

“THE IMAGE OF THE OTHER”

First High-Level Regional Conference Report

KAICIID in Partnership with
EUROCLIO: The European Association of History Educators

**Interreligious and Intercultural Education
Best Practices in the Europe-Mediterranean Region
22 May 2013**

First Edition

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Preface



The KAICIID Dialogue Centre (King Abdullah Bin Abdulaziz International Centre for Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue) was founded to enable, empower and encourage dialogue among followers of different religions and cultures around the world. This year we have carried out an inaugural programme on the 'Image of the Other' with the aim of promoting interreligious understanding through education. Through a series of four regional conferences, we have aimed to facilitate a frank and constructive exchange amongst policymakers, experts and practitioners working in this sensitive and crucial field. These consultations were designed to support an international exchange of ideas and methods, the dissemination of existing standards and the articulation of fresh recommendations, and increased connections amongst individuals and institutions working in this field. The global forum convening in November, 2013, widens the discussion and builds bridges for future work trans-regionally.

This report brings together some of the rich findings of the first Regional Conference entitled "The Image of the Other": Interreligious and Intercultural Education-Best Practices in the Europe-Mediterranean Region' which convened in Vienna, Austria on 22 May 2013. We gratefully acknowledge the support of EUROCLIO: The European Association of History Educators, in the organisation of this successful event. In the name of the King Abdullah International Centre for Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue, I would like to express my sincerest appreciation to each participant who joined us at this event. The insights and contributions made at this conference are valuable guides for our future work as well as for our valued partners and colleagues in this field. The policy and practical expertise in the field of interreligious and intercultural education were highly relevant to our shared challenge of fostering mutual respect through mutual understanding in the next generation. We at KAICIID look forward to further collaboration and the opportunity to contribute to one another's work in future.

I very much hope that you find this report informative and useful, and that it is able to enrich your work.

Faisal Bin Abdulrahman Bin Muaammar
Secretary-General
King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz International Centre for Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue (KAICIID)

About the Report



On 22 May 2013, KAICIID Dialogue Centre in cooperation with the European Association of History Educators (EUROCLIO) invited approximately 130 leaders, representing a

wide spectrum of cultural, religious and disciplinary perspectives, to discuss and analyse existing methods and approaches to interreligious and intercultural education in the Europe–Mediterranean region. The meeting’s framework was based on the concept of the “Image of the Other”.

Interreligious and intercultural education intersects with civic education, peace education and religious education. It develops the skills to recognize bias, to perceive diversity within religions and cultures, to identify credible information sources, and to overcome reactions of fear and self-affirmation when encountering unfamiliar beliefs. A skillset of this kind raises awareness of the construction of Self/Other binaries and “enemy image creation”, encouraging mutual respect and understanding, and helping dialogue to commence.

At KAICIID and the Diplomatic Academy of Vienna, researchers, field practitioners and representatives from schools and educational institutions met with policy makers and representatives of international organizations from Western and Eastern Europe as well as the MENA region (Middle East and North Africa, i.e., the countries along the Mediterranean basin) to discuss effective education methods, models and material in the region.

This report is the outcome of two working sessions. The first session comprised an interdisciplinary group of 20 specialists who offered a “bird’s eye view” of the challenges, including communication and coordination between diverse situations, in the EuroMed region and examined the idea and depiction of “the Other” insofar as it is related to education.¹ The second session included over 100 stakeholders from the EuroMed region: interreligious and intercultural education field experts, religious and civic education practitioners, and

¹ The list of participants in the morning session is included in this report as Annex A.

representatives from religious, educational, governmental and intergovernmental organisations. Participants discussed the methods and approaches that were proving most effective in different parts of the region and provided recommendations for advancing the field. The purpose of the meeting was to connect practitioners from a range of contexts and disciplines, particularly in order to inform the further development of KAICIID's Educational Programme on the "Image of the Other".

This "Image of the Other" Educational Programme is KAICIID's inaugural endeavour, of which the 22 May event and this report constitute the first phase. Over the coming months, the programme will regularly convene experts in regional conferences and workshops to analyse models and "lessons learned" in the field of interreligious and intercultural education. Engaging organisations and researchers already working in the field, the project will culminate in a global forum of civil society leaders and policy makers on 18 and 19 November 2013.

