

1. *INTRODUCTION AND BRIEF BACKGROUND*

New ways of working are needed to respond to the large-scale humanitarian and development challenges of our day. This is a time for working together across sectors and for innovative collaboration with local leadership. This paper lays out principles and mechanisms for more participatory ways of working together with local faith actors for the sustainable wellbeing of children, their families, and communities.¹

This paper has been produced as part of a global partnership initiative on Faith and Positive Change for Children (FPCC).² Led by UNICEF, partners include Religions for Peace, (RFP) (interfaith convening partner), the Joint Learning Initiative on Faith and Local Communities (JLI) (knowledge partner), and Harvard Divinity School (religious literacy partner). The paper was drafted by JLI with guidance from the FPCC Advisory Group, a group of engaged supporters of FPCC from a range of faith-based religious and non-governmental organizations and academia.³

This paper is firmly grounded in a growing evidence base on the role of faith actors in bringing about positive social and behavior change. JLI completed a literature review from over 100 sources, a mapping of 26 technical guidelines, toolkits, and standards documents, case studies of UNICEF-faith actor collaboration in 17 countries through primary research to inform and co-create an evidence-based Theory of Change. The principles refer to key sources, including previous frameworks and guides summarized in Annex A. We recommend exploring the full evidence base, including many in-depth case studies that exemplify the principles below, through the documents at the FPCC website.⁴ For more about how to put the principles into practice, the FPCC Program Guide and Thematic Modules provide specific guidance.

¹ We are using “faith actors” to include all levels of faith both formal and informal and including traditional and religious leadership, faith institutions and communities, and faith-based NGOs at local national, and global levels but with an emphasis on LOCAL faith actors as that is where the change happens and is sustained.

² UNICEF, Joint Learning Initiative on Faith and Local Communities and Religions for Peace, “Faith and Positive Change for Children - Global Initiative on Social and Behavior Change,” Joint Learning Initiative on Faith and Local Communities, accessed November 19, 2019, <https://jliflc.com/resources/fpcc-info-brief/>.

³ Co-chairs and Members of the FPCC Advisory Group (listed above)

⁴ Joint Learning Initiative on Faith and Local Communities, “Faith and Positive Change for Children,” Joint Learning Initiative on Faith and Local Communities, accessed November 19, 2019, <https://jliflc.com/fpcc/>.

2. THE DISTINCTIVE CONTRIBUTION OF FAITH TO PARTNERSHIPS: FAITH CAN POWERFULLY INFLUENCE THE WELL BEING OF CHILDREN, FAMILIES AND LOCAL COMMUNITIES

Faith influence can be a mixed blessing. At worst, faith influences can drive conflict, discrimination, exclusion and division. At best, faith influence has powerful lasting transformational qualities that shape social and cultural norms, contributing to positive behavioral outcomes and results for children.

The powerful positive influence of faith can be seen in faith actors' unique understanding of their communities,⁶ holistic view of wellbeing and psychosocial support to their constituencies,⁷ authority and trust⁸ with communities that allows them to promote the abandonment of harmful norms⁹ and adoption of key practices for child

GO TOGETHER!

Collaboration is needed to achieve the SDGs by 2030: "Facing such challenges and deep polarization within countries across the world, no country, no group, no organization can go it alone. Everyone including FBOs need to rally around the SDGs." Deputy Secretary General Amina Mohammed⁵

GO LOCAL!

The mission of NEAR Network, a movement of civil society organizations rooted in the global south, encapsulates the message of localization: "A world where local communities have the capacity, resources and agency to address the challenges that impact them."¹⁰

⁵ Christian Aid, "Faith communities vital in tackling rising intolerance, says UN deputy secretary general," Christian Aid, June 2019, <https://reliefweb.int/report/world/faith-communities-vital-tackling-rising-intolerance-says-un-deputy-secretary-general>.

⁶ Alison Strang and Oonagh O'Brien, "Who can I turn to? Mapping social connections, trust and problem-solving among conflict-affected populations," Teddington; Edinburgh: Tearfund; Queen Margaret University, accessed March 1, 2018, <https://jliflc.com/resources/can-turn-mapping-social-connections-trust-problem-solving-among-conflict-affected-populations/>.

⁷ Wendy Ager et al., "The Case for—and Challenges of—Faith-Sensitive Psychosocial Programming," *Invention Journal*, October 8, 2018, <http://www.interventionjournal.org/preprintarticle.asp?id=242487;type=0>; Michael French et al., Islamic Relief Worldwide and Islamic Relief Worldwide, "A Faith-Sensitive Approach in Humanitarian Response," June 2018, <https://refugee.jliflc.com/resources/a-faith-sensitive-approach-in-humanitarian-response/>.

⁸ Andy Featherstone, "Keeping the faith: The role of faith leaders in the ebola response," Christian Aid, CAFOD, Tearfund, and Islamic Relief, 2015, <http://jliflc.com/resources/keeping-the-faith-the-role-of-faith-leaders-in-the-ebola-response-full-report/>.

