CAFOD workshops on *Laudato Si’*

**CONTRIBUTION TO A GLOBAL DIALOGUE ON PROGRESS**

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**Abstract**

Interim findings of an international dialogue among CAFOD partners and UK stakeholders about Pope Francis’s encyclical and how we can build a new model of development.
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User’s guide and next steps

As the audiences for this report are varied, whether CAFOD staff or external partners / stakeholders, this guide will help you find your way quickly to the parts that you or your team most need.

This interim report is designed for you to dip in and out of according to your specific needs and interests, rather than to read right through. There is a detailed index to guide you and each section is self-explanatory. (For example, if you are already very familiar with Laudato Si’, you could omit the section on the encyclical or revisit only key elements.)

Your contribution is an essential part of furthering this process of dialogue and will help to shape the future direction of CAFOD’s vision and mission.

If you have already attended a workshop on this international dialogue

- **Read:** We hope you will find it interesting to compare your own experience with the findings from workshops in other countries (see Executive Summary and Interim Findings). Meanwhile the section ‘Unlocking Laudato Si’ should provide useful reinforcement and background to the learning you experienced in the workshop.

- **Feedback:** Please comment on the ‘Interim findings’ in this report. Do they accurately reflect your experience? Let us know any way in which your experience of the workshop has borne fruit – professionally or personally. Have you had any opportunities to share the learning? Please note your feedback will be fed into the second stage of the dialogue, and is therefore very valuable to us. Please send all feedback to Fr. Augusto Zampini at azampini@cafod.org.uk

For future workshop participants

- **Prepare:** If you are due to attend a workshop, we suggest you read as a minimum the Executive Summary and the area/s of the report most relevant to your expertise.

  You could reflect (individually/or with team members) on one or two of the questions marked ‘Discussion time’ in one of the five key subject areas underlined by participants: **technology, politics, urbanisation, economics, culture.** We offer some suggestions below on which subject area could be of most interest to your team, but feel free to make your own choice:

  - Directorate: Politics and Culture
  - Advocacy and Education: Politics and Economics
  - Communications: Technology and Culture
  - International Development: Economics and Culture
  - Emergency: Technology and Politics (or Urbanisation)
  - Parish Participation and Volunteering: Culture and Urbanisation
  - Supporter Fundraising: Urbanisation and Economics
  - Finance, Information and Infrastructure: Economics and Technology
- People and Performance: Technology and Culture
- CAFOD Partner: Choose according to your expertise

- **Attend:** Workshops for all CAFOD staff will be held between October and November 2016. A further international workshop will take place in Kenya (September).

- **Feedback:** After attending the workshop you will be asked to meet as a team to discuss learning points and how this dialogical process – based on *Laudato Si’* – could have a concrete impact on your work. Each team should nominate a delegate, who will participate in a final interteam workshop. This will then inform the final report (March 2017).

Please note that, according to the communication sent by Geoff O’Donoghue – CAFOD’s Change Director – on 20 June, the following series of meetings, workshops and seminars will take place between July 2016 and March 2017, aiming at including as many voices as possible in this process:

**7 July 2016:** Input to Country Reps meeting.

**6-9 September 2016:** Workshop in Nairobi.

**Oct-Nov 2016:** “Re-defining Progress” workshops for all CAFOD staff (those in international offices will be invited to run their own workshop. Materials and facilitators’ notes will be available from September).

**Oct 2016:** CAFOD’s Board participation.

**Nov 2016:** Theological Reference Group reflection.

**Nov 2016:** All teams across CAFOD to discuss impact of *Laudato Si’* on their work. Each team will appoint a delegate to feed into the December meeting (discussion materials provided).

**Dec 2016:** Team Delegates meeting (Romero House and Skype).

**Feb 2017:** International and inter-disciplinary expert seminar in Leuven, Belgium (joint initiative with Catholic University of Leuven & Durham University).

**March 2017:** Final report.

If you need any help or more information, please do not hesitate to contact the CAFOD Theology Team. More information about the upcoming workshops will be provided in due course.
Executive Summary

“I urgently appeal, then, for a new dialogue about how we are shaping the future of our planet.” (Pope Francis, LS, 14)

A summary follows of what the project is, who attended the workshops, where they were held, and the methodology used. It then covers key interim findings from the workshops. The report raises challenging questions about the prevailing model of development and the future shape of our development programmes.

Description of the project

What is this report and what is it for?

This project is CAFOD’s contribution to the dialogue called for by Pope Francis to redefine our notion of human progress (cf. LS, 3; 13-14; 194). After the encyclical Laudato Si’ was issued in 2015, CAFOD reflected deeply on this remarkable document and then, through a series of workshops, started a conversation with international partners and UK stakeholders to revisit our notion of progress. This goes to the heart of Just One World, CAFOD’s statement of identity as a Catholic agency. It has been a powerful and revealing process, which is still very much in motion.

This is a first-stage report on those workshops, with interim key findings and analysis, raising questions for further reflection. It is both for workshop participants and future participants. Rather than an empirical survey, it reflects an international dialogue whilst providing a substantial piece of qualitative research.

In addition, this report offers a way into the second stage of our reflection, starting with a new series of workshops, meetings and seminars for CAFOD staff, supporters and overseas partners. Everyone will have the opportunity to reflect on how our present idea of progress affects our programmes, and how a redefinition of progress based on a dialogical process triggered by Laudato Si’ could challenge and strengthen our reflection and practice. The outcome of the dialogue will be discussed by academics and practitioners during an international and interdisciplinary conference in Leuven, Belgium, in February 2017. The final report will be ready in March 2017. CAFOD will then explore the implications for its own organisational practice, starting with a new theological underpinning to the Just One World strategic framework, while partners will be able to spread dialogue out to their communities.

Incomplete process: you and your team have something to contribute

This process will be incomplete without the input of every individual and team taking part. During 2016, all CAFOD staff will have the opportunity to make their contribution to the dialogue, as will additional international participants and UK stakeholders, each according to their standpoint and particular expertise. As Pope Francis states, ‘no form of wisdom can be left out’ (LS, 63) - yours included.

The idea is for teams to take time for ‘deep thought’ and ‘rest’ through the next workshops. So far, attendees have overwhelmingly reported that they have been personally and professionally enriched by the process – we hope this will apply to you too.

This interim report does not provide a final definition of development, nor it respond to the question of what we should do next as a Catholic development agency; but by the end of the process, we hope to be better equipped to propose a new understanding of progress, as well as to suggest different means of implementing it, while opening ourselves to take up new challenges (cf. LS, 63).
Outcomes

The following are the intended outcomes of the process:

- CAFOD, as a Catholic agency, has reflected in depth on its organisational understanding of development in the light of Laudato Si’, and is confident in its articulation of this understanding in practice.
- CAFOD’s identity, mission and practice is strengthened by this dialogical process based on Laudato Si’, aiming at redefining the notion of progress and development practice.
- CAFOD’s practice and policies are underpinned by this new understanding.
- CAFOD keeps its constitutional document Just One World alive and relevant as it moves forward, with its mandate as an agency of the Catholic Conference of Bishops of England and Wales.
- Local Church relationships and partnerships, and relationships with local leaders in all contexts are enhanced through a shared and participatory exploration of our understanding of the Church’s recent teaching on development and how this might be experienced in practice.
- Catholic Social Thought is influenced by the praxis of an experienced development agency with a global overview of development.

Who has taken part, and where?

“This workshop has enlightened me and opened me up to look at creation, its importance and value. It has helped me to listen intensely and with more care and love to the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor...”
Fr. Emanuel Rosario, Bangladesh

“After this workshop...my understanding of progress is, showing respect for the next generation, demonstrating our interconnectedness and caring for our common home.”
Sister Brenda, Ethiopia

CAFOD can contribute to this global dialogue called for by Pope Francis in a distinctive way. We have privileged access to communities in regions that are iconic in terms of the current socio-ecological crisis. Workshop participants so far include our partners and stakeholders from these countries (see overleaf):

- Sierra Leone (West Africa), one of the poorest countries in the world.
- Ethiopia (Horn of Africa), the only African country not to have been a European colony; developing quite rapidly, with all the issues this entails. It has been seriously affected by unpredictable droughts, and food security is critical.
- Colombia (Latin America), where we met communities from across Amazonia who are being seriously affected by devastation of biodiversity.1
- Bangladesh (Asia), one of the most densely populated countries in the world (1101 people per sq. km)2, a country that will see widespread flooding if sea levels continue to rise at the current pace.
- UK (Western Europe), where most of CAFOD’s supporters live, a technologically and economically advanced country (see Figure 2), and a key player in the promotion of international development.

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1 The Colombia case, though analogous, cannot be compared directly with the other workshops since the structure was different. It was organised by REPAM (Red Panamazonica), part of the Latin American Conference of Bishops.
2 Population density in Bangladesh is more than three times that of the UK, 13 times more than Sierra Leone, and almost 130 times more than Russia.
Methodology

As stated above, the stimulus for the process is Pope Francis’s invitation to all of us to have an open and honest dialogue to redefine our notion of progress. So we adopted an inductive, bottom-up methodology with our partners and stakeholders to consult with and listen to them, which proved to be very fruitful.

The sessions in Sierra Leone, Ethiopia, Bangladesh and the UK (3 workshops) had a similar structure across one long day or two shorter days. In the spirit of *Laudato Si’*, we aimed at *listening* to our partners, while *being attentive* to our Catholic tradition, and we contributed to the dialogue based on our expertise as a global development agency.

The structure of the workshops followed the same model as that used by Pope Francis in *Laudato Si’*, namely: *see; judge; act; celebrate* (see ‘Methodology, *Laudato Si’*). You will encounter this model in action if you are taking part in the next round of workshops.
• **Seeing**: we started by contemplating the way God sees the world, based on Biblical stories of creation, and then considered how we see it. We reflected on what Pope Francis sees as the main impediments to development, adding the view from our own contexts.

• **Judging**: we continued with a positive critical judgement, and discussed how we integrate different dimensions of life. These include political-economic and environmental ecology, cultural ecology and personal lifestyles, the common good and our personal interests and dignity, inter- and intra-generational justice. The interconnectedness of these dimensions is what Pope Francis calls ‘integral ecology’ (see section ‘Unlocking *Laudato Si*’).

• **Acting**: finally, we listened to the proposals for action in *Laudato Si’*, and reflected on what we must do differently in four aspects of life: myself, my family, my community and my nation/world. We ended by celebrating God’s gift of creation and our role within it as responsible stewards. The celebrations were inclusive towards people of all faiths.

**Summary of key findings**

Two of the most critical questions asked of participants are ‘what hinders’ and ‘what helps’ development. It was notable that five major topics emerge across all workshops in response: *technology, politics, urbanisation, economics and culture & nature.*

As these themes were discussed in the light of the teaching in *Laudato Si’*, it is fascinating to compare how the issues are perceived by the Pope and how they are experienced in the local contexts of workshop participants. For example, while Pope Francis is concerned with the structural problems behind technological development—because it is controlled by those with economic power—participants accentuate the advantages of technology for the poor.

While Pope Francis sees politicians as key drivers for change, participants are far more sceptical about their roles. Where the Pope underlines the structural issues behind urbanisation and violence, participants focus on the day-to-day problems city dwellers suffer due to insecurity and violence; however, they also point out the opportunities that cities provide to fulfil people’s dreams. With regard to economics, participants agree with the Pope about the need for urgent change. However, different approaches for achieving future change emerge: one involves complete and immediate change; the other is a more gradual—though still radical—approach.

In terms of culture, participants agree with and add to the Pope’s analysis of the devastating effects of a consumerist and individualistic culture, as well as the threat from a global culture which does not respect diversity. However, a key difference rapidly became evident under the theme of culture: the link between gender equality and development. Whilst for participants across all workshops gender equality is an absolutely vital element of sustainable development and integral ecology, this topic is completely absent from *Laudato Si’*.

Once the question of what helps or hinders development has been analysed, the next fundamental step is to decide what we must do differently in order to address the current crisis outlined so clearly in *Laudato Si’*. It is illuminating to acknowledge how important time is in this regard for Pope Francis and for all participants. Unanimously, they feel we need more time for personal and community reflection on how we relate to each other and to nature; more time to discuss what is the best way of moving forward; and, strikingly, more time for contemplation, since we need to slow down if we are to re-define our priorities, plans and development programmes.
Another area of agreement between participants and the Pope, is the need for joint actions. This collaborative understanding of promoting development applies to all relationships, from inter-personal to national and international. It also implies that there are different individual and national responsibilities, according to positions of power and what resources are available. But joint actions cannot forge sustainable development if they are not rooted in actual dialogical processes where the voices of the powerless—and the cry of the earth—are truly heard. Moreover, shared actions comprise the need to rethink our lifestyles, seeking a simpler way of living and using natural resources wisely.

In short, from this series of workshops, in which we have dialogued with partners from different countries on how to redefine the notion of progress (cf LS, 148), we have definitively learned something about ‘how to live wisely, to think deeply and to love generously’ (LS, 46). This dialogical process has so far proved very enriching for those of us who work in development, and has raised challenging questions around the best way we can care for our common home. Whilst we look forward to the second stage of the dialogue, which will bring more voices to the conversation, we hope the findings of this report are useful for you.
Unlocking *Laudato Si’*

This section gives an overview of *Laudato Si’* and its special importance for Catholic development agencies under the following headings:

1. Basic questions answered
2. *Laudato Si’* and the tradition of the Catholic Church
3. Why is *Laudato Si’* so relevant for CAFOD?

1. Basic questions answered

Pope Francis invites every citizen of the world to enter into a dialogue by which we can re-define the idea of development and improve the way we live together, in our common home (the Earth). But why is he writing an encyclical that addresses every person in the planet, and not just Catholics? Why would non-Catholics be interested in reading and responding to the Pope’s call? Why is he writing about this now? And is he not interfering in issues that are far beyond faith, such as economics, politics, and ecology? These are basic questions that arose during our international conversation about the Pope’s letter and the prevailing model of development.

These questions are worth answering before we address more complex questions of what the encyclical has to do with the tradition of the Catholic Church in general, and with CAFOD in particular. Once we clear the ground, we will be better equipped to get into the main ideas of the encyclical, and the findings of the dialogue CAFOD has conducted about redefining the notion of progress in the light of *Laudato Si’* with partners in Sierra Leone, Ethiopia, Bangladesh, Colombia and the UK.

What is an encyclical?

The word “encyclical”, in its original Greek and Latin meaning, expresses something general, or common, that is circulated (e.g. *encyclopaedia* = general education). Hence an encyclical is a letter circulated to the general public. In the case of the Catholic Church, an encyclical is a letter issued by its leader, the Pope, usually to the whole Catholic family, or what we call the faithful Catholic world, i.e. lay people, religious orders, priests and bishops. Many modern encyclicals, however, have also been addressed to “people of good will”. The latest encyclical, *Laudato Si’: On the care for our common home*, has gone further, including every person on the planet.

Why is the Pope addressing people beyond his flock?

Firstly, Pope Francis’s encyclical-letter is an attempt to respond to a problem that all of us are currently facing, namely an unprecedented socio-ecological crisis. And if this crisis is affecting every single person in the world (though in particular the poorest), then the letter cannot be restricted to a particular faith group. We all live on this Earth, our common home.

Secondly, he is addressing all of us because this unique problem is caused mainly by human activity, regardless of nationality, race, religion or sex. This is what the best science available tells us, and what communities all around the world are witnessing. For the first time in the history of the Earth, human activities are transforming ecosystems, the climate, the components of water, the quality of the air, and the capacity of soils and landscapes to produce their fruit. They are dictating the fate of many species.

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3 For an introductory overview of social encyclicals of the Catholic Church, see DeBerri, Hug, Henriot and Schultheis (2003).
and, arguably, of the entire planet (see IPCC 2014). We are all part of the problem, whether we like it or not, and whether we are aware of it or not.

Thirdly, we are all involved because this common problem, affecting our shared home, requires urgent common solutions. These solutions can only come about from an honest, deep, and transformative ‘dialogue... about our common home’ (LS, 3), a dialogue that can trigger ‘a radical change in humanity’s behaviour’ (LS, 4). No voices can be left out, especially not the voices of those who are most affected by social disintegration and ecological devastation (cf LS, 14). Though we are all part of the problem, we are also all part of the solution. Every single gesture counts, and everyone has something to contribute towards the care of our common home. Thus the Pope is encouraging us all to take part in this dialogue, to find a new way forward together.

Why should a non-Catholic care?

Some have questioned why a non-Catholic would want to read or respond to a letter from the Pope. The answer is that anybody interested in trying to find ways of developing as human beings in a sustainable way – without damaging our planet’s ecosystems so that it remains a hospitable home for future generations – could well be responsive to Laudato Si’. In particular, they might like to engage with the ‘dialogical’ proposal of the encyclical, since such a comprehensive problem can only be addressed through an inclusive dialogue, where everybody is heard, and from which sustainable solutions can arise. Yet, there remains the question of whether religions in general, and the Catholic Church in particular, are actually able to contribute to this dialogue about sustainable development.

With about 80 per cent of the world’s population professing a belief in God, religion is an inescapable reality for the social sciences and international development. A belief in an ultimate source of meaning, or God, influences the choices that the majority of people make with regard to their lives, the lives of others and the environment, for better or for worse. It has been invoked to justify killing as well as to inspire peace and reconciliation, to plunder natural resources as well to seek a life in harmony with nature. In short, whatever the influence of religious beliefs on human actions or their internal dynamics, religions have an influence on people’s lives, on their values, choices and actions.

What Pope Francis is proposing in this letter, therefore, are some core values of the Catholic tradition that can contribute to a global, inclusive dialogue around finding healthy and sustainable models of living together and seeking progress. The Pope clarifies that that the Church ‘does not presume to settle scientific questions or to replace politics’, but does want ‘to encourage an honest and open debate, so that particular interests or ideologies will not prejudice the common good’ (LS, 188). Pope Francis is not introducing the Church as a teacher who wants to indoctrinate the rest of the world, but as an important group of millions of people and countless communities whose faith values can enrich the idea of development and wellbeing, values that can incentivise the motivation for transformation.

Moreover, the encyclical argues that religious narratives have something in particular to contribute, because they open up new ways of understanding, and expand people’s imagination. This happens in every age and culture, as occurs with any form of classic art (Schneiders 1991; LS, 199).

From what has been said so far, we can identify three novel contributions of Laudato Si’ to Catholic Social Teaching (CST), that can attract Catholics and non-Catholics alike:

(i) the universal reach, i.e. a letter to all, addressing a global issue;

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5 For a discussion on the ambivalence of the religion, see especially Appleby (2000), Mariano et al. (2012), Philpot (2007) and Thomas (2015). This chapter focuses on the positive contribution of religion.
an explicit mention of the use of religious narratives as a pivotal contribution to promoting sustainable development and transformation of the socio-political status quo; and

a call for individual and collective action based on dialogue, in which the Church wants to participate, not to impose its view, nor condemn what it believes to be wrong.

Isn’t the Pope meddling in issues that are beyond faith, like economics, politics and ecology?

