

# Theory of Change:



## The added value of Christian Faith-Based Organisations across the triple nexus

### Introduction

The Faith in Action group developed this theory of change (ToC) in 2020. It was an exercise that helped members articulate the faith dimension in their organisational ToC and serves as a reference point for the Faith in Action programme.

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### Problem statement

Over the past decades, an increased number of faith-based and non-faith-based organisations have engaged in humanitarian, development and peacebuilding work (hereafter the nexus or triple nexus).

These organisations have advocated for the introduction of sectors standards such as the Core Humanitarian Standard (CHS), which are recognised by both the organisations and institutional donors. The acceptance and application of these common standards have contributed towards higher professionalism in the sector.

As a result of the common application of such standards, the value-adding contribution of faith-based organisations (FBOs) active in the triple nexus is not distinguished from secular organisations, both among the public and by donors.

Simultaneously the influence of secularisation has been strong in society, including within FBOs. This has led to FBOs seeking answers to the following fundamental questions:

1. What distinguishes faith-based organisations from other organisations involved in humanitarian, development and peacebuilding work?
2. What does it mean to be a faith-based organisation, and how is this expressed?

### Christian Faith-Based Organisations

As Christian FBOs, we seek through the way we work with vulnerable or marginalised communities to make Jesus Christ visible and give the communities we work, hope. To realise this, how we engage in such work is as important as the work we do.

Worldwide, more than eight in ten people identify with a religious group<sup>1</sup> which influences how they see the world and act within it.

FBOs themselves are religious in their foundation and understand the world spiritually, which makes them different from their secular counterparts. This lived faith perspective enables them to interact and respond to the faith-dimension of the communities where they work, irrespective of the communities' religious affiliation from personal motivation, rather than instrumentalising faith for better humanitarian development of humanitarian outcomes.

## Theory of Change

Christian FBOs will build on their faith perspective to complement their humanitarian, peacebuilding or development actions to be more effective and better distinguished in society and by donors.

Based on the described problem statement, we want to show that:

*As Christian Faith-Based Organisations, we have a unique value-adding contribution to the impact of humanitarian, development and peacebuilding work.*

To achieve this goal, we have identified the following three outcomes:

1. *There is sufficient space for faith in humanitarian, development and peace work.* Sufficient space is needed to be able to operate and contribute towards development.
2. *There is a transformative force for change in societies.* This is something we don't do on our own, but by setting up structures, the formation of groups and systems through which FBOs ultimately make a unique contribution.
3. *Humanitarian, development and peacebuilding issues are addressed in an inclusive and sustainable way.* Only when problems in society are addressed in an inclusive manner and sustainability is a priority can FBOs be distinguished as being unique.

Our theory is that the realisation of these three outcomes will help Christian FBOs to show their unique contribution towards better impact outcomes across the triple nexus.

The results pathway articulates the intermediate results needed to link the outcomes with the end goal.

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<sup>1</sup> [The Global Religious Landscape | Pew Research Center \(pewforum.org\)](https://www.pewforum.org/2015/02/18/global-religious-landscape/)

## Results Pathway

### 1. Sufficient space for faith in Humanitarian and Development work

#### Supportive constituency base

A strong and supportive faith-aware constituency is key to legitimising FBOs and to ensuring space for faith consideration in humanitarian, development and peacebuilding work. The FBOs will maintain their faith base and have a supportive constituency who understand and support their work.

#### Positive change

We can have sufficient space for the faith considerations in the first place because of the positive change in the attitude of donors and the public on the role faith has in promoting better development, humanitarian and peacebuilding outcomes. This is achieved as the evidence base on the role of faith across the triple nexus is increased due to the support of FBOs who research this topic. The support of FBOs for this type of research is a logical consequence of FBOs maintaining their faith base.

Simultaneously, the positive change in the attitude of donors, governments and the public on the role of faith across the sector is also achieved through challenging sceptical mindsets linked to worldviews and beliefs of the wider public, which are barriers to development. Challenging these barriers happens as FBOs are connected to and actively involve themselves in multi-stakeholder platforms and/or processes.

### 2. There is a transformative force for change in societies

#### Supported faith communities

The value-adding contribution of FBOs is achieved through a transformative force for change in society. The support of faith communities to address the needs in their societies contributes to this. This is the result of faith actors at different levels in communities that are encouraged to engage in development responsibly, mirroring Christ by giving attention to justice. This is possible since FBOs have effective long-term relationships with local partners. Faith actors include faith leaders of different religions. Faith leaders often have a lot of influence and have great reach.

Faith communities are supported to address the needs in their societies as faith actors and institutions. They are effective mobilisers of volunteerism in their communities. The effective mobilisation of volunteerism is possible as FBOs have unique access to faith communities and actors because FBOs retain their faith base.

### **3. Development issues are addressed in an inclusive and sustainable way**

#### **Reach most marginalised**

In the ToC, we argue that as FBOs, we are able to address issues across the nexus in an inclusive and sustainable manner because FBOs are able to reach and sustain that reach towards the most marginalised in their programmes. This is a logical effect as FBOs mirror Christian values in their activities and programmes so that they consciously leave no one behind and thus reach the most marginalised. It is understood that marginalisation varies with the context and concerns holistic human needs at all levels.

#### **All spheres of human development addressed**

We are also able to address development issues in an inclusive and sustainable manner because FBOs address all spheres of human development, including the spiritual and existential needs of people in their programmes. This is possible as FBOs acknowledge the importance of worldviews, faith, and beliefs in holistic development.

**Christian Faith Based Organisations make a unique contribution to**