⁹ Sani-Gwarzo Nasir et al., "From Intense Rejection to Advocacy: How Muslim Clerics Were Engaged in a Polio Eradication Initiative in Northern Nigeria," *PLOS Medicine* 11, no. 8 (August 5, 2014): e1001687, <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pmed.1001687>.

wellbeing,¹⁰ social capital and scale to work through extensive networks,¹² and track record of leadership and interventions for social and behavior change.¹³

Challenges arise when faith actors perpetrate and sustain practices that damage child wellbeing,¹⁴ such as child marriage and female genital mutilation,¹⁵ or abuse their positions of power.¹⁶ Issues particularly arise for partnerships between development and faith actors. Political affiliations and agendas can complicate partnerships,¹⁷ as can distrust between secular and faith actors who see each other's ideologies and some practices as non-complementary.¹⁸ Faith actors have experienced instrumentalization by development partners, with short-term, donor-driven projects and consultations that are one-offs with joint planning and problem solving on an ad hoc basis, rather than from inception and in collaboration.

"One cannot expect positive results from an educational or political action program which fails to respect the particular view of the world held by the people. Such a program constitutes cultural invasion, good intentions notwithstanding." ¹⁸

¹⁰ John Hembling et al., "Mobilising Faith-Based and Lay Leaders to Address Antenatal Care Outcomes in Northern Ghana," *Development in Practice* 27, no. 5 (July 4, 2017): 634–45, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09614524.2017.1327028>.

¹⁰ NEAR, "Dispatches from the Field: "Localize Action," NEAR, accessed November 21, 2019, <http://www.near.ngo/>.

¹² Christopher A. Airriess et al., "Church-Based Social Capital, Networks and Geographical Scale: Katrina Evacuation, Relocation, and Recovery in a New Orleans Vietnamese American Community," *Geoforum*, Rethinking Economy, 39, no. 3 (May 1, 2008): 1333–46, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.geoforum.2007.11.003>.

¹³ Jill Olivier and Sally Smith, "Innovative Faith-Community Responses to HIV and AIDS: Summative Lessons from Over Two Decades of Work," *The Review of Faith & International Affairs* 14, no. 3 (July 2, 2016): 5–21, <https://doi.org/10.1080/15570274.2016.1215839>.

¹⁴ Carola Eyber and Selina Palm, "A Mixed Blessing: Roles of Faith Communities in Ending Violence against Children," Briefing Paper. Washington DC: Joint Learning Initiative on Faith and Local Communities Ending Violence Against Children Hub. <https://jliflc.com/resources/a-mixed-blessing-roles-of-faith-communities-in-ending-violence-against-children/>.

¹⁵ African Union, "The Effects of Traditional and Religious Practices of Child Marriage on Africa's Socio-Economic Development: A Review of Research, Reports and Toolkits from Africa," African Union, 2015, https://au.int/sites/default/files/documents/31018-doc-5465_ccmc_africa_report.pdf; Elisabeth le Roux and Selina Palm, "What Lies beneath? Tackling the Roots of Religious Resistance to Ending Child Marriage" Girls Not Brides, Stellenbosch University, 2018, <https://www.girlsnotbrides.org/resource-centre/what-lies-beneath-tackling-the-roots-of-religious-resistance-to-ending-child-marriage-2/>.

¹⁶ Katherine Marshall and Lucy Keough, "Fighting Female Genital Cutting: Religious and Traditional Leaders' Roles in Combating Genital Cutting in Senegal and Uganda," in *Mind, Heart, and Soul in the Fight against Poverty* (Washington, D.C: World Bank, 2004), 159–64.

¹⁷ Le Roux, Elisabet, and Selina Palm. "What lies beneath? Tackling the roots of religious resistance to ending child marriage." (2018).

¹⁸ Katherine Marshall in G. Carbonnier, *International Development Policy: Religion and Development* (Springer, 2016), 39; Olivia J. Wilkinson, "'It's Being, Not Doing': Hospitality and Hostility between Local Faith Actors and International Humanitarian Organizations in Refugee Response," *Migration and Society* 1, no. 1 (December 1, 2018): 111–26, <https://doi.org/10.3167/arms.2017.010110>; Philip M. Fountain, "Proselytizing Development," in *The Routledge Handbook of Religions and Global Development*, Routledge International Handbooks (Abingdon; New York: Routledge, 2015).

¹⁸ Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. Trans. M. B. Ramos, Thirtieth Anniversary Edition. (New York: Continuum, 2000), 95.

The reverse happens when faith actors seek opportunistic engagement with development partners with little or no effort to improve coordination or avoid duplication. Other partnership challenges include language and cultural barriers, such as potentially antagonistic terms (“harmful traditional practices”)²⁰ and differing interpretations of rights,²¹ lack of religious literacy (from development partners)²² and development literacy (from faith actors), privileging one faith partner and not including others, including a lack of formative research to map out the scope of possible faith partners and their beliefs and influences, and a loss of the transformative elements of faith and belief when “NGO-ized” into standard development parameters.

