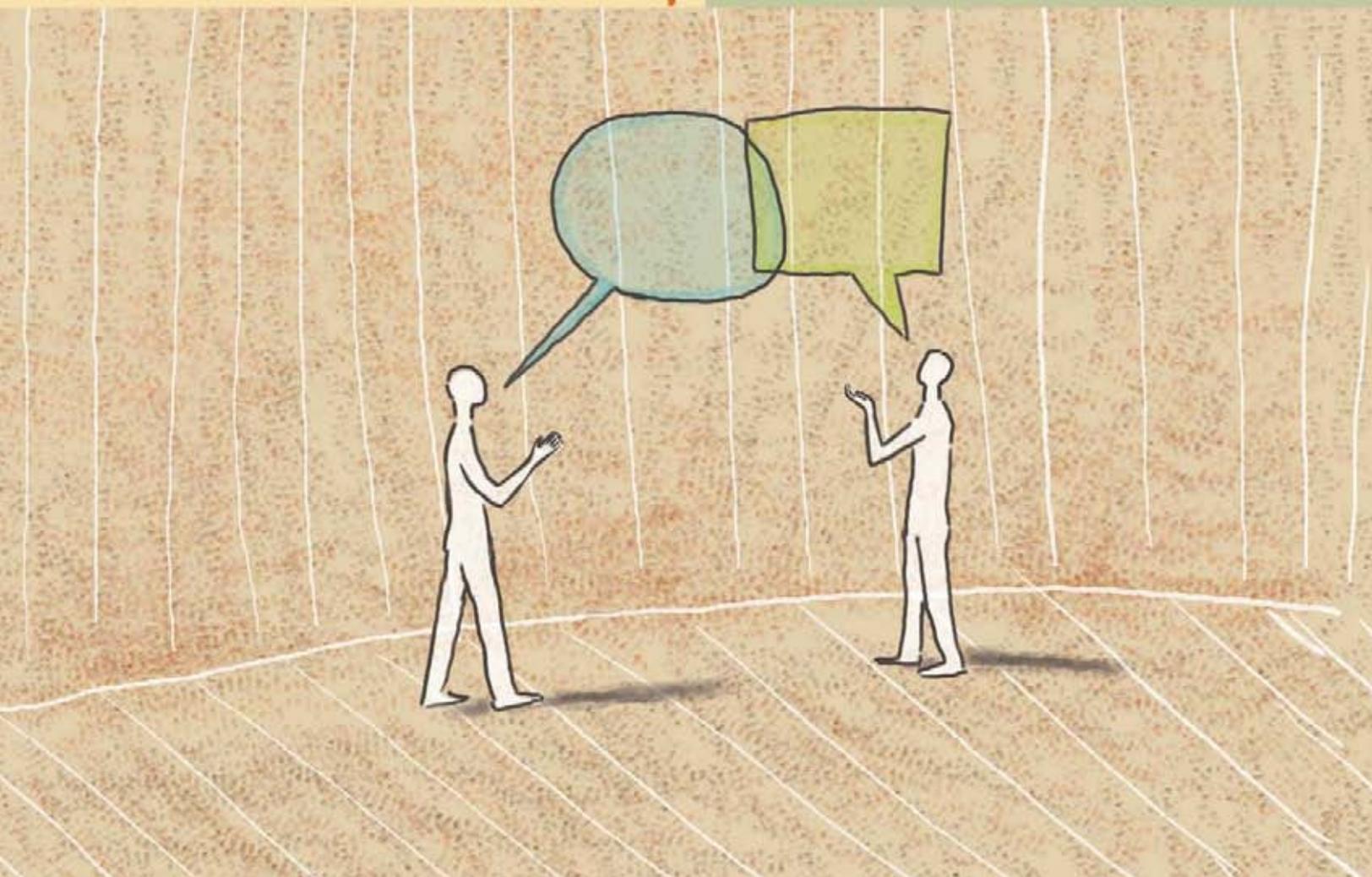
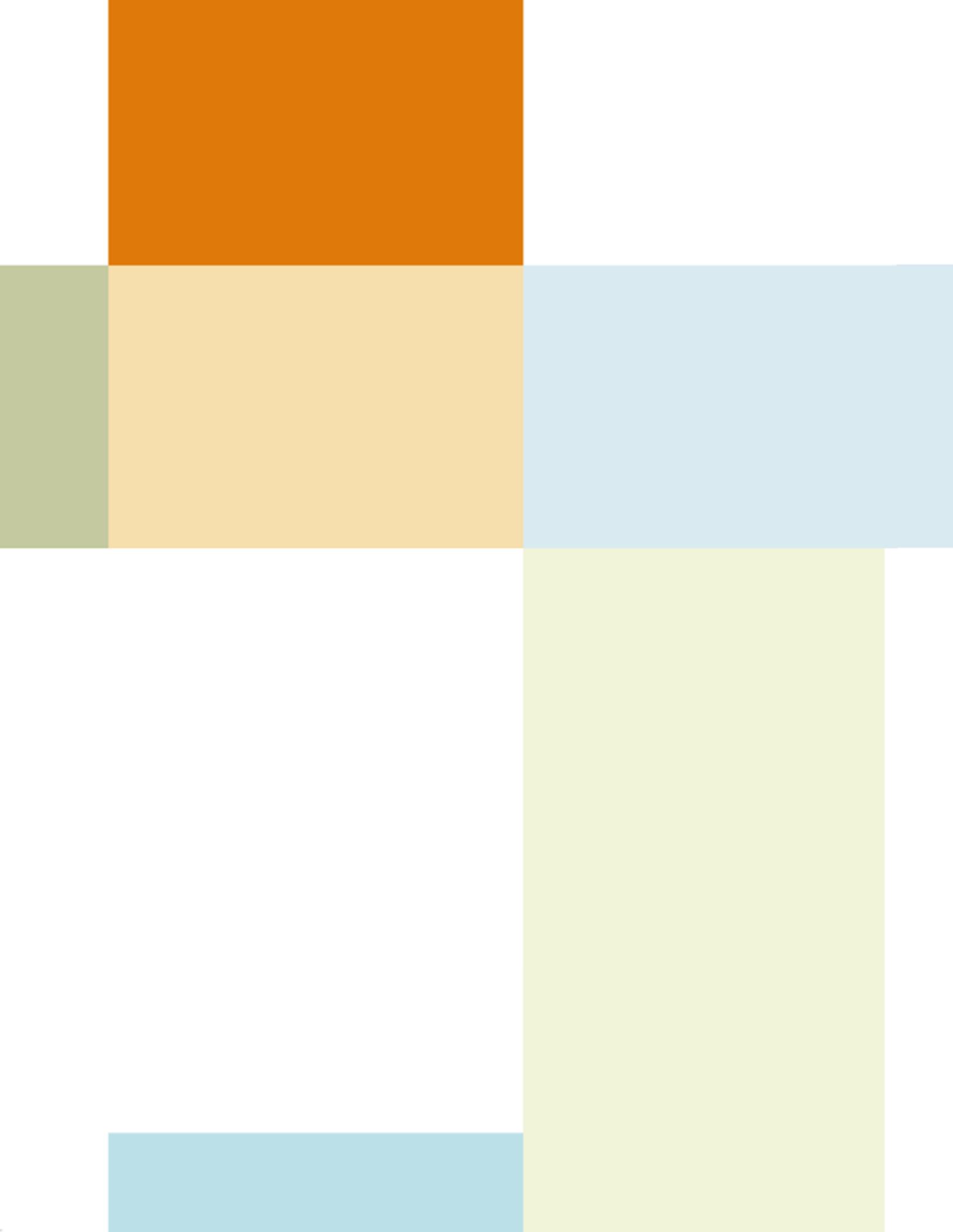
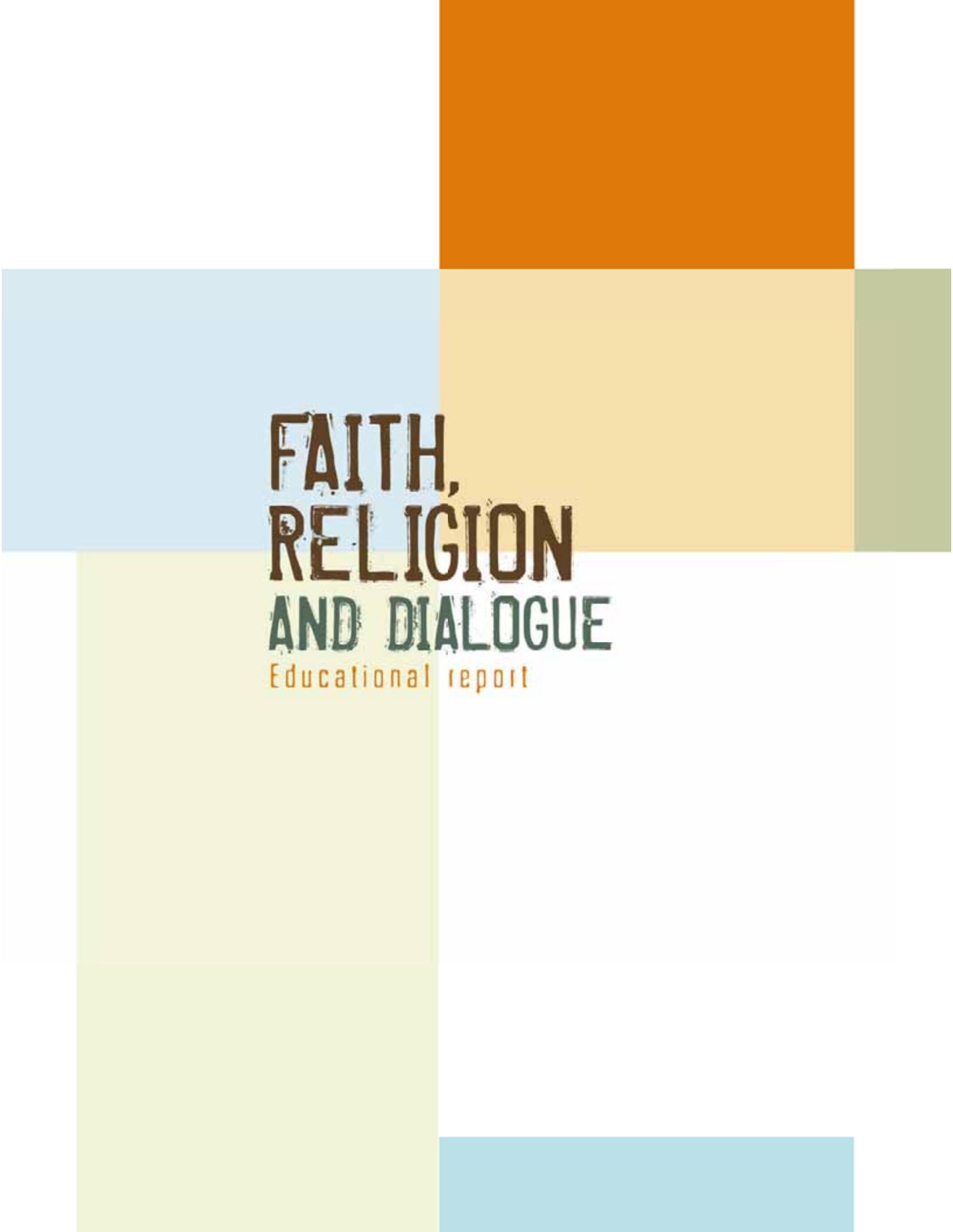


# FAITH, RELIGION AND DIALOGUE

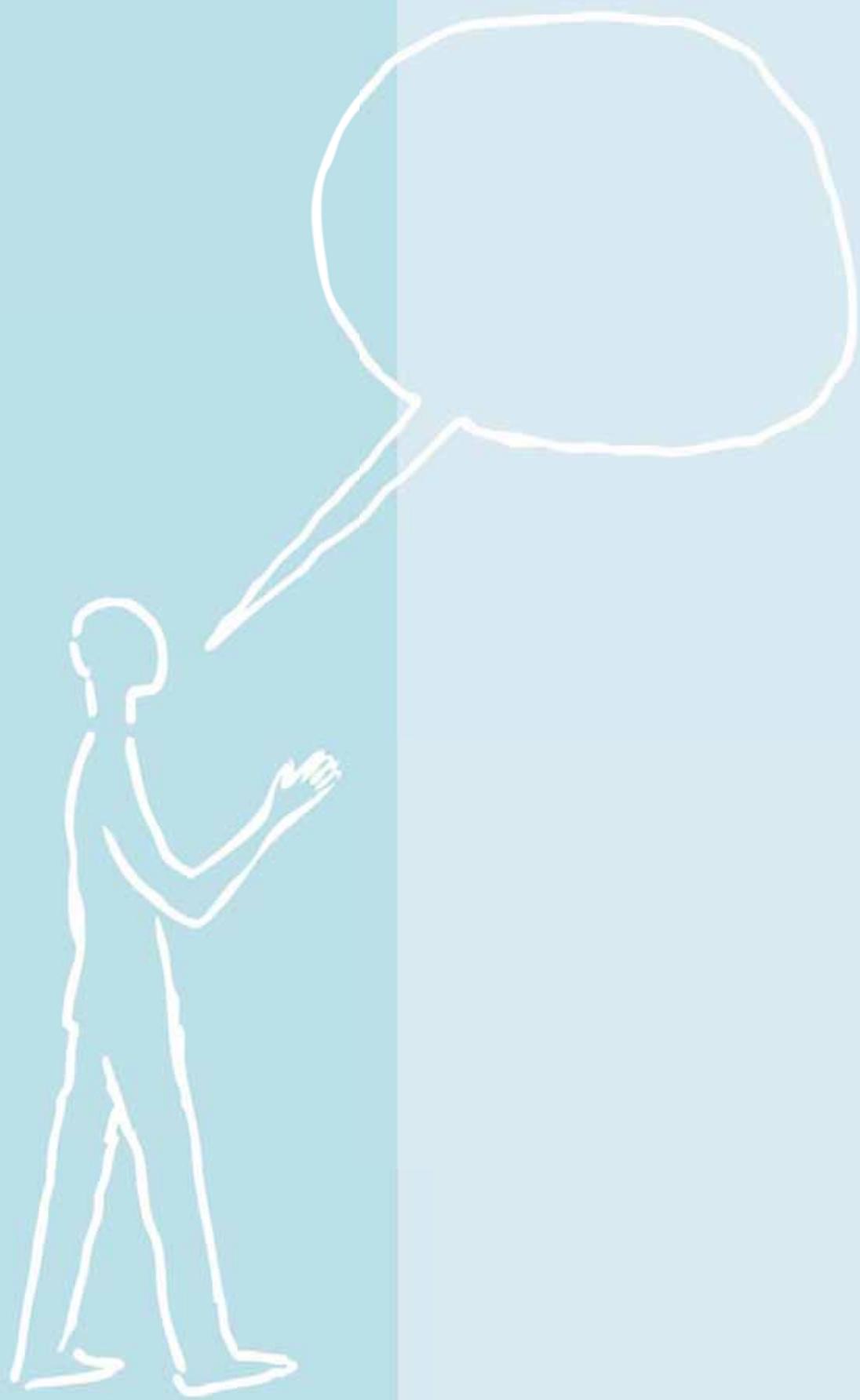
Educational Report







**FAITH,  
RELIGION  
AND DIALOGUE**  
Educational report



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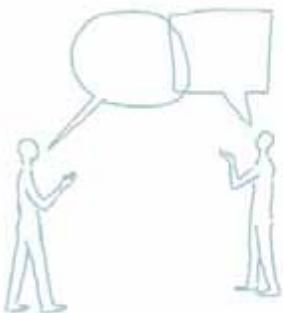
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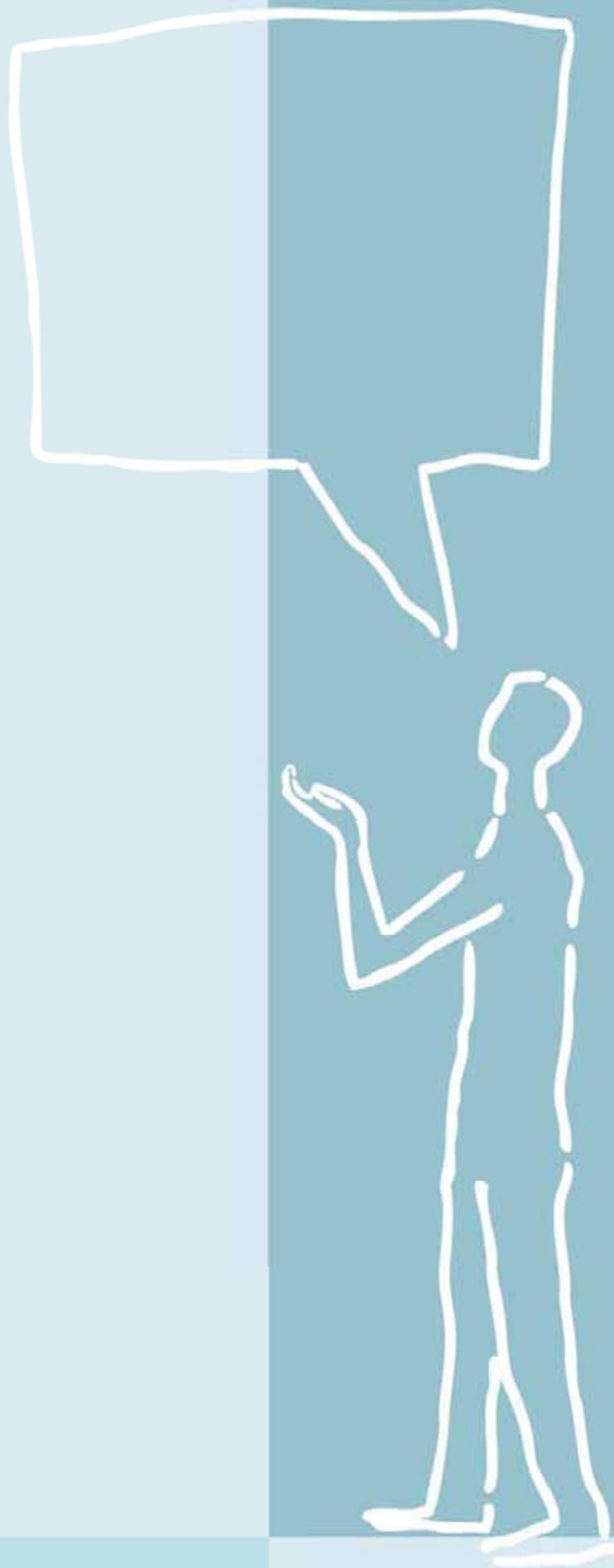
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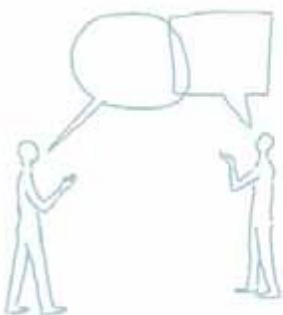
# INTRODUCTION AND THANKS

This report is NOT a definitive guide to Faith and Religions and the dialogue between them; nor is it an academic text on the subject. It is also NOT a comprehensive toolkit for trainers, but rather it is a starting point for aiding and promoting learning on Faith, Religion and Dialogue. The contents are drawn from many sources and, where possible the references are given, but most of the Report is based on the words, ideas and experience of around 60 participants and trainers at two training events held in Europe in 2007. The proceedings of those events are described in the pages below.

