World Service



Middle East Hub on Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability, and Learning (MEAL) and Faith

Hub Leadership



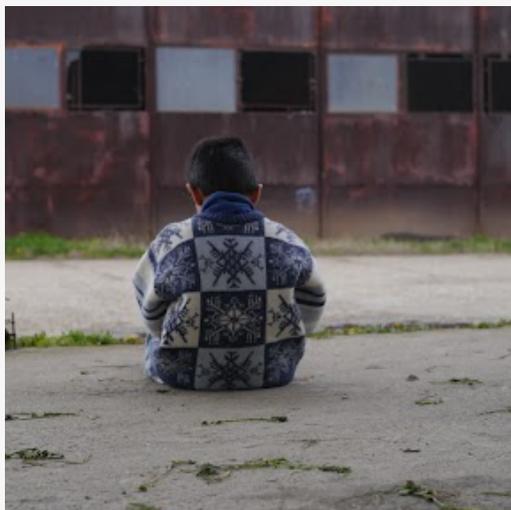
Ana Maria Daou
(Adyan Foundation,
Lebanon)



Dr Mohammad Abo-Hilal
(Syria Bright Future, Syria)

The Hub experienced several challenges in 2023, such as the catastrophic earthquake in Türkiye and Syria in February 2023, as well as the outbreak of the Israel/Gaza war and the bombing of southern Lebanon by Israel from October 2023 onwards, all of which affected several Hub members and disrupted plans for an in-person Hub meeting in 2023. The Hub's activities were also affected by the departure of JLI's previous Middle East Regional Coordinator, Zainab Chamoun, in early 2023.

However, in June 2023 JLI welcomed a new Middle East Regional Coordinator, Mira Neaimeh, who, like Zainab, has extensive knowledge and experience of working with faith actors in the region.



Child sitting alone in a refugee camp. Image Courtesy of JLI Interim President/CEO Maurice Bloem

Working with the Middle East Hub co-chairs, Ana Maria Daou and Dr. Mohammad Abo Hilal, JLI has worked to resume planning for the Hub and connect with actors and practitioners in the region as they explore how MEAL is practiced in partnership with faith actors.

In October 2023, the Middle East Hub held a virtual meeting where members were able to reconnect with each other and the Hub leadership.

The meeting showcased a summary of previous achievements, as well as the current and future aspirations of the Hub. Hub members also discussed the achievements and activities of their respective organizations during the past period. Members welcomed the new coordinator, as well as the continuation of the hub's activities for the benefits it holds for each one of them personally as well as the organizations they represent. It was agreed during the meeting to keep our regular meeting once every two months to ensure communication and cohesion between hub members.

A second meeting took place on 22 December, which hub members used to update each other about their current situation and activities and to plan for the hub's first practice guide on MEAL and faith in the Middle East.

Plans are now underway for the first in-person Hub meeting to take place in Istanbul in February 2024.



Portrait of a Bedouin woman in Petra, Jordan. Photo by Joel Carillet.



Syria Hub on Mental Health & Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) & Culture

Hub Leadership



Dr Mohammad Abo-Hilal
(Syria Bright Future, Syria)



Dr Jennifer Philippa Eggert
(JLI, United Kingdom)

The Syria Hub (as well as the Middle East Hub) faced severe disruption in early 2023 as JLI's partners in the region were affected by the 6 February earthquake. Fortunately, all of our colleagues survived however several of them were displaced and others were exposed to new layers of trauma and grief. After a break of several weeks, the Hub resumed activities.

By the end of May, the hub completed its second research capacity-sharing project. The project focused on culturally adapted and faith-sensitive MHPSS interventions for Syrian communities. The project's findings were shared in an international webinar and a workshop aimed at Syrian practitioners. [“Culturally Sensitive Mental Health and Psychosocial Support \(MHPSS\) in the Syrian Context: Findings Of a Research Capacity-Sharing Project”](#) a policy paper written jointly by the JLI and Syria Bright Future (SBF) summarizes the key findings of the research.

JLI and SBF completed a further two hub publications in 2023: [an annotated bibliography on MHPSS, Culture and Faith in Syrian Communities](#), and [a report on the outcome of the listening dialogues](#) held by the Hub in Türkiye and Syria in 2022.

In June 2023, Senior Research Fellow Dr Jennifer Philippa Eggert presented the hub's work at the Annual Meeting of the Alliance for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action, in a session on 'Supporting children on the move through community-based, faith-sensitive responses for MHPSS'. On 5 October, Jennifer presented two research capacity-building initiatives of the

JLI, including the work of the Syria Hub, at a session focusing on capacity-building, refugees and faith. Later that month, on 25 October, Jennifer and hub co-chair Dr. Mohammad Abo Hilal presented the Syria hub approach at a session on MHPSS, refugees and faith.

South East Asia Hub on Humanitarian Response, Human Trafficking, and Faith

In 2023, JLI partnered with the International Network of Engaged Buddhists (INEB) and the Spirit in Education Movement (SEM) in Thailand to establish a new Hub examining the role of faith actors in responding to migration and human trafficking at the Thai-Myanmar border.

In March 2023, INEB and SEM facilitated a Listening Dialogue at a Buddhist temple in the border town of Mae Sot, bringing together members of the temple (including the Abbott, various monks, and novices, some of whom were displaced children from Myanmar placed by their families at the temple for safety), as well as local civil society organizations and humanitarian practitioners.



