

Engaging Religious Communities, Leaders and Organisations:
Rationale, Policy and Practice at Vision Hope International



© Vision Hope International
<http://www.vision-hope.org>

Written by Ekkardt A. Sonntag, PhD
2018

Content

ENGAGING RELIGIOUS COMMUNITIES, LEADERS AND ORGANISATIONS: RATIONALE, POLICY AND PRACTICE AT VISION HOPE INTERNATIONAL.....	1
CONTENT	2
1. INTRODUCTION	3
2. ENGAGING RELIGIOUS COMMUNITIES - AREAS OF POTENTIAL	5
<i>Religion's Relevance to Life and Society.....</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>Religious Communities Increase Presence and Reach.....</i>	<i>7</i>
<i>Religious Communities as Social Welfare Actors</i>	<i>8</i>
<i>Religious Communities are Dialogue and Reconciliation Partners.....</i>	<i>9</i>
<i>Religious Communities are Donors and Supporters</i>	<i>11</i>
3. THE MIDDLE GROUND APPROACH	12
<i>Human Dignity</i>	<i>12</i>
<i>An Ethic of Reciprocity: The Golden Rule</i>	<i>14</i>
<i>Positive Peace as Part of Human Flourishing</i>	<i>15</i>
<i>Three-Dimensional, Value-Based Communication, Conceptualization and Identity.....</i>	<i>16</i>
4. MANAGING RISKS - KNOWING THE DIFFICULTIES, CHOOSING PARTNERS, MITIGATING PROBLEMS	17
5. BUILDING CAPACITY - RELIGIOUS LITERACY, INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE	20
6. CONCLUSION	22
7. ALL CITED SOURCES.....	23

1. Introduction

Vision Hope International (VHI) is an international humanitarian aid organisation founded in 2002 with its headquarters in Emmendingen, Germany. VHI strives to integrate relief, rehabilitation, and development to holistically promote long-term peace in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region. This means VHI is dedicated to the advancement of human flourishing by empowering individuals, driven by the belief in inherent human dignity.

VHI is formally set up as an international, non-governmental, humanitarian help and development organisation (NGO) in Germany and gratefully looks back on a history of support from faith-based donors and co-operation with faith-based partners on the field. With this in mind, VHI advocates engaging religious communities (RCs), religious leaders (RLs) and faith-based organisations (FBOs) in international development cooperation and strives to develop expertise in how to do so.

The policies put forward in this paper are based on VHI's experience in cooperation with faith-based donors and partners over the years. They are also a response to insights and experience by the wider international development community, academic work, and field experience.¹

Engaging religious communities in relief, rehabilitation and development work is challenging. However, the recognition of the influence and peace-building capacity of RLs and FBOs leads to the realization that it is a challenge worthy of great effort in order to achieve VHI's development goals. The main reasons for an intentional inclusion of and cooperation with RCs, RLs and FBOs fall into the following categories.

1. Relevance to life and society:

Religion is central to the life of most people VHI serves and works with in the MENA region. Religious communities, leaders and organisations influence decision making, local and regional politics and other areas of life on a daily basis.

2. Presence and Reach:

Religious communities are traditionally rooted and present among the marginalised and needy. By cooperating with them, VHI hopes to increase its effectiveness.

¹ See for example Deepa Naraya, 'Voices of the Poor: Can Anyone Hear Us ?' (The World Bank, 31 March 2000), <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/131441468779067441/Voices-of-the-poor-can-anyone-hear-us>; Séverine Deneulin and Bano Masooda, *Religion in Development: Rewriting the Secular Script* (Zed Books, 2013); Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), *Religious Communities as Partners for Development Cooperation* (Bonn, 2016); U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), 'U.S. Strategy on Religious Leader and Faith Community Engagement', accessed 31 May 2018, <https://www.usaid.gov/faith-based-and-community-initiatives/us-strategy>; United Nations Development Programme, 'UNDP Guidelines on Engaging with Faith-Based Organizations and Religious Leaders', 2014, http://www.undp.org/content/dam/undp/documents/partners/2014_UNDP_Guidelines-on-Engaging-with-FBOs-and-Religious-Leaders_EN.pdf; United Nations Population Fund, 'Culture Matters: Lessons from a Legacy of Engaging Faith-Based Organizations', 2008, http://www.unfpa.org/upload/lib_pub_file/813_filename_Culture_Matter_II.pdf.

3. Social Welfare Actors:
Religious communities have always been active in social welfare and have influence to address the sustainable development goals (SDGs) of the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development² more effectively than others.
4. Dialogue and Reconciliation Partners:
Religious communities are potential partners for interreligious and intercultural dialogue which can foster mutual understanding and lead to peaceful, dignified and flourishing life.
5. Donors and Supporters:
Religious communities are donors and supporters of VHI's work, driven by values emerging from their respective beliefs and traditions, such as the pursuit of peace and human flourishing, and an ethic of reciprocity (also known as the Golden Rule of caring for others' needs like for one's own).

There are risks associated with the cooperation with religious communities. Religious players in the development process can show tendencies to proselytize or disrespect non-negotiable standards of equality and dignity (e.g. through exclusionary programming that marginalizes beneficiaries based on religion, gender, political affiliation, sexual orientation, citizenship etc.). VHI sees the pitfalls and strives to grow in expertise on how to avoid and mitigate them. This is done mainly through careful selection, implementation of values within the framework of VHI's middle ground approach, separation of religious and development activities where necessary and investment in democratic and inclusive dialogue on issues that might remain controversial.

VHI is committed to a high level of reflection on its work as well as playing an active role in relevant discussions in the development and relief community. The following chapters describe in more detail how and why VHI purposefully engages religious communities, leaders and organisations. This serves the dual purpose of identifying VHI's position and practice in this area and joining a global discussion VHI believes to be central for the next years of value-based development cooperation, striving to achieve the SDGs.

² 'SDGs: Sustainable Development Knowledge Platform', accessed 8 October 2018, <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdgs>.

