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Navigating Changing Winds

Contributions and Achievements of the Dutch Knowledge Centre for Religion and Development

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The Knowledge Centre Religion and Development (KCRD) was established in 2005. It was initiated by Christian development organizations operating in an increasingly secularized environment, also affecting their own identity and mode of operation. Creating a multi-religious platform, Muslim and Hindu organizations were involved from the start, although their orientation and scope was different from traditional development organizations.¹ The KCRD aims to contribute to international development by collecting and disseminating information and knowledge on the role of religion (religious resources); promoting an open attitude and empathy toward the role of religion (religious sensitive approach); stimulating reflection on the meaning of religion for international development; developing and offering methodologies for the preparation, implementation, and evaluation of policies with a greater focus on religion; building coalitions between non-governmental and religious organizations; and delivering a well-informed contribution to the public and political debate about the meaning of religion in the public domain.² These aims and subsequent actions were carefully grounded on practical experience as well as research, yet the KCRD also needs to be understood in a broader context of dynamics around development and religion.

The aim of this article is to summarize the contributions and the achievements of the Knowledge Centre Religion and Development in expanding and deepening the awareness, knowledge, and integration of religion in development policies and programmes.

¹ The organizations that have been involved in the KCRD over the years are: ICCO cooperation, Cordaid, Islamic University of Rotterdam, SEVA, Edukans, Mensen met een Missie, Islamic Relief, Oikos, DCMO.

² See the KCRD website www.religion-and-development.nl.

It gives an account of an experience of learning by doing, of trial and error. Perhaps the biggest challenge in this regard was how to engage people in religion and development rather than by presenting them only with theories about the subject. However, in the context of a secularized Western European society, it seems almost impossible to take a so-called insiders' perspective on these matters. While this article is to a large extent descriptive, it draws from somewhat more conceptual and critical perspectives on the power dynamics between this insider/outsider question, between the pragmatism of practice and the underlying political dynamics.³ The article is based on document analysis and intimate knowledge of the KCRD and its journey through the author's role as a researcher on religion and development and her involvement as a programme advisor and coordinator at the KCRD between 2012 and 2016. Although the first paragraph starts at the beginning of the journey, the article is not entirely chronological but tries to thematically address the achievements and contributions, as well as the challenges, faced by the KCRD.

Tailwind for Religion

Perhaps a bicycle ride is a telling metaphor for the KCRD's journey. Every child in the Netherlands is introduced to cycling at an early age. Parents and grandparents teach their offspring how to ride their bikes with patience and practice, trial and error. The KCRD was in many ways a means of navigating the changing religious and developmental landscape of the Netherlands and broader Western Europe. By the late 1990s, it became clear that in the Netherlands, as a result of secularization, the space for addressing matters of religion in the public domain had become rather narrow.⁴ Gradually, the rich and multi-layered landscape of religious organizations in the Netherlands changed.⁵ As a result, Christian development organizations in particular had to reposition themselves to continue to be relevant to the Dutch government and the donor community, and gain new constituencies in a secularized general public.⁶ At the same time, these organizations were still and continued to be part of the transnational,

³ I aim to develop this critical perspective elsewhere, together with Ton Groeneweg who is policy officer for Religion and Development with Mensen met een Missie.

⁴ See Lisette van der Wel, "Integral Development: Religion and Development Cooperation in the Netherlands," *Religion and Development: Ways of Transforming the World*, ed. Gerrie ter Haar (London: Hurst and Co., 2011).

⁵ James Kennedy, "Looking beyond the Church: The Religious Crisis of Dutch Public Life during the 1960s," *Journal of Religion in Europe* 5:4 (2012), 452-83.

⁶ James Kennedy and Jan Zwemer, "Religion in the Modern Netherlands and the Problems of Pluralism," *Bijdragen en Mededelingen betreffende de Geschiedenis der Nederlanden*, 125:2/3 (2010), 237-68.

historical networks of churches, missions, and religiously inspired social movements around the world. Seen against this background, the KCRD was as much a response to these changing landscapes as it was a vehicle for engagement with religion that suited this changed context better. It required patience and practice, trial and error, to address religion in a relevant, constructive and critical manner in the context of development.