Over the years, development and faith actors have been working to learn how to overcome partnership challenges and maximize cooperation, with many studies recommending improved ways of working.²³ The following principles summarize the main lessons for successful collaborations.

3. 8 PRINCIPLES OF MORE PARTICIPATORY WAY OF WORKING

²⁰ Le Roux, Elisabet, and Brenda Elizabeth Bartelink. “No more ‘harmful traditional practices’: working effectively with faith leaders.” Synthesis report of the UK-Government funded project: ‘Working effectively with faith leaders to challenge harmful traditional practices’ (November 2017). <https://jilifc.com/resources/no-harmful-traditional-practices-workingeffectively-faith-leaders> (2017).

²¹ Ayesha Imam, “The Devil Is in the Details: At the Nexus of Development, Women’s Rights, and Religious Fundamentalisms,” Toronto: Association for Women’s Rights in Development (AWID), March 22, 2016, <https://www.awid.org/publications/devil-details>.

²² UNFPA and NORAD, “Religion, Women’s Health and Rights: Points of Contention and Paths of Opportunities,” GSDRC, accessed February 6, 2019, <https://gsdrc.org/document-library/religion-womens-health-and-rights-points-of-contention-and-paths-of-opportunities/>.

²³ A few examples: Elizabeth Costenbader et al., “Getting to Intent: Are Social Norms Influencing Intentions to Use Modern Contraception in the DRC?,” *PLOS ONE* 14, no. 7 (July 16, 2019): e0219617, <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0219617>; Elisabet le Roux et al., “Getting Dirty: Working with Faith Leaders to Prevent and Respond to Gender-Based Violence,” *The Review of Faith & International Affairs* 14, no. 3 (July 2, 2016): 22–35, <https://doi.org/10.1080/15570274.2016.1215837>; Rick James, “Addressing Dependency with Faith and Hope: The Eagles Relief and Development Programme of the Living Waters Church in Malawi,” *Development in Practice* 22, no. 5–6 (August 1, 2012): 883–92, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09614524.2012.685878>; Copestake, James et al., “Faith-Based Rural Poverty Reduction in Uganda |,” in *Attributing Development Impact*, 2019, <https://www.developmentbookshelf.com/doi/abs/10.3362/9781780447469.006>; Seren Boyd, “In the Thick of It: Why the Church Is an Essential Partner for Sustainable Development in the World’s Poorest Countries” (Teddington: Tearfund, 2009), <http://jilifc.com/resources/in-the-thick-of-it-why-the-church-is-an-essential-partner-for-sustainable-development-in-the-worlds-poorest-countries/>; BMZ, “Religious Communities as Partners for Development Cooperation” (Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), 2016), <http://www.partner-religion-development.org/resources/knowledge-center/>; Nell Bolton, “Interreligious Action for Peace: Studies in Muslim-Christian Cooperation,” Text (Catholic Relief Services, March 28, 2017), <http://www.crs.org/our-work-overseas/research-publications/interreligious-action-peace>; Jean F. Duff and Warren W. Buckingham, “Strengthening of Partnerships between the Public Sector and Faith-Based Groups,” *The Lancet* 386, no. 10005 (October 31, 2015): 1786–94, [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736\(15\)60250-1](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(15)60250-1); Mary Graw Leary, “Religious Organizations as Partners in the Global and Local Fight Against Human Trafficking,” *The Review of Faith & International Affairs* 16, no. 1 (January 2, 2018): 51–60, <https://doi.org/10.1080/15570274.2018.1433583>; Tonya Sanders, “David and Goliath: Dismantling Inequalities within Faith-Based Cross-Sector Partnerships,” *Development in Practice* 26, no. 7 (October 2, 2016): 892–905, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09614524.2016.1210089>.

The eight principles outlined in this document are also aligned with and build on the Bangkok Statement signed by over 100 participants from 20 countries at the Global Faith for Social and Behavior Change Communication workshop in Bangkok in July 2018.²⁴ The Statement has a strong focus on equity, participation, and on inclusive and evidence-based partnerships - and thus on diversified, context specific approaches to FPCC. Likewise, the principles acknowledge and draw inspiration from various principles and standards paper developed by UN and donor agencies in the last decade, as described in Annex 1.²⁵

The FPCC Initiative is grounded in a rights and evidence-based framework, the Theory of Faith for Social and Behavior Change.²⁶ The framework directs us away from sometimes instrumentalized and traditional ways of engagement with faith actors, and towards more integrated, systematic, sustainable ways of collaborating for the benefit of children. The framework affirms that faith actors and institutions bring with them certain transformational qualities, that are significant for achieving social and behavior change outcomes, including an agency/non dependency mindset, faith mandate and motivation from sacred texts, healthy and equitable relationships, non-discriminatory and inclusive practices, safe spaces to engage on sensitive issues, values of stewardship, accountability to the divine, and a moral vision for action. Intentional articulation and development of these inherent qualities increases their transformative power

The following table summarizes the main differences between instrumentalizing and participatory approaches to collaboration, and frames parameters of a more effective way of working with faith actors for sustainable change for children. We recognize of course that existing parameters of collaboration fall along a continuum. This table describes for discussion the poles of the continuum.