As Rapporteur it has been a great pleasure and a wonderful learning opportunity to have been part of these SALTO training courses, and I am indebted to all those involved for allowing me to listen in on their discussions and presentations. Many thanks to all participants for your energies that resulted in such a rich output and to the organisers, SALTO Cultural Diversity, Euromed and Eastern Europe & Caucasus as well as Turkish and British National Agencies of the Youth in Action Programme. To the training teams that teased out this knowledge and experience, let me also say thanks and congratulations!

A full list of all who contributed can be found in the last section of the report.

*Simon Forrester,  
Ankara, Turkey, December 2007*





# SECTION ONE: THE BASICS - FAITH, RELIGION, AND DIALOGUE

## 1. How to use this Report

This report is aimed at Youth Workers, Trainers, Youth Leaders and anyone else with an active interest in issues related to Youth, faith and inter-religious dialogue. It can be used in a variety of ways:

- ✦ To contribute to briefing papers or newsletter articles, posters and other awareness-raising media
- ✦ To inspire and inform on the design of training activities, and...
- ✦ To help develop training materials and tools for training
- ✦ As a reference document if you are producing a project proposal
- ✦ To stimulate debate, discussion and dialogue
- ✦ To raise questions and offer some solutions
- ✦ For self-development for those new to the topics
- ✦ As inspiration to encourage engagement in the tricky subject of faith, religion, and dialogue

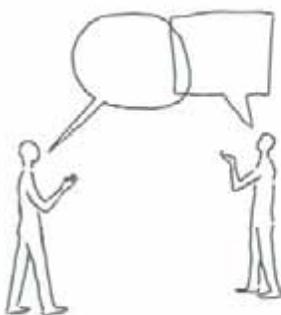
So, feel free to read through all of the text, or just go to those sections that appear to meet your needs. Copy any parts that may be of use to you, but please give credit to those that produced the report.

Enjoy!

## 2. Information about the SALTO RCs

This Report, and the training activities it is based on, has been made possible through the SALTO Resource Centres on Cultural Diversity, EuroMed, and Eastern Europe and Caucasus. SALTOYOUTH stands for 'Support for Advanced Learning and Training Opportunities' within the European Youth in Action (YiA) programme. It 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 frame of the European Commission's YiA programme and beyond.

SALTOYOUTH's history started in 2000 when it was founded as part of the European Commission's Training Strategy within the YOUTH programme. It works in synergy and complementarity with many other partners in the



field, and is always looking for possible new collaborations. Thus, if you would like to know more and to access the various resources on offer through SALTO, please refer to the contact details at the end of the Report.



### 3. Background to the Training on Faith, Religion & Dialogue – different approaches

The recent history of Europe and its neighbours has witnessed a powerful mixing of a range of cultures, religions and ideologies. The ravages of the Second World War, the dismantling of the Soviet Union, the growth of the European Union, and the horrors of 9/11, have presented youth and their communities with complex challenges of knowing how to be tolerant and how to value and promote diversity. To make a contribution towards fulfilling the challenge, the Council of Europe and European Parliament have, and are, advocating for change.

„All different, All equal” is the call of the Council of Europe for Diversity, Human Rights and Participation. It is a campaign that began 10 years ago, and that has seen renewal as a European Youth Campaign in 2006-2007.

The basic purpose is to reinforce the fight against racism, anti-Semitism, Xenophobia and Intolerance.

The European Year of Intercultural Dialogue 2008 will be dedicated to contributing to particular commitments of the

### THE EUROPEAN YEAR OF INTERCULTURAL DIALOGUE 2008

Specific objectives include:

- + Raise the profile and increase the coherence of all Community programmes contributing to intercultural dialogue
- + Highlight the contributions of different cultures
- + Contribute to innovation in promoting intercultural dialogue, particularly among young people.

Three types of action:

- + Information campaigns and research
- + Grants for actions on a Community scale
- + Co-financing of actions on a national scale

EU, namely those related to solidarity, social justice, and greater cohesion. It is expected that the Year will promote intercultural dialogue particularly among young people.

From these wider scale initiatives, the SALTO Resource Centres have run a number of activities to work with Youth on issues connected to Diversity and Intercultural Dialogue. The SALTO EuroMed RC, for example, has run thematic courses based on the main priorities of its YOUTH and YIA programmes: role of women in society, anti-racism and anti-xenophobia, participation of civil society and active citizenship, and the environment. These courses have included training on ‘Common Heritage – Common Memory’, ‘Education and Civilisation’, and ‘Peace Education’. SALTO Eastern Europe and Caucasus, for example, had run a series of study visits to the region, where youth workers could discover and taste the cultural and religious diversity of the eastern neighbours of European Union.

SALTO also has produced a number of resources and texts to support actions and learning on these topics. The SALTO Cultural Diversity RC, for example, has booklets on ‘Cultural Diversity in Europe’ and another on ‘Peer Education in Cultural Diversity Projects’. And Salto EuroMed

## FAITH & DIALOGUE, 6 DAYS, APRIL 2007, BELFAST, N.IRELAND

### Course Objectives:

- \* The Training was designed to help participants
- \* Be more conscious about the influence faith has on identity
- \* Identify and overcome challenges / difficulties / barriers to dialogue
- \* Enhance mediation skills and techniques
- \* Better understand the impact of faith on communication + dialogue
- \* Share experience of case studies + best practices
- \* Increase knowledge on theories and concepts
- \* To take initiative and learn new approaches in handling activities with diverse groups

### Approach:

Provide a safe and informal educational environment in which participants can first explore and understand their own personal identity, as shaped by faith and religion. Then to see how these identities may constrain or promote dialogue, and by looking wider at a range of public spaces, get some hands-on experience of seeing and using tools that may support dialogue in the youth sector.

The emphasis of this training is the role that the individual plays in 'faith & dialogue', and how youth workers may relate to that role.

### Key Session Topics:

- \* Influence of faith on identity
- \* Understanding 'communication' & dialogue
- \* Impact of faith on dialogue
- \* Frameworks for and best practices in dialogue
- \* 'Bombs & Bullets' site visits in N Ireland
- \* Mediation and conflict resolution

### Who Designed & Delivered the Training:

The training was coordinated by Susie Green (of the SALTO Cultural Diversity RC), with a training team of Barbara Bello (Italy), Behrooz Motamed-Afshari (Germany), and Julia Kozłowska (Poland), with a little help from researcher Hanne Kleinemas (Germany). Locally the logistics and site visits were organised by Bernice Sweeney of the Youth Council for Northern Ireland

### Participants:

Came from 12 different countries across the Member States. There were 18 in total.

## INTER-RELIGIOUS DIALOGUE, 6 DAYS, OCTOBER 2007, ISTANBUL, TURKEY

### Course Objectives:

This Training was aimed at supporting

- \* Participants to share / reflect about their own experiences + knowledge in the field of inter-religious dialogue
- \* Dissemination of the principles of inter-religious dialogue using different means
- \* Identification of common elements in relation with the other religions that help participants built common understanding
- \* Participants in improving their competence in the field of inter-religious dialogue.
- \* The allocation of space for participants to develop project ideas in the field of inter-religious dialogue
- \* The development of specific methods + tools for better cooperation

### Approach:

Support participants in a process of peer-learning and sharing so that a general picture is built up, illustrating the diversity of religious beliefs and practices in the regions, providing explanation of the Faiths, and identifying what tensions may exist between them. The Training location of Istanbul, with its rich history of inter-religions, and timing during Ramadan, are important learning tools in this process. Finally participants explore what conditions and approaches might be required to support a dialogue to mitigate the tensions.

This approach is clearly focussed on exploring and understanding the historical and contextual issues of inter-religious dialogue

### Key Session Topics:

- \* Knowledge about religion
- \* Reality of religious beliefs and practices in participants' countries
- \* Religion and Inter-Religious Dialogue (IRD) in Turkey
- \* Definitions & development of IRD
- \* IRD and youth work

### Who Designed & Delivered the Training:

Roy Abou Habib (Lebanon) led a training team of Christin Voigt (Germany), Emin Amrullayev (Azerbaijan), and Marta Piszczek (Poland). With local logistical support from Tugba Cansali (Turkey) and Ibrahim Demirel from the Turkish National Agency. Management & inputs also came from Bernard Abrignani of SALTO EuroMed RC and Tomasz Szopa of SALTO EECA

### Participants:

A total of 28 participated, representing 24 countries from various Mediterranean, Caucasian and European regions

RC provides its Educational reports collection (All these are referenced at the end of this Report, but if you need a quick link go to <http://www.salto-youth.net>)

Thus, for this year, a natural progression for SALTO Resource Centres has been to explore the themes of Faith, Religion and Dialogue. To do this three of the Centres teamed up to develop and deliver two Training Courses. The Cultural Diversity RC produced a course on 'Faith & Dialogue', and the EuroMed and Eastern Europe & Caucasus RCs delivered a 'Inter-Religious Dialogue' training. The first event was run over 6 days in April 2007 in Belfast, Northern Ireland, and the second, also of 6 days, in Istanbul, Turkey, in October 2007. Interestingly the two Training Courses although linked by theme, were developed through different approaches. These different approaches and the contents of the trainings are summarised in the boxes below.

#### 4. Introducing the concepts: What do we mean by 'religion', 'faith', 'identity', and 'dialogue'?

Across both Training Courses there were attempts in the first couple of days to explore and define the key concepts. These also included exercises whereby the participants could share their own personal interpretations and the training teams were able to introduce definitions and perspectives from a range of theologians, lexicographers, thinkers and writers. Some of the outputs of these initial parts of the courses are collected below.

##### Understanding 'Faith' & 'Religion'

A quick glance through the online 'Wikipedia' (<http://en.wikipedia.org>) for the word 'faith' shows a definition that reads:

"Faith is a belief, trust, or confidence, not necessarily based on logic, facts, reason, or empirical data, but based fundamentally on volition often associated with a transpersonal relationship with God, a higher power, a person, elements of nature, and/or a perception of the human race as a whole. Faith can be placed in a person, inanimate object,

### IN THE SALTO ONLINE TOOLBOX FOR TRAINERS: 'FAITH BIOGRAPHIES'

#### Title

Faith/Religious Biography

#### Aim (what for?)

- \* To get to know each other;
- \* To raise awareness on each others religious/faith environment;
- \* To understand that each person has their own "history"

#### Group (whom for?)

Participants who want to know more about each others faith background

#### Material needed

- \* Polaroid camera to make pictures of each participant (if not available pax will draw a symbol which characterise the interview partner.)
- \* Pens, coloured pens
- \* Glue

#### Duration

ca. 30 minutes

#### Description

1. The participants will work in pairs. They receive clear instructions that they have to interview each other and write the answers of the other on the form they will receive. (10 minutes per interview partner).
2. After the participants are ready - Each interviewer presents the partner by making a short summary of the interview.
3. The interviews are will be stick on the wall till the end of the training so everybody can read them.

[www.salto-youth.net/find-a-tool/704.html](http://www.salto-youth.net/find-a-tool/704.html)



'Untangling our web of faith identities, Belfast, April 2007'

state of affairs, proposition or body of propositions such as a religious creed.”

On Day 1 of the TC in Belfast, participants began to describe their own personal understanding of ‘faith’ by compiling Faith Biographies in pairs. This was a simple and productive exercise whereby participants interviewed each other, asking ‘what 3 words describe your faith? What were the key ‘faith’ experiences in your childhood, teens, 20s 30s and now? How would you complete the sentence “I believe that...”

With the Faith Biographies pinned up on the walls, participants next attempted a collective exercise to produce a Dictionary of Faith. This was to be an A to Z of words and expressions that participants associated with the concept of ‘faith’. Small groups tackled different parts of the alphabet and a plenary session then brought all the parts together. Some parts of the A to Z came out predictably – G was for God, Glory and Guide; H for Hope, Holy, and Heart – whereas for some letters participants threw up some interesting associations – E was for Equality, N for Nature, O for Opportunity, and S for Saoirse (meaning ‘freedom’ in Irish) and Tuomiokorkko under T (the Finnish word for ‘cathedral’). And if your wondering, Z was for Zeus and X was for ‘...erm, we’ll have to think a bit more about that one!’

On the second day of the TC in Istanbul the 28 participants shared their personal interpretations of faith and religious belief through presentations of symbols and artefacts: A Symbol of My Faith or Religion. This exercise in sharing

various understandings of what ‘religion’ might be and how it might manifest itself, was a powerful compliment to looking at religion as an institution (which is covered in later paragraphs below).

The symbolic representations of faith and religion were often universal, but all had a personal dimension to them. Some were obvious in their symbolism, and others more abstract. The list included: Lithuanian Christ figure, Candles, Grandmother’s beads, Climbers safety belt, Painted egg, Stethoscope, The 10 Commandments, Crescent Moon, Tasbeeh beads, Prayer mat, Earth from garden at home, Cross, Angel sculpture, Extracts from Koran, a Wooden fish.

In explaining their symbols or representations of their faith or religion, the participants in the Istanbul TC demonstrated how necessary it is to have an understanding of ‘religion’ as a broad, accommodating concept. Some commented that they were not inclined to be religious and had no particular religious faith. Others declared attachments to institutionalised religions. Not surprisingly, therefore, their comments came from many perspectives:

### Religion as the keeper of norms and values

“For me, religion is morality, and it can come in many forms and colours” (Symbol – a painted egg, with the various colours representing all faiths and religions)

“Religion is a kind of code of conduct”

“Religion is ‘knowledge’ to me, as well as being about spirituality” (Symbol – small text with extracts from the Koran)

“My Jewish upbringing showed me the importance of a good set of rules and ethics” (Symbol – a Hanukkah candle set)

“Religion is not only about the spiritual, it is a way of life”

### Religion is about relationships and sharing

“Religion has many aspects. It is about the relationship between Man and God, and Man and Man” (Symbol – a wooden fish that divides into 12 parts)

### DID YOU KNOW...

- + Tasbeeh is, in Islam, the ritual process of glorifying or praising Allah (God) or Muhammad. The word literally means, as a verb, ‘to travel swiftly’ and as a noun, ‘duties’ or ‘occupation’, with the implied meaning in this context being ‘to carry out duties assigned by Allah swiftly and expeditiously’. It is one of the many means of remembrance of Allah. Usually it involves reciting Islamic mantra glorifying Allah and Muhammad, of which there are various combinations and varieties. These are often done with prayer beads. Usually the recitations number 99 or 33; 99 being the number of names for Allah in Islam - e.g. The Most Kind, The Most Merciful, etc - and 33 being a number that easily divides into 99), which is very similar to a rosary or worry beads. Such beads are also known as a **Tasbeeh**.

- + An example of Tasbeeh would be to say ‘Allahu Akbar’ (God is Great) 33 times, to say ‘Alhamdulillah’ (Praise Be To Allah) 33 times, and to say ‘Subhanallah’ (Glory Be To Allah) 33 times, then to finish saying ‘Ilha’ilahil’Allah’ (there is no god but Allah) this makes the 99, 100.

“Religion is about the holy contract between people and God”

“Religion is essentially about feelings. The highest feeling is that of love and the object that best represents love is the heart” (But you can't see our hearts, so the best symbol is a doctor's stethoscope!)

