The Common Ground Approach to Religious Engagement

FACILITATOR GUIDE

Introduction

Religion has the power to be both a force for peace and a weapon of war. Search for Common Ground's (Search)[1] *Common Ground Approach (CGA) to Religious Engagement* has been developed to galvanize the former and minimize the exploitation of religion for the latter. Most religious actors[2] want to be part of a solution to conflict rather than part of the problem. As influential and trusted people within their communities, with many assets at their disposal, they are well positioned to promote peace through their networks.[3] Search's goal is to work with them to build safer, just, and more harmonious societies where collaborations across religions and other sectors of society are the norm, interreligious dialogue is valued and freedom of religion or belief (FoRB) is upheld.

For followers, religion provides a framework for understanding the material and spiritual world and how to live their lives accordingly. It is an inextricable factor of their identity, of who they are and who they are not. Identity plays a highly significant role in the intersection between religion and conflict; hardly surprising given that for the world's seven billion people today, nearly six billion identify as members of religious communities[4].

1   Search for Common Ground (Search) is an international organization committed to conflict transformation. Since 1982, we have led programs around the world to help societies channel their differences away from adversarial approaches and towards collaborative solutions. Our long-term programming in 30 countries and 141 active projects around the world enables Search to reach over 700,000 direct participants in many of the world's most challenging conflicts. (www.sfcg.org, 2019 statistics. Numbers vary annually.)

2   Religious actors include global and community leaders, men, women and youth whose faith infuses their actions.

3   Dr. William F. Vendley, 'The Power of Inter-Religious Cooperation to Transform Conflict', CrossCurrents; Vol. 55, No. 1, CURRENT ISSUES IN INTERFAITH WORK (SPRING 2005), pp. 90-9 https://www.jstor.org/stable/24461189?seq=1#page_scan_tab_contents

4   The Global Religious Landscape, Pew Research Center, December 18 2012, http://www.pewforum.org/2012/12/18/global-religious-landscape-exec

When people embroiled in conflict feel their deeply held religious identities are under attack, they tend to withdraw into their communities, demonize the perceived enemy and find justifications for violence. Religion then becomes a lightning rod for conflict and can be manipulated to advance a binary 'us versus them' mentality. This is true of conflicting identities within religions, between religions and between secular and religious actors. A commonly held opinion, therefore, has religion as one of the main drivers of conflict impeding efforts to solve global problems like terrorism.

Yet the many religious actors and faith-based non-profit organizations around the world working to reduce conflicts and helping those suffering from violence and oppression attest to the reverse. Religion is not the main cause of war today[5]. At the same time the majority of armed conflicts now have a religious dimension and this number is on the rise[6]. If we want to live in safer and more harmonious societies, we cannot afford to ignore the religious aspects of a conflict and how religion can be both a driver of violence and a path to peace.

For a comprehensive introduction to Search's approach to religious engagement, see: *Overview: CGA to Religious Engagement*.

5   Five Key Questions answered on the link between Peace and Religion, Institute for Economics & Peace. October 2014
6   Rethinking Mediation: Resolving Religious Conflicts. CSS Policy Perspectives Vol. 6/1, February 2018

The CGA to Religious Engagement Toolkit

Search's CGA to Religious Engagement toolkit is the product of decades of learning collected from individual projects across the organization and from external sources. It outlines effective strategies for improving communication and building partnerships with religious actors in the communities we serve. The development of this guide, and accompanying resource materials, is intended to help systematize Search's engagement with religious actors globally.

THE CGA TO RELIGIOUS ENGAGEMENT TOOL KIT INCLUDES:

- CGA to Religious Engagement Overview – PDF
- CGA to Religious Engagement Facilitator Guide – PDF
- CGA to Religious Engagement Participant Workbook – PDF
- CGA to Religious Engagement PowerPoint – PPT
- CGA to Religious Engagement Religious Literacy Quiz – PPT

The Purpose of This Facilitator Guide

This guide supports the delivery of a two-day introductory training on Search's *CGA to Religious Engagement*. It includes detailed instructions on how to facilitate each of its eight modules, as well as background information on key concepts. The guide complements a set of PowerPoint slides that summarizes the key messages and includes images and graphics that support learning.

Who are these materials for?

SEARCH PRACTITIONERS WORKING WITH RELIGIOUS ACTORS

The primary target audience for these resource materials is Search's field-based practitioners–staff in Search's many offices across Africa, Asia, and the Middle East who meet and work with religious actors in their locales. However, they will be of use to all Search staff who are developing policies and initiatives and/or designing, monitoring and evaluating projects that have a religious engagement dimension to them. We anticipate that as Search builds its fluency in the approach, effective strategies for engaging religious actors will be mainstreamed across the organization in country programs and their designs.

While the objective is to provide common ground training in religious engagement for internal Search use, organizations and institutions working in this field in various countries have demonstrated eagerness at receiving the resources. This reflects both a broader need for religious engagement trainings in general and a growing acceptance of the concepts therein. We are therefore ready to share the materials for wider use outside Search free of charge and on request.

Our next step is developing an online course, based on these materials, in co-partnership with the United States Institute of Peace (USIP) for the public at large which we plan to launch in early 2021.

PARTICIPANTS OF TRAININGS

As the materials are highly experiential, a heterogenous mix of participants will enrich discussions and learning. By heterogenous, we mean men, women, younger and older people, and those of different religions and no religion. While the trainings are likely to take place for staff at a specific Search location, inviting people from other Search offices with diverse experiences will enrich the discussion further.

Once staff have been trained and projects designed using the materials at hand, project managers may choose to include religious engagement trainings within the projects themselves for their own target audiences e.g. religious actors, and/or other participants working in cooperation with them.

Methodology

Similar to Search's flagship CGA training, this guide adopts an experiential approach to learning. Experiential learning is promoted through facilitation techniques that relate to learners' life experiences and build on what they already know. Together the facilitator and CGA participants examine their own experiences, how religious and secular identities play a part in their lives and how these identities may or may not color their approach to engaging religious actors from different religions.

Contents of this Training

The training, divided into eight modules that build one upon the other, also provides knowledge essential to engaging religious actors in peacebuilding.

1. The *first module* offers basic definitions and an understanding of Search's approach to engaging religious actors and looks at possible risks inherent in the process.
2. The *second module* explores issues of identity, religion and violent conflict and how engaging religious actors can transform conflict.
3. The *third module* examines the various types of religious actors and provides tools to effectively recruit and engage them.
4. The *fourth module* provides knowledge on five world religions and the sensitivities needed to work with diverse religious actors effectively.
5. The *fifth module* emphasizes the essential need to engage female religious actors in peacebuilding and how to do so while exploring the potential challenges.
6. The *sixth module* examines the role of religious youth in peacebuilding and offers creative ways to include them in projects that also close intergenerational gaps.
7. The *seventh module* focuses on the essential need to use a multi-sectoral approach when engaging religious actors in peacebuilding in order to ensure enduring, systemic change.
8. The *eighth and final module* outlines key principles when designing projects that include religious actors and provides best practices for monitoring and evaluation.

CUSTOMIZE TO FOCUS

While we recommend that staff receive training in all eight modules, we know that time constraints sometimes prevail. We see the first four modules as providing a fundamental understanding of the CGA to religious engagement and therefore essential to working with religious actors. As modules five to eight focus on specific sectors and spheres of work, office staff may decide to prioritize one module over another depending on time limitations and the program focus of the office.

EXPLORING IDEAS THROUGH EXPERIENTIAL EDUCATION

The goal of the training is not to arrive at a specific "right answer" but the exploration of ideas and issues that can lead to constructive changes in attitude, greater confidence in working with religious actors and the application of new skills in Search's programs and initiatives. For a more detailed introduction to experiential learning and Search's approach to facilitation see *The Common Ground Approach: Guide for Facilitators* a guide designed to help CGA facilitators cultivate a climate of trust and connection during training and dialogue initiatives.

The Modules in Detail

1. INTRODUCTION TO RELIGIOUS ENGAGEMENT

This module introduces religious engagement and its role in the broader peacebuilding field. It clarifies the term 'religious actors' and describes the benefits of engaging a wide range of people-of-faith at all levels of society in peacebuilding efforts. It explores the potential risks of religious engagement and emphasizes the importance of *Do No Harm* principles.

2. RELIGION: A FORCE FOR PEACE – A DRIVER OF CONFLICT?

This module examines the complex dynamics between identity, religion and violent conflict. It opens a discussion on the potential for religious engagement to transform conflict. The module concludes with an exploration of the role religious actors can play as 'connectors' and as a force for peace.

3. ENGAGING RELIGIOUS ACTORS IN PEACEBUILDING

This module describes the various types of religious actors and the different perspectives they bring to the peacebuilding table. It discusses the benefits of engaging religious actors at all levels of society in order to target diverse populations and achieve wide-ranging objectives. This module also introduces Search practitioners to a variety of tools that can be used to effectively recruit and engage religious actors of diverse ages and backgrounds

4. RELIGIOUS SENSITIVITY

This module provides a basic understanding of theologies and rituals of five world religions. The module highlights religious and cultural traditions to be considered when designing projects and concludes with an overview of challenges that may arise when working with religious actors.

5. ENGAGING WOMEN

This module provides an inclusive definition of female religious actors that ensures their engagement in the process of peacebuilding. It offers good practices on how to recruit and engage religious women in conflict transformation activities while exploring the challenges that may arise when including them in activities.

6. ENGAGING YOUTH

This module highlights the role religious youth play in peacebuilding and offers creative methods to engage youth in religious engagement projects. It explores the generation gap between youth and older religious actors as well as the benefits of intergenerational projects.

7. A MULTI-SECTORAL APPROACH TO RELIGIOUS ENGAGEMENT

This module explores the various sectors (e.g. state, governmental, multi-lateral, civil society, media) that interface with religious actors. It discusses the shared values and common interests that underpin their cooperation in building more peaceful societies and the benefits and risks of such collaborations.

8. DESIGN, MONITORING, AND EVALUATION FOR RELIGIOUS ENGAGEMENT

This module outlines the key principles of designing projects for religious actors and reiterates the importance of a 'Do-No-Harm' approach. It also provides best practices for effective monitoring and evaluation when working with religious actors.

Training Agenda

DAY ONE
Module 1 // 105 minutes
Module 2 // 105 minutes
LUNCH BREAK
Module 3 // 125 minutes
Tea/Coffee Break
Module 4 // 115 minutes

DAY TWO
Module 5 // 110 minutes
Module 6 // 115 minutes
LUNCH BREAK
Module 7 // 135 minutes
Tea/Coffee Break
Module 8 // 100 minutes

Facilitator's Key

At the beginning of each activity there is text explaining the objectives of the activity. There is a light blue box with any preparation needed and the materials required, if any. Preparation indicates anything else that must be completed in advance for the smooth running of the module.

The *CGA to Religious Engagement PowerPoint, the Religious Literacy Quiz PowerPoint* and the *Participant Workbook* complement this guide. The modules are planned with a computer, projector and screen in mind.

The facilitator is expected to read through this guide in advance and familiarize her/himself with the activities and case studies provided. At the end of each module, additional reading material is suggested for further study.

Included in this guide are expanded versions of many of the slides in the *CGA to Religious Engagement PowerPoint*. These materials include additional information for the facilitator to use as they are presenting the corresponding slide.

Special instructions to the facilitator are included throughout this guide. You will find them throughout this guide in colored text.

Throughout the guide you will see this mark in places where extra attention should be made to do no harm or bring the *'Do No Harm'* slide to the forefront of the dialogue.

DO NO HARM

NOTE ABOUT THE LAYOUT OF THIS GUIDE

This guide is set up to print double-sided on A4 paper.

Dual Facilitation Model

COVID-19 CONTINGENCIES

The COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in many changes to our lives including severe restrictions on international travel. As a result, we are recommending a dual facilitation model of the workshop as a contingency measure to enable Search field staff and other potential participants to be trained in the 8 modules even when a religious engagement facilitator cannot attend in person. This model works if staff have physically returned to their respective offices or are able to congregate together in one room.

METHODOLOGY

The workshop is led by two trainers: a local facilitator who supports the workshop on-site from the Search's field office, and a remote instructor from Search's Religious Engagement unit who leads the training via a video-conferencing platform. This model provides local teams with the opportunity to learn directly from a Religious Engagement unit instructor, without the latter having to travel to the field office site, while at the same time enjoy the experiential nature of the workshop's activities through the guidance of a local facilitator. The local facilitator must have prior experience in leading group facilitations for this to work well and it is helpful if s/he also has knowledge of religious engagement. The field office also needs a good internet connection to enable the remote instructor to connect with it over an extended period.

As a general rule, the local facilitator leads the experiential activities that are to be found in each of the workshop's modules, while the remote instructor presents the frontal information sharing elements, including the PowerPoint slides, and answers participants' questions. It is essential that the local facilitator and the remote instructor discuss in detail and decide on the practical division of roles in advance of the workshop. We envision that after the local facilitator has jointly led several workshops together with the online instructor, s/he will have garnered enough knowledge and experience to run future workshops alone. In this way, the dual model also becomes a form of training of trainers for facilitators on site.

The workshop may be held continuously over two days, but it is more likely to be divided according to the eight modules with one or two modules presented a day over several days or weeks according to the needs of the remote instructor and the participants.

In addition to providing a contingency measure for trainings as a result of the pandemic, this dual module saves field offices international travel and per diem costs. It may also allow for more spontaneous workshop scheduling since the field office will not need to wait for the religious engagement instructor's travel availability.

1.

Introduction to Religious Engagement

THE **COMMON GROUND APPROACH** TO **RELIGIOUS ENGAGEMENT**

SEARCH
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Introduction to Religious Engagement

This module introduces religious engagement and its role in the broader peacebuilding field. It clarifies the term 'religious actors' and describes the benefits of engaging a wide range of people-of-faith at all levels of society in peacebuilding efforts. It explores the potential risks of religious engagement and emphasizes the importance of *Do No Harm* principles.

IN THIS MODULE

105 MINUTES
THIS MODULE

1. Introduction & Icebreaker // *Standing Baseline*
2. CGA to Religious Engagement // *Presentation*
3. Defining Religious Engagement // *Presentation & Discussion*
4. Building Consensus on the Protection of Holy Sites in Northern Nigeria // *Case Study Discussion*
5. Interreligious Dialogue Vs. Religious Engagement // *Presentation & Discussion*
6. Risks of Religious Engagement // *Think-Pair-Share*

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Religion plays a significant role in many societies and in a majority of people's lives
- Religious engagement goes beyond interreligious dialogue. It is a variety of concrete activities that reduce conflict and build peace
- Religious actors include a diversity of people: men, women, youth, community leaders, activists, educators, social workers etc.
- Note the risks when engaging religious actors. Carefully consider how to engage; particularly prior to ground-breaking initiatives in new locations

Icebreaker // Standing Baseline

15 MINUTES
THIS ACTIVITY

Introduce the facilitation team and build initial trust, comfort, and familiarity among the participants and facilitators. Lay ground rules for the workshop, e.g. use of mobile phones, punctuality, listening and sharing etc.

The standing baseline is a great way to help people get to know each other in an interactive and visual way. It can provide a physical snapshot of the group without having to go through long individualized, verbal introductions.

PREPARATION

- Prepare stickers and markers for participants to create name tags.

- Familiarize yourself with the Standing Baseline sample statements.

- Adapt the statements according to the needs of different workshop locations and participants.

- Additional statements can be found in *The Common Ground Approach: A Guide for Facilitators.*

MATERIALS

- Stickers
- Markers

BEFORE THE ICEBREAKER // WELCOME!

Have the participants write their name on a sticker to wear as a name tag for the rest of the day.

Ask the participants to share their name and where they come from.

STANDING BASELINE

1. After welcoming everyone to the workshop begin by asking participants to stand up and form a straight line. Explain that when you say a statement or question, they will line up to the left or the right according to their answer or viewpoint. As participants discover 'where they are on the scale' encourage them to speak to each other.

2. Create an open space in the training room.

3. Draw an imaginary line down the middle of the space. Explain that this line represents a spectrum between disagree (on the left side of the room) and agree (on the right side of the room).

4. You will read out a statement and participants stand on the line based on their personal opinion.

    If they 100% disagree with the statement they should stand to the far left. If they 30% disagree they should stand left of center, and so on.

    Begin with neutral statements that are not connected to 'disagree or agree'.

5. The participants are asked to line up from top to bottom on the imaginary line according to their answers (highest numbers at the top, lowest as the bottom).

6. Read out the first neutral statement.

    ### NEUTRAL STATEMENTS

    -   *Your place according to birth among your siblings (e.g. Only child, First born, second born, third born, last born etc.).*
    -   *The month you were born.*
    -   *The length of time you have worked at your organization.*

7. After 2-3 neutral statements continue with statements that are explicitly connected to participant's work and the workshop's objectives.

    "Order yourselves based on how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statement...."

    ### STATEMENTS CONNECTED TO 'AGREE' OR 'DISAGREE'

    -   *I think that religion is a significant factor in my country's conflict.*
    -   *I think that religious actors make excellent peacebuilders.*
    -   *I am confident in my ability to engage religious actors in peacebuilding.*
    -   *I think my country is moving in the right direction towards peace.*
    -   *I am hopeful that our efforts to build peace are paying off.*
    -   *I think that many religious leaders would not support peace efforts if led by women.*
    -   *I am worried that if religious actors are included in peacebuilding efforts they might do more harm than good.*

8. After reading each statement invite participants to turn to their neighbor, or neighbors, and discuss their responses.

9. After the last statement has been read and discussed, close by asking a few participants to share what they hope to leave with after the workshop is over.

10. Ask participants to take their seats

MODULE 1 **ACTIVITY 2**

CGA to Religious Engagement // Presentation

5 MINUTES
THIS ACTIVITY

Familiarize participants with the learning objectives and teaching methodology of the training.

Use the 'CGA to Religious Engagement' slide to present the workshop objectives.

CGA TO RELIGIOUS ENGAGEMENT

- Introduction
- Team
- Schedule
- Objectives
- Ground Rules

MODULE 1 **ACTIVITY 3**

Defining Religious Engagement // Presentation & Discussion

30 MINUTES
THIS ACTIVITY

Introduce participants to the CGA to Religious Engagement lexicon. Expand participants' understanding of religious engagement beyond religious dialogue.

PREPARATION

- Decide whether to begin activity 1 with the discussion in steps 1 and 2, OR the presentation in step 3.

  *If participants **have worked on religious engagement projects,** begin with the discussion and then proceed to the slide as is written below in step 3.*

  *If the participants **do not have prior experience with religious engagement**, start with step 3, proceed with the discussion in steps 1 and 2, and then continue to step 4.*

MATERIALS

- Sticky notes (optional)

1. Ask participants the following discussion question:

   What has been your experience working with religious leaders?

2. Elicit responses from participants. Prompt further discussion using the following questions.

   - *Why is 'religious engagement' particularly important today?*
   - *Why do you think your organization is investing in religious engagement?*
   - *Who are the people involved in religious engagement and what are some of the things they do as part of their religious engagement efforts?*
   - *Why might religious actors be good peacebuilders?*

3. Present the three assumptions that underpin Search's religious engagement theory of change.

THE THREE BASIC ASSUMPTIONS

There are three basic assumptions that underpin our religious engagement work and inform our theory of change.

1. It is vital to *involve religious actors in peacebuilding*.

    Religious actors often have the influence to shape social norms.

    Many religious actors belong to institutions that can scale positive, enduring change locally, regionally and internationally

    They can contribute valuable religious perspectives on a variety of issues, even those not traditionally considered religious e.g. the environment, refugees, animal welfare

2. Religion can be a *driver of conflict* and *a path to peace*.

    Engaging religious actors is essential because religion can be used both as a driver of conflict and a path to peace.

    It is essential not to view religion or religious actors as inherently a source of conflict and to always look for opportunities to mobilize religious actors together with other relevant stakeholders in favor of peacebuilding.

3. *Dialogue and joint action* are the most effective ways to cross the religious dividing line.

    Using a Common Ground approach with religious actors that values dialogue and joint action as the accepted response to conflict is the most effective way to progress beyond adversarial approaches and catalyze collaborative solutions across religious dividing lines.

4. Present a brief history of Search's involvement in religious engagement around the world, using the 'History of Search's Religious Engagement' map slide.