First Working Session

Executive Summary

A common problem in the EuroMed region, the first working session at KAICIID

“We don’t need more recommendations; the focus should be on implementation.”

found, is that **while values are shared, perceptions differ**. These differing perceptions, which are often critical of other religious and cultural practices, can stand in the way of positive interaction among groups. There is **ample evidence that work on the image of “the Other” is needed**, especially in the field of textbook writing and research. While educational tools for interreligious and intercultural understanding currently exist, they are only available in a **limited number of languages** and are **not sufficiently disseminated or used**. Several organisations currently working on interreligious and intercultural education have a **long-term commitment** to working on perceptions of “the Other”. However not enough research and impact studies have been done to evaluate such initiatives or make them accessible to policy makers.

It was noted that there are many recommendations on an international level, but **implementation is lacking**, primarily due to weak commitment at national levels. Moreover, the **educational realities in the region are very diverse**, a complexity that requires multiple strategies and interventions to make changes effective.

The group expressed **a common interest in cooperation** and made an explicit call for interdisciplinary collaboration. It was pointed out that there is an interest from both **faith-based** and **non-faith-based** organisations to further develop intercultural competences. However there is currently **no network for sustained dialogue** between the multiple stakeholders in the field of interreligious and intercultural education.

Responses to the question “What do we need as a community?” brought forth the need for increased cooperation between these stakeholders. It is the current **disconnection** between the various stakeholders in the field that is creating confusion between many competing initiatives. The risk is high that actions will be **duplicated** and **deficiencies overlooked**. There is a **lack of both transfer and follow up** and, while research, good practices and recommendations do exist, **dissemination and implementation strategies are absent**. Several major influencing factors are out of the control of experts and practitioners, including the media, political forces and regulation of textbook production. There is also a need to

strengthen relations with those who are working in similar educational fields to interreligious and intercultural education, such as value education or ethics.²

Challenges by Sector

Educational Systems Level

The position of interreligious and intercultural education in schooling systems is often **marginal**; such instruction is not always

“There is no room for a one-size-fits-all perspective.”

embedded in the curriculum, which creates challenges for implementation. Moreover, the impact of interreligious and intercultural education is often low since such lessons are frequently not part of testing structures. Examinations are often a decisive factor in influencing what students commit to memory. It is also difficult to implement general principles in this subject because of the differences between educational systems. In some countries, such as Bosnia and Germany, there are several educational systems within the same country.

Institutional Level

When people leave positions or change posts there is a lack of **institutional memory**. The structural **bureaucracy** of intergovernmental organisations can also hamper implementation.

Structural Level

Most initiatives are undertaken on a **project basis** and are not implemented for long enough to have a measurable impact.

Policy Level

Politicians often demonstrate little commitment to improving this field of education and hence resources and funding are often lacking. Moreover **dialogue** is sometimes instrumentalised to justify a lack of political responsibility and can come to be perceived as ineffectual. In the

² An overview of the types of education mentioned during this session is found in Annex B.

same way, **diversity** may sometimes be used as a “promotional concept” to avoid more difficult discussions relating to minority issues.

Societal Level

In historically multi-ethnic and multi-religious societies such as those in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Lebanon and Ukraine, it is very difficult to separate religion from **collective memory, identity and nationalistic politics** and therefore for religious institutions to perform a stabilizing function where political systems fluctuate. As societies become increasingly **culturally diverse**, new challenges are being presented to educators. **Hate speech, stigmatisation, xenophobia and discrimination** continue to be problems that need to be addressed. Increasing, hatred towards particular religious groups appears to be a response to the anxiety caused by economic crises.

Research Level

There is a **lack of monitoring** and **scientific evidence** on the claimed **effectiveness** and **impact** of grass-roots- and community-based initiatives related to intercultural dialogue or those that are attempting to create community cohesion. The claim that religious education improves relations between people would benefit from more supporting evidence and a firmer **theoretical** basis.

Resources

There is a lack of opportunity for **interreligious learning** and of materials in **translation** or in **common languages**. This has an impact on levels of knowledge and understanding in different areas. **Mobility**, that would offer possibilities for groups to meet “the Other”, is also frequently restricted.