*Listening Dialogue for the Southeast Asia Hub
(Thailand, March 2023)*

Participants reflected on the need for greater coordination between faith actors who were providing front-line services to displaced children, and humanitarian and civil society actors.

Following the Listening Dialogue, INEB and SEM expanded their network of faith actor and humanitarian partners working collaboratively with the Buddhist temple in Mae Sot, with plans for further Listening Dialogues, and creative documentation (such as storytelling and videos) planned for 2024.

Southern Africa Hub on Religion and Gender-Based Violence

In 2023, JLI worked together with our member, Speak One Voice International (SOVI), to establish a Regional Hub focused on Religion and Gender-Based Violence (GBV) in Malawi and Zambia. Drawing on JLI's State of the Evidence in Religions and Development Report from 2022, SOVI identified a need for locally-led and culturally-relevant research on religion and GBV in Southern Africa.

With JLI's support, SOVI convened a series of six Listening Dialogues across Zambia and Malawi over the course of 2023, engaging with GBV practitioners, religious leaders, and survivors of GBV. The Listening Dialogues invited participants to share their experiences of GBV, the extent to which religious institutions addressed GBV in their local communities, and what they felt the research or learning needs on GBV were.



Participants of the Lusaka Listening Dialogue for the Southern Africa Hub (Zambia, July 2023)

Following the completion of the Listening Dialogues in November 2023, SOVI and JLI developed plans for further research to be conducted on GBV and religion in Southern Africa, as well as to establish an Institute for Gender, Religion and Development in 2024.

Guiding Principles for a Fair & Equitable JLI

Following a series of consultations with JLI staff, consultants, Board members, and Leadership Council members, JLI developed a comprehensive set of guiding principles aimed at integrated fair and equitable practices across JLI's work. The Guiding Principles provide both practical and aspirational guidelines on how JLI can become more fair and equitable in its research and knowledge work, engagement with members and partners, communications, and organizational culture. JLI aims to publish the Guiding Principles in 2024.

ACTIVE GLOBAL LEARNING HUBS



Conflict Transformation Hub

In February 2023, after a three-month research capacity sharing project on Preventing Violent Extremism (PVE), conflict, peace, faith and youth, JLI launched the Conflict Transformation Hub. With a strong research capacity-sharing focus, the Hub brings together practitioners and activists working on peace, conflict and faith in their communities, allowing them to network, update each other about relevant research, and plan joint activities.

On 5 May, hub members Ali Raza Khan (Pakistan) and Khadija Tirha (Italy) spoke about the hub's work at a panel JLI held with the Hidden Peacebuilders Network at PeaceCon, organized by the Alliance for Peacebuilding.

In September, the Hub, previously working on an invite-only basis decided to open up to a broader membership and, in October, the Conflict Transformation Hub held its first open meeting with plans for regular meetings going forward. Existing members presented about the Hub's existing work and were joined by new members and friends from research and practice.



Woman standing in front of a community. Image Courtesy of Church World Service.



Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning (MEAL) Hub

In 2023, the Global MEAL and Faith hub went through a change of leadership with Dan Williams (HOPE International) and Asaad Taha (Islamic Relief USA) stepping down from their roles. We welcomed Konul Vazirova Kangarli (Islamic Relief USA), Michelle Garred (Ripple Peace Research and Consulting) and Mukunda Adhikari (Transform Aid International and University of Technology Sydney) as new hub co-chairs.

Throughout the year, the Hub held a series of events on creative faith-sensitive MEAL and research methods. In March, Dr Michelle Lokot (London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine Warwick) spoke about decolonial feminist approaches to MEAL. In July, Dr Wanda Casillas (Claremont Graduate University) shared how Culturally Responsive Evaluation (CRE) provides a way of understanding how culture influences us as diverse MEAL practitioners. A third session was planned for December, with co-chair Mukunda Adhikari to speak on bottom-up project co-design, however this was postponed to early 2024.



Refugees & Forced Migration Hub

Between October and December 2023, the Refugee and Forced Migration Hub convened a series of roundtables exploring themes that intersect with religions, faith actors, and forced migration. Members shared practice and research on the experiences of faith actors in capacity sharing, mental health and psychosocial support, and social cohesion work for refugees and forced migrants. Speakers shared examples from different faith and cultural communities across Latin America and the Caribbean, Burundi, South Africa, Lebanon, Europe, Egypt, Iraq and Syria. The sessions were followed by discussions of possible research collaboration between present members.

RESEARCH, LEARNING AND KNOWLEDGE PARTNERSHIPS

Faith and Positive Change for Children, Families and Communities (FPCC)

Faith and Positive Change for Children, Families and Communities (FPCC) is a collaboration between UNICEF, Religions for Peace and JLI which aims to strengthen interfaith and faith-secular efforts at influencing positive social and behavioural changes of the most marginalised children, families, and communities globally in order to improve child wellbeing. In 2023, FPCC saw a number of global developments.