“Religion is about sharing. Which is why I always travel to new places with a small packet of soil taken from my garden at home, so I can bury the soil in the new place”

“Being connected with others and with the world is a representation of my religion”

“During the act of prayer we all become equal” (Symbol – a prayer mat)

**Religion is help and guidance in times of trouble, and a way to be 'cleansed'**

“It's difficult to view religion objectively, as inside the individual the 'subjective' tends to overrule” (Symbol – a small statue of 'Christ of Sorrow' and candle, which helps me to become unburdened by troubles)

“Religion helps to govern me; to overcome all my internal problems”

“I grew up in circumstances that allowed me to 'choose a religion' and I chose not to have one. But sometimes I feel jealous of those that are religious as it seems to provide some protection and security” (Hence my symbol being a climbers safety karabinder)

“Cleansing myself is important and very spiritual. The cross in a church symbolises this process of cleansing”

In addition to the personal descriptions of what the concept of religion means, the participants in Istanbul also spent time working together to make up some institutional components of an imaginary religion. This exercise was therefore both effective in team-building amongst the participants, coming as it did on the afternoon of the first day of the Training Course, as well as providing an entertaining method of highlighting cultural aspects of religions

and how religious beliefs and practices may become institutionalised.

To facilitate this 'Making Up a New Religion' activity, the participants were divided into 5 mixed small groups, and each group assigned a task;

- I. Develop a song or hymn that celebrates the new religion
- II. Create a dance to represent the religion
- III. Decide on the customs for greetings and other social behaviour
- IV. Draft a set of 10 commandments for this new religion
- V. Provide a name and a symbol for the religion

The five groups spent about 90 minutes to develop their tasks and then to share the outputs in a plenary session. It's amazing how quickly rules and rituals can be created when you have strong bonded groups! The groups in the Training Course managed to give a song, an elaborate dance, several ways in which we could greet each other and show displeasure, 10 new Commandments, and a democratically chosen name for the new religion, 'Bosphirithum'!

### The Concept of 'Identity'

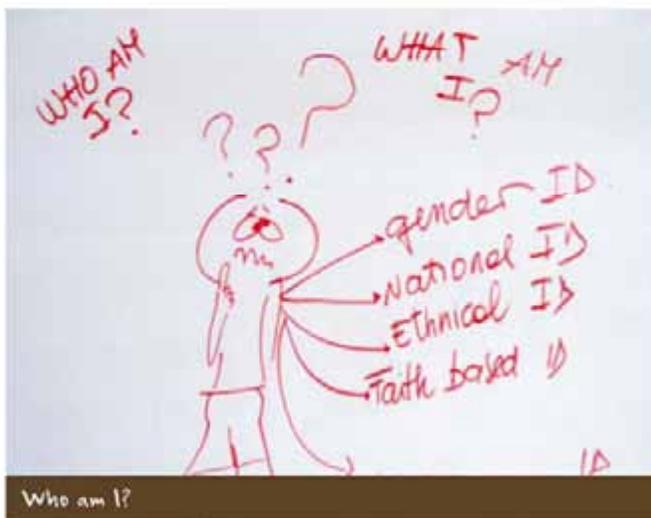
For the next part of the training journey in Belfast, the trainers guided participants through an exploration of 'identity'. Of course this process had actually begun with the production of the Faith Biographies, but before unpacking identities further there was a brief input on what might be understood by 'identity' and how it might be analysed. How much more is there to our personal identities than the data that appears on our ID Cards? Do we have a single or multiple identities? What can we learn about that part of our identity that derives from our 'faith'? How much can a sociological, psychological or philosophical approach to the analysis inform us?

Nearly all discussions of identity development have begun with the pioneering work of Erik Erikson and his formulations of identity serve as a reference point for many models of student development. Erikson defined identity as „the

Stage (age)	Psychosocial crisis	Significant relations	Psychosocial modalities	Psychosocial virtues	Maladaptations & malignancies
I (0-1yrs) -- infant	trust vs mistrust	mother	to get, to give in return	hope, faith	sensory distortion -- withdrawal
II (2-3yrs) -- toddler	autonomy vs shame and doubt	parents	to hold on, to let go	will, determination	impulsivity -- compulsion
III (3-6yrs) -- preschooler	initiative vs guilt	family	to go after, to play	purpose, courage	ruthlessness -- inhibition
IV (7-12yrs or so) -- school-age child	industry vs inferiority	neighbourhood and school	to complete, to make things together	competence	narrow virtuosity -- inertia
V (12-18yrs or so) -- adolescence	ego-identity vs role-confusion	peer groups, role models	to be oneself, to share oneself	fidelity, loyalty	fanaticism -- repudiation
VI (the 20's) -- young adult	intimacy vs isolation	partners, friends	to lose and find oneself in another	love	promiscuity -- exclusivity
VII (late 20's to 50's) -- middle adult	generativity vs self-absorption	household, workmates	to make be, to take care of	care	overextension -- reactivity
VIII (50's and beyond) -- old adult	integrity vs despair	man kind or "my kind"	to be, through having been, to face not being	wisdom	presumption -- despair

Chart adapted from Erikson's 1959 *Identity and the Life Cycle* (Psychological Issues vol 1, #1)

ability to experience one's self as something that has continuity and sameness, and to act accordingly". Ironically, it was Erikson himself who cautioned against the overuse and misuse of the concept of identity, and it seems that he intended to describe the concept more than define it. He is



most famous for his work in refining and expanding Freud's theory of stages. Development, he says, functions by the epigenetic principle. This principle says that we develop through a predetermined unfolding of our personalities in eight stages. Our progress through each stage is in part determined by our success, or lack of success, in all the previous stages. A little like the unfolding of a rose bud, each petal opens up at a certain time, in a certain order, which nature, through its genetics, has determined. If we interfere in the natural order of development by pulling a petal forward prematurely or out of order, we ruin the development of the entire flower.

No matter what theoretical framework or tools for analysis might be used to uncover the make-up of identity, participants on the course understood that some process of 'uncovering' must take place.

"When we look at this question from the perspective of a Youth Worker it's useful to remember that identity is

## IN THE SALTO ONLINE TOOLBOX FOR TRAINERS: 'MANDALA OF IDENTITY'

### Title

Mandala of Identity

### Aim (what for?)

To offer to participants a creative tool to

- \* deconstruct the idea of identity as a monolith;
- \* reflect on different elements belonging to their own identity
- \* spend time for inner self-reflection and intimacy
- \* put in relation their identity/identities and different roles played in daily life
- \* develop self-awareness, sensitiveness and empathy

### Group (whom for?)

The tool is designed for individual work and can be used both in small groups and in bigger ones.

### Material needed

A3 coloured papers (one for each participant), many coloured pencils, scissors, glue, tape

### Duration

from 90' to 1h 30'

### Description

Intro. The Mandala of Identity can be used as an alternative to the traditional models of culture and identity (iceberg, onion, etc), or as further step in the description of them. **1)** You can start providing participants with a flipchart presentation of different identity theories and models, in a comparative way, outlining limits and advantages of each of them. For the Mandala I chose the Erik Erikson's theory of personality. Even if it is a bit much structured for contemporary society, it can be an interesting starting point for a self reflection. It goes without saying that also other theories can be integrated and adapted, depending on the participants' group and aims. **2)** Prepare a simple and uncoloured "Mandala Model" on a flipchart, drawing in it 4 symmetric sections corresponding to a) nation/race/ethnic origin, b) gender/sex, c) faith/religion/belief, d) ...the fourth can be open to participants' suggestion. The four sections have a common core at the centre of the Mandala. Each section can be sub-divided in smaller sections corresponding to Erikson's model of personality. **3)** Ask the participants to prepare their own Mandala of Identity, in a place they feel comfortable, outside or inside. You can also prepare some candles and soft meditation music. It would be great to prepare participants with a short meditation exercise, for example inviting them to close their eyes and go through their life, giving them some suggestions (childhood, toys, landscapes). **4)** The participants complete individually their Mandala of Identity using as many remembering, connections, emotions, etc as they can (abundant 60 minutes) **5)** Debriefing. Start this part reminding participants to feel free to share what they choose and to keep secret some parts they are not ready to share. Participants share their Mandalas in pairs or in smaller groups and exchange them, putting questions to each other. You can ask them to answer different questions such as was it relaxing to complete the Mandala? Discovered something new? **6)** Exhibition. If they are comfortable with the idea, participants can hang their Mandalas on the training room wall for all to see and discuss.

[www.salto-youth.net/find-a-tool/707.html](http://www.salto-youth.net/find-a-tool/707.html)



formed by a challenging process: we all have an ongoing 'inner dialogue', remarked one of the participants.

To help look at this inner dialogue before linking to any process of public dialogue, participants in Belfast spent a large part of Day 2 creating very personal 'Mandala of Identity'; a concentric visual image capturing the significant moments in the participants' lives influencing the shape of their gender identity, national identity, ethical identity, and faith identity. Mandala is a Sanskrit term – literally meaning 'circle' or 'completion' – used to refer to various objects. It is of Hindu origin, but is also used in other Dharmic religions, such as Buddhism. In practice, mandala has become a generic term for any plan, chart or geometric pattern that represents the cosmos metaphysically or symbolically, a microcosm of the universe from the human perspective.

### What is Dialogue?

The trainers at the two TCs shared with participants a number of commentaries trying to give 'dialogue' a

definition. One of the most accessible approaches comes from a document entitled 'Mapping Dialogue', produced from a project implemented by the Pioneers of Change Associates (with support from GTZ), in South Africa, in April 2006.

"The most common dictionary definition of a dialogue is simply as a conversation between two or more people. In the field of dialogue practitioners, however, it is given a much deeper and more distinct meaning. David Bohm went back to the source of the word, deriving from the Greek root of "dia" which means "through" and "logos" which is "the word" or "meaning", and therefore saw dialogue as meaning [flowing through us. (There'll be more about David Bohm in Section Two). Elements of this deeper understanding of the word include an emphasis on questions, inquiry, co-creation, and listening, the uncovering of one's own assumptions and those of others, a suspension of judgment and a collective search for truth."

The Mapping Dialogue document goes on to suggest what a dialogue is not!

### What a Dialogue is Not

**Advocacy** – Advocacy is the act of pleading or arguing strongly in favor of a certain cause, idea or policy.

**Conference** – A conference is a formal meeting for consultation or discussion.

**Consultation** – In a consultation, a party with the power to act consults another person or group for advice or in-



put to a decision. The decision-maker generally retains the power to take the advice or not.

**Debate** – A debate is a discussion usually focused around two opposing sides, and held with the objective of one side winning. The winner is the one with the best articulations, ideas and arguments.

**Discussion** – As opposed to dialogue, Bohm points out that the root of the word discussion, "cuss", is the same as the root of "percussion" and "concussion", meaning to break apart. A discussion is generally a rational and analytical consideration of a topic in a group, breaking a topic down into its constituent parts in order to understand it.

**Negotiation** – A negotiation is a discussion intended to produce an agreement. Different sides bring their interests to the table and the negotiation has a transactional and bargaining character to it."

### How Youth Workers View 'Dialogue'

It makes sense to try to have a handle on the concept of 'dialogue' as seen by academics, but perhaps more importantly is the understanding of the term in the eyes of practitioners. And in particular, those engaged in youth work. Thus, the participants in the Training Course in Belfast spent a whole morning looking first at what they considered to be dialogue, and secondly what might be the constraints to dialogue. The plenary session on these tasks revealed some commonly agreed differences between the terms 'discussion' and 'dialogue', and participants' comments then illuminated on some possible characteristics of 'dialogue'.

Let's first look at the words that the participants chose to describe the differences between the terms:

<b>Discussion</b>	<b>Dialogue</b>
Conversation	Outcome
Debate	Exchange of proposals
Argument	Practice
Tool for dialogue	Purposeful
Process	More official
Sharing individual values & ideas	Formal
Way of communicating	Working together
Informal	Way for commitment
Can lead to dialogue	Requires commitment

For the participants on the Course in Istanbul, there was also diversity in how the term 'dialogue' might be defined. When asked to choose one of 4 cards describing what dialogue might be, 7 chose the card marked 'discussion', 1 chose 'debate', 2 chose 'negotiation', and 18 chose the card that said 'I have my own understanding'!

Clearly this is a difficult term to pin down, and the participants in both Training Courses remarked how important it was to spend time exploring the term with any individuals or groups who may be gravitating towards 'dialogue'.

When focussing on what might be the characteristics of 'dialogue', participants drew upon their personal experiences, which helped to make the concept more concrete. "There is no need for dialogue to result in a compromise, but rather it is important that a mutual understanding has been achieved. In a way this means agreeing the difference."

"The process of dialogue may itself be an outcome. I find that this perspective is important to me in my work as I can see how it helps young people on their own 'journey' in life."

"For me I see a difference between what I do at the local level, as a local government employee implementing actions of an elected executive, and the dialogue that is maintained through the higher level politics."

"Certainly I do not see any need for dialogue to have defined purpose. It is a process-oriented activity."

"It is important to link dialogue to a process of change. During the last 12 years in Northern Ireland the process of dialogue has led to a process of change. For example, the two communities are now sharing political power. However, although the dialogue has brought about change, it is important to note that 2 individuals from the 2 communities can still have a discussion where they exchange opinions but do not change them."

"Dialogue is a meeting of different perspectives, which may lead to a new perspective, and possibly some action."

### 5 Key religious and spiritual doctrines

Part of the approach of the Training Course on Inter-Religious Dialogue was to allow participants the time and space,

#### DID YOU KNOW...

Religious studies is the academic field of multi-disciplinary, secular study of religious beliefs, behaviors, and institutions. It describes, compares, interprets, and explains religion, emphasizing systematic, historically-based, and cross-cultural perspectives.

While a theologian studies supernatural topics, such as God, salvation, and the afterlife, scholars of religion study human behaviors and beliefs. It treats prayers, scriptures, religious iconography, church hierarchies, and personal beliefs as social phenomena influenced by historical forces. It draws upon multiple disciplines and their methodologies including anthropology, sociology, psychology, philosophy, and history of religion. In its early years, it was known as Comparative Religion or the Science of Religion and, in the USA, there are those who today also know the field as the History of Religion (associated with methodological traditions traced to the University of Chicago in general, and in particular Mircea Eliade, from the late 1950s through to the late 1980s). Western philosophy of religion, as the basic ancestor of modern religious studies, is differentiated from the many Eastern philosophical traditions by generally being written from a third party perspective. The scholar need not be a believer. Theology stands in contrast to the philosophy of religion and religious studies in that, generally, the scholar is first and foremost a believer employing both logic and scripture as evidence. At least one theologian has noted that one can study and analyze a symphony to understand it in great detail, but it is the listening that is of greatest significance.

There is some amount of overlap between subcategories of religious studies and the discipline itself. Religious studies seeks to study religious phenomena as a whole, rather than be limited to the approaches of its subcategories.

Extracted from a paper by Hovhannes Hovhannisyan, a participant in the IRD TC in Istanbul

## IN THE SALTO ONLINE TOOLBOX FOR TRAINERS: 'RELIGIOUS KNOWLEDGE TRIVIAL PURSUIT'

### Title

Religious Knowledge Trivial Pursuit

### Aim (what for?)

To offer participants a fun way to:

- test their knowledge of the world's main religions
- identify gaps in their religious knowledge
- encourage peer-learning on facts from religious studies
- contribute to team-building

### Group (whom for?)

The tool is designed for small groups to play as teams against each other

### Material needed

A large mat showing an adapted Trivial Pursuit Board – the coloured spaces are matched to questions on different world religions. Team 'pieces' to be moved around the board. A giant dice. Tokens (to be won when questions are answered correctly). Lots of religious knowledge questions (and the answers!) – it is likely that you will need a range of easy-to-difficult questions, with at least 10 questions on each of the six religions cited as topics.

### Duration

Between 1h – 2h

### Description

The game follows the traditional format of Trivial Pursuit, except that the subjects of the questions relate to the world's main religions (For example, Green-Ba'a'i, Yellow-Judaism, Red-Buddhism, Brown-Christianity, Orange-Isam, Blue-Hinduism).

The object of the game is to move around the Board and correctly answer questions from squares of the six different colours, and so collect 6 'tokens', and end up in the middle square on the Board. Teams take it in turns to throw the dice and to move around the Board. The 'quiz master' asks a question to the team on a religious subject, depending on the colour of the square the team is on. The team has 2 minutes to answer. If a correct answer is given the team wins a 'token' of the appropriate colour.



IRD participants play Religious Knowledge Trivial Pursuit

and to provide some of the resources, for an improved understanding of the various religious and spiritual doctrines that can be found in our communities. To implement this approach the Training Team facilitated a number of different activities during the week-long Course. There was a game of 'Religious Knowledge Trivial Pursuit'. There were open sessions in which some participants made presentations on Religious Studies and introduced tools for providing basic education on Religions, such as the 'God In A Box' method, and 'Inter-Religious Speed-Dating'! There were sessions dedicated to participants sharing the realities of religious practice in their countries and, of course, there were site visits around Istanbul in order to see religious institutions and their activities in the context of Turkey. All contributed to a growing body of knowledge about Religions, but can only be partially captured in this brief report. To find out more, please do follow up the references and contacts mentioned in the text below and in Section 3.