HISTORY OF SEARCH'S RELIGIOUS ENGAGEMENT

Search has led religious engagement projects around the world including in: Central African Republic (CAR), Indonesia, Jerusalem, Jordan, Kyrgyzstan, Lebanon, Morocco, Myanmar, Nigeria, and Tunisia.

5. Present Search's definitions of religious engagement and religious actors in the context of Search's work on religious engagement

RELIGIOUS ENGAGEMENT

Religious engagement is ongoing and takes place during times of both peace and conflict.

When Search uses the term religious engagement, we are referring to peacebuilding activities that engage religious actors, often in collaboration with other sectors in the broader society, on matters of religion and society.

This is likely to include working with religious actors from different traditions on conflicts where religious identity and belief play significant roles in exacerbating tensions.

RELIGIOUS ACTORS

A religious actor is any individual in a society who exercises a position of influence within a religious community by virtue of his/her religious standing and/or credibility.

We intentionally use the term 'religious actors' when referring to religious engagement in order to include people who may not have formal religious authority, titles or qualifications.

These include men, women and youth; community lay-leaders, educators, social workers, and activists.

MODULE 1 **ACTIVITY 3**

Nigeria // Case Study & Discussion

30 MINUTES
THIS ACTIVITY

1. Introduce the Universal Code of Conduct Nigeria Case Study as an illustration of how Search effectively engages religious actors. The Nigeria case study can also be found in *Module 1 of the participant workbook*.

2. Play the video included in the PowerPoint.

VIDEO ON THE CASE STUDY

3. Have participants turn to a neighbor or form groups of three and share their responses to the questions.

   If you are having trouble encouraging participants to engage, first project the slide with the discussion questions.

   After allowing 10-15 minutes for discussion, debrief as a group.

4. Debrief as a group.

SAMPLE DEBRIEF QUESTIONS

- *Why were religious actors chosen to be the key participants in this project?*
- *Why did this project focus on places of worship?*
- *Are there any similarities between the conflict in Plateau State, Nigeria, and your location? What are they?*
- *Do you think religious engagement can be a useful tool in your location? Why or why not?*

Universal Code of Conduct on Holy Sites

In 2016 Search for Common Ground Nigeria launched, 'Building Consensus on the Protection of Holy Sites' in northern Nigeria. The project culminated its first stage with a two-day national conference where 64 Christian and Muslim religious leaders developed a shared statement that endorses the protection of holy sites. Religious leaders committed to disseminating the statement in their communities and institutions through the media, town hall meetings, and educational programs in schools.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Attacks on places of worship often change the nature of a conflict by adding a religious dimension to it which exacerbates tensions.
- Attacks on places of worship factionalize communities and are used as weapons to inflict physical and psychological pain.
- Religious actors generally want to be part of a solution to reducing conflicts.
- Practically, religious actors who serve as guardians of holy sites are able to work at the grass-roots level with their communities to promote the protection of holy sites.

REFERENCES

Search, 'Building Consensus on Protection of Holy Sites in Norther Nigeria', 2017

Search, 'Project Brief: Building Consensus on the Protection of Holy Sites in Northern Nigeria', 2017

MODULE 1 **ACTIVITY 5**

Interreligious Dialogue vs. Religious Engagement // Presentation & Discussion

10 MINUTES
THIS ACTIVITY

1. Present the slide entitled 'Interreligious Dialogue vs. Religious Engagement.'

INTERRELIGIOUS DIALOGUE VS. RELIGIOUS ENGAGEMENT

RELIGIOUS ENGAGEMENT

INTERRELIGIOUS DIALOGUE

RELIGIOUS ENGAGEMENT

- Can include one or more regions
- Can address a variety of conflict issues

INTERRELIGIOUS DIALOGUE

- Focuses on dialogue as a methodology for interreligious understanding
- Builds mutual respect and trust

2. Give participants a brief moment on their own to consider the relationship between interreligious dialogue and religious engagement. Ask 1-2 volunteers to share.

3. Conclude by explaining that religious engagement includes people of religion or no religion and can address a variety of issues, including topics not specifically focusing on religion. Joint interreligious action may be used to find pragmatic solutions to shared problems. It is often only later that religious actors see interreligious dialogue as an ideological value in itself. Interreligious dialogue is therefore a subset of religious engagement. Interreligious dialogue is a tool to build trust, increase knowledge and reduce conflict between two or more religious groupings.

4. Reinforce understanding by asking participants if the Nigeria Case Study is an example of interreligious dialogue or religious engagement.

   ANSWER – Both. Shared concern over the protection of holy sites was used as a catalyst to bring religious leaders from Muslim and Christian communities to discuss a solution.

   However, the approach also enabled interreligious dialogue, which helped build mutual trust and respect.

MODULE 1 **ACTIVITY 6**

Risks of Religious Engagement // Think-Pair-Share

20 MINUTES
THIS ACTIVITY

To deepen understanding of the potential risks of engaging religious actors.

1. Project the Think-Pair-Share slide.

> **THINK-PAIR-SHARE**

ACTIVITY
Risks of Religious Engagement: Think-Pair-Share

My thoughts

My partner's thoughts

Thoughts to share with the group

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THE COMMON GROUND APPROACH TO RELIGIOUS ENGAGEMENT

2. Ask participants to turn to *Module 1 of the participant workbook*. Give participants a few minutes to silently write down what risks there may be to using religious engagement as a peacebuilding tool.

3. Next, ask the participants to turn to a neighbor and exchange the risks they wrote down. The partner's thoughts can be recorded in the 'My partner's thoughts column'.

4. Then ask the partners to discuss how to mitigate these risks. These ideas should be noted down in the 'Thoughts to be shared with the group' column.

5. Invite a few pairs to share their ideas with the group. Participants can write down any ideas they had not yet considered in their chart.

6. Present the slide on 'Risks of Religious Engagement' as a brief review and to make sure all risks have been covered.

RISKS OF RELIGIOUS ENGAGEMENT

LEGITIMIZING TOXIC OR EXTREMIST DISCOURSE

- Including extremist religious voices can sometimes do more harm than good.
  - » We risk legitimizing extremist voices by engaging with them.
  - » It is often more difficult to build trust and hold dialogues with people who have been victims of extremist, violent views if we also engage with those extremist voices.

INSTRUMENTALIZING RELIGION

- Governments and civil society organizations may (or may be perceived to) co-opt religious language or influence to support their own agendas.
  - » Similarly, religious actors may instrumentalize their involvement in policies and projects to further their own agendas.

MISUNDERSTANDING THE ROLE OF RELIGION IN A CONFLICT

- Each conflict has its own religious context; be careful not to over- or under-estimate the role of religion in a conflict. *(This will be discussed further in Module 2)*

7. Present the 'Do No Harm' slide. Remind participants that as peacebuilders we must always consider how programs impact local dynamics and relationships.

DO NO HARM

A *'Do No Harm'* approach causes peacebuilding practitioners to consider how programs impact local dynamics and relationships.

Religious engagement needs *extra sensitivity* in research and preparation to prevent unintended negative consequences.

DO NO HARM

8. Close by reviewing Module 1: Key Takeaways.

MODULE 1: KEY TAKEAWAYS

Distribute sticky notes. Invite participants to write a personal takeaway on the note and stick it on the projected slide or a prepared flip chart titled 'Module 1.'

Introduction to Religious Engagement

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KEY TAKEAWAYS

1. Religion plays a significant role in many societies and in a majority of people's lives.

2. Religious engagement goes beyond interreligious dialogue. It is a variety of concrete activities that reduce conflict and build peace.

3. Religious actors include a diversity of people: men, women, youth, community leaders, activists, educators, social workers etc.

4. Note the risks when engaging religious actors. Carefully consider how to engage; particularly prior to ground-breaking initiatives in new locations.

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THE COMMON GROUND APPROACH TO RELIGIOUS ENGAGEMENT

1. Introduction to Religious Engagement

2. Religion: A Force for Peace–a Driver of Conflict?

3. Engaging Religious Actors in Peacebuilding

4. Religious Sensitivity

5. Engaging Women

6. Engaging Youth

7. A multi-Sectoral Approach to Religious Engagement

8. Design, Monitoring, and Evaluation for Religious Engagement

FURTHER READING

Universal Code of Conduct on Holy Sites

Search for Common Ground, Building Consensus on Protection of Holy Sites in Northern Nigeria, 2017

Search for Common Ground, Project Brief: Building Consensus on the Protection of Holy Sites in Northern Nigeria, 2017

CDA Collaborative Learning Projects, Do No Harm Workshop Trainer's Manual, 2016

2.

Religion: A Force for Peace–A Driver of Conflict?

THE **COMMON GROUND APPROACH** TO **RELIGIOUS ENGAGEMENT**

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GROUND

Religion: A Force for Peace-A Driver of Conflict?

This module examines the complex dynamics between identity, religion and violent conflict. It opens a discussion on the potential for religious engagement to transform conflict. The module concludes with an exploration of the role religious actors can play as 'connectors' and as a force for peace.

IN THIS MODULE

🕐 **105 MINUTES**
THIS MODULE

1. Identity // *Identity Flower & Debrief*
2. Religious Affiliation // *Discussion*
3. Conflict Analysis // *Case Study Discussion*
4. Using Religious Engagement // *Presentation & Discussion*

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- A large majority of the world is religiously affiliated.
- Religion/religious identity can be manipulated to exacerbate conflicts.
- We may do more harm than good when we overestimate the role of religion in conflicts.
- Religion and religious actors can act as 'connectors' and be a force for peace.

MODULE 2 **ACTIVITY 1**

Identity // Identity Flower & Debrief

15 MINUTES
THIS ACTIVITY

Explore the multiple facets of our own identity. Understand how identity can be a connector and a divider in times of conflict.

PREPARATION

- If needed, create an identify flower for yourself as an example to share with participants.

MATERIALS

- Flip chart
- Blank paper for identity flower activity

1. Ask each participant to take a sheet of A4 paper and draw a large flower with four petals and a stem. It should fill the whole page so that the participants can write a word inside each of the petals and center part. See the slide.

2. Ask participants to reflect on the question, 'Who am I?'

3. Ask them to write their most important identity in the center of the flower and other identities that are very important to them in each of the four petals. Use only one word to describe each identity.

IDENTITY FLOWER

4. Use the debrief questions to facilitate a discussion, noting key words and phrases on a flip chart sheet.

    When in conflict the identity engaged in the conflict is amplified while other identities are relatively ignored.

    Highlight that identities can be sources of division.

    However, when we recognize the complexities and multiplicities of identities within each of us, our identities can be resources for building common ground.

IDENTITY FLOWER DEBRIEF QUESTIONS

1. **Which of the identities included in your flower are inherent (gender, race, daughter etc.)? Which are chosen (profession, hobby, etc.)?**

    a. When/How did you choose these identities? What was the process?

    b. Does anyone have an identity that is important to them that they did not put on their flower? Do you ever hide an aspect of your identity?

    c. What about nationality and religion - are they inherent or chosen?

    d. Why do you think they are inherent/chosen?

    e. Can you think of anyone who might disagree with you?

    f. Why may their response be different from yours?

2. **What role do you think religion plays in people's identity?**

    a. Why is religion an important part of people's lives?

    b. How does religion affect people's daily life?

3. **How permanent are our identities?**

    a. Are our religious identities static or changing?

    b. Does everyone experience their religious identity in the same way? Are there differences in religious identity, even among people who come from the same religious tradition?

4. **What happens to our identity(ies) when we are in a conflict situation?**

    a. Can you remember a time when one part of your identity seemed more important because of the situation around you? For example, when your nation or tribe was at war, when your neighbor's child bullied your child, or when you felt injustice against you because of your gender or religion.

5. **How do we find common ground among people with different identities?**

   a. What is needed to build common ground with somebody who has a different religious identity to us?

   b. Why is this important in peacebuilding?

MODULE 2 **ACTIVITY 2**

Religious Affiliation // Discussion

20 MINUTES
THIS ACTIVITY

1. Present the 'global population slide'

🖥️ **GLOBAL POPULATION**

84%
of the global population are affiliated with religious groups.

"The Global Religious Landscape," Pew Research Center, December 18, 2012, http://www.pewforum.org/2012/12/18/global-religious-landscape-exec

THE COMMON GROUND APPROACH TO RELIGIOUS ENGAGEMENT

SLIDE 20

Ask the following questions in quick succession, pausing after each question to collect brief responses from participants.

NOTE: The majority of the discussion time needs to be allocated for step 2 and the 'toy soldiers' slide.

- What are your country's religious demographics?
- What role does religion play in people's lives in your country?
- Does this make your country vulnerable to religious conflict, or resistant to religious conflict? Why?
- How do people's religious identities influence conflict in your country?

2. Present the 'toy soldiers' slide.

🖥️ **TOY SOLDIERS**

Religion is not the main cause of war today.[1]

The majority of armed conflicts have a religious dimension and this number is on the rise.[2]

[1] Five Key Questions answered on the link between Peace and Religion, Institute for Economics & Peace, October 2014
[2] Rethinking Mediation: Resolving Religious Conflicts, CSS Policy Perspectives Vol. 6/1, February 2018

THE COMMON GROUND APPROACH TO RELIGIOUS ENGAGEMENT

SLIDE 21

Religion is not the main cause of war today.

The majority of armed conflicts have a religious dimension and this number is on the rise.

3. Ask participants if the above statements are true for the community/communities they work with.

4. As an introduction to the next activity tell the participants that we will now analyze a case study of a country (Myanmar) which discusses these two statements in greater depth.

MODULE 2 **ACTIVITY 3**

Conflict Analysis // Case Study

25 MINUTES
THIS ACTIVITY

Deepen understanding of a conflict by exploring core issues and distinguishing between case, effect and triggering events.

PREPARATION

- Print the Myanmar photos included in the appendix in color.

MATERIALS

- Myanmar photos

1. Place the Myanmar photos on the floor and give the participants two minutes or so to have a look at all them.

2. Ask the participants what country they are from and what they know about the conflict there. Introduce the Myanmar case study and ask the participants in groups of twos or threes to read the case study out loud. The case study can be found in *Module 2 of the participant workbook*.

3. Present the Myanmar case study slide and ask the participants, in their groups, to discuss the following questions.

- *How does religion impact identity and conflict in Myanmar?*
- *How does religion impact identity and conflict in your location?*
- *How would you use religious engagement in your location?*

4. Invite a few participants to share their ideas with the plenary.

MYANMAR

Myanmar

Search Myanmar has been active since 2014 and works to promote inclusive governance, the acceptance of diversity, and the reduction of inter-communal violence. It engages all stakeholders, including government, armed groups, civilians, and religious actors, as part of its long-term commitment to building social cohesion and sustaining change through its initiatives.

When considering the intersection of religion and peacebuilding, religious actors are generally sought out as allies in efforts to transform conflict. However, in Myanmar the confluence of religion, ethnicity, and nationalism has created a complex landscape where religious actors may be working in ways counter to this and doing more harm than good. Religious actors in Myanmar have intersected with socio-political movements in the country at many points throughout its struggle for independence and transition to democracy. Their actions have carried significant weight for persons of faith across the country and the world. In 2007, thousands of monks participated in the Saffron Revolution, protesting against Myanmar's military government. More recently, the nationalist, lay Association for the Protection of Race and Religion (commonly referred to by its Myanmar-language acronym, MaBaTha), has promoted the institutionalization of Buddhism in education and welfare, including through updated national security laws (that denies voting rights to Rohingya Muslims) and the Race and Religion Laws passed in 2015. In both of these examples, the actions of religious actors have inspired vast support by some, but greatly alienated others.

An exclusive definition of national identity, based on race and religion and promoted by powerful players in the country, has increased marginalization of Muslims and other religious minorities such as Christians and Hindus, as well as members of minority ethnic groups. For decades Myanmar has been engaged in a civil war with various ethnic armed organizations (EAOs) throughout the country, in part because of this exclusive national identity based on singular race and religion. These divisions are deep-rooted, irritable, and easily ignited.

Animosity towards Muslims has escalated in the last five years, during which nationalist and anti-Islamic narratives have been linked to violence against Muslim civilians in townships around the country. The growing socio-political influence of the

MaBaTha, has increased themes of a "Muslim takeover of Myanmar" and a "Muslim threat to Burmese racial purity." In part, the pervasiveness of anti-Muslim sentiments in the general population allowed for the general acceptance of the Myanmar military's operations in 2017 which led to the mass exodus of Rohingya Muslims into neighboring Bangladesh.

This complex intersection of ethnicity, religion, and nationality creates a dry tinderbox ready to ignite. Given this scenario, religious actors may not be accepted as neutral to the conflict dynamics or are unready to be allies for peace. However not engaging them demonstrates a clear failure to recognize their roles in contributing to both conflict and peace. While many religious actors may not be natural allies in building social cohesion and multi-faith acceptance, it is essential to find and engage those who can champion these efforts and build constituencies within their own networks.

That is why Search Myanmar insists on a highly contextual and creative approach to building relationships with religious actors and other sectors. One example is its Let's Think, Let's Change: Promoting Diversity through Popular Culture project which challenges popular stereotypes related to gender, youth, ethnicity, and religion. It has developed radio and television shows that are broadcast by the national MRTV (Myanmar Radio and Television), active social media pages, and people to people programs that include collective listening circles and community-level discussions that explore these sensitive issues. Engaging religious actors from different religions in these programs exposes large audiences to the diverse nature of Myanmar society and the possibility of building a more inclusive one.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Pay attention to the way intertwined deeply-held identities impact and complicate conflict

- Consider engaging religious actors creatively with other sectors to minimize a direct focus on religious issues

- Religious engagement includes engaging religious actors on topics not directly related to religion

REFERENCES

Angela Ullman & Seng Mai Aunt, 'Addressing Religion in Conflict: Insights and Case Studies from Myanmar,' CSS Mediation Resources, 2018

Search for Common Ground, 'Rapid Conflict Assessment: Let's Think, Let's Change. Promoting Diversity through Popular Culture', 2017

S. Trotta & O. Wilkinson. 'Partnering with Local Faith Actors to Support Peaceful and Inclusive Societies.' Washington DC; Bonn: Joint Learning

MODULE 2 **ACTIVITY 5**

Using Religious Engagement // Presentation & Discussion

20 MINUTES
THIS ACTIVITY

1. Conclude the Myanmar case study by presenting the slide 'Identities and Conflict'.

IDENTITIES & CONFLICT

When people feel their deeply held religious identities are under attack, they withdraw into their communities, demonize the 'other' and justify violence.

Religion becomes a lightning rod for conflict and can be manipulated to advance a binary 'us versus them' mentality.

2. Pose the question:

   When do we use religious engagement?

3. Present the slide titled 'When do we use religious engagement?'

WHEN DO WE USE RELIGIOUS ENGAGEMENT?

Not all conflicts have a religious dimension, but religious actors are community influencers

When there is a religious dimension to a conflict, engagement with religious actors is crucial to peacebuilding.

Analyze the sensitivities around engaging religious actors in a conflict:

- Who to engage?
- How to engage?
- E.g. Intrareligious meetings, joint project creation on shared non-religious issue

Don't 'religionize' a conflict – overestimate the role of religion in a conflict

DO NO HARM

Carefully analyze the context and sensitivities in each location

4. Play the video: 'The Young Imam' (3 minutes)

YOUNG IMAM VIDEO

5. Pose the question:

   How does this young Imam embody the idea of religion as a force for peace?

   Pause for a brief moment for quiet reflection. Invite volunteers to share.

6. Close by reviewing the Module 2: Key Takeaways

MODULE 2: KEY TAKEAWAYS
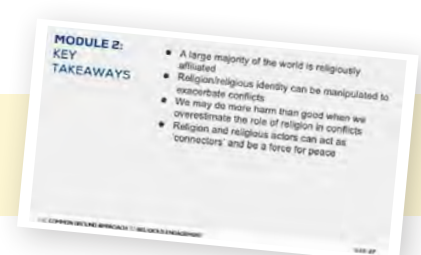
Religion: A Force for Peace–a Driver of Conflict?