- **JLI signed two new agreements with UNICEF:** one with the UNICEF Latin America and Caribbean Office (LACRO) and one with the Global HQ to cover the regions of South Asia (SAR), East and Southern Africa (ESAR) and West and Central Africa (WCAR). Both agreements are currently active and scheduled to end on April 30, 2024.
- **Three FPCC Regional Coordinators and an FPCC Global Manager were hired** in May and June as the core partners of the FPCC Initiative felt more regional representation would be helpful in ensuring progress on numerous deliverables.
- **Stocktaking:** The end of 2023 marked five years since the inception of FPCC. It was agreed that there was a need to gain an overview of achievements and an analysis of strengths and weaknesses in the work so far. JLI conducted a 'stocktaking' assessment and, during Q4 2023, launched three surveys designed to collect insights from individuals involved with the FPCC. Information from the surveys was used to plan an in-person hybrid two-day event in Nairobi, Kenya in January of 2024, the outcome of which will create a foundation for the future of the FPCC moving forward.

WESTERN, CENTRAL, EASTERN AND SOUTHERN AFRICA

A Multi-Faith Action Coordination Committees (MFACCs) survey was conducted to determine the level of MFACCs operationalization in Africa. The findings of the survey pointed towards a need for:

1. Additional support to MFACCs to ensure active participation at the country level in terms of resources and capacity building,
2. UNICEF country offices to actively participate in MFACC activities to build legitimacy at the country levels,
3. Increased Mind Heart Dialogue (MHD) training to ensure the approach is well embedded in MFACC activities,
4. Further mobilization and activation of FBOs to participate at the country level, and
5. Streamlined and frequent communication at all levels to enhance stakeholder participation.

The region conducted an annual Mind-Heart Dialogue (MHD) monitoring survey during the spring to document its implementation status in Africa. It was found that the MHD approach has been widely adopted for its unique delivery style and viability in equipping facilitators with necessary skills and tools. It was also found that there is a need for continuous capacity building with requests for increased training of country facilitators and mentorship being highlighted.

Together with the African Council of Religious leaders (ACRL), MHD facilitators in Uganda were supported with resources to roll out community dialogues and report on their experiences. While most of the facilitators had been equipped with skills, a limiting factor was that they were held behind by a lack of funds to hold dialogues in their respective spaces.

JLI, together with its regional training partner CORAT coordinated with ACRL to roll out in-person MHD refresher training in Zambia, South Sudan, Malawi, Sierra Leone and Burkina Faso. This provided an opportunity to further gather feedback on MHD implementation, expose facilitators to aspects of the reviewed MHD guide and develop action plans for the year 2024.

SOUTH ASIA

FPCC South Asia held its Regional Advisory Group (RAG) Workshop of Faith Actors for Child Rights and Well-Being, enhancing collaboration and positive change for adolescent girls on 13-15 August, 2023 in Colombo, Sri Lanka. A [report on the RAG meeting](#) was published to the JLI resource library.



South Asia RAG Workshop (Sri Lanka, August 2023)

The Region hosted its Mind-Heart Dialogue Training of Trainers (Regional MHD TOT) in Kathmandu, Nepal from November 27 - December 1, 2023. Organized and facilitated by partner and regional training institute Sarvodaya, the MHD TOT trained 34 trainers from eight countries in South Asia in partnership with UNICEF and Religions for Peace. Preliminary joint action planning was begun for the national rollout of FPCC. These national action plans are expected to include formation of Multi-Faith Action Coordination Committees for Children (MFACCs), national Mind Heart Dialogue facilitators training & MEAL Framework Rollout in eight countries of South Asia (India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Bhutan, Maldives, Bangladesh and Afghanistan). The national action plans will be implemented throughout 2024.



MHD TOT (Nepal, November 2023)

LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

A mapping exercise was conducted with a methodology designed to deepen knowledge on the work on children's rights carried out by FBOs in Latin America and the Caribbean. A series of virtual National Sessions were conducted with partners in El Salvador, Guatemala, the Dominican Republic and Brazil to discuss the information gathered through the survey as well as the preliminary mapping activities done in 2022. The mapping process faced some difficulties including a lack of response from some regional actors and partners and the ongoing political, social and health crisis in Haiti that made it nearly impossible to reach faith actors in the country. Despite the challenges, this second mapping exercise succeeded in gathering a significant amount of new and useful information regarding the focus of the FBOs' regional work.

A Regional Planning Committee was established with participation of UNICEF Regional Social and Behaviour Change (SBC), Religions for Peace, JLI and Arigatou. This committee has met on a regular basis to draft versions of a concept note for the Regional Forum. It has also convened meetings with global staff of the above mentioned organizations to find common ground within the partners to plan for the Regional Forum (27 and 29 February, 2024).

JLI participated in a webinar organized by UNICEF SBC in the region to present the FPCC initiative to religious leaders and FBOs. UNICEF regional SBC representative introduced the FPCC initiative and JLI presented the mapping results to the audience; due to time constraints, it was a very brief presentation of the main results and challenges identified in the Latin American and Caribbean context.

In September 2023, an introduction to the Mind-Heart Dialogue methodology for partners in the Latin America and Caribbean region was conducted. Partner CORAT, from Africa, gave a first glance on how the methodology works. JLI has since been focusing on finding a partner organization that can deliver trainings in each of the focused countries in 2024.

