Religious Dimensions of Development: Lessons at the Country Level

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About the World Faiths Development Dialogue

The World Faiths Development Dialogue (WFDD) is a not-for-profit organization working at the intersection of religion and global development. Housed within the Berkley Center in Washington, D.C., WFDD documents the work of faith-inspired organizations and explores the importance of religious ideas and actors in development contexts. WFDD supports dialogue between religious and development communities and promotes innovative partnerships, at national and international levels, with the goal of contributing to positive and inclusive development outcomes.

About the Berkley Center for Religion, Peace & World Affairs

The Berkley Center for Religion, Peace, and World Affairs at Georgetown University, created within the Office of the President in 2006, is dedicated to the interdisciplinary study of religion, ethics, and public life. Through research, teaching, and service, the center explores global challenges of democracy and human rights, economic and social development, international diplomacy, and interreligious understanding. Two premises guide the center’s work: that a deep examination of faith and values is critical to address these challenges, and that the open engagement of religious and cultural traditions with one another can promote peace.

About this Report

This summary report reflects discussions at the October 2016 capstone conference at Georgetown University, which examined findings and conclusions of the three-year research program carried out with the generous support of the Henry R. Luce Foundation. The country-level mapping work involved a combination of literature reviews, consultations with experts, and in-country fieldwork. The country-level mapping built on an earlier five-year project supported by the Henry R. Luce Foundation, which examined six broadly defined world regions and eight development issues. Project outputs, including interviews, briefs, and reports, are available online at https://berkleycenter.georgetown.edu/projects/religion-and-development-country-level-mapping.

This report was prepared by WFDD Executive Director Katherine Marshall, Lauren Herzog, and Wilma Mui. Berkley Center Director Tom Banchoff and Claudia Winkler provided support and substantial input. The report reflects thoughtful comments from participants at the October 2016 capstone conference held at Georgetown University. Support from student research assistants Christina Johnson and Natalie Koltun is gratefully acknowledged.

Photos in this report were taken by the WFDD research team, except where noted.
Georgetown University’s Berkley Center for Religion, Peace, and World Affairs celebrated its ten-year anniversary in 2016. From the very start, the partnership with the Henry R. Luce Foundation has been an integral part of the center’s life and history. The collaboration, under the able leadership of Katherine Marshall, has centered on the challenges of linking religion and development. This report summarizes and reflects on the most recent phase of this work, which has explored the changing landscape of religion and development in several very different countries (Bangladesh, Kenya, Senegal, and Guatemala). All four countries face significant challenges of fragility and development actors of many kinds, public and private, play critical roles.

Global development is a priority for Georgetown University, and the Berkley Center’s work on religion and development is a central part of the university’s wider global engagement. With the values of intercultural dialogue and social justice so integral to its Catholic and Jesuit identity, Georgetown is committed to a deeper understanding of the positive role of religious actors around development issues.

From 2013 to 2016, the Religion and Development project was implemented in close cooperation with the World Faiths Development Dialogue, a leading NGO housed at the center. The latest phase of the Luce-supported work has built on earlier research and dialogue, deepening our understanding of particular countries, making research results more accessible, and linking research to teaching and building professional “religious literacy.”

It has added to an already impressive set of more than 400 in-depth interviews with practitioners working on religion and development around the world. Consultation meetings in Washington, London, and the countries of focus have brought together interdisciplinary groups to highlight gaps in knowledge and important operational issues. A large group of student researchers have contributed to background research and report preparation. And the center and WFDD have built strong partnerships with institutions in different regions of the world.

This collaboration between the Luce Foundation, Georgetown University, and WFDD is a pioneering venture linking different fields of study and action and highlighting the complex and vital roles that religious institutions and beliefs can play in advancing solutions to the world’s most pressing policy challenges.

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Director, Berkley Center for Religion, Peace, and World Affairs
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INTRODUCTION

The year 2015 marked an important turning point, a “moment of truth” for the international development community. World leaders set forth bold aspirations for human rights and human welfare at the turn of the millennium, then grappled with translating them into practical measures. The result was eight goals (the Millennium Development Goals or MDGs), with targets, a 2015 deadline, and specific numbers attached. The MDGs defined what were seen as economic and social imperatives—to reduce poverty, hunger, and preventable diseases and to move from promises for education and women’s equality toward reality and results. With the 2015 deadline came an elaborate global accounting. In parallel and even more significant, the United Nations General Assembly meeting in September 2015 saw the culmination of a process of defining still bolder, far broader goals that expanded the vision of development to encompass peace, environmental action, and an integrated humanitarian response. The 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and 169 targets defined a framework, an architecture, for global action for the next 15 years.

It was evident to some actors from the outset that the partnerships that were envisioned as a vital part of the new global development architecture must include the vast networks of religious institutions that were, in many areas, the original thinkers and workers in the development vineyards. However, they were often quite invisible. Although it was religious communities who were largely responsible for passionate challenges in 2000 to “make poverty history” and to “drop the debt,” they were rarely engaged in leading roles in shaping the MDGs, and the rather technocratic language of targets and results-based management proved to be something of a turnoff. However, over the past 17 years, the roles of religious institutions, communities, and beliefs as central actors in the development field have become both more visible and more central. As the SDGs were launched and in early efforts to grapple with turning these global ideals into practice, religious voices were increasingly heard. Most actors now acknowledge that they are an integral part of the new global partnership.

This change owes much to leadership and advocacy from parts of religious communities (Pope Francis and Patriarch Bartholomew, for example) and to leaders like Madeleine Albright, George W. Bush, Thoraya Obaid, James W. Wolfensohn, and Nicholas Kristof, who came to appreciate that religion had been far too long ignored as a major force in global affairs. It has also depended, however, on better knowledge about the ideas that religious communities advance and the work they do, a coming to terms with issues and obstacles that have stood in the way, and a clearer articulation of shared goals and values.

With generous support from the Henry R. Luce Foundation, the Berkley Center and the World Faiths Development Dialogue (WFDD, a small NGO born in the World Bank to build bridges between development and faith worlds) have worked since 2006 to build this foundation of knowledge, to address complexities and issues, and to engage in dialogue that enhances understanding and helps to build a sense of common purpose. The goal is, by fostering better mutual understanding and honest dialogue on common goals and different perspectives, to see better, broader, and more lasting improvements in the quality of life of the world’s poorer communities.

A first phase project, launched in 2006, focused on different world regions and on critical development issues. It engaged a wide range of actors and produced substantial research outputs. An interim grant from the Luce Foundation (2010-2011) focused on helping to translate this research into a more action-oriented format through policy briefs and other communication efforts. A second-phase project from 2013 to 2016 took the dialogue and analysis to a country level; we were and are convinced that deepening understanding of religious and development dynamics and the practical efforts to help improve lives must focus at this level. We also set out to enhance understanding or “literacy” about the complex religious engagement on development issues by producing case studies designed to support teaching and to encourage dialogue.

The project has reached its conclusion, with substantial learning behind us. It has enabled us at least to scratch the surface of the topic and to help map the path ahead. The path is defined by three central questions: (a) Taking any development issue, what does religion have to do with it? (b) Why does religious engagement matter, and what can be learned from it? and (c) How does this translate into policy challenges and policy action? On a wide range of topics, from madrasa education, refugee support, anti-corruption efforts, and health system development to lifting obstacles that block hope for vulnerable children, the research and dialogue have yielded a gold mine of insights, even as they raise a host of questions. These will engage us and our many partners as we move forward.

Katherine Marshall
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Looking Ahead ....................................................................................................................................9
This report summarizes and explores research work undertaken by the Berkley Center and WFDD between 2013 and 2016, with support from a grant from the Henry R. Luce Foundation under its Religion and International Affairs Program. The project has focused above all on what we have termed country mapping. This means an effort to investigate and present a detailed landscape of religious actors, framed in relation to the development objectives of the governments concerned, major actors in civil society, development partners, and faith-inspired organizations (FIOs). The work focused on four countries, selected both because of prior operational and research links and because they represented a diverse group in terms of religious demography, development challenges, and international partnerships.

The rationale for selection of countries was both strategic and operational. Some factors were as follows: (a) Bangladesh: Muslim majority, contested secular constitution, host of development challenges, immediate climate change challenges, and epicenter of thinking and action for the development community. BRAC University has been a strong partner in the research work; (b) Senegal: secular constitution, Muslim majority with significant Catholic influence, large poverty challenges, climate and demographic issues, and diverse development partnerships. The Ministry of Health and Social Action has been a partner, as has CRSD (Cadre des Religieux pour la Santé et le Développement), an association of religious leaders; (c) Kenya: Christian majority with Muslim and other religious minorities, conflict challenges as well as climate change, governance issues at the fore, and complex development partnerships; (d) Guatemala: majority Christian with diverse and changing denominational landscape; strong indigenous religious traditions; long history of conflict with religious engagement in peacebuilding, governance and climate change challenges; stubborn poverty problems; and erratic development partnerships.

Linked to the country mapping work that was the project focus, the team has developed a series of teaching case studies and policy briefs on a range of topics. With parallel support from the Handa Foundations and the International Shinto Foundation, WFDD and the Berkley Center took on issues where the analysis promised to support needed action, notably on religious dimensions of the Ebola crisis and on faith and tuberculosis.

The project built on earlier research, most of it linked to Luce Foundation-supported projects, aimed at linking leading global development issues and their religious dimensions. From 2006 to 2011, the Berkley Center and WFDD Religion and Global Development Program focused on different world regions and leading development priorities (notably as reflected in the MDGs defined by the United Nations General Assembly in 2000). Activities included a series of global workshops and consultations with scholars, religious leaders, NGO representatives, and policymakers; publication of 28 regional and issue reports; more than 200 interviews with practitioners; and development of an extensive Religion and Development Database. For additional information, see the 2012 report “Faith-Inspired Development Work: Appraising the Luce/SFS Program on Religion and Development.”
The major focus of project work was at the country level. In developing the research approach, the Berkley Center/WFDD team built on WFDD’s prior country mapping work in Cambodia, conducted between 2007 and 2011. This earlier work in Cambodia was foundational. It involved a broad analysis of development and religious trends; interviews with development practitioners, religious actors, and scholars; more detailed exploration of important development topics where religious actors were actively engaged (maternal mortality, environmental action, trafficking, indigenous spirituality, and forest protection); and discussions with policymakers on the operational implications of the research. The Cambodia experience highlighted the complexity of the challenge of mapping, which was far more demanding than initially anticipated, and some of the paths to meaningful dialogue, as well as some pitfalls along the way. These included, inter alia, linking the broad country-level landscape analysis to quite specific operational challenges and presenting materials in different formats that would be appealing and suitable for various audiences.

The 2013 to 2016 country mapping work set out to achieve a significant level of understanding of each country’s development and religious landscape, to map the major development activities of FIOs, and to highlight and explore critical issues and areas of potential further research and action. Aside from making considerable contributions to understanding the nature of faith-linked development work in each country, the aim was to contribute to dialogue at the national level on implications and lessons of the experience, as well as to draw general conclusions with broader applicability. An implicit objective was to develop one or several models for the kind of mapping that would be useful to a wide range of actors, religious and non-religious, public sector and private, national and international, academic and operational.

The mapping work for each country began with an in-depth desk review of existing scholarly and grey literature on the country in question. This focused on two broad areas: the country’s religious landscape and its development progress and challenges. In several cases, the Berkley Center and WFDD had some prior knowledge of the country and existing contacts, building on them to establish a preliminary research agenda. It was obviously important to ensure that the team had appropriate language skills and relevant country knowledge. This work was and is demanding; it needs to cover a wide range of disciplines.
(economics, religious studies, anthropology, political science, and history, among others) and to navigate often complex shoals of sensitivities (for example, around extremist trends, gender roles, and governance).

The literature reviews covered economic and social development strategies and planning documents of government and international development organizations active in the country, including various forms of strategic and evaluation documents, to help construct a picture of development priorities, approaches, and issues, as well as the activities and financial engagement of partners (World Bank, UN system, bilateral development programs, major NGOs and foundations, and private sector actors). As an illustration, we searched such documents for explicit mention of religious actors or issues, which might range from complete silence to a general acknowledgement of the complex religious dimensions of development challenges to more detailed plans for partnerships with religious institutions, leaders, or communities.

The review of the faith landscape combed academic sources, including scholarly monographs, edited volumes, journal articles, and more contemporary journal and newspaper accounts. We were particularly concerned with social dimensions of religion and the ways in which religious traditions and practices relate to social attitudes and norms, as well as traditional social services (notably health and education) and other aid provided by religious actors. We aimed to understand how religious actors viewed development and how they were most directly involved, including the roles religious beliefs and practices play, for example, in gender roles, approaches to religious charity, and child spacing and child welfare.