Recommended Coordination and Intervention Areas

- **Holistic approaches** that consider schools only one space among many where self-realisation and changes in attitudes can be initiated (for example, sport and cultural institutions, etc., should also be included)
- Coordination throughout **the educational chain**: governments, curricula, textbook authors, publishers, trainers, schools, teachers and researchers
- **Cross-border** coordination that also implements **tailored national** approaches (since, for example, religion has a different importance in the societies of Bosnia and Sweden, and the modernization of education is at very different stages, they will require different styles of teaching)

Potential Areas of Synergy

- Create means for **transfer** between schools and researchers as well as a virtual **feedback** loop
- Have a group of independent experts **examine project implementation to identify gaps and to measure progress**
- **Engage and support representatives of religious communities** in becoming more aware of the need for and the benefits of an interreligious dimension to education
- **Sustain** and/or widen the **impact** of current best practice initiatives by **extending project timeframes**
- **Connect interreligious and intercultural experts, practitioners and programmes**
- **Monitor and evaluate** existing initiatives and promote those which are successful
- **Conduct joint advocacy** at the policy level, supported by evaluation results of community-based projects
- **Provide professional** development for educational stakeholders (including online distance learning)
- **Facilitate teacher resource exchanges** (including any mediation required)
- Engage and empower **young people**

“The social experience of working together is irreplaceable.”

Possible Means of Intervention

- Teacher **training and professional development**
- **Non-formal and informal learning** (in which fewer top-down approaches are used)
- **Development of cross-community and cross-border interreligious networks**
- Support **cross-community and cross-border mobility** of the people involved in interreligious initiatives
- **Online learning** and use of the internet (including an examination of how working online, which is becoming more and more the norm, influences the learner)
- **Citizenship education** in societies divided along religious and ethnic lines
- Rethinking how **history** is taught, striving for intellectually honest representation of the contributions of different religions and cultures to civilizations

- **Long-term action** in order to attain measurable results (from the experience of one participant, at least seven years are needed to achieve measurable results)
- Consideration of continuity of contact and the **legitimacy of spokespeople** is crucial
- Examination of different types of **dialogue** (how questions are framed and developed has a strong impact on whether an audience will be attracted and become involved)
- Consideration of “**mind information fatigue**” due to information **overload**
- **Action and impact research**
- Creation of a **web platform** as an expert database for practitioners to share resources (see, e.g., SALTO-YOUTH: www.salto-youth.net; EWC Share and Connect Platform: www.theewc.org/network)
- **Translation** of books, research, etc., into the various languages of the Mediterranean region (in particular from Arabic into European languages)
- **Develop a regional roadmap and common agenda**, taking existing recommendations into account

Interreligious and Intercultural Education

The following means of bringing together various interreligious and intercultural domains were mentioned:

- Creating a **value and behaviour-based** global vision rooted in the concept of human dignity
- Realizing the need for **quality knowledge** and **informed opinions**
- Integrating overarching concepts: **equality, respect, tolerance, democracy, spirituality, history, memory, justice, reconciliation**
- Supporting the common interest of **conflict prevention** and empowering young people to resist **hatred trends** as a response to social anxiety
- Addressing the challenges of **changing identities** in the post-Soviet region, immigration countries etc., by developing confidence in diversity
- Developing **intercultural competences** such as social responsibility, open-mindedness and critical thinking
- Perceiving the **image of “the Other”** as a shared issue that is relevant for all stakeholders

Potential Stakeholders to Engage

- **Schools** and **educators**: using the classroom as a safe space for exploring otherness
- **Ministries** (not only ministries of education), governmental agencies and **politicians**
- **Religious leaders** (who are often directly involved in education)
- **Researchers**
- **Parents and community leaders**
- **Young people** (who need to be heard)
- **The media**
- **The private sector** (as based on Corporate Social Responsibility)

Roundtables Report

Executive Summary

The afternoon sessions brought together over 100 leaders representing a diverse cultural, religious and disciplinary spectrum to discuss and analyse, within the framework of the “Image of the Other”, existing approaches and methods of interreligious and intercultural education in the Europe-Mediterranean region. Researchers, field practitioners, and representatives from schools and educational institutions met with policy makers and representatives of international organizations from Western and Eastern Europe as well as the MENA area to discuss effective practices in the EuroMed region.

Ten moderated roundtable dialogues were conducted, with participants grouped according their area of interest and work. A rapporteur was present at each table to document the discussions. The tables were divided into the following categories:

Table 1. Religious Organisations	Table 6. Teaching Tools
Table 2. Interfaith Organisations	Table 7. Curriculum Assessment
Table 3. Schools & Training Institutes	Table 8. Research
Table 4. Religious Educators and Religious Education	Table 9. Civic Education Organisations
Table 5. Governmental and IGOs	Table 10. Community Engagement and Youth Organisations

The discussions focussed on the methods and approaches that are most effective in the region, as well as the possibilities and challenges of expanding projects and programmes.