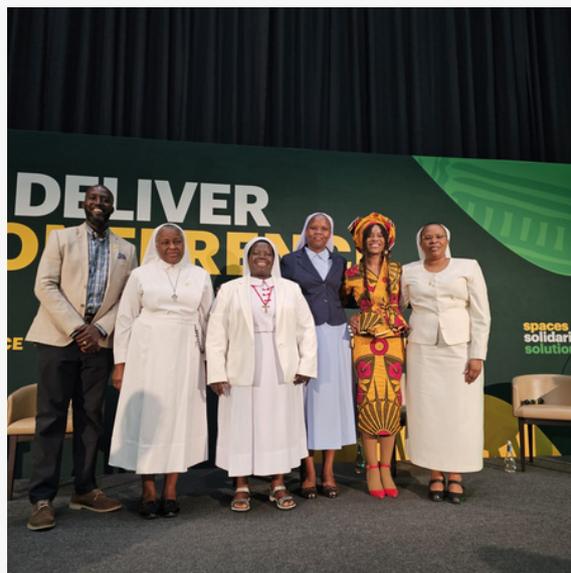


All the FPCC Core Documents were translated in Spanish, Portuguese and French. They are available on our website: jliflc.com/fpcc

Women in Faith Leadership Fellowship

In 2023, JLI coordinated the pilot year of the Women in Faith Leadership Fellowship (WFLF), co-funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and Conrad N. Hilton Foundation, in collaboration with the Centre for Public and Nonprofit Leadership and the Berkley Centre for Religion, Peace & World Affairs at Georgetown University. The ten fellows arrived in Washington, DC, in mid-April for the first engagement of the Fellowship. They spent two weeks at Georgetown University undertaking a range of courses, such as gender in development, advocacy, public speaking, resource mobilization, and leadership. They also met with Ambassador Melanne Verwee to discuss women in peace and security and visited the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA). A public session in the Riggs Library at Georgetown highlighted the work of the cohort in Africa for the university audience.

They also made several exciting site visits, including meeting with Samantha Power (Administrator) and Adam Philips (then Executive Director of the Local, Faith and Transformative Partnerships Hub) at USAID, Victoria Kwakwa (Regional Vice President for Eastern and Southern Africa) at the World Bank, learned about women in conflict, religion, and peacebuilding at USIP, and had meetings with CRS, the One Foundation, and the Gates Foundation.



Women Deliver Conference (Kigali, July 2023)

In May, the fellows attended the World Union of Catholic Women's Organisations (WUCWO)'s General Assembly in Assisi, which included an audience with Pope Francis. In July, they participated in the Women Deliver Conference in Kigali. The Fellowship hosted its own breakfast session titled "*Bridging Faith and Development to Advance Gender Equality: How Women of Faith Champion Unseen Women and Girls in Africa*", in which fellows spoke about their experiences.

The fellows worked on designing their capstone projects and attended events around the United Nations General Assembly in New York in September. The Inaugural pilot cohort completed their fellowship experience by visiting events around the United Nations General Assembly in New York in September 2023.

They attended and spoke at events and meetings hosted by the Bakhita Partnership for Education, Goalkeepers, the Justice Coalition for Religion (JCOR), the UN's Multi-Faith Advisory Council (MFAC), and a Moth storytelling event. They presented their capstone projects to the Fellowship's Steering Committee on the final day of their visit and received their certificates of fellowship completion in a short ceremony.

Into 2024, the fellows are implementing their capstone projects in their countries, with projects ranging from maternal health projects to care of elderly sisters and climate adaptation initiatives. Throughout this pilot year, JLI has also designed and implemented a key monitoring, evaluation, and learning process to understand key lessons. JLI provided robust lessons learned documentation to the Steering Committee and has now finalized its involvement in the Fellowship.



Women in Faith Leadership Fellowship at the United States Institute of Peace (Washington, D.C., April 2023)

Training on Religions & Development

In September 2023, JLI launched a new project, funded by Trinity Church Wall Street, aimed at developing a new college course on religions and development research for use in Anglican seminaries around the world.

JLI has partnered with the following five Anglican colleges and seminaries:

- St Paul's University, Kenya
- Leonard Kamungu Theological College, Malawi
- College of Transfiguration, South Africa
- Cathedral Institute for Education & Formation, Sri Lanka
- St Andrew's Theological Seminary, the Philippines

Using a participatory and collaborative model, JLI and the partnered institutions have been working together to develop course content covering issues pertaining to religions and development such as health, peacebuilding, climate change, and gender, as well as developing course materials to support the practical research skills of participants. The course will be aimed at seminary students, clergy, and laypeople, supporting them to engage confidently with these issues at both community and research levels.

The course will be implemented across all five institutions in 2024.

Strategic Religious Engagement

JLI is part of an ambitious three-year project funded by the Templeton Religions Trust to implement Strategic Religious Engagement (SRE) in four countries (Philippines, Ghana, Senegal, Sri Lanka). The project is led by Katherine Marshall at World Faiths Development Dialogue. There are two priority topics: 1) educational issues around social cohesion and 2) social safety nets affecting poor and marginalized communities. Year one (2023-2024) is a period of assessment and planning with landscaping research underway in the countries. In years 2 and 3, implementation of SRE projects will take place.

