LIVING☾ FAI✝HS T✡GETHER

YOUTH FORUM JEUNESSE

Thanks to the support of the European Youth Forum (YFJ) and its engagement in the promotion of Inter-religious Dialogue (IRD), the Tool Kit is being published and is going to be given visibility within the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue 2008.

The publication aims to contribute to improved interaction between young people of different faiths, to promote free religious expression, to strengthen solidarity, to promote learning about the religious diversity of Europe and to encourage cohesion in Europe. In the current European political context that faces escalation of Anti-Semitism, Islamophobia, intolerance (also directed towards Christianity), and religious tensions, this Tool Kit comes as an important reflection on the role youth organisations can play to tackle these questions.

It is important to note that while this publication can be used as a vision for wider interfaith dialogue, only IRD as a part of this framework is used as reference within it. This follows the fact that the experiences of IRD and cooperation come from representative platforms of young people from monotheistic religions on European level.

FOREWORD

Dear user,

Following an expert seminar on 'prejudice' organised by the Council of Europe in Strasbourg in 2003 and an event organised by the Forum of European Muslim Youth and Student Organisations (FEMYSO) and the European Youth Forum (YFJ) at the European Parliament in Brussels in September 2003, a group of faith-based international non-governmental youth organisations started regular meetings at the YFJ secretariat in Brussels to discuss how the organisations involved could improve their communication and promote co-operation in the field of Inter-Religious Dialogue (IRD). This informal group was acknowledged as an official Expert Group of the YFJ during its General Assembly in Madrid in November 2004.

The aim of the group is "to develop an understanding of the role of religion and IRD, to contribute to current and future activities of international institutions and to develop actions related to this topic". The Expert Group set the following priorities for its work:

• Exchanging knowledge and experience
• Promoting diversity
• Learning about each other's differences and commonalities,
• Respecting cultural, individual, religious, gender and political differences,
• Working together towards a cohesive, united and diverse Europe,
• Contributing to narrowing down the existing social and cultural gaps,
• Fighting all kinds of discrimination and hatred,
• Building a Europe of minorities,
• Promoting common values and defending the rights of individuals and communities.

After setting the guidelines for its future work during the seminar on IRD "Jumma-Shabbat-Sunday"[1] , the Expert Group decided to embark on the development of educational material that would be used by trainers, faith-based and other youth organisations throughout Europe.

To achieve this and following the acceptance of the Expert Group's Action 5 application to the European YOUTH programme of the European Union, a week-long seminar was held in Barcelona from January 17th to 23rd, 2006. The Tool Kit you have here, offering the necessary tools for local and national youth organisations to initiate and develop IRD, is a follow-up of this seminar.

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1 This seminar was held prior to the Council of Europe Head of States summit in Warsaw in May 2005, coinciding with the Youth Summit which took place in parallel. The findings of the Expert Group's seminar were presented at this Summit.

The Tool Kit is targeting faith-based youth organisations working on local, national, regional or European levels, encouraging them to engage in the promotion of IRD. The Tool Kit also aims to encourage youth platforms such as National Youth Councils, to explore possibilities for IRD within their work. Finally the Tool Kit also aims to provide trainers with practical information on specific considerations they need to make in the organisation of events that involve religiously diverse groups.

The Tool Kit can be used as a reference for activities, as an information background on the specificities of the monotheistic religions, as a tool for learning about the concept of IRD, and as a way of exploring the similarities between the different religions.

WHAT DO THE CHAPTERS INCLUDE?

The first chapter of this Tool Kit aims to serve as an information point which you may want to refer to as a source of inspiration before developing your own IRD activities. This chapter is mainly gathering theoretical information on IRD, its history and objectives in Europe. It is not intended to replace a more academic research, but will however provide you with useful information on the motives and objectives of IRD and its current state of development. Reading this part, you will also understand how important it is for youth organisations to get involved in developing and improving the current reality of IRD.

This chapter also deals with stereotypes and prejudices related to religions, to provide you with ideas on how to deconstruct and overcome those through youth work and non-formal education.

If you and/or the youth organisation you are active in are considering engagement in IRD activities but don't know how to start such dialogue, the second and third chapters aim to give you hints, tools and examples on how to get started.

Chapter two will give you tips on some preconditions that you and your organisation should usefully keep in mind and implement in order to develop fruitful dialogue activity. Building upon that, chapter three will gather a comprehensive overview of the tools that have been developed by several youth organisations and international institutions already active in the field of IRD.

While recognising the diversity of Europe today, significant attention to the principles of diversity and its values is given at an institutional and civil society level. However, diversity on a personal level for many remains an abstract concept that is hard to grasp, as the challenges arising from the presence of diversity continue to affect the lives of young people and their well-being in society. It still is a dream for many young people to be able to live their identities freely and to be respected for who they are. Youth organisations are important actors in making this dream possible and making diversity a concept that is close to them and is present in their organisation, school, community, etc. Consequently, diversity based on the respect on human rights becomes an integral element in developing awareness, understanding and interaction between people.

When many of the difficulties arising are based on religious grounds, religious identity as part of a wider framework of identity becomes the focus of the attention. The experiences of young people from different religious communities living next door to each other and yet far away from each other's worlds are unfortunately not uncommon.

At a moment when the political climate at the European level is increasingly developing space to link these worlds, it is time for youth organisations to contribute to this goal through their working fields and areas, within the specific age group they cover.

2008 has been designated the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue. The Council of Europe (CoE) has adopted the White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue in 2008. In 2005 the UN launched the Alliance of Civilizations initiative that among others is aiming to promote dialogue between religious communities. These are already three important references to why it is important to use this moment to get active in the field of inter-religious learning and dialogue, and promote it at different levels and in different contexts.

If the formal educational systems fail to provide a diverse religious education for the issues relevant to young people, youth organisations are responsible to fill this gap. Non-formal education is a unique tool in the hands of young organisations that makes learning also a process of bringing young people to work together.

INTER-RELIGIOUS DIALOGUE AND ITS PLACE IN EUROPE TODAY

INTRODUCTION

Religion has played a significant role in the history of humankind. Interpretations of religions and their history have however many times been partial, often leading to hostility and extremism, some of which continue to affect us today. Therefore history serves as a source from which we can learn, understand previous mistakes and prevent new ones from occurring. While it is important to be aware of historic events, we should be aware that they can increase gaps and limit the potential that lies in co-operation between religious communities. Nevertheless, history has many positive examples of peaceful dialogue that we can be inspired by today.

Despite the fact that throughout history religious institutions and state power have had many overlapping spheres of action and influence, in modern Europe religion no longer has the close connection to state power that it once had. Nonetheless, the cooperation of the different religious communities remains an essential element of a broader public dialogue.

1. BASIC CONCEPTS, DEFINITIONS AND SYMBOLS OF THE THREE MONOTHEISTIC RELIGIONS

1.1 WHAT IS INTER-RELIGIOUS DIALOGUE?

IRD is understood as an open and respectful exchange of views between individuals and groups with different religious backgrounds and heritage on the basis of mutual understanding and respect.

There is wisdom in different spiritual traditions and dialogue with members of other religions allows people of one religion to see different perspectives of God and their values. Thus diversity is enriching for everyone. Dialogue with different religions is the way of searching for a common ground; it is declaring that religions share a responsibility for the well being of humankind and for the preservation of the Earth.

IRD requires, above all, an attitude of respect for those who have different beliefs. To show respect to one another means to welcome him or her and leave no place for exclusion or absorption.

IRD can take on different forms that are nevertheless connected. Four principal types are listed below:

The dialogue of life –

Religions should bring people together. In a world where suspicion is prevalent, values such as hospitality and mutual respect need to be embodied. Through sharing and trust we must set up relationships with our neighbours, with immigrants or others who we encounter in our daily life, who profess different beliefs.

Dialogue that searches for common causes –

Different faiths also come together to stress values such as Peace and Justice. An unfair and violent action damages not only the victim but also the perpetrator – with these kinds of actions humankind is hurting itself. The shared emphasis upon ethical values by the different world faiths can inspire them to search for a more harmonious and sustainable world, and strive against injustice together.

Academic dialogue –

This is where exponents of different religious faiths meet and discuss the theological/philosophical basis of their traditions. Here genuine attempts are made to arrive at a common appreciation of the way in which each religious tradition has sought to explain and approach reality. These dialogues help in breaking down prejudices and misconceptions accumulated over centuries. They enrich, enlarge, challenge and correct the way some religions have understood and approached religious life in other traditions.

Dialogue of religious experience –

This is where different faiths share their experiences of prayer and contemplation – it is an invitation to encounter another faith directly at the spiritual level.

1.2 Brief history and current state

IRD takes place between people in various times and places. It should not exclusively be seen as a dialogue of institutions, but as a dialogue on all levels. The history of Europe provides many examples of such IRD and this has shaped the face of Europe more than is often admitted.

Many European regions, like Southern Spain, the Balkans, or Poland and Hungary have a history of inter-religious coexistence that has not only led to violence, but also to a peaceful and fertile cultural exchange. For example, European humanists of the Renaissance profited from ancient philosophical texts, linguistic and medical knowledge preserved by Arab and Jewish scholars.

Such exchange has always been part of European history. However, the catastrophic experiences of the twentieth century underlined the need for more institutionalised dialogue. After World War II IRD made a leap forward, when different faiths came together to struggle for civil rights and world peace. The cultural diversity of a uniting Europe, the challenges faced by migration and an increasing religious pluralism necessitated dialogue at the international level. Organisations like World Conference of Religions for Peace or the initiative of a Parliament of World Religions are some of the key actors in this form of IRD.

In times of an increased fear of a "clash of civilizations", the importance of intercultural and IRD in the formation of multicultural societies has become widely accepted. Therefore, raising awareness and promoting dialogue on all levels have been put on the political agenda. Results of this are for example the U.N. Alliance of Civilizations, the EU designating 2008 as the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue or, for instance, the increased cooperation of European faith-based youth organisations.

1.3 What is the importance of inter-religious dialogue?

When approaching IRD, the first question you might ask yourself is: why is IRD necessary and why should we engage in it?

The current situation in Europe gives many answers to this question. Europe is a plural and multi-cultural continent. There are a rich variety of nationalities, ethnicities, languages, cultures and religions present. Recently the boundaries between cultures, nationalities and religions have become more blurred as a result of increased migration, mobility and communications. With so many different people living side by side the possibility of tensions and conflict are increased, so it is important to find ways to reduce these tensions and increase understanding.

IRD can have many beneficial outcomes in this regard. It can encourage unity and peace, help to improve the knowledge and skills of participants, and lead to mutual spiritual enrichment. All of these are vitally important for a positive European future. Here are some examples of the beneficial outcomes.