There was general consensus among the participants that there is significant need for:

- **Improving cooperation among all involved stakeholders.** At the governmental level there is not enough coordination within and between government ministries or between local, provincial and federal authorities. This problem extends to international inter-governmental organisations. Participants spoke about the importance of integrating families and communities into the education process and of finding incentives for communities to become engaged with each other. Many saw the need to address the generational divide in the perspectives of young people, policy makers and directors of institutions. Researchers indicated that there is an implementation

gap between research being done on the image of “the Other” and the content that is reaching the classroom

Recommendations

- **Creating more space(s) for young people** to meet and discuss interreligious and intercultural issues, both in schools and outside the classroom
- **Implementing more programmes specialized in the training of teachers**, as well as for training skilled mediators and leaders in schools and religious communities. Such leaders could serve as multipliers, training and mentoring young people in turn to examine their own attitudes and assumptions toward other cultures and faith traditions
- **“Revolutionizing” teaching tools and curricula by making them more adaptable to different contexts, more interactive, technologically up-to-date and socially applicable to the cultural and religious diversity encountered in everyday life.** The problem of incorporating multi-perspective approaches into teacher resources was emphasised by many participants
- **Monitoring and evaluating existing practices in order to gauge the effectiveness of implementation**

The most universally recognized challenge to promoting better interreligious and intercultural practices was perceived to be **existing attitudes and a lack of commitment toward diversity issues in society**. Many institutions and communities are reluctant to view religious and cultural diversity positively. Even in societies where there is a commitment to multiculturalism and/or diversity, it can still prove difficult to persuade governments or educational institutions to consider interreligious and intercultural programmes a priority, and to persuade the institutions to invest the necessary resources in effective diversity training for educators or to widen the cultural diversity represented in institutions. As a result, not enough funding, time or properly trained staff are provided to address these issues adequately.

The next highlighted challenge was how to deal with conflicting perceptions between groups in different societies. Two key lines of conflict were identified: firstly, tensions between secular and religiously based perspectives; secondly, between different religious and ethnic communities, including religious minorities.

There was clear-cut agreement that the complexity and diversity of differing national contexts within the EuroMed region, each with different educational systems and governmental structures, was a major challenge. This complexity increases in countries that have several provincial educational structures. Differences can even be found at the level of local communities and individual schools. To address this, a need was seen for approaches and

methods that are flexible and that can be tailored to and implemented in a wide variety of contexts.

There was also discussion about the difficulty of defining the appropriate degree of authority and the social role of religious actors and religious and ethnic minorities in the EuroMed region. Several talks touched on how their involvement in the interreligious and intercultural educational issues could best be aided, especially since religious and cultural identities are often politicized.

General Recommendations

- **Expand and improve the implementation of programmes that focus on commonalities rather than religious and ethnic differences by highlighting shared human interest and a common identity/ies** (meeting as fellow citizens or students for example). There was wide praise for programmes that search for ways to discuss common interests and concerns or to cooperate in shared action on collective social challenges. However, there were several participants who also spoke of the need to **find careful and respectful ways of discussing difficult topics** to prevent dialogue from becoming “artificial” because it avoids points of conflict
- There was **widespread support for programmes and projects that facilitate encounters between students and people of other faith traditions and cultures**. Such programmes give students the opportunity to **gain empathy by hearing other perspectives**. Special emphasis was placed on the importance of **multi-perspectival activities**. Guided visits to various houses of worship as well as meeting with and learning from different religious leaders and fellow students from diverse faith traditions and cultures were mentioned as being potentially transformative for young people
- The importance of **networking and exchange** was emphasized **at all levels**, from the grass-roots and local/community level all the way to national and international levels. This included providing more opportunities for practitioners, researchers and policy makers to meet and learn from and about the systems and approaches of others. **“Comparing and sharing” information and experiences enables activities to be better coordinated.**

Roundtable Summaries

Table 1 – Leaders of Religious Organisations

The discussion at the table of religious leaders focused on the need to increase the capacity of teachers and religious educators to teach world religions and to assist students in reflecting on religious and cultural diversity issues. It was thought that more support should exist for members of religious institutions who seek to improve or engage in interreligious and intercultural education within or on behalf of their communities. Developing youth networks and peer groups for implementing new projects was also discussed, along with the need for context specific programmes rather than generalized approaches.

The difficulties religious minorities often face when attempting to get their traditions and perspectives fairly represented in schools were identified as a major challenge. It was felt that there is not enough structural implementation of interreligious and intercultural programmes. Also mentioned was the problem of the reluctance in some schools, due to increasing secularism, to engage with the topic of religion at all.