²⁴ Joint Learning Initiative on Faith & Local Communities, UNICEF and Religions for Peace, "Informing the Mind and Moving the Heart Report on the first Global Workshop on Social and Behavior Change," Joint Learning Initiative on Faith & Local Communities, accessed November 20, 2019, https://docs.wixstatic.com/ugd/e98ce2_0626675633de414ebf7855c25ea40487.pdf.

²⁵ McKinsey & Co with JLIIFLC, "Building More Effective Partnerships between Public Sector and Faith Groups," Washington D.C.: Joint Learning Initiative on Faith and Local Communities, 2015, <https://jliflc.com/resources/building-effective-partnerships-between-public-sector-and-faith-groups/>; UNFPA, "Guidelines for Engaging Faith-Based Organisations (FBOs) as Agents of Change," New York: United Nations Population Fund, 2009, http://www.unfpa.org/culture/docs/fbo_engagement.pdf; UNHCR, "Partnership Note on Faith-Based Organizations, Local Faith Communities, and Faith Leaders," Geneva: UNHCR, 2014, <http://www.unhcr.org/539ef28b9.pdf>; UNAIDS, "Partnership with Faith-Based Organizations UNAIDS Strategic Framework" (Geneva: Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), 2009); DFID, "Faith Partnership Principles: Working Effectively with Faith Groups to Fight Global Poverty," London: Department for International Development, June 26, 2012, <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/faith-partnership-principles-working-effectively-with-faith-groups-to-fight-global-poverty>; UNICEF, "Partnering with Religious Communities for Children," New York: UNICEF, January 2012, https://www.unicef.org/eapro/Partnering_with_Religious_Communities_for_Children.pdf.

²⁶ Cathy James, "Faith and Positive Change for Children - Global Initiative on Social and Behavior Change - Theory of Change," Joint Learning Initiative, accessed November 20, 2019, <https://jliflc.com/resources/faith-and-positive-change-for-children-global-initiative-on-social-and-behavior-change-theory-of-change/>.

KEY DIFFERENCES BETWEEN INSTRUMENTALIZING and PARTICIPATORY APPROACHES TO COLLABORATION

A top down instrumentalizing <i>status quo</i>	A ground up aspirational, participatory future
Image of human is economic/material	Recognizes inherent human dignity, equality and sacredness of life; affirms the agency
Short term, thematic/single sector interventions	Multi-sectoral/integrated/holistic - speaking to hearts and minds
Project-based; vertical and siloed	Sustaining and community systems strengthening
Top down; hierarchical	Confidence in community solutions -participatory, co-created, multi-level
Donor funding dependent	Asset based; multiple funding sources
Focus on religion/faith actors as “isolated” partners	Focus on faith actors in connection with other groups in society and faith as integral to all aspects of lives
Focus only on high-level formal religious leaders, mostly male	Inclusive, equitable approach also engaging informal, traditional leaders - especially women and youth leaders
Mutual discomfort/suspicion/bias between faith and secular actors	Complementary learning between actors with a valuing of transformational power of faith and heart-mind dialogue
Limited/default options for partnerships (favoring pre-established relationships)	Broadening relationships through formative research to understand how existing structures work, who is excluded and why. Engaging the whole of a community through plurality of non-faith, faith, and traditional actors.
Little and generic monitoring and evaluation (M&EAL); results stay with the donor	Tailored and participative M&E and follow-up processes, shared results
One-off lecture-style religious and development literacy/capacity building trainings. International actors as capacity “holders”	Two-way knowledge exchange and capacity sharing, with recognition of mutually beneficial capacities
Global North -> South	Increased South-South local cooperation and knowledge exchange
Guidelines on ways of working compiled by Global North actors; international standards	Evidence-based guidelines on ways of working compiled collaboratively a range of actors
Assuming that there will be a cascade effect through religious structures after trainings of trainers	Ownership, sustainability, and effectiveness at different levels through participative processes and follow-up

Unchecked power imbalances; subcontractor relationship	Participative analysis of power imbalances and joint decision-making relationships
Use of “development jargon” and culturally inappropriate language	Use of local and culturally appropriate language and communication

To move from the status quo towards a more collaborative future, our joint efforts have underlined eight key principles of more effective partnership

PRINCIPLE # 1. Understand and value the transformational power of faith

- Learn about the powerful influence, both positive and harmful, of faith actors for social and behavior change
- Understand the power of **faith-inspired mind-heart dialogue** for changes of heart and of attitudes towards children. **Sacred texts and faith teachings** mandate care for children and vulnerable people and frame the duty and possibility of positive change.
- Commit to **long term partnership** to build the trust and relationships that break down biases between faith and development partners, open and foster spaces for dialogue for all, and find common understanding on issues that are important for children and their communities.
- **Deal transparently with sensitivities** about potential areas of conflict, cross purposes, or limitations by intentionally bringing them up for discussion to find a middle ground and develop clear strategies and agreements as required.
- Faith actors who **participate in and own collaborative processes** will be best placed to engage in the transformation of social behavior by authentically exerting influence at the individual, community, and national/international level.

