

September 2024 | Version 2

Training on Religions and Development Research Course

Module 3:
Practical Application

Session 2:
Planning research II



Joint Learning Initiative
on Faith & Local Communities

Homework (pre-session)

Students are required to decide on one topic they would like to work on. In preparation for the session, they should think about the following questions and write down their thoughts. This could be in the form of sentences or bullet points.

- **Research topic:** What broad topic are you interested in? Why do you want to work on this topic? Why is it relevant, to whom, and in what ways?
- **Research question:** What exactly do you want to know? What's your exact research question? Is your research question specific enough for you to address it in the time and with the resources that you have?
- **Researcher background and positionality:** Are you the right person to do this research? Do you have access to all resources and research participants that you need?
- **Data collection:** What form of data collection do you intend to use? Which other forms of data collection could you possibly use? Why do you plan to use this form of data collection and not any others?
- **Data analysis:** What form of data analysis do you intend to use? Which other forms of data analysis could you possibly use? Why do you plan to use this form of data analysis and not any others?
- **Research dissemination, uptake and application:** How do you plan to disseminate your research findings? What's your target group? Do they find it easy to engage with the format you have in mind to disseminate your research? Are there other possible forms of research dissemination that may be more suited for this work?

Recap and Follow-up

(10-30 minutes)

As in the previous session, it is recommended that you start this session with some time (depending on how much time you have available, this could be as little as 10 minutes or as long as 30 minutes) to recap with the students.

Recap: The instructor asks students what they have covered in class in the previous session, what they have learned, what they have enjoyed, and what they found useful for their work. You could either do a big group discussion or pair students and have them discuss this with a partner. It is a good idea to remind students here again to keep their projects manageable.

Follow-up: It is not unlikely that questions will come up during the recap. Instructors can make some time for these here, but if they are very detailed, it may be better to remind students that there will be more time in the next part of this session to examine them in detail.

Discussion or Research Ideas

(1-2.5 hours)

Discussion of research ideas (estimated time: 30 min-1 hour): Students should then get time to discuss their research ideas. This can be done in a big group or small groups of 3-5 students. Instructors could decide based on how the work has been going with students on this course so far, or they could let the students choose. If some students would like to work in small groups and others would prefer to present to a bigger group, it is possible to split students up into one big and 1-2 smaller groups to cater to different preferences.

Finalisation of research ideas (estimated time: 15-30 min): Following the group feedback and discussions, students should be given time to finalise their research ideas. For that, they should complete/refine the answers to the questions they worked on for their homework. Once students finish that, they can work in pairs to give each other one final round of feedback or clarify any outstanding questions they may have with the instructor.

Planning next steps (estimated time: 30 min-1 hour): Once students have a final-for-now version of their research plans, they should spend some time thinking about concrete next steps. How are they going to start working on their research? What are they going to do next? What is going to be their first step in engaging in this work? The instructor could ask students to reflect on this independently, make notes, and outline the first steps and different stages of the work. They can then work on this in pairs and, after that, discuss their thoughts in small groups or a big group, as facilitated by the instructor. At the end of the class, all students must be clear about the next steps.