Faith Perspectives on Localisation and Decolonisation

JLI members made an investment (thank you to the generous sponsors of this work, which include ADRA, CORUS, ERD, Islamic Relief USA, and the Salvation Army) to conduct research into faith actors' perspectives of localisation and decolonisation. The project which is jointly led by JLI Board Member Emma Tomalin and Senior Research Fellow Jennifer P. Eggert includes surveys and stakeholder interviews aimed at exploring what localisation and decolonisation means to faith actors in the development sector, to what extent and how they incorporate these into their work, and what they have learned along the way. The research continues into 2024.

Research on Lutheran World Federation's Faith-Based Advocacy

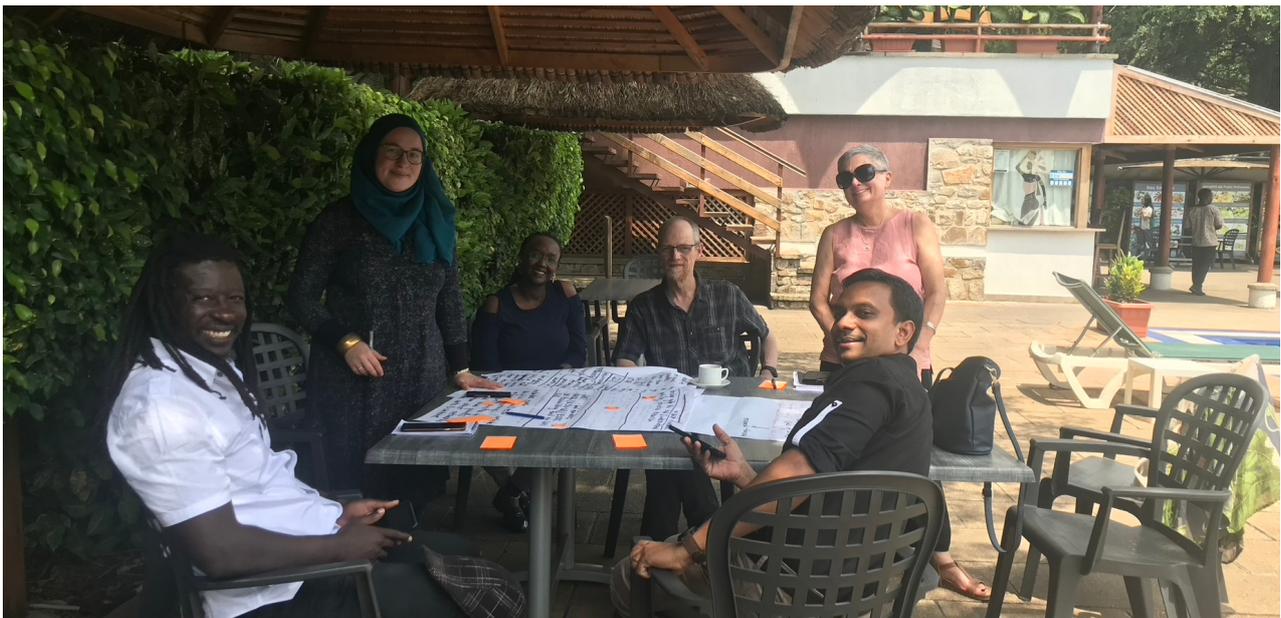
JLI conducted some research for the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) on faith-based advocacy within the Federation. The research sought to capture stories about LWF's advocacy in the last seven years, aiming to understand the range of topics LWF advocacy has covered, identify good practice examples of LWF advocacy, examine challenges for LWF advocacy, learn more about how LWF staff understand and define faith-based advocacy, and present recommendations from the learning for future planning. The JLI team conducted interviews with 21 LWF team members and wrote a report based on the findings.

Religion and Development Journal

JLI team members Olivia and Jennifer continued to be part of the editorial committee of the journal Religion and Development. As policy and practice editors, they are in charge of policy and practice notes published in the journal. For more information about the journal, please visit: <https://in-rcsd.org/en/journal-religion-development>.

Hidden Peacebuilders Network

The Hidden Peacebuilders Network, a collaboration of researchers, practitioners and faith actors working on the role of faith actors in peacebuilding, started the year with a networking and research planning in Burundi. The meeting brought together colleagues from East Africa, South and South East Asia, Latin America, and Europe. JLI was represented by Senior Research Fellow Jennifer, board members Emma Tomalin and Jayeel Cornelio, and East Africa hub co-chairs John Okanga and Fredrick Ogenga. Throughout the year, the Network had two major funding successes and secured a total of £300,000 for joint research in Burundi, Sri Lanka, and the Philippines in 2023 and 2024, with Emma being Principal Investigator and Jayeel and Jennifer amongst the Co-Investigators of the project.



