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A faith-inspired way of working: an exploration of International Faith-Inspired Organisation's local faith-inspired humanitarian partnerships and programs in response to the COVID-19 pandemic in fragile urban contexts

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**A faith-inspired way of working: an exploration of
International Faith-Inspired Organisation's local
faith-inspired humanitarian partnerships and
programs in response to the COVID-19 pandemic in
fragile urban contexts**

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Thesis submitted for the degree of PhD in Development Studies

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Abstract

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a devastating impact on the lives of many of the world's poorest. COVID-19 has proved to be much more than a health emergency; as well as the immediate health-related concerns of COVID-19, measures to stem the spread of the virus have created additional livelihood, protection and mental health challenges.

As seen during previous health crises, the COVID-19 pandemic has intersected in various ways with faith, religion and spirituality. The pandemic has deeply affected faith life and faith actors at all levels - from International Faith-Inspired Organisations (IFIOs) to Local Faith Actors (LFAs) and Local Communities of Faith (LCFs) – who have remobilised to respond to the health crisis and its secondary impacts.

This thesis draws on the experiences of staff working for IFIOs during the pandemic to argue that IFIO's local faith-inspired partnerships and programs have the potential to make responses to humanitarian crises more effective. This thesis details how IFIOs engaged increasingly rapidly, and with increased breadth and depth, with LFAs and LCFs in response to COVID-19, in comparison to previous crises. This suggests lessons learnt which have been reinforced by the COVID-19 pandemic, that speak to the potential value-add of locally-led faith-inspired partnerships and programs. This potential value-add is mitigated by certain challenges, as well as some persistent gaps in understanding, including a lack of knowledge around how best to engage with LFAs and LCFs in fragile urban contexts. While IFIOs' modes and levels of engagement with faith, religion and spirituality vary, their experience in this area means they have a potential leadership role to play in promoting faith literacy and locally-led faith engagement within the humanitarian sphere to leverage the potential value-add of localised faith engagement for more effective responses to crises.

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Acronyms/Abbreviations

ADP	Area Development Program
BLM	Black Lives Matter
CAR	Central African Republic
CBO	Community Based Organisation
CCIH	Christian Center for International Health
CCT	Church and Community Transformation
CDC	Centers for Disease Control
CHAT	Community Hope Action Team
CoH	Channels of Hope
CoH-CP	Channels of Hope for Child Protection
CoH-E	Channels of Hope for Ebola
CoH-G	Channels of Hope for Gender
CoH-HIV	Channels of Hope for HIV
CoH MNCH	Channels of Hope for Maternal, Newborn and Child Health
COVER	COVID-19 Emergency Response plan
COVID-19	SARS-CoV2, the severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2
CPAID	Centre for Public Authority and International Development
CRS	Catholic Relief Services
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
EASO	East Asia
ESRC	Economic and Science Research Council
EVD	Ebola Virus Disease
FBO	Faith-Based Organisation
F&D	Faith and Development
FGM	Female Genital Mutilation
FIO	Faith-Inspired Organisation
FO	Field Offices
FORB	Freedom of Religion or Belief
FSI	Fragile States Index

GAUC	Global Alliance for Urban Crises
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
GC	Global Centre
GMT	Grounded Method Theory
HOVID	Hunger + COVID
HQ	Head Quarters
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
IDPs	Internally Displaced Peoples (IDPs)
IFIO	International Faith-Inspired Organisation
INGO	International Non-Government Organisation
JLI	Joint Learning Initiative
KII	Key Informant Interview/s
LACRO	Latin American & Caribbean
LCF	Local Community of Faith
LFA	Local Faith Actor
LGBTQ+	Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender Queer Plus (LGBTQ+)
LMICs	Low- and Middle-Income Countries
LSE	London School of Economics
MEERO	Middle East & Eastern Europe
MDGs	Millenium Development Goals
MHPSS	Mental Health and Psychosocial Support
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MSF	Médecins Sans Frontiers
NFIO	National Faith-Inspired Organisation
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NO	National Office
NWOW	New Way of Working
OCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PPE	Personal Protective Equipment
RCCG	Redeemed Christian Church of God

RO	Regional Office
SAPO	South Asia & Pacific
SO	Support Office
SOAS	School of Oriental and African Studies
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SMS	Short Message Service
TOR	Terms of Reference
VAWG	Violence Against Women and Girls
VFI	Vision Fund International
WARO	West Africa
WASH	Water And Sanitation and Hygiene
WHO	World Health Organisation
WHS	World Humanitarian Summit
WV DRC	World Vision DRC
WVI	World Vision International
WV Indonesia	Wahana Visi Indonesia
UBEL-DTP Training Partnership	The University College London, Bloomsbury and East London Doctoral
UCL	University College London
UN	United Nations
UNHCR	The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

Introduction

Background and academic contribution

Global Humanitarian Reform

The formal humanitarian sphere is at a critical juncture (Aneja, 2016). As humanitarian crises around the world become increasingly frequent, complicated and protracted, the international community has recognised the need to find a new way of working for more effective responses, particularly in fragile (urban) contexts. These shifts led the formal humanitarian sphere to hold the first-ever World Humanitarian Summit (WHS) in Istanbul in 2016, led by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). The WHS and the subsequent publication of OCHA's New Way of Working (NWOW) in 2017 called on relevant stakeholders to commit to a new vision for humanitarian action; for bold and visionary reform to the humanitarian architecture to ensure its ability to deal with the changing nature of humanitarian crises.

This commitment to a new way of working marks a distinct shift within the humanitarian arena away from humanitarian exceptionalism where only certain actors, those who are guided by a set of specific principles, can legitimately be involved in humanitarian action (Aneja, 2016:4). Instead, this vision for a reformed humanitarian sphere calls for collective action in the form of the coordination of various actors, using a range of instruments and operational modalities, to deal with the range of problems that arise in fragile situations (Aneja, 2016:4). This emphasis on collective action went hand-in-hand with commitments to the localisation agenda, focusing on engaging with a range of local actors and those from the Global South. It was hoped that by partnering with and enhancing

the work of local actors, humanitarian responses will be more adept at dealing with the unpredictable realities of responding to humanitarian crises today.

The global humanitarian reform agenda, with an emphasis on the principles of collective action and localisation, has created a space in which to (re)visit the roles Local Faith Actors (LFAs) and Local Communities of Faith (LCFs) play in humanitarian responses. It is increasingly recognised that faith, religion and spirituality are inextricably intertwined with humanitarian processes informing the decisions people make about their development, that of their community and their responses to short- and long-term crises (Ver Beek, 2000:31. Selinger, 2004:525-539). While faith, religion and spirituality may not be important to everyone, they remain inseparable from the social and political of people's everyday lives, especially in low-income and fragile contexts (See Ellis and Ter Haar, 2004).

Despite the centrality of faith, religion and spirituality in the lives of individuals and communities, and the religious roots of humanitarianism itself (see Barnett and Stein, 2012. Warner, 2013), faith, religion and spirituality have historically been at best overlooked, and at worst actively avoided, by the formal humanitarian sphere (Barnett, 2005:725. Barnett, 2012. Ager and Ager, 2013:457). That being said, for some time the humanitarian sphere has engaged significantly with faith, religion and spirituality through International Faith-Inspired Organisations (IFIOs) who have long inhabited a prominent place within the humanitarian architecture. In recent years the humanitarian sphere has been criticised for its narrow engagement with IFIOs at the expense of LFAs and LCFs. It is suggested that such a narrow approach results from the fact that many IFIOs were incorporated into the formal humanitarian sphere during its processes of secular codification from the end of the nineteenth through the twentieth century, and so largely adhere to the 'secular script' of humanitarianism (Deneulin and Bano, 2009. Ager and Ager, 2011:457. Burchardt, 2012:31). While IFIOs have long been viewed as important actors for humanitarian response, particularly as points of access to LCFs

and affected communities, it is only very recently that the humanitarian sphere has begun to engage with faith, religion and spirituality at the local level.

This broadening of the field of Faith and Humanitarianism has increased recognition within the academic literature and within communities of practice that LFAs and LCFs are important humanitarian actors. LFAs and LCFs are often among the first responders to crises of which they are also victims (Ager and Ager, 2011. Fiddian-Qasmiyeh and Ager, 2013:6. Rivera and Nickels, 2014). Their embeddedness in their local contexts also means they are a sustained presence in local communities, helping communities before, during and after crises, sometimes in places where religious institutions and communities of faith are all that is left to provide vital services and support (Fountain et al, 2004). The humanitarian sphere's shift towards engaging more with LFAs and LCFs was further solidified by the important roles they played during the HIV & AIDs (See Chitando, 2007. Hodge and Roby, 2010. Dilger et al, 2014) and Ebola epidemics (see Featherston, 2015. Greyling et al, 2016. Marshall, 2016. PaRD, 2016).

As the humanitarian sphere looks to make humanitarian responses 'as local as possible, as international as necessary' (Ban Ki-Moon, 2016), the literature has begun to focus on what the future relationship between international and local actors might look like. This has seen concepts such as complementarity emerge as a way to proceed, recognising the ongoing and important role for international actors in humanitarian responses, as well as the leadership role of local and national actors. Whilst there is a growing literature around this relationship (See Schenkenberg, 2016. Austin and Chessex, 2018. Barbelet, 2019) there has been little, if any, focus on what this relationship looks like between IFIOs and LFAs and LCFs. As explored above, the literature highlights the distinctive opportunities (and challenges) of faith actors' influence on humanitarian processes, from IFIOs to LFAs and LCFs. There is very little available work which interrogates whether there is anything distinctive about the relationships between IFIOs and LFAs and LCFs which helps leverage

opportunities and mitigate challenges that arise from the inextricable intertwinement of faith, religion and spirituality with humanitarian processes. This research helps to fill this gap.

COVID-19: A global pandemic

This thesis makes its original contribution through filling significant gaps in the academic literature on faith, religion, spirituality and humanitarianism. Specifically, it makes an original contribution through exploring the intersections of faith, religion and spirituality in humanitarian responses to public health crises. This thesis is also at the forefront of understanding how humanitarian and faith actors responded to COVID-19, through analysing IFIO's local faith-inspired partnerships and programs in response to, and during, the COVID-19 pandemic.

The rapid spread of SARS-CoV2, the severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2, otherwise known as COVID-19, was named a Public Health Emergency by the WHO on January 30th, 2020.

COVID-19 was declared a pandemic on March 11th, 2020, in response to alarm caused by the rapid spread and apparent severity of the virus. By April 4th, 2020, the WHO reported that the number of confirmed cases had increased tenfold in less than a month and they reported 1 million cases of COVID-19 around the world (WHO, 2021iii).

Throughout the ongoing lifecycle of the COVID-19 pandemic, several variations have been identified. The data collection for this thesis is situated in the emergence of the original strain of COVID-19, first identified in Wuhan China in 2019 which spread around the world. It also covers the emergence and spread of the first new variant, first detected in the UK in September 2020. This became known as the Alpha variant and contained several mutations in the spike protein, making it more contagious. It was estimated to be around 50 percent more transmissible than the original strain of COVID-19 identified in Wuhan China in 2019 and it was thought to induce more severe cases of the virus, although the data on this is mixed (Geddes, 2021).

The subsequent Delta and Omicron variants and their significant impacts across the world emerged after the end of data collection for this research. As did the development of several vaccines, although there was talk of hope for vaccines during the data collection period of this thesis. This allowed humanitarian actors to start thinking about the recovery phases of their COVID-19 responses.

The COVID-19 pandemic has been characterised by high levels of misinformation. Misinformation and conspiracy theories have enshrined the COVID-19 pandemic; from its emergence through to the acceptance of vaccines. Studies done early in the pandemic, in early 2020, on the social media platforms Twitter and YouTube detected surprisingly high levels of misinformation (Parker et al, 2021:1-2). This posed significant challenges for governments, public health bodies and development and humanitarian agencies seeking to limit the spread of the virus. False information and beliefs about the existence and spread of the virus often led to unsafe behaviours. While misinformation is not new, the extent to which misinformation impacted public health responses was notable and a defining feature of the pandemic.

Not only does the COVID-19 virus pose serious health risks, but the policies put in place by national governments to stem the spread of the disease have caused significant secondary challenges. Livelihood challenges (Rahaman et al, 2021), food insecurity (UN, 2021), protection issues (Fogstad et al, 2021) and mental health and psychosocial impacts have affected people all over the world. On October 5th, 2020, 7 months after COVID-19 was named a pandemic, the WHO (2021iii) shared the results of a survey which suggested that critical mental health services in contexts all around the world had been disrupted as a result of the pandemic despite need continuing to rise.

The secondary impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic were felt most acutely in many low-income and fragile contexts. In particular, urban contexts in low-income and fragile contexts were hard hit. The COVID-19 pandemic, spread between people through respiratory droplets in the air, unsurprisingly

hit densely populated urban centres first. Urban centres are also economic hubs with people working in economic activities that require them to leave the house everyday, contributing to the spread of the virus. Similarly, the secondary impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic were felt most acutely in low-income and fragile urban contexts. Many people living in urban contexts work for daily wages which disappeared in response to lockdowns and restrictions of movement (Sharifi and Khavarian-Garmsir, 2020:2). The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on urban contexts has reinforced growing concern within humanitarian circles that the humanitarian sphere is unprepared to respond, and inexperienced at responding to humanitarian crises occurring increasingly frequently in urban contexts (Campbell, 2016:7-8). This thesis makes the case for further investment in research and planning around the most effective ways to respond to humanitarian crises in urban contexts. Through the lens of faith, religion and spirituality this thesis makes an initial and original contribution to this necessary body of work.

This thesis is a 'real time' analysis of faith-inspired humanitarian responses to, and during, the first phase of the COVID-19 pandemic. The data collection period for this project started in March 2020, when the COVID-19 outbreak was first declared a pandemic and when there was just the original strain of COVID-19 first identified in Wuhan China. The data collection continued until the end of December 2020, after the emergence of the Alpha variant. The shifting and evolving COVID-19 landscape indicated above meant that IFIO's responses in general, and their faith-inspired partnerships and programs in particular, changed through multiple stages. By situating this research in an emerging and ongoing pandemic, this thesis makes an original contribution to the research of on-going crises and provides a highly contemporary account of the humanitarian sphere's current theory and practice around local faith-inspired responses to crises.

An interdisciplinary and collaborative methodology

This thesis makes an original and distinctive contribution to the academic literature through its inherently interdisciplinary nature and its innovative collaborative approach. The interdisciplinary nature of this research project draws on my equal years of training in Theology and Religious Studies and Development/Humanitarian Studies. As a result, I have adopted an inherently interdisciplinary approach to researching the intersections between faith, religion, spirituality, and humanitarianism in general, and the ways faith, religion and spirituality have interacted with the COVID-19 pandemic in particular.

As well as the interdisciplinary approach adopted by this research, it also transcends the boundaries between academia and practice through an innovative collaborative approach to academic research on humanitarian action. Academic research within Humanitarian Studies is always a dialogue between academia and practice as it seeks to assess, critically analyse and at times inform how the humanitarian sphere operates in practice. However, this dialogue between academia and practice was formalised from the outset of this project. This research was undertaken thanks to an award from the Economic and Social Science Research Council (ESRC), through the University College London, Bloomsbury and East London ESRC Doctoral Training Partnership (UBEL-DTP). The award was given to conduct an academic research project working with a non-academic partner, in this case the IFIO World Vision. The aim of this award is to produce an academic thesis that makes an original contribution to the academic literature and produces findings that are relevant to the work of the non-academic partner.

To ensure that the findings of this academic research project make an original contribution to the academic literature and remained relevant to the work of practitioners, I chose a research methodology that draws on Grounded Theory. A Grounded Theory methodology was also important for providing this project with the flexibility needed to navigate a tumultuous research environment, and study a rapidly evolving humanitarian context, during the COVID-19 pandemic. Adopting a methodology which draws on tenants of Grounded Theory meant that the focus of this project was

led by the data, which was collected through qualitative, semi-structured, Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) with staff working for a number of IFIOs and INGOs including World Vision, and two of World Vision's National Offices (NOs) in the DRC and Indonesia. This allowed the project to follow academic avenues of interest that remained relevant to communities of practice, even as they pivoted to react to the changing COVID-19 landscape. This approach to data collection, speaking to key informants on a regular basis, allowed me to record their opinions in real-time, capturing reflections that might not make it into official documentation such as impact reports.

Overall, my interdisciplinary background as the researcher facilitated a research methodology that helped produce a nuanced understanding of the ways faith, religion and spirituality influence, and are engaged by, humanitarian actors. The innovative research methodology, drawing on Grounded Theory, facilitated a real time analysis of IFIO's local faith-inspired partnerships and programs in response to a public health crisis going through multiple shifts and changes. The collaborative approach adopted by this research also practically facilitated this research. In particular, the methodology employed here, and explored in more detail in Chapter Two, is an example of how academic literature can be part of a shared process of learning between academia and practice.

Argument and chapter outlines

In response to the global context of humanitarian reform and pandemic, building on the existing literature and responding to gaps within it, this research project responds to the primary research question: Can local faith-inspired partnerships and programming make International Faith-Inspired Organisation's (IFIO's) responses to humanitarian crises like COVID-19 more effective in fragile urban contexts?

This thesis argues that the COVID-19 pandemic has reinforced to IFIO staff that their relationships with LFAs and LCFs, leverageable through their local faith-inspired partnerships and programs, have the potential to make their humanitarian responses more effective, including potentially in fragile

urban contexts. This thesis argues that the potential value-add of such localised faith engagement for more effective humanitarian responses was also recognised by the broader humanitarian sphere during the COVID-19 pandemic. This was evidenced by the increasingly rapid consideration by international humanitarian agencies about how to best engage with LFAs and LCFs for more effective responses to COVID-19. IFIO's responses to the COVID-19 pandemic epitomised this shift within the humanitarian sphere as they engaged with LFAs and LCFs more rapidly, and in increasingly diverse and meaningful ways.

IFIO's Faith and Development (F&D) responses to COVID-19 highlighted an increasingly rapid engagement with LFAs and LCFs, reflected by the broader humanitarian sphere, particularly for disseminating accurate information and preventative messaging for social behaviour change. Many IFIOs rapidly leveraged their local faith-inspired partnerships and programs, particularly those working with local faith leaders, to train them to disseminate accurate information and preventative messaging around COVID-19 in a bid to stem the spread of the virus and tackle rising levels of misinformation around the pandemic. This testifies to recognition of the potential value-add of engaging with local faith leaders, due to their trusted, authoritative positions within local communities, creating opportunities for more effective humanitarian responses.

The humanitarian sphere's rapid knowledge production around this topic, even if this was not translated into practice, was undoubtedly a response to missed opportunities identified during past humanitarian responses to comparable crises, namely Ebola. During the Ebola epidemic, public health specialists identified practices such as burial rituals that involve touching highly infectious bodies as contributing to the spread of the disease. Messages from international public health specialists, urging communities to promote healthy and safe behaviours, were not sufficiently heeded. It wasn't until they connected with local community and faith leaders to help disseminate information and adapt practices in ways that were culturally and religiously appropriate that there was evidence of social behaviour change (PaRD, 2016:8-9). Key informants for this research

identified similarities between the responses required for COVID-19 and Ebola. It followed therefore that they saw local faith-inspired partnerships and programs as having an important role to play, from the start of the pandemic, to promote social behaviour change to stem the spread of the covid-19 virus.

IFIOs recognition of the potential for their local faith-inspired partnerships and programs to make their humanitarian responses more effective is also evidenced by the increased breadth of their F&D activities during the pandemic. IFIOs leveraged their local faith-inspired partnerships and programs as part of their multi-sectoral responses to COVID-19 in response to the varied primary and secondary impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. To address the livelihood and food insecurity challenges caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, many IFIOs supported LFAs and LCFs to assist the most vulnerable members of their communities with food assistance and support them in finding new economic opportunities for future employment. It was felt that the reach of LFAs and LCFs meant they were well placed to identify and help those suffering most from the livelihood and food insecurity challenges resulting from COVID-19. As part of their multi-sectoral responses, many IFIOs also worked with LFAs and LCFs to tackle rising levels of Gender-Based Violence (GBV) and child abuse. IFIOs engaged in activities such as continuing to train local faith leaders on how to tackle beliefs and practices that promote gender inequality and support families to parent with discipline and not violence. Finally, many IFIOs saw their local faith-inspired partnerships and programs as a key part of their recovery response to COVID-19. Towards the end of the data collection period of this project, for example, local faith leaders were being engaged with to promote vaccine roll outs and to give people hope of a life after the pandemic.

However, perhaps most distinctively, this thesis argues that IFIOs engaged in increasingly meaningful ways with faith, religion and spirituality in response to COVID-19. This is evidenced particularly through their F&D engagement in response to the mental health and psychosocial impacts of the pandemic. Not only did many IFIOs invest F&D capacity in providing 'secular' Mental Health and

Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) during the pandemic, such as providing entry level counselling, but they also supported LFAs and LCFs to provide spiritual support and nurture. This evidences an increasing awareness of the importance of faith, religion and spirituality as ends in themselves for effective humanitarian responses, catering to deeply felt core needs for many in times of crisis.

This thesis also argues that IFIO's local faith-inspired partnerships and programs have the potential to make their humanitarian responses more effective by virtue of being local in nature. These local faith-inspired partnerships and programs delivered by many IFIOs, albeit to varying extents, during the COVID-19 pandemic evidence a growing consensus that engaging with LFAs and LCFs, and with faith, religion and spirituality more generally at the local level, creates opportunities for more effective humanitarian interventions.

While there was a huge diversity in IFIOs approaches to engaging with LFAs and LCFs for responding to COVID-19, in general key informants felt their ability to leverage existing relationships with LFAs and LCFs, as part of a wider emphasis on working with and being led by local actors, facilitated their responses to the COVID-19 pandemic. In practice, pre-existing relationships with LFAs and LCFs, and mechanisms through which local (faith) actors can lead responses to development and humanitarian challenges, helped them to overcome the constraints imposed upon them by lockdowns, restrictions of movement and travel bans. This argument contributes to the growing corpus promoting localisation and speaks to the distinctive value-add of local faith-inspired partnerships and programming for increasing the depth and scope of responses. IFIO staff identified the various ways that LFAs and LCFs present distinctive sources of value-add for more effective humanitarian responses, reinforcing the wider literature on this topic. Many of these sources of value-add have been reinforced during the COVID-19 pandemic. The experiences of staff working for IFIOs during the pandemic evidences the importance of engaging with the diversity of LFAs, moving beyond a narrow engagement with local faith leaders which is accompanied by some challenges, to engage with the 'human network' of LCFs to leverage the reach of LFAs and LCFs.

An overarching takeaway from these findings is that the relationships between IFIOs and LFAs and LCFs is potentially distinctive, creating context-specific opportunities and challenges for more effective humanitarian responses. The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted that relationships of trust, including those based on a shared understanding of the importance of faith, have helped bring about responses that are ‘as local as possible, as international as necessary’ (Ban Ki-Moon, 2016). However, this trust between international and local actors is built on a constellation of identity factors of which one is a faith-basis. This thesis demonstrates how the faith identity of IFIOs can create points of connection between IFIOs and LCFs of the same or different faiths which can encourage community participation in development and humanitarian interventions. However, the faith basis of IFIOs can also create suspicion within affected communities. In contexts where they are met with suspicion, initially at least, numerous key informants discussed emphasising their development or humanitarian identity over and above their faith identity. To what extent IFIO’s faith basis is a point of connection or (at least initially) suspicion appears to depend on the socio-historical context as well as the how IFIOs constellation of identity markers are presented and perceived by local communities.

While the COVID-19 pandemic illuminated and reiterated a general, but not unanimous, agreement that IFIOs local faith-inspired partnerships and programs could help make their humanitarian responses more effective, the COVID-19 pandemic also highlighted significant gaps in IFIOs understanding of the roles of LFAs and LCFs for responding to crises in different contexts. This thesis focuses on a gap in understanding around the opportunities and challenges for local faith-inspired partnerships and programs in fragile urban contexts.

The COVID-19 pandemic hit urban contexts first and hardest in contexts around the world. As a result, IFIOs more used to operating in rural contexts were having to respond more in urban contexts. In response, many IFIOs reproduced the same programs they developed for rural contexts in urban ones. This included their faith-inspired programs. However, KIIs for this project exposed a

lack of organisational understanding about whether the different (faith) landscapes between rural and urban contexts might impact the effectiveness of these programs and their relationships with LFAs and LCFs. This lack of understanding can be seen clearly through the inconsistencies in organisational knowledge and practice around the role of social cohesion on humanitarian processes in rural versus urban contexts. IFIO staff generally identified a lack of social cohesion in fragile urban contexts as opposed to rural ones. However, despite this, there was little if any reflection about whether this would impact the effectiveness of their (faith-inspired) humanitarian responses which take social cohesion as their starting point.

To be able to fully answer the primary research question of this thesis, particularly the focus on fragile urban contexts, more research and knowledge production needs to be done, by academics and/or with practitioners, to understand the differences between rural and urban contexts and whether this requires adaptations to existing programming. In particular, there needs to be more work done exploring the differences between rural and urban faith landscapes, to ensure that IFIO's local faith-inspired partnerships and programs remain effective in fragile urban contexts.

While this thesis highlights the many ways some IFIOs are leading the way in terms of local faith-inspired partnerships and programs in response to humanitarian crises, they are not immune to blind spots and gaps in their understanding. This is an important learning for IFIOs; that a shared understanding of the roles of faith, religion and spirituality in people's lives is not necessarily enough to leverage the opportunities and mitigate the challenges presented by the intertwinement of faith, religion, spirituality and humanitarianism. To ensure that IFIO's relationships with LFAs and LCFs have the potential to make their humanitarian responses more effective, including potentially in fragile urban contexts, it is crucial that IFIOs play a leadership role in promoting the importance of continual investments in organisational faith literacy. Going forward, this will include more investment in knowledge production around local faith-inspired partnerships and programs in fragile urban contexts.

This thesis will be divided into a literature review, a chapter on context and methodology, three research chapters and a conclusion which includes some overarching reflections. Chapter One, the literature review, will give more in-depth background for this research project, situating its findings in the broader academic literature. Embodying the interdisciplinary approach of this research project, the literature review draws on work from within Humanitarian Studies, Development Studies and Religious Studies predominantly. It argues that the humanitarian sphere is going through a process of global humanitarian reform to find more effective ways of working. As part of this reform process, humanitarian crises occurring increasingly frequently in urban contexts have been identified as a significant obstacle to finding a more effective way of working.

The humanitarian reform agenda has emphasised collective action and localisation as important themes for a new way of working. This has created the space for broader and more meaningful engagement with faith, religion and spirituality, including engaging with LFAs and LCFs. However, gaps remain in the academic literature. Firstly, there is limited literature yet on the intersections of faith, religion, spirituality, humanitarian responses and COVID-19. Secondly, there is little understand on how crises impact LFAs and LCFs. Thirdly, there is little academic literature on the role of LFAs and LCFs for humanitarian responses in fragile urban contexts. Fourthly, there is a lack of understanding around the relationship between IFIOs and LFAs and LCFs in the context of a global humanitarian reform agenda that promotes humanitarian action that is 'as local as possible, as international as necessary' (Ban Ki-Moon, 2016). This thesis makes an original contribution to the academic literature, speaking into all four of the gaps identified in the literature review.

Chapter Two provides vital context for the research project and its methodology which was constrained by various factors which created opportunities, challenges, limitations and implications for the project's outputs. This chapter will explain the 'one foot in theory, one foot in practice' design of this project, working in partnership with the IFIO World Vision. This research was my work as the primary and only researcher on this project, but it was designed and carried out with support

from the IFIO World Vision. While the primary outcome of this project and partnership is a rigorous academic thesis that makes an original contribution to the academic literature, it also produces findings relevant to World Vision's work.

The context and methodology chapter also reflects on the implications of doing research during a global pandemic. A crucial takeaway from this chapter is that the COVID-19 pandemic, and the constraints and limitations it imposed on this research, has limited what this thesis can realistically say about IFIO's faith-inspired partnerships and programs in response to COVID-19 in fragile urban contexts. The constraints imposed upon this project by the COVID-19 pandemic, namely the preclusion of in-country fieldwork and therefore engagement with the beneficiaries of IFIO's local faith-inspired partnerships and programs, means that this thesis cannot triangulate the experiences of key informants working in IFIOs during the COVID-19 pandemic. While this means that it is not possible for the findings of this research to say whether IFIO's local faith-inspired partnerships and programs made their responses to COVID-19 pandemic more effective in fragile urban contexts, comparing IFIOs responses with previous humanitarian activities during comparable crises such as the Ebola epidemic means this thesis can speak to what IFIOs learnt/did not learn from those experiences as they are brought to bear on the COVID-19 pandemic. This thesis can therefore present an account of what the current thinking is within IFIOs and beyond around localised faith-inspired humanitarian engagement.

This thesis will then move on to the research chapters. Chapter Three will respond to the subsidiary research question: how have local faith-inspired partnerships and programming been leveraged by IFIOs to respond to COVID-19? It argues that IFIOs have leveraged local faith-inspired partnerships and programs with unprecedented rapidity, and in increasingly diverse and meaningful ways, in response to COVID-19. While not all humanitarian actors, nor all IFIOs, have engaged to the same extent with faith, religion and spirituality for humanitarian responses to COVID-19, there has been an evidential shift in approach and an increased willingness to engage with LFAs and LCFs. This shift

is based on lessons learnt from previous responses to crises, namely the Ebola epidemic, and a growing awareness of the potential value-add of local faith-inspired partnerships and programs for humanitarian responses.

This chapter makes this argument by highlighting the rapidity with which the humanitarian sphere leveraged local faith-inspired partnerships and programs to disseminate accurate information, preventative messaging and promote social behaviour change. This illuminated the growing recognition within many IFIOs that leveraging their local faith-inspired partnerships and programs presents potential value-add to their humanitarian responses. This chapter highlights the increased breadth of local faith engagement evidenced during the COVID-19 pandemic. It emphasises that a faith dimension was integrated into many IFIOs multisectoral responses to the COVID-19 pandemic and its secondary impacts from the start of the crisis. This chapter moves on to highlight the depth of IFIO's local faith engagement during the COVID-19 pandemic, exemplified through the provision of Spiritual Support and Nurture, seeing faith, religion and spirituality as ends in themselves. Throughout, this chapter argues that not all IFIOs leverage the potential value-add of local faith-inspired partnerships and partnerships and there remain gaps in IFIO's understandings of the intersections of faith, religion, spirituality and humanitarian processes including around the impact of crises on LFAs and LCFs and what this means for their ability to respond to future crises. These challenges and gaps threaten to mitigate the impact of IFIO's faith-inspired partnerships and programs for more effective humanitarian responses to crises like the COVID-19 pandemic.

Chapter Four hinges on the local focus of the primary research question. Against the backdrop of the localisation agenda, this chapter responds to the subsidiary research question: how does IFIO's engagement with LCFs impact their humanitarian responses to crises like COVID-19? It argues that IFIO's engagement with LCFs has a significant, and potentially positive, impact on their humanitarian responses. IFIO staff in organisations with a history of local faith engagement were emphatic that their pre-existing local-international faith networks presented several significant strengths for their

responses to COVID-19 against a backdrop of significant operational and logistical challenges. A number of IFIOs emphasised the importance of engaging with LFAs and LCFs as a priority when entering local communities and creating two-way communication mechanisms to ensure that their interventions are led by local actors and communities. The distinctive relationship between IFIOs and LFAs and LCFs while not wholly unproblematic, enables IFIOs to support LFAs and LCFs to respond effectively to the crises they and their wider communities face.

This chapter makes this argument by focusing on the relationship between IFIOs, and LFAs/LCFs. It starts by arguing that locally-led humanitarian action can make humanitarian responses more effective. This is done through exploring the operational and logistical challenges experienced by IFIOs, as well as the broader humanitarian sphere, because of COVID-19 and the accompanying lockdowns, restrictions of movements and travel bans. There is clearly a growing consensus, despite persistent conceptual ambiguity around the concept of localisation and the category of the local, that humanitarian interventions should be led by local actors. For many IFIOs, including World Vision, they have built into their faith-inspired partnership models and programs ways to ensure that challenges in communities are identified by local actors who also derive action plans to respond to them. IFIOs like World Vision are therefore cast in a more supportive role, providing the technical and financial assistance required.

This chapter also explores the distinctive value-add of 'glocal' faith networks. It will explore why staff from IFIOs felt that there was something distinctive about IFIO's relationships with LFAs and LCFs, as well as some distinctive potential challenges, for more effective humanitarian responses to crises like COVID-19. As a result, IFIOs currently have a potentially distinctive role to play in leveraging the value-add of local-international faith networks for more effective humanitarian responses, in part based on a shared understanding of faith, religion and spirituality.

Chapter Five focuses on fragile urban contexts. This was not an original focus of this research project, but it was an unavoidable theme in KIIs with IFIO staff working to respond to COVID-19 in varied contexts. The challenges encountered by IFIOs responding in urban contexts, when more used to working in rural areas, led to the third subsidiary research question of this project: What are the distinctive opportunities and challenges of faith-inspired partnerships and programming for IFIO's humanitarian responses to crises like COVID-19 in fragile *urban* contexts? This chapter argues that fragile urban contexts present distinctive challenges and opportunities for humanitarian responses in general, and faith-inspired partnerships and programming in particular. However, what is perhaps most significant, is that there has been little reflection on what this means for humanitarian (faith-inspired) programming in urban contexts. IFIOs have continued to deliver F&D methodologies that emerged and were tested in rural contexts in urban ones, without reflecting on whether the differences between rural and urban contexts require adaptations to their programming. As a result, there is a need for continued and scaled up investment in urban programming. This needs to include better knowledge production around the differences between rural and urban contexts and their respective faith landscapes and what this means for the way international humanitarian actors work.

This argument is made against the backdrop of the humanitarian sphere's awareness that humanitarian crises are occurring increasingly frequently in fragile urban contexts. It highlights the distinctive challenges and sources of resilience in local communities observed by IFIOs responding to COVID-19 on an unprecedented scale in (fragile) urban contexts. Not only does this mean that definitions of fragility need to be broad enough to include fragile urban contexts, to understand the specificities of responding to crises in those contexts, but IFIOs and INGOs need to build on their often limited understandings and experiences of responding in fragile urban centres so they are prepared for future humanitarian crises that hit towns, cities and urban neighbourhoods.

This chapter details how these findings are reflected in the F&D space by focusing in on a particular difference between urban and rural faith landscapes identified by numerous key informants. It

explores key informants' perceptions that there are lower levels of social cohesion and trust in urban contexts than in rural settings. This section will argue that despite perceived lower levels of social cohesion and trust in urban contexts, which are foundational tenants to many F&D methodologies, IFIOs have largely reproduced F&D programs rooted in rural contexts in urban settings. This thesis cannot triangulate the claims that there are lower levels of social cohesion and trust in urban contexts, nor can it speak to the impact such differences between rural and urban contexts might have on the effectiveness of F&D programs. However, it does highlight inconsistencies in IFIOs knowledge and actions in regard to F&D programming in urban contexts, exposing a lack of awareness and understanding of the differences between rural and urban contexts and whether such differences require adaptations in F&D methodologies to maintain their effectiveness. This chapter therefore speaks to some operational challenges and blind spots within many IFIOs.

The analysis explored in Chapter Five of this thesis continues in the Conclusion. As well as summarising the findings explored in the three research chapters, the conclusion of this thesis provides some over-arching reflections on the role of IFIOs and their local faith-inspired partnerships and programs in the wider humanitarian sphere. This thesis highlights that while there is variation among IFIOs in terms of the depth and extent to which they engage with LFAs and LCFs for humanitarian responses, there is a great deal of faith literacy and experience of the opportunities and challenges around local faith engagement within many IFIOs. IFIOs have a potential leadership role to play, therefore, in promoting broad and meaningful engagement with faith, religion and spirituality at the local level, to ensure that the opportunities of such engagement are leveraged for more effective humanitarian responses, including in fragile urban contexts, and that the unavoidable challenges that arise from the inextricable intertwinement of faith, religion and spirituality with humanitarian processes at all levels are mitigated.

Chapter One: Literature review - A new way of working: the role of faith, religion and spirituality for more effective humanitarian responses in fragile urban contexts

As humanitarian crises around the world become increasingly frequent, complicated and protracted, the international community has recognised the need to find a new way of working to build more resilient communities. As most humanitarian disasters occur in fragile contexts, there is an increased focus on how to deliver programs that can respond flexibly to the changing circumstances and needs of those living in fragile contexts, whilst dealing with the root causes of the fragility that render communities vulnerable to future crises. As processes of urbanisation are set to continue, concentrated particularly in low-income and fragile contexts, the emphasis on fragility includes a focus on fragile urban contexts.

The impetus on finding a new way of working has seen the formal humanitarian sphere, as well as academia, start to engage with a range of actors, with an emphasis on local actors and those from the Global South. Localisation was one of the principal themes at the first ever WHS in 2016. This emphasis on localisation is based on the assumption that locally-led humanitarian responses will inspire more context-specific and therefore appropriate, relevant and efficient interventions. This will help humanitarian responses be more adept at dealing with the unpredictable realities of fragile (urban) contexts as well as their short- and long-term causes and consequences.

Another key theme at the WHS, linked to the prominent localisation agenda, was collective action. The concept of collective action denotes the coordination of various actors, including those at the local level, using a range of instruments and operational modalities to deal with the range of

problems that arise in fragile situations (Aneja, 2016:4). This concept expands the space in which different actors, including those outside the traditional, formal humanitarian sphere, can participate in humanitarian processes. This has created the space to (re)visit the roles of faith, religion and spirituality in humanitarian responses.

While historically the formal humanitarian spheres' initial engagement with faith, religion and spirituality remained narrow and instrumental – engaging predominantly with IFIOs as points of access to affected communities – the WHS and its emphasis on engaging a wide range of (local) actors, has seen an increasing emphasis on the roles of LFAs and LCFs for humanitarian interventions. It is increasingly acknowledged that faith, religion and spirituality at all levels are inextricably interwoven with humanitarian processes in fragile contexts, presenting opportunities and challenges for more effective interventions. Understanding the intersections of faith, religion, spirituality and humanitarianism at the local level requires moving beyond a narrow and instrumental approach, to acknowledge the variety of diverse LFAs and LCFs involved in humanitarian responses, their agency and the importance of faith, religion and spirituality as ends in themselves.

Despite progress made, gaps remain in the understanding of the roles of faith, religion and spirituality in response to crises. A significant gap in the academic literature, and within communities of humanitarian practice, relates to the role of LFAs and LCFs in fragile urban contexts. This thesis contributes to filling this gap.

A New Way of Working in fragile urban contexts

The humanitarian sphere is at a critical juncture; as humanitarian crises appear more frequent, complicated and protracted, the formal humanitarian sphere has acknowledged its failure to keep pace (Aneja, 2016). In response, the first ever WHS was held in Istanbul in 2016, led by OCHA. The WHS focused on reducing risk, vulnerability and overall need, moving away from humanitarian

exceptionalism towards more long-term strategies to deal with the underlying causes of humanitarian crises.

Following the WHS, OCHA published their report in 2017 the *NWOW: a call for bold and visionary reform to the humanitarian architecture to ensure its ability to deal with the changing nature of humanitarian crises*, a majority of which occur in fragile contexts. While OCHA's *NWOW* has been applauded for the vision and reforms that it represents, it has been criticised as 'empty rhetoric' (Aneja, 2016).

In the report *States of Fragility 2018*, the OECD classifies 58 contexts as 'fragile', emphasising the fact that the variety of ways that fragility is manifested in these contexts could jeopardise this new vision for humanitarianism. This new-found emphasis on fragility comes from lessons learnt following the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Samy and Carment (2011) criticised the MDG campaign for not addressing the specific problems of failed and fragile states. As a result, they argue that populations living in fragile contexts benefited less from the MDGs than others because '...so long as stability eludes such states, small gains may be wiped out at any time by loss of authority, instability, government failure or conflict' (Samy and Carment, 2011:92). This sentiment is echoed by Wouters (2015) in relation to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Wouters posits that, '[a]ccordingly, resolving the underlying causes of instability should be seen as a precondition to addressing sustainable development goals in failed states' (2015:314).

The importance of addressing fragility for more sustainable and effective development and humanitarian responses has been reinforced by the COVID-19 pandemic. Literature is emerging around the intersections of COVID-19, fragility and development/humanitarian processes. The COVID-19 pandemic is a humanitarian crisis and a threat multiplier which will increase humanitarian need (Mercy Corps, 2020. OECD, 2020). Most fragile contexts are already dealing with a myriad of interlocking crises including poverty, hunger, extreme weather events, conflict, violence, poor

governance and existing health crises. These crises make fragile contexts more vulnerable to the primary and secondary impacts of additional stressors such as the COVID-19 pandemic. For example, health care systems in fragile contexts are often weak and not accessible to everyone. As a result, they are ill-equipped to deal with the scale of a crisis like COVID-19. Similarly, poverty is increasingly concentrated in fragile contexts. Public health measures to stem the spread of COVID-19 disproportionately impact the poor and those relying on daily wages. In turn, COVID-19 has undermined the ability of fragile contexts to respond to the pandemic. The COVID-19 pandemic has also amplified existing vulnerabilities in fragile settings and exposed and entrenched deep social inequalities, setting back progress. Ahead of the COVID-19 pandemic, only 18 percent of fragile and conflict-affected states were on track to meet goals set by the SDGs by 2030 (Mercy Corps, 2020). For many fragile contexts, they have been set back even further by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The current emphasis on fragility in recent years has led to a proliferation of academic and policy-orientated literature on the subject. A lot of these works have engaged in debates over the concept of, and use of, the term fragility. Previous emphasis on failed, weak or collapsed states (see Helman and Ratner, 1993. Gros, 1996. Rotbery, 2004. Fukuyama, 2004), arising from the popularity of state-building and its emphasis on strong institutions, have been challenged in recent years. The term 'failed state' has been criticised as being analytically useless and potentially harmful as it pushes a single, technocratic strategy for strengthening the state, which could encourage coercive measures (Call, 2008). Grimm et al (2015:198) warn against the term 'failed states' due to its emotional, financial and political implications. The authors suggest that the terminology of failed states is tied up with international power dynamics and that it can be seen as an attempt by state powers to legitimise aid spending and interventionist strategies and can be exploited by aid recipients to delay political reforms and convince donors to invest more money.

The terminology of failed, weak, failing and collapsed states have given way to more diplomatic terminologies that centre on the concept of 'fragility'. In 2007 the OECD introduced the term

'situations of fragility' and the European Union has reframed its understanding of fragility to consider 'countries and regions in crisis, post-crisis and fragile situations' (Grimm et al, 2015:203). These shifts in terminology have been accompanied by a more multifaceted understanding of fragility. While media reports tend to focus on the most extreme consequences of fragility, there are also a great number of fragile contexts that, while not in crises, remain fragile due to their lagging behind in terms of equitable and sustainable development and their unacceptable levels of human suffering (OECD, 2018:23).

While scholars and practitioners have started to engage in more nuanced understandings of fragility and how it interacts with humanitarian processes, much of the literature so far has focused on the role of the (fragile) state. Based around studies of statehood, the literature on fragility remains focused on the state and the presence, or lack, of three dimensions: authority, legitimacy and capacity. However, this narrow approach to fragility has been challenged in the last decade. Following criticisms of their earlier engagement with fragility (see Kaplan, 2014), the OECD stated in their 2018 report that they are attempting to defy common assumptions and simplistic characterisations of fragility:

'Several years ago, the OECD moved on from using fragile states moniker in acknowledgment that a broader conceptualisation and label of fragility – one that recognised fragility's many shades or states – was in line with the universality of the post-2015 world' (OECD, 2018:22).

While the state is undoubtedly a significant player in fragility, research needs to look beyond formalised governance and governments and beyond vertical state-society relations (Kaplan, 2014. OECD, 2018). This is especially the case when good and bad governance are being defined by the West. De Waal (2015) explores how the western state model is not necessarily applicable everywhere. Kaplan (2014) identifies several East Asian countries that have, for a long time, scored

poorly in governance indicators, such as Indonesia and Vietnam, but that are not necessarily considered fragile. Grindle (2007) suggests that 'good enough' governance can still deliver public goods, challenging the emphasis on the state as the main referent for research on fragile contexts.

There is an emerging literature on the many ways people experience authorities, legitimacies and capacities and on horizontal society-society relations such as local and municipal dynamics and the relationships between ethnic, religious and ideological groups, although more needs to be done (Kaplan, 2014:50. OECD, 2018:24). The concept of Public Authority is a useful framework for challenging the idea that fragile contexts 'are locations on a trajectory towards what international actors have called 'good governance'(CPAID, 2018:9). It highlights other expressions of authority, legitimacy and capacity including those at the local and municipal levels.

The concept of Public Authority can be defined as

'...any kind of authority beyond the immediate family which commands a degree of consent – from clans, religious institutions, aid agencies, civil social organisations, rebel militia and vigilante groups, to formal and semi-formal mechanisms of government' (CPAID, 2018:8).

Theros and Kaldor (2018:2) outline how the theory of Public Authority emerged within Development Studies to move beyond the dichotomy between an over-emphasis on state-building and the new body of literature on hybrid institutions that over-emphasises the advantages of the local and traditional. As a result, the concept of Public Authority illuminates patterns of social life in diverse settings beyond the processes encompassed in more conventional debates in terms of failed versus functional states (CPAID, 2018:9).

The Centre for Public Authority and International Development (CPAID) (2018:9) at LSE use 'logics' to explain how Public Authority is claimed in different contexts, in recognition of the fact that people

can use multiple logics simultaneously and that different sources of authority can be ambiguous and contingent. Logics of Public Authority can include intimate governance, political marketplaces, moral popularism, social harmony, public mutuality and civiness (CPAID, 2018:10-11). Religious Institutions are frequently invoked in these discussions as deriving their Public Authority from the logic of Moral Popularism. This logic is based on the idea that 'moral order has some purchase among the population' (Theros and Kaldor, 2018:3). Through collective ideologies, moral norms and religious and spiritual beliefs, religious institutions tend to exercise power through ritual, punishment or exclusion. Moral Popularism is often used by elites to secure a constituency by excluding groups or creating an 'other' as a scapegoat (CPAID, 2018:10). These processes can create moral panics which are then used by manipulative leaders to incite violence against the 'other'.

There are undoubtedly many examples of religious institutions deriving Public Authority from tactics of exclusion. However, religious institutions can also exert Public Authority through more benign forms of Public Authority. CPAID highlights the logic of social harmony as the efforts of populations to maintain neighbourly relations, treating others how they wish to be treated. This kind of Public Authority is '...much more common than many would anticipate, people often find ways of sharing and helping that is almost instinctive, even in the most extreme social circumstance' (CPAID, 2018:11). The logic of Social Harmony allows the researcher to explore the Public Authority of religious, faith-inspired and spiritual traditions and expressions beyond institutions and exclusion tactics, to look at how LFAs and their lived experiences interact with fragility beyond the level of the state to build cooperation, trust and reciprocity and to bring communities together to respond to challenges including the COVID-19 pandemic.

In the last decade, scholars have not only challenged the state-centric conceptualisations of fragility but, relatedly, they have also critiqued the way fragility is measured. To elucidate the problems with how fragility is measured, Glawion et al (2018) identify the 'three most fragile states' according to the Fund for Peace's Fragile States Index (FSI); the Central African Republic (CAR), Somalia and South

Sudan. The FSI indicators present these three cases as comparative and impartial. However the spatial and temporal nature of fragility means that their characteristics and trajectories differ significantly. The way that fragility continues to be conceived – as a necessarily state-wide phenomenon - and measured – through aggregations of quantitative indicators at the state level - leads academics and practitioners to overlook contexts with significant pockets of fragility. This is problematic because contexts with significant areas of fragility are increasingly common and can have devastating consequences for people living there.

While there are rising criticisms of indices as a basis for action in fragile contexts, there is simultaneously an ongoing impetus to ensure that research on fragility remains relevant beyond academia. There is a will to find a balance between the complexity and multidimensionality of fragility and a degree of simplicity and problem-solving for policymaking purposes (Gisselquist, 2015:1271. OECD, 2018:23). There is a concern as an appreciation of the complexity of fragility grows, that it could become a vague and catch-all term with no practical applicability (OECD, 2018:23). Gravingholt et al (2015) highlight this tension; while the multidimensionality of the concepts of statehood and fragility make a one-dimensional scale in the form of an indices misleading, individual case studies cannot fully undertake comparative analysis, which means that larger patterns of fragility, be they national, regional or global, can be missed.

However, Glawion et al (2018) suggest that a consideration of the spatial, temporal and contextual nature of fragility is important if scholarly research is to be relevant to broader policy and programming concerns. Gisselquist (2015:1277) suggests that unpacking fragility in this way, considering its dimensions and forms, can help develop and test hypotheses about how aid-recipient states become more resilient through theory building to inform evidence-based aid policy. Through conceiving of fragility in such a multifaceted way and systematically exploring what kind of policies have and would work in different contexts, there is the possibility of finding a range of different policy models that can then be tailored to particular contexts (Gisselquist, 2015:1277).

The use of the concepts of 'fragility' and 'pockets of fragility', as multifaceted concepts that extend beyond the state, can be used to refer to contexts residing outside of the control of state authorities including favelas, rural areas controlled by forces that are not state-led, 'ungoverned spaces' or 'wild spaces' as well as areas that, when measured according to certain variables, are considered fragile, but are in otherwise stable countries (Nogueira, 2017:1442). This can include a focus on fragile cities, towns and peri-urban contexts.

The expansion of humanitarian space, facilitated in part due to the adoption of the more inclusive concept of fragility, has been criticised as a way for the formal humanitarian sphere to expand the reach of its liberal governance. Since the Cold War, the formal humanitarian sphere's rules and practices have empowered international actors to intervene in crisis affected contexts. 'The attempt to define the city as a humanitarian space can be read as one of many to produce spaces in need of governance' (Nogueira, 2017:1448). While this is a valid criticism of the way the formal humanitarian sphere operates, it is nonetheless true that instances of urban violence and humanitarian crises in urban contexts are becoming more frequent. The humanitarian sphere's shift in focus, from predominantly rural contexts to urban ones, is therefore unavoidable.

There remains a lack of knowledge of how to work in fragile urban settings or fragile cities. Not all cities are fragile and not all cities in fragile contexts are fragile. 'City fragility occurs when municipal authorities and their institutions are unable, or unwilling, to deliver basic services to urban residents' (Muggah 2015). Urban contexts are becoming increasingly relevant to the work of humanitarians as, over the last forty years, lower income and fragile countries' urban populations have increased by 326 percent and rising as the world goes through a process of rapid urbanisation (de Boer, 2015). 60 percent of all refugees and 80 percent of Internally Displaced Peoples (IDPs) reside in urban areas (Archer and Dodman, 2017:1). Violence and conflict is erupting more frequently in urban contexts as the hubs of power, assets, tensions and inequalities. There is a consensus in the literature that crime and violence are endemic in many fragile urban contexts, compounded by a range of interconnected

factors such as poverty, inequality and exclusion (Dodman et al, 2012:26). Since the Cold War, instances of interstate conflict have declined, while confrontations in urban contexts have increased. This trajectory is often explained by rapid urbanisation, poor governance, poverty and increasing levels of vulnerability and risk produced by processes of globalisation (Nogueira, 2017:1443).

Processes of urbanisation and their consequences, most significant in low income and fragile contexts, mean that humanitarians are set to work more in urban contexts. As a result, the concept of the fragile city has emerged as a way to understand the underlying risks in fragile urban contexts in low income and fragile settings (Archer and Dodman, 2017:2). While the fragile city was initially presented as a result of state failure, the shifts in thinking outlined above have seen urban violence increasingly considered the result of acute vulnerabilities in a specific context (Nogueira, 2017:1443).

In response to the increasing need in fragile urban contexts, urban responses were one of the foci of the WHS in 2016, where a set of urban recommendations were derived (Archer and Dodman, 2017:1). This led to the creation of the Global Alliance for Urban Crises (GAUC) at the WHS and the New Urban Agenda which emerged out of Habitat III, calling for the protection of the rights of displaced populations and support for local governments to aid the integration of displaced peoples into already present city systems and structures (Archer and Dodman, 2017:1). While existing knowledge revolves around environmental factors which drive conflict and crises in fragile urban contexts, there remains a lack of knowledge on the socioeconomic drivers of conflict and crises in these settings and the best ways to respond to them drawing on the strengths and capacities of the people, organisations and systems affected (Sharifi and Khavarian-Garmsir, 2020:3. Archer and Dodman, 2017:4).

The COVID-19 pandemic has not only brought the issue of vulnerability to pandemics and infectious diseases to the forefront of the humanitarian sphere's mind, but it has also brought the vulnerability – including those of a socioeconomic nature - of fragile urban contexts to the fore. As the COVID-19

pandemic spread around the world, affecting high-income and low-income countries alike, it hit urban contexts first and hardest. In response, there is a growing body of literature emerging exploring the impact of COVID-19 on cities (see Sharifi and Khavarian-Garmsir, 2020:2), although a lot of it remains focused on Europe and North America which were initially hit hardest by the pandemic.

Cities have been at the forefront of the COVID-19 pandemic due to high rates of infection and inadequate resources with which to respond to the crisis. Jan Vapaavuori, the Mayor of Helsinki during the crisis, suggested that “[o]ne of the biggest lessons learned from the COVID-19 crisis is that sustainable, resilient cities were able to handle the pandemic better,” (cited in Wahba, 2021). Given the fragility of many cities in low-income and fragile contexts and the acute and structural vulnerabilities faced by many of their inhabitants, the COVID-19 pandemic has reinforced the importance of finding ways to support cities to respond more effectively to crises, as well as deal with the root causes of vulnerability in these contexts (Wahba, 2021).

The COVID-19 pandemic hit minorities, as well as other vulnerable groups including the urban poor, hardest (Biswas, 2020). This is in keeping with historic epidemics and pandemics which have impacted the most disadvantaged the hardest due to the intersecting vulnerabilities which expose them to risk (Sharifi and Khavarian-Garmsir, 2020:6). For example, Wade (2020) explores how social and economic vulnerabilities shaped the course of the black death and how the 1918 Flu pandemic exposed existing socioeconomic fault lines. Despite the historical evidence that epidemics and pandemics’ impact and are impacted by socioeconomic inequalities, there has been few efforts to reduce inequalities, and address the need of minorities and groups, following the pandemic. There are hopes that action will be taken following the COVID-19 pandemic for more inclusive planning on how to respond to future epidemics and pandemics (Wade, 2020:700).

Many of the obstacles to effective humanitarian responses in fragile urban contexts result from the fact that cities are complex and dynamic systems (Batty, 2009). This has seen the practice of urban profiling emerge to understand the complexity of crises occurring in urban contexts, taking into account the different systems, sectors and key actors relevant to the crises. Urban profiling is a collaborative process aiming to collect and analyse data on the area in which the crisis is occurring, the systems that organise that area, and the needs, vulnerabilities and capacities of the affected population in that area, bringing them into the decision-making and planning processes (Lintelo and Soye,2018:4).

Not only are fragile urban contexts highly complex, but they present acute, intersecting hazards leading to complicated layers of vulnerability for individuals and communities in those settings. Rapid urbanisation as seen in many low income and fragile urban contexts is generally associated with

‘flows of people, capital, information, services – characteristic of globalisation which can lead to exclusion and marginalisation of people in less developed countries unable to adapt to volatility and complexity of a new cycle of capitalist accumulation’ (Nogueira, 2017:1444).

In many low-income and fragile contexts, urban development has been rapid and not uniform, resulting in a situation where many people living in these contexts live in slums. Such informal settlements accumulate acute and structural vulnerabilities, limiting the ability of urban communities to absorb and withstand crises. For many living in informal settlements common vulnerabilities and hazards such as a lack of protective infrastructure, poor housing conditions and limited access to health care, education and employment opportunities accumulate.

Urban risk is made up of a wide range of interrelated factors; including physical, biological, technological and chemical hazards (Dodman et al, 2012:4). Poverty and vulnerability in urban

contexts can look like a lack of various things: income, assets, food security, sanitation, education, legal status and rights. Over time, these hazards and risks can accumulate leading to increasingly acute structural vulnerabilities. There are also concerns around a lack of social cohesion and community, reinforced during the COVID-19 pandemic which exposed a diminishing sense of community and an increase in self-centric behaviours in some cities which, along with livelihood concerns in low-income contexts, led to limited attention being paid to 'stay home' orders (Biswas, 2020). These behaviours propagated the crises which disproportionately impacted the most socioeconomically disadvantaged. For example, in the high-income context of North America, a number of wealthy urbanites left their residences in the cities for their holiday homes located in the territories of indigenous people, ignoring the border closures imposed by indigenous groups, with little concern to how their actions may impact high risk populations including indigenous nations (Leonard, 2020:166). This also means that in many fragile urban contexts there is a risk of further social fracturing and tensions rising with the potential of leading to violence (Finn and Kobayashi, 2020:219. Sharifi and Khavarian-Garmsir, 2020:6).

Fragile urban contexts are all distinctive and complex (Archer and Dodman, 2017:2). The high number of people who are drawn to cities will impact different cities in different ways (Lintelo and Soye,2018:3). As a result, several scholars warn against transferring approaches and methods of responding to humanitarian crises in fragile urban contexts from one setting to another (Archer and Dodman, 2017). While it is possible to draw out some common patterns between different fragile urban contexts, the evidence that does exist strongly indicates that the impact of humanitarian crises differs, as does response mechanisms (Sharifi and Khavarian-Garmsir, 2020:12). Context is also extremely important for understanding Public Authority in fragile contexts more generally, as public actors are deeply embedded in their local social context. The social embeddedness of Public Authority determines how it manages conflict (Vlavourou, 2019).

In response to the increasing awareness that fragile urban contexts present distinctive challenges and opportunities for effective responses to humanitarian crises, there is an increasing awareness across the humanitarian sphere that effective humanitarian responses need to be context-specific and built on local knowledge. A spatial lens is often recommended in the literature to ensure this local context-specificity is considered as it is applied to a local scale, be that of a city, neighbourhood or street even. Similarly, an area-based approach is becoming increasingly prominent in the academic literature and in practice. An area-based approach focuses on a defined (local) urban area and acknowledges the complexity of urban systems by taking that specific area as the entry point for humanitarian interventions more than a target group or a specific sector (Lintelo and Soye,2018:3). The aim is an integrated, multi-sectoral participatory approach (Archer and Dodman, 2017:2). An area-based approach recognises that the spatial organisation of a defined urban area; its geography, road networks, control over land and so on, needs to be analysed at a microlocal, or granular, level (Lintelo and Soye,2018:4). Such an approach recognises the fact that the experiences of individuals and communities differs from neighbourhood to neighbourhood in cities and therefore need different assistance and support (Archer and Dodman, 2017:2).

An area-based approach also considers the need for a multi-stakeholder approach to humanitarian interventions in fragile urban contexts. There are a large range of actors impacting and impacted by humanitarian crises in fragile urban contexts. These actors include, but are not limited to, governments at the local and municipal levels, FIOs, humanitarian agencies, private landlords, the private sector, militias, and gangs (Lintelo and Soye,2018:2). This varied range of actors, with their overlapping responsibilities and entrenched, often politicised relationships creates a complex stakeholder environment (Archer and Dodman, 2017:3). While there is a range of actors in all contexts, the range of actors in urban contexts is also often even more significant given the flows of people in and out of urban environments, changing the landscape accordingly and the demographic

of the city. This can then impact the kinds of responses and support needed from humanitarian agents.

While there are undoubtedly significant challenges for responding to humanitarian crises in fragile urban contexts, there are also existing sources of resilience and opportunities to build on for more effective responses in these contexts. Urban cities attract people, enterprises and organisations creating jobs and opportunities, facilitating transactions and accelerating the spread of information which all helps with producing shared facilities such as hospitals and schools (Lintelo and Soye, 2018:2). This means that cities can be 'centers of economic growth and innovation' (Sharifi and Khavarian-Garmsir, 2020:2). Evidence also suggests that crisis affected populations in urban contexts are more able to 'self-recover'. For example, humanitarian agencies provide housing for only around 30 percent of the world's refugee and IDPs. Most refugees and IDPs live with friends, family or in make-shift accommodation. Similarly, most households impacted by humanitarian crises which destroy their homes re-build them themselves. There is evidence of social innovation, collaboration, volunteer programs, social movements and community-driven responses to the socioeconomic hazards which cause such vulnerability to humanitarian crises. During the COVID-19 pandemic, numerous examples have emerged of communities coming together to respond to the crisis in fragile urban contexts (see Sverdlik, 2020). These kinds of civil society interventions, displaying Public Authority through the logic of social harmony, can create networks of support between community members and communities.

The increasing focus on fragile urban contexts has been met with the emergence of practices and concepts around resilient cities (Nogueira, 2017:1443), matched more broadly by the increasing emphasis on resilience across the humanitarian sphere. The broadening definition and conceptualisation of fragility, which provides the space to include fragile urban contexts, challenges the linear, teleological trajectory of fragile contexts from fragile to resilient. It is increasingly acknowledged that fragility is a continuum and

‘...problems have to be engaged with along an ‘arc’ or continuum, from prevention to reconstruction: sustaining peace is a complex process not a set of discrete linear stages, calling for different institutional operation and sets of expertise’ (Chandler, 2013:8).

The notion of fragility as a continuum between fragility and resilience is shared by many in the field. For example, Gravingholt et al challenge the idea that fragility and resilience are binary antipoles (2015:1284). Instead, they suggest that they are two ends of a logical field. Fragility does not follow a linear trajectory from survival, through recovery to the end goal of stability and resilience. A new or recurring stressor in a fragile context can undermine stability setting individuals and communities, as well as their needs, back along the continuum. As a result, policy and programming in fragile contexts needs to be flexible enough to respond to the volatile and unpredictable settings and changing needs of people living in fragile contexts.

Resilience has come to be seen as the ultimate goal of humanitarian, development and peacebuilding programming through the NWOW. An increased awareness of the potentially devastating effects of climate change has raised the profile of the concept of resilience within the humanitarian arena. It is increasingly acknowledged that those who suffer most from the effects of climate change and increasingly frequent and protracted natural disasters are the poorest in the world. The growing awareness of the relationship between human society and environmental disasters has seen the concept of resilience popularized through the discipline of ecology and a focus on social-ecological systems (see Adger, 2000. Folke, 2006. Robards et al, 2011. Bene et al, 2012. Gillard, 2016). Accordingly, resilience is the ability of ecological and social systems to ‘...absorb disturbance and reorganize while undergoing change so as to still retain essentially the same function, structure, identity and feedbacks’ (Folke, 2006:259). Within the social sciences resilience refers to these processes on different scales; at the community, institutional and economic levels (Bahadur and Tanner, 2014:200-201).

While the concept of resilience has become increasingly prominent in a variety of fields, there has been a growing body of literature dedicated to the concept's limits (See Davidson, 2010. Joseph, 2013. Cretney and Bond, 2014). Critically, this literature calls into question the applicability of the systems epistemology, from which the concept of resilience has emerged, for social and political concerns (Gillard, 2016:14). Resilience is often criticized for not considering human agency and power relations and for not being able to capture and reflect social dynamics (see Davidson, 2010. Bene et al, 2012. Gillard, 2016). The rise in prominence of the concept of resilience has been accompanied by criticisms of it being vague and without inherent direction or goals. Bahadur and Tanner (2014) argue that this lack of normativity has led the concept to fail to address its epistemological bias towards technical responses and move towards more people-focused programs (Wisner, 2010:128. Bahadur and Tanner, 2014:202). As a result, programs that seek to build resilience continue to stress systems, the scientific, technical and rational, while paying insufficient attention to the human and social (Bahadur and Tanner, 2014:203).

Despite these valid criticisms, resilience remains a discursively useful tool for carrying out research in fragile contexts in general, and for fragile urban contexts in particular. In response to criticisms of the concept of resilience as inapplicable to the social and political, Berkes (2007) argues that the concept of resilience helps evaluate hazards holistically, avoiding the artificial physical and human divide. This is important for putting people at the forefront of humanitarian, development and peacebuilding programs, which is an explicit aim in OCHA's NWOW. Following on from Berkes (2007) within the peace and conflict part of the nexus, Chandler (2013) suggests that resilience offers a societal or agent-based understanding of security. Resilience discourses suggest that governments need to prevent future disasters and catastrophes through proactive engagement with society and

the individuals that constitute it. As a result, the subject, or agent, of security shifts from the state to society and individuals. Chandler (2013) suggests that resilience in terms of security is therefore a de-liberalizing discourse which directly challenges Joseph's (2013) critique of resilience as committed to a hegemonic vision of neoliberalism.

For responding to humanitarian challenges in fragile urban contexts, the concept of resilience directs programming towards the distinctive forms of existing capacity in diverse urban contexts. Resilience is a broad enough concept that multiple actors with differing values can share a common discourse: it helps bring together multiple actors, concerns and scales in the pursuit of change through collective action (Gillard, 2016). It produces an integrating discourse around which academics, practitioners and policy makers can work together. It creates communication bridges and platforms between disciplines and communities of practices whether they have had little or no history of collaboration (Bene et al, 2012:11). While resilience does provide a concept around which collective action can be devised, it is important to recognize its potential limits in that such collaboration does not necessarily lead to the successful operationalization of resilience knowledge. Similarly, competing ideas about resilience might arise and what might help one individual, household, group or community be more resilient may hinder the resilience of others. However, the opportunities for using resilience as a discursive tool that brings different actors together are explicit in terms of this specific project, not only because it is situated in the humanitarian-development-peacebuilding nexus but because it is a collaborative endeavor that straddles the spheres of academia and practice through its affiliation with World Vision.

Localisation and fragile urban contexts

Critical to the global humanitarian reform agenda is the principle of localisation. Localisation has been a prominent theme across the humanitarian sphere since the 1990s and gained further prominence in the lead up to, during and following the WHS. The localisation agenda emerged in

response to criticisms that the formal humanitarian sphere works around, instead of with, national and local actors and this had led to ineffective humanitarian interventions. International humanitarian actors are often criticised for displacing local capacity to implement their own mandates and agendas, instead of building local capacity in keeping with local realities of crises (Aneja, 2016:7).

Proponents of localisation argue that, especially in smaller scale crises, locally-led humanitarian interventions are more effective and save more lives. There is a large body of literature dedicated to demonstrating that localised humanitarian responses are more appropriate, connected and relevant to the context (see Ramalingham et al 2013. Gingerich and Cohen 2015. El Taraboulsi et al 2016). Being embedded in the affected area, there is evidence that local actors have a better understanding of the local context and the needs of the affected communities (PaRD, 2016:8-9). The embeddedness of local actors in a given context also means they are directly accountable to the affected populations of which they are a part, promoting sustainable responses to crises (Gingerich and Cohen, 2015:5).

Humanitarian responses embedded in local contexts are highlighted as important by those working in fragile urban settings. The complexity of urban systems and the need for context-specific responses to humanitarian crises in fragile urban contexts requires building on the knowledge of local governments and communities (te Lintelo and Soye, 2018). However, in practice, the huge number of international humanitarian actors who descend on humanitarian contexts often subsume the voices of local actors in fragile urban contexts (Archer and Dodman, 2017:2).

Without a localised approach to fragile urban programming, humanitarian interventions are unable to build on existing urban delivery systems, the recovery mechanisms of individuals and communities and the potential strength of the urban economy for more effective humanitarian responses (Archer and Dodman, 2017:2). While proponents of localisation argue that humanitarian

interventions in general should be led by local knowledge, it may be even more significant when responding to crises in fragile urban crises where things need to be analysed at a granular level to understand the challenges faced by, and needs of, those living in a defined location. In keeping with the popular area-based approach in urban humanitarian programming, the challenges and needs of affected communities in a certain context can change from city to city, neighbourhood to neighbourhood or even street to street (Archer and Dodman, 2017:2).

Another key argument in the localisation corpus is that local actors tend to play a vital role as first responders in times of crisis. They are sometimes the only responders in the immediate aftermath of a disaster and they can be the only actors with access to certain affected populations (Featherstone, 2015. El Taraboulsi et al, 2016:2. IFRC, 2018:2). Local actors therefore potentially play a vital role in ensuring humanitarian interventions are timely and efficient. It follows that the humanitarian sphere should build the capacity of local actors to be able to fulfil this important role when necessary.

Research like that carried out by Gingerich and Cohen (2015) also shows that states have a role to play in a more localised vision of humanitarian action. States have a responsibility to respect, protect, facilitate and fulfil the rights of their citizens and many states have some capacity to be able to do so, even when a humanitarian crisis hits. The role of the state is potentially most significant for responding to small- and medium-sized disasters. In light of this, a number of states have, in recent years, resisted international assistance following crises, demonstrating their own response capacity. El Taraboulsi et al (2016:2) highlight the example of the Indian government's resistance to assistance in response to the Tsunami that struck India in 2004.

While the case for a prominent role of state actors presents a reason for further investment in localisation, it also presents potential challenges for the humanitarian sphere's commitments to the agenda. For example, Schenkenberg (2016) highlights concerns around the control given to state actors in the name of the localisation agenda, potentially strengthening authoritarian regimes

seeking to limit civic spaces. In Sudan, the government restricted the access of international NGOs in March 2009, claiming they had the capacity and resources to respond to the conflict. However, at the same time, the government also stopped several Sudanese NGOs, working on human rights and protection issues, from operating (Schenkenberg, 2016:17). While on the one hand, this critique reinforces the need to build the capacity of sub-state local actors, opening channels to ensure that resources can get to them more directly so they are not reliant on the state, it also highlights how a lack of international presence and oversight can lead to additional challenges to humanitarian efforts.