All encyclicals are first and foremost a faith statement, whose function is, generally speaking, both descriptive and prescriptive. They describe a truth that is revealed by God in itself (in se), reinterpreted and actualised by the tradition of the Church. But such a revelation is intended by God to be valuable for us (pro nobis). Thus, it is not enough to describe God’s revelation, because we need some guidance as to how to connect it with our life and behaviour. This is when the objective description of a truth could be translated into subjective life commitments.⁶

For example, the encyclical *Pacem in Terris* (1963) describes and actualises God’s revelation on peace, and how this needs to be translated into rights for the advancement of the common good. However, it is not just a declaration of peace and human rights, since it also provides guidance on how to assume a peaceful attitude towards our neighbours, states, other religions, etc. True peace, therefore, cannot be pursued without a subjective commitment to reconciliation and forgiveness, justice and love, and respect for minorities.

As a faith statement, an encyclical can either be about strict faith issues, touching the heart of Christian experience, or it could be about world topics connected with faith. An example of the former is the first encyclical of John Paul II, *Redemptor Hominis* (1979), which develops the meaning of Christ’s universal salvation through his death and resurrection and explains how Christ is the centre of time and space – of the universe and of history. Examples of the latter are some of the Catholic Social Teaching documents which address issues of social justice; for example, *Rerum Novarum* (1891) on labour and capital; *Pacem in Terris* (1963) on war; *Populorum Progressio* (1967) on international development. These documents are not scientific research on economics or warfare, but a faith view that can enlighten those topics through the Gospel and the tradition of the Catholic Church.

Likewise, *Laudato Si’*, as the new encyclical of Catholic social tradition and teaching (LS, 15), is also and primarily a faith statement. Not a political, or an economic, or an environmental statement, but a faith one – related, of course, to all those topics. The first two words of the document, *Laudato Si’*, confirm this. They are taken from a verse of St Francis of Assisi’s *Canticle of the Creatures*. Although they implicitly refer to God (‘praise be… to God, to my Lord’ – ‘*Laudato si’ oh mio signore’), God’s name is not mentioned in the title.

This shows the intention, right from the start, to be an inclusive ‘faith statement’, aligned with the belief that God is the creator of the universe and the redeemer of all creatures, and echoing a common socio-ecological concern with ‘numerous scientists, philosophers, theologians and civic groups’ and ‘other churches… and religions’ (LS, 7). The document aspires to build up a communal response, based in this common concern, and ‘to bring the whole human family together to seek a sustainable and integral development’ (LS, 13).

If there is any doubt about the weight of faith in this letter, we need only to read the last part of it:

‘At the end, we will find ourselves face to face with the infinite beauty of God (cf 1 Cor. 13:12), and be able to read with admiration and happiness the mystery of the universe, which with us will share in unending plenitude… In the meantime, we come together to

⁶ For a comprehensive explanation about objective and subjective revelation, see O’Collins (2011).
At the very end of the document, the Pope praises God with two prayers, one universal, the other a specific Christian prayer, which works as a ‘chiasm’ or inclusion using the first two words of the title: Praise Be!

The Pope is not shy about the contribution that faith can bring to the current crisis. Because ‘many efforts to seek concrete solutions to the environmental crisis have proved ineffective’ (LS, 14), the encyclical offers ‘some inspired guidelines for human development to be found in the treasure of Christian spiritual experience’ (LS, 15). It strongly argues that religions can make a substantial contribution to integral ecology and the full development of humanity through dialogue with science, philosophy and among different religions (cf. LS, 62). From a faith perspective, ‘rather than a problem to be solved, the world is a joyful mystery to be contemplated with gladness and praise’ (LS, 12).

Why is the Pope writing about socio-ecological issues now?

It is worth noting that Laudato Si’ was issued shortly after the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were introduced, and some months before the UN Paris conference on climate change. Thus it was clearly intended to influence this international meeting on sustainable development and ecological issues. Yet it cannot be reduced to this particular process. It has a wider aim, and provides a long-term view – a Catholic contribution to a vision of a better future for the planet and for all the life it contains.

Responding to difficult social problems, or to what is known in the Catholic tradition as ‘the signs of the times’, has been the aim of modern Catholic social encyclicals. The first one was issued in 1891 to respond to the problems of industrialisation and the exploitation of workers. The encyclical called on governments to legislate for minimum wages sufficient for family subsistence, labour rights such as protection against illness and accidents, and affirmed the right of workers to form unions. Its title was Rerum Novarum (Latin for ‘new things’ or ‘new state of affairs’), a reference to the industrial revolution as a ‘new thing’ that humanity was experiencing.

Although this revolution forged the capacity of humans to create unimaginable things at a pace never experienced before, and caused extraordinary material growth, it also caused serious social disruption. Likewise, this latest Catholic social encyclical is an attempt to respond to a new state of affairs - the consequences of two hundred years of industrialisation. This is of course related to ‘work’, to the work of human hands, which, in interaction with the earth, can produce fruitful life. Unfortunately, not only do we still have an immense global problem with unemployment and undignified work, but also, human activities are changing our planetary environment and our future within it in unprecedented ways.

In turn, in a sort of vicious circle, the environmental crisis foments employment problems and other social issues, such as war and migration. The material and ecological changes that human activities are wreaking are, in great part, due to the need to maintain and increase the pace of development unleashed two centuries ago. This idea of development is still based on fossil fuels and is underpinned by the myth of unlimited material progress. The paradox is that those who burn the most fossil fuels are the ones who have most benefited from the industrial ‘revolution’, and therefore have more resources to cope (so far) with the effects of climate change. Meanwhile, the ones who burn less are not only denied the social benefits of the ‘revolution’, but are also most affected in terms of environmental degradation, as we in CAFOD witness through our overseas partners. This is not only leading to an increasing gap between those who have access to wealth and energy and those who do not, but also to an increasing gap between those who have access to decent work – hence the capacity to develop – and those who do not.

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Praise Be!

The Pope is not shy about the contribution that faith can bring to the current crisis. Because ‘many efforts to seek concrete solutions to the environmental crisis have proved ineffective’ (LS, 14), the encyclical offers ‘some inspired guidelines for human development to be found in the treasure of Christian spiritual experience’ (LS, 15). It strongly argues that religions can make a substantial contribution to integral ecology and the full development of humanity through dialogue with science, philosophy and among different religions (cf. LS, 62). From a faith perspective, ‘rather than a problem to be solved, the world is a joyful mystery to be contemplated with gladness and praise’ (LS, 12).

Why is the Pope writing about socio-ecological issues now?

It is worth noting that Laudato Si’ was issued shortly after the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were introduced, and some months before the UN Paris conference on climate change. Thus it was clearly intended to influence this international meeting on sustainable development and ecological issues. Yet it cannot be reduced to this particular process. It has a wider aim, and provides a long-term view – a Catholic contribution to a vision of a better future for the planet and for all the life it contains.

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At the time of *Rerum Novarum*, the problem of work was related to human dignity and the creation of capital. In the era of *Laudato Si’*, it is still about ‘decent’ work, dignity and the relations between humans as they seek to develop themselves, but this is now understood as the capacity to provide what is needed to live well without destroying our common home. This is a challenge that integrates capital and work, employers and employees, individuals and social structures, developed and developing nations, nature and society. This is an important ‘sign of the times’ that needs to be considered thoroughly when discussing how to expand freedom and justice and how to promote sustainable development.

In short, the new encyclical has not been written with the sole purpose of influencing a particular international process of dialogue, but to address the question of development in depth, in the light of scripture and tradition (faith), with a specific proposal for personal and social transformation found in integral ecology and eco-spirituality.

2. *Laudato Si’* and the tradition of the Catholic Church

Many people somehow believe that the ecological crisis is a personal concern of the current Pope, and has little to do with Church tradition. This is certainly not the case. An overview of the encyclical follows, showing its deep roots in previous teaching of the Church.

Not only does *Laudato Si’* explicitly rely on the previous teachings of Paul VI, John Paul II and Benedict XVI (LS, 4-6), but it is also grounded in the extensive teaching of Conferences of Bishops worldwide, on the tradition of saints such as St Francis of Assisi (LS, 10-12), and on ecumenical teachings such as that of Patriarch Bartholomew (LS, 7-9).

From a theological perspective, it is rooted in the theology of creation and the universality of Christ’s redemption, and brings fresh views of the relational anthropology deriving from it (indeed Chapter Two is entitled ‘The Gospel of Creation’). Moreover, Pope Francis includes a sound theology of the sacraments in his last chapter (LS, 233-237), and proposes the long tradition of Christian spirituality as a pivotal and inspiring contribution to changing the way we live together and care for our common home. He clarifies that this encyclical is ‘now added to the body of the Church’s social teaching’, a tradition started with *Rerum Novarum* in 1891 as explained above.

*Figure 4: Popes quoted in Laudato Si’ (excluding Leo XIII)*
Papal teaching

**Pope Paul VI**

The teachings of Pope Paul VI, some of which are highlighted in *Laudato Si*’ (4), are known for their ecological concern about the ‘ill-considered exploitation of nature’, which is putting humanity and the planet at risk (*Octogesima Adveniens*, 1971: 9; 21). Paul VI argued that the idea that all creation is given to humanity (cf Gn 1:28) needs to be properly understood. Being stewards of creation is not limited to using the earth’s resources, but to completing and perfecting God’s work, which means loving and respecting it, while sharing the earth’s goods with all (*Populorum Progressio*, 1967: 22-28). Since ‘creation is a common good’, the use of its resources should benefit the whole human family’, and should ‘preserve, improve and hand over to future generations’, so that ‘every person’ can feel ‘truly at home’ on this Earth (*Message to the Conference on the Environment, Stockholm*, 1972).

Moreover, in the same message, Paul VI stressed ‘the urgent need for a radical change in the conduct of humanity’, which involves a ‘change of mentality and a conversion of attitude: more simplicity of lifestyles, intelligent conservation of resources, less use and more sharing of the earth’s goods by the rich’. This call for radical conversion would be reiterated by John Paul II, Benedict XVI and Francis. Finally, Paul VI argued that scientific and technological advance and economic growth, if they are to foster authentic development that does not turn against humanity, must be accompanied by social and moral progress (*Address to FAO*, 1970, 4; *LS*, 4).

Thus Paul VI’s contribution regarding the social tradition of the Church and its connection with ecological issues focuses around the following points: (i) awareness and improvement of our responsibility as good stewards of creation; (ii) the need to treat creation as a common good that serves and benefits all; (iii) the need to link economic and technological development with social and moral progress; and (iv) an urgent call for conversion, meaning a change of mentality and attitude regarding our lifestyles, and our use and just division of natural resources.

**Pope Saint John Paul II**

Pope John Paul II became increasingly concerned about ecological and development issues (see *LS*, 4). In his first encyclical, *Redemptor Hominis* (1979: 8; 15; 16), he carefully related the fundamental doctrines of creation and redemption to present-day environmental problems. He warned, as *Laudato Si*’ (n.4) highlights, that human beings seem ‘to see no other meaning in their natural environment than what serves for immediate use and consumption’.

In his encyclical *Dominum et Vivificantem* (1986: 50), he explained that the **incarnation of Christ** has a cosmic significance, since in it the Son of God unites himself with all ‘flesh’, meaning the whole of humanity and the entire visible and material world. He was to further the explanation of the cosmic reality of creation whilst officially recognising the liturgical and theological contribution of the Oriental Churches (*Orientale Lumen*, 1995: 11). For this reason, as is argued in *Laudato Si*’, Christ’s cosmic salvation and love is present in the Eucharist, and whatever altar this is celebrated on, however humble, that altar represents the altar of the world (cf *LS*, 236).

In his social encyclical *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis* (1987: 6-34), he further developed the notion of **integral and authentic development**, which includes an ecological concern and acknowledgment of the limits of available resources, the need to respect the integrity and the cycles of nature and to take them into account when planning for development. He also clarified that integral and authentic development is our fundamental vocation as people – men and women – created in the image and likeness of God. The fact that humans are ‘masters’ called to ‘dominate the earth’ means they need ‘to cultivate the garden’, or ‘to build cities’ or develop their skills, in accordance to the Creator’s will, and respecting God’s gift. In
other words, the fact that we are stewards or privileged creatures does not mean that we can do with creation whatever we like. As *Laudato Si’* (5) reiterates, we need to respect ‘the nature of each being’ and the ‘mutual connection in an ordered system’.

Arguably, John Paul II’s *Address to World Peace Day* in January 1st 1990, ‘Peace with God the Creator, Peace with All Creation’, has become a turning point in the tradition of the Church regarding ecological concern. John Paul II emphasised the ‘relationship’ between humanity and the rest of creation, which needs to be nurtured with love and wisdom. He argued that peace, a key message from Christ and a truly universal human aspiration, is threatened by disrespect of nature and collective selfishness. Therefore, destroying environmental harmony is a ‘sin’, since it alienates humans from themselves and from the earth; as with any sin, it requires conversion, a global ecological conversion (see also *Catechesis – 17th January 2001* – and LS, 5).

The Pope also explained that the environmental crisis is more than scientific and technological; it is fundamentally moral, and complex. Addressing it requires respect for all life, especially the dignity of the human person. Given that this is a cosmic issue, an inter-disciplinary approach is mandatory to preserve our common heritage, the earth, for the benefit of all. But in order to promote such a universal benefit from our common earth, environmental responsibility should be shared by all nations, for which a novel understanding of solidarity is required, one that can address the structural forms of poverty worldwide through courageous structural reforms, as well as new ways of relating among peoples and States.

Also, environmental education plays a fundamental role for this new solidarity that can promote conversion, peace and integral development, especially education within the family. We can see how many of these topics are resumed and furthered in *Laudato Si’*, particularly: ‘relational’ anthropology; sin (including structural sin) and conversion (both personal and community); the link between economics, technology and ecology (hence the need for an ‘integral’ approach); the urge for a new understanding of solidarity; and the key role of education.

In his last social encyclical *Centesimus Annus* (1991: 37–38), written for the centenary of *Rerum Novarum*, John Paul II insisted that we humans must respect the original purpose of creation, entrusted to us by God, which has a value in itself, a natural and a moral structure. As stewards of the gift of creation, our role is to safeguard both natural and human ecology, and protect it from all forms of debasement. As Pope Francis puts it when resuming this topic (LS, 5), protecting creation and improving our world ‘entails profound changes in lifestyles, models of production and consumption, and the established structures of power’.

For this, on the one hand, we must also accept responsibility for the development of an economic model that serves the good of all, which needs the participation of all sectors of society and a conversion of heart through a change of lifestyle (*Bull of Indiction for the Jubilee Year 2000 Incarnationis Misterium*, 1994: 12). On the other hand, John Paul II called for a *philosophical and theological*, organic and morally coherent vision that can help disoriented ethical consciences, and allow people to tackle effectively the many problems related to peace, justice, the family, the defence of life and ‘the natural environment’ (*Fides et Ratio*, 1998). Because we are indeed subject to moral laws and responsible for our environment (*Evangelium Vitae*, 1995: 42), we find signs of hope not only when individuals re-discover their kinship with the earth and have an ecological conversion (*General Audience*, 26th January 2000), but also when scientific and technological advancement is aware of this environmental responsibility (*Tertio Millennio Adveniente*, 1994: 13; 46).

John Paul II’s later references to tradition and environmental issues have been noticeably influential for Pope Francis. Firstly, John Paul II appealed for a change in lifestyles and structures when addressing the people of three different continents. When writing to all people of the Americas, he questioned the effect of the globalisation process, called for equality and unity, and insisted on a conversion from selfish attitudes and lifestyles which lead to the depletion of natural resources, as witnessed with the
Amazonian forest (*Ecclesia in America*, 1999: 20; 25). When writing to the peoples of Asia, he also expressed his concern about the balance of the ecosystem; denounced disrespect for the environment as a consequence of immediate consumption in an unbridled desire for profit; stressed the responsibility of leaders — politicians and business people in particular — and called for the participation of young people (*Ecclesia in Asia*, 1999: 41). And when writing to those in Oceania, he emphasised the beauty of creation and recognised the example of indigenous people who still live in harmony with nature and with one another (*Ecclesia in Oceania*, 2001: 28; 31). All these teachings are included in *Laudato Si’* and are now applied to its universal audience.

Secondly, Pope Francis’s magisterial expression ‘globalisation of indifference’ (*Evangelii Gaudium*, 54), revisited in his homily to refugees on the Italian island of Lampedusa in July 2013, echoes John Paul II’s question to the world at the turn of the millennium: ‘Can we remain indifferent to the prospect of an ecological crisis which is making vast areas of our planet uninhabitable and hostile to humanity?’ *Novo Millennio Ineunte*, 2001: 51). In fact, ‘nothing in the world is indifferent to us’, especially such a deep crisis as the ecological one (cf LS, 3-6).

Thirdly, John Paul II, alongside Patriarch Bartholomew I of Constantinople, issued a *Declaration on the Environment* (2002), in which they once more clarified the role of stewardship. Despite our central role within creation, we humans are called to cooperate with God in realising more and more fully the divine purpose of creation and in restoring its original harmony through wisdom and love, something furthered in *Laudato Si’*, especially ‘Chapter Two: The Gospel of Creation’ (LS, 62-100). Moreover, they claim that the raising of an ecological awareness needs to be encouraged, but this ought to lead to practical programmes and initiatives.

Finally, John Paul II and Patriarch Bartholomew overtly argued that Christians and all other believers have a specific role to play in proclaiming moral values and in educating people in ecological awareness and responsibility, something repeated in *Laudato Si’*, especially in its last chapter (LS, 202-246). Furthermore, the ecumenical declaration argued that ‘respect for creation stems from respect for human life and dignity’; which means they do not contradict each other. We can see here a precedent of the link made in *Laudato Si’* between ‘the cry of the poor and the cry of the earth’, between ‘social and ecological issues’ (LS, 49). Also, the fact that Pope Francis (LS, 7-9) refers to Patriarch Bartholomew as a reference for these matters, was anticipated by John Paul II in this joint declaration.

In short, we can summarise John Paul II’s main contribution as follows: (i) Christ is the universal and cosmic redeemer; (ii) creation reflects the Creator, and we humans have a kinship with all creatures and a special responsibility towards the gift of nature; (iii) there is an inextricable connection between human ecology and dignity and natural ecology and value; (iv) the fruits of nature are meant for all to share; (v) there is an urgent need to raise ecological awareness and to promote ecological education and conversion; (vi) environmental issues are not just scientific and economic, but also ethical and spiritual; (vii) there is a need for international law to address the ecological crisis.

**Pope Benedict XVI**

Benedict continued with the tradition of his predecessors. In his *Address to the World Peace Day* (2007), *The Human Person, the Heart of Peace*, he stressed the inextricable connection between ‘natural ecology’ and ‘human-social’ ecology, depicted in the example of energy supply and prices. He also insisted that ‘development’ is not restricted to a technical-economic dimension, because it is also moral and religious. The following year, for *World Peace Day* (2008), *The Human Family, a Community of Peace*, he drew an analogy between global problems, the global family and family life. A family, indeed, needs a ‘home’ so as to build relationships of solidarity among its members (e.g. justice and peace among siblings, role of authority through parents, loving concern for the weakest members). So do we, the global human family: the earth is our common home, created by God and entrusted to us to be protected and cultivated with responsible freedom. As stewards of creation, our responsibility towards
creation applies to the house (earth), and to all its members, especially humanity, and in particular the poor. This is a significant basis for the title of *Laudato Si’": care for the common home.