Recommendations

- The main recommendation of the group was to create an assembly or a council of religious representatives in which all voices have equal authority, including those of religious minorities. This group could convene at both national and regional levels. Its aim would be to foster cooperation and support between religious organizations on many issues, including the topic of education. This would also provide a way for religious minorities to gain increased representation
- To address and overcome the current high levels of religious illiteracy and misunderstanding, schools should not provide confessional instruction in individual religions, but rather about all religions. This would not only increase the understanding of other worldviews, but, for many religious adherents, it would also improve their understanding of their own faith traditions, which is often lacking
- Also recommended was improving the education of teachers about world religions by providing expert guidance that goes beyond common stereotypes and prejudices. Opening houses of worship to students so that they learn about and experience the religious diversity in their communities was offered as a concrete proposal. Programmes should be honest and transparent and not hold hidden agendas. They should highlight shared values and accept diversity as a starting principle before guiding students to reflect on the elements involved in their differences

Table 2 – Leaders of Interreligious Organisations

The discussants at this table agreed that the current steps being taken to examine and address religious and cultural differences need to be reinforced and expanded. There is a need not only for improved curricula and tools, but also for strong and passionate leaders within religious communities who can make persuasive arguments for change. There is also a need for places outside of schools and universities that provide opportunities to learn about other religious and cultural viewpoints. Such places would encourage “active rather than passive coexistence” and could involve people who are resistant to change.

Secularism was mentioned as an attitude in certain societies that seeks to move religious viewpoints out of the public sphere and marginalize them.

Various methods and approaches were considered effective for bridging divides between religious groups. They included methods that seek to find common ground based on shared interests, as well as multi-pronged approaches that go beyond knowledge about divergent attitudes. Such approaches can instil an appreciation for diversity and develop the skills necessary for engaging religious and cultural similarities and differences in constructive and transformative ways.

Recommendations

- Work with target groups at the community level should be connected all the way to the macro-policy level
- Produce learning methodologies that are participatory and based on advice from a wide variety of stakeholders
- Focus on common challenges and issues that can be worked on cooperatively
- Focus on engagement and direct encounters (which have been proven to be amongst the most effective learning methods for increasing knowledge and skills as well as for changing attitudes)

Table 3 – Schools and Training Institutes

The representative of schools and training institutes pointed out the important role of parents in supporting interreligious and intercultural education, both in schools and at home. They emphasized that education is not the only cause of problems concerning perception of “the Other”, nor is it the only solution. The group emphasised the importance of training reflective and sincere teachers who possess sufficient skills for facilitating dialogue on difficult topics and for teaching students how to navigate complex issues. Teachers must be careful not to

assign collective guilt to individuals and be sensitive when encountering group thinking and group identification. This was considered especially important with regard to points of conflict where differences between groups are often emphasised.

The group supported approaches of which the starting point is our shared humanity, whereby students come together as peers without regard to religion, ethnicity or nationality. Nonetheless, while dialogue should be based on common identities and shared interests, it is also important that difficult issues are not avoided or ignored. Students should have the space and opportunity to encounter each other, and discussions should be facilitated that are constructive and not “artificial” or forced. In this way, students can address not only their commonalities but also their differences. Providing materials and approaches that illuminate multi-perspectival viewpoints was emphasized, including activities such as reading books by authors from diverse backgrounds or listening to the stories of peers. From this, children can begin to see that religious and cultural viewpoints are not abstractions, but are often deeply held and important to their classmates. The group also mentioned the difficulty of addressing controversial or potentially volatile issues in history and current events.

Recommendations

- Provide enabling environments
- Address the past carefully in order to avoid conflict and to move forward in collective understanding
- Train teachers to guide students in productive dialogue that involves critical thinking and open-mindedness as well as scepticism
- Precede cross-cultural dialogue with a focus on human solidarity and common interests

Table 4 – Religious Educators and Religious Education

All of the participants in this group acknowledged that the increasing diversity of cultural and religious viewpoints in societies is a major challenge to confessional religious education. However, there are not enough funds to adequately expand upon or improve existing programmes. It was also discussed that knowing “about” a topic is not enough; actual engagement and/or exchange are required for attitudes to change.

“Is religious education meeting the current challenges of religious diversity?”