Many of the debates around the localisation agenda stem from the lack of conceptual clarity (Wall and Helmund, 2016:11). The conceptual ambiguity around localisation means there is no agreed definition. Many IFIOs engaged with for this research detailed their decentralised organisational structures as an important part of their localisation efforts. The concept of decentralisation has its roots in the organisation of governance systems and refers to the transference of authority, responsibilities and resources from central government to lower levels of government (See Cheema and Rondinelli, 2007. Oxhorn, 2004. Crook and Manor, 1998. Litvack et al, 1998). This definition is broadly reflected in the how the concept of decentralisation is used in terms of the organisation of INGOs as a strategy to transfer administrative responsibility and authority from central Headquarters (HQs) closer to areas of operations (Fowler, 1992:121). Decentralisation is a scale and different approaches to decentralisation cede power to local offices to varying extents (see Conyers, 1989).

Localisation is sometimes defined in terms of ‘...decentralising power, money and resources in humanitarian and development aid. It’s about local actors influencing action and making decisions throughout, with international actors (including INGOs) stepping in only if and when necessary’ (Humanitarian Academy for Development, 2020). However, the emphasis on decentralisation in this definition of localisation speaks of a more technical-focus for localisation. Interpreting localisation as decentralisation suggests that localisation can be achieved through strategic operational and

financial decisions being made closer to affected populations. It is about those in closest proximity to a crisis leading, designing and implementing responses, with support from HQs in terms of financial, organisational and collaborative capacity (Charter4Change, 2016).

However, there is another interpretation of localisation, which goes further than decentralisation.

This approach to localisation is more transformative; it is about seeking deeper change in the political economy of humanitarian aid (Van Brabant and Patel, 2017:4). This approach to localisation relates to shifting the power within the humanitarian sphere as a whole, beyond the organisational structures of international actors. This interpretation moves beyond giving local and national actors more of a leadership role in international organisations. It is about ensuring that local and national actors are part of the global politics and policies of humanitarian aid. This transformative approach of localisation seeks a broader shift in the humanitarian sphere, away from the western-centric nature of aid and away from the domineering presence and attitudes of international actors. Slim (2021:4) for example wants to move away from terminology which ‘puts the more powerful ethical and legal principle of necessity on the side of international aid, and only a weaker “possibility” of primacy on the side of locally-led aid’ by using the phrase “nationally and locally led with international support.”

Evidently, localisation is about more than decentralisation. While decentralisation, is part of the localisation agenda, and has the potential to make humanitarian interventions more efficient and cost effective through proximity to affected populations, localisation extends beyond the organisational structures of international humanitarian actors.

The conflation of localisation with decentralisation denotes a lack of conceptual clarity around the localisation agenda which can create the space in which INGOs avoid the hard work of ceding power to a variety of local and national actors, contributing to dismantling the western-centric nature of humanitarian aid. The confusion around whether decentralisation is, or is part of, the localisation

agenda means that INGOs can focus on their organisational structure, while overlooking the need to do the difficult work of ceding power on a more general scale to local and national actors and organisations in order to diversify the broader organisational ecosystem of the humanitarian sphere.

There are concerns that localisation as decentralisation will not only cement the authority of international humanitarian actors but will further exclude national and local actors. This concern centres around the potential for decentralisation to bring about multi-nationalism by creating more NOs and national affiliates. Depending on where on the scale an organisations decentralisation efforts are, this may result in a proliferation of NOs still led by international HQs. In turn, this might increase already fierce competition for humanitarian funding, thus further squeezing out nation and civil society organisations (Van Brabant and Patel, 2017:4). The limitations of the technical approach to localisation as decentralisation can also be identified by the fact that staff working for decentralised NOs, while physically closer to affected communities, are not necessarily local to them.

Across definitions, a significant aspect of the localisation agenda is about getting funding more directly to local and national actors. International humanitarian actors' commitments have focused on this issue. There have been a number of high-profile commitments to localisation across the formal humanitarian sphere. For example, the Grand Bargain, agreed at the WHS by some of the world's biggest donors and humanitarian aid agencies, promised to get more money and resources into the hands of those in need, with the aim of improving humanitarian effectiveness and efficiency (Grand Bargain, 2021). Similarly, the Charter 4 Change is an initiative made up of national and international NGOs seeking to reform the humanitarian operational system to be more locally-led (Charter 4 Change, 2021). 420 national and local organisations, and 38 international NGOs have endorsed the charter. One of the most significant principles of partnership signed up to as part of the Charter 4 Change is a commitment to getting 25 percent of humanitarian funding to National NGOs.

However, in recent years there has been a broadening of the localisation agenda, beyond funding, to cede strategic and decision-making power to local and national actors, with international actors stepping in only if and when necessary (de Geoffroy and Grunewald 2017:1). The principle of localisation is coming to encapsulate a more long-term vision of humanitarian action which no longer sees local actors as instruments through which to deliver pre-conceived humanitarian interventions. Increasingly the emphasis is on local initiative and leadership (Wall and Helmund, 2016:11).

While there is a growing consensus that localisation in the humanitarian sphere is a significant step towards finding a new way of working for more effective interventions, not all actors support the agenda in all contexts. Schenkenberg (2016) writing for Médecins Sans Frontiers (MSF), while not opposed to localisation in principle, has presented compelling critiques of the suitability of the localisation agenda in certain contexts and situations. Schenkenberg's (2016) principal critique is that certain issues around the principle of localisation have not been given inadequate attention.

The concept continues to be criticised more broadly for being vague; allowing for conceptualisations and practices that only superficially re-focus humanitarian action on local actors, providing the space for major (international) humanitarian actors to pick the lowest hanging fruit to satisfy their commitments to localisation, without doing the difficult but necessary work of ceding power to local and national actors (Goodwin and Ager, 2021). Goodwin and Ager (2021) highlight how the conceptual ambiguity of the localisation agenda has repercussions for scholars and practitioners across the humanitarian-development-peacebuilding nexus, creating space for various stakeholders to interpret the agenda according to their own interests.

The lack of consistent definition of localisation means that it can be used as an umbrella term to cover various practices such as equitable partnerships between international actors, getting more funding to local and national actors, locally-led strategic and decision making humanitarian

processes (de Geoffroy and Grunewald, 2017:1). In practice, the space created by the lack of agreed definition of localisation means that humanitarian actors tend to engage narrowly and instrumentally with local and national actors. Localised engagement tends to be limited to local and national NGOs, viewed as implementing partners to whom international humanitarian actors can out-source their pre-determined, pre-conceived programme delivery (Barbelet, 2018:6). Similarly, localisation can be used to refer to the relationship international actors have with affected communities. However, studies have shown that in practice this amounts to inviting beneficiaries to give feedback on programmes that have already delivered, without engaging with them for input in planning, designing or carrying out the programs (Wall and Helmund, 2016:11).

In response to these narrow and instrumental engagements with localisation, facilitated through a lack of agreed definition, other terms have emerged in the literature such as 'local humanitarian action' and 'locally-led humanitarian action'. This terminology seeks to shift the emphasis onto local actors, their existing capacity, and the potential role they can play in responding to humanitarian responses. While these terms are themselves debated (see Schenkenberg, 2016: 9-11), they do reflect the impetus to ensure that humanitarian processes are more locally-led (Barbelet, 2018:5).

In keeping with this desire for a more locally-led humanitarian sphere, the concept of 'subsidiarity' has emerged, framing central authorities, in this case international humanitarian agencies, as performing a subsidiary function; 'performing only tasks which cannot be performed more effectively at a more immediate/local level' (Wall and Hedlund, 2016:11). This vision of localised humanitarianism fits better with former Secretary General Ban Ki Moon's hope for humanitarian action that is 'as local as possible, as international as necessary' (Ban Ki-Moon, 2016), although it has perhaps not reached Slim's (2021) approach that prioritises locally-led humanitarian action as the status quo.

More broadly, there are concerns within the humanitarian sphere that ceding more power to local actors may challenge the dominance of the humanitarian principles. In particular, this concern refers to the core humanitarian principles of impartiality, neutrality and independence, derived from the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) definition of humanitarianism which is still often viewed as the gold standard (Barnett and Weiss, 2011:28). The ICRC's definition calls for independent, neutral and impartial provision of relief to victims of armed conflict and natural disasters. While the 'core' humanitarian principles highlighted in this definition were seen, until recently, as universal, in recent years the changing nature of humanitarian crises have seen them increasingly negotiated and debated (see Hammond 2015, Hilhorst and Schmiemann 2002).

As humanitarian crises become increasing frequent, complicated and protracted, the universal applicability of the humanitarian principles is being called into question. Many working in the humanitarian sector continue to view the principle of neutrality as a vital conduit for their interventions, testifying to the apolitical nature of their work and organisation and therefore providing access to affected populations, even in politically contentious situations (Kellenberger, 2004. Hammond, 2015). However, several organisations have been led to question their adherence to this principle in contexts of human rights abuses such as MSF (MSF, 2014) and even the ICRC (ICRC, 2020).

These challenges and renegotiations around the humanitarian principles, and the roles and actors of humanitarian action more generally, appear inevitable in the context of global humanitarian reform. As humanitarian crises become more frequent, complicated and protracted and the formal humanitarian sphere seeks new ways of more effectively responding to them, thus begins processes of renegotiation. Hilhorst and Jansen (2010) present an arena approach to humanitarianism, which allows for the flexibility to accommodate processes of renegotiation currently being undertaken by the humanitarian sphere. According to Hilhorst and Jensen's (2010) arena approach, it is inevitable that the inclusion of a variety of non-traditional actors, at the local, national and regional levels, with

their respective skills, experiences and perspectives, will change what the humanitarian arena looks like. Therefore the principle of localisation, and that of collective action, expands humanitarian space to include this range of humanitarian actors, which then expands the understanding of humanitarian itself.

As well as the vagueness of the concept of localisation, the localisation agenda is often critiqued due to its confusion over the concept of the 'local' and which actors are included in the category of the 'local' (Roepstroff, 2020:289). Again, this risks allowing humanitarian organisations the space to engage with a restricted list of local actors, overlooking the range and diversity of actors operating at the local level, with their respective opportunities and challenges for more effective humanitarian responses. Not only does this limit the benefits of a collective action approach to humanitarian processes, but it also provides the space for international humanitarian actors to work with the 'local' actors who are easiest to identify and engage with (Schenkenberg, 2016:9). For example, formal national and sub-national actors are more easily identifiable during a crisis. However, when a disaster occurs, the number of local actors increases 'exponentially as volunteers, private sector and groups previously uninvolved in disaster... become responders overnight' (Well and Helmund 2016, 14). Formal national and sub-national actors are therefore only part of the story. To engage primarily with them, is to overlook the support required by a range of local actors who are all active in humanitarian response.

The conceptual ambiguity around the concept of the 'local', leading to narrow engagements with local actors, overlooks the heterogeneity and fluidity of the category of the 'local' as well as the context-specificity of the concept (Wall and Helmund, 2016:15). The concept of the 'local' could include local and national governments, Community-Based organisations (CBOs), FIOs, faith leaders, local private sector actors, communities, civil society, diaspora groups, even local organisations who are affiliated with international actors like Red Cross/Crescent National Societies. Again, responding in fragile urban contexts reinforces the importance of a more comprehensive understanding of the

concept of the 'local', as who are relevant 'local' actors may differ from neighbourhood to neighbourhood, even street to street in those settings. The granular approach required for humanitarian responses in fragile urban contexts reinforces the importance of urban profiling and an area-based approach, to capture the collective picture of what the 'local' is in that specific context, and who are 'local actors'.

Despite the concerns articulated above, there is growing evidence that a vision of humanitarianism that is as 'local as possible, as international as necessary' is an important step for more effective humanitarian action in general and in fragile urban contexts specifically (Ban Ki-Moon, 2016). Fast and Bennett's (2020) report explores local humanitarian action from a ground-level perspective. Their research, covering multiple themes and across various contexts, shows that humanitarian action is always stronger with local action and that humanitarian responses which fail to take the diverse local into account are always less effective, less relevant, and less likely to fulfil commitments to Do No Harm (Fast and Bennett, 2020:19). It is also set to remain a significant theme of the humanitarian sphere's work to find a new way of working for more effective responses in general, and in fragile urban contexts in particular.

There are concerns amongst proponents and critics of the localisation agenda that it could lead to the withdrawal of international actors and their resources, putting a disproportionate burden of response onto local actors. Indeed, the COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted how narrow and instrumental approaches to the localisation agenda has meant that the withdrawal of international actors from the field and or constraints on their ability to operate due to travel bans, lockdowns and restrictions of movement, left the burden of response on local and national actors. The COVID-19 pandemic has illuminated how, while local actors have a more prominent role in program delivery, decision-making power continues to reside with international humanitarian actors. As a result, responses have often been slow, delayed and ineffective (see Cornish, 2020).

The concept of complementarity recognises the ongoing and important role international actors have in humanitarian responses, as well as the leadership role of local and national actors. Collective action requires increased local, national and regional leadership, as well as strengthened international responses. International actors' continued role is perhaps most significant in conflict-affected settings, where there is still an acute need for international capacity and resources (Schenkenberg, 2016:3). This concept of complementarity requires that all these different stakeholders adopt separate but inter-linked roles, established so that they do not need to be renegotiated each time a crisis emerges (Zyck and Krebs, 2015:3).

This thesis is situated in the intersection of the interrelated concepts of localisation, collective action and complementarity as it explores the relationships between IFIOs, an example of a prominent international humanitarian actor, and LFAs and LCFs operating at the local level. Faith-Inspired Organisation (FIO) is a broad term, which encompasses a plethora of different organisations in which religion, spirituality, and or faith, play different roles (Ferris, 2011:609). The term Faith-Based Organisation (FBO) is often, and perhaps more widely, used in the academic literature and by practitioners. However, given the diversity of the category, this thesis will continue to use FIO, as a more inclusive term, in recognition of the diverse ways that religion, faith and spirituality have influenced, and continue to influence, organisations.

The table derived by Clarke and Jennings (2008:34) clearly highlights the diversity of the category of FIO by identifying the faith-basis of the organisation: passive, active, inclusive or exclusive (Figure One). While FIOs are positioned at different points along this matrix according to their faith-basis, the locus of FIOs can also differ; some are grassroots organisations embedded in local communities, while others are major international organisations with global reach.

Figure One

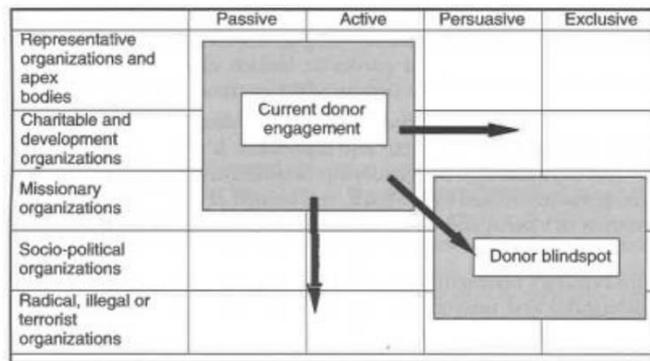


Figure 2.1 Current donor engagement with FBOs and the challenges that arise

IFIOs occupy a prominent place in the humanitarian architecture and are frequently discussed in the academic literature (see OCHAi, 2016. Gaillard and Texier, 2010. Ferris, 2011). The WHS took place following two years of extensive, global consultations with a wide range of actors, including major IFIOs. There is also an increasing literature exploring the roles of LFAs and LCFs (See Naess-Holm, et al, 2017, de Wolf and Wilkinson, 2019, Wurtz and Wilkinson, 2020). However, there is little that looks at the relationships between international and local faith-inspired actors and whether there is anything distinctive about this relationship. This thesis contributes to filling this gap.

Faith-inspired humanitarianisms in urban contexts

Shifting sands of humanitarian faith engagement

The formal humanitarian sphere has historically been reluctant to engage with faith, religion and spirituality, despite the fact that humanitarianism’s roots are in religious concepts (see Barnett and Stein, 2012. Warner, 2013). Following processes of secular codification after the Second World War, the spread of neo-liberalism and its material bias in the 1980s, as well as the bureaucratisation, rationalisation and professionalisation of the humanitarian arena over the last two decades faith, religion and spirituality were marginalised (Barnett, 2012).

The humanitarian arena's distrust of faith, religion and spirituality is underlined by the dominance of modernisation and secularisation theory in the field of humanitarianism and in the social sciences (Selinger, 2004). Secularisation theory and the separation of sacred and secular, goes hand in hand with modernisation theory which posits that as countries develop, religion will become increasingly irrelevant, eventually disappearing altogether when countries become "modern". Modernisation theory was extremely influential on the social sciences in the modern period, which led to the marginalisation of faith, religion and spirituality across the social sciences (Selinger, 2004:526-528).

However, the neglect of faith, religion and spirituality in humanitarian studies and practices is no longer tenable in an age that has seen a failure of modernisation, apparent resurgence of religion, and global humanitarian reform. It can be argued that we have passed through the modern age and its reliance on modernisation theory; that we are now living in a postmodern age. The modernity in the 21st century is in a state of crisis because of general disillusionment with its theories, which reduce the world to what can be perceived and controlled through reason, science, technology and bureaucratic rationality (Thomas, 2000:816).

The main challenge to modern ways of viewing the world is the resurgence of religion which started in the 1980s and persists today (Thomas, 2000:815). The Iranian Revolution of 1979 as well as 9/11, the growth of politically active forms of Christianity in modern Africa and the fall of the Soviet Union exemplify the new-found visibility of faith, religion and spirituality and its (re)assertion in the public sphere in various forms of 'public religion' (Casanova, 1994:5). Casanova's (1994) work does not necessarily relate to the many contexts in which faith, religion and spirituality have never been marginalised. However, Casanova's (1994) theory of public religion is an explicit challenge to the centrality of modernisation theory and the marginalisation of faith, religion and spirituality in humanitarianism. Evidently, humanitarian processes themselves are not neutral. They are tied into several western-centric assumptions that were common-place in the modern period, including the

separation of church and state, faith/religion/spirituality and politics and the sacred and material (Selinger, 2004:526).

The failure of modernisation theory goes hand in hand with criticisms of secularisation theory. Berger argues that previous assumptions that we live in a secularised world are false (1999:2). In fact, modernisation has ‘...provoked powerful movements of counter-secularisation’ searching for authenticity as well as some secularising effects (Berger, 1999:3). Faith, religion and spirituality’s global resurgence is in some ways intrinsically involved in the search for authenticity and struggle for cultural liberation which has become increasingly powerful since the 1990s (Thomas, 2000:815-817). Faith is inherently involved in the search for more authentic notions of well-being. Religious institutions have also been some of the most prominent critics of the failings of development and globalisation in this regard (Marshall, 2004:895). Weber argued that religiously, or magically, motivated action is inherently directed at matters of this-worldliness, particularly towards enhancing well-being and long-life (Burchardt, 2012:33).

The humanitarian reform agenda marks a point of departure away from a reliance on modernisation and secularisation theories and the neglect of faith, religion and spirituality. The humanitarian sphere’s commitments to localisation, collective action and bridging the humanitarian-development divide marks a distinct shift away from humanitarian exceptionalism. Previously, the humanitarian arena had seen itself as a separate and distinct sphere of activity, defined by a normative framework based on humanitarian law (Barnett, 2005:723. Aneja, 2016:4). The exceptional nature of this vision of humanitarianism infers that only some actors can legitimately be involved in humanitarian action; those that are guided by a set of specific principles (Aneja, 2016:4). The current shift in humanitarian thinking not only expands the space in which different actors, including those outside the traditional, formal humanitarian sphere, can engage with humanitarian interventions, but, renegotiates what humanitarianism is (Hilhorst and Jansen, 2010).

There is increasing acknowledgment in the literature and the humanitarian sphere more widely that a multitude of humanitarianisms exist and they present opportunities and challenges for humanitarian interventions. Pacitto and Fiddian-Qasmiyeh (2015) refer to this process as the ‘writing in of the “other” in humanitarianism’, and frame it as a vital step towards meaningful collective action. Given their historic marginalisation, there are few humanitarian actors that embody the “other” more than religious, faith-inspired or spiritual ones. However, it is only through the formal humanitarian sphere’s engagement with “other” humanitarian actors that humanitarian interventions against crises can be a truly collective effort that draws on the so-far untapped potential of a range of actors.

As a result, in recent years that has been increased interest in, and recognition of, the inextricable entanglement of faith, religion and spirituality with humanitarianism. Faith, religion and spirituality impact humanitarian processes as they shape people’s worldviews, affecting the choices they make.

‘At the community, household, and individual levels, spirituality, religion, and faith play a major role in how many give meaning to their world, themselves and the decisions they make that shape their lives and those around them’ (Jones and Peterson, 2011:1296).

For individuals and communities around the world, faith, religion and spirituality act as pervasive and vital forces. Faith, religion and spirituality are personal motivations, and central parts of the complex formation of cultural and social identity (Selinger, 2004:525-539).

‘... [A]t the core of the experience of the vast majority of communities facing crisis and, perhaps as crucially of the majority of national humanitarian agency staff that typically constitute 90 percent of the humanitarian workforce’ (Ager and Ager, 2011:465).

The integral role of faith, religion and spirituality in how many people understand the world and their place in it is central to the decisions they make about their personal development and that of their community (Ver Beek, 2000:31). It is also no longer feasible to ignore faith, religion or spirituality for research in fragile contexts as it is frequently intertwined with conflicts, even if it is not the driver (See Appleby, 2010. Gopin, 2000. Longman, 2001. Carter, 2006. Philpott, 2007. Shannahan and Payne, 2016). Of course, it is important to acknowledge that faith, religion or spirituality may not be important to everyone. However, in many fragile contexts around the world they remain important parts of people's everyday lives or perhaps inseparable from them (Ellis and Ter Haar, 2004).

Despite these shifts within the humanitarian arena, the legacies of modernisation and secularisation theories and their marginalisation of faith, religion and spirituality persist. As a result, some glaring gaps remain within the existing literature. A significant one in the context of this research is the role of faith, religion and spirituality for humanitarian responses in fragile urban contexts. The neglect of urban faith, religion and spirituality is grounded in the urbanisation and modernisation experiences of, and theories from, Western Europe (Casanova, 2013:113). Urbanisation has been seen as part of modernisation processes alongside rationalisation and industrialisation which has side-lined faith, religion and spirituality. These theories present faith, religion and spirituality as 'primitive' and 'backward' to be left behind as people move from the parochiality of their rural villages to large cities and urban spaces.

For much of western Europe, urbanisation processes have been accompanied by 'radical secularization' (Casanova, 2013:114). For most of the twentieth century, most social scientists generally assumed that processes of urbanisation had secularising effects (Burchardt and Becci, 2013:1). The normativity of this classical theory, which sees secularisation as an inevitable

consequence of modernisation and therefore urbanisation processes, divides the individual into their public and private selves and displaces faith, religion and spirituality from the state to civil society. These assumptions and normative frameworks have then been instrumentalised through city planning that adheres to a secular vision for the city (Burchardt and Becci, 2013:4-5).

However, several scholars have, in the last decade or so, begun to critique such ideologically secularist readings of urbanisation (Casanova, 2013. Van der Veer, 2013). A significant critique is that western European experiences of urbanisation, modernisation and secularisation are not universal. While in western Europe modernisation and urbanisation have been accompanied by 'un-churching, de-confessionalisation and drastic secularization' in the context of the United States they have experienced 'processes of churching, denominational affiliation and religious revival' (Casanova, 2013:116).

A historical approach to the study of urban faith, even in western Europe, exposes the variation and lack of understanding of these processes. Casanova (2013:113) invokes Weber's work which highlights that all great historical traditions were born in urban centres and constant processes of religious innovation taking place throughout history have been rooted in urban contexts more than rural. It is not surprising therefore, that increasing numbers of studies of urban faith throughout history, especially those situated outside of western Europe, challenge the assumptions and normative frameworks of classical theory. Orsi (1999:42-43) identifies several examples from South Asia where the city was a sacred domain from the first millennium BCE through the rise of Buddhist and Jain centres around cities such as Taxila, Varanasi and Anuradhapura.

It is inevitable that modernisation and urbanisation processes will interact with faith, religion, spirituality and secularism in different ways depending on the context. Sassen's (2001) work on the concept of global cities is path breaking, highlighting how globalisation has shaped urban economies, detaching them from the nation state, instead plugging them into urban networks through their links

to other global cities. However, Van Der Veer (2013) has expressed concern around the universality of this concept. Van Der Veer (2013) compares the city of Mumbai in India with Singapore to highlight how, despite many similarities, the historical foundations of the city influences processes of urbanisation, building very different global cities.

However, for several reasons, studies of urban faith, religion and spirituality outside of western Europe and North America have historically been lacking. Scholars have been resistant to engage with faith, religion and spirituality as a category in regard to South Asia in an attempt to push back against Europe's orientalising project which employed religion as a way to exoticize the Eastern world (Fisher, 2018:1489). More recent studies such as Fisher's (2018) employ the example of South Asia as a counter example to the 'normative model of the place of religion in early modernity' as the region has seen 'a radical theologization of public discourse' and South Asian knowledge systems have proved surprisingly innovative during early modernity (Fisher, 2018:1488, 1492). In Africa, the Religious Urbanisation in Africa Project (RUA), who released a policy review in 2017, has bemoaned the overly secular and economic lens of studies on urbanisation in Africa. While the studies explored as part of this policy review are nuanced and comprehensive, they overlook the way faith, religion and spirituality have shaped urbanisation processes in African contexts.

Contemporary empirical studies on faith, religion, spirituality and secularisation on diverse cities around the world, and a renewed interest in the city as a 'lens for social theory' at the turn of the century, further critique the historical neglect of the study of urban religion (Burchardt and Becci, 2013:5).

'[V]ibrant, vital and highly innovative' religious life in many major cities around the world 'has disrupted dominant images of urban modernity, along with the established narrative that urbanisation and modernisation necessarily lead to secularisation' (Burchardt and Westendrop, 2018:161).

There are many visible manifestations of faith, religious and spiritual life in diverse urban contexts around the world (Van Der Veer, 2013:64). Formal, traditional signs of faith, religion and spirituality such as places of worship have, in many contexts, persisted in shaping the physical landscape of urban spaces despite processes of modernisation. Similarly, in Goa, India for example, more informal signs of faith, religion and spirituality such as wayside shrines to Hindu and Catholic divinities and Saints have also become increasingly popular, perhaps even eclipsing the significance of more traditional signs of faith, religion and spirituality (Henn, 2008). The numerous examples of faith, religion and spirituality's visible presence in cities around the world have led prominent theorists such as Van der Veer (2013:62) to call on researchers to 'refuse to make pre-conceived oppositions between the secular and the religious, both theoretically and empirically'.

Instead of viewing this faith-inspired, religious and spiritual vitality as existing in spite of the secularising forces of modernisation and urbanisation Burchardt and Becci (2013:13) argue that '...religion and urbanity are transformed together' and they continue to shape each other (Rau and Rüpke, 2020). Faith life has contributed to processes of urbanisation. For example, pilgrimage sites, whether arising around worshipping a deity or a charismatic faith leader, have been catalysts for urbanisation, attracting pilgrims the whole year round or even for a major festival (Orsi, 1999:42-43). Faith, religion and spirituality also continue to impact and influence the topography of urban spaces (The Berkley Center, 2019. Rau and Rüpke, 2020). Faith, religion and spirituality play central roles in the life of towns and cities. They have produced and altered urban spaces through the construction of buildings, shrines, memorials and so on. Faith, religion and spirituality have changed the practices of urban societies, by organising around specific calendars and cycles, as well as celebrating rituals at certain times. They have even impacted the social demography of urban spaces through shifts in power and migration flow.

Processes of urbanisation have also shaped faith, religious and spiritual life. For example, faith traditions, religions and spiritualities have attempted to respond to the challenges of living in urban

contexts. These challenges are felt even more acutely in low-income and fragile urban contexts. Comaroff and Comaroff (2001) have shown how aspects of the neoliberal regime have led to the growth of 'occult economies' such as witchcraft and fortune telling as people hope to generate wealth in response to the material deprivation and inequality experienced in many urban contexts. Pentecostal Christians in many urban contexts in African cities have seen popular adherence to the Prosperity Gospel in response to the inequity, capitalism and consumerism of urban centres (Hancock and Srinivas, 2008:620). The impacts of the neoliberal regime on urban spaces around the world through processes of globalisation, as well as increasing levels of faith-inspired, religious and spiritual diversity in urban contexts, have led some scholars to extend 'the paradigms of consumerism to religiosity, proposing a 'spiritual marketplace'...' (Hancock and Srinivas, 2008:620). In turn, this spiritual marketplace shapes the urban landscape. Faith and spiritual traditions and religions compete for a public presence. These dynamics are exemplified by De Witte's (2008) study of the sonic sacralization or urban space in Accra, Ghana. De Witte's (2008) case study outlines how sounds related to different faith, religious and spiritual traditions in Accra, Ghana 'occupy and compete for urban space' as they compete not only for symbolic control of space, but also in a spiritual, invisible struggle against the various powers believed to be active in the city.

To understand peoples lived religious experiences in cities today, it is therefore vital to consider the urban dimension. Similarly, to understand urban contexts, it is important to explore the contributions of faith, religion and spirituality:

'...Processes of collective and individual identity formation, of constructing and maintaining power relations, occur in cities in the local, national and transnational levels, on each of which they are reversed by religious elements. Cities are sites of encounter for diasporas, nodal points of transnational communities and laboratories of religious innovation. They are sites where faith traditions live side by side, where internal religious differentiations are re-negotiated, and where multiple claims to public recognition and

tolerance meet with entrenched cultural hierarchies, social exclusion, political resistance or ideologies of pluralism' (Burchardt and Becci, 2013:17).

In response to the above developments in the study of faith, religion and spirituality in urban contexts, Beaumont and Baker (2011) derived the concept of the 'post-secular city', emphasising the renewed, or ongoing, significance of faith life in urban contexts. While in some contexts, processes of urbanisation have seen increasing secularisation, these trends are also interjected with instances of innovation and revivals due to migration flows and adaptations to urban life (Burchardt and Becci, 2013:6).

Future work in the area of urban faith, religion and spirituality needs to continue to engage with secularisation. Secularisation is still highly relevant in religiously vibrant urban contexts, where social domains are differentiated by the sacred and the secular (Burchardt and Becci, 2013:8). Socially constructed sacred spaces in urban contexts constantly overlap, complement and conflict with secular spaces as well as other religious places (Kong, 2001:212). As a result, Kong suggests that in urban contexts, 'at the material, symbolic and ideological levels, the separation between sacred and secular is more fluid than ridged' (2001:212).

Previous theories that present faith, religion and spirituality as backward, primitive and weak, based on western European experiences of urbanisation and modernisation in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, did not foresee modern societies becoming simultaneously more religious and more secular as global modernisation was accompanied everywhere by the institutionalisation of diverse religious and secular domains (Casanova, 2013:120). The transformation of western Christianity into the binary classification of secular-sacred has now been globalised, encountering non-western systems of classification which are themselves being transformed through these interactions (Casanova, 2013:121). 'The paradox is that globalisation of the western secular-religious

regime leads not to the exit from religion but rather to all kinds of novel religious transformations' (Casanova, 2013:122).

Through processes of globalisation and mass media, all forms of faith, religion and spirituality are available to the individual and collective aspirations. The sacralisation of human rights also means that there is an increasing awareness of the right to Freedom of Religion or Belief (FoRB). This has seen the emergence of various secular regimes of separation and political authority, methods of state management of religious pluralism, increased religious pluralisation, new transnational religious dynamics linked to migration and globalisation and different patterns of minority/majority relations (Casanova, 2013:123) as well as instances of religious innovation and revival. The task now therefore is that they must find a way to co-exists in today's global cities (Casanova, 2013:122).

Studying faith, religion and spirituality in urban contexts illuminates issues around cultural identity, how different cultures come together and foster or hamper processes of socio-political integration and how this might impact how people and groups relate to each other, either with tolerance or hostility and even violence. These processes are key elements of producing urban space (Hancock and Srinivas, 2018:618).

While there is now a significant body of increasingly nuanced literature dedicated to the study of urban religion (and the secular), it appears that there has been little, if any, communication between this research and Humanitarian Studies. The only area that might be considered an exception to this apparent neglect of urban religion by the humanitarian sphere is the work on faith and displacement in urban contexts. Many of the sources of the religious innovation identified in studies of urban religion are the result of transnational migration flows to cities, leading to culturally and religiously and spiritually diverse urban centres (Van Der Veer, 2013:64). As a result, there is a significant body of literature exploring the roles faith, religion and spirituality play in the experiences of migrants and host communities in urban contexts (see Ager and El-Nakib, 2015. Fiddian-Qasmiyeh et al, 2020, Eghdamian, 2016). However, beyond these specific intersections of urban faith/religion/spirituality

and displacement, little attention has been paid to the interactions between faith, religion and spirituality in urban spaces and humanitarian processes. This remains a significant gap in both the academic literature and in humanitarian understanding for practice.

As has been explored above, there is an increasing awareness that faith, religion and spirituality, as well as LFAs and LCFs, present distinctive opportunities and challenges for humanitarian responses. While the evidence base for this awakening within the humanitarian sphere has been built on research and learnings from rural contexts, the research that has been done on urban faith, religion and spirituality, particularly the smattering of studies based in contexts outside of Europe and North America, points to their relevance for humanitarian responses in fragile urban contexts. Burchardt and Westendrop (2018) draw attention to the immaterial power of faith, religion and spirituality in urban centres, beyond its visible forms such as places of worship, to include more invisible forms of faith life; 'values, motivations, imaginings and spiritualities that underpin people's religious investments in urban life' (Burchardt and Westendrop, 2018:162). This approach does not seek to privilege this immaterial over the material. Instead, it seeks to take faith-inspired, religious and spiritual creativity and agency seriously by linking faith, religiously, spiritually inspired human action to urban aspirations. Van Der Veer (2013) employed the example of the city of Mumbai in India to show how a faith/religious/spiritual lens highlights how 'aspirations for the urban context that are derived from religious imaginaries carried by social movements as well as producers in the art scene and entertainment industry' (2013:69). Indeed, it is these ideational sources of immaterial faith, religion and spirituality which impact individuals and groups responses to humanitarian crises, as well as the decisions they make about their development and that of their communities. Burchardt and Westndrop (2018) use the concept of 'urban aspirations' to study lived faith, religion and spirituality in urban contexts, exploring how faith, religion and spirituality frame and guide the aspirations of individuals in urban contexts which are themselves formed in dialogue with a person's social context (Burchardt and Westendrop, 2018:165).

The available research, and the large gaps that are left, raise the question of whether humanitarian actors need to work differently to build on the potential opportunities and mitigate the potential challenges of faith, religious and spirituality for more effective humanitarian responses in fragile urban contexts? Evidently the faith, religious and or spiritual landscapes are different in urban contexts as opposed to in rural contexts. Faith, religion and spirituality shape and are shaped by the urban context. Instead of eclipsing faith life, processes of urbanisation appear to reshape faith, religious and spiritual lines, meaning that faith life often looks quite different in urban areas in comparison to rural ones (Burchardt and Becci, 2013:1). Because the humanitarian sphere has historically focused on responding to humanitarian crises in rural contexts, most research on faith, religion, spirituality and humanitarianism has been done in rural contexts. As a result, there is a gap in understanding around how best to engage with faith, religion and spirituality in urban contexts, including those of a fragile nature. This thesis takes an initial step towards answering this question.

'Glocal' Faith Actors

The humanitarian sphere has come a long way from its near total neglect of faith, religion and spirituality. However in recent year it has been criticised for hereto narrow and instrumental engagements with faith, religion and spirituality, working predominantly with IFIOs who adhere to the secular script as points of access to LCFs and affected communities. Such narrow engagement may result from the fact that many IFIOs were incorporated into the formal humanitarian sphere during processes of secular codification from the end of the nineteenth through the twentieth century, and so largely adhere to the 'secular script' of humanitarianism (Deneulin and Bano, 2009. Ager and Ager, 2011:457. Burchardt, 2012:31).

While major IFIOs and religious institutions were consulted in the run up to the WHS, the resulting documents only make cursory mentions of LFAs. Ager and Ager (2011) argue that this avoidance of working with local faith-inspired, religious and spiritual voices is symptomatic of the humanitarian

sphere's ongoing materialist bias, based on its commitment to functional secularism. They suggest that the intention of functional secularism is to be neutral and not promote one ideology over another. However, it leads to the marginalisation and privatisation of faith, religion and spirituality (Ager and Ager, 2011:458). The formal humanitarian sphere tends to be blind to the ideological context of functional secularism, which limits the space in which to discuss the links between faith, religion and spirituality and humanitarianism (Ager and Ager, 2011:462).

IFIOs evidently have a very important role to play in humanitarian processes and carry out life-saving work in many crisis-afflicted contexts. The World Bank estimates that 50 percent of health and education services in certain parts of Sub-Saharan Africa were provided by FIOs in 2000 (Deneulin and Bano, 2009:1. Marshall, 2004:897). However, Jones and Peterson (2011) criticise such a narrow focus on faith leaders and FIOs that can disempower local actors in favour of dominant voices within the religious institution or organisation. This can provide a platform for religious leaders to represent and further promote their essentialist views about women and other marginalised people (Bradley, 2011:26-28).

LFAs and LCFs have been identified predominantly in terms of their usefulness in linking IFIOs with affected people. The capabilities of LFAs, their agency and how they understand humanitarian crises and fragility have been neglected. The narrow and instrumental engagement of the formal humanitarian sphere with faith actors, highlights a broader problem inherent in the localisation agenda. The formal humanitarian sphere tends to focus on how international and local actors can be better connected to carry out pre-conceived ideas of what constitutes effective humanitarian interventions. The formal humanitarian sphere's superficial attempts at making humanitarian action more local has been from the perspective of external agencies; relating to the experiences and assumptions of international organizations. These attempts have focused on the hiring of staff, subcontracting locally and linking international actors with local ones (Obrecht, 2014:1).

The humanitarian sphere's reluctance to engage with LFAs and LCFs is in part due to dedication to the humanitarian principles of neutrality, impartiality and independence. A criticism often levelled against engaging with faith, religion and spirituality is that they threaten these principles that many humanitarian actors continue to hold dear. As explored in the previous section, this concern is particularly levelled at LFAs and LCFs.

These fears are not unfounded; many faith actors are, by their very definition, partial, often politically entrenched and frequently themselves actors and victims of humanitarian disasters (Fiddian-Qasmiyeh and Ager, 2013:6). For many faith actors, the humanitarian principles are not the standard as they are for other organisations, as they often hold other principles close such as compassion, sacrifice and solidarity. Such challenges to the dominance of the humanitarian principles are inevitable when opening up the humanitarian arena to a wide range of different actors.

However, an increased awareness of unavoidable influence of faith, religion and spirituality on humanitarian processes, as well as the global humanitarian reform agenda's emphasis on localisation and collective action, has shifted the focus on faith, religion and spirituality to the local level and the roles of LFAs and LCFs.

The term LFAs can encompass a wide range of actors relevant to humanitarian processes and is sometimes used inclusive of LCFs. Wilkinson et al (2020) outline a comprehensive typology of LFAs which was used in their Bridge Builders two-way model for sharing capacity and strengthening a localised response including LFAs. Their typology includes formal faith actors and networks, with national or even regional scope, who often partner with government departments or international multilateral organisations such as the UN. The term LFAs also covers smaller formal actors who are not linked to bodies like the UN or international development organisations. They may be supported by religious bodies in the West but their transnational ties don't tend to extend beyond that.

As well as more formal LFAs, the category also includes informal actors, linked to local places of worship such as parish or zakat committees. While they have some organisational structure, they are inherently linked to the place of worship. LFAs also include religious leaders who are crucial partners in the F&D work of many humanitarian and development organisations. Local leaders can traverse local, national and international boundaries and be integrated into formal or informal leadership roles. It is important, when discussing the role of local faith leaders in humanitarian processes, to remember the influence of informal faith leaders such as women's group leaders and youth group leaders. While they may not be part of the formal hierarchy of a religious institution, they have a potentially significant role in promoting humanitarian goals through their informal leadership roles within LCFs. Finally, places of worship and the communities that surround them, are also relevant LFAs for humanitarian processes.

This thesis will use the terms LFAs and LCFs respectively, to denote the individual and communal capacities of faith, religion and spirituality at the local level for responding to crises. However, they present an important source of potential resilience, as well as some distinctive challenges, for many communities as they often mobilise themselves in response to a crisis, playing an important role in first response.

The 'glocal' nature of many religions; inhabiting the realms of the local and the global, does provide potential opportunities for increasingly effective humanitarian solutions to crises emerging in fragile contexts. Beyer (2007) explains the importance of the concepts of globalisation and glocalisation for understanding faith, religion and spirituality today. The concept of glocalisation arose in response to the growing interest in processes of globalisation from the 1960s and particularly 1990s onwards. Unlike theories previously dominant in the social sciences, such as modernisation theory which temporalises its universalism, dictating that eventually all would become modern, globalisation spatialises its universalism; the local must come to terms with the global. This in turn means that the global cannot be global without a plurality of locals. The global and local are in mutual relation.

Processes of globalisation have seen the global and the local meet. As a result, globalisation is also glocalisation; the global can be expressed in the local, and the local can be seen as the particularisation of the global (Beyer, 2007:98).

The theorisations of globalisation and glocalisation have been particularly influential in the Sociology of Religion. They mark the shift from modernisation theory and secularisation theory, which view faith, religion and spirituality as 'irrational' and increasingly irrelevant as countries modernise, towards theories of globalisation and glocalisation which explain the global nature of faith, religion and spirituality, which also appears at the local level. Theories of faith, religion and spirituality in terms of globalisation and glocalisation explain the pluralisation of faiths, religions and spiritualities observable today where secularisation cannot. This is vital for understanding the relationship between IFIOs and LFAs and LCFs. Through exploring this relationship, both the global nature of faith, religion and spirituality, as well as the lived experiences of faith, religion and spirituality at the local levels, are observable. This thesis is therefore situated within the 'glocal' faith networks that can both connect and differentiate international and local faith actors and communities.

Religious actors often maintain global and local networks that can bridge the gap between international agents and local contexts, improving communication and coordination between those providing disaster relief towards those who need it (PaRD, 2016:14). The opportunities of the 'glocal' nature of many religions are particularly potent in its ability to link LCFs with major IFIOs. IFIOs are often linked to local faith, religious and spiritual agents beyond the realm of funding and programming. They maintain built-in networks of local partnerships based on shared identities, belonging, values, experiences and worship which 'are highly instrumental in bridging cultural gaps that might otherwise be felt' (Ferris, 2011:617. Burchardt, 2012:50). There are many examples of how the links between major IFIOs and LCFs have facilitated increasingly effective humanitarian action from basic service delivery to advocacy.

However, this approach can remain instrumental; failing to address the gulf that can exist, between IFIOs and LFAs/LCFs, as well as the tensions that can arise because of major IFIO's work appearing to undermine local community efforts. Moreover, to reduce LFAs to solely a point of access, is to undermine their local agency, which prevents the humanitarian arena from learning from them for more effective responses. LFAs can yield Public Authority through multiple logics at various societal levels and are political, power-holding entities. However, there is a lack of understanding in academia and policy and practice regarding what types of authority and power LFAs hold in different contexts and how this is exercised. This research project helps to fill this gap.

To overcome the current short-comings of the literature surrounding the interactions between humanitarianism and faith, religion and spirituality, Jones and Peterson suggest that research into religion and development and beyond needs to be opened to agendas that are less obviously useful to (humanitarian) development agencies and NGOs (2011:1297-1298). They suggest that the approach common in Religious Studies needs to be adopted by these studies, to incorporate a focus on ritual, tradition, inner beliefs and lived religious expressions (Jones and Peterson, 2011:1298).

Defining Faith, Religion and Spirituality

A more Religious Studies approach to exploring the varied ways that faith, religion, spirituality intersect with humanitarian processes, from the international to the local level, requires a broad working definition. This is particularly important for this collaborative research, in partnership with the IFIO World Vision. The collaborative nature of this doctoral research means that this research is engaging with faith, religion and spirituality at the international level, as they are lived and embodied by IFIOs and their staff. It also engages with faith, religion and spirituality at the national and local levels as IFIO's engage with LFAs and LCFs. The definitions below give this thesis the precision and flexibility to be able to do this.

Constructing such a broad enough definition is not an easy task as there are no agreed definitions of the terms 'faith', 'religion' or 'spirituality'. As a result, their respective meanings can range and they are often used interchangeably. While the boundaries between religion, faith and spirituality may be fuzzy at times, to not engage with how the concepts relate to each other overlooks the distinctiveness of each concept. By drawing on common themes from the long-standing literature aimed at attempting to define faith, religion and spirituality it is possible to construct some working definitions which have helped guide this study of faith, religion and spirituality, and humanitarian responses to COVID-19.

Faith is particularly difficult to define as it means different things to different people and is experienced personally and privately (Newman, 2004:102). A key aspect of the concept of faith is that it is rooted in the individual and used to refer to an individual's beliefs (Newman, 2004:108). Definitions of faith as a general religious attitude or accepted set of beliefs originates from the Hebrew Scriptures (Newman, 2004:103). However, for Walker et al, faith is about more than belief, it is about individual meaning-making, which is then embedded in beliefs, actions and journeys of a religious and/or spiritual nature (2012:118). Faith as meaning-making, goes back further than the Hebrew Scriptures, to ancient Greece and Rome and a secular faith (Newman, 2004:103. Walker et al, 2012:118). Faith is therefore a particularly useful concept in humanitarian contexts because it refers to that '...hard-to-measure but central phenomenon that explains so much about why and how humans often prove resilience in the wake of hardship and disaster' (Walker et al, 2012:118). Faith as meaning-making can also encompass a wide range of religious and non-religious beliefs and meaning-making processes.

Faith is often presented in the literature as foundational to spirituality and religion (Fowler, 1981:xiii):

‘Prior to our being religious or irreligious... we are already engaged with issues of faith... we are concerned with how to put our lives together and with what will make life worth living’ (Fowler, 1981:5).

According to Newman’s model, spirituality and religion are functions of faith; they require faith as a foundation which then guides whether an individual is religious and/or spiritual (2004:106). As a result, faith is both the target and the source of religion and spirituality. ‘Devotion to religion or perception of growth in spirituality may be seen as a measure of greater valence of understanding one’s faith’ (Newman, 2004:106). Newman (2004) views religion and spirituality as value add of faith. Acknowledging the foundational nature of faith makes it a useful concept to be able to include a wide range of belief systems, which influence the decisions people make about their, and their communities’, responses to crises, which are not necessarily religious. Given the foundational nature of faith, it is not a surprise that it is the term most widely used by many social scientists. FBO/FIO use the term faith, no doubt to be inclusive of a wide range of organisations who feel inspired by the spirituality or religions of their mission or staff. Walker et al (2012:118) prefer to use the term faith because it speaks to both religion and spirituality which are functions of faith. As a result, when a term is needed to encompass different faiths, religions and spiritualities going forward the term ‘faith’ will be use.

While faith is about individual, personal beliefs and meaning-making, religion is more commonly used to refer to the more external expressions of faith (Gotterer, 2001:188). Put another way, if faith is about knowing, religion respectively is about doing (Newman, 2004:106). Religion is used to denote the systems and structures consisting of particular beliefs and practices related to the supernatural realm (Smith, 1995:893). The term religion encompasses institutions, systems consisting of organisational structures, codes of behaviours, symbol systems defining assumptions/beliefs designed to create powerful, comprehensive, enduring world views and

attitudes. Religiousness refers to what individuals experience and or do with religion (Walker et al, 2012:116)

The term religion operates at different levels (Lunn, 2009:937). The working definition of religion invoked in this thesis inhabits two interlinked but distinct realms. On the one hand, religion is defined according to its role as organised, hierarchical institutions. The other realm is that of the individual and social. Haynes' two-part definition of religion is a useful tool for understanding how religion acts on an individual and social level (2002:17). According to this definition, religion is both an entity, concerned with transcendence, sacredness and ultimacy and something concerned with the material, a concept that unifies society, that mobilises political and community-based groups and movements (Selinger, 2004:524). Haynes' (2002) use of this two-part definition is not an attempt to separate the sacred from the material, instead it seeks to highlight the different realms that religion inhabits in people's lives and communities.

If faith is about knowing and religion is about doing then spirituality is about being (Newman, 2004:106). Spirituality can be described as 'the human search for purpose and meaning of life experiences' (Sheridan and Amato-von Hemren, 1999:129). Spirituality can also be conceived of as the ability of individuals to experience a transcendent relationship with someone or something (Cubert, 2000:68). While spirituality is increasingly distinguished from that of religion, this distinction is a relatively recent one, produced in response to the dwindling church attendance and resistance to institutional religion in Western Europe in particular (Waker et al, 2012:117). This distinction was in many ways developed to allow for the assumption that spirituality can exist without religion. However, historically in western Europe the spiritual world and the physical world were intertwined. Still, in many parts of the world where Development and/or Humanitarian Studies are focused, the distinction between spirituality and religion is less salient:

‘In cultures where spirits and ancestors are more salient than belief in a Supreme God, and where religion is treated as something other than a matter of institutional affiliation and loyalty, the distinction between religious and spiritual is even less clear – and less important’ (Walker et al, 2012:117-118).

However, to encompass sufficient nuance in the use of this fuzzy terminology, this thesis uses the phrase ‘faith, religion and spirituality’ as inclusive of the interrelated concepts, the wide range of beliefs, practices and experiences they present and the different lived experiences of people in diverse contexts. This thesis uses the three terms distinctively to specify that these three phenomena are not interchangeable. Instead, this is an attempt to highlight their interrelated but distinct meanings. This approach also affords the flexibility to study people’s lived experiences of faith, religion and spirituality within and outside of the western tradition and context. Employing all three terms, sometimes all together but sometimes independently, also provides this thesis with a level of precision, as a single term, with its distinctive meaning, can be used to describe particular phenomena and experiences.

A key aspect of the above working definitions of faith, religion and spirituality is that they operate on all levels. The collaborative nature of this doctoral research means that this research is engaging with faith, religion and spirituality at the international level, as they are lived and embodied by IFIOs and their staff. It also engages with faith, religion and spirituality at the national and local levels as IFIO’s engage with LFAs and LCFs.

The potential of LFAs

While historically, any engagement with faith, religion and spirituality by the humanitarian arena has been narrow and instrumental, the humanitarian sphere is beginning to engage with faith, religion and spirituality and how they are lived and experienced. While this needs to go further in policy and practice, there is a growing awareness that engaging with faith, religion and spirituality at the local

level, and LFAs and LCFs, present some distinctive value-add for more effective humanitarian responses. LFAs and LCFs are thought to have distinctive kinds and levels of 'human, social, cultural and financial capital' (Wilkinson, 2020i).

This has led to a growing body of literature, including around faith, religion, spirituality and resilience (Fiddian-Qasmiyeh and Ager, 2013), Disaster Risk Reduction (Gaillard and Texier, 2010. Wisner, 2010), MHPSS (Ager et al, 2005. Peres et al, 2007. Henderson et al, 2010. Schafer, 2010. Ager et al, 2014), migration, displacement and integration (Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, 2011. Refugee Hosts, 2018), peace and conflict (Abu-Nimer, 2000. Coward and Smith, 2004. Seiple and Hoover, 2004. Irvin-Erikson and Phan, 2016.) and interfaith responses to crises (Bouta et al, 2005. Smock, 2010. Abu-Nimer and Smith, 2016. Lyk-Bowen and Owen, 2019. Woodrow et al, 2017).

The growth in interest around interfaith initiatives in particular speaks to a broader assumption that social cohesion among and between groups of faith can promote development and humanitarian goals. Despite being used frequently in the literature, the concept of social cohesion can be a buzzword that is vague, malleable and ill-defined. Many have argued that social cohesion lacks clarity in terms of its definition, measurability and how it can be operationalised. Similarly, Browne (2013) posits that there is little empirical understanding of how social cohesion contributes to resilience. Indeed, not all theories identify social cohesion as a foundation for social order. For Alexis de Tocqueville (1935) it was private associations that created social order, for classical market liberals it is the market and individual transactions.

While some theories of social cohesion assume a need for homogeneity and convergence across groups (see Ahmadi, 2017) there are other theories of, and linked to, social cohesion that are perhaps more useful ways to look at multi-faith contexts in which local religious institutions, faith leaders, organisations and beliefs interact with each other to impact humanitarian processes. For example, theories of social mixing propose that what's important is not 'cohesion' but how to

manage diversity and difference (Bouma, 2016. Ahmadi, 2017). De Beer (2014) defines social cohesion accordingly as a society that does not minimise the reality of diversity and complexity but displays high degrees of collectively, interconnectivity, interdependence, acceptance, inclusivity, equity, justice, mutuality and integration. This outlook considers social cohesion not as an objective but as a mechanism whereby change, in this case humanitarian/development change, can be affected through managing diversity and difference (Haberman et al, 2014).

This project also looks beyond the societal perspective of social cohesion to the individual and community perspective of social capital to explore what IFIO's perceive as being distinct about local faith-inspired responses to fragility (Cloete, 2014). The concepts of social, religious and spiritual capital contribute to a more comprehensive analysis of the role of LFAs in humanitarian contexts. While the distinction between social cohesion as a society-level phenomenon and social capital as an individual and community-level phenomenon is somewhat idealised, it is a useful distinction to operate because it highlights the importance of looking at how religious, faith-based and spiritual groups and individuals work together (Janmaat, 2011).

Social capital is often split into three groups: bridging, bonding and linking (Putnam, 2000). Linking social capital refers to ties or bonds that traverse strata within groups, for example across class lines. Bonding social capital refers to ties created within a group and bridging capital creates links between different groups to ensure deeper connectedness and bridge fractures in or between communities (De Beer, 2014). Bridging capital can be forged through local interfaith interactions. It is often assumed that interfaith bridging social capital can establish norms of trust and reciprocity, to promote long-term cooperation, making communities and individuals more resilient to the shocks and stressors associated with fragile contexts. A socially cohesive environment created through, amongst other processes, good interfaith interactions and peace, may help resolve some of the underlying root causes of fragility.

Invoking the concepts of social capital makes it crucial to acknowledge that social capital is not always positive – it can have negative, dividing effects. The fact that LFAs and LCFs can present potential opportunities and challenges for effective humanitarian responses, and are not magic bullets for effective aid and program delivery, is a key overarching argument within this thesis. The potential negative effects of social capital is a criticism most frequently levelled towards bonding social capital in particular. Bonding social capital is often criticised as being exclusive, building strong ties between members of a group to the exclusion of others. It relies on the construction of boundaries between ‘us and them’. This could be highly problematic in humanitarian contexts, especially urban contexts where there is already a lack of social cohesion, and potentially seriously threaten the humanitarian principles of neutrality and impartiality. Cox and Sisk (2017) suggest that in fragile contexts, religious institutions promote bonding social capital over bridging which can be exclusive and lead to further divisions which prohibit growth and development. This is often done through the logic of Moral Populism (CPAID, 2018).

Other literature suggests that high levels of bonding social capital present in most faith groups does provide certain opportunities and resources for effective, long term development programs that seek to build resilient communities (Rivera and Nickels, 2014). It promotes trust, reciprocity and cooperation within a group, which helps that community to be resilient. It follows that bridging social capital has the capacity to overcome or mitigate the exclusivity of high levels of bonding social capital through attempting to build a sense of ‘we-ness’ and in turn promote inter-connectedness and cooperation across group divides. If this is possible, it would potentially bring together the resources of LFAs gained through high levels of bonding social capital, as well as other sources of capital, and build on them for humanitarian action. If this is possible, then interfaith action would potentially be greater than sum of its parts (Orton, 2016. Jenson, 2002).

Spiritual and religious capital are other resources distinctively available to faith actors for increasingly effective humanitarian responses. Berger and Redding (2017) explicitly link the importance of spiritual and religious capital to activities related to the sphere:

‘The place occupied by religion within the category of social capital comes from its value in stabilizing and clarifying the purposes around which people can build their willingness to cooperate.’ (Berger and Redding, 2017:3).

Spiritual capital is a subset of social capital and refers to the ways faith, religious and spiritual beliefs influence society’s ability to make the processes of society and economic exchange run smoothly. Spiritual capital allows us to look beyond institutions to understand the meaning that underpins both social action and institutions. Verteer (2003) argues that it is important to consider spiritual capital, as well as Bourdieu’s theory of religious capital, in order to take into account the dynamics of lived faith, religion and spirituality, operating outside of religion’s official parameters (Arat, 2014: 270). Bourdieu’s theory, while still useful for understanding the distinctive resources that (local) religious institutions and organisations can bring to the humanitarian table is limited (Verteer, 2003). Bourdieu’s theory of religious capital overemphasises the organised and institutional role of religion on societal processes at the expense of other forms of faith, religious and spiritual action.

Baker (2017) reinforces the importance of looking at both religious and spiritual capital for what makes the resources available to LFAs and LCFs distinct. Baker (2017) suggests that religious capital constitutes the practical contribution to local and national life made by faith groups. Spiritual capital on the other hand,

‘energises religious capital by providing theological identity and worshipping tradition, but also a value system, moral vision and basis of faith. Spiritual capital is embedded locally within faith groups but [is] also expressed in the lives of individuals’ (Baker, 2017:11).

The locally embedded nature of spiritual capital means that it has the potential to inspire trust and openness within that community in a way secular or civic organisations cannot. Guiney (2012) suggests that this provides LFAs with substantial resources for articulating the voices of the poor and creating networks to make people aware of the effect of policy decisions. Such networking at the local level by faith actors can be very effective at putting people at the centre of the development agenda. Through looking at spiritual capital, as well as religious capital and its array of physical, material, financial and educational resources, it is possible to explore what is potentially distinct about engaging with faith, religion and spirituality, as well as LFAs and LCFs for humanitarian responses.

Conclusion

This thesis is produced against the backdrop of the global humanitarian reform agenda, kickstarted by the WHS and ongoing today, aimed at finding a new way of working for more effective humanitarian responses. As the humanitarian sphere works to this aim, several key issues and gaps have emerged in which this research is situated. The global humanitarian reform agenda has highlighted fragile contexts as a key issue and focus for a new way of working. This has led to the concept of the fragile city also emerging as a key focus, but also a significant gap in understanding. This has been reinforced during the COVID-19 pandemic which had a significant impact on fragile urban contexts which in turn presented a significant challenge for humanitarian responders.

Collective action and localisation have also become prominent parts of discussions around how to make humanitarian interventions more effective. Debates around localisation have been reignited in response to the COVID-19 pandemic as travel bans, restrictions of movement and lockdowns have shifted the burden of response onto local and national actors, reinforcing to many the relevance of the concept and failures to reverse the flow of power in the humanitarian sphere. While there is growing evidence supporting localisation, it is a contested principle. Part of debates around

localisation revolve around the ongoing relationship between international and local actors. While there is a growing literature exploring concepts such as complementarity and subsidiarity, there is a gap within this literature around the specific relationship between IFIOs and LFAs and LCFs.

The global humanitarian reform agenda, and the emergence of concepts such as collective action and localisation, have created the space in which to (re)visit the role of faith, religion and spirituality in humanitarian processes in general, and LFAs and LCFs in particular. This thesis contributes to a growing body of work in this area, in the contemporary context of the COVID-19 pandemic. While there has been progress as the humanitarian sphere engages more with LFAs and LCFs, there is still further to go. For example, there needs to be a less instrumental focus on faith, religion and spirituality as deeply felt core needs in times of crisis and so ends in and of themselves for humanitarian responses. Similarly, there are still gaps in understanding in the current literature, specifically around how to engage with LFAs and LCFs for more effective humanitarian responses in fragile urban contexts. This thesis makes a significant contribution to this area.

Chapter Two: Context and methodology

Context: collaborative research during a global humanitarian crisis

All roads lead to this project

The project explored in this thesis was not the one I had originally planned. However, as will be explored in detail in this section and chapter more broadly, a range of factors, namely those associated with the COVID-19 pandemic, changed the course of this research.

The thesis presented here is situated against the backdrop of the WHS. This was the same starting point for the project I had originally planned to do. As detailed in the literature review of this thesis, the global humanitarian reform agenda has seen a growing awareness of the fact that faith, religion, and spirituality at all levels are inextricably interwoven with humanitarian, development and peacebuilding processes in fragile contexts and that this presents opportunities and challenges for development/humanitarian actors. While donors and members of the wider humanitarian community have stated that they want to engage with faith networks to work more effectively in fragile contexts, many have also observed that they do not know how to best do so. Donors, multilateral agencies, and large International Non-Governmental Organizations (INGOs) want to better understand what modalities of engagement are working in the field and what mechanisms exist for engagement at scale.

My original doctoral research project, taking the above as a starting point, focused on a particular mode of local faith engagement: interfaith. Facilitating interfaith dialogue and cooperation has emerged as a potentially important step towards harnessing the potential of faith, religious and spiritual actors for humanitarian aims in fragile contexts, particularly those affected by conflict. This has coincided with a proliferation of interfaith and multifaith organisations and a growing academic literature on the subject. 'However, the evidence base explaining exactly why, how and in what

circumstances multi-religious cooperation can be effective is sparse' (Lyck-Bowen and Owen, 2019:23).

I originally wanted to do a project that filled this gap within the formal humanitarian arena's understanding of, and the academic literature on, the potential opportunities and challenges associated with interfaith cooperation in fragile contexts. I wanted to conduct research that went further than the narrow and instrumental engagement of the formal humanitarian sphere, who engage primarily with IFIOs and world faith leaders, to include a focus on LFAs and LCFs and their varied expressions of faith and lived experiences.

This research was funded by the Economic and Social Science Research Council (ESRC), delivered through the University College London, Bloomsbury and East London ESRC Doctoral Training Partnership (UBEL-DTP), for a co-funded studentship. This has been a constant theme throughout this research. The original project designed for this studentship was still collaborative, working with the IFIO World Vision to address a research topic of both theoretical and practical importance. An aim of this collaborative set up was to provide opportunities for me as a researcher to gain first-hand experience of work outside an academic environment. The process through which I arrived at this distinctive research project and how the award for a collaborative doctoral research project works in this case will be explored in more detail later in this chapter.

In recognition of the volatile and unpredictable nature of fragile contexts and their non-linear trajectory, and in keeping with OCHA's (2017) NWOW as a result of the WHS, at the time of designing my original project, World Vision had begun looking into how they can work differently to protect the most vulnerable in society (particularly children) in the increasing number of fragile contexts around the world. World Vision were working on a Fragile Context's Programming Approach (FCPA) (World Vision, 2022) to find ways to work 'in' fragility, to continue its work in responding to the basic needs of people affected by crises through aid delivery and basic service

provision, and to work 'on' fragility, to deal with the root causes of crises and the vulnerabilities that perpetuates them.

World Vision's understanding of working 'in' and 'on' fragility responds to the calls of the humanitarian arena to bridge humanitarian-development-peacebuilding divides in order to respond to the varied and changing needs of people living in fragile contexts. Working 'in' and 'on' fragility is indicative of a desire for transformational resilience. While working 'in' fragile contexts requires helping people adapt to their changing circumstances, working 'on' fragility hopes for deeper, transformational changes to some of the poorest contexts in the world. This in turn requires the collective action specified in OCHA's (2017) NWOW and localisation to strengthen local responses to crises, making communities and individuals resilient to shocks, for more sustainable solutions to fragility.

The original project for my doctoral research planned to consider whether local interfaith cooperation, from collaborations between faith leaders to friendships between people of different faith, religious and/or spiritual traditions, could create a socially cohesive foundation, upon which humanitarian, development and peacebuilding activities could be carried out in a way that is more flexible and effective in fragile contexts. This research would have been relevant to the work of World Vision as they developed their FCPA seeking to work more flexibly to meet the needs of people, particularly children, living in fragile contexts.

The primary research question of this project was already set out before data collection: what is the role of faith actors, from different faith traditions, for creating a cohesive foundation for building transformational resilience in fragile contexts? The sub-research questions included: what role do LFAs play across the humanitarian-development-peacebuilding nexus? What role does local interfaith cooperation play in promoting transformational resilience in fragile contexts? what role do external actors play in local interfaith interventions within the humanitarian-development-peacebuilding nexus in fragile contexts? How can local interfaith cooperation, trust and reciprocity

facilitate increasingly effective humanitarian action that is ‘as local as possible and as international as necessary’?

This project was going to contribute to World Vision’s knowledge base and fill a gap in the academic literature on this topic. Doing a case study would have allowed for an in-depth exploration, from multiple perspectives, of a particular project, policy, institution or system in a real-life context, in all its complexity (Simons, 2014:455). A mixed-methods approach was going to be carried out to triangulate findings of a project that sought to work with and balance the perspectives of LFAs and LCFs and the IFIO World Vision. This research project intended to carry out a survey to collect quantitative data on a community scale, as well as semi-structured interviews with local faith leaders and members of the LCF and key informant interviews with World Vision staff to collect qualitative data for a more in-depth, richer understanding of processes of local interfaith cooperation and their impact on programming in fragile contexts. Observation would have also constituted an important method for this research project not only in terms of the community but also in terms of the work of World Vision.

Through conversations with World Vision, it had been decided that the case study would take place in Ethiopia. This context was chosen because it was on the list of OECD fragile states and somewhere in which World Vision worked. Ethiopia was a context that World Vision had identified as having significant pockets of fragility and being ‘very low’ or ‘low’ developing. Everything was arranged for me to fly to Addis Ababa, to start my fieldwork, in collaboration with the NO World Vision Ethiopia. However, as will be explained in more detail in the coming sections, due to the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic my fieldwork was cancelled the day I was due to fly and was not able to be re-arranged or re-started.

As a result, I had to adapt my project to both the constraints imposed upon me as a researcher as a result of COVID-19 pandemic, and to respond to an emerging global humanitarian crisis. While the COVID-19 pandemic led to a number of significant changes in focus and methodology for this

project, many of which will be explored in the coming sections, there are some common themes between the original project I planned, and the project presented here in this thesis.

The starting point and background for both projects are the same. As humanitarian crises around the world become increasingly frequent, complicated, and protracted, the international community has recognised the need to find a new way of working for more effective humanitarian responses which build more resilient communities. The impetus on finding a new way of working has seen the formal humanitarian sphere, as well as academia, start to engage with a range of actors across the humanitarian-development-peacebuilding nexus, with an emphasis on local actors and those from the Global South. This has created space to (re)engage LFAs and LCFs who have been key players in responding to crises such as Ebola in recent years.

Several avenues of interest also remained constant during the adaption of the original project. For example, the importance of a broad definition of fragility, to encompass the wide range of contexts in which people suffer the effects of fragility, is a key tenant of both projects. Localisation in general and local faith engagement specifically have also been constant interests for both projects. This includes the relationships between IFIOs and LFAs/LCFs within a shifting humanitarian arena. While in the original project, I was planning to tell part of this story through a focus on LFAs and LCFs and their relationships with IFIOs, due to the constraints imposed upon this project by the COVID-19 pandemic, this project focused more on IFIOs modalities for engaging, supporting and being led by LFAs and LCFs for their faith-inspired responses to COVID-19.

A research project in a global pandemic

While there were common strands between my original doctoral project, which informed and was adapted into the project presented here, the COVID-19 pandemic irrevocably changed the trajectory of this research. In March 2020, I was preparing for a fieldwork trip to Ethiopia to collect data for my original project exploring the roles of interfaith cooperation as a cohesive foundation for building transformational resilience in fragile contexts. However, on the day I was due to fly, March 10th,

2020, my principal contact at World Vision UK called to deliver the news that the World Vision partnership had issued a total travel ban that morning due to the threat posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. As a result, just hours before my flight, I was no longer permitted to travel. This verdict was particularly final as my NGO visa was sponsored by World Vision Ethiopia who could no longer host me.

At the time, no one was sure how long the COVID-19 pandemic would last and whether the situation, and the resultant travel ban, would lift in the coming weeks. I continued to monitor the situation, which was getting worse, with the numbers of cases and deaths in the UK and around the world rising rapidly. It was clear that the COVID-19 pandemic was not going away any time soon. As a result, it was also clear that my original project was no longer feasible. The original project included a significant component which was dependent on in-person data collection, working with local communities who often do not have access to the internet. To build relationships of trust with local communities, to allow them to feel comfortable talking about sensitive issues of faith and social cohesion, requires in-person communication and contact often over a sustained period. The COVID-19 pandemic meant that such a methodology was not feasible.

While the situation was personally very disappointing, it became clear in the following weeks that the COVID-19 pandemic was intersecting in numerous ways with faith, religion, spirituality. Places of worship were becoming loci of infection and having to close. As a result, faith communities were having to change the way they worshipped, with services moving online, outside or being broken up into small groups in keeping with social distancing measures. Exceptional reports on the news showed priests baptising people through car windows with water guns to maintain social distancing (Associated Press, 2020).

While attention was originally being paid to the intersections between faith and COVID-19 in high-income countries as this is where the pandemic was initially most prevalent, my background in the field of Religion and Development/Humanitarianism led me to question what the impacts of the

COVID-19 pandemic would be on faith, religion, and spirituality, and communities of faith, in low-income and fragile contexts. Over the last decades, a growing literature on Religion and Development and Humanitarianism has evidenced faith and faith actors at various levels playing a vital role in the success or failure of development and humanitarian programs. It therefore followed that if the COVID-19 pandemic was impacting faith actors, communities, and life, then this may have an impact on their ability to respond to current and ongoing crises.