2. Engaging Religious Communities - Areas of Potential

Religion's Relevance to Life and Society

Contrary to what is felt in large parts of many western societies, Religion is central to the life of the vast majority of people on earth. An approximate 80 percent of all humans identify as belonging to a religion.⁴ The MENA region is an area where religion's influence on everyday life is significant. Islam as the predominant religion takes on many different forms throughout the region and shapes public and private life, culture and politics. This means that any values-based, receptor-oriented and holistic approach to relief, rehabilitation and development must acknowledge the centrality of religion, simply because of its relevance to almost every individual in the benefitting communities.

"A values-based development policy which takes the individual seriously also needs to take that individual's worldview seriously."

Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)³

For much of the 20th century, the western influenced aid community assumed that development will lead to a decrease in the influence of religion. This so-called "secularist assumption" is now widely believed to have failed.⁵ Religion remains central to the life of a vast majority of people and nothing suggests this will change. This means that development work should not be viewed as part of the path to a more secularized world, but rather that religion appears as part of the hard landscape on the way to sustainable development.

Religion shapes the identity and self-understanding of the vast majority of VHI's beneficiaries and must be taken into account as an aspect of their selfhood and well-being. It also shapes the identity of many of VHI's local and international staff. As such, VHI takes religion seriously as a source of motivation and as a framework for the work of VHI staff and partners. This, very importantly, also includes secularist, agnostic and atheist worldviews. Different religions and secular world views must be acknowledged and respected so that work relationships will stand on a "middle ground basis" (see below, Part 3) and will be fruitful and sustainable.⁶

The centrality of religion to life in VHI's beneficiary communities means that religion also potentially influences all levels of decision- and policy making. Religious leaders and groups might influence policies directly. Political leaders might be influenced by religion or religious constituents as they make decisions. Religion opens a space for discourse on many societal issues. Western influenced relief and development organisations need to learn how to inhabit this space, relate to religious stake holders, and be part of the discourse. This seems to be an indispensable prerequisite for effectively delivering humanitarian aid.

In developing countries, religious leaders and faith-based organisations frequently enjoy greater trust and confidence by the population than political leaders and parties, which are

³ Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), *Religious Communities as Partners for Development Cooperation*, 11.

⁴ 'The Global Religious Landscape | Pew Research Center', accessed 8 October 2018, <http://www.pewforum.org/2012/12/18/global-religious-landscape-exec/>.

⁵ Cf. Deneulin and Masooda, *Religion in Development*, 15.

⁶ See also Rick Love, 'VHI Communications Manual', 2018.

viewed as corrupt and not representative.⁷ A World Bank Study found that “poor people trusted religious leaders more than politicians, because they listened to them, unlike the latter. Also, poor people rated faith-based organizations much higher than state institutions.”⁸

This is relevant for the MENA region as VHI’s field of engagement, too. In Yemen and Syria, for example, state structures are weakened by years of armed conflict. Even in stable countries such as Jordan the legitimacy of the regime is derived from a religious basis (the Hashemite descendance of the King). This shows that religion plays a larger role in individual and corporate identity of the MENA communities than any other force or worldview (e.g. humanism etc.). Religion as a source of trust and legitimacy must be recognised and harnessed in order to meet beneficiary communities on eye-level, in a holistic way, as the SDGs of the 2030 agenda call us to.

This does not preclude that religious actors are obviously also subject to distrust in parts of the MENA region, especially where they appear in the form of foreign-backed actors in active conflicts (e.g. the Houthi in Yemen). Part 4 of this publication will discuss ways to effectively navigate the difficult path between trusted, good-willed local religious leaders and communities, and foreign-backed terrorist groups.

“Religious leaders and faith-based organizations often serve as decision-makers at the community level and oversee development and humanitarian efforts in their communities. By working in partnership with such leaders and designing programs with the religious context in mind, U.S. foreign assistance efforts can become more effective and sustainable.”

U.S. Department of State, Office of Religion and Global Affairs⁹

“..[R]eligion permeates peoples’s conception of wellbeing..”

Dr Séverine Deneulin, Senior Lecturer in International Development, University of Bath¹⁰

The ability to live out one’s religion has been proven to be an important part of beneficiaries’ non-material needs. When the World Bank first started assessing poverty according to beneficiaries’ subjective needs, the inability to practice religion – e.g. due to no means of transportation, destroyed holy places, lack of funds to participate in particular rites, even absence of a shielded space for private acts of devotion – was strongly perceived as a form of poverty.¹¹ These needs have often been

ignored by secular development actors. If, for example, a community prioritises rebuilding a place of worship over rebuilding a hospital, their voice needs to be heard as much as the donors’ voices who might prioritise differently. VHI believes that much will be gained even by discerning these voices and giving them room; and by building up inter-religious and inter-cultural competencies (see part 5) to negotiate the different needs and perspectives in order to achieve sustained development with maximal buy-in from all stake holders.

⁷ Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), *Religious Communities as Partners for Development Cooperation*, 11.

⁸ Deneulin and Masooda, *Religion in Development*, 43.

⁹ ‘U.S. Strategy on Religious Leader and Faith Community Engagement’, n.d., <https://www.state.gov/s/rga/strategy/>.

¹⁰ Deneulin and Masooda, *Religion in Development*, 43.

¹¹ Cf. Deneulin and Masooda, 42ff; see also Naraya, ‘Voices of the Poor: Can Anyone Hear Us ?’

Religious Communities Increase Presence and Reach

Engaging religious communities can increase the impact of our aid efforts in many ways.

Religious communities permeate beneficiary societies in ways no other actors can. They are frequently present where other organisations have left due to political or safety concerns. Engaging them gives access to regions that would otherwise be out of reach. This is particularly true for the active conflict zones of Syria and Yemen. It is VHI's priority to reach the neediest, wherever they are; in many cases the cooperation with religious communities and organisations is instrumental to achieving this goal.

"FBOs and RLs are part of nearly every community on earth. They not only make significant contributions to development, but add value to United Nations efforts in a number of ways. In many countries, FBOs and RLs are the dominant civil society actors."

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)¹²

Religious communities not just expand the geographical reach of humanitarian organizations, they also usually stay present over sustained periods of time. They have the potential to positively influence the resilience and hope of communities in much more sustainable ways than many other welfare actors. It is part of VHI's profile to soften the lines between relief, rehabilitation and development.¹³ In this light, VHI aim at engaging religious communities for all stages of its help efforts with the aim to increase the sustainable presence and availability of aid.