Hidden Peacebuilders Network Planning & Networking Meeting (Burundi, January 2023)

PUBLICATIONS

- Alice Karuri (2023). [Speaking Truth to Power: Christian Faith Actors and Kenya's Liberation Movements](#). Joint JLI/Leeds blog series on decolonisation, development and faith, blog of the Centre for Religion in Public Life.
- Amjad Mohamed-Saleem (2023). [Decolonising the international development sector requires a disruption \(part 1\): A focus on the past can mask the colonial present](#). Joint JLI/Leeds blog series on decolonisation, development and faith, blog of the Centre for Religion in Public Life.
- Amjad Mohamed-Saleem (2023). [Decolonising the international development sector requires a disruption \(part 2\): Engaging with faith actors to transform colonial power structures](#). Joint JLI/Leeds blog series on decolonisation, development and faith, blog of the Centre for Religion in Public Life.
- Emma Tomalin and Olivia Wilkinson (2023). [NGO-isation, local faith actors and 'legitimate' humanitarian action in South Sudan](#). Journal of Humanitarian Affairs, Volume 5, Issue 2.
- Florine De Wolf (2023). [No One Is Safe Until Everyone Is Safe: Advocacy and Policy Engagement on the COVID-19 Pandemic](#). Geneva: Lutheran World Federation.
- Jennifer P. Eggert (2023). [Decolonisation, violence, and faith: Reflections on Israel, Palestine and beyond](#). Joint JLI/Leeds blog series on decolonisation, development and faith, blog of the Centre for Religion in Public Life.
- Jennifer P. Eggert (2023). [Participatory Research Capacity-Sharing for PVE, Conflict and Peace Practitioners: Insights from an International, Collaborative Project focused on PVE, Religion and Youth](#). Washington DC: Joint Learning Initiative on Faith and Local Communities (JLI).

- JLI (2023). **2022 Annual Report**. Washington DC: Joint Learning Initiative on Faith and Local Communities (JLI).
- Jodie Salter and Olivia Wilkinson (2023). **Faith framing climate: a review of faith actors' definitions and usage of climate change**. *Climate and Development*, Volume 16, Issue 2.
- Jodie Salter, Florencia Pulhin, Olivia Wilkinson and Chendan Yan (2023). **Emissions and Environmental Surveys With Faith Actors: A Pilot Project With the Episcopal Church in the Philippines**. Working Paper. The Episcopal Church in the Philippines (ECP), Joint Learning Initiative on Faith and Local Communities (JLI), the University of the Philippines Los Baños (UPLB), and the World Resources Institute (WRI) Faith and Sustainability Initiative.
- Manal Alkourdi and Marwa Alghadban (2023). **Cultural Adaptation of Mental Health Programmes in the Syrian Context: Dialogue Sessions Report**. Gaziantep and Washington DC: Syria Bright Future (SBF) and Joint Learning Initiative on Faith and Local Communities (JLI) MHPSS Hub.
- Mohammad Abo-Hilal, Jennifer Philippa Eggert, Manal Alkourdi, Zein Okab, Marwa Alghadban and Amr Mustafaaalhasan (2023). **Culturally Sensitive Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) in the Syrian Context: Findings Of a Research Capacity-Sharing Project**. Policy Paper. Washington DC: Joint Learning Initiative on Faith and Local Communities (JLI)
- Naomi Fastovsky and Charlotte McAdams (2023). **Annotated Bibliography on on MHPSS, Culture and Faith in Syrian Communities**. Washington DC and Gaziantep: Joint Learning Initiative on Faith and Local Communities (JLI) and Syria Bright Future (SBF) MHPSS and Culture in Syria Hub
- Olivia Wilkinson (2023). **Faith, Local Actors, and the Localization of International Humanitarian Response**. *The Oxford Handbook of Religion and Contemporary Migration*, Oxford University Press.

- Olivia Wilkinson and Emma Tomalin (2023). [Secular-Religious Dynamics and their Effect on Humanitarian Norms Compliance](#). Journal of Human Rights Practice, online, in print pending.
- Steffie Kemp (2023). [Effective Faith Partnerships during COVID-19: Lessons Learned from Development Practitioners](#). Religion and Development.
- Seb Rumsby (2023). [Grappling with ethnoreligious politics, double colonialism and positionalities in Vietnam](#). Joint JLI/Leeds blog series on decolonisation, development and faith, blog of the Centre for Religion in Public Life.

BLOG

In 2023, JLI launched ‘Rethinking Religions and Development’, a new blog on faith action, evidence and partnerships. It is an open space for members, partners and staff to share their perspectives and experiences on issues relating to local faith actors in humanitarian, development, and peacebuilding work. Throughout the year, the blog has featured dozens of posts, including for example:

- Dr Olivia Wilkinson’s post [introducing JLI’s flagship State of the Evidence in Religions & Development report](#)
- [A vision for shared learning on religions and development](#) by JLI former CEO Kirsten Laursen Muth
- [My Future in Research is Now as Clear as Day](#) by Regina Mutiru, JLI PVE, Youth and Interfaith Research Capacity Sharing project participant
- [From diversity to justice: understanding faith approaches to decolonisation](#) by Amjad Mohamed-Saleem

PODCAST

Our Interim President/CEO Maurice Bloem started a special series about the JLI on his ‘Walk Talk Listen’ podcast. All the episodes are available [here](#) on our website or on [all the platforms](#).

CONFERENCES, PANELS AND TALKS

- On going: JLI continued to host regular meetings of the [Religions, Humanitarianism, and Development Research Reading Group](#) throughout the year.