The preliminary reviews sought to ascertain what could be learned about the civil society space in each country, and specifically the framework relevant for FIOs active in the country. Studies, government NGO registration lists (if available), or other NGO bodies were reviewed. In no case did we identify any systematic and complete roster of relevant organizations, though the NGO coordination systems in Bangladesh and Kenya include the larger FIOs, national and transnational. What was missing everywhere was solid information on local-level civil society organizations, including those with faith links.

The next stage was, for each country, a consultation event. These events were held in Washington, D.C., and for Bangladesh) in London. The approach was to invite a group of between 12 and 20 people (to assure meaningful discussion within the group), including leading international scholars, development practitioners, and activists with relevant and in-depth knowledge of the country; scholars and practitioners from the relevant country were always among the participants. The consultation was explicitly designed to ensure that participants could react to the proposed research plans set out in the concept note, as well as to consider themes to be explored during fieldwork and identify potential obstacles. The events lasted one to two days, typically divided into thematic sessions, each with prompts to spark discussion. Katherine Marshall facilitated each session. Each consultation involved lively discussion, some debate, and airing of information and suggestions for approaches during fieldwork. The team prepared detailed meeting summaries that were reviewed by participants and posted online. Most consultations have operated under the Chatham House Rule to ensure frank and open discussions. Each consultation helped the team to solidify five to eight focal topics (usually key development priorities that have strong religious dimensions) to serve as central topics for field investigation. Potential local partners were identified. The consultation groups served as a continuing resource during the fieldwork and report writing stages, offering referrals for fieldwork and reviewing draft reports.

Fieldwork followed the consultations, in each case involving a series of extended visits by the WFDD team. Typically, WFDD’s executive director participated in the initial visits to present and gain support for the effort among government, civil society, religious actors, and bi- and multilateral development partners. Fieldwork continued, with a goal of interviewing a minimum of 50 individuals or organizations per country, as well as establishing various contacts with individuals and organizations while gathering supplementary written materials.

Methodologically, the study relied heavily on semi-structured interviews with key informants, including disciplined efforts to write up interviews and publish them where appropriate, in light of the content of interviews and sensitivities of interviewees. Interviewees were drawn from international development practitioners, religious leaders/institutions, FIO staff, local civil society, local government officials, development agencies, development banks, UN agencies, and some of the larger international NGOs, as well as representatives of government ministries. Initial and follow-up meetings afforded the opportunity to inform critical stakeholders about the project and gain a sense of both knowledge of and sensitivity to issues around religion in the country.

Potential interviewees were identified using multiple sources, but the initial contacts were drawn largely from the information about larger FIOs active in the country developed during the initial desk research. Additional local expert contacts were identified during the literature review, supplemented by the
recommendations of the consultation group and the wider Georgetown University community.

Berkley Center/WFDD staff created and maintained detailed records of interviews (a feature highlighted in the Institutional Review Board exchange at the start of research). Often, introductory discussions preceded the formal interviews, and there were often follow-ups. Some interviews were conducted by video call or phone. In cases where a written interview was anticipated, most discussions were recorded. An especially demanding facet of the research was transcription, and in relevant cases, translation of text. In each instance, the interviewee reviewed, edited, and approved the text of the interview prior to publication on the Berkley Center website.

The extensive interview series with FIOs was an original feature of the research. The Berkley Center/WFDD team began at the macro level, focusing on FIOs that work nationally, regionally, or have particularly significant roles historically or in key sectors. Criteria for inclusion varied by context, but invariably involved an effort to assure diverse representation, for example by religious affiliation, size, type of government registration (e.g., NGO vs. civil society organization), whether international funding is received, or whether an institution implements projects or has activities in all regions of the country. As active FIOs were identified, researchers searched online for available information regarding the organization’s history and mission, size, focal areas, strategic approach, and active projects. The team reviewed program-specific grey literature produced by FIOs themselves and published online, helping to identify organizations targeted for visits and in-depth interviews during fieldwork. In parallel, contacts with leading scholars working on pertinent topics were pursued.

Following the initial round of interviews, Berkley Center/WFDD made use of snowball sampling to expand the mapping. Researchers sought additional leads to other contacts to help develop a comprehensive picture of faith-inspired development actors working in the country. As interviewees often recommended individuals or organizations that they are most familiar with and with whom they interact regularly, this process helped to identify informal networks. In order to counter bias in snowball sampling, Berkley Center/WFDD worked to include FIOs from a full range of religious traditions and ideologies, as well as a diversity of organizational sizes and programmatic foci. Attempts were made to highlight and explore the work of unique or noteworthy organizations and approaches.

Understanding how FIOs relate to non-faith organizations emerged as a critical issue, helping to shed light on the level of integration and coordination of FIOs with the broader development community. Interviews therefore included secular

WFDD’s Katherine Marshall and Nathaniel Adams discuss madrasa education with Samia Huq of BRAC University in Dhaka, Bangladesh
development actors, such as UN agencies, NGOs, government agencies, and local scholars, in order to deepen understanding of the development context. In some instances, there was prior engagement with faith actors or important religious dimensions related to the topic, but not always.

One potential limitation was possible bias toward larger organizations, which are formally registered as NGOs with the government and that have higher levels of foreign language (English/French/Spanish) proficiency and web presence. Initial interviews tended to be concentrated at organizational headquarters in the capital city. There was an additional nonresponse bias as interviews are limited to those organizations willing to meet. Religious actors in some contexts were suspicious of foreign groups for various reasons or wished to maintain a low profile. Smaller or grassroots organizations were included to the extent feasible, though they in practice represented a handful out of the hundreds or thousands of such organizations nationwide.

Interview techniques and procedures were important to define and hone over time. Given the sensitivity of the topics broached, building rapport and trust was essential. Where technology allowed, researchers emailed research objectives and scope and examples of prior interviews, reports, and other documents in advance. Occasionally, formal letters from a local partner (for example, university) were requested. Knowledge of local languages, culture, and religious traditions helped build rapport, and for some, the prospect of visibility and attention to their work was attractive. Interviews were all documented carefully but reviewed and published only with the consent of the individual involved. This varied by country, with greater sensitivities in Kenya and Bangladesh than in Senegal and Guatemala.

Interview questions were drawn from a standard model (see Box 1) and supplemented with questions particular to the specific organization based on background research. Interviews built on conversations and interviews with others as the picture of an issue or sector took form. Interview content varied considerably but generally included: history and mission of the organization; motivation for involvement in development sectors; strategic approach; partnership and networking with other faith and/or development actors; challenges and trends over time; future plans; stories of success or lessons drawn from failures; perspectives on what role religion played in the country; perspectives on what development in the country should look like; and observations on what makes their work unique or distinctive, such as religious perspectives or values in mission or programming. For secular development actors, the interviews included an exploration of key development themes and actors involved; an attempt to gauge the sensitivity of religion as a topic in the country (for example, security, fundamentalism, foreign funding sources, proselytism, corruption); an exploration of networking or collaboration with local faith leaders; and recommendations for strategic involvement of religious actors in policy formulation and implementation on particular development issues.

Berkley Center and WFDD staff worked with research assistants (RAs) to analyze the different resources and move to report preparation. Student RAs often transcribed interviews, with precautions taken to ensure the confidentiality of the documents including storing the files on password-protected computers. Transcripts and published material were analyzed using NVivo (or other qualitative analysis software) to identify themes and draw comparisons. Additional desk research expanded on themes emerging from fieldwork, including newly recommended or accessible resources.

The end products included a central, comprehensive report for each country. This was supplemented by a shorter religious landscape summary and shorter papers on specific topics of focus. The main reports provide a rich account of both the development challenges and approaches, as well as a detailed review of the country’s religious landscape and development work of a representative group of FIOs in various sectors. The country reports are the core product of the mapping work. They begin with a brief overview of the country’s development landscape, including key challenges and noteworthy successes, drawing attention to critical intersections with religion that are explored in further detail in subsequent sec-

Crystal Corman meeting with Women Challenged to Challenge in Nairobi, Kenya
tions. An overview of the country’s religious landscape offers a historical perspective, an analysis of religion in public life, and an extended description of the country’s religious communities with a nuanced treatment of various denominations and ideological currents. This section takes up major themes in the scholarly literature, as well as those that emerged in field research, such as exploring religion’s role in gender relations or social conflict. By integrating the development context and religious landscapes, the reports explore the work of faith-inspired actors in development.

The country reports are organized around the five to eight core development challenges identified at the consultation and pursued during fieldwork. Each subsection begins with a broad look at the engagement of faith-inspired actors within the sector, followed by profiles of noteworthy projects that provide illustrative examples. Selected profiles from the large range of projects identified during fieldwork were described in detail. Given space restrictions, the country reports feature three to five profiles within a sector to demonstrate the diversity of approaches and draw attention to innovative or unique features. The reports conclude with an overview of key themes and point to directions for further research.

The reports represent rigorous studies, but they aim to be accessible to a wide range of development practitioners. A key goal is to increase faith literacy among the development community at large, to provide a useful and usable tool that meets their needs, and to ultimately facilitate better understanding and possibly collaboration and exchange between the faith and development communities.

Other project outputs include topical policy briefs, occasional papers, and case studies aimed at informing international dialogue on critical topics. As the mapping expands to further countries, richer reviews that look at issues and themes across multiple country contexts can be undertaken.

A gap in the country analysis in all four cases is financial information that would make it possible to compare FIOs and situate them in the context of development finance. Broader religious financial flows also could not be established. The problem is that the information available is fragmented and partial, using different definitions and measures of accounting. Rather than present inaccurate or misleading information, the team elected to exclude what is an important dimension. This is an obvious topic for future research.

Box 1. Sample Interview Questions

1. About the organization/institution
   a. What is the history of [your organization] in [country]?
   b. What parts of the country do you work in, and how is this determined?
   c. What development topics/sectors is your organization working on?
      i. How do you choose these?
      ii. How do you evaluate your success in each of these sectors?

2. Development activities
   a. Could you explain more about the background of [previously mentioned project]?
   b. Are there any other sectors/activities you are planning on getting involved with in the future? If so, what are they and why?
   c. How do you identify your beneficiaries? Does religious identity matter?

3. Collaboration, formal and informal
   a. How do you communicate and collaborate with other FIOs, NGOs, development organizations, and/or the government?
   b. What sort of national or international networks do you belong to?

4. Role of faith
   a. Does [faith community] have a special role to play in [country]?
   b. What makes a [faith tradition] approach unique?
   c. Does coming from a faith perspective pose any challenges for development work in [country]? If so, why and how do you manage these?

5. Motivation for involvement in development
   a. How did you come to work at this organization?
   b. What inspires you personally in your development work?
Bangladesh is renowned in development circles for its robust civil society that includes some of the world’s largest and best known NGOs. The considerable development work of religious actors, however, is much less well known, although many have been intimately involved for centuries in humanitarian work, providing different social services and spiritual support in their communities. The Berkley Center and WFDD drew on the conclusions of a regional workshop for South and Central Asia in January 2011, as well as on a partnership with BRAC University developed in that context, to explore and then undertake research in Bangladesh. The effort proved to be especially timely, as religious tensions have taken center stage in Bangladesh, with spillover effects of international trends in Islam. Berkley Center/WFDD research was enriched by a parallel grant to WFDD from an anonymous foundation, which permitted more in-depth work than was possible in other countries.

Berkley Center/WFDD mapping research in Bangladesh involved exploratory work and desk reviews during 2013, followed by a consultation meeting in London in early 2014. It brought together scholars and practitioners, exploring Bangladeshi religious challenges and their links to development topics. From mid-2014, the focus was on fieldwork in Bangladesh, involving extended stays by WFDD staff member Nathaniel Adams and close cooperation with BRAC University. Among
activities was a series of policy forums held in Dhaka, supported by the parallel funding, which addressed critical topics involving religious roles in development policy, namely the role of secularism, conflict resolution, gender issues, and madrasa education.

COUNTRY OVERVIEW

Bangladesh has long represented a development paradox. Despite high levels of poverty and notable governance and infrastructure challenges, it has outpaced more affluent neighbors in important areas, including progress toward key Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Famously termed an international “basket case” just a few decades ago, Bangladesh has made remarkable strides in human development and has earned a reputation as an innovator, pioneering development approaches that have become internationally influential. It has seen sustained economic growth in recent years, driven by a growing, export-oriented garment industry, and it is poised to meet the government’s goal of middle-income status by 2021. Goldman Sachs has pinpointed Bangladesh as one of the “Next Eleven” emerging economies.