1.4 Promotion of unity in diverse context

'Unity in diversity' is one of the main principles of European policy in the field of equality today. It is promoting openness of people despite physical or psychological barriers. It is not aiming to standardise European society, but on the contrary it is trying to find the values in peoples'/communities' culture and identity and promote respect for those. This includes the field of spirituality as well.

There are many common challenges such as conflicts, immorality, violence etc that religions face today. Trying to find the common basis for action while respecting the differences that exist between religious communities is a way to ensure that joint efforts are made to face those challenges. IRD is one of the tools that can make the work on unity in diverse Europe possible and concrete.

1.5 Promotion of peace

Our world is torn apart by conflict and violence, and Europe is certainly not exempt from this. It is clear that despite the best efforts of religious leaders, they alone cannot produce peace between different peoples on behalf of everyone else. It is the task of every single one of us – Jew, Christian, Muslim, or other, to actively seek out this peace. It can often seem that conflicts between religions cause violence, although often this may be through the misuse of religion for other, political, ends.

IRD has a very important role to play here because it is through face-to-face dialogue that conflict and misunderstanding is reduced. While it is not expected that all tensions and differences will be eliminated, through an attitude of openness and respect which is engendered by such dialogue we can find solutions to these tensions which are creative, informed and peaceful.

One of the main messages which can be found in each religion is peaceful coexistence and interaction with one's neighbours and fellow citizens. Rather than being a threat to religious authenticity therefore, IRD helps to fulfil this core instruction common to all faith traditions.

1.6 Getting knowledge and developing skills

If the indifference which Elie Wiesel laments is to be tackled it must be through combating ignorance, because the more you know about others the more you are inclined to care about them. It is particularly important for young people, who are shaping Europe, to increase both their knowledge of others and the skills involved in communicating this knowledge. IRD meets both these goals, and is therefore indispensable for combating indifference in the search for peace and respect.

Each religion invites its believers to gain wisdom, to seek for the truth and to look at the world. Building on this, IRD leads to two kinds of knowledge:

• Knowledge about your own identity, religion and culture;
• Knowledge about others.

Both aspects are crucial when engaging in IRD as both are steps towards deeper respect, understanding, unity and peace.

First of all you gain knowledge of your own identity through meeting people with different cultural and religious backgrounds. This is because you formulate who you are and reflect on what is valuable and important to you as a person of faith.

Secondly you gain knowledge of others. And is there a safer way to gain objective knowledge than in ongoing conversation with "the other"? Is there anything more exciting and interesting than a conversation with a young person you have never met and known before?

The skills gained by participating in IRD, such as listening, empathy, communication, sensitivity to difference and inclusion of others, are also important life skills, and to develop them in the delicate and fulfilling environment of IRD will be of huge benefit to the participants.

1.7 Mutual spiritual enrichment

One of the important goals of IRD is spiritual enrichment. Through knowing who we are and what we believe in, through exercising our ability to look at our own faith critically and others in an open and respectful manner, we are able to grow and mature.

It is always important to remember that IRD is not about the fusion of religions. It should always be stressed that whatever common aims and principles they may share, understanding and dialogue should not seek to undermine the fundamental distinctiveness of each religion. However this does not mean that followers of one religion cannot learn from or be inspired by the spirituality, practices or teaching of others.

There are several aspects of mutual spiritual enrichment that you might find in interfaith dialogue through conversations, discussions and meeting other young people. These often include the following:

• intensity and character of spiritual life
• prayer life
• ethics and morality
• social norms
• practical life

JUDAISM	CHRISTIANITY	ISLAM
The "Magen David" ("Shield of David", aka Star of David) is traditionally used as a symbol for Judaism. According to the most common interpretation, it refers to G-d, who "shielded" the Biblical king David. However, the symbol is old and many interpretations can be found. Another common symbol is the Menorah, a seven-armed candelabrum that was used in the ancient Jewish temple following a divine revelation. It is still found in every synagogue.	The crucifix symbolizes Jesus' death on the cross for the sins of mankind and his resurrection on the third day. However, a first secret symbol was the fish, Ichthys (in Greek), which is an acronym for Iesous Christos Theou Yios Soter – Jesus Christ, Son of God and Savior.	Even though Islam has no official symbol or color, the symbol of a star with a crescent moon, as well as the color green are generally associated with Islam. Many countries with a Muslim majority population use crescent and star, probably going back to the Ottoman Empire's symbolism.

2. UNIFYING PRINCIPLES BETWEEN RELIGIONS

In recent decades there has been a growing awareness of the many fundamental principles that are shared by different religions. The three sections below illustrate these important points of convergence to help show the points of unity that exist amongst the different faiths and peoples of the world.

2.1 Ethical values

All faith traditions share a fundamental concern with teaching right and proper conduct to their adherents.

At a training course on IRD in Greece in 2004 the participants were asked to answer the following question:

"In which part of my everyday life or of my personality do I share common values with you?"

The participants wrote down their answers separately and when they collated them discovered the most important common values for the whole group were as follows:

Freedom	Trust
Tolerance	Equality
Respect	Justice
Care	Happiness

At the Chicago Parliament of World Religions, held in 1993, a document called "The Declaration toward a Global Ethic" was endorsed by many religious leaders. The Declaration says that there are ethical principles on which all religions agree:

"There is a principle which is found and has persisted in many religions and ethical traditions of humankind for thousands of years. What you do not wish done to yourself, do not do to others! Or in positive terms: What you wish done to yourself, do to others!"

In Judaism, Christianity and Islam that principle is expressed in the following ways:

"What is hateful to you, do not do to your fellowman. This is the entire Law; all the rest is commentary." (Talmud, Shabbat 31a)

"Whatever things you would have others do to you, do so to them for this is the Law and the Prophets." (Matthew 7:12)

"No one of you is a believer until he desires for his brother that which he desires for himself" (Saying of the Prophet Muhammad, Hadith of an-Nawawi 13)

2.2 Beliefs

There are different approaches to finding similarities in the beliefs of religious faiths. Although the Tool Kit has been designed by representatives of the three monotheistic religions, it is seen as an added value to have an outlook on other religions as well. However, this outlook is not considered complete and does not claim to represent people of other faiths.

One example is the list of fundamental similarities between all faiths, created by the Snowmass Interfaith Conference in 1984:

• "The world religions bear witness to the experience of Ultimate Reality, to which they give various names: Brahman, Allah, the Absolute, God, Great Spirit.
• Ultimate Reality cannot be limited by any name or concept.
• Ultimate Reality is the ground of infinite potentiality and actualisation.
• Faith is opening, accepting and responding to Ultimate Reality. Faith in this sense precedes every belief system.
• The potential for human wholeness – or in other frames of reference, enlightenment, salvation, transformation, blessedness, nirvana – is present in every human person.
• Ultimate Reality may be experienced not only through religious practices but also through nature, art, human relationships, and service of others.
• As long as the human condition is experienced as separate from Ultimate Reality, it is subject to ignorance and illusion, weakness and suffering.
• Disciplined practice is essential to the spiritual life; yet spiritual attainment is not the result of one's own efforts, but the result of the experience of oneness with Ultimate Reality."

Another expression of the points of convergence between different faiths is expressed by the writer and philosopher, Aldous Huxley, in his book The Perennial Philosophy:

"The metaphysic that recognises a divine Reality substantial to the world of things and lives and minds; the psychology that finds in the soul something similar to, or even identical with, divine Reality; the ethic that places man's final end in the knowledge of the immanent and transcendent Ground of all being – the thing is immemorial and universal."

Even religious Scriptures provide direct examples of similar teachings and views

One God

"Hear, O Israel: The Lord is our God; the Lord is one. And you shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart and with all your soul, and with all your means." – *Shema Israel, Hebrew Prayer, Deuteronomy 6:4-5*

"The first [of all commandments] is, "Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God, the Lord is one; you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength." – *Jesus, Mark 12:29-30*

"He is God, the One!" – *Qur'an, 112:1*

Examples from other faiths:
"The One is Lord of all that moves" - *Rig Veda III.54.8 (Hinduism)*
"There is only One God." - *Chief Seattle, Native American*

God is Everywhere

"Do I not fill the heavens and the earth? says the Lord." - *Jeremiah 23:24*

"His Throne extends across the heavens and the earth." - *Qur'an 2:255*

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Examples from other faiths:
"The whole world is Brahman." - *the Upanishads (Hinduism)*

God is Light

"But the Lord shall be to you for an everlasting light, and your God for your glory." - *Isaiah 60:19*

"God is light and in him there is no darkness at all." - *1John 1:5*

"God is the Light of the heavens and the earth" – *Qur'an 24:35*

Examples from other faiths:
"All things appear, illumined by Brahman's Light." - *the Upanishads (Hinduism)*

God is Ever with Us

"Do not fear for I am with you; be not discouraged for I am your God." - *Isaiah 41:10*

"And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age." - *Matthew 28:20*

"God is closer to you than your jugular vein" – *Qur'an 16:50*

Examples from other faiths:
"The One God is hidden in all living things" - *the Upanishads (Hinduism)*

The Existence of a "Soul"

"And it came to pass, when her soul departed for she died..." - *Genesis 35:18*

"Do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul." – *Matthew 10:28*

"They ask you concerning the soul, say the soul is of the command of my Lord" - *Qur'an 17:85*

Examples from other faiths:
"For the soul there is never birth nor death. It is not slain when the body is slain" - *Bhagavad-Gita (Hinduism)*

Spiritual Knowledge is Obtainable

"If you call for understanding [and] raise your voice for discernment, if you seek it like silver, and hunt for it like treasures, then you will understand the fear of the Lord, and you will find the knowledge of God. For the Lord gives wisdom; from His mouth [come] knowledge and discernment." – *The Book of Proverbs 2:4-6*

"Do not worry about how you are to speak […] for it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you." – *Jesus, Matthew 10: 19-20*

"Those who strive towards us, we will guide them to our paths." – *Qur'an 29: 69*

Examples from other faiths:
"The sage who is intent on yoga comes to Brahman without long delay" – *Bhagavad-Gita (Hinduism)*
"Search with sincerity and in the end you will find the truth." *(Buddhism)*

Compassion and Respect for Everyone

"You shall love your neighbour as yourself." - *Leviticus 19:18*

"But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you." – *Jesus, Matthew 5:44*

"O people, be compassionate to others so that you may be granted compassion by God." *Saying of the Prophet Muhammad*

Examples from other faiths:
"All beings long for happiness. Therefore extend your compassion to all. He who wishes his own happiness, let him cultivate goodwill towards all the world" *(Buddhism)*

Moral teachings
(Don't Lie, Steal, Commit Adultery, Covet, Kill)

"I am the Lord, your God, Who took you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. You shall not have the gods of others in My presence. You shall not make for yourself a graven image or any likeness […]

You shall not take the name of the Lord, your God, in vain […].