Conferences and Panels

- Hidden Peacebuilders Network research planning and networking meeting, with JLI participation. Bujumbura, Burundi. January 2023.
- Gender and Counterterrorism: An Intersectional Perspective. Presentation by Jennifer at Islamabad Policy Research Institute Distinguished Lecture Series. February 2023.
- [Launch of “No one is safe until everyone is Safe” – the LWF Covid-19 Advocacy Report](#). Presentation by Florine. February 2023.
- Research positions outside of academia. Contribution by Jennifer to an online panel on non-academic careers following a PhD at University of Warwick. March 2023.
- [Webinar on culturally responsive & faith-sensitive MHPSS in the Syrian context](#). Co-organised by Syria Bright Future and JLI. April 2023.
- [Online workshop on Climate-Responsible Finance: A Moral Imperative towards Children](#). Co-organised by WCC, UNEP Faith for Earth and JLI. May 2023.
- [Science-Based Targets For Faith: A Global Colloquium](#). Co-organised by Georgetown University and the World Resources Institute, with JLI presenting its research with the Episcopal Church of the Philippines. May 2023.
- [Webinar on the Evaluation Results and Learnings from a Program in Liberia that is Working to End Violence Against Women & Girls \(VAWG\)](#). Co-organised by Episcopal Relief & Development, Episcopal Church of Liberia Relief & Development, and JLI. May 2023.

- [Climate-Responsible Finance: A Moral Imperative towards Children.](#) Online capacity-building workshop co-organized by WCC, UNEP Faith for Earth and JLI. May 2023.
- Research Capacity-Sharing on Culturally Adapted and Faith-Sensitive MHPSS in Syria and for Syrian Refugees. Presentation by Jennifer on the work of the Syria Hub, at the Annual Meeting of the Alliance for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action, at a session on 'Supporting children on the move through community-based, faith-sensitive responses for MHPSS', organized by Arigatou International, World Vision International and Queen Margaret University. June 2023.
- State of the Evidence in Religions and Development roundtable, at the Annual Conference of the Development Studies Association. Chaired by Olivia. July 2023.
- LGBTQ+ communities, faith actors and international development panel, at the Annual Conference of the Development Studies Association. Co-chaired by Jennifer. July 2023.
- Doing research differently: A new model for evidence-based, impact-focused collaborative research. Presentation at Annual Forum of International Partnership on Religion and Sustainable Development (PaRD). October 2023.
- Re-framing Common Themes in Religions and Development Research. Presentation by Olivia to the International Development and Religion Unit of the American Academy of Religion Annual Conference. November 2023.
- [Science-Based Targets for Faith: Advancing a Global Standard for FBOs to Measure, Manage and Report – GHG Emissions World Resources Institute,](#) Presentation by Olivia at The Faith Pavilion at COP 28. November 2023.
- [Cities Faith and Communities Forum](#) panel on the far-right, political violence and anti-immigration sentiment. Contribution by Jennifer. December 2023.

COMMUNICATIONS

Platform	Insights
Newsletter	4 newsletters sent in 2023 to 2632 subscribers (+10.9%) Mailchimp: Open rate of 32.6% (+5.16%) and clicks per unique open rate of 17.8% (-38.6%)
Twitter @JLIFLC	1850 followers (+12.12%) 37K impressions (-63%)
LinkedIn Joint Learning Initiative on Faith & Local Communities	1576 Page views (+103%) 708 Unique views (+97.2%)
YouTube JLI Faith & Local Communities	2089 views (-88%) 34.5K impressions (+13.7%) 210 subscribers (+21.4%)
Website JLIFLC.COM	28.1K users (-36.1%)* 57.4K page views (-30.1%)* 11.6% returning visitors (+3.3%)* *Please note that there is a 2-months gap of missing data due to website flow issue

JLI Leadership

JLI BOARD

Andrea Kaufmann	World Vision International
Anwar Khan	Islamic Relief USA
Bwibo Adieri	Anglican Development Services Kenya
Dionne Gravesande	Christian Aid
Elisa Di Benedetto	International Association of Religion Journalists
Emma Tomalin	University of Leeds Religions and the Sustainable Development Network
Jayeel Cornelio	Ateneo De Manila University
Julie Clague	University of Glasgow
Katherine Marshall	World Faiths Development Dialogue (WFDD)
Mara Luz	International Cooperation and Organisational Development
Maurice Bloem, Ex Officio	Church World Service and JLI Interim President/CEO
Somboon (Moo) Chungprampree	International Network of Engaged Buddhists (INEB)

LEADERSHIP COUNCIL

Four Leadership Council sessions were convened in 2023 with thematic discussions and inputs into JLI's work. We were excited to meet with many members of the JLI's

Leadership Council in Istanbul in June 2023 after several years without an in-person gathering and heartened to hear the support for our work across the organization and network. Financial support was given by our JLI community to assist with ensuring we had wider participation.



JLI Leadership Council Meeting (Istanbul, June 2023)

JLI Leadership Council Members

The Leadership Council consists of the current board and other members listed below.