On its cycling journey, the KCRD encountered headwinds, yet it started out with a tailwind when in 2005 the then Minister for Development Cooperation Agnes Van Ardenne stated that “we . . . should put religion back on the policy map.”⁷ By that time, new questions around religion had emerged that were linked to the global and domestic concerns with religious conservatism, fundamentalism, and terrorism. Van Ardenne was committed to counter this, because when “we do not use (culture and religion) for peace and prosperity, others will misuse them for war and personal gain.”⁸ It resulted in a policy dialogue on religion and development between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Dutch development NGOs.⁹ Academic research had paved the way for the KCRD long before it started its journey. As early as 1998, the Protestant and Catholic development organizations ICCO and Cordaid had established an endowed chair at the Institute of Social Studies in The Hague in cooperation with the World Council of Religion and Peace. Scholar of Religion Gerrie ter Haar, who held the chair on Religion, Human Rights and Social Change from its inception until her retirement in 2011, played an important role in paving the way for academic research and professional reflection and in realizing new institutional arrangements such as the KCRD. In her inaugural lecture in 2000, Ter Haar had underlined the relevance of studying religion in relation to human rights by pointing at religious conflicts and violence around the world and the emergence of political Islam.¹⁰ Based on her long experience in working on and with African religious leaders, churches, and communities she time-and-again

⁷ Agnes van Ardenne-Van der Hoeven, “The Outstretched Hand,” Speech given at the Cordaid, ICCO and ISS Conference on 7 September 2005 in Soesterberg, <http://parlis.nl/pdf/bijlagen/BLG6489.pdf>.

⁸ The political winds were supportive. Early in the new millennium, several activities were organized involving experts, policy makers, and researchers. In 2005, this resulted in the launch of the Knowledge Forum on Religion and Development Policy, alongside the establishment of the Knowledge Centre Religion and Development, which was exclusively NGO-based.

⁹ The policy dialogue took place in the context of a Knowledge Forum on Religion and Development Policy. The forum was a joint venture of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and nine NGOs: Cordaid, ICCO, Kerk in Actie, Hivos, IKV Pax Christi, Oikos, Seva, Prisma, and CMC Mensen met een Missie. It was launched in concordance with the KCRD, but eventually became part of the KCRD when the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs ceased structural participation in a dialogue on religion and development.

¹⁰ Gerrie ter Haar, *Rats and Cockroaches and People Like Us: Views of Humanity and Human Rights* (Rotterdam: Erasmus, MC: University Medical Center Rotterdam, 2000), <http://hdl.handle.net/1765/30880>.

emphasized that religion was first and foremost part of the practices, ideas, and networks of most people around the world.¹¹

The KCRD has made invaluable contributions to address religion in the context of development in the Netherlands that have not gone unnoticed internationally. It has contributed to addressing religion in the context of development policy and practice, which is remarkable in particular in light of the observation that religion was almost entirely ignored in development until 1999.¹² However, researchers have also rendered discourses on religion in the context of development problematic because of the specific constructions of religion put forward.¹³ I mention two in particular. First of all, the emphasis on a positive role for religion in development responds to an increasingly influential public debate in which religion is emphasized as hampering, conservative, or inducing conflict. As such it contributes to an understanding of religion as either good or bad, which fails to escape a dominant secular frame of religion.¹⁴ Second, the tendency to focus on those aspects of religion that are tangible and visible has been noted, often centralizing so-called faith-based organizations and religious leaders.¹⁵ Both problems reveal an underlying tendency toward the instrumentalizing of religion for development purposes that prevents a more substantial engagement between religious and secular approaches. Being well aware of this critique, the Knowledge Centre Religion and Development had to navigate these challenges, which was in many ways a process of learning by doing. After all, theories do not teach one how to ride a bike.

¹¹ Gerrie ter Haar and Stephen Ellis, "The Role of Religion in Development: Towards a New Relationship between the European Union and Africa," *European Journal of Development Research* 18:3 (2006), 351-67; Gerrie ter Haar and Stephen Ellis, "Religion and Development in Africa," Online Research Paper, 2004, <https://openaccess.leidenuniv.nl/bitstream/handle/1887/12909/ASC-071342346-174-01.pdf?sequence=2>.

¹² Kurt A. Ver Beek, "Spirituality: A Development Taboo," *Development in Practice* 10:1 (2000), 31-43.