In the weeks that followed, reports began to emerge from low income and fragile contexts that faith actors at all levels had been at the forefront of responding to COVID-19 and its secondary impacts in contexts all over the world since the pandemic began. At the local level, examples emerged of LFAs and LCFs upholding their role as first responders. News reports cited many examples of LFAs and LCFs responding to COVID-19 and its impacts on vulnerable people. Local religious institutions and groups had been helping provide health care (Clarke, 2020) and spiritual support (Molina, 2020), feeding people and providing basic services (Dharra, 2020. Fraser, 2020. Gulf Today, 2020. Mint, 2020) as well as advocating for and supporting the most vulnerable (Swiatecki, 2020. Thomas, 2020).

IFIOs such as World Vision were also responding to COVID-19 and its secondary impacts through faith-inspired and non-faith-inspired programming, as well as advocating for improved faith literacy within the highest echelons of the Humanitarian sphere (see Buddhist Global Relief, 2021. Caritas Internationalis, 2021. Catholic Relief Services, 2021. ChristianAid, 2020. Episcopal Relief and Development, 2021. International Orthodox Christian Charities,2021. Islamic Relief Services, 2020. Norwegian Church Aid, 2020. Reliefweb, 2020i. Tearfund, 2021. The Lutheran World Federation, 2020. World Vision, 2020i). World Vision DRC was among the first of 17 countries to be selected by the partnership to implement their faith-inspired response to COVID-19. By March 2020, World Vision was already working to adapt Channels of Hope (CoH), their F&D methodology which builds the capacity of faith leaders to respond to various kinds of development and humanitarian crises, for

COVID-19. The training module was completed and shared, and the module was field tested in World Vision DRC and World Vision Angola.

In April 2020, in response to a growing awareness of the significance and relevance of studying the intersections of faith, religion, spirituality, COVID-19 and humanitarian responses, I convened remotely with my academic supervisor and with my primary contact at World Vision UK to propose a new project on faith-inspired responses to COVID-19.

The COVID-19 pandemic has undisputedly affected this research project, and in turn provided its primary focus. While the COVID-19 pandemic has been restrictive for this project in many ways, it has also meant that it can track the developments in responses to COVID-19, giving it a unique vantage point of IFIO's work responding to the virus and its secondary impacts. Being able to track IFIO's responses to COVID-19 also gave me access to lessons learnt as and when they arose.

A global humanitarian crisis

SARS-CoV2, the severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2, is the pathogen causing the Coronavirus Disease-2019 (COVID-19). It was first detected in the City of Wuhan, China, in December 2019 (Manda, 2021:254). It soon spread around the world igniting global panic and was declared a Public Health Emergency of International Concern on January 30th, 2020 by the World Health Organisation (WHO).

The COVID-19 pandemic is primarily a health emergency; an infectious disease causing respiratory illnesses that can vary in severity. The virus is potentially fatal, particularly for the elderly and those with underlying health issues. According to the WHO (2021), figures suggest that over 82 million people had been infected by COVID-19 as of December 31st, 2020. It is also estimated that 1.8 million people around the world had died from the virus at the time of writing.

However, as witnessed during previous epidemics and pandemics (Evans, 1988. Kleinman and Watson, 2006. Madhav et al, 2017. Qui et al, 2018) COVID-19 has proved to be much more than a

health emergency; with serious social, political and economic consequences. As well as the immediate health-related concerns of COVID-19, lockdown measures to stem the spread of the virus have created additional livelihood challenges. The COVID-19 pandemic and its secondary impacts have had a devastating impact on the lives of many of the poorest, and most vulnerable people and communities. The number of global 'excess deaths', directly and indirectly caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, is much higher than the 1.8 million previously cited. In this context, 'excess deaths' refers to deaths beyond what would be expected under 'normal conditions'. Therefore, the WHO (2021) estimates that at least 3.3 million people have died as result of COVID-19 at the time of writing.

While the COVID-19 pandemic initially hit high-income contexts hardest, such as Europe and North America, COVID-19 later spread indiscriminately around the world, including to low-income and fragile contexts. Countries already facing humanitarian crises are especially vulnerable to viruses and diseases and do not necessarily have the capacity to adequately respond to them (Alawa et al, 2020:1). In many conflict-affected contexts, health infrastructure is limited, if not non-existent, making the kind of respiratory care and cardiac resuscitation necessary in some cases of COVID-19 difficult (San Lau et al, 2020:647. Alawa et al, 2021:2). Similarly, in many humanitarian contexts, the living situations of many people make the social distancing and good hygiene practices necessary to stem the spread of the virus difficult (San Lau et al, 2020:647). Refugees and Internally Displaced Peoples (IDPs), often living in informal settings, with high population densities, over crowdedness and limited Water And Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) facilities, are vulnerable to the spread and effects of COVID-19 (Alawa et al, 2021:2). In general, a lack of political stability, conflict, weak governance, limited health systems and resources constrain the ability of governments and communities in these contexts to respond to a threat like COVID-19 (San Lau et al:647).

Despite the potentially disproportionate impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on fragile contexts, and the Humanitarian Response Plan for COVID-19 delivered by OCHA, which outlined a framework to address COVID-19 in humanitarian contexts, humanitarian actors were

‘slow to coordinate a multifaceted response, and few policies [were] put forth to develop sufficient test-treat-isolate capacity and to equip medical facilities and health personnel with the resources necessary to care for patients with COVID-19’ (Alawa et al, 2021:1).

This slow response has exposed significant gaps in the humanitarian sphere’s response plan to the pandemic.

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a devastating impact in the DRC and Indonesia. While the DRC, like many countries in sub-Saharan Africa, braced themselves for predicted high numbers of cases and deaths, in reality the caseload and proportion of deaths in sub-Saharan Africa accounted for 2.5 percent globally (Hategeka et al, 2021). By July 7th, 2021, only 43,333 cases and 973 deaths were recorded (Wild-Wood et al, 2021:10). From the January 3rd, 2020, till the December 10th, 2021, 59,851 confirmed cases were reported and 1,118 deaths (WHO, 2021). As of February 28th, 2022, 850,731 vaccine doses were administered (WHO, 2022).

Accurate figures of case loads and numbers of deaths are likely to be much higher due to limited government resources for monitoring and recording. Lower test rates may, for example, explain these low levels to some extent (Hategeka et al, 2021). Similarly, numbers of cases and deaths have varied significantly across such a large country. Some regions of the DRC, such as North-East Congo, were more badly hit because of the introduction of the more transmissible Delta variant from Uganda, entrenched due to a lack of available vaccines and high levels of vaccine hesitancy among the population. This led to a rise in cases and deaths (Wild-Wood et al, 2021:10) Despite some spikes in cases, in general, COVID-19 cases and deaths were relatively low in the DRC. As a result, often the myriad of other pressures of ongoing infectious diseases and instability appeared more pressing during the pandemic.

Nonetheless, on March 24th, 2020, the then President of the DRC, President Feix Tshisekedi, announced a state of emergency and instituted regional COVID measures including closing

markets, schools, universities and places of worship on a periodic basis. These prevention measures engendered serious social and economic effects in the DRC. The secondary impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic because of these state-led measures have been perhaps more severe than the health-related concerns of the virus. Most significantly, COVID-19 has caused a decline in labour and non-labour income in households in the DRC. This has led to harmful coping strategies, disruptions in goods and services markets as well as health and education services (Batana et al, 2021). These secondary impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic have led to an increase in poverty, food insecurity, hunger and levels of inequality (Batana et al, 2021).

Indonesia on the other hand has had much higher numbers of confirmed cases and deaths from COVID-19. From January 3rd, 2020, to December 10th, 2021, there has been 4,258,752 confirmed cases, and 143,923 deaths. The delta variant of COVID-19 escalated the crisis in Indonesia, causing a sharp increase in the number of cases. In July 2021, Indonesia was recording the highest number of new cases in the world (BMJ, 2021).

Indonesia too suffered from the secondary impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. The COVID-19 pandemic and accompanying lockdowns saw many people's hours cut, or pay reduced, putting financial pressure on many. This was accompanied by rising pressure on domestic life, intensifying the workloads of those who perform unpaid domestic work and housework. These pressures had a disproportionate impact on women (See Hill et al, 2020). While the Government of Indonesia were able to deliver several packages to respond to the economic downturn resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic, they did not adequately cover all groups. Vulnerable and marginalised groups, including women and persons with disabilities, were particularly hard hit by the primary and secondary impacts of the pandemic, and were most excluded from government policies (See Samudra and Setyonalun, 2020). However, Indonesia progressed further with their vaccine roll out with a total of 243,523,258 vaccine doses administered as of the December 7th, 2021 (WHO, 2021i).

Research on Practice

This project was possible thanks to an award from the Economic and Social Science Research Council (ESRC), delivered through the University College London, Bloomsbury and East London ESRC Doctoral Training Partnership (UBEL-DTP). The award was given for a co-funded studentship. The IFIO World Vision UK was the non-academic partner of this project and I maintained contact with staff at World Vision UK throughout the lifetime of this project, to ensure that my research continued to pursue areas of academic importance and remained relevant to their work. World Vision UK did not provide funding for this research project but provided in-kind support such as training and facilitating contact with key informants. Therefore, all the funding for this project was awarded by the ESRC, though the UBEL-DTP.

I came to this studentship through interest. I have always had a deep interest in Theology and Religious Studies. This is what led me to study it as part of my Undergraduate degree. However, while theology and faith/religion/spirituality have significant real-world impacts, I was also keen to study something with a more applied edge; with relevance beyond academia and knowledge production. This desire became focused on Development and Humanitarianism in the final year of my undergraduate degree after taking modules such as Religion and Development. Then, for my MPhil thesis in World Christianities – focusing on how Christianity is lived and embodied outside of Europe and North America - I chose to focus my work on how the beliefs and practices of the Ethiopian Tewahedo Church interact with the HIV & AIDs epidemic, particularly for women. This PhD project therefore presented an opportunity to follow my interests and engage in research that had a direct route to impacting Development and/or Humanitarian policy or practice, further solidified through its collaborative nature.

Applying for this studentship appealed to me because it was situated in the faith and development/humanitarian space, which corresponded with my interests, and from the outset it was in collaboration with a non-academic partner, with the aim of producing an academic piece of

work that remained relevant to the non-academic partner. World Vision UK was always the primary non-academic partner of this research, and this remained true throughout the life of this project, despite its adaptations. For the initial project, as already explored, there were some steers from World Vision International and World Vision UK, to situate the project in their FCPA, although final decisions were to be made by me.

While this research was for an academic doctoral thesis, the idea behind the collaborative funding was that it should be research that could be used by the partner organisation - in this case in thinking critically about their policies, approach, programming and so on. World Vision UK saw this as an opportunity to contribute to their knowledge hub.

This approach to research does risk the researcher getting pulled in opposite directions - policy research is different from academic research, even if there are clear overlaps. However, this was managed by an understanding from the outset that the thesis was an academic output, and that WV might ask for different sets of research outputs. From the start of this project, it was clear that the original piece of academic work was the primary and principal output of this collaborative funding.

Ultimately, the aim of the award for this research is to 'address a research topic of both theoretical and practical importance... the project should be both intellectually and practically...rigorous and should seek to have wider relevance than just the needs of the non-academic partner...' (UBEL DTP, 2021). Accordingly, I have conducted independent academic research that is situated in the organisation(s) I have been studying.

World Vision UK was quite involved in informing the design and set up of the original project and the one presented here, and practically facilitated this project's first steps. However, from the start of data collection I had little engagement with them until I reached out to present my findings in December 2021. I picked up engagement with World Vision International, and the South Asia & Pacific Regional Office to arrange a second case study, but again, once contact had been made there

was little involvement from World Vision in my project, beyond staff being key informants. As a result, World Vision was not involved in the analysis of the data collected for this project and was involved in setting up the data collection but not in the key informant interviews.

I did engage World Vision International during the writing up phase of this thesis, for some clarification on the organisational structure of the World Vision partnership. These interactions produced a moment of tension between me as the researcher and World Vision International. In particular, when I was consulting World Vision International around how to describe the work of World Vision and how best to outline their organisational structure, World Vision International staff didn't feel comfortable with my inclusion of a discussion on how World Vision is perceived externally, within communities and by partners, very differently depending on the context (Jennings et al, 2021:76). Specifically, they objected to my analysis that they are often perceived externally as operating predominantly in a particular Christian tradition, namely a Protestant-Christian tradition. World Vision International staff reiterated that they are non-denominational, information I have also included in the section below describing the World Vision partnership. However, I felt it was important to highlight this disparity between how World Vision sees itself, and how it is sometimes viewed externally, including by local partners. I felt this discussion had particular academic significance as it provides important context to a discussion in Chapter Four, about what impacts the relationships between IFIOs and local faith-inspired partners in different contexts. In the end, I made the executive decision to include this discussion. I felt that because the principal outcome of this collaboration was outlined clearly from the start of working together, for myself and World Vision, I was able to negotiate and manage these tensions successfully by keeping in mind the main goal of this project: a rigorous piece of academic work. It was clear for all stakeholders in this project that I, as the doctoral researcher, had final say on what was included, although I did of course listen and reflect on points made.

In fact, there were a number of instances, throughout the life cycle of this project, where I did successfully push back against steers from World Vision. Another tension, for example, arose when choosing a context for the initial project planned. Originally, the project was set out to look at the role of interfaith dialogue and cooperation for World Vision's responses in fragile contexts, using the FCPA as a starting point. The FCPA recognises that definitions of fragility, and how we respond to and in fragility, need to look beyond fragile states, to fragile contexts. In World Vision's FCPA, they highlight a number of fragile states, and countries with pockets of fragility, that they consider relevant to the FCPA. However, it was clear that World Vision's research in this area tended to focus on the contexts they identify as the most fragile: fragile states. For many of the reasons explored in the literature review of this thesis, I believed there was an academic justification for focusing on a context with pockets of fragility, to expand the academic and practitioner knowledge base on humanitarianism in fragile contexts.

When I raised my preferences for doing this research in a context World Vision identified within their FCPA as having pockets of fragility, I was met with some resistance. This caused significant delays to choosing the fieldwork context for the original project for this doctoral research. So much so that I did not have an agreed context at the time of my upgrade paper. While ultimately the contexts for this research were my decision as the primary and only researcher, I wanted World Vision's buy-in, particularly because I needed the support of the NO from the context in which I chose to do fieldwork and that required World Vision UK, as my primary contact, to put me in touch with them. I chose a number of contexts that were identified in the FCPA as having significant pockets of fragility that I thought would work for this project more broadly for this research and presented them, and my reasoning for how this focus could expand the knowledge production of the FCPA, as well as the academic literature on this topic. Ultimately, I convinced all stakeholders on this approach and its utility, and, through consultation, we decided on Ethiopia given that I had some pre-existing knowledge of the faith landscape there from previous studies.

I think both of the instances explored above, highlight my critical distance from World Vision. While I was working closely with them, as the non-academic partner of this project, and sought to ensure that the findings of this research remained relevant to them, I remained first and foremost an academic researcher during the lifetime of this project. As a result, while in the coming sections I will detail my experience as in some ways an Insider and Outsider of both communities of faith and communities of practice, I always felt that I was doing research from an Etic standpoint: from without the community. This is especially the case as I have not worked in the aid sector before, beyond research and policy. While I had one foot in practice, I prioritised the academic integrity of this project, and engaged critically with the work of World Vision. I felt that this was important for this thesis but also to ensure that my research provided robust learnings for World Vision. That being said, whilst I possessed critical distance, the relationship with World Vision also brought a closeness and an ability to discuss and negotiate that wouldn't have been possible if I had been an Outsider-Outsider.

This distinctive positionality, which will be discussed in more detail later in this chapter, provides broader benefits for research on (I)NGOs and (I)FIOs. Mosse and Lewis (2006) have critiqued the hereto instrumental, populist and/or deconstructivist approach to NGO research. Typically, research on NGOs has by and large been produced by insiders, those who work in the aid sector (Nauta, 2006:1). Research done predominantly by insiders, can produce an echo chamber, justifying the way that NGOs work. The aim of much research on NGOs, done by those who work for them, is to promote their work in a public relations capacity. This kind of research constrains a critical understanding of their work. While this threatens to undermine processes of mutual learning, it is often overlooked because despite the populist nature of such research, it is often presented as 'scientific' and 'neutral'. This can lead to the perpetuation of many of the myths of NGOs and their work. My position, as an Insider and an Outsider in the Aid and Development world, but doing

research from an Etic standpoint, puts me in a distinctive position to avoid some of the challenges outlined by Mosse and Lewis (2006), to produce a critical analysis of NGOs, or in this case IFIOs, while ensuring that the findings remain relevant to the world of practice.

Nonetheless, the kinds of tensions detailed above, that I experienced as part of this academic-practitioner relationship, is why the interfaces between research and practice in relation to NGOs remains a contentious issue within Development and Humanitarian Studies. Some argue that there are clear divides between academics and practitioners that are impossible to overcome (Aniekwe et al, 2012). For example, academic institutions and INGOs are structurally and organisationally different (Russel, 2021). This can lead to tensions between academics and practitioners as highlighted in this section. These tensions may arise due to differences in relation

‘...to knowledge transfer, difference in knowledge types, difficulties in knowledge production, and the method of influence—whether diffusion, whereby academic knowledge is transmitted to practitioners; or utilization, a political interaction in which the content and focus of research are decided by those who have access to information and control the agenda...’ (Sher-Hadar and Bar Giora, 2019:170)

I experienced tensions and delays because of my collaboration with World Vision UK. As I was the sole investigator for this research, consulting with World Vision UK to ensure the project’s relevance to their work, I was able to make decisions relatively autonomously and efficiently, albeit in accordance with SOAS’s Research Ethics Policy and Procedures. For my contacts at World Vision UK however, this project was not part of their official workload. It was therefore not a priority for them in their busy work lives. Nevertheless, the feedback I elicited on the direction of my project and support required, to ensure that the work I was doing remained relevant to that of World Vision UK, was subject to multiple layers of sign off. Competing priorities and waiting for sign-off caused delays for this project in the design phase.

The difficulties of working across theory and practice were brought into sharp focus when deciding on a context for the original project. As well as the tensions between me as an academic, and my contacts at World Vision UK and International around choosing a context, there were also organisational differences that caused delays in this process. I was keen that the context for the research was decided upon collaboratively, to ensure that the findings of the project remained relevant to the work of the World Vision partnership. This was also of practical importance as I would need to be hosted by a World Vision NO in the chosen context, who would need to accept and have the capacity to host me. This decision took a long time and faced numerous delays. The decentralised organisational structure of the World Vision partnership meant that while my primary contact at World Vision UK and I might have identified a relevant context efficiently, it was not confirmed until the primary contact at World Vision UK had contacted the relevant NO. As a result, I had to wait for information to filter through various layers of World Vision's decentralised organisational structure before I could use it to inform my project design.

As well as the potential tensions between academics and practitioners, some dislike the very concept of an academic-practitioner divide. They perceive the binary separation of academics and practitioners to be unrealistic. However, in practice, if not in theory, there is a great deal of overlap. Indeed, in the humanitarian sphere, there are many who adopt hybrid roles as academic-practitioners, working within academic institutions and for development/humanitarian organisations (Sher-Hadar and Giora, 2019:169). Several of them have been supportive of, and have informed the findings of, this project.

While there are challenges around academic and practitioner collaborations, working with World Vision UK did facilitate this project in many ways. Some of these will be explored in more detail in following sections. However, overarchingly, there is growing recognition of the importance of shared learning in the sector. More frequent, complicated and protracted humanitarian crises, and the humanitarian sphere's acknowledged failure to keep pace with the changing nature of disasters, has

emphasised the need for new knowledge, expertise and approaches for more effective humanitarian responses (Camburn, 2011. Aneja, 2016). Simultaneously, across the humanitarian sphere there is a persistent push for more evidence-based decision-making. Given the impetus on humanitarian practitioners to act quickly, they don't necessarily have the time to gather evidence to analyse and reflect upon. Similarly, humanitarian practitioners don't necessarily have the adequate research experience to 'conduct assessments, design program methodologies, capture evidence and measure impacts...' (InterActions, 2019:5). Academic-practitioner partnerships have been highlighted as a way to respond to these humanitarian needs (Russell, 2021).

Recognition of the advantages of academic-practitioner collaborations is evidenced through the increasing number of forums committed to exploring these relationships for more effective humanitarian responses. They include the Academic-Practitioner Forum which convened in 2019, supported by USAID and the Office of US Foreign Disaster Assistance, which brought together seventy participants; thirty-three from academic and research institutions and twenty-six from NGOs and donors, to facilitate systematic collaborations between academic and practitioners in the humanitarian sphere (InterAction, 2019). Similarly, the Rethinking Research Collaborative is an informal international network of academics, civil society organisations, social movements, INGOs and researchers to explore these collaborations for international development (Rethinking Research Collaborative, 2021).

The relevance of this research to both spheres – academic and practitioner – evidences the process of shared learning encapsulated within this project. For example, during conversations with key informants from a range of IFIOs, several of them indicated that they had been encouraged to reflect on their work in response to the questions I asked during semi-structured KIIs. Several key informants also stated that, during a very stressful period of time trying to respond to a range of crises including and during the COVID-19 pandemic, the KIIs presented an opportunity to talk through and reflect on their experiences which was beneficial for their well-being.

The level of interest from key informants and their wider organisations in this research and its topic also evidences the shared process of mutual learning through this project. This thesis makes an original contribution to the academic literature and produces relevant findings for the work of practitioners. Based on the conversations I had with key informants from both the World Vision NOs taken as primary case studies of this research – World Vision DRC (WV DRC) and Wahana Visi Indonesia (WV Indonesia) – both NOs asked me to produce country specific case studies of my findings as they pertain to their specific contexts. Producing a country specific report was actually part of the agreement between myself and WV Indonesia. I produced the report for their National Office, seeking feedback from my key informants from WV Indonesia before circulating it more widely to ensure that I was presenting their comments in a way they felt comfortable with. As well as summarising my findings, this report leveraged my position as an academic with some critical distance to World Vision, to produce some lessons learnt for faith-inspired engagement in the future. I was told by some key informants, that they were happy that I had elevated some of their criticisms of WV Indonesia's usually limited and slow faith-inspired responses so that the NO could learn from this.

I also presented my findings through an oral presentation to World Vision UK, as the primary contact for this work, in December 2021. Staff at World Vision UK were really engaged with my findings and I helped provide a short section highlighting their faith-inspired responses to COVID-19, based on my work, for a report by World Vision UK. I hope to send World Vision UK, International, WV DRC and WV Indonesia, as well as some of the other IFIOs I engaged with the full thesis once completed. I have also spoken to one key informant from a different IFIO about ways to publish my thesis for practitioners.

Other than the country specific report for WV Indonesia, arranged at the outset of my engagement with that National Office in particular, there was no formal expectation that I would disseminate my findings in a particular way or produce anything for World Vision to use. However, in keeping with

my desire for my research to impact policy and practice I was keen to disseminate my findings in ways that were accessible to IFIO staff. This is why I agreed to country specific reports for NOs and oral presentations and inputs into reports for World Vision UK. I am conscious, after delivering on these reports, how World Vision actors might use them, may be outside of what I intended these findings for which was mutual learning. For example, they might be used for/integrated into fundraising efforts or for donor reports. I was conscious of my role as an academic researcher, with some critical distance or Insider and Outsider status with the organisation, when writing reports to ensure that I presented my findings accurately. This was generally not a problem, as all the World Vision offices I engaged with gave me the freedom to produce whatever I wanted including learnings that engaged critically with their work, so there was little need for me to push back in reality.

Hilhorst and Ferf (2018) have said that it is the responsibility of researchers and funding partners to ensure research finds its key audience. To ensure the uptake of humanitarian research, messages and communications need to be tailored to the specific audience. In the case of this research project, I, as the researcher, and the ESRC as the funding partner, saw research uptake by humanitarian practitioners as a key and distinctive aim of this collaborative project. The constraints imposed upon this research by the COVID-19 pandemic made the target audience even more clearly encapsulated in IFIOs and international humanitarian practitioners.

This project worked with a non-academic partner, with the explicit desire to produce findings relevant to academia and practice, from the outset. The Grounded Theory Methodology chosen, allowed the research to follow avenues of interest to the researcher and to key informants who were also practitioners. This methodology, speaking to key informants on a regular basis, in real-time, allowed key informants to reflect on and adapt their work in real-time in response to KIIs. It was established from the outset of this project that different research outputs would be produced, an academic thesis but also communications for the World Vision partnership. All of above, speak to

the desire of this project to ensure uptake of this research, which was embedded into the research methodology of this project.

The academic-practitioner relationship at the centre of this research goes some way towards Hilhorst et al's (2021) calls to find ways to integrate research uptake into the objective and processes of this research, so that research can be more transformational.

Context: World Vision

The World Vision Partnership

World Vision today is a global, child-focused organisation, working in the fields of Development, Humanitarianism and Advocacy. As a child-focused organisation, World Vision sees children as the most vulnerable members of all communities. World Vision seeks to promote child well-being through recognising that children are part of families and communities who play an important role in child well-being. World Vision in recent years have promoted these ideas through their 'it takes a world' global advocacy campaign launched in 2016; reinforcing the fact that it takes the generosity of people around the world, and the efforts of local communities and families to improve the lives of children (WVI, 2021).

World Vision works in around 100 countries globally, coordinating more than 34,000 staff members, to support over 100 million vulnerable children and families (WVI, 2021i). World Vision projects cover a wide range of sectors. They deliver humanitarian responses that provide short-term relief in response to natural and man-made disasters, including food, shelter and medical care. World Vision also embark on longer-term projects which are based in communities for sustainable development. These activities may include WASH, education and agricultural projects. World Vision also engages in advocacy work at the national, regional and international levels, working with policymakers to make them aware of poverty, inequality and injustice, as well as the systems that sustain them.

The World Vision partnership is made up of various World Vision entities. A World Vision legal entity is registered, operates and employs staff in a given context. The Covenant of Partnership binds the various World Vision entities together as they agree to abide by common policies and standards. NOs hold each other to account through a system of peer review. In the Covenant of Partnership this is how the Elements of the Partnership are defined as:

- **World Vision Partnership:** World Vision uses this term to refer to the network of offices that make up World Vision worldwide. Any expression of ‘the World Vision ministry’ is connected in some way to the Partnership. It encompasses all offices which will be detailed below. World Vision is not a partnership in a legal sense, instead the word partnership is used in an informal sense, to refer to the organisation of World Vision around the world.
- **Global Centre (GC):** Within the federalist model of the World Vision Partnership, the Global Centre is the international office, operating from different locations across the Partnership. The Global Centre is the overall governing body of the World Vision partnership; with operational responsibility through the President for ‘stewarding’ all entities of the global partnership based on a defines set of reserved powers.
- **World Vision International (WVI):** This office is a legal entity, registered in the State of California in the USA. WVI provides the formal international structure for the whole World Vision Partnership through its council and board of directors.
- **World Vision International Council:** All entities within the partnership are represented on the Council. The WVI Council provides the structure for the wider Partnership. Meeting three times a year, the Council reviews the purpose and objectives of World Vision. They assess to what extent the Partnership’s objectives have been attained and make recommendations to the WVI Board in relation to policy.
- **World Vision International Board of Directors:** WVI is governed by the WVI Board of Directors which is outlined in the By-Laws. Members of the Board are appointed through a

process determined by the Partnership and the membership of the Board broadly reflects the wider Partnership.

- **Vision Fund International (VFI):** a subsidiary of WVI, VFI was established to manage and fund affiliated microfinance institutions. This World Vision entity is not particularly relevant to this thesis and so is not revisited.
- **Regional Offices (ROs):** These World Vision entities cover large areas of the world that World Vision operates in and delivers field programmes. Defined regions for World Vision are Middle East & Eastern Europe (MEERO), South Asia & Pacific (SAPO), East Asia (EASO), East Africa (EARO), West Africa (WARO), Southern Africa (SARO) and Latin America & Caribbean (LACRO).
- **Support Offices (SOs):** SOs such as World Vision UK, primarily focus on fundraising (private and grants) to 'support' the work of World Vision around the world.
- **Field Offices (FOs) or National Offices (NOs):** FOs are formally called NOs across the World Vision partnership, and this is the term used in this thesis as it is the terminology used by key informants from various World Vision national entities. They are registered in the host country as a branch of the main organisation. Often it is WVI that is the registered legal entity in many countries in which World Vision have NOs. The conditions and categories of membership are described in the By-Laws of WVI and all national entities act with the guidance of the National Board or Advisory Council. There are different kinds of NOs. They can be intermediate stage field offices with a separate board of directors. They can also be interdependently national registered offices who are autonomous in internal decisions but expected to coordinate with WVI and bound by the Covenant of Partnership. The two primary case studies of this thesis, the NOs WV DRC and WV Indonesia, are the latter.

Evidently, the World Vision Partnership is made by of many different entities all working under the World Vision Partnership umbrella. The above highlights how different entities within the Partnership operate in different ways. For example, there are significant differences between the

roles of WV SOs, like WV UK, whose primary role is fundraising and supporting national entities, and NOs who directly implement programming. Not only this, but NOs can also differ significantly in terms of operations depending on the context. Therefore, discussions around how World Vision, as an IFIO, has engaged local faith-inspired partnerships and programs to respond to COVID-19, depends on the World Vision entity being discussed. As a result, this thesis recognises the importance of specificity when describing and analysing the work of a given World Vision entity during the COVID-19 pandemic. In this thesis, when the term World Vision is used, it refers to the whole of the World Vision partnership including all of its entities. The name of the specific entity - WVI, WV DRC, WV Indonesia and so on - will be used when referring to a specific entity.

World Vision as a Faith-Inspired Organisation

World Vision is an openly Christian organisation and its faith identity seeks to guide its work and how it operates at all levels of the organisation (Jennings et al, 2021:75). The World Vision Partnership has always been a Christian Organisation since its foundation by Bob Pierce, who had strong religious convictions. World Vision has six key objectives for connecting its Christian identity and witness with its development, humanitarian and advocacy work (Jennings et al, 2021:75). Firstly, World Vision seeks to reinforce the organisation's Christian identity, foundations and witness. Secondly, they try to help employees ensure that their work and life is centred around Christ. Their third objective is engaging supporters and churches, while the fourth relates to making sure that children and young people can experience the love of God and their neighbours. Objective five is to promote inter-faith cooperation and finally, the sixth objective is to support a global movement of prayer. Jennings et al (2021:76-77) found that, with some exceptions where the expression of Christian identity for context specific reasons was more muted, staff across World Vision had a clear understanding of the organisation's faith-identity which was a motivation for their work and a way of understanding their development mandate.

While World Vision perceives itself to be a non-denominational Christian organisation, Jennings et al (2021:75) suggest that World Vision is perceived externally, within communities and by partners, very differently depending on the context (Jennings et al, 2021:76). They are often perceived externally as operating predominantly in a particular Christian tradition, namely a Protestant-Christian tradition. This can create points of difference between World Vision and local communities, which risks engendering distrust and suspicion. Jennings et al (2021:77) highlight some of the potential implications of this tension between how World Vision's faith identity is perceived internally and externally. For example, Jennings et al (2021:77) highlight that in several Christian Orthodox communities in which World Vision are operational, such as Ethiopia, they witnessed community members' suspicion that World Vision would use development activities to proselytise and engage in evangelical activities. How World Vision's Christian identity is perceived within local communities has the potential to have real implications for engagement with, and the success of, World Vision's programming. It also threatens to weaken World Vision's messaging on key issues as staff feel unable to speak freely and it can limit the reach of their work. This is an uncomfortable reality for some staff working within certain World Vision entities who do not see this as aligned with how the organisation perceives itself internally as non-denominational.

More generally, Jennings et al (2021:76) found that World Vision staff across numerous contexts felt they clearly understood the faith identity of World Vision and explicitly defined their work in relation to it. They felt that the faith identity and principles of World Vision were a significant motivator for their work, contributing to their understanding of why their work is important. While many staff, according to Jennings et al (2021:77), explicitly expressed their faith identity and that of World Vision, the extent to which it is publicised differs depending on the context. For some NOs, conscious decisions are made to promote their development/humanitarian identity over their faith identity to 'allow for the creation of shared values across and between all communities' (Jennings et al, 2021:77). Indeed, these fluctuations were evidenced in this research. While both NOs; in the DRC and Indonesia, were proud of and very open about their Christian identity, the extent to which they

led with their faith identity differed. WV DRC led with their faith identity, whereas staff from WV Indonesia felt they had to be more sensitive about how they presented themselves.

WV DRC and WV Indonesia

I engaged with key informants from across the World Vision partnership, as well as from a wide range of IFIOs across the F&D landscape. However, I engaged in-depth with two World Vision NOs in particular; World Vision Democratic Republic of Congo (WV DRC) and Wahana Visi Indonesia (WV Indonesia). WV DRC was the first NO I engaged with. As a result, it is the primary case study of this thesis. WV Indonesia was engaged later in the project and so presents a secondary case study. While both NOs have a long history of engaging with faith, religion and spirituality, their F&D investments have looked, and continue to be, quite different. This is undoubtedly because of quite different faith and humanitarian landscapes, geographies and sociohistorical contexts. The F&D engagements of both NOs will be explored in more detail in the coming chapters through the lens of F&D responses to COVID-19. However, this section will briefly give some context to the NOs and countries in which they are situated. While it would be possible to write much more on these two contexts, this section is limited to a brief exploration of the humanitarian (health) and faith contexts of the two countries and how they intersect.

WV DRC

WV DRC was my first contact point and has been operational since 1984, when World Vision, USAID and local churches came together to provide food for vulnerable families. Since then, their operations have shifted from primarily short-term relief activities to more long-term sustainable development work (WVI, 2021iii). Today, WV DRC delivers transformational development and humanitarian relief programs covering sectors such as child protection, health and nutrition, education, WASH, livelihoods and resilience, food aid, psychosocial support and the reintegration of displaced people (WVI, 2021iv).

The Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) is the second largest country in Africa. Despite the DRC's vast natural resources, poverty rates remain significantly high in the DRC (The World Bank, 2021). The World Bank (2021) suggests that as of 2018, around 73 percent of people in the DRC lived on less than \$1.90 a day, which is the international poverty rate. In real terms, this means that one in six people living in poverty in Sub-Saharan Africa live in the DRC; the equivalent of around 60 million people. The DRC is 175th out of 189 on the 2020 Human Development Index.

Competition, both internally and externally, for the DRC's natural resources, severe poverty, the gradual collapse of the state, its functions and the formal economy over 40 years, have all contributed to and were impacted by the conflict in the DRC, which has been called Africa's 'first world war' (Clark, 2002 cited in Baaz and Stern, 2008:62). The DRC has been suffering from internal conflict and political instability for many years. The First Congo War (1996-1997) and the Second Congo War (1998-2003) may be over, but violence still remains a part of daily life in the DRC (Le Roux et al, 2020:2). As recently as 2016, conflict ignited in the Kasai region of the DRC. Between 2016 and 2017, a local dispute between a chief and the national government led to out and out conflict and the creation of militias and counter-militias which began attacking people along ethnic lines (Shaw, 2018). While the militias have now been formally disbanded, ethnic and political tensions persist leading to ad hoc bouts of violence.

Estimates for the number of deaths resulting from such prolonged conflict in the DRC vary, but they suggest around 4-5 million people have been killed, with millions more displaced (Baaz and Stern, 2008: 58. Le Roux et al, 2020:2). The conflict and violence experienced in the DRC is characterised by rebel groups and militias and they have come to be synonymous with particularly brutal forms of sexual violence and violence against women and unspeakable acts of violence (HRW, 2002.

Horwood, 2007. Omanyondo et al, 2005. Le Roux et al, 2020:2). During the COVID-19 pandemic, six armed groups or more were active in the DRC, presenting perhaps a more significant and immediate threat than the health concerns of COVID-19 (Wild-Wood et al, 2021:8).

As well as poverty and instability, the DRC is also battling numerous diseases and infections that threaten the lives of children and families, including COVID-19. Malaria and Cholera continue to pose a significant threat to people's lives, and many are still living with the consequences of the HIV & AIDs crisis (Wild-Wood et al, 2021:8-10) One of the most significant threats to the health of the Congolese population is the Ebola virus. In February 2021, the DRC faced its 12th outbreak of the Ebola virus disease (EVD) lasting until May 2021. The outbreak of Ebola in July 2019 was declared a public health emergency of international concern by the WHO (Reid, 2019).

When the COVID-19 pandemic hit the DRC, it emerged in a country whose health facilities were already struggling to deal with the health concerns detailed above. Health care in the DRC is not guaranteed for every citizen. The instability of years of conflict has undermined the DRC's ability to sustain and improve healthcare facilities over decades as has long-lasting poverty and a lack of efficiency within the health care system itself (Lateef, 2021). The health care system works in a four-level pyramid structure. It starts at the first level with community health centres for basic treatment, staffed by nurses. The second level are centres for general physicians' practices and the third level is regional hospitals for more specialised treatment. The fourth and highest level of health care facilities in the DRC are university hospitals. While there have been some improvements in the health system – increases in vaccination rates and slow but steady rises in healthcare funding – healthcare facilities remain chronically understaffed due to a lack of health care workers, limiting access to healthcare. According to Bersch (2021) at the Borgen Project, per 10,000 people in the DRC there are only 0.28 doctors and 1.19 nurses and midwives. The health workers that are active in the DRC are concentrated in the capital and big cities. In more rural and remote regions of the DRC, access to health care is extremely limited. Healthcare worker shortages in the DRC poses a significant obstacle to effectively dealing with a public health crisis like the COVID-19 pandemic. Not only does the lack of health care workers and resources limit peoples access to treatment, but the kind of activities required for broader public health measures, such as disseminating accurate information around the spread of the virus and promoting health behaviours, are limited too.

There is evidently an important role for NGOs to play in filling the gaps in the DRC's current healthcare system. Indeed, while the government in the DRC funds and controls the public health care system, it is already aided by NGOs and receives significant funding from USAID. Similarly, FIOs and religious institutions currently play a critical role in providing healthcare in the DRC (see Schmidt et al, 2008. Lipsky, 2011. Seay, 2013). Beyond the practical provision of healthcare in the DRC it is difficult to disentangle faith, religion and spirituality from health. Forms of faith-healing, referring to a particular set of Pentecostal-Charismatic beliefs, functions alongside bio-medical treatment for illness (Wild-Wood et al, 2021:4). Illness is often attributed to a social cause, and given that faith, religion and spirituality in the DRC are an important part of social life, a spiritual remedy to illness is often sought, instead of or as well as a biomedical one (Wild-Wood et al, 2021:7).

The overwhelming majority of people living in the DRC adhere to a faith, religious or spiritual tradition which is reflective of sub-Saharan Africa more broadly. As Ellis and Ter Haar (1998, 2004, 2007) have argued on multiple occasions, it is impossible to understand social or political phenomenon in sub-Saharan Africa without accounting for the roles of religion, faith and spirituality. Underlying their work is a critique of models that seek to understand the relationship between religion and politics through a structural distinction between the visible and material world and the invisible world.

The struggles faced by the people in the DRC intersect with faith, religion and spirituality in various ways. The intertwining of faith, religion and spirituality with conflict, development and humanitarianism is unavoidable given the prominent space in which faith, religion and spirituality inhabit in Congolese society, albeit it within a secular state:

'In the DRC, and in most African countries, religion is present everywhere, in every conversation, in every meeting. God is invoked for everything. His blessings are seen everywhere even when one is in a dire situation. New names for children are given that

reflect the way parents see the divine presence in their family or lives. Names like Plamedi (Plan Merveilleux de Dieu), Glodi (Gloire a Dieu), and many more are formed by contraction, in order to express a Christian wish or desire, or prayer. Such names have become popular in the DRC' (Cicura, 2018:480).

Wild-Wood (2008:7) highlights how a sense of corporate belonging, in keeping with the African proverb of 'being-in-relation'; Mutu ni Watu (a person is people), is central to the identity of many Congolese. One way in which this need is met in the DRC, is through belonging to a community of faith.

Most people in the DRC are Christian, almost 80 percent or even higher, with a significant Muslim population of around 10 percent. Indigenous Religions are also practiced by another 10 percent of the population (Le Roux et al, 2020:2. Wild-Wood et al, 2021:7). However, there is not a lot of information, or consensus, around religious affiliation in the DRC. Many people may affiliate with various religions and faith and spiritual traditions and their affiliations can change over their lifetimes (Wild-Wood et al, 2021:7) Like many contexts in Africa, the faith landscape and the interactions between faith, religion, spirituality and society in the DRC have been shaped by indigenous African religions, as well as the later introduction of Christianity by colonial powers from Europe, and of Islam by traders and conquerors (see Cicura, 2018). More recent movements of people through migration and displacement also have shaped and continue to impact the faith landscape in the DRC (See Wild-wood, 2008).

Religion, faith and spirituality are 'engaged in the mission of peace and reconciliation' in the DRC, while also being implicated as a driving force of violence and conflict (Cicura, 2018:480). The religiosity of people in the DRC means that religion, faith and spirituality play a prominent role in the public sphere and in civil society activities and religious institutions and faith leaders remain hugely influential. Indeed, Le Roux et al (2020:2) highlight that religious institutions, especially in the eastern parts of the DRC which have been particularly impacted both by conflict and by

development and humanitarian crises like Ebola, are some of the last functioning institutions able to support communities materially and spiritually.

Faith, religion and spirituality have also been important coping strategies for civilians, including victims of sexual violence in the DRC (see Smigelsky, 2017), as well as for soldiers and combatants (see Wabule and Tarusarira, 2019). As a result, there is increasing interest in the roles that faith, religion and spirituality can play in transformational development programs and humanitarian responses to deal with the root causes of the poverty and instability experienced in the DRC (see Maman et al, 2009. La Roux et al, 2020).

WV Indonesia

In many ways Indonesia presents a context that contrasts with the DRC as the geographic, faith and humanitarian landscapes are very different. WV Indonesia's history and current standing in Indonesia is also quite different to that of WV DRC. WV Indonesia has been operational in the country since the late 1960s, moving its head office to Jakarta in 1979 as operations grew. WV Indonesia began in the 1960s and 1970s by supporting children through children's homes around the country.

Since the start of the 1970s, WV Indonesia have enacted a more community development (CD) approach; empowering communities and their children through more integrated support including education, health, income generation and infrastructure projects. WV Indonesia's CD approach has since influenced the wider partnership. WV Indonesia has been working in Indonesia since the 1980s through a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Social Affairs Ministry. Since the 1990s WV Indonesia has focused on longer-term projects in a bid to transform the lives of the poor through their Area Development Program (ADP). An important part of WV Indonesia's work is also providing relief and reconstruction support in response to various natural disasters (WVI, 2021v).

Indonesia has made impressive progress towards poverty reduction since the late 1990s, cutting the poverty rate in half since 1999 (The World Bank, 2021i). However, Indonesia continues to face development challenges, not least because of the COVID-19 pandemic. The World Bank (2021i) estimated that between March and September 2020, in the initial months of the pandemic, poverty increased nationally from 9.78 percent to 10.19 percent, meaning the number of poor people in the country increased from 26.42 million to 27.55 million.

Indonesia, like many countries in the region, is extremely vulnerable to natural disasters. Over 97 percent of people living in Indonesia inhabit areas that are prone to disasters (UNFPA, 2021). The effects of the climate crisis, environmental degradation and rapid urbanisation augments the existing risks of disaster (USAID, 2021). The country regularly responds to drought, earthquakes, flooding, landslides, tsunamis and volcanic eruptions (USAID, 2021).

A significant humanitarian crisis occurring due to a natural disaster in recent memory was the Indian Ocean Tsunami in 2004 which killed more than 130,000 people in Indonesia and caused widespread destruction. Another significant disaster was the eruption of Mt. Merapi in 2010, leading to 386 deaths and widespread displacement of over 300,000 people (USAID, 2021). These events came after decades of violent conflict between the central government a regional separatist movement in Indonesia (Feener, 2021:40).

Indonesia presents a particular challenge for humanitarian responders because many parts of Indonesia are difficult to access. This can make getting assistance to those areas difficult. This was brought into sharp focus in 2019 when an outbreak of circulating vaccine derived polio virus (cVDPV1) was identified by the Government of Indonesia in the remote Yahukimo district of the Papua Province. While the outbreak consisted of only one case and two contacts, the global push for the eradication of polio and the difficulty in accessing this area – often only possible by air – made this outbreak a public health emergency of international concern (UNICEF, 2019:2).

In comparison to the DRC, Indonesia's health care system is far more comprehensive. However, the COVID-19 pandemic tested it. Mehendradhata et al (2021) found that current levels of medical staff were insufficient in the face of the increase in demand caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. They have found the Indonesian healthcare system to be wanting in many areas such as fragility of medical supply chains and depleted medical supplies.

While the DRC and Indonesia present disparate contexts, just like in the DRC, faith, religion and spirituality play an important role in people's lives in Indonesia and intersect, in various ways, with humanitarian processes. Like in the DRC faith, religion and spirituality are integral to many people's daily lives in Indonesia:

'Religion plays an important role in the everyday life of the Indonesian people, as well as in the life of the nation. It is part of an individual's personal identity, ethnic identity and political identity, as well as of the nation's identity. Indonesia is in reality a religiously diverse country, with a wealth of religions and beliefs, although the vast majority of its people (around 90 per cent) profess to be Muslim' (Colbran, 2010:678).

Unlike the DRC, Indonesia is not a Christian majority country. Instead, Indonesia has a majority Muslim population. In fact, Indonesia is the largest Muslim country in the world in terms of absolute number of adherents (Fair et al, 2020:281). While Indonesia is a Muslim-majority country, Indonesia also has a significant non-Muslim minority consisting of different faith groups. Indonesia is an archipelago encompassing tens of thousands of islands and is, as a result, comprised of diverse religious, ethnic and linguistic groups (Hoon, 2017:476). As a result, building the nation of Indonesia has been a difficult process with the impact of this still felt today. The complexity of this journey of nation building can be seen through the lens of faith, religion and spirituality. When the nation of Indonesia was born in 1928 it had a difficult task in creating an 'imagined community' and state identity that unifies all Indonesians despite them speaking different languages, identifying with

different ethnicities, and following diverse faith, religious and spiritual traditions (Hoon, 2017:475. Lukito, 2018:646).

Indonesia is a secular state, and is considered a democratic country, holding free elections with integrated hand-overs of political power since 1988 (Fair et al, 2020:281). In the nation's 1945 constitution, it presents a vision of a nation based on 'Belief in Almighty God'. While this statement promotes monotheism, it also promotes neutrality and tolerance towards diverse faith, religious and spiritual traditions (Colbra, 2010:678). Hoon (2021) details how Pancasila – often perceived as the state ideology - which translates as the Five Principles and is the preamble to the constitution, is an important part of this unification process, promising a domain in which faiths, religions and spiritualities can evolve and publicly define and maintain social ethics (Hoon, 2021:476). The constitution protects the Freedom of Religion or Belief, also acknowledged in a human rights law in Indonesia (Colbran, 2010:678). As a result, Indonesia has long presented itself as a bastion of tolerance towards diverse faiths, religions and spiritualities (Colbran, 2020:678). Indonesia has, in recent decades, also been held up by the international community as an example of a 'moderate' Muslim country, which is tolerant of other faiths, religions and spiritualities.

In reality, the imperative to build a sense of secular nationalism, which has been inherited from Western colonialism, has often created tensions with theocratic-orientated religiously-inspired political ideologies. These tensions between a secular nationalist vision of an independent Indonesia, and the largely Muslim identity of the country, continue to be lived out. Feener (2021) highlights how these tensions are visible in the humanitarian space in response to the 2004 tsunami in Indonesia. Feener (2021) suggests that the Aceh province in Indonesia, particularly hard hit by the 2004 tsunami and the preceding conflict, was going through a process of social transformation at the time of the disaster. Contemporary Islamic ideologies, geared towards a vision of the future and a new society according to Islamic beliefs and practices aimed at helping Muslims in this life and the next, worked through the state and its desire for 'total reconstruction' following the tsunami and

conflict, to engineer the desired social transformation and religious reform. Humanitarian responses, aimed at long-term development projects, were intertwined with 'discourses of religious reform and social transformation that had been taking shape within a set of Indonesia Muslim institutions for decades' (Feener, 2021:40). This case study exemplifies the entanglements of faith, religion and spirituality, with the state in Indonesia and humanitarian processes.

These tensions between secular nationalism and a very religious population are exemplified through the country's approaches to religious pluralism and multiculturalism. Questions around how to potentially integrate political Islam into this new state and how that could be possible in such a religiously plural context persist (Lukito, 2021:646). The government of Indonesia continues to regulate religious pluralism through restrictive measures (Hoon, 2021:477). This is accompanied by radical faith groups and rising levels of Islamism and religious intolerance which has undermined any religious harmony and freedom promoted by Pancasila (Hoon, 2021:477). Hoon (2021:477) suggests that religious extremists have used Indonesia's open democracy to

'promote and politicise their religious agendas and to attack marginalised minorities such as the Shi'a and Ahmadiyya communities and Christian churches, culminating in an alarming increase in intra- and inter-religious conflict and violence'.

The Joko Widodo administration vocally condemns such violence, discrimination and attacks on religious minorities, perhaps even more so than previous governments (Hoon, 2021:478). However, in some cases the violence, discrimination and displacement of some minority faith groups has been acquiesced by local governments (Fair et al, 2020:281). As a result, faith, religion and spirituality present a fault line in Indonesia, along which conflict and violence can and does erupt.

Since the Bali bombing in 2002, there has been increased interest in religious extremism in Indonesia (Fair et al, 2020:281). Scholars have criticised the simplistic categorisations of Indonesia as either an exemplar of religious tolerance or a second home for faith-inspired extremist groups such as al Qaeda, by tracing the history of religious extremism in Indonesia (see Fair et al, 2020:281). Such

historical, contextual and nuanced approaches to these studies have highlighted the complicated intertwinement of faith, religion and spirituality and the state in Indonesia.

Methodology

Timeline and Data Collection methods

World Vision's total travel ban in March 2020 meant that I had to re-design my project to respond to, and work around, the COVID-19 pandemic. To ensure that a new project remained relevant to the work of World Vision, decisions and adaptations were made in conversation with my primary contact at World Vision UK. I also maintained frequent contact with my supervisor at SOAS, University of London to ensure that requirements were satisfied on the behalf of my research institution, including getting ethical approval for a new project.

On March 16th, 2020, I had a conversation with my primary contact at World Vision UK. I outlined that I would like to adapt my project to respond to COVID-19 and find a way to collect data remotely. I wanted to continue to situate this project in the field of Religion and Humanitarianism, a choice reinforced through media reports early in the pandemic around the intersections of faith, religion, spirituality and humanitarian responses to COVID-19 in high-income contexts as well as Low- and Middle-Income Contexts (LMICs). Over the next week, my primary contact at World Vision UK put me in contact with various people across the World Vision partnership who were working in the F&D space for responses to COVID-19. They sent me various resources to inform a new project proposal. Simultaneously, my primary research contact World Vision UK reached out to their Director to approve this change in direction and reflected on potential case study contexts and key informants for a new project in this area in World Vision UK.

Four days later, on the March 27th, my contact at World Vision UK got approval from their Director. This meant that World Vision UK could share resources with me, that would otherwise not be publicly accessible. By this time my primary contact at World Vision UK had also identified WV DRC

as a feasible and appropriate case study for the new research focus I had outlined. Not only were they personally acquainted with the director of the NO in the DRC, but WV DRC was one of two contexts where World Vision's F&D methodology Channels of Hope (CoH) for COVID-19 was being trialled.

Between March 27th and April 29th, I worked on rapidly drawing up a proposal for a new project, which I presented to my academic supervisor and to my primary contact at World Vision UK. I then submitted this new proposal, accepted by all stakeholders, to SOAS as my research institution for ethical approval which was granted. I wrote a short summary of the new project proposal, as part of a Terms of Reference (ToR) document, which was sent to the Director of WV DRC. This proposal was broad as I was keen to start speaking to key informants as soon as possible to further develop my proposal as I tracked developments in real time. It was therefore written into my new project proposal that I would develop my specific research focus and research questions during the data collection period. By April 29th, 2020, my primary contact at World Vision UK has received a reply from the Director of WV DRC identifying a number of key informants who had agreed to speak to me on a regular basis. I contacted the identified staff members and started conducting semi-structured interviews with them within the week.

During this time, I also reached out to a personal contact at the Joint Learning Initiative for Local and Faith Communities (JLI). The JLI is an international collaboration aimed at bringing together evidence of faith actors' roles in achieving and challenging humanitarian and development goals. The JLI's board members include many IFIOs who they work with in this capacity. My contact at the JLI put me in contact with several relevant contacts at a range of IFIOs working around the world.

After speaking to the WV DRC team and a range of other key informants across the IFIO landscape for a couple of months, I decided to reach out to a contact at WVI in May 2020 about finding a second NO case study in the South Asia and Pacific region. The COVID-19 pandemic had spread rapidly around the world. To reflect the global nature of the pandemic, it made sense to find a

second case study from a different region. This ultimately allowed me to track F&D investments in response to COVID-19 on a more global scale and to consider some of the different ways that faith, religion and spirituality interacted with humanitarian processes at this time in different contexts.

My contact at WVI contacted the SAPO who expressed interest in engaging with this research project. Between May and July 2020, I had multiple conversations with the SAPO, with whom I agreed that WV Indonesia would be a suitable second case study. The RO subsequently put me in contact with the WV Indonesia NO on July 23rd, 2020 and after fulfilling their requirements by sending them a formal letter of introduction from SOAS, a ToR and a short presentation of my project and proof of ethical clearance from SOAS, in August 2020 the NO identified a number of key informants in the F&D team of WV Indonesia and I began conducting KIIs with them.

I conducted qualitative KIIs on a rolling basis with staff from World Vision UK, World Vision International, World Vision DRC, World Vision Indonesia, Islamic Relief Worldwide, Christian Connections for International Health (USA), Catholic Relief Services, Catholic Relief Services Uganda, Harper Hill Global, DanChurch Aid, Episcopal Relief and Development, Christian Aid, Mennonite Central Committee, Buddhist Global Relief and Da'wah Institute of Nigeria. While the focus of this project is IFIOs, discussions around what makes IFIOs distinctive within the humanitarian and development spheres led me to also want to understand non-faith-inspired organisation's responses to COVID-19 and their approach to faith, religion and spirituality. As a result, I also conducted KIIs with a member of staff from OXFAM as a 'secular' counterpoint. While this is by no means enough for a comprehensive comparison of IFIOs and 'secular' INGOs approaches to faith engagement for humanitarian responses to COVID-19, it deepened the reflection around the distinctive nature of IFIO's approaches to humanitarian response.

The data collection period for this project started in March 2020, when the COVID-19 outbreak was first declared a pandemic and continued until the end of December 2020. Speaking to key informants on a regular basis allowed me to capture their impressions in real-time, capturing

reflections that might not make it into official documentation such as impact reports. The intervals between interviews differed between key informants. Some key informants were only able to participate in interviews once or had specific information that filled gaps in the project. Other KIIs took place between once a fortnight and once a month, again for varying durations. Overall, I engaged with 30 key informants, conducting a total of 77 KIIs.

Research Questions

Throughout the initial KIIs with a range of actors working for IFIOs, I developed a set of research questions, which guided, and were adapted in response to, my conversations with key informants. The following research questions were therefore constructed during the data collection and analyses process, in response to the theory emerging from the data.

Primary research question: Can local faith-inspired partnerships and programming make International Faith-Inspired Organisation’s (IFIO’s) responses to humanitarian crises like COVID-19 more effective in fragile urban contexts?		
Sub-research question	Operational research question	Data collection methods
How have local faith-inspired partnerships and programming been leveraged by IFIOs to respond to COVID-19?	How have local faith leaders and communities of faith responded to COVID-19?	Literature review, KIIs with national office staff
	How have IFIOs, if at all, integrated a faith-dimension into their COVID-19 responses?	KIIs with staff members from IFIOs
	How has the broader international humanitarian community engaged with	Literature review, KIIs with staff members from IFIOs

	religion, spirituality and faith for responding to COVID-19?	
	Has the international humanitarian community's engagement with religion, spirituality and faith in response to COVID-19 changed from previous crises?	Literature review
	What has the COVID-19 pandemic shown is distinctive about faith-inspired responses to crises, if anything?	Literature review, KII with staff from IFIOs
	As well as human and material resources, what role have religious and spiritual beliefs, narratives, worldviews and practices played in IFIOs responses to COVID-19?	Literature review, KII with staff from IFIOs
	Has any evidence emerged during the COVID-19 pandemic that IFIOs are better placed to engage with religion, spirituality and faith than secular actors?	Literature review, KII with staff from IFIOs

	What learnings have emerged for IFIOs during the COVID-19 pandemic related to their faith-inspired programming?	KIIs with staff from IFIOs
How does IFIO's engagement with local communities of faith impact their humanitarian responses to crises like COVID-19?	In what ways have IFIOs engaged with local faith actors to respond to COVID-19?	Literature review, KIIs with staff from IFIOs
	Why does the international humanitarian community (including IFIOs) think it is important to engage with local actors generally and local religious actors specifically?	Literature review
	How have IFIOs, if at all, embraced the localisation agenda?	Literature review, KIIs with staff from IFIOs
	Has the COVID-19 pandemic highlighted any opportunities or challenges for localising humanitarian responses?	KIIs with staff from IFIOs
	Does the faith-identity of IFIOs impact their ability to partner with local faith actors of the same and different faith traditions?	Literature review, KIIs with staff from IFIOs

	<p>Is there anything distinctive about IFIO's engagement with local faith actors, as opposed to local secular/civil society actors?</p>	<p>Literature review, KIIs with staff from IFIOs</p>
	<p>Is there anything distinctive about IFIO's engagement with local faith actors, as opposed to INGO's engaging with local religious actors?</p>	<p>Literature review, KIIs with staff from IFIO and INGOs</p>
	<p>Is there any value-add of IFIOs engaging with local faith actors, as opposed to INGOs engaging with civil society?</p>	<p>Literature review, KIIs with staff from IFIO and INGOs</p>
	<p>How do IFIOs understand the localisation agenda and where do they position themselves in the vision of humanitarian responses that is 'as local as possible as international as necessary'?</p>	<p>Literature review, KIIs with staff from IFIOs</p>
	<p>What learnings have emerged for IFIOs during the COVID-19 pandemic related to their engagement with local actors</p>	<p>Literature review, KIIs with staff from IFIOs</p>

	generally, and local faith actors and communities of faith specifically?	
What are the distinctive opportunities and challenges of faith-inspired partnerships and programming for IFIO's humanitarian responses to crises like COVID-19 in fragile <i>urban</i> contexts?	Why are fragile urban contexts relevant to humanitarian responses in response to COVID-19?	Literature review, KIIs with staff from IFIOs
	What is the humanitarian sphere's approach to/understanding of humanitarian responses in fragile urban contexts?	Literature review, KIIs with staff from IFIOs
	What are the distinctive challenges of responding to COVID-19 in urban contexts?	Literature review, KIIs with staff from IFIOs
	Does trust play a different role in urban settings, as opposed to rural settings?	Literature review, KIIs with staff from IFIOs
	Are (inter)faith dynamics different in urban contexts than in rural ones and does that impact how local faith actors and IFIOs respond to crises like COVID-19?	Literature review, KIIs with staff from IFIOs

	<p>Does social cohesion at the local level in urban contexts impact the ability of humanitarian agencies to respond to crises?</p>	<p>Literature review, KIIs with staff from IFIOs</p>
	<p>Does religion, spirituality and faith occupy the same place in people's lives in urban contexts and does this impact how religion, spirituality and faith impacts communities' responses in urban contexts?</p>	<p>Literature review, KIIs with staff from IFIOs</p>
	<p>Do local faith leaders hold the same positions in urban communities than in rural and does this impact their role in responding to crisis and how IFIOs engages with them?</p>	<p>Literature review, KIIs with staff from IFIOs</p>
	<p>Do IFIOs work differently in urban contexts?</p>	<p>Literature review, KIIs with staff from IFIOs</p>
	<p>Do IFIOs work differently with religion, spirituality and faith in urban contexts?</p>	<p>Literature review, KIIs with staff from IFIOs</p>

	Have IFIOs worked in urban contexts much before the COVID-19 pandemic?	KIIs with staff from IFIOs
	What learnings do IFIOs have from responding to COVID-19 in urban contexts?	KIIs with staff from IFIOs
	What learnings do IFIOs have from engaging with local faith actors and communities of faith for responding to COVID-19 in urban contexts?	KIIs with staff from IFIOs

As indicated above, the primary research question for this thesis to answer is: can local faith-inspired partnerships and programming make International Faith-Inspired Organisation's (IFIO's) responses to humanitarian crises like COVID-19 more effective in fragile urban contexts? To answer this question, this thesis will address three subsidiary research questions. These questions and the data collection methods used to answer them are outlined in the table above. A chapter is dedicated to each of them, and the arguments made in the three research chapters will be brought together to explicitly answer the primary research question in the conclusion of this thesis.

Effective humanitarian responses

The primary research question of this thesis is: can local faith-inspired partnerships and programming make International Faith-Inspired Organisation's (IFIO's) responses to humanitarian crises like COVID-19 more effective in fragile urban contexts? This research question presents 'more effective' humanitarian responses as the aim of IFIOs (local faith-inspired) work during the COVID-19 pandemic. The emphasis on 'more effective' humanitarian responses makes for a very broad

question, especially given that humanitarian effectiveness is such a vague concept. As a result, what is meant by 'more effective' humanitarian responses, and how that is assessed in this thesis, requires some explaining in relation to this project in particular.

This thesis is situated against the backdrop of the WHS and the desire to find a new way of working. The idea of humanitarian effectiveness was one of the main pillars of the WHS. It is viewed in many ways as the aim of a new way of working: for more effective humanitarian responses. As a result, the terminology of humanitarian effectiveness is prominent across the humanitarian sphere and among IFIOs who are the focus of this project.

There has been an increased focus on aid effectiveness since the 1980s, brought to the fore by conferences like Rome (2003) and Paris (2005) out of which came the Paris Declaration of Aid Effectiveness. This received support from many of the poorest countries in the world (Glennie and Sumner, 2016:4). However, there were criticisms of the aid effectiveness agenda to this point, as being too donor focused. Indeed, both in the 1980s and in the late 1990s, the issue of aid effectiveness came to the forefront at times when donors were being asked to increase their funding. In the late 1990s, early 2000s, these calls for funding were against a backdrop of increasing criticism and an impetus therefore to show what did and did not work. Nonetheless, these discussions revolved around what worked for donors, pulling the analysis upwards. This was critiqued by many at the Accra conference (2008) which reaffirmed but further defined the aid effectiveness agenda, including a focus on the role of partnering with non-state actors, including civil society.

Despite the prominence of the concept of 'effectiveness' across the humanitarian sphere, and its inclusion in several high-profile agreements, there is no agreed, shared or binding definition or vision of effective humanitarianism. There are a wide range of 'key drivers, challenges and expectations' that 'shape the debate on humanitarian effectiveness, such as value-for-money, accountability and standards, operational challenges, and the acknowledgement of diverse - and sometimes conflicting

– expectations of humanitarian action’ (Bourns and Alexander, 2015: 25): As a result, it is difficult to find a shared definition of humanitarian effectiveness when there are diverse and changing expectations of humanitarianism itself. As has been explored in the literature review, the humanitarian sphere is at a critical juncture, trying to find a new way of working, seeing shifting remits and approaches to responding to humanitarian crises. It is difficult to assess if humanitarian responses are ‘more’ or ‘less effective’, without a clear understanding around the expectations against which humanitarian responses are measured (Bourns and Alexandre, 2015:25).

There have been efforts to improve and monitor humanitarian effectiveness in recent years. For example, The Code of Conduct for The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement (1994), The Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance in Humanitarian Action (ALNAP, 1997), The Sphere Project (1997), Good Humanitarian Donorship Initiative (2003) and others (see Bourns and Alexander, 2015:25). Nonetheless, there has been little clarity around what effective humanitarian responses look like.

As a result, current conceptualisations of humanitarian effectiveness remain broad and vague because of a lack of conceptual clarity due to an evolving humanitarian arena. The OECD/DAC dictates that ‘effectiveness measures the extent to which the activity achieves its purpose, or whether this can be expected to happen on the basis of the outputs. Implicit within the criteria of effectiveness is timeliness...similarly, issues of resourcing and preparedness should be addressed’ (Scott, 2014:1). Similarly, Slim (2013) defines effective as ‘about being functional, workable, fit for purpose and delivering results’.

These attempts to define ‘effective’ humanitarianism remain highly relative to the aid actor and its activities, making it hard to derive an objective typology of an effective humanitarian response against which to measure or assess, in this case, IFIOs humanitarian responses to COVID-19.

However, while the concept of aid effectiveness can be critiqued for being vague, this vagueness allows it to be inclusive of the different moving parts of the humanitarian arena and their respective

responsibilities. As a result, effectiveness remains a powerful concept, that can speak to a collective aim of the humanitarian arena.

While different aid actors, be they operational actors, affected populations, states, donors or policymakers, should be held accountable for their contributions to humanitarian effectiveness, their respective responsibilities to this broad, vague but inclusive aim may look different (Scott, 2014:i). One of the challenges around finding a definition of effectiveness in relation to humanitarian activities is that the humanitarian system is made of up of different moving parts and wide range of actors (Scott, 2014:1). What 'more effective' humanitarian responses look like will undoubtedly be different according to the aid actor and the functions they are performing within the humanitarian system.

While the concept of humanitarian effectiveness remains very broad, what this thesis is able to speak to within this topic, is quite narrow. What this thesis and its findings can speak to in relation to 'more effective' humanitarian responses is somewhat restricted, or directed, by the constraints imposed upon this project more broadly by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The COVID-19 pandemic, and its accompanying lockdowns, restrictions of movement and travel bans meant that in-country fieldwork was not possible for this project. All KIIs had to be done remotely and online. These constraints limited who I was able to connect with for this research. IFIO staff, and undoubtedly INGO staff more broadly, even in NOs, are more likely to have reliable access to internet access through their work than local community members. Beyond this, I felt that even if I was able to make contact remotely with local community members and beneficiaries of humanitarian support, I would not be able to build enough trust with local actors and communities, without being in the field for a sustained period of time. I was aware that I would likely be perceived as an extension of the IFIO who was able to put me in touch with beneficiaries and would perhaps have to set up access for KIIs to take place. This set up would likely introduce significant biases into the research, for example, if local actors understandably felt uncomfortable being critical about IFIOs

work at the risk of losing continued assistance. As a result, the KIIs which produced the data for this project were limited to IFIO staff.

The limitations imposed upon this research in turn constrained and limited the scope of the concept of humanitarian effectiveness in this thesis. Here, the concept of 'more effective' humanitarian responses is from the point of view of one, albeit diverse, category of aid actor: IFIOs. Therefore, it is beyond the scope of this thesis, given the limitations on the project and data collection, and the lack of clarity in the humanitarian sphere more generally, to provide an objective and definitive definition of 'effective' humanitarian responses. It is also therefore not possible to measure IFIO's humanitarian responses against an accepted vision of effective humanitarian action or to assess whether they are 'more' or 'less' effective after integrating a faith dimension.

The constraints on this project as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, as has been explored above, limits what this thesis and its findings can say in general and in relation to the effectiveness of humanitarian responses. The constraints imposed upon this project mean it can tell part of the story of humanitarian responses to COVID-19. However, given the multi-faceted, multi-actor nature of humanitarian responses, even if there was a shared definition of humanitarian effectiveness against which to measure humanitarian responses, without engaging with beneficiaries of IFIOs responses, to triangulate key informant's reflections, it would not be possible to say with any confidence whether IFIO's humanitarian responses were 'effective' for beneficiaries. As a result, part of this story would have always been missing from this conversation.

What this thesis can speak to is whether local faith-inspired partnerships and programs produced value-add for IFIOs humanitarian responses to COVID-19 according to IFIO staff and what they sought to achieve. The aims of IFIOs humanitarian responses to COVID-19 can in turn be measured against commitments to effectiveness. For example, accountability to beneficiaries is often seen as an important pillar of effective humanitarianism and it is possible to assess whether IFIOs are

integrating this into their humanitarian responses. What this thesis cannot do is say whether this did, or did not, make their humanitarian responses more effective for all actors involved.

Therefore, this thesis defines effectiveness in terms of IFIOs ability to keep their commitments to the broader effectiveness agenda, and to meet their desired outcomes. IFIOs local faith-inspired partnerships and programs are therefore measured against their commitments to certain tenants of the broader effectiveness agenda, such as localisation, and whether they were able to achieve what they set out to achieve through their humanitarian responses. It does not mean that this is the only, or the best, way to understand effectiveness, but it is a working conceptualisation that, despite constraints on this project, allows it to speak into the wider humanitarian reform agenda aimed at humanitarian effectiveness. It helps tell a specific part of this multi-faceted and multi-actor story through the lens of IFIOs and their local faith-inspired partnerships and programs.