Since 2013, however, Bangladesh has attracted international attention of a different sort. Various events have threatened to derail its hard-fought economic and human development gains. In addition to garment factory disasters (including the Rana Plaza collapse), deadly episodes of communal violence, political deadlock, and the targeted killings of atheist and free-thinking bloggers by radical Islamists have shone a harsh light on Bangladesh’s destabilizing internal dynamics and the fragility of Bangladeshi democratic institutions. Religious actors and, more specifically, religiously inspired political parties and recently energized conservative groups play important roles in rising social and political tensions. Any development practitioner working in this context needs to take them into account. Beyond this contemporary political context, Bangladesh’s faith communities have longstanding commitments to social service and humanitarian efforts, and many groups are actively engaged in development efforts, though the details are often poorly documented and misunderstood.

Religion plays a central role in the daily lives of many ordinary citizens and in the broader social dynamics, including rising tensions. Bangladesh’s high religiosity means that religious leaders, institutions, and teachings have wide influence. Killings of prominent secular and atheist bloggers have directed international attention to religious divides in Bangladeshi society. But it is important to understand their deep roots in the turbulent history of Bangladesh, from colonial occupation through Partition to the Liberation War, and now a vitriolic political stalemate. There is tension between the secular character of Bangladesh and its strong religious identity, both in politics and in the society and economy. Various new conservative Islamic groups have emerged, generating new tensions that have important repercussions for many development issues, prominent among them education and gender policies.

Bangladesh’s religious landscape is important in virtually all facets of development policy and program implementation, though in ways that are more complex than often recognized. Far less than might be expected has been done to understand these interactions. Richer faith literacy could potentially contribute to better collaboration and innovative partnerships that could increase the effectiveness of development interventions and help to better address some of Bangladesh’s persistent development challenges. This is especially true for those that involve underlying social norms and attitudes where religious engagement has particular importance. But engagement with religious actors can be a complex and challenging endeavor, given rising tensions around and politicization of religion in Bangladesh. Efforts need to be well-informed and carefully planned. Avenues for better engagement need to start with community-level understanding, dialogue, and commitment.

Table 1. Bangladesh: Some Key Development Facts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Status (Year)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Religious composition²</td>
<td>Muslim (89.8%) Hindu (9.1%) Buddhist (0.5%) Folk religion (0.4%) Christian (0.2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban population⁴</td>
<td>55,184,476 (34.3% of total) (2015)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population growth rate⁵</td>
<td>1.2% (2015)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capital city population (Dhaka)⁶</td>
<td>31.89% of urban population (2015)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population aged 0-14 years⁷</td>
<td>29.45% (2015)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GNI per capita, Atlas method (current US$)⁸</td>
<td>$1,190 (2015)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GDP growth rate⁹</td>
<td>6.55% (2015)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNDP Human Development Index Rank¹⁰</td>
<td>142 out of 188 (2014)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Corruption Perceptions Index Rank¹¹</td>
<td>139 out of 168 (2015)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal remittances, received (current US$)¹²</td>
<td>$15.38 billion (2015)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
to change, but also address the broader social, political, and economic context of religious leadership and institutions.

Some religious actors have actively opposed development efforts in Bangladesh, particularly where they intentionally or unintentionally alter social and cultural norms (for example, women’s equality). Since the 1990s, when many NGOs faced organized opposition and occasional attacks from Islamist groups, there has been a narrative of inherent antagonism between religious communities and development efforts. Points of contention have centered on changing social norms, particularly related to increasing rights and agency for women. A Pew survey found that 55 percent of Bangladeshis considered there to be a conflict between religion and modern society, the second highest rate in the Muslim world. Groups like Hezazat-e-Islami, tied to orthodox Quomi madrasas, have called for the revocation of the 2011 Women’s Development Policy. This has only served to reinforce such perceptions.

FIOs make important contributions to development in Bangladesh. Purposeful collaboration with these faith actors can highlight the positive roles religion can play in development, and thus counterbalance some more negative trends. Faith actors are engaged in virtually every development sector, but their impact is probably most noteworthy in education, where they are significant providers, not just in terms of scale, but also quality. Though there are concerns over Quomi madrasa curriculums, faith-based schools rank among Bangladesh’s top performing institutions. Exploring and highlighting the real development contributions of faith-inspired actors can provide a basis for an alternative, non-politicized dialogue on religion and society in Bangladesh that might contribute to easing tensions.

Local grassroots FIOs are numerous and have a considerable local influence, but more research is needed to understand their roles. Some estimates put the number of religiously affiliated groups at over 200,000, but there has been no real mapping of these local grassroots groups, and very little is known about their approaches and activities. Likewise, little is known about how they link with other FIOs nationally, fit into broader ideological movements, and interact with secular development actors. A BRAC/WFDD study paints a picture of these groups, their social influence, and development impact.

Development practitioners can learn from FIO community-based models and links with local faith networks. Many FIOs have been active in Bangladeshi communities for decades and are among the most established and trusted organizations operating there, with strong grassroots connections. FIOs can play important roles in facilitating this engagement. Bangladesh’s minority faith traditions and sub-currents (primarily Hinduism, Buddhism, and Christianity) play important roles but often operate in isolation. Better networking and dialogue could improve coordination, foster use of best practices at the grassroots level, and increase capacity and dialogue around development goals and priorities.

“Values-based” approaches may be effectively employed in areas where strong moral dimensions would have impact. Though they vary greatly, many FIOs share an emphasis on core values drawn from religious teachings, which are often highly influential within the communities they serve. They serve as inspiration, but also shape activities in unique ways, notably in microfinance, where many FIOs object to the concept of charging interest on loans to the poor. This is particularly true for Islamic FIOs for whom interest is forbidden. More research is needed to determine how values-based approaches that engage religious leaders could effectively advance ideas and action on the challenges of corruption and women’s empowerment.

Targeted support for informal women leaders within religions has the potential to foster gender change locally. Women rarely hold formal leadership roles in religious institutions and FIOs at present; this is true across faith traditions in Bangladesh. Given the tension between development actors and religious actors on women’s empowerment, cautious but purposeful action could be of great importance. Women leaders can open dialogues about the ways religious traditions shape women’s roles and expectations in the home and society. They will need support, resources, and access to transnational networks, but this could help Bangladeshi women to shape their own empowerment vis-à-vis religion.

**CONSULTATION**

January 26-27, 2014
London

A planning session for the Bangladesh research was organized in London in January 2014. A group of 11 scholars and development practitioners met for two days. The group drew on deep understandings of Bangladesh to explore areas where religious factors influence development. Discussions focused on obvious development challenges, such as education and gender, but also explored emerging topics like the new roles of media. Berkley Center/WFDD benefited from input from the consultation participants over the life of the research, with several participants contributing to project events and providing feedback on project outputs.
Core areas for research in Bangladesh included:

- **Religion, politics, and current tensions**: With religious conflict and tensions in Bangladesh a growing concern, both domestically and internationally, the complex fault lines that fracture society, particularly the rural-urban, class, and political divides, were an important area of focus. Exploring non-politicized expressions of religion in civil society proved to be a good entry point.

- **Education**: Education quality is a principal national concern, alongside the long-debated issue of the roles of the madrasas, which have significant historical roots. Much current religious tension centers on religion's changing roles in education. Research on education has been fragmented, without systematic examination of the diverse madrasa system. Helping to frame dialogue is a priority.

- **Good governance and corruption**: Governance challenges are widely perceived as a critical obstacle to Bangladesh's development. The role of politics, too often viewed as a profitable enterprise, is a parallel challenge. Faith leaders, as moral authorities, could play more active roles in addressing corruption, but mechanisms to channel and benefit from such leadership need to be defined.

- **Conflict resolution and peacebuilding**: Faith engagement is critical in addressing recent tensions, conflict resolution, and peacebuilding, particularly (but not exclusively) where religious tensions are contributing factors. Religious minorities can and should be engaged, perhaps most notably Bangladesh's Catholic community. These avenues for dialogue can also be tapped into to promote participatory community development projects.

- **Gender**: Development projects seeking to empower rural women have traditionally been a major point of contention between religious and secular actors. If gender is a focus, exploration needs to involve skilled approaches to making action inclusive and to take the family as a unit. Exploring local women's understandings of empowerment and how religion is perceived as facilitating or hindering that process could offer relevant insights.

- **Child nutrition**: Statistics on child nutrition in Bangladesh are alarming. A strategy to promote faith engagement on this issue is well worth exploring.

- **Roles of media**: New technologies are quickly changing media consumption, with sermons now available by phone, and religious links are largely unexplored.

**MANAGING THE RESEARCH IN BANGLADESH**

Fieldwork in Bangladesh was managed successfully but required deep country understanding and strong local partnerships. Sensitivities around religious issues curtailed some avenues of research in the latter phases of work. It was difficult to identify smaller, local Islamic FIOs, and following government crackdowns on these groups, there was increasing suspicion of outsiders. Islamic actors tend to be somewhat fragmented, so identifying a “gatekeeper” able to open doors in some contexts was a liability in others. Research became progressively more difficult as the security situation worsened, especially with the blogger attacks, election protests, and Holey Bakery attack (July 2016). Many organizations and groups were reluctant to discuss religion at all. Fieldwork throughout benefited from the partnership with BRAC University.

**INTERVIEWS**

Fieldwork was conducted over the course of several extended visits to Bangladesh between June 2014 and April 2015. This work drew on the literature review and the consultation held in London, adding nuance and importance context to understandings of Bangladesh. More than 50 interviews were conducted, with many available online.

**SELECT INTERVIEWS**

A Discussion with Kazi Nurul Islam, Head of the Department of World Religions, Dhaka University
August 2014

Kazi Nurul Islam heads the Department of World Religions at Dhaka University and also acts as director of the Center for Inter-religious and Inter-cultural Dialogue. His passion for inter-
faith understanding was inspired by a promise he made to his father as a young boy to improve relations between Hindus and Muslims in Bangladesh. Over many decades, he studied diverse religious traditions at academic institutions around the world. His quest to establish the Department of World Religions at Dhaka University was far from easy, but ultimately successful. The interview offers insights into recent interreligious violence in Bangladesh.

A Discussion with Venerable Prajnananda Mahathera, Chairman, Banophool Adibashi Green Heart College
August 2014

Venerable Prajnananda Mahathera, a Theravada Buddhist monk, is Chairman of the Banophool Adibashi Green Heart College, a school serving underprivileged indigenous and Bengali youth. Ven. Mahathera's drive to complete his education as an orphaned boy led him into the monkhood and to becoming a passionate advocate for education in the neglected Chittagong Hill Tracts region. The Moanoghar School, which he founded, is widely renowned. Ven. Mahathera highlights the key role of the Buddhist sangha in supporting indigenous communities in Bangladesh, and comments on some of the grave challenges these communities currently face in Bangladesh.

A Discussion with Anwar Hossain, Executive Director of HEED Bangladesh
July 2014

Anwar Hossain discusses the role of Christian values in informing the approach of HEED, a broad-based Bangladeshi development organization, particularly on issues such as gender empowerment and good governance. The significant governance challenges that Bangladesh faces have engaged HEED’s own struggles with corruption, and they are now a critical focal area for the organization. Hossain is committed to rebuilding HEED’s integrity over his three-year tenure as executive director.

EVENTS

Workshop on Global Development and Institutions Inspired by Faith in Bangladesh
London
January 26-27, 2014

The workshop focused on the role that religious actors play in development processes at the community and national level. Reasons for the relative neglect of these roles by many Bangladeshi and international development partners were a focus. Better information could provide background for the development community and faith-linked partners and strengthen support for development programs. The workshop brought together a group of academic researchers and development practitioners with interests in the intersections of international development, culture, and religion in Bangladesh.

PUBLICATIONS

• "The Religious Landscape of Bangladesh: A Primer"
  Policy brief, November 2014

• "Conflict and Peacebuilding in Bangladesh: Religious Dimensions"
  Policy brief, December 2014

• "Religion and Women’s Empowerment in Bangladesh"
  Occasional paper, November 2015

• "Women and Religion in Bangladesh"
  Policy brief, December 2015

• "Faith and Development in Focus: Bangladesh"
  Report, October 2015

• "Islam and Development in Bangladesh: A Grassroots Perspective"
  Report, October 2016
  (With the support of an anonymous foundation)
The challenges of socioeconomic development color many aspects of life in Senegal, and both survey data and daily contacts highlight Senegal’s particularly religious character. Senegal’s faith communities have a long history of engaging in areas at the core of the contemporary development agenda, particularly education and agriculture. How, then, are the two related? In many respects, development approaches and religious life intersect constantly but have often constituted separate worlds. The country review set out to understand the different perspectives and to explore what might be learned from Senegal’s distinctive experience.

Berkley Center/WFDD mapping research in Senegal began in early 2014 with a review of existing literature—both scholarly work and development publications. A consultation meeting in Washington, D.C., in January 2015 brought together scholars and practitioners to explore development topics where religious factors have particular significance. From mid-2014, the focus was on fieldwork in Senegal. This involved a wide range of contacts that enriched understandings and raised new questions. A parallel grant to WFDD from the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation on family welfare offered practical insights about the workings of religious communities and relationships with government authorities and development partners.

