Training on Religions and Development Research Course

Module 3:
Practical Application

Session 3 and 4:
Discussing research

**Joint Learning Initiative
on Faith & Local Communities**

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Homework (pre-session)

Students are required to bring an update about their research to the class. This should include the following: What progress have I made with my research since we last met? What has worked well? What was difficult? What do I need help with? Who could help me with that? What is my plan in terms of next steps between now and the completion of the research? Is this plan realistic, considering how much time and resources I have available? If not, would it make sense to adjust it accordingly?

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Recap and Follow-up
(10-30 minutes)

As in the previous sessions, it is recommended that you make some time at the beginning of the session (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 we covered in class in the previous session, what they have learned, what they have enjoyed, and what they found useful for their work. This can either be done in a big group discussion or you could pair students and have them discuss this with a partner.

Follow-up: It is not unlikely that questions will come up during the recap. The instructor 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 really look at them in detail.

Discussion or Research Ideas
(1-2.5 hours)

Discussion of research progress (estimated time: 1 hour-1 hour 15 min): Students should then get some time to discuss the progress they are making on their research. This can be done in a big group or in 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 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. The instructor could also start this session by asking everyone to briefly mention any difficulties they have been facing, which the instructor then collates on the whiteboard for everyone to see. Students can then look at these together, with facilitation by the instructor, and discuss them as a group. It is important that all students feel like they have time to discuss their research. In line with the course's pedagogical approach, instructors should keep encouraging students to think through their problems on their own or get feedback from their classmates, rather than just turning to the instructor.

Planning next steps (estimated time: 1 hour-1 hour 15 min): Following the discussion of students' progress and any difficulties they may have encountered, it is important for students to spend a good amount of time planning the next steps. This could be done by preparing visuals whereby they write down any issues they have encountered on one side and then add possible solutions on the other. This can be done individually, in pairs, or in small groups, followed by discussion where necessary. It is important that all students feel like their research has been given sufficient time and that students are clear about the next steps. Instructors may need to remind students to keep their projects manageable. This could include reducing the initially planned number of interviews or documents to analyse (even just one interview or analysed text is excellent progress! The aim is not to conduct a full-fledged research project but to try out the skills taught in module 2 by implementing small research assignments). At the end of session 4, students should be given a deadline to complete any outstanding work. Ideally, this should be before the final session.