To understand each other’s perspective, the group highlighted approaches that involved sharing stories, cross-confessional teacher exchanges, and meetings with adherents of other

faith traditions. This could include providing immersion opportunities through trips to other countries to experience other cultures and religions first hand. This idea was viewed as a possible way not only to learn about religious and cultural differences, but to cultivate changes in attitude.

There was some disagreement on the appropriateness of religious authorities overseeing curricula. One participant pointed out the possibility of religious authorities being tempted to present their own tradition in an idealized or positive light in relation to other traditions. Others felt that confessional teaching could address this adequately by inviting experts, practitioners and teachers with expertise in other faith traditions to teach classes, host students and lead excursions.

Recommendations

- Exchange and encounters are essential for changing attitudes toward other religions and cultures. Suitable mediated encounters with other traditions can be accomplished through exchanges, visits to houses of worship, etc.
- “Context is key”: projects must meet the specific structural and cultural needs of the society in which they are implemented. In some countries confessional religious education is a respected part of the society; programmes should be tailored to suit this reality. In cultures that do not have confessional religious education, other approaches are needed

Table 5 – Governmental and intergovernmental Organisations

The group consisting of representatives of governmental and intergovernmental organisations

“The state is an irreplaceable actor. It enables change by helping all citizens to participate fully and equally in society without discrimination.”

recognized the general need to improve the “image of other” in the EuroMed region. At the governmental level it was mentioned that there is a need for coordination within and between government ministries, between local, regional and national authorities, as well as with international institutions. Discussions also addressed the difficulty of finding appropriate and effective means for the state to promote coexistence, as well as of defining the role that religious actors should hold in relation to the state. The latter is especially critical when religious authorities and institutions become involved in politics in places where religion is generally distrusted by many non-religious citizens.

At the social level there remain differing and sometimes conflicting perspectives of religious and cultural diversity. Diversity can be considered either as positive or as detrimental to society. It is sometimes difficult, for instance, to convince institutions that there are lasting benefits to hiring a diverse workforce and incorporating diversity training. It is also difficult to find incentives for communities to work together on a long-term basis without the guarantee that such efforts will be taken up and followed by others. In pluralistic societies, especially where tensions exist, it can be difficult to identify and select stakeholders or to convince citizens to acknowledge the authority of people outside their group as legitimate.

The table felt that there are no simple, universal solutions that are applicable in all contexts. It is vital that solutions be context specific. It was also generally agreed that programmes must engage the media to increase the awareness and impact of the work being done.

Recommendations

- Create integrated multi-track approaches that include all levels of education: from parents to communities and religious institutions, and from civil society to government
- Commission more research to identify and expand on effective practices by testing and evaluating a variety of projects and strategies to determine what works and what does not
- Create mechanisms to oversee and analyse religious pluralism within particular societies to ensure that rights regarding religious practices, reasonable accommodation of minorities, etc., are being implemented

Table 6 – Specialists in Teaching Tools

The specialists in teaching tools discussed the need for more support from governments to implement "living in plurality" models that assist students in understanding the concepts of freedom and respect. They also discussed the need for laws to better interact with and accommodate education strategies (such as copyright laws on pedagogical materials).

“Teaching tools need to be revolutionized.”

The challenges that were mentioned included a perceived lack of adequate governmental recognition for good programmes, and a shortage of financial support to sustain and expand quality initiatives. There was a perceived lack of adequate teaching tools such as textbooks and general educational material on different religions and cultures. In some countries, curricula for interreligious and intercultural education are not available or general templates are

found to be inappropriate for small groups of students. It was also mentioned that to really foster respect for other religious worldviews and cultures takes time that is often not provided.

Exchange programmes were a commonly approved method and approach (i.e., religious schools hosting students from other religious backgrounds). It was emphasised that solutions are needed which are specific not only to the national and social context, but also to the particular needs of different classroom environments. For example, in the UK religious education is separated from history and citizenship education in order to meet the needs of the broad diversity found in British classrooms. In Spain, teachers use the historical example of the coexistence between Christians, Jews and Muslims when discussing the present day interreligious and intercultural diversity found in Spanish society.

Recommendations

- New curricula in religious education should be developed in order to meet the needs of different grade levels, ages and religious and ethnic groups; more individual teaching based on the needs of the children involved should be used; a variety of tools should be developed for pupils in mixed communities
- Teaching tools, especially textbooks, need to be “revolutionized”: textbooks should be better linked to modern media forms
- Teachers should receive special training: to deal with the influence of modern media in shaping attitudes; to train others in order to serve as multipliers; to engage children in dialogue
- Multi-media and web-based curricula for children should be developed

Table 7 – Specialists in Curriculum Assessment

The specialists in curriculum assessment mentioned the fact that religion is often connected to nationality. Many students have insufficient understanding of religious identities outside their own. There was concern that if student groups are separated according to their background and language, this reduces the ability to learn about “the Other”.

