

## Workshop 2 Mobilising your Assets for People and Planet

### Common themes - Discussion points from the breakout rooms

#### *The Seven Key Areas*



#### Common themes:

1. Developing faith-consistent investment guidelines is an important step for faith groups seeking to align their investments with their values. Getting started on this process may seem daunting. Take small steps, keep expectations grounded, and document progress as you go. Have faith and have the will, it can be done!
2. Seek out examples from similar organisations who have developed guidelines and have moved their investments. Learn more from FaithInvest's [resource and guidance documents](#) and download the [FaithInvest guide to developing faith-consistent investment guidelines](#). Find out what [questions should be considered](#) in relation to mobilising assets when developing a faith plan.
3. Proactively engage with the decision makers within your organisation. Proactively engage with your investment manager. Put the right questions to the right people. Leadership is important, as is inclusivity and a sense of ownership in planning and decision making. Individual and collective conversations are crucial.

#### Breakout room 1

**Key point: finding examples of existing work in this area is extremely helpful, especially when trying to engage leadership in faith organisations to take action, which, at times, can be difficult.**

- Our leaders are not catching the vision!
- How do you become sustainable when you're used to a level of support?
- Seamus explained their task was to encourage leadership to take [action] on but show it is not difficult - leaders understood they had to align faith values so door was half open. They need to work together to find suitable investments and do due diligence.
- Support and help from organisations like FaithInvest for networking is helpful.
- People already doing impact can influence those getting started!
- Pheobe, working with Lutheran grassroots divestment organisation (separate from Church), explained it was not just the Church they had to convince. It was the financial partner organisations too so they had to figure out how it all works. It takes time to gather (lay) people to do the work, help them to understand and then approach the Church and ask them to divest.
- Churches have a responsibility to divest – we just need to know who to talk to, and how to talk about it, i.e. speak the language that everyone can understand but also makes a difference.
- **FaithInvest offer good communication tools, and usher along with guidance and next steps.**
- **FaithInvest are engaging with asset managers who are faith friendly, and are creating solutions. This way, they are able to share knowledge in the room and learn from each other.**
- Bokani, from Operation Noah, explained how they are supporting Christian organisations in the UK on impact investing. Finding examples to amplify is important and it is good to be in these conversations. Religious orders often want examples on how to get started, due diligence challenges, what the landscape looks like etc.
- 2-4% annual interest will be enough to persuade in Japan ... how can FaithInvest make that argument and live up to the promises? (From a trustee for a Church in Japan)
- Tom Barasa is helping faith groups develop Faith Plans in Kenya, giving practical and technical support to walk through journey. He said the Bishop Shoo example was very useful.
- There is also the example of the Cabrini Sisters - someone hired specifically to do impact, in a Church organisation.
- FaithInvest offers working groups to showcase and share these practical ways needed.
- Sara, A Rocha Uganda, explained that information on the assets faiths own is often not documented, so it is a task. Churches are doing a lot, but information is hard to find. E.g. how much land they own.
- Information is not streamlined e.g. investing in a variety of different areas - complicated to find the details.
- Rev Edward – touched on coordinating faith organisations. He shared that Covid stopped visits which has delayed progress on the Faith Plan.
- Question: would a 50 hectare underdeveloped campsite suffice? Your investment can turn it into an eco-leisure, educational, therapeutic, thriving agricultural space as well as get you that 2-4% interest maybe from 2USD/head entrance charge.

## Breakout room 2

**Key Point: We need to be asking the right people the right questions! This is now a case of looking to others who are doing this and bringing examples to our faith communities to help them understand the importance of divestment and investment from a faith perspective, and inspire them to begin the journey.**

- This group includes a range of people who are keen to learn more about divestment and investment, some are doing similar work already but not necessarily under the Faith Plans programme.
- Kasisi, Laudato Si' in Kenya, explained they are stuck with resources. The issue has always been an advance to do any action within churches because of the lack of support and resources to do the work. There is a need for partnership. The group shared contacts in the chat.
- James, Operation Noah, asked participants to reflect on the assets your faith group *does* have, and this might largely depend on the size of your faith institutions.
- Question: What kind of barriers might you face as you begin to look at this within your own faith groups?
- Question: was there anything that really struck you from what has been shared so far?
- John Woodhouse (Laudato Si' Animators, UK) told the group that the structure of the catholic church struck him. "A bit of resting on laurels?" he suggests. Dioceses tend to operate on their own, so how do we get the message through to them, especially as many catholic groups are not working together?
- James explained that every faith group, even within the central body, is different. This is a question of focus and who the decision-makers are. These are the people who need to be influenced. **Are we asking the right question to the right person?**
- Ciara Murphy (Jesuits in Ireland) explained that some in her organisation have been against divestment etc. because they say it doesn't work. Does it actually lead to reducing emissions?
- James answered, saying it's worth, where you can, looking to similar organisations who are looking for what you want to encourage your own faithful. This could be specifically helpful for the Jesuits in Ireland as the Jesuits in Britain have already done this.
- If you agree it is not ethical, is it right to keep investing in it? **Think about ethics first.** This could be a helpful argument for encouraging divesting and investing.
- This is what Faith Plans is trying to do – centring into the faith context and understanding how your faith should guide your decisions!
- Ethically, morally, do you want to be profiting from companies who are profiting from the crises we are in?
- Mario asks when divesting from fossil fuels, where should we invest to mitigate the negative impacts we have made so far? Because fossil fuels are involved in many other sectors!

- James answered with it is best to divest from fossil fuel producing companies firstly. It is better to continue to engage with companies that are involved in fossil fuels as shareholders because they have the ability to change quickly.
- Sheena (St Nic's Church) suggested that by divesting, you are taking yourself away as a shareholder and therefore able to have an influence, is the best thing to do? If by divesting, are you having a negative influence on a larger scale with other companies?
- James shared that for most of the big companies, only a small amount of their focus is on renewable, so it is best to divest completely!
- It would also be good to think about your banks and who you are banking with.