### How to Expand Our Knowledge of Religions

During Day 6 of the IRD Course in Istanbul, most of the morning was devoted to 'open sessions' wherein a number of different participants offered to lead on a variety of exercises, presentations and interactions. Three of these open sessions directly related to the notion of building up religious knowledge and illustrated how such a process is invaluable in contributing to building foundations for dialogue.

Two of the sessions were used to introduce tools, and a third to look at the history of religion. Their content is briefly captured below.

#### 'Inter-Religious Speed Dating'

A great tool for encouraging young people to find out for themselves basic religious knowledge, and while doing so, get some experience of simple research tools. The exercise may be designed to last from anywhere between one hour to one day. Small working groups are formed and each group takes responsibility to research one particular religion. The focus of the research is determined by the questions that the members of the other groups would like to know about that particular religion. In this way the reli-

religious knowledge being researched relates directly to what the wider group actually wants to know. The facilitator then gives each working group a limited amount of time to conduct the research and gives instructions about how the research findings will be presented. The main sources of information for the research are a) other group members who may be followers of any of the religions being researched; b) books and other texts; c) internet sources such as Wikipedia; d) leaders or members of the local religious communities.

This tool was presented at the TC by Fatma Bulaz, who explained that the key benefits of using the tool were that

- I. It focuses on what young people actually want to know about different religions
- II. Encourages the use of research skills
- III. Enables young people to present the information as they wish
- IV. Helps to foster a sharing culture

#### 'God in a Box'

Neal Terry shared this tool, as developed by the UK's North East Religious Learning Resources Centre. It is a simple and effective way to help young people to explore different religions. The basic idea is to have a number of different boxes, each one representing a different religion. Inside each of the boxes are items and artefacts that repre-



An image from a multi-faith mural

sent or tell us something about the religion. The facilitator reveals the contents of each box and can then either explain a little about the items or ask the young people what they think the items represent.

The experience in the north-east English city of Newcastle of using this tool has been very encouraging. The tool has been used over a period of 3-4 years and now there is a core group of about 250 facilitators, drawn from the young people themselves, who represent 14 different faiths and who can help to explain different religions to different people. For example, this means that there is a young Jewish person who is now capable of going into a Christian community and explaining what Islam is all about.

#### 'History of Religion'

In order to gather together different pieces of knowledge and perspectives on the historical processes that have influenced the development of religions, participants in the session are invited to write up on a range of flip charts whatever it is that they would like to contribute. The flip charts have various headings: 'when did religion start?' 'what movements were established to promote secularism?' 'what ancient religions do you know?' 'what information do you know about the founders of religions?'

After spending 10 minutes writing up their contributions, the participants review the flip charts in plenary and discuss the knowledge displayed. For the group at the IRD in Istanbul, Hovhannes Hovhannisyian, one of the participants, provided facilitation and drew upon his experience as a theologian.

#### DID YOU KNOW...

That there are some simple online and standard printed texts that can provide great material as an introduction to Religious Knowledge. During both the 'Faith & Dialogue' and the 'Inter-Religious Dialogue' Training Courses the Training Teams and participants extensively used two particular sources of information: **Wikipedia** and the **Harper Collins Dictionary of Religions**. Below are some extracts from these two sources that may contribute towards an A-Z of religions:

**Agnosticism** – term coined in the nineteenth century by combining the Greek *gnosts* (meaning esoteric or secret forms of knowledge) with the prefix *a-* which often denotes the negative form of a word; a philosophical position that admits to having no privileged knowledge concerning whether God or the gods exist; a position of theological neutrality to be distinguished from atheism.

**Animism** – [Latin *anima*, meaning life, soul] a term popularized by the late nineteenth-century anthropologist Edward Burnett Tylor to name the belief he thought to be held by evolutionarily early people (what Tylor would have named as „primitive” or „tribes very low in the scale of humanity”) concerning natural phenomena (e.g. trees, the ocean, people, etc.) possessing spirits or souls. This term, and his theory of animism, was developed to help answer the question: „What is the origin of religion?” making Tylor an early example of a scholar developing a naturalistic theory of religion.

**Atheism** – a term that combines the Greek *theos*, meaning god, with the negative prefix *a-* which often denotes the negative form of a word; the philosophical position that denies the existence of God or the gods; to be distinguished from theism and agnosticism

**Bahá'í** – The Bahá'í Faith is a religion founded by Bahá'u'lláh in 19th-century Persia, emphasizing the spiritual unity of all humankind.[1] There are around six million Bahá'ís in more than 200 countries and territories around the world.

According to Bahá'í teachings, religious history has unfolded through a series of God's messengers who brought teachings suited for the capacity of the people at their time, and whose fundamental purpose is the same. Bahá'u'lláh is regarded as the most recent, but not final, in a line of messengers that includes Abraham, Buddha, Jesus, Muhammad and others. Bahá'u'lláh's claim to fulfill the eschatological promises of previous scriptures coincides with his mission to establish a firm basis for unity throughout the world, and inaugurate an age of peace and justice, which Bahá'ís expect will inevitably arise.

**Buddhism** – the name given to a collection of beliefs, practices, and institutions that developed from (sometimes said to be in reaction to) Hindu/Indian institutions



and that revolve around the importance placed upon the teachings attributed to Siddhartha Gautama, thought to have lived and taught in northwestern India between the sixth and fifth centuries BCE. Gautama is known by the honorary title of „the Buddha” (which, in the language of Pali, means „awakened one”). The Buddha is thought to have awoken to the true nature of reality, thereby experiencing nirvana (to extinguish ones presumption of having a distinct, enduring self). His teachings involve understanding that all appearances are misleading and that impermanence, or change, is the basis of all reality. Several dominant branches of Buddhism exist today and it has distinctive shape in different geographic locations (such as in southeast Asia as opposed to Tibet, China, Japan, Europe, and North America). Studies of Buddhism will often begin by narrating the life of Gautama (given that it illustrates certain key ideas that come to symbolize basic Buddhist doctrines), and then focus on its critique of Hinduism's caste system as well as the doctrines known as the Four Noble Truths (credited to Gautama's first teaching after attaining enlightenment) and the Noble Eightfold Path (entailing a systematic behavioral system of detachment or mindfulness). Although „Buddhism” is an outsider's term (coined under the earlier European presumption that this Asian mass movement is centered on the worship of the Buddha just as Christianity is centered on the worship of the Christ), a more apt term for this tradition may be „the Middle Path” (between the two extremes of craving and complete renunciation).

**Christianity** – the name given to a collection of beliefs, practices, and institutions that developed from cut of the ancient Jewish, as well as the Greco-Roman,

DID YOU KNOW...

world of antiquity. Focused on the life and teachings of a turn-of-the-era Jew named Jesus of Nazareth, it began as an oppositional movement that was persecuted and, by the early fourth century CE, it had become tolerated throughout the Roman empire. Its teachings, found in its scripture called the Bible (from the Greek for paper, scroll, or book), include much of the previously existing Jewish scripture, including the Torah, along with the New Testament comprising the Gospels (from the Greek for „good news“), which present various narrations of the life and significance of Jesus (including his resurrection from the dead after being executed by the Roman authorities), along with the Epistles (Latin *epistola*, meaning letter), comprising communications between early Christian leaders (such as the influential early convert to Christianity and missionary, Paul) and various isolated early Christian communities or house churches. Jesus, considered early on to be the messiah („annointed one of the Lord,” a Hebrew designation originally of relevance to Jewish tradition) was soon understood by his followers to have been „the son of God,” and later in Christian doctrine is understood to have been one of three aspects of God (the others including God the Father and the Holy Spirit). The honorary title of „Christ” (from *khristos*) derives from the Greek translation of the Hebrew *masiah*: Christians are therefore followers of the one believed to be the Messiah. Currently, Christianity involves three major sub-types, some of which differ significantly from the others on issues of doctrine and ritual: Roman Catholicism, Protestantism (which contains a large number of sub-types), and Greek Orthodoxy.

**Confucianism** – Name given by European scholars to a group of Chinese schools of thought associated with the teachings of such writers as Confucius (551-479 BCE), Mencius (372-289 BCE), and Hsun-tzu (298-238 BCE). These traditions focus upon developing proper forms of social and political behavior. During the Chinese Han dynasty (206-220 CE), these schools became official state orthodoxy, and a authoritative collection of texts and temples were established.

**Cult** – [Latin *cultus*, meaning care, cultivation, and by extension, a system of ritual] originally a merely descriptive term for the ritual component attached to any social group, as in the phrase „the cult of the saints,” it is today a term

most often used in popular culture to name marginal groups considered by members of dominant groups to be deviant and thus dangerous. In the sociology of religion, „cult” is used as a technical term, in distinction from both „church” (or „denomination”) and „sect.” Traced to the work of the German sociologist, Max Weber, „church” and „sect” were technical terms he used to identify what he took to be significant differences among religions, the former meaning a religion into which one was born whereas the latter named one in which membership was the result of a conscious decision. This pair of terms was then reformulated by the German theologian, Ernst Troeltsch (1865-1923)--such as his book, *In The Social Teaching of the Christian Churches*--„church” was distinguished from „sect” in terms of the latter being a group in greater tension to the dominant social world whereas the former being a group that more easily accomodates itself and, thereby, lives in greater harmony with the wider social world. For Troeltsch, „mysticism” was the term he used for a third, far more private and individualized variation that likely did not lead to any form of social organization. In the early 1930s, the sociologist Howard Becker termed this latter group „cult.” The modern, popular use of the term to name groups that deviate too far from accepted conventions can be understood to develop from these uses.

**Existentialism** – although it can be traced to earlier influences, it is primary understood today as a mid-twentieth-century European philosophical movement, much associated with post-World War II French intellectuals (philosophers, literary critics, authors, playwrights, etc.), that takes as its starting point the priority of the individual along with the assumption that, in the words of one of the best known representatives of the movement, Jean Paul Sartre (1905-1980), „existence precedes essence”--that is, historical human beings come before, and are thus the makers of, qualities and values. As Sartre also observes, human beings are therefore „condemned to be free”--that is, have no choice but to be accountable for their own actions, desires, and the values they produce. Existentialism, then, can be understood to be in opposition to essentialist approaches to the study of culture and meaning, though there were theological existentialists.

**Hinduism** – [*sindhu*, meaning river, especially the body of water known today as the Indus River (in northeastern

India), hence the region of the Indus, which today also names the entire nation-state of India] the name given to the mass social movement found originally in the sub-continent that is today known as India and dates to up to 1,500 years prior to the turn-of-the-era; those who practice Hinduism refer to it as Sanatana-dharma; it is a term for indigenous Indian religions, and is characterized by a diverse array of belief systems, practices, institutions, and texts. It is believed to have had its origin in the ancient Indo-Aryan



Vedic culture. Texts in Hinduism are separated into two categories *shruti* (inspired [revealed scripture]) and *smriti* (remembered [epic literature]). The Veda, a body of texts recited by ritual specialists (brahmins) is considered *shruti*, whereas the *Bhagavad Gita* is considered to be *smriti*. Other *smriti* texts are the major epics the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata*. Some of the commonly known deities are Vishnu, Brahma, Kali, Ganesha, Shiva, and Krishna. Studies of Hinduism will often focus on the role played by the *dharma* system (social system of duties and obligations), the caste system (similar to a class system but inherited), beliefs in *karma* (social actions result in future reactions), *atman* (the name for one's soul or self), and *samsara* (the term for the almost limitless cosmic system of rebirths), and the central role of *brahmins* (a caste of ritual specialists).

**Islam** – in Arabic meaning literally „submission,” the name given to a collection of beliefs, practices, and institutions that date to the sixth and seventh centuries CE, originating in the Arabian peninsula, which place importance on the role played by the Prophet Muhammad who is believed to have received, by means of recitations granted to him by an angel, the word of Allah (Arabic, „the God”) which is contained in their scripture, known as the Qur’an (sometimes

written in English as „Koran”). These revelations, which occurred in the area outside of the city of Mecca (today considered the central geographic site of Islam, toward which devout Muslims worldwide face when praying each day and to which they aim to make a pilgrimage at some point in their adult life), were eventually transcribed and today comprise the Qur’an’s 114 suras, or chapter divisions, each of which have a number of verses. Merging indigenous Arabian cultural practices with elements of Jewish and Christian belief, Muslims (those who submit to the will of Allah) understand Muhammad to have been the last in a long line of prophetic figures (stretching from Abraham to Jesus); he is understood to have been the „seal of the prophets” (as in a stamp to close an envelope), all of whom conveyed the divine word, law, and instructions of Allah. After establishing the first Muslim community in the nearby city of Medina, Islam spread successfully throughout much of the then „known” world, stretching across north Africa, Europe, and well into Asia. Today it can be found all throughout the world. Early on in its development, disagreements over such things as leadership succession led to a division, leaving two main sub-types: Sunni and Shi’ite (a third sub-type, Sufism, is considered the mystical aspect of Islam)—all of which have their own sub-types, often based on differing traditions of legal and textual interpretation.

**Jainism** – traditionally known as Jain Dharma, is one of the oldest religions in the world. It is a religion and philosophy originating in ancient India. The Jains follow the teachings of the 24 Jinas (conquerors) who are also known as Tirthankaras. The 24th Tirthankara, Lord Mahavira lived in ca. 6th century BC. One of the main characteristics of Jain belief is the emphasis on the immediate consequences of one’s behavior. Jains are a small but influential religious minority with at least 4.2 million practitioners in modern India and more in growing immigrant communities in the United States, Western Europe, Africa, the Far East and elsewhere. Jains continue to sustain the ancient Shraman or ascetic tradition.

Jains have significantly influenced the religious, ethical, political and economic spheres in India for over two millennia. Jainism stresses spiritual independence and equality of all life with particular emphasis on non-violence. Self-control is vital for attaining omniscience (*kevala jnana*) and eventually *moksha*, or realization of the soul’s true nature.

**Judaism** – the name given to a collection of beliefs, practices, and institutions that date at least to several hundred years prior to the turn-of-the-era and whose significant historical events transpired in the area of the world now known as the Middle East; although today considered a religious designation, to some it has always been an ethnic designation and—especially since the founding of the state of Israel in 1948—for yet others it designates a national identity (sometimes designating all three at once). The terms „Jew,” „Jewish,” and „Judaism” derive from the ancient Hebrew *y’hudi* which is itself a derivative of the proper name *Y’hudah* or Judah, which means „celebrated” and was the name of the fourth son of one of the group’s ancient patriarchs, Jacob, as well as the name for the familial line (that is, tribe) that is said to have descended from him. Although one might talk of ancient Hebrew religion (involving twelve ancestral tribes, a distinctive role for the members of a priestly tribe, the centrality of temple worship, animal sacrifice, a period of enslavement in ancient Egypt, and a belief in a divine mandate to settle „the promised land”), after the Exilic period (in which it is held that, for much of the sixth century BCE, Hebrews were conquered by the ancient Babylonian empire [specifically, a group called the Chaldeans] and forcibly removed from their land) the centrality of textual interpretation, the role of the rabbi (Hebrew: master), and the place of the synagogue (Greek: assembly, as a translation for the late Hebrew, *keneseth*) came to supplant the prior place of the temple and priests. Along with legal traditions and traditions of rabbinic commentary, the main scripture is known as TANAKH, an acronym standing for the letters that signify the three main bodies of work that comprise what is sometimes called the Hebrew Bible: Torah (the Law, which comprises the first five books of the Hebrew Bible), Neviim (the writings attributed to the Prophets), and Ketuvim „the writings” (such as the more poetic book of Psalms that is attributed to the patriarch and onetime Hebrew King, David). Today, Jews are found worldwide and the modern state of Israel (the so-called „promised land”) plays a particularly important role in the social identity for many Jews.

**Laïcité** – In French, some other Romance Languages, and Turkish, *laïcité* (pronounced /la.ĩsĩte/), Turkish: *laiklik*, Italian: *laicit * or *laicismo*, is the concept of a secular state, that is, of the absence of religious interference in government affairs, and vice-versa. While it is thought that no English word captures the exact meaning of „laïcité”,

which comes from the Greek λαϊκός („layman”), it is related to the English word „laity” or „laymen,” and is sometimes rendered in English as „laicity” or „laicism.” Laïcité is a main component of both the liberal and republican traditions in Europe.

The conception of laïcité is based on the respect of freedom of thought and of freedom of religion. Thus, the absence of a state religion and the subsequent separation of the state and Church is considered a prerequisite of such freedom of thought. Laïcité is thus distinct from anti-clericalism, which actively opposes the influence of religion and of the clergy. Laïcité relies on the division between private life, to which its adherents believe religion belongs, and the public sphere, in which each individual, its adherents believe, should appear devoid of ethnic, religious or others particularities, and as a simple citizen equal to all others citizens. According to this conception, the government must refrain from taking positions on religious doctrine and only consider religious subjects from their practical consequences on inhabitants’ lives.

*Laïcité* does not necessarily imply, by itself, any hostility of the government with respect to religion. It is best described a belief that government and political issues should be kept separate from religious organizations and religious issues (as long as the latter do not have notable social consequences). This is meant to protect both the government from any possible interference from religious organizations, and to protect the religious organization from political quarrels and controversies.