But Benedict XVI, in his discourse for peace and environmental care, went beyond the analogy. He advocated a ‘global agreement’ on a sustainable model of development, capable of ensuring the wellbeing of all while respecting environmental balances, an agreement that Pope Francis advocates in *Laudato Si’* in detail (LS, 164-175). Benedict XVI was also aware that in order to promote such agreement, we need good ‘dialogue’ that can enable us to act in harmony, to distribute justly the costs of environmental protection, and to take into account the different levels of development and technological advancement of countries.

Later Pope Benedict XVI (2009) would claim that those with more power have more responsibility, a topic resumed by Pope Francis (LS, 102-15). More precisely, the former advocated a redistribution of energy resources and renewable energy, from the developed to the developing countries, probably the basis for the argument in *Laudato Si’* about the ‘ecological debt’ that the North has with the South (LS, 51). Moreover, as Francis reminds us (LS, 6), Benedict XVI proposed ‘eliminating the structural causes of the dysfunctions of the world economy and correcting models of growth which have proved incapable of ensuring respect for the environment’ (*Address to the Diplomatic Corps to the Holy See* 2007: 73).

The extensive references and rich contribution of Benedict XVI to environmental issues and development are synthesised in his social encyclical *Caritas in Veritate* (2009), particularly in Chapter IV: ‘The Development of People, Rights and Duties, The Environment’ (nn. 43-52). He explains how nature has its own ‘grammar’ which sets forth ends and criteria for its wise use, not its reckless exploitation’ (n. 48). He also argued that human development needs to have the person at its centre in order to promote solidarity and foster responsibility towards others and nature, especially towards the current poor and future generations.

He urged a responsible use of goods – those that satisfy our legitimate needs – for which a new lifestyle is needed, based on inalienable ethical values, forged by moral education, and aimed at the common good. Perhaps the clearest influence on Pope Francis’s focus on ‘integral ecology’ (LS, 137-162) (where social and ecological issues go hand in hand), was Benedict’s argument about the meaning of ecology, which is always human, cultural and natural. This connection is so strong, that ‘the way humanity treats the environment influences the way it treats itself, and vice versa’ (*Caritas in Veritate*, 51).

Put negatively, irresponsible human behaviour, due to a misunderstanding and misuse of freedom, affects society and the environment, the human spirit and nature (*Address to the Bundestag*, 2011: 664). As LS (6) reminds us from Benedict XVI’s teachings, social and ecological irresponsibility have ‘the same evil: the notion that there are no indisputable truths to guide our lives, and hence human freedom is limitless’, and thus we ‘no longer recognise any higher instance than ourselves’ (*Address to the Clergy of the Diocese of Bolzano-Bressanone*, 2008: 634).

In short, among the main contributions of Benedict XVI to this socio-environmental Catholic tradition, we found: (i) the intrinsic value and ‘grammar’ of nature and creation; (ii) the inextricable connection between human and natural ecology; (iii) the need to correct models of economic development when they do not have human dignity at their centre, or when they belittle ethical values and are solely ruled by economic or technological rules; (iv) the increasing responsibility that those with more gifts or power have, nations included, and the need to redress the misunderstanding of human freedom; and (v) the importance of dialogue and the necessity for a legally-binding international agreement on development, natural resources, and the environment. *Laudato Si’* is grounded in all these contributions.
Teaching of the Bishops’ Conferences

Alongside papal teaching, *Laudato Si’* also draws extensively on the teachings of the Conferences of Bishops. Not only is this a way of promoting the collegiality of the Catholic Church, urged back in the late 1960s by the Second Vatican Council, but it is also in accord with the encyclical’s methodology of ‘seeing-judging-acting-celebrating’. In order to ‘see’ what is happening to our common home, the Pope cannot but rely on what his Christian communities have witnessed in different parts of the world, echoed by fellow Bishops.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BISHOPS’ CONFERENCES</th>
<th>TITLE</th>
<th>TOPIC / QUOTE</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(1983) PARAGUAY</td>
<td><em>Pastoral Letter: El campesino paraguayo y la tierra</em></td>
<td>WORK &amp; LAND: “every campesino has a natural right to possess a reasonable allotment of land where he can establish his home, work for subsistence of his family and a secure life... apart from the ownership of property, rural people must have access to means of technical education, credit, insurance, and markets” (LS, 94).</td>
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<tr>
<td>(1987) DOMINICAN REPUBLIC</td>
<td><em>Pastoral Letter: Sobre la relación del hombre con la naturaleza</em></td>
<td>INTERCONNECTEDNESS: “Peace, justice and the preservation of creation are three absolutely interconnected themes, which cannot be separated and treated individually without once again falling into reductionism” (LS, 92).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(1992) BRAZIL</td>
<td><em>A Igreja e a Questão Ecológica</em></td>
<td>THE IMPORTANCE OF EVERY CREATURE AND ECO-VIRTUES: “...nature as a whole not only manifests God but is also a locus of his presence. The Spirit of life dwells in every living creature and calls us to enter into relationship with him. Discovering this presence leads us to cultivate the ‘ecological virtues’” (LS, 88).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(1999) SOUTH AFRICA</td>
<td><em>Pastoral Statement on the Environmental Crisis</em></td>
<td>PARTICIPATION: “Everyone’s talents and involvement are needed to redress the damage caused by human abuse of God’s creation” (LS, 14).</td>
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</tbody>
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7 Collegiality refers to the fact that the college of bishops, together with its head, the Pope, governs the Church as successors of the ‘college’ of the apostles of Jesus Christ (see *The Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, Lumen Gentium*, Chapter 3).
Table 1: Bishop’s teaching on ecology

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Document Title</th>
<th>Citation</th>
<th>Topic/Theme</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>Reverence for Life. A Message for the Twenty-First Century</td>
<td>(LS, 85)</td>
<td>THE IMPORTANCE OF EVERY CREATURE: “To sense each creature singing the hymn of its existence is to live joyfully in God’s love and hope”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>US</td>
<td>Global Climate Change: A Plea for Dialogue, Prudence and the Common Good</td>
<td>(LS, 52)</td>
<td>THE POOR &amp; THE ENVIRONMENT: ‘greater attention must be given to “the needs of the poor, the weak and the vulnerable, in a debate often dominated by more powerful interests”’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>A New Earth – The Environmental Challenge</td>
<td>(LS, 218)</td>
<td>ECO-CONVERSION: “To achieve such reconciliation, we must examine our lives and acknowledge the ways in which we have harmed God’s creation through our actions and our failure to act. We need to experience a conversion, or change of heart”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>Pastoral Letter: You Love All that Exists, All Things are Yours, God, Lover of Life</td>
<td>(LS, 85)</td>
<td>THE IMPORTANCE OF EVERY CREATURE: ‘No creature is excluded from this manifestation of God: “from panoramic vistas to the tiniest living form, nature is a constant source of wonder and awe. It is also a continuing revelation of the divine”’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>Portugal</td>
<td>Pastoral Letter: Responsabilidade Solidária pelo Bem Comum</td>
<td>(LS, 159)</td>
<td>INTERGENERATIONAL JUSTICE: “The environment is part of a logic of receptivity. It is on loan to each generation, which must then hand it on to the next”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>Der Klimawandel: Brennpunkt globaler, intergenerationeller und ökologischer Gerechtigkeit</td>
<td>(LS, 48)</td>
<td>DETERIORATION OF HUMAN &amp; NATURAL ENVIRONMENT (POVERTY): ‘The impact of present imbalances is also seen in the premature death of many of the poor, in conflicts sparked by the shortage of resources, and in any number of other problems which are insufficiently represented on global agendas’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>New Zealand</td>
<td>Statement on Environmental Issues</td>
<td>(LS, 95)</td>
<td>POVERTY, GLOBAL RESOURCES, AND FUTURE GENERATIONS: ‘what the commandment “Thou shall not kill” means when “twenty per cent of the world’s population consumes resources at a rate that robs the poor nations and future generations of what they need to survive”’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>CELAM (Latin American Conference)</td>
<td>Documento de Aparecida</td>
<td>(LS, 38)</td>
<td>MULTINATIONALS &amp; THE AMAZON: there are “proposals to internationalize the Amazon, which only serve the economic interests of transnational corporations”</td>
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<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>Mexico</td>
<td>Jesucristo, vida y esperanza de los indígenas y campesinos</td>
<td>(LS, 189)</td>
<td>POLITICS &amp; ECONOMICS: ‘…Production is not always rational, and is usually tied to economic variables which assign to products a value that does not necessarily correspond to their real worth. This frequently leads to an overproduction of some commodities, with unnecessary impact on the environment and with negative results on regional economies’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>Patagonia - Comahue (Argentina)</td>
<td>Christmas Message: No habia lugar para ellos</td>
<td>(LS, 51)</td>
<td>ECONOMICS, POWER &amp; DEVELOPMENT: on multinationals, development &amp; environmental liabilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>Bolivia</td>
<td>Pastoral Letter on the Environment and Human Development in Bolivia: El universo, don de Dios para la vida</td>
<td>(LS, 48)</td>
<td>DETERIORATION OF HUMAN &amp; NATURAL ENVIRONMENT (POVERTY): “Both everyday experience and scientific research show that the gravest effects of all attacks on the environment are suffered by the poorest”</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>(LS, 170)</td>
<td>RESPONSIBILITY OF DEVELOPED COUNTRIES: “the countries which have benefited from a high degree of industrialisation, at the cost of enormous emissions of greenhouse gases, have a greater responsibility for providing a solution to the problems they have caused”</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Table 1: Bishop’s teaching on ecology
3. Why is *Laudato Si’* so relevant for CAFOD?

We have seen above how the encyclical is relevant to Church tradition. In this section we consider the many reasons why it is also a pivotal document for CAFOD, one that can reshape CAFOD’s own strategic vision and mission. Some obvious links follow, with the hope that during 2016, different teams, partners and volunteers can enrich and improve this description.

Catholic doctrine and CAFOD’s mission

Any document of the Social Doctrine of the Church, known as Catholic Social Teaching (CST), is relevant to CAFOD and to any Catholic agency that embraces and promotes CST. In particular, those CST documents focused on ‘development’ have a special validity for CAFOD, since it is an official development agency of the Catholic Church. CST also offers a frame of reference for all staff in their work for social and climate justice, including those who do not come from a Christian background.

*Laudato Si’*, the latest pontifical CST document, questions the current model of development, and invites everybody to dialogue, to re-define what development actually means, and to promote it in a way that can benefit all, particularly the poor, while respecting the natural environment. This is at the heart of CAFOD’s mission and of every Christian’s vocation. As Pope Francis says, ‘living our vocation to be protectors of God’s handiwork is essential to a life of virtue; it is not an optional or a secondary aspect of our Christian experience’ (*LS*, 217). This vocation is grounded in the ‘conviction that we need one another, that we have a shared responsibility for others and the world, and that being good and decent are worth it’ (*LS*, 229).

Catholic spirituality and CAFOD’s contribution

For Pope Francis, Christians can contribute to promoting integral development (for the entire person and for all persons) and integral ecology (natural and social) through their spirituality. *First*, because given that Christian spirituality is cemented in the relationship with Jesus Christ, the redeemer of all humans and the whole creation, it provides motivation and passion to care for and protect the world and all humans, especially those in need (cf. *LS*, 216). And considering that ‘many things have to change course’ (*LS*, 202) in order to face this unprecedented and grave socio-ecological crisis, the spiritual or faith-based extra motivation seems to be more relevant than ever. How are we going to promote a life in harmony with others and with nature, and to make sacrifices, without drawing on our deepest beliefs and motivations? (cf *LS*, 200). How are we going to be convinced that, sometimes, ‘less is more’? (*LS*, 222). Indeed, given that the deep change required is ‘impossible without motivation’, Pope Francis offers ‘some inspired guidelines for human development to be found in the treasury of Christian spiritual exercise’ (*LS*, 15). And because CAFOD, alongside overseas partners and Catholic communities in the UK, has done its best to promote development based on a Catholic ethos in the past decades, not only has it something to learn from *Laudato Si’*, but it also has some relevant contributions to make.

*Secondly*, Christian spirituality is critical for development because it ‘proposes an alternative understanding of the quality of life... one capable of deep enjoyment free of the obsession with consumption’, hence ‘encourages a prophetic and contemplative lifestyle’ (*LS*, 222). In this way, Christian spirituality ignites personal and social love (cf. *LS*, 231), because it favours ‘sobriety and humility’ at a personal level (*LS*, 224), while increasing ‘the capacity for living together in communion’ (*LS*, 228). In other words, Christian spirituality, on the one hand, invites us to practise ‘the little way of love’, emulating St Theresa of Lisieux’s spirituality. This means, the love of individual relationships expressed in ‘any small gesture which sows peace and friendship’, thus countering ‘violence, exploitation and selfishness’ (*LS*, 231). On the other hand, however, Christian spirituality is...
also manifested through ‘civic and political’ love, seeking ‘to build a better world’, improving the ‘macro-relationships’, i.e. the ‘social, economic and political ones’, for the sake of the common good and a ‘culture of care’ that can permeate all society (LS, 231). Social love is also ‘part of our spirituality’, a true ‘exercise of charity’ that ‘sanctifies us’ (LS, 231). CAFOD, whilst promoting integral development, works at the level of small and anonymous gestures of love and compassion (e.g. supporters giving money in an envelope for a Fast Day), and at the level of wider and more public gestures of civic love (e.g. climate change petitions). Thus, *Laudato Si’* is a powerful reaffirmation of and boost for CAFOD’s work.

**Thirdly,** Christian spirituality, rooted in the encounter with Jesus Christ, becomes evident in the relationship between Christians and the world around them (cf LS, 217). Now the world is crying out for help, both the earth and the poor (LS, 49). In response, ‘the rich heritage of Christian spirituality’ encourages ecological conversion (LS, 216). This ‘entails the recognition of our errors, sins, faults and failures, and leads to heartfelt repentance and desire to change’ and to be reconciled with others, with creation and with the Creator (LS, 218). It also comprises a conversion of attitude, from indifference to loving awareness, from utilitarianism to gratuitousness, from selfishness to generosity, from self-advantage to solidarity (cf LS, 220). Still, as Pope Francis points out, isolated individual conversion is not enough; ‘social problems must be addressed by community networks and not simply by the sum of individual good deeds’ (LS, 219). Therefore, ‘the ecological conversion needed to bring about lasting change is also a community conversion’ (LS, 219). This is an area that could be further explored by CAFOD, especially regarding its own corporate communitarian conversion.

**Fourthly,** Christian spirituality is critical for development because it permits us ‘to be serenely present to each reality, however small it may be, opens us to much greater horizons of understanding and personal fulfilment... and proposes a growth marked by moderation and the capacity to be happy with little’ (LS, 222). Approaching life as Jesus did, ‘with serene attentiveness... being fully present to someone without thinking of what comes next, [accepting] each moment as a gift from God to be lived to the full’, is an excellent way ‘to overcome that unhealthy anxiety which makes us superficial, aggressive and compulsive consumers’ (LS, 226). Put differently, Christian spirituality aids in redressing the effect of ‘rapidification’, an ‘intensified pace of life and work’ which hinders development (LS, 18). As many of our interlocutors have pointed out, this is also an area for CAFOD and partners to revisit.

Although Christian spirituality is promoted through different means, there is one particularly critical pathway for Catholics that cannot be ruled out: the sacraments. These are ‘a privileged way in which nature is taken up by God to become a means of mediating supernatural life. Through our worship of God, we are invited to embrace the world on a different plane’ (LS, 235), to rediscover the beauty of creation through the grace of Christ. *Laudato Si’* reminds us that Christian spirituality in general, and the Sacraments and the Eucharist in particular, incorporate ‘the value of relaxation and festivity’ and of ‘contemplative rest’, which is neither unproductive nor unnecessary. Conversely, it helps us to discover ‘the meaning’ of work, providing it with ‘a dimension of receptivity and gratuity, which is different from inactivity’ (LS, 237).

This is of particular importance in countering the previously-mentioned problem of ‘rapidification’, which seems to affect a great majority of people, religious persons included (LS, 18). Moreover, the value of contemplative rest found in the celebration of the sacraments, ‘opens our eyes to the larger picture and gives us renewed sensitivity to the rights of others’, while it ‘motivates us to greater concern for nature and the poor’ (LS, 237). This is food for thought for CAFOD.

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8 This term, coined by the Pope to synthesise one of the problems affecting growth, has a deep theological root.
In short, *Laudato Si’* shows us that Christian spirituality can provide a rich and balanced understanding of the meaning of our life and work on earth (cf LS, 125), as well as the basis for a new understanding of growth, underpinned by an economic system that has people at its centre, with long-term policies that include future generations (cf LS, 231). This is certainly something to which CAFOD can contribute. Christian spirituality also recovers our capacity to contemplate the goodness of creation; it is the antidote to the widespread malaise of ‘rapidification’, and a solid motivation for personal conversion and social transformation. CAFOD can find further inspiration from this to continue to improve its mission.

**CAFOD’s mission and the structure of *Laudato Si’***

The structure of *Laudato Si’* has a strong connection with CAFOD’s mission, and overall the encyclical can be considered a boost for CAFOD’s policies and programmes.

The *sub-title* ‘On the care for our common home’, resonates with CAFOD’s notion of ‘Just one World’.

In the introduction to *Laudato Si’*, we are asked to respond to the cry of the poor and to the cry of the earth (both interconnected), which resonates with CAFOD’s ‘One Climate One World’ campaign. CAFOD believes that development should enable all of us—humanity and the earth—to flourish, both now and for generations to come.

In *Chapter 1 (What is Happening to Our Common Home?)*, Pope Francis provides a spiritual reading of the best available scientific data on the environment, ‘letting them touch us deeply and provide a concrete foundation for the ethical and spiritual itinerary that follows’ (LS, 15). CAFOD is contributing to this process by attesting to the direct experience of climate change from communities where we work.

In *Chapter 2 (The Gospel of Creation)*, Pope Francis emphasises the wealth of Judeo-Christian tradition, particularly in biblical texts and the theological reflection on these, which is pivotal to analysing the deep roots of the socio-ecological crisis. Likewise, CAFOD’s ‘One Climate One World’ campaign – launched before *Laudato Si’* – is based on a thorough analysis of the biblical stories of creation, read in the light of the New Testament and in the tradition of Catholic Social Teaching. The idea was to provide a solid anthropological and theological basis for analysing the present crisis. Similarly, post-*Laudato Si’* campaigns from other teams, such as Harvest and Lent Fast Days on ‘abundance’, ‘grace’ and ‘compassion’, have solid roots in the theology of creation, understood as a gift from God to everybody.

In *Chapter 3 (The Human Roots of the Ecological Crisis)*, *Laudato Si’* argues that a society controlled by technology – which is in turn controlled by the powerful – has a misplaced idea of the role of free will. Humans are conceived of as absolute dominators of the world, with no limitations to their actions. This in turn leads people to belittle their capacity to seek for what is truly good for our common home, and to be indifferent to the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor. CAFOD’s research for the ‘One Climate One World’ campaign has also stressed the need to move away from this misleading anthropocentrism and from the idea that technological fixes alone can solve the current crisis.

In *Chapter 4 (Integral Ecology)*, a concept is introduced that is key to the encyclical: ‘integral ecology’ (see Figure 8). This is introduced as a paradigm able to articulate the fundamental relationships of the person: with ‘God’, with ‘oneself’, with ‘other human beings’, and with ‘creation’. It also stresses the need to acknowledge the interconnectedness between the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor, between economics, politics, and ecology; between our daily life and our culture; between the dignity of each human being and the common good; and between intra- and inter-generational justice. Integrating these themes is critical for a dialogue which redefines the idea of growth. Similarly, CAFOD’s ‘One Climate One World’ campaign and subsequent policies are deeply rooted in the idea of forging better relationships with our neighbours and the Earth, in order to address the crisis.