Remember the Sabbath day to sanctify it. Six days may you work and perform all your labor, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord, your God; […]

Honor your father and your mother, […]

You shall not murder. You shall not commit adultery. You shall not steal. You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.

You shall not covet your neighbor's house. You shall not covet your neighbor's wife, his manservant, his maidservant, his ox, his donkey, or whatever belongs to your neighbor." - *The Ten Commandments (excerpt from Exodus 20:2-4.7-10.12-14; cp. Exodus 20:1-17 in most Christian Bibles)*

"And the slaves of the Most Beneficent (Allah) are those who walk on the earth in humility and sedateness, and when the foolish address them (with bad words) they reply back with mild words of gentleness. […]

And those who invoke not any other ilah (god) along with Allah, nor kill such life as Allah has forbidden, except for just cause, nor commit illegal sexual intercourse and whoever does this shall receive the punishment. […]

And those who do not witness falsehood, and if they pass by some evil play or evil talk, they pass by it with dignity." – *Standards for a true servant of God, excerpted from Qur'an 25:63-75 (verses 63, 68 and 72)*

Examples from other faiths:

The (Five, Eight or Ten) Precepts of the Buddha (Buddhism)

Bhagavad-Gita 16:1 (Hinduism)

All of Humanity is United

"All people are your children, whatever their belief, whatever their shade of skin" – *High Holiday Prayer Book*

"From one ancestor he made all nations to inhabit the whole earth." – *Acts 17:16*

"All creatures are members of the one family of God" – *Saying of the Prophet Muhammad*

Examples from other faiths:

"Human beings, all, are as head, arms, trunk, and legs unto one another" - *The Vedas (Hinduism)*

Please note that many different translations are available for the Scriptures of Judaism, Christianity and Islam. They all differ in their linguistic and theological approach, in their legitimisation within the specific religion, its denominations and confessions, and sometimes even in their order and numbering of books, chapters and verses.

In the above list, quotations from the Tanakh (Jewish Bible) were taken from the "The Judaica Press Complete Tanakh with Rashi", an orthodox modern English translation from Hebrew.

Mosque in Baku, Azerbaijan

Christians and Jews partly share the same Scriptures. For Christians, all books of the Tanakh form what they call the Old Testament. Non-Protestant Christian denominations may count some additional books to their Old Testament, though, known as deuterocanonical books or Biblical apocrypha. However, the above list uses references only from those books that are recognised as canonical by all Christians. Joint references to the Tanakh/Old Testament for Jewish and Christian examples are supposed to underline that for Christianity its Jewish heritage is still valid. Quotations from the books of the New Testament are taken from the "New Revised Standard Version" of the Christian Bible. This English translation from Northern America was developed under consultation of Jewish scholars by theologians of all mainstream Protestant and Catholic Churches and is from these churches commended for use by their members.

Quotations from the Qu'ran are taken from different English translations. In Islam, the sole authority of the Arabic text of the Qu'ran is particularly stressed. Only the Arabic text is considered to be the true word of God, while for theological and linguistic reasons translations are not given the same authority.

When studying each others' Scriptures during an inter-religious encounter, it is recommendable to agree on a certain version or translation to be used for this.

2.3 INTERNAL TEACHINGS ON PLURALITY

All three monotheistic religions contain teachings that govern the manner of interaction of adherents with those of other faiths:

JUDAISM

• Jews believe that, although they have a particular relationship with God, this does not preclude a belief that God has a relationship with other peoples:
"*God permitted to every people something he forbade to others… (and) God sends a prophet to every people according to their own language.*" (Nethaneal ibn Fayyumi)

• Jews believe that all good people will go to Heaven:
"*Righteous people of all nations have a share in the world to come.*" (The Talmud, Sanhedrin 105a)

• Jews recognise the legitimacy and moral validity of all religions that conform to the "7 Laws of Noah." They are:

1. To refrain from bloodshed and murder
2. To establish laws
3. To refrain from idolatry
4. To refrain from blasphemy
5. To refrain from sexual immorality
6. To refrain from theft
7. To refrain from the tearing of a limb from a living animal.

CHRISTIANITY

- Christians are encouraged to defuse tensions and avoid conflicts –

  "*Live in peace with all if possible, to the extent that it depends on you.*" (Romans 12:18)

- Christians are encouraged to engage in dialogue and explanation of their faith

  "Always be ready to give an answer to anyone who asks you the reason for the hope that is within you." (1 Peter 3:15)

- Christians are required to be concerned with the harmony of the community within which they live –

  "*Seek the peace and prosperity of the city to which I have carried you into exile. Pray to the LORD for it, because if it prospers, you too will prosper.*" (Jeremiah 29:7)
  "*Be concerned with what is good in the sight of all.*" (Romans 12:17)

- The Christian monk and pioneer of ecumenism, Br. Roger has said:

  "*With respect to Christians, we cannot deny the fact that at the centre of our faith there is Jesus Christ… But far from making true dialogue impossible, this absolute commits us to it, since what makes Jesus unique is his humility.*

He became the servant of all. He took the last place. That is why we can never, in his name, lord it over others but only welcome them and let them welcome us."

ISLAM

- Muslims believe in universal peaceful co-existence:
  "*As for such (non-Muslims) who do not fight you on account of faith, or drive you forth from your homelands, God does not forbid you to show them love and respect and deal with them with equity, for God loves those who act equitably.*" (Qur'an 60:8)

- Muslims believe in universal human brotherhood:

  "*O humankind! We (God) have created you from a single pair of male and female and have made you into nations and tribes, so that you may come to know one another. Truly, the most honoured of you in the sight of God is the most righteous among you*" (Qur'an 49:13).

- Muslims believe in peaceful dialogue, especially with Jews and Christians:

  "*Say, O People of the Book! Come to common terms as between you and us: That we worship none but God; that we associate no partners with Him; that we do not erect, from among ourselves, Lords and patrons other than God.*" (Qur'an 3:64)

- Muslims believe in the revelations given to Jesus and the Jewish Prophets:

  "*In matters of faith, He (God) has ordained for you that which He had enjoined upon Abraham, Moses and Jesus.*"

3. CONCEPTUAL CHALLENGES AND OBSTACLES TO INTER-RELIGIOUS DIALOGUE

The logic and value of IRD is clear, but there are often fears and obstacles that might get in the way of genuine, open and respectful dialogue. It is important to recognise these common problems because there are ways of overcoming them. At the same time it must be recognised that in some cases it may not be possible to change people's minds on these issues, and while education and trust-building are important and fruitful tools, occasionally you may find that some people are simply not willing to engage in dialogue, and forcing them to may be counter-productive.

3.1 Lack of understanding of own and other religions

Many conflicts and misunderstandings are founded on reciprocal ignorance. Because they are badly informed or educated on religious topics, people are often victims of the media's interpretations of information. Ignorance can lead to social, cultural and political conflicts. The value of young people, as well as a wider public, educating themselves about concepts present in different religious traditions and making an effort to approach their holy scriptures, cannot be overstated. Inter-religious education is an invaluable tool in developing inter-religious understanding. Joint cultural activities that could improve relationships at the personal level are also ideal ways to develop this understanding.

3.2 Fear of losing identity?

A common fear of some people which prevents them from engaging with IRD is the fear of losing their religious identity. They may feel that to mix with those of very different beliefs will water down their own, or be suspicious of the motives of people inviting them to dialogue. They might worry that what is sought by the dialoguing partners is some kind of conversion or assimilation to the other group. It is more likely for minority groups to behave in this defensive manner, but note that this can also include Christian groups who see themselves as under threat and wish to preserve their identity.

In situations like this it is not only the responsibility of those feeling threatened to become more 'open' to dialogue. The dialoguing partner should also make efforts to ensure that their statements are free of attempts to convert the other and unqualified unification, and that they are fully respectful of the traditions and distinctiveness of other religions.

3.3 Prejudice and stereotypes

Religious prejudices and stereotypes can often be deeply rooted in our societies, and pose a serious danger to the development of IRD. Faith-based youth organisations can take positive steps to raise awareness of and help to deconstruct damaging stereotypes which lead to religious prejudice.

3.4 Causes of stereotypes

There are many causes of stereotyping:
• Ignorance
• Fear of others
• Intellectual laziness: simplification, generalisation, and reductionism
• Fear of losing identity
• The influence of persistent historical images and interpretations

- Media manipulation and over-simplification
- The exploitation of religion for political ends
- Social and economic exclusion.

3.5 RELIGIOUS PREJUDICES

Particularly common religious prejudices are Islamophobia and Anti-Semitism, both of which have been found in Europe for centuries but are still dangerously prevalent. Many Muslim communities in Europe are experiencing an increasingly hostile environment towards them, characterised by suspicion, discrimination and sometimes physical and verbal harassment. These may have been increasing since the activities of Al-Qaeda came to global attention in 2001, but were certainly in evidence previously and can be traced back at least to the time of the Crusades. Some experts argue that the image of the 'Muslim other' helped to forge the ideological unity of Western Europe.1

Anti-Semitism is a long-standing prejudice and there have been many instances of the persecution of Jews in Europe going back over hundreds of years. These have included not only fear, suspicion and discrimination but also systematic social exclusion and violent expulsion, culminating in the Holocaust of the mid-20th century. Since then there has been something of a backlash against Anti-Semitism at a governmental level, but it can still be found amongst individuals and communities, for example personal discrimination and attacks and the desecration of Jewish graves and synagogues.

Prejudice and discrimination against Christians has not been nearly so evident in Europe, mainly due to the official Church-State relationships over the past centuries. However, Christians of different denominations have more often faced persecution by other branches of Christianity. Stereotypes and prejudices about Christians still exist and may come to the attention of groups engaged in IRD. Public expression of Christian values in debates and similar forums is often interpreted as attempts to establish the Church as a dictatorial moral barometer, and therefore not given the weight due to them.

3.6 OVERCOMING STEREOTYPES

To overcome the stereotypes about others which can lead to religious prejudice it is wise to consider the following:

- Personal contact is crucial – treat all people as individuals
- Seek information from different sources, cross-checking information and using critical enquiry
- Recognise that people are defined not only by their religion but by other characteristics such as age, sex, gender, ethnicity, political, cultural and economic circumstances
- Increase communication between different religions, communities and individuals
- Encourage minorities to be open to contact with others
- Do not allow dominant groups to swallow the identity of minorities
- Be balanced, reasonable and fair
- Distinguish between the ideas and teaching of a religion and the practice of its followers
- Do not judge people on first impressions or appearances
- Do not form your ideas about others only from the media.

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1 *Islamophobia and its consequences on young people*, Seminar report : Ingrid Ramberg, European Youth Centre.