KEY TAKEAWAYS

1. A large majority of the world is religiously affiliated.

2. Religion/religious identity can be manipulated to exacerbate conflicts.

3. We may do more harm than good when we overestimate the role of religion in conflicts.

4. Religion and religious actors can act as 'connectors' and be a force for peace.

THE COMMON GROUND APPROACH TO RELIGIOUS ENGAGEMENT

1. *Introduction to Religious Engagement*

2. **Religion: A Force for Peace–a Driver of Conflict?**

3. *Engaging Religious Actors in Peacebuilding*

4. *Religious Sensitivity*

5. *Engaging Women*

6. *Engaging Youth*

7. *A multi-Sectoral Approach to Religious Engagement*

8. *Design, Monitoring, and Evaluation for Religious Engagement*

FURTHER READING

Angela Ullman & Seng Mai Aunt, Addressing Religion in Conflict: Insights and Case Studies from Myanmar, CSS Mediation Resources, 2018

Institute for Economics & Peace, Five Key Questions answered on the link between Peace and Religion, October 2014

Jonas Baumann, Daniel Finnbogason, and Isak Svensson, Rethinking Mediation: Resolving Religious Conflicts. CSS Policy Perspectives Vol. 6/1, February 2018

Pew Research Center, The Global Religious Landscape, December 2012

Search for Common Ground, Rapid Conflict Assessment: Let's Think, Let's Change. Promoting Diversity through Popular Culture, 2017

S. Trotta & O. Wilkinson. Partnering with Local Faith Actors to Support Peaceful and Inclusive Societies. Washington DC; Bonn: Joint Learning Initiative on Faith and Local Communities; International Partnership on Religion and Sustainable Development(PaRD), 2019. See Myanmar: A secular international actor partnering with local faith actors as part of civil society engagement for social cohesion (pp. 30-32)

3.
Engaging Religious Actors in Peacebuilding

THE **COMMON GROUND APPROACH** TO **RELIGIOUS ENGAGEMENT**

Engaging Religious Actors in Peacebuilding

This module describes the various types of religious actors and the different perspectives they bring to the peacebuilding table. It discusses the benefits of engaging religious actors at all levels of society in order to target diverse populations and achieve wide-ranging objectives.

This module also introduces Search practitioners to a variety of tools that can be used to effectively recruit and engage religious actors of diverse ages and backgrounds.

IN THIS MODULE

125 MINUTES
THIS MODULE

1. Defining 'Religious Actors' // *Presentation*
2. Engaging Religious Actors // *Case Study (2 options)*
3. Types of Religious Actors // *Presentation & Discussion*
4. Identifying Religious Actors // *Worksheet*
5. Religious Actor Analysis // *Worksheet*
6. Recruiting Religious Actors // *Role Play*
7. Tools for Religious Engagement // *Presentation & Discussion*

Decide whether to present the Kyrgyzstan or Jerusalem case study and organize your slides before leading.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Age, role, and gender of religious actors may affect the way they perceive the same conflict.
- Different religious actors offer different benefits in a collaboration.
- Senior religious leaders provide top-down 'vertical' influence.
- Community-level religious leaders are more accessible and connected to constituents; influential AND collaborate horizontally.
- Identify religious 'champions' from each group to engage 'horizontally' and 'vertically.'
- Use a variety of creative designs and methods to engage religious actors in projects.

MODULE 3 **ACTIVITY 1**

Defining Religious Actors // Presentation

5 MINUTES
THIS ACTIVITY

Identify different types of religious actors including those who serve their communities outside formal or senior roles.

PREPARATION

- Set up the flip chart and markers at the front of the room.

MATERIALS

- Flip chart
- Markers

1. Introduce the module by reminding the participants of the inclusive definition of the term 'religious actors' in *Module 1*.

RELIGIOUS ACTOR

An individual in society who exercises influence within a religious community by virtue of his/her religious standing and/or credibility.

Religious actors need not have formal religious authority, titles or qualifications.

Includes men, women and youth; community lay-leaders, educators, social workers, activists etc.

MODULE 3 **ACTIVITY 2**

Defining Religious Actors // Case Study

25 MINUTES
THIS ACTIVITY

To identify different types of religious actors including those who serve their communities outside formal or senior roles.

If you choose to present the Jerusalem case study, present the 'Senior Religious Actors' slide before introducing the case study.

1. Divide the participants into groups of two or three.

2. Read the case study.

   For the Kyrgyzstan case study: Ask one volunteer from each group to read the case study aloud for his or her group. Each participant can follow along in the workbook. The case study can be found in *Module 3 of the workbook*.

   For the Jerusalem case study: Give the participants ten minutes to read the written case study and participants' biographies. The case study can be found in *Module 3 of the workbook*.

2. Ask the following questions for each group to discuss among themselves. Give 10-15 minutes for discussion.

   a. Who were the stakeholders involved in this project?

   b. What types of religious actors were involved in this project?

   c. What are the potential benefits and challenges of working with these types of religious actors?

      Use the benefits/challenges sheet found in Module 3 of the workbook to help order your ideas.

   d. What connections and influence do these religious actors have?

   e. Do you have similar religious actors in your country?

3. Return the group to the plenary and review the pros and cons they discussed in their small groups. *Continue to Activity 3* which discusses the different types of religious actors in depth.
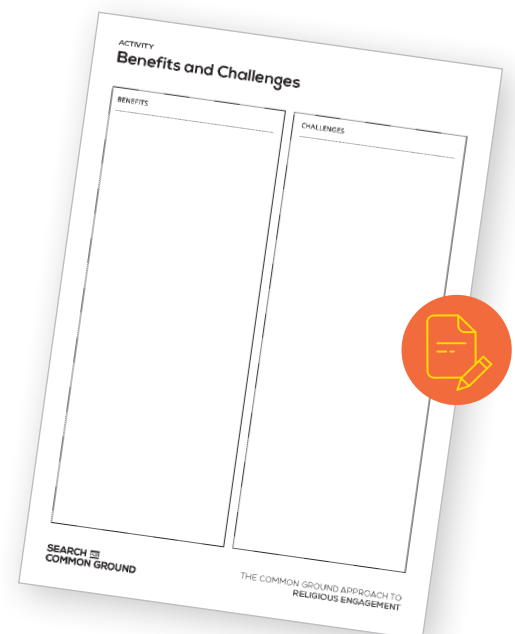
CASE STUDY
KYRGYZSTAN

Promoting Freedom of Religion or Belief (FoRB)

As a post-Soviet country, Kyrgyzstan has a complex relationship with religion and state. Rooted in Soviet, communist ideals, many in Kyrgyzstan maintain that religion must not influence state laws, and in turn it is the state's role to regulate and control religious groups. The resurgence of Islam in Kyrgyzstan (supported by Saudi Arabia and Pakistan) after independence, led to a profound level of mistrust between state authorities, fearing the rise of religious extremism, and some religious communities. Consequently, this has influenced how the police, judiciary, and other state instruments relate to Kyrgyzstan's religious communities.

Search has been active in Kyrgyzstan since 2011 working to promote a culture of mutual respect amid political, religious and ethnic tensions. Promoting Freedom of Religion or Belief (FoRB) in Kyrgyzstan is an initiative that engages religious leaders, government authorities and civil society organizations to jointly foster institutional legal reform and an environment of interreligious acceptance.

Since June 2018, Search, in partnership with Kyrgyzstan's State Committee for Religious Affairs, organized 14 public sessions across the country to address amendments to Kyrgyzstan's draft law on Freedom of Religion and Religious Organizations. 591 representatives from state and law enforcement bodies, religious organizations (including Muslim, Christian, Jewish, Buddhist,and Baha'i senior religious leaders), academic and educational institutions, human rights organizations and the media participated in these public hearings and were able to raise questions and contribute to improving the legal framework on religious freedom. The religious actors who participated in this project had a hand in formulating new government legislation that directly affects the religious rights of their communities.

Additionally, Search in partnership with legal experts, created a unique guidebook entitled, 'Freedom of Religion or Belief in the Kyrgyz Republic: Legal Regulation Practices in Accordance with Constitutional and International Standards'.

215 copies of this guidebook (in Kyrgyz and Russian) were distributed to the Training Center for Lawyers, High School of Justice, Kyrgyzstan Bar Association, State Committee for Religious Affairs and the Training Center for Prosecution and the General Prosecutor's Office. This guidebook also formed the basis for professional development workshops and webinars where judicial actors where trained in national and international FoRB policies and practices, and countering violent extremism.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Senior religious actors are able to effect top-down change due to their authority and high-level connections
- The Common Ground inclusive approach supports religious actors to effect sustained institutional and societal change when engaged as equal actors with other sectors of society

REFERENCES

Gulnara Asilbekova & Kanyey Jailobaeva, 'Final Evaluation: Promoting Religious Freedom through Government and Civil Society Collaboration in the Kyrgyz Republic', Search for Common Ground, July 2017

Search for Common Ground, 'Freedom of Religion in Kyrgyzstan – A Common Ground Approach 2015-2017', 2017

CASE STUDY
JERUSALEM

Constituencies for Peace

Search's Constituencies for Peace project brings together mid-level (ages 35-50) Jewish and Muslim religious actors, men and women, in the Holy Land with the aim of finding ways to advance a negotiated settlement to the Arab-Israeli conflict through a religious perspective.

The participants, not all of whom have formal religious qualifications (e.g. some are lawyers and educators) are highly regarded in their communities and serve them through a variety of spiritual, professional, and communal positions. They are all citizens of Israel.

Through the project, the religious actors discuss religious texts that relate to issues at the heart of the conflict - e.g. the sanctity of the land and the people, the meaning of sovereignty, jihad and peace, and peace and the significance of holy sites - and meet with religious and political leaders, diplomats, academics, and security experts to gain a deeper insight into the multiple facets of the conflict. They then spearhead group-projects in order to spread pro-peace messages within their own faith communities.

One of the projects is a series of joint-lectures delivered by pairs of Muslim and Jewish religious actors who talk about their personal experiences in the Constituencies for Peace project, religious issues within the Arab-Israeli conflict and more broadly about Islam and Judaism. These joint lectures take place in religious seminaries, community centers, high schools, and pre-army academies.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Community level religious actors influence their communities through close connections, accessibility and understanding of local needs
- Community level religious actors include men, women, and youth
- Religious actors can bring value to peace processes when constructively included

REFERENCES

Key Impact Consulting, 'Evaluation of Constituencies for Peace: Final Report', March 2019

Key Impact Consulting, 'Evaluation of Constituencies for Peace: Executive Summary', March 2019
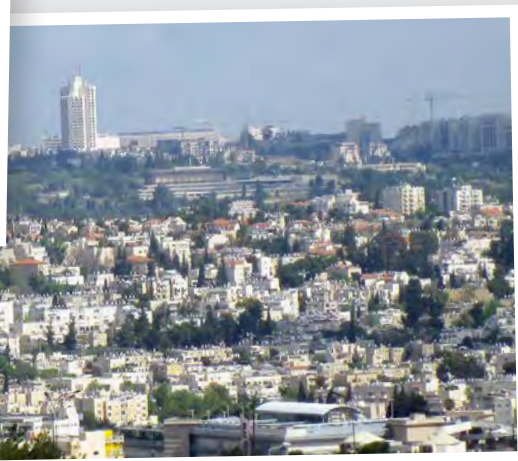
Jerusalem images: Wikipedia Commons

MODULE 3 **ACTIVITY 3**

Types of Religious Actors // Presentation & Discussion

40 MINUTES
THIS ACTIVITY

1. Present the five types of religious actors.

TYPES OF RELIGIOUS ACTORS

SENIOR

COMMUNITY-LEVEL

WOMEN

INFORMAL OR NON-TRADITIONAL

YOUTH
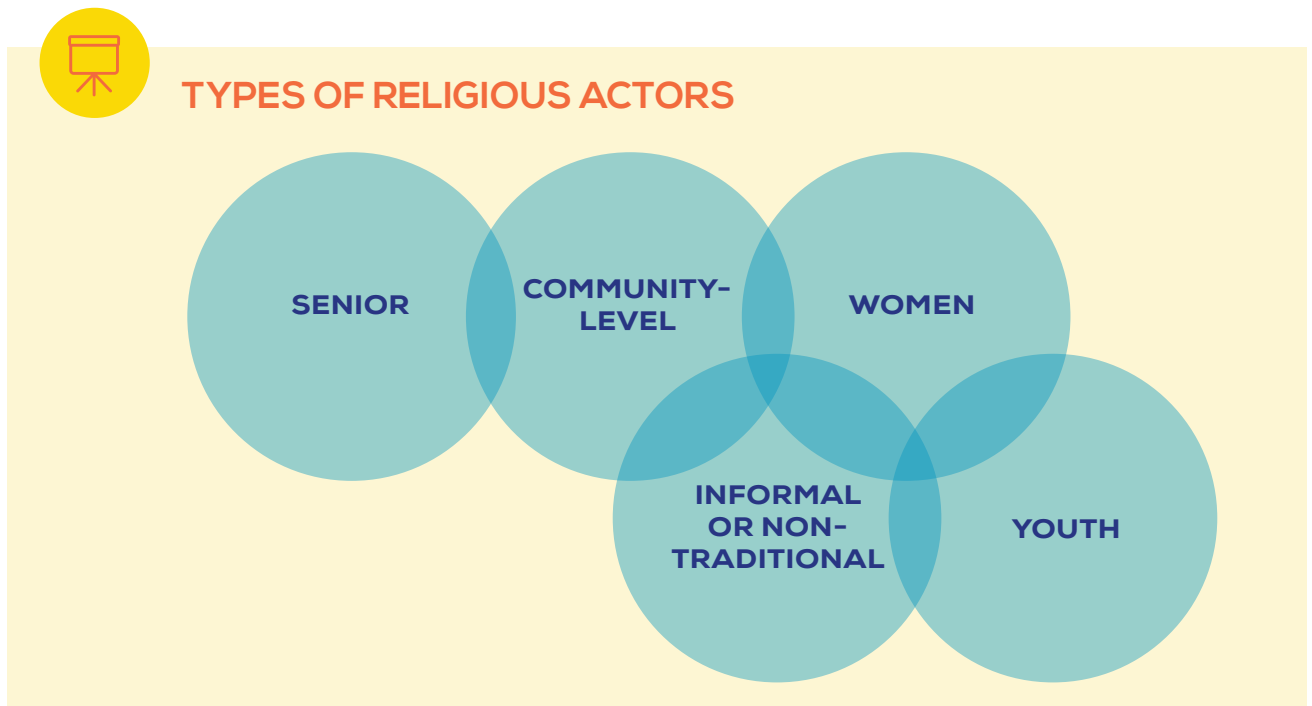
2. There are five slides. After each slide ask the participants to share short examples of each type of religious actor from their home country.

    Some of the points on the slide are more appropriate for senior religious leaders

    Focus on points that have not yet been raised.

    As women and youth have dedicated modules (5 & 6) we recommend keeping these sections brief in this module.

SENIOR RELIGIOUS ACTORS

- Hold senior positions of authority within a religion
- Usually older and male
- Members of government or well connected to senior government officials and policy makers
- Top down, vertical influence, particularly in hierarchical societies
- Members of international religious networks
- Enact quiet diplomacy
- Connected with CSOs
- Provide endorsements for projects
- Involved in vital community infrastructures e.g. schools, charity organizations, communal places of worship, chaplaincy programs etc.

COMMUNITY-LEVEL RELIGIOUS ACTORS

- Often younger than senior-level leaders
- Usually male
- Accessible on a regular basis
- Well-connected with their constituents and youth
- Often spearhead new initiatives
- Adept at using new media technologies
- Involved in vital community infrastructures e.g. schools, charity organizations, communal places of worship, chaplaincy programs etc.

INFORMAL/NON-TRADITIONAL RELIGIOUS ACTORS

- E.g. tribal leaders, lay leaders, teachers in study circles, media personalities.
- May not hold formal religious titles or positions, but have religious influence within their communities
- Can be an access point for outsider communities or marginalized populations
- Often overlooked in religious engagement efforts
- Men, women and sometimes youth hold these roles
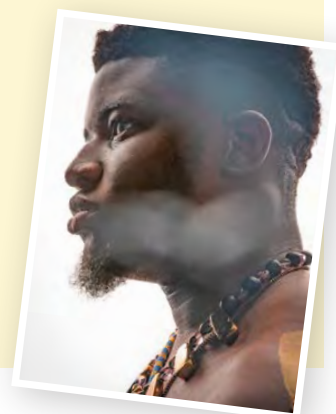
RELIGIOUS WOMEN

- Feminine characteristics offer alternative models of leadership
- Well-connected members of faith-based social groups such as religious women's associations, charity organizations and religious school communities
- Primary educators in the home and schools
- Including women religious actors in programming can be challenging
- Sensitivity to local gender norms and customs needed

RELIGIOUS YOUTH

- Engaged in diverse physical and social networks through family, friends, faith-communities, schools, sports clubs, university associations etc.
- Far-reaching virtual social networks through Instagram, WhatsApp, Telegram, Snapchat
- Digital natives (unlike other religious actors)
- Energetic, innovative, creative qualities
- Youth engagement builds community resilience

3. Continue the discussion with a quick question and answer session to the following questions:

   a. What *types* of religious actors have you worked with?

   b. How did you engage them *initially*?

   c. How did you build *trust*?

   d. How did you *maintain* relationships over time?

   e. How was your *experience* in engaging religious actors?

   f. If you have not yet engaged with religious actors what steps are needed to generate a credible connection?

4. Summarize answers to the above questions on a flip chart and then present the slide entitled 'Entry Points to Engage Religious Actors' while emphasizing points not mentioned in the group discussion.

ENTRY POINTS TO ENGAGE RELIGIOUS ACTORS

BEFORE THE MEETING – DO YOUR HOMEWORK

- Check how to address the religious actor respectfully according to his/her religious/ traditional title? (E.g. Your Eminence; Imam; Sheikh; Father; Mother; Rabbi; Sister; Your Beatitude; Your Grace; Reverend; Your Excellency; Qadi etc.) N.B. You can always fall back on 'Your Honor' if you forget!

- Familiarize yourself with the main tenets of the religion. What are the codes/values by which the person lives his/her life? E.g. if the sanctity of life overrides other religious commands can this be helpful in your meeting?

- Familiarize yourself with the traditional greeting of the respective religious community if relevant e.g. Asalamu Alaikum for Muslims.

- Consider learning a phrase or two in the language of the holy texts for use in the meeting to show goodwill.

- Check whether there is someone you have access to who has the trust of the religious actor and who could speak for you beforehand to prepare the way for an introduction and accompany you to the meeting.

- It may be more appropriate for a male to meet a male religious actor (or a male accompanying a female) and a female to meet a female religious actor.

DURING THE MEETING

- Dress appropriately according to the religious and cultural norms of the actor.

- Be led by the religious actor in terms of protocols of behavior (You may need to speak about yourself first and your background before starting on your agenda).

- Express gratitude at being received by the religious actor (at the beginning and end)

- Do not rush the meeting. Many religious actors live by a different time frame and you may be requested to enjoy hospitality first or thereafter.

MODULE 3 **ACTIVITY 4**

Identifying Religious Actors // Worksheet

10 MINUTES
THIS ACTIVITY

1. Ask each participant to find a partner from the same country/region and work together to fill out the *'Identifying Religious Actors' worksheet* in *Module 3 of the participant workbook*.

   If this is not possible each pair should select a context they are both familiar with to complete the exercise.

2. Ask participants to write down the names of people, local institutions or community groups who could be a potential point of contact for these different types of religious actors.

3. Two lines for each are provided but invite participants to write down as many as they can think of.
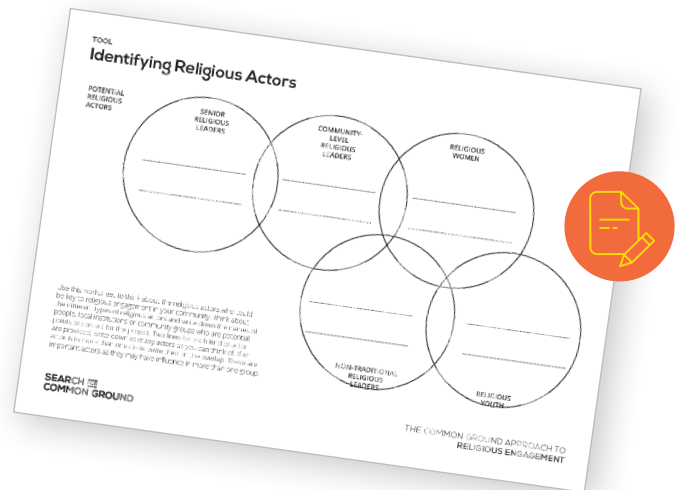
MODULE 3 **ACTIVITY 5**

Religious Actor Analysis // Worksheet

20 MINUTES
THIS ACTIVITY

To understand the sphere of influence of different religious actors and the value they bring to peace processes.