Example: In the 2014-2015 Ebola response in West Africa, the spread of Ebola during religious burial rituals was contained when religious and community leaders were engaged to explain and change expectations and practices relating to the preparation of bodies for burial. The role of these leaders in affecting transformation was game changing in the overall Ebola response.²⁷ Failure of external organizations to effectively engage local faith networks accounts for some of the violence resistance to Ebola control measures in the current epidemic in DRC.

Principle #2. Have confidence in community solutions. Adopt a respectful reciprocal learning approach leading to mutual understanding

²⁷ Featherstone, “Keeping the Faith”; Katherine Marshall and Sally Smith, “Religion and Ebola: Learning from Experience,” *The Lancet* 386, no. 10005 (October 2015): e24–25, [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736\(15\)61082-0S](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(15)61082-0S); SMART Consortium. “Protecting the Living, Honouring the Dead: The Barriers and Enablers to Community Acceptance and Implementation of Safe Burials.” (2017).

- The participatory approach is grounded in the understanding that **communities have their own traditions, successful experience, assets,²⁸ ways of working and preferred solutions;** and that these can be very powerful in achieving good outcomes for children, without any external resources
- Working with faith actors should not be a default option. Participatory partnership needs to begin with **an understanding of the roles and competencies of the different faith and development actors,** including power dynamics and who is excluded. Different actors will have different competencies, including technical and culturally specific knowledge, and the ability to speak to different groups.
- Framed in a **listening and joint learning process,** and including child and youth voices and participation, faith actors should be active partners in discussion of the most critical needs for children in their communities, about the definition of “success,” and about the most effective strategies for sustainable change in their contexts.

Example: In Egypt, UNICEF supports the long-standing engagement of faith actors and the Ministry of Awqaf. The partnerships have developed publications, training materials for religious leaders and theology students, and community engagement formats based on community dialogue and viewing clubs of docu-drama. The partnership established with Al Azhar University in 1984 expanded to the Coptic Church in 2014 to produce Peace, Love and Tolerance, the first interfaith publication on child protection.²⁹ The partnership demonstrates the effectiveness of a two-way capacity sharing and learning process between UNICEF and its faith partners.³⁰

Principle #3. Be mindful of power inequalities and be inclusive of marginalized groups

- The inclusion of **minority religious and other groups, as well as traditional and informal leaders (such as women and youth leaders),** must be prioritized to ensure empowerment, equality and plurality. Recognizing people’s agency, this equity approach avoids imbalances of power, commits to leave no one behind and shifts to making aid as local as possible.
- **Instrumentalization** should be recognized and avoided. Drawing on the capacities of all partners for leadership and coordination, participatory processes emphasize joint decision making.

Example: In Panama, UNICEF has partnered with the inter-religious council (COEPA) to increase cooperation within the council and promote youth awareness and empowerment against domestic violence and child abuse. The Youth Engagement and Participation program supports regular interfaith

²⁸ ABCD Institute: DePaul University, Chicago, “What Is Asset Based Community Development (ABCD),” Depaul University, accessed November 19, 2019, <https://resources.depaul.edu/abcd-institute/Pages/default.aspx>.

²⁹ UNICEF, Al-Azhar University, and Coptic Church of Egypt, “Peace, Love, Tolerance,” Joint Learning Initiative on Faith & Local Communities, accessed February 18, 2019, <https://jliflc.com/resources/peace-love-tolerance/>.

³⁰ Stacy Nam, Dr. Olivia Wilkinson, and Maya Casagrande, “Faith and Positive Change for Children Case Study: UNICEF Egypt,” Joint Learning Initiative on Faith & Local Communities, accessed November 21, 2019, <https://jliflc.com/resources/faith-and-positive-change-for-children-case-study-unicef-egypt/>.

youth meetings and a periodic Youth Assembly, in which young people are free to choose topics to address, express their own beliefs and practices, and become advocates of their own rights.³¹

Principle #4. Adopt participative planning processes valuing heart-mind dialogue and systems strengthening

- From the start of the planning process, co-creation is key. Participation is a cardinal principle at every stage of the collaboration – from formative research and needs assessment to programming, from implementation to monitoring and evaluation. Local leadership and decision-making are central to the effectiveness and sustainability of partnerships. This also means continuing relationship building, checking in, and follow up processes so that the engagement does not trail off.

Example: Mothers Union “Listening Observing Acting” (MULOA) process.³² MULOA is a community led process of putting faith into action and exploring how to work together to bring lasting wholistic change according to the specific needs of each community.

Principle #5. Identify and discuss challenges and difficult areas

- Differences on attitudes towards gender, sexuality, and other human rights may occur. Participatory practice intentionally opens safe space and makes time for active listening, discussion of differences, and integrated planning. The aim should be to build on common goals and understanding –such as preventing maternal mortality, as a basis for change.
- Steps may include: facilitate articulation of a positive vision or goal, unpack whether current realities are helping or hindering that vision and discuss whether and how changes need to be made towards achieving the intention.