COUNTRY OVERVIEW

A full 98 percent of Senegalese say that religion is “very important” in their daily lives. This fact alone, however, tells us little about how religious beliefs and institutions affect both daily lives and policies in contemporary Senegal. How do the roles of faith leaders and communities influence development policies and responses to them? And how, in a dynamic society changing constantly through urbanization, emigration, new forms of communication, economic transformation, the rapid spread of education, and a host of other factors, are religious factors evolving, reshaped by changes affecting the society?

Senegal’s constitution defines the nation’s government as secular and establishes the framework of a democratic government. There is a clear and proud emphasis on freedom to practice one’s religion, equality among faith traditions, and pluralism. This has made Senegal an admired and quite rare democracy among Muslim-majority countries. Senegalese secularism, in
large part an inheritance from the French colonial era, is quite distinctly Senegalese and actively debated. It shapes, even if it does not sharply define, relationships between government officials and the powerful and influential religious leadership. In practice, there are significant ties between the government and faith leaders, many of them informal and some contested. An illustration is the official government representation during Senegal’s various religious pilgrimages. More telling are political practices like favor seeking during political campaigns. Formal ties on matters affecting social and economic development (strategies and policies) are, however, quite limited. Government-religious relationships are generally cordial, even without an official or formal framework. There is no ministry of religious affairs, though Senegal’s president has an adviser on religious matters. Imams are not approved by government bodies, but rather are appointed by religious communities. There are no specific consultative mechanisms to bring together religious communities and government institutions, and this includes development topics. Religious organizations are, to a degree, seen as part of Senegal’s active civil society and are subject to relevant regulatory arrangements, including registration of associations and NGOs. Senegal prides itself on its religious harmony. Some 94 percent of Senegalese are Muslim, with well-accepted religious minorities—4 percent of Senegalese are Christian, most of them Catholics. Traditional beliefs play important roles among Muslims and Christians alike. Most Senegalese Muslims adhere to one of four Sufi orders (often referred to locally as confréries): Qadiriyya, Tijaniyya, Muridiyya, and Layeniyya. Intra- and interreligious relations are generally open and positive. However, interfaith collaboration has been more evident in absence of tension than in specific common action. Senegal has long traditions as an open society. This is evident in strong religious ties among its active diaspora communities, which often identify strongly with the confréries, and in the presence of religious actors from other countries in Senegal. This has included increasingly influential religious links with the Gulf countries and the longstanding presence of Christian missionaries. To date, Sen-
egal has not experienced significant extremist movements or the religiously linked violence seen in several neighboring West African countries.

Senegalese Islam is well established and permeates all aspects of society and economy. Beginning in the eleventh century, traders from North Africa brought Islam with them. The distinctively Senegalese confréries came to dominate the religious scene, and during the colonial era, particularly the nineteenth century, their power was consolidated. Senegal’s “religious families” constitute confrérie leadership, with hereditary succession. Senegalese Sufism emphasizes the marabout-talibé (leader-disciple) relationship. Sufi community groups, known as dahi-ras, are at the base of the social order, with extensive networks throughout the country. These groups gather for spiritual growth, but also organize various religious events. They have the potential to play wide-ranging roles in development beyond traditional roles, but their engagement on and responses to development challenges have been limited. A notable feature of Senegal’s religious landscape is the geographic concentration of the orders, most dramatically in the large religious city of Touba, the capital of the Mouride order. This city is essentially ruled by Mouride authorities and has drawn comparisons by some Senegalese to the Vatican because of its autonomy and special status.

Senegalese Islam is changing, notably with the dynamics of urbanization and economic and societal transformation. Transnational influences also play important roles. They contribute to Senegal’s cosmopolitan character that shapes the elite, but also to emerging Sunni reformist and Shi’á communities that offer an alternative to the confrérie model. These communities, although small, are growing, particularly the Sunni reformist movement.

Christianity has long roots in Senegal, from the time that Portuguese explorers arrived during the fifteenth century; it grew significantly in influence during the colonial era. Senegal’s Christians are highly concentrated in several geographic areas, mostly along the coast and in the southern region. The small and diverse Protestant community includes Lutherans, Methodists, Baptists, and Adventists, and has a more recent presence than the Catholics. The Catholic school system, with the majority of its students Muslim, plays influential roles.

The active religious media is a striking feature of Senegal’s religious landscape. More than 90 percent of Senegalese listen to or watch religious media. Radio and television shows are popular, and social media (Facebook, Twitter, etc.) is now omnipresent. Many hosts discuss religious rites (praying, ablutions, etc.), but many also tackle social issues, such as family dynamics and family planning. Although most media hosts preach an Islam that is considered mainstream, others present more radical or extremist views.

Formal collaboration between religious communities and development actors has been episodic. The best known example was around the HIV and AIDS epidemic during the early 1980s. Government-religious cooperation is said to have helped Senegal stave off the worst of the epidemic. Several of the influential non-religious development organizations active in Senegal have worked actively with religious communities. An example is the NGO Tostan, which has long engaged faith leaders in community development. Many FIOs work in Senegal, both international—Islamic Relief, Caritas, World Vision—and local—Mozdahir International and the Catholic Church’s Direction des Œuvres catholiques (Catholic Works Division).

**CONSULTATION**

January 14-15, 2015
Washington, D.C.

A planning consultation in January 2015 focused on Senegal. A group of 12 scholars and development practitioners with experience and interest in Senegal met in Washington, D.C. Discus-
sions focused on topics where religious factors have special importance for development. Some were readily apparent: health, education, gender relations, and vulnerable children. The group also highlighted several less explored topics around contemporary changes in Senegal’s religious and development landscapes. The discussions generally affirmed the research scope and objectives, and the group’s input and guidance (from the consultation and beyond) helped shape the research agenda.

Themes that emerged from the discussions reflect the agenda of core issues for the Senegal work:

- **Understanding religious communities**: Senegal’s confréries have been the subject of in-depth research, but their contemporary influence and changing roles are not well understood. With power less concentrated with successive generations, how is leadership exercised? How do urbanization and emigration affect organization and authority? What role do the Sunni reformists and the Gulf countries play in Senegalese society? How extensive are Christian roles, particularly in education?

- **Health**: Operational roles of faith communities in public health have been quite limited, but influence on relevant behaviors is far-reaching. There are gaps in understandings of how religious beliefs affect various topics, such as mental health. Women’s health issues were seen as subject to noteworthy religious influence.

- **Human rights**: Senegal faces tensions, including with the international development community, linked to attitudes about LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender) communities. Faith leaders, particularly those vocal in the media, have shaped approaches. While there was traditional acceptance, there is now legal and political intolerance.

- **Media**: The growing influence of religious media is changing relationships between local religious leaders and adherents (particularly youth), especially in how adherents seek and interpret different forms of information.

- **Agriculture**: Historically the Sufi orders dominated agriculture. Shifting agricultural trends, spurred largely by
droughts in the 1970s, have influenced the marabout-talibé (leader-disciple) relationship.

- **Castes:** With castes an important historical feature of Senegalese society, their influence on contemporary relationships, such as marriage practices, is worth exploring.

- **Education:** De facto parallel religious and public educational systems create tensions between secular and religious approaches. Several reforms focus on improving religious schools and integrating religious curriculum into primary schools, but key issues remain unresolved.

- **Youth:** With over 50 percent of Senegal’s population under the age of 20, education quality and employment opportunities are critical issues. Some religious communities have engaged youth, but it has been difficult to discern the specific ways in which they exert influence and the various responses to changing social dynamics.

- **Women and gender:** Changing gender roles are a prominent feature of Senegalese society. Senegalese religious traditions support many changes, but there are areas where both secular and religious groups have been hesitant. The family code has been quite contentious, with lively debates between secular and religious groups. Similarly, there was active debate around the 2010 law on gender parity. Women with religious ties are quite active in religious media and in many areas linked to development.

- **The Casamance:** Senegal’s southern region, where a longstanding separatist movement has fueled low-level violence, is often neglected in broader research agendas. Religious influences are noteworthy in conflict and peacemaking, as well as in addressing social tensions.

### MANAGING THE RESEARCH IN SENEGAL

Fieldwork in Senegal demanded several specific approaches. Although most interviews were conducted in French, the team benefited from use of Wolof and Pulaar when interviewees were not proficient in French or had a strong preference for another language. Local languages helped in the critical effort to build trust.

Berkley Center/WFDD did not begin with a specific Senegalese partner, but WFDD’s parallel work that led to the creation of the Cadre des Religieux pour la Santé et le Développement (Group of Religious Leaders for Health and Development, CRSD) facilitated strong local connections. A broad focus on development partners also opened many doors.

Identifying religiously linked development actors working in Senegal proved more challenging than anticipated. There was no accessible list of all FIOs, which exists, for example, in Bangladesh. Many organizations have no online presence, often due to lack of internet access or limited literacy. Some sites are Arabic-only.

### INTERVIEWS

Fieldwork between March 2014 and August 2016 complemented the literature review and the consultation in Washington, D.C. The team conducted more than 60 semi-structured interviews. Many written interviews are available online, both in English and French.

### SELECT INTERVIEWS

**A Discussion with Imam Oumar Diene, Secretary General of the National Association of Imams and Ulama of Senegal**

March 2015

Imam Oumar Diene serves both as an imam and a dental prosthetist, but with a main focus on Senegal’s community development. He is secretary general of the National Association of Imams and Ulama of Senegal and spokesperson for the Group of Religious Leaders on Health and Development. Imam Diene points to his upbringing and training as shaping his overall approach. He reflects on the roles of the confrérie and his experience working on family well-being and reproductive health in Senegal. He speaks eloquently about Senegal’s strong traditions of interreligious harmony, emphasizing the key roles that schools, and especially pri-
vate Catholic schools, play in the traditions of tolerance and mutual respect. Religious thinking, he argues, needs to be adapted to truly benefit from modern life and technology.

A Discussion with Abbé Ambroise Tiné, Secretary General of Caritas Senegal
March 2015

Abbé Ambroise Tiné, Caritas Senegal secretary general, links Catholic teachings and Caritas’ diverse activities in Senegal. These include education, water and sanitation, food security, and migration. Abbé Tiné emphasizes education as a focus, with Caritas supporting both school construction and a sponsorship program. He reflects on the history, traditions, and culture that contribute to Senegal’s interreligious harmony.

A Discussion with Penda Mbow, Associate Professor of History at Cheikh Anta Diop University
February 2015

Dr. Mbow, a leading academic and political leader, works to advance women’s rights in Senegal from various positions in the government, civil society, and academia. A scholar of Islamic history, she is a proud Senegalese citizen and a forthright critic. She speaks with concern and courage about challenges to women’s rights in contemporary Senegalese society and politics. She sees steps backwards on women’s roles and commitment to women’s rights in Senegal. Although Senegal has ratified, without qualification, all the human rights conventions of the United Nations, it has moved very slowly toward implementation. Dr. Mbow points out the declining quality of education, especially at the university level, and emphasizes the importance of education for girls as the main long-term solution.

EVENTS

Workshop on Global Development and Religion in Senegal
Washington, D.C.
January 13-14, 2015

Despite the influence of religion on Senegalese culture and society, many development actors overlook or under-appreciate the development implications of religious beliefs, practices, and institutions in Senegal. This workshop brought together a select group of academic researchers and development practitioners to inform the Berkley Center/WFDD research in Senegal.

PUBLICATIONS

• ”Education and Vulnerability: The Case of the Talibés in Senegal”
  Policy brief, December 2014

• ”Les médias religieux et la santé maternelle au Sénégal”
  (”Religious Media and Maternal Health in Senegal”)
  Working paper, January 2015

• ”The Mouride Sufi Order”
  Working paper, January 2016

• ”Faith and Development in Focus: Senegal”
  Report, May 2016

• ”The Religious Landscape of Senegal: An Overview”
  Policy brief, May 2016
Kenya's dynamic religious institutions play vital roles in many facets of national development. They help shape national identity, public policy, and private behavior. They are ubiquitous and are changing rapidly. They are very global in their links and visions and very local, deeply anchored in communities in countless ways. Complex religious demography, the relationships among different traditions and denominations, and their involvement in politics all bear the marks of different historical phases. These include, inter alia, troubling legacies of racial discrimination, tangled economic relationships, counterproductive ethnic and religious competition, and the enduring divides and bonds left behind by artificial lines drawn on colonial maps. More positive legacies, though, include vibrant communities linked through religious expression and a strong network of health and education institutions. A feature of many institutions shaped by religious values is expectations of excellence and caring that often underpin hope, resilience, and joy.