PREPARATION

- Before the workshop, prepare an example 'Religious Actor Analysis' using a religious actor that you are familiar with.

- Fill out an example table on the power point slide to present to the group.

1. Each pair from the previous exercise should join with another pair to form a group of four.

2. Present a sample analysis using the template below, explaining what is meant by the different columns on the table 'value, legitimacy etc.'

3. In their new groups of four, participants are to think of a project they are already implementing (or want to implement) and then choose one religious actor that they identified on the Identifying Religious Actors template whom they would like to involve in this project. Participants now conduct an analysis using the Analyzing Religious Actors template provided in the *participant workbook in Module 3.*

4. Ask participants to consider these questions while they complete the chart:

   a. Value: What is the value-add of this person to the project? Does s/he have any information, access to people/resources, expertise that is valuable?

   b. Legitimacy/Authority: Is there any reason NOT to reach out to this religious actor?

   c. Willingness to Engage: How willing do you think s/he will be to partner?

   d. Influence: How would their participation have a constructive influence on the project?

   e. Necessity of Involvement: What would happen if this religious actor wasn't included or reached out to, or refuses to be involved? How relevant is s/he to your project?

RELIGIOUS ACTOR ANALYSIS EXAMPLE

The example provided below is of a family in Jerusalem who are custodians of and have access to the important Muslim cemetery on Mt. Zion, just outside the walls of Jerusalem's Old City. In 2015, Search was implementing the Window on Mt. Zion initiative as part of its Universal Code of Conduct on Holy Sites activities. This project included building a 'community' among the religious institutions that have a presence on Mt. Zion and recruiting volunteers to protect and monitor Mt. Zion's holy sites, creating a safe and inclusive environment for people of all faiths. Search had hoped that the family would be interested in joining the project motivated by an opportunity to clean and repair the Muslim cemetery. However, they were not interested for political reasons. Through persistent confidential attempts to involve the family, members finally joined the project in its third year.

A family with various Muslim influential members	☐ SENIOR RELIGIOUS LEADER
	☒ COMMUNITY-LEVEL RELIGIOUS LEADER
	☐ NON-TRADITIONAL RELIGIOUS LEADER
RELIGIOUS ACTOR	☐ RELIGIOUS WOMAN
	☐ RELIGIOUS YOUTH

VALUE	Muslim inclusion in project provides greater opportunities to reduce interreligious tensions, build multi-faith dialogue and celebrate importance of Mt Zion for 3 religions Access to the Muslim cemetery on Mt. Zion which is currently in disrepair
LEGITIMACY / AUTHORITY	Held the keys to Mt. Zion for 400 years until establishment of the State of Israel 1948 and see themselves as the rightful custodians.
WILLINGNESS TO ENGAGE	Unwilling to engage due to political animosity
INFLUENCE	If family joined it would create a calmer atmosphere and prove the success of building cooperation through dialogue. Cemetery would be repaired.
NECESSITY OF INVOLVEMENT	Refused to be involved for 2 years but joined in year 3. Project went ahead but succeeded in only reducing Christian/Jewish tensions during first 2 years

MODULE 3 **ACTIVITY 6**

Recruiting Religious Actors // Roleplay

20 MINUTES
THIS ACTIVITY

1. Ask the current groups of four participants to split into pairs, and work with the person they had not worked with previously.

2. Ask each pair to choose one person to play the role of trying to recruit religious actors to engage in a new project and one person to play the role of the potential recruit.

3. After participants have organized themselves give them 5 minutes to act out the role-play

4. After 5 minutes. Debrief the activity as a large group.

DEBRIEF QUESTIONS

1. How did the Search Managers gauge the interest of the religious actor?

2. What strategies did they used to convince the religious actor to join the project?

3. Which strategies did the religious actors find the most effective? Why? What strategies did not work?

MODULE 3 **ACTIVITY 7**

Tools for Religious Engagement // Presentation & Discussion

10 MINUTES THIS ACTIVITY

1. Pose the following question to participants: What tools do we use to engage religious actors?

2. Briefly ask participants for responses.

3. Present the slide entitled 'What tools do we use to engage religious actors?'
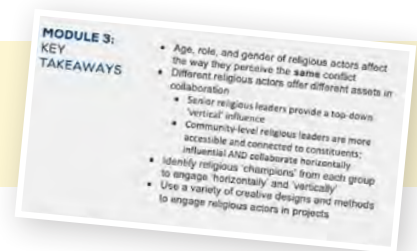
WHAT TOOLS DO WE USE TO ENGAGE RELIGIOUS ACTORS?

4. Close by reviewing the Module 3: Key Takeaways

MODULE 3: KEY TAKEAWAYS

Engaging Religious Actors in Peacebuilding

KEY TAKEAWAYS

1. Age, role, and gender of religious actors may affect the way they perceive the same conflict

2. Different religious actors offer different benefits in a collaboration

3. Senior religious leaders provide top-down 'vertical' influence

4. Community-level religious leaders are more accessible and connected to constituents; influential AND collaborate horizontally

5. Identify religious 'champions' from each group to engage 'horizontally' and 'vertically'

6. Use a variety of creative designs and methods to engage religious actors in projects

THE COMMON GROUND APPROACH TO RELIGIOUS ENGAGEMENT

1. *Introduction to Religious Engagement*
2. *Religion: A Force for Peace–a Driver of Conflict?*
3. **Engaging Religious Actors in Peacebuilding**
4. *Religious Sensitivity*
5. *Engaging Women*
6. *Engaging Youth*
7. *A multi-Sectoral Approach to Religious Engagement*
8. *Design, Monitoring, and Evaluation for Religious Engagement*

FURTHER READING

Gulnara Asilbekova & Kanyey Jailobaeva, Final Evaluation: Promoting Religious Freedom through Government and Civil Society Collaboration in the Kyrgyz Republic, Search for Common Ground, July 2017

Search for Common Ground, Freedom of Religion in Kyrgyzstan – A Common Ground Approach 2015-2017, August 2017

Key Impact Consulting, Evaluation of Constituencies for Peace: Final Report, March 2019

Key Impact Consulting, Evaluation of Constituencies for Peace: Executive Summary, March 2019

4.
Religious Sensitivity

THE **COMMON GROUND APPROACH** TO **RELIGIOUS ENGAGEMENT**

SEARCH FOR **COMMON** GROUND

Religious Sensitivity

This module provides a basic understanding of theologies and rituals of five world religions. The module highlights religious and cultural traditions to be considered when designing projects and concludes with an overview of challenges that may arise when working with religious actors.

IN THIS MODULE

115 MINUTES
THIS MODULE

1. Religious Literacy // *Quiz*

2. Religious Needs // *What's Wrong With This Scenario?*

3. Challenges of Working with Religious Actors // *Presentation & Discussion*

Decide whether to present on LGBTQ issues and organize your slides before leading.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

• It is vitally important to have some knowledge of religious theology and practice when working with religious actors.

• Be sensitive and attentive to religious actors' differing needs throughout the project.

• If addressing LGBTQ issues, particular sensitivity is required while respecting all sides.

• It can be challenging to work with religious actors.

MODULE 4 **ACTIVITY 1**

Religious Literacy // Quiz

55 MINUTES
THIS ACTIVITY

Familiarize participants with the principle beliefs and traditions of some of the world's major religions.

PREPARATION

- Project the Religious Literacy Quiz PowerPoint on the screen.

  Practice using the PowerPoint Quiz, reviewing how the questions and answers appear on the screen

- Prepare a flip chart to be used as a scoreboard.

MATERIALS

- Flip chart
- Markers

1. Divide the participants into four teams and ask them to think of a team name that will be written on the flip chart scoreboard.

2. Explain that the teams will be participating in a multiple-choice question quiz and the questions will be projected onto the screen. The first team to call out the correct answer will receive a point recorded on the scoreboard.

3. After completing all 22 questions (approximately 20 minutes) and tallying up the points on the scoreboard, declare the winner.

4. Ask the participants to open their *participant workbook* to *Module 4* which contains the questions. The answers and the additional information can be found in the appendix to this guide. NOTE the only place with answers to the quiz is in this appendix.

5. Run through all the questions again, allowing time to supplement information and answer questions from the participants. The questions with the additional information can be found in the appendix to this guide. Encourage the participants to take notes. Space has been provided in their *workbook*.

MODULE 4 **ACTIVITY 2**

Religious Sensitivity // What's Wrong with This Scenario?

15 MINUTES
THIS ACTIVITY

To encourage the participants to consider the wide range of religious needs to be taken into account when designing and implementing projects.

PREPARATION

- Review the "What's wrong with this scenario" summary and answer key.

MATERIALS

- Highlighters

---

1. Refer participants to the scenario included in the *participant workbook in Module 4.* Ask a volunteer to read out the scenario.

WHAT'S WRONG WITH THIS SCENARIO?

Due to various political fluctuations, your community has recently experienced a resurgence of interreligious violence between Christians and Muslims. This has led to a breakdown in trust and communication between the local Christian and Muslim communities, further exacerbating the conflict. In order to begin repairing the relationship between the two communities, local CSOs decided to gather together religious actors - men and women - to discuss the conflict and find ways to increase mutual respect between the groups.

The meeting takes place during Lent at a conference center on the outskirts of the capital city in the afternoon and continues throughout most of the evening. The schedule for the meeting is jam-packed and there is little time allotted for breaks. Refreshments provided by the hotel during the meeting include wine and charcuterie boards with many varieties of cured meats.

The meeting is facilitated by a senior priest who does his best to foster civil discussion between the religious actors. However, by the end of the evening both the Christian and the Muslim religious actors leave the meeting feeling frustrated and disrespected. The local CSOs discuss a follow-up meeting but the religious actors are not excited about attending.

---

2. Ask the participants to use a highlighter to mark any missteps that were made in their *workbook*.

---

3. Discuss these 'missteps' and how they could be corrected as a group before presenting the answer key (10 minutes). The participants may offer ideas that are not included on the answer key.

> ### SCENARIO 'ANSWER' KEY
>
> - Need for sensitivity around mixed-gender meetings
> - Meetings may not be appropriate according to local cultural norms without previous discussion/approval
> - It may be imprudent to start a new initiative with an interreligious meeting (as opposed to first holding intrareligious meetings)
> - Religious holy days need to be considered when scheduling activities
> - In some locations, it may not be appropriate for women to travel without a male chaperone, especially if meetings end late in the evening
> - There is no scheduled time for prayer and informal conversation
> - Foods served may not meet Halal requirements and/or are not appropriate for those observing Lent
> - Serving alcohol is not appropriate for any meeting to which Muslims are invited
> - Choosing a priest as a facilitator may be perceived as 'taking' sides
> - An experienced professional facilitator is needed for sensitive, impartial handling of the group

4. Debrief the activity with the following question:

   What religious needs are to be taken into account when engaging religious actors?

5. Present the slide entitled 'Religious Needs' providing examples for each type of need.

RELIGIOUS NEEDS

- Religious Holy Days

  Eid, Easter etc.

- Dietary Requirements

  Halal, Kosher, Vegetarian etc.

- Prayer Times

  Muslims pray five times a day, Jews three times a day

- Activity Locations

  Is it appropriate for female participants to travel there alone?

- Appropriate Language

  Some colloquial language may not only be unprofessional, but offensive to religious actors e.g. 'Oh my God'

- Written Materials

  Any written materials provided need to come from an impartial source and/or sacred texts from all sides

- Dress Code

  All staff need to dress in an appropriate manner. This is generally more formal wear that covers the body and may include covering hair. For men this may mean wearing long pants (not shorts) and a long-sleeved shirt. For women this may mean covering shoulders and wearing a high-necked blouse.

- Gender Needs & Dynamics

  This will be discussed further in Module 5

- Age Dynamics

  This will be discussed further in Module 6

MODULE 4 **ACTIVITY 3**

Challenges of Working with Religious Actors // Presentation & Discussion

45 MINUTES
THIS ACTIVITY

1. Ask participants to share their thoughts and feelings about possible challenges when working with religious actors.

> ### SOME CHALLENGES
>
> - Challenges relating to the religious actors
> - How might religious hierarchies impact the recruitment and participation of religious actors?
> - What internal tensions within a religion might pose challenges to religious engagement projects? What about tensions between religions?
> - Challenges relating to the participant
> - Does the participant's religion (or no religion) or humanist values affect personal attitudes toward the religious actor?
> - How can the participant address potential judgmental feelings towards religious actors – or possible judgments by them?

2. As an example of a religiously sensitive topic - homosexuality is prohibited in several religious traditions - present the two slides entitled 'Engaging LGBTQ Communities – Opportunities' and 'Engaging LGBTQ Communities – Challenges', followed by a brief discussion.

ENGAGING LGBTQ COMMUNITIES: OPPORTUNITIES

ENGAGING LGBTQ COMMUNITIES: CHALLENGES

3. Present slide entitled 'Challenges of Working with Religious Actors

CHALLENGES OF WORKING WITH RELIGIOUS ACTORS

- Imbalance of power/authority between religious actors
- Majority religion influence and dominance in government and society
- Some religious groups do not want to be called a 'minority' which they perceive as derogatory but rather want to be referred to as 'equal/full citizens'
- Religious hierarchy, relationship between senior religious leaders and others
- Relationship between male, female, and young religious actors
- Engaging religious actors and LGBTQ persons/communities
- *Intra*religious tensions and *inter*religious tensions
- Different denominations with different interpretations of holy texts within the same religion
- Working with the 'God is on our side' position of religious actors
- Religious and theological diversity (or lack thereof)
- Maintaining impartiality; practice the CGA by giving empathy to self and others while preserving principles
- Managing attempts to instrumentalize religious actors
- Providing for special dietary and other religious needs

4. Close by reviewing the Module 4: Key Takeaways

MODULE 4: KEY TAKEAWAYS

Religious Sensitivity

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- It is vitally important to have some knowledge of religious theology and practice when working with religious actors
- Be sensitive and attentive to religious actors' differing needs throughout the project
- If addressing LGBTQ issues, particular sensitivity is required while respecting all sides
- It can be challenging to work with religious actors

THE COMMON GROUND APPROACH TO RELIGIOUS ENGAGEMENT

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8. *Design, Monitoring, and Evaluation for Religious Engagement*

FURTHER READING

Search for Common Ground, Accommodating Religious Identity in Youth Peacebuilding Programs, May 2017

5.
Engaging Women

THE **COMMON GROUND APPROACH** TO **RELIGIOUS ENGAGEMENT**

Engaging Women

This module provides an inclusive definition of female religious actors that ensures their engagement in the process of peacebuilding. It offers good practices on how to recruit and engage religious women in conflict transformation activities while exploring the challenges that may arise when including them in activities.

IN THIS MODULE

110 MINUTES
THIS MODULE

1. Recruiting Religious Women // *Case Study*
2. Try Walking in Our Shoes // *Scenario*
3. Anticipating Challenges // *2-4-6*

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Women are effective peacebuilders – include them in peacebuilding activities
- Be inclusive when defining female religious actors
- Be sensitive and attentive to religious actors' differing needs
- In some locations you will face push-back when including women
- Many of these challenges can be addressed during project design and by facilitators once the project is underway

MODULE 5 **ACTIVITY 1**

Recruiting Religious Women // Case Study & Discussion

40 MINUTES
THIS ACTIVITY

To encourage the participants to think about who a female religious actor is and how she can be recruited.

1. Present the slide entitled 'Religious Women' as an introduction to the module.

RELIGIOUS WOMEN

- Feminine characteristics offer alternative models of leadership
- Well-connected members of faith-based social groups such as religious women's associations, charity organizations and religious school communities
- Primary educators in the home and schools
- Including women religious actors in programming can be challenging
- Sensitivity to local gender norms and customs needed

2. Give participants 5 minutes to individually read the Jerusalem case study found in *Module 3 of the participant workbook*.

CASE STUDY
JERUSALEM

Constituencies for Peace

Refer to Module 3 in this guide or in the participant workbook for this case study.

3. Have participants also read the short biographies that can be found in the *participant workbook in Module 5*.

4. Ask the group the following questions as a debrief discussion:

> a. How do you recruit female religious actors especially if you are working with religions that have a hierarchical male structure?
>
> b. When recruiting religious women to take part in your religious engagement activities, what qualities are you looking for?

JERUSALEM BIOS

Idit S. is a sales manager at Clalit health services and works as part of the general management responsible for the National Religious sector. She is a board member of the 'Jewish Home' party committee (appointed by the party's chairman) and manages the women's forum of the party, headed by Member of Knesset Shuli Mualem. She also leads the 'Women for Health' forum that promotes projects relating to health issues of National Religious women and is on the advisory board of 'Yad La'Isha' organization, for women whose husbands refuse or are unable to grant them a divorce. She is a delegate in the World Zionist Congress and also active on the local level, running the women's forum of the 'Jewish Home' party in Rechovot, where she lives with her husband and three children

Maha B. has worked for the past 17 years in Kfar Qassem's Junior High School and for the past four years has also worked in the medical laboratories in Beilinson hospital and Meuchedet health clinics. Her BA is in Medical Laboratories' studies and her MA in Education. She is currently studying for a PhD in Educational Counseling and volunteers guiding interreligious dialogue groups. Maha lives in Kfar Qassem.

Rabbanit Surale R. is a graduate of Matan's Advanced Talmud Institute and Hilkhata program, for advanced study of Jewish Law. She founded Shayla, an online column that answers questions in Jewish law and is used by many of her fellow, female colleagues. She was trained as a lawyer in the religious court system and teaches Talmud and Jewish Law. Surale is married to a community Rabbi in Jerusalem and is the proud mother of many sons and daughters.

Reem M. is a LL.M graduate of the University of Haifa and a practicing lawyer for the past 12 years. She works in a law office specializing in tort law and appeals to Israel's Supreme Court, in Palestinian human rights issues (such as casualties, family unification and citizenship). Reem is also active in several social initiatives. She is the founder and a board member of Al-Bir NGO for the community of Wadi Ara, focusing on women and youth empowerment through community activities. Reem also founded an organization promoting bone marrow donation in Arab society. She is on the board of the Arab Association for Human Rights in Nazareth, dealing with the civil, social and economic rights for the Palestinian minority in Israel, and is also active on the municipal level through her positions on different committees of Arara's local council.

5. Present the slide entitled 'Recruiting Religious Women' and dedicate more time to the points that were not raised in the previous discussion.

RECRUITING RELIGIOUS WOMEN

- Think creatively about what makes a 'female religious actor'

  » Female religious leadership
  » Deep commitment to their religion
  » Religious academic background
  » Educators
  » Welfare workers
  » Professionals
  » Community leaders
  » Potential leaders

- Women are members of social networks (women's associations, school communities, mothers' circles etc.) that provide good sources for recruitment

- Possible need for senior religious leader's/father's/spouse's endorsement for a woman's participation in a project

6. Contextualize this discussion by explaining that co-ed meetings may be challenging to organize in some traditional societies.

7. Ask the following question about engaging men & women. Invite responses from participants before introducing the next slide

   What's to be considered when engaging with religious women and men in mixed or same-sex meetings?

8. Present the slide entitled 'Engaging Religious Women and Men'

ENGAGING RELIGIOUS WOMEN AND MEN

- Time and location of the meetings: Do some women require a male chaperone? Are they available for long/overnight meetings?

- Activities: Do they involve specific clothing or touch between participants?

- Pros and cons of mixed gender and same-sex meetings: Is a combination of the two possible?

- What is the gender of the meeting facilitator?

- Are women and men getting equal 'air-time' in the project?

- Are men and women being addressed by similar titles/shown equal respect? If not, how can this gap be addressed?

- In mixed-gender projects, are women and men coming from similar backgrounds/ levels of education? If not, how can this gap be addressed?

MODULE 5 **ACTIVITY 2**

Try Walking in Our Shoes // Scenario

40 MINUTES
THIS ACTIVITY

To encourage the participants to consider the challenges a NGO faces when engaging women in peacebuilding activities.