Engaging religious communities also means to broaden the analytical basis¹⁵ of VHI's assessment processes and thereby increase the potential for effective, transformational aid. Religious actors are frequently not tied into the cluster and sector activities of the wider development networks. Their efforts are frequently not coordinated with others in the development community, which can lead to redundant programming and inefficient resource distribution. VHI commits to consciously taking religious communities, leaders and organisations into focus during our assessments and monitoring. This means building rapport with religious players and investing in capacity building in the areas of inter-religious and inter-cultural literacy for staff (see below, part 5, Building Capacity -). VHI hopes to act, wherever possible, as mediator between the secular development community and religious actors in sector and cluster activities in order to increase the coordination of efforts.

"Pay sufficient attention to religion in your context analysis and organizational scan."

Knowledge Centre Religion and Development(KCDR), Netherlands¹⁴

Engaging religious communities and leaders frequently means to establish a connection with transnational networks. These are organisational networks (such as church denominations or Islamic schools of thought), but also networks of shared world views, traditions, convictions

¹² United Nations Development Programme, 'UNDP Guidelines on Engaging with Faith-Based Organizations and Religious Leaders', 6.

¹³ For an overview, see 'The New Way of Working', OCHA, 10 April 2017, <https://www.unocha.org/story/new-way-working>.

¹⁴ Knowledge Centre Religion and Development (KCRD), *Practitioner's Guide to Religion and Development* (Utrecht, 2011), 26, <https://issuu.com/stichtingoikos/docs/religionanddevelopment>.

¹⁵ See Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), *Religious Communities as Partners for Development Cooperation*, 9.

and allegiances. For example, consider a program relying on training for local sheikhs to promote protection measures for women and children. Such a program might produce materials that can be used in different settings elsewhere with greater credibility and precision if the religious community is, for example, affiliated to the same religion or school. Sensitivity to the trans-national networks in which religious communities are organised can increase efficiency of similar efforts if it is mainstreamed into assessments, grant and proposal writing, programming and implementation.

Religious Communities as Social Welfare Actors

Faith communities, leaders and organizations have historically engaged in providing public welfare for centuries. Worldwide, they have been among the biggest providers of relief and development services, a fact often ignored by the western based development community. Their history, experience and historically grown position in relief and aid work calls for committed cooperation with them wherever possible.

“Historically, many faith actors have extended vital social services to local communities, especially humanitarian relief, health and education.”

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)¹⁶

It was seen recently that religion can be an effective means to emotionally process grief and disaster. A joint report by Tearfund, CAFOD, Christian Aid and Islamic Relief Worldwide portrays the role of faith leaders in the 2014 Ebola crisis in West Africa. In the context of this crisis, relief actors provided the affected communities with facts about the growing crisis but could not effectively instil hope and a will to persevere. Christian and Muslim faith leaders, however, were able to replace the negative messaging of the relief agencies with messages of hope through prayers, vigils, liturgies and songs. In similar circumstances, religious actors can also help to give words to grief that cannot easily be sourced in secular contexts and will not likely be provided by secular relief providers. This strengthens resilience by offering an emotional counterweight to the negative messaging about the disaster at hand, through the content of religious traditions, texts and rituals.

¹⁶ United Nations Development Programme, ‘UNDP Guidelines on Engaging with Faith-Based Organizations and Religious Leaders’, 4.

“Government messaging on the cruel medical realities of Ebola had sought to speak to people’s intellect as a means of stimulating change and the social mobilisation that followed sought to reason with people about the need for change, but neither of these approaches created a tipping point of behaviour change; rather, these messages served to push care of the sick and traditional approaches to burials underground.

Through the use of religious texts and with the leadership of the faith community, biomedical messages which appeared harsh at first and which brought fear were given religious context and delivered with compassion in a way that provided hope and encouragement. Fundamentally, many of the messages were unchanged, but the means through which they were delivered spoke to the belief that people had in a compassionate and loving God, which provided reassurance and hope.”

Joint Report by Christian Aid, Catholic Agency for Overseas Development, Islamic Relief, and Tearfund, on Faith Leaders in the Ebola Crisis¹⁷

VHI identifies dignity as a main value for its vision and mission (see part 3). Dignity is a central value of many religions, particularly in Islam and Christianity, two of the predominant religions of the MENA region. VHI contends that motivation to strive for the dignity of all people is always useful for relief and development, regardless whether it flows out of secular humanism or religion. To that end, it will be helpful to grow among staff and partners basic religious literacy and dialogue abilities in order to tap into the synergy present between religious leaders, communities and wider society. This will mean that staff, partners and stake holders will not look at religious texts, philosophies and practices with suspicion, but with increased respect, especially if they have the ability to evoke hope, motivation and perseverance, and the value of unconditional human dignity.

Religious communities continue to be first among the actors who “Lend a voice to the poor and vulnerable.”¹⁸ Religions offer a source of values. Care for the marginalised is often one of those values. For this reason, they need to play a role in any value-based development efforts.

Religious Communities are Dialogue and Reconciliation Partners

Religion has influence on social cohesion. It is a powerful platform to promote acceptance, respect and commitment to a peaceful and fruitful middle ground between people from different backgrounds. Religion can, however, also work as a force against cohesion. VHI believes that where religion is part of the problem, it should also be part of the solution. Activating the potential of religious communities to overcome conflict that is a direct

“While religion is accused of bringing conflicts, it has also been an invaluable instrument of peace.”

Dr Séverine Deneulin, Senior Lecturer in International Development, University of Bath¹⁹

¹⁷ Christian Aid et al., ‘Keeping the Faith: The Role of Faith Leaders in the Ebola Response’ (London, 2015), 49.

¹⁸ Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), *Religious Communities as Partners for Development Cooperation*, 12.

¹⁹ Deneulin and Masooda, *Religion in Development*, 1.

result of actions of the very same religious players is a difficult task. While VHI believes it can be done, it is clear that a high degree of skill, religious literacy, inter-cultural wisdom and experience is needed. All of those are often underexposed in western development agencies and developing them will generate great value in many relief and development contexts.

"It is not dialogue that poses risks, it is the refusal to engage in dialogue."

German Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)²⁰

Interreligious dialogue happens in four forms namely as dialogue of..