**Shintoism** – the native religion of Japan and was once its state religion. It involves the worship of *kami*, spirits. Some kami are local and can be regarded as the spiritual being/spirit or genius of a particular place, but other ones represent major natural objects and processes: for example, Amaterasu, the Sun goddess, or Mount Fuji. Shinto is an animistic belief system. The word Shinto, from the original Chinese Sh ntao combines two *kanj * „shin” (loan words usually retain their Chinese pronunciation, hence shin not kami), meaning gods or spirits; and „t ” meaning a philosophical way or path (originally from the Chinese word dao). As such, Shinto is commonly translated as „The Way of the Gods”. Some differences exist between Koshint  (the ancient Shint ) and the many types of Shint  taught and practiced today, showing the influences of Buddhism when it was introduced into Japan in the sixth century.

**Sikhism** – is the fifth-largest religion in the world that was founded on the teachings of Nanak and nine successive gurus in fifteenth century Northern India. This system of religious philosophy and expression has been traditionally known as the Gurmat (literally the counsel of the gurus) or the Sikh Dharma. Sikhism originated from the word *Sikhī*, which in turn comes from the Sanskrit root *śiṣya* meaning „disciple” or „learner”.

The principal belief of Sikhism is faith in *Vāhigurū*—represented using the sacred symbol of *ēk ōaṅkār*. Sikhism advocates the pursuit of salvation through disciplined, personal meditation on the name and message of God. A key distinctive feature of Sikhism is a non-anthropomorphic concept of God, to the extent that one can interpret God as the Universe itself. The followers of Sikhism are ordained to follow the teachings of the ten Sikh gurus, or enlightened leaders, as well as the holy scripture entitled the *Gurū Granth Sāhīb*, which includes the selected works of many authors from diverse socioeconomic and religious backgrounds. The text was decreed by Gobind Singh, the tenth guru, as the final guru of the Khalsa Panth. Sikhism’s traditions and teachings are distinctly associated with the history, society and culture of the Punjab. Adherents of Sikhism are known as Sikhs (*students or disciples*) and number over 23 million across the world. Most Sikhs live in the state of Punjab in India and, prior to the country’s partition, millions of Sikhs lived in what is now the Punjab province of Pakistan.

**Taoism (Daoism)** – the English name referring to a variety of related Chinese philosophical and religious traditions and concepts. These traditions influenced East Asia for over two thousand years and some have spread internationally. Taoist propriety and ethics emphasize the Three Jewels of the Tao; namely, compassion, moderation, and humility. Taoist thought focuses on *wu wei* („non-action”), spontaneity, humanism, and emptiness. An emphasis is placed on the link between people and nature. Taoism teaches that this link lessened the need for rules and order, and leads one to a better understanding of the world. The character Tao (or Dao, depending on the romanisation scheme) means „path” or „way”, but in Chinese religion and philosophy it has taken on more abstract meanings. Tao is rarely an object of worship, being treated more like the Indian concepts of *atman* and *dharma*. The word „Taoism” is used to translate different Chinese terms. *Daojiao/Taochiao* („teachings/religion of the Dao”) refers to Daoism

as a religion. *Daojia/Taochia* („school of the Dao”) refers to the studies of scholars, or „philosophical” Daoism.

**Zoroastrianism** is the religion and philosophy based on the teachings ascribed to the prophet Zoroaster (Zarathustra, Zartosht). Mazdaism is the religion that acknowledges the divine authority of Ahura Mazda, proclaimed by Zoroaster to be the one uncreated Creator of all (God).

As demonstrated by Zoroastrian creed and articles of faith, the two terms are effectively synonymous. In a declaration of the creed – the *Fravarānē* – the adherent states: „I profess myself a devotee of Mazda, a follower of Zarathustra.” (Yasna 12.2, 12.8)

While Zoroastrianism was once the dominant religion of much of Greater Iran, the number of adherents has dwindled to not more than 200,000 worldwide, with concentrations in India and Iran.

## 6. Constraints and opportunities for dialogue

Given that tolerance and the benefits from diversity are stressed throughout the European Commission’s (EC) social policy documents, it is logical that EC programmes should aim to generate and support dialogue practices, particularly in the Youth sector. However, even with a reasonable understanding of the concepts, the realities of religious beliefs and faith-based actions in our communities are often difficult to comprehend.

How might a constraint to dialogue manifest itself?

What might an opportunity for dialogue look like?

These are questions that youth leaders and workers need to ask themselves.

In both the F&D and IRD Training Courses participants were supported in examining these questions by using the location of the training as a case study, and by looking at the realities in their own countries.

### The Case of Northern Ireland

It is not possible to sufficiently summarise the complexities that influence the relationships between the different religious communities in Northern Ireland, however par-

**✦ DID YOU KNOW...**

- ✦ Sectarian behaviour may be promoted when members of a religious or political group may feel that their own salvation, or success of their particular objectives, requires aggressively seeking converts from other groups, adherents of a given faction may believe that for the achievement of their own political or religious project their internal opponents must be purged. Sometimes a group feeling itself to be under economic or political pressure will attack members of another group thought to be responsible for its own decline. It may also more rigidly define the definition of „orthodox“ belief within its particular group or organisation, and expel or excommunicate those who do not agree with this newfound clarified definition of political or religious 'orthodoxy.'
- ✦ In other cases, dissenters from this orthodoxy will secede from the orthodox organisation and proclaim themselves as practitioners of a reformed belief system, or holders of a perceived former orthodoxy. At other times, sectarianism may be the expression of a group's nationalistic or cultural ambitions, or cynically exploited to serve an individual demagogue's ambition.

Participants on the TC in Belfast could see examples of what might easily constrain dialogue in that context:

- ✦ Social infrastructure that promotes segregated living
  - Catholics and Protestants live in different areas, shop in different shops, send their children to different schools, play games in different sport clubs
- ✦ On the boundaries of the segregated areas there are 'contested spaces' which the communities have historically fought over and defended. Thus, as one Youth Worker commented, the challenge is to turn young people away from being 'defenders' to being 'menders' of relationships
- ✦ Faith-based ways of working are so dominant in the region that anyone and everyone tend to be labelled with a 'sectarian tag' whether it is wanted or not

Equally, the TC participants saw or heard about examples where opportunities for dialogue had been identified and acted upon:

- ✦ The introduction and rise in the two dominant communities of other religious groups, for example from South Asia and Eastern Europe, through the impact of migration and globalisation, has widened the agenda. This has resulted in initiatives such as the collective celebration of festivals across religions.
- ✦ Realisation of a shared heritage – a small project working with ten young people exploring the heritage value of the City Cemetery, was scaled up into a large 'shared spaces' project, with hundreds of young people from both Catholic and Protestant communi-



the city. The managers of the project commented that 'we can all now see the benefits and impacts that the exploration of the dead and the lives that they led had on our young peoples lives'. (Thanks to Stephen Hughes of the Corpus Christi Youth Centre in Belfast for this information)

**The Case of Turkey**

On Day 3 of the TC in Istanbul, participants visited a number of sites and talked with a few people connected to a range of religious institutions in Turkey, including the Mufti of Fatih Municipality; a Franciscan monk in the Roman Catholic Church of Santa Maria Draperis; Muharrem Ercan, leader of the Alevi Karaccaahmet Sultan Cem House. From these visits the participants later reflected upon the influences on inter-religious dialogue in Istanbul

- ✦ It may well be unique, globally speaking, that, in Turkey, 'ethnic minorities' are categorised in law as the groups of people who have a religious belief which is other than Islam. Thus, under Turkish Law, Jews are a minority, but Kurdish people (who are traditionally Islamic) and the Alevis (a distinct and large sect of Islamic believers) are not. Many see this as a constraint to setting appropriate conditions for intra-religious dialogue.
- ✦ History plays a big part in the dialogue process. On the one hand, a 1000 years of tolerance is seen as a good investment in encouraging dialogue, as the Mufti pointed out, however, on the other hand, migration over the years has meant that Christians make up less than 0.3% of the modern Turkish Republic's population, compared to the 30% of the population of the Ottoman Empire. The result of this, as the monk men-

### + DID YOU KNOW...

+ There is a diversity of doctrines and practices among groups calling themselves Christian. These groups are sometimes classified under denominations, though for theological reasons some groups reject this classification system. Christianity may be broadly represented as being divided into three main groupings:

+ Roman Catholicism: The Roman Catholic Church, or „Catholic Church,“ includes the 23 particular churches in communion with the Bishop of Rome. It is the largest single body, with more than 1 billion baptized members. The ‘particular churches’ may be autonomous churches, such as the Coptic Catholic Church or Armenian Catholic Church, or dioceses (eg. The Dioceses of London), but all are the embodiment of the fullness of the one Catholic Church.

+ Eastern Orthodoxy: Those churches in communion with the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople and the other Patriarchal Sees of the East. A 1992 agreement amongst American theologians resolved theological differences between Eastern and Oriental Orthodox Christians -- although this has yet to be universally recognized. Together with the „Church of the East“, these can be considered a single large grouping. Members of the Eastern Orthodox Church do not usually refer to themselves as „Eastern“ Orthodox but rather with a prefix denoting their nation of origin. Thus, there are the terms *Greek, Russian, Romanian, Serbian, Antiochian*, or any national Orthodox; and collective terms such as *The Church, The Orthodox Church, The Byzantine Church*.

+ Protestantism: Virtually every church body outside Eastern Orthodoxy and Roman Catholicism are considered to be Protestant. In the 16th Century, Martin Luther, Ulrich Zwingli, and John Calvin inaugurated what has come to be called the Protestant Reformation. Luther’s primary theological heirs are known as Lutherans (Also known as Evangelicals in Germany and elsewhere). Zwingli and Calvin’s heirs are far broader denominationally, and are broadly referred to as the Reformed Tradition. Most Protestant traditions branch out from the Reformed tradition in some way. In addition to the Lutheran and Reformed branches of the Reformation, there is also the Anabaptist tradition, and Restorationism may be considered to be another.

+ (For more on Protestantism, see the photograph of a timeline drawn by a participant at the Istanbul TC on page xx)

tioned, is the challenge of scale - the reality is that Christians are a very, very small minority in Turkey.

+ It is difficult to be sure as to whether the process of Accession to the EU is a real opportunity for dialogue or actually a constraint, as at the local level you tend to feel that individuals just say what they think is the ‘right thing to say’, so as to build on the Accession, rather than to reveal what they really believe. This is the constraint of political processes.

+ Clearly there is some kind of ongoing dialogue. Representatives of the various religions and faiths participate in each others celebrations and festivals. For example, during Ramadan, the Patriarch of the

Armenian Orthodox Church provided Iftar - the evening meal at sunset that breaks the daily fast during the Islamic month of Ramadan - on one day to poorer residents of the Fatih district. The heads of the different religions in Istanbul exchange greeting cards on special occasions and, although as one participant pointed out that this was rather superficial, perhaps this type of ‘postcard dialogue’ builds into something stronger.

+ In one district, the Director of a secondary school invited a local imam and the priest from a Roman Catholic Church to run a small seminar for children entitled ‘What is Man?’ The imam and priest debated this subject with the children, then took them on a tour of 3 places of worship: a church, mosque and synagogue.

### The Reality in Participants’ Countries

Participants from the two TCs gave many examples of opportunities for dialogue and of the kind of constraints that they face as youth workers. Often the examples of constraints were linked to inter-generational barriers and the obstacles put up by those resisting social change:

“Dealing with inter-generation differences determined by faith are very challenging for Youth Workers. For example, I know situations whereby parents will not tolerate their children sleeping with their boy/girlfriends in their house, thus forcing the children to find other places to have sex. In such cases is it not the case that the faith identity of the household is encouraging irresponsible social behaviour? How to tackle this?”

“In Romania there are certainly many instances where the faith identity of the older generation is pushing for observance of conservative doctrines and thus restricting any social change”

“How can religious doctrines written hundreds of years ago be applied in contemporary life? Don’t they just hold back social change?”

“In my country many Muslims ask the question ‘why should we enter into dialogue; what are the benefits? All we get from

the Christian Europeans is mockery in their newspapers of our religion. It is a huge challenge to know how and when to start a dialogue process with these people."

Often constraints were seen to be originating from economic influences:

"In Belgium it is clear to see a kind of 'ghettoisation' of immigrants from countries such as Turkey and Morocco. This has potential for conflict and tension" (as these groups are mostly Islamic, surrounded by wealthy Christian communities)

"In Georgia there is a town where members of the Georgian Catholic Church and Armenian Orthodox Church both wanted to claim a church building as 'theirs' in the aftermath of local civil unrest, as most other religious properties had been destroyed. However, although this was initially a source of conflict, the two denominations later realised that the idea of sharing the church building was actually a constructive act for both communities!"

Or related to the fear that the unknown brings and the symbols of that:

"Some Dutch fear that there is no integration if Muslim women wear headscarves"

Some mentioned that the constraints to dialogue were from deep-seated cultural norms:

"In Italy it is not common behaviour to dialogue, but rather to argue!"

And there were many comments that there are universal constraints to dialogue that will cause tensions no matter where you are or which religions or faiths are involved:

"Actually dialogue is like 'partnership'. There is a need to have an equal union in the process. If one side knows more than the other it ends being teaching rather than dialogue"

In terms of illustrating the opportunities for dialogue, it was apparent that work in the youth sector is actually a fruitful ground.

"In Ukraine the various (Christian) Orthodox denominations have tense relationships, but within the activities of

the YMCA (Young Men's Christian Association) representatives from these denominations do cooperate and work together"

"Most of the young people I work with have no idea what a NGO is or what social development is all about. Therefore they are unlikely to see the opportunities that demonstrate pre-conditions for dialogue. But my approach is to engage them in activities that appeal to them – such as music and sport – then to introduce themes for dialogue."

As has been illustrated above in the description of the 'God in a Box' tool, in the northern English city of Newcastle, youth workers have succeeded in promoting curiosity about different religions and their practices within communities of young people. This positive curiosity is then fed by revealing the contents of the 'God in a Box' and the facilitation of discussion of the contents. This process is setting the right conditions for dialogue, for example by demonstrating that "there is a young Jewish person who is now capable of going into a Christian community and explaining what Islam is all about".

Often it is through humanitarian work and as a consequence of large scale and natural disasters that opportunities for dialogue appear. In the case of Palestine, for example, "there are many NGOs that are inter-religious and provide urgent social services to all sectors of the community". This is also the case in Lebanon, and, as we have seen in Georgia, there is often inter-religious dialogue in order to stave off political tensions. The community in the Georgian village that decided to share their church between two different Christian denominations, did so "in order to avoid a political conflict at a higher level."



The Yellow Hats Dialogue in Istanbul

## SECTION TWO: THE DIALOGUE PROCESS

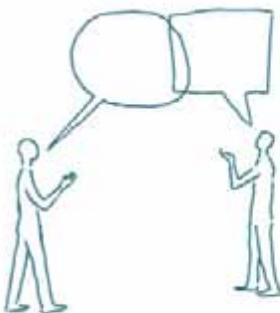
### 1. What 'added value' does Faith and Religion bring to our communities?

There is clearly a 'horizontal thread' of faith and religion that weaves through most of our communities and youth work. This thread may at times be wound around issues related to economics and livelihoods and to anything that may threaten those livelihoods. Or the thread may be tied to politics, or to issues of ethics and morality and the way we organise ourselves. Or at times perhaps the thread is simply providing a way out of trouble. Whatever the weave of the thread it is certain that most communities, and individuals within those communities, value their faiths and religions highly. For this reason communities and individuals are increasingly turning to a process of dialogue in order to protect the value of their religion or faith.

During the course of the two training events in Belfast and Istanbul, trainers and participants alike heard and shared stories illustrating the value of Religion and the activities of religious organisations. All these stories suggested that a process of dialogue was somehow involved. Thus, in this section, before looking at some of the guidance and models for promoting dialogue, it is worthwhile considering why we bother with religion, faith and dialogue at all!

#### 'We all cry the same'

The awful earthquake that struck north-western Turkey in 1999 was responsible for the deaths of thousands of people and the destruction of homes and livelihoods for thousands more. In response to the earthquake Turkey's civil society mobilised itself and saw the creation of hundreds of organisations and networks dedicated to providing services to those that survived the disaster. Amongst these organisations were many with grassroots support from the local Islamic community. One such organisation is 'Kimse Yok Mu', the Association for Solidarity and Aid, based in Istanbul. This organisation has grown into an efficient deliverer of emergency aid, and although its supporters and staff are predominantly of the Islamic faith, the organisation is not faith-orientated in terms of its target groups. Their criteria relates purely to 'need'. As their Volunteer Coordinator explained to a group of the IRD participants, "it doesn't matter what your religion is, we all cry the same".