In *Chapter 5 (Lines of approach and action)*, Pope Francis provides a series of guidelines for the renewal of international, national and local policies, as well as for decision-making processes in the public and business sector. Rather than a doctrinal approach, it is an invitation for an honest dialogue, where
politics and economics, religion and science can improve their relationships for the betterment of our common home. CAFOD has been part of the dialogue and negotiations for a sustainable and integral development, researching and matching religion, science, politics and economics. We can be proud of having anticipated the encyclical’s suggestions, and we embrace the challenges and guidelines that it contains to enhance our work still further.

In Chapter 6 (Ecological Education and Spirituality), Laudato Si’ points out that change is impossible without motivation and a process of education. The Pope underlines the contribution that Christian spirituality and faith offer, involving a deep desire to change the world, to transmit values, and to leave this earth somehow better than we found it. He points out the need to change our lifestyle and consumer habits, the need for an ecological conversion, the importance of education for future generations, and the need for civic and social love. The sacraments, based on our faith in a Trinitarian God, can inspire this conversion.

CAFOD’s work has always taken Christian spirituality as a source for inspiration, conversion and transformation, and this is an area we continually work to strengthen. In terms of education, we work alongside Catholic schools in England and Wales, with a strong commitment to promote love for creation. CAFOD also promotes adult education in various ways, with a strong emphasis on ecological care. On these topics CAFOD can contribute in a particular way through the experience of its partners working in the field.

Laudato Si’ ends with two Prayers, one inclusive of all people, the other explicitly Christian. Proposing prayers is already a fundamental approach used throughout CAFOD’s work with the Catholic community in England and Wales. However, Laudato Si’ can be seen as a challenge to CAFOD to use prayer and Catholic spirituality in an inclusive way with partner organisations of all faiths and none.

“We are able to take an honest look at ourselves, to acknowledge our deep dissatisfaction, and to embark on new paths to authentic freedom”

(LS, 205).
Methodology: 
*Laudato Si’,* CAFOD, and development research

In this section we investigate the methodology used by Pope Francis in *Laudato Si’* and how this was mirrored in the approach used for the CAFOD workshops.

CST inductive methodology

*Laudato Si’* follows the traditional methodology of Catholic Social Teaching (CST): ‘seeing’ the reality, particularly through the eyes of the poor and disadvantaged; ‘judging’ it in the light of the Gospel and the tradition of the Church; (iii) and ‘acting’ or promoting decisions according to what we see and discern.

This method was embraced by Pope John XXIII (*Mater et Magistra*, 1959: 236). It breaks away completely from ‘the old dogmatic device’ of pre-stating that if a situation is hypothetically bad, the Church is unavoidably obliged to reject it in theory, although it can occasionally tolerate it as a *modus vivendi* (practical agreement), as occurred with the notion of democracy until the mid-1950s (Mich 2005, 197-8).

Pope John XXIII, therefore, introduced a shift in the methodology of social analysis in the Church. From the classical deductive method, which basically ‘understands reality in terms of the eternal, the immutable, and the unchanging’, John XXIII has shifted CST methodology towards an inductive historical consciousness approach, which ‘gives more importance to the particular, the contingent, the historical and the individual’ (Curran 1988, 427). It has the advantage of putting people’s experiences at the heart of the Church’s teaching. Indeed, regarding social issues, if the sources of this teaching were merely previous documents or statements, then the experiences of the poor could be rarely taken into account. Conversely, when experience is put at the beginning of the method, then the struggles for oppression and liberation underpin the teaching (cf. Dorr 1984). This also prevents the Church’s teachings from presenting a false dichotomy between theological teaching (or theory) and spiritual experience (practice), because, right from the beginning, the method depicts how theory and experience are intertwined.

This method, which has strong Biblical roots, was officially confirmed by the Second Vatican Council (*Gaudium et Spes*, 1965; *Dei Verbum*, 1965) and refined by Paul VI (*Populorum Progressio*, 1967; *Octogesima Adveniens*, 1971) and John Paul II (*Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, 1987; *Centesimus Annus*, 1991). It has also been further developed by the Latin American Bishops, who applied it to analyse the context of their own countries and their continent (see CELAM *Medellín* 1968, *Puebla* 1979 and *Aparecida* 2007). It comes as no surprise, then, that Pope Francis has explicitly approved the inductive/bottom-up and inclusive method in CST and subtly enriched it.

Pope Francis: enhancing the inductive/interdisciplinary method

Before issuing *Laudato Si’*, while addressing the Latin American Bishops on his trip to Brazil, Pope Francis (2013) explicitly mentioned the CST method ‘seeing—judging—acting’. Not only did he praise the bishops for continuing to apply that method in their later document *Aparecida* (19), but also critically pointed out the risk comprised in the method, i.e. to have an “aseptic” view of reality, as if the ‘seeing’ could ever be neutral and impartial. Pope Francis has openly admitted that the ‘seeing’ of reality is always affected by our view, our sight. A great temptation, he argues, is to pretend to have aseptic-
**impartial-objective** views of socio-economic problems and therefore attempt to impose it on others who have, supposedly, **contaminated-partial-subjective** views.

For Christians, a possible way to avoid this temptation is to take ‘the path of discipleship’. The view of the disciples of Christ, while chiefly influenced by the values of the Kingdom of God, was also affected by historic and cultural surrounding views (*Aparecida*, 20-32). Thus, the current disciples of Christ need to see new social realities with the eyes of the Kingdom and with the eyes of the world. When the views of the Kingdom and of the world (e.g. other sciences) go hand in hand, the creativity to find effective “actions” to redress injustices is possible.

In his Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium* (EG, 2013), Pope Francis explains why, in order to spread the joy of the Gospel and discover creative paths for human advancement, Christians cannot be detached from community life, their local contexts, and the engagement with ‘others’ (EG, 11; 177; 178; 234). Following Paul VI’s approach, Francis argues that the enhancement of the Kingdom of God, inextricably linked with human life, human advancement, and the care of the environment (EG, 178; 181; 215), is thus related to particular social, geographical and historic realities. In order to find concrete responses to those contingent situations, and to promote integral human development and the common good, the Church’s teaching cannot but ‘take into account the contributions of the different sciences’ and be engaged in a public dialogue with politics and economics (EG, 182).

Pope Francis also addresses in detail the connection between the methodology of reading the signs of the times alongside different views, with the option for the poor whose views need to be taken on board if we are to find novel paths for human fulfilment. For Francis, the Church has a pivotal mission for the liberation and promotion of the poor, and ‘for enabling them to be fully a part of society’ (EG, 187). Expanding the anthropological basis of Paul VI with regard to ‘dignity, freedom, equality and participation’, John Paul’s Christological value of ‘solidarity’ and ‘structural transformation’, and Benedict’s evangelical views of ‘justice and charity’, the Pope overtly explains why the option for the poor is not only fundamental for each Christian and for the Church (in fact the criterion of Christian authenticity), but also for human-development in general (EG, 193-216). Although he clarifies that the option for the poor is primarily a theological category and not a socio-political one (EG, 198), the Pope does not leave room for misinterpretations: spiritual conversion implies seeking for social justice and for concrete solutions in the political and economic spheres, so Christians need to be engaged without delay in fruitful dialogues in these areas.

Therefore, Pope Francis not only accords great importance to the inductive-historical approach of theology towards social issues, but also highlights the correlation between such methodology and the anthropological stress on freedom, inclusion and participation. An inclusive “seeing” of the signs of the times necessitates an inclusive dialogue, from which creative programmes fostering an inclusive society can ensue.

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*Laudato Si’: CST method enriched and its relevance for CAFOD*

Pope Francis also applies the inductive/bottom-up/interdisciplinary/inclusive methodology in *Laudato Si’*. Not only is the whole letter structured according to this model, but the Pope also provides some novel contributions to the method itself.
Firstly, the ‘seeing’ is done alongside the best science available, in partnership with other Churches, such as the Orthodox Church (ecumenical), and it includes the way God sees the world through revelation in Scripture. This is relevant for CAFOD, because, although we are a Catholic agency, we work with staff, partner agencies and communities overseas who come from different backgrounds and religious identities. Alongside them, also, we are seeing the impact of growing inequality and extreme poverty, which means, for example, that millions of people do not have access to sufficient food or to clean water, to safe and sustainable housing or to dignified work. Moreover, we are witnessing a rise in migration, as people seek safety and a place of peace, away from war and conflict, and from extreme weather events.

We are aware that climate change is the single biggest threat to reducing poverty. It is already the poorest amongst us who are being hit the hardest. We have seen that many of the communities supported by CAFOD are suffering more frequent and extreme floods, storms, or droughts, which are pushing the most vulnerable people further into poverty. Farming families are struggling with more unpredictable seasons, meaning crops fail and livestock die because of a lack of food and water. At the same time, we are impressed by the resilience and capacity of the very poorest and most disadvantaged people to respond to the challenges they face. Our ‘seeing’, hence, could be a critical contribution to the dialogue, enriching the views in Laudato Si’.

Secondly, ‘judging’ in the light of the Gospel and of the Church’s tradition, involves for Laudato Si’ both a critical negative judgement (Chapter 3: Human Roots of the Ecological Crisis), and a critical positive judgement (Chapter 4: Integral Ecology). This resonates with CAFOD’s work. For example, CAFOD’s ‘One Climate One World’ campaign was based on a thorough analysis of the biblical stories of creation, read in the light of the New Testament and in the CST tradition. It not only stresses the way we mistreat creation and the need for conversion (negative critical judgement), but also puts emphasis on the positive attitude to moving forward, treating the Earth and creatures as neighbours, and thereby extending the notion of solidarity beyond humanity.

Thirdly, the ‘acting’ element in Laudato Si’ is proposed, unusually, through ‘dialogue’, and through setting out the ways by which ‘education’ and ‘spirituality’ can contribute to redressing the crisis.
CAFOD promotes personal, communitarian and political action to tackle poverty and climate change. In some areas, such as the Sustainable Development Goals, we take the lead with different sister agencies and NGOs, marking out the path for international dialogue. This is the case, for example, with Goal 5, which aims to ‘achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls’, since we play a vital role in the faith and gender network Side by Side.

Still, the dialogue that is needed, and its process, requires further elaboration and implementation, and CAFOD could contribute more on this topic, particularly through the work of the Advocacy team. Moreover, CAFOD’s work through ecological education in the UK has proved to be highly relevant for educators and students alike. However, Pope Francis poses some challenges to the kind of education needed. It is not merely about scientific information or consciousness-raising, or even about prevention of environmental risks. Education is also about cultivating social virtues that can help people to make selfless ecological commitments (LS, 211), and to have a critical understanding of the “myth” of a modernity grounded in a utilitarian mind-set (e.g. individualism, unlimited progress, competition, consumerism, the unregulated market) (LS, 210).

Education also involves promoting a new way of thinking about human beings, life, society and our relationship with nature (LS, 215), which will eventually promote a simpler and more “grateful” way of living, concerned with the needs of the poor and the environment (LS, 214). This kind of education is called to forge a ‘culture of love’ and care (LS, 213) that, while promoting a ‘new and universal solidarity’ (LS, 14) and countering the laws of the market (LS, 30) and ‘self-interest pragmatism’ (LS, 215), can urgently move society forward ‘in a bold cultural revolution’ (LS, 114). Equally challenging for CAFOD is the approach to ‘integral spirituality’ and its link with development, as explained above (see p.23).

Lastly, *Laudato Si’* includes a fourth additional step to the CST methodology: ‘celebrating’ God’s love and goodness, crucial to bringing about hope and joy, and pivotal to seeing more clearly, judging more wisely, and acting more efficiently. This is also challenging for CAFOD. As Cardinal Vincent Nichols argued when the encyclical was launched (Press Conference, 18 June 2015), it is not only about ecology, economy or climate change. It is also about caring for our common home, a home given to us by God, cared for by God and destined for fulfilment in God. Celebrating God’s gifts is vital to taking care of them, and the sacraments are a privileged way of doing this. Different cultures and religions have diverse ways of celebrating love; Catholics have the gift of the ‘sacraments’ which cannot be ignored by a Catholic agency.
Using *Laudato Si’* methodology in the workshops - summary

<table>
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<th>Good (SEEING)</th>
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<td>What does God see as good? (creation)</td>
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<th>Impediments for development (SEEING)</th>
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<td>What does Pope Francis see as symptoms of the crisis?</td>
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<th>What hinders progress? (JUDGING)</th>
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<td>What does Pope Francis see as the roots of the crisis?</td>
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<th>What enhances progress? (JUDGING)</th>
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<td>Integral ecology (Pope Francis)</td>
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<td>Dialogue, education and spirituality (Pope Francis)</td>
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<th>CELEBRATING</th>
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<td>Celebrating the goodness of creation and of life</td>
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*Figure 6: Methodology for the workshops*
Interim findings

In this section we summarise the key findings across all the workshops. We review the symptoms and root causes of the ecological crisis listed in *Laudato Si’*, which stimulated workshop participants to analyse the crisis from their own context. Five major areas emerged, each of which is analysed according to whether it helps or hinders development. Finally we summarise what action needs to be taken and what resources are needed.

Symptoms and root causes of the crisis

In order to judge what is helping or hindering progress, we first reviewed what Pope Francis sees as the most important symptoms of the socio-ecological crisis, set out in the first chapter of *Laudato Si’* ‘What is happening to our common home?’ (see Table 2). We did this as Pope Francis says, ‘to become painfully aware, to dare to turn what is happening to the world into our own personal suffering and thus to discover what each of us can do about it’ (LS, 19).

Once they had added symptoms from their own contexts, participants were asked to identify what they perceived to be root causes of the crisis.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Table 2: SYMPTOMS of the crisis named in <em>Laudato Si’</em> and discussed by participants in the workshops</th>
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<td>‘Rapidification’</td>
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<td>Pollution</td>
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<td>Global warming &amp; climate change</td>
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<td>Water</td>
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Pope Francis stresses the problem of the ‘quality of water available to the poor’, which ‘results in many deaths and the spread of water-related diseases’ (LS, 29). He is also...
Loss of biodiversity

Concerned about water inequality (LS, 28), and about the ‘growing tendency... to privatise this resource, turning it into a complete commodity subject to the laws of the market’, which seem to ignore that ‘access to safe drinkable water is a basic and universal human right’ (LS, 30). He warns that ‘control of water by large multinational businesses may become a major source of conflict’ (LS, 31).

He is also aware of the waste of water, something that happens everywhere, showing that ‘the problem of water is partly an educational and cultural issue’ (LS, 30).

Each year sees the disappearance of thousands of plant and animal species which we will never know, which our children will never see, because they have been lost forever... Because of us, thousands of species will no longer give glory to God by their very existence, nor convey their message to us’ (LS, 33). But species are not just any exploitable ‘resource’; they have a value in and of themselves (LS, 33).

The Pope is not referring merely to ‘mammals and birds’, but also to the ‘innumerable variety of microorganisms’ needed for ‘the good functioning of ecosystems’, and ‘less numerous species’ that, ‘although unseen, nonetheless play a critical role in maintaining the equilibrium of a particular place’ (LS, 34).

Decline in the quality of human life and the breakdown of society

Given that ‘human beings too are creatures of this world’, the Pope considers it vital to highlight the effects that ‘environmental deterioration, current models of development and the throwaway culture’ have on people’s lives (LS, 43). This applies to:

- **Cities**: pollution, transport, poor urban planning, lack of green spaces, housing, etc. (LS, 45).
- **Social dimensions of global change and growth of the past two centuries**: unemployment, social exclusion and breakdown, inequitable distribution and consumption of energy and other services, violence, drug use and trafficking, the loss of identity, etc. (LS, 46).
- **Media and the digital world**: occasionally a sign of ‘mental pollution’, fomenting disruptive relationships and isolation (LS, 47).
- **Global inequality**: this affects ‘not only individuals but entire countries’ (LS, 51), generates unbearable debts — both economic (poor countries indebted to rich ones) and ecological (rich indebted to poor) — and has ethical implications for **differentiated responsibilities** regarding climate change (LS, 52).

Weak responses, lack of leadership, conflict, plurality

We still lack the culture and the leadership needed to confront this crisis, or discover new paths so as to meet the needs of the present with concern for all and without prejudice towards coming generations (cf LS, 53). ‘Too many special interests, and economic interests easily end up trumping the common good and manipulating information so that their own plans will not be affected’ (LS, 54).

*Table 2: Symptoms of the current crisis*
Participants then looked at the root causes laid out in *Laudato Si'* as summarised in Table 3 below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prevailing technocratic paradigm</th>
<th>‘This paradigm exalts the concept of a subject who... progressively approaches and gains control over an external object... formless, completely open to manipulation’ (LS, 106).</th>
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<td></td>
<td>‘The technological paradigm has become so dominant... technology tends to absorb everything into its ironclad logic... Our capacity for making decisions, a more genuine freedom and the space for each one’s alternative creativity are diminished’ (LS, 108).</td>
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<td>‘The technocratic paradigm also tends to dominate economic and political life... The economy accepts every advance in technology with a view to profit, without concern for its potentially negative impact on human beings... We fail to see the deepest roots of our present failures, which have to do with the direction, goals, meaning and social implications of technological and economic growth’ (LS, 109).</td>
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<td>‘...it often leads to a loss of appreciation for the whole, for the relationships between things, and for the broader horizon, which becomes irrelevant... Life gradually becomes a surrender to situations conditioned by technology, itself viewed as the principal key to the meaning of existence’ (LS, 110).</td>
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<tr>
<td>Myth of perennial progress</td>
<td>‘Science and technology are not neutral’ (LS, 113-114). ‘Technological products... create a framework which ends up conditioning lifestyles and shaping social possibilities along the lines dictated by the interests of certain powerful groups’ (LS, 107)... ‘Power is its motive’ (LS, 108). ‘Scientific and technological progress cannot be equated with the progress of humanity and history’ (LS, 113).</td>
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<tr>
<td>Globalisation of indifference</td>
<td>‘It is based on the lie that there is an infinite supply of the earth’s goods’, on ‘the false notion that an infinite quantity of energy and resources are available... and that the negative effects of the exploitation of the natural order can be easily absorbed’ (LS, 106).</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lack of political will</td>
<td>Refers to the indifference to the suffering of the poor and the earth: ‘Obstructionist attitudes, even on the part of believers, can range from denial of the problem to indifference, nonchalant resignation or blind confidence in technical solutions. We require a new and universal solidarity’ (LS, 14).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>‘There are no frontiers or barriers, political or social, behind which we can hide, still less is there room for the globalisation of indifference’ (LS, 52)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>‘God of love... Enlighten those who possess power and money, that they may avoid the sin of indifference’ (LS, 246)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Throwaway culture</td>
<td>‘We lack leadership capable of striking out on new paths and meeting the needs of the present with concern for all and without prejudice towards coming generations’ (LS, 53). ‘It is remarkable how weak international politics have been’ (LS, 54). ‘Recent World Summits on the environment have not lived up to expectations because, due to lack of political will, they were unable to reach truly meaningful and effective global agreements on the environment’ (LS, 166).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The socio-ecological problems ‘are closely linked to a throwaway culture which affects the excluded just as it quickly reduces things to rubbish... We have not yet managed to adopt a circular model of production capable of preserving resources for present and future generations, while limiting as much as possible the use of</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3: Root causes of the current crisis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Consumer lifestyle</th>
<th>non-renewable resources, moderating their consumption, maximizing their efficient use, reusing and recycling them’ (LS, 22).</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>‘Every effort to protect and improve our world entails profound changes in “lifestyles, models of production and consumption, and the established structures of power which today govern societies”’ (LS, 5).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>‘Obsession with a consumerist lifestyle, above all when few people are capable of maintaining it, can only lead to violence and mutual destruction’ (LS, 204). ‘A change in lifestyle could bring healthy pressure to bear on those who wield political, economic and social power’ (LS, 206).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Discussion time**

- Choose one symptom and one root cause identified by Pope Francis that you consider relevant. Why do you consider them relevant? How do they influence your work life, and that of your colleagues?