PREPARATION

- Review the 'Try Walking in Our Shoes' activity. All pages can be found in the appendix to this guide.

- Print out multiple copies of options 1a and 1b and options 2a and 2b, so there are enough available for each group to read, should they choose these options.

  This activity can be excluded if there are time restraints or offered as an optional extension to the module.

MATERIALS

Try Walking in our Shoes handouts:

- The opening scenario is found in the participant workbook

- Copies of Options 1, 1a, 1b, 2, 2a, and 2b for subgroups

1. Split the participants into groups of 4 or 5.

2. Explain the activity to participants. Point out before the groups begin reading that there are no right or wrong answers to this scenario – only different consequences based on choice. Each group will read the opening of the *'Try Walking in our Shoes' scenario* found in the <u>participant workbook in Module 5</u> and as a group discuss the choices eventually deciding on either option 1 or option 2.

3. The facilitator will then hand out the pages for option 1 or option 2 to each group according to their decision.

4. Each group will read their page, discuss the next choices they can make - either option 1a or option 1b, or option 2a or option 2b, eventually deciding on one of the two options before them.

5. The facilitator will then hand out the pages for option 1a or option 1b, or option 2a or option 2b to each group according to their decision.

6. Once each group has finished reading their final page, ask them to discuss the following question(s).

> a. Where has your project ended up as a result of the choices made in the face of challenges?
> b. Where is your greatest impact?

7. Return to the plenary and request a short feedback from each group asking them to focus on the challenges they encountered while implementing the exercise.

8. Conclude the activity by presenting the slide entitled 'Challenges of Working with Female Religious Actors'

CHALLENGES OF WORKING WITH FEMALE RELIGIOUS ACTORS

- Women's participation viewed as threatening traditional societal/religious structures leading to pushback.

- Women accused of advancing a 'feminist agenda' rather than dealing with the subject at hand; Power dynamics may become an issue

- Different levels of religious knowledge between men and women

- Extra attention paid to female participants (sometimes needed to 'level the playing field') is seen as preferential treatment

- Male religious leaders want to 'supervise' women's only meetings and activities

- Women do not feel confident in mixed-gender settings

MODULE 5 **ACTIVITY 3**

Anticipating Challenges // 2-4-6

20 MINUTES
THIS ACTIVITY

1. Pose these two discussion questions to the participants:

   a. How can you address these challenges in the project design phase?
   b. How can the team resolve challenges that arise?

2. For 2 minutes: ask participants to think about the questions individually
3. For 4 minutes: ask participants to discuss the questions with their neighbors in small groups
4. For 6 minutes: Ask a representative from one or two groups (based on time) to summarize what they discussed.
5. Conclude the activity with the slide entitled '2-4-6: Anticipating Challenges'

2-4-6: ANTICIPATING CHALLENGES

- Receive endorsement from senior-level religious leaders before start-up.
- Clearly and transparently communicate the values underpinning women's participation, e.g. extra time/knowledge provided to female participants to close unequal gaps.
- Create an empowering experience for all participants (male and female) according to needs.
- Be flexible and willing to adapt the project in real time according to participants' needs – male and female.

6. Close the module by reviewing Module 5: Key Takeaways.

MODULE 5: KEY TAKEAWAYS

MODULE 5:
KEY
TAKEAWAYS
- Women are effective peacebuilders – include them in peacebuilding activities
- Be inclusive when defining female religious actors
- Be sensitive and attentive to religious actors' differing needs
- In some locations you will face push-back when including women

Many of these challenges can be addressed during project design and by facilitators once the project is underway

Engaging Women

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Women are effective peacebuilders – include them in peacebuilding activities
- Be inclusive when defining female religious actors
- Be sensitive and attentive to religious actors' differing needs
- In some locations you will face push-back when including women
- Many of these challenges can be addressed during project design and by facilitators once the project is underway

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5. ***Engaging Women***
6. *Engaging Youth*
7. *A multi-Sectoral Approach to Religious Engagement*
8. *Design, Monitoring, and Evaluation for Religious Engagement*

FURTHER READING

Manal Omar, Video: Women at the Negotiating Table: The Missing Piece in Peacebuilding, TEDxSanDiego, January 2018

Search for Common Ground, Accommodating Religious Identity in Youth Peacebuilding Programs, May 2017

United States Institute of Peace, Women in Religious Peacebuilding, Peaceworks no. 71, 2011

6.

Engaging Youth

THE **COMMON GROUND APPROACH** TO **RELIGIOUS ENGAGEMENT**

Engaging Youth

This module highlights the role religious youth play in peacebuilding and offers creative methods to engage youth in religious engagement projects. It explores the generation gap between youth and older religious actors as well as the benefits of intergenerational projects.

IN THIS MODULE

115 MINUTES
THIS MODULE

1. Youth Engagement // *Discussion & Presentation*
2. Recruiting Young Religious Actors // *Discussion & Presentation*
3. Youth & Media // *Case Studies*
4. Challenges of Working with Religious Youth // *Brainstorming*
5. Exploring Generational Gaps // *Six Thinking Hats*

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Religious youth are valuable contributors to peacebuilding.
- Broad definitions of 'young religious actor' aids recruitment.
- Program activities need to be creatively designed.
- Including young people offers a sense of belonging and reduces a need for them to seek it from extremist groups.
- Youth today are digital natives and have large online and offline networks.
- Intergenerational projects may pose challenges but also offer benefits to religious actors, young and old.

MODULE 6 **ACTIVITY 1**

Youth Engagement // Discussion & Presentation

20 MINUTES THIS ACTIVITY

Encourage the participants to explore the role of religious youth in relation to conflict in a given country

1. Open the module by presenting the slide with the following statements:

    Most conflicts occur in countries with youthful populations.

    The vast majority of youth do not participate in violence.

YOUTH AND CONFLICT

> Most conflicts occur in countries with youthful populations.[1]
>
> On the whole, youth do not participate in violence.[2]
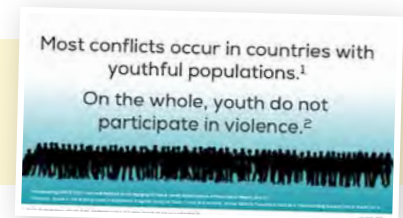
2. Lead a plenary discussion with the following questions:

    a. Do you include youth in projects that do not focus on youth issues?

    b. Are there ways that conflict specifically affects youth in your country?

    c. Are youth included in peacebuilding projects in your country? Why or why not?

    d. Have you previously worked with religious youth in peacebuilding projects?

    e. Do you see benefits to working with religious youth?

3. Present slide entitled 'Youth'.

YOUTH

- Integral to - and often the majority in - a nation
- Engagement supports community resilience
- Diverse physical networks - family, friends, faith-communities, schools, sports clubs, university associations etc.
- Far-reaching virtual networks - Instagram, WhatsApp, Telegram, Snapchat etc.
- Digital natives (unlike other religious actors)
- Energetic, innovative, creative

MODULE 6 **ACTIVITY 2**

Recruiting Young Religious Actors // Discussion & Presentation

10 MINUTES
THIS ACTIVITY

1. Before presenting the slide entitled 'Recruiting Young Religious Actors', briefly ask participants the following questions.

> a. What ages fall into the 'youth' category?
> b. From where can we recruit religious youth?

RECRUITING YOUNG RELIGIOUS ACTORS

WHAT IS 'YOUTH'?

> » Adolescent youth (aged 15-19)
> » Early Youth (20-24)
> » Middle Youth (25-29)
> » Late Youth (30-34)

WHO ARE YOUNG RELIGIOUS ACTORS?

> » Young people who are active in their religious communities
> » Young clergy such as youth ministers etc.

WHERE TO FIND RELIGIOUS YOUTH?

> » Faith associations at universities
> » Youth groups
> » Youth ministries
> » Summer camps
> » NGO programming

2. Present the slide entitled 'Recruiting Young Religious Actors – Possible Limitations.'

RECRUITING YOUNG RELIGIOUS ACTORS - POSSIBLE LIMITATIONS

Recruiting Young Religious Actors
Possible Limitations
• Religious authority's endorsement for youth participation
• Parental approval for youth participation
• Chaperones for females
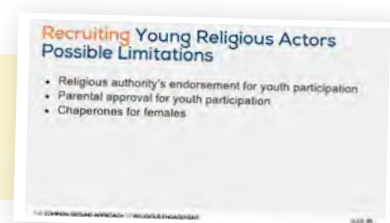
Some youth will not participate in a project if it requires parental approval.

Others will only participate in a project if they have parental approval. As always, it depends on the context and culture of each specific location, as well as each participant's needs.

MODULE 6 **ACTIVITY 3**

Youth & Media // Case Studies

30 MINUTES
THIS ACTIVITY

Explore the role youth play in preventing/countering/ transforming violent extremism and the various media tools that can be used in youth religious engagement.

PREPARATION

- You will cover both slides but choose one case study to go into depth on based on the context. The Lebanon case study focuses on youth and violent extremism, the Soliya case study focuses on youth and digital media. If you have additional time, present both cases.

  Details on the slides used in both case studies are included in this guide. The Lebanon case facilitation includes more detailed notes on youth and violent extremism.

LEBANON CASE STUDY FACILITATION

1. Instruct the participants to read the case study individually for 5 minutes. The case study can be found in the *participant workbook in Module 6*.

2. Ask the group the following questions as a debrief discussion:

   a. What's the added value of youth in this project?

   b. How can engaging youth help counter exclusionist approaches?

   c. Why are holy sites at risk during conflict?

3. Present the slides entitled 'Youth and Violent Extremism' and 'Youth and Digital Media'.

SOLIYA (NEW MEDIA) CASE STUDY FACILITATION

1. Instruct participants to individually read the case study. The case study can be found in the *participant workbook in Module 6*.

2. Ask the group the following questions as a debrief discussion:

   a. What role can new media technologies play in peacebuilding?

   b. Are young people's social networks online or offline today? How does this affect their impact on peacebuilding?

   c. What risks does young people's use of new media pose to peacebuilding? How can these be mitigated?

3. Present the slides entitled 'Youth and Digital Media' and then 'Youth and Violent Extremism'.

   More details on youth and violent extremism are included in the Lebanon case study facilitation earlier in this module.

YOUTH & VIOLENT EXTREMISM

- On the whole, youth do not participate in conflict or join groups with violent and extremist ideologies.

  » Political narratives may blame youth for violent extremism in order to repress opposition to government policy.

- Youth are often at the forefront of preventing violent extremism.

- The primary motivation for young people to join extremist groups is usually NOT ideological.

  » Factors of vulnerability, looking for belonging, identity etc.
  » Engaging youth in peacebuilding provides a sense of purpose and belonging so they do not need to search for it elsewhere.
  » *Religion is a protective factor.* Some research suggests that religious youth may be less likely to join groups with violent and extremist ideologies.[1]

- Categorizing youth as 'at-risk' stigmatizes and marginalizes them further.

1 United States Institute of Peace, 'Faith and Fragile States First Panel: Religious Engagement in Countering Violent Extremism (CVE)', August 2018. See 38:00 – 39:38.

YOUTH & DIGITAL MEDIA

- Majority are active on social media
- "Digital natives" with large online social networks.
- Many young religious leaders have a popular online presence.
- "Digital literacy" media training helps encourage safe and healthy messaging

CASE STUDY
LEBANON

Protecting our Future

Many of Lebanon's religious and cultural heritage sites are at risk due to a lack of public awareness about them, lack of local preservation skills and the sectarian nature of Lebanese society. Search's Tourathi: Protecting our Future: A Youth Led Approach to the Promotion of Lebanese Cultural Heritage project brings together youth volunteers from six different communities in Lebanon to learn about local religious and cultural heritage sites through research, mapping, and recording oral histories. These volunteers highlight what personal meaning these sites have for them as well as their historical, religious and cultural importance to the Lebanese people. Activities led by youth volunteers include exchange visits, guided tours, festivals and social media campaigns. 600 people attended the project's final event in Beirut. The youth volunteers produced 8 brochures and reached more than 3000 people through social media campaigns on Facebook and Instagram. Through this project the youth champion a message that pride in local religious and cultural heritage can unite Lebanese society. As a result, they also play a role in preventing exclusionist attitudes.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Building local and national pride around religious and cultural heritage creates a sense of unity and can help in reducing exclusionist approaches
- Religious youth bring a fresh, personal approach to the significance of religious and cultural sites through their engagement in the project

REFERENCE

Search for Common Ground, Tourathi Project PowerPoint Presentation, January 2019

Out of the Box, Tourathing: Protecting our Future: A Youth Led Approach to the Promotion of Lebanese Cultural Heritage, November 2017

CASE STUDY
SOLIYA

New Media

Soliya Connect is a virtual exchange program that allows university students around the world to engage in intercultural and interfaith dialogue. The program empowers young people to address religious, cultural and political differences constructively, while building international relationships based on cooperation and mutual respect. This intersection of digital technology and dialogue allows peacebuilding efforts to engage youth who are often excluded, and also reaches further than the students themselves due to their diverse physical and virtual social networks. The NGO Soliya is a strategic global partner of Search.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- New media technologies can connect people across geographical, cultural and religious divides

- As digital natives, young people are a prime audience for virtual exchange projects and it is an attractive way to draw them into peacebuilding

- Youth peacebuilding programs can have far-reaching effects due to young people's diverse social networks, online and offline

REFERENCE

Soliya Connect Program

MODULE 6 **ACTIVITY 3**

Challenges of Working with Religious Youth // Brainstorming

15 MINUTES
THIS ACTIVITY

Identify and discuss the challenges of working with religious youth.

PREPARATION

- Review the guide for how to manage the 'Six Thinking Hats' exercise.

MATERIALS

- Sticky notes
- A4 flip chart
- Pens or marker

1. Present the slide with the question 'What are the challenges of working with religious youth?'

WHAT ARE THE CHALLENGES OF WORKING WITH RELIGIOUS YOUTH?

What are the challenges of working with religious youth?

2. In pairs, ask participants to brainstorm challenges of working with religious youth and write the challenges on separate sticky notes.

3. After 5 minutes, ask one representative from each pair to place their sticky notes on the large flip chart at the front of the room.

4. As a group, sort the sticky notes into groups with similar themes on the flip chart, naming each group as you go.

5. Present the slide entitled 'Challenges of Working with Religious Youth' with an emphasis on challenges that have not been raised during the exercise.

CHALLENGES OF WORKING WITH RELIGIOUS YOUTH

- Possible need for parental/religious authority approval
- Discomfort with co-ed programs
- Gaps in secular education/narrow world perspective – particularly problematic if there are gaps between participants
- High levels of institutional mistrust – may include own religious institutions
- Discomfort with multi-generational programs – on both sides
- Generation gap
- Feeling shy, inadequate or too ignorant to work with older religious actors as equals
- Older actors may not value youth's contribution

MODULE 6 **ACTIVITY 4**

Exploring Generational Gaps // Six Thinking Hats

40 MINUTES
THIS ACTIVITY

If intergenerational projects are not relevant to your location, consider using the Six Thinking Hats exercise to analyze the opportunities and challenges of engaging religious youth (instead of the sticky notes activity)

1. Before presenting the slide entitled 'Generation Gaps', ask participants to call out thoughts about generational gaps between younger and older religious actors before presenting the answers.

2. Present the slide entitled 'Generation Gaps'.

GENERATIONAL GAPS

Generation Gaps
- Gender issues
- Urban vs Rural
- Tradition vs Modernity
- Religious knowledge
- Secular education
- Language
- Popular culture
- Technological skills
- Political beliefs
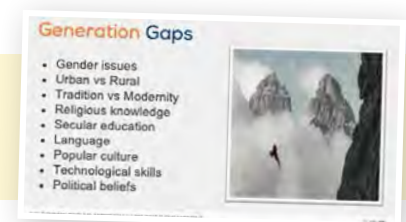
3. Divide participants into groups of six for the Six Thinking Hats exercise. Six Thinking Hats is a technique developed by Edward de Bono that provides a clear structure of how to think about complex issues and scenarios from a variety of perspectives. Here, we will be using this tool to analyze the effectiveness of intergenerational projects.

DATA & FACTS   CHALLENGES   EMOTIONS   OPPORTUNITIES   NEW IDEAS   GUIDE

4. In their groups of six, each participant is to choose one 'thinking hat color'. Each color represents a different analysis method.

- White Hat focuses on data and facts, those already known and those needed
- Black Hat focuses on difficulties and challenges
- Red Hat focuses on emotions and intuitions
- Yellow Hat focuses on values and benefits, why something may work
- Green Hat focuses on creativity, possibilities, new ideas
- Blue Hat leads the process and discussion

5. Using the worksheet with guiding questions in *Module 6 of the participant workbook*, each 'hat' is to spend five minutes jotting down thoughts/feelings about intergenerational projects according to its focus. Blue Hat needs to keep an eye on time and prepare to lead the next stage of the activity. The worksheet can also be found in the appendix to this guide.

6. After five minutes, Blue Hat leads a group discussion with each hat sharing its ideas and approach to intergenerational projects.

7. After fifteen minutes, return to the plenary and invite two or three reactions to discussions. Conclude the activity by presenting the two slides entitled 'Intergenerational Projects'.

INTERGENERATIONAL PROJECTS
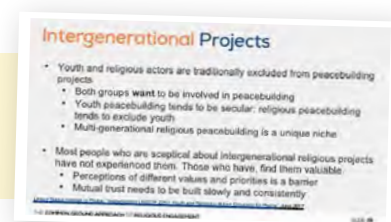
INTERGENERATIONAL PROJECTS

8. Present Module 6 Key Takeaways.

MODULE 6: KEY TAKEAWAYS

Engaging Youth

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Religious youth are valuable contributors to peacebuilding
- Broad definitions of 'young religious actor' aids recruitment
- Program activities need to be creatively designed
- Including young people offers a sense of belonging and reduces a need for them to seek it from extremist groups
- Youth today are digital natives and have large online and offline networks
- Intergenerational projects may pose challenges but also offer benefits to religious actors, young and old

THE **COMMON GROUND APPROACH** TO **RELIGIOUS ENGAGEMENT**

1. *Introduction to Religious Engagement*
2. *Religion: A Force for Peace–a Driver of Conflict?*
3. *Engaging Religious Actors in Peacebuilding*
4. *Religious Sensitivity*
5. *Engaging Women*
6. **Engaging Youth**
7. *A multi-Sectoral Approach to Religious Engagement*
8. *Design, Monitoring, and Evaluation for Religious Engagement*

FURTHER READING

Graeme Simpson, The Missing Peace: Independent Progress Study on Youth and Peace and Security United Nations Population Fund and Peacebuilding Support Office, 2018

Margaret Williams, Working Together to Address Violent Extremism: A Strategy for Youth-Government Partnerships, Search for Common Ground, 2017

Search for Common Ground, Memo on Disaggregating Data by Age Groups, Children & Youth and Institutional Learning Team, February 2017

United States Institute of Peace, Implementing UNSCR 2250: Youth and Religious Actors Engaging for Peace, June 2017

United States Institute of Peace, Faith and Fragile States First Panel: Religious Engagement in Countering Violent Extremism (CVE), August 2018

United Nations, Security Council, Unanimously Adopting Resolution 2250 (2015), Urges Member States to Increase Representation of Youth in Decision-Making at All Levels, Meetings Coverage and Press Releases, December 2015

United Nations Development Programme, Preventing Violent Extremism through Promoting Inclusive Development, Tolerance and Respect for Diversity, 2016

7.
A Multi-Sectoral Approach to Religious Engagement

THE **COMMON GROUND APPROACH** TO **RELIGIOUS ENGAGEMENT**

A Multi-sectoral Approach to Religious Engagement

This module explores the various sectors (e.g. state, governmental, multi-lateral, civil society, media) that interface with religious actors. It discusses the shared values and common interests that underpin their cooperation in building more peaceful societies and the benefits and risks of such collaborations.

IN THIS MODULE

1. Values and Interests // *Mind Mapping*
2. Exploring Multiple Sectors // *Station Rotation*
3. Additional Actors // *Presentation*

135 MINUTES
THIS MODULE

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- There are common values and shared interests between religious actors and other sectors on which collaboration can be built
- Governments and Political Institutions
- International Actors
- Civil Society Organizations
- Media
- Private Market
- There are risks and benefits to engaging with each sector that must be considered before building partnerships
- A multi-sectoral approach encourages systemic, enduring change

MODULE 7 **ACTIVITY 1**

Identify Shared Values & Interests // Mind Mapping

🕐 **20 MINUTES**
THIS ACTIVITY

Identify shared values and interests between religious actors and other sectors.