While the role of education is important, families, society and religious institutions are the main drivers and need to be supported. It was felt that there is a strong need to engage the community in reinforcing and broadening the impact of curriculum in schools. **Education is not enough. Families, society and religious institutions have an important role to play in helping children develop the "soft skills" necessary to avoid negative prejudices.**

Recommendations

- Approaches to interreligious and intercultural education should be contextual and address the relationship of education to families and the public sphere, as well as other influential aspects of society such as politics
- Communities and organisations should advocate for influence over policy-making where there is concern about misrepresentation or who is speaking on behalf of whom (although with the awareness that this can contribute to further marginalization)
- The dichotomy "Western" and "non-Western" should be eliminated, since this categorization encourages the continued marginalization of "the Other". Advocates should seek to support traditional education from more diverse sources
- In future analyses, experiences from the rest of the world should be integrated into the EuroMed region. However, national and regional contexts must be considered when applying approaches used in other parts of the world
- "The Other" should also be identified as "part of us", not only as "different from us". Nonetheless, coexistence does not necessarily imply integration and inclusivity. The difference between coexistence and integration needs to be addressed

Table 8 - Researchers

The discussion at the table of researchers and scholars addressed the

“Why aren’t research and recommendations in the field systematically making their way into educational practice?”

needs and challenges of implementing and improving interreligious and intercultural education in schools. Several facets of this process were discussed, including the recommendation that new perspectives on history be offered to school children in order to expose them to other historical discourses. Moreover awareness and evaluation of the creation of self-images is needed, as well as the importance of critically reflecting on one’s own image before thinking about the image of “the Other”.

Taking power dynamics into consideration was also cited as necessary, whereby it was understood that “tolerance is a privilege of those with power.” Tolerance requires self-confidence and a secure image of one’s self.

There was some discussion about the various relevant fields of research, such as theology, psychology and sociology, as well as other disciplines. There is a need for regular exchange

between experts in various academic disciplines to share research results about learning that combines cognitive, emotional and social aspects.

Recommendations

- It is important to raise the awareness of successful national curricular applications that include representations of the image of “the Other”. Nonetheless, each example must be contextualized within an inter-sectional perspective; that is, each national curriculum must be seen as the result of a combination of identity and power dynamics that is unique to the inherited history and contemporary socio-political realities within the country in question
- Comparative evaluations of these best curricular practices should be conducted to gain instructional value from them
- New technologies bring new challenges to research and pedagogy; they must continue to be explored with regard to their various pedagogical implications

Table 9 – Civic Education Organisations

Participants from civic education organisations spoke of the need to develop inclusive approaches involving diverse religious and non-religious citizens. They also mentioned the challenge of finding ways to engage those who are sceptical. This is particularly difficult in conflict regions where there is general suspicion amongst the public. The table participants also addressed the difficulty of raising awareness of and interest in interreligious and intercultural civic education activities. There was a strong sense that improvements in properly evaluating the effectiveness of existing models and programmes are needed. It was noted that monitoring and evaluation are very time consuming and expensive. Moreover, there are currently no existing networks that might assist in such evaluations.

Recommendations

- More should be put into evaluating projects on a large and long-term scale. Prospects will improve if networks and organisations or institutes are established that are responsible for monitoring and evaluation. Such organisations could work together with NGOs
- There should be more focus on personal contact with “the Other”. More possibilities should be developed for personal activities (for example, exchange programmes) and means for experiencing other religions. Active dialogue should be encouraged by

hosting events that allow for shared experiences (for example, festivals, concerts, exhibitions, etc.)

- In order to include everyone in the dialogue process, one focus should be on public awareness and messaging through the media
- Information between organisations should be shared, and tools for information sharing that involve social media should continue to be developed
- Proposals should be made at the community level
- Religious leaders should come together to address the image of “the Other”. This should be followed by activities that enable face-to-face meetings
- There should be a focus on similarities rather than differences
- Practice and theory should be linked by gathering knowledge and incorporating data into approaches involving dialogue

Table 10 – Community Engagement and Youth Organisations

The representatives from community engagement and youth organisations emphasized the importance of identity(ies).