- From your context, are there any symptoms or root causes that you would have expected to find on Pope Francis’ list? Do you consider any of those listed as inaccurate or misleading? If so, why?
What helps or hinders development?

Once participants had identified the symptoms and roots of the socio-ecological crisis according to their own context (negative judgement), they were also invited to provide a positive judgement, in the light of what Pope Francis calls ‘integral ecology’. In a nutshell, this means acknowledging the interconnection between different aspects of life, as shown in Figure 8. This interconnectedness makes it impossible to address the unprecedented socio-ecological crisis in one dimension only. ¹⁰

For example, it is not possible to ameliorate poverty in Sierra Leone, if actions by the government or international agencies damage the environment – since environmental disruption hurts the poor most. Help provided to poor people can end up in fact creating more poverty.

Nor is it feasible to promote green policies in Ethiopia, a big topic at present in the country, without considering the importance of labour and its contribution to human dignity. The whole purpose of green policies is to enhance human dignity and care for our common home. It would be a contradiction in terms to support one at the cost of the other.

In Bangladesh, it is not logical to work for inter-generational justice, in the attempt to leave a better world to the next generation, if we do not work simultaneously on intra-generational justice, e.g. fighting social or gender injustices and inequalities.

Neither is it sustainable to promote social peace in Colombia, an area in which the country has made substantial progress recently, without addressing the problems of a utilitarian culture that wreaks havoc on the country’s rich and beautiful biodiversity, or without tackling the problems of the relation between politics and economics. Loss of biodiversity will eventually foment serious conflicts among inhabitants of different regions (e.g. due to access to water), and if politics is not independent enough from big economic powers, peace will be weak and not rooted in national culture.

Nor is coherent to work for the promotion of the common good in the UK, a topic that often arises in politics and development, without addressing the consequences of the consumerist culture and lifestyle of its citizens. This culture threatens the global common good, because, among other things, it supports the practice of unlimited exploitation and irrational use of natural resources.

Figure 8: Integral ecology

¹⁰ For more about integral ecology, see p.23
To synthesise the findings of the participants’ contributions, including symptoms, roots and integral ecology, we group them into two vital questions:

1. What hinders progress/development?
2. What helps progress/development?

As the following sections and Figures 9-12 and 14 show, participants identified five crucial topics in answer to these questions:

- Technology
- Politics
- Urbanisation
- Economics
- Culture & Nature

Since all these both contribute to and threaten progress, the ‘balance charts’ in the following pages indicate the emphasis the participants chose, as to whether a topic was, overall, more ‘for’ or more ‘against’ progress. As outlined in the Executive Summary, it is illuminating to compare and contrast the way the Pope and participants from different countries deal with these issues (summarised at the beginning of each section in a speech-bubble).
1. Technology

Participants across all countries agreed that technology is essential for progress. It has brought a communications revolution, with unprecedented access to information. Across Africa, for example, mobile phones have transformed peoples’ lives, especially in the area of access to financial services. Technology spurs human creativity in many fields, from green energy solutions to improvements in transportation and health care. It has permitted increased food production, critical for countries vulnerable to severe food shortages such as Bangladesh and Ethiopia. Participants agreed with Pope Francis’ praise for these positive contributions of technology to our lives:

“Technology has remedied countless evils which used to harm and limit human beings... Techno-science, when well directed, can produce important means of improving the quality of human life” (LS, 102-103).

However, participants also highlighted threats to progress posed by technology. On a national level, some mentioned their concern about the control of social media, by the state or corporations, and the consequent risks to freedom. They also noted how global mass media can threaten local cultures. On a more personal level, participants recognised the problems of virtual friendship, which blights real communication, and of technological addiction, with its dependency and negative psychological impact. This latter point was particularly emphasised by UK participants.

The graphic overleaf shows that participants shared Pope Francis’s appraisal of the positive aspects of technology. Did their view of the negative impacts also coincide? Yes and no. On the one hand, the examples they put forward not only coincided with but enriched the Pope’s judgement, with more concrete illustrations. On the other hand, however, the Pope places a strong emphasis on the disruptive technocratic paradigm – a systemic and structural emphasis that was not brought up in the workshops.

A ‘technocratic paradigm’

For Pope Francis, ‘technological products are not neutral, for they create a framework which ends up conditioning lifestyles and shaping social possibilities along the lines dictated by the interests of certain powerful groups. Decisions which may seem purely instrumental are in reality decisions about the kind of society we want to build’ (LS, 107). What is more, he argues, ‘the technological paradigm has become so dominant that it would be difficult to do without its resources and even more difficult to utilize them without being dominated by their internal logic’ (LS, 108). This ‘ironclad logic’ (the idea that we can dominate and manipulate nature as we wish), tends to ‘absorb everything into it’; this idea distances humans from themselves and the logic of nature; it prevents them from valuing the inner value of creation and creatures; it tends to link future progress merely with profit and to conceive of the past as obsolete; and lastly, more worryingly, it diminishes ‘our capacity’ for creativity and freedom (cf. LS, 108).
Because this logic also dominates current global politics and economics, it has become the ruler of the way we relate to each other and to nature, conditioning our lifestyles (cf. LS, 107). Moreover, those behind this logic, whose main motivation is ‘power’, present technology as the solution for the ecological crisis, a kind of ‘quick-techno-fix’ solution for symptoms, rather than addressing the deep roots of the crisis (cf. LS, 113). Technology, therefore, instead of an instrument for the promotion of integral human development, becomes a smoke screen that prevents us addressing the structural power issues that hinder integral development.

For this reason, the Pope declares the need to look at things differently, technology included (cf. LS, 111). But perhaps, for the majority of participants, the benefits of technology are so relevant for progress that the Pope’s over-emphasis on the structural negativities does not resonate for them. Although some participants did highlight the problem of structures, especially in economics and politics, they did not stress the technocratic global paradigm dominating such political-economic structures. Yet for Pope Francis, to have a shared plan to care for our common home, we need to tackle this issue:

‘... the same ingenuity which has brought about enormous technological progress has so far proved incapable of finding effective ways of dealing with grave environmental and social problems worldwide’ (LS, 164).
Discussion time

• Provide at least two concrete examples to illustrate the pros & cons of technology for progress as highlighted above. Preferably, take examples from your work and/or expertise.

• Would you agree with Pope Francis in terms of the over-emphasis on the technocratic paradigm and the subsequent structural problems for technology & development? Or would you agree with previous participants, and choose not to ‘over’ emphasise this aspect? Discuss.
2. Politics

Politics can change the world! Politicians, please act!

Politics must change. Politicians need conversion. Stay away from us!

Pope Francis is not shy about highlighting the dangers of politics for progress, and frequently mentions the problem of corruption as something that needs to be redressed (cf. LS, 55; 172; 177; 179; 182; 197). Participants agreed and indeed criticised political corruption even more emphatically.

Arguably, the Pope sounds optimistic in his belief that some countries ‘are gradually... developing more effective controls... to combat corruption’ (LS, 55). In the case of poor countries, Pope Francis says that while prioritising the elimination of ‘extreme poverty’ and fostering ‘social development’, they also need to ‘acknowledge the scandalous level of consumption in some privileged sectors of their population and to combat corruption more effectively’ (LS, 172). Hence, the stress here is put on the corruption of the elites rather than on national politicians.

Likewise, the Pope gently reminds countries that in order to promote a ‘healthy, mature and sovereign society’, they should regulate and control technology and power through the enforcement of law, including reducing corruption, whilst being vigilant about business activities that cause pollution (cf LS, 177).

Moreover, Pope Francis seems to positively encourage politicians to combat corruption not merely by law enforcement, but also through good practice, which suggests that the Pope trusts politicians to bring about change: ‘political and institutional frameworks do not exist simply to avoid bad practice, but also to promote best practice, to stimulate creativity in seeking new solutions and to encourage individual or group initiatives’ (LS, 177).

Even when talking about the failure of law enforcement, the Pope calls for the participation of intermediate organisations and the public in general, rather than insisting on the conversion of corrupt politicians: ‘because the enforcement of laws is at times inadequate due to corruption, public pressure has to be exerted in order to bring about decisive political action. Society, through non-governmental organizations and intermediate groups, must put pressure on governments to develop more rigorous regulations, procedures and controls. Unless citizens control political power – national, regional and municipal – it will not be possible to control damage to the environment’ (LS, 179).

It is true that Pope Francis highlights the problem of short-termism, both in business and in politics (LS, 36; 178), and that he condemns politicians for their lack of leadership and their weak responses (LS, 53) to what ‘represents one of the principal challenges facing humanity in our days’ (LS, 25). However, it is also true that he sees these weak responses as inextricably linked with economic interests and technological and economic powers (LS, 53; 54; 107) as well as ‘the lack of culture needed to confront this crisis’ (LS, 53). Therefore, the Pope’s statement that, ‘regarding climate change, there are differentiated responsibilities’ (LS, 52), seems to apply not only to rich, highly technologically-developed countries (as being more responsible than poor, technologically-underdeveloped nations), but also to technological and economic powers and leaders (as being more responsible than the political ones). To reinforce this perception, one may just read the first four sub-chapters of Chapter 5. There, Pope Francis suggests some concrete and positive lines of approach and action for the political international community (LS, 164-175), for local politics (LS, 176-181), for transparency in decision-making (LS, 182-188), and for the dialogue between economics and politics in order to promote human fulfilment (LS, 188-197).
189-198). He does not provide nearly so much positive and detailed input on economics or business as he does on politics.

This enthusiasm could well be triggered by the Pope’s understanding that ‘politics must not be subject to the economy’ (LS, 189). Hence, for Pope Francis, politicians are the ones capable of leading change, perhaps even more so than business people or economists, most of whom respond primarily to the logic of the market. For this reason, the Pope insists that, in order to overcome the ‘myth of progress’ (LS, 60) and find ‘new models of global development’ (LS, 194) able to produce wealth while improving – and not destroying – the world, we need not only creative business vocations (LS, 129), but also, maybe above all, politicians who are:

- ‘capable of reforming and coordinating institutions, promoting best practices and overcoming undue pressure and bureaucratic inertia’ (LS, 181);
- far-sighted enough to see beyond immediate political needs (cf LS, 197);
- wise enough to understand global as well as local problems (cf LS, 180);
- brave enough to challenge and resist becoming ‘subject to the economy’ or to ‘an efficiency-driven paradigm of technocracy’ (LS, 189);
- honest enough to promote ‘transparent political processes’, considering all the stakeholders involved in political-economic matters that affect people and the planet (cf LS, 182), determined enough to break the ‘perverse logic’ of corruption; and
- open enough to seek honest dialogue and international, enforceable agreements (cf LS, 173).

This optimism around politics was not something we found in the workshops. Participants, as Figure 10 below shows, were more prone to see the negative side of politics with regard to progress. For instance, the short-termism and self-interest found in business, they argued, is also found in politics. Moreover, participants pointed to ‘State’ failures as responsible for the spread of institutions that negate the common good.

Participants also indicated the importance of taxation and the way it is administered by politicians. For instance, by setting taxes that do not benefit the poor or the environment, but rather the rich, politicians are responsible for negative effects on actual progress. ‘Business as usual’ tends to utilise and manipulate the environment in the name of economic growth.

Participants, especially those from Africa and Latin America, highlighted the issue of land grabbing as something that cannot happen without political support from governments. Furthermore, participants from all countries pointed out the tendency of the national political power to increase power and control, which belittles the principle of subsidiarity and prevents citizenship empowerment. The more power the government holds, according to many participants, the more impotent people feel. This slightly differs from the optimism of Pope Francis on increasing political power.

In a further difference from Laudato Si’, the workshops recognised the benefits of global finance, although there was no unanimous consensus on this issue. In line with Pope Francis, many participants highlighted the positive impact on progress of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) on green and sustainable development policies (e.g. in Ethiopia), and on justice and human rights (at least in terms of declaration and agreement, though not necessarily translated into practice).
PARTICIPANTS’ VIEWS

POLITICS: for progress
- national participation in MDGs and SDGs
- green national policies alongside global finance
- justice and human rights; people’s participation

POLITICS: against progress
- corruption, short-termism, self-interest, detachment from reality, indifference, lack of leadership
- state failure (institutions vs common good), contradiction between taxes & promotion of growth, land grabs
- green policies: difficult to implement, rhetoric, attracting investment but destroying virgin forests
- poor subsidiarity & citizenship empowerment; governmental power vs people’s impotence; few women in power

Figure 10: Politics: for and against progress

Discussion time
- Provide at least two examples (preferably from your work/expertise) of the pros & cons of politics for progress, as highlighted by participants above.
- Would you agree with Pope Francis’s optimism regarding the role of political leaders? Or would you tend to agree more with the participants, who criticised politicians as well as business? Why? Discuss and provide examples.
3. Urbanisation

Pope Francis is well aware that urbanisation can hinder or enhance progress. He claims that due to ‘the disproportionate and unruly growth of many cities’, many of them have become unhealthy places in which to live. In addition to toxic emissions, there is also visual and noise pollution, not healthy for human fulfilment (cf. LS 44). Air pollution in cities was extensively discussed in workshops in Ethiopia and Bangladesh, since Addis Ababa and Dhaka are highly polluted. One of the main causes is transport, which also causes considerable noise pollution. Despite the fact that Bogotá is quite polluted too, the issue did not come up as strongly in Colombia as in other workshops, probably because discussions were more focused on what is happening in Amazonia (see Appendix A).

![Air pollution Bogotá](image1)

![Air pollution Dhaka](image2)

![Air pollution Addis Ababa](image3)

The Pope argues that our chaotic cities have also become huge, ‘inefficient structures, excessively wasteful of energy and water’, and ‘lacking in sufficient green space’, that disconnect citizens from nature (LS, 44). Lack of green spaces was stressed by participants in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, and chaotic urban planning was highlighted by participants in Sierra Leone, as they said that Freetown is not exactly the best-designed metropolis in the world. The issue of ‘waste’ in cities was something common to all workshops.

It is also argued in *Laudato Si’* that because the most beautiful areas of cities are now restricted to the rich (cf. LS, 45), ‘many professionals, opinion makers, communications media and centres of power’, located in these ‘affluent urban areas’, lose ‘direct contact with’ the poor and common urban dwellers and their problems (LS, 49). ‘They live and reason from the comfortable position of a high... quality of life well beyond the reach of the majority of the world’s population’ (LS, 49). ‘This lack of physical contact and encounter can lead to a numbing of conscience and to tendentious analyses which neglect parts of reality’ (LS, 49). Apart from participants in Colombia, this was not, however, a major topic of discussion. Although disconnection with nature was something highlighted by participants of all countries, the link was not made between this and the disconnectedness of affluent urban dwellers.

The Pope also reminds us of the injustice of ‘rural workers... moving to poverty-stricken urban areas’ (LS, 134). This is partly triggered by the fact that ‘productive land is concentrated in the hands of a few owners due to the progressive disappearance of small producers, who, as a consequence of the loss of the exploited lands, are obliged to withdraw from direct production’ (LS, 134). This issue was commented on by participants, especially in Bangladesh, Ethiopia and Colombia.

Another serious problem of today’s cities noted in *Laudato Si’*, is the ‘lack of housing’, ‘since state budgets usually cover only a small portion of the demand. Not only the poor, but many other members of society as well, find it difficult to own a home. Having a home has much to do with a sense of
personal dignity and the growth of families’ (LS, 152). This is an issue brought up by many participants in all countries, but particularly in the UK, where prices of houses and the increasing number of homeless people have become serious urban problems. In addition to what Pope Francis says about the need for cities to be places of integration and not of isolation, many participants commented on the lamentable rise of ‘neighbourhoods without neighbours’.

**PARTICIPANTS’ VIEWS**

**URBANISATION:**
- for progress
  - infrastructure: schools, hospitals, roads, bridges, housing, transport
  - recycling, planting trees, recreational areas
  - better opportunities to fulfil one’s dreams

**URBANISATION:**
- against progress
  - rapid urbanisation, poor planning, depletion of natural resources, poor waste management, over-priced properties, homelessness, precarious housing
  - waste, pollution, water problems (health), energy use, transport-traffic-pollution
  - insecurity, violence, anxiety and isolation
  - land grabbing for big projects, displacement & loss of social networks, neighbourhoods without neighbours (individualism), disconnection from nature, poor food quality

*Figure 11: Urbanisation: for and against progress*

Pope Francis also refers to the problem of displacement of citizens living in poor neighbourhoods, and reminds us of the need for advanced ‘adequate information’. Not only do ‘the people directly involved need to be part of the [decision-making] process’, but also those in power must be aware of the displaced citizens’ needs and offer them choices for ‘decent housing’ (LS, 152). Also, either due to displacement or migration, the Pope points to the need for ‘creativity’ on how to integrate ‘rundown neighbourhoods into a welcoming city’ (LS, 152). Displacement issues were present during workshops in all countries, with special concern shown in Bangladesh, Ethiopia and Colombia, where participants described concrete causes for the displacement of citizens in poor neighbourhoods. In general, they argue, this is due to the ‘development’ of big projects somehow disconnected with ordinary people. They also mentioned the importance of taking people’s social networks into account. A neighbourhood is not just a place where we live, it is a place where we develop our social dimension as human beings.
Massive displacements necessarily disrupt this social dimension, something which is not always taken into consideration.

According to *Laudato Si’*, the ‘quality of life in cities has much to do with systems of transport, which are often a source of much suffering for those who use them’ (LS, 153). This was one of the most deeply-felt topics addressed by participants in workshops of all countries. In almost all the cities we visited, commuting to work is a nightmare. Traffic is chaotic, and the rise of cars has become a serious problem, not just because of traffic congestion and air pollution, but also because of parking areas, which ‘spoil the urban landscape’.

On a positive note regarding transport, participants in Dhaka highlighted the fact that millions of taximopeds in the city now use ‘natural gas’ rather than ‘petrol’. However, according to participants, traffic and transportation in Dhaka could not be more chaotic. Police even issue tickets for people travelling on the roof of trains. Participants in Colombia noted the importance of the new bus system (TransMilenio), which has been gradually replacing the old buses. Others saw as positive the decision to limit cars entering the city according to odd and even number plates on alternate days (but some affluent people just buy a second car and enter the city every day).