**+ DID YOU KNOW...**

- + The Mevlevi Sufi order was founded in 1273 by followers of Mevlana Jelaluddin Rumi after his death. The Mevlevi, or „The Whirling Dervishes“, believe in performing their dhikr in the form of sema. During the time of Rumi (as attested in the „Manakib ul Arifin“ of Eflakj Dede), his followers gathered for musical and „turning“ practices. These rituals enabled followers to aim for a state of existence of perfect balance, with the body turning on one spot, the right hand lifted to ‘take’ from God and the left hand lowered to give to the people. Mevlana himself was a notable musician, as well as being a highly regarded poet and writer. The music accompanying the traditional ‘whirling’ ritual consists of settings of poems from the „Masnavi“ and „Diwan-i-Kebir“ or of Rumi’s son’s poems.
  - + The Mevlevi were a well-established Sufi Order in the Ottoman Empire, and many of the members of the order served in various official positions of the Caliphate. The centre for the Mevlevi order was in Konya, Turkey.
  - + The Mevlevi order issues an invitation to people of all backgrounds:
- Come, come, whoever you are,  
Wanderer, idolater, worshiper of fire,  
Come even though you have broken your vows a thousand times,  
Come, and come yet again.  
Ours is not a caravan of despair*



Participants of the Istanbul Training Course witness the whirling of the followers of Mevlana

**Preparing for a diverse society**

Norma Rae is Development Officer at Youth Council for Northern Ireland. Her prime function is community relations work with a particular focus on ‘equality’. As part of this work, Norma co-ordinates the JEDI equality partnership in Northern Ireland; JEDI stands for Joined in Equality, Diversity and Interdependence. The partnership was formed to

embed these principles by training, discussion and promoting shared learning in good relations through the lead youth agencies in the region.

Participants at the Training Course in Belfast were able to meet with Norma and learn that her own ‘mixed faith’ background was a prime motivator for her working in community relations. She has been doing this work since she was a teenager and she sees this as a way to prepare young people appropriately for life in a diverse society; preparation that may have been missing from previous generations growing up in a Northern Ireland dominated by sectarianism. Participants were able to hear how more recently young people in Belfast were realising that the diversity of the Catholic and Protestant communities offered more strengths than it did divisions.

**Less like ‘blood for a vampire’**

During one session in the Istanbul Training Course, a group of participants debated the motion that ‘Religion Makes Development Slower’. One response to this was as follows:

“I don’t think this statement is true. Most religions try to promote the equal and just use of resources. For example, if a country like mine that has large amounts of oil, it shouldn’t use it up like ‘blood to a vampire’, but rather use it as a resource for the benefit of all. Religion can help to ensure good use of resources like this by influencing economic decisions”.

**2. How do we create and widen space for dialogue?**

**Getting Ready To Dialogue.**

Training on dialogue has to be one of the most challenging, but enjoyable experiences. On the Belfast course the trainers approached the objective by helping participants through this particular section of their training journey by firstly comparing the concepts of dialogue, communication and discussion. Then looking at what form dialogue may take, what purpose it may have, and lastly exploring how you might prepare for and actually begin dialogue. The essence of these sessions, made up largely of small

group discussions and plenary feedback, was well summed up by one of the participants:

“...I do not see any need for dialogue to have a defined purpose. It is a process-orientated activity”.

In the setting of Northern Ireland, the venue for the training, this sentiment was very much echoed in a group presentation on the ‘constraints to dialogue’. One of the group members, a youth worker from Belfast, reflected on his own experience that there was a continued need to motivate for dialogue:

“In Belfast the younger generation is now growing up in a more stable, calm environment and therefore members of the different communities do not any longer understand the importance of maintaining dialogue. For them the job has already been done. But for me it is essential for continued peace for there to be continued dialogue.”

So, how do we differentiate between ‘dialogue’ and other forms of communication, such as ‘discussion’ and how do we motivate and prepare for dialogue? Some differentiation has already been made in the Section above looking at the concept of dialogue, however, it is worthwhile to build on this. The training team in Belfast presented one approach to this taken from David Bohm (an American born quantum physicist, who also made significant contributions in the fields of philosophy and neuropsychology). Bohm likened discussion to an activity where we throw our opinions back and forth in an attempt to convince each other of the rightness of a particular point of view. In this process, the whole view is often fragmented and shattered into many pieces. This is in sharp contrast to Bohm’s view of Dialogue, which he saw as being something that moves beyond any one individual’s understanding, to make explicit the implicit and build collective meaning and community.

Bohm suggested that there were 4 essential skill areas that needed to be weaved together in order to facilitate genuine dialogue:

- \* Suspension of judgement
- \* Assumptions have to be identified and named
- \* Listening to diverse perspectives
- \* Inquiry and reflection – this is about learning how to

ask questions with the intention of gaining additional insight and perspective

During the Training Course in Istanbul, in addition to the ideas of Bohm, a couple of other practical approaches to dialogue were considered. One of them came from the group of writers that produced the ‘Mapping Dialogue’ document, already quoted above in the first Section. This was a list of necessary foundations to support dialogue and was only briefly covered by the trainers. A second ‘framework’ for guiding dialogue came from Leonard Swidler, The Dialogue Decalogue. This latter framework is set out as a kind of 10 commandments governing the dialogue process and was presented in detail to the Training participants.

Both the Foundations for Dialogue and the Dialogue Decalogue are set out in full here, and are followed by descriptions from the TC participants of why dialogue is needed, what they think the pre-conditions may be, and their thoughts on the various frameworks.

## Foundations for Dialogue

### *Purpose and Principles*

“Clarity of purpose is a sweet weapon against confusion” – as Toke Moeller, a Danish practitioner who specialises in designing and hosting gatherings for learning and dialogue, so succinctly put it.

Within most if not all of the tools that we are presenting, but also beyond them, lies an essential principle of clarity of purpose. Before deciding on which tools to make use of, we need to be crystal clear on our intention for bringing together a group of people or initiating a process of change. Sometimes we may find ourselves having begun something without quite knowing why, or for reasons that are inappropriate or external to the particular context and the needs of the people involved.

Before clarifying a purpose, it can be necessary to connect with the need. What is the need that has propelled us to come together? What do we hope to achieve as we respond to it? From a genuine need, a clear purpose can be derived. It’s also important to be clear on whether the amount of investment of time and attention we are de-

manding from participants is in proportion with the importance to them of meeting this need.

The purpose needs to be attractive, but it should not be in the form of too specific, structured, and quantifiable goals. If objectives and expectations are too dominant in the room, this can deter dialogue and openness. Some proponents and practitioners of dialogue emphasise that it needs to be completely open-ended and not attached to specific outcomes, but there is still clarity on why the group is together.

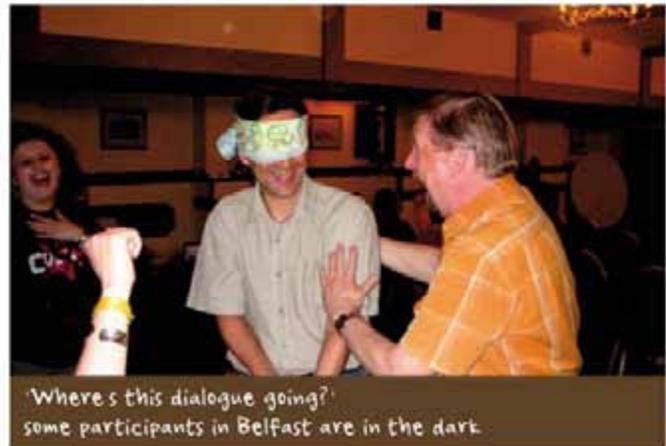
Principles are our aspiration of how we would like to be together as we pursue our purpose. The principles can be used to design and guide the process and the involvement of participants. Even if we simply come together as an informal group for a conversation of a few hours, making a simple set of agreements for how we wish to be together is important. The longer and larger an initiative the more critical working through principles together becomes. Most of the tools here have a set of principles attached to them, and this is a significant part of what makes them work. Some examples include: "Rotate leadership" (Circle), "Access the wisdom of the minority" (Deep Democracy), "Explore questions that matter" (World Café) and "Whoever comes are the right people" (Open Space).

Often a convener will share (or co-create) the purpose and principles with participants both before and at the beginning of an event or process, and where possible allow for its evolution during the process with the broader group of participants. Ideally the group, not just the convener, should "own" the purpose and principles. Taken as a whole, a clear purpose together with the principles provides a compass helping us to navigate and make decisions.

#### *Good Strategic Questions*

The power of a good question cannot be underestimated. Good questions are catalytic. They open up the learning field. They stimulate thought processes, curiosity, and the desire to engage with a group, and they are central to what defines and distinguishes dialogue.

Often we arrive with answers and expertise, statements to be discussed, or positions to be advocated or negotiated. But in dialogue, questions are actually in many ways more powerful than answers. Questions pull people toward the future, while answers – while useful of course – are of the



'Where's this dialogue going?'  
some participants in Belfast are in the dark.

past. A question that has meaning to the people involved can ignite the whole process of learning and change. The knowledge that people involved are genuinely needed to bring forth the answers and solutions collaboratively changes the entire field of interaction.

#### *Participation and participants*

How serious are we about the people we bring together? So often we bring people together to listen to experts, ask a few questions, and make some comments, and we feel that we have involved them. We may label it a "dialogue", or a "consultation" but actually only a few people have been heard. In contrast, this dialogue work comes from a deep belief in, and appreciation of, the intelligence and wisdom that is accessible to us from each person we connect and engage with. Depending on our purpose, different forms and levels of participation will be required. Based on our purpose, who needs to be involved? What do we hope to do and achieve with them? What will each of them be bringing and what will they be wanting to gain? Do we really trust that they each hold an invaluable part of the puzzle we are trying to solve? How do we best involve and engage them?

#### *Underlying Structure*

There is an underlying rhythm to most processes of change. Some of the tools and processes we have included here have integrated their own understanding of deep-rooted change in their overall design. However for many of the tools, we need to design a daily rhythm and an overall workshop flow paying attention to the underlying architecture that might best serve our intent.

It can help to look at a dialogue process as a story. What is the “beginning”, the “middle” and the “end”? How will people arrive, clarify their individual and collective intentions, agree on how they want to be together and set out on the journey? What will be at the center of their process? How will they close, note individual and collective commitments and conclusions, and prepare to return to where they came from?

### *The Facilitator*

The tools, the design, the process. It is easy to let concerns around these preoccupy us, and yet the most important tool that any one of us have at our disposal as a facilitator is ourselves and our presence. That is not to say that the others don't count. It is simply to state that the importance of the preparation, presence, and state of mind of the facilitator are often neglected. As a convener and host of groups, the facilitator influences the space and the group in visible and invisible ways.

Although much can be planned in advance, a true master will stay present to what shows up in the moment. For dialogue to work, the facilitator should not be getting caught up in a predetermined structure and timetable that has to be followed at all cost. The rule of thumb: over-prepared, under-structured, speaks to the criticality of preparation, coupled with the flexibility to respond creatively as the process unfolds in real time. This may sound like *laissez-faire*, but actually requires great clarity, and the ability to listen to the group and the process. This is where the value of purpose and principles shows up strongly: A clear purpose and set of principles that are alive and embodied in the facilitator will enable him or her to improvise and respond with freedom that is rooted in clear direction. The ability to hold clear and strong the intention and principles of a gathering or process is directly related to how able the facilitator is to be fully present. Some of the most successful facilitators we know take time for a meditative practice, and time to tune into an intention to serve the group before stepping into the facilitator role. To perform well a facilitator needs to develop humility, but also courage to go with the flow. If the facilitator has this kind of confidence and groundedness, they will also gain more legitimacy and trust from participants. In the last section of this report, on assessment tools, we go further into different qualities a facilitator may embody.



Getting ready for dialogue ??

### *Physical Space*

Many typical conference-room setups are actually not conducive to dialogue, but we continue to use them out of habit. We worry more about the agenda, and less about the set-up of the rooms or halls. Meanwhile, the physical space exerts an invisible but incredibly strong influence and so we must do more to prepare a space that will foster rather than deter dialogue.

### **The Dialogue Decalogue**

The „Dialogue Decalogue” was first published in the *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* in 1983 and was written by Leonard Swidler. The text below is an edited version of what first appeared in the *Journal*.

“Dialogue is a conversation on a common subject between two or more persons with differing views, the primary purpose of which is for each participant to learn from the other so that s/he can change and grow. This very definition of dialogue embodies the first commandment of dialogue.

In the religious-ideological sphere in the past, we came together to discuss with those differing with us, for example, Catholics with Protestants, either to defeat an opponent, or to learn about an opponent so as to deal more effectively with her or him, or at best to negotiate with him or her. If we faced each other at all, it was in confrontation--sometimes more openly polemically, sometimes more subtly so, but always with the ultimate goal of defeating the other, because we were convinced that we alone had the absolute truth.

But dialogue is not debate. In dialogue each partner must listen to the other as openly and sympathetically as s/he can in an attempt to understand the other's position as precisely and, as it were, as much from within, as possible. Such an attitude automatically includes the assumption that at any point we might find the partner's position so persuasive that, if we would act with integrity, we would have to change, and change can be disturbing.

We are here, of course, speaking of a specific kind of dialogue, an interreligious, interideological dialogue. To have such, it is not sufficient that the dialogue partners discuss a religious-ideological subject, that is, the meaning of life and how to live accordingly. Rather, they must come to the dialogue as persons somehow significantly identified with a religious or ideological community. If I were neither a Christian nor a Marxist, for example, I could not participate as a „partner“ in Christian-Marxist dialogue, though I might listen in, ask some questions for information, and make some helpful comments.

It is obvious that interreligious, interideological dialogue is something new under the sun. We could not conceive of it, let alone do it in the past. How, then, can we effectively engage in this new thing? The following are some basic ground rules, or „commandments,“ of interreligious, interideological dialogue that must be observed if dialogue is actually to take place. These are not theoretical rules, or commandments given from „on high,“ but ones that have been learned from hard experience.

**FIRST COMMANDMENT:** The primary purpose of dialogue is to learn, that is, to change and grow in the perception and understanding of reality, and then to act accordingly. Minimally, the very fact that I learn that my dialogue partner believes „this“ rather than „that“ proportionally changes my attitude toward her, and a change in my attitude is a significant change in me. We enter into dialogue so that we can learn, change, and grow, not so we can force change on the other, as one hopes to do in debate—a hope realized in inverse proportion to the frequency and ferocity with which debate is entered into. On the other hand, because in dialogue each partner comes with the intention of learning and changing herself, one's partner in fact will also change. Thus the goal of debate, and much more, is accomplished far more effectively by dialogue.

**SECOND COMMANDMENT:** Interreligious, interideological dialogue must be a two-sided project—within each religious or ideological community and between religious or ideological communities. Because of the „corporate“ nature of interreligious dialogue, and since the primary goal of dialogue is that each partner learn and change himself, it is also necessary that each participant enter into dialogue not only with his partner across the faith line—the Lutheran with the Anglican, for example—but also with his coreligionists, with his fellow Lutherans, to share with them the fruits of the interreligious dialogue. Only thus can the whole community eventually learn and change, moving toward an ever more perceptive insight into reality.

**THIRD COMMANDMENT:** Each participant must come to the dialogue with complete honesty and sincerity. It should be made clear in what direction the major and minor thrusts of the tradition move, what the future shifts might be, and, if necessary, where the participant has difficulties with her own tradition. No false fronts have any place in dialogue.

Conversely—each participant must assume a similar complete honesty and sincerity in the other partners. Not only will the absence of sincerity prevent dialogue from happening, but the absence of the assumption of the partner's sincerity will do so as well. In brief: no trust, no dialogue.

**FOURTH COMMANDMENT:** In interreligious, interideological dialogue we must not compare our ideals with our partner's practice, but rather our ideals with our partner's ideals, our practice with our partner's practice.

**FIFTH COMMANDMENT:** Each participant must define himself. Only the Jew, for example, can define what it means to be a Jew. The rest can only describe what it looks like from the outside. Moreover, because dialogue is a dynamic medium, as each participant learns, he will change and hence continually deepen, expand, and modify his self-definition as a Jew—being careful to remain in constant dialogue with fellow Jews. Thus it is mandatory that each dialogue partner define what it means to be an authentic member of his own tradition.

Conversely—the one interpreted must be able to recognize herself in the interpretation. This is the golden rule of interreligious hermeneutics, as has been often reiterated by the „apostle of interreligious dialogue,“ Raimundo Panikkar.

For the sake of understanding, each dialogue participant will naturally attempt to express for herself what she thinks is the meaning of the partner's statement; the partner must be able to recognize herself in that expression.

**SIXTH COMMANDMENT:** Each participant must come to the dialogue with no hard-and-fast assumptions as to where the points of disagreement are. Rather, each partner should not only listen to the other partner with openness and sympathy but also attempt to agree with the dialogue partner as far as is possible while still maintaining integrity with his own tradition; where he absolutely can agree no further without violating his own integrity, precisely there is the real point of disagreement--which most often turns out to be different from the point of disagreement that was falsely assumed ahead of time.

**SEVENTH COMMANDMENT:** Dialogue can take place only between equals. Both must come to learn from each other. Therefore, if, for example, the Muslim views Hinduism as inferior, or if the Hindu views Islam as inferior, there will be no dialogue. If authentic interreligious, interideological dialogue between Muslims and Hindus is to occur, then both the Muslim and the Hindu must come mainly to learn from each other; only then will it be „equal with equal,” *par cum pari*. This rule also indicates that there can be no such thing as a one-way dialogue. For example, Jewish-Christian discussions begun in the 1960s were mainly only pro-

legomena to inter-religious dialogue. Understandably and properly, the Jews came to these exchanges only to teach Christians, although the Christians came mainly to learn. But, if authentic interreligious dialogue between Christians and Jews is to occur, then the Jews must also come mainly to learn; only then will it too be *par cum pari*.