Kenya's contemporary religious landscape exemplifies the stunning transformation of African societies in the twentieth century, with fundamental shifts in religious demography juxtaposed with threads linked to traditional practices. Religious institutions have played important roles at every historical
juncture. This history colors the political, social, and economic landscape to this day. Religious institutions engage actively in today’s social issues, involved in every complex challenge that will shape Kenya’s future.

The Kenya research explored what are generally unarticulated, if taken for granted, religious roles across many development issues. It sought to provide a comprehensive, yet accessible, overview of Kenya’s religious landscape highlighting those links. The approach was grounded by interviews (largely with people in Kenya working with religiously inspired institutions) that explored how various actors see their work within the Kenyan context, but also highlighted the ways in which it fits within broader strategic frameworks. The resulting map of religion and development can, it is hoped, enhance efforts to strengthen the multi-sectoral partnerships that are essential for development success and sustainability. Contextual religious literacy may also offer insights that can improve the quality of various programs.

COUNTRY OVERVIEW

A paradox in exploring religious issues for Kenya is the wealth of information set against striking gaps in knowledge and understanding. Kenya’s missionary history has been extensively researched and the roles of religious actors in the active political debates beginning in the 1990s are quite well documented. Less is published about the role of religious actors in post-independence Kenya, when political strategies focused on nation building and strengthening at the grassroots level. Few reports from that time describe or analyze national and international FIO engagement, even in traditional sectors such as health, education, agriculture, and humanitarian relief. This had shifted by the 1990s with the increasing visibility of religious actors and institutions in global affairs. Their active engagement, deeply rooted in history, in humanitarian relief had special significance.

Kenya’s varied and dynamic religious landscape matters in development debates and implementation of development strategies. Every issue has a religious dimension, often with long historic roots and a complex present. Religious attitudes and narratives are reflected in language and approach across virtually all institutions, including within the government. Private organizations run a gamut from explicitly religious to others whose religious ties are tenuous or limited. Thousands of FIOs, many with explicit links to different faith denominations, are engaged in a wide range of development activities, and they commonly articulate their goals in religious terms. Nonetheless religious elements are rarely an explicit focus of written development strategies and policies. They may creep in via discussions of values, culture, or even politics, with religious leaders often seen—by themselves and by others—to have responsibil-

Religious links have sometimes been obvious, for example in aspects of behavior that shaped the HIV/AIDS pandemic and response, as well as the evolution of education and health systems. Factors shaping attitudes toward investment, land management, or gender relations are more difficult to pinpoint. The various dimensions of religious involvement in development are obviously complex and contentious but, in a highly religious society, questions about them are worth asking.

The Kenyan Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Health have long recognized the robust system and quality of schools and health facilities operated by religious groups and institutions. As the AIDS epidemic swept across East Africa, religious actors played starkly different roles, with some advocating for care, while others condemned those infected as sinners. But the religious healthcare system was deeply engaged from the start.

Table 3. Kenya: Some key development facts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Status (Year)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Religious composition</td>
<td>Protestant (48%) Catholic (24%) Muslim (11%) Unaffiliated (2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban population</td>
<td>11,799,008 (25.6% of total) (2015)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population growth rate</td>
<td>2.6% (2015)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capital city population</td>
<td>33.2% of urban population (2015)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population aged 0-14 years</td>
<td>41.9% (2015)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GNI per capita, Atlas method</td>
<td>$1,340 (2015)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GDP growth rate</td>
<td>5.65% (2015)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNDP Human Development Index Rank</td>
<td>145 out of 188 (2014)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corruption Perceptions Index Rank</td>
<td>139 out of 168 (2015)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal remittances, received</td>
<td>$1.56 billion (2015)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Religious actors have also been central in efforts to stop female genital cutting (FGC); missionaries condemned the practice (with mixed impact), and later efforts sought to disentangle the intersecting role that religion and culture play in perpetuating the practice. More recently, national cohesion policies have pointed to positive roles for religious leaders in healing divisions among Kenyan communities. Efforts to counter violence and extremism focus heavily on religious facets. Beyond these sectors, development strategies largely take religious influences and actors for granted.

Religious engagement on gender issues, including domestic violence and broader efforts to empower women and girls, is spotty. A few initiatives work to address deep-seated attitudes that are bars to gender equality, and some national and international FIOs target specific issues, such as FGC. However, few religious groups give gender equality the priority it deserves seen from a human rights and a development perspective. Among constructivists, approaches are explicit attention to these issues in seminaries and teacher training programs and pertinent materials for congregations that build on religious teachings and core values.

Local community action led by religious communities offers a wealth of experience that is difficult to capture and thus does not always attract sufficient attention. With Kenya’s devolution (the shifting of powers and revenues from the national government to county administrations), the experience and roles of religious actors take on increasing importance, as does the challenge of gathering and sharing experience in a meaningful fashion. Working with the umbrella religious organizations and willing congregations to explore and share approaches and practical lessons from their experience could have important benefits.

Kenya’s Muslim population has a distinguished history and leaders but, notably because of concerns around extremism and its links to terrorism, finds itself beleaguered today. Muslim-Christian tensions are higher than at any point in the past and are drawing the attention of leaders, especially religious leaders. Long-standing issues of regional inequalities and discrimination by police or in obtaining national identity cards need to be addressed. Promising initiatives like the BRAVE project highlight the potential benefits of drawing from and building on local ideas and institutions to shape local and national policy and programs.

Several key areas emerged from discussions with participants:

- **Understanding religious institutions and communities:** The religious landscape is not well understood, especially its dynamics and directions of change. There is a foundation of trust in religious leaders, but respect for religious leadership has weakened. This affects approaches to religious engagement in policy, program design, and program implementation. Research outputs should focus on presenting a portrait of religious leadership, institutions, and trends.

- **Corruption and distrust:** Corruption issues cut across all levels of society. How can religious leaders and FIOs be more actively engaged? And how can issues of public ethics and values be linked to tangible anticorruption measures?

- **Peacebuilding and violence prevention:** The threat of attacks from Al-Shabaab influences the mood across Kenya. The violence in 2007 and 2008 following the election compared with the relatively peaceful 2013 elections might offer insights into the diverse drivers of tension and violence in Kenya. Is space for civil society and FIOs to engage on peace and violence prevention shrinking or shifting?

- **Women and gender:** Religious links to several pertinent development topics deserve targeted attention, notably domestic violence, sexual violence, and the persistence of child marriage in some regions of Kenya. How are faith communities engaged on these issues?

- **Youth:** Like many African countries, Kenya is experiencing a youth bulge. How are youth involved in faith communities? What is known about their religiosity? This has special significance given the appeals of extremist and violent trends, some tied to religious affiliation.

- **Orphans and vulnerable children:** Many faith communities are especially concerned with child welfare, which is also a focus of government policy. The issue of changing ap-
Approaches to orphan care should be set in a broader policy and programmatic context.

- **Health**: The Memorandum of Understanding between FIO health actors and the government formalizes relationships, financing, and mutual obligations. It is worth exploring and highlighting.

- **Education**: Quality issues confronting the education system have special importance, and faith actors play important roles. Likewise, the question of how education systems shape citizen values is of special interest for religious communities.

- **Refugees**: Religious roles are far-reaching, as FIOs provide direct services to refugees and insofar as religious tensions arise between Kenya’s mostly Christian population and its heavily Muslim refugee community. The complexities of the ethnic-religious tensions are a particular subject of interest.

**Consultation Participants**

- Ousseina D. Alidiou
- Charles DeSantis
- Samuel K. Elolia, Ph.D.
- Cynthia Hoehler-Fatton, Ph.D.
- Callisto Madavo, Ph.D.
- Ray Martin
- Pauline Muchina, Ph.D.
- Mary Nyangweso, Ph.D.
- Beverly Smith, Ph.D.
- Travis Rejman
- Daniel Ritchie
- Robert Rotberg, Ph.D.
- Lahra Smith, Ph.D.
- Lauren Van Enk

*Kenyan grandma and granddaughter working in the field in Maseno, Kisumu, Kenya*
MANAGING THE RESEARCH IN KENYA

Research in Kenya went smoothly, notwithstanding concerns during the period about security. One visit ended just two days before an attack on a bus traveling from Mandera to Nairobi, and another came days after the massacre at Garissa University. Interviews highlighted a marked deterioration of Christian-Muslim relations over the period, with emotions raw; many people shared fears, concerns, and thoughts during interviews in April 2015.

The research benefitted from several partnerships, including the Hekima Institute, the Depot, and the Global Network of Religions for Children. It also benefited from parallel support from the GHR Foundation for a review of peacebuilding and interfaith approaches, and of faith engagement on refugee issues.

INTERVIEWS

Fieldwork was conducted over successive visits to Kenya between April 2014 and September 2016. Drawing on understandings of Kenya from the literature review and the consultation in Washington, D.C., the team conducted over 120 semi-structured interviews. Many written interviews are available online.

SELECT INTERVIEWS:

A Discussion with Jacqueline Mutere, Founder and Director of Grace Agenda
June 2015

During the chaos of communal violence, everyone is threatened as security systems and norms weaken—but women and girls become especially vulnerable. Jacqueline Mutere supports survivors of rape during conflict, especially those victimized during the post-election violence in Kenya in 2007 and 2008. Her own experience and resilience motivated her to support other survivors and their children by founding Grace Agenda. In this interview, she tells her own story and the beginnings of Grace Agenda. She explains the organization’s advocacy for survivors, collaboration with stakeholders supporting survivors of gender-based violence, and its short-term shelter. The theme of grace is central as she speaks about the role personal faith can play in recovery, as well as her hopes for leadership from faith actors.

A Discussion with Abdulhamid Sakar, Kenya Muslim Youth Alliance
November 2014

Muslim youth in Kenya face marginalization from various sources for different reasons, but the Kenya Muslim Youth Alliance (KMYA) creates a space for youth to gather, discuss, and engage. Abdulhamid Sakar, Fadhilee Msuri, and Fatuma Kamene, all three KMYA leaders, are active in the organization and on issues facing Muslim youth in Kenya. The conversation ranges from the idea to organize a national Muslim youth organization, to programmatic activities, communication tools, and youth dialogues. The youth describe their work on peace and security, as well as their desire to include more women. They also speak about persistent barriers for youth that they argue the government can quickly address.

A Discussion with Shamsia Ramadhan, Catholic Relief Services
April 2015

Especially in fragile contexts, development practitioners are gaining skills to apply a conflict-sensitive approach to their work. CRS has added a layer to this approach by focusing on the religious landscape of fragile contexts, both in preventing
violence and in building social cohesion. Shamsia Ramadan, program manager for the Capacity for Inter-religious Action program at CRS, is building the capacity of faith-based partners in six countries across Africa. This interview came just two weeks after the attack at Garissa University. Ramadan discusses her peace work and interreligious relations in Kenya, reflecting on her own journey to becoming a peace practitioner and the importance of interreligious relations at all levels, especially in the current context. She pushes beyond dialogue, emphasizing the need for faith-based actors to take action jointly to address issues within communities.

EVENTS

Workshop on Global Development and Religion in Kenya
Washington, D.C.
October 21-22, 2014

Religion affects not just the private lives of Kenyans, but also the broader cultural and societal levels. The number of faith-inspired organizations active in Kenya, which have projects spanning many development sectors, is especially large. However, many international development partners fail to appreciate significant religious roles in development. The workshop brought together scholars and practitioners to discuss the intersection of religion and development in Kenya, with the goal of generating ideas for research on diverse development topics.

Peace and Stability in Kenya: The Role of Religious Actors
Nairobi, Kenya
August 4, 2015

Violent extremism in Kenya and the region has unsettled interreligious relations, exacerbating long-standing ethnic, political, and socioeconomic divisions. This workshop at the Hekima Institute for Peace Studies and International Relations in Nairobi gathered 60 faith-inspired and secular actors/organizations who are working for stability and social cohesion in Kenya. Participants explored the complexities of working with multiple religious traditions toward common goals, drawing both on Kenyan and international experience. This event drew on understandings of Kenya from country-mapping research and was organized with support from the GHR Foundation.

PUBLICATIONS

- "Refugees in Kenya: Roles of Faith" Report, November 2015
- "Religion in Violence and Peace: Exploring inter-religious peacebuilding efforts in Kenya" Report, August 2016 (With the support of the GHR Foundation)
- "Faith and Development in Focus: Kenya" Report, February 2017
Guatemala is at a turning point, reflected in hopes that its potential will be realized. Citizen concern about corruption and poor governance was manifested in unprecedented demonstrations that put political leaders, including a former president, in prison; the new government has bold plans. Yet, violence is an everyday reality, as are stark inequalities. Migration to the north, especially of children, continues. In 2016 Guatemala observed the twentieth anniversary of a peace accord hailed at the time as a model, encouraging reflection on the experiences in implementation. In this complex history and at present, religious institutions have played vital roles, and Guatemala’s dynamic contemporary religious landscape is an integral part of each challenge and each opportunity.