Example: World Vision’s Channels of Hope includes deep reflection on science and theology, plus an intentional session on "Tough Stuff" to bring together science, theology, and ethics.³³ Another example is the Ouagadougou Partnership that has sought to open space to discuss religious beliefs and family planning.³⁴

Principle #6. Commit to evidence-based decision-making, ongoing evaluation and learning, and to being informed by outcomes

³¹ Stacy Nam, Dr. Olivia Wilkinson, and Maya Casagrande, “Faith and Positive Change for Children Case Study: UNICEF Panama,” Joint Learning Initiative on Faith & Local Communities, accessed November 21, 2019, <https://jliflc.com/resources/faith-and-positive-change-for-children-case-study-unicef-panama/>.

³² Mothers Union, “Mothers Union Innovative-The MULOA Process,” Mother's Union Christian Care for Families, accessed November 19, 2019, <http://www.mothersunioncpwi.org/mothers-union-initiative-the-muloa-process/>.

³³ Channels of hope, “Channels of hope evidence brief,” World Vision International, December 2016, https://docs.google.com/viewerng/viewer?url=https://jliflc.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/World-Vision-Channels-of-Hope-Evidence-Brief_December-2016.pdf.

³⁴ Brenda Bartelink, Erin Wilson and Nikki Haze, “Spirituality as a conduit for social transformation? Rethinking secular and religious assumptions in development practice,” World Vision, September 2015, <https://assets.worldvision.org.uk/files/1514/4552/6225/Channels-Of-Hope-Maternal-Newborn-Child-Health-Zimbabwe-Executive-Summary-2015.pdf>.

- Partnerships and programs are most effective when there are informed by evidence, and when they include participative processes of monitoring, evaluation and reflection. Best practice examples and guidelines can help build better partnerships and should be developed in a collaborative way. Commitment to co-creation of M & EAL process, and feedback loops on results is key.³⁵

Example: The partnership between UNICEF and the Kenyan Inter-religious Council on the Faith for Life Initiative showed that co-designing, co-developing and testing training materials together with religious leaders ensured a strong initial buy-in. The initiative’s monitoring and evaluation processes showed the importance of increasing faith actors’ participation in order to use measuring strategies that are meaningful to them rather than focusing on reporting and being purely “extractive.”³⁶

Principle #7. Explore and document new enabling and facilitation roles for global FBOs and other intermediaries

- Recognizing the autonomy and agency of local actors, international FBOs are shifting resources and strategies away from direct program implementation and more towards technical, strategic, resourcing support.
- Local faith actors can benefit from skilled support strategies including:
 - Convening and supporting emerging alliances, as well as maintaining effective intermediary organizations
 - Scalable, collaborative faith and community mobilization mechanisms
 - Developing and adapting resources and methods for capacity sharing, fundraising, and systems strengthening
 - Enabling evidence generation and learning using participatory approaches

Examples: Salvation Army Faith-based Facilitation process³⁷ is a way of helping people think, talk, explore and respond to their issues in the light of faith. In Mozambique, UNICEF supports national interfaith organizations that have developed expertise in working with international donors through years of experience in development and relief work. For instance, PIRCOM (Inter-religious Program Against Malaria) acts as local and national broker. It is able to communicate with development partners by knowing the jargon and to understand donor compliance requirements, while being able to engage diverse religious networks, particularly through the Mozambique Council of Religions (COREM), and the Government and communities nationwide.³⁸

Principle #8. Work with Local Faith Actors (LFA) to build and amplify their capacity for advocacy

³⁵Nava Friedman and Lynn Aylward, “Faith and International Family Planning,” Berkley Center, accessed November 19, 2019, <https://berkeleycenter.georgetown.edu/publications/religious-engagement-in-family-planning-policies>.

³⁶Stacy Nam, Dr. Olivia Wilkinson, and Maya Casagrande, “Faith and Positive Change for Children Case Study: UNICEF Kenya,” Joint Learning Initiative on Faith & Local Communities, publish date to be determined.

³⁷Judith Thompson, “Building Deeper Relationships,” The Salvation Army, accessed November 19, 2019, https://issuu.com/salvationarmyhq/docs/xfb_english.

³⁸Programa Inter-Religioso Contra a Malaria, “Multi-Purpose Agents Success Story in Murrupula District,” Joint Learning Initiative on Faith & Local Communities, accessed November 19, 2019, <https://jliflc.com/resources/programa-inter-religioso-contra-malaria-pircom-mozambique/>.

- LFAs are uniquely positioned to monitor government delivery on commitments, to hold to account and to advocate for unmet needs. They may need help in forming alliances, developing, adapting and conveying messages, and understanding the donor/public sector landscape.
- Technical and capacity support in developing advocacy skills among LFAs and helping them establish broad advocacy coalitions across faith and geographies is a valuable partnership function.