In Addis Ababa, getting anywhere at rush hour is an adventure lasting from one to three hours. Participants had to address this problem in order to get to the workshops. The official bus system and rail network is limited, so most people commute in old, overcrowded mini-buses. However, participants say it works, and also that outside rush hour traffic it is not so bad. In Freetown traffic is chaotic, and roads are in poor condition. There are thousands of mostly unlicensed motor-taxis, the only way of getting from one place to another in reasonable time. Participants in the UK all complained about traffic, but not necessarily about ‘transportation’.

In all workshops (except Colombia where the setting was different), participants also discussed the ‘inter-relationship between living space and human behaviour’ (LS, 150). One exercise was to design a ‘home’ based on the values they considered essential for sustainable development and the protection of common areas (cf. LS, 151). Participants noted that recycling, the expansion of recreational areas, and the planting of trees was on the agenda of their programmes. Complementing *Laudato Si’*, they pointed out that cities provide more opportunities than rural areas to fulfil people’s dreams, and better infrastructure regarding schools, hospitals, roads, etc. Participants in all countries mentioned the problem of ‘insecurity and violence’ in cities (including gender-based violence), a topic the encyclical skirts around. When violence is mentioned in *Laudato Si’*, it is in relation to exclusion, poverty, oppression, unemployment, displacement, even ecological degradation, but not necessarily in terms of physical ‘security’.

In terms of promoting better urbanisation, ‘civic love’ and public and political action is critical (LS, 231), although ‘not everyone is called to engage directly in political life’ (LS, 232). Yet, for Pope Francis, ‘the promotion of the common good’ in cities can be expressed in multiple ways, even by showing ‘concern for a public place (a building, a fountain, an abandoned monument, a landscape, a square)’, in order ‘to protect, restore, improve or beautify it’ (LS, 232). Participants provided examples of personal and community actions that express self-giving love whilst enhancing a more beautiful urban environment.
**Discussion time (choose one or two questions)**

- Choose one topic highlighted by participants as negative or positive in terms of urbanisation and progress. Provide examples, preferably from your work/expertise. Discuss.
- Is the issue of urbanisation included in your programmes? If so, how? How could it be improved? Are there any new ways you think your team can promote urban love? If not, why not? Would you consider it as a future relevant issue?
- Participants have stressed the issue of personal insecurity in cities. Yet, Pope Francis talks about violence from a more structural perspective. Neither position discards the other, they are just different emphases. What would be yours? How would you combine them in your programmes?
- The problem of housing has been pointed out by Pope Francis and by participants as critical for progress. Discuss and provide a course of action based on your expertise.
4. Economics

Laudato Si’ thoroughly addresses the economic dimension of the socio-ecological degradation going on around us. The importance that the document gives to the relationship between economics and ecology is clear from the start, in its sub-title: On the Care for our Common Home. The word “home” (oikos in Greek) is the root for: (i) ‘oiko-nomia’ (economy: the way we organise, or rule home); (ii) ‘oiko-logia’ (ecology: the logos or life that inhabits home); and (iii) ‘oiko-umene’ (the whole world, the place where we live and flourish). Economics, ecology and ecumenism are interconnected. Because our common home, ‘burdened and laid waste, is among the most abandoned and maltreated of our poor’, and ‘groans in travail’ (LS, 2), it needs good administration (economics), fruitful connections between the various webs of life (ecology), and dialogue and respect between its inhabitants (ecumenism).

Cardinal Turkson, head of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, has refuted the claim that Laudato Si’ is anti-business, pointing out in the case of sustainable development, the Pope “calls upon business to lead by harnessing its creativity to solve pressing human needs” (Conference speech, Chile, January 2016). For Pope Francis, business is a ‘noble vocation’, because it is ‘directed to producing wealth and improving our world’ (LS, 129). Moreover, business ‘can be a fruitful source of prosperity for the areas in which it operates, especially if it sees the creation of jobs as an essential part of its service to the common good’ (LS, 129).

In other words, as Cardinal Turkson has explained on several occasions, Pope Francis recognises the validity of business, since in the ideal case its activities can promote decent and fulfilling employment while respecting the environment, hence contributing to the common good. However, the world will not benefit from businesses which heedlessly follow the old logic of “business as usual”. As with many other areas of human activity, economics and business need an integral ecological conversion.

According to Pope Francis, the current economic system ‘fails to take the context into account, let alone the effects on human dignity and the natural environment... Whatever is fragile, like the environment, is defenceless before the interests of a deified market, which become the only rule’ (LS, 56). Therefore, the Pope argues that many things need to be reconsidered in economics, because a substantial change is required on topics such as: consumerism; short-termism; irrational confidence in economic growth and human abilities; the dependency on fossil fuels to sustain a particular model of consumption-production; global inequality; an increase in the ecological and social debt affecting the earth and the poor; vested interests – particularly over-powerful financial and speculative interests; control and manipulation of information and technology; and the lack of investment in people and decent work.

Following Benedict XVI, the Pope argues ‘for new models of progress to arise, there is a need to change models of global development’, entailing ‘a responsible reflection on the meaning of the economy and its goals with an eye to correcting its malfunctions and misapplications... Put simply, it is a matter of redefining our notion of progress. A technological and economic development which does not leave in its wake a better world and an integrally higher quality of life cannot be considered progress’ (LS, 194).
The economic connection with ecology was underlined by participants of all workshops. As different regions and countries are affected differently, participants also brought a rich diversity of opinions on this matter. In terms of the positive aspects of present economics, participants highlighted the importance of global trade and finance (especially from African countries), of the textile and agricultural industries (especially in Bangladesh), of green energy (especially in Ethiopia and the UK), and of the role of civil society organisations (CSOs) and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in promoting long-term sustainable programmes and alternative economic models (especially in Colombia).

When discussing the aspects of present economics that hinder development, the analysis of Laudato Si' was practically unanimously accepted. Almost all participants highlighted the ‘myth of progress’ as one of the main causes of the problem. When money and profits are considered as ‘idols’, as participants are witnessing among individuals and organisations in their own countries, other values are overshadowed, greed becomes a driver for economic activities and planning, and the market mentality (or ideology) rules rather than serves while we ‘administer our home’ (economics).

Consequently, economic programmes are merely designed and measured according to the maximisation of profits and cost-reduction, without considering other parameters such as the environment or quality of work. This idolatry is also translated into an exclusive financial dominance in economics, detached from real production and needs, fomenting also a short-term mentality which has proved to be unhealthy to our common home in general and to the economy in particular. Under this predominant ideology, it comes as no surprise to observe what participants noted about the problem of work, i.e. unemployment, unfair wages and over-exploitation of workers (even modern slavery), all linked with over-exploitation of resources.

Participants also discussed the risk of applying these economic ideologies in Christian development agencies. One participant in Ethiopia highlighted this risk in an explicit way. She pointed out that when Christian institutions—such as CAFOD—measure the success of their development programmes only through material growth (i.e. numbers of beneficiaries affected, money raised for a particular purpose, etc.), and this measurement prevails over a more interpersonal model that put people and their overall wellbeing at the centre, then those institutions can be complicit in the same economic idolatry that Laudato Si’ denounces.

Again, both Pope Francis and the participants seem to agree on the fact that new models of development economics are needed. Yet two slightly different approaches emerged. One could be represented by what we heard and learned in Colombia; the other by what we heard and learned in Ethiopia. This does not mean that participants of other countries have not discussed the matter; just that in those two places, the approaches were more noticeable. Neither does it mean that all participants in Colombia and Ethiopia agree with one particular model and reject the other – this question was not actually part of the discussions. But in order to simplify the argument, we have chosen those two countries to label the distinction between two approaches that emerged during the dialogue.

The ‘Colombian approach’ is a more radical claim for urgently turning upside down present economic models that do not respect people and the environment. These damaging models, they argue, are ideated, promoted and sustained mainly by big international corporations, in alliance with local governments and some international organisations. But given that these organisations and their leaders are detached from the actual needs of people and the earth, social movements, supported by faith-based organisations and churches, should lead the way. For a serious ‘dialogue’ on progress, Laudato Si’ claims, this approach argues that the voices of the poor (and of the earth) need to take the place they deserve.
PARTICIPANTS’ VIEWS

ECONOMICS: for progress
- global trade, international finance for development, growing affluence
- green energy, textile industry, agriculture & food industry
- long-term sustainable programmes, contributions of CSOs and NGOs

ECONOMICS: against progress
- myth of progress: money & profit as primordial values (idols), greed as a driver, market-driven ideology, progress = maximum profits, over-optimism re. material growth, breakdown of communities & trust
- unemployment, unfair wages, over-exploitation and mismanagement of natural resources
- property without social value, privatisation of security-transport-housing (high prices)
- short-termism, financial dominance (exclusion)

Figure 12: Economics: for and against progress

In contrast, the ‘Ethiopian approach’, although it also promotes urgent change to the current system, does so through the law of gradualism. This approach argues that the development model can be improved through substantial changes that allow poor countries to develop, but in an autonomous and ecological way. This Ethiopian approach has more trust in the formal international dialogical process than the Colombian model, whilst still calling for the participation of the voices of the poor (something that they suggest can be facilitated by the Church).

Discussion time
- Choose two topics highlighted by participants as negative in terms of economics and progress. Provide examples, preferably from your work/expertise. Discuss.
- Choose at least one topic highlighted by participants as positive in terms of economics and progress. Provide examples. Discuss.
- According to your expertise and experience, would you agree with a complete radical change in economics (similar to the Colombian approach), or would you prefer a radical but gradual change in economics (similar to the Ethiopian approach)? Or would you embrace a different approach?
5. Culture & nature

A throwaway culture is destroying the earth and our social bonds! We need to preserve cultural diversity.

Yes, a culture of consumerism and individualism is destroying us. But, er... what about GENDER?

In *Laudato Si’*, Pope Francis does not define culture, a broad term often interpreted in different ways by different people, especially by social scientists (see Lévi-Strauss 1978). Still, for the tradition of the Church, culture is critical for development, since it allows humans to live life to the full (or not). Moreover, as the constitution *Gaudium et Spes* (n. 53) explains, culture indicates everything that humans develop and perfect through their bodily and spiritual qualities. This includes: (i) the human capacity to labour and the technical ability to use and to control—to a certain degree—natural resources; (ii) the specific human spiritual and intellectual skills, which allow us to express ourselves, to practice religion, and to cultivate science, art and beauty; and (iii) the social configuration of humanity, which enables us to form customs, to establish laws and institutions, and to develop our relationships, among which the ‘family’ plays a pivotal role. In particular, this social dimension permits humans to seek ‘the progress of many, even of the whole human family’, hence to ‘promote civilisation’.

Culture, therefore, is not so much an object that can be studied or practised by experts, but rather the way in which every human being finds meaning in his/her life. It is a process generated in time and space, shared with a specific group, and transmitted from generation to generation through different forms of expressions (e.g. language). Yet culture comprises, for the Catholic tradition (cf *Gaudium et Spes*, 53) not only the cultivation of values, but also the cultivation of nature. In other words, culture is about the relationship between humans and the relationship we have with the natural world. Nature and culture are intimately connected. No wonder Pope Francis has given such importance to culture in *Laudato Si’*.

For *Laudato Si’*, the natural and cultural patrimony are intertwined. They constitute the foundation of our identity, are inherited and shared by all peoples of this planet, shape our present and influence our future (cf. LS, 143). This aspect was highlighted by some participants, especially those in Colombia, among whom were representatives of indigenous people. They reminded us that for many indigenous tribes, “the land does not belong to them”, but “they belong to the land”. This resonates with a strong argument expressed in *Laudato Si’* (n. 146), by which ‘land is not a commodity but a gift from God and from their ancestors who live there, a sacred space with which they need to interact if they are to maintain their identity and values’. Participants in Colombia also expressed their concern about ‘the world’ wanting to teach them how to preserve nature, because they consider their culture is better equipped to do so than the current ‘world’ culture. In the words of Francis, ‘when they remain in their land they themselves care for it best’ (ibid.).

Echoing *Laudato Si’*, participants highlighted positive elements of their own culture. For example, they stressed the increasing awareness of environmental issues, even in cities where such awareness used to be quite low. They also pointed out the importance of local cultures and the richness of cultural diversity.

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11 For more on the notion of culture for Christians, see *Gaudium et Spes*, nn. 54-62; Quarello (1979) and Misfud (1988).
diversity, particularly in big cities due to the experience of migration. Family life was seen as a key factor in promoting meaningful development, something that was especially highlighted by participants in Bangladesh. Participants from all countries also underlined the importance of religious life and spirituality, which they see as essential for the transformation required to promote a culture of care, to seek the common good, and to deploy love beyond interpersonal relations (i.e. civic love).

The Pope argues that because our natural and cultural patrimony are inextricably connected, both are being threatened by the present socio-ecological crisis. The deterioration of nature caused by the ‘throwaway culture’ (LS, 16; 43) and by a ‘self-centred culture of instant gratification’ (LS, 162) is affecting people’s life and corroding the foundations of social and natural life (cf. LS, 20-22; 146; 229). A ‘consumerist vision of human beings, encouraged by the mechanism of today’s global economy’, not only diminishes the notion of our human existence, but also compromises the rich diversity of local cultures (LS, 144). For Francis, the ‘disappearance of a culture can be as serious, or even more serious, than the disappearance of a species of plant or animal’ (LS, 145). Therefore, it is undesirable that people feel pressurised to abandon their cultural traditions. In short, when culture is corrupted, the whole idea of humanity belittled, and social life corroded, there ensue ‘new forms of violence and brutality... obstacles to the growth of a genuine culture of care for the environment’ (LS, 229).

Participants of all countries seemed to agree with the Pope about certain negative aspects of the prevailing global culture, which influence their local cultures. They emphasised the detrimental effects of the throwaway culture, in which consumerism is the principal value. They also stressed how problematic an individualistic culture is for society and for the environment, and how it has triggered insensitivity or, as Pope Francis says, ‘a globalisation of indifference’. Participants provided many concrete examples of this corrupt culture from their standpoints. For instance, they discussed how, when success is culturally determined by having more than the other, a culture of competition ensues, damaging a culture of solidarity. They felt the sense of belonging and cultural bonds are diminishing in their contexts due to the influence of global culture. Also, whilst Laudato Si’ describes how damaging the throwaway culture has proved to be for the poor and the frail (both people and land), participants in all countries discussed how this is translated into specific unjust social practices, such as the stigmatisation of minorities.

Although participants agreed that the present culture does not help promote a culture of care, they did not place as much emphasis as Laudato Si’ on the elements of conflict, death and violence that the current culture generates (cf LS, 213). Only those in Colombia pointed out the ‘violence’ that international companies, governments and local groups inflict on the land and on indigenous communities. Still, participants of other countries recognised that if we do not overcome the individualistic throwaway culture, more serious conflicts may arise. They also agreed with the fact that a proper ‘ecological culture cannot be reduced to a series of urgent and partial responses’ (LS, 111), because it requires a change of mentality to which Christian spirituality can contribute. Regarding change of mentality and spirituality, participants strongly emphasised one fundamental cultural issue which is not explicitly found in Laudato Si’: gender inequality.

Gender

The term ‘gender’ is absent from Laudato Si’, perhaps to avoid what Benedict XVI has called the ideology of gender, a new philosophy that considers that sex is no longer a given element of nature, but something socially constructed that humans can choose. However, in his later Apostolic Exhortation on The Family, Pope Francis refers to the need to emphasize ‘that biological sex and the socio-cultural role of sex (gender) can be distinguished but not separated’ (Amoris Laetitia, 56). So it is striking that in Laudato Si’, a document that invites every single person on the planet (not just Catholics) to revisit the idea and practice of progress, with a particular emphasis on the option for the poor, he has omitted gender inequality. The majority of the world’s one billion poorest people are women and girls (UN, The World’s Women 2015). Among illiterate people over 15 years old, 63% are women (UNESCO, International Literacy Data 2014). One in three women suffer from violence or abuse, and they are the
ones who suffer the most in armed conflicts and natural disasters (UN, The World’s Women 2015). In countries where we conducted workshops, less than 29% of parliamentarians are women, (Fig. 13). Can we talk about development without addressing this sensitive issue?

Moreover, it is bewildering that Laudato Si’, a papal document that unprecedentedly quotes a great number of Conferences of Bishops on issues around development and/or the ecology (see Table 1), has missed the 1991 document from the Zambian bishops, You shall be my witnesses. This acknowledged that women in Zambia are not only the backbone of families, but play major roles in the economy, especially in rural areas (nn. 41-42). However, in both places, i.e. families and the economy, women are oppressed and exploited, an injustice that ‘cries out to our Creator’ (n. 42). Hence, the bishops urged the Government ‘to take stronger action and promote the rightful development of women’, particularly by promoting ‘equal opportunity for women to be represented at decision-making levels’ (ibid.). Yet, the bishops argued, the Church must also take action to redress injustices against women in ‘Church, State and family life’ (ibid). It is hard to understand why Laudato Si’ has not linked the cry of the women, witnessed by the Zambian bishops, with the cry of the poor and of the earth (LS, 49).

Even more astonishing is the omission of gender when we consider that Laudato Si’ also appeals for a redefinition of our relationships with each other, with the planet, and with God (cf. LS, 15; 66; 70). The same year that Laudato Si’ was issued, leaders of the world declared that gender equality is critical for tackling poverty and promoting human development. The Sustainable Development Goals put gender equality as the fifth goal. The targets of this goal are to end all forms of discrimination against women and girls everywhere, to eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls in the public and private spheres—including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation—and to empower women and girls so as to achieve universal development.

Despite the fact that the workshops were based on Laudato Si’ and not on the Sustainable Development Goals, participants explicitly pointed out gender inequality as a big obstacle for human dignity, for healthy relationships, and hence for human development. Although the issue was raised by women, there was consensus that inequality is a cultural problem that foments injustices, abuse and lack of opportunity for women. Although male participants did not deny this, some were surprised at the emphasis on this topic, which was one facilitators had not proposed.

Gender equality in Laudato Si’
Is the gender inequality issue identified by participants compatible with the proposal of Laudato Si’?
One can argue that in spite of the absence of the term ‘gender’, the encyclical is not closed to gender inequality problems, issues highlighted by participants and stressed by eco-feminists for decades.

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12 This proportion has stayed the same for the last two decades. Girls are more likely than boys to miss out on education for the following reasons: (i) due to high school fees, boys are chosen to go to school; (ii) many adolescent girls are expected to help out at home; (iii) child marriage restricts girls’ mobility and freedom.

13 For a brief account of the SDGs, see "Sustainable Development Goals. Actions Towards 2030".

On the one hand, *Laudato Si’* uses the binary masculine-feminine as complementary (LS, 156), because, it argues, it is necessary to promote healthy relationships through which our own identity can be recognised. The encyclical often translates this binary into gender stereotypes, meaning the strong, powerful, rational, active and governmental dimensions to the ‘masculine’, but the sensitive, emotional, passive and productive dimensions to the ‘feminine’. That is why Pope Francis refers to sister-mother earth as the one who sustains us and produces fruit for us all (cf LS, 1), or to the Virgin Mary as queen of maternal affection and symbol of beauty (cf LS, 241), as opposed to the Father, a God who ‘creates and who alone owns the world’ (LS, 75), the one who has a ‘paternal relationship... with all his creatures’ (LS, 96). The encyclical seems to follow uncritically the stereotypes of St Francis of Assisi’s *Canticle of the Sun*: ‘brother’ sun-wind-fire are robust, while ‘sister’ moon-water are beautiful, humble and chaste (LS, 87). Feminist theologians have repeatedly warned about applying these binaries without any proper historical or literary hermeneutics (see Ruether 1993). In particular, these dualisms can lead to what Pope Francis himself calls an ‘inadequate presentation of Christian anthropology’ that gives ‘rise to a wrong understanding of the relationship between human beings and the world’ (LS, 116). Indeed, a misinterpretation of the Genesis story of creation has often promoted a ‘dominion model’ for all relationships, including our bond with creation (cf LS, 67; 139).