3.7 Disagreement over the role of religion in society

Different religions often have different ways of seeing their involvement in society. These different approaches to the social role of religion can, if not handled properly, prove problematic to IRD. They need to be approached in an informed way, with sensitivity and caution. Here is a selection of such sensitive areas:
- The involvement of religion in politics.
- Attitudes of religion to gender roles.
- Attitudes of religion to the use of physical force.
- The role of religion in education.

IRD is often most constructive when we are able to distinguish cultural practice from religious duty, and at the same time respect the wisdom that often lies behind practices with which we are not familiar.

3.8 Lack of expertise

Another perceived obstacle to IRD is the idea that it is an activity only for experts, in formal settings, and that those with less experience (such as those in youth organisations) are not qualified or able to take part in it. There may be a reluctance to engage with people of other religions until one feels that they have fully 'mastered' their own, or a reliance on those in leadership positions to take part in dialogue on behalf of their followers.

This attitude needs to be countered as it is not only factually incorrect, but may have dangerous consequences. The more IRD is seen as something for a group of experts, the more it is removed from the everyday lives and activities of ordinary people. If IRD is to address the challenges of society (like migration,

integration, etc.), it must involve participation from people most affected by them.

Empowering people who might otherwise not consider themselves able to take part in dialogue is a key challenge addressed by this Tool Kit. It is crucial to allow people to speak for themselves and give them the courage to represent their own religious tradition, while also acknowledging that they as individuals can never represent the totality of a religion's views. Participants should also be reassured that they are not expected to know everything, and it is ok to not have the answer to every question - all of our knowledge remains incomplete, and sometimes even the wisest religious leaders will recognise this.

Finally, it is impossible to deny the reality of grassroots inter-religious encounter. Modern Europe sees people of many traditions living side by side, and despite some tendencies towards isolation and separation, there are also many instances of people engaging with and learning from each other, through the dialogue of daily life and shared social and economic projects.

3.9 'I have nothing to learn!'

Some people may claim that their religion gives them the whole truth and there is nothing to gain from dialogue with those of other traditions. This is perhaps the most difficult obstacle to overcome because those holding this view will be least likely to change. Certainly forcing such people into dialogue is likely to be counter-productive, but again themes such as the incompleteness of human knowledge, the positive teachings on religious plurality, and, in the Abrahamic heritage, the shared roots of religious identity, could prove gently persuasive.

INTER-RELIGIOUS DIALOGUE
ALL ONE NEEDS TO KNOW

INTRODUCTION

Whether you are about to engage in IRD or are already involved in it, there are some things to consider on the way. This chapter will provide you with suggestions about what to consider, during preparations as well as in the process of ongoing IRD, in order to have a smooth process, suiting all partners and avoiding confusing moments.

1. BEFORE STARTING THE DIALOGUE…

Before starting IRD a good attitude is really important. Nevertheless there are some more things should be considered.

It is essential to be prepared that the dialogue partners do not have to agree on everything. "Agree to disagree" and learn to appreciate the differences. Moreover, partners don't have to defend their own faith, but a predisposition towards answering several questions will be appreciated.

It is also important to remember that youth-related IRD is a meeting with people, and not with institutions or official religious bodies. Remember that the individuals who meet might hold attitudes different to the mainstream thought in their religion. Therefore, separating the position of the individual, the religion and the institution from each other is crucial.

Be careful with your language. Speak frankly but with a language that does not hurt the other. Say what you need to say but respect the other group. Try and put yourself in their shoes and be empathetic.

In addition to that don't be afraid of feelings being evoked in the dialogue since religion is an emotional topic. And do not be afraid to change your previous impressions, perceptions, images, thoughts etc. of the other – and even of yourself.

1.1 KNOWING YOUR OWN RELIGION

Dialogue is an interaction between different sides. It is not only about your interest in your chosen partner, but also about their interest in you. You might be asked questions on your religion, beliefs, and reasons for practices/customs. It might be helpful to prepare also for this occasion in order to answer questions - or at least to deal with them. To be involved in IRD does not require being an expert and it's not a big shame to admit that you don't know. But you should feel confident to talk about your own faith and address the upcoming questions. This will help to reduce the fear of losing own faith in the dialogue.

Also keep in mind that things that are obvious to you may not be clear to others. Gain knowledge of the other.

Try to ensure that your group knows the basics of other beliefs. This will create a good starting point for the dialogue. This is also a matter of

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respect as it shows the other group that you are prepared, curious, interested and treating the partner seriously.

1.2 Knowing your fears, limits and expectations

A vital factor in dialogue is the approach that you have at the starting point. It is important to be aware of the motivation that brings one to meet others, while realising that this motivation might be different for each partner. Knowing what is expected from IRD is important, since it will affect the direction of your dialogue. For example, you might be engaging in the dialogue to gain first-hand-knowledge or to make friends. Visualising your expectations and keeping them realistic might prevent future disappointments.

Keep in mind that you cannot know beforehand where exactly the dialogue will take you. It is also important to realise what you already know about the partner. Is it an objective, positive or maybe negative vision? It's good to be involved or start involvement in dialogue, but it does not necessarily mean you will not have prejudices or share stereotypes. Nobody has to be perfect and ideal. All dialogue partners are going to learn from each other and also to revise visions of others that they had at the beginning, with the reality.

You do not have to be an expert already on inter-religious issues, but it is good to know own limits and expectations in order not to disappoint, nor to force each other to do things, one does not feel comfortable doing. Sometimes limits are also present in religious rules. Learn about limits specified by your own religion and the others. Learn these rules before the meeting, but also during the confrontation. Don't be afraid to ask questions.

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1.3 Choosing dialogue partners

Often IRD initiatives are based on coexistence and it's just to formalise and do more consciously what is already going on. Sometimes your group might be contacted by others looking for partner; or indeed the opposite. It is worth to define the ideal partner group and then look for such.

Josefov, old Jewish cementry in Prague, Czech Republic

You might have some idea of which religion your group would like to enter into dialogue with. There are still many more decisions to be made. Just as there is variety in your own religion, the other religion also has many different groups. Have a look around and see which groups are active in your region, and whom you would feel comfortable working with.

If you don't know where to look for such information, you may contact the international youth faith-based organisations listed at the start of this Tool Kit, or their national member

movements and ask for the contacts to their local groups in your area.

1.4 Practical preparations

When aim, objectives and potential dialogue partners are already defined, there are some special practicalities to consider. It is necessary to:

- Get to know own group dynamics – as many individuals can share, but also might have different, opinions, beliefs, prejudices, approaches.
- Brief everyone on the practical needs of the other group;

Some other things to consider:

- Handle all religious objects including symbols and books with respect;
- Plan any event to ensure that each faith involved is equally represented in the planning team, and that there is a gender balance. Also check that this balance carries over into the groups who will take part in the dialogue;
- If you are visiting or holding an event in a religious building: be aware of what is considered to be appropriate or inappropriate behaviour in religious buildings. Find out if there are any particular clothing requirements.

1.5 Organising an activity

When? Calendar of main religious festivities

When planning an event, take into consideration that in certain times the dialogue partner may not be able to meet. Each faith has its own religious holidays and weekly ceremonies.

For example:

- Muslims have their congregational prayer on Friday around noon / in the afternoon, and it is called Jumma;
- Jews' weekly celebrations starts on Friday evening (20 minutes prior to sunset) and last for 25 hours until three stars appear on the sky on Saturday evening. This feast is called Shabbat;
- Christians consider Sunday as a holy day / day of rest.

It is also essential to consider that some time of the year religious holidays give certain rules on behaviour. It is important to know them as this will prevent from potential misunderstandings.

Several websites offer inter-faith calendars for free online or to download in .PDF format. Some examples are:

- Inter-Faith Calendar: http://www.interfaithcalendar.org/;
- Inter Faith Network for UK: Calendar Matters: http://www.interfaith.org.uk/local/calendarmatters.htm;
- Tower Hamlets Inter Faith Forum: http://www.faithintowerhamlets.com/default/1150.calendar/index.htm.

Time and place for worship

Planning an agenda for the meeting and ensuring a special time is allocated in the programme for prayers. It is always useful to consult with religious calendars as the time of the prayers may vary throughout the year and are dependent on local latitude. But also (as explained in chapter above) special weekdays are dedicated for religious celebrations.

Participants will appreciate it if a room is designated for prayers and reflection. It should be a room where no other activities or exercises take place. The most preferable location would

have plain decoration, a clean and quiet room, which will facilitate essential elements for worship.

You should bear in mind that decorating the room with religious symbols might cause people of other religions upset and they then may not feel comfortable to use this place for their own prayers.

Some practical arrangements might be also useful, i.e. find out what the direction of Mecca and Jerusalem are from this room, as Muslims must be facing Mecca and Jews Jerusalem during their prayers (for most European countries, the praying direction is towards South-East, however it might be helpful to have a compass for this)

Also note that Muslims and Jews pray respectively five and three times a day. The times vary dependant on the time of year and on the time of sunrise and sunset.

Dietary requirements

When preparing an activity, special consideration also needs to be paid to dietary restrictions.

Many religions forbid certain food items, have strict requirements about how food should be prepared or have special dietary practices that must be observed. Adhering to these guidelines, will prove respect to the followers of these religions. Violation of their dietary requirements which are based on religious beliefs and/or traditions may be perceived as a challenge to their faith - and can impact negatively on the atmosphere of the meeting. In all three Abrahamic religions there are specific holidays where a special menu is served and there are some special restrictions for what should be eaten, and what should not.

However the most important thing is to know these restrictions and requirements on a daily basis. In order to avoid organising an activity on a special religious holiday, just consult the calendar of religious festivals.

Below several useful tips regarding special religious dietary needs are presented:

Muslim Dietary Practices:

Food that is permissible according to Islamic law is called *Halal* (lawful). In order to be called halal, the food should receive special certification. However, several items are clearly prohibited when organising an activity with Muslims. It sometimes might be easier not to provide the forbidden substances, than providing certified halal food.

Islam prohibits Muslims from consuming any of the following items:

- Alcohol. This includes alcoholic beverages such as wine and liquor, as well as any food items that contain alcohol. Islam forbids the use of any mind-altering substances, whether in the form of food, drink or smoking. Muslims believe that maintaining health, Allah's gift, requires mastering full control over one's mind, body and spirit at all times.
- Pork or any pig-based products, such as lard, ham and pepperoni but also gelatine and shortening. This includes consuming any food that contains these items in any concentration or amount.
- Blood. Raw meat must be soaked in water to drain out the blood before cooking. Muslims are permitted to eat only well-cooked meat where no trace of blood can be found after cooking.