¹³ Ben Jones and Marie Juul Petersen, "Instrumental, Narrow, Normative? Reviewing Recent Work on Religion and Development," *Third World Quarterly* 32:7 (2011), 1291-1306.; Philip Fountain, "Myth of Religious NGOs, Development Studies and the Return of Religion," *International Development Policy | Revue internationale de politique de développement* 4:1 (2013), 9-30. Brenda E. Bartelink, *Cultural Encounters of the Secular Kind: Religious and Secular Dynamics in the Development Response to HIV/AIDS*, PhD thesis, 2016, http://www.rug.nl/research/portal/files/30171759/Complete_thesis.pdfnull.

¹⁴ See also J. Haynes, *Introduction to International Relations and Religion* (Harlow, England: PearLongman, 2007).

¹⁵ The tendency within international development contexts to emphasize those dimensions of religion that are visible and tangible, as Jones and Petersen have stated, suggest that research on faith-based organizations in development has been done against the background of a dominant secular discourse on religion. Consequently, as Fountain has argued, a "myth of religious NGOs" has been constructed in the field of development that has contributed to a perceived deepened dichotomy between religion and the secular. See Jones and Juul Petersen, "Instrumental, Narrow, Normative?"; Fountain, "Myth of Religious NGOs."

High Ambitions

The Knowledge Centre Religion and Development was established with academic grounding in a positive political climate to address religion in development.¹⁶ Christian development organizations ICCO and Cordaid started the NGO-based centre in close collaboration with smaller organizations – which included Muslim, Hindu, and migrant development organizations. Its first aim was to raise awareness “that religion is important” in development and to counter the dominant narrative in which religion was mainly seen as a stumbling block.¹⁷ This fed in to a range of follow-up questions that will be introduced in this section.¹⁸

The first is the question of whether and how religions offer alternative understandings of development on which an “integral development” approach could be developed. This was explored through Hindu,¹⁹ Muslim,²⁰ and African Christian²¹ perspectives on development.²² Kenyan theologian Philomena Mwaura, for example, argued that “transformation” should replace development, opening up to including Christian spiritual or “divine” processes of transformation that

¹⁶ In the phase between 2003-2006, Cordaid, ISS, Seva, IUR, and Oikos prepared the KCRD. After its launch in 2005, the KCRD commenced its activities in 2006 with Cordaid, Islamic University of Rotterdam (IUR), Seva, and Oikos. The Institute of Social Studies (ISS) was connected through the close collaboration with the endowed chair Professor Gerrie ter Haar. ICCO was involved through its role in the endowed chair as well as in the earlier mentioned Knowledge Forum. In 2011, the KCRD continued its activities while ICCO, Edukans, Islamic Relief, DCMO, and Mensen met een Missie joined the KCRD, and IUR withdrew as a participant.

¹⁷ Van der Wel, “Integral Development.”

¹⁸ See Louke van Wensveen, “Transforming Development: Exploring Approaches to Development from Religious Perspectives,” Conference Report, 2008, http://www.religion-and-development.nl/documents/publications/transforming_development.pdf.

¹⁹ <http://www.religion-and-development.nl/documents/publications/lecture%20khanna%20hindu%20perspective-def.pdf>.

²⁰ <http://www.religion-and-development.nl/documents/publications/lecture%20mulia%20muslim%20perspective.pdf>.

²¹ <http://www.religion-and-development.nl/documents/publications/lecture%20mwaura%20christian%20perspective.pdf>.

²² Integral development created space for alternative understandings and practices of development for which many suggestions and examples were offered during the conference. Perhaps due to time constraints and other more mundane factors that prevented further conceptualization and grounding in empirical research, integral development came with its own limitations. This suggests a harmony that ignores complicated questions, fields of tension, (potential) conflicts, and power differences between actors in the transnational social field of development. See Ton Groeneweg, “All Religions are Equal,” Blogpost on Religion Factor, <https://religionfactor.net/2015/02/09/all-religions-are-equal-but-some-religions-are-more-equal-than-others-part-one/>; and Bartelink, *Cultural Encounters*.

produce development as a result.²³ Dr Chander Khana, presenting a Hindu perspective on development, spoke about Mahatma Gandhi. He narrated a story of Ghandi asking a Hindu couple who had lost their son in a Muslim-Hindu conflict to raise an orphaned Muslim boy as a Muslim. Khana argued that plurality is deeply challenging – requiring not only peaceful coexistence, but full recognition of the inner logic and consistency of a particular world view without any desire to cast it against or subsume it under a worldview that is seen as better. The notions of transformation and plurality have been important notions guiding the KCRD’s work since then.

