

September 2024 | Version 2

Training on Religions and Development Research Course

Module 1:

Topics in Religions and
Development

Session 1:

Introduction to Religions and
Development



Joint Learning Initiative
on Faith & Local Communities

Homework (pre-session)



Essential reading

(everyone is required to read this)

- Students are to read Chapter 1 (Introduction to Religions and Development) of the JLI State of the Evidence report: [SoE-chapter-1.pdf](#) and answer the following questions on one page:
 - Define “evidence” in your own words.
 - Define “religions and development” in your own words.
 - Define “faith actor” in your own words.
- They should complete the reading before attending the session.



Optional readings I

(advanced readings)

- Tomalin, E., Haustein, J. and Kidy, S. (2019), “Religion and the Sustainable Development Goals,” *The Review of Faith & International Affairs*, 17:2, 102-118, DOI: [10.1080/15570274.2019.1608664](#)
- Chitando, E., Gunda, M. R. and Togarasei, L. (2020), *Religion and Development in Africa*, University of Bamberg Press. <https://fis.uni-bamberg.de/server/api/core/bitstreams/d396ce31-8f72-4c6f-a319-dd6628626869/content>
- Wilkinson, O. (2022), “Re-framing Common Themes in Religions and Development Research,” *The Review of Faith & International Affairs*, 20:4, pp. 91-106, DOI: [10.1080/15570274.2022.2139542](#)
- Bompani, B. (2019), “Religion and development: Tracing the trajectories of an evolving sub-discipline,” *Progress in Development Studies*, 19:3, pp. 171-185. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1464993419829598>
- Marshall, K. (2021), “Impressions & Indications of Religious Engagement in Development,” *The Review of Faith & International Affairs*, 19:sup1, pp. 12-30, DOI: [10.1080/15570274.2021.1983358](#)
- Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, E. and Ager, A. (2013), *Local faith communities and the promotion of resilience in humanitarian situations: a scoping study*, Joint Learning Initiative on Faith and Local Communities; Refugee Studies Centre, University of Oxford. <https://jliflc.com/resources/local-faith-communities-promotion-resilience-humanitarian-situations-scoping-study/>



Optional readings II

(easy readings)

- Wilkinson, O. (2023), 'Introducing the State of the Evidence in Religions and Development', <https://jiflrc.com/2023/02/state-of-the-evidence-olivia-wilkinson/>
- Hovey, G. and Saleem, A. (2008), 'Faith, relief and development: the Sri Lanka experience', Forced Migration Review, <https://www.fmreview.org/burma/hovey-saleem>
- Wilkinson, O. (2019), 'The opportunities and challenges of working with local faith actors in urban humanitarian response'. <https://southernresponses.org/2020/04/29/the-opportunities-and-challenges-of-working-with-local-faith-actors-in-urban-humanitarian-response/>
- Green, D. (2023), 'What would make an Atheist spend a day discussing Faith and Development?' <https://frompoverty.oxfam.org.uk/what-would-make-an-atheist-spend-a-day-discussing-faith-and-development/>
- Deneulin, S. and Zampini-Davie, A. (2016), 'How the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) can engage with religion.' <https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/religionglobalsociety/2016/10/how-the-sustainable-development-goals-sdgs-can-engage-with-religion/>
- Karam, A. (2019), 'Religion & Development: An Enhanced Approach or a Transaction?' <https://www.ipsnews.net/2019/04/religion-development-enhanced-approach-transaction/>



Further online training

(optional)

- ACT Alliance's FABO – Religion & Development course (requires registration, no costs). https://fabo.org/act/religion_development

Engaging with the readings

(1 hour)

This part of the session aims to engage with the readings that the students did as part of their homework in more detail. It aims to give the students a chance to discuss the readings, share their reflections, and consolidate their understanding of the texts.

- 1. Individual reflection (5 min):** The instructor asks all students to individually reflect on the following three questions and write down their answers. Students do this on their own without consulting others, but they are allowed to consult the text if they find it helpful.
 - One thing I learned from this chapter that I did not know before
 - One thing I read in the chapter that I already knew
 - One thing that was mentioned in the chapter that I did not understand/that I would like to know more about
- 2. Post-it notes (15 min):** students should each write what they did not understand/what they would like to know more about on a post-it note and stick it on a wall or board so that everyone can see each other's queries. Ask the students to gather around the wall or board and read each other's Post-it notes. Ask the students to rearrange the post-it notes into groups. They must discuss with each other to decide where each post-it note should go. For example, if multiple people have said they would like to know more about theologies of development, all those Post-it notes should be clustered together. Eventually, the wall or board should have several clustered groups of Post-it notes. The instructor can label each of these groupings (i.e., give the group a short title, such as "Theology"). Once this exercise is completed, the group will create their **priority learning areas** for this session. Each of the clustered groups represents a priority learning area.
- 3. Small group discussions (25 min):** Each small group should choose one of the priority learning areas. The small group is now responsible for going back to the reading material and discussing that topic in particular. They can go to the longer reading list and search through the other reading materials to help find more answers.
- 4. Big group (15 min):** Each small group can then report their findings to the big group. The groups have now collectively helped each other learn more about their priority learning areas.

Contextualising the learning

(1 hour)

The aim of this part of the session is for students to apply what they learned from the readings and the first part of the session to their local contexts. It encourages them to think critically about the extent to which the debates from the readings are relevant to their everyday lives, studies, or work.

1. **Break (5 min)**
2. **Individual reflection (10 min)**: The instructor invites students to reflect on how what they have discussed previously relates to their everyday work/life or communities. Each student thinks about this on their own and makes a list of at least 3-5 points. Students are encouraged to use examples from their own experiences.
3. **Small group work - discussion (20 min)**: Students work in groups of 5. Each group discusses their individually collected points.
4. **Big group discussions (25 min)**: The chapter references some major themes in religions and development research. The instructor should prompt a whole group discussion using the following questions:
 - What assets do faith actors bring to achieving sustainable development? Do you have any examples and experiences to share?
 - Why would some development actors avoid engaging with faith actors? What are the disadvantages of working with faith actors? Do you have any examples and experiences to share?
 - How does the group define a “faith actor”? Which sorts of faith actors do development work from your experience? Which faith actors do not do development work and why?

Creative task

(1 hour)

The third part of the session is aimed at engaging with the content covered in parts 1 and 2 of the session in a creative manner. This part of the session acknowledges the fact that there are different types of learners. It also aims to expose students to creative and arts-based forms of learning and teaching.

1. **Break (5 min)**
2. **Watch the video (5 min)**: watch the video from the International Partnership on Religion and Sustainable Development. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_wr6jzhsYuo&t=313s
3. **Small group work (15 min)**: After watching the video, discuss these questions in your group.
 - The video includes a series of examples from people worldwide who belong to different religions and are engaged in development work. Give an example from your experience of a religious actor engaged in development work.
 - Why do you think the German government would want to fund a partnership network on religions and development like the one described in the video?
 - What audience is this video trying to reach? What do you think the purpose of this video is? How would you change the video to improve the messaging?
4. **Create your own video - directions (5 min)**: The instructor brings the whole group back together and explains that they will create their own videos. Students should use the cameras on a phone to record the video. Students should focus on the following points when creating their videos:
 - 5 minutes long
 - Identify your audience – who are you trying to target with this video?
 - Identify your main message – what are you trying to communicate about religions and development with this video?
 - Identify your examples – what examples can you highlight in your video? Who in your group can speak about the example(s) on camera?
5. **Create your own video - action (25 min)**
6. **Share your videos with the class (5-20 min)**