- Animals and poultry slaughtered in a halal way must be slaughtered by cutting both the neck artery and vein to cause instant death and decrease animal suffering. The name of Allah must be mentioned during the slaughtering of the animal to bless it. Therefore, one should consider not serving meat in case the halal meat is not affordable.

There is a debate between Muslim authorities on the question of seafood - if it is halal.

Islam also forbids cooking, eating or drinking from any pans, dishes, cups or table utensils that were used to prepare food containing pork or alcohol. They cannot be used to prepare or serve food for Muslims until they are thoroughly washed. Therefore, when serving food one should consider using plastic plates and cutlery.

Islam also stresses certain hygienic measures such as washing hands before and after eating, and cleaning the teeth frequently. A Muslim who has eaten onions will pray at home, rather than in the mosque, so as not to offend others and the angels.

During several special periods in year such as festivities, Muslims have some special restrictions. For example during Ramadan, Muslims are not allowed to eat nor drink from sunrise until sunset. Then they can eat and drink and traditionally these evening meals are celebrated with family and friends. The month of Ramadan closes with a special feast.

Jewish Dietary Practices:

Jewish dietary law is known as **kashrut** and food that adheres to these standards is called **kosher**.

Many mandates of the kosher diet are similar to those found in Islam[1]. For example:
- Eating any pork or pig-products, including animal shortening or pig-product gelatine, is prohibited.
- All blood must be drained from meat and poultry before cooking.

Judaism forbids cooking, eating or drinking from any pans, dishes, cups or table utensils that previously has been used to prepare food containing non-Kosher meat or products:
- Dairy products and meat products cannot be eaten together. Most people wait between 1-3 hours between eating meat and milk products. This rule applies when, for example, serving milk coffee after a meat meal
- Animals and poultry must be slaughtered in accordance with Jewish law.

Other Jewish dietary restrictions include the following:
- Eating certain types of animals, birds and fish is prohibited. Specifically, the only mammals that may be eaten are those that have cloven hooves and chew their cud, such as cows, sheep and goats. This explains why pork is forbidden, since pigs do not have these characteristics.
- The only types of fish that may be eaten are those that have fins and scales. Therefore, shellfish, such as lobster, shrimp, oysters and crab, are prohibited.
- Birds of prey and birds that are scavengers may not be eaten. Typical fowl, such as chicken, ducks and turkeys, are permissible.
- Certain parts of permitted animals may not be eaten. In the case of forbidden

1 There is an ongoing debate whether or not Muslims can use kashrut standards as a replacement for halal standards if needed, and the answer depends largely on the individual being asked. However, most Muslim authorities believe the terms are not interchangeable.

animals, their eggs and milk also cannot be consumed.

- Before eating, observant Jews will recite a blessing (*bracha*) acknowledging God as the creator of the food they are about to enjoy. This is done by holding the food in one hand, reciting the blessing and immediately taking a bite or a sip. One must not speak or make any interruption before finishing the first bite or sip. Another commandment of the Torah requires that a blessing also be recited after the meal.
- There are also special *bracha* that are recited for specific foods. For example, certain fruits and nuts, such as almonds, apples, apricots, blackberries, cashews, cherries, chestnuts, coconut, cranberries and dates, require a blessing known as a Ha'etz. A blessing called a Ha'adamah is required before eating vegetables such as asparagus, beans, beets, broccoli, Brussels sprouts, whole buckwheat, cabbage, etc.
- Certain foods must have been prepared in whole or in part by Jews, this includes:
- Wine
- Certain cooked foods,
- Cheese and according to some also butter,
- According to many: certain dairy products,
- According to some: bread (under certain circumstances).

There are also several products that do not have to receive *kosher* certifications, as they are perceived as *parve* (clean, neutral), since they don't contain either milk or meat derived ingredients.

Christian Dietary Practices:

In opposition to Jewish and Muslim traditions, Christians don't have a list of products that they can or should not eat. However there are some dietary restrictions also in Christian tradition. It all varies on the national culture and denomination, but for example some Catholics fast on Fridays to commemorate the suffering of Jesus, who died on Friday at the cross. In this case fasting would mean not eating meat (perhaps eating fish instead).

There are specific conditions when this tradition is not required to be followed, e.g. for children, pregnant women and the elderly, in times of illness or while travelling. Other periods of fasting include Lent (before Easter) or Advent (before Christmas), but the practice differs from one Christian denomination to another.

1.6 Gender sensitivity

In order to ensure that women and men have an equal chance to not only attend but participate in an activity, organisers should pay attention to gender specific needs and issues. There are many important elements that need to be considered in the preparation of an event.

One of those elements is travelling. In several religions, religious practices expect women (especially young girls) not to travel alone. Thus a travel companion is required. This might be an important factor to consider when selecting participants and when making the travel arrangements.

In order to provide both women and men the possibility to feel represented and have people to refer during the activity, gender balance should be sought within planning team, experts and participants.

Another important gender element in an activity is the empowerment of women. This can be done through the methodologies

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and spaces used within your activity if the question is taken into account. Ensuring balance between plenary and working groups is necessary, if it is observed that not everyone participates equally in the plenary sessions. In some contexts, depending on the topic of discussion, you may well consider provision of space for work in gender differentiated groups, which can ensure that different genders get more actively involved.

Similar gender specific rules can apply to the sharing of bedrooms between people of the opposite sexes. In some cases the same requirement can apply to two people of different sexes staying alone in a room together during the meeting. You should try to avoid such situations.

Christian Eastern in Granada, Spain

Gender neutral and sensitive language should be used throughout the activity in order to create an inclusive environment for both women and men. When it comes to language you should also know that in some religions God is refer to as He, and in some as S/He.

Another aspect of gender sensitivity in IRD activities is the physical contact. The rules vary depending on the group. Some religious traditions have strict rules on what should not be done, referring mainly to male-female contact. For example all kinds of hugging or kissing on the cheek (when greeting or saying good bye) between genders is not appropriate when dealing with Muslims. The same applies to Orthodox Jews. In spite of this there is an ongoing debate about handshakes. This should be taken into consideration when planning icebreakers, energisers etc.

1.7 Suitable location

IRD is not just bringing people together. The context in which people meet does matter too. The background for the meeting, but also literally: the location.

The Corrymeela Community from Northern Ireland use the term "safe space" that describes a location that facilitates a dialogue. According to the inventors of this term, a "safe space" is a place "in which different groups can share a similar experience of discovery. Sometimes such spaces allow people to detach aspects of their identity (cultural, vocational and sexual) from what they have hitherto seen as its essential and dominating character. Often, it is within rather than between groups that the real processes of discovery occur. In any event, it is in such spaces – youth groups, drama workshops, sports teams – that some of the most imaginative and successful forms of community healing have taken place." (David Edgar, *the Guardian*, 14/09/05).

In such a venue, there are no relations of guests-hosts. Everyone is new to this a neutral (but warm, welcoming and friendly) place. However to keep the space safe, the contract with the group should be settled taking into account hopes, fears, expectations and limitations of group.

But location can play an important role for the IRD also in another way. It might be part of IRD or inter-religious learning process to visit each others at religious venues, for example inviting partners to attend your religious celebrations.

TOOLS, METHODS AND RESOURCES

INTRODUCTION

This chapter offers a comprehensive selection of the tools, references, publications and other material you can use for activities, workshops, and discussion topics or for learning more about IRD. We should not forget that various organisations have been active in the field of IRD for many years; and their experience, knowledge, tools and skills should be pooled and used as their success has been already proven. Keep in mind that this chapter offers only a selection and by no means represents a full collection of tools and resources.

1. HOW TO USE TOOLS?

Organising an inter-religious activity is no easy task. It should be planned carefully taking several things into account. It is very important to communicate effectively with partners and stakeholders and set the common goals for the activity before starting the preparations.

Once the goals have been identified and set, you need to decide on the tools to be used in the activity. This can be a crucial turning point for the success of the activity and should be decided upon carefully. You should only use the tools that serve the defined goals and that you feel comfortable with. Consider the limitations and expectations of the target group participating in the activity and take into consideration their cultural and religious background.

In the following part of this Tool Kit you can find various tools that can be used during an inter-religious activity. Sometimes it is very important how to combine different tools and make them comfortable and user-friendly for all participants.

Depending on the length and goals of the activity, different emphasis should be put on different phases of the activity (group dynamics, discussion, evaluation, etc). If you are planning an evening activity, you may not want to allocate too much time on group building and/or energisers. However, in case of a week long seminar or conference you should focus much more on building group dynamics, making all participants feel comfortable, allowing them to get to know each other and creating a tolerant and open environment as this will set the mood for the rest of the week.

There is no prescribed right way of organising an inter-religious activity! The most important thing to keep in mind is that both the organisers and the participants should feel comfortable and at ease with the setting. The approach that the organisers bring into the activity is what will eventually set the framework for the rest of the participants. So, you should take time to study the background of participants and understand what will make them feel at ease. Furthermore, the readiness to engage in an inter-religious activity does not make you an expert. It is always better to ask and consult than assume things.

Dialogue, understanding and appreciation take time. Moreover reaching them is a process and one should not expect immediate results. The skills used to introduce the activities are crucial. In that sense, it is advisable to begin with activities the facilitator can memorise by heart without approaching the group with notes.

2. EXAMPLES OF TOOLS SUITABLE FOR INTER-RELIGIOUS DIALOGUE

NOTE: When applying the following tools, please refer to section 4.8 on Gender Sensitivity. Even though these tools have been used with some inter-religious groups, they might not be suitable for EVERY inter-religious group.

2.1 ICE-BREAKERS

These could be a number of things - from telling a good joke to elaborate games.

The choice depends on what you want to accomplish, how much time is available and the composition of the group. For example, when organising the first meeting it is really useful to introduce an ice-breaker that will make participants learn each other's names and get to know each other.

In general, ice-breakers help create a positive group atmosphere, help people to relax, break down social barriers, energise and motivate, and also help people to think outside the box.

CATEGORY: ICE-BREAKER

Title: LINE UP!

Purpose:
This energiser is easy to use in every circumstance and creates opportunity for participants to get to know each other or find similarities.

Duration:
10 minutes

Process:
Participants have to line-up without talking to each-other. By different categories: birthday, hair colour, shoe size etc. Starting from smallest to the youngest etc.

Variations:
Can be used with different categories and different line-ups. You can play the game on a line of chairs or in a circle.

CATEGORY: ICE-BREAKER

Title: TRUTH AND LIES

Purpose:
"Truth and Lies" is an activity for introducing a facilitator to a group, and participants to each other. It works well even if some participants know each other well already.

Materials:
This icebreaker requires minimal preparation; it can be easily customised for the interests or purpose of the group; it can be used with small or large groups.