Example: ABAAD, a secular partner with expertise in advocacy and activism, and UNICEF are engaged in a country-wide program in Lebanon bringing together religious leaders from all major religious traditions to discuss differences and potential commonalities in a “protected” environment. These discussions will lead to the identification of key shared priority messages and of religious texts that justify the messages across faiths, and to plan advocacy interventions targeting the different faith communities, for instance through media outreach, including the dissemination of religious leaders’ messages in public media.³⁹

4. WHAT THIS ALL MEANS FOR LOCAL AND INTERNATIONAL PARTNERS

Focusing on the agency of local leadership calls for a radical repositioning of mission and method of INGOs, international organizations, and donors, both secular and faith-based. A collaborative, reciprocal, non-instrumentalized approach to partnership calls for institutional humility, intentional servant leadership, and a commitment to ‘graduation’ of local partners as capabilities develop. It also implies a commitment to the time needed to build trust, to listen, and to engage in adequate feedback loops. Contextual assessments of priorities, goals, and needs to consider the assets of local faith actors, as well as those of the international partners. Actors outside communities may be able to offer funding, technical expertise, coalition building, advocacy skills, and help in navigating the complex development sector.

IMPLICATIONS FOR LOCAL FAITH ACTORS (LFA)

- Assess community *assets*, as well as needs, based on continuous community engagement
- Adopt evidence-based learning approach to change; insist that any data collected be available and useful to LFAs
- Convene, connect and coordinate with other LFAs and local actors
- Seek out opportunities for equitable partnerships and clarify expectations with prospective partners
- Value intermediary mechanisms, skills, and assets of external entities, not only funding opportunities

IMPLICATIONS FOR INTERNATIONAL AGENCIES, NGOs, AND FBOs

³⁹ Stacy Nam, Dr. Olivia Wilkinson, and Maya Casagrande, “Faith and Positive Change for Children Case Study: UNICEF Lebanon,” Joint Learning Initiative on Faith & Local Communities, publish date to be determined.

Where shared beliefs bring international and local faith actors together, particular attention should be paid to checking theological and religious practice assumptions, which may differ greatly between contexts, and perpetuate neo-colonial/civilizational practices of the past. Likewise, where differing secular and religious worldviews meet, attention is needed to secular biases that may view religious beliefs and practices as “outdated” and secular views as superior, again to ensure that there is not a neo-colonial imposition of worldviews.

Reflecting a commitment to local autonomy and deeper more sustainable partnerships, many international FBOs and NGOs are already and should further seek to: ⁴⁰

- prioritize facilitation and support of local actors over direct implementation
- renew theological reflection and explore new ways to work with local denominational networks; explore ways to discuss secular and religious dynamics in new and existing partnerships
- consider the power dynamics in partnerships; in particular how do ways of working and funding inhibit the agency and action of local faith actors
- adopt and adapt participatory planning and mobilization processes, and strengthening community engagement and social accountability processes
- value a joint learning approach grounded in capacity sharing
- invest in participatory research on local faith actors
- shift HQ human and financial resources to locally-led country and district offices
- adjust fundraising goals to incorporate local priorities, with joint resource mobilization

UNICEF COMMUNICATION FOR DEVELOPMENT HAS DEVELOPED ‘MINIMUM QUALITY STANDARDS AND INDICATORS IN COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT’ TO PROVIDE GLOBALLY ESTABLISHED GUIDANCE ON THE CONTRIBUTION OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT IN DEVELOPMENT PRACTICE AS WELL AS HUMANITARIAN ACTION. THE OBJECTIVE OF THE STANDARDS IS TO SUPPORT IMPLEMENTATION OF HIGH QUALITY, EVIDENCE- BASED COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AT SCALE IN DEVELOPMENT AND HUMANITARIAN CONTEXTS. THE STANDARDS PRIORITIZE PARTICIPATION, EMPOWERMENT AND OWNERSHIP, INCLUSION, TWO-WAY COMMUNICATION, ADAPTABILITY AND LOCALIZATION, AND BUILDING ON LOCAL CAPACITY. ³⁹

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⁴⁰ Dena Freeman, “Tearfund and the Quest for Faith-Based Development,” *Abingdon; New York: Routledge*, (2019), <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429343322>.

Jamie Bedson and Sharon Abramowitz, “Minimum Quality Standards for Community Engagement: DRAFT,” MESH, accessed Nov. 25 2019, https://mesh.tghn.org/site_media/media/uploads/articles/attachments/UNICEF_Minimum_Quality_Standards_DRAFT.pdf.

- Commit time and resources to non-instrumentalization and to developing procedures that support more co-creative and localizing approaches
- Map faith actors in country contexts to expand inclusive, representative partnership
- Respond to stated priorities and needs of local communities and facilitate community engagement as a fundamental approach in all development processes
- Invest in strengthening the evidence base and M&EAL on FPCC, with feedback loops to communities
- Multilaterals and bilaterals could position a faith partnerships representative in each country who knows the local actors, builds relationships with the local actors, and understands the beliefs and practices and points of intersection.