Abigail Nelson	Episcopal Relief & Development
Amjad Mohamed-Saleem	Paths2People
Ana Maria Daou	Adyan Foundation
Ashella Ndhlovu-Chama	Speak One Voice
Atallah Fitzgibbon	Islamic Relief Worldwide
Benjamin Laniado	CADENA
W. Bramwell Bailey	Salvation Army World Service Office
Catriona Dejean	Tearfund
Christa Foster Crawford	Payap University & Freedom Resource International
Christine MacMillan	World Evangelical Alliance
Deepika Singh	Religions for Peace
Elham Alshejri	International Dialogue Centre (KAICIID)
Ezra Chitando	University of Zimbabwe
Floyd Lalwet	Episcopal Church of the Philippines
Imad Madanat	ADRA International
Imrana A. Umar	International Interfaith Peace Corp
Jean Duff	Partnership for Faith & Development
Jill Olivier	University of Cape Town
John Blevins	Interfaith Health Program
Mara Luz	Independent Consultant
Mary Zulu Mwiche	Speak One Voice & United Church of Zambia University
Mohammed Abu-Nimer	Salam Institute for Peace and Justice
Muhamad Ali Yusuf	Humanitarian Forum Indonesia
Nobuyuki Asai	Soka Gakkai International
Rebeca Rios-Kohn	Arigatou International
Rebecca Waugh	IMA World Health
Romina Istratii	dIdI/ድልድል
Sally Smith	Independent Consultant
Tarek Abdelalem	Islamic Relief Germany
Thorsten Göbel	ACT Alliance
Vinya Ariyaratne	Sarvodaya

FINANCE

Thank you to our 2023 partners and donors: GHR Foundation, UNICEF, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Conrad N. Hilton Foundation, Trinity Church Wall Street, Islamic Relief USA, Adventist Development & Relief Agency, Episcopal Relief and Development, The Salvation Army, University of Leeds, World Resources Institute, Lutheran World Federation, Templeton Religion Trust, and World Council of Churches.

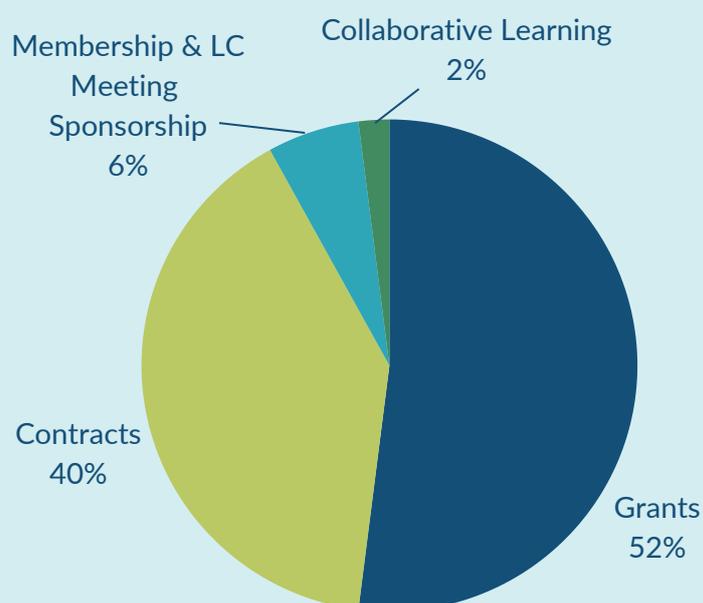
We gratefully received membership contributions from ACT Alliance, Adventist Development & Relief Agency, Anglican Alliance, Church World Service, CORUS, Episcopal Church in the Philippines, Episcopal Relief and Development, Humanitarian Forum Indonesia, International Network of Engaged Buddhists, IRUSA, KAICIID, Salam Institute, Sarvodaya, Soka Gakkai, The Salvation Army, World Evangelical Alliance, and World Vision International.

2023 Statement of Activities

Revenue	
Member Institutions	\$ 64,500
Grants	\$ 335,473
Contracts	\$ 546,323
Income Total	\$ 946,296
Expenses	
Personnel	\$ 368,099
Professional Fee	\$ 76,614
Management Consulting	\$ 26,040
Evidence	\$ 714,423
Event	\$ 35,685
Gen Operating Expenses	\$ 39,743
Travel Expenses	\$ 200,230
Expense Total	\$ 1,460,834

Revenue Streams

JLI is supported financially by Board and Leadership Council member contributions, foundations and grants. The most significant area of revenue in 2023 came from grants for research and evidence.



*This revenue stream is based on cash basis accounting



In memoriam, Sheku Anna Chundung

We lost our friend and colleague Sheku unexpectedly before Christmas 2023. JLI had been working with Sheku since September 2022 when she joined the [PVE, Youth and Interfaith](#) project. When the project was completed, Sheku became an active member of the [JLI Conflict Transformation and Faith hub](#). We have lost a colleague and a friend. May her memory be a blessing. Read tributes from dear friends and colleagues [here](#) on our website.



A memorial to Dr Abuom written by JLI's Alvin Andanje

The entire JLI is saddened by the recent passing of Dr Agnes Regina Abuom. She was a committed member of our Leadership Council since October 2020. Her firm voice on issues will be dearly missed. She brought a wealth of knowledge and experience from the ecumenical, development and humanitarian world that helped shape JLI's direction. Dr Abuom will be remembered as the first woman and the first African to be elected as the World Council of Churches (WCC) Central Committee Moderator in 2013 and the WCC Africa President from 1999 to 2006, among many other achievements. Dr. Abuom lived for a world where every man and woman's dignity will be upheld. A world where every person's basic needs will be secured. A world where there will be no racial discrimination, negative ethnicity and xenophobia as well as related violence. Even as we mourn, we celebrate her life journey and the many gifts she left us with. And to her family, we pray for God's strength during this period of deep sorrow. May her soul rest in peace.



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