In this case, the conceptualisation of effectiveness is relative to the point of view of key informants and the organisations they work for. It refers to the desired outcomes of IFIOs humanitarian responses. It speaks to the effective operationalisation of IFIO's humanitarian responses to COVID-19. There is still a great deal of value to gain from these perspectives and reflections, from a prominent and diverse category of aid actor. Indeed, given the scope of values, activities and actors the concept of humanitarian effectiveness could encompass, it would be difficult for any project to speak to humanitarian effectiveness in its broadest sense. Telling part of this story, however, from the perspectives of IFIOs, contributes to ongoing debates around how to find a new way of working for more effective humanitarian responses.

Methodological implications of a collaborative PhD during a global pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic, as well as the collaborative nature of this research, created limitations and opportunities for this research project. However, in both cases, these factors shaped the methodology of this research.

One of the constraints of doing research during a global pandemic that restricts travel and movement, is that the researcher was dependent on the non-academic partner of the project to connect them with relevant key informants. The process for identifying respondents for the KIIs was therefore selected through a process of nonprobability sampling. I used a combination of purposeful or judgemental sampling techniques which involves ‘...actively select[ing] the most productive sample to answer the research question’ (Marshall, 1996). Samples for qualitative research are assumed to be purposeful, to yield cases that are information rich. This may also be known as theoretical sampling, enabling the researcher to build up justification for the concepts in the theory by finding more instances of a particular concept and allows them to follow an emerging storyline suggested by the data (Urquhart, 2012). This project drew predominantly on expert sampling – with key informants from World Vision International, World Vision UK and World Vision DRC and Indonesia – and an element of snowball sampling as pre-existing contacts put the researcher in touch with a range of different actors in IFIOs who then introduced me to others. In general, nonprobability sampling allows the researcher to determine who is best to study so as not to miss out on critical persons in a bid to collect data which is deep and rich enough to generate inductive theory (Philips, 2014). This sampling process was in many ways necessitated by the constraints imposed on it by the COVID-19 pandemic and its accompanying travel bans, lockdowns and restrictions of movement. While it helped put me in contact with relevant people, despite restrictions, the researcher was restricted to remote data collection.

Sampling participants in this way, is aimed toward theory construction and not for population representativeness. However, there are some considerable limitations to this sampling technique. This sampling technique, while to some extent unavoidable given the global situation, presents a high risk of selection bias. Practitioners may want to present their work in the best possible light. Those identifying key informants may want to choose people who they know will present the organisation and their activities according to the image they seek to cultivate. Key informants may be concerned that if their line managers found out they had been critical of the organisation, that

there would be repercussions in terms of their job security. As a result, key informants are incentivised to identify certain actors and share certain things about their experiences and not others, to share their successes over their failures, to shine a positive light on the work of the organisation. This of course can impede real processes of mutual learning which is the aim of this collaborative PhD.

I took several conscious steps to mitigate some of the problems associated with this methodology, even if it is not possible to mitigate the limitations entirely. I assured key informants that their contributions to this research would be anonymous. This is important ethically. However, it was also a step taken to overcome an element of the selection bias, freeing them from the concern that their comments would be traced back to them. Key informants were assured of their anonymity during the informed consent process. This meant key informants could be honest about their experiences, in the knowledge that it would not reflect on their individual job performance.

Informed consent was collected from all participants in this study. If possible, an informed consent form was sent, by email, to the participant who would read the form, sign it, and scan the form back to the researcher. Their informed consent was then noted by the researcher and their signed forms securely saved by the researcher on a password protected electronic device. Given that most people were working from home during the data collection period of this research, not everyone had the resources to print and scan documents. As a result, I wrote a shorter but still comprehensive speech outlining the same information on the written informed consent form. I read this speech to participants on the phone, or on zoom, before interviews started. I gave the participant time to think about what they heard and then asked the participant if they gave their consent to participate and separately to be recorded for this study. Both forms of consent were noted by the researcher and were captured in the recordings of the interviews. I also noted if participants had any other requests. For example, several participants were happy to participate and for their interviews to be

used in this research, but they wanted to see and check any direct quotes that were going to be used in the thesis.

Expanding my data collection beyond World Vision by engaging with key informants from a range of IFIOs was also an important step in triangulating the data being collected from key informants across the World Vision partnership. While these key informants are at risk from the same biases as the staff from World Vision, these respondents had been identified by a research institution, not their employer, and assured anonymity through the informed consent process. While this doesn't reduce biases in their entirety, this step helped provide a wider view of the F&D landscape responding to COVID-19 in a bid to triangulate the findings of this research with World Vision.

To counteract some of the researcher (and partner) bias of this project, a reflexive approach was also adopted, especially during the coding, analysis and writing up phases, to ensure that I was aware of the limitations and potential biases of the sampling techniques. Such a reflexive approach is not a new requisite for humanitarian research. Humanitarian researchers, including those exploring religion, spirituality and faith in these contexts, often have to reflect on the overlapping identity markers of different religious identities, gender, race, and class and how this impacts the research. As part of this reflexive methodology this project engaged with key conceptual debates surrounding power and privilege (see Bordieu, 1985. Schepper-Hughes, 1992. Robben and Nordstrom, 2011. Paluck, 2009. Prowse, 2010), intersectionality (see Maher and Tetreault, 1993. Dowling, 2000. Cartensen-Egwuom, 2014), Insider/Outsider status (see O'Connor, 2004. Knott, 2008. Jensen, 2011. Bell and Taylor, 2013. Braunelein, 2016) and the Emic/Etic distinction (see Holmes, 2014) to reflect on how they relate to this project.

Researcher positionality and impacts on this research

Positionality refers to the multiple identities of the researcher, as they are situated in hierarchies of power (Sehgal, 2009:31). This positionality affects how researchers interact with participants, what they disclose and/or hide and how data is analysed (Abu-Lughod, 1993). Reflexivity involves the

researcher acknowledging that their actions and decisions will impact what is being studied (Horsburgh, 2003:209). It is vital therefore to be upfront about my positionality for this thesis. Not only can this help me reflect on how my multiple identities, within hierarchies of power and in relations to others multiple identities may impact the findings of my research, but also so readers of this thesis can reflect on how my positionality might inform the meaning and context of the experiences I am presenting (Horsburgh, 2003:209).

Reflexivity was foundational to the success of the methodology of this project. Grounded Method Theory relies on remaining open minded to the data and following avenues of interest when they arise. Without being reflexive of my own identities, positioned within hierarchies of power, and how they relate to other people and concepts engaged in this research, I would not be live to my own biases or assumptions. Such biases risk obscuring certain avenues of interest, leading the researcher to follow their own assumptions regardless of what the data is saying. Such an approach would undermine the opportunities created by this methodology as detailed above.

An important part of my positionality as the researcher on this project, that I came alive to during data collection and analysis through my reflexive methodology, is my faith/religious/spiritual identity. I am not a religious person, nor do I adhere to a specific faith and/or spiritual tradition. Nonetheless, my distinctive professional and personal background means that I have considerable faith literacy that enables me to understand the sometimes unsaid, when people discuss their work or lives in relation to faith, religion and/or spirituality.

I have engaged with faith/religious/spiritual actors in various contexts most of my personal and professional life. While it was not an explicit part of my upbringing, members of my immediate family were religious – Christian specifically – as were much of my extended family. When I was young, I attended Church of England on a Sunday, although as my sibling and I got older the whole family stopped attending. My father in particular, was always interested in Theology and Religious Studies and so there were books and conversations on this topic around while I was growing up. This

environment, one of openness to faith, religion and spirituality, as phenomena worth engaging with, undoubtedly informed my own interests in faith, religion and spirituality leading me to study Theology and Religious Studies as part of my undergraduate degree and World Christianities at masters level. As a result, I have a strong academic background in Theology and Religious Studies as well as Development Studies. In fact, I have spent equal years in higher education in Theology and Religious Studies as I have in Development Studies, making me a truly interdisciplinary researcher.

Alongside my studies, I undertook internships in advocacy organisations in which I was the only non-religious person working there, and in interfaith charities which were multifaith environments.

Through my work and studies, I have met many people of faith who remain friends. I have always been interested in faith, religion and spirituality, the different ways it is lived and embodied in different contexts and how they interact with other worldly or material phenomena.

Spending most years of my adult life surrounded by people of faith whilst not being religious myself, nor adherent to a faith or spiritual tradition, I see myself as inhabiting a position that is not fully Outsider nor Insider when it comes to faith, religion and spirituality. My interdisciplinary background makes me feel the same way about Theology and Religious Studies and Development Studies. I am both part of, and apart from, both disciplines.

In some ways, my experiences in religious/faith/spiritual environments have given me distinctive insights into faith life. I am faith literate, although not without inevitable blind spots, and open to different faiths, religions and spiritualities. I feel comfortable around people of faith and in overtly religious settings.

Reflecting on my positionality in relation to faith, religion and spirituality has at times interacted with other aspects of my identity in interesting ways. I am a white, western woman who is highly educated exclusively in western higher education institutions and in western, European contexts. As a result, I have also met a lot of people who have had very negative perceptions of religion in particular. While the academic literature suggests a shift away from modernisation and

secularisation theory, I have been met with a great deal of hostility, particularly towards what is often termed 'organised religion' by friends and colleagues in liberal, western (academic) settings. I noticed these biases, explicitly, when I moved from Religious Studies departments to Development Studies departments, where it sometimes felt, although not exclusively, like moving from a context of high faith literacy to one where people made sweeping generalisations about faith, religion and spirituality based on a lack of understanding about the diverse ways faith, religion and spirituality are lived and embodied by different people in different contexts. Often these generalisations cast religion in a negative light in relation to development and humanitarianism.

I feel that these biases, informed by people's own positionality of being rooted in western, relatively secularised contexts, has led to a bias against faith, religion and spirituality. This has seen me have to adopt, on many occasions, a position of defender of faith, religion and spirituality, despite my outsider status – as a non-religious person. I think the persistence of these encounters, likely especially clear to me as an interdisciplinary researcher, where I have tried to inject more nuance into people's engagements with faith, religion and spirituality based on my own experiences, has made me sometimes appear 'favourable' to faith, religion and spirituality. They have also made me appear perhaps more able to dismiss aspects of faith, religious or spiritual life that are in tension with other values I hold dear as a white, western, liberal, educated woman. This is something I need to reflect on to ensure that I am doing interdisciplinary research with both my Theology and Religious Studies and Development Studies hats on.

It is interesting that Development and Humanitarian Studies ask questions of researchers and research in relation to faith, that it doesn't of other, equally important, and potentially impactful, aspects of people's identities. I have found, conducting research in the intersections of faith/religion/spirituality and humanitarian/development studies, that I have been asked many times about my faith background, which I am happy to discuss. Of course, faith, religion and spirituality are central foci of this project, so it is important to clarify my own faith/religious/spiritual status as it

comes into contacts with that of others. However, I have never been asked about my political beliefs, memberships, sexuality, gender or other identity markers, despite the fact that these have the same potential to impact my interactions with other stakeholders and my analysis of the data. I will go on to explore some other aspects of my positionality in relation to this research in this section, although it is beyond the scope of this research to elaborate on all aspects of my identity. Nonetheless, in my experience there is a disproportionate preoccupation with how people's faith/religious/spiritual identity impacts their positionality in development/humanitarian research, which potentially speaks to an ongoing uncomfortableness within development and humanitarianism with faith, religion and spirituality. However, it is important to reflect on all aspects of one's identity in relation to a research project, including how they interact with each other, in agreement or contradiction, as this has the potential to come to bare on the research and its findings.

This Insider/Outsider position I inhabit in relation to faith, religion and spirituality evidently does not make me objective. However, it does position me in a somewhat distinctive vantage point for research like that presented here. I have an understanding of faith, religion and spirituality and how they are lived and embodied in people's lives, but I also exist at a distance to faith, religion and spirituality. As long as I remain conscious, through reflexivity, of my own biases and those inherent in the disciplines I work in, I believe my distinctive positionality helps me be open-minded to what the data tells me about the opportunities and challenges of the roles of faith, religion and spirituality for humanitarian processes.

It is also important to add here, that I am an Insider and an Outside in other ways too. In many ways I am an Insider and an Outsider in relation to Development and Humanitarianism. I have studied Development and Humanitarianism in various forms since my undergraduate degree. I have also undertaken a research placement in the Department for International Development giving me insight into development policy. I have worked as a research consultant for a think tank that works

with practitioners in the faith and development/humanitarian space. I have also worked closely, for this project, with staff working for a range of IFIOs. I have spent the last five years embedded in the literature on Development and Humanitarianism and speaking to practitioners on a regular basis.

Nonetheless, I have never worked for an International Development and/or Humanitarian Organisation. As a result, I feel that I am once again, an Insider and an Outsider, or neither, to development nor humanitarian work. I am conscious that I do not have the insider knowledge of how development and humanitarian processes work from a personal point of view. I had to be reflective about this throughout this project, remaining conscious of what I don't know and what I might need clarifying given I have not worked in the aid sector in practice before. I made sure to continue asking questions and rounding out my knowledge through the wider academic and grey literature to ensure that I wasn't misunderstanding anything. On the other hand, I have some distance with which to be critical, with fresh eyes, of development and humanitarian processes. I think this positionality has facilitated this project having one foot in academia one foot in practice and a mutual learning process.

In regard to issues of power and privilege, as mentioned above, I am conscious of my position as a white, western woman who leads a very privileged life in many ways. I was particularly conscious of this when designing my original PhD project, that involved engaging with LFAs and LCFs in low-income and fragile contexts. I was deeply aware that I was extremely privileged in many ways that those key informants would not be and that that would impact how I went about my research, ethically, to ensure I did no harm, and it would undoubtedly have impacted the responses I received from them and how I could interpret those findings. These considerations of my positionality in regard to power and privilege were an important and explicit focus of that project from its inception, through its design and would have continued to be so during data collection and analysis had the project been able to progress.

The COVID-19 pandemic shifted my focus from the local to the international contingent of the humanitarian sphere. While this shift did not remove issues of power and privilege, I do feel that the disparities between my power and privilege and those of my key informants were reduced. I will go on shortly, to discuss issues of power and privilege that continued to impact this project. However, in many ways, I felt more comfortable with my positionality, working at this level, as a result of less explicitly disparate levels of power and privilege between myself and my key informants. While disparities still existed, they were less explicit and less stark. I felt there was less, although not no, risk of me doing harm just by carrying out my research. This has made me reflect more broadly, for future work, about what kind of research I, as a white, western women, with significant power and privilege, can and should be doing in the humanitarian and development spaces. This will undoubtedly impact future research topics and how I choose to do research in this field. I do not feel that I have resolved these issues of positionality for future research, but it is something I am continuing to think and reflect on, including for any future publications of this work.

There were however, nonetheless, issues of power and privilege related to my positionality that I needed to reflect on for this project. One of the ways that I am imbued with power and privilege, that I had to be reflexive about during this project, is my education. I have an undergraduate degree, two masters degrees and this thesis contributes to a doctoral degree. My explicit purpose for engaging with key informants was evidence of my educational status, status that is highly valued in most contexts, but certainly in contexts where education is a premium, such as low-income and fragile contexts. While many of the key informants I engaged with were highly educated themselves, I was conscious that even key informants working in IFIOs who were from low-income and/or fragile contexts, as was the case for many of the key informants working for NOs, my position was imbued with some power by the nature of being a doctoral student. I was aware that undue deference to this may impact the responses I received or the kind of information that it might be expected I want to hear. I remained alive to this particularly in key informant interviews to ensure that I was getting to the heart of issues. Similarly, in the context of World Vision, I was put in contact with NOs,

through World Vision UK or WVI who yield both financial and strategic power within the partnership. I was then put in contact with key informants by the Director, in the case of WVDRC, or by SAPO RO staff in the case of WV Indonesia. As a result, I was being put in touch with key informants by their superiors. This undoubtedly had the potential to create an imbalance of power between me and my key informants which could have impacted the data I collected. In particular I was worried that key informants might feel they have to big up their work, to ensure the continuation of their programs and perhaps even their own positions and future promotions. As mentioned above, I think ensuring anonymity and the informed consent process, as well as speaking to key informants regularly over a period of time, built trust between me as the researcher and key informants, to mitigate some of the impacts of that power imbalance. Nonetheless, it was key that I be reflexive about these power dynamics in the analysis of my data.

The travel bans, restrictions of movement and lockdowns of the COVID-19 pandemic, forced me to focus more on the international side of the humanitarian sphere. Major IFIOs and their NOs are likely to have access to the internet, telecommunication devices and be able to afford data/call charges. Most major IFIO's head offices are in high-income countries and for NO staff, even if they don't have consistent internet access at home, their offices are well equipped.

A reflective methodology helped me reflect on what this research could speak to in light of its shift from a local focus to an international one. While this thesis can speak to the international perspective on F&D responses to COVID-19, it cannot speak to local communities' experiences of IFIO's F&D methodologies or the COVID-19 pandemic. Nonetheless, the international focus of this research does include two case studies with World Vision's NOs who are on the front-line of responding to COVID-19. They experience the reality of beneficiaries' situations daily. They also have an insight into the institution they work for. Therefore, understanding their experiences, whilst not without caveats, can provide useful insights into what's happening on the ground and at the national

and international levels (Clarke and Parris, 2019). However, it cannot triangulate these perspectives and so the findings of this project speak to IFIO staff's perspectives.

While the travel bans, lockdowns and restrictions of movement were undoubtedly constraining for this project, they also created an opportunity to focus on the work of IFIOs like World Vision, as the non-academic partner of this project, to ensure that the findings were directly relevant to their work. As a result, the findings of this project better fulfil the criteria of this distinctive project; with one foot in academia and one foot in practice. Similarly, it allowed this research to track development in F&D in real time. As a result, the COVID-19 situation provided an opportunity to make an original, timely and relevant contribution to the academic literature and the wider humanitarian sphere's understanding.

Methodology

The COVID-19 pandemic meant I had to rapidly change my project and embark on a process of data collection before I had defined the research questions or the specific focus of the project. This approach reflected the evolving and changing global environment in which this new project was taking place. I was tracking IFIO's F&D investments as they responded to the challenges and changing dynamics of the COVID-19 pandemic. As a result, the methodology for this project reflects aspects of a Grounded Method Theory (GMT) approach.

Grounded theory was first developed by Glaser and Strauss (1967) and has been taken in various directions by the respective authors (Glaser, 1978. Strauss, 1987. Strauss and Corbin, 1990. Glaser, 1992. Glaser, 2005) and others (Chamaz, 2006. Urquhart, 2012) in the years since. GMT is about generating new theories, grounded in the data, rather than forcing data into a few existing theories (Urquhart, 2012).

GMT is highly contested due to its chequered history, including major disagreements between the founders of the method. However, GMT has appeal when, and is very useful in instances where,

there is little or no existing theory. While there is now growing existing theory on Religion and Humanitarianism, the COVID-19 pandemic and the circumstances in which faith-actors responded to the pandemic were unknown at the inception of this project. Additionally, it was not clear when I embarked on this project, in an unprecedented global situation, what the results of the research would be; whether they would support or challenge the existing theory and or construct a new theory.

Both qualitative and quantitative data are useful in GMT, which can be used within positivist, interpretivist and critical paradigms. Nonetheless, GMT was a revolutionary method of analysing qualitative data and is frequently invoked as a method for qualitative analysis, whether or not the research is employing GMT. As Charmaz (2006) highlights, using qualitative methods within GMT allows the researcher to be flexible enough to follow leads or hunches that emerge, to add new information to the overall picture and to change the framework all together if needed. These twists and changes can happen at any time in the research process, to ensure that the data reflects empirical events and experiences. Being able to adapt to situational changes is valuable for humanitarian research more generally as emergency contexts can change quickly requiring researchers to be flexible and adaptable and react to events as they happen.

GMT has allowed the flexibility for the project's focus and research questions to be guided by the experiences of key informants. An example of the project being guided by the data is the focus on fragile urban contexts. Before speaking with key informants from IFIOs, the project was not focused on urban settings. However, through conversations with key informants, it emerged that urban contexts were not only epicentres of the virus, they presented an unknown for many IFIOs who had hitherto worked primarily in rural contexts servicing the extreme poor. This emerged as a significant challenge for many humanitarian agencies responding to COVID-19. How to respond to COVID-19 in fragile urban contexts is therefore not only a question for the key informants participating in this project, but for the whole humanitarian sphere. Using a methodology that reflected GMT allowed

the researcher to pursue this avenue of research and to track their responses to this emerging humanitarian challenge related to their COVID-19 responses.

In keeping with GMT, I began systematically coding the data, attaching categories to data, line by line, early in the research process. I began coding the data as the interviews were being done and data was coming in. As Charmaz (2006) experienced, this approach helped me gain an analytical grasp of the data early in the process:

‘Through studying data, comparing them, and writing memos, we define ideas that best fit and interpret the data as tentative analytic categories. When inevitable questions arise and gaps in our categories appear, we seek data that answer these questions and may fill the gaps’ (Charmaz, 2006:3).

Initially this was done through open coding, going through the data line by line or paragraph to paragraph, attaching codes to data and staying open to what the data tells us. I then moved on to selective coding; grouping codes into larger categories, before moving onto theoretical coding; considering how categories are related to each other and the relationships between them. These latter stages took place after all the data was collected. While this method of data analysis may have taken longer than others, my experience, reflected by Urquhart’s work (2012) and that of her postgraduate students, allowed for a relatively quicker writing up time.

GMT requires the researcher to set aside existing theoretical ideas to let theory emerge from the data. It is often recommended that literature reviews are not conducted before data collection, but once theory has begun to emerge. The founders of GMT ask that we put aside what we have read, so we do not influence our coding of the data. This has received criticism. However, criticisms tend to be based on a misconception that GMT does not engage with existing literature, research or theory at all. This is not the case. It is still important to engage with emergent theories and existing literature for GMT. It may not be possible, or wise, to be unaware of existing literature when coding. Instead, it is about having an open mind. It is important not to privilege existing theories over what is

emerging from the data. I was already embedded in the faith and humanitarianism literature ahead of this project. I had completed a literature review ahead of my original project and in other professional roles. This awareness of the literature and theory prompted me to pursue this line of research in the first place. Nevertheless, I sought to remain open minded about the data being collected and the theories it built.

I used several overarching themes that led the open-ended, yet directed, KIs. I had a list of questions that, for the first interview at least, helped guide the discussion. However, I worked to remain engaged in discussions, to follow up on areas of interest as they arose. The themes that guided discussions with key informants were undoubtedly informed by the literature review completed for the previous project that was disrupted due to the COVID-19 pandemic. However, the literature review for this adapted research was done comprehensively after data collection and analysis, to ensure the project was led by the data and experiences of key informants, in keeping with GMT, and not by existing theories (Charmaz, 2006).

Chapter Three: Faith-inspired partnerships and programs in response to COVID-19

Alongside the immediate health-related concerns of the COVID-19 illness, the lockdown measures imposed by many governments around the world to try and stem the spread of the virus had a devastating impact on the lives of many of the poorest and most vulnerable people and communities. For many living in low-income and/or fragile contexts, and contexts with pockets of fragility, lockdown measures resulted in additional livelihood challenges and protection issues.

The varied challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, for local communities and for those seeking to support them, required a multi-sectoral response from humanitarian actors. World Vision's COVID-19 response was called the COVID-19 Emergency Response plan (COVER) (World Vision, 2020) and was a global program from World Vision International, being rolled out across every operational area, program and office, for a 'whole-of-organisation' response to COVID-19. The goal of COVER was to limit the spread of COVID-19 and limit its impacts on vulnerable children and families. COVER contained four strategic objectives; (1) scale up preventative measures to limit the spread of the disease, (2) strengthen health systems and workers, (3) support children impacted by COVID-19 through education, protection, food security and (4) livelihoods and collaborate and advocate to ensure vulnerable children are protected.

World Vision's response to COVID-19 explicitly engaged with faith, religion and spirituality by promoting the use of the World Vision partnership's Channels of Hope (CoH) methodology, which will be explained in more detail later in this chapter. The World Vision partnership adapted CoH curricula geared towards existing development challenges and emergencies to create CoH for COVID-19 which was piloted in the early months of the pandemic (World Vision, 2020). The World Vision partnership also explicitly engaged with F&D to respond to COVID-19 by publishing its COVID-

19: Guidance for Faith Communities; a practical resource detailing what faith actors and communities can do to respond to COVID-19 and how the World Vision partnership can support them (World Vision, 2020).

As well as this explicit F&D engagement, the World Vision partnership engaged implicitly with faith, religion and spirituality across their multisectoral response to COVID-19. While the World Vision partnership's response was driven by the multisectoral needs of individuals and communities in which they work, F&D presents a cross-cutting theme. The World Vision partnership's experience of investing in F&D means it was an implicit consideration across the four objectives and COVER. This will be demonstrated in this chapter exploring the breadth of IFIO's faith-inspired partnerships and programs in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

While this chapter focuses on the primary case studies of the World Vision partnership, especially the NOs WV DRC and WV Indonesia, it draws on the experiences of people working for a wide range of IFIOs, for a general understanding of the F&D landscape during the COVID-19 pandemic. It also looks to the wider humanitarian sphere's engagement with faith, religion and spirituality evidenced through webinars, publications, social media and so on. Some IFIOs, such as Dan Church Aid, a Danish IFIO, adopted a similar approach to F&D as World Vision; perceiving faith engagement as both an explicit workstream and as an implicit consideration cross cutting their multisectoral COVID-19 response. A key informant from Dan Church Aid (DCA1) detailed their approach to F&D and how the organisation reached out to seven out of the eighteen countries in which they were operational to ask them to contact their present faith partners, and try and reach out to new ones, to find out what they can meaningfully do to respond to COVID-19. They asked faith partners what they could do beyond their normal roles - information dissemination, WASH and test distribution - to identify new avenues for faith-inspired partnerships across their multisectoral response. On the other hand, other IFIOs such as Islamic Relief Worldwide, despite an increased push for more faith engagement across the organisation in recent years, generally engaged with LFAs and LCFs in a more inconsistent

and ad hoc way (IRWH1). This was reflected in their COVID-19 responses. While they did engage with LFAs and LCFs in some contexts, there was no explicit strategy to engage with faith, religion and spirituality in their COVID-19 response.

Overall, this chapter speaks directly to the primary research question of this thesis: can local faith-inspired partnerships and programming make IFIO's responses to humanitarian crises like COVID-19 more effective in fragile urban contexts? It does so through primarily addressing the first sub-research question: How have local faith-inspired partnerships and programming been leveraged by IFIOs to respond to COVID-19?

This chapter argues that IFIO's have leveraged local faith-inspired partnerships and programs with unprecedented rapidity, and in increasingly diverse and meaningful ways, in response to COVID-19. While not all humanitarian actors, nor all IFIOs, have engaged to the same extent with faith, religion and spirituality for humanitarian responses to the COVID-19 pandemic, there has been an evidential shift in approach and willingness to engage with LFAs and LCFs. This shift is based on lessons learnt from previous responses to crises, namely the ongoing Ebola epidemic, and a growing awareness of the potential value-add of local faith-inspired partnerships and programs due to the inextricable intertwinement of faith, religion, spirituality and humanitarian processes. While this denotes progress, this chapter reinforces the fact that local-faith inspired partnerships and programs are not magic bullets for more effective humanitarian responses. Nonetheless, religion, spirituality and humanitarianism are inextricably intertwined. Humanitarian actors need to continue to invest in knowledge production around how to engage with LFAs and LCFs, to leverage value-add and mitigate obstacles, for effective humanitarian responses.

Multi-sectoral F&D responses

In response to the varied primary and secondary impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, humanitarian organisations enacted multisectoral responses. For many of the IFIOs engaged with for this research,

and for a number of international humanitarian organisations such as the WHO, this also involved an F&D component. This section by no means presents an exhaustive exploration of the diverse ways IFIOs and the humanitarian sphere more generally, engaged with faith, religion and spirituality to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. However, while keeping the diversity of the category of IFIO in mind, this section points to the breadth of the humanitarian sphere's F&D investments for responses to the global COVID-19 crisis. Given the historically narrow approach to faith engagement in the humanitarian sphere, the scope of the F&D investments in response to COVID-19 highlights how far the humanitarian arena has come.

Livelihoods and 'HOVID'

Many people around the world suffered due to the impact of lockdowns, restrictions of movement and travel bans. They could not go out to work or to work the land. This left many people who rely on daily wages or agricultural production without income or food. The impact of these measures to stem the spread of COVID-19 were felt most acutely in many low-income contexts where governments may be unable to produce the fiscal policy responses delivered by many governments in high-income countries. They are not able to 'spirit money from nowhere' to provide for those in need (IRW1). As a result, the economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and the resultant lockdowns soon became the primary issue for many IFIOs.

Participants in this research highlighted tensions they perceived in many low-income contexts resulting from trying to balance public health measures against their economic consequences. One respondent from WV Indonesia highlighted a saying they heard from their beneficiaries that emphasised these tensions:

'You can stay at home and be safe from COVID and die from economic or you can go out of home and die by COVID but you have your economic' (WVInRH1).

Many participants from IFIOs felt that low-income countries had often got the balance wrong between stemming the spread of the virus and ensuring people could still access livelihood opportunities. They perceived the replication of lockdown measures used in many western European and north American contexts to be unsustainable in low-income countries, doing more harm than good;

‘...these countries will increasingly start to struggle with understanding whether the lockdown measures are actually possible and I think that sort of argument hasn’t been had fully yet. It’s starting to be had in places like America, but you know, that is still a world removed from places like Nigeria, where a lockdown over a long period is unsustainable’ (IRW1)

A key informant from the IFIO Islamic Relief Worldwide also raised concerns that the desperation caused by these acute livelihood challenges had led to civil unrest in some contexts, seeing crime rates rise:

‘... there’s also concern around law and order and actually this has real possibilities of severe population unrest. It’s started to happen in places like Kenya where there’s been an increase in burglaries, and things like that, so the reality is that these countries won’t have the same means to be able to prevent people going back to work, going to the markets, and that sort of thing’ (IRW1).

In response to such instances of civil unrest and rising crime rates key informants detailed instances of police brutality as authorities tried to enforce lockdown measures. A key informant from Islamic Relief Worldwide highlighted the example of Pakistan, where civil unrest and breaking curfews could result in being ‘at the end of a gun’ due to ‘heavy handed policing methods’ (IRW1). Instances of clashes between civilians and the police led to concerns around governments using the COVID-19

pandemic as an excuse to use draconian measures to enforce lockdown measures leading to a shrinking of civic rights and civic space (DCA2).

One of the principal impacts of the economic issues felt by many communities in low-income contexts was food insecurity. This led to the popular concept of 'HOVID' – Hunger and COVID-19 - highlighting food insecurity as a primary focus for responses to COVID-19 (Berkley Center, 2020). Several respondents from IFIOs working in low-income contexts during the initial months of the COVID-19 pandemic highlighted hunger as the number one issue they were responding to. One respondent illustrated the severity of HOVID through stories they'd been told by local partners in Nairobi, Kenya, such as mothers boiling stones in hot water, to fool their children into thinking that food was coming, until they fell asleep (HHG2).

It has been acknowledged that the humanitarian sphere should have addressed the economic and food insecurity caused by the COVID-19 pandemic earlier in their responses. For example, Chetcuti et al (2020:1), writing for OXFAM, lamented the fact that while the INGO had highlighted the fact that the COVID-19 pandemic risked further entrenching a global hunger crisis in July 2020, three months later in October 2020 there had been little humanitarian response aimed at addressing food insecurity. Similarly, several months into the pandemic, a key informant from the IFIO Harper Hill Global (HHG3) identified hunger as the number one issue local communities were facing because of COVID-19. Harper Hill Global's work revolves around disseminating accurate information and preventative messages via SMS through their grassroots faith networks. Through their expertise in this area, they thought that Harper Hill Global would be able to 'build a communication system' to link those in need with the information of NGOs who were providing food relief. However, that food provision by NGOs wasn't there.

The late inclusion of economic and food insecurity challenges into IFIOs and INGOs responses to COVID-19 has been presented as a key learning for many organisations. A key informant from WV DRC made this point in regard to their own COVID-19 response:

‘You know we have many, many community members that have been affected by food insecurity during this time. We didn’t plan efficiently on that. We were not very, very intentional. Being intentional when we are analysing the impact or the potential impact of a disease or a pandemic can help us to really, really provide the total support to the community’ (WVDRCJ7).

Nonetheless, many IFIOs did adapt their work to respond to the challenges caused by COVID-19 related to livelihoods and food security. A respondent from the humanitarian team in Islamic Relief Worldwide highlighted the new approaches they were adopting, such as Cash Transfers, to deal with these challenges as they arose:

‘So, some of our initial responses have focused on cash transfers and food distribution, taking into account that the lockdown has affected a lot of people economically and to a large extent people are saying that the effects of the lockdown are worse than the coronavirus itself...’ (IRWH1)

The use of cash transfers was also an important part of WV DRC’s response to the food insecurity faced by communities, especially in urban contexts where people have access to bank accounts and mobile banking. While it took several weeks for WV DRC to start delivering cash transfers, it eventually became part of their multisectoral response to COVID-19 (WVDRCPS6).

For some IFIOs of course, addressing food insecurity and hunger is not a new part of their work. Addressing hunger is the core mission of Buddhist Global Relief, a faith-inspired fund aggregator based in the US. It is, and always has been, their first priority when deciding what organisations and

projects to fund. A key informant from Buddhist Global Relief (BGR1) explained that their focus on food insecurity is the result of the experiences of the founder of Buddhist Global Relief, Bikkhu Bodhi. Bikkhu Bodhi's experiences of fasting, and the impact that hunger has on the body and the mind, led him to want to do something about the hunger faced by children and families around the world. A key informant from Buddhist Global Relief spoke about how they had been inundated with requests to help address hunger because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Not only did key informants suggest that they should have engaged sooner with the economic and food insecurity caused by COVID-19, but they also suggested that they should have engaged more efficiently with LFAs and LCFs for this purpose. One member of staff from WV DRC recognised this as a challenge for their COVID-19 response, highlighting that not engaging with faith leaders to respond to food insecurity was a missed opportunity;

'we provide sensitisation, we provide technical training, we provide some materials to health service so that they can also support the community during the treatment of people infected by COVID-19. But there is a component where we didn't do well - we didn't see the component of financial, and economical, even at the food area. We could have also provided food to faith leaders so they could also support their fellow members with some food to reduce the impact of food insecurity during the pandemic. That's one where I think it is a lesson; when we are planning during a crisis, we need to see all components to discuss and also to find the means how we can also address the challenges in all areas....' (WVDRCJ7). Not only did key informants suggest that they should have engaged sooner with the economic and food insecurity caused by COVID-19, but they also suggested that they should have engaged more efficiently with LFAs and LCFs for this purpose. One member of staff from WV DRC recognised this as a challenge for their COVID-19 response, highlighting that not engaging with faith leaders to respond to food insecurity was a missed opportunity;

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Even though many IFIO’s responses to the economic and livelihoods challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic came late, a number of them did pivot to respond to these challenges, often including an F&D dimension. Staff from IFIOs noted the varied roles that LFAs and LCFs were playing in response to these economic and livelihoods challenges, as well as what they were doing to support them. For example, WV DRC, as part of their trainings with faith leaders, explored how they:

‘...can work with their fellow members to develop some livelihood and resilience means. So that when they go through a crisis, church can be able to assist some of the most vulnerable members for the church with food assistance. So, we put an emphasis on the food production; how can they use the potential of the immediate environment to increase food production? So that when there is a crisis like COVID-19, they can be able to provide for needs in terms of food and also the needs of the most vulnerable children and the most vulnerable families in their congregations’ (WVDRCJ6).

Similarly, one of WV Indonesia’s eventual responses to the economic and livelihoods concerns of local communities was through a;

'... task force [made up of faith leaders and local community members], what they have, not only activities related to the spiritual support, but also how they give support related to livelihoods, when they don't have jobs, how they also give information related to jobs' (WVInAD2).

The development arm of the Anglican Communion, Episcopal Relief and Development, also supported national faith actors to ensure people had enough to eat:

'So, I know in the case of south Africa, I was just on a call yesterday, the Anglican church agency there is negotiating with government. Government wants to feed people and they recognise that they cannot reach them... The church helps provide introductions, can the share data, so they know who's really vulnerable. So, we're creating partnerships in certain contexts where that is doable' (ERD1).

The IFIO Tearfund's approach to F&D, employed before and during COVID-19, is Church and Community Transformation (CCT). This is built on the idea of 'integral mission'; that the church should serve the community beyond worship. This approach is both deeply theological – engaging with theological seminaries to develop the curricula and addressing theological reflections on what the mission of the church is – and thoroughly practical – equipping churches to mobilise to the needs of the community. A key informant from Tearfund explained this process as;

'trying to break down the walls of the church, not physically but metaphorically, to go out into the community. [...] recognising that we're suffering, our neighbours are suffering, let's go and do something about it. And it's forcing people into thinking much more about how does my faith affect how I'm working, how I'm living, how I treat my neighbour...' (TF1)

This key informant from Tearfund, detailed how this F&D investment, operational before and during the COVID-19 pandemic, was aimed towards mobilising communities of faith to respond to the needs of the wider community. Through this faith-inspired program, Tearfund worked with churches to help them respond to the needs of the community as a result of the economic and food insecurity caused by the pandemic helping them provide food for those in need.

Protection

The COVID-19 pandemic also created significant protection challenges in many contexts around the world, especially in terms of Child Protection - which is of great concern to World Vision as a child-focused organisation – and Gender-Based Violence (GBV). WV Indonesia staff raised the issue that, because of the COVID-19 pandemic and measures to stem the spread of the virus, families were spending all day together as children were home schooled and parents were, if possible, working from home. Mothers, fathers and other care givers were extremely stressed. Mothers in particular were carrying increased domestic loads as well as the brunt of the home-schooling burden in many contexts.

A key informant from World Vision UK (WVUKCLB1) illuminated evidence collected at the international level, showing that families were adopting negative coping mechanisms leading to increased instances of violence against children. There was also evidence that instances of child marriage and child pregnancy had increased during the COVID-19 pandemic. World Vision UK (WVUKCB1) staff expressed concern that children being out of school might also increase their likelihood of joining gangs or armed groups.

World Vision's third strategic objective in response to COVID-19 was to integrate support for children impacted by COVID-19; addressing the disruption to daily routines and environments, increased stress on children, and their relationships with family members, friends and the wider community, and increased instances of violence against children. Staff from WV DRC saw their

efforts to mobilise communities, including faith leaders, to better understand the virus and its secondary impacts, especially on children, as an important part of their COVID-19 response (WVDRCJ2, WCDRCPS3). Islamic Relief Worldwide has also been working with faith leaders for child protection, through the Channels of Hope methodology they worked with World Vision to produce for Muslim communities of faith (IRW1).

WV Indonesia engaged substantially with local faith leaders to support families, and their mental health, during the pandemic. This will be explored in more detail later in this chapter. However, it is worth noting here that faith inspired MHPSS programming was also delivered for child protection purposes. WV Indonesia saw faith leaders as key actors in their child protection strategies. WV Indonesia staff emphasised the importance of local faith leaders as gatekeepers to parents, who are in turn gatekeepers to children. As a result, most of World Vision's F&D for Child Protection focuses on partnering with faith leaders who nurture parents who then find more positive ways of interacting with their children:

'faith leaders are the gatekeeper to parents and then the parents are the gatekeepers to children. We don't have like to directly from the intervention from the faith leaders directly to children because yes, it is too small an intervention, we have tried to spiritual nurture children, but most of our projects focus on faith leaders and nurture their parents' (WVInAD2).

Before COVID-19, WV Indonesia had two F&D project models for child protection: Celebrating Families and Positive Parenting. WV Indonesia contextualised and mixed these modules to create a model known in Indonesia as Parenting with Love. World Vision partnered with and trained faith leaders to deliver this programme. The aim of Parenting with Love is to give parents the skills to nurture their children with discipline, not violence, and to manage their stress, anxiety and workloads.

They also worked with faith leaders to respond to challenges families were facing with children spending more time online. WV Indonesia emphasised their ability to adapt their F&D responses to address the needs of families. This, again, will be explored in more detail in a later section, but WV Indonesia's faith-inspired partnerships with faith leaders for Child Protection, including addressing the risks of children spending more time online during the pandemic, is an example of the importance of adapting F&D programming to respond to situation:

'...so many interventions to digital parenting because we use by internet during the learning from home...and so many cases not only violence in reality but also violence on social media because also children also have contact with other strangers and use their smart phone to contact with...this is just to prevent and to have the capacity for the parents to be aware of the situation...' (WVInAD3).

'...child protection from digital parenting because with COVID all children use computer and laptop and sometimes they use also not just for education but also for games and games online and so much pornography as well and we reduce, we prevent, this is the side impact' (WVInAD4).

A key informant from Dan Church Aid (DCA1) linked the important role of LFAs and LCFs in terms of protection, to their wider reaching role in rights protection. The key informant suggested that faith actors have the moral authority to protect rights which are being threatened during the pandemic. The same key informant detailed the various rights abuses being experienced during the pandemic resulting from strict quarantines and the enforcement of curfews: GBV, limitations on civic rights such as freedom of expression and the right to demonstrate, and lack of access to water. The key informant stressed the impact of these rights violations particularly in refugee camps where they saw faith leaders intervening as intermediaries between camp authorities and residents to ensure all obligations and rights were upheld:

‘...we have faith actors who have both intervened with refugee communities in the refugee camp in Kenya to talk to the residents of the camp and to the camp authorities explaining to both sides what are the obligations and their rights, but also trying to make sure that the camp authorities would administer this curfew in a humane way’ (DCA1).

IFIOs engagement with LFAs and LCFs for protection issues such as child protection indicates that they see faith leaders in particular as presenting value-add for addressing sensitive issues. As will be explored in more detail later in this chapter, IFIOs F&D methodologies, such as CoH, build on the trust, authority and legitimacy of faith leaders, and their ability to speak directly to values, attitudes and behaviours.

Recovery

For WV Indonesia, as the pandemic progressed, with the news of potential vaccines being developed, their focus shifted to recovery. WV Indonesia staff highlighted their shift in F&D responses, from MHPSS, which had been the team’s initial focus, to livelihoods and dealing with the economic consequences of COVID-19 and food insecurity. Their focus then shifted again to include looking towards recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic and its secondary impacts, including vaccine roll-out.

For example, as well as the economic and livelihood consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic, the accompanying lockdowns also put people’s lives on hold. The pandemic changed the world and how it works, impacting future livelihood opportunities and presenting ongoing uncertainty around economic prospects. As a result, WV Indonesia staff felt that people were worried about what to do next to address the challenges they faced, including around livelihood and economic opportunities.

WV Indonesia staff felt that a role for local faith leaders in this context of uncertainty is to encourage their congregations when they have lost hope and are unsure what to do next. One staff member from the WV Indonesia F&D team, gave an example of their work in this area:

‘I was coming from West Papua for three weeks where I was meeting some church leaders and we are discussing about how can we build our vision, how can we build to encourage our congregations who struggle with economic to build new business ...but this is kind of a change because everybody know virus, and we already have, virus is not really scary like before because we face it day to day and people start to build a new base of their life after this pandemic. They are trying to start a new life...’ (WVInRH3).

The important role of faith leaders for encouraging hopefulness was emphasised by a key informant from another IFIO, Harper Hill Global. They explained how ‘...hopelessness is a deadly disease. And so being able to share a message of hope, at the right time, can give people that momentum to just keep going...’ (HHG1)

While faith leaders may not have the technical capacity to help members of their congregations move employment sectors or start their own businesses, they have a potentially significant role in encouraging them. They can also facilitate this livelihoods recovery process by ‘doing marketing... putting on groups so if you produce something they can buy’ (WVInRH4). Faith leaders also engaged their task forces in more practical ways to respond to livelihoods challenges. They have disseminated information about jobs and helped publicised the skills of people looking for work and the products made by members of the congregation they’d like to sell.

Faith leaders may be in a distinctive position to help with encouraging people and giving them hope during and following a humanitarian crisis. WV Indonesia staff relayed that in Indonesia, religion is often perceived as a ‘map of your life’ (WVInRH3). This means that people are often asking their faith leaders about what they should do with their life. Faith leaders play a crucial role in supporting

congregation members to make these decisions. Faith leaders' role is beyond giving technical advice; it is about giving encouragement. Faith leaders play an important role in helping congregation and community members see how they could start a new life for themselves, their families and their communities. They help congregation members create a new vision for their lives. Part of this approach is to bring these discussions back to what the congregation's Holy texts says about these situations.

F&D for disseminating accurate information and preventative messaging for social behaviour change

While both WV DRC and WV Indonesia engaged with faith, religion and spirituality in a multitude of ways to respond to COVID-19, WV DRC's most significant investment in F&D was for strategic objective one of COVER: scale up preventative measures to limit the spread of the disease. This objective sought to address misinformation around COVID-19 and disseminate accurate information and preventative messaging. It also implied that through disseminating accurate information and preventative messaging, through trusted authoritative (faith) leaders, it will promote social behaviour change towards healthy and safe practices.

The World Vision partnership's significant investment in faith-inspired partnerships and programming to scale up preventative measures to limit the spread of the disease reflects the humanitarian sphere's most significant F&D engagement. The role that LFAs and LCFs play in responding to emergencies is well-explored in the Religion and Development/Humanitarianism literature, and in communities of practice. What does appear to be particular to the COVID-19 pandemic, however, is the speed with which the formal humanitarian sphere engaged with and mobilised LFAs for responses to COVID-19, and the scope of this investment across the humanitarian sphere, particularly in terms of disseminating accurate information and preventative messaging.

Within weeks of declaring COVID-19 a pandemic, in March 2020, the World Health Organisation (WHO) held a webinar called 'EPI-WIN COVID-19 Faith-based Organizations'. The WHO also released guidelines for Faith Based Organizations and Faith Leaders (WHO, 2020) and the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) released Resources for Community and Faith-Based Leaders (CDC, 2019). UNICEF, who was already working with Religion's for Peace to launch their Global Multi-Religious Faith-in-Action Initiative (UNICEF, 2020), partnered with the JLI to draft a module on the role of faith leaders and communities of faith for responding to COVID-19. Most of these F&D investments focus predominantly on faith-inspired partnerships with faith leaders to scale up preventative measures to limit the spread of the disease.

However, while the humanitarian sphere in general engaged more widely and quickly with LFAs to disseminate accurate information and preventative messages for social behaviour change, at times their methodologies remained narrow and instrumental. For several IFIOs on the other hand, they engaged more meaningfully with faith, religion and spirituality for social behaviour change. For example, World Vision's faith-inspired programming geared towards this aim involves in-depth engagement with faith, religion and spirituality, engaging with beliefs, teachings and scriptures, presenting distinctive value-add to their work in this space.

CoH for COVID-19 Lessons learnt: accurate and misinformation

WV DRC continued to invest in F&D to scale up preventative measures to limit the spread of the disease, continuing to emphasise the effectiveness of their Channels of Hope (CoH) methodology for this objective. The World Vision partnership's CoH methodology is perceived internally as one of their most successful exports and most defined contributions to humanitarian responses (WVUKSP1). It is aimed at ensuring faith leaders disseminate accurate information, addressing any misinformation around the issue, promoting social behaviour change that in this context leads to healthy and safe behaviours that stem the spread of the virus.

According to an F&D lead in WV DRC, CoH for COVID-19 was implemented in four phases. The first phase was preparation; designing the project, mapping potential stakeholders, building the capacity of World Vision staff to lead the programme and training facilitators through three-day workshops. Secondly, World Vision catalysed faith leaders; they organised the faith leaders catalysing workshop to engage and influence local faith leaders and their spouses. This workshop used a behaviour change methodology 'designed for the heads, the hearts and the hands...' (WVDRCPSZ1). The CoH methodology, which has been operationalised in response to several other health- and non-health-related challenges by offices across the World Vision partnership, was designed to tackle a 'lack of knowledge, wrong attitudes and lack of action' (WVDRCPSZ1). The catalysing workshop was described by a key informant from WV DRC as a 'safe space for diverse faith leaders and faith communities from various denominations to learn...' (WVDRCJ1). The third phase of CoH for COVID-19 was strategy. For this phase World Vision facilitated the creation of Community Hub Action Teams (CHATs). CHATs were made up of leaders chosen by catalysed faith leaders from their congregations. After a three- or four-day CHAT workshop, CHATs worked together with faith leaders to focus on a specific issue. They then developed '... their own congregational strategies and action plans according to their size, vision and needs' (World Vision, 2014:4). The fourth stage was empowerment; where faith communities implemented the action plan while World Vision continue to offer capacity strengthening and engagement opportunities. World Vision continues to keep in touch with communities of faith to provide technical support as they implement their action plans.

World Vision's CoH methodology had five circulars, adding a sixth now that they have developed one in response to COVID-19, all aimed towards changing attitudes, behaviours and social norms around sensitive topics: (1) CoH for Child Protection (CoH-CP), (2) CoH for Ebola (CoH-e), (3) CoH for Gender (CoH-G), (4) CoH for HIV (CoH-HIV) and, (5) CoH for Maternal, Newborn, and Child Health (CoH-MNCH).

World Vision's CoH methodology was identified as a way of leveraging local faith networks for development programming and responses to humanitarian emergencies such as COVID-19. World Vision's CoH methodology was based on the influence faith leaders have in their communities to be agents for transformative change. When trained and sensitised, faith leaders, as well as other community members, are equipped to tackle serious and sensitive issues to ensure the well-being of communities, especially their most vulnerable members (World Vision, 2012). The majority of literature that affirms this Theory of Change has come from World Vision. As a result, there is a lack of external evidence around whether CoH achieves the aims it sets out. However, there is wider evidence that highlights the importance of engaging with faith leaders for responding to the Ebola crisis (Featherstone, 2014. PaRD, 2016). Featherstone (2014:27), for example, highlights the fact that significant adoption of the CoH methodology was part of a greater coherence around messaging at the peak of the epidemic which helped reduce confusion.

World Vision's CoH methodology seeks to engage with the problematic aspects of faith, religion or spirituality's involvement in humanitarian crises, as well as the opportunities they present, through engaging faith leaders; training and sensitising them, and rooting the training in sacred texts: '... CoH workshops provide faith leaders with a safe space to examine their own attitudes and beliefs in light of their sacred texts and sound scientific information. Faith leaders need time and space to unpack important ethical and theological issues' (World Vision, 2014:6). It works with Christian communities of faith and communities of other faiths. For example, World Vision worked with the IFIO Islamic Relief Worldwide to create a CoH methodology for Muslim communities of faith for Child Protection (Islamic Relief Worldwide, 2021).

CoH for COVID-19 was rapidly adapted, primarily from CoH-E, initially by World Vision's Global Center (GC) as part of their COVER, and then by national offices. This highlights the great extent to which lessons learnt from responding to Ebola, and the roles that faith actors played in promoting behaviour change to stem the spread of the disease, have influenced F&D responses to COVID-19.

Key informants from IFIOs across the humanitarian sphere, regardless of the extent to which they invest in F&D generally, emphasised the important lessons learnt about F&D from the Ebola crisis. One member of staff from WV DRC emphasised succinctly the importance of lessons learnt from Ebola for responding effectively to COVID-19 by employing a faith dimension:

‘The importance of involving faith leaders, and the other influencers, in the multisectoral, integrated response, is emphasised seeing the role they played in the Ebola crisis, and how they are already engaged in fighting COVID-19’ (WVDRCJ1)

WV DRC has a long history of responding to infectious diseases, all of which informed their COVID-19 response in general, and their F&D activities in particular. WV DRC staff spoke about the complex health context of the DRC which meant that during their COVID-19 response, WV DRC was also responding to more than seven ongoing outbreaks including Ebola, measles, cholera, smallpox and yellow fever. WV DRC staff felt that building their response to COVID-19 on their extensive knowledge of faith-inspired responses to infectious diseases was a significant strength of their COVID-19 response. In particular, WV DRC staff felt that their experiences of working with LFAs and LCFs to respond to previous and ongoing epidemics in the country meant they were quick to engage with them again in response to COVID-19.

The importance of building on lessons learned from faith-inspired responses to health crises was felt across key informants, from World Vision and from other IFIOs. A key lesson learned was articulated by one key informant, an Imam based in Nigeria and associated with Islamic Relief Worldwide, who highlighted that ‘...a lot of studies have shown that in handling the malaria problem, in handling the polio problem... without the role of religious leaders these problems would not be solved’ (IRWSN1).

As highlighted above, while IFIOs drew on their experiences of F&D investments in response to other crises and infectious diseases, the most relatable health crisis to the COVID-19 pandemic from which to draw on lessons learnt for more effective responses to COVID-19, was the Ebola crisis. A Key

informant from the IFIO Catholic Relief Services (CRS) stated that not only did the Ebola epidemic teach humanitarian organisations about the kinds of precautions needed to work in situations affected by health-related emergencies, but it highlighted the importance of involving LFAs, namely faith leaders, in humanitarian responses (CRS1). In countries like the DRC, Senegal, Liberia and Sierra Leone, CRS still has local (faith) partners working with them, who ‘...understand the types of precautions, they might even be more stringent this time, but they are quite knowledgeable about this’ (CRS1).

During the Ebola crisis in 2016, public health specialists highlighted how traditional practices, namely mourning rituals that involve touching and washing highly infectious bodies, were significantly contributing to the spread of the disease. International, governmental and non-governmental organizations advised local communities to avoid these traditional practices. While some people did change their behaviors and practices, many remained wary of the advice. It became clear that local community trust and engagement was crucial for efforts to stem the outbreaks of Ebola. Once international and national humanitarian agencies recognized the need to make their interventions more local, and to change their approach, they established and reinforced their links with local faith leaders. Through the advocacy of local faith leaders, there was a significant change in behavior within communities towards safe, as well as religiously and culturally accepted practices which helped stem the spread of the Ebola disease (PaRD, 2016:8).

There is now a significant body of literature exploring the impact of F&D activities for responding to Ebola (see Featherston, 2015. Greyling et al, 2016. Marshall, 2016). World Vision have extensive experience of, and have published widely on, the value-add of F&D responses to Ebola (See for example World Vision, 2019). The significant role that faith leaders played in responding to Ebola was fresh in the minds of staff at WV DRC who continue to combat Ebola outbreaks, especially in the eastern part of the country. One key informant remembered how an F&D team, led by a CoH specialist who is a Pastor himself, ‘...managed to stop the spread of Ebola in the major parts of the

cities of the province' of the Eastern DRC (WVDRCJ3). They saw how CoH for Ebola '... really helped... a lot to change hearts and minds towards the Ebola virus response' in the DRC (WVDRCPS1). Several other key informants from WV DRC also expressed how '... the approach played a very big role in fighting Ebola' (WVDRCJ1):

'...from what we have done from HIV, from what we have done in maternal, infant and child health, even in Ebola in Sierra Leone, yes, [faith leaders] were very, very, very instrumental and the sensitisation among them was very, very helpful... it was easy actually to break through' (WVDRCPSZ1).

Reinforcing the experiences of staff from WV DRC is a grand claim made by the World Vision partnership in their literature that in Sierra Leone, the first notable decline in the Ebola epidemic coincided with the implementation of CoH-E (World Vision, 2015:1).

The effectiveness of CoH for Ebola is reiterated by the fact that in areas where World Vision had worked to tackle Ebola, people have been quicker to adopt healthy and safe behaviours:

'In Beni, you don't see people hiding, you don't see people shaking hands, and the handwashing becomes automatic. There was, the government has to take a decision, for every business to have a handwashing station and in Beni etc... where there is Ebola, it's automatic, you don't have to ask people to do that, they know they have to do it, and you see outside the supermarket, if you're going to the supermarket you see a handwashing station and people are not forced to do it, they go by themselves and this is, I agree that somehow, because communities have been sensitised, on the risk of transmission, and we continue to use the same channels to inform them of the risks of COVID-19. They think it is serious' (WVDRCJF2).

While they acknowledge some significant differences, staff in WV DRC emphasised the similarities between Ebola and COVID-19:

‘There has been quite a number of lessons. The first is that when people have understood Ebola, the way the Ebola virus works, it’s easy to understand the COVID virus, the COVID-19. Because they are both in the same family of viruses. Secondly, the same messages, the hygiene messages, that we have been sensitising people on, in Ebola, they are the same messages and the same practices. The only added practice for COVID-19 is the mask. Because in Ebola, there was the isolation, there was the lockdown, there was people restricted of movements and so on. Like we have added the mask because of the way the virus actually gains entry into one’s body. So, using the same hygienic principles, the same isolation principles, the community that has had Ebola, it’s much easier to introduce COVID-19.’ (WVDRCPSZ1)

One of the most concerning similarities between the two health crises was the vast amount of misinformation circulating around them both:

‘At the time people felt that the virus, it was a myth, it was a disease that was imported, it was a strategy by westerners to change or to betray Congolese or Africans. There were a lot of superstitions around the Ebola virus. And the same with the COVID. There are a lot of community perception that is happening, that the people are assuming that COVID-19 ... is not an African disease, it’s not even existing, it’s not a real thing’ (WVDRCPS1).

Staff from WV DRC had seen the value-add of engaging with faith leaders to disseminate accurate information and preventative messaging about Ebola, which led to behaviour change, stemming the spread of the virus:

‘... CoH for Ebola were able to reach many people including the children, the young people, other faith community members so that many understand what was going on and they start changing the way of seeing that Ebola because other people like militias, the other people in the community were saying the Ebola is not really. People are coming with that to do their own business, it’s not a reality. But when they start dying with, and also, they saw other faith leaders that died with that Ebola virus, people start understanding and when we went with Ebola and CoH for Ebola the approach played a very big role in fighting Ebola.’ (WVDRCJ1)

Building on lessons learnt from their Ebola response, to combat high levels of misinformation around COVID-19, WV DRC engaged primarily with faith leaders, through the CoH methodology, to disseminate preventative messages and technical information to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

Engaging with LFAs and LCFs to disseminate accurate information and preventative messaging, as well as messages of hope, was also a significant F&D investment made by other IFIOs. For example, a key informant from Harper Hill Global explained their methodology for disseminating accurate information and preventative messaging through faith networks:

‘We’re sending text messages... to provide clear information to counter, because some people do believe it’s a myth and a hoax, or that it’s a rich man’s disease, there’s all kind of horrible myths that some people have shared with me, and like they were true and if I heard them I’d think, oh my god that isn’t true, but for them it’s like is this true? And they don’t know whether to believe the myths. So basically, were sending text messages, sending out two messages a day, one in the morning for health, and in the evening for hope’ (HHG1)

They explained that they do not send these messages directly to community members, but they are sent and signed off by local faith leaders.

Creativity and Adaption: successes and challenges

Usually, World Vision NOs, such as WV DRC, would carry out CoH trainings in-person with local faith leaders. However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the accompanying lockdowns and restrictions of movement, WV DRC had to adapt their practices. They, like many other IFIOs, found a variety of creative ways to continue their local faith-inspired programs despite these restrictions. Such creative adaptations presented opportunities and challenges for IFIOs, including NOs like WV DRC. However, regardless of how successful they were, the effort put into ensuring the continuation of local faith-inspired programs, despite the imposed constraints, highlights the significance attributed to these programs. Evidently, the continuation of local faith-inspired programs in some form, to disseminate accurate information and preventative messaging for social behaviour change, was a priority for many IFIOs.

WV DRC made sure to comply with the restrictions and guidelines put in place by the government to prevent the spread of COVID-19. A few months into the pandemic, it was possible in the DRC to meet in small groups with under twenty people, if they observed more than one metre between each person. They also connected trainings they were able to do in person with other small groups around the country via the online video platform Zoom. As a result, they were still able to reach 219 faith leaders from across the country despite the restrictions of movement. One key informant from WV DRC highlighted the benefits of this approach:

'we organised in the way that when there is a question, when we have an exercise, people will discuss in the room. And then, they will feedback on the zoom chat, they can also, someone can speak on behalf of others. So, if there is something to correct, questions, people are asking. And after that, they still in the room, they discuss and they draw up the action plan for the next step...' (WVDRCJ1)

WV DRC carried out their CoH trainings in keeping with government guidelines and ensured that masks were worn and hand washing facilities were accessible. WV DRC also provided material support to faith leaders to facilitate them going into their communities to cascade the information they learned in their CoH workshops safely. For example, they provided protective gear, megaphones and batteries. WV DRC adapted and updated their practices around CoH as the pandemic progressed and the government's restrictions and guidelines changed.

WV DRC found increasingly creative ways to work with faith actors to scale up preventative measures to limit the spread of the disease. For example, WV DRC did work around negotiating and planning with different radio stations to transmit preventative messages, often having people of trust such as faith leaders speaking to radio audiences. WV DRC worked with twelve radio stations and one television station. Towards the end of the data collection period for this research, WV DRC were working on 'a talk show dialogue' format and 'mobile dialogue training' (WVDRCPS5) to enable faith leaders and health personnel to go onto different radio stations to talk about the causes, effects and prevention of COVID-19. It was hoped that this format would allow members of the community to call into the radio station and pose questions to faith leaders and health personnel to start a conversation or dialogue about COVID-19.

WV DRC were not the only NO of an IFIO to adopt the creative use of radio to adapt their programming. A key informant at CRS Uganda detailed how they had taken their work to radio, for '... creative listening circles where participants would normally be working together in groups of 15 to 20 in participant workshops they are now listening to radio programmes in groups of 5 and discussing what that has to do with their enterprise, their micro-enterprise' (CRSHD1). While this programming isn't explicitly related to F&D it highlights another example of an IFIO working creatively to overcome the restrictions on their programming because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

WV DRC also encouraged and helped faith leaders to use social media, such as Facebook, to spread preventative messages during the COVID-19 pandemic. During the COVID-19 pandemic, World Vision asked each NO to submit updates twice a week called 'sitreps'. These reports detailed their COVID-19 programming, including narrative reports on their F&D work. 48 countries reported their work in all. The ways that NOs engaged with faith, religion and spirituality differed according to the context, as did the way they reported their F&D programming. According to this sitrep data on F&D responses to COVID-19 across the World Vision partnership, setting up a Whatsapp group for faith leaders following trainings was a common activity before and during the COVID-19 pandemic. As a result, there were lots of examples of faith leaders sharing information on what they had been doing to respond to COVID-19, with World Vision national offices and with each other. World Vision also sent up-to-date information through these Whatsapp groups and '...every activity that will be running in the community, they will just send' World Vision 'a short report on Whatsapp' (WVDRCJ1).

The COVID-19 pandemic elicited creative responses to the restrictions from the majority of IFIOs engaged with for this project, who faced these common challenges because of the pandemic. According to reports from F&D responses to COVID-19 from across the World Vision partnership, such creativity was a distinctive characteristic of national offices' F&D responses to COVID-19. For some IFIOs working remotely - online and through phones – this was a new way of working. However, a key informant from the IFIO Harper Hill Global, based in the US but working in low-income contexts around the world, detailed their experience with this way of working with LFAs and LCFs:

'I work digitally, I've always worked digitally, so this is like, oh, this is what we've been working for all along, just activate the network... So basically, we're sending text messages, sending out two messages a day, one in the morning for health, and in the evening for hope.' (HHG1).

The COVID-19 pandemic, and the work of IFIOs like Harper Hill Global, highlights some important lessons for responding to future humanitarian crises like COVID-19, particularly in the realm of spreading accurate information and preventative messaging. Using technology, particularly cheap forms of technology accessible to many people around the world, provides a way to communicate accurate information and preventative messages, without the need for in-person activities. In the case of Harper Hill Global, text messaging is the lowest common denominator in terms of technology. While it may not be possible to directly access everyone through this method, it can access a lot of people and is particularly important when in-person contact is limited.

While WV DRC was able to respond creatively to COVID-19, enabling them to continue their work to scale up preventative measures to limit the spread of the disease despite restrictions, this did not mean that WV DRC were exempt from the significant challenges of moving more of their F&D work online:

‘... there are some things we can't do online. Most of the places we work don't have internet. All of last week for example... we only had internet intermittently, so we had to go face-to-face and going face-to-face in light of COVID it was like, oh no. The numbers we had to do face-to-face and also big numbers. And how do you size them up and do it within one week? So, it was a bit challenging...’ (WVDRCPSZ3).

Other key informants also explained that the technology relied on for many of the creative adaptations of F&D programs is not accessible everywhere. A key informant from CCIH for example detailed their attempts at delivering programs in Zimbabwe. They suggested that internet connections are unreliable in many areas in the country which made it a difficult place to deliver programs during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Similarly, a key informant from WV DRC (WVDRCPSZ1) was frustrated because they saw social mobilisation as the value-add of faith-inspired responses to humanitarian crises. However, because

of the pandemic, having to engage with smaller groups and online meant that social mobilisation rates were slower than normal, especially in rural areas. WV Indonesia faced similar challenges in this area. One key informant from WV Indonesia admitted that moving online felt like a 'coping mechanism for the situation' (WVInRH2). However, it was clear that not being able to go into and live among communities meant they were less effective. Just like in the DRC, in Indonesia, not everyone has internet access. Using technology and the internet is also not part of some people's day-to-day lives. As a result, there have been issues relating to the efficiency and effectiveness of F&D responses that adopted these creative solutions to the unavoidable restrictions of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Finally, a key informant from Episcopal Relief and Development indicated that they were facing the most significant challenges in contexts where governments were using COVID-19 to 'completely shut down society' and positioning themselves as the only solution to the crisis, not working with civil society actors, to reach as many people as possible (ERD1). This key informant explained that while many governments, such as South Africa's, wanted to feed as many people as possible during the COVID-19 pandemic and were asking how they can work with civil society to do this, other governments were using the COVID-19 pandemic as an excuse to limit civil society associations and activities that may threaten their power.

Lockdowns in some countries were 'draconian' according to a key informant from Episcopal Relief and Development, making it hard for their faith-inspired partnerships to respond to the crisis and the needs of their communities (ERD2). Faith leaders, embedded in local communities, are often well placed to identify vulnerable people and access certain contexts that governments or INGOs cannot. The actions of the governments of some countries, using the COVID-19 pandemic as an excuse to limit civil society activities, create obstacles for leveraging this distinctive role for faith leaders, no matter how creative they are. In some contexts, such as Colombia, the key informants relayed instances of churches working with the military to provide security for food distributions to ensure

churches do not get mobbed and that supplies get to those most in need. However, in contexts where the government refuses to work with civil society and faith actors it is much harder for them to support the most vulnerable people in their communities. As a result, it was difficult for IFIOs like Episcopal Relief and Development to reach certain communities in some countries.

Value-add of engaging with faith leaders to stem the spread of COVID-19

IFIO staff were keen to impress the distinctive opportunities for engaging with faith actors for health-related interventions. IFIO staff highlighted the importance of trust in, and authority and legitimacy of, faith leaders especially in highly religious contexts:

‘...faith leaders are trusted in their communities, you know, we see that everywhere, we see that as being more profound in global south countries... where people turn to their faith leaders for all kinds of advice and personal issues including health. So having faith leaders informed with correct information is crucial’ (CCIH1).

‘we work with faith based partners because we are a Catholic institution ... we work hand-in-hand with Catholic organisations here and Uganda as our sister organisations... our overall business model allows us to work very closely with Communities and to have a project with implemented by those who know the community best, who are trusted by communities who have long histories and expertise in addressing a particular issue in a specific community’ (CRSHD1).

The authority and trust imbued in faith leaders by communities, and the role that this gives them for responding to humanitarian crises, speaks into the concept of Public Authority. Numerous key informants stressed the value-add to their F&D programming due to the authority and legitimacy of faith leaders:

'... you know we have around 95% of people the DRC... who are Christian. So, if you need to reach a huge number of people in the country you need to work with faith leaders. So, they are trusted and when they speak to religious community members here, she can be, they can be heard by the community members' (WVDRCJ7).

'Let me start by stating that Africa is strongly religious. So, people in Africa they, I would say, they all believe in something. Whether in different religion or traditional religions or ancestral practices. But they are all believers. So having a project model or approach that relies on what they, on something that everyone has in common, is fundamental, Because the faith when Allah, God and whatever it is, is what they have in common. And because also, they have congregations where they meet, where they share, where they live out their faith. So, using these channels, has demonstrated a real difference' (WVDRCJF1).

'...faith leaders are trusted in their communities, you know we see that everywhere, we see that as being more profound in global south countries... where people turn to their faith leaders for all kinds of advice and personal issues including health. So having faith leaders informed with correct information is crucial. Having them trained to address health issues is important, because you don't know when a crisis is going to come' (CCIH1).

'... there is an additional... penetration to local constituencies through the faith structures. And there is also an additional authority if you work with faith structures because when people's wealth views are religiously informed it makes, they base their decisions, their choices, their behavioural change on advice and information through the faith structures. Whether it's the leader who speaks to them or it's a discussion in

the women's group when they get together for church women's group meetings on Sunday afternoons' (DCA1).

Evidently, across the F&D landscape, the Public Authority of faith leaders is considered a considerable value-add of engaging with them to respond to development challenges and humanitarian crises. This is particularly the case for projects and programming seeking behavioural, attitudinal and social norm change, relying on trusted figures to lead the process. This appears to be the most widely acknowledged value-add of F&D investments in humanitarian action.

The distinctive role of faith leaders in responding to crises like Ebola and now COVID-19 reinforce the relevance of the concept of Public Authority. It also underlines the importance of considering a range of actors outside of those traditionally perceived as humanitarian actors. In particular, key informants emphasised the importance of engaging with alternative sources of Public Authority, such as faith leaders, in contexts where state authority is contested. WV DRC staff emphasised the lack of trust local community members had in state authorities in general and during the COVID-19 pandemic:

'The mistrust in the authorities. Which means that populations refuse to abide by authorities' instructions.' (WVDRCJF1).