Duration:
30 minutes – 1 hour

Process:
1. Facilitator writes three statements on the board. Two statements are true, and one is a lie. Example:
I have been teaching for 10 years.
I have a pet newt called, "Isaac Newt."
I lived in Switzerland for a year.

2. Participants ask "lie detector" questions to get further information, in order to determine which statement is false. For example:

Teaching - Where have you taught? What have you taught? What year did you start?

Pet - How old is Isaac Newt? What does Isaac eat? Where do you keep Isaac?

Switzerland - Where did you live in Switzerland? What language was spoken in that part of Switzerland?

3. Participants vote on which statement is a lie. Record votes for each statement on the board.

4. Reveal which statements are truths and which is a lie.

5. Place participants in small groups (groups of 3 or 4 works well). Small groups repeat steps 1-4. Finally, have participants introduce each other to the large group.

2.2 GROUP AND TRUST BUILDING

It is crucial for any type of activity that the participants feel comfortable sharing amongst themselves. A facilitator has a task of creating the right atmosphere in which participants will feel comfortable. Trust building activities help people to develop mutual respect, openness, understanding, and empathy, and also help to develop communication and teamwork skills.

CATEGORY: SMALL GROUP ACTIVITY

Title: WHY DIALOGUE?

Purpose:
To identify why it is necessary to have dialogue; gaining understanding and developing new insights into other ways of thinking.

Materials:
Paper and pens

Duration:
1 hour 15 minutes

Process:
Identify why it is necessary to have dialogue. Then divide into small groups to ensure that dialogue can be viewed from different religious and cultural perspectives. The conclusion should be that everybody has a right to their opinion even though others may not agree with it. Participants should then be divided into groups according to religion or denomination. The groups then have three questions to answer: Why dialogue? How to conduct dialogue? What is the difference between dialogue, communication, negotiation and talking? Outcomes should then be discussed in a plenary session.

Variations:
The activity can be used in other parts of a seminar or conference, with other types of questions.

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CATEGORY: GROUP AND TRUST BUILDING

Title: WHAT DO YOU THINK?
Purpose:
To show the different point of views
Materials:
Pictures of different people of different cultures and religions / traditions. Four copies of every picture.
Duration: 1 hour
Process:
Participants form 3-4 groups. In every group there should be a maximum of 5 participants. Every group gets 10 pictures. All groups have the same pictures. To begin participants write down the first thing that comes to mind and later the thoughts are discussed in the plenary.

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2.3 DIALOGUE

Dialogue in any type of activity is a key to the organiser's success. One should always choose a tool that fits within the time frame allocated to the activity. People often like to speak, so a facilitator should make sure that there is enough time to conclude the workshop and the ongoing discussion in a relaxed and good way. Some people talk more than others and a facilitator should prepare in advance for how to make room for everyone to feel heard. It is important to keep in mind that not everyone likes to stand in front of a group and only a few people enjoy hearing the same person go on and on. Choosing dialogue tools balances between open space and taking it back.

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CATEGORY: ROLE GAME

Title: LET'S WALK IN THE SAME SHOES
Purpose:
Understand an issue from other's perspective.
Materials:
Paper and pens
Duration:
1 h 15 min (first), 1 h 15 min (second)
Process:
This role game is a method to be used for further exploration of our own as well as other people's beliefs and points of view. In the framework of the role game participants explore different issues from the perspectives of other people. The essential part of this method is avoiding judgements, before being in the role of others, before walking in the other's shoes. This method leads participants towards a better understanding of the others and their cultural and religious backgrounds, as well as different standpoints which these backgrounds create.
Firstly: Participants are divided into groups to explore the subject. Each person pairs up with someone of the same gender but a different religious background. A handout is given out with different questions concerning faith and how it plays role in various

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aspects of our lives; discussion takes place between partners to find out more about their beliefs.

Secondly: This part is built on the knowledge from first. Everybody is asked to use the knowledge from the questions and answers of their partner. Or, in other words, walk in that person's shoes. Participants are asked to take the role of partner in the EU assembly (or something else). Each partner has to present their partners stance on the issue

Variations:

Can be used with a variety of different themes.

Title: COMMON VALUES…

Purpose:

To find out common values for IRD

Materials:

Colourful pieces of paper, markers, scissors

Duration:

1 hour 15 minutes

Process:

One of the most important methods of a training course is common work of the participants to find common values and prepare guidelines for IRD. This method is designed so that participants can work together in putting their theoretical knowledge in practice. Participants discuss the things that are important for conducting dialogue.

Participants are divided into groups, and each workshop tries to answer the following question: In which part of my everyday life or of my personality do I share common values with you? Participants have to write down the three most important values they shared in their group. Afterwards they have to share their results and discuss them in the plenary. The session ends with a visual presentation of these values, in the form of a colourful flower.

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Title: QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS?

Purpose:

To fill the gaps of knowledge which have been missing from discussions.

Duration:

1 hour

Process:

It is always important to fill in the gaps that are still left in order to get the full picture, and a "Questions and Answers" session is maybe an easy way to do this. It gives a space to the participants to ask the questions to each other on the issues that are still not clear or important for them. Different interesting discussions should arise and the time provided should give the opportunity to leave with as few questions as possible. Everyone is free to ask the questions they are interested in and get the proper answer or point of view. Participants are expected to be very open-minded, honest and tolerant. It is worth reaffirming the boundaries and emphasising respect before beginning this dialogue.

CATEGORY: DIALOGUE

Title: FISHBOWL

Purpose:

Dialogue and sharing of ideas, opinions and knowledge in large groups

Materials:

Chairs

Duration:

10 minutes to potentially many hours

Process:

The group forms two circles, a small one and a larger one that surrounds it. The inner circle is the fishbowl. The people who are placed at random or on purpose in the fishbowl are the only ones who are allowed to speak. You can think about how to place the participants. You could choose to place a person who has been very vocal in the outer circle, ask the group who they would like to have in the circle or pick from other criteria.

Variation:

There are several ways to use this method. You can expand the tool by first having a dialogue inside the fishbowl and then have the people inside the fishbowl turn their chairs around and make small discussion groups with the outer circle. They can re-turn to the fishbowl with the feedback given from the outer circle. You can change the people in the fishbowl at random or with purpose. The people in the fishbowl can be tapped on the shoulder and then leave the fishbowl for the person who tapped them (the person taps if he/she feels like something is missing from the conversation or a point was missed or has some other contribution.) The people in the fishbowl can also ask someone to step in (in a non-verbal manner). A more relaxed version can work very well within disciplined groups. But be careful that it does not turn into unconstructive chaos.

CATEGORY: DIALOGUE

Title: CAFE DIALOGUE

Purpose:

Dialogue and sharing of ideas, opinions and knowledge in large groups.

Materials:

Tables, chairs, pens and paper.

Duration:

1 hour to potentially many hours

Process:

The physical setting should look like a standard European cafe environment. You can have fruit, nuts, water and green tea on the tables. An amount of tables are set up each with a relevant topic. At each table there is a "secretary/minister/reporter". The job of the reporter is to take notes. (It is ok for the reporter to participate in the dialogue). The rest of the participants go to the tables and discuss the topic. They do this for 30-60 min. When the time is over everyone but the reporter switches tables. The reporter then

gives a small presentation/summary of the previous discussion and then start to discuss the topic again for 30-60 with the new group. The process of changing tables can be repeated for as many times as necessary. The result of the dialogues can be used in different ways. It is up to you where to go from here.

CATEGORY: DIALOGUE

Title: TOOL KIT TRAVELLING RELIGIONS

Purpose:

To learn and discuss aspects of religions by using symbols

Materials:

24 tasks and 24 items such as a rosary, Kippah, headscarf, traditional food, Bible, Qur'an, Torah etc.

Duration:

1-2 hours

Process:

Make groups of preferably 3 to 4 people of each religion. Make different tasks for example to mention four special ceremonies of each religion. Let every group start by answering one task and let all members of the group be creative in solving the task.

CATEGORY: DIALOGUE

Title: MY FAITH EXPLAINS

Purpose:

Think about and reflect own religion

Materials:

An empty room

Process:

Stand in two circles, one within the other, an equal number of people in each circle, everyone facing a person in the other circle. Ask the participants 4 questions, one minute each to answer:

- What is my faith?
- When did I start having an awareness of my faith?
- How does my faith manifest itself? How does it affect my life?
- What do you see when you look at me?
- Then ask the following questions i n plenary. Try to answer this in one sentence
- What is the most essential / important part of your identity?
- What role does faith play in my identity?

2.4 EVALUATION

How much time is allocated to an evaluation workshop is up to the organiser of the activity. Evaluation is often neglected but it can be a very powerful and useful tool to round up discussions and debates in a way that leaves all participants with a comfortable and satisfied feeling. Consider the use of a mid-term evaluation in order to gauge the effectiveness of your activity.

Title: MOVE AROUND

Purpose:

To evaluate on activity, what has happened; this is an easy evaluation, which gives a simple overview of all participants.

Duration:

15 minutes

Process:

Participants are spread out in the room. There are questions asked. On one side there is negative and in the other positive answer. People stand in the room as they feel and then explain why they are standing there.

Variations:

Can ask a variety of questions in any place.

Title: TALKING STICK

Purpose:

Sharing of feelings and thoughts

Materials:

Chairs

Duration:

Depending on the group (5 minutes per person)

Process:

Have the group form a circle. Ask if everyone can see everyone else. If not encourage them to move so that they are able to see everyone. In the middle of the circle you place a stick or something that is not good for throwing around or too silly (no hats). Encourage members of the group to (when they feel like it) go to the middle and grasp hold of the stick, and return to their seat. The one holding the stick is the only one who is allowed to talk. Keep going till everyone has had an opportunity to express themselves. This tool has a tendency to create silent moments. If you are not comfortable with silence you should consider other alternatives. Let silence be silence and enjoy the feeling of it...

Variation:

You can decide that you are allowed the stick 1,2,3+ times, or if the stick is free after everyone have had the possibility to contribute, or if it is free from the beginning. Whether or not it is allowed to comment on what someone else said or...You set the rules.

2.5 ENERGISERS

Energisers are physical activities that integrate physical activity with academic concepts. These are short (about 10 minute) activities, ideal for defeating tiredness after lunch or breaking the ice or a seamless transition between sessions. But it is important that the energiser matches the subject that is being presented. Energisers should not be used just because they look good; they should match what the facilitator wants to communicate.

Title: 1-8
Purpose:
To energise the group
Duration:
30 seconds
Process:
The group stands in a circle. The right hand is raised, and bending and stretching the elbow joint, you count from 1-8 in your preferred language. Fast. You then raise your right hand again and count out 1-4. You do it fast. Repeat the count 1-4 with left arm, right leg and left leg. The next count is 1-2 and then only 1. When the last one is counted (with the left leg) you touch the floor with your hands going 'uuuu' or 'aaaa' or 'weeeee' or some other cheery sound. You raise you hands and upper body to a jump while the sound intensifies. When you land you laugh and clap and that is it.
Variation:
In the jump you might like to spell out the acronym of a particular organisation or the name of a team, or a person you like or. You can choose to do it in one language or in many different languages at the same time.