Second – perhaps inevitably after arguments like Khana’s – this also led to a more critical stance toward secularism and secular claims of modernity, progress, and development. The notion of multiple modernities – allowing for Muslim²⁴ or Hindu²⁵ versions of modernity (alongside others) – was adopted while a narrow secular conception of development was further questioned.²⁶ Critical reflection focused on development approaches and the dominance of rational, economic models in development and the lack of reflection on this in the Netherlands and broader Western Europe in particular.²⁷ “Western” development thinking was equated with an economic perspective on development, characterized by words such as goal orientation, accounting, and evaluation. This mode of self-reflection was coined with the KCRD motto: “No outreach without inreach.” Along this line, the secular bias in development was further unpacked through evaluating fears of proselytism as well as claims of neutrality and universality

²³ See Philomena Njeri Mwaura, “Alternative Vision for Transforming Development: Perspectives from Christianity with Particular Reference to New Christian Expressions in Africa,” Unpublished lecture delivered on 15 October 2007 in Soesterberg, The Netherlands, <http://www.religion-and-development.nl/documents/publications/lecture%20mwaura%20christian%20perspective.pdf>; Chander Khana, “The Hindu Perspective,” Unpublished lecture delivered on 15 October in Soesterberg 2007, The Netherlands, <http://www.religion-and-development.nl/documents/publications/lecture%20khanna%20hindu%20perspective-def.pdf>.

²⁴ <http://www.religion-and-development.nl/documents/publications/islam%20en%20moderniteit.pdf>.

²⁵ http://www.religion-and-development.nl/documents/publications/hindoeisme%20en%20moderniteit%20_nl.pdf.

²⁶ The concept of Multiple Modernities was developed by sociologist Shmuel N. Eisenstad to offer an alternative for the classical sociological understanding of modernity based on one type of western-European linear process, by conceptualising diverse (and sometimes divergent) cultural programmes that all shape and are shaped by modernity. See Shmuel. N. Eisenstadt, *Comparative Civilizations and Multiple Modernities* (Leiden: Brill, 2003).

²⁷ This was particularly visible in two conferences organized in 2006 and 2007. In the 2007 conference, entitled Transforming Development, participants coming from various contexts and regions in the world shared their experiences and perceptions of how religion, values, and inspiration were ignored in the context of development relations with “Western” organizations. Reflections from the conference as well as the overall discourse of the KCRD are addressed more extensively in Van der Wel, “Integral Development.”

underlying dominant development approaches.²⁸ In its focus on developing alternatives and a more inclusive understanding of development, alongside critical approaches to the study of religion and secularism, the KCRD aimed to create a space for both insiders' perspectives as well outsiders' perspectives on religion and its roles, meanings, and contributions to development. While the general critique was that insiders' perspectives on religion are overlooked in secular thinking, it was argued that outsiders' perspectives (among which secular ones) are important and valuable in deepening and broadening the entanglements between religion and development as well.²⁹ Bringing to mind the metaphor of the bike ride, it is the question whether one can claim to be an outsider to religion and development at all – after all, there is no neutral, theoretical position from which one can engage with religion and development.

The KCRD started to develop practical methodologies, alongside the more critical and perhaps somewhat discursive approach. The *Practitioners Book on Religion and Development* published in 2011 is a clear example of the KCRD's efforts to offer practical advice and methodologies to its participants and other development actors.³⁰ While the practical focus had been emphasized by the KCRD from the beginning, there were certain external pressures to it as well. The quote “Developing instruments is an important phase . . . , a challenge in which we find ourselves now” – which I noted during an interview with a development professional involved in various activities on religion and development in the Netherlands – is illustrative of an interest in practical methodologies on religion and development that has increasingly been emphasized by policy makers, NGOs, and others involved.³¹ This need for practical instruments reflects the pragmatic nature of development, in which finding solutions to the pressing problems that development professionals deal with on a daily basis is of utmost importance.³² In the

²⁸ Esther Dwarswaard, “Proselytism and Conversion Zeal,” Unpublished paper, 2010; <http://www.religion-and-development.nl/publications/30/paper-proselytism-and-conversion-zeal-drs-esther-dwarswaard-july-2010>; See Ton Groeneweg, “Believing in the House of the Other,” Report of a meeting organized in Utrecht, 31 May 2012, <http://www.religion-and-development.nl/news/49/believing-in-the-house-of-the-other>.