'...now you will realise that if scientists or doctors or public health workers get in the community to transmit the health messages, the health messages are received with a pinch of salt. They don't trust everything because especially among Faith communities They have been led to believe if these health workers are being trained to bring in western ideas that will come and corrupt our cultural morals. So they are like Invaders from the outside to bring a new things that are not part of the culture' (WVDRCPSZ2).

‘Because most communities are still thinking that COVID is not real. That is a political disease, that it’s a political statement’ (WVDRCPS2).

‘The faith leaders, they are, how can I say, they are influencers in the community. They are more heard than even the heads of state’ (WVDRCJ1).

Key informants highlighted that this mistrust of state-led authority figures in the DRC also lead, by proxy, to a deep mistrust of the health system, which in the DRC ‘exists sometimes only by name’ (WVDRCJF1):

‘...they won’t trust the volunteers [from the Ministry of Health] because they think they are from some political reasons, and they won’t take the message. But if it comes from religious leaders, because in most religions the pastors, the priests or imams, they see them as representatives of God. So, if they trust in God or Allah, they will always respect those people that represent God or Allah or whatever they believe in’ (WVDRCJF1).

Key informants from other IFIOs felt that mistrust of the state and health system led people to seek accurate information and help from alternative sources, often faith actors. For example, if someone wants

‘...healing, sometimes they’ll go, and I don’t think this is necessarily great, to do this, sometimes they’ll go to the church instead of the doctor. And so, in something like this, they’re looking towards their local leaders, they’re not looking for help outside, and so they go to their local leader... Even Harpel Hill Global, I don’t put our name on those text messages, they come from the local leaders.’ (HHG1).

Fractured trust in the state and health system can be intensified in conflict-affected contexts. One member of staff from WV DRC suggested that in times of conflict, and the eastern part of the DRC has been ravaged by conflict for decades, it is even more difficult to trust the authorities. This

creates real barriers to responding to a health emergencies like COVID-19, limiting trust in government advice and adherence to restrictions and measures to stem the spread of the disease. A lack of trust in the state and the health system also de-incentivises people to go to health facilities when they are unwell.

The Public Authority of faith leaders and religious institutions has played a significant role in responding to COVID-19 in fragile contexts around the world. One respondent from Episcopal Relief and Development (ERD1) recalled examples of the church in Colombia, working with the military to provide food distributions during the COVID-19 pandemic. They were important partners for responding to the needs of local communities because they were not at risk of getting mobbed for the food. Their authority and legitimacy in local communities, including amongst gang members, gave them the protection needed to be able to respond to the needs of the most vulnerable in their communities.

Of course, the other side of the Public Authority of many faith leaders is that;

‘...if there is a lack of trust among the congregation, that has an adverse effect on the project and even on response to COVID-19. Because if Faith leaders, or the head of the church, or the head of the mosque, are not deeply engaged and involved in the fight and risk communication approach or the whole strategy then COVID cannot be defeated’ (WVDRCP8).

The F&D landscape during the COVID-19 pandemic has further strengthened the concept of Public Authority as it speaks to the logics of both moral popularism and social harmony. There are many examples of religious institutions deriving Public Authority from tactics of exclusion. For example, during the COVID-19 pandemic, WV DRC staff addressed ‘bad theologies’ being promoted by faith leaders, that blamed the COVID-19 pandemic on sinners. There were also problematic narratives in

different contexts, spread by faith leaders, about certain marginalised groups such as the Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender Queer Plus (LGBTQ+) community causing the pandemic (Staff, 2020).

On reflection, these narratives around ‘bad theologies’ highlight a blindspot in many IFIOs faith literacy. My same biases, as a western-based researcher situated in seemingly ‘secular’ European contexts, meant that only on reflection did I engage critically with the way IFIO staff were presenting theologies; as good or bad in relation to ‘secular’ humanitarian outcomes. This reinforces the importance of reflexivity for all those in the Religion and Humanitarianism space.

The idea that some theologies are ‘bad’ and others ‘good’ and that their categorisation depends on whether they facilitate or undermine humanitarian responses is a narrow and instrumental approach to faith engagement. This is an example of how a lack of faith literacy, common across the international humanitarian sphere, including IFIOs who are not immune to such blindspots, can lead to certain challenges related to the intertwining of faith, religion, spirituality and humanitarianism going unmitigated. Making judgements on faith-inspired narratives solely based on their functionality for humanitarian responses creates distance between humanitarian processes and the lived, embodied experiences of faith, religion and spirituality in local communities. Such an approach risks undermining or creating barriers for broader efforts around localisation and engaging with local faith actors. This is potentially significant given the important roles of faith, religion and spirituality in themselves during and after crises.

It is vital that narratives that may undermined public health are addressed, but this needs to be done in a faith-sensitive way if it is to be effective. This is recognised by World Vision’s CoH methodology, which engages with faith-inspired beliefs and narratives, texts and scriptures, to address ‘problematic’ beliefs and behaviours, for example around domestic abuse. This approach recognises that theological education and transformation can be part of humanitarian responses and solutions, in a way that sees faith, religion and spirituality as ends in themselves and not just conduits to

humanitarian responses, and in a way that limits the reproduction of power inequalities and western views that are inherent in the language of 'good' and 'bad' theologies.

The Public Authority of many faith leaders, particularly in highly religious contexts, means that misinformation spread by faith leaders' risks undermining broader humanitarian and development efforts. So does faith leaders' adoption of an apathetic stance towards the pandemic. This could, unchecked, have led to the unmitigated spread of the virus and increased deaths as a result. A key informant from Dan Church Aid felt that the COVID-19 pandemic;

'...underlined that religion is ambiguous and it can be very powerful obstacle to rights protection or even to health, sound health-based information, just as it can be an extremely powerful avenue for the changes we would like to see for the rights, protection, for the regulation of faith life, for sound good and proper information' (DCA1).

A key informant from CCIH suggested that these challenges posed by some faith leaders for effective humanitarian responses are why it is so important to recognise the diversity within communities of faith. Some faith leaders 'reject the science and encourage their followers not to listen and to just have faith' (CCIH4). While instances like this are not the majority, it highlights the potential challenges posed by engaging with LFAs and LCFs and the fact that partnering with LFAs and LCFs is not necessarily a magic bullet for more effective humanitarian action.

The same key informant from CCIH (CCIH4) emphasised that while IFIOs tend to be conscious of the diversity of LFAs and the opportunities and challenges this presents for effective humanitarian responses, it is important the wider 'secular' humanitarian sphere recognises this to leverage the opportunities presented by F&D programming and mitigate the challenges. A key informant from Episcopal Relief and Development reflected that the relationship between faith and

humanitarianism can be misunderstood by secular actors (ERD1). Therefore sometimes ‘... faith groups are judged by their worst actors...’ whereas if you are embedded in the F&D space, you understand the ambiguity of the influences of faith, religion and spirituality on humanitarian processes; the opportunities and the challenges (ERD1).

Similarly, a key informant for Dan Church Aid (DCA1) warned the broader humanitarian sphere not to let these challenges put secular actors off engaging with faith, religion and spirituality. They suggested that the ambiguity of faith actors’ contributions to humanitarian and development responses was the basis upon ‘which a secularized norm of development thinking, for decades, has avoided contact with faith actors’ (DCA1). As has been explored in the literature review, and is reinforced in this chapter, to overlook the influences of faith, religion and spirituality in humanitarian processes is no longer tenable. It is important therefore, that all humanitarian actors, faith-inspired or secular, continue to engage with faith, religion and spirituality; the opportunities and challenges they present for effective humanitarian action because

‘... yes, religion can be part of the problem and it can definitely be part of the solution, but what it cannot be is left out of the equation because if we want to see a change in places where religious actors are part, are a major part of the problem these changes will not occur unless we get these faith actors on board. We cannot circumvent them. And I’m not saying that that is possible in each and all contexts and so on, but there is sufficient let’s say mass of actors who can be influenced and we must work with them to be professional. Not because we are a faith-based organisation involved in development; it’s just as relevant for Oxfam and Save the Children as it is for Dan Churchaid and its act Alliance’ (DCA1)

An understanding of the diversity of communities of faith, and the ambiguities of faith, religion and spirituality’s influences on humanitarian processes requires a level of faith literacy. While levels of

faith literacy differ amongst IFIOs and within the wider humanitarian sphere, a key informant from Episcopal Relief and Development felt that IFIOs tend to have a better understanding of the relationships between faith, religion and spirituality and humanitarianism;

‘again, I think that’s sometimes very misunderstood by secular groups because they’re not, there just can be a misunderstanding about faith groups are up to. Sometimes because faith groups are judged by their worst actors, erm, which you know is always what happens... whereas when you’re in it you know all of the good things that are going on...’ (ERD1).

The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted that faith leaders trusted and authoritative positions in communities can, through moral popularism, lead to harmful behaviours and narratives that further entrench a crisis. However, it has also shown that through the logic of social harmony faith leaders can also be an important part of bringing people together to find solutions to misinformation.

WV Indonesia staff were keen to stress the intertwinement of communities of faith with cultural values which promote the logic of social harmony and was active in response to COVID-19. WV Indonesia staff emphasised that community is extremely important in Indonesia – illustrated through the cultural adherence to the principle of Gotong Royong or communal work. Religious institutions, like Churches or Mosques, are prominent parts of many communities in Indonesia. WV Indonesia staff highlighted several examples of Gotong Royong being practiced in communities of faith in response to COVID-19. For example, in some villages in Papua, there are numerous examples of congregations working together to respond to the various challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

WV Indonesia staff also highlighted the value-add of their investment in F&D in response to COVID-19, which leveraged the Public Authority of communities of faith to respond to the pandemic. Staff

highlighted how, after participating in trainings, faith leaders had the ability and motivation to do something to help their congregations. One pertinent example of the impact that training faith leaders has had on community-led responses was given by a member of the F&D team (WVInAD1). They detailed the example of a Pastor in a small village, with low levels of education and no electricity. Once the Pastor had received training from WV Indonesia, he took the initiative to find nine young members of his congregation to build a WASH station. Sanitation and hygiene are vital in preventing the spread of COVID-19. However, in this context it is not easy to access water as it is such a dry climate. The Pastor also engaged women in the congregation to make masks. While these initiatives may appear relatively small, they can have a huge impact on stemming the spread of COVID-19.

WV Indonesia staff also expressed worries that stigma towards those perceived to have, or have had, COVID-19, may lead to community members not receiving the support they need from the congregation. Both WV DRC and WV Indonesia have engaged with faith leaders to directly combat stigma and misinformation. While WV Indonesia did not use CoH for COVID-19, WV Indonesia partnered with faith actors at the national and local levels in every province of the country. They have sought to support local faith leaders and build on their enthusiasm to help their communities through providing training and guidance to respond to COVID-19.

To respond to growing levels of misinformation around, and stigma attached to, COVID-19, both WV DRC and WV Indonesia engaged with faith leaders who had recovered from COVID-19, to share their experiences with their communities, to debunk rumours that COVID-19 is a hoax, and to encourage behaviour change in respect to social and physical distancing and handwashing. They invited faith leaders who had survived COVID-19, once they were fully recovered, to share their experience, feelings, the responses they had from their families and the support and/or punishment they received from the community. Staff from WV Indonesia (WVInAD1, WVInRH1). felt that this initiative made a big impact on communities of faith, who were 'enlightened' about the virus. They very much

hoped that this would lead to less misinformation about the virus and stigma towards those who were perceived to have COVID-19.

Value-add of engaging with faith leaders to address faith-inspired messages that undermine humanitarian efforts

The Ebola epidemic emphasised the significant role of F&D responses for scaling up preventative measures to limit the spread of the disease, disseminating accurate information and preventative messages in general. However, the COVID-19 pandemic has also underlined the distinctive role of engaging with LFAs to tackle misinformation specifically that is rooted in faith-inspired narratives. The COVID-19 pandemic has therefore highlighted the distinctive value-add of leveraging local faith-inspired partnerships for addressing specific sources of misinformation that create obstacles for effective humanitarian responses.

In contexts such as the DRC, for example, faith-inspired narratives were inextricably intertwined with perceptions of COVID-19 among LCFs. As a result, faith-narratives impacted how people and communities responded to COVID-19, and to what extent they followed government guidelines and engaged with biomedical health provision. Wild-Wood et al.'s (2021) research identified four perceptions within faith-communities in the North-Eastern region of the DRC towards COVID-19, which highlight the impact of faith-inspired narratives on how individuals and communities responded to COVID-19 :

'The four perceptions are set out using terms that were used by some but not all respondents as follows: a/ COVID-19 is a 'natural' disease, caused by the transmission of a virus and it requires prayer, biomedical and public health approaches to overcome it; b/ COVID-19 is a supernatural disease, caused by the devil, malign spirits or God. It requires *only* spiritual intervention through prayer, faith-healing practices and exorcism to overcome it; c/ COVID-19 is fabricated disease, either fictitious, in which case it can

be ignored, or man-made, in which case either public health measures or faith healing may be good responses. d/ COVID-19's existence or nature is unclear, respondents were unsure or confused by the information available and were unsure how to respond' (Wild-Wood et al, 2021:11).

Of course, people's perceptions of COVID-19 changed throughout the course of the pandemic, often in response to the perceived immediacy of the threat of the virus; increasing numbers of cases and deaths, and funerals attended (Wild-Wood et al, 2021:25). However, Wild-Wood et al (2021:11) found that most of their key informants believed that faith-inspired, religious and/or spiritual responses were an essential part of any response to COVID-19. Wild-Wood et al.'s (2021) timely research highlights the intertwinement of faith, religion and spirituality with communities of faith's perceptions of COVID-19 and how to respond. It also underlines the fact that these perceptions influence how individuals and communities receive and act on public health messaging which will include that propagated by international humanitarian actors (Wild-Wood et al, 2021:26). While some faith-inspired narratives, as highlighted above, can run in tandem with biomedical health provision, some faith-inspired narratives and misinformation can become obstacles for effective responses to health crises such as COVID-19.

Key informants from IFIOs across the F&D landscape expressed concern about the potency and reach of misinformation about COVID-19 rooted in faith-, religious- or spiritually-inspired narratives. Media reports during the COVID-19 pandemic highlighted that in some cases these narratives have been spread by faith leaders (Pulse, 2020). WV Indonesia staff expressed how such narratives can become obstacles to behaviour change. For '...example in Indonesia... some Christian Faith groups say that go to church even if it is forbidden because this is God testing our faith' (WVInAD2). This is particularly problematic as places of worship around the world were loci of infections during the COVID-19 pandemic due to high numbers of people sitting, singing, embracing and holding or

shaking hands, in close physical proximity (Naqvi, 2020) As a result, such narratives have the potential to undermine humanitarian outcomes, encouraging the spread of the virus.

The intersections between the role of leaders, faith, religion and spirituality, and the COVID-19 pandemic were significant. This was the case, in part, because the COVID-19 pandemic impacted individuals and communities' faith, religious and spiritual lives. The COVID-19 pandemic saw places of worship become loci of infection and having to close to stem the spread of the virus. This put pressure not only of faith leaders, but on leaders who have faith, to respond to the needs of LFAs and LCFs. National and sub-national leadership had an important role to play in mitigating the territorial impacts of the crisis (see OECD, 2020i).

Many faith leaders worked to adapt their services to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic and many asked people to stay and worship at home as an act of service to keep their community members safe. For example, in Ghana, the 1st Counselor of the West Africa Area Presidency of The Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter-day Saints, Elder Edward Dube, asked the church and the faithful to adhere to government regulations around COVID-19 (Kpogli, 2020). Similarly, many faith leaders made difficult decisions to stem the spread of the virus through banning gatherings of communities of faith. For example, the Bangladeshi government banned Iftar gatherings during the holy month of Ramadan at the start of the pandemic (Latest LY, 2020).

However, other faith leaders and leaders of faith - meaning political leaders who invoke their faith or the language of faith in public discourse - promoted more harmful behaviours. For example, E.A. Adeboye, a pastor of the Redeemed Christian Church of God (RCCG) in Nigeria, posted a message on the online social media platform, Instagram, telling people that “no virus can come near your dwelling”, whilst also promoting good hygiene (Green, 2020). Similarly, the president of Tanzania, John Magufuli, said at the start of the pandemic that, while the country followed measures put in place by other nations in Africa, such as closing schools, disallowing public events and making

foreign visitor quarantine, he would not close places of worship (Kombe, 2020). In keeping with some of the problematic narratives expounded by faith leaders explored above, President Magufuli said the virus was 'satanic' and therefore could not thrive in places of worship. The late president is also reported to have said that prayer would cure COVID-19 (Burke, 2021).

Numerous members of staff from WV DRC highlighted examples of faith-inspired narratives creating significant barriers to preventing the spread of COVID-19. One key informant from WV DRC expressed concern that faith-inspired narratives could inspire passivity in the face of COVID-19:

'...misconceptions, and also theological issues that tend to stand in between the correct information and the needs of the people. Also, now when you look at COVID-19, it is a plague. And if there's a plague someone will quickly go to the scriptures and say like it was scripture, this came because of sin. So, if you remove sin, the plague will go. So, their response is repent. If you repent the plague will go. we cannot be overcome by the devil. It's a devilish disease...' (WVDRCPS6)

These narratives were highlighted as significant challenges for responding to COVID-19 by other World Vision national offices and by other IFIOs working across the globe. A key informant from CCIH highlighted that while it doesn't happen often, faith leaders can decide not to listen to public health messages and spread misinformation based on spiritual or theological narratives:

'there is some concern, especially with Pentecostals, and we have some Pentecostal members, and they're great, you know, I'm not trying to stigmatise them, that is we have heard some cases of some people, they often say they are washed in the blood of Jesus, so they are protected from viruses or whatever' (CCIH1).

In response to the harmful faith-narratives transmitted by some faith leaders, CCIH worked with another IFIO, Harper Hill Global, and with Pastors in Liberia to address this information. They

recognised that faith leaders are uniquely situated to combat harmful narratives rooted in religious texts or beliefs in a way that remains culturally and religiously appropriate. At the time of the key informant interview, the key informant from CCIH detailed that the two IFIOs were planning an interview with the Pastor, for a podcast, to leverage the trust imbued in the Pastor as a faith leader to help dispel those myths.

While the authority, trust and legitimacy imbued into faith leaders can lead to the dissemination of inaccurate information and harmful behaviour, through the logic of Social Harmony LFAs are often motivated to help their communities. WV Indonesia staff highlighted how

‘Faith leaders... they have a responsibility, they don’t want to go from the situation, they have a responsibility, their situations. For example, I met with pastor in an area, it’s a very difficult situation, he wanted to go to other place because it was very crisis, but he remembered he is a leader and he has a responsibility to help the congregations, his congregations...’ (WVInAD2).

WV DRC staff were also keen to stress this distinctive aspect of communities of faith’s responses to crises:

‘The distinction when it comes to specifically, you know ... for religious communities it’s part of the call from the Bible. So, when they're doing it they found themselves accountable to God, to the Lord when they are doing it because the Bible instructs them to do it so, even the Quran instruction Muslims to take care of the most vulnerable people; to provide food, it says please give them yourself the food... it’s part mission, the call, the responsibility of the community. But other communities, they can do it, but sometimes they can say we're not there for a profit but they can do it for or trying to fund some support costs for example, but religious communities are doing it because it's part of their mandate, it's part of their DNA. So even if there is no external support

to them, religious leaders are always going to do it. When there is a family in a very bad situation; we have widows, we have orphans, we also some most vulnerable people in churches or in their communities they always find the means to support them’ (WVDRCJ6).

Accepting the assumption that faith leaders are powerful, influential actors in many communities, who can make or break communities, a key informant from Dan Church Aid (DCA1) highlighted the importance of teaching faith leaders and building their capacity to respond positively to crises. Many of the IFIOs engaged with for this project saw their role in F&D responses to train faith leaders and build their capacities to be agents of positive change in their community. The intersections between faith, religion, spirituality and humanitarian responses detailed in this section, as well as the trust, authority and legitimacy of faith leaders in many communities, also reinforce the distinctive position of LFAs to address faith-inspired narrative that promote inaccurate information and harmful behaviours.

Distinctive value-add of meaningful F&D engagement for social behaviour change

WV DRC’s COVID-19 preparedness and response plan aimed at controlling and containing the spread of the virus in the DRC. The first of three objectives identified to achieve this goal was to promote preventative measures and stop or slow the spread of COVID-19. This objective targets household and community behaviour change. WV DRC’s first responses therefore, focused on disseminating accurate information and raising awareness around preventative measures, leading to behaviour change that will prevent, slow down or stop the propagation of the virus. Again, the speed with which the humanitarian sphere leveraged local faith-inspired partnerships and programs for social behaviour change indicates their awareness of the potential value-add of integrating a faith dimension into such responses. This potential value-add of faith-inspired social behaviour change methodologies is reinforced when compared with ‘secular’ methodologies with the same aim.

F&D was an integral part of WV DRC's COVID-19 response in general, and its preventative measures specifically. One staff member from WV DRC said '...the whole COVID response is around social behaviour change and faith leaders and the community health workers are big agents of change to increase awareness' (WVDRCPS5). For the World Vision Partnership social behaviour change is an important part of their work seeking to 'address deeply entrenched, long-lasting beliefs, convictions and culture that may contribute to harmful attitudes, norms, values and practices and hinder child and community development outcomes' (WVI, 2016:3). This is in many ways a foundational part of World Vision's work; seeking to remove the behavioural, attitudinal and social norm barriers to development and humanitarian progress.

The World Vision partnership perceives LFAs and LCFs as playing a critical role in driving social behaviour change. They can be part of the problem; promoting attitudes, norms, values and practices that risk hindering child and community development. However, they can also play a critical role overcoming social behaviours, attitudes and norms that create barriers for community development and resilience to crises. In particular, the World Vision partnership sees faith leaders as role models able to initiate social behaviour change within their communities. '[F]aith leaders have considerable influence over culture and the behaviours encouraged or prohibited in their communities' (WVI, 2016:3). According to World Vision's approach to social behaviour change, whenever a faith community is present, they have a potential role to play in dismantling the barriers caused by harmful beliefs, norms, values and practices for development progress (WVI, 2016:1).

The integral role that LFAs and LCFs play in social behaviour change is therefore a key area of World Vision's F&D investments in response to COVID-19. Driving social change and removing attitudinal, behavioural and social norm barriers to development and humanitarian responses is seen as an area where faith-inspired partnerships and programming can have its biggest impact. Engagement with faith actors to disseminate accurate preventative messaging was reflected in discussions with a wide range of IFIOs responding to COVID-19. For example, a key informant from Dan Church Aid (DCA1)

stressed the importance of scientific messaging going hand-in-hand with faith-inspired narratives, particularly in African countries, for social behaviour change. This was a key part of their COVID-19 response, and they were working to promote F&D engagement more broadly within the humanitarian sector. A key informant from Islamic Relief Worldwide (IRWSM1) also highlighted an example of their F&D activities in this area in Mali, where they trained 60 faith leaders on faith-based messaging around how to prevent and identify COVID-19. It was expected that they would then cascade that information in their communities.

In recent years, effective behaviour, attitude and social norm change strategies have become an increasingly important part of international development and humanitarian actors' work. This is in recognition of the underlying premise that '[b]ehaviour change strategies – whether to promote desirable behaviours and practices or curtail undesirable ones – can play a vital role in combating poverty, injustice and environmental degradation' (Mayne et al, 2018:4). As a result, humanitarian actors, INGOs and Civils Society Organisations (CSOs) increasingly recognise that behavioural theory and associated change theories can influence the outcomes of their development and humanitarian projects and programs (Mayne et al, 2018: 4).

The importance of social behaviour change as a prerequisite for development progress and resilience building is not unique to World Vision's thinking. In fact, there are several secular strategies employed by INGOs 'to enable behavioural and practice change' (Mayne et al, 2018:1). OXFAM's 'Enough' campaign is another example of a program aimed at not just changing attitudes and behaviours, but also social norms that produce violence against women and girls. The 'Enough' campaign seeks to catalyse citizens and influences together, in countries over the world, to change social norms that perpetuate Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) and Gender Based Violence (GBV). This is, comparable to World Vision's CoH-G:

‘Channels of Hope for Gender is an innovative approach to exploring gender identities, norms and values that impact male and female relationships in families and communities. The programme methodology challenges participants to see men and women as created by God as equals and to treat each other accordingly. The new understanding empowers both women and men to celebrate who they are, moves people towards healthier relationships, and contributes to reducing gender-based violence’ (World Vision, 2021:2).

Like World Vision’s CoH methodology, OXFAM’s approach to challenging and changing harmful social norms is rooted in communities and institutions (although they include women’s rights organisations as a key player in their Theory of Change (ToC)). Both approaches recognise that key change agents, with considerable influence in ‘social community and political spheres’ play a critical role in challenging harmful norms and promoting (new) more positive ones (Wiebe et al, 2021:6). In keeping with the humanitarian sphere’s shift towards recognising the important role that faith, religion and spirituality play in the lives of those affected by crises, OXFAM’s ‘Enough’ campaign does reference the importance of including faith actors in their program seeking behavioural, attitudinal and social norm change, as part of a multi-level, multi-pronged strategy (Mayne et al, 2018:5). OXFAM’s ‘Enough’ campaign recognises the important role that faith leaders and institutions play in reinforcing communications aimed at addressing deep-seated, habitual behaviours, attitudes and social norms (Wiebe et al, 2021:12).

The approach of OXFAM’s ‘Enough’ campaign to faith engagement highlights its secular nature and instrumental approach to engaging with LFAs and religious institutions. Local faith leaders are seen as useful implementers of pre-conceived, secular social behaviour change programs. While OXFAM’s programming recognises the important role of faith leaders for promoting behavioural, attitudinal and social norm change, what is distinctive about World Vision’s CoH methodology is that its

approach engages more meaningfully with faith, religion and spirituality; rooted in sacred texts and teachings.

The importance of engaging with faith, religion and spirituality in a more meaningful way was (re)emphasised during the Ebola epidemic. As explored in more detail in other areas of this thesis, the humanitarian and development sphere's engagement with local faith leaders to adapt religious practices that were spreading the disease, such as burial rituals, so that they were both safe and culturally and religiously appropriate, marked a changing point in the fight against the disease in west Africa. OXFAM acknowledges the role of local faith leaders in promoting behaviour change around the Ebola epidemic. In an OXFAM policy paper, Mayne et al (2018:35) recognise the importance of this work in general, and the role of World Vision's CoH methodology in particular, highlighting how;

'[f]aith-based leaders can help people to link religious and spiritual practices with preventative measures to protect themselves against Ebola. In Sierra Leone, CAFOD supported Imams to positively influence cultural beliefs and practices around burials using the adoption of World Vision's 'Channels of Hope' methodology which is designed to help faith leaders understand the root causes of, and respond to, issues that affect vulnerable people in their communities'.

These experiences suggest that the value-add of engaging with faith leaders extends beyond their role reinforcing 'secular' messaging. The value-add of World Vision's more meaningful local faith engagement for social behaviour change has been reiterated by external actors. In 2015, the University of Queensland undertook an evaluation of World Vision's CoH-G project in the Solomon Islands. In the Solomon Islands, GBV was identified as a significant problem, underscored by local beliefs and social practices (World Vision, 2021i:1). In response, World Vision worked in 30 remote communities in Guadalcanal's Weather Coast and Temotu province delivering their CoH-G program.

The evaluation of World Vision's CoH-G project in the Solomon Islands found high levels of community support for the project and the methodology. It is the meaningful engagement with the Bible and religious teachings that led to community buy in. The evaluation highlights how women felt that the '...biblical content gave them a freedom to talk about violence in the home for the first-time ever' (World Vision, 2021i:3).

The 2015 evaluation found a great deal of evidence that there had been positive change in communities' attitudes towards gender relations in the Solomon Islands, attributable to World Vision's CoH-G project. This success is, in part, down to the meaningful engagement with faith, religion and spirituality, beyond the instrumental engagement with faith actors as mouthpieces for 'secular' messages. The progress made by World Vision's CoH methodology through their F&D engagement highlights a potential challenge to OXFAM's mode of engagement with faith actors. It implicitly criticises a narrow and instrumental engagement with faith leaders, calling for more meaningful engagement with faith, religion and spirituality for promoting positive behaviour, attitudinal and social norm change. This was reinforced by a key informant from the Mennonite Central Committee as the value-add of faith engagement for responding to emergencies like COVID-19: 'you can be more effective because you can tap into people's core values and you are using authority figures and can help trail blaze technical goals into everyday reality , cultural norms and beliefs' (MCC1).

This distinction between World Vision's and OXFAM's F&D approach to behaviour, attitude and social norm change speaks to wider challenges related to the international development and humanitarian sphere's approach to addressing issues like GBV. OXFAM's F&D engagement as part of their 'Enough' campaign epitomises the international development (and humanitarian) sphere's approach to GBV in Lower- and Middle-Income Countries (LMICs) rooted in, and limited to, a western industrialised lens (Istratii, 2020). While this approach helpfully draws attention to the gendered dynamics of such violence, it assumes that the western, industrialised paradigm of GBV is

internationally relevant (Istratii, 2021). As a result, there is very little academic research, or knowledge production, around strategies to address GBV according to religious worldviews and socio-specific socio-cultural systems (Istratii, 2021:2).

Istratii (2021) argues that the development (and humanitarian) sphere has increasingly recognised the role of faith leaders as agents of change in communities, as exemplified by OXFAM's recommendation to engage with faith leaders to reinforce messaging addressing social norms that perpetuate GBV. However, these approaches continue to fail to overcome western assumptions about faith, religion and spirituality, failing to consider the 'holistic and multidimensional way in which religious traditions and belief systems have been experienced in many tradition-orientated societies and the complicated ways they intersect with people's experiences of GBV - both as victims and perpetrators' (Istratii, 2021:2). This is where World Vision's CoH methodology, as well as the strategies of a handful of other humanitarian and development actors, present methodologies for addressing behavioural, attitudinal and social norms change in many LMICs which, while not perfect, contribute a distinctive value-add in terms of their meaningful faith engagement.

The divide between instrumental and meaningful faith engagement for social behaviour change is not strictly associated with secular INGOs and IFIOs respectively. For example, in discussions with a key informant from Islamic Relief Worldwide, while the organisation has been on a strong faith literacy push over the last 10 years, they still saw an important role for faith leaders as 'mouth pieces for rational behaviour and responsible behaviour' (IRW1). This is where the World Vision partnership's CoH methodology, across the humanitarian sphere, presents a distinctive value-add for disseminating accurate information and preventative messaging and then social behaviour change. The World Vision partnership's meaningful engagement with faith, religion and spirituality for social behaviour change does indeed therefore present a defined contribution to the F&D space in particular, and the humanitarian sphere in general.

F&D engagement for holistic responses to COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a serious impact on the mental health and psychological well-being of people all over the world. As the pandemic progressed, it became clear that, while mental health and psychosocial well-being was set to be a significant concern for individuals and communities around the world, it would hit humanitarian contexts even harder. For example, OCHA (2020i) estimated that rates of mental illness amongst people living in conflict-affected contexts were twice as high as the general population. Haddad et al.'s (2020) report highlights how children in conflict-affected situations are finding it difficult to cope with the impact of COVID-19, compounding the 'fear, trauma and chronic stress' they already face due to living in conflict-affected situations (Haddad et al, 2020:4). Not only are rates of mental illness and psychosocial issues higher in humanitarian contexts, but often MHPSS services in these contexts are limited or even non-existent. The lack of MHPSS services in humanitarian contexts has been felt even more acutely because of the disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic (relieffweb, 2020).

While the literature review highlighted the growing recognition of the roles of faith, religion and spirituality for promoting mental health and psychosocial well-being, much of the knowledge and understanding around this is rooted in western, industrialised contexts in western Europe and north America. However, faith, religion and spirituality are just as, if not more, important to those suffering from developmental or humanitarian challenges in other parts of the world. For example, a report from OCHA (2020ii) detailed that in North-west Syria, between April and May of 2020, the amount of people requesting consultations about their mental health doubled in comparison to the same time the year before. Similarly, Haddad et al (2020) details how for many living in low-income and/or fragile contexts, COVID-19 has compounded existing mental health problems for those already facing the fear and trauma of conflict and/or severe poverty.

IFIOs invested significant F&D capacity in providing 'secular' MHPSS responses to the COVID-19 pandemic; working with faith leaders to provide entry-level counselling according to a secular framework. However, many IFIOs also leveraged faith-inspired partnerships and programming to engage with faith, religion and spirituality as important ends in themselves, in recognition of the fact that faith, religion and spirituality are deeply felt core needs for many people living through crises. These investments tended to materialise in the provision of spiritual support and nurture. IFIO's support of faith leaders providing spiritual support in response to COVID-19 marks a shift within the humanitarian sphere, or within some IFIOs, away from narrow and instrumental F&D, towards more meaningful engagement with faith, religion and spirituality.

Providing spiritual support and nurture requires high levels of faith literacy and experience. As a result, there is little evidence that many 'secular' NGOs are engaging with faith, religion or spirituality as ends in themselves beyond acknowledging that faith, religion and spirituality can be important coping mechanisms in times of crisis. For example, The UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR)'s research note on Mental Health and Psychosocial Response during the COVID-19 Outbreak (2020) doesn't mention the role of faith, religion and spirituality, or LFAs and LCFs, at all. It appears to be IFIOs, therefore, that are leading the charge for spiritual support and nurture.

To overlook the importance of faith, religion and spirituality as ends in themselves for people living through crises risks limiting the willingness of faith leaders to work with INGOs in this sector. As Goodwin and Kraft (2021) highlight, faith leaders are, primarily, brokers of spiritual support and nurture. This is their primary role within a paradigm where spiritual well-being can surpass in importance mental health and psychosocial well-being. Narrow and instrumental approaches to F&D investments in MHPSS risk missing out an area of faith leaders' work for which they are uniquely situated to deliver. Additionally, engaging with faith, religion and spirituality as ends in themselves has the potential to amplify the value-add of F&D for responding to humanitarian crises by responding to a distinctive but deeply felt core need for many facing trauma and crisis. It may also create a perceived

barrier between INGOs and faith leaders who feel that their roles and core values are misunderstood or overlooked.

F&D for MHPSS

While engaging with F&D to scale up preventative measures to limit the spread of the disease was also a significant part of WV Indonesia's COVID-19 response, the most significant investment in F&D by WV Indonesia appears to be for Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) and Spiritual Nurture.

COVID-19 and its resultant lockdowns have caused people stress and anxiety. Being cut off from in-person social support systems means people have felt lonely and isolated. A respondent from WV Indonesia highlighted a survey done by the Communion of Churches of Indonesia which showed that sixty percent of the people who participated felt anxious and worried about the COVID-19 situation. While MHPSS is important during and after any crisis, the emotional toll of the COVID-19 pandemic presents a different challenge than those faced by WV Indonesia in their natural disaster responses.

In the last decade, there has been increased attention on the social and psychological aspects of community recovery across the humanitarian sphere (Ager et al, 2005:159. Fiddian-Qasmiyeh and Ager, 2013:31). One key informant from WV DRC emphasised lessons learnt from responding to Ebola, that highlight the importance of MHPSS for responses to public health crises:

'... I don't even think I've talked about the mental health which is a direct result and consequence of the Ebola. You know people live in fear, you know people have like trauma they have stigma attached .Especially families and survivors. So, you know mental health becomes like a basic need for these people like food or water. So, I think that with covid-19 as well we need mental health as a sector of support even for schools and education...' (WVDRCJ3).

The emergence of numerous MHPSS programmes and the IASC Guidelines on MHPSS in emergency settings (2007) testify to the formal humanitarian sphere's recognition of its previous failures to redress the overly technical focus of building resilience. MHPSS programs are part of the formal humanitarian sphere's proposed shift towards long-term, people-focused strategies that provide individuals and communities with the facilities to remain resilient to the trauma of humanitarian disasters. The emphasis on MHPSS across the humanitarian sphere in recent years highlights the humanitarian sphere's shift towards more holistic approaches to responding to crises in the name of resilience building.

Several key informants stressed the distinctive role of IFIO's engagement with faith, religion and spirituality for more holistic approaches to responding to crises. For example, a key informant from CCIH identified the holistic approach of many of the IFIOs they worked with, taking care of 'body, mind and spirit' as a distinctive aspect of their F&D work in comparison to secular INGOs (CCIH1). The same key informant stressed the importance of 'not just treating the short-term illness, you're seeing the person as a whole, and their mental health, spiritual health, and all of that combined' (CCIH1).

There was a consensus across the IFIOs engaged with for this research that IFIOs were more likely, or quicker, to adopt a holistic approach to humanitarian challenges than secular organisations. This was commonly referred to as a distinctive value-add that they bring to the humanitarian sphere. A key informant who has worked for several IFIOs, and conducted research in this area, suggested that IFIOs, as opposed to secular INGOs, adopt a whole-person approach to responding to crises which is particularly significant for responding to emergencies like COVID-19:

'...one of the big opportunities and benefits is that Faith-Based organisations tend to, and often have, a more holistic response that can involve the whole person which is a huge benefit. And I think especially with a crisis as all-encompassing and frightening as

Covid-19, instinctively people know, OK, this impacts the whole person. This isn't just about their physical health' (MGRip).

IFIOs engagement with faith, religion and spirituality recognises that faith, religion and spirituality are already intricately involved in the mental health and psychosocial well-being of individuals and communities all over the world. Throughout history, religious leaders and institutions such as churches have cared for people with psychosocial concerns and mental illness (Schafer, 2010:121). It is estimated that worldwide, 40 percent of people who experience mental health concerns turn to clergy or churches as first line assistance (Schafer, 2010:121).

The impact of MHPSS on building resilience has been reinforced during the COVID-19 pandemic with the pandemic's impact on mental health and psychosocial well-being being called the 'silent pandemic' (Haddad et al, 2020). The COVID-19 pandemic has also highlighted that for many enduring humanitarian crises, faith, religion and spirituality are deeply felt core needs and important coping mechanisms (see DeRossett et al, 2021).

These sentiments were re-iterated by key informants during the COVID-19 pandemic. For example, one respondent from Episcopal Relief and Development highlighted the link between the religious belief that members of the global church are in communion with each other and building individual and community resilience in the face of crises:

'You know, all of the research around resilience point to the fact that people are resilient when they believe in something above and beyond themselves. And when they're linked in strong relationships to others. And I mean particularly in times of trauma and fear, maintaining that sense that you are not alone, and that you are supported and can be held and supported by others, is, I think, not only a core value of religious experience and increasingly a scientifically understood requirement for resilience' (ERD1).

This sentiment was reiterated by key informants from WV Indonesia. Maintaining contact between the LFCs and their faith leaders was an important part of WV Indonesia's provision of MHPSS because, as they outlined, in Indonesia, the Church, for example, is not just about listening to the Pastor's sermon. It is a place of fellowship and connection with your faith leader. Without these aspects of religious life, LFCs are more likely to feel anxious and isolated (WVInRH1).

There are increasing numbers of case studies in the literature demonstrating the importance of faith-inspired, religious and spiritual beliefs, narratives and worldviews for building resilience through promoting mental health and psychosocial support. In Ager et al.'s (2005) study, based in Ethiopia following the Eritrean border conflict, they highlight the importance of how people frame traumatic events in times of crises. This case study highlights the influential nature of religion on how people perceive, frame and behave in reaction to traumatic events in a country that continues to suffer from humanitarian crises. They suggest that an understanding of local theology provides deeper insight into local post-disaster recovery in a way that is largely inaccessible to secular humanitarian actors.

Schafer's (2010) work with WVI following the earthquake in Haiti in 2010 demonstrates how religious beliefs contribute to an improved quality of life, reduced incidences of affective disorders, lowered rates of suicide, and good relationships. Religious beliefs can increase giving and forgiveness, fostering both individual resilience and community resilience (Schafer, 2010:123). Religion is foundational to local culture in Haiti and spiritual beliefs can encourage more optimistic worldviews that offer people a sense of meaning and purpose in their lives, even in times of significant trauma and stress (Shafer, 2010:123).

There is also a large literature exploring the role of religious beliefs and spiritual coping strategies following Hurricane Katrina in the United States. Henderson et al.'s (2010) research shows that religious beliefs and coping mechanisms inspire positive adaptation through their transcendent,

adaptive and transformational values. Religious beliefs and coping mechanisms following hurricane Katrina promoted inner peace, self-esteem, perseverance, and helping others all of which contribute towards individual and community resilience (Henderson et al, 2010:297).

Faith-inspired, religious and spiritual beliefs can also foster negative meaning-making processes with the potential to hinder community resilience (Fiddina-Qasmiyeh and Ager, 2013:36). WV Indonesia staff members expressed such concerns about problematic theological narratives around COVID-19 leading to passivity in the face of crises: ‘because this is theology and if this is just a punishment from God, we don’t have the resilience to survive. The solution to a punishment from God is just repentance’ (WVInAD4).

However, the effects of these beliefs on psychosocial well-being and its impact on resilience and recovery remain unclear. It is relevant to note that the evidence suggests that while certain faith-inspired, religious and spiritual beliefs have the potential to undermine mental health and psychosocial well-being, this is not often the case. This serves to remind that there is a distinction between faith-inspired, religious and spiritual beliefs and how they are lived and embodied. Even though a religious belief system might be replete with fatalistic beliefs, when people are trapped in buildings, or stranded by floods, or suffering, those same believers try to help (Wisner, 2010:130).

WV Indonesia’s significant F&D investment in MHPSS recognises the important role faith actors play in responding to mental health and psychosocial concerns, and the impact of faith, religious and spiritual beliefs, narratives and worldviews on their ability to cope in times of crises. This marks a distinctive shift away from historically secular framings of MHPSS, to more inclusive approaches to supporting people during and following crises. WV Indonesia built on an existing generic module for how faith leaders can support psychosocial health in their communities, then adapted, modified and contextualised it to respond to COVID-19. Training faith leaders to provide MHPSS includes how to

stay connected with the community, how to be a good listener and how to refer people for further support.

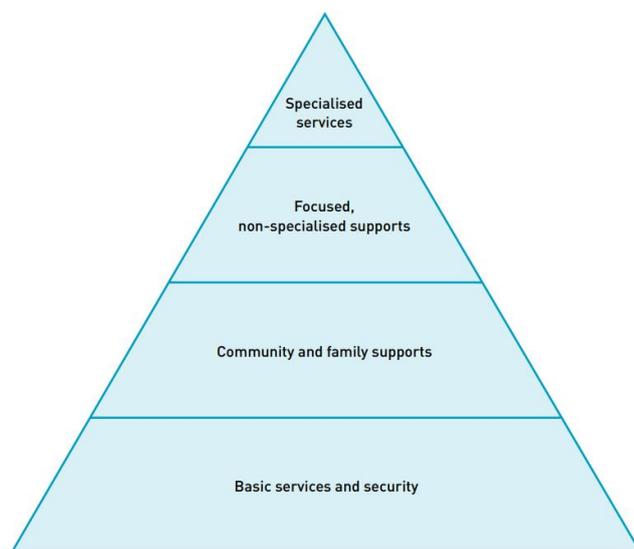
WV Indonesia's F&D MHPSS response is based on the acknowledgement that faith leaders are often sought out by community members as first responders to mental health and psychosocial challenges in communities. World Vision's Psychological First Aid training is aimed at equipping them to manage those situations effectively. Psychological First Aid builds on the capacity of faith leaders to listen to community members and to focus on the issue at hand. WV Indonesia had already engaged with the Psychological First Aid model in response to the Tsunami in 2019 and had already trained 1200 faith leaders before the COVID-19 pandemic. WV Indonesia built on these efforts to train faith leaders and strengthen their capacity to provide psychosocial support during COVID-19, with WV Indonesia's specialists in the national office adapting the existing programme to respond to the current situation. WV Indonesia staff highlighted the importance of training local faith leaders on how to be good listeners and supported them to provide online counselling, pastoral counselling and psychosocial support.

WV Indonesia's Psychological First Aid program is based on a pyramid of interventions framework (See Figure 1). This approach recognises the limits of what faith leaders can do to provide MHPSS in times of crises. While there is evidence that faith leaders can help ensure the general well-being and basic needs of members of their communities, help strengthen community and family support and provide focused, non-specialised support, there remain are some issues that would need to be referred for specialized services (ISAC, 2007:11). WV Indonesia's approach was that anyone can be trained to provide psychosocial support for some things. However other issues require transferring people to a professional psychiatrist. WV Indonesia's Psychological First-Aid program seeks to build on the existing, basic knowledge of faith leaders, who support their congregation in times of crises and peace, and bring it closer with the knowledge and terminology of psychology. When faith leaders feel unable to deal with a problem, they can refer the community member to a psychologist

or psychiatrist. WV Indonesia trains faith leaders and encourages them to set up a task force to put this training into action in the community. WV Indonesia have also helped set up a counselling hotline, so that community and congregation members can contact their faith leaders for MHPSS.

Figure 1 (IASC, 2007:13).

Figure 1. Intervention pyramid for mental health and psychosocial support in emergencies. Each layer is described below.



WV Indonesia staff emphasised that mental health remains a sensitive subject in Indonesia and there is often a reluctance to share personal problems, especially in religious contexts. Local faith leaders have a potentially important role to play in addressing such sensitivities by using their trusted positions in society to break down some of the barriers around mental health. As detailed above, based on learnings from their CoH-CP model, WV Indonesia invited faith leaders who had survived COVID-19, once they had recovered, to share their experiences, how they feel and the responses from their families and the community. Staff believe that faith leaders sharing their experiences around mental health and psychosocial well-being as part of this sharing process will help break down barriers around the subject.

Again, the COVID-19 pandemic led WV Indonesia to find creative ways to provide MHPSS and spiritual nurture to local communities. WV Indonesia was also working on developing an app, so that community members can connect with their faith leaders by booking an appointment through the app. Online services can also be streamed through the app, as well as a range of other services. The app was not presented as a means of doing counselling sessions, but for community members to 'have a chat' with faith leaders. It was hoped this mode of engagement will be particularly appropriate for young people.

A significant potential challenge to the success of this F&D investment is that many faith leaders are not familiar with technology. WV Indonesia staff said they had received a lot of questions from faith leaders on how to use the app, but they were enthusiastic about the development. The app had only just launched towards the end of the data collection period for this project, so the efficacy of this approach is unclear.

As the pandemic has progressed, with the news of vaccines being developed, WV Indonesia's focus shifted away from responding directly to COVID-19 towards recovery. WV Indonesia staff felt that a new role for local faith leaders, as the country looked to recovering from the COVID-19 pandemic, was to encourage their congregations when they have lost hope and are unsure what to do next:

'...we support faith leaders because the psychosocial support; it's not only one by one counselling. But also, they, how they can, they have the ability and the competence to empower their congregations. They empower... we push, faith leaders to have empathy and sympathy on how to approach not only from their own perspective and their experiences but how to be involved in the congregation and empower them. To go hand in hand together. Like support groups. To build support for many people'
(WVInAD2).

Hope, as an important part of supporting people's mental health and psychosocial support, was a prominent theme of WV Indonesia's F&D engagement for responses to COVID-19.

It is important to recognise that faith-inspired coping is not monolithic and is expressed differently in different contexts (Fiddian-Qasmiyeh and Ager, 2013:33). Faith-inspired coping is also lived and embodied differently by individuals in the same context. In recognition of the scale of this diversity, Wisner argues that it is too large a task to accumulate detailed worldwide accounts of the diversity of people's religious coping strategies and worldviews (2010:130). He concludes that, while it is important to engage with religious actors for building resilience to crises for their material and social resources, which themselves contribute to mental health and psychosocial well-being, it is not important how theologians and lay people understand disasters (Wisner, 2010:130).

Wisner's (2010) reluctance to engage with religious worldviews and imaginaries is symptomatic of the formal humanitarian sphere's historically narrow and instrumental engagement with IFIOs, overlooking the individual and social realms of faith, religion and spirituality and people's lived experiences. This approach speaks into the humanitarian sphere's historical emphasis on providing short-term relief through technical assistance. This perspective privileges material support and physical needs. However, this approach to humanitarian program delivery has been criticised. For example, a key informant from Episcopal Relief and Development criticised the humanitarian sphere for thinking;

'our physical needs are our most critical ones. Or our only needs. I mean clearly physical needs are huge, but as I just shared, I think that particularly when faced with uncertainty and tragedy, human beings need other things. It's a plus questions right? they need the food and water and protective equipment... and they also need to remind themselves that we're more than our physical needs...I think faith brings that values' (ERD1).

The pervasive reluctance to engage with faith, religion and spirituality for MHPSS specifically overlooked the unavoidable history of, and contemporary, intertwinement of, faith, religion and spirituality with mental health and psychosocial well-being. It also failed to engage with the scope of both the opportunities, as well as the challenges, that arise from faith, religions and spirituality's unavoidable interactions with humanitarian processes and MHPSS programming. As a result, the value-add of engaging with faith-inspired beliefs, practices and worldviews for providing MHPSS are missed out on, while the obstacles certain faith-inspired beliefs, practices and worldviews can produce for mental health and psychosocial well-being go unmitigated.

The significant investment of WV Indonesia in F&D for providing MHPSS programs recognises the vital role that faith, religious and spiritual beliefs, practices play in helping people cope with mental health and psychosocial issues. This marks a distinct shift in the humanitarian sphere's approach to MHPSS towards being more inclusive of faith, religion and spirituality. This shift began prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, evidenced by documents such as 'A faith-sensitive approach in humanitarian response: Guidance on mental health and psychosocial programming' published in 2018 by the IASC. The document was created by a consortium of IFIOs from varied faith backgrounds; The Lutheran World Federation, Islamic Relief, The Psychosocial Centre of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, World Vision, Church of Sweden a member of actalliance and HIAS. The increased interest across the humanitarian sphere on the role of faith, religion and spirituality in MHPSS also highlights a move away from more narrow and instrumental approaches to engaging with religion and humanitarianism; where local communities of faith are identified predominantly in terms of their usefulness in linking IFIOs with affected people, overlooking the capabilities of LFAs, their agency and how they understand crises.

However, some question the extent to which this increased appreciation of the impact of religion, spirituality and faith on mental health and psychosocial well-being, and the accompanying guidance, has been incorporated into secular actors' MHPSS (Ager and Ager, 2015). Similarly, most of the

literature on faith, religion and spirituality for MHPSS is based in high-income contexts like Europe and the United States. Therefore, while the investments of IFIOs like WV Indonesia in F&D for MHPSS is a step in the direction, more needs to be done to understand the roles of faith, religion and spirituality in low- and middle-income contexts and during and following humanitarian crises. Faith, religion and spirituality also need to be better and more systematically integrated into MHPSS programming by actors outside of the F&D sector. IFIOs experience of F&D in this sector situates them in a leadership position to promote faith-sensitive MHPSS.

Faith, religion and spirituality as ends in themselves

While WV Indonesia's, and other IFIO's, engagement with faith, religion and spirituality for MHPSS marks a potential broadening of the humanitarian sphere's engagement with faith, religion and spirituality, potentially even more striking is that during the COVID-19 pandemic, many IFIOs have integrated elements of spiritual support and nurture into their responses. This is a notable development within the humanitarian sphere. While the humanitarian sphere has witnessed a shift to a more holistic approach to MHPSS, creating space to engage with aspects of faith life that are important for secular visions of mental health and psycho-social well-being, there has been little engagement thus far with faith, religion and spirituality as ends in themselves.

There is evidence, again predominantly based in high-income contexts, that having faith-inspired, religious and spiritual beliefs can, at least initially cause people additional stress when facing traumatic events, such as those surrounding humanitarian crises. Pargament et al.'s (1998) study found that indeed, faith, religious and spiritual coping can promote forgiveness, seeking spiritual support, collaborative religious coping, spiritual connection, religious purification, and benevolent religious reappraisal. However, alongside this positive pattern of faith-inspired, religious and spiritual coping, Pargament et al (1998) explored negative patterns of faith-inspired, religious and

spiritual coping, consisting of spiritual discontent, punishing God reappraisals, interpersonal religious discontent, demonic reappraisal, and reappraisal of God's powers.

Humanitarian crises like COVID-19 can shake people's faith-inspired, religious and spiritual beliefs; leading people to potentially lose or question their faith (Wortmann and Park, 2009). This point was made by a key informant from WV DRC who pointed out that in humanitarian contexts '...people, especially the community, people tend to lose faith, or they feel a bit shaken...' (WVDRCJ6) following a crisis. Trauma from humanitarian crises, involving loss and devastation, can challenge people's worldviews, informed by their faith, religion and spirituality (Janoff-Bulman, 1992). This may require specialised psycho-spiritual support for recovery involving building new assumptions and a worldview that incorporates these traumatic events (Clarke and Parris, 2019:5). Faith leaders may have a distinctive role to play in these responses to the secondary trauma of religious and spiritual struggles. A key informant from WV DRC made this point; that '...having the religious leaders to be there to comfort' people suffering from loss of or shaken faith, '... and to pass that message of hope was a great thing from our response...' (WVDRCJ3).

While much of the evidence around the value-add of spiritual support and nurture for building resilience is based in high-income contexts, the responses of several IFIOs, most notably WV Indonesia, working in low-income and/or fragile contexts emphasised the importance of spiritual support and nurture in those contexts too. WV Indonesia staff stressed that their psychological programming was not just related to mental health, but also spiritual support, tackling existential questions through theological and scriptural understandings. A key informant from WV Indonesia continued to state that faith leaders can '...help faith communities answer the questions of why. Why on the anxiety and on the fear about the situation. So, this is quite a distinctive thing about what...' WV Indonesia did in their COVID-19 response (WVInRH1).

Local faith leaders are uniquely positioned to provide spiritual support to local communities of faith. There is growing evidence that spiritual nurture not only contributes to people's mental health and psychosocial well-being, but it is often a deeply felt core need. This was echoed by key informants working in the F&D and MHPSS space. For many during the COVID-19 pandemic, a key informant from WV Indonesia called spirituality the 'core of mental health' (WVInAD1).

There is overlap between faith, religion and spirituality for MHPSS and spiritual nurture/support. However, they represent linked but distinct spheres of activity. For example, in terms of stress management, the psychological support training for faith leaders provided by WV Indonesia includes ways to reduce stress through breathing exercises and other 'secular' techniques. However, spiritual support also tries to reduce stress through prayers, to help people (re)connect with their faith, which helps them relax. A key informant from CCIH (CCIH2) detailed how encouraging prayer, alongside public health messaging, was an important part of their holistic approach to health. A holistic approach to addressing health, and the role of spiritual practices such as prayer, was something they hadn't done before the COVID-19 pandemic.

One WV Indonesia F&D staff member (WVInAD2) saw the integration of spiritual support in their MHPSS responses to COVID-19 as significant for reducing stress and anxiety. They saw stress as being related to people's minds, emotions and feelings. Secular MHPSS programming stays in the realm of minds, emotions and feelings. However, spiritual perspectives draw the person into the realms of transcendence and imminence, taking them beyond this life with its stresses and tensions, giving them hope, calmness and resilience:

'And I think from the faith leaders they give so many advice from the Bible and also the Qur'an. And their authority is very important because their preachings in the mosque or in the church, they help solve the problem and empower people to have the capacity for more resilience. They can pray. Also, in the community, in the church, in the

mosque, most of them have groups, for peer support. And they have sympathy to help others' (WVInAD2).

WV Indonesia's attempts to integrate a spiritual dimension into their COVID-19 response, is a distinctive aspect of their MHPSS efforts. It is also reflected in other IFIOs such as Tearfund:

'I mean we always try to be careful but we don't instrumentalise churches as kind of the arms of Tearfund but churches keep the focus on what the church is calling is, that the Calling is much more to bring light to the whole person. So, the church, it has a calling to love other people and... bring hope to the community. So, we see a lot on the pastoral side, the kind of low-level and if you want to call it Psychosocial' (TF1).

WV Indonesia's support of faith leaders to provide psychological counselling includes a focus on pastoral counselling and spiritual nurture/support. One staff member from WV Indonesia (WVInAD1), who has a background in the seminary, highlighted the similar approaches and skills needed to deliver psychological and pastoral support. For example, an important aspect of WV Indonesia's engagement with spiritual support is mobilising faith leaders' ability to pray for their congregation members and for their problems to be solved. In WV Indonesia's trainings for Psychological first Aid, they focus on how to pray for community members, as well as how to provide counselling. For many religious and/or spiritual people or people of faith, connecting with God is an important source of strength and resilience. When people feel anxious and scared, they often seek spiritual advice. Faith leaders are uniquely situated to give that advice and to root it in scriptures and Holy Texts, reminding congregation members of something transcendent and beyond this world, hopefully instilling a sense of calm, hope and resilience. WV Indonesia's training with local faith leaders includes a focus on how to pray for congregations and how to address the existential and theological questions that arise from crises as community members try to make sense of the situation.

Once again, the evidence suggests that the significance of spiritual support, for providing holistic MHPSS, should not only be the job of FIOs. There is reason enough for the humanitarian sphere to take faith, religion and spirituality seriously in humanitarian responses. Similarly, Clarke and Parris (2019) found that faith-inspired and secular humanitarian agencies generally feel comfortable including faith-inspired, religious and spiritual worldviews in their programming and there is little evidence to suggest that faith-inspired organisations are better able to provide spiritual support (Tomalin, 2012).

Nevertheless, during the COVID-19 pandemic, it has been predominantly FIOs who have most rapidly and significantly integrated spiritual support/nurture and pastoral support into their responses. While many INGOs are engaging with faith, religion and spirituality to promote a 'secular' framing of MHPSS, there is little evidence, including during the COVID-19 pandemic, that 'secular' INGOs are engaging with faith, religion and spirituality as ends in themselves. Perhaps this is due to concerns around providing spiritual support and nurture and adherence to the humanitarian principles. This latter challenge around tensions between local faith engagement and the humanitarian principles are explored in more detail in the next chapter.

Another potential reason for the reluctance of 'secular' INGOs to engage with faith, religion and spirituality for resilience building is a lack of experience and faith literacy which limits their confidence in engaging with such issues. Schafer (2010, 2011) suggests that IFIOs are well situated to provide spiritual support during and after a humanitarian crisis, because communities tend to approach them to request spiritual support. A shared language and clear faith-inspired values make some FIOs feel comfortable and competent providing these services.

Building on Schafer's (2010, 2011) experiences of working with the World Vision partnership, several key informants for this research working for IFIOs challenged the literature highlighted above to suggest that FIOs do have a distinctive role to play in supporting LFAs to provide spiritual support

and nurture within their communities. Several IFIOs who participated in this research re-iterated their distinctive role in supporting LFAs and LCFs to provide spiritual support. A key informant from CCIH suggested that IFIOs tend to view health more holistically than secular actors, seeing the importance of the whole person, caring for their mind, body and soul (CCIH1). This sentiment was reinforced by a key informant from the Mennonite Central Committee who emphasised their value-add as a FIO for providing spiritual support:

‘we would have a pretty significant part of our programs that focus on that kind of broader psychosocial support including spiritual resources. It's Tricky, so like a group like MCC can do more because we do come from a faith backgrounds where explicitly acknowledge in the value in those sort of systems’ (MCC3).

However, exploring the role of spiritual support, within the broader MHPSS framework, during the COVID-19 pandemic has also highlighted some of the distinct challenges faced by IFIOs for providing spiritual support to all who need it. Schafer (2010), drawing on experience from other humanitarian crises, remembers World Vision feeling less comfortable providing spiritual support for individuals, families and communities of faith of different faith-backgrounds (Schafer, 2010:125). This challenges IFIOs ability to act impartially and a lack of understanding of the diversity of faith-inspired, religious and spiritual beliefs in any given context may lead to divergence from the IDRC/ICRC Code of Conduct which states that people of all faiths have access to MHPSS programmes that are culturally, religiously and spiritually appropriate (Schafer, 2010:122). Sitrep data from across the World Vision partnership, detailing the F&D investments of different national offices in their COVID-19 responses, highlights lots of examples of the IFIO supporting LFAs to provide spiritual support for diverse LFCs, including Muslims, Buddhists and Hindus. It is therefore unclear the extent to which these challenges impact the work of IFIOs in practice.

Impact of COVID-19 on faith partners

While many IFIOs, and humanitarian actors more generally, have engaged with faith, religion and spirituality with unprecedented speed, breadth and depth, this has not been consistent across the board. IFIOs and ‘secular’ humanitarian actors have leveraged local faith-inspired partnerships and programs to varying extents. Similarly, there remain significant gaps in the academic literature, and in humanitarian understanding, around the intersections of faith, religion, spirituality and humanitarianism. For example, while the above contributes to a growing literature on the roles of faith, religion and spirituality for responding to humanitarian crises, there is very little, if any, research that explores how humanitarian crises impact and/or change LCFs and whether this impacts their ability to support communities during crises. In turn, this means there is little understanding of whether the impact of humanitarian crises on LFAs and LCFs means IFIOs need to adapt their modus operandi for faith engagement in any way. This gap in the academic literature, and in humanitarian understanding, highlights the fact that the humanitarian sphere has further to go, and that further investment is needed in F&D.

The COVID-19 pandemic deeply impacted LFAs and LCFs all over the world. One of the ways the public health crisis and resultant lockdowns impacted LFAs and LCFs is that it changed religious practices and rituals as places of worship closed and had to adapt to the public health restrictions when re-opening:

‘The only challenge I have observed is that instead of big church gatherings, they have resorted to cell group meetings, so people come from varying households and gather together in one home. So, to me that is still a challenge. Even when you’ve got, like in DRC, you are allowed to meet up to 20 people. But 20 people in one enclosed space is not safe. Because of the enclosure. And one meter distance when you are singing and shouting hallelujah, one meter distance cannot be safe’ (WVDRCP5Z1).

A key informant from Dan Church Aid identified these as significant challenges for LCFs as they embarked on a process of 'migrating at-risk faith life' from in-person to online (DCA1). Dan Church Aid deliberately reached out to LFAs to ask for their multisectoral contributions to the COVID-19 response. They sought to support faith actors' responses to COVID-19 not only through dissemination of accurate information, and WASH and cash programming, but also through 'regulating community life, stimulating community inclusivity and community resilience through maintained faith life' (DCA2).

Supporting faith leaders to adapt and continue key aspects of faith life was part of other IFIO's COVID-19 responses. A key informant from Episcopal Relief and Development stated that during the COVID-19 pandemic, '... from a faith perspective, we're in constant conversation with religious leaders, bishops, archbishops, clergy, about alternate ways of holding church or holding space for faith and liturgy... So that's one version, where the church is using its resources to maintain continuation of service and presence as appropriate' (ERD1). This key informant was keen to stress the importance of ensuring the continuation of faith life. As has been explored in this chapter already, faith beliefs and religious rites and practices can help communities and individuals remain resilient in times of crisis, 'maintaining that sense that you are not alone, and that you are supported and can be held and supported by others' (ERD1). A key informant from Episcopal Relief and Development (ERD1) also explained how their belief, as people of faith, is that there is life after death which brings people comfort in the face of loss and fear. The continuation of faith life helps communities of faith hold each other up and remind each other of the hope and comfort of their faith.

Supporting the continuation of faith life in times of crisis is reflected in the literature exploring the roles of extrinsic faith-inspired, religious and spiritual behaviors, rituals and practices on building resilience. In particular, maintaining faith-inspired, religious and spiritual behaviors, rituals and practices in times of crisis can support broader MHPSS programming. There is evidence of faith-

inspired, religious and spiritual practices correlating with increased social support in times of stress, ensuring people receive assistance and helping individuals protect themselves against emotional disorders (Hill and Pargament, 2003:69. Walker, 2012:122). Fiddian-Qasmiyeh and Ager (2013) explore how faith-inspired, religious and spiritual rituals and rites, can have a significant impact of individuals and communities' psychosocial well-being. Rites and rituals define passages of life for people of faith which can help people feel normal in times of crisis, giving them control over stressful situations. Prayer is often considered an important faith-inspired, religious, spiritual practice that helps people cope during crises. Similarly, after the events of 9/11, faith, religion and spirituality, including prayer and spiritual feelings, were utilized by ninety percent of people to help cope (Peres et al, 2007:344). As a result, shrines, temples, synagogues, mosques and churches are seen as priority tasks for many communities of faith following disasters.

Once again, there are concerns that faith-inspired, religious and spiritual behaviors, rituals and practices may hinder resilience and mental health and psychosocial well-being; making it harder for communities and their members to recover from trauma following humanitarian crises. For example, in the Muslim-majority province of Aceh Indonesia, to avoid using interest-based bank accounts prohibited by the Qur'an, people kept their savings in gold or jewelry. When the tsunami hit the country in 2004, many lost their meagre savings which were carried away in the floods. In recognition of the role of faith-inspired, religious and spiritual behaviors, rituals and practices on mental health and psychosocial support, a number of IFIOs have worked with faith actors to facilitate safe worship services and overcome some of the challenges LCF's practices might present for stemming the spread of COVID-19.

In recognition of the struggles facing LFCs having to adapt to the changing context of the pandemic, and the significance of continued faith life in times of crisis for LFAs mental health and psychosocial well-being, WV DRC supported local faith leaders and religious institutions to carry out worship services safely;

'...we tried to ask what can Faith do for this situation? at the time we were thinking that churches closed not only churches but mosques closed and Indonesia is majority Muslim and some Christians and at the time the church closed it's kind of like anxiety confused what's the church do? And at the time what the church can do is online service preaching and recording something so that people can see' (WVInRH1).

WV DRC, as well as providing Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) to the health system and health care volunteers, also provided basic equipment such as handwashing stations to places of worship. WV DRC also supported religious institutions to navigate information relevant to religious life coming from the government. While there was no scientific evidence that burials were spreading COVID-19, to reduce risk in the meantime, authorities in the DRC made it so that only the relevant authorities from the Ministry of Health could conduct burials. In response, WV DRC carried out a barrier assessment to understand what are the barriers that could put the community at risk conducting burials. This barrier assessment was not concluded before the end of the data collection period for this research, but it was hoped that this would inform WV DRC's engagement with faith leaders, to put measures in place to address these barriers, to carry out religious practices safely. WV DRC again, drew on lessons learnt from the Ebola epidemic, to adapt religious practices that can contribute to the spread of the disease or virus:

'So, faith leaders, and other community members, interact with religious perspectives because you can find, there's some practices when you are praying like evangelical fellows, when the pastors are praying for the fellows, they have to put their hand on the head of the people. So, with that practice with Ebola, it was a good way of transmission for the Ebola virus, the way of contamination. Even for COVID-19, it's the same. So how to change the religious perspectives, to transform and giving them the technical information and also share personal experiences...' (WVDRCJ1).

'...the government also lifted the requirement on the ban of worship spaces. So we work with faith leaders to teach them on how their service can be conducted to ensure the prevention of the disease is maintained so most of the areas we are operating we have, we work with washing places to install hand washing facilities we also have a strategy designed with them to make sure the population the congregation is not all attended in full scale, if a church has a capacity of 500 people we agree with the faith leaders to organise worship services in several segments so we respect social distancing whereas continuous washing facilities are provided and considering awareness-raising in their messaging. So these are some of the adjustments we've made to our programming' (WVDRCP8).

Supporting communities of faith to adapt religious practices and meetings to adhere to health and safety guidelines was also a significant investment of the IFIO Islamic Relief Worldwide. Islamic Relief Worldwide, in comparison to an IFIO like World Vision, is more internally reticent to engage with faith, religion and spirituality. Like several IFIOs, Islamic Relief Worldwide invested in F&D for '...messaging, health messaging, principally and within that, key messages around safe worship and distancing and safe burials' (IRW1). According to the traditions of the Islamic faith, the burials are a collective obligation, undertaken by the Muslim community, including the ritual washing of the body, covering the body with a piece of cloth and prayer (Al-Dawoody and Finegan, 2020). Not only do these practices become problematic in the context of COVID-19 and a highly infectious virus, but in some contexts this led government authorities to want to cremate the bodies of those who had died from COVID-19. Cremation is considered as a violation of the dignity of the human body and prohibited in Islamic law (Al-Dawoody and Finegan, 2020). A key informant from Islamic Relief Worldwide gave an example of where this was happening in Sri Lanka, '...an awful situation because they started burning bodies which you know is against Islamic teaching, they were so insensitive...I mean this was obviously a deliberate act in relation to the Muslim community' (IRW1). Addressing

ways to adapt religious practices in a culturally and religious appropriate way was therefore a significant part of Islamic Relief Worldwide's F&D response to COVID-19 and was part of a broader push to ramp up their faith-inspired messaging in response to humanitarian crises, where they also circulated advice to office on faith messaging.

Faith leaders have also suffered mentally and economically because of the COVID-19 pandemic and its resultant lockdowns. The financial hardship suffered by LFAs during the COVID-19 pandemic was of great concern to F&D staff in WV DRC, for whom engaging with faith leaders for disseminating preventative messaging and accurate information was a significant part of their response. Similarly, staff in WV Indonesia shared similar concerns that many churches were having to close due to declining incomes and that faith leaders were struggling to manage their growing workloads.

