

Concept Note

Ethnographic Diaries: Self-Reflections on Decolonization and Faith

The [JLI Fair and Equitable Initiative](#) invites students, researchers, practitioners, theologians, faith actors, and members of civil society from around the world to engage in a new project “**Ethnographic Diaries: Self-Reflections on Decolonization, Power, Oppression, and Faith**”.

Timeline	June 2022 - September 2022
Deadline for Submissions	Saturday, April 30, 2022
Contact Person	Zainab Chamoun (zainab@jliflc.com)

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The October 2021 Faith Dialogues Group session highlighted the richness of personal and subjective experiences with decolonization, power, oppression, and faith. Our day-to-day encounters with these concepts are informative to producing new evidence and observations that lend themselves to new or alternative research methods that go beyond traditional academic circles and approaches. The session also highlighted the importance of digging deeper into how different religious teachings and faith traditions encourage resistance and decolonized practices.

The ethnographic diaries project provides an opportunity to explore the potential of collective writing and non-conventional research methods in producing and sharing knowledge and evidence that is relevant, inclusive, and connected to lived experiences. The aim of this collaboration is to capture subjective experiences, reflections, and observations coming from our lives and work, and aligns with the objectives of the Faith Dialogues (See objectives below).

This non-conventional way of articulating themes related to decolonization, power, and oppression in the humanitarian and development sector is an opportunity for students, scholars, practitioners, theologians, and members of civil society to reflect from different positionalities and on different levels, including:

- Individual diary entries (a maximum of 500 words/1 page per diary), as a daily act and an opportunity to reflect on these themes from their own personal and professional experiences and day-to-day events.



- Monthly group discussion and collective diary-sharing to compare our individual experiences with the experiences and reflections of others, and to break the isolation we may be experiencing while speaking about these themes.
- Using the diary as an ethnographic method to preserve the lived experience and reflections paving the way for possible present and future examinations, research, and projects to work on.
- After having dozens of diary entries, we will collectively analyze and identify the different emerging themes.
- The final output of the project will be discussed and designed with participants as the work progresses. We envision some kind of publication of the reflections, including art and other imagery, with the possibility of promoting it through a podcast/webinar.

The project will explore where perspectives on decolonization, power, oppression, and faith meet and diverge through self-ethnography and diary writing and keeping. Contextual analysis of the collective reflections will take into consideration i) the country you are writing from; ii) the field you come from; iii) the faith tradition that you follow; and iv) any personal experiences with these themes coming based on dynamics of gender, race, sexuality, and ethnicity.

PARTICIPATION

All types of expertise and backgrounds are welcome to take part. Participants are expected to commit to the below:

- Share regular diary entries over four months (**June 2022 – September 2022**). These entries do not need to be polished, publishable material. The entries could be a language of your own preference (e.g. in English, Arabic, French, or Spanish) and can include audio-visual material and links to relevant resources. These diaries will be shared with JLI Projects Officer, Zainab Chamoun, and saved on a shared drive where all participants can read the reflections of others. Writing anonymously is an option. Diaries can be written and shared on a weekly basis or every two weeks based on the participants' preferences.
- Participate in **4 meetings** with other participants from the Faith Dialogues Group throughout the period of the project to share reflections on the diaries and discuss emerging and intersecting themes
- Participants will receive an honorarium (exact amount TBD) for their contribution at the end of the project



HOW TO APPLY

If you are interested in participating in the project, please send a short letter (max 300 words) highlighting who you are, where you come from, and why you are interested in this project to Zainab Chamoun at zainab@jliflc.com or fill out [this form](#) by **Saturday, 30 April, 2022**.

Accepted participants will be contacted by mid-May 2022.

BONUS PARTICIPATION:

If you cannot commit to the project, but still want to share reflections on decolonisation and faith, you are welcome to share other formats of creative submissions including but not limited to, journal entries, poetry, personal essays (800 words), photos and artwork, and interviews. Accepted submissions will be published on a later stage and will receive a \$50 honorarium.

Submissions should be sent to Zainab Chamoun at zainab@jliflc.com by **Saturday, 30 April, 2022**.

Note:

The idea of this project was inspired by “Ethnographic Diaries: Capturing the Everyday in Crisis” project implemented by the [Arab Council for the Social Sciences](#) in Lebanon.

ANNEX I: Faith Dialogues Objectives:

- Create space for debate and joint learning across different contexts and religions to understand better the complex relationship between theology, teachings, beliefs, power and oppression.
- Build mutual learning between indigenous scholars and practitioners working across different postcolonial theories, theologies, and religions.
- Explore the influence of theologies of race and gender on decolonized partnerships, including the importance of lived experiences' in shaping postcolonial theologies.
- Generate multi-religious reflections on decolonization to resource members to think about this issue in their own organizations and contexts.