**EIGHTH COMMANDMENT:** Dialogue can take place only on the basis of mutual trust. Although interreligious, interideological dialogue must occur with some kind of „corporate” dimension, that is, the participants must be involved as members of a religious or ideological community--for instance, as Marxists or Taoists--it is also fundamentally true that it is only persons who can enter into dialogue. But a dialogue among persons can be built only on personal trust. Hence it is wise not to tackle the most difficult problems in the beginning, but rather to approach first those issues most likely to provide some common ground, thereby establishing the basis of human trust. Then, gradually, as this personal trust deepens and expands, the more thorny matters can be undertaken. Thus, as in learning we move from the known to the unknown, so in dialogue we proceed from commonly held matters--which, given our mutual ignorance resulting from centuries of hostility, will take us quite some time to discover fully--to discuss matters of disagreement.

**NINTH COMMANDMENT:** Persons entering into interreligious, interideological dialogue must be at least minimally self-critical of both themselves and their own religious or ideological traditions. A lack of such self-criticism implies that one's own tradition already has all the correct answers. Such an attitude makes dialogue not only unnecessary, but even impossible, since we enter into dialogue primarily so we can learn--which obviously is impossible if our tradition has never made a misstep, if it has all the right answers. To be sure, in interreligious, interideological dialogue one must stand within a religious or ideological tradition with integrity and conviction, but such integrity and conviction must include, not exclude, a healthy self-criticism. Without it there can be no dialogue--and, indeed, no integrity.

**TENTH COMMANDMENT:** Each participant eventually must attempt to experience the partner's religion or ideology „from within”; for a religion or ideology is not merely something of the head, but also of the spirit, heart,

### + DID YOU KNOW...

- + The **Talmud** is a record of rabbinic discussions pertaining to Jewish law, ethics, customs, and history.
- + The Talmud has two components: the Mishnah (c. 200 CE), the first written compendium of Judaism's Oral Law; and the Gemara (c. 500 CE), a discussion of the Mishnah and related Tannaitic writings that often ventures onto other subjects and expounds broadly on the Tanakh. The terms *Talmud* and *Gemara* are often used interchangeably. The Gemara is the basis for all codes of rabbinic law and is much quoted in other rabbinic literature. The whole Talmud is also traditionally referred to as **Shas**, which in Hebrew means the „six orders” of the Mishnah.
- + The **Tanakh** is an acronym that identifies the Hebrew Bible. The acronym is formed from the initial Hebrew letters of the Tanakh's three traditional subdivision
- + 5 books of the *Torah* („Instruction”)
- + 8 books of the *Nevi'im* („Prophets”)
- + 11 books of the *Ketuvim* („Writings” or „Scriptures”)

and „whole being,” individual and communal. One writer here speaks of „passing over” into another’s religious or ideological experience and then coming back enlightened, broadened, and deepened.

Interreligious, interideological dialogue operates in three areas: the practical, where we collaborate to help humanity; the depth or „spiritual” dimension where we attempt to experience the partner’s religion or ideology „from within”; the cognitive, where we seek understanding and truth. Interreligious, interideological dialogue also has three phases. In the first phase we unlearn misinformation about each other and begin to know each other as we truly are. In phase two we begin to discern values in the partner’s tradition and wish to appropriate them into our own tradition. For example, in the Buddhist-Christian dialogue Christians might learn a greater appreciation of the meditative tradition, and Buddhists might learn a greater appreciation of the prophetic, social justice tradition—both values traditionally strongly, though not exclusively, associated with the other’s community. If we are serious, persistent, and sensitive enough in the dialogue, we may at times enter into phase three. Here we together begin to explore new areas of reality, of meaning, and of truth, of which neither of us had even been aware before. We are brought face to face with this new, as-yet-unknown-to-us dimension of reality only because of questions, insights, probings produced in the dialogue. We may thus dare to say that patiently pursued dialogue can become an instrument of new „re-velation,” a further „un-veiling” of reality—on which we must then act.

There is something radically different about phase one on the one hand and phases two and three on the other. In the latter we do not simply add on quantitatively another „truth” or value from the partner’s tradition. Instead, as we assimilate it within our own religious self-understanding, it will proportionately transform our self-understanding. Since our dialogue partner will be in a similar position, we will then be able to witness authentically to those elements of deep value in our own tradition that our partner’s tradition may well be able to assimilate with self-transforming profit. All this of course will have to be done with complete integrity on each side, each partner remaining authentically true to the vital core of his/her own religious tradition. However, in significant ways that vital core will be perceived and experienced differently under the influence of the dialogue, but, if the dialogue is carried



on with both integrity and openness, the result will be that, for example, the Jew will be authentically Jewish and the Christian will be authentically Christian, not despite the fact that Judaism and/or Christianity have been profoundly „Buddhized,” but because of it. And the same is true of a Judaized and/or Christianized Buddhism. There can be no talk of a syncretism here, for syncretism means amalgamating various elements of different religions into some kind of a (con)fused whole without concern for the integrity of the religions involved—which is not the case with authentic dialogue.”

### 3. The Practice of Dialogue

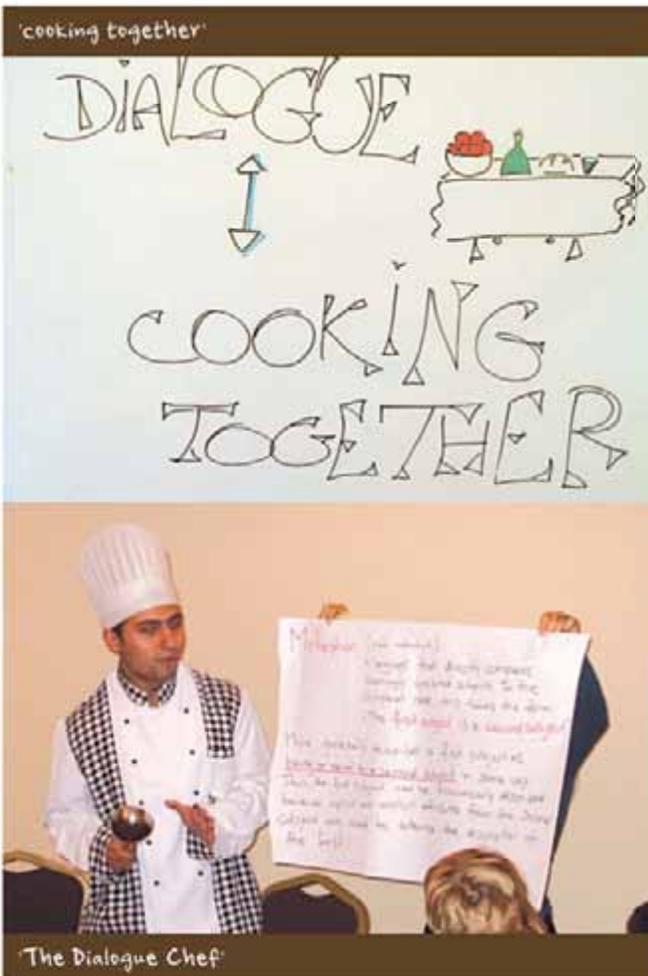
In both Training Courses in Belfast and Istanbul, participants spend time to consider how they might enter into dialogue and what might be the pre-conditions or ingredients for any such dialogue to take place. In the case of the course in Belfast, the practice of dialogue played a large part of the course and thus the training teams helped participants to prepare for and then to engage in dialogue. In Istanbul the focus was more on working with the participants to plan for dialogue-type activities in terms of youth work.

With the prerequisites of Bohm, Swidler et al in mind, the participants in Belfast were invited on Day 4 to a session fondly entitled ‘Village People’. This was not an invitation to disco, but to a prepared space where participants were asked to imagine themselves gathering under a large tree in the centre of a village. Participants could start the dialogue in any way that they liked, but the reason given for the dialogue was itself to explore ‘the need for dialogue in

the frame of faith-based youth work. With these instructions given, the trainers left the space and left the village people to dialogue.

The dialoguing practice lasted for around 45 minutes. Of course, just a beginning in dialogue terms, but a useful exercise that clearly illustrated to participants how much investment was needed in order to make dialogue work. In the plenary wrap up to the Village People session one of the participants noted that "dialogue has to be well informed and we didn't have enough knowledge to make the dialogue work". Another described the learning experience as being so hard 'that I wanted to run away'!

Interestingly on both TCs, the training teams supported participants in their preparation for dialogue in youth work through use of cooking metaphors. In Istanbul there was a session entitled the Inter-Religious Dialogue Kitchen. In this session participants were asked to consider how they might develop IRD activities in the youth sector. The



## IN THE SALTO ONLINE TOOLBOX FOR TRAINERS: 'VILLAGE PEOPLE'

### Title

Dialogue a la "Dialogue group" – the village people !

### Aim (what for?)

\* to explore, practice and reflect on one among many theories related to Dialogue as perceived and suggested by "Dialogue Group".

### Group (whom for?)

For people who need some examples on how the process of "dialogue" among people with different and probably controversial views can be "started".

### Material needed

- \* A nice and cosy room/space, with enough light, where all PAX can sit in a circle, having enough space to stand, sit or move in the room.
- \* Meditative Music
- \* Flipchart

### Duration

20 min for the presentation of the "dialogue group" concept 20 min for the preparation of the "atmosphere" for the village – the inner preparedness! 1-2 hours for "dialoguing" – the village people

### Description

A presentation on the concept of dialogue will include:

- \* the general background of the concept
- \* the sources and the purpose
- \* the skill building blocks and guidelines for dialogue

After the presentation the PAX will listen to a meditative music while the trainer will read slowly the following "Imagine you are in a village! Each of you is an inhabitant of this village. Although you all live in the same village you are all different: you have different views, different jobs, different skills, different knowledge, different preferences and priorities. And above all your faith and how you perceive it is different. JUST imagine yourself living in a village. Don't try to be someone else. Imagine there is a tree in this village. Right in the centre of the village. It is an old tree. People say it is a wise tree. Every week, all villagers meet at this tree. You sit in a circle and talk about what you think about different things, about each other, about how you do what you do and how you see the benefit of what you do. You do this in order to help people understand you and to understand others. But before you go to this tree, where you meet all the others, you prepare yourself for the dialogue on the way, by saying:

- \* I shall try to speak without judgement in order to open the door to others to listen to me
- \* I shall try to listen without judgment so I open the door to understanding
- \* I shall respect and honour others perspective as it is an essential contribution only they can bring in order to understand the whole view.
- \* No one perspective is more important than any other – I shall make my self "unimportant"

After this preparation the participants will be asked to start the "village talk" – as a starting point they are given a topic such as "Dialogue in the frame of interfaith youth work"

Depending on how much time you can dedicate to this session – participants will have the opportunity - after a break and energizer – to reflect in the group and share their personal views concerning this method.

[www.salto-youth.net/find-a-tool/702.html](http://www.salto-youth.net/find-a-tool/702.html)

process of doing this involved firstly identifying what 'ingredients' might be useful and 'tasty' to throw into the recipe for IRD. And then secondly to think about what 'ingredients' might be inappropriate or that would produce a bad taste.

In the Belfast TC, trainers took participants into the Inter-Faith Kitchen. This session asked participants to describe how such a 'kitchen' might look, bearing in mind all the essence of creating a safe and conducive space for dialogue, as well as what might be the tools and ingredients for cooking up dialogue. Participants were grouped for this work according, broadly speaking, to the composition of the target group of their own youth work: faith-based; non faith-based; and targets with no single identity. In this way participants were able to describe 'kitchens' and give 'top tips for dialogue preparation' that may apply to these different target youth groups. In one of the working groups participants moved beyond the image of a 'kitchen' and described their ideal space for dialogue as being "the Land of Safe Place. It sounds amazing! I want to go there now!!"

### Ingredients for Dialogue with youth groups

One of the small groups of participants in Istanbul emerged from their IRD Kitchen to propose the following 'good' and 'bad' ingredients:

<i>Good Ingredients</i>	<i>Ingredients to Avoid</i>
An agreed theme	Competition
Good preparation	Dishonesty
Balance between work & play	Superficial chatting
Challenges and commitment	Prejudices

In Belfast, the TC participants grouped around faith-based youth work described the contents and actions within their Inter-Faith Dialogue Kitchen as follows:

- ✦ Location and venue are important. Should be neutral, but will also vary according to needs and context of groups
- ✦ To identify participants it might be useful to use a 'search approach': first step is to go to the young people in their own environment, i.e. schools. Next invite



Reflecting on our symbols of expectation

all to an external, neutral location; lastly follow-up support work back in the communities.

- ✦ As examples, some participants mention the use of summer camps and a house in the countryside: 'important to take youth away from their usual environment, plus important to have stimulating and relaxing environment'
- ✦ If resources are limited and an external venue is not possible, why not try holding the inter-faith kitchen in a changing venue: a different person amongst the dialogue group each time will host a meeting in their house/apartment
- ✦ Ensure the environment of the Kitchen is safe. There should be enough space and facilities to allow all participants to feel comfortable and to allow for a range of meeting options
- ✦ Important to have enough space so that individuals can reflect
- ✦ Participants must be able to contribute at their own pace
- ✦ The role of a mediator should be as a 'gate keeper' - he/she is the controller of the process
- ✦ There should be no pressure on the group - individuals 'cook' at their own speed and motivation
- ✦ No need to push for conclusions
- ✦ Important to consider that not all participants can contribute equally (language; communication skills etc), but principle of equity must remain
- ✦ Participants must exercise their right to contribute or not.

## SECTION THREE: TAKING ACTION

### 1. What we can do next?

On the last days of both the Training Courses in Belfast and Istanbul, participants were given time to think about and discuss what actions they might directly take as a result of the courses. These actions might include partnering each other in projects and networking activities, or relate to work that they might engage in directly with the target groups of their organisations. And for some participants the follow-up actions centred on further self-learning and development in the areas of Faith, Religion and Dialogue.

In terms of looking at concrete activities and beginning the process of planning any such activities, the SALTO Resource Centres directed participants to the available support and resources available under the EU programme for young people, Youth in Action. Also, for those participants from the relevant countries, information was provided about a specific component of the EU's EuroMed Programme, the EuroMed Youth III Programme. Thus, it is worthwhile to consider, or be reminded of what these programmes are all about.

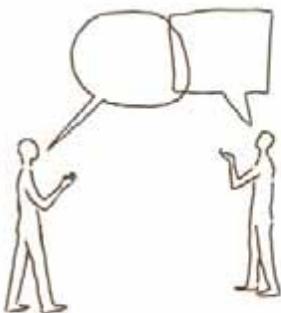
#### **Youth in Action**

Youth in Action is the new EU Programme in the field of youth, which will be implemented from 1 January 2007 until 31 December 2013 with a total budget of 885 million euros. It is the successor of the YOUTH Programme (2000-2006).

The Youth in Action Programme makes an important contribution to the acquisition of competences and is therefore a key instrument in providing young people with opportunities for non-formal and informal learning with a European dimension.

The Youth in Action Programme is a programme for all. It encourages the involvement of young people with fewer opportunities and addresses young people aged between 13 and 30.

This Programme is the result of a large consultation with the different stakeholders in the youth field and is the response to the evolutions in the youth sector at European level and



wider (through the European Neighbourhood Policy). It aims to inspire a sense of European citizenship among the youth of Europe and to involve them in constructing the future of the Community.

In order to achieve its objectives, the Youth in Action Programme foresees five operational Actions:

**Action 1** – Youth for Europe: supporting exchanges and youth initiatives and encouraging young people's participation in democratic life.

**Action 2** – European Voluntary Service: encouraging young people to take part in a voluntary activity abroad that benefits the general public.

**Action 3** – Youth in the World: encouraging cooperation with Partner Countries by building networks, promoting the exchange of information and assisting with cross-border activities.

**Action 4** – Youth Support Systems: promoting the development of exchange, training and information schemes.

**Action 5** – European Cooperation in the youth field contributing to the development of policy cooperation in the youth field.

Who can participate?

Programme Countries:

- \* 27 EU Member States
- \* Participating countries of the EFTA members of the EEA: Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway
- \* Candidate countries for accession to the EU: Turkey

Neighbouring Partner Countries:

- \* Eastern Europe and Caucasus (EECA)
- \* South East Europe (SEE)
- \* Mediterranean Partner Countries (Euro - Med)

Three main kinds of activities supported by Youth in Action Programme could be useful in youth work on Faith, Religion and Dialogue:

A **Youth Exchange** allows one or more groups of young people to host or to be hosted by a group from another country in order to participate together in a joint programme of activities. Youth Exchanges are aimed for groups of young people aged between 13 and 25.

**European Voluntary Service (EVS)** supports transnational voluntary service of young people. The volunteer carries out the voluntary activity in a country other than his/her country of residence. The activity is unpaid, non-profit making and full-time during a given period (max. 12 months). It serves the benefit of the community.

**Training and Networking** helps in Cooperation and partnerships building, training measures and exchange of good practice. Those are the key terms for the development of youth organizations, civil society and those involved in youth work.

### **EuroMed Youth III Programme**

The Barcelona Declaration, adopted in 1995, laid down the foundations for the EuroMed Youth Programme and stressed that 'Youth exchanges should be the means to prepare future generations for a closer co-operation between the Euro-Mediterranean partners'. The main purpose of the Regional EuroMed Youth Programme is to promote mobility of young people, non formal education and understanding between nations.