Several key informants also expressed the financial hardship being experienced by many faith leaders because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Many faith leaders make a living from the income of the church, often through the donations of congregation members. Due to COVID-19, many places of worship had to close, and many congregation members suffered financial hardship themselves. As a result, many faith leaders' incomes were significantly reduced. Not only was this a problem for the mental health of the faith leader, but it also limited their ability to engage with IFIO's like World Vision, to contribute to program delivery:

'...the small churches have suffered tremendously, especially where the pastor was already struggling on whatever salary he was getting. I have had Christian friends who are religious leaders get in touch with me and say I need help, and I say what is it? And for some it is the COVID. And I have had to raise funds to support some Christian leaders and their families...' (IRWSN1)

'...no Church services so no offerings. If Faith leaders are paid monthly by the church, it is not possible now to get paid at the end of the month. So, when they have to dedicate

their time for sensitisation of the church members, they will need a kind of financial support for them to survive during this time. It has been 3 months now without Church services so there is no salary for pastors, there are no salaries for church leaders. So, it's become a bit complicated for them to dedicate a lot of time to that activity to those activities' (WVDRCJ4).

'As you know churches are closed, there's no offerings at church, some people are not getting tithes... so faith leaders they don't get any salary...So when they have to educate and it's time to come to the training you have to support them with their transport fees... which are quite considerable from one place to that place' (WVDRCJ5).

Faith leaders can also feel alone and be unsure how to help communities during a crisis. Staff at WV Indonesia (WVInRH3, WVInAD4) highlighted faith leaders feeling confused and shocked because of the pandemic, which presented mental health and psychological challenges for faith leaders, as well as members of their communities and congregations. Given the vital role that faith leaders play in supporting communities during difficult times, many congregations have high expectations of them. This can successfully mobilise faith leaders in times of crisis. However, WV Indonesia staff highlighted how if faith leaders do not have the capacity to respond to the challenges they and their communities are facing it can lead them to feel alone and confused. Faith leaders are already busy, as one key informant who is a faith leader and staff member for WV DRC emphasised: 'Faith leaders do not have the time to do everything they are required to do in a response such as child protection, COVID, HIV, gender and so on. Because plates are already full' (WVDRCPSZ3). This raises questions around how IFIOs engage with faith leaders for responding to emerging crises, to find a way to engage with them in a way that does not overwhelm them.

Key informants working for the World Vision partnership detailed how their engagement and trainings with faith leaders had helped some faith leaders feel less alone and more capable to

support their congregations. Training faith leaders, and reinforcing their role in their community, helped them feel more part of that community and less isolated. WV Indonesia staff emphasised that community is extremely important in Indonesia – illustrated through the cultural adherence to the principle of Gotong Royong or communal work. Religious institutions, like Churches or Mosques, are prominent parts of many communities in Indonesia. WV Indonesia staff highlighted several examples of Gotong Royong (WVInAD2, WVInAD3) being practiced in communities of faith. For example, in some villages in Papua, there are numerous examples of congregations working together to respond to the various challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. By building the capacity of local faith leaders to play a vital role in these community responses, it reinforces their position within the community which in turn supports the faith leader.

Bringing diverse faith leaders together for trainings can also create a sense of community support among local faith leaders. One WV Indonesia staff member even highlighted an example of how faith leaders who had attended the same training for psychosocial support have been supporting each other in several ways to respond to COVID-19 (WVInRH2).

The various ways in which the COVID-19 pandemic and its secondary impacts have affected LFAs and LFC raises questions around how to support them during crises; whether the impacts of crises on LFAs and LCFs change their ability to, or the ways they respond to crises and therefore how IFIOs should best engage with them. These questions are reflected in comments made by a key informant from WV Indonesia:

‘We’re doing some learning processes, with churches, before faith is about talking how to bring people to heaven, but now during the pandemic we’re talking about this is real life, this is our situation, what should we do because it’s impacted churches very much. Churches and mosques close and wow, what do we do now, this is really real, so it’s

kind of how can we engage more strategically and understand the situation together with the faith leaders'(WVInRH3).

However, the questions raised around how crises impact LFAs and LCFs and how IFIOs can support them, particularly financially, also highlights some potential tensions for IFIOs and their strict adherence to the humanitarian principles. To support local faith actors financially, to facilitate them continuing worship services and to keep their places of worship open, presents a challenge for their adherence to the humanitarian principles of neutrality and impartiality. Staff from WV DRC expressed their empathy with LFAs who had been badly affected by the pandemic, as well as discomfort about supporting explicitly religious activities that would serve one community and that could include evangelism and proselytization. WV DRC have overcome these tensions by only providing support and funding for faith leaders to be used for development and humanitarian activities. They provided logistical support, so faith leaders could travel from one community to another to deliver faith-inspired program although this was clearly not a salary (WVDRCJ1). They recognise the financial hardship suffered by many faith leaders during the pandemic, so they provided funding for their transport to trainings, and they have purchased data for faith leaders to send preventative message to members of their communities.

Conclusion

The data collection period of this research project was early in the pandemic; too early to evaluate the impact of these local faith-inspired partnerships and programs. Even at the time of writing the results of this research, the COVID-19 pandemic was still ongoing. Therefore, this chapter cannot speak to whether local faith-inspired partnerships and programs did make humanitarian interventions during the COVID-19 pandemic more effective. Nonetheless, this chapter speaks to a growing awareness that while local faith-inspired partnerships and programs are not a magic bullet for humanitarianism, they have the potential to make humanitarian responses more effective.

This chapter has argued that the COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted several shifts within the humanitarian sphere's approach to engaging with faith, religion and spirituality for responses to crises. These shifts evidence a growing awareness that local faith-inspired partnerships and programs have the potential to make humanitarian responses more effective. This chapter started by detailing the increased breadth of F&D engagement evidenced during the COVID-19 pandemic as a faith dimension was integrated into many IFIOs multisectoral responses to the COVID-19 pandemic and its secondary impacts. Then it highlighted the principal F&D investment by IFIOs, and the humanitarian sphere more widely, in response to COVID-19: disseminating accurate information, preventative messaging and promoting social behaviour change. The rapidity with which the humanitarian sphere leveraged local faith-inspired partnerships and programs for this objective was unprecedented.

Following on from this, this chapter explores the increased depth of IFIO's local faith-inspired partnerships and programs in response to COVID-19. IFIO's investments in holistic MHPSS and spiritual support and nurture saw IFIOs engage more meaningfully with faith, religion and spirituality in response to COVID-19, moving beyond a narrow and instrumental approach to leveraging faith-inspired partnerships and programs for secular humanitarian goals, seeing them as an end in itself.

Throughout, this chapter has highlighted the inconsistency of IFIOs approaches to faith engagement. While some IFIOs have demonstrated increasingly meaningful faith-inspired programs, others' efforts remain narrow and instrumental. There are also gaps in the humanitarian sphere's understanding of the intersections of faith, religion, spirituality and humanitarian processes. The COVID-19 pandemic had a significant impact on LFAs and LCFs. However, there is very little literature or institutional understanding around how this might impact their responses to new and ongoing crises and how humanitarian actors might support them.

Chapter Four: Putting the 'local' into local faith-inspired partnerships and programming

This chapter outlines the conditions imposed on the humanitarian sphere by the COVID-19 pandemic by public health measures brought in by national governments to stem the spread of the virus.

These constraints created a test tube situation for the localisation agenda. Lockdowns, restrictions of movement and travel bans limited international activities, putting the burden of response on local and national actors. This situation has created a lens through which to assess the progress made towards localisation through high-level commitments made by major international humanitarian actors.

The literature review explored how the COVID-19 pandemic has exposed significant challenges for, and insufficient progress towards, a vision of humanitarian action that is 'as local as possible, as international as necessary' (Ban Ki Moon, 2016. Barbelet et al, 2020). However, this chapter shows that a different path is possible. Staff working for IFIOs across the humanitarian sphere highlighted instances of how previous investments in localisation, primarily building local-international networks, have borne fruit during the COVID-19 pandemic.

While the COVID-19 pandemic may have shown the humanitarian sphere's collective failures in their efforts to localise humanitarianism - shifting resources, funding and power to local actors - key informants highlighted individual successes which, when taken together, present an important lesson for the humanitarian sphere. For IFIO staff, this lesson was that pre-existing local-international (faith) networks facilitated them to support their local partners, despite constraints on international humanitarian activities. While these 'glocal' networks can be secular or faith-inspired,

or a mixture of actors with varying relationships to faith, IFIO staff felt that there was distinctive value-add, as well as challenges, associated with engaging with LFAs and LCFs for these networks.

This chapter speaks to the emphasis on the 'local' nature of the local faith-inspired partnerships and programs in the primary research question of this thesis: Can local faith-inspired partnerships and programming make International Faith-Inspired Organisation's (IFIO's) responses to humanitarian crises like COVID-19 more effective in fragile urban contexts? The following chapter will consider the local faith-inspired programs and partnerships specifically in urban contexts, whereas this chapter takes a more general view of the importance of engaging with local actors for responding to crises to answer the subsidiary research question: How does IFIO's engagement with local communities of faith impact their humanitarian responses to crises like COVID-19?

This chapter argues that IFIO's locally-led faith-inspired partnerships and programs have the potential to make their humanitarian responses more effective. To make this argument, this chapter starts by exploring the operational and logistical challenges experienced by IFIOs because of COVID-19 and the accompanying lockdowns, restrictions of movements and travel bans. Such public health measures meant international actors' activities were significantly constrained, seeing them rely on resources, capacity and information from local partners to an unprecedented extent (Barbelet et al, 2020. Cornish, 2021). This chapter then moves on to explore the value-add of many IFIOs pre-existing relationships and partnerships with local actors, often faith-inspired, which helped them to continue to respond to the needs of local communities despite restrictions, even if they still had to grapple with certain challenges.

This chapter then explores the distinctive value-add of glocal faith networks in particular. Key informants from IFIOs who are part of local-international faith networks recalled the distinctive resources brought to the humanitarian table by IFIOs and LCFs. In particular key informants implicitly expressed the importance of locally-led faith-inspired partnerships and programs mobilised through

mechanisms promoting two-way feedback. Finally, this chapter argues that IFIOs currently have a distinctive role to play in leveraging the value-add of local-international faith networks for more effective humanitarian responses, in part based on a shared understanding of faith, religion and spirituality.

The COVID-19 pandemic, a 'crunch point' for the localisation agenda

Many IFIOs faced significant challenges because of COVID-19; impacting their ability to operate, the way they work and their reach. The challenges faced by IFIOs were all-encompassing; impacting their work in general and their F&D activities specifically. The challenges faced by IFIOs also changed over the course of the pandemic, in response to shifting regulatory environments, contexts and trajectories of the virus.

Key informants identified several funding, operational and logistical constraints due to COVID-19 pandemic. These challenges arose due to the lockdowns, travel restrictions and travel bans imposed by many national governments and local authorities around the world to stem the spread of the virus. Then when restrictions were lifted there were challenges around how to keep staff safe and how to ensure the community were taking the right steps to protect themselves and others. These challenges in many ways constrained the work of international actors, seeing them rely increasingly on the resources, capacity and information of from local actors. Therefore, the challenges and constraints imposed on the humanitarian sphere has made it possible to zero in on IFIO's localisation efforts in general, and their faith-inspired partnerships with LFAs and LCFs in particular, to analyse their progress towards their commitments to locally-led humanitarian action.

Funding challenges

One area where these constraints created potential challenges for IFIO's COVID-19 responses was funding. The COVID-19 pandemic hit many high-income contexts hard, including western Europe and

North America. Many high-income contexts rolled out extensive relief and stimulus packages to support their populations during lockdowns and attempt to counteract the potential negative economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. As a result of such large amounts of public spending, the economies of many high-income contexts who were hit by the COVID-19 pandemic saw their national budgets shrink. Not only did this reduce the amount of money they could commit to international development and humanitarian responses as a percentage of their national budgets, but in countries like the UK, this even led the government to cut the aid budget to redirect money to pay for the aforementioned relief and stimulus packages (Worley, 2021). On several occasions, key informants expressed concerns that reduced budgets as a result of domestic responses to COVID-19 in donor countries could impact their work in low-income contexts:

‘I have the concern about... what's being put aside, what funding might be drying up and particularly, I guess, as the economic impacts of COVID are felt in the donor lands and you have western economies retracting into - will we have a recession? - I don't know and what does that mean the UK 0.7 will be worth less?’ (WVUKSP2).

‘...when it comes to funding, I think that's going to be the challenge because the funding comes up often from the Western capitals. So, it's going to be an interesting question as to what donors do in terms of how they make decisions and I what level was they dispersed funding...’ (WVUKSP3).

‘You know, this [COVID-19] impacted the major home donors and sector. So, as we were kind of speaking to them and trying to get more funding’ (OXG1).

These concerns around funding were felt across the World Vision partnership. Key informants expressed concern that a lack of funding would funnel down from donors, through SOs, to NOs. As a result, key informants from WV UK and WV DRC highlighted their concern that a lack of funding in general would constrain World Vision’s activities internationally, limiting the support they could give

to local communities. A key informant from World Vision UK (WVUKSP3) detailed that there 'might be a reduced pot' for NOs 'because of the economic impact of COVID on donors'. Therefore 'even if more money was coming locally it might not be the same amount as before'. Similar concerns were detailed by a key informant from WV DRC:

'...even the countries, those SOs that are very strong in terms of supporting us around fundraising, are also in the crisis. And these big superpowers that are raising funds for poor countries are badly hit also with the pandemic. So funding is really, really getting more scarce in terms of resource allocation so that's one of the things, yes resource allocation is getting more challenging and more competitive because the whole world is dealing with the disease.' (WVDRCPS2)

These potential and actual budgetary constraints also created an even more competitive funding landscape for humanitarian organisations, making getting new funding 'a little difficult to get' (CRS2).

The negative economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic in HICs threatened to affect IFIOs in particular. For example, the World Vision partnership receives a great deal of funding from individual, private donors and congregations situated in HICs. The World Vision partnership receives the majority of its funding from private accounts (World Vision, 2021). A key informant from WV DRC detailed how churches in the United States do a lot of fundraising to help churches they are affiliated with in the DRC. They do this through the child sponsorship program as well as directly donating money to the church:

'...we have a big program, a huge sponsorship program and that program we get in touch with sponsors through that program, they are part of evangelical church in the US and then they have other churches in DRC, so they wanted to help the communities

where their churches are based and then they come, the local church come to WV DRC...' (WVDRCJ1).

While there were support nets for many living in high-income countries, many people still suffered financially because of the COVID-19 pandemic and accompanying lockdowns. As a result, a key informant working for World Vision UK expressed concern that they were receiving fewer private donations from individuals, communities and congregations of faith/faith groups:

'so, we're in a crisis on the ground for the people we're trying to help, they're in crisis, we're in a crisis as a staff team because we're all working from home, we're all having funding challenges... and then we've got a crisis of support. So normally it's a case of, you know, picking up the phone doing an... appeal asking government for money. Now you've got domestic pressure, both in terms of the individual private donor but also the northern, the government, that has an aid budget. So, you've got this triple crisis at an unprecedented level' (WVUKGW1)

A key informant from the Mennonite Central Committee (MCC2), based in the United States, also expressed concern over these dwindling donations and their subsequently reduced budget at a time when their services were needed in the contexts they work in more than ever. They highlighted the impact these reduced budgets were having on their COVID-19 responses and ongoing programs:

'it's challenging in these budget times. So, we have a reduced budget, so ramping up [WASH ad education] work does mean cutting back on other work now. For right now some of that cut back is because some things just can't happen' (MCC2).

Budget constraints for many IFIOs posed operational challenges for responding to future crises or developments in the COVID-19 situation. Key informants from across the World Vision partnership highlighted how the flexible funding of their sponsorship programming was a significant strength of

their initial COVID-19 response. It allowed them to divert funding to respond to the emerging and potential crisis of COVID-19:

‘...in March for DRC specifically, there were this global decision from GC that every country programme that had sponsorship can repurpose 20% of their funds’
(WVDRPCS2).

This of course, reiterates the importance of innovative and flexible funding mechanisms for localisation as is explored more broadly in the literature (See Fabre, 2017:11-13, Munson et al, 2021. Barbelet et al, 2021).

Operational challenges

While funding remained a concern for key informants, at the start of the pandemic, restrictions of movement, travel bans and lockdowns presented the most significant operational and logistical challenges for IFIOs. Most countries followed the response model first employed in western Europe, of restricting movement within the country, banning travel in and out the country and instigating lockdowns on populations, calling for them to stay at home unless absolutely necessary. However, regulatory environments shifted according to the political landscape and the trajectory of the virus in different contexts. In some countries, the regulatory environments differed depending on the province or the region. For example, in the DRC, being such a large country meant that different provinces had different restrictions imposed upon them at different times. Key informants, situated in different parts of the country experienced different challenges, at different times. While some areas of the country were in strict lockdown due to high numbers of COVID-19 cases, in other parts of the country they were able to move around and meet in groups of higher numbers.

In the last chapter, the economic impact of COVID-19 lockdowns on local communities in LMICs was explored. Lockdowns, travel bans and restrictions of movement also meant that in some cases IFIO

staff couldn't reach affected communities. At the start of the pandemic, the travel bans imposed on the country by the government in the DRC limited, and at the beginning of the pandemic curtailed altogether, humanitarian access. This is particularly problematic in the DRC, where the government was heavily reliant on humanitarian aid to support their response to the COVID-19 pandemic (WVDRCP1). In response, WV DRC was one of the voices advocating for humanitarian access during the COVID-19 pandemic:

'...there have been lots of advocacy initiated that have been ongoing to address, to mitigate, the restrictions around travel, for humanitarian access. Its one of the key advocacy points that have been pushed out there to the government' (WVDRCP1)

Ultimately, they were successful in convincing the government to allow humanitarian access, including incoming flights from the United Nations and for NGOs like WV DRC, to fly to humanitarian hubs in the country (WVDRCP1). However, these restrictions did initially impact NO staff's ability to travel to local communities for direct implementation. One of the key challenges expressed by key informants from IFIOs was difficulties in getting national staff to field sites. Staff from WV DRC for example explained that initially there were no commercial flights during the countries' lockdown. For such a large country, where flying can be the only way to reach certain locations, this created substantial logistical challenges and obstacles to access:

'...there a lot of restrictions around travel, which is good in terms of stemming the spread of the disease but also in terms of humanitarian access to the needy, to the vulnerable population it's becoming a very big Challenge for us as well.' (WVDRCP2)

A key informant from WV DRC (WVDRCP1) also detailed the situation they observed, where many ex-patriot staff living across the border in Rwanda where the facilities are better could not cross back into the DRC when lockdowns started. This had broad logistical ramifications because to buy the resources needed to support communities in the DRC, WV DRC staff would sometimes need the

signatures of staff living across the border in Rwanda. This meant they often couldn't get the signatures they needed to support local communities. Again, this caused delays in getting important material resources to local communities.

A key informant from Islamic Relief Worldwide (IRWH1) also highlighted challenges they faced around getting personnel where they needed to be as particularly problematic for responding to COVID-19 in LMICs. Islamic Relief Worldwide have a global surge roster so they can deploy people for two or three months to assist responses when needed. However, because of strict lockdown measures in many of the countries Islamic Relief Worldwide are operational in, as well as international travel bans, it meant that some national offices remained under-capacitated. Whereas in 'normal' circumstances Islamic Relief Worldwide would have surged capacity to those countries to fill that gap, allowing staff working in those contexts to take time off, this was not possible in the initial months on the COVID-19 pandemic. Key informants therefore expressed concerns about staff burn out in these contexts. Staff at Islamic Relief Worldwide highlighted the context of Afghanistan, where their inability to surge international staff had impacted their COVID-19 response and their programming more generally:

'...at the moment, because of our increase in funding in Afghanistan, we need a good program manager there to join the team. Quite a few of our staff came down with COVID like symptoms... So, we need to get some surge capacity to Afghanistan right now. The challenges are flights, its not easy to get to Afghanistan, but let's say you do it, how to you cover someone with health insurance or with medical evacuation? It's going to be very expensive, but you can potentially do it. The third thing is who do you actually find? Because if every country is in their own COVID response, there's no one really available to send and we don't have existing people on standby everyone's engaged in their own countries with difficulties. So, I'd say yes its affected us.'

(IRWH1)

A key informant from Islamic Relief Worldwide (IRW1) suggested that in many of the low-income and fragile contexts in which they work, they do not have the same tracing mechanisms and knowledge of people within the country through tax systems. As a result, without being able to move staff to field sites, it was hard for many IFIOs, including Islamic Relief Worldwide, to know who was vulnerable and in need of support.

These sentiments were in keeping with concerns articulated by a key informant from Episcopal Relief and Development (ERD3) who felt that lockdowns, restrictions of movement and travel bans were making it hard to enter communities they had not previously worked in to get support to those in need. The same key informant suggested that it was difficult to get to know new communities and negotiate with local community leaders for access remotely.

Logistical challenges

Another area of WV DRC's COVID-19 response that was severely inhibited due to the restrictions of movement imposed on IFIOs by national governments was delivering supplies to vulnerable communities. This logistical challenge was highlighted by several key informants across the World Vision partnership:

'The next thing also the challenge we are faced with in terms of capacity of suppliers. As COVID response requires a huge logistics in terms of PPE, provision of PPE... provision of WASH kits and as well as other related medication that we support the response'
(WVDRCPS1)

'...resources are also very scarce and right now with the restrictions we have around travel so getting supplies to different locations is a very big challenge for not just for us as an organisation but even the communities' (WVDRCPS2)

‘...the sectors that are much more hardware based where you have to get things in, and staff have to go in to carry stuff, is a lot trickier when borders are closed and airports are closed and money isn’t coming in for logistics’ (WVUKSP1)

One key informant from WV DRC (WVDRCP1) spoke of how food suppliers, for example, didn’t have the capacity to get supplies to where they needed to be in time. This was also the case for other vital supplies such as handwashing stations and PPE. As a result, there were delays in responses. It could take up to two to three weeks for WV DRC to receive vital supplies, stretching the capacity of suppliers and negatively impacting WV DRC’s COVID-19 response (WVDRCP1).

One area where the impact of these delays was experienced was WV DRC’s support to the Ministry of Health through the provision of PPE to health facilities. At the start of the pandemic most health facilities did not have the capacity, or supplies, to safely respond to the COVID-19 pandemic (WVDRCP1). They were therefore ‘heavily dependent on humanitarian aid, to build the capacity of health workers, [and] strengthen even the infrastructure of these health facilities’ (WVDRCP1). Delays in the supplies by a couple of weeks therefore delayed health facilities being able to respond to the primary health needs of local community members.

Staff from IFIOs who engaged with this research expressed frustration that, while they were able to carry out some projects in full, some had to be adapted and some activities in the field were not possible at all. One key informant (WVUKSP1) expressed how the COVID-19 pandemic, and its accompanying restrictions of movement, lockdowns, travel bans and funding constraints, made ‘hardware-based’ activities – those which needed material supplies to complete – difficult during the first months of the COVID-19 pandemic. However, as explored in the last chapter, these operational challenges also affected the ‘softer side’ of programming (WVUKSP1).

Funding, operational and logistical challenges: A lens for the localisation agenda

As IFIO's activities were increasingly constrained due to lockdowns, restrictions of movement and travel bans both in support and implementation, local actors were increasingly viewed as vital informants for and implementers of humanitarian responses. That is not to say the public health measures to stem the spread of the COVID-19 virus did not impact the ability of local actors to respond to the needs of their communities. However, the constraints on international humanitarian actors emphasised and magnified the important role of local actors for humanitarian responses. This drew several key informant's attention towards whether their organisation had done enough to invest in localisation prior to COVID-19, to help mitigate the constraints imposed on them by the pandemic.

The COVID-19 pandemic saw many international actors withdraw from intervention countries in which staff were unable to visit field sites and get supplies to vulnerable communities. As a result, several key informants working for IFIOs felt that the COVID-19 pandemic explicitly challenged the 'old ways of doing things' (IRWSN1). For many key informants, they felt that the COVID-19 pandemic presented 'an opportunity for localisation really, in the sense that it could be the start of a process of communities taking on some aid activities that they wouldn't have normally done' (IRW1). A key informant from Islamic Relief Worldwide (IRW1) suggested that the COVID-19 pandemic was forcing localisation onto the humanitarian sphere, encouraging international humanitarian actors to deliver aid through non-traditional partners at the local level. This approach to responding to the COVID-19 pandemic was in many ways necessitated by Islamic Relief Worldwide's inability to surge capacity to different contexts.

Key informants spoke of seeing new players and new organisations entering the humanitarian landscape as 'very few international agencies were very active' (IRWSN1). Islamic Relief Worldwide's international office was urging country offices to 'explore and suggest ways that particularly hard to reach communities can organise and share food for instance or share the acquisition' (IRW1). In response to the restrictive international, national and local contexts they found themselves

operating in, Islamic Relief Worldwide started to see part of their role to support local communities fulfilling this role.

Global challenges, international and local impact

The above section explores the challenges imposed on the humanitarian sphere by the COVID-19, including their impact on the international and national levels of IFIOs. Of course, there are questions around whether WV DRC, as a NO, counts as an international actor and whether the challenges they faced are linked to the constraints imposed on international actors' activities. These questions speak to the tensions explored in the literature review around whether decentralised organisational structures count towards localisation. This section highlights the nuanced position of the NOs of IFIOs and INGOs as linked into local contexts and as part of international organisations.

As a result, while the NOs of an IFIO like the World Vision partnership can contribute to more locally-led humanitarian interventions, a decentralised structure in itself cannot lead to humanitarian action that is 'as local as possible, as international as necessary' (Ban Ki-Moon, 2016). Additional efforts to cede power to local actors and communities beyond the organisation need to be made for local partnerships and localised programming that makes humanitarian interventions more effective.

The World Vision partnership is a decentralised organisation which, in keeping with its name, is a partnership of different offices, at different levels, joined together under a shared goal. NOs have a great deal of autonomy in their decision making, and significant freedoms to contextualise and adapt World Vision programs: 'we're a very decentralized partnership in that the national officers have the deciding vote in that they decide' (WVUKSP2). Given their embeddedness in the national context and proximity to local communities it may follow that their decision-making will be better informed by local priorities than international organisations that deliver their programs directly.

However, the NOs of the World Vision partnership remain directed by the GC at the international level, who set the organisation's strategic direction. COVER for example, is a whole-of-organisation

response to the COVID-19 pandemic stemming from WVI. In many ways, the challenges faced by the NO WV DRC because of the COVID-19 pandemic, reinforce their role as part of an international organisation. Key informants from WV DRC identified challenges they faced in their work, many of which were the same as those faced by key informants from the international offices in their work. While NOs may be better placed to mitigate some of these challenges, they are not unaffected.

A key informant from the Mennonite Central Committee (MCC1) suggested that this may be because the scale of international organisations like World Vision makes it difficult to work at the local level, even through NOs. They suggested that many NOs have to rely on travelling managers and they are often based in capital cities away from the small communities in which they work. Similarly, NOs remain guided in their decision making by the international office. This makes it harder for NOs of large IFIOs and INGOs to engage with local partners and adapt their responses to integrate local priorities into humanitarian programming.

The funding, operational and logistical challenges faced by INGOs and IFIOs during the COVID-19 pandemic suggests they have not sufficiently ceded decision-making power to a diverse local and do not have the mechanisms through which to engage with very local actors. These challenges highlight the diversity of local actors that are themselves more, or less, local. While some local actors operate on a very small scale, for example within a village, other local actors may work at a more national level. The concepts of localisation and collective action, emphasise the importance of engaging with diverse local actors for more effective humanitarian interventions. However, the conceptual ambiguity around the localisation agenda, and the category of the local itself, creates the space in which international humanitarian actors can engage with local actors according to their own interests and definitions. This can, in practice, lead to narrow and instrumental localisation.

Evidently, the NOs of IFIOs and INGOs like the World Vision partnership are interrelated. NOs are both closer to local actors and communities and still part of the international structure of their wider

organisations. The interrelation of NOs with local contexts and international structures can also be seen through their use of funding. The scale of the World Vision partnership means it has the resources to apply for large grants and funding. They then pass this funding down to the relevant NOs. The NO WV DRC for example, highlighted funding they had received, with support from WVI, from major funders such as Irish Aid and Unilever to respond to COVID-19. Being able to access such funding helps the World Vision partnership continue to deliver, and scale-up, its world-wide development, humanitarian and peacebuilding programs.

However, such funding schemes are not always conducive to localised decision-making. A key informant from Mennonite Central Committee (MCC2) suggested that, unlike the larger INGOs responding to COVID-19, they felt 'lucky' to be working for a small organisation who gained most of their funding through small grants and private donations. While it was harder for them to scale up their responses to crises like COVID-19, they felt more able to ensure that decisions were taken at the local level:

'...this is where I think I just feel so lucky being in a small organisation that is not primarily funded by grants because we can make those decisions locally. So I and other people at the international level speak into what the specifics of those look like, what the big picture strategy but the actual projects in country are coming from their local priorities. We've been doing increasingly in this time instead of even applying for some of those big grants, applying if you're applying for external funding much smaller, for example, embassy level grades. Which are in the 50 - 100,000-dollar range, which allows you to make it particular to that community. Whereas if you're applying for a 2 million grant it's going to be at maybe a regional level or maybe a metropolitan level, which is not actually locally responsive' (MCC2).

However, while the NOs of the World Vision partnership may be constrained to some extent by funding funnelled down to them from major donors via their international offices, they often receive funding from private donors which allows for more flexibility. For example, World Vision does receive large amounts of its funding through private donations, for example through sponsorship mechanisms. This has allowed WV DRC the flexibility to better respond to the needs of local actors and communities as detailed above.

Evidently, through the lens of humanitarian funding mechanisms, it is clear that decentralised structures can potentially facilitate more locally-led humanitarian action and constrain it. NOs which are relatively autonomous and have flexibility over the use of their funding, for example through sponsorship programs, can facilitate humanitarian responses for which decisions are made more at the local level. However, the oversight and guidance of the international level of the organisation, and the large-scale funding and grants they attract can make it harder to induce more locally-led humanitarian action.

This discussion highlights a lack of clarity around whether a decentralised organisation generally, and their NOs particularly, can and should be categorised as 'local' or 'international' actors. NOs like WV DRC appear to be interrelated to both spheres of activity. This lack of clarity around the categorisation of NOs therefore recognises the complicated and context-specific relationships of NOs with both local actors and communities and international offices. As noted above, this debate rages beyond the issue of decentralisation.

This debate speaks to an underlying problem for the localisation agenda: a lack of conceptual clarity. Conceptual ambiguity around what is localisation and who are local actors creates the space for international humanitarian actors to engage with the localisation agenda, and with local actors, according to their own interests. This often leads to international humanitarian actors picking the easiest ways to engage with local actors, and with local actors they find easiest to identify and

partner with. Ultimately, this leads to a narrow and instrumental approach to localisation which restricts advance towards locally-led humanitarian action.

This has implications for international organisations who present their decentralised structure as an example of their localised way of working. It suggests that this is not enough to bring about a vision of humanitarian action that is 'as local as possible' for more effective humanitarian responses (Ban Ki-Moon, 2016). While NOs can play a role in increasing locally-led humanitarian interventions, more efforts need to be made towards ceding power to local actors and communities beyond international organisations.

For example, a key argument for localisation is that local actors are better situated to design and deliver timely, appropriate and relevant humanitarian responses. The COVID-19 pandemic has shown that, during crises, NOs are afflicted by many of the same operational and logistical challenges as international actors which threatens to slow down their humanitarian responses as they wait for direction from the international office and struggle to get people and resources to the affected area. These challenges for NOs, resulting in part from being interrelated to international organisations, indicate that localisation needs to go further than the decentralisation of international humanitarian organisations to also include meaningful engagement with local actors and communities. NOs may play an important role in this, as they leverage the strengths of their position as part of an international organisation, but also closer to local actors and communities and embedded in the affected national context and its networks.

The above discussions around the complicated, multifaceted role of NOs in localising humanitarian responses suggests that perhaps, instead of viewing localisation and the movement of power from one category (international) to another category (local), localisation should be reviewed as the reversal of the flow of power. Instead of power flowing from international actors, who make decisions about humanitarian responses that are then passed down through NOs to local

communities, it is about local communities deciding what they need to respond to crises, informing NOs who then request support from those at the international level with the financial resources.

The value-add of pre-existing local-international (faith) networks

Despite the operational and logistical challenges caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, all the IFIOs engaged with for this research were able, to some extent, to respond to the needs of communities in contexts around the world. For several IFIOs, this was made possible, in part, thanks to their pre-existing networks with local actors, often inclusive of LFAs and LCFs. This was explicitly outlined by key informants from World Vision UK and WVD RC:

‘I assume, that because a lot of these networks are, and I see lots of examples of where, stuff with networks does mean that activities can continue, because those networks are there, they’re on the ground and sometimes it’s using different modalities but the same networks’ (WVUKSP1).

‘I would highlight is the fact we had a large presence in the country in so many provinces, which is not the case for some of our international organisations and I feel like the fact that we have a presence in those places, with such a big team, especially in the ARP, the development programme, the sponsorship programme. So, we are well known in the community, so we already have our network. So, that was a good thing during our response. So, we didn’t have to move to a place, we didn’t have to go to design a project, but we only need to take action in our program, that continue to the strategic objectives, number one around prevention’ (WVDRCJF3).

Discussions with key informants for this research were through the lens of faith, religion and spirituality. Therefore, this section will explore the role of local-international networks in humanitarian responses through the lens of faith engagement. However, it is important to note that

the discussion in this section, detailing the value-add of pre-existing local-international networks for more effective humanitarian responses, is relevant beyond the realm of F&D.

Establishing local-international networks as a multisectoral priority

IFIOs local faith-inspired partnerships and programs during the COVID-19 pandemic were often part of a wider push for increasingly localised humanitarian responses. The extent to which an IFIO's localised approach to humanitarian responses encompassed an F&D component differed. For many IFIOs, including World Vision, F&D investment at the local level is central to their work and their community-based approach and is systematically integrated into their strategies and programs. For example, most of WV DRC's projects are with local church-related relief and development organizations. Similarly, a key informant from the Mennonite Central Committee explained how most of their partners are faith-inspired (MCC1).

On the other hand, while Islamic Relief Worldwide delivers their programs primarily through direct implementation, they see working through local partnerships as a 'fair and principled way' of fulfilling commitments made through Charter4Change and at the WHS (Islamic Relief Worldwide, 2021). However, a key informant highlighted that Islamic Relief Worldwide, in general, doesn't see engaging with LFAs and LCFs as humanitarian work. As a result, they engage unsystematically with LFAs and LCFs and this is not a consistent part of their work with local partners (IRWSM2). A key informant from Islamic Relief Worldwide felt that building relationships with, and the capacity of LFAs and LCFs, is relevant to more long-term development strategies to be delivered in more stable times. One key informant from Islamic Relief Worldwide outlined that;

'...when it comes to emergency programming, so, if there's been a cyclone or an earthquake, the focus is always on the lifesaving assistance and you're not maybe necessarily placing an emphasis on engaging Faith leaders just because of the time frame of the training up and doing the activities' (IRWSM2).

While this point is made in relation to engaging with LFAs and LCFs, it is relevant beyond the F&D landscape. It identifies a challenge for the localisation agenda more broadly. Islamic Relief Worldwide's reluctance around engaging with LFAs and LCFs as part of their localised approach speaks to the time- and resource-intensive nature of building relationships with, and the capacity of, local actors, faith-inspired or not. This makes these processes difficult to implement after an emergency has struck and in the midst of a crisis. Therefore, if relationships with local actors and communities are not built ahead of a humanitarian crisis, it is difficult to engage them for responses to an emerging crisis. This challenge was even more significant during the COVID-19 pandemic as travel restrictions, travel bans and lockdowns meant entering new communities was even more difficult.

These challenges to engaging with LFAs and LCFs, and often local actors more broadly, for responding to humanitarian crises highlights the importance of building these relationships and networks before a disaster strikes. As a result, several key informants working for IFIOs who had been engaging with LFAs and LCFs for a long time, and during previous humanitarian crises, felt that their existing relationships and networks with local actors in general, and LFAs and LCFs in particular, were a significant strength of their COVID-19 response, allowing them to mobilise a response effectively despite restrictions. However, in order to leverage these opportunities, these networks and relationships had to be built before a crisis.

This is evidently a lesson previously learnt by World Vision. A key informant from World Vision UK identified how one of the approaches of COVER was around leveraging local networks and communities of trust, including communities of faith. This approach was included in COVER based on the organisation's experiences of engaging their local-international faith networks to respond to past crises:

‘...how much faith is now at the front of our COVID-19 response, you know our responses wouldn’t put it front and centre in terms of objectives and indicators if they didn’t think that our faith networks are going to be an absolutely critical part us delivering impact you know in terms of if we couldn’t do it there would be no point as setting it as an objective to set ourselves up for failure.’ (WVUKSP1)

While not specifically related to F&D, the lesson that pre-existing ‘glocal’ networks can make humanitarian interventions more effective has also been reinforced for WV DRC whose ability to work through local structures has been vital for their COVID-19 response in general:

‘...the locations we cannot access directly we work through local structures. For example, it is possible their locations we cannot access during this lockdown scenario. But the fact that we work through local structures, we work through community health workers for example, we work through the health system... they are available locally in those locations, so we work through them. For example, the current PPE items with distributing we are providing them through the health structures because we are not involved in those locations, we are not present, so we work through those local structures to strengthen our programming approach’ (WVDRCPS2)

Many of the local faith leaders receiving CoH for COVID-19 training in the DRC had already received training from World Vision offices for other issues such as child protection, GBV or HIV & AIDS. As a result, those local faith leaders were quicker to understand and take on training around COVID-19. Again, this is an example of how pre-existing relationships with local actors not only facilitates contact even in the midst of a crisis, but it also highlights how previous investments in building the capacity of local actors makes future responses by those actors more effective and efficient.

A key informant from WV DRC (WVDRCPSZ1) stressed that mobilising faith leaders as a priority when entering communities and integrating these F&D activities into their work in general, meant that

they already have good relationships with LFAs and LCFs when disasters strike. This helps them mobilise these networks more easily to respond to emerging crises. The same key informant from WV DRC explained how their pre-existing networks with local faith leaders to respond to Ebola, made it easier to re-engage them in response to COVID-19:

‘We already have relationships. If I go to Beni, I was there, we are going to mobilise the faith leaders who we mobilised for Ebola. And so, because they know oh this is ‘WVDRCPZ1’ he is coming, we already have a relationship, it’s World Vision, oh World Vision is already working with us, so the response to come and listen is actually also high’ (WVDRCPZ1).

The sustained presence of World Vision in many of the contexts in which they work, reinforce their ability to build these rich networks of interpersonal relationships with local actors, even if they do require high levels of time investment. As a result, when WV DRC wants to help respond to a crisis, the local community knows them and trusts them. This trust was important in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, when people were scared about attending trainings, particularly in person. When in-person trainings were allowed, a key informant from WV DRC felt that because they had engaged with many of the faith leaders in attendance before, they trusted them to put their safety first (WVDRCPZ1).

The importance of IFIO’s sustained presence for building trusting relationships with local networks for more effective humanitarian interventions was also reiterated by a key informant from Mennonite Central Committee (MCC1):

‘If you’re coming in new to a community you’re going to have to start at local level. People on the ground not going to get beyond it. If you’re not there long enough you’re not going to be able to build relationships.’

The experience of WV DRC, seeing their previous efforts to build the capacity of LFAs and LCFs to respond to challenges bear fruit during the COVID-19 pandemic, is a sentiment reflected by other staff from IFIOs. For example, a key informant from Tearfund, speaking about their church-community processes, suggested that churches that have been through their trainings before had been;

‘...a lot more open and ready to respond to Communities and to start thinking about... mobilizing local resources, so rather than saying we’re desperately waiting for the help to come from Europe or America or wherever they start to respond with what they do have...’ (TF1)

A key informant from Harper Hill Global (HHG1) spoke about how they had existing networks in the DRC, Nigeria, Uganda and South Sudan. So, when COVID-19 came along, they were able to simply reach out to their existing colleagues to share accurate information about the virus and messages of hope. Similarly, a key informant from CCIH also highlighted the importance of these pre-existing networks of trained LFAs and LCFs in responding to COVID-19 and other crises:

‘So when a crisis like this comes up... you already have the network, already have faith leaders who are used to talking about health issues and also understand evidence-based information and where it comes from, so they’re not sharing rumours and misinformation. And you don’t want to be finding your partners in a crisis, you want to already have your partnerships set up, if possible, you know who those partners could be, obviously its best to have already established a relationship.’ (CCIH1)

Another key informant from Mennonite Central Committee (MCC1) made a similar point that

‘[i]n comparison to other agencies this is a time when the small-scale localised approach really bears a lot of fruit... All our projects are done with local partners and staff from

the community in which the project is so most of our work is able to continue with modifications...’

Conversations with key informants from a range of IFIOs highlighted that these pre-existing local-international networks appeared to be leveraged, and productive, particularly often in fragile contexts like the DRC:

‘...in fragile contexts such as the eastern part of DRC, when you might have to leave your location any time, whether you were in the middle of a response, like the Ebola response. So, relying on the communities is definitely critical. I can tell you why. One of the things, and not only communities but community leaders. Because when humanitarians cannot access the location, community leaders still do. And again, when we are relocated, when we are evacuated, when we cannot go somewhere, they can still go to the place. And that is one aspect.’ (WVDRCJF1)

Fragile contexts present some distinctive challenges for IFIO’s engagement with local communities. Even though an IFIO like World Vision may be in an area for many years, because the context is always changing and people are on the move, it can make building these networks at the local level quite difficult. One key informant from WV DRC (WVDRCJF1) however, suggested that building relationships with local faith leaders as points of entry to the wider, often changing, community is one of the most effective ways of building these relationships in fragile contexts.

Shifting the decision-making power through two-way channels of communication

At times, the narratives of IFIO staff presented their existing relationships with local actors and communities as instrumental; local actors and communities were seen as implementers of pre-conceived humanitarian programs. However, if they are pre-conceived programs, with little or no input from local actors themselves, is this truly localisation? Is the direct implementation approach,

through local partnerships, of Islamic Relief Worldwide helping to shift the power to local actors? For a number of key informants from IFIOs, they sought to address this tension by emphasising these relationships as not only points of access for IFIOs, but as a two-way channel of communication.

The important role that feedback mechanisms between local and international FIOs play in more localised approaches to humanitarian interventions was emphasised by key informants. This was not presented as a one-way street, with LFAs feeding back on pre-conceived programs delivered by international agents. Instead, IFIOs referred to feedback mechanisms being used as a way to ensure IFIOs were accountable to beneficiaries who had ways to inform development and humanitarian decision-making. World Vision's CoH methodology inherently contains feedback mechanisms for a two-way channel of communication between World Vision as the international partner, and local communities. A key informant from WV DRC (WVDRCP2) outlined that once faith leaders have set up their CHATs, faith leaders and CHATs identify challenges in their communities and come up with action plans on how to address it. They then get in contact with World Vision, through their trained facilitator contact, if they need support such as technical expertise or resources. In many ways, this approach is attempting to embody the 'as local as possible, as international as necessary' mandate from the WHS and the NWOW (2017). It recognises the respective capacities of both local and international actors and seeks to build on and leverage them for more effective humanitarian responses.

A key informant from WV DRC outlined their other feedback mechanisms which contributes to this localised approach, and why they're important to for their work:

'So, we make sure that we have feedback mechanisms at different levels, at the community level, making sure that they understand from the very inception of our projects that they get involved and are able to provide feedback in terms of operational feedback or programmatic feedback, through the use of selection boxes or the use of

entry points, we have entry points, where they can send messages and also through the hotline. So, these are all different modalities, mechanisms, we have put in place for the community to be able to report operational challenges around our operations. So, accountability to affected persons is highly considered in not only our approaches but programming. So, there's a very strong decision in terms of how our projects are working at their level and take ownership of it.' (WVDRCP2)

This was also an important part of WV Indonesia's work. A key informant from WV Indonesia (WVInAG1) detailed how they ask beneficiaries for their input, to give them suggestions on how to solve challenges in the community. They discuss problems together to find solutions.

These feedback and communication loops, in conjunction their pre-existing networks of LFAs and LCFs in the form of faith leaders and CHATs, helped WV DRC develop and roll out their CoH for COVID-19 model. Their efforts to build the capacity of LFAs and LCFs helped them respond more quickly, and more appropriately to the virus and its secondary impacts:

'...when the first model of the CoH covid-19 was developed it was 2, 3 days before the training for trainers we'd organised for faith leaders on Ebola. Which means when we launched that training the model, we really rely on the faith leaders' feedback, and it has, their feedback really helped in the adapting, readjusting, the first model, to come with the second version. And then because we really rely on their understanding, at some point they have contributed so much in having a better and well developed document, which is not... perfect, but it's on its way...'

This two-way communication between World Vision and local communities, often through their local faith networks, facilitated several strengths for WV DRC's COVID-19 response. WV DRC's 'strong engagement with community programming and... existing relationships and linkages with faith leaders at the community level' (WVDRCP2) helped them;

'mobilize the community to understand to create a preparedness plan to understand the response to address the secondary effects of covid-19 especially on children. so we've been able to work with different committees at the prevention level with different stakeholders as well as the faith leaders and the chat groups to be able to understand that yes committees preparedness about the secondary effects as on children' (WVDRCP2).

It also allowed WV DRC, despite the restrictions, to conduct a barrier analysis. This was an extremely important tool during the Ebola crisis, where a barrier analysis concluded that burial rituals were having an effect on the transmission of the disease. This meant they could work with faith leaders to adapt these rituals so they could be carried out in a safe way. As a result, WV DRC were keen to conduct barrier analyses during the COVID-19 pandemic to understand what barriers they needed to redress to respond to COVID-19. Existing relationships with local communities and their emphasis on channels of communication allowed them to carry out these activities despite the restrictions.

Not all IFIOs have pre-existing 'glocal' networks (of faith) in all contexts. However, for those that have invested in building the capacity of LFAs and LCFs to respond to crises, and invested in relationships of trust and communication, these investments bore fruit in their COVID-19 responses. It meant that local actors were equipped to respond to the crisis, despite limited in-person international support. They were also more willing, and had the channels of communication, to re-engage with IFIOs with whom they had these pre-existing relationships to ask for support. Not only do these pre-existing 'glocal' networks (of faith) help IFIOs continue their responses even in the midst of a crisis, but they also facilitate more locally-led humanitarian action, ceding power to trusted local actors to some extent, even if it remains limited.

Distinctive value-add of working with LFAs and LCFs

For many IFIO's, their pre-existing local-international networks were a strength of their COVID-19 response. For many IFIOs, albeit to varying extents, these networks included, or were predominantly, faith-inspired. Discussions with key informants from a range of IFIOs also unearthed the distinctive value-add of the faith-inspired nature of these networks. Key informants expressed how pre-existing faith networks have the potential to increase the depth and the scope of their humanitarian responses. These sources of distinctive value-add for humanitarian responses contribute to the argument for a diverse categorisation of the 'local', including a broad definition of LFAs. It highlights several reasons for why local actors in general, and LFAs in particular, should play a significant role in humanitarian responses that are 'as local as possible, as international as necessary' (Ban Ki-Moon, 2016).

Depth of response

The previous chapter explored the authority and legitimacy of local faith leaders, and the opportunities and challenges they present for responses to crises like COVID-19. In many cases, this authority and legitimacy comes from the trust the faithful have in their faith leaders. The trust imbued in faith leaders was highlighted as one of the main value-add of partnering with LFAs in general, and particularly for responses to crises like COVID-19:

'...faith leaders are trusted in their communities, you know we see that everywhere, we see that as being more profound in global south countries... where people turn to their faith leaders for all kinds of advice and personal issues including health. So having faith leaders informed with correct information is crucial. Having them trained to address health issues is important, because you don't know when a crisis is going to come.'

(CCIH1)

Trust and authority are linked but distinct concepts. While trust may imbue figures with authority, not all authorities are trusted. Many local faith leaders are both trusted and viewed as a source of authority in local communities. They are therefore highly influential actors in many local communities.

Faith leaders are often presented as important points of entry to local communities, and therefore they are vital for reaching as many people as possible. As one key informant from WV DRC (WVDRCJ7) pointed out, in a country where around ninety-five percent of the population is Christian, if you want to reach a large number of people in the country it is vital to work with faith leaders. The importance of reaching as many people as possible and not to leave anyone out was driven home to many working in the humanitarian sphere during the Ebola crisis. Therefore, WV DRC engage predominantly with faith leaders, who are their points of access to communities of faith. They do engage with LCFs, however their initial, and official engagement through the signings of Memorandum of Understandings (MOUs), is with local faith leaders.

A great deal of IFIO's engagement with faith, religion and spirituality at the local level has been through working with local faith leaders. Faith leaders according to IFIOs are trusted, and have access to high levels of social, spiritual and religious capital. Local faith leaders and their position within local faith networks play an important role in public health messaging and behavior change during crises like COVID-19.

However, in recent years, criticisms have emerged of such a narrow focus on local faith leaders, who can disempower local actors in favour of dominant voices within the religious institution or organisation, providing a platform for faith leaders to represent and further promote their essentialist views about women and other marginalised people (Bradley, 2011:26-28). The risk of marginalising and essentialising women and marginalised groups was brought into sharp focus during the COVID-19 pandemic as the risks of domestic abuse and gender-based violence is

heightened, and the impact of the pandemic is felt most keenly by the most vulnerable people in societies all around the world.

World Vision, and many IFIOs staff members are aware of the challenges of working with local faith leaders. World Vision does work to mitigate some of these risks through the CoH Methodology. One of World Vision's CoH modules is dedicated to tackling gender issues for example. CoH for Gender works with and through religious texts to tackle problematic beliefs, attitudes and practices towards women. These efforts seek to tackle some of the root causes of gender discrimination and for faith leaders to be agents of change in their community; leveraging their trust and authority to promote women and girls' empowerment. Islamic Relief Worldwide also have a similar methodology being implemented in Tunisia and Lebanon '...around supporting faith leaders to tackle kinds of xenophobia and inclusion towards refugees and migrants and that's including COVID-19 education' (IRW3).

The challenges presented by engaging predominantly with local faith leaders is recognised across the World Vision partnership. This is evidenced by a comment made by a key informant from World Vision UK, who stressed the importance of acknowledging that faith partnerships with local faith leaders and their networks is not a;

'silver bullet and the answer to everything. Because we're also aware of the challenges of working with faith groups, and the fact that they, as with any other network or partnership, no one is completely without bias, and you have to fully understand the dynamics in every country to know how every partnership's perceived, and you know even those partnerships may have issues with exclusiveness or reach to certain parts of the community' (WVUKSP1).

Not everyone in every community 'views faith leaders and faith groups and faith networks in the same way' (WVUKSP1). As a result, World Vision often works 'through multiple channels and

multiple partnerships', sometimes faith-based, sometimes not, to reach everyone (WVUKSP1). Key informants from WV DRC highlighted some of the different channels through which they work. While the data collection period for this project was too early in the COVID-19 pandemic to know whether this multi-channel approach made humanitarian interventions more effective, there is evidence that it has been effective for the World Vision partnership before:

'...I did a case study, and this is pre-COVID, on South Sudan and our Channels of Hope work we did there and that was actually, obviously worked through faith leaders, but it also engaged women's groups and youth groups as well. Because especially for young, youth, they by far looked up to local sports stars far more than they did local faith leaders. So, it would often be looking at what are the relevant entry points for communities. And that's why I think we often say at World Vision we have to do very good a doing context analysis before you know we do all of these, to try and understand the landscape which includes faith, before we decide who we partner with. Its really from a DO NO HARM perspective... about making sure that we understand if there are any tensions or perceptions that we don't want to make anything worse. So, we do have to be quite careful, as well especially in contexts where religion can be quite a highly charged thing. And therefore, it can have the potential for great good, but we just have to be sensitive and careful at the same time' (WVUKSP1).

Scope of response - beyond local formal faith leaders

To address the potential harm that partnering with local faith leaders can cause, while still mobilising the distinctive resources of LCFs, it is vital to engage with LFAs including and beyond local faith leaders. Key informants at World Vision SOs suggested that World Vision do partner with a broad range of LFAs. While this may to some extent be true, key informants at the national level in DRC

explained that they work predominantly through local faith leaders, although they engage with LCFs as beneficiaries and through CHATs.

Numerous key informants from a range of IFIOs challenged the narrowness of the focus that humanitarian actors, both faith-inspired and 'secular', have on local faith leaders at the expense of other relevant LFAs. One key informant from Harper Hill Global (HHG1) spoke about how the COVID-19 pandemic has brought a change in their thinking on how best to engage with local faith networks. Harper Hill Global works through 'glocal' faith networks, via digital technology, mainly text messages, to communicate accurate information and messages of hope to people in LMICs. In response to Ebola, Harper Hill Global signed off most of their messages with the signature of a local faith leaders. However, a key informant from the organisation (HHG1) emphasised that they now work predominantly beyond local faith leaders, through the 'human network' of the church. They engage with lay authority and women within the church to reach those that may be overlooked by the formal religious leadership, thus extending local faith/religious/spiritual networks as they become more inclusive:

'... I'm recognising something different this time. I worked with Ebola in 2014, in West Africa, and at that point all of the text messages were signed by the bishop. This time, some of the people are saying, its grassroots, that people are going to listen more. And I actually like that better, because when you work grassroots, then no matter the leadership changes that happen within a church, people still move. And you're familiar with laity, the term laity, like lay authority. So, I really like that so much more.

Particularly with women, they're often the back-bone of the church. I had a group of women sing that to me, on one of my first trips to Africa, to Angola. And they surrounded me, I was getting ready to preach, they surrounded me and put a gown on me, they did the head wrap and then they sang women are the back-bone of the church. So erm, equipping them, training them first, it's giving the oxygen mask to the

religious leaders, they will then be able to breathe out health o their community.’

(HHG1)

The importance of working with, and beyond, faith leaders at the local level for development and humanitarian responses was reinforced by a story relayed by a key informant from DanChurch Aid (DCA2). The key informant spoke of a program they ran in Eastern Uganda, which aimed to stop Female Genital Mutilation (FGM). The program worked with a woman who made her living by performing traditional circumcision of women, or FGM. The program educated her to the potential harm inflicted on girls through this practice and provided access to alternative sources of livelihood. As a result, the woman began to distance herself from the practice of FGM. The beneficiary of this program fed back to Dan Church Aid that to reduce FGM, it is vital to speak to the mothers of the girls, who often acted out of fear that their daughters would be marginalised if they didn't participate in the practice. DanChurch Aid listened to this advice and facilitated a conversation, taking place in an Anglican church, where an un-ordained leader of women's groups spoke to and advised mothers of girls about the dangers of FGM. Through her position within the lay structure of the Anglican Church, she was able to speak to women and their daughters, in an appropriate setting, building on her own experiences. While this is not necessarily a humanitarian response, it highlights the roles that a wide range of actors within LCFs can play in changing hearts, minds and behaviours. Working through faith leaders, but also beyond them through lay structures within communities of faith, behaviour change like that needed in response to COVID-19 can be instigated more widely, increasing the reach of interventions even further.

Too narrow a focus on local faith leaders risks misunderstanding how faith, religion and spirituality is lived and embodied in the lives of the faithful. The definition of religion explored in the literature review of this thesis makes an important distinction between the linked but distinct realms of religion. On the one hand, religion encompasses organised, hierarchical institutions. On the other hand, religion refers to the individual and social levels, as it is lived and embodied by individuals and

communities. There can be a distinction between faith teachings as they are preached by faith leaders, and how they are lived and embodied by faithful adherents. People may live and embody the same teachings and practices in different ways.

Similarly, to focus too narrowly on faith leaders and the official religious activities of faith groups risks overlooking the important role local faith networks have in people's day-to-day lives. The literature and key informants from IFIOs expressed how local faith networks and communities promote a sense of communion, they ensure people do not feel alone and they present a ready-made support network. WV DRC staff for example, highlighted the existing efforts of LFAs and LCFs to provide MHPSS during the COVID-19 pandemic:

'yes, many religious communities during the lockdown they organised small cells during the lockdown and also pastors took time... and keep contact with their fellow members for two reasons the first one they didn't want to lose their Faith members... And the second reason was to still provide spiritual support to fellow members. So, they organise themselves in small groups and the small groups were not meeting in the church but in some places where they have enough space to put them, and they can meet 10 people or up to 20 people in a space and they have time to be together...'
(WVDRCP56).

These quotidian impacts of local faith networks, that operate beyond the official auspices of religious institutions, can contribute to the promotion of community resilience in times of crisis.

Responsive and Sustainable faith-inspired responses

Working with and beyond local faith leaders, to engage with the 'human network' of faith, religious and spiritual groups means that humanitarian responses have access to the broader resources available to LFAs and LCFs. As has been discussed, one of the arguments for localisation more

broadly is that local actors are often first responders to crises. Embedded in local communities they are present before, during and after a crisis. The 'human network' of faith groups is also present before, during and after the appointment and lives of local faith leaders. As one key informant from an international Christian health organisation put it, perhaps even more than local or national NGOs: 'the church has not exit strategy, they're in for the long haul' (CCIH1). As a result, many LFAs and LCFs have the potential to carry out sustainable programs.

Several key informants from IFIOs have highlighted how, during the COVID-19 pandemic, their (often faith-inspired) local networks, and their communication with them, led them to adjust their programming to respond to what communities really need. This was most explicit in IFIO's shifts from dealing with COVID-19 as a health emergency, to considering the secondary impacts of the pandemic, or other challenges that were going unaddressed due to attention being focused on COVID-19. One key informant from World Vision UK (WVUKSP1) suggested that while from a western perspective everything is about COVID-19, in other contexts, there are other challenges for which local actors need help. This key informant felt that local voices grounded World Vision's responses in what communities wanted and needed and that this helped them adjust to the changing nature of the COVID-19 pandemic.

A key informant from the Mennonite Central Committee (MCC1) reiterated this sentiment. They suggested that they were able to be responsive to the needs of the community through their localised approach, working with predominantly faith-inspired partners. They worked with their local faith partners to make sure that their humanitarian responses were appropriate to the context, in recognition that humanitarian interventions '...were a lot more effective ensuring it speaking to local needs and priorities' (MCC1). This key informant was keen to impress the importance of partnering with local actors for more relevant, appropriate and therefore effective humanitarian responses, based on their previous experiences of responding to Ebola, and reinforced by the COVID-19 pandemic:

'What we have seen around the world in prior epidemics like when Ebola was in West Africa and then in the DR Congo. You know in these kind of crises situations, the impulse of the international community is to go to very standardised, very top-down, controlled and sort of coldly scientific programming. This is a crisis, you need to do this, the WHO is going to come out with guidelines, and the problem is it doesn't work. People are very resistant to that top-down, de-cultured, de-contextualised, not built on local priorities or local realities. So, we saw in both Ebola epidemics that treatment centres were being burnt down and attacked. Seeing the same thing with Covid 19 and it shouldn't surprise us' (MCC1).

This key informant from Mennonite Central Committee (MCC1) felt that by delivering programs informed by the lived realities of local faith partners helped them balance responding directly to COVID-19 and to the secondary impacts of the pandemic. Their experiences emphasised the value-add of their local partners for informing more effective humanitarian responses. An example of how meaningful engagement with local actors can make humanitarian responses more effective by ensuring that materials, such as those disseminated to spread accurate information and preventative messaging around COVID-19, were truly contextualised. A key informant from Mennonite Central Committee (MMC2) criticised an unnamed INGO, who tried to localise their COVID-19 materials by translating them into many languages. While this is important, it is translation, not contextualisation. The INGO used the same infographic, based on the lived realities of those living in Europe, where it was first created: 'you know it's in someone's apartments with potted plants and a cat and a sink' (MCC2). However, while that might be relatable in the context in which it was created, it doesn't mean it is accessible in other contexts, in which their day to day lives look very different. In cases where this takes place, the message of the infographic can be lost.

The examples above outline the importance of local actors, who are embedded in and accountable to their communities, informing and driving humanitarian responses. Through these local-international networks, IFIOs are ceding decision-making power to some extent to local actors. While this could go further, it emphasises the importance of re-balancing the power in the humanitarian sphere; casting local actors as the decision-makers, and international actors in a supporting role. This more transformative vision of localisation reinforces the importance of seeing 'People in local languages and seeing faith activists as true partners not as implementers or barriers which is how they are normally seen' (MCC1).

Key informants from a range of IFIOs also reinforced the strength of local actors' proximity to their community, making for more relevant interventions: '...[T]hey are closer to their community. They speak the language, they are trusted and they stay in their communities' (WVDRCJF1). This was highlighted as a strength for IFIO's responses to crises like Ebola and COVID-19:

'...having this in place, the capacity the ability to work with existing partners in the communities, makes it much more easy for like World Vision to respond to COVID-19 or Ebola. Because you have like an interlocuter in the communities to talk with'
(WVDRCJF1)

Reach

The human network of the church, or faith groups more generally also provides value-add to humanitarian interventions through extending their reach:

'... faith-based networks are really the largest representation of human networks in the world. And so, my thesis ... is that basically if we move through faith-based networks we can effect lasting change. Rather than development groups kind of parachuting in, tackling a particular issue and leaving' (HHG1)

WV Indonesia has a long history of collaborating with a range of National Faith-Inspired Organisations (NFIOs) and religious umbrella organisations for responding to humanitarian crises to improve the reach of their interventions. For example, one respondent from WV Indonesia highlighted their collaboration with the Indonesian Community of Churches who had a programme to address COVID-19. They had a website where they share information about the virus and suggest ideas about how churches can respond to COVID-19. WV Indonesia has shared videos, flyers, brochures and communications with them, to share on their platform.

A key informant from the IFIO Tearfund suggested that the reach of these faith-inspired networks is distinctive:

‘...if you're working with a CBO [Civil-Society Based Organisation] it tends to be just in one area. There are some more networks obviously, but pretty much every country go to you will find a fairly widespread of churches which are functioning in places where most people aren't, and agencies struggle to’ (TF1)

This sentiment was reiterated by a key informant from the IFIO Harper Hill Global: ‘..., well if we equip local leaders with the right information, then we've got an automatic network for leaders, that secular organisations don't have’ (HHG1).

In the previous chapter, the importance of the role of technology was identified. While not everyone has access to technology, phones or internet, the reach of these creative methodologies was expanded further when they tapped into faith, religious or spiritual networks, as experienced by Harper Hill Global:

‘...moving through faith-based networks, because, I mean they represent the largest network, human network around the world...So faith-based networks are really the

largest representation of human networks in the world. And so, my thesis for Harper Hill Global, that I started three and a half years ago almost, erm is that basically if we move through faith-based networks, we can effect lasting change. Rather than development groups kind of parachuting in, tackling a particular issue and leaving. That we invest in humanitarian indicators and then they are the ones that communicate out to all of the people in their communities' (HHG1)

For a key informant at Episcopal Relief and Development the reach of local faith networks is distinctive. As the development arm of the Anglican church, Episcopal Relief and Development has a global network, leverageable 'for anything really' (ERD1). The key informant detailed how the Anglican Communion, while having global reach, is 'a small enough network within two degrees of separation...' (ERD1). The opportunities of the 'glocal' nature of many faith groups, religions and spiritual traditions are particularly potent in its ability to link LCFs with major IFIOs. IFIOs are often linked to LFAs beyond the realm of funding and programming. They maintain built-in networks of local partnerships based on shared identities, belonging, values, experiences and worship which 'are highly instrumental in bridging cultural gaps that might otherwise be felt' (Ferris, 2011:617. Burchardt, 2012:50).

Overlapping, distinct and complex agendas

While there are numerous reasons for why LFAs and LCFs present distinctive value-add, as well as challenges, for humanitarian responses, it is important, as one key informant pointed out, to approach localisation in terms of ceding power and working with LFAs as overlapping but distinct processes. By shifting power to local actors, they need to have some relevant training and expertise in relation to development and humanitarian work. IFIOs like World Vision address this by training and building the capacity of LFAs and LCFs through, for example, their CoH methodology. However, while not all LFAs bring technical development and humanitarian experience to the table, they may

present other strengths for humanitarian responses that other humanitarian actors – local or not – do not. This is perhaps most relevantly demonstrated by IFIOs work with LFAs and LCFs to provide spiritual support during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Despite the unavoidable impact LFAs and LCFs have on humanitarian processes, the NWOW in its advocacy of localisation, does not engage with local religious, faith-inspired or spiritual voices. Perhaps it implicitly includes LFAs in the term ‘civil society’, whom it explicitly mentions as a key resource for localising humanitarian aid. A key informant from Islamic Relief Worldwide outlined that they are trying to build up their work through civil-society organisations. While they are not inherently faith-inspired, in many of the contexts they work in they are. Of course, in many places in the world, the boundaries between civil society and faith communities are not so clear cut:

‘The Muslim world, its not a secular world. So local community-based organisations tend to be based around faith values and practices, even though they may not say it, you scratch the surface you find they are’ (IRW2)

Nevertheless, the conflation of LFAs and LCFs with civil society more broadly based on the humanitarian sphere’s commitment to functional secularism (Ager and Ager, 2011), risks overlooking what make the variety of LFAs and their wider networks distinctive for responding to humanitarian crises.

Evidently, many IFIOs see some value-add in supporting LFAs and LCFs to respond to COVID-19. However, not all IFIO staff see LFAs and LCFs as providing more value-add than local ‘secular’ actors. For example, a key informant from Islamic Relief Worldwide (IRWSM1) suggested that they weren’t sure whether there was much of a substantive difference between faith-inspired and secular groups at the local level. They work with both, depending on their suitability in each context, but they don’t systematically engage more with faith-inspired or secular organisations based on inherent value-

add. For them, the context was extremely important for whether they would engage with faith-inspired or secular organisations.

For other IFIOs like WV Indonesia, while LFAs and LCFs may not be better or worse than secular organisations they are different, presenting distinctive opportunities and challenges. LFAs and local 'secular' actors require different approaches and can operate in different spheres of activity.

According to one key informant from WV Indonesia,

'...the issue is no difference, but the approach is quite different. When we talk with the local community we are talking about a programme, a project what we want to achieve, its kind of more technical we do with them. But with faith leaders we are talking about the essential questions.... They are more like in India we say Guru giving advice, like they are not talking about you should do this and this and this, so they are more on giving advice, giving encouragement, help people to understand the situation rather than talking about this is the project... so this is kind of the approach quite different between working with the local communities and working with faith leaders'

(WVInRH3)

The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted just how far the sphere of Religion and Humanitarianism has come in the last decade, in large part due to lessons learnt from the Ebola crisis that is still ongoing in parts of West Africa, including the DRC. It is more widely recognised that LFAs, LCFs and networks of faith are highly relevant for humanitarian processes. In the case of COVID-19, the pandemic has reinforced the important role that local faith leaders and their local faith networks, play in public health messaging as part of humanitarian preventative measures. However, there are still some obstacles to overcome in how many IFIOs, and the broader humanitarian sphere, engage with faith networks at the local level. Currently, even the engagement of IFIOs like World Vision, let alone the

formal humanitarian sphere more generally, remains narrow. Predominantly, IFIOs and INGOs engage with faith, religion and spirituality at the local level through local faith leaders.

There are distinctive value-add for engaging with LFAs and LCFs that may be more powerful, or that are different from engaging with other secular actors. In either case, they require a different way of working to include them in humanitarian processes. However, engaging with LFAs and LCFs needs to be in a wider context of localisation, engaging with a wide range of local actors. This includes working beyond local faith leaders, to bring LFAs and their wider faith networks into the humanitarian processes. This not only helps leverage the reach of faith networks, but it also helps to mitigate some of the challenges posed by local faith leaders' engagement in humanitarian processes. Broader engagement with LFAs and LCFs requires a shift in thinking, both for secular humanitarian actors and IFIOs to ensure more systematic engagement.

Distinctive relationship between IFIOs and LFAs and LCFs

The COVID-19 pandemic has reinforced the relevance of engaging with, and building the capacity of LFAs and LCFs, alongside other local actors, to respond to humanitarian crises. It has also highlighted the importance of the continued role of international actors to support local humanitarian action. There is a growing literature on the role of IFIOs (see OCHA, 2016. Gaillard and Texier, 2010. Ferris, 2011. Jennings et al, 2021) in humanitarian responses, and the roles of LFAs and LCFs (see Fiddian-Qasmiyeh and Ager, 2013. De Wolf and Wilkinson, 2019. Wilkinson et al, 2020). However, there is little available exploring the relationship between IFIOs and LFAs/LCFs and whether there is anything distinctive about this relationship for more effective humanitarian responses. This is a surprising gap given the impetus to find a vision of humanitarianism that is 'as local as possible, as international as necessary' built on the concepts of collective action, complementarity and subsidiarity (Ban Ki-Moon, 2016).

The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted that relationships of trust, often based on a shared understanding of the importance of faith, have helped bring about responses that are ‘as local as possible, as international as necessary’ (Ban Ki-Moon, 2016). Not only do LFAs and LCFs in many LMICs often find it easier to trust an IFIO, as opposed to a secular INGOs, but a shared understanding of the importance of faith means IFIOs are more open to engaging with LFAs and LCFs and more aware of the potential distinctive value-add they present for humanitarian interventions.

For some key informants from IFIOs, they felt that being explicitly faith-inspired created a more trusting relationship with local communities. A key informant from Dan Church Aid (DCA1) explained how important their pre-existing partnerships had been in their COVID-19 response. In particular, they emphasised the atmosphere of trust and confidence that had been built between Dan Church Aid and their local faith-inspired partners. This enabled LFAs and LCFs to identify issues to Dan Church Aid and together they were able to find pragmatic solutions quickly. This sentiment was reiterated by a key informant from Tearfund (TF1), who outlined how their pre-existing relationships of trust with contacts and networks of faith. These networks provided channels through which Tearfund could hear what’s happening, giving them a channel through which to respond and share information. They were able to share best practices from faith communities around the globe during the COVID-19 pandemic through these channels of communication.