WFDD has a long history of reflection on the Guatemala experience, starting in 1999 when the religious roles in implementing the peace accords were a focus. This interreligious reflection translated into a focus on ethical values, and especially their role in the education system. Tensions around mining ventures were also of interest, notably in conjunction with the Catholic Peacebuilding Network. The current research began in 2015, with extensive literature reviews. A consultation meeting in Washington, D.C., in September 2015 brought together scholars and practitioners and was followed by fieldwork in Guatemala, including a workshop there in January 2016 on health and religion.
COUNTRY OVERVIEW

Guatemala has rich resources and enviable potential for economic and human development, but as Central America’s largest economy, with a population of over 16 million people, the country is better known for violence, record high inequality, and development disappointments. Long years of bitter civil war, the behavior of a powerful elite, and centuries of ethnic discrimination against the majority indigenous population still exact a heavy toll. Guatemala today is in a transitional period; there have been notable achievements in calling corrupt leaders to account, and the government and its partners have set ambitious development goals. The central question for Berkley Center/WFDD research is what roles Guatemala’s rich religious history and contemporary institutions might play in surmounting the challenges the nation faces, especially those for the most vulnerable populations.

Guatemala’s religious institutions, especially the Catholic Church, have played vital political and social roles throughout the nation’s history, working for peace and reconciliation, and on broader social justice issues. Since the 1990s, missionaries and FIOs, especially from the United States, sparked a transformation of the religious landscape, to the point that Guatemala’s Pentecostal population is proportionally the largest in the hemisphere. Guatemala’s dynamic religious landscape has had marked effects on politics, essentially reducing the de facto power of the Catholic Church. Religious roles are intertwined in complex ways with the longstanding complications of a deeply divided society, largely along ethnic lines. The fact that Guatemalans are a particularly religious people colors many aspects of the country’s society, economy, and politics. Whether Catholic or Protestant, Guatemalans share their faith with others, participate actively in congregational life, take the Bible as the literal word of God, and consider religion centrally important in their lives. The overwhelmingly Christian population is nonetheless very diverse, and there is no common religious voice or set of positions. The indigenous heritage of large segments of the Guatemalan population overlays the formal Christian affiliations and institutions. Strong leaders (Rigoberta Menchú and Rosalina Tuyuc Velásquez, for example), emerging institutions, and popular movements bring these spiritual traditions increasingly into the mainstream.

Faith actors are engaged, sometimes in partnership with the various non-religious development organizations, on many pressing development issues today, such as extractive industries, environment, and health. Catholic and Pentecostal churches can be well positioned to address development challenges, as they have direct access to urban and rural communities, and they have an organic organizational capacity with longstanding community roots. Many churches have focused on problems like gang prevention and livelihood support, often in various partnership arrangements. The Catholic Church, despite the erosion of its membership and some of its political influence, still plays important roles in education through parochial schools and in efforts to redress the large gaps in healthcare for poor communities. It engages in social work through pastoral and other activity. Even during the most difficult periods of the Guatemalan Civil War when segments of the Catholic Church were targets of military repression, many Catholic leaders (priests and nuns) supported the population in practical ways and took courageous stands in “speaking truth to power.” Today, Catholic parishes and institutions work to address crime levels, for example, through well-established, age-graded programs, beginning in early childhood and continuing into adulthood. Pentecostal parishes engage, largely at the community level, in social projects and social activities, although they may not label such activities as development.

CONSULTATION

September 28-29, 2015
Washington, D.C.

A workshop in September 2015 focused on objectives and potential research avenues for planned work in Guatemala. The
group of scholars and development practitioners brought diverse perspectives and expertise on the country. They encouraged a broad exploration of issues facing contemporary Guatemala, seeing the research focus on religious dimensions fitting well with the demands of current development challenges. Discussions sharpened priority areas for research and explored the important, but often obscured, religious dimensions of development topics.

Emerging themes that have shaped the Guatemala research include:

- **Current political crisis and social transformation**: Profound sociopolitical events color research plans. Months of peaceful demonstrations against government corruption led to the resignation and subsequent arrest of the president, vice-president, and other government officials. Questions center on the roles religious leaders can play in the new landscape of citizen activism in Guatemala.

- **Youth and education**: The education sector faces serious challenges, with a high value placed on private education, limited jobs available after secondary and tertiary education, and university costs that are prohibitive for most. Indigenous youth face particular challenges, as bilingual education is highly limited and colors approaches to education. Religious organizations can play an important part, especially in rural areas.

- **Women and gender**: Women's situations have seen remarkable improvements in recent decades, but illiteracy rates among indigenous women are still high, signaling that issues around language and bilingual education have yet to be resolved. Many women suffer war-related trauma, and widespread domestic violence is rarely discussed and acknowledged. Secular and religious women's initiatives tend to proceed separately, even with some tension.

- **A focus on indigenous people**: Development practitioners need to evaluate carefully the mechanisms through which programs treat indigenous people as true citizens of the country. Ignorance or dismissive attitudes on topics such as healing and medicine by development actors run the risk of demeaning traditional approaches, which connect spirituality and sickness.

- **Migration, internal displacement, and the diaspora**: Migration of unaccompanied migrant children to the United States, alongside gang and other violence, has captured attention, but solutions are still distant. The Catholic Church plays quite active roles, and better understanding of actual and potential experience could be useful. This also applies to Protestant and Pentecostal approaches.

- **Environmental challenges**: Longer-term effects of global climate change and local environmental degradation are increasingly important, and there is a local focus on the papal encyclical on the environment, *Laudato Si’*. Tensions around mining projects and land engage religious actors. A robust reflection on experience and prospects for religious action is important.

- **Lessons from peacemaking and post conflict action**: 2016 marked the twentieth anniversary of the Guatemala peace accords, which were followed by efforts to reset the development agenda in an equitable manner and to further reconciliation. The experience, with its many religious dimensions, offers many lessons that should be examined.

- **Roles of missionaries and mission trips**: Guatemala is a favored destination for mission trips. Numbers are not known with any precision, nor is their impact. Anecdotal evidence suggests a mixed record, notably in the areas of health and education.

### Consultation Participants

- Kelsey Alford-Jones
- Patricia Biermayr-Jenzano, Ph.D.
- Robert Brenneman, Ph.D.
- Kevin Carvajal
- Lydia Dibos
- Virginia Garrand-Burnett, Ph.D.
- Desha Girod, Ph.D.
- Fernando Paredes
- Bishop Alvaro Ramazzini
- Mathews Samson, Ph.D.
- Pablo Villeda, J.D.

### Managing the Research in Guatemala

Fieldwork followed the consultation, despite complications of working in Guatemala during a rather turbulent period. Elections and their aftermath triggered a pause in various sectors in the country, with uncertainties around the results and new government approaches to social and development strategies. The climate of political instability in 2015 and 2016 affected topics interviewees were willing to address during recorded interviews. Concerns about violence and crime called for special cautions.
INTERVIEWS

Fieldwork in Guatemala involved a series of extended visits between October 2015 and February 2016. More than three dozen interviews were conducted, with many written interviews available online in English and Spanish.

SELECT INTERVIEWS:

A Discussion with Eduardo Magermans, Christian Radio Producer
January 2016

Eduardo Magermans has a unique vantage point at the convergence of public policy and Christian life in Guatemala. As an evangelical, he engages religious communities through radio and TV outlets to promote civic participation among evangelical churches; as an independent consultant to various faith-based social projects and organizations, he has first-hand exposure to the challenges faith-inspired organizations face in their social work. Magermans sees significant progress, after decades of reluctance, in evangelical engagement with politics and civic life, especially among young church members.

A Discussion with Carmen Ordoñez, Manos Abiertas, Guatemala
February 2016

A coordinator at Manos Abiertas, a clinic specializing in child and maternal health in Antigua Guatemala, Carmen Ordoñez advocates for more openness and information regarding child and maternal health in Guatemala, given the high vulnerability of low-income women. She has worked with faith-inspired groups, churches, and religious communities around topics that are still considered taboo in Guatemala; she sees great potential for collaboration and support among secular and faith-inspired groups to support vulnerable children and women.

A Discussion with Selvin Peres Hernandez, Teacher and Catholic Youth Activist, and Elvis Perez Hernandez, Visual Artist and Catholic Youth Worker
January 2016

Young people often take the initiative within church settings to address what they see as urgent problems in their community.
Two siblings, Selvin Peres Hernandez and Evis Perez Hernandez, assess a range of youth-led activities. Initially working within Catholic parishes, the groups encountered resistance from Catholic Church leadership, but persisted in their efforts, including allying themselves with young people from other churches. Their view is generally optimistic on approaches and attitudes of Guatemala’s youth, though they bemoan the lack of support and opportunities to engage, notably from the Church.

EVENTS

Workshop on Global Development and Religion in Guatemala
Washington, D.C.
September 28, 2015

The large presence of faith-inspired organizations makes religion a particularly salient topic to Guatemala’s development. However, international development partners have rarely focused explicitly on what this implies for policy and action. This workshop brought together a distinguished group of academic researchers and development practitioners interested in the intersections of international development, culture, and religion in Guatemala.

Our Common Home: Policy Implications for Environmental Challenges in Guatemala
Washington, D.C.
December 7, 2015

Pope Francis’ recent Laudato Si’ encyclical has encouraged conversation and policy debate on the environment globally, especially summoning religious communities to reflect on spiritual as well as material dimensions. Environmental vulnerabilities, such as depletion of the rainforest canopy, yearly droughts, and ongoing water scarcity, are rendered more acute by the effects of climate change. This policy consultation allowed scholars, policymakers, and faith actors to discuss the role religion can and does play for various environmental issues at the national and regional level.

Consultation on the Role of Religion in Guatemala’s Health Sector
Antigua Guatemala
February 26, 2016

Guatemala has made slow progress toward the maternal and child health MDGs in the past 15 years. High rates of malnutrition, as well as maternal and infant mortality, persist and disproportionately affect indigenous communities. With an urgent need to understand broad partnerships in the health sector, especially the widely varied perspectives and direct contributions of faith-inspired organizations, the event gathered both faith-linked and secular Guatemalan and international organizations working on maternal and child health. The core objectives included understanding the engagement of faith actors and discussing best practices for coordination given the ongoing weakness of the health system.

PUBLICATIONS

- "Guatemala’s Environmental Challenges: Vulnerabilities and Policy Solutions"
  Policy brief, May 2016

- "Roles for Religious Institutions in Facing Guatemala’s Healthcare Crisis"
  Policy brief, August 2016

- "Faith and Development in Focus: Guatemala"
  Report, March 2017
The research program focused on country-mapping work. It also included efforts to draw on this work for comparative reflections (See Box 2), to develop materials to support teaching and training, and to respond to topical and urgent demands (notably during the Ebola crisis and on global tuberculosis challenges).

TOPICAL REVIEWS

The policy brief "Faith and Tuberculosis: Experience and Opportunity," published in 2015, builds on prior Berkley Center/WFDD analysis and a report dating from 2009. The brief responded to heightened international interest in the challenges presented by tuberculosis (TB). It examines the issues that TB represents for health in a global context, focusing on the engagement of faith communities. Researchers drew on ongoing discussions in Nigeria and southern Africa to provide an in-depth look at the TB situation there, with a particular focus on the involvement of faith actors. A supplementary output is "Faith and Tuberculosis: Experience and Opportunity in Nigeria."

With the support of the Handa Foundation, a policy brief and mapping document on Ebola were developed to address the religious dimensions of this issue in real time. As the Ebola virus spread in West Africa, religious communities were among those most directly involved. Various religious communities and FIOs were vital in the response, providing medical supplies, psychosocial counseling, community awareness, and food assistance. WFDD and the Berkley Center published "Response to Ebola: Mapping Religious Networks and FIOs," a mapping of the engagement of faith actors and organizations. Published in successive versions as the crisis unfolded, the document aimed to raise awareness about the work of these actors and the potential for working more effectively with established religious leaders, networks, and communities. A policy brief, "Global Health Strategies: Ebola and the Untapped Potential of Religious Networks," was also published to point to networks of religious and faith-inspired actors that can be viewed as a resource for urgent responses and recovery plans. The publication drew on many contacts from the region and beyond, offering an example of careful monitoring of a fast-developing situation that took religious perspectives purposefully into account.

EVENTS

Religion and Development: Mapping the Terrain
Washington, D.C.
February 3, 2016

Faith-inspired actors have long played critical roles in development work around the world; however, their contributions can
Box 2. Cross-country comparison: Case studies

The research team produced three case studies focusing on cross-country comparison. These built on the model of our first case study on "Female Genital Cutting," published in 2012. Each of the four case studies is designed for teaching and professional training purposes. The three Luce project cases draw on mapping research in focus countries, as well as countries of concern (for example, Guinea, Liberia, and Sierra Leone during the Ebola crisis).