EuroMed Youth I (1999-2001) and EuroMed Youth II (2001-2004) were primarily managed by the European Commission. The EuroMed Youth III (2005-2008) programme has been fully decentralised to the 9 Mediterranean partner countries (Algeria, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, West Bank and Gaza Strip, Syria, Tunisia and Turkey) who signed a Financing Agreement with the Commission in 2006. The decentralisation aims to adapt the Programme to diverse national youth systems and encourage a closer relationship with the beneficiaries.

Objectives of the EuroMed Youth III Programme are:

- \* Fostering mutual understanding and intercultural dialogue among young people within the Euro-Mediterranean region

- \* Promoting young people's active citizenship and sense of solidarity
- \* Enhancing the contribution of non-governmental youth organisations to civil society and democracy
- \* Contributing to the development of youth policy

The programme aims to promote thematic priorities, namely:

- \* *Fight against racism and xenophobia*
- \* *Active citizenship*
- \* *Gender equality*
- \* *Minority rights*
- \* *Heritage and environment protection*

EuroMed Youth grants are awarded on the basis of Calls for Proposals launched by the different EuroMed Youth Units (EMYUs). The grants support the following types of action:

**Youth Exchange** projects bring together young people from at least 4 different countries (2 EU member states and 2 Mediterranean partner countries), providing them with an opportunity to discuss various themes and learn about each other's country, culture and language.

**Voluntary Service** consists in an unpaid, full-time and non-profit-making transnational voluntary activity for the benefit of the community. It involves young people from at least 1 EU member state and 1 Mediterranean partner country.

**Support Measures** also follow the 2+2 formula (young people from 2 EU member states and 2 Mediterranean partner countries). Projects involve job-shadowing, contact making seminars, study visits, training courses and other kinds of seminars.

For more information about YiA and EMY III and how to contact the EMYUs please see the information in the Contact Details in part 4 below.

An example of how a 'Youth Exchange' initiative may contribute to furthering inter-religious dialogue can be seen in the box below. This example shows how a group from various environmental youth NGOs worked togeth-

## DECLARING INTENTION - EXAMPLE FROM YOUTH EXCHANGE "INTERRELIGIOUS DIALOGUE"

Lisbon 2.-9.7.2006

### Final statement proposal

We, the members of different green youth organizations, who gathered for the Youth Exchange in Lisbon in July 2006 in order to have an interfaith and -religious dialogue, have come to the following conclusions that we hope shall guide further work in this field.

We recognise various problems existing in our societies, such as the lack of knowledge and various prejudices about different religions. This may create a lack of cohesion within society and can lead to intolerance, negative prejudices and even violence. Especially, misconceptions caused by media and politicians serve to further hinder communication between people who see their religion or lack of religion to be the best lifestyle and therefore are intolerant to others.

We are concerned about the problems that may arise within religions about issues related to gender and sexual minorities, like questions about abortion or discrimination against women and homosexuals. Also, the rise of religious fundamentalism mixed with politics presents an obstacle to mutual understanding and prevents a healthy dialogue from taking place. Therefore, we call for religion and state to be separate from each other, and for measures which serve to lessen the influence of religion on public life to be implemented.

We think that the best solution to interreligious problems lies in intercultural communication between all members of society. Therefore, we wish to promote a dialogue between different kinds of religions all over the world. We find the right to choose one's religion to be the right of the individual and therefore we do not support any one particular religion and/or spirituality. Also, they should not be the main or only source of values.

We declare that it is possible to be young, green and religious at the same time. We encourage further exchanges, debates and meetings between young people, also with religious youth groups and not only with political ones. We are working on finding and stressing green ideas and values in religious discussion.

We, as the Federation of Young European Greens, want to enhance the awareness of people and especially of young people on how to coexist with people from different religious backgrounds in our society. We provide information about interreligious exchanges on our website, and invite our Member Organizations to cooperate on this topic. We recommend all the Green movements to also work with religious and other organisations.

er on an exchange programme to see how inter-religious dialoguing could cut across their main theme. The boxed text gives the exchange participants full 'declaration' on completing their initial activity.

## Project Development

Many of the participants on the Istanbul course were keen to use the training as a means of identifying partners and as such several activity ideas were proposed for future cooperation. A brief review of these ideas may stimulate others into similar planning. They do not all have explicit aims that relate to Faith, Religion and Dialogue, however all intend to imply contributions to intercultural and interfaith dialogue:

### Proposal 1 – Network for Inter-Religious Dialogue

Involving organisations in the following countries: Estonia, Egypt, France, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Netherlands, Syria, Turkey

#### Objectives:

- \* Connect partners
- \* Build a platform to improve understanding on IRD between partners
- \* Develop young leaders in IRD

#### Activities:

- \* Initially activate the network electronically through exchanges by e-group
- \* One organisation to act as 'hub'
- \* Create web pages
- \* Later organise some seminar to bring all together face-to-face to exchange experiences

### Proposal 2 – Youth Exchange to explore diversity within religions

Involving organisations in the following countries: Sweden, Azerbaijan, Moldova, France, Ukraine, Armenia

#### Objective:

- \* Explore differences and diversities within religions
- \* Use vehicle of the 'arts' to illustrate how the diversities co-exist

#### Activities:

- \* Focus on meeting in Ukraine, with location in some

kind of religious venue that will facilitate and encourage dialogue

- \* Exchange participants will work together on a joint artistic challenge

### Proposal 3 – Youth Exchange to explore living as a Minority

UK as the focus, with organisations from 5 other countries

#### Objective:

- \* To improve understanding of the challenges faced by Minorities

#### Activities:

- \* Exchange groups from 6 countries will be made up of half taken from the country's 'majority' and the other half from a particular 'minority'

### Proposal 4 – Study Visit re. Migration issues

Italy + (undefined, but could be Morocco)

#### Objective:

- \* To demonstrate to youth workers/leaders the difficulties that migrants may face on trying to integrate with a new community

#### Activities:

- \* Youth workers/researchers from country X (a country that is the source of migrants to EU, such as Morocco) visit a recipient country (like Italy)
- \* Identify main problems facing young migrants
- \* Document the issues in such a way that they can be used for awareness raising activities back in the 'source country'

## 2. Checklist for improving dialogue

### Dos

- \* Build up your own confidence to take on the challenges of Inter-faith and Inter-religious Dialogue by learning more about the concepts and the realities of

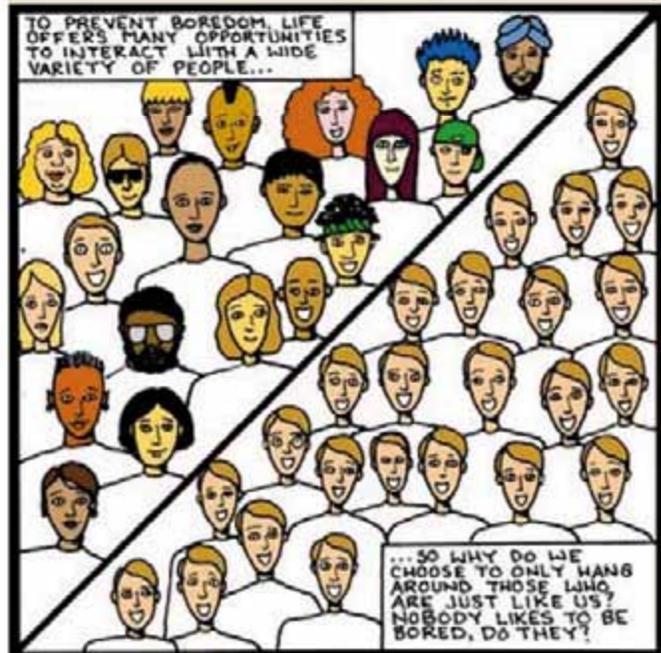
religious practices in and around Europe

- \* Find out more about what might be going on in your community in terms of the constraints and opportunities for dialogue. Speak with the representatives of the different religious institutions, community leaders, local authorities, schools
- \* Be clear what the need for dialogue is and what might be the purpose
- \* Invest resources into preparing for dialogue. Arrange activities with potential dialogue participants so that they and you are ready for the process. This might involve training or awareness-raising, such as the 'god in a box' approach, or activities to assist individuals in exploring their own identities, or to help them 'suspend' the tendency to make judgements before entering into dialogue
- \* Ensure access to an environment and venue that is conducive to dialogue
- \* Provide a suitable level and style of facilitation for the dialogue participants that support the process rather than directs it. The facilitator must be as open and non-judgemental as all the participants
- \* Be prepared to support any follow-up work that may arise from a dialogue process
- \* Share any lessons learnt from your experience on issues related to Faith, Religion and Dialogue through all available networks – such as the SALTO Resource Centres, National Agencies, E-Groups
- \* Secure resources to assist the dialogue process from your local community, from the EU's Youth in Action, and from other donors

#### Don'ts

- \* Don't be afraid to face up to the challenges presented by Inter-faith and Inter-Religious Dialogue in your community

- \* Don't rush into forcing a dialogue process without being well informed on the subjects, the context, and the needs of any potential participants



- \* Don't 'go it alone' - the very nature of dialoguing lends itself well to the development of partnerships to support the process
- \* Don't give up!

### 3. The 'End-piece' Before the References

During both the Training Courses in Belfast and Istanbul, the metaphor of 'taking a journey' to illustrate the process of exploring and participating in Inter-Faith or Inter-Religious Dialogue was commonly used. There were two particular uses of the metaphor that will remain in my (the rapporteur's) mind for a long time to come...

#### The Corrymeela experience

The Corrymeela Community operates a residential Centre in a village on the beautiful coastline north of Belfast in Northern Ireland. Amongst other things the Centre has a mission to:



- \* Be in positive relationship with people regardless of class, religious opinion or political conviction
- \* Create safe spaces where people of diverse backgrounds can come and meet each other, where there is an atmosphere of trust and acceptance and where differences can be acknowledged, explored and accepted
- \* Work to realize a society whose priorities are justice, mutual respect, the participation of all, concern for the vulnerable and the stranger, stewardship of resources, and care for creation

As an approach to help the staff and volunteers of the Centre achieve their mission, one of the Social Workers explained that it was a bit like taking a journey through someone else's life. "What we do at Corrymeela is simple. We are walking along with people". And by walking side by side, the Community members are able to first come to terms with their own identities and secondly be prepared to enter into a meaningful dialogue with others.

### The Istanbul experience

Anyone that knows modern day Istanbul knows that it is an incredibly exciting, bustling city, and that to find your way around the city it is necessary to navigate congested roadways, taxis driven by Formula One drivers, packed trams, a dizzying array of Water-buses and ferries, and cars obeying highway rules that only apply in Istanbul (i.e. none!). Thus it was not surprising that for the participants of the Istanbul TC, moving around the city in order to undertake site visits generated many stories. One participant reflect-

ing on the experience saw that it mirrored the challenges of engaging in dialogue:

"We traveled around Istanbul using all kinds of transport. This was quite a hassle as every individual on the streets of the city seems to be most concerned about their individual journey and objective of that journey, and not at all concerned about the journeys of others, even though those 'others' were perpetually crossing their path." We need to think more about this 'journey processes and how we can better understand the journeys of others.



#### 4 Contact details; references; where to find more information

##### Organisations and their web sites

###### *Alevilik Bektaşilik Research Site*

A portal run by an Alevi association in Turkey that offers many English language papers and information about the Alevi sect.

<http://www.alevibektasi.org>

###### *The Corrymeela Centre*

For more about the innovative support to dialogue and reconciliation at the Corrymeela Centre in Northern Ireland see:

[www.corrymeela.org](http://www.corrymeela.org)

###### *The Council of Europe's Cultural Cooperation/Youth*

For the period 2006-2008 priorities are aimed at youth promoting intercultural dialogue, inter-religious co-operation and respect for cultural difference. For more information about these priorities and the related events and financing opportunities visit the web pages at:

[http://www.coe.int/t/e/cultural\\_co-operation/youth](http://www.coe.int/t/e/cultural_co-operation/youth)

###### *Democratic Dialogue*

An independent think tank operating in Belfast, Northern Ireland, which produces regular reports on issues related to producing a peaceful, inclusive and fair society.

[www.democraticdialogue.org](http://www.democraticdialogue.org)

###### *The Dialogue Group*

You can learn more about David Bohm and his approaches to dialogue by reading the articles and training resources available from the Dialogue Group at [www.thedialogue-grouponline.com](http://www.thedialogue-grouponline.com)

###### *Dialogue Lab*

Is a European organization by and for young people who want to contribute constructively to just and peaceful societies. The organization is non-governmental and politically independent. It publishes a regular newsletter and runs a number of training activities, seminars, and working groups on dialogue issues.

[www.dialogue-lab.org](http://www.dialogue-lab.org)

###### *European Commission's Youth Portal*

Offers you information, news and discussions – all about Europe and relevant to young people – and details about the Youth in Action Programme.

[www.europa.eu.int/youth](http://www.europa.eu.int/youth)

###### *EuroMed Youth III Programme*

EuroMed Youth III Programme and the EMY Units contact details can be found at:

[www.euromedyouth.net](http://www.euromedyouth.net)

###### *InterChange*

'We help to give birth to and sustain communities of practice, networks and partnerships that can function as living organizations or systems. Our means include process design and process hosting, using a large range of social technologies, large-scale conversations and group processes to enable the emergence of the collective intelligence necessary to create change and wise action'. This is an organisation and site run by Töke Moeller, who is also quoted in Lyn Hartley's book in the Bibliography.

<http://interchange.dk>

###### *Islamic Studies Centre, Istanbul*

Established by the Turkish Religious Foundation in order to conduct academic research especially in the areas of Islamic Studies and Middle Eastern Affairs. (Web pages are only in Turkish, but you can navigate to English language and Arabic texts).

[www.isam.org.tr](http://www.isam.org.tr)

###### *Kimse Yok Mu, Association for Solidarity & Aid, Istanbul, Turkey*

Humanitarian relief organization, founded by believers of the Islamic faith in the aftermath of the 1999 earthquake in Turkey, but offering assistance on a needs rather than faith basis.

[www.kimseyokjnu.org.tr](http://www.kimseyokjnu.org.tr)

###### *The Mandala Project*

A good website to find training resources using and explaining 'mandalas' is

[www.themandalaproject.org](http://www.themandalaproject.org)

###### *The Foundation of Universal Lovers of Mevlana Rumi*

Runs a web site for anyone interested to find out more

about Sufism, Mevlani Rumi, and the Whirling Dervishes, and if you happen to be visiting Istanbul, you can find out from this site where to see public performances of the modern day Dervishes.

[www.whirlingdervishistanbul.com](http://www.whirlingdervishistanbul.com)

*The North East Religious Learning Resources Centre*

Amongst other things, this Centre has developed and facilitated learning on different religions within youth communities by using the 'God in a Box' tool.

[www.resourcecentreonline.co.uk](http://www.resourcecentreonline.co.uk)

[resourcecentre@resourcecentreonline.co.uk](mailto:resourcecentre@resourcecentreonline.co.uk)

*SALTO Resource Centres*

All methods and activities run by the trainers during this course can be found in the Toolbox at [www.salto-youth.net/find-a-tool](http://www.salto-youth.net/find-a-tool).

Some inspiration on the background of the sessions can be found at:

[www.salto-youth.net/faithdialogueresources](http://www.salto-youth.net/faithdialogueresources)

**SALTO Cultural Diversity Resource Centre** responds to the needs of the users of the European Youth in Action programme in order to provide training and resources about Cultural Diversity. Over the last year we have been concentrating on Communication, with a seminar on effective and sensitive intercultural communication, leading into this Faith & Dialogue training course. We hope to take these issues further in the European year of Intercultural Dialogue 2008.

[www.salto-youth.net/diversity](http://www.salto-youth.net/diversity)

**SALTO Eastern Europe and Caucasus** was formed in October 2003 by European Commission. It continues work on the basis of EC decision to support the cooperation within the Youth in Action Programme with Neighbouring Partner Countries from Eastern Europe and Caucasus Region: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, Russia and Ukraine.

[www.salto-youth.net/eeca](http://www.salto-youth.net/eeca)

Here you can find some photos from the Inter-religious Dialogue TC in Istanbul:

[www.salto-youth.net/IRDphotos](http://www.salto-youth.net/IRDphotos)



**SALTO EuroMed Resource Centre** aims to enhance the cooperation between the both sides of Mediterranean Sea. For this reason, we organize several activities to foster the cooperation between National Agencies and EuroMed Youth Units. Moreover, for the European year on Intercultural Dialogue 2008, we provide training courses focusing on this topic. You can find more information on line.

[www.salto-youth.net/euromed](http://www.salto-youth.net/euromed)

*United Religions Initiative*

United Religions Initiative (URI) was founded in 2000 by an extraordinary global community committed to promoting enduring, daily interfaith cooperation and to ending religiously motivated violence. Today the URI includes thousands of members in over 65 countries representing more than 100 religions, spiritual expressions, and indigenous traditions.

[www.uri.org](http://www.uri.org)

*Wikipedia*

The online, open source and free-to-use encyclopedia that has many interesting entries relating to Faith, Religion and Dialogue.

<http://en.wikipedia.org>

*The Youth Council of Northern Ireland*

The Youth Council seeks to champion the well-being, rights and participation of young people by: supporting the development of effective youth policies and quality youth work practice; and facilitating meaningful collaboration between youth organisations and all sectors with responsibility for young people.

<http://www.ycni.org>

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<http://alldifferent-allequal.info>

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