Key informants from IFIOs were keen to emphasise that their relationships of trust LCFs were not just based on faith but built through the sustained presence of the IFIO. A key informant working at CRS’s Uganda office suggested that because ‘CRS has been working in Uganda for over 50 years’ they ‘have a good amount of trust and credibility built up’ (CRSHD1). Proximity to the LFAs and LCFs was important for a key informant at DanChurch Aid too, who suggested that while these close relationships were an asset to their COVID-19 response, if there is ‘...a very big distance from local settings to international headquarters then you have other challenges’ (DCA1). This reinforces the importance of a decentralised structure as part of a comprehensive vision of local humanitarian

action, recognising the complementary roles played by a variety of actors at different levels. Ultimately, these trusting relationships between IFIOs and LFAs/LCFs over time helped facilitate efficient, complementary F&D responses to COVID-19.

The trust many key informants from IFIOs felt from LFAs and LCFs during the COVID-19 pandemic is perhaps even more significant in a context where many local actors in LMICs lack trust towards international actors. A key informant from the IFIO Mennonite Central Committee felt that the Ebola crisis, followed by COVID-19, made many local actors and communities question the motives of international humanitarian and development actors, leading to a lack of trust:

‘One of the just startling realities of the Ebola response in the DR Congo, so the DR Congo is a context where on average in the Congo about 30 dollars per person is being spent on health care. Yet, Ebola comes along and scares wealthy people and all of a sudden we’re spending per Ebola patient \$150,000 per person. Imagine what that looks like to someone who lost their uncle last year to cholera and no one cared. And now with Ebola there are resources beyond imagination being deployed... why do you care all of sudden? Why is this now the issue? Is this really what’s going on? Do you really care about my health? You didn’t care when I was going to die from something. We have these ramp-ups and the same thing’s happening with COVID-19. We need deep relationships with folks on the ground. They say I don’t understand we can’t go to the market – there are put-up clinics with all these resources – but it’s disconnected- I can’t feed my kids. Who are they protecting?’ (MCC1).

Of course, this mistrust may be levelled against both IFIOs and INGOs and there is undoubtedly an element of confirmation bias in the responses from IFIO staff. Certainly, a more focused and large-scale study would need to be conducted to compare the amount of trust imbued by local communities in IFIOs and INGOs comparatively. However, it is significant that in discussions with key

informants from IFIOs, many identified their strong, pre-existing, trusting relationships with LFAs and LCFs as strength of their COVID-19 responses.

According to discussions with key informants working at IFIOs, trust between IFIOs and LFAs/LCFs is built based on a constellation of identity factors. This research, which encompasses the experiences of key informants from a range of IFIOs, reinforces the findings of Jennings et al (2021) in relation to World Vision in particular. Conversations with a range of key informants from different IFIOs during the COVID-19 pandemic reiterates the fact that the faith identity of IFIOs can create points of connection between the IFIO and LFAs and LCFs, encouraging community participation. This research also reinforces the argument made by Jennings et al (2021) that the faith identity of many IFIOs impact their ability to engage with LFAs and LCFs both in response to how the IFIO defines itself but also how it is perceived by others. Depending on the context the faith identity of IFIOs create distinctive opportunities and challenges for engaging with local communities in general and LFAs/LCFs in particular.

One of the most distinctive identity markers which impacts the ability of an IFIO to engage with local communities is a shared faith, religious and/or spiritual identity. A key informant working for CRS in Uganda outlined how their Catholic identity helped them build relationships of trust with local communities in Uganda:

'I know in Uganda in particular... it's a Christian country. I think technically speaking, I'm not sure if it's in their constitution that they're a Christian country but it's a very religious country. 70 percent of people are Christian. And it's a country where the presence of religion is very heavy, very strong in people's lives. So certainly, being a faith-based organization, and the Catholic church is very strong here, so being a Catholic organisation we have a lot of opportunities to work with local Partners and our local

partners have a lot of trust from the Communities they work in...so I would say that yes, our faith dimension is a huge positive.’ (CRSHD1)

The significance of World Vision’s Christian identity was also highlighted as a particular strength by key informants working for WV DRC:

‘The majority in DRC are Christians. And so, when they identify with World Vision’s the faith principles and the core values and the mission statement and the other beliefs, they are more at ease. And they can fully express their Christian faith. Because whatever they would say that is of the Christian faith, they know they are safe to say it because they are amongst Christians. So, faith identity as World Vision has a huge impact’ (WVDRCPSZ1)

A shared faith, religious and/or spiritual identity between local communities and international humanitarian actors impacts the choices people make about their health care. This has been seen during previous epidemics and is of course significant during the COVID-19 pandemic. A key informant from CRS gave a pertinent example of how a shared faith identity can lead local actors to access certain health facilities:

‘I can give you an example from the work we did 10 years ago. We had, we were responding to the AIDS epidemic in Nigeria. And we were in a project that was supporting hospitals; so many of them Catholic hospitals, so many of them are secular hospitals, so many were Christian, non-catholic hospitals and so many of them were Muslim hospitals. And what we found was the services were available to everyone. But often the participants would feel more comfortable going to the hospital that was run by the faith, that is managed by their own faith’ (CRS2).

While a shared faith, religious and/or spiritual identity can help build trust between IFIOs and LFAs and LCFs, discussions with key informants highlighted that a shared understanding of the importance of faith, religion and spirituality can also help build trust. Trust building based on faith, religion and spirituality does not necessarily have to be built on a shared faith, religion or spirituality. Several key informants felt that being faith-inspired, and therefore demonstrating their understanding of the importance of faith, religion and spirituality, helped build trust with LFAs and LCFs of different faiths too. This was certainly the case for a key informant from CRS:

‘...even in places that are not Christian who know we are Christians very often they understand the motivation because they themselves say ‘oh yes, we know, we are religious people to we also do that work out of a call we feel.’ So, I think that it is a feature that enables us to be more effective’ (CRS2)

A key informant from WV Indonesia saw themselves as ‘having the same DNA’ as faith communities of the same and different faith basis with the same vision (WVInAD4). Discussions with key informants from WV DRC reflected these sentiments. A key informant from WV DRC (WVDRCPSZ1) also suggested that the faith identity of World Vision also helped them engage with communities of other faiths. In the context of the DRC the country is majority Christian, however there is a small but significant Muslim community:

‘Now you may also be interested to know that Muslims are very keen for identifying through Christianity. So, when they see you living according to the Bible, they like it. And they accept. They feel safe. I mean in the places I’ve worked with Muslims, they feel safe because you are practicing Christianity. So, because of that, when they see that you can embrace other faiths, especially in you can also embrace the Muslims, give them a platform for example, give them time to pray in the group, you give them time

to share the Qur'an in the workshop, they accept it. And they understand oh, we are just people and we can do this thing together' (WVDRPCSZ1)

A key informant from DanChurch Aid (DCA1) felt that IFIOs have a particular advantage in engaging and partnering with LFAs and LCFs from all faith, religious and spiritual backgrounds. The key informant gave a pertinent example of when they worked in Kyrgyzstan in Central Asia setting up the Act Alliance operation. They made it clear to all their partners that while they are an IFIO, they 'wanted to work with all of good will who' they could 'align dreams and visions of the future with (DCA1). They directed this message at the muslim-inspired organisations, as Islam is the majority religion in Kyrgyzstan. Many Islam-inspired local organisations agreed to work with them. The key informant from DanChurch Aid felt that it was easier for them to cooperate with FIOs, even of another faith, than it was for international secular organisations because they shared a subscription to a faith-base. The key informant felt their faith-basis also helped them with work with non-faith inspired civil society organisations in many LMICs because while they may not be explicitly faith-inspired, most of the staff of local and national NGOs will adhere to a faith and/or be religious and/or spiritual.

While there were numerous examples from key informants illustrating the trust built between IFIOs and LFAs and LCFs of the same and different faiths, and the implications of this for effective humanitarian interventions, a key informant from Islamic Relief Worldwide felt that the value add of being faith-inspired depended on the context. In some contexts, they found their name and logo – 'a mosque-like logo' (IRW1) – facilitated access to some areas. For example, in some areas of non-government-controlled Afghanistan, or North-West Syria, where many INGOs cannot work, Islamic Relief Worldwide are able to. The key informant felt that their name and faith-basis allows for access in these contexts. On the other hand, in India for example, the key informant felt that their faith-inspired identity had negatively affected their ability to operate. For many years, the government has not allowed Islamic Relief Worldwide to register as an INGO. They can fund local organisations,

but they won't allow them to set up an office under the name Islamic Relief. The key informant highlighted historical, if not ongoing, attitudes towards Islam-inspired organisations, which may affect their ability to work in certain countries, and with certain communities. A key informant from Islamic Relief Worldwide felt that, in their experience, attitudes towards FIOs have changed. However, in previous decades, Islamophobia and ignorance about the Islamic faith, religion and spirituality meant being faith-inspired was a risk for accessing and building trust with some communities. The key informant reflected that perhaps this history contributed to Islamic Relief Worldwide 'becoming at one stage fairly secular' (IRW1) perhaps feeding into their more ad hoc approach to F&D.

While many key informants highlighted how a shared faith identity, or a shared understanding of faith, helped them build trust with LFAs and LCFs, that's not to say that IFIOs of a different faith basis were not met with suspicion when they entered certain communities. This suspicion may be based on historical precedent as explained by a key informant and Imam from Nigeria, who suggested that;

'...historically one community has felt that when another community, another religious community is coming to your community with welfare, then they're going to do missionary work with your poor. There's also suspicion' (IRWSN1).

This was a challenge expressed by key informants from WV Indonesia (WVInN1, WVInAD1, WVInAD1). As a Christian IFIO working in a Muslim-majority context, they felt they were often met with initial suspicion entering new communities. To rectify this, they work directly with local faith leaders, to explain that they have nothing to do with proselytisation.

In contexts where they are met with suspicion, initially at least, numerous key informants discussed emphasising certain parts of their identity – that of their development or humanitarian mission – and not drawing attention to their faith identity. Again, this narrative is concurrent with that of Jennings et al (2021), reiterating the importance of the development or humanitarian side of IFIOs

identity. For many key informants who participated in this research, the multifaceted nature of an IFIO's identity was a considerable strength. Being able to emphasise different parts of their identity, in different contexts, at different times, helped them navigate any suspicion due to one particular identity marker. If a local community was suspicious of the faith basis of the organisation, emphasising the development or humanitarian identity of the organisation this could help them work in those communities. Similarly, if a local community in a LMIC distrusts international humanitarian actors, and by extension IFIOs, the faith identity of an IFIO may provide a point of connection with that LCF.

A key informant from Mennonite Central Committee (MCC1) suggested that while in some contexts, being faith-inspired can open doors to groups who work in a similar way, providing a natural point of connection, it can create significant challenges if local actors and communities don't want to relate to the organisation. In those contexts, they lean into the Anabaptist faith more than the denomination. They lean heavily on the peace perspective intrinsic to their faith. This helps them make connections with communities from other faiths, overcoming the initial suspicion. The key informant used the example of working in Afghanistan, where they found that talking about peace with Islamic groups meant they could work together, focusing on that more than what elements of their faith traditions they do or don't agree with.

For several key informants, this process of emphasising their development and humanitarian identity was demonstrated in practice through adhering to the humanitarian principles. Most key informants were keen to stress their commitment to the humanitarian principles of neutrality, impartiality and independence. They stressed that being transparent about their faith identity was an important part of their will to work according to the humanitarian principles. Several key informants suggested that living out their commitments to the humanitarian principles through their work helped overcome any initial suspicions and help them engage with local actors and communities across faith boundaries. This was an important way of working for CRS:

‘we’re very transparent about why we do what we do, so people from other countries see that we call ourselves CRS, they understand very well who we are... they see our work, and maybe they test it to make sure we do reach out to everyone. Our responsibility is to reach out to all not just to Catholics. People keep an eye to make sure that’s true and that’s what we want in any case...’ (CRS1)

The commitment of most if not all the staff from IFIOs who engaged with this research to the humanitarian principles is an interesting counterpoint to criticisms often levelled against working with faith-inspired actors.

While demonstrably living out their commitments to the humanitarian principles may help some IFIOs engage with local communities in some contexts, a key informant living and working in Nigeria and associated with Islamic Relief Worldwide, cautioned against appearing to work only with ‘neutral’ actors. They suggested that to work like this could undermine the distinctive nature of the relationships between IFIOs and LFAs/LCFs. They suggested that, in many LMICs, if a donor appears to only work with neutral, non-faith-inspired organisations, that creates an obstacle to community engagement.

The balance between adhering to the humanitarian principles and leveraging faith identities to build trust with LFAs and LCFs is obviously a sensitive one for IFIOs. However, for many key informants working for IFIOs, they feel they strike this balance consistently through their F&D work. One way that they do this is through an expectation that their local faith partners also adhere to the humanitarian principles. For example, a key informant from Mennonite Central Committee (MCC1) stated most of their partners are faith-inspired, and that they would have the same expectation of them as any partner, to work in a non-discriminatory way, serving those most at need. For many IFIOs, they do not perceive the same tensions then, between LFAs and the humanitarian principles. However once again, this approach highlights tensions in IFIOs adherence to the humanitarian

principles, and investments in F&D, especially working with LFAs and LCFs. This approach raises concerns around the professionalisation of local actors, including LFAs, which risks them losing what brings distinctive value add to humanitarian responses.

While there are tensions around IFIOs engagements with LFAs and LCFs, a distinctive value-add of this relationship is the openness of IFIOs to engage with faith, religion and spirituality in their humanitarian responses. Not only are they seemingly more open to engage with LFAs and LCFs for 'secular' humanitarian programs, but they are more open to engaging with LFAs and LCFs along faith lines. An interesting point that came out of discussions with key informants, especially from WV DRC, was that their F&D activities themselves also helped build trust with LFAs and LCFs. From the perspective of one key informant from WV DRC, initial contact with many faith leaders was as community leaders. They were not mobilised along the lines of their faith, but as trusted, authoritative, connected member of the community. This mode of engagement with faith leaders was often for non-faith-inspired development and humanitarian activities such as WASH. However, over the years WV DRC have found that;

'...it is of more interest to [faith leaders] when world vision comes to them and says, we only want faith leaders because we are going to discuss faith issues. There is a form of new excitement and also an understanding that World Vision is recognising them as Partners and not just community members and alongside the rest of the community they are special World Vision is a faith-based organisation and a faith-based organisation is recognising the right way to go. So that excitement but that susceptibility and recognising that you are coming with a program that his face focused so are they more interested because they feel that they are comfort zone so we are getting them in their comfort zone, so their acceptability is quite high. And they are ability to actually work is very much there because we are training them as facilitators and Wild fishing is also sponsoring them to go out and do workshops among their own

people so that partnership, so that is really appreciated. That partnership is appreciated' (WVDRCP4)

This citation from a key informant working with WV DRC highlights the importance of working with LFAs and LCFs for faith-inspired, religious and spiritual humanitarian programs in particular. This helps build trust between IFIOs and LFAs/LCFs, helping LFAs feel more comfortable. This key informant also suggests that the rate of engagement, and the likelihood of their F&D investments being sustainable, is higher when an IFIO works with LFAs for activities that are themselves faith-inspired. This is a source of trust that IFIOs and INGOs who do not invest as significantly in F&D are potentially missing out on.

IFIOs, as opposed to INGOs of a secular background, may be best placed to engage with these F&D activities that mobilise LFAs and LCFs along the lines of their faith. While all INGOs, faith-inspired and not, have the capacity to engage with LFAs and LCFs, the faith-identity of many, although not all, IFIOs meant that they had the organisational infrastructure and knowledge to engage with issues around faith, religion and spirituality. A key informant from WV Indonesia suggested that an IFIO like World Vision has a F&D unit devoted to engaging with LFAs and LCFs. It is therefore easier for them to leverage partnerships with LFAs and LCFs along faith lines. They suggested that they were therefore better equipped and more used to engaging with LFAs and LCFs than secular organisation, few of whom if any have a specific unit dedicated to F&D.

Evidence suggests that all international actors feel able to work with LFAs and LCFs (Clarke and Parris, 2019). However, many key informants working for IFIOs felt that their faith-basis made them particularly open and well-equipped to engage with LFAs and LCFs. The significant investments of many IFIOs in F&D, and the systematic approach several IFIOs such as World Vision take to integrating F&D into humanitarian responses highlight a difference between IFIOs and INGOs. A key informant from WV Indonesia felt that as an IFIO, one of their foci was on F&D. For example, they

have specific targets related to engaging with faith leaders (WVInAD2). However, for many secular actors, they focus on the government and the community at the local, village or district levels. Engaging with local 'secular' actors in a crisis creates some potential obstacles for secular organisation according to this key informant. The bureaucracy of working with formal government and community leaders can slow down responses during a crisis. Many LFAs on the other hand, see their purpose as serving people, they are motivated to help, with or without a salary. In turn this reduces the bureaucracy and cost.

This is not to say that secular organisations cannot work with LFAs as well as other local actors. However, the increased willingness of IFIOs to work with LFAs and LCFs along faith lines, and the reticence of INGOs to do so, suggests that, while all international humanitarian actors should be faith literate, perhaps there is complementarity between IFIOs and INGOs in terms of building the capacity of local actors. This is already recognised in the humanitarian sphere and has been leveraged in response to COVID-19. For example, a key informant from WV DRC (WVDRCP3) detailed their work in conjunction with Save the Children, funded by Unilever. While Save the Children focused on the health-based perspective; strengthening the health system and working with health workers, doctors and nurses, WV DRC engaged and worked with faith leaders and community health volunteers at the community level. This relationship between IFIOs recognises the potentially distinct nature of the relationship of World Vision as an IFIO with LFAs and LCFs.

Several key informants felt that IFIOs were better placed to engage with LFAs and LCFs to leverage the opportunities, and mitigate the challenges, they present for effective humanitarian interventions. A key informant from Episcopal Relief and Development explained what makes IFIOs particularly adept at working with LFAs and LCFs particularly eloquently:

'So, to me...our social network... are sort of gossamer threads of a web that connects us.

And often the way I describe it is, with funders and others, is that we at Episcopal Relief

and Development know how to, okay so take the web and let's call it a harpsichord, we know how to plug the strings to reach that space. And its not everyone, it's a knowledge base, you don't just 'do' that' (ERD1).

For this key informant, secular international actors frequently misunderstand how faith groups work and what they are doing. They can judge faith actors by their worst representatives, without an understanding of the diverse ways that faith, religion and spirituality are lived and embodied by different actors. While, as discussed, not all IFIOs relate to their faith-identity in the same ways and to the same extent, this key informant from Episcopal Relief and Development felt that their faith-identity made them more open, and better able, to engage with LFAs and LCFs where they are.

The ability to build sustainable trusting relationships with LFAs and LCFs as an international organisation is evidently a sensitive process of balancing, emphasising and de-emphasising a constellation of identity markers. The historical and social context, as well as the faith-identities of the organisations and actors involved all have a role to play in whether, and the extent to which, IFIOs can engage certain LFAs and LCFs. While there are perhaps some additional barriers to working with communities of different faiths for IFIOs, particularly on entry, staff from IFIOs feel that there is also something distinctive about the relationships between IFIOs and LFAs/LCFs. A shared faith, or understanding of the importance of faith, alongside demonstrable non-discriminatory ways of working, help build trust between IFIOs and LFAs and LCFs. On top of this, many IFIOs appear to be more open to engaging with LFAs and LCFs, perhaps based on their understanding of the importance of faith, religion and spirituality in people's lives. This in turn, sees them more likely to invest in F&D, which means that their programming is more in keeping with the realities of LFAs and LCFs. While all international actors have the capacity to work with LFAs and LCFs for humanitarian responses to crises like COVID-19, it appears that INGOs that are not explicitly faith-inspired, do not prioritise the

roles of faith, religion and spirituality, making them less likely to build the trust and networks with LFAs and LCFs as IFIOs. This risks overlooking the capacity and strengths of LFAs and LCFs, while failing to deal with the challenges they present. While more research needs to be done to explore the different relationships between international actors and LFAs and LCFs, this study appears to suggest that there is something distinctive about the relationships between many IFIOs and LFAs/LCFs to build on for future humanitarian responses.

Conclusion

This chapter has highlighted the importance of a vision of humanitarianism that is ‘as local as possible, as international as necessary’ (Bab Ki-Moon, 2016). The constraints imposed on international humanitarian actors by the COVID-19 pandemic saw the burden of response shift to local actors. However, the COVID-19 pandemic has therefore emphasised the importance of meaningful localisation processes, where international actors, including IFIOs, cede power and resources to local and national actors. This chapter has highlighted examples of ‘best practice’ where IFIO’s investments in localisation, building relationships with, and the capacity of, local actors including LFAs have contributed to more effective humanitarian responses. Investing in local-international networks as a priority when entering a community means that these networks, and their respective resources and capacities, are leverageable when a crisis occurs. Similarly, ensuring that these investments in localisation are meaningful, including an element of ceding decision-making power to local actors, has the potential to make humanitarian responses more effective, appropriate, relevant, timely and far-reaching. While the experiences of key informants for this research have reinforced the importance of localisation, including an F&D component, for more effective humanitarian responses, it has also highlighted some of the obstacles and challenges around this engagement, such as the time and resource intensive nature of such initiatives.

This chapter has argued that there are some potentially distinctive resources to be leveraged through faith-inspired 'glocal' networks. The distinctive relationship between some IFIOs and LCFs present opportunities for more effective humanitarian responses. However, to optimise this value-add requires a definition of the 'local', including diverse local actors, and diverse LFAs. Many IFIOs engage predominantly with local faith leaders. However, local faith networks extend beyond local faith leaders and the category of local faith leaders extends beyond formal and ordained faith leaders. Not only can engaging with the wider faith network ensure inclusive humanitarian responses, but it can improve the reach of humanitarian interventions.

Chapter Five: Faith-inspired partnerships and programs in fragile urban contexts

There is a growing consensus that while in previous decades most humanitarian responses were carried out in rural contexts, humanitarians are increasingly responding to crises in urban contexts (Campbell, 2016:7-8). The increasing trend of urbanisation across the world, and specifically in low income and fragile contexts, and the significant challenges this presents for humanitarian responders, has seen urban contexts emerge at the heart of the humanitarian sphere's desire to find a new way of working for more effective humanitarian responses (Earle, 2016:216).

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought attention back to the importance of investing in urban programming as the humanitarian sphere seeks to find a new way of working to make humanitarian interventions more effective. Not only were cities and other urban contexts loci of infection of COVID-19, but inhabitants were often hit hardest by the economic consequences of restrictions of movement and lockdowns. As a result, the literature has suggested that

‘...the recent pandemic offers an unprecedented opportunity to understand how cities might be affected by pandemics and what actions are needed to minimize the impacts and enhance urban pandemic resilience’ (Sharifi and Khavarian-Garmsir, 2020:2).

This chapter recognises the opportunity to learn from the COVID-19 pandemic's disproportionate impact on fragile urban contexts.

This chapter is situated in the humanitarian sphere's desire to find a new way of working for more effective humanitarian responses including in fragile urban contexts. It speaks directly to the third sub-research question of this thesis: What are the distinctive opportunities and challenges of faith-inspired partnerships and programming for IFIO's humanitarian responses to crises like COVID-19 in

fragile *urban* contexts? While the previous chapter took a broad view of IFIO's approaches to working with LFAs and LCFs, this chapter focuses on this specifically in fragile urban contexts.

This chapter argues that fragile urban contexts present distinctive challenges and opportunities for humanitarian responses in general, and faith-inspired partnerships and programming in particular. However, what is perhaps most significant, is that there has been little reflection on what this means for humanitarian (faith-inspired) programming in urban contexts. IFIOs for example, have continued to deliver F&D methodologies in urban contexts, that emerged and have been tested in rural contexts, without reflecting on whether the differences between rural and urban contexts require adaptations to their programs. As a result, there is a need for continued and scaled up investment in urban programming. This needs to include better knowledge production around the differences between rural and urban contexts and their respective faith landscapes and what this means for the way international humanitarian actors work. This is true for humanitarian urban programming in general and for faith-inspired partnerships and programs in particular.

To make this argument, the first section of this chapter explores the distinctive challenges and sources of resilience encountered by IFIOs as they responded, on an unprecedented scale, to the emerging COVID-19 pandemic in urban contexts. It argues, in keeping with WHO's reflections during Urban October 2021, that these opportunities and challenges should inform future humanitarian programming in urban contexts. To facilitate this learning process, and to ensure that people remain at the heart of humanitarian responses, the definition of fragility needs to be expanded to include diverse urban contexts which have been deeply affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. The following section shows that the humanitarian sphere has engaged, albeit to a limited extent, with urban programming prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. It outlines some of the previous investments made by IFIOs in urban programming, which were then built on for responses to COVID-19 in urban contexts. This section argues that the COVID-19 pandemic has exposed these investments as insufficient to respond to humanitarian crises in urban contexts at scale. Overall, this section makes

the case for continued and scaled up investment in urban programming for more effective humanitarian interventions in the future.

Finally, this chapter details how these findings are reflected in the F&D space, to reinforce the case for more investment in knowledge production around urban programming in general, and faith-inspired partnerships and programs in urban contexts in particular. It focuses on a particular difference between urban and rural faith landscapes, identified by numerous key informants: lower levels of social cohesion and trust in urban contexts than in rural areas. This section argues that despite perceived lower levels of social cohesion and trust in urban contexts, which are foundational tenants to many F&D methodologies, IFIOs have largely reproduced their F&D programs rooted in rural contexts in urban settings. This exposes inconsistencies in IFIOs knowledge and actions in regard to F&D programming in urban contexts, exposing a lack of awareness and understanding of the differences between rural and urban contexts and whether such differences require adaptations in F&D methodologies to maintain their effectiveness in urban contexts. This line of analysis is continued in the conclusion of this chapter, which reflects on what the findings mean for the way IFIOs operate and how they present themselves within the humanitarian sphere.

Re-defining fragility to include fragile urban contexts

This section will explore how the COVID-19 pandemic initially hit urban contexts hardest. The unprecedented extent to which the COVID-19 pandemic impacted those living in urban contexts exposed several significant and distinctive challenges, as well as some distinctive sources of resilience, for delivering humanitarian responses in urban settings. This argument was reiterated by the WHO (UN HABITAT, 2021) during Urban October 2021, a month of UN-led initiatives to bring attention to fragile urban contexts. Reflecting on the initial months of the COVID-19 pandemic, the WHO highlighted the fact that COVID-19 had exacerbated social injustices and vulnerabilities already existing in urban contexts, many of which are touched upon in this chapter. However, they also

indicated that urban contexts reacted quickly to the emerging pandemic, finding innovative ways to respond to COVID-19 and its secondary impacts. Based on these reflections, the WHO argues that it is important that the humanitarian sphere learn about the distinctive challenges and sources of resilience inherent in fragile urban settings which have been exposed by the COVID-19 pandemic, to ensure that they inform future humanitarian urban programming for more effective responses (UN HABITAT, 2021).

While this thesis focuses on responses to the COVID-19 pandemic in low-income and fragile contexts, it is worth noting that many of the vulnerabilities explored in this section speak more generally to the inherent vulnerability of many urban contexts around the world. Many of the challenges for responding to COVID-19 in urban contexts were more acute in low-income and fragile countries. However, they were present to varying extents in many urban contexts, including those in high-income countries and states not traditionally perceived as 'developing' or 'fragile'. Similarly, the COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted that in an increasingly interconnected and globalised world, humanitarian crises can affect any context. It is therefore important to re-define or expand definitions of fragility to ensure that all fragile cities and fragile urban contexts are included in fragile contexts programming.

This argument is consistent with that made in the literature review. It moves away from state-centric definitions of fragility, towards a more multifaceted and inclusive understanding of how fragility impacts peoples' lives at all levels. An inclusion of the fragile city, or fragile urban contexts, in humanitarian fragile contexts programming creates the space in which to look beyond traditionally fragile contexts, to the wide range of contexts in which individuals and communities suffer the impact of humanitarian crises and fragility. This is more consistent with the formal humanitarian sphere's desire to put people at the centre of humanitarian interventions, which was a prominent theme at the WHS.

Urban contexts: the epicentres of the COVID-19 pandemic

Numerous key informants from IFIOs working in diverse contexts outlined their experiences of responding to COVID-19 in urban contexts. Many of them identified urban contexts as being hardest hit by the pandemic in its initial months and throughout the data collection period of this project. The OECD also highlighted this trend, detailing how although COVID-19 triggered a global health crisis, its impact has differed significantly depending on the context (OECD, 2021). They also make the point that well-connected urban areas were the first to be exposed to the pandemic and there is evidence that contexts with high number of urban poor, in crowded living conditions, appeared more vulnerable than better resourced and less crowded contexts with less significant inequality such as many cities in LMICs (Lacobucci, 2020:4).

Key informants from WV DRC and WV Indonesia highlighted how COVID-19 started in urban settings, namely in the capital cities of Kinshasa and Jakarta, which remained the epicentres of the virus throughout the duration of the data collection period of this project (WVDRCJ3, WVInAG1). At the height of the COVID-19 pandemic in the DRC, a key informant from WV DRC expressed their concern about the situation in Kinshasa:

‘...I think COVID-19 in an urban context face the most elevated risks as opposed to the rural context because since COVID-19 existed in Kinshasa on the 10th of March in the DRC, Kinshasa is the capital, where they have 5000 cases now as opposed to the Rural provinces that have, some provinces don't have cases to date, and some have very few cases...’ (WVDRCPS4)

This situation, where the COVID-19 pandemic and its secondary impacts were disproportionately impacting urban contexts, was reflected by key informants from across the IFIO landscape, working in disparate contexts:

‘...I think it remains true that in most of the world it is those urban contexts that have been some of the hardest hit. Both from the epidemiological perspective as well as economically with lockdowns...’ (MCC3)

‘...Let’s say ordinarily, in Kenya for example, all our programs were focused on the field areas of Kenya but because of COVID we saw that even in Nairobi there are lots of people who have lost their income and going through economic crises. The same in Bangladesh and Dakar as well...’ (IRWH1)

‘...I mean in the COVID context it's a very strange context because it's impacting urban areas more....’ (IRWSM2)

The scale of the response needed in urban contexts was unprecedented for many IFIOs who are more used to working in rural areas. For example, a key informant from Islamic Relief Worldwide, like many organisations who participated in this research, expressed that they were more used to working in rural or remote areas (IRWSM2). This sentiment was reiterated by a key informant from WV DRC. They explained why, as a humanitarian and development organisation, World Vision was more used to operating in rural contexts:

‘It's just World Vision’s way of doing things. They normally work in rural areas. Most of the projects are in the rural areas because the policy of targeting the vulnerable and the most vulnerable of the vulnerable. So, if everyone’s vulnerable they go to the most vulnerable. So... rural areas are more vulnerable than the urban areas and the concentration of many World Vision projects are in the rural areas. So, this is why most of the work is actually in the rural areas. In the urban areas there's just two projects that target the cities; the child protection project and one COVID project but the rest is for the rural areas,’ (WVDRCPSZ4).

While many key informants working for IFIOs were more used to working in rural areas, servicing the extreme poor, the COVID-19 pandemic necessitated an urban response. A key informant from WVI expressed how a lot of their responses to COVID-19 in cities meant responding in places they had not been active in before (WVIAR2). For WV DRC, their response to COVID-19 in the capital city of Kinshasa was the first time they had ever focused to this extent on urban programming (WVDRCPS2). A key informant from Islamic Relief Worldwide detailed how they were having to move some of their programs to urban areas because of COVID-19 (IRWH1), despite the admission from another key informant from Islamic Relief Worldwide that the organisation doesn't have 'much direct experience of' responding in urban contexts (IRWSM2).

The similarities to the Ebola epidemic, in this case particularly the 2014/15 outbreak in West Africa, are striking. While the Ebola epidemic is considered to have started in 2013 and lasted till 2016, the outbreak focused on by Campbell (2017, 2017i) began in 2014 into 2015, and is considered the largest, most severe and complex Ebola outbreak (World Vision, 2020). Campbell (2017, 2017i) has written extensively on the intersections of the Ebola epidemic and urban dynamics relating to this specific but significant outbreak. The EVD outbreak in 2014/2015 in West Africa was the first time the virus hit cities and urban contexts. 'The unprecedented scale of the outbreak combined with the dynamic urban contexts within the affected region challenged responders considerably' (Campbell, 2017i:4). Before 2014/2015, the 23 outbreaks of Ebola in Africa had predominantly emerged in rural locations (Murray et al, 2015) and the most significant outbreak had been in Gulu, Uganda and had infected 425 people (Stockman, 2014). As a result, the 2014/2015 outbreak of EVD, affecting most significantly Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone, was unprecedented both in terms of severity and numbers of deaths, and the fact that it was, for the first time, hitting urban contexts hardest.

This suggests that when the COVID-19 pandemic hit, many humanitarian responders active in tackling Ebola did have some experience of responding to health crises in urban contexts. At least those who had been active responding to Ebola in 2014/2015 would have had some experiences of

responding to a public health crisis in fragile urban contexts. However, the 2014/2015 EVD outbreak was curtailed to West Africa. The COVID-19 pandemic on the other hand was impacting urban contexts all around the world. So, while the humanitarian sphere had some experience of responding to public health crises in urban contexts, the scale of the COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on urban communities, was still unprecedented. While in contexts like the DRC, state funded health facilities are based in urban areas, often capital cities, the humanitarian sphere's experiences of operating predominantly in rural areas suggests voluntary health services are rural based.

Distinctive challenges and sources of resilience

The shift in focus for many IFIOs from working predominantly in rural contexts to responding in urban settings during the COVID-19 pandemic highlighted several distinctive challenges. The COVID-19 pandemic presented additional and distinctive challenges for local urban communities' ability to respond to COVID-19 which in turn created additional and distinctive challenges for IFIOs and INGOs seeking to support local urban communities to respond effectively to the pandemic. However, the shift from predominantly rural to increased urban programming in response to the COVID-19 pandemic also emphasised several sources of resilience.

Many of the challenges facing IFIOs and local communities during the COVID-19 pandemic already explored in this thesis are relevant to, if not exacerbated in, urban contexts. However, there also exists a great deal of capacity in urban contexts to build upon for more effective humanitarian interventions. The below is not exhaustive of all the challenges and sources of resilience embedded in fragile urban contexts. Nonetheless, they contribute to important learnings for the humanitarian sphere set to respond more frequently in urban contexts, as they strive to find a new way of working for more effective humanitarian action. The below examples emphasise the distinctive challenges presented by urban contexts, more than the sources of resilience. This may reflect the experiences of IFIOs who were, in many ways, unprepared for the scale of response required in urban contexts,

therefore coming up against more challenges that they were able to engage with sources of resilience.

(Mis)information, multiple sources of public authority, technology and innovation

A key informant from WV Indonesia highlighted that information is everywhere in urban contexts (WVInRH1). Such ease of access to information is both a potential source of resilience for responding to a crisis like COVID-19, as well as an obstacle for effective responses in urban contexts. For example, a key informant from WV DRC suggested that the abundance of information in urban areas means that accurate information and preventative messaging can be disseminated efficiently especially through digital mediums like social media and mobile phones (WVDRCPS8). Access to technology in urban settings was identified as a particular advantage of IFIO's responses to COVID-19, allowing them to continue their work remotely and disseminate accurate information through multiple channels such as radio, television, SMS and social media (WVDRCPS2, WVDRCPSZ3). The existence of such infrastructure, albeit often tenuous and weak in low-income and fragile contexts, undoubtedly '...presents an opportunity for effective humanitarian action to contribute to the longer-term development of inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable urban centres' (WHS Urban Expert Group, 2015:1).

The accessibility of technological infrastructure in urban contexts is a source of resilience for urban communities in their ability to respond to crises. It facilitated WV DRC being able to engage in creative ways to respond to COVID-19 in urban contexts through a new Unilever funded project. One of the most innovative aspects of this project was WV DRC's partnership with the company Viamo, a digital organisation and NGO that engage in push messaging, online trainings, mobile surveys and other digital activities. The partnership with Viamo is a global one for World Vision, however WV DRC were able to leverage it at the national level in response to COVID-19. They worked with Viamo to develop a training model to be incorporated into their online training systems and platform. At the

global level, WVI signed a Master Service Agreement (MSA) with Viamo to ensure there was a digital solution to the problems caused by lockdowns and restrictions of movement resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. 'WV DRC and Viamo agreed on the implementation of digital solution in the following areas – mobile survey (baseline and end line), push messaging, and remote training of faith leaders on COH and CHWs based on the MOH curriculum' (World Vision International, 2020:2).

However, while the ease of access to technology in urban contexts can be a source of resilience for responding to a crisis, it can also facilitate the spread of misinformation. The issue of misinformation explored in Chapter Three of this project was highlighted as a particular obstacle for responding to COVID-19 in fragile urban settings. People living in urban settings, with improved technology skills, can be more empowered in their ability to access information (OXGL1). However, this increased access to information can lead to higher levels of misinformation as well as accurate information. It also makes it more difficult to address misinformation because there are so many potential sources.

A key informant from WV Indonesia corroborated these challenges by expressing their concerns about the high levels of misinformation about COVID-19 in Indonesia. They frequently heard rumours that the pandemic was a hoax and fake news (WVInRH2). The same key informant expressed this crisis of misinformation in the country as a kind of conflict that risks destroying the community and therefore potentially undermining humanitarian responses to COVID-19:

'if you're talking about urban contexts, information is everywhere. You can access the right information and wrong information... but it's kind of fighting, bad information is like a fight in society because it can broke social cohesion...' (WVInRH2).

In rural contexts, lower levels of education and less access to information through technology means that people are more reliant on a limited number of sources for their information. While this made it easier for IFIOs and INGOs to identify, trace and mobilise key actors to ensure that accurate information was being spread (WVDRCPS8), it made the dissemination of accurate information much

slower in rural contexts (WVDRCP34) which created space for there to be more 'negative perceptions around COVID-19' (WVDRCP3). There is therefore more pressure on the primary sources of information and news in rural settings to disseminate accurate information. It also imbues those sources of information, including faith leaders, with a great deal of power, with serious sanctions for community members who do not do what they say (MCC2).

Evidently, humanitarian responses aimed at disseminating preventative messaging and accurate information epitomise the fact that urban contexts present distinctive challenges and sources of resilience, even for the same humanitarian response. The above also highlights that some of these opportunities and challenges mark differences between rural and urban contexts which impact the effectiveness of humanitarian responses in those contexts if not accounted for.

Economic and livelihood challenges, population movement and exclusion

Another challenge explored in the third chapter of this thesis was the economic and livelihoods challenges resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. These challenges were perhaps even more significant in fragile urban contexts. While the COVID-19 pandemic undoubtedly impacted rural communities and their agricultural activities, concerns around the secondary impacts of the pandemic were felt most significantly in urban areas during the data collection period for this research. On the one hand, the cases of COVID-19 were lower in rural areas, allowing for less strict regulations in some contexts. Similarly, many families in rural areas could rely on farming to feed themselves:

'...in this urban context, most of this population they are living on the daily wage or they have to go out every day to survive. So, the stay-at-home instruction failed, it really failed to work in Kinshasa and it's the same case in most of the capital cities with the population with limited resources' (WVDRCP1).

‘...the urban plight... you look at people in cramped quarters...they don’t have a plot of land to plant food so they’re totally depending on the marketplace being open, they don’t have money to buy soap, you know, they might not be in the routine of washing their hands’ (HHG3)

However, a key informant from WV Indonesia highlighted how many people living in urban contexts work for daily wages (WVInRH1). This is more common in urban contexts, than it is in rural contexts. The COVID-19 pandemic, with its accompanying lockdowns, meant that people could not go out and work. As a result, they had no money coming in and therefore nothing with which to provide for their basic needs (WVInRH1). This challenge is made more significant in many low income and fragile contexts which do not have the social protection mechanisms provided by many high-income countries (IRWH1).

Even in many contexts where there is some level of social protection, several key informants expressed their concerns about certain groups being excluded from receiving support in urban settings specifically. Identifying those in need is a more difficult task in urban contexts in comparison to rural ones: ‘[v]ulnerability is diffused across a town or city, making it harder to identify those most in need and target interventions....’ (Twigg and Mosel, 2018:8). The challenge of identifying and supporting those in need in fragile urban contexts was eloquently expressed by a key informant from OXFAM who explained that in their experience, there are high numbers of informal workers and ‘invisible’ or excluded groups in urban centres. This means that even if there are social protection mechanisms in a given context, some communities remain unprotected and unsupported:

‘So the big thing I think with urban centres is they are likely areas, there might be some level of Social Protection, but then you have a whole underground population or group that will just not be covered and they would be informal workers, they would be women because women are predominantly informal workers, you have migrants, so

you'd have this whole kind of additional case load of people that were just not showing up in lots of ways in the data. You're quite a lot of organisations like OXFAM try to get this list and we work with authorities and local leaders to put that together so it's also navigating those power dynamics and understanding if the kind of more invisible populations are showing up so they can actually get assistance' (OXGL1).

A couple of key informants (OXGL1, WVIAR2) detailed how they had made urban slums and informal settlements priorities of their COVID-19 response in the name of inclusion. Inclusion is also a focus of World Vision's Citywide Self-Sustaining Model as they seek to identify the most vulnerable children, 'especially the invisible groups living in fragile pockets of the city and those affected by urban crises and disasters,' (World Vision International, 2009:1). This is important during crises like COVID-19 because people living in poor areas of cities, or slums, like those on the outskirts of Kinshasa (WVDRCPS6), tend to move around a lot, risking catching and spreading the virus. The motivations behind such high-level of population movement in urban contexts is complex, but livelihoods are a significant driver. Many people living in urban contexts rely on daily wages and they must go out to work or they don't have an income. Similarly, economic opportunities or the hope of them are a pull factor for migration flows to urban hubs. High levels of population movement within and to urban hubs is then mixed with the fact that these fragile urban contexts are often the areas with the least access to health care, the least hygienic living conditions and a general lack of protection, it makes for a challenging and complex crisis situation.

Campbell (2017i) identifies population movement as one of the key vectors for the spread of EVD in West Africa in 2014/2015. Much of the population movement during the 2014/2015 EVD outbreak in West Africa happened within and between urban hubs. This was, once again, reflected in the COVID-19 pandemic, as the movement of people in and between urban contexts created a significant challenge for humanitarians working to stem the spread the virus. Both the Ebola epidemic, and the COVID-19 pandemic, were spread through human interaction. It was inevitable therefore, that the

high levels of population movement between and within urban contexts would not only contribute to the spread of the viruses but concentrate infections in urban settings (Campbell, 2017:27).

Campbell (2017) highlights that population movement in West Africa during the 2014/2015 EVD outbreak had different scales and explanations. This is true for population movement in other parts of the world and is reflected in the COVID-19 pandemic. Population movement can be the result of conflict and displacement, it might be seasonal according to agricultural patterns and/or due to the day-to-day movement of trade, socialising and for cultural and religious pilgrimages, celebrations and rites (Campbell, 2017:26). As well as being shaped by population movement, epidemics like Ebola, and pandemics like COVID-19, can also shape population movement. Campbell (2017) illustrates how this was seen during the Ebola outbreak in 2014/2015 as people travelled for access to healthcare, to attend burials and ceremonies, to be with family and friends, to die at home and to flee stigma, abuse and quarantine.

The anonymous, diverse, changing and moving populations of fragile urban contexts not only make it hard for IFIOs to identify those in need, leading to exclusion by omission, but such contexts can also create the space for national responses to exclude certain groups. A key informant from DanChurch Aid gave an example from the city of Kampala in Uganda during the COVID-19 pandemic to illustrate this point (DCA2). Country office staff from DanChurch Aid reported that a government funded scheme to distribute supplementary food during the COVID-19 crisis had 'deliberately and intentionally omitted urban refugees in Kampala', reserving the support for Ugandan citizens (DCA2). Evidently, a challenge for communities responding to COVID-19, and IFIOs and INGOs for supporting communities responses, is that in the densely populated, diverse, moving populations of fragile urban contexts, interventions can easily overlook, fail to identify, or exclude groups and individuals in need.

Overcrowding

One of the most significant challenges identified by key informants for responding to COVID-19 in fragile urban contexts was (over)crowding. There is already an awareness within the literature around humanitarian urban programming, that urban settings contain a high density of residents, of buildings and infrastructure, of livelihood options and of stakeholders' (American Red Cross, 2014 cited in Campbell, 2016:14). Such complex systems undoubtedly present an important source of existing capacity for responding to humanitarian crises, 'as one action can have positive impacts on a large number of people in one area' (Campbell, 2016:15). However, such dense populations also mean that humanitarian crises are likely to affect more people, as was seen during the COVID-19 pandemic.

A key informant from WV DRC (WVDRCJ3) highlighted some of the specific challenges of (over)crowding in the capital city of Kinshasa. They highlighted the fact that an old census identified a population of 14 million people in Kinshasa, more likely to be around 18 million today. Such a high-density population makes social distancing difficult. This is compounded by the fact that many people in Kinshasa live in shared accommodation, sometimes 10 to a room. This led another key informant from WV DRC to question the feasibility of lockdowns and restrictions of movement in these contexts: 'In the capital city, how can you ask someone who is sharing a space to stay at home, when the person doesn't even have enough space, they only have enough space to lie down and sleep?' (WVDRCJF1).

These concerns around (over)crowding and the limited possibilities of social distancing, were expressed by most key informants working in fragile urban contexts to respond to COVID-19:

'I mean I think it's almost impossible to respond to COVID-19 in urban context. People here live in very overcrowded urban slums. There's no access or very limited access to water because the crowding social distancing it's impossible. People are very poor, so they don't have access to soap. And I think it's just I think unless we're going to relocate

people, I don't think it's feasible to follow the basic measures that are required to prevent COVID-19. Yeah, it's a really hard context for that' (CRSHD1)

'...the overcrowding is also a big issue. In these urban areas, people are packed in together, in slums. So, it has its own set of distinctive challenges for sure' (IRWH1)

'I think that the challenge of course is that living in an urban context you're just congested and of course we all know the slums and places in the world where people are not only congested but they barely live with walls and that's just a petri dish for infection' (ERD2)

'...in the urban settlements we're working in in Uganda, or Kenya, Ethiopia you know like when the guidance just says keep visible distancing of 2 m between everyone. They have 10 people in a house that's 3 metres by 3 metres' (MCC2)

'I think there were different challenges in terms of in urban areas a lot of the programming that you would typically do you had to really rethink it. And it was just the worry about cases increasing because of lack of social distance saying and ability to sort of manage that' (OXGL1)

'...speaking only anecdotally...but yes anything that's urban slums refugee camps... you can't really do social distancing, how on earth can you do contact tracing everybody's in contact with everybody else?' (WVUKGW1)

The (over)crowding experienced in many densely populated urban settings can itself cause additional challenges for local communities responding to crises like COVID-19. One key informant from WV DRC highlighted how (over)crowding, as well as being a challenge itself, can also create wider protection issues (WVDRCPS6). For example, this key informant explained that due to the (over)crowdedness of densely populated urban areas they were unable to distribute material aid to

local community members in keeping with the social distancing guidelines leading to an emphasis on cash transfer programming. However, in densely populated urban centres, where news travels fast, they need to make sure they integrate a protection lens into their cash transfer programming, to ensure that those who receive cash transfers are not put at risk as they are seen to benefit:

‘because everyone in a slum community is in need of assistance, especially the last 4 to 5 months people don’t have jobs, so there a lot of risks around, risks with people attacking those who benefit’ (WVDRCP6).

Another way that (over)crowding and dense populations can create their own challenges for humanitarian responses in fragile urban contexts is that they help viruses and disease thrive and spread. This was clearly evidenced by the fact that infections in many urban contexts, such as Kinshasa and Jakarta, were much higher than in more rural areas during the data collection period of this project. This puts extra pressure on often already struggling health systems, as detailed by key informants from Islamic Relief Worldwide and WV DRC:

‘The health systems are worse in urban areas often because of the overcrowding, the disease, the bad water, especially, hepatitis in some countries, cholera’ (IRWH1).

‘...people are already very poor, without good hygiene practices. See, you have huge parts of Kinshasa in the Rural context of Kinshasa, where health services are not readily available to people where it’s crowded, there’s no good hygiene practices, no good toilet facilities.’ (WVDRCP6)

Including fragile cities in fragile contexts program approaches

The COVID-19 pandemic shifted humanitarian focus from rural contexts to urban ones, encompassing various distinctive challenges and sources of resilience for effective responses to crises in urban contexts. Not only did the COVID-19 pandemic shift focus to urban contexts in

general, but it also shifted attention to urban contexts in countries that were not traditionally viewed as in need of development or humanitarian interventions. A key informant (IRWSM1) from Islamic Relief Worldwide highlighted how at the start of the pandemic, their earliest responses were in countries like Albania and Bosnia and Kosovo, which were a surprise to the organisation. These contexts were traditionally considered donor countries for Islamic Relief Worldwide; families in these contexts were engaged in sponsorship schemes through the organisation. However, restrictions of movement and lockdowns meant people's incomes were diminished, even in otherwise higher-income countries. Islamic Relief Worldwide delivered food packages and cash transfers to families in those contexts:

'[S]o those kind of countries in eastern Europe and even in some parts of Jordan where we were responding, were not the usual areas we would respond. It was more the cities and in slums and places like that' (IRWSM1)

While few other key informants from IFIOs spoke of providing support for high-income contexts during the COVID-19 pandemic, in the first research chapter of this thesis, several examples are highlighted where key informants expressed concern around the financial impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on donor countries, individuals and sponsors. This suggests that in many countries people were being financially squeezed due to the COVID-19 pandemic and its secondary impacts.

The literature highlights many structural weaknesses that are common to urban contexts, to varying extents, around the world. While they might be more acute in low-income and fragile contexts, they are present in cities in many high-income countries too. Therefore, inhabitants of any city may suffer the consequences of fragility because of a humanitarian crisis. While humanitarian crises are less common in high-income contexts, the COVID-19 pandemic has shown that there are still stressors that might exacerbate structural vulnerabilities in urban contexts situated in high-income countries. This can lead to individuals and communities, especially the most socio-economically disadvantaged in any given context, suffering the impacts of fragility.

It follows, therefore, that definitions of fragility need to include the concept of the fragile city and they need to expand to encompass potentially fragile urban contexts in traditionally non-fragile countries. The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted that in an increasingly interconnected and globalised world that humanitarian crises and their impacts are increasingly likely to be felt in a range of countries and contexts. The ongoing climate crisis explored in some detail in the literature review reiterates this argument. Expanding the definition of fragility in this way will allow humanitarian responses to include fragile cities in a wide range of contexts, wherever people are suffering the effects of fragility. This puts people at the heart of humanitarian responses in keeping with themes at the WHS.

Such a broad definition of fragility, encompassing such a range of contexts in which people may suffer the lived experiences of fragility necessitates a flexible approach to fragile contexts programming. There is already an awareness of the need for such adaptable programming in fragile contexts in the humanitarian sphere. World Vision are working on a Fragile Context's Programme Approach (FCPA)¹ to find ways to work 'in' fragility, to continue its work in responding to the basic needs of people affected by crises through aid delivery and basic service provision, and to work 'on' fragility, to deal with the root causes of crises and the vulnerabilities that perpetuates them. World Vision's understanding of working 'in' and 'on' fragility responds to the calls of the humanitarian arena to bridge humanitarian-development-peacebuilding divides to respond to the varied and changing needs of people living in diverse fragile contexts. Working 'in' and 'on' fragility is indicative of a desire for transformational resilience. While working 'in' fragile contexts requires helping people adapt to their changing circumstances, working 'on' fragility hopes for deeper, transformational changes to some of the poorest contexts in the world.

¹ At the time of writing, World Vision had not published their work on the FCPA but had allowed the researcher to see drafts which are the basis for this analysis

At the heart of World Vision's FCPA is the need for flexible programming so that plans, budgets and activities can respond to the unpredictable and changing circumstances of diverse fragile contexts. World Vision use the metaphor of three dials to highlight the importance of flexibility for dealing with crises in fragile contexts. Each of the three dials; survive, recover and thrive, have a set of programming options associated with it and the dials can be adjusted based on the context which will directly affect programming decisions. The activities associated with the survive dial, when situations are highly volatile, correspond to what is traditionally thought of as humanitarian action, with a focus on saving lives and the provision of basic needs. The recover dial, once the survive dial has been turned down some and things are a bit more stable, is concerned with activities such as rehabilitation, social cohesion, recovery from trauma and re-establishing livelihoods. The thrive dial, as situations continue to become more stable, is concerned with long-term activities more associated with development agendas.

However, even the relatively nuanced approach of the FCPA could go further to ensure that it is able to respond to the distinctive challenges presented by diverse fragile cities. World Vision's approach to fragility focuses on contexts 'where chronic instability, conflict, and violence leave large numbers of children caught in a trap of extreme vulnerability coupled with crippling poverty' (World Vision, 2021ii). While this definition may encompass fragile cities in chronically fragile contexts, it would not take into account the fragility experienced by individuals and communities living in cities in countries that are not traditionally perceived as 'developing' or 'fragile'. This risks overlooking many of the children and families suffering the impacts of fragility in cities and urban contexts all over the world.

Further to go: the limitations of IFIO's investments in urban programming

Many IFIOs engaged with for this research have invested in urban programming to varying extents, prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, in recognition of the fact that humanitarian crises are happening more frequently in urban settings. In response, many IFIOs were able to draw on these investments to respond to some of the distinctive challenges facing fragile urban communities as outlined in the

previous section. However, many of the key informants interviewed for this research felt that the COVID-19 pandemic had also exposed the limitations of their investments in urban responses to humanitarian crises. They emphasised that they were, in general, more used to working in rural contexts than urban contexts and that the scale of response required in urban contexts at the start of the pandemic was difficult to contend with.

In particular, the COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the humanitarian sphere's lack of understanding of urban contexts and illuminated how much more complex the challenges are in urban contexts in comparison to rural ones (see also Twigg and Mosel, 2018:8). They therefore presented the COVID-19 pandemic as a significant learning opportunity for urban programming. To scale up effective urban humanitarian responses, it is vital to understand the distinctive challenges and existing capacity of complex urban systems as explored in the previous sections. This understanding can then inform humanitarian processes - what might work and what won't - in urban contexts. This section therefore explores how the COVID-19 pandemic has reinforced the importance of continuing, if not scaling up, investment, in humanitarian urban programming and in knowledge production.

Prior Investments

A significant strength of many organisation's responses to COVID-19 in urban contexts, is previous investment in urban programming that took place before the pandemic, even to a limited extent (WVIAR2). This includes previous engagement, even on an ad hoc basis, with LFAs and LCFs in urban contexts. In the previous research chapter, several key informants expressed that a significant strength of their COVID-19 response being their existing networks of LFAs and LCFs which allowed them to respond efficiently to the emerging situation. This was a strength also articulated specifically in relation to urban responses. A key informant from WV DRC detailed how they have existing faith networks in urban areas through their cluster system. They use a 'clustering model', so in each

cluster and in each Area Programme, World Vision make sure they engage with faith leaders in specific communities (WVDRCJ4). They create a platform for faith leaders in each cluster:

‘And then at cluster level we connect the different platform of faith leaders and at the national level we have contact with the church mother bodies, there are eight in the country officially known, eight Church mother bodies we have the catholic church, we have the Church of Christ - this is for Protestants - we have revival churches, we have the *Kimbagys*, the salute army, we have orthodox and the Muslims...’ (WVDRCJ4).

Similarly, the growing awareness of the impact of urbanisation on humanitarian responses since the WHS has seen some advancements across the humanitarian sphere; shifting policies, programming and operational tools to respond to crises in urban contexts (WHS Urban Expert Group, 2015:2-3). In the lead up to the WHS a group of experts on humanitarianism in urban contexts, now called the Global Alliance for Urban Crises (GAUC), came together to ensure that the WHS included a focus on urban responses (Campbell, 2016:8). They highlighted at the time of the WHS that, humanitarian response was ‘fundamentally at odds with the way that towns and cities are organized and the way that urban life plays out, and this can limit the effectiveness of humanitarian assistance’ (WHS Urban Expert Group, 2015:2).

This awareness of the need to invest in urban programming was reflected in the responses of IFIOs to COVID-19. While the scale of urban responses to COVID-19 was unprecedented, some IFIOs were already investing in urban programming to varying extents. Several key informants from different IFIOs detailed their previous work in urban contexts, prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, which they were building on and adapting to respond to the emerging pandemic and it’s accompanying restrictions.

Key informants from World Vision and beyond highlighted their work in cash transfers as examples of their urban programming both before and during the COVID-19 pandemic (IRWSM1, WVDRCPS6).

Increasing the use and coordination of cash programming was one of the Grand Bargain commitments to getting more aid into the hands of those in need, to empower them to make the decisions that affect their lives. In the right conditions, cash transfers can stimulate local markets (World Bank Group, 2016:viii) while affording more dignity to the recipients. There is evidence that cash transfers can help effectively meet the needs of people in fragile contexts instead of, or to complement, in-kind aid (Harvey and Bailey, 2015:2). Cash transfers may not always be appropriate, and risks in different settings need to be considered. However, during the COVID-19 pandemic, several key informants highlighted how cash transfers were the 'safest modality' through which to support vulnerable families, particularly in crowded urban areas (IRWSM2) as they didn't involve in person interaction. Previous investments in cash transfer programming in urban contexts meant many IFIOs were able to continue to provide for people's basic needs during the pandemic. WV DRC used a cash transfer model that used people's mobile phones during the COVID-19 pandemic, and allowed them to take the money all at once, or in parts. This was a way to limit some of the protection risks around cash transfer programming in these busy urban contexts, as it meant people didn't necessarily have a lot of cash on them, reducing their likelihood of being attacked for it.

The COVID-19 pandemic created logistical challenges for IFIOs and INGOs, who would usually be able to send out food packages and material support quickly and effectively. A key informant from OXFAM (OXGL1) detailed how usually, it is easier to distribute food packages and material support in urban contexts because the population is so dense. You can therefore reach a lot of people in a short space of time. However, the scale and the speed with which they usually distributed such support was not possible in contexts with restrictions of movement, lockdowns and social distancing regulations. The restrictions around COVID-19 really impacted 'the timeliness of responding. You know you'd have a van of 10 people, that could tackle hundreds of households in a day, and that will be difficult now because they now have to have social distancing' (OXGL1). As a result, several key informants (OXGL1, IRWSM2, WVDRCPS2) distributed digital cash transfers, where people could

access cash through their phones or computers. Digital banking systems, which are more likely to be set up and accessible in urban areas in comparison to rural ones, means that digital cash transfers were distinctly workable in urban contexts during the COVID-19 pandemic (WVDRPCS2).

For World Vision, the use of cash transfers was part of a wider approach to working in fragile urban contexts. A key informant from WVI detailed how they had built on existing urban programming to respond to COVID-19 in low-income and fragile urban contexts. World Vision's Citywide Self-Sustaining Model was launched in 2008 and focuses on maximising what World Vision can do to sustainably impact the lives of the most vulnerable children in urban settings. World Vision's Citywide Self-Sustaining Model seeks to build on the 'glocal' nature of the organisation; a global organisation working in local contexts. It looks to promote 'sustainable impact in cities', through their work with partners and coalitions, focusing on the inclusion of the most vulnerable children and families (World Vision International, 2009:1). The World Vision team devoted to urban programming and their Citywide Self-Sustaining Model is relatively small and their work has focused on specific contexts. However, the COVID-19 pandemic saw World Vision adapt their Citywide Self-Sustaining Model for a different global context and expanded its use to urban contexts they had previously not worked in. A key informant outlined how their COVID-19 response in urban settings was being informed by their previous investments in the Citywide Self-Sustaining Model:

'[g]lobally, World Vision's urban programming is adapting its signature citywide approach to respond to the impact of COVID-19 across 56 countries in over 250 cities. These cities have significant pockets of poverty in densely populated urban slums, informal settlements and overcrowded low-income neighbourhoods hosting refugees, internally displaced people and migrants.' (WVI).

The World Vision partnership has already been investing, at least in research but to some extent in practice, in urban programming. However, the extent to which different World Vision national

offices have engaged with urban programming in the lead up to the COVID-19 pandemic varies according to the context. While for WV DRC their expansion into urban programming and the scale of their urban operations in response to COVID-19 was a new experience (WVDRCP2, WVDRCP3), key informants from WV Indonesia expressed that they were used to working in urban contexts (WVInN1, WVInRH3). While the extent to which the World Vision partnership has engaged with urban programming in the past differs according to the context, the organisation's urban programming can be characterised as relatively limited and ad hoc, as explained by a key informant from WV UK:

'... World Vision's investment in urban programme clearly remains in its infancy. Beyond the team dedicated to urban responses, key informants from the World Vision partnerships admitted that they were still learning about how World Vision's urban programming worked and what it looked like, as well as what the challenges are' (WVUKSP4).

It is clear, through the lens of the COVID-19 pandemic, that there has been investments in urban programming across the humanitarian sphere. Predominantly, key informants were keen to focus on their investment in cash transfers. This may reflect the general donor landscape as donors like the UK government and the UN have been focused on cash transfers as part of their efforts to localise humanitarian action (see Goodwin and Ager, 2021).

However, the differing levels of investment in urban programming across the IFIO landscape suggests that, for many of the IFIOs who participated in this research, urban programming prior to the COVID-19 pandemic has not been a systematic focus of their work. Humanitarian agencies have engaged with urban programming in contexts where there is significant need in urban contexts, but they have failed to prepare for the unprecedented scale of need experienced in fragile cities during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Need to continue, or scale up, investments

Despite the advancements around urban programming, such as the use of cash transfers, the COVID-19 pandemic has demonstrated that current investments are not enough to adequately deal with humanitarian crises in urban contexts on such a scale. Once again, there are parallels to draw here with the 2014/2015 Ebola outbreak in West Africa. As detailed above, the 2014/2015 EVD outbreak in West Africa was the first time the Ebola virus had significantly impacted urban contexts. As a result, programming to try and stem the spread of the virus was rooted in rural contexts. Therefore, the initial response to the EVD outbreak in cities was guided by what worked in rural contexts.

However, as Campbell (2017:10) succinctly outlines, it soon became clear that these strategies to stem the spread of the virus were inadequate and inappropriate for the new context into which they were being delivered. As a result, responses started to shift to account for the different contexts. They moved away from a single-minded focus on stemming the spread of the virus and moved onto a more holistic approach, responding to the varied impacts of the epidemic, helping humanitarian agencies respond to locally identified needs through more multisectoral responses. Campbell (2017:11) emphasises these failings, most significantly the importance of understanding the differences between rural and urban contexts and what this means for how humanitarian actors work in those respective contexts' as '...issues and learning that can be taken forward into future public health crises in urban environments.'

The COVID-19 pandemic has shown that these lessons have not been sufficiently learnt by the humanitarian sphere. Indeed, five years before the COVID-19 pandemic emerged, the outbreak of Ebola in West Africa reiterated the relevance of understanding how humanitarian crises, a public health crisis no less, interacts with urban dynamics. The humanitarian sphere's failure to keep up with the investment in urban programming needed and identified by the 2014/2015 EVD outbreak, saw them caught short by the COVID-19 pandemic when urban centres become loci of infection and

centres of the pandemic. A key informant from World Vision UK acknowledged that while NGOs are aware that they will have to operate more frequently in urban contexts, the COVID-19 pandemic showed that they have not scaled up their urban programming as much as they should have (WVUKSP1). A growing awareness, reinforced by the COVID-19 pandemic, that humanitarian crises will occur more frequently in urban contexts presents an opportunity to speed and scale up urban operations (WVUKPS2).

As a result, the shift from working predominantly in the rural context to urban contexts during the COVID-19 pandemic presented 'a big learning' opportunity for many key informants and their organisations (WVDRCP8). Given the unlimited engagement in urban contexts, a key informant from WV DRC highlighted they were expecting to learn a lot from the new program they had started in the capital city of Kinshasa, funded by Unilever, to respond to COVID-19 (WVDRCP8). WV DRC started the new 6-month, \$1 million project specifically to respond to the increasing need in urban contexts in the DRC, especially Kinshasa, during the COVID-19 pandemic (WVDRCP2). One of the key informants involved in this project was leading it and they explained how this project was the first to be done in an urban setting in the DRC in the capital city of Kinshasa (WVDRCP3).

Nevertheless, there is still resistance to scaling up investments in fragile urban programming. While the COVID-19 pandemic necessitated more responses in fragile urban contexts, leading many key informants to see the COVID-19 pandemic as a learning opportunity for urban programming, a key informant from Islamic Relief Worldwide expressed wariness of investing too much in urban contexts, suggesting that the current levels of need in urban areas may be less significant when the COVID-19 pandemic is less prevalent. The key informant was concerned that investing too much in urban programming, in reaction to the COVID-19 pandemic, may be wasted if, in the future, need is once again greatest in rural areas:

'I'm not sure when I'll get to deal with these countries again in an emergency contact because they've never really come up in the last 5 years and I can't see beyond covid them popping up again' (IRWSM2).

Once again, this reflection overlooks the fact that this is not the first public health crisis that has impacted fragile urban contexts. Given the evidence that humanitarian crises are occurring increasingly frequently in urban contexts, it follows that the COVID-19 pandemic is not the first, nor the last crisis to hit fragile urban contexts. In keeping with this argument, for many other key informants, the COVID-19 pandemic presented a push to invest in and understand more about urban programming, with the awareness expressed at the WHS and subsequently, that humanitarian crises are occurring more often in urban contexts. A key informant from WV UK expressed their opinion that in fragile contexts specifically, but also in general, urban contexts are going to be the focus of humanitarian responses in the future (WVUKSP1). While such statements are promising, the humanitarian sphere's failures to learn from the 2014/2015 EVD outbreak in West Africa for more effective responses to COVID-19 in urban contexts casts doubt on the humanitarian sphere's commitments to use this as an opportunity to scale up investment in urban programming despite the importance of the task.

Learnings reflected in the F&D landscape

The above sections have highlighted the unprecedented scale of the humanitarian sphere's urban response to the COVID-19 pandemic, and the various challenges and sources of opportunity encountered therein. Throughout the previous sections, a comparison with the 2014/2015 EVD outbreak in West Africa has highlighted the humanitarian sphere's failure to learn from those events, in particular around the importance of understanding the differences between rural and urban contexts and what these mean for how humanitarian actors can best work in those contexts.

These learnings about the importance of investing in and scaling up investment in urban programming are reflected in the F&D space.

This section will focus on an observation made by numerous key informants: that urban contexts are perceived to have lower levels of social cohesion and communal trust. This perception, if reflected on the ground, would have implications for the effectiveness of F&D methodologies as social cohesion and trust are often foundational tenants of F&D programs.

However, despite the perceived differences between rural and urban contexts and the potential impact this might have on the effectiveness of faith-inspired partnerships and programming, there was very little, if any, reflection by key informants within IFIOs around whether this necessitated adaptations to existing F&D methodologies to suit such different contexts. It is beyond the scope of this thesis to triangulate key informants' perceptions that there are lower levels of social cohesion and trust in urban communities. It is also not possible for these findings to relay whether any differences between urban and rural contexts impacted the effectiveness of IFIOs faith-inspired partnerships and programs. However, the following sub-sections will illuminate inconsistencies and contradictions in IFIOs perceptions of the differences between rural and urban contexts, and their actions in response.

This section argues therefore, for scaled-up investment in knowledge production around the differences between rural and urban contexts, including their faith landscapes. To leverage the potential distinctive value-add of local faith-inspired partnerships and programming in fragile urban contexts, and mitigate any challenges such faith engagement might present, it is vital to scale-up investment in knowledge production around urban programming in general, and faith-inspired urban programming in particular.

Social Cohesion and Trust: Rural vs Urban

Conversations with key informants working to respond to COVID-19 in fragile urban contexts highlighted several perceived differences between rural and urban contexts. As well as these more practical operational challenges detailed above, numerous key informants also expressed concerns that a lack of social cohesion and trust in fragile urban contexts, as well as increasingly individualistic cultures, meant it is harder for local communities and IFIOs and INGOs to respond to humanitarian crises in fragile urban contexts.

A key informant from Dan Church Aid reflected on their long experience of working in the world of F&D. They suggested that there is a difference between the levels of social cohesion in rural and urban areas:

‘...in rural settings you have communities who have had a long time to develop peaceful cohabitation and tradition and, in my experience, often do not distinguish on the basis of faith but do consider or all the locals and neighbours equally eligible for support. So that is because of time and also because Faith Communities have proactively nurtured that friendly relationship there's a different starting point. In an urban setting where a conglomerate of many different backgrounds often in fluxes of have happened over very short times and therefore Communities are not to the same extent prepared for this or to be more fair to be more realistic that causes conflict because it leads to a competition for resources’ (DCA2).

A key informant from WV Indonesia expressed similar thoughts about the differences in levels social cohesion between rural and urban contexts in Indonesia, suggesting that urban communities are more fragmented and individualist, without the communal support associated with the cultural practice of Gotong Royong which was explored in the third chapter of this thesis in more detail:

‘...we have the different situation if we compare with urban and rural area. In urban area, we have ten cities, and also fragmentation, and social cohesion is very the big issue’ (WVInAD3).