"Responding to the Ebola Epidemic in West Africa: What Role Does Religion Play?" traced the timeline of the 2014 Ebola epidemic in Guinea, Liberia, and Sierra Leone. The epidemic was a human and medical drama that killed more than 11,000 people, devastated communities, and set back the development of health systems. Its impact was concentrated in these three West African countries, but the tremors reverberated throughout the world, generating reactions of compassion and fear, spurring mobilization of vast human and financial resources, and inspiring many reflections on the lessons that should be learned by the many actors concerned. This case study examined the complex institutional roles of religious actors, various aspects of their involvement, and notably, how international organizations were or were not prepared to engage them in a systematic fashion. The focus is on lessons learned from the experience.

"A Society’s Responsibility: Ethics, Religion, and Children at Risk in Kenya, Senegal, and Cambodia" explored the often sensitive topic of how best to help vulnerable children. Caring for children in need is an ancient and universal problem and is a central focus for virtually all religious traditions. The challenges of supporting vulnerable children, however, are especially complex and vary from country to country, and often even within a country or community. Religious actors often play major roles in caring for these children. At issue are varying philosophies and practical approaches to the contemporary challenges of protecting and caring for society’s most vulnerable children. Kenya, Senegal, and Cambodia have each faced a crisis that has accentuated challenges of child vulnerability—and in each context, some approaches to vulnerable children are contested. This case study focuses on situations in the three countries where religious attitudes and actors are directly involved in specific challenges facing children. The case study explores the roles that religious beliefs and religious communities play in caring for vulnerable children. This case drew on previous mapping work in Cambodia.

"Modernizing Islamic Education: The Cases of Bangladesh and Senegal," examines Islamic education systems, focusing on how they fit within broader national education strategies and how reform proposals meet concerns of national education authorities and religious leaders and communities. These systems are the subject of mounting attention and are prominent on various development and foreign policy agendas, with discussions often driven primarily by security concerns. There is, however, growing recognition that Islamic education institutions can and do play important roles in meeting the basic global goal of education for all and in addressing a common and growing demand for attention to values and culturally appropriate curricula in the school context. In many countries, Islamic school systems are major education providers, filling key gaps in state-run education systems. They also point to significant demand for religious education, notable in Muslim communities in different world regions.
often be overlooked or viewed with suspicion. Taking a country-level approach, the research aimed to provide practitioners with a focused view of the many ways local religious actors, institutions, and ideas intersect with national development agendas. Project researchers discussed their findings to date, highlighting the complex and varied roles that religious actors play in development.

PUBLICATIONS

- "Response to Ebola: Mapping Religious Networks and FIOs"
  Working paper, October 2014
  (With the support of the Handa Foundation)

- "Global Health Strategies: Ebola and the Untapped Potential of Religious Networks"
  Policy brief, October 2014
  (With the support of the Handa Foundation)

- "Faith and Tuberculosis: Experience and Opportunity"
  Policy brief, September 2015

- "Country-Level Mapping Methodology"
  Working paper, February 2016

- "Responding to the Ebola Epidemic in West Africa: What Role Does Religion Play?"
  Case study, May 2016

- "Faith and Tuberculosis: Experience and Opportunity in Nigeria"
  Policy brief, May 2016

- "A Society’s Responsibility: Ethics, Religion, and Children at Risk in Kenya, Senegal, and Cambodia"
  Case study, September 2016

- "Modernizing Islamic Education: The Cases of Bangladesh and Senegal"
  Case study, September 2016

- "Gender Roles and Political, Social, and Economic Change in Bangladesh and Senegal" (Katherine Marshall)
  In *Islam, Gender, and Democracy in Comparative Perspective* (Jocelyne Cesari and Jose Casanova, eds.), June 2017

Mapping Religion and Development

Washington, D.C.
October 3, 2016

How do religious institutions and beliefs approach the challenges of modernization and development? And how do religious and secular actors engage on the relevant policies and programs? This capstone event highlighted findings from the three-year research project in four countries and explored cross-country comparisons for various development sectors. (For a thorough overview, see the "Capstone Event" section on page 38.)
As the three-year country-level mapping program approached its conclusion, a capstone event at Georgetown University on October 3, 2016, focused directly on the lessons learned through the project and looked ahead to future challenges and possibilities. The event was an opportunity to reflect on the project’s research, methodology, and outputs. It was organized as three distinct sessions: a morning “working circle” with a small invited group of external experts to review the project and offer feedback directly to WFDD and the Berkley Center, an afternoon roundtable workshop with a broader group of scholars and practitioners to discuss the roles religion plays in four key development sectors, and an evening public panel featuring prominent scholars and practitioners who reflected on the roles of religious institutions and beliefs in approaching the challenges of modernization and development.

The following paragraphs summarize the discussions and main points that arose.

WORKING CIRCLE: A CRITICAL REVIEW OF COUNTRY-LEVEL MAPPING

The working circle brought together external experts to review the project and offer critiques and recommendations directly to the Berkley Center and WFDD. The closed working circle included 13 practitioners, scholars, and thought leaders, mostly from the four countries where the research was focused. Participants drew on their various specialities within the fields of development and peacebuilding, each bringing a deep understanding of religious engagement within these areas. The Berkley Center and WFDD challenged participants to offer specific feedback based on a thorough prior review and evaluation of project methodology and the content of project outputs.

Working Circle Participants

Agnes Abuom, Ph.D.
Mustafa Ali, Ph.D.
R. Scott Appleby, Ph.D.
Rebecca Blachly
Benedict D’Rozario, Ph.D.
Nazrul Islam
Thomas Lawo, Ph.D.
Cecelia Lynch, Ph.D.
Sheikh Saliou Mbaké
Penda Mbow, Ph.D.
El Hadji Mansour Sy
Paul Townsend
Miguel von Hoegen
**BANGLADESH**

Working circle participants found the reports, briefs, and case studies on Bangladesh reader-friendly, but offered specific suggestions that might enhance accessibility and dissemination. They saw substantial value in the reports but suggested that reports solely in English are inaccessible to grassroots workers who do much of the development work. Suggestions include further work to summarize findings and to translate key documents into Bangla to increase circulation. More use could be made of social media to disseminate information.

Bangladesh saw dynamic changes in 2016, with shifting tensions and security concerns. These undercurrents render some information and references a bit outdated. An emerging challenge is balancing staying up to date on the current climate with producing robust and durable products.

**GUATEMALA**

The experts found the Guatemala publications to be done well, providing a general overview that could be useful for practitioners. With a full-length report forthcoming, they recommended key areas of focus, including corruption, malnutrition, and the effects of marginalization of the indigenous population.

The contemporary challenges around migration within the Guatemala-U.S. context represent a topic that should be explored further. The question of what causes individuals and families to choose whether or not to migrate is central to understanding migratory patterns.

**KENYA**

The group found the Kenya written outputs to be easily understandable, yet comprehensive. They would recommend the materials for a diverse audience, including both religious and non-religious actors. The exploration of root causes of conflict, including inter-ethnic and interreligious tensions, was especially appreciated. The group suggested that the country report highlight gender, the role of religious and faith-based media, peace initiatives of community-based leaders, employment, corruption, and the youth bulge. The report should cover as much as possible of the broad spectrum of development organizations, balanced with an account of historical issues and recent developments.

The experts recommended delving deeper into several topics to bring out greater nuances. These include explicit review of Islamic interventions in development work, the potential effects and consequences of Brexit on policy, sectarian and intra-religious conflict around ideology, the role of social media in radicalization, and the effects of extremism on women.

**SENEGAL**

The Senegal publications were seen as providing a comprehensive and descriptive account of the complex and dynamic situation on the ground. One participant stressed the importance of acknowledging and understanding the historical background for mapping work. The number of interviews, including those conducted with religious leaders, lends credibility to the reports. Questions centered on how to communicate research findings to stakeholders, particularly those in government and grassroots communities. It was suggested that the research could be used to encourage dialogue between government and religious leaders in order to build a stronger consensus on critical issues.

The topic of education provoked lively discussion. Experts suggested diving deeper into the different education systems and the issues within each system. Language of instruction, mandatory schooling, impact of population growth, and questions of financing are central issues for public education. The Berkley Center/WFDD research could inform and direct longstanding debates on daaras (Qur’anic schools) and the well-being of talibé (pupils at Qur’anic schools), navigating the need to modernize these schools while preserving the values education that the system provides. Daaras fill gaps in the public education system, but the widespread begging by talibés, often intended to teach humility, has been perverted by some instructors. A suggestion to regulate daaras by integrating them into the formal school system sparked debate, as the government’s education budget is already stretched thin, and the feasibility of integration is unclear.

**OVERALL FEEDBACK**

The working circle participants saw the materials produced as remarkably rich and innovative resources. The mapping work is distinct from other similar efforts in both breadth and depth. Project publications show care in considering religious, historical, and cultural factors. They will be useful for practitioners and students alike. For practitioners, it would be helpful to include practical information on contacting the organizations and individuals highlighted.

The interviews are a crucial aspect to the research, even if potential response bias and sampling largely within the capital cities could skew the information obtained. Supplementing the hard data and statistics with information from interviews provides a more comprehensive picture. The policy briefs lay out the problems in an adequate way but could provide more pol-
icy recommendations. The experts would like to see materials written about land issues, corruption, colonial ties, and power dynamics, as well as transnational religious trends and their impact on development.

The group discussed targeted dissemination of materials. At the international level, religious literacy among development practitioners and development literacy among religious actors are prime concerns, and these materials make a noteworthy contribution. At the national and local levels, the policy briefs could be disseminated widely among different communities. Overall, the experts thought research in the four countries could be deepened on certain issues, especially education, which has links to a wide range of other development topics. The mapping process was well received, and the products were found to be useful.

The group was asked a central operational question facing the Berkley Center and WFDD: Should future work deepen work to date in the four focus countries, or extend to other countries using the methodology developed to date? The basic answer was: Both are important. A broad suggestion was that research should focus on the same group of countries in the next phase to probe deeper into particular issues. Sharp issue briefs on pertinent topics were seen as especially useful. However, there was also a call to work in a widening group of countries.

ROUND TABLE SESSION: EXPLORING THE INTERSECTIONS OF RELIGION AND GENDER, HEALTH, EDUCATION, AND PEACE AND CONFLICT

This roundtable session convened specialists engaged in work on religion and development to discuss particular themes emerging from country-level analysis conducted by WFDD and the Berkley Center and to explore cross-country comparisons. The event focused on religious roles in four specific areas (gender, health, education, and peace and conflict), with separate tables taking up the different issues. Roundtable participants provided specific feedback and recommendations based on WFDD and Berkley Center research and outputs. The session concluded with a broad discussion responding to comments from the various tables.

Discussions ranged quite widely, from the roles of religious texts to specific actions linked to development policies and programs. There was especially lively discussion around the challenges of gender and religion. Linking religious texts to efforts to fight gender inequality was advanced as one illustration of a place where understanding can be furthered with a deliberate linking of religious beliefs and development/human rights principles. Translating development and rights principles into religious language can help to demonstrate their congruency. A participant pointed to the pitfall of seeing gender ideology as an invention of feminists; this contributes to tensions between the Catholic hierarchy that traditionally keeps males in leading roles and radical secularists who may view religion as the greatest threat to women. Ordinary people, however, rarely put aspects of the gender revolution in an all-or-nothing package. The role of education in creating gender identities was a topic of particular interest. Economic autonomy and family planning are likely to continue as critical issues at the intersection of gender and religion. Governments and groups cannot wait to educate people; if action is not taken, health and education risks will only grow.

On the topic of health, strong historic links between health and religion were highlighted. Churches have long involvement in establishing hospitals and service delivery; however, there is a lack of coherent and effective religious advocacy for improved policies. Government-religious partnerships focused on expanding access to healthcare could make a significant difference. Organizations could benefit from looking at wellness through a wider lens, rather than focusing primarily on service delivery, in order to broaden health education to health promotion. A white paper for service deliverers on how to engage in policy for the benefit of healthy, strong communities could be useful. While community-level services show results, there must be crossover to policy. This concept can be applied broadly in the development sector and is particularly applicable for mitigating conflict and promoting peace.

Practitioners, it was suggested, can usefully distinguish themselves as influencers of, rather than agitators for, policies. Key questions to ask include: What is our message? Where is our evidence? How does the government actually see our value in influencing policy? The complex map of advocacy groups and aid should be considered in combining service experience and policy advocacy. Players include not only community groups, but also national and international partners and influencers. How does one create a voice on behalf of an organization and a community that also intersects with other crucial institutions? A frequent suggestion was to focus on public-private partnerships that include religious figures. Declarations of support make too little impact; there must be country and group representation and participation. Effective partnership models, many practitioners noted, produce the long-term effects that are needed across the board.