PREPARATION

- Review the characteristics of a mind map. An example template can be found in the appendix to this guide.

MATERIALS

- Flip chart/butcher paper
- Four different color markers

The values and interests discussed in this activity do not need to be explicitly related to religion.

Also, it can sometimes be difficult to differentiate between a value and an interest. (Is physical and emotional security a value or an interest – or both?)

1. In the plenary, ask participants to brainstorm some values and interests of each sector. Mark these on the mind-map in the appropriate color. Examples of values include equality, charity, justice, peace etc. Examples of interests include economic growth, health and educational services, security, environmental awareness, information sharing, freedom of religion and access to holy sites.

2. As values and interests are added to the mind map in their designated colors, also draw a line between the bubbles in the designated 'connections' color to represent the connections between sectors, values and interests. You can further explain what the connection is by writing it above the connection line.

This activity also brings to light areas of possible conflict between different sectors. We can also try and focus our efforts on these areas, aiming to create greater flexibility and gradual change.

A MULTI-SECTORAL APPROACH TO RELIGIOUS ENGAGEMENT
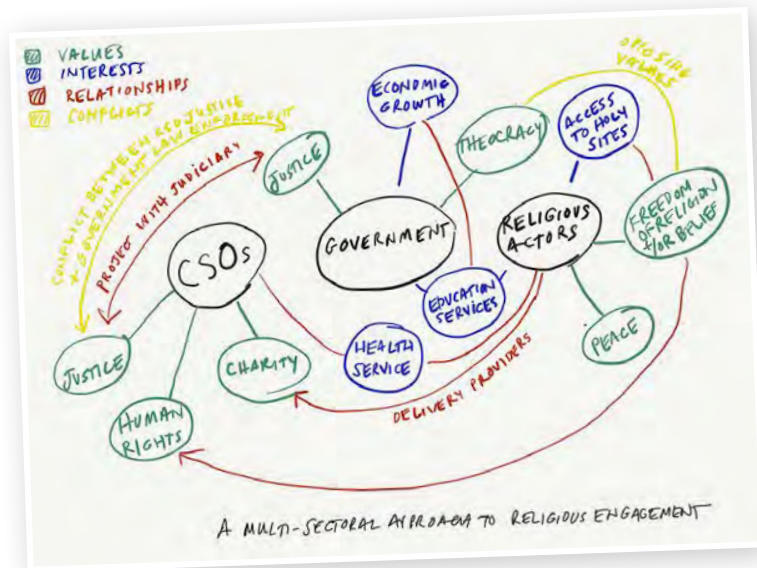
3. After completing the mind map, present the 'Basis of a Multi-Sectoral Approach' slide.

BASIS OF A MULTI-SECTORAL APPROACH

- Identify shared values
- Collaborate on shared interests
- Explore areas of conflicting interests/values as opportunities for future cooperation

4. Facilitate a discussion emphasizing the following:

- You can build multi-sectoral partners around common values AND/OR interests.
- Religious actors may articulate their values in specifically religious terms, but the core issue may not be inherently specific to religion itself.
- Religious actors often have valuable perspectives to contribute on contemporary issues that are not overtly connected to religion, e.g. the environment, refugees. These touch points often provide shared values and interests between religious actors and other sectors and are therefore opportunities for collaboration.

MODULE 7 **ACTIVITY 2**

Station Rotation // Activity

100 MINUTES
THIS ACTIVITY

Explore various sectors that have an interest in religious engagement.

PREPARATION

- Arrange the chairs and tables in the room so there are four clearly defined stations (chairs and tables grouped together).

- Download the United Nations video in advance and set it up on a digital device at one of the four stations. If there are technical difficulties, the transcript of the video can be found in the appendix to this guide.

- Print the station 'guide' sheets included in the appendix and leave a copy at each of the stations. These guide sheets can also be found in the *participant workbook in Module 7*.

MATERIALS

- A 'guide' sheet present at each station. These can be found in the appendix to this guide.

- Digital device and downloaded United Nations video at one of the stations.

1. Divide the participants into four groups.

2. Send each group to one station.

   Three stations have a written case study to read and one station has a video case study to watch (or a video transcript to read in the event of technical difficulties).

   Each group will have the opportunity to analyze all three case studies and see the video.

3. Explain that each group will read a case study or watch the video and discuss the questions on the guide sheet for 20 minutes before moving to the next station.

4. After 80 minutes, bring the participants back to one large group. Ask the plenary the following question, only accepting answers for a few minutes.

   How do you see the multi-sectoral approach to religious engagement after discussing these four case studies?

5. Conclude the station rotation by presenting the risks and benefits of engaging with each sector. These slides are entitled 'Government and Political Institutions', 'International Institutions', 'Civil Society Organizations', and 'Media'.

GOVERNMENT & POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS

INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS

MEDIA

MODULE 7 **ACTIVITY 4**

Additional Actors // Presentation

15 MINUTES
THIS ACTIVITY

Discuss additional sectors that have an interest in religious engagement & provide an opportunity to consider additional actors not yet mentioned.

1. Present the slide with the question, *'Who else might be included in a multi-sectoral approach to religious engagement?'* Pause to hear brief answers. Examples of other sectors include military, business, law-enforcement etc.

    WHO ELSE MIGHT BE INCLUDED?

2. Present the slide entitled 'Healthy, safe and just societies' noting that a multi-sectoral approach reflects the essence of the CGA. We work together to change social norms, institutions and markets in societies mired in conflict in order to create enduring positive change and transform societies. Religious actors are an integral and influential part of society and along with other sectors need to play their part in effecting change.
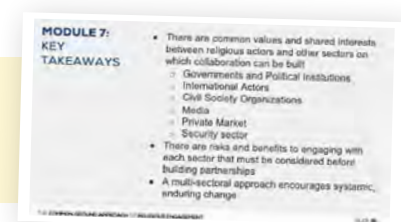
    HEALTHY, SAFE, AND JUST SOCIETIES

3. Conclude the module by reviewing the Key Takeaways.

    MODULE 7: KEY TAKEAWAYS

A Multi-sectoral Approach to Religious Engagement

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- There are common values and shared interests between religious actors and other sectors on which collaboration can be built
  - » Governments and Political Institutions
  - » International Actors
  - » Civil Society Organizations
  - » Media
  - » Private Market

- There are risks and benefits to engaging with each sector that must be considered before building partnerships
- A multi-sectoral approach encourages systemic, enduring change

THE **COMMON GROUND APPROACH** TO **RELIGIOUS ENGAGEMENT**

FURTHER READING

Marie Juul Peterson & Katherine Marshall, Promoting Freedom of Religion or Belief – Key Lessons, Berkley Center, December 2019

Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, Freedom of Religion or Belief and Security: Policy Guidance, OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, 2019

8.

Design, Monitoring, and Evaluation for Religious Engagement

THE **COMMON GROUND APPROACH** TO **RELIGIOUS ENGAGEMENT**

Design, Monitoring, and Evaluation for Religious Engagement

This module outlines the key principles of designing projects for religious actors and reiterates the importance of a 'Do-No-Harm' approach. It also provides best practices for effective monitoring and evaluation when working with religious actors.

The purpose of this module is not to teach design, monitoring and evaluation (DM&E) but to highlight the unique characteristics of DM&E for religious engagement projects.

This module may not be suitable for participants without a foundation in DM&E. Consider skipping this module if it is not appropriate for your workshop's audience.

IN THIS MODULE

60 MINUTES
THIS MODULE

1. Religious Engagement Project Design // *Presentation & Discussion*
2. Designing for Religious Engagement // *Role Play & Practice*
3. Evaluating Religious Engagement // *Presentation & Discussion*
4. Evaluating Religious Engagement // *Case Study*
5. Key Considerations for M&E // *Presentation & Discussion*

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- DM&E for religious engagement is not particularly different from general peacebuilding projects.
  BUT
- Choose suitable evaluation methods for your indicators and your subjects.
- Participatory and qualitative evaluation methods are often more effective when evaluating religious engagement projects.
- Use religious language/terms to enhance religious actors' understanding of the project objectives.
- Know well with whom you are working.
- Set reasonable expectations and time-frames.

MODULE 8 **ACTIVITY 1**

Religious Engagement Project Design // Presentation & Discussion

20 MINUTES
THIS ACTIVITY

Consider adjustments in design for religious engagement projects.

There are two specific aspects to 'Do No Harm' in religious engagement projects – 1) how the project may be affected and 2) how the religious actors may be affected.
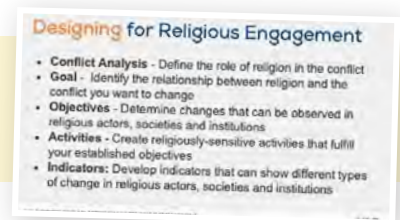
For the first, consider whether including religious actors aligns with your office strategy and weigh up the risks of whether designing a project that directly focuses on religious issues does more harm than good (e.g. Myanmar case study, Module 2).

For the second point, consider the personal implications of religious engagement projects on our religious actor 'champions'. They may be going against the grain at personal risk (safety, reputation, livelihood).

1. Briefly present the slide entitled 'Do No Harm.' Participants should be familiar with this principle from previous modules (Modules 1, 2, and 5).

2. Present the slide 'Designing for Religious Engagement' to introduce the rest of this section. The remainder of this exercise acts as a crash course on designing religious engagement projects.

DO NO HARM

DESIGNING FOR RELIGIOUS ENGAGEMENT

Designing for Religious Engagement

- **Conflict Analysis** - Define the role of religion in the conflict
- **Goal** - Identify the relationship between religion and the conflict you want to change
- **Objectives** - Determine changes that can be observed in religious actors, societies and institutions
- **Activities** - Create religiously-sensitive activities that fulfil your established objectives
- **Indicators:** Develop indicators that can show different types of change in religious actors, societies and institutions

3. Introduce the slide entitled 'Conflict Analysis.' In order to design an effective religious engagement project, the role of religion in the conflict context must be carefully considered. Ask the participants to provide two examples from their own experience of where religion played different roles in a conflict. If religion is not being used in their local programming, ask the participants to provide examples from the case studies they have seen in the workshop so far.
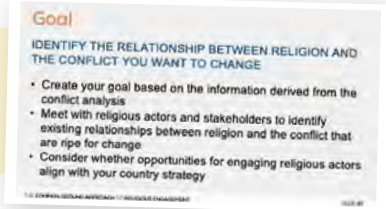
CONFLICT ANALYSIS

- Are there current factors contributing to the conflict that contain religious elements?
- Are there root causes contributing to the conflict that contain religious elements?
- How does the conflict affect the daily lives of religious people, communities and institutions?
- Who are the religious connectors?
- Who are the religious dividers?

4. Present the slides entitled 'Goal', 'Objectives' and 'Activities'.
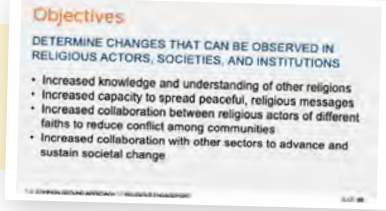
GOALS

OBJECTIVES

ACTIVITIES

5. After presenting the slide entitled 'Activities', ask the plenary the following questions for response:

   a. What are religious-sensitive activities?
   b. What considerations need to be taken into account when creating them?

6. Present the slide entitled 'Indicators' and the summary slide entitled 'Designing for Religious Engagement'. Leave this slide on the screen for the duration of Exercise 2.

INDICATORS

DESIGNING FOR RELIGIOUS ENGAGEMENT

MODULE 8 **ACTIVITY 2**

Designing for Religious Engagement // Role Play & Practice

35 MINUTES
THIS ACTIVITY

URUZANIA SCENARIO

Uruzania is a coastal country with a large rural agricultural inland and active coastal fishery communities. Oil and gas companies have been engaged in exploration off shore, but no viable resource has been identified yet. Uruzania has experienced horrific violence since independence in the mid-1960s. Its population is divided across thirty-two different ethnic groups, of which 60% are Christians, 30% Muslims, and 10% of other faith traditions, including indigenous religions. Despite this diversity, the people have lived together peacefully, even during recurrent violent conflicts resulting from coup d'états and other political upheavals. These incidents of violence have led to the creation of many militia groups that claim to defend different population groups defined by ethnicity, geography, or religion. Five years ago, one such upheaval brought a predominantly Christian military group to power. The brutalities that the military units inflicted on civilian populations as they fought their way to power prompted Muslim militia groups to mobilize themselves for reprisals and to defend their communities. The ensuing war led to the deaths of at least 8,000 combatants and civilians, with thousands more internally displaced or seeking refuge in neighboring countries.

Following international intervention, a peace accord was signed, and an elected government is now in place after a three-year transition period. An interim president has been installed, and there are UN peacekeepers in the country. The situation is now calmer, but still punctuated by outbreaks of violence and an ongoing sense of insecurity for many. Militia groups are still active. The mobilization along religious lines has led to the portrayal of the civil war as a Christian-Muslim struggle, although most analysts argue that the conflict is mostly about power and resources in which religious identity is used as a tool for rousing fear, gaining allegiance and seeking power. While the role of faith traditions as an identity marker must be recognized, additional conflict drivers include political and economic tensions magnified by corruption, weak governance and the failure to create a national identity that supersedes other identities. While many rural minority groups experience marginalization, Muslim groups are particularly aggrieved, feel excluded from political influence, and observe that they have not received their fair share of economic development support. To engage effectively in such a context, any actor—religious or secular—will need to recognize the specific role each conflict driver plays as well as the ways they interact.

Example Taken from Woodrow, Peter, Nick Oatley, and Michelle Garred. 'Faith Matters: A Guide for the Design, Monitoring & Evaluation of Inter-Religious Peacebuilding.'CDA Collaborative Learning Projects and Alliance for Peacebuilding, September 2017.

1. Ask participants to read the fictional Uruzania scenario below. It can be found in *Module 8 of the participant workbook*.

2. Ask participants for four volunteers for the role-play. The role play can also be found in the *workbook*.

3. Assign the roles of Narrator, BBC Presenter James, Imam and Pastor to the volunteers. Have volunteers read out the role-play below according to their designated parts.

ROLE PLAY

Narrator: For several years, the Interfaith Peace Platform has had many vigorous discussions about the conflict in the country and whether it has religious dimensions. Last year Pastor Otano and Imam Bubakar were interviewed by the BBC. Part of the interview went like this:

James Menendez (BBC): Thank you, Pastor Otano and Imam Bubakar for joining us today. We have been told that the conflict and violence in Uruzania arises from tensions between Muslims and Christians. Yet the two of you have been cooperating to promote peace. How do you explain that contradiction?

Imam: Thanks, James, we are pleased to be here. Actually, we don't agree that the conflict here is primarily about religion. The contending groups are struggling for political power and have been manipulating peoples' religious identities to mobilize actions and violence. But there is no fundamental contention between religious groups.

Pastor: I would just add that a lot of the conflict is about neglect and marginalization of the huge majority of the population—both Muslim and Christian. Elite groups (which include both Muslim and Christian as well) are doing well, while most people suffer. And, the farther from the capital you are, the less likely you will receive services, including health care, education, and even basic security.

James: So, the issue is about how to ensure that everyone receives an equitable share of resources, regardless of their faith community. Is that right?

Imam: Absolutely! And resources are connected closely to political and economic power. As religious leaders, we don't intervene in political struggles—at least not directly. But each of our faith traditions emphasizes a responsibility to ensure that all are fed, clothed and have shelter.

---

4. After the role-play divide the participants into groups of three or four.

5. They will then create a religious engagement project for Uruzania using the information from the Uruzania case study/role play and the crash course on designing for religious engagement. Participants are to use the *blank worksheets in the participant workbook* to plan their project. Ask the participants to consider the following in their project design.

a.   Goal: Identify the relationship between religion and the conflict you want to change

b.   Objectives: Determine the changes that can be observed in religious actors, societies, and institutions

c.   Activities: Create religious-sensitive activities that fulfill your established objectives

d.   Indicators: Develop indicators that show different types of change in religious actors, societies and institutions

6.   After twenty minutes gather the participants allowing one representative from each group to present their project for five minutes.

Evaluating Religious Engagement // Presentation & Discussion

15 MINUTES
THIS ACTIVITY

Understand and be able to implement monitoring and evaluation in light of religious engagement.

1.   Present the slide entitled 'How is M&E for a religious engagement initiative different or similar to other projects?'

HOW IS M&E FOR A RELIGIOUS ENGAGEMENT INITIATIVE DIFFERENT OR SIMILAR TO OTHER PROJECTS?

DISCUSSION

How is M&E for a religious engagement initiative different or similar to other projects?
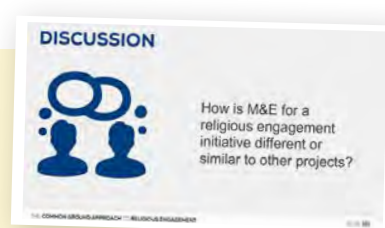
2.   In the plenary, ask participants to use their own experiences to answer the question above and on the slide.

3. After getting participant feedback, present points not already discussed on the slide entitled 'Evaluating Religious Engagement'.

EVALUATING RELIGIOUS ENGAGEMENT

WHAT IS SIMILAR

- Designing a M&E plan around a clear theory of change.
- Measuring change in attitudes, beliefs and behaviors.
- Data collection methods and tools.
- Maintaining high standards of data collection and analysis.

WHERE THERE IS NUANCE

- Using language religious actors feel comfortable with

  » The way the question is asked: using religious terminology e.g. Zakat instead of charity
  » The content of the question: e.g. focusing on attitudes towards religious groups rather than ethnic groups

- How religious actors define success or peace in a project

  » Scriptures may define or interpret peace or success differently from secular society

- Who religious actors consider a credible, trustworthy evaluator
- Attitude towards time among religious actors

  » Religious actors often have a long-term vision that might be at odds with the typical project/funding cycle and time frame

- Comfort with more hierarchical styles of project design and facilitation.

MODULE 8 **ACTIVITY 4**

Evaluating Religious Engagement // Case Study

🕐 **20 MINUTES**
THIS ACTIVITY

1. Ask participants to individually read the Mercy Corps in Myanmar case study. It can be found in *Module 8 of the participant workbook*.

2. Present the slide entitled 'Case Study: Mercy Corps in Myanmar'

CASE STUDY: MERCY CORPS IN MYANMAR

3. Lead a discussion in the plenary using the following questions:

   a. How did Mercy Corps adapt their evaluation methods to a religious peacebuilding project?

   b. What are the advantages of using these methods when working with religious actors?

CASE STUDY
MYANMAR

Mercy Corps

When Mercy Corps and World Vision International tested the pilot version of this Guide (developed for DM&E of interreligious action for peacebuilding), they adapted their usual evaluation practices to make them more faith-sensitive. Mercy Corps in Myanmar was developing the monitoring and evaluation strategy for their Some Hmat community-based inter-communal peacebuilding project. They had originally planned to focus on mostly theory-based approaches and a quantitative set of indicators. However, they increasingly considered the relevance of goal-free impact evaluation approaches (i.e., Most Significant Change), and decided to expand that plan to include more qualitative data gathered through participatory processes, so that project stakeholders (community leaders, government officials and interreligious leaders) could voice their own interpretations of project experiences and results in ways that influence monitoring and evaluation findings and future project design.

This decision involved adding semi-structured interviews to elicit stories, and training staff in how to facilitate this form of data collection and highlight individual behavioral changes. It also involved convening project participants to discuss the purpose of participatory monitoring and evaluation, and to collectively identify the best way to tell the story of the project's impact. This adjustment greatly increased religious leaders' understanding, ownership, and active participation in the monitoring and evaluation process, and reduced suspicions about the investigation of sensitive topics such as peace and religion. The Mercy Corps team still plans to analyze the findings according to their traditional results framework, but they expect those findings to be more robust and meaningful.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Ask project participants to tell their own stories of the project's impact
- Focus on qualitative data measures

REFERENCE

From Faith Matters: A Guide for the Design, Monitoring and Evaluation of Interreligious Action for Peacebuilding

MODULE 8 **ACTIVITY 5**

Key Considerations for M&E //
Presentation & Discussion

10 MINUTES
THIS ACTIVITY

In general, the key considerations presented on this slide are true for all projects.