**Figure 14: Culture: for and against progress**

- **Culture: for progress**
  - Increasing awareness of environmental issues
  - Multicultural experience due to migration; progress in gender equality
  - Religious life, spirituality, civic love, desire for transformation

- **Culture: against progress**
  - Gender inequality: cultural acceptance of abuse, injustices, lack of opportunities for women
  - Success culturally determined by having more than the other
  - Unjust social practices embedded in culture (e.g. stigmatisation of minorities or poor)
  - Throwaway culture and consumerism, individualistic culture and globalisation of indifference
On the other hand, *Laudato Si’* develops the meaning of human dignity, based on the belief that “all” humans are created in the image and likeness of God (LS, Chapter 2), emphasising the value of every human person (LS, 117). Also, unusually for a papal document, *Laudato Si’* mentions ‘men and women’ in places where previous pontiffs would have used only ‘men’. More importantly, the encyclical challenges the dominant mind-set with which we ‘see ourselves as... lords and masters’ (LS, 2). For the Pope, this ‘dominion’ mentality is not just translated into dominion over the natural world, but also into dominion over the poor and the frail, and the dominion of structures (e.g. technocratic structures) over communities and individuals. It would not be unreasonable to extend this criticism to the ‘dominion’ mentality of men over women, as perhaps the participants of the workshops instinctively did.

*Laudato Si’* also overflows with descriptions of God’s love: ‘the entire material universe speaks of God’s love, his boundless affection for us’ (LS, 84), which balances out the ‘paternal’ image of other passages of the encyclical. When Francis talks about St Joseph, while portraying him as a hard-working and strong father, he introduces him as somebody who ‘shows great tenderness, which is not a mark of the weak but of those who are genuinely strong, fully aware of reality and ready to love and serve in humility’ (LS, 242). This seems to challenge the usual cultural feminine-masculine binary.

*Laudato Si’* stresses the need for healthy relationships and mutuality when describing the Trinity: ‘The human person grows more, matures more and is sanctified more to the extent that he or she enters into relationships, going out from themselves to live in communion with God, with others and with all creatures. In this way, they make their own that Trinitarian dynamism which God imprinted in them when they were created’ (LS, 240).

To sum up, although *Laudato Si’* omits the term gender, a case can still be made for the encyclical’s openness to gender issues. The considerable emphasis placed on gender by workshop participants proves again how critical the topic is for human development, and marks a valuable contribution to the dialogue called for by *Laudato Si’*.

**Discussion time**

- Identify one example of gender inequality in your context (region, community, work, etc.). What are the factors that foment such inequality? Are there cultural values in your context that can counter gender inequality? Discuss.
- Choose one other topic highlighted by participants as negative in terms of culture. Provide examples, preferably from your work/expertise. Discuss.
- Choose at least one topic highlighted by participants as positive in terms of culture. Identify one positive element of your own local culture. How is it affected by the prevailing culture of consumerism?
- Culture includes the human capacity to labour. In your daily experience, what helps or hinders your social and ecological relationships at work?
Action: what to do differently and what resources are needed

Overall analysis of participants’ ideas for change

As explained before (see Figure 6), participants were firstly invited to ‘see’ what is good – from God’s viewpoint and from their own – and subsequently to identify the symptoms and roots of what damages such goodness. Secondly, participants were asked to revisit Pope Francis’ ‘judgement’ on what hinders and promotes development, and then to provide their own.

During the last section of the workshop, participants were invited to listen to the proposals for ‘action’ identified in Laudato Si’, and subsequently to think about what they can do differently. They did this by selecting actions and resources in four areas. The first two were more personal: (i) myself; and (ii) my family. The last two were more public: (iii) my community; and (iv) my country and world.

Figures 15, 17 and 19 below depict the main ‘actions’ that participants from each country selected as the most relevant and urgent in each of these four areas. The reverse of each figure (i.e. Figures 16, 18 and 20) shows the ‘resources’ that participants highlighted as necessary for putting their actions into practice.

For reasons already explained, Colombia is not included in these charts, but the main actions proposed by participants from Colombia are highlighted in Appendix A. Responses from Sierra Leone are also excluded, since owing to limitations of time, participants were asked to fill in the matrix for ‘actions-resources’ as a voluntary post-workshop task. We hope to include some of their answers in the final report. This leaves us with the answers of participants from three countries: Ethiopia, Bangladesh and the UK. What follows is a synthesis of the main commonalities, differences and highlights of their proposals for action and the resources they consider are needed to fulfil them.

Time

Participants from all countries highlighted the need for ‘TIME’ in all four areas (myself, my family, my community, my country/world). They felt we need more personal and familial time for reflection, for self-examination of the way we live and relate to others and to nature. They added that time is also needed within our local and national communities, for examining our communal lifestyles at a deeper level, and reflecting on how these are affecting the environment. Furthermore, participants considered that time is required not only for discussion and reflection, but also for enhancing our connection and relationship with nature. Our lack of time for this relationship, according to participants, shows that the ecological aspect of our lives is not an actual priority. Therefore, the first change required in order to respond to the ecological crisis is the allocation of ‘time’ for personal and communitarian reflection on how we live, and on how we relate to each other and to nature.

The participants’ view of time resonates with two strong aspects of Laudato Si’. One is the philosophical and theological idea – already developed in Evangelii Gaudium (222-225) – that ‘time is greater than space’ (LS, 178). The other is about ‘rapidification’, meaning an intense pace of life that stands in the way of integral development and integral ecology.

Time is greater than space

Although this requires further explanation (which we hope to include in the final report), according to Pope Francis, time is greater than space because:

- Time is about open horizons: time refers to the aspiration of fullness among our limitations. Despite the fact that each individual moment ‘has to do with limitation as an expression of enclosure’, people aspire to the greater and brighter horizon of the future (EG, 222). Hence, we ‘work slowly but surely, without being obsessed with immediate results’, towards this better
future, while patiently enduring ‘difficult situations or inevitable changes in our plans’ (EG, 223). It is this openness that enthuses us to work for change towards a better future.

Time is about processes of people-building: ‘giving priority to time means being concerned about initiating processes rather than possessing spaces’ (EG, 223). ‘What we need... is to give priority to actions which generate new processes in society and engage other persons and groups who can develop them to the point where they bear fruit in significant historical events’ (ibid.). Rather than being obsessed with possessing spaces, which is linked to power—the Pope argues—we should be more focused on generating time across spaces, which is linked with community-building and sharing. Indeed, we cannot possess time; we just live in time. This is one reason why an emphasis on time processes can free us from certain anxieties and conflicts related to possessions, thus enabling us to perform actions that can improve integral ecology.

Time is about evaluating our actions in terms of human development: the Pope quotes a German priest and philosopher, Romano Guardini, for whom ‘the only measure for properly evaluating an age is to ask to what extent it fosters the development and attainment of a full and authentically meaningful human existence, in accordance with the peculiar character and the capacities of that age’ (EG, 182). For Pope Francis, we have the capacity to act and redress the ecological conversion, but this goes beyond our technological capabilities. It is about the life we want to live, and also the life we would like our children and grandchildren to have.

Time is about the history of salvation: God walks alongside us in our time, towards eternity. But this does not mean that we do not need to act because God is with us. On the contrary, God’s presence enables us to ‘act’ in a better way towards striving for human fullness and the fullness of all creation.

‘Rapidification’
Participants’ emphasis on ‘time’ also echoes Pope Francis’ argument concerning ‘rapidification’: an intensified pace of life and work that promotes constant change without questioning if such change is harming the world and humanity at present, or if it is threatening the life of the world and humanity in the future (LS, 18). This state of ‘rapidification’ prevents us from being attentive to ‘the beauty that is in the world’ (LS, 91), from contemplating nature, and from living life to the full, because it makes us incapable ‘of being fully present to someone without thinking of what comes next’ (LS, 226).

There was unanimous consensus among participants about how ‘rapidification’ hinders integral human development, integral ecology, and integral spirituality (for an explanation of these concepts see ‘Catholic spirituality and CAFOD’s contribution’, p.23). Hence their insistence on ‘time’ as both an action and a resource for promoting change. Indeed, participants clarified that the need for more time means that we must “redefine” our priorities, reorganise our agendas, re-plan our programmes and strategies, and change our attitudes accordingly.

Joint action: collaboration, sharing, responsibilities
A second commonality regarding proposals for action is about the need to act with others, in collaboration with them, sharing our resources and wisdom, and supporting each other. The need for joint action, according to participants, goes from inter-personal relations to communitarian, national and international ones. It comprises the need for a more gender-balanced care of households, for a stronger sharing of moral national leadership (e.g. among different civic, political, business and religious leaders), and for a deeper sharing of global responsibilities – which are different according to positions of power or resources.

There were some slightly different emphases regarding political responsibilities and shared actions that can bring about change for sustainable development. Participants from Ethiopia discussed the “Africa
2063 Agenda\textsuperscript{15}, and the convenience of using both \textit{Laudato Si’} and the Istanbul Declaration on Global Climate Change together, as resources to influence such an agenda. Participants from Bangladesh argued that, whatever the joint actions proposed may be, they must always promote peace and reconciliation. Participants from the UK highlighted the need to work on long-term thinking and planning in politics so as to have effective joint actions. Participants in Sierra Leone underlined the need for shared action on recycling, because without a collective approach and governmental infrastructure, recycling is impossible (as is their case at present).

The participants’ proposals on ‘joint action, collaboration and responsibilities’ resonate with what Pope Francis calls the need for a new universal and intergenerational solidarity, especially with those in greater need (cf. LS, 14; 159; 160; 172; 227; 240). For the Pope, ‘every violation of solidarity and civic friendship harms the environment’ (LS, 142), and needs to be overcome. The participants’ proposal on ‘joint action’ also resonates with what \textit{Laudato Si’} explains about the common but ‘differentiated’ responsibilities for rich countries, big businesses, and leaders have in order to redress socio-ecological degradation (cf. LS, 52; 170; 176; 179; 197).

\textit{Instruction; education and empowerment}

Participants agreed that new levels of knowledge are needed, in both personal and community relations. They recognised we need to know more about ecological issues and the ecological crisis in order to be aware of its seriousness and urgency. Yet they felt that formal instruction is not enough; what is needed is a profound education around something we value life and nature. Education, for most participants, is not restricted to ‘knowing’ something about ecology, but is about being empowered with the wisdom to bring about change.

This echoes what \textit{Laudato Si’} proposes regarding ‘education’. The Pope advocates for education towards ‘ecological citizenship’, which is not just about scientific information, or consciousness-raising, or even prevention of environmental risks; but is also about:

- cultivating social virtues that help people make selfless ecological commitments (LS, 211);
- promoting a new way of thinking about human beings, life, society and our relationship with nature (LS, 215);
- forging a ‘culture of love’ and care which permeates all society (LS, 213), which can urgently move society forward ‘in a bold cultural revolution’ (LS, 114), fostering ‘a new and universal solidarity’ (LS 14) that can counter the laws of the market (LS, 30) and ‘self-interested pragmatism’ (LS, 215);
- promoting a simpler and more grateful way of living, concerned for the needs of the poor and the environment (LS, 214);
- encouraging ‘ways of acting which directly and significantly affect the world around us, such as avoiding the use of plastic and paper, reducing water consumption, separating refuse, cooking only what can reasonably be consumed, showing care for other living beings, using public transport or car-pooling, planting trees, turning off unnecessary lights, or any number of other practices’ (LS, 211), and
- critiquing the ‘myths’ of a modernity grounded in a utilitarian mind-set (individualism, unlimited progress, competition, consumerism, the unregulated market) (LS, 210).

Both the workshop participants and the Pope argue that in order to promote this kind of education, the first resource needed is adequate educators. These are not to be found merely in schools or universities, because ecological educators ought to come also from ‘families… social media… catechesis and

\textsuperscript{15} A 50-year plan of action for long-term development in Africa signed by leaders of the African Union.
elsewhere’ (LS, 213). Most participants felt the need to commit themselves more to this particular task, especially those from Sierra Leone.

**Dialogue and participation**

Participants of all countries highlighted the need for dialogue among families, communities and nations on ecological issues, although with complementary approaches. Those in the UK suggested that members of the Church, NGOs and governments should ask their organisations to promote dialogue, and felt leaders should be held accountable for it. Those in Bangladesh stressed the role that the Church and Caritas network can provide in terms of promoting dialogue. They argued that rather than battling with governments, the Church’s network could provide support, as a way of exercising ‘subsidiarity’.

Participants in Ethiopia also mentioned the contribution that civil society should make to governance and accountability, particularly regarding the awareness of eco-destruction and the need for dialogue. But they also emphasised the need for a dialogue where the ‘poor’ – either communities or nations – are heard. Whilst participants of all countries agreed with the fact that the ‘poor’ must take part in the dialogue, those in Ethiopia went further and argued that ‘participation’ comes with ‘responsibility’. Moreover, they claimed that participation of people living in poverty (men and women) implies that different voices of different oppressed groups are heard on an equal level with the voices of the ‘rich’ or of those minorities that already have a voice in the national dialogue. In other words, participation and dialogue for the promotion of integral ecology must not create competition between different ‘poor’ groups seeking the attention of the powerful.

All these proposals on dialogue and participation resonate with *Laudato Si’* and the need to listen to ‘the cry of the poor’ and ‘the cry of the earth’ (LS, 49) (see section *Unlocking Laudato Si’*).

**Simpler lifestyle**

Another common proposal from participants of all countries was the need to start living in a simpler way. This goes from consuming differently, wasting less, and recycling more, to questioning our use of natural resources and revisiting our understanding of what it means to be human. Topics repeatedly emphasised were the use of water and food waste.

Participants also pointed out that the proposal for personal and familial change towards a simpler way of living must be balanced with political incentives that could help change habits (e.g. taxes), and with political regulations of certain social activities (e.g. production, or waste). Participants from Ethiopia and the UK connected the promotion of a simpler lifestyle with the need to enforce the Paris UN agreement on the reduction of carbon emissions and the need for more renewable and clean energy.

Participants of all countries mentioned how important spirituality, campaigns and social media are in the promotion of responsible habits. For this reason, these were considered key resources for change, and were described in different ways: e.g. prayer and celebration; good witnesses inspired by their faith; resources for clergy and communities; creative campaigns; and the presence of the need to live more simply in the ‘local’ media.

All this echoes what *Laudato Si’* calls the ‘need to take up an ancient lesson, found in different religious traditions and also in the Bible… the conviction that “less is more”’ (LS, 222).

**Charts of actions and resources needed for change: Ethiopia, Bangladesh, UK**

See following pages for a breakdown by country of what participants felt needed to be done differently to create the change called for in *Laudato Si’*, and what resources would be needed to achieve this.
My country/world:
- contribute to government awareness on eco-destruction & integral ecology
- need pollution tax
- LS’s message endorsed by religious leaders, & global leaders in Paris
- integral urban planning
- constant dialogue between ‘rich’ and ‘poor’ countries
- ‘poor’ nations take responsibility for our development and actions
- a diversity of voices is essential to dialogue
- nations’ periodic review of carbon emissions must be mandatory (of Paris commitments: accountability)

Myself:
- self-examination: re-organise agenda & priorities
- analyse ‘meaning’ of our life
- simpler lifestyle
- change of habits
- re-use materials
- reduce food waste; eat less meat; cook healthily
- less use of water, electricity, wood

What to do differently?

My community:
- dialogue on ecology; conversations on issues that matter
  - ‘awareness’ in media & schools
  - ecology club
  - new and better leadership
  - all-inclusive participation and joint action
- eco-audit in the office (eg energy & paper consumption, add plants)
- neighbourhoods: e.g. public toilets project

My family:
- more contact with nature
- education to change habits
- economise
- reduce household emissions and consumption
- share responsibilities
- move from greed to contentment
- act as witness: example, teaching
- educate family members

Figure 15: Ethiopia, what to do differently
Figure 16: Ethiopia, what resources are needed

My country/world:
- organisation; awareness
- Ethiopian green policies (improved, implemented)
- CO2 reductions; carbon bonds
- workshops at country level
- Africa 2063 agenda
- source of engagement: our nature, our continent
- endorsement by global faith leaders; LS & Istanbul Islamic declaration
- enforcement of Paris UN agreement; law-enforcing body at global level

Myself:
- time for reflection
- dialogue
- deepen knowledge
- change of attitude
- conviction
- money

My community:
- internalise values; develop new habits
- actual involvement; mobilisation; action groups; volunteers
  - leadership
  - culture
  - solar energy
- office policies (aid agencies included)
  - resources ($)

My family:
- time & space
- solar energy & other renewables
- attitudinal change; more care; more faith
  - joy (from small things)
  - what is enough?
- water (re-use, re-harvest); food recycling; ecological habits
- financial saving
- revisit roles women-men; education girls-boys, gender language
My country/world:
- clean common places
- ‘clean’ food
- better waste management
- protection of land and rivers
- know more, plan better
- support dialogue between policy makers about care of our common home
- support work of Caritas networks etc
- counter work of groups hindering progress (eg human trafficking)

What to do differently?

Myself:
- simpler lifestyle (e.g. to waste less, consume differently)
- increase our love for others
- find inspiration / motivation
- physical and spiritual cleanliness

My community:
- increase ecological awareness
- less use of energy and natural resources
- share ecological issues in prayer
- promote clean atmosphere, especially for disabled people

My family:
- discussion on integral ecology
- less use of water, electricity, paper
- more caring, sharing, playing
- collective care for our home (reduce burden on women)
- keep home ordered and clean

Bangladesh

Figure 17: Bangladesh, what to do differently
Figure 18: Bangladesh, what resources are needed
**What to do differently?**

**My country/world:**
- Share moral leadership; civic & spiritual leadership
- Become informed/trained on ecological issues
- Development funding (put pressure on government pre-election)
- Government: promote renewable energy, local products & fair trade; address the issue of lack of time for formation/information
- Collaboration across globe (international & inter-religious)
- Create strong regulatory body
- Empower people, particularly women
- Experience other cultures; seek links with communities in other countries

**Myself:**
- Less food waste
- Spend time with people who are different
- Change our attitudes
- Discipline and plan
- Find time & space to reflect (even at work); being less busy
- Balance what I am/am not able to achieve

**My community:**
- Be more reflective
- Listen to the cry of the poor; visualise the invisible and vulnerable
- See and understand the world better
- Move away from fearing to accepting each other
- Go beyond our comfort zone, outside our normal environments (churches, communities), to discover our neighbours and their actual needs
- Anti-poverty strategy
- Education for proper use of world resources
- Ignite Christian passion for sharing & loving God & neighbours (like the first apostles)
- Renewed understanding of human dignity

**My family:**
- Time to reflect
- More Sabbath time, together (as well as time alone)
- Dialogue / listening
- Shift to renewable energy
- Simplify our lives

*Figure 19: UK, what to do differently*
### My country/world:
- A different politics - long-term thinking
- Political will for good policies
- Change of heart in electorate
- New model of development: not fixing old framework
- Campaigns with characters (joyful)
  - Time, money, wisdom
- Clergy resources: homily textbooks
  - Integrity of leaders
- CAFOD groups (e.g. J&P), & their resources

### Myself:
- Critical colleagues; check it out with others and God
- Self awareness
- Local communities
- Distinguish between needs and wants
  - Learn to say no
  - Attentiveness
- Allocate time for reflection

### What resources are needed?

### My community:
- Time
- Degree of political will
- Local community leaders (animators & facilitators)
  - Lottery funding
  - Engagement; attentiveness
  - Recycling facilities
- Reflection: covenant God-us; prayer (& ecumenical prayer)
  - Local media (newspaper-radio)
  - Churches together in ecological groups

### My family:
- Time
- Planning
- Spiritual guidance
- Shared activities
- CAFOD campaigns

*Figure 20: UK, what resources are needed*
Initial reflections

These interim reflections on the first stage of the international dialogue will be complemented and furthered with data obtained during the second stage of the process.