- 1) **life**: Exposure to each other's views and practices by living in proximity to each other,
- 2) **action**: Exposure to others' views and practices through,
- 3) **theological exchange**: Intentional dialogue on theological topics,
- 4) **religious experience**: Exposure to others' religious practice.²¹

As VHI engages mostly Muslim, Christian and secular stakeholders in relief and development efforts, these four modes of dialogue play different roles. Dialogue of life and action is important in as far as most of VHI's work potentially implies various degrees of life and work together between adherents of religions and non-religious mindsets. In these areas, VHI's middle ground approach is the guiding principle (see part 3). The areas of theological exchange and religious experience are less significant at first sight. However, theological exchange might happen at the grassroots level in any situation, e.g. where religious festivals such as Ramadan give occasion to certain aid events and programs, which might also prompt faith discussions among participants as well as staff. These situations are often foreign to westerners but normal to many or most Middle-Easterners and North-Africans. VHI's vision is to grow in all international and local staff the religious literacy to not let themselves be estranged by religion as it is freely and frequently discussed in the public sphere all across the MENA cultures. Similarly, we aim to foster in our staff healthy and informed discretion when it comes to religious experiences. Consider the above-mentioned Ebola situation; if certain religious texts, prayers and rituals were able to infuse hope into parts of the affected communities, it is desirable that a middle ground is established where secular staff can still appreciate the comfort emanating from those practices. Equally, adherents of the religion in question should respect non-religious postures and accept them as non-threatening. In and around VHI's projects, this is the middle ground envisioned.

"We are generally much more aware of the way religion is abused than of its potential to promote positive values."

Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ)²²

It will be described below (part 3) how peace is a holistic concept and its comprehensive nature, which goes beyond the absence of conflict, is rooted in Christian, Muslim and secular traditions. It is one of VHI's core values to promote this kind of peace, and working towards

²⁰ Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), *Religious Communities as Partners for Development Cooperation*, 18.

²¹ See Deneulin and Masooda, *Religion in Development*, 164; See also Michael L. Fitzgerald and John Borelli, *Interfaith Dialogue: A Catholic View* (Orbis Books, 2006).

²² Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH, 'Expertise. Values and Religion', accessed 21 June 2018, <https://www.giz.de/expertise/html/19064.html>.

this goal in cooperation with religious actors seems the most effective way to achieving it.

Religious Communities are Donors and Supporters

Religion is also a defining framework for parts of the donor community. The German BMZ cites the over 50-year-long cooperation with the German churches as a positive example.²³ Religious communities, actors and organisations have often acted on the imperative to care for the vulnerable and needy emanating from their respective traditions and scriptures. What the BMZ has experienced in its cooperation with churches in Germany is also true of religious actors from other traditions elsewhere in the world. They, too, feel “close to the ‘poorest of the poor’” and have a deep sense of responsibility towards the extremely underprivileged.²⁴

In VHI’s particular geopolitical area of work, the MENA region, a challenge for religious donors is trust. For example, some donors might view the region biased by fear of religious and political extremism and hesitate to donate. Others might be dissuaded by the seemingly unpredictable consequences of western involvement in the region. Through the “3D approach” described in part 3 we hope, among other things, to diffuse the scepticism between religious players in the donor community and create a middle ground of trust for cooperation, not just with local communities but also with donor communities. VHI is and always has been generously supported by Christian organisations, private donors and churches who are driven by values such as holistic peace and support for human flourishing, and who believe in active, efficient and professional humanitarian aid work as an expression of their faith. We are grateful for these co-operations because they are deeply value-based and hence characterised by sustainable synergy and cooperation.

²³ See Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), *Religious Communities as Partners for Development Cooperation*, 25.

²⁴ Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), 25.

3. The Middle Ground Approach

VHI adopts neither a particular religion nor a particular concept of secularism as its framework. Instead, VHI strive towards a middle ground approach that allows us to harness the potential that, in our case, secular, Muslim and Christian actors bring to the table.

As discussed earlier, the so-called “secularist assumption” is now widely recognized to have failed. A part of this assumption has been that religions present static and uniform world views.

As a consequence, if a religion shows traits detrimental to development, this was rarely expected to change since religions were assumed to be defined by unalterable, historic and traditional teachings. In reality, however, religious communities adapt their convictions and traditional views to new realities much more readily than thought. The middle ground approach is built on the hope that Christian, secular and Muslim actors can recognize common values and adapt their views and teachings to the challenges they are faced with in emergency situations and find a mode of fruitful cooperation.

“Incorporating language that appreciates the nuances of religion and religious sensitivities is sometimes critical to the creation of spaces in which there is understanding and support for programme objectives, with a solid understanding of each other’s constraints.”

United Nations Populations Fund (UNFPA)²⁵

The middle ground approach is inspired at its center by the following four documents.

1. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, especially the concept of human dignity.²⁶
2. The Red Cross/Crescent Code of Conduct, with its practical ethical guidance reflecting human dignity.²⁷
3. Donna Hicks’ book, *Dignity: Its Essential Role in Resolving Conflict*.²⁸
4. *A Global Ethic*, summarized in the golden rule.²⁹

From those, two concepts emerge that are essential to our approach: dignity and the ethic of reciprocity.

Human Dignity

The concept of human dignity runs through the Declaration of Human Rights as well as the RCRC Code of Conduct as a guiding principle. Donna Hicks has argued that it is a core value in conflict resolution.³⁰ For VHI’s purposes, dignity serves as a main guiding value that informs policy and practice because it is pertinent to the situations we work in.³¹ In most of those

²⁵ United Nations Population Fund, ‘Culture Matters’, 13.

²⁶ ‘Universal Declaration of Human Rights’, 6 October 2015, <http://www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights/>.

²⁷ ‘Code of Conduct of the ICRC’, International Committee of the Red Cross, 15 February 2018, <https://www.icrc.org/en/document/code-conduct-employees-icrc>.

²⁸ Donna Hicks, *Dignity: Its Essential Role in Resolving Conflict*, n.d.

²⁹ ‘Global Ethic: About the Global Ethic | Parliamentofreligions.Org’, accessed 26 April 2018, <https://parliamentofreligions.org/parliament/global-ethic/about-global-ethic>.