However, here there are nuances that are specifically relevant for projects that include religious actors.

1. In the plenary, review the points on the slide entitled 'Key Considerations.'
2. Close by reviewing the Module 8: Key Takeaways

MODULE 8: KEY TAKEAWAYS
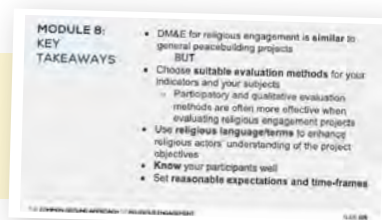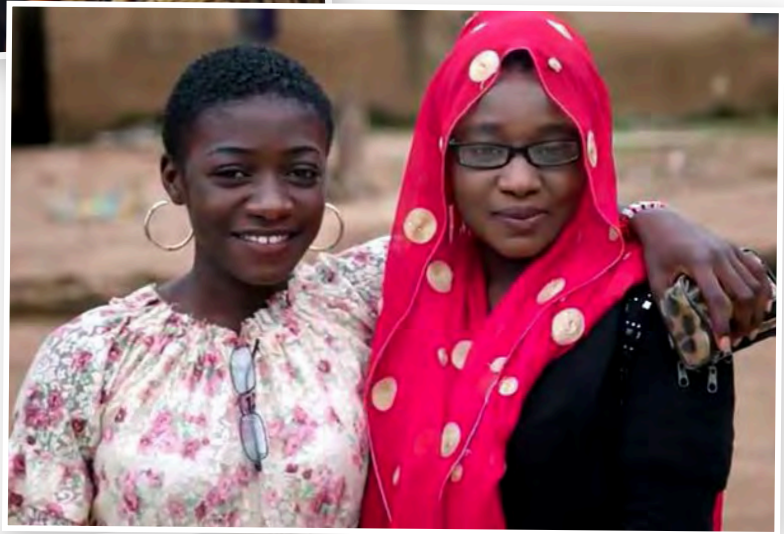
Design, Monitoring, and Evaluation for Religious Engagement

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- DM&E for religious engagement is not particularly different from general peacebuilding projects

    BUT

- Choose suitable evaluation methods for your indicators and your subjects

    Participatory and qualitative evaluation methods are often more effective when evaluating religious engagement projects

- Use religious language/terms to enhance religious actors' understanding of the project objectives
- Know well with whom you are working
- Set reasonable expectations and time-frames

THE **COMMON GROUND APPROACH** TO **RELIGIOUS ENGAGEMENT**

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5. *Engaging Women*
6. *Engaging Youth*
7. *A multi-Sectoral Approach to Religious Engagement*
8. *Design, Monitoring, and Evaluation for Religious Engagement*

FURTHER READING

Peter Woodrow, Nick Oatley &; Michelle Garred, Faith Matters: A Guide for the Design, Monitoring, and Evaluation of Interreligious Action for Peacebuilding, CDA Collaborative Learning Projects and Alliance for Peacebuilding, September 2017

Alliance for Peacebuilding, Policy Brief: The Effective Interreligious Action in Peacebuilding, November 2017

Alliance for Peacebuilding, Learnings and Findings: Effective Interreligious Action in Peacebuilding, November 2017

Appendix

COMMON GROUND APPROACH
TO **RELIGIOUS ENGAGEMENT**

SEARCH
FOR **COMMON**
GROUND

Myanmar Case Study Images

Map of Myanmar and the surrounding region.

The Shewadagon Pagoda located in Myanmar's largest city, Yangon, is the most sacred Buddhist pagoda in Myanmar.

The ballot paper for Myanmar's general election in 2015. These polls were one of the first openly contested general elections in Myanmar since the 1990s.

Women in Myanmar dressed in traditional clothing taking part in a festive procession.

The current national flag of Myanmar that was adopted in 2010.

Religious Literacy Quiz

1. MEDINA IS A SACRED SITE TO WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING RELIGIONS?

C | ISLAM

Medina is the 2nd most important holy site in Islam (after Mecca which is the birthplace of Muhammad and Islam) situated in Saudi Arabia. Muhammad established the Muslim community (ummah) there after his flight from Mecca (622 CE) and it is where his body is entombed.

2. WHICH CHRISTIAN HOLIDAY IS PRECEDED BY LENT, A TIME CHRISTIANS USE FOR SPIRITUAL REFLECTION?

B | EASTER

Lent begins on Ash Wednesday and is observed for 40 days before Easter (March/April). It is marked by fasting, both from food and festivities.

Passover is a Jewish pilgrimage festival that takes place around the same time as Easter.

3. WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING IS ASSOCIATED WITH THE FOUNDING OF BUDDHISM?

C | SIDDARTHA GAUTAMA

Bhagavad Gita (the Song of God) is a 700 verse Sanskrit scripture that is part of the Hindu epic Mahabharata.

Vedas are a large body of religious Sanskrit texts originating in ancient India. They are Hinduism's oldest scriptures.

Siddartha Gautama, also known as the Buddha (awakened one), was a philosopher, meditator, healer and spiritual teacher who lived in ancient India and is revered as the founder of Buddhism.

Krishna is a deity in Hinduism.

4. THE OM SYMBOL IN HINDUISM IS …

A | SACRED LIFE BREATH

Meditation is one of the main practices in Buddhism and Hinduism. It is a technique where, by focusing the mind on a particular object, thought, or activity, one trains attention and awareness and achieves a mentally clear and emotionally calm state. There are many types of meditation.

Nirvana is a place of perfect peace and happiness, like heaven. In Hinduism and Buddhism, it is the highest state a person can attain – enlightenment.

5. WHAT IS THE CENTRAL RELIGIOUS TEXT OF ISLAM?

C | QURAN

Sharia is Islamic law. It is derived from the religious percepts of Islam, particularly the Quran and the Hadith.

Shahada is the first pillar of five in Islam and is the declaration of faith "There is no god but God and Muhammad is His prophet'

The Quran is written in Arabic and for Muslims is the explicit word of God. It was written between 609-632 CE.

Al-Aqsa is the third holiest site for Muslims, situated in Al Quds (Jerusalem). Muslims believe Muhammad was transported from the Great Mosque of Mecca to al-Aqsa during the Night Journey.

6. WHICH OF THESE HOLIDAYS ARE CELEBRATED BY HINDUS?

A | DIWALI (FESTIVAL OF LIGHTS)
OR
D | HOLI (FESTIVAL OF COLORS)

(NB trick question – 2 correct answers)

Diwali lasts 5 days and is celebrated during the Hindu Lunisolar month Kartika (November). It celebrates the spiritual victory of light over darkness, good over evil, and knowledge over ignorance.

Vesak commemorates Buddha's birthday.

Holi is an ancient Hindu two-day festival which heralds the arrival of spring after winter and is celebrated as a day of spreading happiness and love.

7. WHO DO JEWS BELIEVE TO BE THE FOUNDER OF JUDAISM?

C | ABRAHAM

Adam is believed to be the first man ever created by God in the Garden of Eden.

Moses is the Jewish leader/prophet, who, according to their Torah, led the Jewish people from slavery in Egypt to freedom and to their homeland (Israel).

Abraham is believed to be the founding father of ethical monotheism and as such is the father of Judaism, Christianity and Islam.

Joseph was the favored son of Jacob (the grandson of Abraham) who was sold into slavery in Egypt but rose to be the top leader under Pharaoh thus saving the whole continent from famine.

8. THE DALAI LAMA IS AN IMPORTANT FIGURE IN WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING RELIGIONS?

C | BUDDHISM

The Dalai Lama is the title given to the foremost spiritual leader of the Gelug school of Tibetan Buddhism. He lives as a refugee in Dharamshala, India.

Shintoism is an indigenous Japanese religion involving the veneration of deities known as kami.

Sikhism is a monotheistic religion founded around 1500 by Guru Nanak. Its world center is in Amritsar, Punjab, India.

9. WHAT ARE THE FIVE PILLARS OF ISLAM?

A | FAITH, PRAYER, ALMS, FASTING AND PILGRIMAGE

Faith, known as the Shahada, declares "There is no god but God and Muhammad is his prophet".

Prayer - Muslims are obligated to pray 5 times a day.

Alms/charity is known as Zakat in Arabic and is an Islamic obligation.

Fasting takes place during the daylight hours of the month of Ramadan.

The term Halal (meaning 'permissible') is associated with Islamic dietary laws especially the slaughtering and eating of meat.

Pilgrimage is known as Hajj in Arabic. It is an obligation for Muslims to visit the holy site of Mecca, Saudi Arabia, at least once in a lifetime.

10. WHAT ARE THE LARGEST BRANCHES OF CHRISTIANITY?

B | CATHOLIC, PROTESTANT, ORTHODOX

Protestant denominations together constitute the second largest branch of Christianity in the world with 300-400 million followers. (e.g. Baptist churches, Lutheranism, Anglicanism, Methodism, Reformed, Calvinism, among others.

Episcopalian is the term American Anglicans use to describe their Church.

The Roman Catholic Church is the largest within Christianity with approximately 1.3 billion followers.

Evangelicalism is a worldwide, movement within Protestant Christianity.

Mormonism, also known as the Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter Day Saints, sees itself as restoring the early Christian Church with additional revelations by Joseph Smith in the late 1820s in the US.

Eastern Orthodoxy is the second largest Christian Church with approximately 260 million followers. (Third after the Protestant Churches altogether.)

11. HINDUISM'S SACRED TEXTS INCLUDE…?

D | THE VEDAS, MAHABHARATA AND THE UPANISHADS

A Bodhisattva in Buddhism is a person who is on the path to Nirvana.

The Lotus Sutra is widely regarded as one of the most important and influential sacred texts in Buddhism.

The Writings of Bahá'u'lláh are sacred texts of the Baha'I faith.

The Vedas, Mahabharata and the Upanishads are all religious sacred Sanskrit texts originating in ancient India.

12. IN BUDDHISM, A BELIEVER WHO ESCAPES THE CYCLE OF BIRTH, DEATH AND REBIRTH REACHES WHAT?

C | NIRVANA

Samsara is the cycle of death and rebirth to which life in the material world is bound.

Karma is the sum of a person's actions in this and previous states of existence which decides their fate in further existences.

Nirvana is a perfect place of peace and happiness.

Krishna is a deity in Hinduism.

13. FROM WHICH CHRISTIAN CHURCH DID MARTIN LUTHER BREAK AWAY DURING THE REFORMATION?

A | CATHOLIC

Martin Luther was a Catholic monk and German professor of theology in the early 16th century and a seminal figure in the Protestant Reformation. His writings, which repudiated the Pope's authority, were responsible for sparking the Reformation.

Puritans were English Protestants in the 16/17 th centuries who sought to purify the Church of England of Roman Catholic practices.

Calvinism is a major branch of Protestantism that follows the theological tradition and forms of Christian practice set down by John Calvin.

14. WHAT ARE THE MAIN PRACTICES OF CHRISTIANITY?

A | CHURCH WORSHIP, SACRAMENTS (E.G. BAPTISM, COMMUNION)

Sacraments include the main life cycle rites of passage within Christianity such as baptism, confirmation, communion (also known as the Eucharist) marriage, burial.

Church worship is most popular on a Sunday.

15. WHAT IS THE NAME OF JUDAISM'S WEEKLY HOLY DAY OF REST?

D | SHABBAT

Hanukkah is the Jewish festival of lights.

Halakha is the collective compendium of Jewish law.

Yom Kippur is the holiest day in the Jewish calendar when Jews expunge their 'sins' through prayer and 25 hours of fasting.

Shabbat is a 25 hour Sabbath day that is celebrated on Saturdays.

16. WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING ARE STIMULI USED BY BUDDHISTS DURING PRAYER?

A | MANTRAS

A mantra is a sacred utterance believed to have psychological and/or spiritual power.

Sutras are like scriptures in Buddhism containing the teachings of Buddha.

Bodhis are people who have reached enlightenment like a Buddha.

Gurus are spiritual guides/masters who teach how to balance materiality and spirituality in one's daily life. It is Sanskrit word and was used originally for Hindu leaders but has been taken on by other religions.

17. THE TORAH IS THE PRIMARY HOLY BOOK OF WHICH RELIGION?

D | JUDAISM

The Torah is comprised of the five books of Moses and is believed to be the word of God.

18. WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING IS THE MONTH THAT MUSLIMS OBSERVE AS A DAYLIGHT FAST?

B | RAMADAN

Hajj is one of the Five pillars of Islam – the obligatory pilgrimage to Mecca once in a lifetime.

Ramadan is the most holy month in the Muslim calendar.

Eid al Aadhar (Festival of the Sacrifice) is considered to be the holiest festival in the Muslim calendar. It commemorates the willingness of Ibrahim to sacrifice his son Ishmael in obedience to God's command.

Umrah is an Islamic pilgrimage to Mecca that can be undertaken at any time of the year but not at the specific time of the Hajj.

19. THE FOUR NOBLE TRUTHS AND THE EIGHT-FOLD PATH ARE PART OF THE CORE BELIEFS OF WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING RELIGIONS?

D | BUDDHISM

The Four Noble Truths are: suffering exists; it has a cause; it has an end; and it has a cause to bring about its end.

The Eight-Fold path consists of 8 practices leading to liberation from the painful cycle of rebirth.

20. WHAT IS THE NAME GIVEN TO PERMISSIBLE FOOD WITHIN THE DIETARY REGULATIONS OF ISLAM?

A | HALAL

The term Halal (meaning 'permissible') is associated with Islamic dietary laws especially the slaughtering and eating of meat.

Kosher is food permissible for Jews according to Jewish law.

Zakat is alms/charity and a religious obligation in Islam.

Lent begins on Ash Wednesday and is observed for 40 days before Easter (March/April). It is marked by fasting, both from food and festivities.

21. IN WHICH RELIGION ARE SHIVA, VISHNU AND GANESH MAJOR DEITIES?

A | HINDUISM

Shiva expresses the force that destroys evil and prepares the way for new growth.

Vishnu is the supreme being, deity of protection and the preservation of good.

Ganesh is one of the best known of the Hindu deities (also worshipped by Buddhists and Jains). It is the deity of new beginnings, success and wisdom.

22. WHO PARTICIPATE IN ASHURA CEREMONIES IN KARBALA (MODERN IRAQ)?

D | SHIA MUSLIMS

Ashura is the commemoration of the death of Husayn ibn Ali, the grandson of the Prophet Muhammad, at the Battle of Karbala in 680. Shia Muslims believe that Husayn's father Imam Ali (the Prophet's son-in-law) was the rightful successor to lead Islam after the death of the Prophet but he was killed in 661. Both Imam Ali and Husayn ibn Ali are considered martyrs in Shia Islam.

Sunni Muslims comprise approximately 85% of all Muslims worldwide. After the death of the Prophet Muhammad in 632 they supported the belief that the new leader needs to be elected from among those most capable and not specifically selected from within the family of the Prophet.

Shia Muslims comprise approximately 15% of all Muslims worldwide and around 90% of the Iranian population. Sunni and Shia Muslims share the most fundamental Islamic beliefs. The split, around 1400 years ago stemmed from political, leadership distinctions, as described above rather than religious ones, although some varying practises have developed over the centuries.

Ahmadiyya (Ahmadiyya Muslim Community) is an Islamic revival or messianic movement founded in Punjab, British India, in the late 19th Century by Mirza Ghulam Ahmad.

23. WHICH ARE THE FOUR LARGEST RELIGIONS IN THE WORLD IN DESCENDING ORDER?

C | CHRISTIANITY, ISLAM, HINDUISM, BUDDHISM

Christianity has 2.4 billion adherents (34% of world's population).

Islam has 1.6 billion adherents (24%).

Hinduism has more than 1 billion adherents (15%).

Buddhism has 500 million adherents (7%).

Try Walking in our Shoes

Adapted from an original scenario developed by the United States Institute of Peace.

Violent extremist organizations that ground themselves in religious (Islamic and Christian) symbolism, narrative, and justification are operating in your area. Youth in the community have been joining these violent movements, driven by their anger at injustices their community has faced, government corruption, and its ineffectiveness/unwillingness to address community needs. Christian and Muslim communities face high levels of tension between them at present, despite generations of generally peaceful coexistence. The community's markets and schools have become religiously and ethnically segregated. Local politicians from both sides have been inciting violence through hate speeches. Regular attacks by the Christian and Muslim extremist groups have made it difficult for people – especially women – to move freely and safely. In the midst of this situation, women from two organizations -- the Christian Women's Society (CWS) and Muslim Women for Peace (MW4P) -- decide to work together to build peace. You hold regular interfaith dialogues that convene Muslim and Christian women in order to build relationships, address biases, and discuss challenges women from both communities are facing as a result of violence and insecurity. These dialogues have been ongoing for seven months, even as violence has escalated around.

Recently, the primary Christian extremist group attacked a market in the Muslim neighborhood that led to the death of 67 people, including many children and women. In retribution, a church was attacked during Sunday worship services, leading to the death of 80 community members including the pastor of the church and his wife. Some of the women participating in the interfaith dialogues organized by CWS and M4P lost family members in these attacks. Trauma and tensions are high; the community fears escalating violence. The government has responded by sending in armed forces to serve as peacekeepers; these soldiers, many of whom are Christian, are believed to have perpetrated sexual violence in other parts of the country and to have harassed non-Christian communities. Meanwhile, staff from a major international organization have arrived hoping to mediate a ceasefire and/or a negotiated end to violent conflict.

The Christian and Muslim Women's interfaith initiative, of which you are a part, has determined it must respond to the current situation. You have decided to explore three forms of action:

1. Provide multi-faith trauma healing services for the broader community;

2. Advocate to the government to reduce its military presence, and;

3. Explore what role you can have in the peace process.

Male clerics in your community tell you to stop doing this work, claiming that it is inappropriate for religious women to do "political" work, much less to lead religious services for healing.

WHAT DO YOU DO?

OPTION 1

Engage the male clerics in dialogue about their concerns and include them in the project.

OPTION 2

Ignore the male clerics and keep moving forward with your initiative as planned, despite their lack of support.

CONSIDER:

- What are the risks of choosing one or the other option? How might you mitigate those risks?
- Which option do you anticipate is more or less likely to ensure successful outcomes of the project's objectives?
- What does a successful outcome look like for the option you've chosen?

NOTE: During this activity participants will build their own scenario, choosing between options at two decision points.

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                    INTRODUCTION
                   /            \
            OPTION 1              OPTION 2
            /      \              /      \
    OPTION 1A   OPTION 1B   OPTION 2A   OPTION 2B
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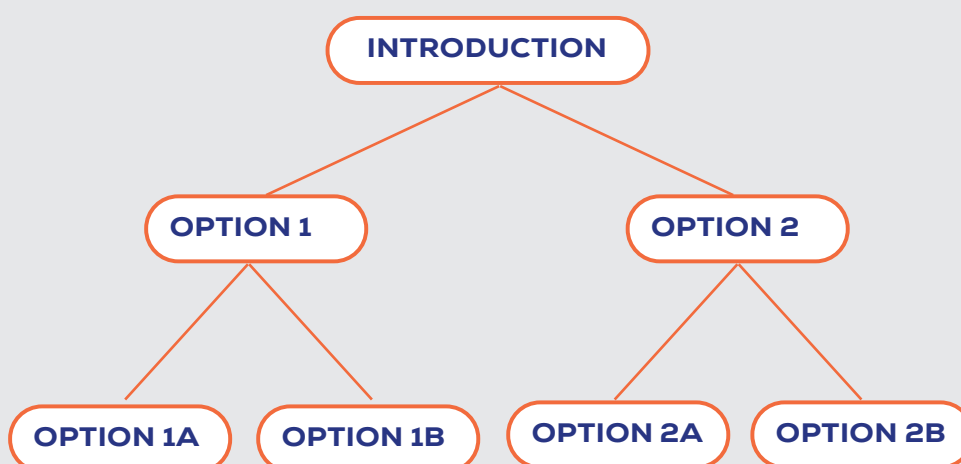
Option 1

The timeline for conducting the healing services is slowed down. The male clerics demand that culturally and politically sensitive issues such as sexual violence against women by soldiers in the armed forces and militia groups not be part of the healing services; instead these services should focus on the loss of life. The male clerics decide they will lead the healing service, and you plan and organize it. The male clerics offer financial resources to support the healing services, which take place in the auditorium of the local Christian/Muslim Council building. The presence of male clerics brings greater visibility and community-buy in for the activities; more people show up for the services, which allows for collective acknowledgment and processing of shared suffering but less opportunities for individual sharing.