1. Concerning the dialogue (workshops)

Regarding the process of dialogue, the following points were noted:

- The process and methodology used in the workshops (as described in Methodology), have been well received by all participants so far.
- This kind of process requires extensive preparation time, active listening by all during the workshop, and the information obtained is hard to classify. However, the methodology of the workshops, which follows that of Laudato Si’, has paid good dividends in terms of outcomes. Proof of this is the fact that there was no unique homogenous voice, instead there was a diversity of opinions and cultural approaches.
- There was a marked difference between the two-day process (Sierra Leone, Ethiopia and Bangladesh), and the one-day workshop (UK). The latter proved more intense with a lot of work packed into a single long day; the former allowed more time to extend, deepen and enrich the dialogue.

With regard to the interlocutors, we noted that:

- Participants all expressed great appreciation. For example, a participant from Ethiopia who could not attend most of the second day, spent hours travelling just to attend the last session.
- Many participants were inspired by the Pope’s statement that even small and simple gestures of care can make a difference, because they break with the logic of exploitation, selfishness and consumerism (cf. LS, 230). In this sense, participants expressed their sense that the workshops, despite their small scale, could bring about a great deal of good, especially due to the meeting of people from different countries and cultures.

With regard to the process as being driven by a ‘faith’ document, we noted that:

- Participants, whether people of faith or not, responded positively to the way ‘faith’ was introduced in the dialogue. Following Laudato Si’, ‘faith’ in development was presented inclusively and respectfully, particularly through religious narratives, almost as classic art, which often widens horizons and generates creativity and motivation for transformation. In general, the process underlined the importance of faith in people’s decision making.

2. Common themes and shared understanding

Roots of the socio-ecological crisis

In general, participants from all countries agreed with the analysis in Laudato Si’ about the causes of socio-ecological degradation, and had further views complementary to the encyclical, as explained in the section on ‘What helps or hinders development?’ The causes most frequently highlighted by participants were:

- Increasing culture of consumerism (throwaway culture).
- An economic model that has only profit at its core, regardless of socio-environmental consequences.
- Lack of proper eco-urban planning.
- Short-termism and corruption, especially in politics and business.
• Disempowerment of minorities and poor people (men and women).
• Difficulty in implementing green policies due to vested (and usually hidden) interests.
• Lack of eco-conversion and a spirituality of care.
• Lack of personal and communitarian awareness.
• Failure of leadership, including religious.
• ‘Rapidification’.

Desire for change
Participants of all countries:
• Acknowledged that the current model of development must change.
• Recognised that we all need to start living simpler lives.
• Showed great ‘passion’ when expressing their views and aspirations for transformation.
• Committed themselves to transmit this desire and what they have learned from the workshops to others.
• Agreed with *Laudato Si*’ with regard to seeking for change through dialogue and participation, not by imposition. Coinciding with the Pope, participants emphasised the need for a ‘true’ dialogue, where all can take part, and where weak voices are actually heard.

Gender inequality
Participants across all countries highlighted the importance of gender equality for promoting sustainable development and integral ecology. They also questioned why this is not considered an essential part of Catholic integral spirituality. Given that gender inequality and its relation to development is absent from *Laudato Si*, and that it was not proposed as an issue for discussion by the workshop facilitators, we take this contribution of the participants as an evidence of the ‘truthfulness’ of the dialogue.

Common home
The notion of the earth as a common home was highly popular among all participants.

Interconnectedness
Much of the participants’ feedback was focused on the sense of ‘interconnectedness’ of social and ecological issues, of local and global problems, of individual and common attitudes towards nature, and of cultural, spiritual, and political-economic approaches towards our common home.

Resources needed for transformative actions
Participants from all countries struggled to think what ‘resources’ were needed to deploy the ‘actions’ they considered critical to promote change. Although this could be attributed partly to lack of time, it nevertheless shows that the thinking about ‘resources’ is something that requires further elaboration.

3. Noticeable differences

Sense of urgency
We noticed a strong sense of urgency for social and ecological change among participants from Colombia, Sierra Leone and Ethiopia. This sense of urgency was slightly less emphatic in Bangladesh, and remarkably toned down in the UK.

Radical change
Although all participants agreed on the need for a change in the current model of development, we discovered different approaches that we arbitrarily classified into two: the Colombian and the Ethiopian approach (see *Interim Findings: 4. Economics*). The first is an urgent call for total change, right now, and means challenging those in power (governments, international organisations and corporations, religions,
etc.). In contrast, the Ethiopian approach, although also stressing the urgency for change, is less confrontational and more collaborative with those in power, and has a slightly more gradual understanding of development.

**Politics, technology, cities, violence and gender inequality**

In general, participants’ views were only in slight contrast to those of Pope Francis on six topics:

- **The Pope sees politicians as key players or drivers for change, and is keen on political interventions to promote sustainable development.**
  - In contrast, participants seem to have more hope in civil society than in political leaders, and in a bottom-up approach to development rather than a more interventional model.
  - Participants from Sierra Leone and Colombia, due to their particular political contexts, strongly emphasise the need for political action and change in order to care for our common home.
  - Participants from Sierra Leone stress the stranglel effect of corruption on development.
  - Participants from Colombia point out the devastation caused by some international companies in Amazonia.

- **Pope Francis has serious concerns about the structural problems underpinning technological advance, usually controlled by those with economic power.**
  - Participants give substantial importance to technological development. Although they agree that technology is not the only solution to promote sustainable development, they are less emphatic about the structural conundrums behind it.

- **Pope Francis is quite critical of the way we are living in cities.**
  - Although participants agree, they also emphasise the opportunities that cities provide to fulfil their dreams.

- **Pope Francis warns us about the risk of violence and conflicts generated by ecological issues.**
  - With the exception of participants from Colombia, the risk of conflict was not especially pressing for the rest of the participants.

- **Pope Francis does not address gender inequality in *Laudato Si*.**
  - In contrast, participants from all countries highlight the ‘gender’ problem as critical for sustainable development and integral spirituality, as expressed by the Sustainable Development Goals.

- **The Pope argues that social and environmental degradation, underpinned by an economic-development model that marginalises the poor and damages nature, causes serious violence and conflicts worldwide.** This is particularly true in urban surroundings.
  - Participants, meanwhile, were more concerned with day-to-day violence in their neighbourhoods. They placed less emphasis on the socio-ecological structural causes of violence than Pope Francis does. Rather, they stressed the lack of moral integrity (seemingly more often characteristic of those in power than of ordinary citizens) and the need for governmental security and policing (often a service enjoyed only by the powerful).

The learning from participants in Colombia is slightly different from the rest because, as mentioned before, the methodology was different. As complementary and distinctive, we noted the following:

- They emphasised the importance of the ancient culture and spirituality of indigenous peoples, who are to take part in the dialogue on sustainable development from their own scientific, legal, political and ecological viewpoint. Their view can trigger a new global collective imagination to address growth.

- They highlighted the importance of an ‘incarnated’ spirituality as a key to promote integral development. In fact, they questioned whether the idea of integral wellbeing (a holistic
understanding of human activity and life) is not a better option than the notion of international development (more economics-orientated) whilst seeking integral ecology.

- They extensively discussed the idea of ‘interconnectedness’, as did all the participants. Yet, they arrived at the conclusion that the world, rather than being explained geographically, needs to be seen and explained through ‘relationships’ – that with nature being paramount.

Some personal reflections, by Augusto Zampini

As mentioned at the beginning, this interim report is deliberately fragmented and incomplete, because it is meant to be enriched with your reflections. A final report will then be prepared at the end of this dialogical process, by March 2017. In the meantime, I offer some initial personal reflections, since I have taken part in almost all the steps of this international dialogue. These are by no means conclusions, nor a synthesis of what I have explained before, but personal reactions to the findings of the process.

Firstly, I have thoroughly enjoyed the conversations so far. It has been thought-provoking and has pushed me to examine the meaning of my mission as a citizen of the world and as a minister of the Church. The dialogue, for me, has also promoted hope in a global change that can truly help people in need. The desire for transformation and the enthusiasm of participants was contagious. It was enlightening to hear their analysis, rooted in their particular contexts. Also, their proposals were feasible and significant enough to encourage everyone present, and to stimulate analogous thinking elsewhere.

This process of dialogue through workshops has exceeded my expectations. As a theologian, I have never experienced such engagement with a papal document. The Pope is asking every inhabitant of the planet to enter into an honest dialogue about what kind of life we want to live, and what world we want to pass on to the next generation. I believe he would be more than pleased to know the way participants from all countries have tuned into this reflection and debate.

Secondly, I was delighted to witness that the methodology of the social tradition of the Church, embraced by *Laudato Si’*, does work and can contribute to a better understanding of current social conundrums, whilst providing creative ideas to cope with and respond to them. Coming from Latin America, I was not surprised to see the method ‘seeing-acting-judging-celebrating’ in action. But what did surprise me was the fact that the method has inspired people with completely different backgrounds who are involved in one particular process: redefining the idea of progress so as to respond to an unprecedented socio-ecological crisis.

In terms of the ‘seeing’ and ‘judging’ steps, I was pleased to discover that a truly ecumenical ‘seeing’, matched with a ‘judgement’ underpinned by both the Gospel and people’s experiences, always brings out some novel approach that is not necessarily considered within the Church’s tradition. This was the case with gender inequality, which female participants pointed out at once. Of course we were aware of the gender inequality problem in development, but because the encyclical does not address it, we chose not to propose it as a topic in the workshops. Nonetheless, not only participants from all countries stressed this point, in line with the Sustainable Development Goals, but they also linked gender inequality with the mentality underlining the socio-ecological crisis. Hence, it is clear to me that, despite potential polemics around gender, when revisiting our notion of progress, this particular dimension of injustice cannot be ignored. This can be considered a contribution from these workshops to Catholic social thought.

Regarding the ‘action’ step, I was thrilled by the fact that all participants mentioned the need for more “time” to contemplate and improve our relationship with nature, to reflect on the impact our individual and collective actions have on the environment, and to unpack the values that drive our rhetoric and
work for progress. Although this was not expressed in philosophical terms in the workshops, it was striking to see the resonance with Pope Francis’ famous phrase about ‘time’ being ‘greater than space’. I had previously felt this phrase was too distant from people’s life, but no longer. These workshops have revealed that the need for time is absolutely critical if we are to seek integral human development and integral spirituality. And time is about redefining our priorities according to our deepest values. There is a lot of food for thought on this topic that requires further exploration.

Including the ‘celebrating’ element of the methodology during the workshops has reassured me about the power a healthy spirituality can have, and how it can integrate people with various creeds (or none). Although there was initial scepticism, at the end of the workshops all participants were satisfied with the celebratory stage. What this shows – at least to me – is the pivotal role spirituality can play when approaching the current socio-ecological crisis. In particular, Christian spirituality, when it inclusively proposes the Gospel values, does bring a ‘new spirit’ that reshapes our vision of our common home, enhancing ‘integral’ ecology.

Thirdly, I was satisfied with the discovery of five recurring wider topics that came out while analysing contributions from different countries: technology, politics, urbanisation, economics, and culture & nature. They have helped to classify the rich and abundant data we have collected from the workshops, and have allowed me to better understand and present some contrasts and complementary visions between participants and the Pope, and between participants from different countries. In my view, these five main topics that, for participants, affect development – for better or worse – and the contrasts-complementarities discovered during the process, are deeply relevant, and deserve a thorough reading (see Interim Findings). They also form a solid basis for the next stage of the dialogue.

I would like to echo the argument stressed both by participants and *Laudato Si’* around ‘culture’; not because this topic is more important than the other four, but because it is often belittled in the analysis of progress and in development planning. The role politics, business and technology play to bring about positive change, the need for a new economic global model and renewable energy, the way we organise our cities and consequently address issues on transport, housing and security, are all a ‘must’ when debating progress. But culture could be harder to grasp, or easier to use as an argument to justify the status quo or our own vested interests.

Although gender inequality has been highlighted as a cultural structure that hinders progress, other cultural topics are not to be undervalued. For instance, cultural diversity in an increasingly interconnected world is always going to be create tensions, an issue that requires thorough analysis. Moreover, as representatives of indigenous communities in Colombia testified, the way we cultivate our land (and resources) is directly linked with the way we cultivate our spirit and our social bonds. Their testimonies were shocking in terms of cultural impositions and the damage that a culture of instant gratification (whether personal or collective) can inflict on the land and on minority groups, a sensitive issue in modern democracies.

Furthermore, identifying and accepting our own cultural blind spots is always going to be challenging. Gender bias could be a cultural blind spot in certain cultures, but indifference about the pivotal role that families and religions play in development could be a blind spot in other cultures too. Another cultural blind-spot, as *Laudato Si’* implies, is related to the structures underpinning our ordinary life. For example, not every person in the UK is an insensitive, polluting, selfish person, who does not care about nature, the poor people in the world, or about generations to come. However, the way the majority of citizens of this country live, make us complicit in the destruction of nature, the consequent effect on poor people worldwide, and the threat to future generations. Changing this needs an examination of our culture and the values underlying it. It was gratifying to hear the unanimous criticism of participants of the throwaway and the individualistic culture, which foments an unsustainable model of progress. But if we are to take this criticism seriously, then profound changes in our habits are needed, something
that is easier to say than to do. For this, I think, we require strong collaborative action, which I hope we can clarify during the second stage of the process.

In short, the structural impediments for integral development and integral ecology need to be further examined. In particular, I am led to reflect on the way these structural impediments affect our actual work. As participants and Pope Francis have agreed (although with different emphasis), addressing structural issues is essential in promoting a culture of care for our common home.

Some challenging questions

To conclude this report, and in order to be consistent with the dialogical methodology, I would like to end with some open questions, which take us back to a personal examination of our priorities and motivations.

- **Time**
  Am I ready to create the time and space I need to check that my current priorities reflect my own deepest values? Am I being the person that I really want to be? Or has ‘rapidification’ got the better of me?

- **Change – personal and structural**
  If we really want to help create the structural changes needed to forge integral development and integral ecology, are we prepared to face our cultural blind spots (corporate and national) that restrict actual change? Where are we going to find the motivation for the radical change that is needed so as to care for our common home?

- **Integral human development and integral ecology**
  How can we resolve the tension between the desire we all have to progress and improve our lifestyles, and the impact our progress causes to our common home? Can we really embrace the idea that ‘small is beautiful’, or that ‘less is more’?

- **Civilisation of love**
  How can we shift from a culture of individualism, short-termism, and waste to a culture of solidarity, long-term vision, and care? Is it feasible today to change the culture of consumerism?

‘Put simply, it is a matter of redefining our notion of progress. A technological and economic development which does not leave in its wake a better world and an integrally higher quality of life cannot be considered progress’ (Pope Francis, *Laudato Si’*, 194).
Appendix A: Colombia conference and *Laudato Si’*

“No tenemos otro mundo al que mirar y en el cual vivir.” G. García Márquez
(We do not have another world to gaze upon and live within)

Our team attended a conference organised by REPAM (Red Panamazonica), in November 2015, in Bogotá, Colombia, with the aims of dialoguing on issues around development in Amazonia and coordinating future work in the area. The first part of the meeting was aligned to CAFOD’s *Laudato Si’* workshops, and we were specially invited to include this discussion in our report.

Attended by many Catholic bishops, other clergy and Religious and lay people, the Colombia gathering also included many indigenous communities from across Amazonia who are being seriously affected by ecological devastation. Our learning was complemented by interviews with partners and Church leaders. Although the dynamic was somewhat different, the questions asked, in the light of the teaching of *Laudato Si’*, were similar, and can be condensed as follows:

1. What are the most urgent cries we should be listening and responding to in Amazonia?
2. What is the most articulate response we can provide as a Church?
3. Listening to the people of the Amazon, what did we learn about their concerns and hopes?

The answers to these questions are summarised in the graphics which follow overleaf. We can synthesise the qualitative data we gathered under three main headings:

Care and participation (vs indifference-violence and exclusion)

Following *Laudato Si’*, the proposal of REPAM is to promote social and environmental care, as opposed to social and environmental conflict. It was agreed that we all need to acknowledge our interconnectedness and, as a Church, foster communion and inclusion rather than indifference and exclusion. Moreover, if the Church aims to help excluded people to organise themselves and, in partnership with them, forge civic participation, then it needs to be closer to people’s culture and language, share their daily needs and their understanding of nature. This is the only way it can be a ‘sounding board’ or an ‘echo chamber’ for the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor.

The world ‘as relationships’

The world, rather than being explained geographically, needs to be seen and explained through relationships, those that build us up and those that damage us. If we follow this view, the idea of wellbeing will be completely different from the one proposed by the current model of development. *Laudato Si’* argues that for an integral human development, which includes integral ecology, we must improve the quality of our relationships with ourselves, our neighbours, our communities, with other creatures and nature, and with God.

Collective imaginary & spirituality

It was also agreed that the collective imaginary of Amazonia needs to change. This resonates with the argument presented in *Laudato Si’* regarding the need for creativity and imagination, something that religious narratives, like great art, can provide. A clear message from all participants was the critical role
of spirituality, ignored by some ecological movements and economic approaches that consequently overlook the intrinsic connection between ‘earth’ and ‘heaven’ – between what we do and what we believe. For some indigenous leaders, this is a ‘childish’ ecological approach that wreaks havoc, because in the very name of development and ecology, we can actually prevent integral human flourishing and integral ecology.

Summary of findings from Colombia meeting

1. Cries for help that require an urgent response in Amazonia

![Diagram of Amazonia cries out](Figure 21: Amazonia cries out)
2. What is the most articulate response we can provide as a Church?

Figure 22: Amazonia: Responding as a Church
3. What have we learned from listening to the people of Amazonia about their hopes?

They evangelise us with their mystique and their prophetic resistance and persistence
Incarnated spirituality at the centre of development

An integral idea of well-being (paradigm shift)
Integral spirituality

Incentivize us to accelerate the processes of ecclesiastical renewal (missionary Church, poor and for the poor)

They have attitudes of openness, welcoming and participation towards the Church’s initiatives (they do not close their doors)

Need for formation of local leaders, both in faith and politics

Demand from us a team effort and work, building communion

What have we learned from listening to the people of Amazonia?

Figure 23: Learning from the people of Amazonia
Bibliography


Church documents (not hyperlinked in the main text)


NB Papal documents mentioned in the text are all available at [www.vatican.va](http://www.vatican.va)

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