³⁰ Hicks, *Dignity: Its Essential Role in Resolving Conflict*.

³¹ See also the central role of dignity as a starting point to the BMZ’s “Charter for the Future”, Iris Christmann

contexts human dignity is compromised in one or several ways. Those include situations where people are:

- denied access to basic nutrition
- denied access to basic education
- denied access to sanitary conditions during birth
- denied access to political or social participation
- denied access to gainful employment
- denied equal pay for equal work
- denied access to basic law enforcement

In the face of these challenges, how can people from secular, Christian and Muslim backgrounds together think about human dignity?

Secular Humanist Thought

Persons rooted in secular humanist thought might think of human dignity in terms of the concept of human flourishing. This thinking is rooted in western philosophy since Aristotle.³² It is not an abstract philosophy, however, but directed towards what is “good” in the sense of a concretely, functionally well-lived life worthy of the human existence. In that sense it ascribes to humanity a certain, unqualified dignity that does not leave room for the above-mentioned ways of oppression.

Christianity

Persons with Christian background might connect to the idea of dignity via the created-ness of man in the image of God (*imago dei*):

“Man in his entirety is the viceroy of the earth. He is to be to the earth what Yahweh is to the entire universe ... Man is made for filial fellowship with the divine and intended to express the family-likeness in righteousness, holiness and integrity ... All men and women ... are thus created. The doctrine of the image of God is the foundation for human dignity and for the biblical ethic.”³³

The *imago dei* idea categorically rules out violence and injustice against humans since humanity reflects the dignity of the transcendent creator whose very essence is dignity and worthiness.

Islam

The concept of human dignity is also found in Islam; namely in the idea of humans as God’s

and Christian Mentzel, *Charter for the Future* (Bonn: Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), 2015), 13–17.

³² Richard Kraut, ‘Aristotle’s Ethics’, in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Edward N. Zalta, Summer 2018 (Metaphysics Research Lab, Stanford University, 2018), <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2018/entries/aristotle-ethics/>; ‘Humanism as a Belief System | The Pluralism Project’, accessed 11 June 2018, <http://pluralism.org/religions/humanism/humanist-tradition/humanism-as-a-belief-system/>.

³³ S.B. Ferguson and J.I. Packer, eds., *New Dictionary of Theology*, electronic edition (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 2000), 329.

representatives or stewards on earth. “Muslims fully agree with the dignity and worth of all people. The creation account in the Qur’an says, ‘Behold your Lord said to the angels, I will create a viceregent (Khalifah) on earth’ (Qur’an 2:30). This Khalifah is a representative, steward or deputy.”³⁴

Similar to Christian thought, the Qur’anic text suggests that Man bears a certain reflection of the dignity and worth of God himself since he is a divinely appointed viceregent or steward on earth. Again, this idea in its essence closes the space for any tolerance of human rights violations and forbids any undermining of human dignity.

The idea of human dignity has great potential to create middle ground between world views. In a similar way this is achieved by the ethic of reciprocity or so-called “golden rule.”

“According to the teachings of Islam, each individual is a Khalifah to God. Muslims in particular must strive to adhere to and advance God’s will by establishing a society that reflects human dignity and justice.”

The Oxford Dictionary of Islam³⁵

An Ethic of Reciprocity: The Golden Rule

The “golden rule” or “ethic of reciprocity” is an ethical principle that can be found in the three world views concerning VHI’s work in the MENA region. It is also found in or adopted by many other religions and schools of thought and was a common denominator for the “Global Ethic” document that included leaders and representatives from over 40 different religions.³⁶

In Christian tradition, the concept is expressed in Jesus’ words: “In everything, do to others what you would have them do to you.” (Matthew 7:12)

In the Hadith (Sahih Muslim, a Hadith collection widely accepted as authentic throughout the Sunni Muslim community) the following saying is found: “None of you has faith until he loves for his brother or his neighbor what he loves for himself.” (Sahih Muslim, Book 1, Hadith 72)

Secular humanism also widely espouses the idea. Secular humanists also “try to embrace the moral principle known as the ‘Golden Rule’, otherwise known as the ethic of reciprocity, which means we believe that people should aim to treat each other as they would like to be treated themselves – with tolerance, consideration and compassion.”³⁷

The Golden Rule complements the idea of human dignity as a more practical notion that can inform practice and decision making at virtually any level. Together they constitute a powerful tool-set to establish a middle ground for aid cooperation.

These values are not categorically espoused for all purposes by all three worldviews VHI deals with, and much less by all sub-groups or individuals they consist of. In principle, however, they are reliably compatible with all three world views and, given that worldviews and religions are not static, they can be expected to help create middle ground for aid

³⁴ Love, ‘VHI Communications Manual’.

³⁵ John Esposito, *The Oxford Dictionary of Islam* (Oxford, 2003), 169 (as cited in Comms paper 6f, June version).

³⁶ ‘Global Ethic: About the Global Ethic | Parliamentofreligions.Org’.

³⁷ ‘The Golden Rule - Think Humanism’, accessed 11 June 2018, <http://www.thinkhumanism.com/the-golden-rule.html>.

cooperation. The task at hand is not to create comprehensive unity between religions and cultures, but to find a middle ground for the particular purposes of VHI's work: serving the most vulnerable in the MENA region through emergency aid, reconstruction and development.³⁸

Positive Peace as Part of Human Flourishing

A stated purpose of VHI is to bring peace to the MENA region, a part of the world marked by strife and unrest more than many others. How can one envision peace in the volatile contexts we work in? VHI strives for "positive peace", defined as a peace that is more than the absence of conflict; namely an environment where people can thrive on the basis of functional relationships through which conflicts can be solved in amicable ways.

It is a difficult task to actively envision this sort of peace in the volatile societies of the MENA region, but the pursuit of human dignity and an ethic of reciprocity lead the way. In VHI's areas of engagement, the quest for peace presents itself in many facets, in an intergroup perspective between Islam and Christianity. It stands out that both Christian and Muslim conceptions of peace actually quite clearly incorporate principles of mutuality, dignity and human flourishing.