²⁹ This was most strongly voiced by John Veldman in his research on Catholic Social Teaching, Cordaid, and the broader theme of Religion and Development with the KCRD. See John Veldman, “Religie in Meervoud,” Unpublished paper in Dutch, 2010, http://www.religion-and-development.nl/documents/publications/religie%20in%20meervoud_0.pdf.

³⁰ Welmoet Boender, Esther Dwarswaard, and Mariske Westendorp, *Religion and Development: A Practitioners Guide* (Utrecht: Kennis Centrum Religie en Ontwikkeling, 2011), <http://www.religie-en-ontwikkeling.nl/documents/gfx/Praktijkboek/practitioners-%20guide%20def.pdf>.

³¹ Interview with Isabelle Leenman (pseudonym), ICCO, November 2007.

³² See Michael Barnett, “Faith in the Machine?,” *Sacred Aid*, ed. M. Barnett and J. Stein (New York: Oxford Street Press, 2012), 188-220.

context of changing political winds, the pressure to demonstrate the added value of religion to development became increasingly important.

Navigating in Changing Winds and Divergent Agendas

In many ways, the KCRD had to navigate between pragmatic and more critical/political approaches that do not always go well together. This became visible after 2007. The new Minister for Development Cooperation, Bert Koenders, was hesitant to address religion publicly. While the MFA withdrew from its public activities on the topic, a more low profile dialogue with the MFA was continued. Yet, eager to continue to demonstrate the relevance of religion, the KCRD chose to focus on “fragile states,” the central theme in the development policy of the MFA, and to engage both NGOs and local Dutch embassies.³³ Clear linkages with the dominant discourse on conflict resolution were made through drawing on the OECD fragile states principles.³⁴ The importance of centralizing local contexts, local priorities, and needs, as well as prioritizing sustainable and long-lasting relationships, was demonstrated in a case study on the Democratic Republic of Congo.³⁵ In DRC, religious actors were seen as crucial development actors, offering some form of stability and sustainable access to aid and support to local communities in a context of recurrent conflicts and fragility.³⁶ While both the embassy staff and the NGOs working in DRC were aware of the role religious actors played, NGOs turned out to be much better connected with religious actors. This can be explained by the orientation of NGOs toward grass-roots communities, in which religious actors play important roles. Yet, perhaps more importantly, the historical church and faith-based networks played a crucial role in the ability of Dutch NGOs to connect to religious actors in local contexts. The top-down organization of the embassy, and, more importantly, the struggles of its staff to engage with religious actors because of articulate understandings of the separation of religion and state, hampered constructive and sustainable collaboration between the

³³ Fragile states lack the ability to develop mutually constructive relations with society and often have a weak capacity to carry out basic governance functions. See Organisation of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), *Fragile States 2013. Resources, Flows and Trends in a Shifting World* (Paris: OECD, 2013), <http://www.oecd.org/dac/incaf/FragileStates2013.pdf>.

³⁴ OECD principles 1, 7, 8 and 9 in particular. See Welmoet Boender and Merel van Meerkerk, *Religion and Development Cooperation in Fragile States: The complementarity of roles of Dutch NGOs and the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs* (Knowledge Centre Religion and Development, 2012), 9.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Ibid.

embassy and religious actors.³⁷ This study allowed the KCRD to make concrete and explicit suggestions on how religion could be better addressed within a policy context – a role that it played as well on other occasions. Perhaps the Course on Religion and Sexuality for policy advisors and diplomats the KCRD organized with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is the best example of how such a concrete focus has offered an opportunity to directly engage with Dutch and international policy agendas.³⁸ These activities, however, also came with a much more narrow approach to religion.³⁹

Therefore, the KCRD, not entirely bound within the strong secularist outlook of the Dutch governmental approach, often tried to engage with alternative approaches. The seminar on Islamic Perspectives on Peace organized in 2014 took the Islamic Reliefs toolkit for community conflict resolution as a starting point.⁴⁰ This toolkit is based on Islamic principles while incorporating local approaches to justice that tend to be marginalized or overlooked in state approaches to conflict transformation. It combines a response to the real and practical needs of communities in (potential and post-)conflict situations, while aiming to present an alternative to dominant approaches to conflict and peacebuilding. In the context of the latter example, two questions need to be raised that have broader relevance for religion and development initiatives.