Women's particular experience of suffering or insecurity remain largely unspoken. Male clergy are celebrated in the national and international press for "their" interfaith services. The male clerics subsequently insist on being the ones to engage in advocacy efforts with the government.

As a result, you decide to focus more on supporting the peace process by building relationships with local male religious leaders ('champions') who have access to leaders of extremist groups and who are ready to discuss the issue of sexual violence with them. You also need to raise additional funds to expand your activities to more outlying areas.

WHAT DO YOU DO?

OPTION 1A

Approach international women's organizations and/or peacebuilding organizations.

OPTION 1B

Focus your efforts on raising funds locally by approaching supportive individuals and businesses.

CONSIDER:

- What are the risks of choosing one or the other option? How might you mitigate those risks?

- Which option do you anticipate is more or less likely to ensure successful outcomes of the project's objectives?

- What does a successful outcome look like for the option you've chosen?

Option 2

The healing services take place inside your homes. Community members find out about it by word-of-mouth, but some are discouraged from attending by their male clerics and husbands. They are small and intimate events with little public visibility, primarily bringing together women and children for a powerful experience of individual and collective healing that directly addresses the particular suffering they have faced. This creates stronger bonds among Muslim and Christian members of your initiative. Rumors circulate about what has taken place at the services that lead several of you to be questioned by government security actors and attendance drops even lower.

With strengthened resolve to eradicate sexual violence and remove armed actors from their communities, your small group decides to launch a local campaign of nonviolent action. You need funding and training to get this campaign off the ground.

WHAT DO YOU DO?

OPTION 2A

Approach international women's organizations and/or peacebuilding organizations.

OPTION 2B

Focus your efforts on raising funds locally by approaching supportive individuals and then recruiting trainers.

CONSIDER:

- What are the risks of choosing one or the other option? How might you mitigate those risks?
- Which option do you anticipate is more or less likely to ensure successful outcomes of the project's objectives?
- What does a successful outcome look like for the option you've chosen?

Option 1A

The international organizations you approach are hesitant to engage with you, especially given your ties to male religious clerics, whom they see as central obstacles to their women's rights agenda. Male clergy allies are also resistant to any affiliation with these women's groups, believing them to be following Western agendas. Time and care is needed to address concerns from both sides. What helps you make the case to both is drawing from your own religious teachings and stories to underscore the importance of women leaders and women's rights in your faiths. International organizations ultimately provide a few small grants. You finally launch a local community campaign with the slogan "human wellbeing over military security," which is covered by the national media and referred to in speeches by national leaders.

Despite this success, progress has been very slow and throughout the process, some of your women have been pressured to drop out of the initiative by their own critical male clergy. This adds to the lingering resentment over the way male clerics took credit for the healing services in the press and refused to acknowledge the forms of violence women face. As your membership and morale sink, you decide to limit your energies to offering more healing services.

FINAL QUESTION:

Where has your project ended up as a result of the choices made in the face of challenges? Where is your greatest impact?

Option 1B

Several of the male clerics who are supporting your interfaith initiative approach individual wealthy members of their community on your behalf and get their financial commitment. Some of these male clergy keep some of the donations for their own places of worship and efforts, and the rest is given to your initiative to support home-based group healing circles, but not to support your advocacy efforts. Several of your leaders in the interfaith initiative approach lay women leaders in your community and in this way are able to receive donations directly for your work. It is not as much as the male clergy were able to collect, but it is enough to do some small local efforts at awareness raising in support of a ceasefire and an end to sexual violence.

After arranging meetings for your 'champions' to listen to the personal stories of victims of sexual violence, they decide to travel to outlying areas to engage the leaders of the extremist organizations. As male religious leaders they are able to get past security checkpoints quite easily. While they aren't able to meet with the top leader of each group, they access those around them and - using religious principles to underscore their points - obtain their commitment to addressing the problem of sexual violence. They also listen to the religious leaders' arguments for a ceasefire but say that it is not realistic at this time.

FINAL QUESTION:

Where has your project ended up as a result of the choices made in the face of challenges? Where is your greatest impact?

Option 2A

Your attempts to solicit support from international peacebuilding organizations, including faith-based ones, are unsuccessful. One of their sympathetic staff persons tells you candidly that their organization does not want to compromise their existing relationship with their primary local partner, the Christian/Muslim Council, which has the formal authority to manage all religious matters in the country. Another organization tells you that they are a registered entity with clear financial controls in place and cannot transfer funds to you if you do not have similar professional controls. Secular international women's organizations are more receptive but are disinclined to fund activities involving the engagement of extremist groups, however indirect, as a violation of their country's counter-terrorism laws. They provide funding and training for programs focused on addressing sexual violence so long as they do not have a strong religious component. They are unwilling to support the healing services because of their religious nature. The capacity building they offer is of limited value given how the language and concepts are not authentic to your own worldview.

Through your campaign, you are able to raise media attention, which leads to greater public awareness and a formal commitment by the military leadership to investigate allegations of sexual violence. You have also been able to establish contacts within the Women's Bureau of the Ministry of Health in your country, and with local and international civil society players. You are now less isolated among new national and international partners but pressured to downplay your religious motivations and expressions in order to be more accepted by this community.

FINAL QUESTION:

Where has your project ended up as a result of the choices made in the face of challenges? Where is your greatest impact?

Option 2B

Businessmen in your community are difficult to meet with and offer little financial support when you do. You have better luck with lay women leaders in your community who are themselves wealthy or have ties (often through family) to wealthy businessmen. This modest support allows you to engage in awareness raising campaigns for a ceasefire and to end sexual violence. These campaigns are limited in scope to the handful of local communities where you live, attracting the attention and support of some religious, traditional, media, and political figures at the local, but not national, level.

You also raise enough funds to provide leverage for your "champions" to engage with leaders of the extremist organizations. The "champions" are able to get past security checkpoints quite easily. While they aren't able to meet with the top leader of each group, they do access those around them and - using religious principles to underscore their points - obtain the organization's commitment to address the problem of sexual violence. They also listen to the "champions'" arguments for a ceasefire but say that it is not realistic at this time..

FINAL QUESTION:

Where has your project ended up as a result of the choices made in the face of challenges? Where is your greatest impact?

Six Hats

DATA & FACTS
LOGIC, DATA, FACTS, INFORMATION

What do you know about intergenerational peacebuilding projects?

What are some examples of past intergenerational peacebuilding project?

What did they look like? What were their results?

Focus on data and facts; those already known and those needed.

CHALLENGES
LOGIC, DATA, FACTS, INFORMATION

What are the challenges of intergenerational peacebuilding projects?

What actions need to be avoided to preempt difficulties when creating an intergenerational project?

Focus on difficulties and challenges.

OPPORTUNITIES
OPTIMISM, VALUES, BENEFITS, OPPORTUNITIES

What are the benefits of intergenerational peacebuilding projects?

Where opportunities open up when building a project like this?

What needs to be included in an intergenerational project to ensure its success?

Focus on values and benefits, why something may work.

EMOTIONS
EMOTION, FEELINGS, INTUITION, INSTINCT

Do you have an emotional response to intergenerational peacebuilding projects?

Put yourself in the shoes of a young religious actor. How would s/he feel about a project like this?

Put yourself in the shoes of a senior religious actor. How would s/he feel about a project like this?

Focus on emotions and intuitions.

NEW IDEAS
CREATIVITY, NEW IDEAS, POSSIBILITIES, ALTERNATIVES

What are your ideas for an intergenerational peacebuilding project?

If you can't create a project that brings senior religious and young religious actors together, what could you do instead?

Focus on creativity, possibilities, new ideas.

PROCESS GUIDE
MANAGER, LEADER, GUIDE

After brainstorming together, what is the next step to create an intergenerational peacebuilding project?

Lead the process and discussion.

Mind Mapping

GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS FOR MIND MAPS

- The main idea is set in the central circle.

- Main themes radiate out from the main idea as 'branches.'

- Each branch contains a keyword printed on its associated line.

- Topics of lesser importance are represented as 'twigs' of the relevant branch.

Image: https://www.mindmapping.com/
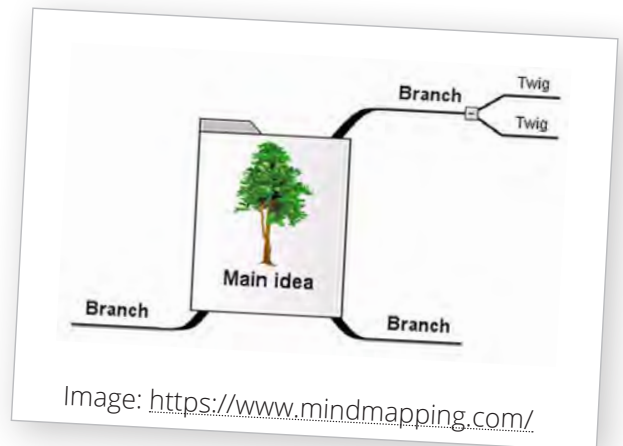
FOR RELIGIOUS ENGAGEMENT

- Draw three bubbles in the center of the page for the mind map. In the first bubble, write 'Civil Society Organizations (CSOs)', in the second bubble write 'Government', and in the third 'Religious Actors'.

- You may choose to draw more bubbles and include more sectors in your mind map. Some suggestions for these additional sectors are international institutions, security forces, media, economic corporations, health systems etc.

- You will need markers in 4 colors:

  » Color 1 = 'values'
  » Color 2 = 'interests'
  » Color 3 = relationships between bubbles on the mind map
  » Color 4 = conflicts between actors on certain issues

- Brainstorm some values and interests of each sector. Mark these on the mind-map in the appropriate color. *Examples of values* include equality, charity, justice, peace etc. *Examples of interests* include economic growth, health and educational services, security, environmental awareness, information sharing, freedom of religion and access to holy sites.

  It can sometimes be difficult to differentiate between a value and an interest. (Is physical and emotional security a value or an interest – or both?) The values and interests discussed in this activity do not need to be explicitly related to religion.

- As values and interests are added to the mind map in their designated colors, draw a line between the bubbles in the designated 'connections' color to represent the connections between sectors, values and interests. You can further explain what the connection is by writing it above the connection line.

  This activity also brings to light areas of possible conflict between different sectors. You can also focus on these areas, aiming to create greater flexibility and gradual change.

Station Rotation

After you read the case study, discuss the following guiding questions as a group.

While your group discusses the case study, add new actors/values/interests to the mind map.

After 20 minutes move to the next station.

STATION 1

GOVERNMENT & POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS

GUIDING QUESTIONS

1. Who were the different actors involved in the Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) project? What were their shared values? What were their common interests?

2. Which governmental bodies deal with religion or religious communities in your country?

3. What are the connectors between government and religion in your country or community?

4. What are the dividers between government and religion in your country or community?

5. What are the opportunities for collaboration between religious actors and political institutions in your country? Are there particular values, histories, laws, or leaders that hinder cooperation?

Morocco

Since 2001, Search Morocco has worked to promote Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) within Moroccan society and judiciary. As a result of a long-term collaboration with the Ministry of Justice and civil society organizations, a state ombudsman that serves as a national mediation body was established to resolve disputes between citizens and the state. Moroccan legislation now provides a variety of avenues for ADR including arbitration, conciliation, and mediation. These innovations were created with the support of the King who is designated as the 'Leader of Believers' and Morocco's supreme head of religious affairs. Search encourages religious scholars to engage with the changing face of Morocco's judicial system. Religious scholars from Rabita Mohammadia des Oulemas au Maroc study Islamic texts and traditions that model ADR and are creating systems to merge them with contemporary approaches to conflict resolution.

REFERENCES

'Alternate Dispute Resolution and Mediation in Morocco Merging Islamic and Contemporary Approaches: The Way Forward', 2014

Station Rotation

Watch the United Nations video (or read the transcript) then discuss the following guiding questions as a group.

While your group discusses the case study, add new actors/values/interests to the mind map.

After 20 minutes move to the next station.

STATION 2

INTERNATIONAL ACTORS

GUIDING QUESTIONS

1. Which sectors were involved in forming this plan of action?

2. Which other international actors might have an interest in religious engagement? What are their shared values? What are their common interests?

3. What are the opportunities for your local religious actors to engage with international actors?

4. What are the connectors between international actors and religious communities in your country?

5. What are the dividers between international actors and religion in your country or community? Are there particular values, histories, laws, or leaders that hinder cooperation?

United Nations Video Transcript

(High Representative AOC Miguel Moratinos) I would like to welcome the Secretary General, His Excellency, Mr. Antonio Guterres and I invite him to take the floor and brief the distinguished delegations:

(Sec. Gen. Guterres) Excellencies, colleagues and friends, thank you for joining us as we launch an important new effort to counter hate and violence around the globe. As we are also tragically aware, our world is facing a surge in anti-Semitism, anti-Muslim hatred, attacks against Christians, and intolerance targeting other religious groups. In recent months alone, Jews have been murdered in synagogues; Muslims gunned down in mosques; Christians killed at prayer. I condemn these attacks in the strongest possible terms. In the wake of the March massacre at the mosques in Christchurch, I went to the Islamic Center of New York and many of you joined me for that solidarity visit. I then made a global call to reaffirm the sanctity of all places of worship and the safety of all worshippers. And I asked the High Representative for the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations, Miguel Moratinos, to develop an action plan for the U.N. and to be fully engaged in support of safeguarding religious sites. Since then, he and his team have been reaching out to a wide variety of actors, including governments, religious leaders, faith-based organizations, civil society, young women and men, local communities, traditional and social media and the private sector. And today we are launching the product of that work, the United Nations Plan of Action to Safeguard Religious Sites. The plan provides concrete recommendations to support member states in their efforts to ensure that religious sites are safe, that worshippers can observe their rituals in peace, and that the values of compassion and tolerance are fostered globally.

The plan is anchored in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and rooted in seven guiding principles; 1. respect for all peoples; 2. responsibility to build bridges of mutual understanding and cooperation; 3. diversity to accept and respect differences among human beings; 4. dialogue as a tool to better communicate and engage with one another; 5. solidarity to support one another, particularly in times of sorrow or trouble; 6. standing together as one to respond with unity and attempts to divide us and; 7. staying together as one to ensure that unity in response to attacks against religious sites is sustained and reinforced over time.

This effort is complemented by the strategy and plan of action on hate speech that we launched in June. That initiative aims to coordinate efforts across the United Nations system to address the root causes of hate speech and make our response more effective. Taken together, both plans provide the important and mutually reinforcing new tools to combat intolerance and to promote peaceful coexistence. Excellences, religious sites are powerful symbols of our collective consciousness. When people are attacked because of their religion or beliefs, all of society is diminished. Houses of worship around the world must be safe havens for reflection and peace, not sites of bloodshed and terror.

People everywhere must be allowed to observe and practice their faith in peace in situations of armed conflict. Buildings dedicated to religion are specifically protected by international humanitarian law. And intentional attacks against such buildings is a war crime, and indeed, the International Criminal Court has already convicted a person for such a crime. The best way to overcome the threat of violence based on unacceptable forms of manipulation of religion and belief is by uniting our voices for good. Countering messages of hate with messages of peace. Embracing diversity as a richness, not a threat. Investing in social cohesion and protecting human rights.

Together, we can help prevent attacks against religious sites and do our part to secure the safety of the faithful to worship in peace. With this Plan of Action, the United Nations is taking an important step to advance that critical goal and address what has emerged as one of the leading global challenges of our era. I count on your support for this plan, which will be led and monitored by the U.N. Alliance of Civilizations in these troubled times. Let us keep working together to uphold the values that bind us as a single human family. Thank you.

(M. Moratinos) I thank the Secretary General, Mr. Antonio Guterres, for his briefing, and I also thank him for his support and his trust.

Station Rotation

After you read the case study, discuss the following guiding questions as a group.

While your group discusses the case study, add new actors/values/interests to the mind map.

After 20 minutes move to the next station.

STATION 3

CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS

GUIDING QUESTIONS

1. How does the Joint Learning Initiative (JLI) engage religious actors?

2. What other sectors do they engage?

3. What type of organization is Joint Learning Initiative (JLI)? What is a Civil Society Organization (CSO)?

4. What types of CSOs might be engaged with religious actors? How do nonsectarian CSOs view religious actors (and vice versa)?

5. What are the connectors between CSOs and religious communities in your country? What types of work do they share in common?

6. What are the dividers between CSOs and religion in your country or community?

Joint Learning Initiative

The Joint Learning Initiative (JLI) on Faith and Local Communities is an international collaboration on evidence for faith groups' activities and contributions to local community health and wellbeing. It was founded in 2012 with the aim to build collective understanding of local faith communities, to establish peaceful coexistence and improve community health. An open source, non-partisan knowledge sharing platform for all sectors, JLI seeks to engage religious and faith-based groups to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. By enhancing their capacities, the initiative strives for excellence in evidence, communications, and advocacy through effective partnerships with public sector and secular entities, and among religious groups themselves. The JLI works through Learning Hubs, publications, conferences and projects, and targets the policy, practitioner and academic sectors. Currently more than 500 stakeholders are members of JLI's Hubs, which stretch from anti-human trafficking and modern slavery to gender-based violence. They also focus on ending violence against children, refugees and forced migration, and the mobilization of local faith communities. With their interdisciplinary, collaborative, and share learning aspect, the Hubs increase the evidence on faith engagement to improve policy and practice. JLI is a valued partner of Search.

REFERENCES

Adapted from KAIICID DKH partners. https://www.kaiciid.org/knowledge-hub/about-dkh/dkh-partners/joint-learning-initiative-faith-and-local-communities

Station Rotation

After you read the case study, discuss the following guiding questions as a group.

While your group discusses the case study, add new actors/values/interests to the mind map.

After 20 minutes move to the next station.

STATION 4

MEDIA

GUIDING QUESTIONS

1. Who were the different actors/stakeholders involved?
2. What were their shared values/common interests in working together?
3. What actions were taken that resulted in success?
4. How was the success sustained?
5. Are there connectors/dividers between media and religion in your country?
6. What media is most suited for peacebuilding collaboration in your country?
7. What are the risks and opportunities for collaboration between media and religious actors in your country?

Central African Republic (CAR)

For decades CAR has been a country torn apart by violence, including attacks against places of worship, and increasing religious intolerance between Christians and Muslims. 2018 saw an explosion of violence with new actors invoking hate speech on social media platforms and radio. The Government Communications Regulatory Authorities (HCC) requested assistance from Search's CAR office in revising and rolling out a 'national plan to prevent incitement of hate and violence'.

In October 2018, Search began a 10-month project whose goal was to reduce intercommunal violence and increase non-violent communication in CAR's capital, Bangui. It used a top-down, bottom-up approach by creating a collaboration of partners and stakeholders that included the governmental HCC, the National Youth Council, 4 community radio stations, religious leaders and victim advocates, bloggers associations and about 10 web platforms. The baseline survey showed that 47% of media actors were not confident in dealing with hate rhetoric; 77% had not been trained in verifying online 'news' and 65% felt that there was 'no plan' to address hate or disinformation.

Activities included top down coaching and a training of trainers' program for the HCC; training of media hosts and producers; multi-stakeholder dialogues and feedback; and the bottom up creation of a youth editorial group and a national multimedia campaign.

Results demonstrate a significant reduction in hate speech cases and a large drop in defamation complaints between 2018 and 2019. The independent Observatory Group (OMCA) has indicated a significant improvement. Moreover a sustained change, post-project, is reflected in continued regular meetings across religious and ethnic lines; HCC's continued delivery of trainings within government and externally to media partners, the National Youth Council's independent running of media campaigns, and continued relations between web activists, youth and regulators.

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Search for Common Ground, 'Project Abstract: Be Africa ti ye ti la so" (We own the modern CAR'), 2019
Search for Common Ground, 'Final Report: Human Rights Support Mechanism', PROgress, 2019