Peace in Islam

In Islam, peace is more than the absence of conflict. Peace and dialogue expert Mohammed Abu-Nimer describes the concept of *Salaam* saying: "Peace in Islam is understood as a state of physical, mental, spiritual, and social harmony, living at peace with God through submission, and living at peace with one's fellow human beings by avoiding wrongdoing. Islam obligates its believers to seek peace in all life's domains. The ultimate purpose of Qur'anic revelation for Muslims is to create a peaceful and just social order."³⁹

Peace in Christianity

Similar observations can be made in Christianity. The Christian concept of peace in Christianity rests on the Old Testament idea of *Shalom*, a Hebrew word deriving from the same Semitic root as *Salaam*. "The biblical concept of *Shalom* includes human flourishing in all dimensions of life. As Nicholas Wolterstorff says, "In shalom, each person enjoys justice, enjoys his or her rights. There is no shalom without justice. But shalom goes beyond justice. Shalom is the human being dwelling at peace in all his or her relationships."⁴⁰

VHI believes the potential in these concepts of peace is best harnessed using a well thought through strategy when it comes to communicating and conceptualizing humanitarian work between the three world views (Christian, Muslim and secular). This approach is described in the following.

³⁸ In this sense the phrase 'middle ground' is slightly more fitting to what VHI does than the more frequently used notion of 'common ground.' Dignity and reciprocity can still be a basis for co-operation even when partners feel that commonalities are scarce otherwise..

³⁹ Mohammed Abu-Nimer, *Nonviolence and Peacebuilding in Islam: Theory and Practice* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2003), 69.

⁴⁰ Nicholas Wolterstorff, *Until Justice and Peace Embrace* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987), 69.

Three-Dimensional, Value-Based Communication, Conceptualization and Identity

VHI works towards increasing middle ground for more efficient cooperation between Christian, Muslim and secular actors for peace and human flourishing in the MENA region. VHI conceptualizes and communicates its work and identity in a 3-dimensional or 3D way. This means to communicate goals, challenges and realities in a transparent manner and in a way that is equally intelligible to persons of Muslim, Christian and secular backgrounds. The values of peace, reciprocity and human flourishing help to achieve this because they offer a conceptual framework for VHI's identity and work, enabling communication into all three directions.

On a practical level, the 3D approach will have very practical implications for VHI's work at different stages of the project cycles. In the early stages of the cycle it means that assessments are conducted with particular sensitivity to the voices of the three distinct world-views. The aim is to discern their needs as well as solutions they might bring to a given situation.

At the later stages, programming is then designed, presented and executed in a way that its benefits will be easily discernible from all three angles and highest possible buy-in is achieved from all three groups.

Finally, the monitoring and evaluation processes show particular sensitivity to how well middle ground has been established and used during the project.

VHI's values lead to radical advocacy for equal employment. The 3D approach also leads to offer employment opportunities to people of equal qualification independent of religion or worldview, as long as those individuals adhere to the values mentioned here and described more fully in the VHI identity document. Positions at VHI will therefore be open to applicants from all faiths and world-views, including all levels of seniority and areas of responsibility.

4. Managing Risks - Knowing the Difficulties, Choosing Partners, Mitigating Problems

Working with religious communities for relief, rehabilitation and development has great potential but also bears certain risks. Cooperation with religious actors can only be truly beneficial if the risks are acknowledged and a strategy exists to mitigate them.

Acknowledging the Difficulties

Examples of negative religious influence on development may include the Catholic Church's prohibition of condoms for religious reasons even in the midst of HIV/Aids pandemics. In the MENA region extremist Islam has far reaching influence and might undermine basic gender equality and child protection principles. Secularist groups might do harm by categorically marginalizing faith-based groups and withholding help and support, out of fear and suspicion of groups that hold to extremist ideologies.⁴¹

The list of how religion can impact development negatively is open-ended. It was noted above that religions are adaptable in the positive sense and might adjust to new societal problems in helpful ways. By the same token, however, they also have the potential to produce irrational and harmful actions and decisions. VHI's decision to engage religious communities means that our projects will benefit from the positive effects of such collaboration, but also be exposed to the negative ones. A strategy is therefore needed not just to harness the positive potential but also to hedge in risk and mitigate problems.

Considering the many areas of potential and the holistic nature of religion and its role in human identity among the people VHI works for, it cannot be an option to avoid religious communities or the topic of religion out of fear of difficulties. Rather, VHI uses two angles to control difficulties in cooperation with religious communities: Selection and values as guiding principles; and compartmentalization and dialogue as mitigation strategies.

Selection and Values

VHI will work with partners who fulfill certain criteria and overlap with our vision and mission.⁴² That means to seek out partners who have the potential to work in a transformational way towards relief and development goals that infuse significant hope into the target communities. In this respect, partners will be characterized by having the "Competency and Capacity" as well as "Network and Reach"⁴³ in order to work towards shared goals. Most importantly, however, they in agreement with VHI's values.

VHI subscribes to the RCRC Code of Conduct and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and chooses partners who take seriously the humanitarian imperative and principles of equality. Our work is marked by a holistic effort, inspired by the SDGs of the 2030 agenda, to

⁴¹ Cf for example the division between muslim and secular women's rights groups in Pakistan that saw secular actors siding with the army on a crackdown against a madrasa that led to a bloodbath: Deneulin and Masooda, *Religion in Development*, 165–67.

⁴² See our partner organisation Violet Syria for an example of a well put vision statement incorporating the notion of faith: 'About – Violet Organization', accessed 27 June 2018, <https://violetsyria.org/en/about/>.

⁴³ See these and other selection criteria used by BMZ: Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), *Religious Communities as Partners for Development Cooperation*, 18.

integrate relief, reconstruction and development work. Human dignity is a guiding principle for our work and we expect our partners to match our commitment to this value. It is the focus point in our work with religious partners and provide continued direction in the cooperation.

Compartmentalization and Democratic Dialogue

Religious communities and faith-based organizations in the MENA region frequently combine welfare activities with religious or political activities and might even have ties to military groups. In the past, western development agencies have restricted involvement to secular-minded organizations with shared political views. This has led to missed opportunities and marginalization of communities who hold potential for transformative work, but were excluded from international aid networks because of their overt religious identity.

VHI's middle ground approach suggests that shared values should be the starting point. As far as middle ground can be established around the RCRC principles and the value of dignity, potential partners should not be categorically excluded because of aspects of their identity that do not touch upon the envisioned cooperation.