The first is the question of how a broader evidence base can be developed for religion and development programming that is of concern to donors, NGOs, and researchers engaged in the field. The KCRD has been part of some promising processes, including a pilot research with the Centre for Religion and Conflict and the Public Domain at the University of Groningen and World Vision International on the Channels of Hope programme.⁴¹ This requires constructive cooperation between researchers and practitioners to develop and apply relevant research methodologies as well as the funds to

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ More information on the Course on Religion and Sexuality at the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs can be found at <http://www.religion-and-development.nl/news/92/let-us-engage-otherwise-you-will-be-a-minority>.

³⁹ This argument will be further developed and demonstrated in a forthcoming article together with Ton Groenweg.

⁴⁰ Lucy Moore, “Working in Conflict: A Faith-based Tool for Conflict Transformation for Islamic Relief,” <http://policy.islamic-relief.com/portfolio/working-in-conflict-a-faith-based-toolkit/>; also see “Report Islamic Perspectives on Peace,” <http://www.religion-and-development.nl/documents/doc/report%20seminar%20islamic%20perspectives%20on%20peace.pdf>.

⁴¹ On the collaborative project and its outcomes see E. K. Wilson and B. E. Bartelink, “Towards a Broader (Research) Agenda for Religion and Development,” Blogpost, <http://www.religion-and-development.nl/news/119/towards-a-broader-research-agenda-for-religion-and-development>; and B. E. Bartelink and E. K.

make this happen. It also necessarily involves greater engagement between policy, practice, and research.

The second question is more fundamental: whether and how the political dynamic in religion and development should be addressed. The development sector itself is highly pragmatic. The quest for sound methods and evidence fits well with the discourse. However, engaging with Islamic approaches to peacebuilding in the context of a highly politicized public and political debate about Islam in Europe is not a neutral act.⁴² Nor is the engagement with Christian approaches regarding gender and sexuality. These questions indicate that conflict and polarization are at the heart of the religion and development debate. Initiatives on religion and development often shy away from addressing these political questions. As a consequence, issues around religion and development always remain the problems of “others.” Two suggestions in this regard are (1) to more explicitly engage with those religious actors that are currently not part of the (mainstream) “development sector,” including Pentecostals, African traditional religions, Muslim clergy, and others, and (2) to address issues that cross-cut the boundaries between developing/developed societies. How religious actors contribute to peacebuilding or gender equality in the context of Nigeria, Mali, and Indonesia might contain valuable lessons and critical insights for actors in the Netherlands and broader Western Europe.⁴³ Rather a new road ahead than a finished race is the need for initiatives on religion and development in order to go beyond the boundaries of the development sector toward “complementary learning processes.”⁴⁴

Routes and Roots

The journey of the KCRD has involved encounters with diversity in many ways. The broader relevance of this to current and future initiatives on religion and development is to take up these questions of diversity that go beyond the religious/secular divide into the heart of diversity and (unequal) power relations within religious development and humanitarian networks itself. While we hope that the KCRD and the development

Wilson, “Spirituality as a Conduit for Development,” Research report, 2015, <http://www.wvi.org/church-and-interfaith-engagement/publication/channels-hope-mnch-research-summary>.

⁴² See also the response by Ton Groeneweg, Policy Advisor on Religion and Development at Mensen met een Missie, in the Report of the Seminar Islamic Perspectives on Peace, a Faith-Based Approach to Conflict Resolution.

⁴³ See the KCRD meeting on religion, conflict, and polarization in November 2015, <http://www.religion-and-development.nl/news/116/up-close-and-personal>.

⁴⁴ Habermas quoted in Emma Tomalin, ed., *The Routledge Handbook of Religions and Global Development* (London: Routledge, Taylor and Francis Group, 2015), 1-13, at 7.

organizations in its network will continue contributing to this endeavour, despite the insecurity of funding for its work in the near future, it is also up to other networks – such as the Joint Learning Initiative for Faith Communities and the ACT Alliance Community of Practice – to contribute to creating well-researched and critically evaluated practices on religion and development. The KCRD's achievements and contributions might inspire similar initiatives around the globe, yet it is a case of how religion is addressed in the context of a pre-dominantly secular/Christian development sector itself. This requires further research and reflection, not to deconstruct the KCRD's achievements until these are scattered into pieces, but to challenge the development organizations, networks, and initiatives to practise what they preach: a truly and genuinely more equal and inclusive development practice. For initiatives on religion and development, this requires a critical awareness of its roots as well as the courage to try new routes.