ANNEX 1 - Key documents informing these principles

- The 2008 Istanbul Consensus on the Principles of a Global Interfaith Network on Population and Development informed the **UNFPA Guidelines for Engaging FBOs as Agents of Change**,⁴² which strongly emphasize the need to foster South-South regional partnerships and knowledge-exchange and to focus on specific objectives to build alliances.⁴³ UNFPA acknowledges the importance of a common understanding that is based on *cultural sensitivity, care and respect* (including the need for different languages and methods).
- The **UNAIDS-FBO strategic framework**,⁴⁴ published in 2009 to encourage stronger partnerships in HIV/AIDS-related interventions is based on the principles of the Resolution adopted by the General Assembly 60/262, the Political Declaration on HIV/AIDS,⁴⁵ which include supporting national ownership and accountability, gender equality, a human-rights-based approach and a focus on engaging people living with HIV/AIDS at all stages, effective communication between partners, participatory decision-making processes and a clear agreement on partnership expectations.

⁴² Rebecca and Madiha Awais, "Global Forum of Faith-based Organisation for Population and Development," United Nations Population Fund, accessed November 20, 2019, https://www.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/global_forums_fbo.pdf.

⁴³ UNFPA, "Guidelines for Engaging Faith-based Organisations (FBO) as Agents of Change," United Nations Population, accessed November 20, 2019, <https://www.unfpa.org/resources/guidelines-engaging-faith-based-organisations-fbo-agents-change>.

⁴⁴ UNAIDS, "Partnership with Faith Based Organizations: UNAIDS Strategic Framework," UNAIDS, accessed November 20, 2019, <https://jiflfc.com/resources/partnership-faith-based-organizations-unaid-strategic-framework-2/>.

⁴⁵ General Assembly resolution 60/262, "Political Declaration on HIV/AIDS," A/RES/60/262, accessed November 20, 2019, http://data.unaids.org/pub/report/2006/20060615_hlm_politicaldeclaration_ares60262_en.pdf

- DFID’s 2012 “**Faith Partnership Principles – working effectively with faith groups to fight global poverty**,”⁴⁶ sets out some key principles to guide collaborations with faith actors for sustainable change, including the importance of transparency about missions and ways of working, mutual respect between faith- and non-faith actors, and understanding of the different roles and added value of faith actors’ contributions.
- In 2012, UNICEF issued a **Guide on Partnering with Religious Communities for Children**,⁴⁷ which identifies *shared values* among different religious traditions, such as a holistic approach to children, a commitment to *addressing the needs of marginalized individuals and communities*, an emphasis on the dignity of the child, and the importance given to the family for the upbringing of children, which are also key elements of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The Guide also stresses the importance of mutual understanding, respect, trust, open dialogue and shared priorities when partnering with religious communities. In particular, it insists on the importance of understanding the roles that religious beliefs and structures play in the context of interventions.
- **UNHCR’s 2014 “Partnership Note on FBOs, LFCs and Faith Leaders”**⁴⁸ builds on the “Welcoming the Stranger: Affirmations for Faith Leaders,”⁴⁹ at the heart of which lie the principles of hospitality, respect and equality, shared by all religious traditions. The document also acknowledges faith as a “basic need”, and the subsequent value of spiritual support.
- **‘Building Effective Partnerships Between Public Sector and Faith Groups’**⁵⁰ conducted by McKinsey and Co with the Joint Learning Initiative in 2015 from interviews with 24 FBOs, academic, multilateral and intergovernmental organizations, illustrated that careful consideration of the *suitability of collaboration*, identification of *shared values and understanding* (including thorough religious literacy trainings), *faith actors’ participation in decision-making and programming*, and *better evidence on the impact* of the interventions is needed.

⁴⁶ DFID, “Faith Partnership Principles –working effectively with faith groups to fight global poverty,” Joint Learning Initiative on Faith & Local Communities, accessed November 20, 2019, <https://jliflc.com/resources/faith-partnership-principles/>.

⁴⁷ UNICEF, “Partnering with Religious Communities for Children,” UNICEF, accessed November 20, 2019, [https://www.unicef.org/about/partnerships/files/Partnering_with_Religious_Communities_for_Children_\(UNICEF\).pdf](https://www.unicef.org/about/partnerships/files/Partnering_with_Religious_Communities_for_Children_(UNICEF).pdf).

⁴⁸ Volker Türk, José Riera and Marie-Claude Poirier, “Partnership Note on Faith-Based Organizations, Local Faith Communities and Faith Leaders,” UNHR, accessed November 20, 2019, <https://www.unhcr.org/protection/hcdialogue%20/539ef28b9/partnership-note-faith-based-organizations-local-faith-communities-faith.html>.

⁴⁹ UNHCR, “Welcoming the Stranger: Affirmations for Faith Leaders,” UNHR, accessed November 20, 2019, <https://www.unhcr.org/protection/hcdialogue%20/51b6de419/welcoming-stranger-affirmations-faith-leaders.html>.

⁵⁰ Joint Learning Initiative on Faith & Local Communities, “Building more effective partnerships between public sector and faith groups,” Joint Learning Initiative on Faith & Local Communities, accessed November 20, 2019, <http://jliflc.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/Building-more-effective-partnerships-between-public-sector-and-faith-groups.pdf>.

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ENDNOTES