This might, however, in certain situations entail a need to set boundaries and compartmentalize cooperation. If there is the danger of undesirable mixing of religious and welfare activities by a certain community, the instruments at VHI's disposal are separation of activities either by time, or space, or both. VHI-supported programming can then be implemented by a faith-based partner at a certain time and place under the condition that religious activities that might stand in contrast to our values (e.g. proselytizing, activities that disrespect principles of equality etc.) cannot take place at the same location and / or time.

Dr Séverine Deneulin, Lecturer for International Development at the University of Bath, UK, argues that religion is holistically intertwined with the identity of its practitioners. She therefore states that selective cooperation is not possible. In practice, VHI will have to be selective in order to meet compliance criteria and avoid supporting projects or groups that do not adhere to VHI's values. However, Deneulin's argument offers insights that inspire VHI's mitigation strategy for cases where cooperation becomes problematic. She suggests that if, for example, a religious community decides that based on their faith abortion should be illegal even in cases of rape and incest, this decision should not be overruled by external development agents. However, it should

"Many religious communities are already engaged in activities countering violent extremism. Their participation is instrumental, especially in conflict areas and fragile states: communities that are not included in dialogue and peace processes can actually become more vulnerable to violent extremism."

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)⁴⁴

be assured that the decision a) is reached by way of extensive discourse in the public sphere with wide participation of members of the community, and b) that it should be reviewed regularly. This avoids the danger of a religious elite forcing doctrinally based decisions onto the majority of the community against their will and to their detriment. Practically, this means that VHI will encourage among staff and partners a sensitivity to democratic discourse as a

⁴⁴ Esposito, *The Oxford Dictionary of Islam*, 169 (as cited in Comms paper 6f, June version).

way forward on contentious issues, inserting knowledge and expertise where appropriate, listening and learning with respect and commitment to the common good.

5. Building Capacity - Religious Literacy, Intercultural Competence

As a consequence of the policies outlined so far, VHI sees the need to build capacity in religious literacy and intercultural competence in the following ways.

Build religious literacy

It is clear from the preceding discussion that harnessing the potential of engaging religious communities will require increased sensitivity, knowledge or – in short – religious literacy⁴⁵ in VHI's staff and partners, especially concerning Christian, Muslim, and secular humanist positions.

Religion is often seen as a part of culture. This is true from a certain perspective and culture and religion are often found to be inextricably intertwined. However, interaction with religious communities goes beyond aspects of culture. Religion, in contrast to culture, points to the transcendent as a source for world-view, convictions and motivations. It is not necessary to affirm or deny the aspect of transcendence, but it is important to acknowledge it, since it is the point of origin for the identity of the members of the community. Equal acknowledgement must be given to the contention that the transcendent does not exist or is irrelevant (i.e. secular, agnostic, and/or atheistic worldviews.)

"[S]ecular development practitioners today cannot do their jobs well without a basic understanding of the perspectives and work of faith organizations...This understanding will enhance the quality of programs and help practitioners gain the support and engagement essential for success, and also enable them to avoid pitfalls now too often obscured by lack of knowledge and active misunderstanding."

Katherine Marshall and Marisa Van Saanen (World Bank)⁴⁶

VHI's middle ground approach rests on the contention that a fruitful middle ground between religious and non-religious communities and individuals can be found; namely around values such as human dignity, flourishing, and the Golden Rule. This approach is incompatible with a dismissive secularist denial of the transcendent or divine. It is equally incompatible with a proselytist posture that tries to force acceptance of the divine. The middle ground is best preserved and used when transcendental motivation and orientation, as well as its rejection, is respectfully acknowledged and not criticized.

Religious literacy training will therefore aim to foster this respectful openness. This includes understanding of the relevant concept(s) and grasp of terms and language to express them in a three-dimensional way, i.e. between adherents of Islam, Christianity and non-religious backgrounds.

Within the framework of religious literacy, VHI also endeavors to train programming and implementing staff in key beliefs and concepts that are relevant for their work. For example, Islamic modes of almsgiving might be relevant in certain contexts. The Catholic position since

⁴⁵ Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), *Religious Communities as Partners for Development Cooperation*, 9.

⁴⁶ Katherine Marshall and Marisa Van Saanen, *Development and Faith: Where Mind, Heart, and Soul Work Together* (The World Bank, 2007), 306, <https://doi.org/10.1596/978-0-8213-7173-2>.

the second Vatican Council towards relief work and cooperation with Muslim organizations might be helpful in others. Christian concepts of God as the transcendent source of forgiveness can help in yet other situations. VHI is aiming at developing a modular and flexible training toolbox that will build capacity in this respect. VHI will also seek cooperation with other organizations that are investing in this kind of training and commit to sharing materials and resources on an open-source basis.

While religion goes beyond culture due to its transcendent reference points, it is also a part of culture. VHI aims at building capacity in staff and partners to understand cultural factors at play in the development cooperation between religious groups. This means investing into training on socio-cultural issues as shame and honor, guilt and fear, gender roles, concepts of space, time and others. The aim here is to build up a basic confidence in all staff and partners to reflect on these issues as they arise in and around VHI's work and impart the ability to minimize their disruptive aspects and maximize their productive potential. When a conflict arises in the context of programming with religious communities, staff should be equipped to discern behavior and motivation coming out of religious teaching, cultural code or political pressures and be able to speak into the situation in an informed, de-escalating manner.

Knowledge management

As VHI begins to engage religious communities with a higher degree of intentionality and reflection, this means to walk down a path less travelled by development actors in the recent past. Apart from capacity building in the area, VHI will work towards effective knowledge management measures. This means foremostly three things; namely (1) to document VHI's walk and experience in this topic in regular assessments, review the data and let it continually influence and shape policy and practice; (2) to organize workshops and events on the topic of engaging religious communities in order to give space for staff and partners to be informed as well as to process and share their own experience; (3) to make data, knowledge products and events as openly and widely accessible as possible in order to become a hub for the discussion in the wider development community.