Title: MAAAAZINGA!
Source:
"Interfaith Dialogue. Religious dimension in Youth Work"
Purpose:
To energise people
Duration:
5 minutes
Process:
Mazinga is a tribal way of expelling energy. Everybody stands up in a circle. A first person starts saying "Maaaa…" putting his/her hands closer to the body as if preparing a blast of energy. The first person has to hold the sound until everybody else repeats the same gesture, one after the other. When the whole circle is doing the same sound and gesture (this should be loud) everyone projects their hands to the centre of the circle and pronounces the rest of the word "Maaa…….ZINGA!" very loudly, releasing the energy.

Title: CHANGE SEATS
Purpose:
Energise the group
Duration:
5 minutes
Process:
If you notice that people are taking the same position in the room (which is often the case) ask them to change seats. Either before a break or in the beginning of a session or

in the middle. It depends on the group, make sure that it is not taken the wrong way and if people have laptops they may not want to move from the power plug, internet etc.
Variation:
Encourage the participants to share (in pairs) their feelings about sitting in a new place (1-2 minutes max)

2.6 OTHER TOOLS AND IDEAS

✻ Celebrate religious holidays
Example: The Union des Etudiants Juifs de Belgique [UEJB] organises each year an activity related to the Jewish holiday of Sukkot at the Brussels University. Students are invited from other religions to spend some time in a traditional cabin to share tea and biscuits. The people can be in contact with Jewish students and learn more about the Jewish faith and culture.

✻ Dinners (Example: breaking the fast at the end of the day in Ramadan etc.)
✻ Celebrations (Christmas, sharing food etc)
✻ Having a visit to a church, synagogue, mosque
✻ Humanitarian action in your neighbourhood
✻ Organise debates (for a larger audience) on subjects like: 'Faith and work life' or 'How do I live my faith and values in a secular society?'
✻ Discussion topics: 'Religious Education in school?' 'Is "tolerance" enough for IRD?'
✻ Creative tools:
  • Music: have a "Eurovision song contest" of religious music etc.
  • Paint: paint your own faith or make a big picture together
  • Architecture: visit religious buildings.
  • Making theatrical play about the story of Noah
  • Write a letter to your God about a topic
  • Organise a concert together
  • Festival
  • Discussion forum on the internet

  • Design an inter-religious prayer service
  • Poetry
  • Photography
  • Make a short video for youtube etc.
✻ Essay competition: Young people could be challenged to write an essay in which they express ideas and activities about how to get in contact with peers from another religion. Some cool prizes could be offered to the best three ideas; for example a meeting with the mayor.
✻ Muslim, Jewish, Christian prayer for Peace.
(source Pax Christi www.paxchristi.org.uk)

O God, you are the source of life and peace.
Praised be your name forever.
We know it is you who turn
Our minds to thoughts of peace.
Hear our prayer in times of crisis
Your power changes hearts
Muslims, Christians and Jews remember,
And profoundly affirm,
That they are followers of the one God,
Children of Abraham, brothers and sisters;
Enemies begin to speak to one another:
Those who were estranged join hands in friendship;
Nations seek the way of peace together.
Strengthen our resolve to give witness to these
Truths by the way we live.
Give to us:
Understanding that puts an end to strife;
Mercy that quenches hatred, and
Forgiveness that overcomes vengeance.
Empower all people to live in your law of love.

Amen

3. Best Practices: Introduction

IRD can be lived in many ways and forms. Drawing on others and your own experience, and adding a dash of creativity, the possibilities are numerous and diverse. Inter-religious activities organised by the contributors to this Tool Kit range from seminars on different issues to peace vigils and from the making of inter-religious dictionaries to film festivals.

Drawing on experience from previous events can be important to gather ideas and to build on what has been done in order to develop and improve it. This chapter gives case studies of different categories of IRD. They are here to show how things have been done, and to be learned from, giving hints on what to keep in mind. Use them and add your own touch!

3.1 Best practice: Attending Prayers, Common Prayer or Joint Prayer?

Attending Prayers

Youth from one faith can invite other youth as guests to attend their usual prayers or ceremonies. For example, when the faith based organisations of the European Youth Forum (YFJ) held a seminar in 2005 in Warsaw, Poland they visited Muslim and Jewish religious celebrations as an integral part of the programme. The participants attended the Friday prayer in the mosque of Warsaw, and later the same day observed the religious celebrations of Shabbat in a synagogue and after joining the Jewish community for the Shabbat meal.

This is a kind of "field experience", where participants get to see, hear and even taste the way religious ceremonies are held in other religious traditions. It is also a chance for the

youth who make the invitation to share their beliefs and identity.

Common Prayer

Youth can hold an inter-religious prayer where members of each faith take it in turn to pray, read from their holy scriptures or sing hymns or songs etc. People "come together to pray" rather than "praying together". For example, at a seminar held in 2004 by the Ecumenical Youth Council in Europe and the Forum for European Muslim Youth and Student Organisations, the closing worship included a Muslim call for worship and a recitation from the Qur'an followed by a Christian song, a Bible reading and the recital of the Lords Prayer.

A common prayer ensures the distinctiveness of each tradition. On the other hand, it may emphasise difference rather than togetherness, leaving those present observers rather than participants.

Joint Prayer

It is also possible to hold a joint service where various readings, prayers and songs are linked together round a central theme, such as peace, protection of the environment, or celebration of a special event. Symbolic actions to express unity may be introduced, while elements particular to any one of the religions are left out. Prayers for peace, such as the World Peace Prayer, are examples of this. During the ceremony, a prayer is recited for peace and happiness to prevail in every nation of the world.

A joint prayer raises theological questions about the relation of religions to each other and critics may say that these ceremonies obscure the distinctiveness of religions. It is important to know your personal and your groups' expectations and

borders, to know what kind of prayer you are ready to engage in.

3.2 BEST PRACTICE PUBLICATION: AN INTER-RELIGIOUS CALENDAR

An inter-religious calendar has the positive effects of creating awareness and increasing our knowledge of others religions. It is a useful tool to facilitate practice of religion - for example, when organising a seminar, you can check that your seminar is not at an inappropriate time for participants of different religious traditions. It can also work as a reminder to bring greetings to your friends and colleagues when they are celebrating religious festivals.
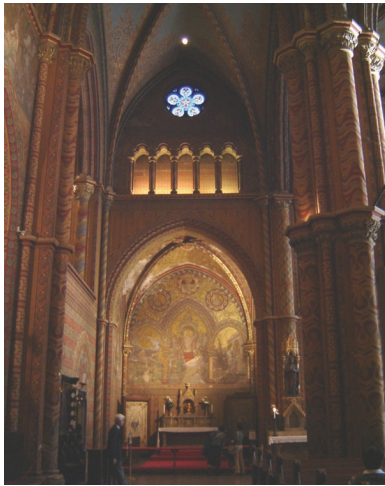
Mathias Church in Budapetst, Hungary

Getting together with other faith-based groups to make inter-religious material is in itself a good way of having a dialogue and building relations of trust and co-operation.

Remember to consider what resources you can invest in producing something such as an inter-religious calendar, keeping in mind what possibilities you have for publishing and distributing the final product. A calendar can be very simple or quite elaborate, and your choice of this will depend on your financial circumstances and who you want to make the calendar for.

3.3 BEST PRACTICE: NETWORKING

The faith based expert group of the YFJ as such is a role model. Under the umbrella of the YFJ, six faith based member organisations of the YFJ and two additional youth organisations started in 2004, to collaborate with each other on European level. Since then, they meet frequently and invite each other to different activities held by each organisation or hold events in co-operation with each other. In addition, we set up our own common agenda and strive together for the promotion of IRD.

This type of dialogue between different religious groups can also be established at local and regional level. Every community will benefit from mutual understanding. IRD helps to develop respect and break down prejudices. Whether you are religious or not, you need only yourself and young religious people around you who would also be motivated to establish such an initiative.

1st step

Try to get in touch with a synagogue, church or a mosque. Ask them if they have the contacts of young people or even if they have the contact details of a faith based youth organisation.

2nd step

After having gathered the different contact details you can prepare an outline of your ideas and especially your motivation on why you want to initiate this process. Put every idea that you have inside your outline.

3rd step

Inform your organisation about your idea and share with them the outline that your have prepared. If you are not organised in a specific youth association, just send out the letter on your own behalf.

4th step

After receiving answers you can start to coordinate a meeting where you all present yourself and get a better overview on your all expectations.

5th step

From now on everything is up to the whole group. For further ideas on how to proceed in the group, consult the information earlier in this chapter.

3.4 Best Practice: Establishing an inter-religious network for peace

There can be many reasons to form a coalition of youth NGOs. Apart from the personal gain of the people involved, there is a considerable outward symbolic effect in speaking with one voice. Working together is a way of expressing determination to fight intolerance and fundamentalism and willingness to engage in dialogue and understanding. There is strength in standing together, not only because the number of people involved is larger, but also because it gives greater credibility to the message.

A network of faith-based youth organisations can speak with one voice on matters of concern to all faiths. It can be a common platform for

the participants to express their opinions in public and to rally support.

A network of this sort requires mutual trust and dedicated co-operation between the organisations involved. It is useful to have a clear structure and goal. Some things to remember:

- Reflect on what your motivation for the co-operation is. Set your aims and objectives together.

- Think through who your target group might be: are you trying to raise awareness in the general public? Are you trying to influence official policies? Are you trying to convey a message to your own community?

- Give each participating organisation a concrete task, dividing responsibilities between you.
  - ✶ Divide tasks according to the resources and knowledge organisations have. Use your strengths, and let others do what they do best.
  - ✶ Prepare what can be prepared. Make templates for press releases, with the logos of the organisations and a digital version of the signatures of all chair people. Think of what contacts you have in the press – this might be different depending on the organisation.

- Establish a chain of communication between the cooperating organisations.
  - ✶ This can be a simple phone chain of the kind: a calls b, b calls c, etc
  - ✶ It can be a mailing list or group.
  - ✶ In larger networks you can use a pyramid phone chain system, meaning that a calls b and c, b calls d and e while c is calling f and g, and so on.

- Every partner is responsible for spreading awareness of the network within its own organisation. Through mailing lists or phone chains the members of each organisation can be informed and engaged when a common action is asked for.