Practitioners need to understand how different industries use tools to understand knowledge, attitudes, and behavior in a quantitative way if they are to be effective in shaping policies. However, available, practical tools to help understand how religious leaders can be influencers are limited. In terms of moni-
toring and evaluation, one religious leader stated that churches focus on what they need to do, rather than proving that they were successful. This kind of approach tends to contrast with the emphasis within the development community on collecting data and demonstrating project impact and results.

The potential for partnerships and collaboration was a common theme in discussions. How can churches come together more effectively to promote health, education, gender rights, and conflict resolution? Consultation and interfaith dialogue can be helpful in establishing a space where leaders are able to think through issues; the need to create and foster safe spaces where differences can be aired openly and without undue risk was emphasized. Many encouraged further studies about the intersections of development with policy and religion. However, many participants agreed that more must be done to ensure that governments, influencers, and donors receive and consider these reports if there is to be an appropriate influence not only at the community, programmatic level, but also at the level of policy.

**PANEL DISCUSSION: MAPPING RELIGION AND DEVELOPMENT**

The third event was a panel discussion, moderated by Katherine Marshall, that focused on the significance and impact of the country-level mapping project. What lessons were learned, and has this project helped to sharpen goals for the future?

Scott Appleby, dean of the Keough School of Global Affairs at the University of Notre Dame, addressed the project’s key questions: What is religion and development about? Why does the intersection matter? How has this area evolved in recent decades? Appleby reflected that faith-based groups both inside and outside a country can engage in development, intentionally or inadvertently, on a range of issues, such as healthcare and conflict resolution. He sees the most significant engagement in the area of education, where religion plays vital roles. Education is an area with notable knowledge gaps in scholarship and policy; there need to be platforms, like the country-level mapping research, to fill these gaps.

Appleby saw the project work as playing an important role in raising new questions. In shifting terrain where secular, state, and religious education change our paradigms of understanding, it is crucial to study these issues. For example, project work highlights how media has different impacts on various facets of knowledge and education. This encourages a broader view of development that enriches wider understandings of the future of religion and education in a transnational, globalized world.

Thomas Lawo, senior advisor at the German Society for International Cooperation, reminded the group of Hans Kung’s assertion that peace among nations cannot occur without peace among religions, and peace between religions cannot occur without dialogue. Development, he argued, is truly a global phenomenon. Thus, development cannot occur with, for example, the German government alone pushing its own agenda.
There must be input from NGOs, global initiatives, and bilateral agreements. The integration of government and religious leaders in policymaking encourages religious literacy and interreligious understanding. Timing also matters in the government agenda; international coordination and action contribute to success. This involves including multiple organizations, meeting in different places, on different topics, and at appropriate moments to take advantage of the presence of diverse leaders.

Miguel von Hoegen, economist, former vice-minister of urban and rural development, and twice secretary of planning in Guatemala, highlighted his perspective after the Guatemalan Peace Accords. Despite the agreement, the percentage of people living in poverty in Guatemala has increased. Many Guatemalans, he suggested, wanted churches to play a more significant role in the 1996 agreements and in ensuring their implementation. Twenty years later, many now acknowledge that the church needs to be considered far more purposefully in the still much needed work of peacebuilding.

Benedict D’Rozario, former executive director of Caritas Bangladesh, focused on how his nation, which is traditionally very peaceful, dealt with violence earlier this year. Events prompted serious reflection and discussion about how government initiatives can address the critical issues facing the nation and individual communities. Although Bangladesh has made progress in healthcare, education, and livelihoods, complex issues like poverty, unemployment, and underemployment are still only partially addressed, and there is a widening gap between the rich and the poor. International events have influenced violence, with many youth recruited by non-state groups. This situation must inspire organizations and governments to unite, reflect, and address these negative trends. While the government emphasizes expanding education in Bangladesh, family remains the most important factor in ensuring education and development. Limited democratic space and lack of confidence between political parties that do not communicate or trust each other compound the issues. It is vital to pursue various initiatives to bridge these divides. D’Rozario remains hopeful that Bangladesh can return to its tradition of harmony, tolerance, and peace with the help of NGOs, government, and other partners.

Agnes Abuom from Kenya, who serves as moderator of the World Council of Churches Central Committee, reflected that every society has wounds that fuel marginalization and religious tension. These must be addressed to move forward. In Kenya, historical wounds from the colonial period have separated communities, but there are also political wounds from the postcolonial period that have harmed Christian-Muslim relationships especially. For example, the violence among youth that occurs in central Kenya results from the wounds related to land questions that were never properly addressed. These issues go beyond Christian-Muslim relationships; rather, they are about how identities and relationships are understood in terms of ethnic, religious, and geographic communities. She recommended examining the changing relationships between religious groups and how movements for positive changes are formed in government and international agendas. Christian and Muslim groups need to address the wounds from radical groups and specific tensions linked to refugees who spend long periods in Kenya. The WFDD report on peacebuilding in Kenya reflects this in its coverage of organizations that are working to restore trust, heal wounds, and create a positive future for Kenya. Abuom advocated for creating a space for dialogue between government and non-state actors, such as faith leaders, to discuss and address issues that have been swept under the rug. These partnerships must not instrumentalize faith-inspired institutions, but they should establish a relationship based on equality where both parties contribute their specific talents to building a dignified, just community.

CLOSING REMARKS

Katherine Marshall emphasized the broadening of development agendas reflected in the UN Sustainable Development Goals. The global development agenda now explicitly includes environmental challenges, peacebuilding, and humanitarian action, as well as the more traditional, but broad, sectors associated with international development (health, education, economic management, governance, infrastructure, etc.). This new architecture translates into a still more ambitious and complex set of challenges and imperatives. They include integrating private-sector and religious leaders in official development-related policy. The central question is how to do this most effectively.

The session concluded with appreciation for the insights of a panel approaching the question from different religious and regional perspectives, illustrating how the global and the local are tightly intertwined. What is the most effective way faith groups stay true to themselves while working to shape development policies? The project and the capstone discussions highlighted the need for continuing robust research, conversation, and advocacy that portray religious actors in development as constructive, holistic, and healing, even as less positive dimensions are recognized and taken into account. WFDD’s and the Berkley Center’s mapping of the constructive players in development is not blindly optimistic, but it looks to continue dialogue, pose questions, and reflect on solutions.

Watch the capstone video at: https://berkleycenter.georgetown.edu/events/mapping-religion-and-development
Through a research program and dialogue focused on four countries, the Berkley Center and WFDD have contributed specific knowledge about religious roles in many areas affecting social and economic development for Bangladesh, Senegal, Kenya, and Guatemala. They have also deepened and sharpened the underlying questions that spurred the research: What, in fact, do these religious roles look like (and how do they differ among countries and regions)? How are they changing in the face of globalization and modernization, both at broad global levels and in communities? Why does this matter generally, and for specific topics? And what does this mean for development approaches, policies, and programs?

The products of project research (reports, policy briefs, literature reviews, consultations, interviews online, and fieldwork) contribute to a growing knowledge base on faith-inspired development. Interest in the topic has increased over the project period, as has openness to taking religious dimensions of development into account. However, there are challenges ahead. The interest in the religious dimensions is rather spotty and can shift with changing leadership in different institutions. The expectation that religious dimensions should be an integral part of strategy and policy reflection is still far more an aspiration than a reality. Many in policy positions still lack familiarity with religious landscapes and institutions, and there are those who bring significant biases and preconceptions to the topic. With particular sensitivities around religious topics, dialogue and even knowledge sharing can present special challenges.

The focus on four different countries highlighted that each country presents quite distinct challenges. While there were several strong common themes (for example, the roles of religious beliefs and actors in shaping education and gender roles), the very different institutions in each country made for different conclusions, ordering of priorities, and approaches to research and engagement. The diversity of religious engagement in various country settings was a starting hypothesis, and it emerged as a robust conclusion.

Several general reflections are noted in conclusion:

- **The country-level approach helped in shaping the broad challenges of linking development and religion much more sharply.** It also highlighted how difficult it is to pinpoint practical ways to bridge traditional gulfs without a quite thorough knowledge of the history and contemporary landscape of religious institutions. Situating development challenges within the local context provides a granular understanding of the practical roles that faith-inspired actors play in society, as well as varying perceptions about their roles. This is necessary to see how they fit together in the larger development strategy.

- **Cross-country comparisons allow us to draw some general conclusions with broader applicability.** The case studies that sought to present complex and pressing issues in a comparative setting encouraged practical analysis of the central operational questions.

- **Relevant and demanding materials that highlight ethical, cultural, and religious dimensions could play a critical role in understanding the diversity of approaches and**
• **In various situations, tensions can arise from understandings of charity versus human rights as a basic rationale for interventions.** Traditions of charity are at the core of many religious interventions while in the development field, rights-based programs can involve rather different approaches. There is, of course, considerable overlap and congruence in practice, but language and perceptions may differ (charity seen as patronizing, emphasizing the role of the giver, rights suggesting entitlement and involving sometimes a rather sterile tone). Open dialogue can go a long way toward an understanding and appreciation of varying perspectives, paving the way for robust cooperation toward mutually agreed ends.

• **Gaining a deeper understanding of the religious context is not a simple task, but the research points to practical ways in which policymakers and development professionals can better identify local partners and areas where taking religious dimensions into account can avoid pitfalls.** And, more importantly, a greater appreciation of the religious context can contribute to more effective and lasting development approaches and programs.

• **There are differences in approaching national and local religious landscapes.** Where religious traditions and authority are decentralized, it can be challenging for policymakers, diplomats, and development workers to find partners who are not already on the interfaith or ecumenical circuit. But the local and community intersections may be the most significant neglected area in the religion/development nexus.

• **Employing mixed methodologies and working across disciplines is demanding—terminology is a first order challenge—but vital for the effort.** It adds complexity to presenting materials and findings but enriches them. Much of the data on religion is problematic and difficult to interpret. For example, interpreting data on the importance people attach to religious beliefs and practices and how they play out in society is far from easy. Rich anecdotes from interviews with diverse actors complement and enrich existing, albeit quite limited, quantitative data.

• **Issues around data need greater exploration.** This includes efforts to press for more nuanced and robust understandings of the significance of religiosity measures. It also prominently includes financial flows and technical assistance contributions, which are often poorly captured in global data. More important is the effort to assess the significance of “market share,” capacity to reach and transform marginalized groups, and relative quality of services provided respectively by religious institutions, non-religious private groups, governments, and various hybrids of the above.

Several questions remain as we reflect on the materials produced and look ahead to the future. Working circle participants from the capstone event held in October 2016 helped us to distill these questions:

• **How can we more effectively bring in local partners and engage them in research?** Fieldwork in Bangladesh and Senegal, in particular, benefited from strong local partnerships. A more purposeful focus on establishing solid partnerships early in the process and working with local scholars will enhance project outputs and lend greater credibility to the work. Establishing relationships with youth, rural actors, and educational institutions could be beneficial.

• **Should mapping focus on new countries or on deepening research in existing countries?** Continuing research in existing countries would contribute to greater learning and possible application by faith-inspired, public, and private sector institutions in these countries. At the same time, there is demand for research in other countries that are interesting from various religious perspectives. Many countries have little documentation on faith-inspired development, and mapping could make critical contributions.

• **Who else should be conducting the research?** The Berkley Center and WFDD have established a model for mapping studies and raised questions for further research. What kinds of partnerships might be most effective to advance the work? What are the best ways to make knowledge available to those who need it and can make use of it?

• **How best can we fill some obvious gaps?** These include, for example, overall financial and operational scales of religiously inspired development work; financial flows and their impact; patterns of teaching about religion within families and schools; and the impact of purposeful efforts to engage religious actors in behavior change (for example, on gender roles) that have particular importance for development.

• **How can sensitive topics best be addressed?** This particularly includes areas where disagreement exists and where there are biases toward and misconceptions about religious actors or development institutions.
Endnotes

1. Berkeley Center/WFDD use the term faith-inspired organizations (FIOs) to include a wide range of formal organizations (generally similar to non-governmental organizations—NGOs). FIOs would not normally refer to religious bodies like the Catholic Church. “Faith-inspired,” in contrast to the commonly used term “faith-based,” suggests both a broader set of links and a less formal association with a faith organization like a Buddhist sangha. The terminology reflects a preference for the broader connotation among some faith traditions.


14. Ibid.

15. The Global Religious Landscape.


34. “Table 1: Human Development Index and its Components,” United Nations Development Programme.


45. “Table 1: Human Development Index and its Components,” United Nations Development Programme.


To learn more about the Religion and Development: Country-Level Mapping Project visit:
http://berkleycenter.georgetown.edu/projects/religion-and-development-country-level-mapping