6. Conclusion

Engaging religious communities for relief, reconstruction and development has many advantages. For humanitarian organizations, it offers possibilities such as extending the reach and presence of work to otherwise unreached communities. Engaging religious actors frequently means cooperating with groups that have longtime experience with social welfare and are deeply rooted in local culture and networks. It means to take seriously the realities of the vast majority of persons living in the Middle-East and North Africa, as their lives are intensely interwoven with religious thought and practice.

VHI has from its inception worked with religious communities and secular actors and over time built up experience in doing so. Recognizing this experience as human and social capital, VHI has formulated the middle ground approach around the values of dignity, an ethic of reciprocity and peace in the comprehensive sense of human flourishing.

Going forward, VHI endeavors to live out this part of its corporate identity by conceptualizing, communicating and executing all efforts in a 3-dimensional way to engage Muslim, secular and Christian stakeholders in the MENA region. In doing so, VHI is aware of the dangers and risks this approach entails. As cooperation intensifies and the beneficial effects of religious actors to VHI's work grow, the potential for harm through arbitrary actions that might undermine basic values such as equality and personal freedom also increases. VHI is trying to minimize those risks through careful selection of partners and stringent enforcement of values.

This document is a step towards building the capacity and growing VHI's expertise in the area of engaging religious actors. VHI will continue to build religious literacy in the organization's circle of influence and make its experience available through knowledge products and workshops. This includes as open as possible dialogue on the topic of how religious communities, leaders and organizations can best join together in achieving transformational change and hope for the poor, marginalized and oppressed in the MENA region.

VHI strives to be a peace building actor in a region marked by strife. Committed to a middle ground, 3-dimensional approach, VHI cooperates with Christian, secular and Muslim actors who are willing and able to join in VHI's endeavor for long-term, holistic peace. Standing in the void between the three world-views will not always be easy. But it is the approach that does most justice to the realities VHI works in and will benefit most the needy and vulnerable throughout the MENA region VHI is committed to.

7. All Cited Sources

- 'About – Violet Organization'. Accessed 27 June 2018. <https://violetsyria.org/en/about/>.
- Abu-Nimer, Mohammed. *Nonviolence and Peacebuilding in Islam: Theory and Practice*. Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2003.
- Christian Aid, CAFOD, Tearfund, and Islamic Relief Worldwide. 'Keeping the Faith: The Role of Faith Leaders in the Ebola Response'. London, 2015.
- Christmann, Iris, and Christian Mentzel. *Charter for the Future*. Bonn: Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), 2015.
- 'Code of Conduct of the ICRC'. International Committee of the Red Cross, 15 February 2018. <https://www.icrc.org/en/document/code-conduct-employees-icrc>.
- Deneulin, Séverine, and Bano Masooda. *Religion in Development: Rewriting the Secular Script*. Zed Books, 2013.
- Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH. 'Expertise. Values and Religion'. Accessed 21 June 2018. <https://www.giz.de/expertise/html/19064.html>.
- Esposito, John. *The Oxford Dictionary of Islam*. Oxford, 2003.
- Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ). *Religious Communities as Partners for Development Cooperation*. Bonn, 2016.
- Ferguson, S.B., and J.I. Packer, eds. *New Dictionary of Theology*. Electronic edition. Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 2000.
- Fitzgerald, Michael L., and John Borelli. *Interfaith Dialogue: A Catholic View*. Orbis Books, 2006.
- 'Global Ethic: About the Global Ethic | Parliamentofreligions.Org'. Accessed 26 April 2018. <https://parliamentofreligions.org/parliament/global-ethic/about-global-ethic>.
- Hicks, Donna. *Dignity: Its Essential Role in Resolving Conflict*, n.d.
- 'Humanism as a Belief System | The Pluralism Project'. Accessed 11 June 2018. <http://pluralism.org/religions/humanism/humanist-tradition/humanism-as-a-belief-system/>.
- Knowledge Centre Religion and Development (KCRD). *Practitioner's Guide to Religion and Development*. Utrecht, 2011. <https://issuu.com/stichtinggoikos/docs/religionanddevelopment>.
- Kraut, Richard. 'Aristotle's Ethics'. In *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, edited by Edward N. Zalta, Summer 2018. Metaphysics Research Lab, Stanford University, 2018. <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2018/entries/aristotle-ethics/>.
- Love, Rick. 'VHI Communications Manual', 2018.
- Marshall, Katherine, and Marisa Van Saanen. *Development and Faith: Where Mind, Heart, and Soul Work Together*. The World Bank, 2007. <https://doi.org/10.1596/978-0-8213-7173-2>.
- Naraya, Deepa. 'Voices of the Poor: Can Anyone Hear Us ?' The World Bank, 31 March 2000. <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/131441468779067441/Voices-of-the-poor-can-anyone-hear-us>.
- 'SDGs: Sustainable Development Knowledge Platform'. Accessed 8 October 2018. <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdgs>.
- 'The Global Religious Landscape | Pew Research Center'. Accessed 8 October 2018. <http://www.pewforum.org/2012/12/18/global-religious-landscape-exec/>.
- 'The Golden Rule - Think Humanism'. Accessed 11 June 2018. <http://www.thinkhumanism.com/the-golden-rule.html>.

- 'The New Way of Working'. OCHA, 10 April 2017. <https://www.unocha.org/story/new-way-working>.
- United Nations Development Programme. 'UNDP Guidelines on Engaging with Faith-Based Organizations and Religious Leaders', 2014.
http://www.undp.org/content/dam/undp/documents/partners/2014_UNDP_Guidelines-on-Engaging-with-FBOs-and-Religious-Leaders_EN.pdf.
- United Nations Population Fund. 'Culture Matters: Lessons from a Legacy of Engaging Faith-Based Organizations', 2008.
http://www.unfpa.org/upload/lib_pub_file/813_filename_Culture_Matter_II.pdf.
- 'Universal Declaration of Human Rights', 6 October 2015. <http://www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights/>.
- U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID). 'U.S. Strategy on Religious Leader and Faith Community Engagement'. Accessed 31 May 2018.
<https://www.usaid.gov/faith-based-and-community-initiatives/us-strategy>.
- 'U.S. Strategy on Religious Leader and Faith Community Engagement', n.d.
<https://www.state.gov/s/rga/strategy/>.
- Wolterstorff, Nicholas. *Until Justice and Peace Embrace*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987.