- Ensure good coordination. This can be done through various tools.
  ✷ You can give the mandate of coordination to one person, functioning as a "drifter" moving from one organisation of the network to the other and ensuring that everyone is moving in the same direction in a productive manner.
  ✷ A committee with representatives from the different organisations can have the coordinating responsibility.
  ✷ You can set a pre-arranged meeting time and place (e.g. 24 hours after occurrence of an event at the office of one of the organisations) and all organisations compare the actions they wish to take before publishing anything or reacting outwardly.

- Be sure that any action is supported by all organisations of the coalition.

Benefits of speaking with one voice:

Each group on its own might be small and therefore not have very much effect. For example, the Muslim population of Greece is not very large and therefore has not many options of voicing their concerns. But even if they would have managed to reach the Greek public, their concerns would have only partly been considered seriously, as it would have been seen as a biased and one sided approach of the Muslim minority which is being over sensitive etc.

What has happened?

Through a joint campaign a much larger public has been reached. The issues raised are taken more seriously, because of the joint campaign and possibly the public figures involved.

What effects has it had?

The direct effect is that due to the political pressure yielded through the campaign a law is being created in Greek parliament that will increase the punishment on hate crimes and heighten the awareness of the local police that the Muslim community needed to be protected.

The indirect effect of the campaign is manifold:
- The Greek public's awareness towards a new coalition is built, so that usual tendency towards a twofold polarisation of matters is decreased.

- The Muslim minority anticipates the Jewish minority as an ally instead of an enemy, so that Anti-Semitism is decreased.

- The Jewish minority anticipates the Muslim minority as a fellow victim that needs support, instead of viewing the Muslims as Anti-Semitic aggressors, so that Islamophobia is decreased.

- The division between the leading Orthodox majority and the Catholic minority in Greece is decreased due to this joint venture.

It becomes clear that the act of cooperating and networking is not only an effective tool to counter or react to newly arisen situations, but also leads to a greater understanding between the different religious factions.

REFERENCES

The Council of Europe is an extremely valuable source for programme ideas, information, guides, trainings, etc. The Education, Culture and Heritage, Youth and Sports Directorate General of the Council of Europe have recently launched a special website dedicated to intercultural dialogue www.coe.int/dialogue. Furthermore the Council of Europe is constantly publishing tool kits and educational material one can use when getting involved in IRD. Here only some of them:

- Council of Europe (2003). **COMPASS**. http://eycb.coe.int/compass/

Compass is a manual of human rights education with young people. It offers excellent tools on different topics (globalisation, human rights, discrimination, civilization, gender equality) which can be transferred to other topics. It can provide with the ideas, inspiration and motivation to venture into the field of human rights education with young people. COMPASS has been produced within the framework of the Human Rights Education Youth Programme of the Directorate of Youth and Sport of the Council of Europe.

- Council of Europe (1995). **All different, all equal** education pack. http://eycb.coe.int/edupack/default.htm

This pack aims to provide practical and theoretical materials which can be used by educators, trainers, youth workers and teachers in informal education. The pack was made as part of the Council of Europe's "all different, all equal" campaign that stands against racism, xenophobia, Anti-Semitism and intolerance.

- Council of Europe (2007). Companion. http://book.coe.int/EN/ficheouvrage. php?PAGEID=36&lang=EN&produit_aliasid=2198

This guide has been produced under the Council of Europe's Youth Campaign for Diversity, Human Rights, and Participation "All Different- All Equal". The campaign provides an essential stimulus for common action to promote diversity, participation and human rights. It seeks to bring attention both to the issues themselves and the methods used to address them. Such mobilisation is vital if we wish to establish strong public awareness throughout Europe of these values.

- Council of Europe (2004). Domino. http://eycb.coe.int/domino/default.htm

This publication is a manual that offers elaborate programmes on peer group education as a means to promote tolerance and accept diversity. This publication tries to promote peer group education within formal and informal educational settings. Domino is aimed at youth and social workers, teachers and youth leaders, as well as young people wishing to get involved in such programmes.

- Council of Europe and European Commission Partnership (2000). Intercultural learning T-kit. http://www.training-youth.net/INTEGRATION/TY/Publications/

This tool kit offers stimulating ideas and useful methods to be used in activities related to the intercultural learning.

- European Commission SALTO-Youth Resource Centres. http://www.salto-youth.net/find-a-tool/ (Search engine)

Look through a wide variety of training methods, background texts, presentations and other tools used at a variety of training events... and get inspired! SALTO-YOUTH.net is a network of 8 Resource Centres working on European priority areas within the youth field. It provides youth work and training resources and organises training and contact-making activities to support organisations and National Agencies within the framework of the European Commission's Youth in Action programme and beyond.

- Council of Europe, EPTO, EFIL. (2005). Interfaith dialogue-religious dimension on youth work.

- Pax Christi. (2005). "Reconciliation: the heart of peace" Study-reflection guide on peace and reconciliation. Published by Pax Christi UK.

- Mozaik (2005). Mozaik number 14; Inter-religious dialogue. Ecumenical Journal World Student Christian Federation - Europe Region.

  * Fundamental Issues (2008 -). Inter-religious Magazine of the EYCE Campaign to Overcome Fundamentalism.

1 Useful Websites and Organizations

- Council for a Parliament of the World's religions - http://www.cpwr.org

- European Federation for Intercultural Learning - http://www.efil.afs.org/

- Forum against Islamophobia and Racism -

- IIID (Institute for Inter-religious, Intercultural dialogue) http://astro.temple.edu/~dialogue/iiid.htm

- Jewish Christian Relations - http://www.jcrelations.com/

- Minorities of Europe - http://www.moe-online.com/

- United For Intercultural Action - http://www.unitedagainstracism.org/

- United Religions Initiative - http://www.uri.org/

- World Conference of Religions for Peace - http://www.wcrp.org/

- Salto-Youth. Travelling cultural diversity. Salto-youth cultural diversity resource centre. www.salto-youth.net/diversity

- Alliance of Civilisations- http://www.unaoc.org/

- A common World- http://acommonword.com/index.php?lang=en

2 SOME SEMINARS ON INTER-RELLIGIOUS DIALOGUE

- In 2003 JECI-MIEC held a seminar "Religions in Europe – Ecumenical and Inter-religious dialogue" Porto, Portugal. May 2003.
- In 2004 EYCE and FEMYSO held a Training for Ecumenical Trainers in Europe. "Intercultural and inter-religious dialogue- avoid conflicts" 15-22nd of November 2004, Greece (Final report available on www.eyce.org of from the EYCE office).
- In 2004 WSCF and FEMYSO held a conference in Oslo, Norway "Young people as agents of inter-religious dialogue".
- In 2005 EYCE & FEMYSO held a seminar on "Gender & Religion" 4th – 11th December 2005, Malta. (Final report available on www.eyce.org or from the EYCE office).
- In 2006 EUJS held its second inter-religious event "Finding One Voice: Faith Based Education as a Tool for Avoiding Misunderstandings and Overcoming Prejudices" in Barcelona, Spain. January 17th – 23rd 2006
- In 2006 EYCE and FEMYSO held a study session on "Overcoming Islamophia – promoting inter-religious dialogue and cooperation" 19th – 26th March 2006, Strasbourg, France. (Final report available on www.eyce.org of from the EYCE office).

- In 2006 JECI-MIEC held a study session "Religion contributing to Human Rights Education" Strasbourg, France. March 2006 (report on jeci-miec.eu/publications.html)
- In 2006 JECI-MIEC, held a seminar "Youth Inter-religious dialogue as a bridge to peace" in collaboration with WSCF, FEMYSO and EUJS. July 2006
- In 2006 EUJS held its third inter-religious meeting "Sharing our Faith – Sharing our Pride: an inter-religious perspective on religious identity for young people in the new Europe" Brussels, Belgium. December 6th -10th 2006.
- In 2007 EYCE held a study session on "Religious rights – human rights? Developing an inter-religious concept of human rights and human rights education". 11th – 18th March 2007. Strasbourg, France.
- In 2007 EYCE, FEMYSO and MECC held a seminar on "Monologue or dialogue - Inter-religious dialogue meets fundamentalism" 9th – 16th December 2007. Volos, Greece.

- In 2007 JECI-MIEC held a study session "Empowering Young People through human rights education", Strasbourg (report on www.coe.int/t/dg4/youth/source/training/study_sessions/2007_JECI-MIEC_en.pdf)
- In 2008 WCSF held a seminar 'Living our faith in a Multicultural Society. Developing Inter-religious Dialogue as a Lifestyle'. 13-19 November 2008, Derbyshire, United Kingdom

3 White papers, statements, reference documents

- **Council of Europe** http://www.coe.int/defaultEN.asp

The Council of Europe regularly issues policy papers and resolutions that can be used as a reference and/or source of information. The "White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue" (2008) might be of particular interest:
http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/intercultural/Source/White%20Paper%20final%20EN%20020508.pdf

- **European Commission**   http://ec.europa.eu/youth/index_en.html

The European Commission's website offers the pan-European official policy overview that once can refer to in the inter-religious work.

- **UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization)** www.unesco.org

UNESCO in its mission commits to disseminating ideas and values of pluralistic societies worldwide, supporting the freedom of expression and equal rights for all citizens. Their website can be used as a valuable source of information for activities and good practices in the field of education. On the UNESCO website one can also easily find historical summaries, information on cultural diversity around world, data on IRD, etc.

- **The Pontifical Council for Inter-religious Dialogue of the Vatican**
http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/interelg/index.htm

"Inter-religious Dialogue in the official teachings of the Catholic Church from the 2nd Vatican Council to John Paul II (1963-2005)". A "manual" for dialogue between the Catholic Church and other religions according to the teaching of the 2nd Vatican Council and Pope John Paul II.

- **World Conference of Religions For Peace** http://www.wcrp.org/

WCRP is the largest international coalition of representatives from the world's religions dedicated to promoting peace. It brings together hundreds of key religious leaders every five years to discuss the great issues of our time. In August 2006, the Eighth World Assembly convened in Kyoto. On their website one can find resolutions, white papers, international agreements, etc.

CONCLUSION

The contributors of this Tool Kit hope that you will find it useful to consider IRD as an important reality in our society; dialogue is also a useful tool between believers and non-believers alike. We hope you can engage with and value this publication in terms of its content, theory and practical advice for creating a wider awareness and understanding of each others religious beliefs, traditions and practices.

We wish for this publication to create a greater awareness of the purpose and aims of working together as diverse organisations striving towards a common understanding regarding the promotion of tolerance and mutual respect. It has been written by using a non-formal educational approach that can effectively shape the lives of young people across Europe.

We would be pleased to receive any feedback on the content of this publication, or for further copies and information, please contact:

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The 2008 Faith-Based Expert Group

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With support from the European Youth Forum (YFJ)**

Athens, Greece

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