This was also reflected by key informants from WV DRC who articulated that relationships in urban areas are not as strong as they are in rural contexts. In rural contexts, people tend to face more problems or challenges in common, whereas in urban areas people have their own issues and their own ways of solving them through their existing connections (WVDRCPSZ2). As a result, individuals in urban contexts have less need for community support than rural areas. This key informant suggested that while in general, 'Africa is more community-orientated than the West... cities are adapting to the Western dynamics more than the rural areas' (WVDRCPSZ2).

A key informant from the Mennonite Central Committee (MCC2) perceived one of the reasons behind the lack of social cohesion in urban settings to be that it takes a significant time investment by all parties involved to build trust between different communities and actors. However, time is not a luxury afforded to many living in fragile urban contexts. This key informant (MCC2) detailed how, in general, rural projects are time-intensive. This is usually appropriate in rural contexts, where people may have more time or flexibility in their schedules. However, 'projects that fail to recognise that time-money interface in urban settings, they have been some of the most frustrating' experienced by this key informant (MCC2).

Despite lower levels of social cohesion and communal trust being widely perceived as having an impact on humanitarian processes, there appears to be a lack of understanding of the reasons why there is a lack of social cohesion in urban centres, and what this means for humanitarian programs. This is symptomatic of a broader lack of understanding of urban stakeholders and systems. As a result, the humanitarian sphere often overlooks the impact social cohesion, and relationships between urban stakeholders, have on the effectiveness of humanitarian responses in urban contexts.

Even when a more nuanced approach to social cohesion, through its replacement by the concept of social mixing, is taken as the analytical lens, key informants for this research suggested that it is

harder to manage in urban contexts. For example, a key informant from WV DRC suggested that it is more difficult to manage diversity in urban areas (WVDRCPSZ3). Diversity is a characteristic of urban contexts, across 'multiple axes: ethnicity, religion, wealth, income' (D'Onforio, 2018:6). Diversity without social cohesion can be a trigger for conflict and create significant obstacles for responding to crises like COVID-19. 'Combined with density, diversity can be a conflict driver waiting for a proximate trigger, such as a sudden large influx of people or a disruption to the city infrastructure' (d'Onforio, 2018:6).

A key informant from OXFAM (OXGL1) highlighted how a lack of social cohesion in urban centres can inhibit urban communities' resilience and make it harder for humanitarian actors to engage with local communities. The same key informant expressed that in rural communities, cooperation is often around agriculture and ensuring that everyone gets through 'lean seasons' (OXGL1). In urban contexts, however, people's interests are more diverse, meaning there is lack of a common goal. While in rural communities, aid and development actors can work with community groups such as cooperatives, trade unions or farmers to support these efforts, 'in urban settings that's a little bit harder because I think it's just, you know, I don't know if in all places you'd have a stronger sense of community and I don't really know how you would set it up' (OXGL1).

A key informant from WV Indonesia expressed concern following a response in Jakarta, that a lack of social cohesion, meant that certain activities such as building early warning systems for the pandemic and its spikes, which can arise very suddenly, were less effective in urban contexts because early warning systems rely on cooperation (WVInRH1). The same key informant suggested that this lack of social cohesion can lead to conflict arising in communities during stressful situations. During the COVID-19 pandemic, this conflict was experienced as stigma. The same key informant argued that in urban contexts, in comparison rural ones, people

'are more individualist. I just care about my family I don't care about what happens elsewhere. And it happens with stigma if one person gets infected with COVID... in the beginning we see people ex-communicated people from their community, even for the nurse that was infected by COVID-19... I think this is the issue of urban, it's difficult to build social cohesion in urban situations... I think this happened with stigma like I don't care, you are a threat to the community, so I need to send you out' (WVInRH1)

Another key informant expressed this lack of social cohesion in urban communities as a lack of trust (MCC2). They suggested that this lack of trust was multidimensional. Individuals remained distrustful of international and state actors, the health system and of other individuals who were not from a very specific locale. A key informant from Mennonite Central Committee suggested that a lack of social cohesion and social trust permeated humanitarian interventions in urban contexts (MCC2). This lack of trust starts at the hiring process; unless those carrying out the interventions are from within that specific context, local communities are less likely to have trust in the program. Leading on from this, the same key informant suggested that the lack of trust means that a lot of the data collected by humanitarian actors who are not from the specific area in which the program is being implemented is unreliable. As a result, the key informant expressed their concern that many of the actors working in these low trust urban settings do not know 'how bad their projects are' as they are 'likely not getting that feedback mechanism in the way that they might have been used to' (MCC2). A key informant from Mennonite Central Committee (MCC2) suggested that the difference between levels of social cohesion and trust in rural and urban contexts was an issue of scale. It wasn't so much about lower levels of social cohesion and trust, but about the fact that social cohesion and trust did not extend as far. They suggested that trust was concentrated in much smaller locales, therefore a 'microlocal' approach to humanitarian urban programming is important in urban contexts. They detailed their experience of working in Ferrari, an urban slum of Nairobi, Kenya. In this context, staff from Nairobi are not considered local. Even being from Ferrari is not seen as local.

To be considered local, and therefore to be trusted, you need to be from the specific neighbourhood of Ferrari, often from within a ten block by ten block area. If you're not from within a very specific location, according to this key informant (MCC2), you are not trusted. This presents a huge challenge for large IFIOs and INGOs such as World Vision 'because we often think we're doing pretty good at being local if we have a Kenyan leading a project or like you're from Nairobi' (MCC2). However, in fragile urban settings, national staff may not be sufficient for drawing on the benefits of a localised approach.

The importance of the microlocal approach is starting to be acknowledged in the emerging literature on urban humanitarianism and by IFIOs and INGOs. For example, World Vision's signature approach to urban programming – their Citywide Sustainable approach – focuses on the organisation's actions specifically at the neighbourhood level. The WHS Urban Expert Group (2015:5) suggests adopting an area-based approach to programming in urban contexts, operating at different scales including the household, neighbourhood and city. Sitko and Massella (2019:7) argue that to not put municipalities and local actors at the heart of designing effective urban responses risks doing harm as they exert influence over a network without sufficient understanding. Given the lack of trust in many fragile urban contexts, 'outsiders' who risk doing harm through humanitarian programming, may be anyone outside of a very narrow geographical location. It is therefore vital that localisation be a critical component of future urban programming.

Impact of a lack of social cohesion and trust for humanitarian responses in urban contexts

The above section highlights the widespread perception among key informants working for IFIOs that urban landscapes have lower levels of social cohesion and wide-reaching trust than in rural areas. If reflected on the ground, these findings could have implications for IFIOs urban programs in general (faith-inspired programs will be a focus of the next sub-section).

Key informants spoke of their experiences of the repercussions of lower levels of trust in urban contexts. One of the most significant perceived consequences of the lack of trust in fragile urban contexts during the COVID-19 pandemic was people not believing and following the guidance issued by international actors including IFIOs, INGOs and organisations like the WHO. A key informant from OXFAM reiterated these concerns, asking how were you meant to convince people to follow the guidelines from the WHO when there is so little trust? (OXGL1). A key informant from the Mennonite Central Committee, in another conversation, highlighted how the humanitarian sphere 'has continued to see ... national-level efforts, big NGOs and WHO promotion campaigns have gotten so much less traction in urban environments than in rural ones' (MCC3). Given that preventive messaging was such a significant part of many IFIO's COVID-19 responses, a lack of trust in those campaigns and those delivering them poses a real and perceived threat to the efficacy of those responses.

A key informant from Mennonite Central Committee (MCC3) outlined their experience of the implications of lower levels of social cohesion and trust in urban contexts for urban programming. They suggested that lower levels of social cohesion and trust means it is harder to 'get to those stakeholders that have power' in urban contexts (MCC3). A key informant from the Mennonite Central Committee uses the example of the Lithari slum in Nairobi, where even though the organisation worked with a trusted local partner and had long-term relationships in that community, volunteers were still identifying a lack of trust in them as an international organisation, as well as national authorities, from local urban communities. Ultimately, a key informant from Mennonite Central Committee (MCC3) detailed the disastrous consequences of this lack of trust. The lack of trust in the national health system and in the communication campaigns of international actors runs so deep that even a nurse from that local area, who 'quote unquote should have known better' did not seek medical help when they had COVID-19. As a result, they died.

In response to this story, a key informant from the Mennonite Central Committee highlighted the lack of trust in the government, health systems and international actors in urban settings during the COVID-19 pandemic as a

‘...big wake up call to that program and that community to see that someone who was as informed as anyone in that community still has such deep distrust of government systems. So, she trusted what she was hearing from the programme that COVID-19 and these are the symptoms but it wasn’t enough to overcome that distrust of the national health system. And of those government facility is that they were actually going to do anything for her. Or treat her with respect. So, no I think that was one example of the humbling reality of how deep that distrust goes in many of these environments. And sort of understanding the limits of what the supplementary programs can do to build trust. So, what are the limits of actual change in a context of such low Trust?’ (MCC3)

A key informant from WV DRC reiterated the distrust urban communities have in the government, and therefore the health system, which leads them not to seek medical attention when they are unwell, undermining the humanitarian responses of humanitarian organisations:

‘...in fact with regard to COVID-19 in an urban context we have the immediate challenges the government is facing where people don’t even trust the government in an urban context. So everything associated with the government people feel, and that’s why in some parts, people feel that the government, if you go to the hospital with a headache you’ll be treated as a COVID—19 patient which isn’t the best option. That you will not go home’ (WVDRCPS6)

Among key informants working for IFIOs they perceive there to be, in general, lower levels of social cohesion and trust, and more individualistic cultures, in urban contexts in comparison to rural ones. There is also a general perception that lower levels of social cohesion and trust,

and more individualistic cultures, in urban contexts have consequences for how they work in fragile urban contexts. There is a perception that these differences between urban and rural contexts potentially impact the effectiveness of their humanitarian responses in urban contexts. Despite this awareness, programs designed, delivered and tested in rural contexts are being reproduced in urban contexts. When these programs are reproduced in urban contexts, interacting with lower levels of social cohesion and trust, key informants generally felt that this negatively impacted the effectiveness of those programs. It follows, then, that humanitarian programs need to be adapted according to the different urban context to ensure ongoing effectiveness of humanitarian interventions. This of course requires a broad and in-depth understanding of the differences between rural and urban contexts and what this means for urban programming.

How a lack of social cohesion and trust (potentially) threatens the efficacy of F&D responses

The challenges outlined above suggest a lack of understanding around the differences between rural and urban contexts which may negatively impact the efficacy of humanitarian responses. This argument is reflected by key informants working in the F&D space. This section highlights a lack of consensus around the roles of LFAs and LCFs in humanitarian responses in urban contexts. While the challenges and opportunities presented by LFAs and LCFs undoubtedly depend on the context, key informants' reflections on their roles in response to humanitarian crises in urban contexts are mixed and inconsistent. This indicates a lack of understanding around the roles of LFAs and LCFs for humanitarian responses to fragile urban contexts. Again, this reinforces the argument of this chapter, that the humanitarian sphere needs to scale up investment in knowledge production around urban programming, including faith-inspired programs in urban contexts.

As has been detailed already in this thesis, most F&D methodologies employed by IFIOs rely on engaging with local faith leaders. The theory behind these methodologies rests on the idea that local

faith leaders are imbued with distinctive levels of trust and authority by local communities. Similarly, the value-add of the cohesion of LCFs for humanitarian responses has also been explored. As a result, key informants' perceptions of lower levels of social cohesion and trust in urban contexts have the potential to impact the authority of, and trust in, local faith leaders as well as trust amongst communities of faith. Interestingly, key informants' perceptions around whether the roles of local faith leaders are impacted by the differences between rural and urban contexts are inconsistent. While some key informants felt that local faith leaders' roles are untouched by the disparate contexts, other felt they were impacted. This then has repercussions for how key informants think they should engage with faith actors for humanitarian responses in urban contexts.

Urban environments are made up of a multitude of 'residents, buildings and infrastructure, of livelihood options and of stakeholders' (American Red Cross, 2014 cited in Campbell, 2016:14). All the systems, processes, organisations, institutions and stakeholders present in urban contexts are interrelated and therefore relevant for humanitarians and their interventions in these contexts (Sitko and Massella, 2019:6). Part of this complex, interrelated system of stakeholders is religious institutions, local faith leaders, other LFAs and LCFs.

Several key informants from IFIOs were also keen to stress that faith leaders remain influential in urban contexts. These opinions suggest that perceived lower levels of social cohesion and trust in urban contexts does not impact the position of local faith leaders in those settings. One key informant made it clear that in their experience, '...in urban areas, or rural areas, faith leaders are trusted' (WVDRCJ7). Another key informant from WV DRC believed that faith leaders;

'are trusted holistically regardless of the context. People see them as spiritual fathers.

So regardless of the context they are all really trusted. In fact, in an urban context, they're well to do... and they have huge congregations...they have 2 to 3 services and each of the services they have over 500 people. So yeah, really listen to them and they

are highly influential. They are very, very influential. So, this holistic belief that spiritual person should be respected, spiritual person's should be people of trust' (WVDRCPS6)

For one key informant from WV DRC, the trust that remains in faith leaders in urban contexts, despite a general lack of trust in authority in comparison to rural contexts, was a value-add of F&D programming in these contexts. This key informant suggested that the higher population density of urban contexts means that people;

'...go more individually than in rural where, especially in Africa they are highly connected around small village or small chief... or they have that kind of connection, and the respect of authority in rural settings is actually higher than in urban settings. So, for us in urban settings, the advantage we have it's because we work with authorities, moral authorities, that are listened to. And like when you work with pastors or priests, at least their worshippers, they listen to them.' (WVDRCJF2).

The ongoing importance of the roles of local faith leaders for responding in urban settings was also reiterated by a key informant from Mennonite Central Committee (MCC2) who expressed that from their experience, there is still a 'huge role' for faith leaders in humanitarian responses in urban contexts. While there is low levels of trust in other authorities, the trust remaining in faith leaders in fragile urban contexts means they are even more significant figures for spreading accurate information and encouraging behaviour change.

However, while key informants from WV DRC especially, but also several other IFIOs, were keen to reinforce the influence of local faith leaders in urban contexts, several key informants also expressed limitations to this influence. These limitations seemed to stem from the lower levels of social cohesion and trust in urban contexts outlined above. For example, key informants suggested that while in rural contexts local faith leaders may be respected and listened to by most people, of the

same faith and other faith traditions, in urban contexts this is not necessarily the case. A key informant from WV DRC highlighted that in urban contexts, faith leaders cannot;

‘...extend their power, or their message, they don’t have the authority to other people. Contrary, as opposed to rural settings, in rural settings... the pastor, even the chief, or an elder, they are very respected and when they pass a message people tend to abide by it. Which means it’s easier to work in rural settings using Channels of Hope in rural settings than in urban settings’ (WVDRCJF2).

This sentiment that faith leaders’ influence in local urban communities is limited, was reflected in conversations with many key informants, from a range of IFIOs, albeit to varying extents. One key informant from WV Indonesia outlined that, in their experience of working in urban contexts, faith leaders ‘are not the ones who have the power in communities.... they put more trust to the community leaders not faith leaders for some reason’ (WVInN1). According to this key informant, faith leaders still have an important role to play in bringing comfort to people, like in times of sickness which is of course relevant to the COVID-19 pandemic. However, they reiterated that in their daily lives, people in urban contexts listen more to community leaders (WVInN1). A key informant from Islamic Relief Worldwide relayed a similar sentiment that, while they were not totally sure, they don’t think that LCFs and local faith leaders’ networks are as strong in urban areas as they are in rural areas. As a result, they felt that engaging a faith element in urban programming would not necessarily provide value-add (IRWSM2).

These sentiments have an impact for humanitarian responses around disseminating preventive messaging. It suggests that in some urban contexts, in which local faith leaders influence is more limited, that other actors are better placed to disseminate accurate information and preventative messaging. For effective humanitarian interventions therefore, it is important that these power dynamics between different urban stakeholders are reflected.

Somewhere in between the experiences detailed above, several key informants from a range of FIOs expressed that while local faith leaders remain influential actors in local communities, they are one of many stakeholders who exert influence in urban settings. A key informant from WV DRC suggested that 'even in urban contexts' working with and among local faith leaders is important (WVDRCJ5). They expressed that faith leaders are still highly influential in urban areas, within urban communities. However, they then went on to explain that they are not the only influential stakeholders in urban systems. In response to this, the key informant from WV DRC explained that in urban contexts, while they are working with faith leaders, they are also working with community leaders like the head of the district for example as the 'voices in the community' (WVDRCJ5). This suggests that implicitly, WV DRC are reflecting on the differences between rural and urban context, including faith landscapes, and what this means for their humanitarian (F&D) responses in urban contexts. However, as will be explored in the coming sections, this is not part of a systematic knowledge building exercise to make humanitarian interventions, including those that are faith-inspired, more effective in fragile urban contexts.

The less central role of local faith leaders in urban contexts was reinforced by another key informant from WV Indonesia (WVInRH3). They suggested that in rural areas, faith leaders have a more all-encompassing role, helping community members with all parts of daily lives. Therefore, the trust imbued in them by community members is also all-encompassing. As a result, faith leaders are more prescriptive in rural contexts, where their advice on how people should live their lives is taken more seriously. However, in urban contexts, there are more numerous stakeholders who yield power in local urban communities. Therefore, the distinctive role of local faith leaders is more limited. Local faith leaders retain a distinctive role for helping individuals and communities respond to crises, but it is more circumscribed than in rural contexts. Local faith leaders' distinctive role in helping their congregations manage humanitarian crisis is through addressing more existential questions of why – why did this happen to me, my family, my community? This subtle difference in the kind of power

yielded in different spheres by faith leaders in rural and urban contexts may have a big impact on their roles in responding to humanitarian crises. In terms of the kind of behaviour change envisioned by World Vision for their COVER response, the prescriptive power of local faith leaders in rural contexts will lead to more direct, more efficient behaviour change. However, the explanatory power of local faith leaders in urban contexts may help with resilience and contribute to the provision of MHPSS during and after crises.

The experiences of key informants from WV Indonesia were reflected in those offered by key informants from WV DRC. For example, one key informant expressed that while faith leaders are trusted in both rural and urban contexts, in rural contexts often the entire 'social infrastructure' revolves around religious institutions (WVDRCJ7). For example, in rural areas;

'...maybe 70/80 percent of schools and health infrastructure and managed by churches. In urban area, where you have private, people have their own health facilities, you'll see the government with some health facilities or schools. So, in an rural area, the church has a very big influence because all social areas in the village are around churches and traditional leaders' (WVDRCJ7)

However, in urban contexts, as explained by a key informant from Mennonite Central Committee (MCC2), the social infrastructure is more fragmented. As a result, trust in faith leaders is not as deep and not as wide as it is in rural contexts. The same key informant explained that this fragmentation in urban contexts, may be due to populations and dynamics of power within them shifting, moving and changing quickly due to population movement:

'...in an urban area just because somebody's pastor of a church or a big leader the people who are in that church might have only been there for a year or two, they might not actually trust that person so even if that person says yes we're going to go ahead

with that project their constituency might not be behind them in the way that they would in a rural area' (MCC2).

Lower levels of social cohesion, trust and a sense of community in urban contexts was also perceived by key informants as potentially impactful on local faith leaders' ability to work together in response to a crisis. A key informant from WV DRC (WVDRCPSZ2) suggested that in rural areas faith leaders tend to be more united and more focused on the community than in urban areas. The same key informant, who is a faith leader themselves, highlighted that while in rural areas you can't go a week without running into another faith leader from another church, in urban areas you might go months without encountering another faith leader. As a result, it is much easier to unite faith leaders around a shared challenge in rural areas in comparison to urban contexts. Similarly, the same key informant who has pastored in rural and urban areas suggested that the lack of social cohesion and the more individualistic culture in urban contexts means it is harder to mobilise a CHAT team. In rural areas, LCFs are 'more closely related to each other' than in urban contexts and therefore work together more easily (WVDRCPSZ2). A key informant from WV DRC highlight that these different community dynamics directly impact World Vision's CoH methodology in urban contexts (WVDRCPSZ2). These reflections highlight how the direct impact of the differences between rural and urban contexts, specifically lower levels of social cohesion and trust in urban contexts, can impact the effectiveness of F&D methodologies in humanitarian urban contexts.

A key informant from WV Indonesia suggested that one of the reasons behind why local faith leaders are less influential in urban contexts, is that sometimes faith leaders are not seen as being as close to the local community, both in terms of geographic proximity and in terms of being part of the community (WVInN1). The literature has explored how communities are more geographically disparate in urban communities, albeit not in reference to LCFs:

‘Urban populations find themselves part of a diverse range of ‘communities’, most of which are not geographically bound. Urban citizens often live in a place (their ‘neighbourhood’) but spend very few of their waking hours there’ (Campbell, 2016:16).

Faith leaders, and their adherents, often must travel to get to their place of worship. One congregation for example, may be made up of people from different communities who have travelled across the city to attend that place of worship or that service (WVDRCP22). A Key informant from WV DRC, who is also a Pastor in an urban area, outlined they he must drive 20kms to his church office (WVDRCP22). However, this doesn’t happen in rural areas, where most people in the community can walk to their place of worship. As a result, faith leaders may not be as embedded in the communities they serve in urban contexts. Indeed, those close-knit communities of believers may not exist in the same way in urban contexts. Faith leaders can therefore be perceived as a less integral part of the community.

There are also several logistical differences between working with local faith leaders in rural and urban contexts that need to be considered. Even with the cluster level platforms of faith leaders detailed earlier in this chapter, a key informant from WV DRC suggested that it is harder to trace and mobilise faith leaders in urban contexts. In urban contexts, the multiplicity of denominations and the religious diversity means it’s challenging to reach all the relevant faith leaders (WVDRCP22). The same key informant went on to say in future conversations that they have not worked with faith leaders through their urban area programs in the same way as they have in rural contexts. In many rural areas, even the more rural areas of the capital city in Kinshasa, WC DRC have ongoing community-driven development programs. So, in these locations, local faith leaders are aware of World Vision and their work. They trust the work and the role that they can play in it, and they take ownership of that. Therefore, part of scaling up urban programming to be able to respond to future crises in those contexts requires building and maintaining networks of relevant stakeholders to mobilise when a humanitarian crises hits.

Key informants suggested that the logistical challenges of engaging with LFAs and LCFs in urban contexts tend to stem from a lack of time. Whereas in rural contexts, an organisation like World Vision may work with LFAs and LCFs for several years, in urban contexts, faith leaders may leave, communities may shift and often they are working to shorter time frames (WVDRCJ4). One key informant from WV DRC (WVDRCJ7) also highlighted the logistical challenges faced by local faith leaders in terms of their limited time to be able to respond to the needs of their communities in times of crisis. They explained that in urban areas, faith leaders also need to work;

‘...so, when they need to reach their fellow members, sometimes it can require more means, more logistical support for them to do it than in rural areas. In rural area, they can meet every time, they can meet in the night, they can meet early in the morning. Like, I work in the northwest of the country, it’s a rural area, you know sometime meeting, community meeting are led around 5.30am. So, the meeting will start 5.30am and it can end up around 7am. So when you need to meet them at that time you will meet all of them and around 7 they will go to the field, to the farm...they start in the market, But when you are in the urban area it is very difficult to meet with people from Monday to Saturday, you meet with people in the morning, for example, even in the afternoon some are at the workplace, people are more employees in urban area than in rural areas. So, in rural areas they are self employed, so you can meet them during the week you can meet them every day but in urban area it is not the case’ (WVDRCJ7).

There is an implicit recognition of the more limited role of LFAs and LCFs in urban contexts, exemplified through World Vision’s urban programming. WVI, recognising that the COVID-19 pandemic presented an opportunity for learning more about how best to respond to crises in urban contexts, compiled case studies to showcase their responses to COVID-19 in urban contexts. Several case studies highlighted World Vision’s engagement with LFAs and LCFs. In Honduras, World Vision partnered with churches as one of many local stakeholders. The case study detailed how working

through networks of local volunteers helped them mobilise and reach affected populations. In Chile, World Vision partnered again with several urban stakeholders, including many 'faith-based organizations to address the impacts of the pandemic at the district, city and metropolitan levels' (World Vision DRC, 2020:5). World Vision Chile designed the 'Count on Me' campaign, creating a platform and network focused on uniting churches and faith-inspired organisations to work in solidarity and love to address the pandemic. In Lebanon, World Vision is working with a range of civil society groups, local government stakeholders and churches to spread awareness around COVID-19 and provide psychosocial support and protection to children living in urban slums.

Key informants from IFIOs still see there as being an important role for local faith leaders for responding to humanitarian crises in urban contexts. They remain highly influential actors in complex urban systems and have a particularly significant role in helping communities understand and be resilient to crises. However, there is also clearly limitations to their influence in urban contexts, casting them as one of many influential stakeholders in urban contexts. The F&D sphere has often been warned that local faith leaders are not necessarily magic bullets for more effective humanitarian interventions, and this appears to be even more so the case in urban contexts. Most key informants from IFIOs, albeit to varying extents, agreed that while faith leaders remained influential in urban contexts, their influence is to some extent diluted by the many other powerful stakeholders. This has policy implications for F&D programming in urban contexts.

Numerous key informants reinforced the importance of engaging with LFAs and LCFs as part of a multi-stakeholder approach. As explored above, key informants felt that while LFAs, particularly local faith leaders, remain influential in complex urban environments, their influence is limited or diluted as one of many significant stakeholders. There is already an awareness of this. World Vision, for example, are already aware that engaging local faith leaders needs to be part of a wider localised approach to humanitarian programming. A key informant from WV DRC (WVDRCJ5) highlighted that even in rural areas, while they work predominantly with local faith leaders, they are aware of and

work with other local stakeholders such as traditional healers. Similarly, the Unilever project based in Kinshasa is working with local faith leaders and community health workers. World Vision's Citywide Sustainable Approach also highlights the importance of working with a wide range of stakeholders at the local level. World Vision's COVID-19 response in urban contexts derived some specific recommendations including 'to identify key urban actors, neighbourhood leaders and grassroots organisations operating in urban hotspots and ensure they are connected in a two-way communication to key response actors (informing of context issues and opportunities and sharing credible information with local residents)' (World Vision International, 2020:2). These recommendations reinforce the importance of informal actors as well as government actors and suggests that a 'local urban leader could be a member of youth group or a faith group, a gang leader, a business owner as well as a local public servant. Any COVID-19 response planning should take this complex urban governance structures into consideration when planning interventions. Legitimacy of urban actors (outside government) should be well understood as it will have implications on the sources of knowledge and information shared in these settings' (World Vision International, 2020:2).

Evidently, there needs to be further reflection and adaptation of F&D methodologies in fragile urban contexts. There needs to be more reflection on the differences of working in rural and urban contexts generally, and with LFAs and LCFs in particular. A key informant from WV Indonesia suggested that now that they are started to engage with F&D in urban contexts in response to COVID-19, they are learning about the differences between working in urban and rural areas as they go (WVInRH4). But they acknowledge that they need to develop this thinking; 'it's kind of my recommendation that we need to develop what's different and what's our unique intervention with rural and urban contexts' (WVInRH4). Key informants working for IFIOs and delivering faith-inspired programs in rural and now increasingly in urban contexts did not seem to be aware of the inconsistencies in their and their peers' understandings of F&D in urban contexts during the COVID-19 pandemic. Once again, this analysis calls on the humanitarian sphere, including IFIOs, to build

their understanding of the differences between rural and urban contexts and what this means for how they work in these different contexts.

F&D responses to COVID-19 in urban contexts

Despite the increasingly important role that LFAs and LCFs are playing in responding to humanitarian crises in rural contexts, in which humanitarian actors are more accustomed to operating, there is very little focus in the academic literature or by communities of practice on the roles of LFAs and LCFs in urban contexts. A significant caveat to that is the growing literature on the roles of LFAs and LCFs in response to migration (see Wilkinson and Ager, 2018. Geatruck et al, 2018. Wagner, 2019. Wilkinson, 2020).

Nevertheless, there is a gap in understanding about whether faith, religion and spirituality, and LFAs and LCFs, occupy different roles in urban societies, changing their potential roles in humanitarian responses. This gap in understanding does not mean that IFIOs are not employing F&D responses in fragile urban responses. In fact, many of the IFIOs engaged with for this research were employing the same methodologies that they perceive as being so effective in rural contexts in their urban responses. In the third chapter of this thesis, this research explored the F&D methodologies being employed to try and stem the spread of the virus such as CoH for COVID-19. Such methodologies rely on the trust imbued in, and public authority of, local faith leaders. WV DRC has employed this methodology, most often used in rural contexts, to respond to COVID-19 in urban contexts. For example, WV DRC's Unilever project for example, based in Kinshasa, includes a significant emphasis on their faith-inspired methodology CoH.

In keeping with World Vision's integration of F&D into their COVER response, WV DRC's new project in urban contexts included an F&D component. As well as training community health workers at the local level, WV DRC's Unilever program in urban contexts also engaged local faith leaders. According to key informants from WV DRC, the national office in the DRC was the first country programme to

develop CoH content using the Viamo platform (WVDRCPS6). WV DRC worked with the existing model prepared by the Ministry of Health for their training of community health workers, and leveraged their CoH for COVID-19 methodology, established and carried out mainly in rural contexts, to respond to COVID-19 in urban contexts. A key component, as well as the online training of faith leaders and community health workers, was push messaging, adapting the messaging component of the normal in-person CoH methodology, to be carried out online. This project will be the focus of the latter half of this research chapter as it produced some of the most concrete learnings for WV DRC, and for the wider F&D landscape, in regard to urban programming generally, and engaging with LFAs and LCFs specifically.

WV DRC's Unilever project is based in Kinshasa and related primarily to the first pillar of World Vision's COVER; aimed at eradicating COVID-19. The project has four basic outcomes. First, to engage faith leaders, trained on CoH for COVID-19, to cascade preventative messaging to their congregations. Second is to capacitate local community health workers, and provide them with PPE, so they can spread awareness around the virus. Third is working the media and other institutions to spread awareness and fourth is providing PPE to health facilities (WVDRCPS2). As part of this program, faith leaders went through the training for CoH for COVID-19. From the same funding, faith leaders were trained to send SMS through their phones and share messages on social media to reach as many people as possible (WVDRCJ5). Through these CoH activities, WV DRC engaged with Scripture to address myths responsibly and appropriately, including any spiritual roots, around COVID-19 such as that the virus was sent as a punishment from God. WV DRC also identified and addressed bad practices and risky behaviours through their engagement with LCFs, they organised debates within CHAT groups and organised 'inclusive preaching during Sunday worship service to reinforce the existence of the disease, consequences and preventive measures' (World Vision DRC, 2020).

WV DRC found creative ways to continue to (re)engage faith leaders through CoH in urban contexts to respond to COVID-19. For example, digital engagement through the Viamo platform allowed World Vision to train local community health workers as well as local faith leaders remotely. WV DRC hoped to reach a great number of people through this project and the creative partnership with Viamo, as outlined in their mid-June progress report:

‘The training contents are being developed by the Channel of Hope Technical Advisor in coordination with VIAMO, who will support the organisation of online training. After training, the 40 faith leaders will facilitate discussions with 150 other religious leaders from their churches who, in turn, will disseminate messages in 600 Community Hope Action Committees (CHATs). Each of the 5 members of a CHAT and the 190 faith leaders will continue raising awareness in small groups.’ (World Vision DRC, 2020).

According to the Quarterly Narrative Report of World Vision’s CoH component of this project (WV DRC, 2020) they were successful in reaching large numbers of LFAs through this project. They carried out 40 Training of Trainers (ToTs), who trained 150 faith leaders who conducted COVID-19 awareness sessions to 600 leaders of CHAT groups of different denominations. The digital element, partnering with Viamo, meant 790 faith leaders have also been disseminating SMS preventative messages twice a week. The texts include general information around COVID-19, barrier measures, information for mother’s on how to prevent the spread of COVID-19 and trying to reinforce good hygiene practices at the household level.

Evidently, while IFIOs have been engaging with faith, religion and spirituality, and LFAs and LCFs for responses to COVID-19 in fragile urban contexts, and finding creative ways to adapt to urban environments, they have reproduced the methodologies traditionally used in rural contexts for their urban responses. For example, the F&D component of WV DRC’s Unilever project was a reproduction of the CoH methodology normally employed in rural contexts. These methodologies

are also rooted in rural contexts as that's where they were designed. The success of World Vision's CoH methodology in rural contexts, which draws on the tenants of social cohesion and trust among others, was re-purposed for responding in urban contexts for WV DRC's new Unilever funded project. As has been explored in previous chapters, social cohesion, a sense of community and trust particularly in local faith leaders, have been critical elements of many of the F&D methodologies employed by IFIOs to respond to COVID -19. One of the approaches of World Vision's COVER, is to leverage local networks and communities of trust. Similarly, World Vision's CoH methodology, a key component of World Vision's COVER, builds on the trust imbued in faith leaders by their adherents:

'Faith leaders are uniquely placed to protect the rights and meet the needs of the most vulnerable in their communities. They have profoundly deep, trusted relationships and links with their communities and often dictate which behaviours are prescribed or prohibited' (World Vision International, 2013:2).

However, as has been explored above, social cohesion, a sense of community and trust are perceived to be less common characteristics of many urban contexts, including the capital city of the DRC, Kinshasa. Despite that, there has been limited reflection on whether this will impact the effectiveness of their F&D methodologies in urban contexts.

Given the fact that many key informants, as detailed above, have suggested that LFAs retain their prominent positions in communities in urban contexts, these same methodologies may continue to produce value-add for their urban responses. In response, several key informants from different IFIOs expressed the importance of including F&D as part of a multi-sectoral approach to humanitarian urban programming. A key informant from Mennonite Central Committee (MCC3) suggested that they have implemented some very successful F&D programs in urban contexts. However, the success they experienced was because they integrated F&D into wider multi-sectoral programs. The key informant from Mennonite Central Committee (MCC3) stressed that they saw the

success of their urban F&D programs at the point where those faith leaders intersected with the formal systems and other influential actors:

‘If the formal systems don't recognise them or aren't willing to partner with them that sort of where the trust ends. So, we've seen Faith leaders be really effective at personal and community level intervention efforts but only in these cases where there's been this genuine partnership... we see Faith leaders effectively bridging that gap to state services or to medical services. So, I think there's a limit to what faith leaders can do’
(MCC3)

The important role of faith leaders in bridging the gap between formal structures and communities in urban contexts was reflected in conversations with another key informant from WV DRC (WVDRCPS6). It has already been explained that communities often express distrust towards ‘the system’ in urban contexts such as Kinshasa (WVDRCPS6). During the COVID-19 pandemic, this distrust in the system has been expressed through a lack of trust in the government and health systems leading to misinformation about the virus being a political disease to get money for the government (WVDRCPS6). In these contexts, ‘faith leaders who are very trusted people are very influential making sure that people trust the system’ (WVDRCPS6).

However, while the strengths and challenges associated with faith engagement in rural areas are relatively well and widely accepted, the above discussions in this section suggest that there is more contention about the role of LFAs for humanitarian responses in urban contexts. This is particularly the case for F&D methodologies that seek to leverage the trust imbued in LFAs and among LCFs. While some key informants persisted in their assertions that LFAs, and local faith leaders in particular, are just as prominent in local communities, others see the role of local faith leaders as more limited in urban areas. The above discussions have also reinforced the fact that these

differences between rural and urban contexts, in general and in regard to F&D, can impact the effectiveness of humanitarian interventions if not sufficiently taken into account.

As a result, while F&D was still regarded as important for urban programming, it wasn't as systematic a consideration for their programming as it was in rural contexts. For example, World Vision's Citywide approach to urban programming elicits ad hoc examples of F&D engagement. However, it is not a central or systematic aspect of their programming in urban contexts. Local faith leaders are identified as one of several community-level stakeholders who have an important role to play in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic in fragile urban contexts. This is of course an important consideration.

While it is possible to draw out some generalisations around urban faith landscapes, they are context specific. These context specificities make it harder to integrate F&D systematically into urban programs like World Vision's Citywide approach. A key informant from World Vision International reiterated this point:

'...for example, in areas like in Latin America and specifically in Central America definitely the church specifically has a huge role to play in places that are controlled by gangs and where the church is the only actor who is present in some of the hardest to reach Communities where we work. So, our connection with the church allows us to respond to the issues in El Salvador Honduras and Guatemala and Nicaragua. In other places I'm in the issue I always think of the issue of who is enforcing the measures and who is taking the role of Supporting Communities and in many places, you have the church doing that and in other places you have the local gangs doing that in Latin America. in Brazil for example in the favelas Gangs of assumes the role of the government imposing some restrictions on movement and doing distributions of hygiene kits and food and working with local grassroots actors including Faith actors. To

make sure that everyone is able to have food or cash or whatever they need it. to survive. because the government wasn't doing anything. So, it's very contextual I don't know to what extent Faith organisations have been engaging in the Middle East for example and the places where we work. I know in any country World Vision has contact with local Faith groups for other programming purposes, like we've had engagement with them before, they were definitely have included them in their covid-19 response because we built on these partnerships' (WVIAR2).

A gap in understanding

The above sub-sections have highlighted that key informants working in IFIOs responding to COVID-19 perceive there to be significant and general differences between rural and urban contexts. These differences are linked to, and reflected by, perceived differences between the faith landscapes in rural and urban contexts. However, despite this awareness, the F&D investments of IFIOs in urban contexts during the COVID-19 pandemic were by and large the same methodologies tried and tested in rural contexts. Few if any key informants from IFIOs suggested they were adapting their F&D methodologies to respond in urban centres. For example, WV DRC's Unilever project in Kinshasa employed the same CoH methodology traditionally used in rural contexts in urban settings. A key informant from WV DRC (WVDRCPSZ3) stated that their CoH methodology does not change in urban settings, World Vision 'used it in the deep rural areas and we have used it in the Urban areas and the module has worked the same because we are using the scriptures how to challenge attitudes through scriptures' (WVDRCPSZ3). A key informant from WV Indonesia (WVInAG1) reiterated the fact that their F&D investments work the same in rural and urban contexts.

As indicated above, for a number of key informants, the lack of reflection on whether their CoH methodology needs to be adapted to suit these different urban contexts was not perceived to be a problem for their response to COVID-19. Several key informants from WV DRC suggested that

reactions to the training have been the same (WVDRCP4), as the challenges of COVID-19 in terms of behaviour and attitudes are the same in rural and urban contexts (WVDRCP4). One key informant felt that the situations were similar enough in rural and urban contexts, that it was appropriate to keep the same methodology (WVDRCP4).

However, the different religious, faith and spiritual landscapes in rural and urban contexts indicated by key informants from their experiences, challenge such an unquestioning reproduction of F&D methodologies in urban contexts. While some IFIOs have been reflecting on this, such as Tearfund who have been working with an urban specialist over the last year to 'start thinking about how different it is to work with the church and mobilise communities and even what is community in the urban settings' (TF1), this practice of reflection tends to be to a limited extent and not across the board.

It is worth noting that key informants were making these assertions during the implementation of their F&D programs in urban contexts. The data collection period of this project finished while many of the F&D programs being discussed were ongoing, or at least before any significant Monitoring and Evaluation processes and reflections had taken place. These assertions are therefore based on key informants' experiences of training faith leaders in urban contexts. They felt, according to the comments outlined above, that faith leaders' engagement with CoH trainings were the same in urban contexts as in rural contexts.

The differences between rural and urban faith landscapes explored in this chapter, including potentially lower levels of trust in faith leaders from LCFs, speaks to a disconnect between communities of faith and their faith leaders, not a disconnect between faith leaders and World Vision, for example. To know whether these same F&D methodologies are as effective in rural and urban contexts will require evaluating their impact on beneficiaries. What this analysis shows,

however, is that IFIOs are not reflecting on the differences between rural and urban contexts and the impacts they might have on their F&D work in such contexts.

This is reinforced once again by the inconsistency in key informants' reflections on this issue during interviews for this research project. While multiple key informants maintained their perceptions that their F&D methodologies were proving as effective in urban contexts as they are in rural ones, often the same key informants were highlighting the fact that the influence of LFAs and LCFs is more limited, or diluted, in fragile urban contexts in comparison to rural ones. As a result, LFAs and LCFs are one of many important and influential stakeholders in urban contexts.

The 2014/2015 Ebola outbreak reinforces the importance of understanding the differences between rural and urban landscapes and how they impact the effectiveness of humanitarian interventions; but is also re-emphasises the importance of knowledge production in this area. Campbell (2017) illustrates this through the example of population movement. While population movement was identified as a critical issue in the spread of EVD in 2014/2015 in West Africa, there was a lack of impetus to understand the drivers behind it. This lack of understanding led to ineffective humanitarian interventions, namely restrictions such as curfews, border control and quarantines. These humanitarian interventions reflect those implemented in countries all over the world in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. However, in the 2014/2015 EVD outbreak, these restrictions did not have the hoped impact. In fact, in many cities in West Africa, population movement increased. People moved back home to be, or die, with family and friends, people moved to the cities to access healthcare.

The responses to COVID-19, by government and the wide-reaching humanitarian sphere suggest that lessons learnt from the 2014/2015 EVD outbreak in West Africa have not been considered. Given the similarities between Ebola and COVID-19, many of which have been outlined in this thesis, it suggests that the impact of not learning from these lessons may result in similar consequences:

ineffective humanitarian interventions. While the data around the EVD outbreak in 2014/2015 does not relate directly to faith-inspired partnerships and programming, the above has shown that the same lack of understanding around the differences between rural and urban contexts and what this means for humanitarian interventions, that existed during the 2014/2015 EVD outbreak, were prevalent during COVID-19 responses in general, and the F&D space in particular. As the humanitarian sphere becomes increasingly aware of the fact that humanitarian crises are becoming increasingly intertwined with urban dynamics, there needs to be a better understanding of how to deliver effective humanitarian interventions in urban contexts, in general and in relation to F&D. To not scale up investment in knowledge production in this area risks repeating the same mistakes made in response to the 2014/2015 EVD outbreak in West Africa, and potentially again in response to COVID-19.

To learn from the 2014/2015 EVD outbreak in West Africa, and now the COVID-19 pandemic, the humanitarian sphere in general needs to scale up investment in urban programming generally, and in knowledge production specifically. This is reflected in the F&D landscape. There needs to be a better understanding of the differences between rural and urban contexts, and the faith landscapes respectively, as well as any context specificities, and whether these require adaptations in F&D methodologies in new urban contexts. To fail to learn these lessons risks repeating them, once again, in a future crisis.

Conclusion

Overall, the COVID-19 pandemic has reinforced the importance of continuing to invest, and scale up investment, in urban programming to ensure that responses consider the distinctive challenges and vulnerabilities, as well as sources of resilience, presented by diverse urban contexts. Through an F&D lens, this chapter has argued that part of this scaling up needs to include increased knowledge production around the differences between rural and urban contexts and what this means for the

effectiveness of humanitarian programming, including faith-inspired partnerships and programming, in urban contexts.

Some of this knowledge may exist in IFIOs through their staff who have diverse experiences of engaging with LFAs and LCFs in urban contexts in response to COVID-19 and other crises. However, there appears to be some organisational blindness, across the IFIO landscape, around whether these differences necessitate changes and adaptations to programming in these contexts. IFIOs have at best reflected to a limited extent on, or verified, what the differences are between rural and urban faith landscapes, or whether these contextual differences impact the roles LFAs and LCFs play in responding to crises in urban contexts and whether their F&D methodologies need to be adapted accordingly. This is reflected in the mixed, inconsistent and at times contradictory perceptions of key informants on these topics and their unquestioning reproduction of F&D methodologies tried and tested in rural contexts in urban ones.

This chapter has highlighted a lack of consensus across the F&D space around the role of LFAs and LCFs for humanitarian responses in fragile urban contexts and inconsistencies around organisation's approach to faith engagement in urban contexts. This suggests a problem with IFIO's external perceptions and their lack of experience in the urban environments. The confusion and lack of understanding around F&D urban programming suggests that IFIO's still see the urban setting through their rural-focus lens. They still want to engage with local faith leaders along the same lines that they would in rural contexts. Even those key informants who spoke about their adaptations of F&D methodologies, casting local faith actors as one of many influential stakeholders, were still working according to the same paradigm, based in rural contexts, that sees the value-add of engaging with LFAs and LCFs as their embeddedness and geographical proximity to affected communities.

Adaptations that cast faith leaders as one of many relevant stakeholders, even in a less privileged position, are based on the perception derived from experiences in rural contexts, that a more fragmented faith sector means less strong bonds between congregation members and faith leaders. However, this line of reasoning fails to reflect on, or question, whether the strong bond between faith leaders and their congregations can be formed through different processes beyond just physical proximity and faith leaders' religious monopoly. For example, the busy spiritual marketplace of many urban contexts, making them more diverse, means that individuals are making an active choice to attend one church or mosque over another. They could, if they wanted to, choose to attend another place of worship all together. Indeed, a key informant from WV DRC spoke of how in urban contexts, people often travel long distances across the city to attend their chosen church. This key informant highlighted this as a difference in the faith landscapes between rural and urban contexts:

'...in the city the people are not coming from one community. They're coming from across the cities. You see that? But in the rural area everyone who comes to this church from the surrounding villages, and it is walking distance. So, the beauty is you go to the church that you can walk there. Are you with me? So, you cannot go to a church that is 10 kms away. But my church office is 20 kilometres away, so every day I have to drive 20km to drive to my church office, every Sunday I have to drive my family 20km to go to church' (WVDRCPSZ2).

It is interesting that the above citation indicates that the geographical distance between the faithful and their chosen place of worship exemplifies less strong bonds between local faith leaders and their communities. However, the above citation does not reflect on whether, if an individual makes the effort to travel across the city to get to a place of worship, perhaps that indicates strong bonds between congregation members and their affiliated institutions and faith leaders. This may be because the key informants who participated in this research, based in IFIOs more used to working

in rural contexts, continue to work according to a rural-focused paradigm in which one of the distinctive value-add of working with local faith leaders is their geographical proximity to affected communities.

Although confirmation of this analysis would require speaking to LFAs in fragile urban and rural contexts, the implications are clear. In both the academic literature and in communities of practice understanding of humanitarian responses in urban contexts lacks critical analysis in general and in regard to faith-inspired programming. The framework through which key informants understanding of the effectiveness of F&D methodologies is formed remains rooted in rural contexts. Once again, this example suggests a lack of understanding of the differences between faith landscapes in rural and urban contexts and what this means for F&D responses to humanitarian contexts in urban settings. To overcome these challenges to more effective (faith-inspired) humanitarian responses in urban contexts the humanitarian sphere in general, and IFIOs in particular, need to scale up investment in knowledge production around the differences between rural and urban (faith) contexts and what this means for what they need to do to maintain the effectiveness of their (faith-inspired) humanitarian responses in urban contexts.

Conclusion: Can local faith-inspired partnerships and programming make International Faith-Inspired Organisation's (IFIO's) responses to humanitarian crises like COVID-19 more effective in fragile urban contexts?

This thesis has explored IFIO's F&D investments in local faith-inspired partnerships and programs in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The findings presented in Chapter Three show how IFIOs engaged with increased speed, breadth and depth with LFAs and LCFs in response to the primary and secondary impacts of COVID-19. This was reflected to some extent by the humanitarian sphere more generally. While the data collection period for this project was too early in the pandemic to assess the impact or success of these F&D investments, the scale and rapidity of IFIOs faith engagement itself is noteworthy. It suggests that across the humanitarian sphere, there is an increased awareness of the inextricable intertwinement of faith, religion and spirituality with humanitarian processes, and the potential value-add of faith engagement for more effective humanitarian responses. As a result, there is more of a willingness within the formal humanitarian sphere to engage with LFAs and LCFs to leverage the distinctive opportunities and mitigate the challenges they present for responses to crises. IFIO's F&D investments in response to COVID-19 draw on the public authority of faith leaders, the various forms of social, religious and spiritual capital, the human resources, the contextual knowledge, and the sustainability and reach of local faith networks.

As well as exploring IFIO's F&D responses to COVID-19, this thesis has also identified a number of important learnings to take forward for F&D responses to future crises. An important learning identified in Chapter Four is the importance of building 'glocal' networks, including IFIOs and LFAs

and LCFs, in times of peace and stability so that those networks are leverageable if and when a crisis hits. Several key informants from IFIOs detailed how their pre-existing local-international faith networks contributed to more effective humanitarian responses during the COVID-19 pandemic. As a result, tapping into local community networks should be a strategic priority for international humanitarian actors entering communities, to build trusting relationships with local actors. This learning is relevant to 'glocal' networks in general and faith networks in particular. Various key informants believed that 'glocal' faith networks had some distinctive potential value-add for responding to crises. The aim is that when a crisis hits, IFIOs have the channels of communication and mechanisms in place, to support LFAs and LCFs to respond to challenges facing their communities, bringing with them the various and distinctive resources they possess to the humanitarian table. Such local faith-inspired networks therefore have the potential to make the humanitarian responses of humanitarian actors, who have invested in such 'glocal' networks, more effective.

While the above learning is based on a strength identified by key informants reflecting on their experiences of responding to COVID-19, IFIOs F&D investments in fragile urban contexts presents a gap in understanding. This makes it difficult to assess whether IFIO's local faith-inspired partnerships and programming would make their humanitarian responses more effective in fragile urban contexts. IFIOs, especially within NOs, have a lot of knowledge around the differences and similarities between rural and urban contexts in general, and the faith landscapes therein specifically. However, there is a lack of joined up thinking around how these differences may impact the effectiveness of existing (F&D) humanitarian programs. As IFIOs, and international humanitarian actors more generally, are set to have to respond more frequently in urban contexts, there needs to be increased investment in urban programming, specifically around knowledge production. IFIO's perceive there to be significant differences between the (faith landscapes) of rural and urban contexts which have the potential to impact the effectiveness of existing F&D methodologies. It is

therefore vital, if IFIOs seek to leverage the potential value-add of local faith-inspired partnerships and programs for more effective humanitarian responses, that they work to understand how best to engage with faith, religion and spirituality, as well as LFAs and LCFs to respond to crises in fragile urban settings.

These findings together go some way to respond to the broad, far-reaching primary research question of this project: Can local faith-inspired partnerships and programming make International Faith-Inspired Organisation's (IFIO's) responses to humanitarian crises like COVID-19 more effective in fragile urban contexts? The COVID-19 pandemic has shown that IFIO's perceive local faith-inspired partnerships and programs as having the potential to make their responses more effective. This is evidenced by the increasingly diverse and meaningful way that IFIO's engaged with faith, religion and spirituality, as well as LFAs and LCFs, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Similarly, IFIO's ability to leverage their 'glocal' networks, including LFAs and LCFs, to continue to carry out localised faith-inspired programs, despite the constraints imposed on all involved due to the COVID-19 pandemic, was identified as a particular strength of their approach to F&D. IFIOs generally felt that their local faith-inspired partnerships and programs would continue to contribute to effective humanitarian responses in fragile urban contexts, although this was not a unanimous perspective. The variance of opinion around whether local faith-inspired partnerships and programming would make humanitarian responses to crises like COVID-19 more effective in fragile urban contexts suggests that IFIO's do not know whether their efforts will have had the desired impact in these contexts. Therefore, to be able to fully answer the primary research question of this thesis, particularly the focus on fragile urban contexts, more research and knowledge production needs to be done, by academics and/or with practitioners, to understand the differences between rural and urban contexts, including their faith landscapes, and whether this requires adaptations to ensure that local faith-inspired partnerships and programs can continue to make IFIO's response to humanitarian crises like COVID-19 more effective in fragile urban contexts.

Overarching reflections: IFIO's as sector leaders

This research project, responding to and deeply affected by the COVID-19 pandemic has explored the ways IFIO's engaged with faith, religion and spirituality, as well as LFAs and LCFs, for responses to COVID-19. The international focus of this project, enforced on it by the COVID-19 pandemic and the inability of the researcher to do in-country fieldwork with LCFs, has produced some overarching key reflections about the formal humanitarian sphere's approach to F&D and the role of IFIOs within it. Specifically, the COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the potential value-add, as well as some of the distinctive challenges, around local faith engagement for more effective humanitarian interventions. While engaging with LFAs and LCFs is not the sole remit of IFIOs, IFIO's experiences of engaging with faith, religion and spirituality during the COVID-19 pandemic has illuminated the potential leadership role for some IFIOs who have made significant previous investments in F&D.

The COVID-19 pandemic has shown that to some extent the humanitarian sphere has learnt lessons from failures to engage with faith, religion and spirituality for previous emergency responses through various shifts in the humanitarian sphere's approach to F&D. The humanitarian sphere was quicker to engage with faith, religion and spirituality than it had been during previous crises, and the humanitarian sphere's faith-inspired partnerships and programs have engaged with a broader range of sectors, starting to move beyond narrow and instrumental engagement for a more meaningful approach to faith engagement for more holistic humanitarian responses.

The COVID-19 pandemic has also witnessed a shift in that it is no longer just (I)FIOs, with a shared understanding of the role of faith, religion and spirituality in people's lives, who now acknowledge the potential value-add of engaging with LFAs and LCFs to respond to crises. The first research chapter of this thesis noted the rapid engagement of organisations such as the WHO and the CDC who engaged with faith, religion and spirituality early in the pandemic particularly to scale up preventative measures to limit the spread of the disease. This chapter also highlighted some 'secular' INGOs quick engagement with faith, religion and spirituality such as UNICEF. Many INGOs

have a tumultuous history with faith engagement, changing their minds on whether it was appropriate or useful to engage with LFAs and LCFs for humanitarian responses. As a result, it is evidently not appropriate to draw a binary distinction between IFIOs who engage with faith, religion and spirituality and 'secular' INGOs who don't.

Another 'secular' INGO who has seen shifts in their approach to F&D is OXFAM. The history of OXFAM, as an example of a 'secular' INGO, with faith, religion and spirituality reinforces the warning against the idea that faith-inspired partnerships and programs are the sole remit of (I)FIOs. IFIOs and INGOs relationships to faith, religion and spirituality can change over the organisation's lifetime. A key informant from an IFIO (DCA1) reflected on how OXFAM was very wary of engaging with faith actors once. However, they believed OXFAM had changed their position on this. Their increased willingness to engage with faith, religion and spirituality is evidenced by some of their publications exploring the roles of faith, religion and spirituality for responding to development and humanitarian challenges (Kirmani, 2012. Gingerich, 2017). Similarly, a participant in this research who works at OXFAM, highlighted the organisation's work with faith leaders, as influential community leaders, in several contexts where they can provide value-add to their projects (OXG1).

OXFAM has a long and interesting history of faith engagement. In the early 1970s, OXFAM was known for working predominantly with church-based organisations and was struggling to increase its engagement with government and 'secular' actors (Jennings, 2002:162). Indeed, the organisation's roots are in Quaker-Fabianism. OXFAM's history with faith, religion and spirituality is reflective of the humanitarian sphere more generally. It is often argued that humanitarianism has its roots in faith groups, but through processes of secular codification after the second world war became increasingly secular and reluctant to engage with faith, religion and spirituality (Barnett, 2012). So too did OXFAM move away from faith-inspired partnerships towards an increasingly secular modus operandi and reticence around engaging with faith, religion and spirituality.

OXFAM's history of faith engagement highlights the complexity of the F&D humanitarian landscape. Different organisations, both faith-inspired and 'secular' in nature, have different relationships, histories and current approaches to engaging with faith, religion and spirituality. As a result, to promote widespread investments in F&D for more effective humanitarian responses, it is important to engage not only with IFIOs but across the humanitarian sphere.

Similarly, it is not only 'secular' INGOs who have work to do to improve their faith literacy levels and gain experience of delivering faith-inspired programs. This thesis has highlighted the diversity of approaches within and amongst IFIOs in terms of F&D throughout, exploring how some IFIOs engage to greater or lesser extents with LFAs and LCFs. Similarly, key informants working in IFIOs have identified themselves that their organisation needs to go further to integrate F&D more systematically into their work. For example, in multiple interviews with WV Indonesia staff, key informants hoped that the COVID-19 pandemic would persuade their superiors to engage more systematically with F&D in the future (WVInRH4). Several key informants felt that integrating F&D into their COVID-19 response as part of COVER was unprecedented for WV Indonesia. However, it was also felt that WV Indonesia's F&D engagement in response to COVID-19 did not go far enough. Staff from WV Indonesia called for the organisation to come together at the start of a disaster to think more strategically about how to engage with faith leaders. It was highlighted that in WV Indonesia's response document that the specific role of faith leaders was not sufficiently explored (WVInRH3). It was suggested that in WV Indonesia specific documents there needed to be more specific guidance on who are faith leaders, what is their role, and how and why do they impact humanitarian processes (WVInRH4).

Some staff members working in F&D in WV Indonesia felt that the importance of engaging LFAs was not always sufficiently recognised by the NO (WVInRH1). It was suggested that in WV Indonesia, the focus tended to be on responding to people's basic needs, overlooking the roles that faith, religion and spirituality can play (WVInAD4). However, the COVID-19 pandemic is an example of a crisis that

requires a response beyond technical assistance. As a result, crises like the COVID-19 pandemic highlight the importance of a more holistic response, in which there is an important role for LFAs to play. Key informants felt that this needed to be reflected from the start of responses, engaging with the F&D team from the outset. Overall, a key learning from the F&D team at WV Indonesia, from their COVID-19 response, is that there needs to be elaboration around what are the strategic roles of faith leaders in Indonesia.

Evidently, engaging with faith, religion and spirituality is not the sole remit of IFIOs. Both 'secular' and 'faith-inspired' INGOs engage with LFAs and LCFs, to varying extents. Nevertheless, through conversations with key informants from IFIOs, it appears that 'secular' INGOs are, and are perceived to be, lagging behind IFIOs in terms of the breadth and depth of their F&D engagement. A respondent from Dan Church Aid suggested that while long-term development work has come a long way in terms of engaging with faith, religion and development, there is 'an extreme backlog of reservation [and] caution' as well as 'a lack of religious literacy that hinders donors to engage easily with [the] potential' that faith actors present for effective humanitarian action (DCA1). This may explain the apparent hesitancy for some humanitarian actors to engage with faith, religion and spirituality in practice to respond to COVID-19.

The increasingly varied and meaningful ways many IFIOs are engaging with faith, religion and spirituality in general to respond to humanitarian crises has seen F&D come to be perceived – by those within IFIOs and without - as their most defined contributions to humanitarian responses. For example, World Vision's CoH methodology is increasingly recognised, both internally and externally, as one of its most defined contributions to the humanitarian sphere. The organisation's internal awareness of the value-add of this methodology for responding to public health crises saw the World Vision partnership rapidly adapt their existing CoH methodology to respond to COVID-19. By March 2020, World Vision was already working to adapt CoH for COVID-19. The training module had been completed and shared. The module was field tested in WV DRC and World Vision Angola. The

CoH module was developed to be an additional module to support existing F&D training curriculum in the field. CoH for COVID-19 was developed as part of World Vision's broader Guidance for Faith Communities in which they identified five actions for faith leaders: protect their congregations, give accurate plan ahead by preparing continuity plan and ensuring social distancing measures are upheld, connect and care for their community, particularly those who are vulnerable, provide psychosocial support to families and wider community and providing spiritual nurture in the event of social distancing (World Vision, 2020).

However, the World Vision partnership is also perceived externally as a sector leader in terms of F&D. This was exemplified during the COVID-19 pandemic, when donors sought out World Vision NOs to deliver community-based programming with an explicit F&D dimension. For example, WV DRC participated in Global handwashing day, including faith leaders and community health volunteers. Global Handwashing Day is a celebration focused on handwashing, one of the key areas for preventing the spread of the disease. This was celebrated in the capital of the DRC in Kinshasa, in conjunction with Save the Children as part of a project responding to COVID-19 funded by Unilever. For the Unilever project, and for Global Handwashing Day, while Save the Children focused on the health-based perspective; strengthening the health system and working with health workers, doctors and nurses, WV DRC engaged and worked with faith leaders and community health volunteers at the community level.

Unilever's choice to fund Save the Children and WV DRC to carry out complementary but distinctive programs speaks to their respective (externally perceived) strengths. It indicates that World Vision is known for, and has evidence of, successful community-level engagement, specifically with LFAs and LCFs. While the World Vision partnership works with a range of stakeholders at the local level as part of their community-based approach, their F&D work is a significant and distinctive part of this. While many, if not most, INGOs have embraced localisation to varying extents, secular INGOs tend to engage narrowly, instrumentally or less with faith, religion and spirituality as explored above. There

is of course, huge variation in terms of F&D engagement across the humanitarian sphere, and within the IFIO landscape, but F&D activities tend to be concentrated in the work of IFIOs more than secular INGOs.

This joint program between Save the Children and WV DRC, suggests that while F&D investments are not the sole remit of FIOs, IFIOs are often perceived internally and externally, as having a potentially distinctive role to play in building faith-inspired partnerships and delivering faith-inspired programs in response to humanitarian crises.

Unilever's engagement with Save the Children and WV DRC, to deliver complementary but distinctive work streams, suggests that there this perceived distinction between IFIOs who engage meaningfully with F&D and INGOs who don't may become more entrenched. As the humanitarian sphere continues to recognise the relevance of faith, religion and spirituality for effective humanitarian responses, there is more of a willingness to fund F&D activities. As IFIOs are perceived to have experience and an advantage in delivering these activities, funders are more likely to funnel funding their way specifically for F&D engagement. The desire to engage more frequently with faith, religion and spirituality for humanitarian responses is welcome, as is the acknowledgement of the knowledge contained in some IFIOs around best practices for F&D. However, as has been explored above, engaging with LFAs and LCFs for more effective humanitarian responses is not the sole remit of IFIOs. Faith, religion and spirituality is intertwined with humanitarian processes, impacting the work of IFIOs and INGOs. Different IFIOs and INGOs engage with faith, religion and spirituality, as well as LFAs and LCFs to varying extents. It is therefore important that faith literacy is invested in by IFIOs and INGOs. Funders and donors therefore need to incentives local faith engagement widely, beyond just IFIOs, to include all international humanitarian actors.

This thesis explores the myriad of challenges and opportunities presented by faith, religion and spirituality's intertwinement with development and humanitarian processes. As a result, faith-inspired partnerships and programming require a high levels of faith literacy to navigate complicated

faith and humanitarian landscapes. The humanitarian sphere's backlog of reservation and caution around faith engagement, identified by the key informant above (DCA1), may be an obstacle for INGOs to improve faith literacy levels. For example, a key informant from OXFAM (OXG1) felt it was not their place to judge the messages of communities of faith or how they practice, unless they presented a protection issue. However even when messages from faith communities are in tension with human rights, the respondent from OXFAM felt that this was an issue of power and not about faith, religion or spirituality. These comments present a lack of understanding around how faith, religion and spirituality interact and intersect with power and humanitarian issues such as protection and human rights. While power is undoubtedly highly influential on faith-inspired narratives and how they are lived and embodied by faith actors, to frame the faith-inspired misinformation around COVID-19 as merely a problem of power overlooks its roots in faith, religion and spirituality. The humanitarian sphere has seen during the Ebola epidemic how failures to engage with the faith, religious or spiritual aspects of a crisis can lead to ineffective responses that do not lead to the desired behaviour change. It is therefore increasingly evident that to tackle faith-inspired narratives, for behaviour change that stops or slows down the spread of COVID-19, it is vital to engage seriously with faith, religion and spirituality.

This thesis, in particular Chapter Five, based in fragile urban contexts, has identified one context in which IFIOs do not appear to have an advantage in terms of F&D. The fifth research chapter of this thesis highlighted a lack of understanding around the differences between rural and urban faith landscapes and what this means for how to best engage with LFAs and LCFs in fragile urban contexts. Of course, reflecting on IFIO's identity highlights the fact that while they are faith-inspired, they are also development organisations. As a result, they may be subject to some of the same tendencies as secular organisations. For example, in this case perhaps, by virtue of their 'development' identities, some of the IFIOs engaged with for this research share some of myopic tendencies of secular organisations such as the concept of modernisation, that as countries, or in this case cities, modernise, faith is relegated more and more to the private sphere. As detailed in this chapter, key

informants from NOs situated in Africa felt that cities in countries like the DRC were becoming more aligned with western cultures. As a result, perhaps there is an underlying assumption that westernisation aligns with secularisation. Once again, at this point we come up against the inconsistencies of key informants' testimonies around the role of faith in urban contexts. While some key informants felt that faith was a less significant part of people's lives in urban contexts due to their increasing alignment with western cultures, others remained adamant that faith was just as important in urban contexts as in rural ones. Nonetheless, investing in knowledge production around urban programming, including the roles of faith, religion and spirituality, are clearly important for IFIO not just in terms of ensuring that their faith-inspired partnerships and programs are effective, but also to ensure that they balance their faith and development identities appropriately.

The above discussion highlights that faith literacy is not solely contained in IFIOs. Similarly, the relationships between IFIOs and INGOs and faith, religion and spirituality are context dependent. While knowledge around F&D is therefore available to all humanitarian actors, many IFIOs feel that currently they have higher levels of internal faith literacy than 'secular' INGOs. This perception is in part due to staff members of IFIOs more often being members of faith groups, religions and spiritual traditions. It was clear through discussions with staff working for IFIOs, both in recipient countries and in donor countries, that their religion, faith and/or spirituality was a key driving force in their work to help the most vulnerable. They were also forthcoming in invoking their faith, religion and/or spirituality as an important motivator in their work. That's not to say that a humanitarian's constellation of other identity markers don't also motivate them to promote human rights and improve the lives of people living all around the world. Similarly, it is important to note that while many people who work for IFIOs may be people of faith, this may also be the case for many people working for secular INGOs. Nonetheless, key informants from IFIOs were keen to emphasise the role their faith, religion and spirituality played in their work:

'...you know talking about myself, as a Christian I believe God is in control, in hard situations, you have your hard times, what I know is God is in control, it is a belief that can centre me. So, if something happens in World Vision... we do an event for staff, we do a spiritual nurture, spiritual nurture is kind of you can do something you can do your work with strength and your faith is key to your strength. By understanding the situation, it gives you strength. For myself, yes, I am a Christian, but how my Christianity influences me I believe God is control I believe there is hope for the time after this pandemic and I believe this is an opportunity to shake stuff up; people and to show love to people. So, I think it has a big influence certainly in our personal faith when I believe in, when I am Christian. I think it also happens in some of the staff. And why we are interested in the spiritual nurture of staff is because we believe personal faith will help them to do right in the situation' (WVInRH3).

'In Buddhism, the first of the perfections that we are supposed to cultivate is generosity so giving is very important for Buddhists, you know, if you're not doing it, you're not doing it right. So, that's one thing and yeah, its so ingrained we don't even talk about... we just do it, its just how were set up' (BGR1).

'Well, I mean its part of our mission for us to look after those affected by covid. We consider it to be an imp part of why exist. We exist to support those who are suffering' (CRS1).

'...essentially everything we do is because of our calling as a Catholic organisation and our commitment hasn't Catholic organisation to uphold the dignity of each and every person. So, I would say everything we do has a faith dimension' (CRSHD1).

Given that faith, religion and/or spirituality

‘...are at the core of the experience of the vast majority of communities facing crisis and, perhaps as crucially of the majority of national humanitarian agency staff that typically constitute 90 percent of the humanitarian workforce’ (Ager and Ager, 2011:465)

the motivation derived from faith, religion and/or spirituality presents a significant and distinctive resource for responding to humanitarian crises like COVID-19 from the local to the international levels.

Many IFIO’s who have experience of engaging with LFAs and LCFs and have invested in improving levels of faith literacy are perceived therefore, internally and externally, in a leadership role within the humanitarian sphere. A key informant from Dan Church Aid felt that this perceived role for organisations like theirs imbues them with an important role to ‘...articulate the comprehensive contribution by local Faith actors in a language and a format and the logic that is intelligible for let’s say a traditional donor’ and the wider secular humanitarian sphere (DCA1). The same key informant felt that this was a difficult task, involving patient advocacy. For Dan Church Aid, to overlook the unavoidable influence of faith, religion and spirituality on humanitarian responses is unprofessional. The important leadership role of IFIOs in promoting a more systematic engagement with faith, religion and spirituality across the humanitarian sphere not only ensures that LFAs and LCFs contributions to humanitarian responses are acknowledged but it may overcome the ‘complete underfunding’ of the F&D sphere (DCA1).

The COVID-19 pandemic opened ‘an advocacy window of opportunity’ (DCA2) for IFIOs to ensure that humanitarian donors are no longer blind to, or overlook, the contributions of LFAs and LCFs. Dan Church Aid, in response to their F&D engagement during the COVID-19 pandemic took up a ‘soft advocacy theme’ (DCA2), building on their international platform, to speak with EU bodies, UN agencies, governments and their constituencies, as well as other IFIOs and INGOs, to increase the visibility of LFAs in humanitarian planning, implementation and funding processes.

They identified this leadership and advocacy position they had adopted in the F&D space, as a distinctive role for IFIOs in the humanitarian sphere (DCA2), one that could be taken up by more IFIOs for greater impact. A key informant from Dan Church (DCA2) Aid highlighted an example of how IFIO's advocacy for greater visibility of localised faith engagement impacted OCHA's COVID-19 response. As mentioned already, OCHA's first global humanitarian response plan did not mention the roles of faith, religion and spirituality, or LFAs and LCFs. Dan Church Aid, most likely alongside other IFIOs, 'bombarded them with advocacy and criticisms' which led them to include a section in a revised version around the role of LFAs and LCFs for responding to COVID-19 (DCA2).

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