“Identity is complex; I don’t only have one identity.”

Individual identities can be complex and multi-layered, with individuals claiming more than one identity. In some cases individuals favour one aspect of their identity over another. For instance, nationality may be more important than religion or vice versa. This type of complexity must be considered when developing and implementing programmes. A focus on shared common values requires a respectful examination of linguistic, generational, ethnic, religious and class differences. The need to act locally was also discussed, since there is such a diversity of societies in the EuroMed region.

Recommendations

- Students should be taught to value their own identity/ies while being accepting of others. Complexity within individual identities should be allowed for, since it is possible to claim more than one identity
- Similarities and common ground should be sought out, rather than concentrating on differences
- Face-to-face encounters should be promoted, as they create conditions for a shared learning process based on horizontal relationships
- Programmes should begin with young people at the local and community level.
- Teacher training should be expanded and improved

- Exchanges between youth, policy makers and decision makers should be promoted
- Programmes should begin with young people at the local and community level
- Teacher training should be expanded and improved
- Exchanges between youth, policy makers and decision makers should be promoted
- Attempts should be made to understand the history and background of others
- Ethnocentrism and nationalism should be avoided
- Intercultural dialogue and competencies should be integrated into all national educational systems
- Action-based programmes that move beyond dialogue should be developed

Conclusion

Ways Forward & Proposed Actions

KAICIID Dialogue Centre would like to thank all of the participants at the 22 May 2013 forum for sharing their expertise

“While we represent an important social force, only our expertise is being used, not our abilities.”

and time with us. Special thanks go to our partners at EUROCLIO, especially Joke van der Leeuw-Roord, Steven Stegers, and Blandine Smilansky for their input and assistance on the programme and in developing this report.

Many participants talked about the potential for KAICIID to act as a hub to facilitate and assist the implementation of interreligious and intercultural initiatives. It was suggested that the Centre could support sustained dialogue by engaging a variety of networks that address common problems and search for solutions on the basis of shared values. KAICIID will continue to review and revise the findings and suggestions made at this event and will share the information gained with participants of the three upcoming “Image of the Other” regional conferences which, it is hoped will build upon them. Outlined below are some general recommendations which developed out of the sessions described above that KAICIID is considering moving forward. These will continue to develop over the coming months and guide our planning into November.

Proposed Actions for Moving Forward

- Create opportunities and space(s) for **sustained dialogue and action based on shared interests and our common humanity**
- Create and maintain lasting **multi-disciplinary stakeholder network(s)**
- Create a multi-disciplinary **“Image of the Other” committee** to guide ongoing efforts
- Work toward the **implementation of existing resources and initiatives**
- **Monitor and evaluate** existing initiatives

Annex A: Panel Participants

Organisers

- Waltner, Mike** KAICIID Dialogue Centre, www.kaiciid.org, Head of Initiatives
- Wiesner, Hillary** KAICIID Dialogue Centre, www.kaiciid.org, Director of Programmes

Moderator

- Van der Leeuw-Roord, Joke** EUROCLIO, the European Association of History Educators, www.euroclio.eu, Executive Director

Participants

- Brine, Alan** Ofsted - Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills, United Kingdom, www.ofsted.gov.uk, HMI, National Advisor for Religious Education
- Chater, Mark** Culnam St. Gabriel's, www.cstg.org.uk, Director
- Claret, Andreu** Anna Lindh Euro-Mediterranean Foundation for the Dialogue between Cultures, Egypt, www.euromedalex.org, Executive Director
- Daou, Fadi** Adyan Foundation, Lebanon, www.adyanvillage.net, Chairman
- Dougui, Nouredine** Manuba University, Tunisia
- Gridinsky, Andrew** OSCE Bosnia & Herzegovina, www.oscebih.org, Head of Education Section
- Gillet, Jenny** International Baccalaureate Organization, www.ibo.org, Curriculum Manager for World History, World Politics and Theory of Knowledge
- Hamadeh, Nayla** Lebanese Association for History
- Lahnemann, Johannes** Peace Education Standing Commission, Religions for Peace, www.religionsforpeace.org, Chairman
- Kasianov, Georgy** Ukraine International Renaissance Foundation/Open Society Foundation Ukraine, www.irf.ua, Education Programs Director
- Lenz, Claudia** European Wergeland Centre/Council of Europe, Norway, www.theewc.org, Head of Research and Development

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www.unesco.org/new/en/bureau-of-strategic-planning/themes/culture-of-peace-and-non-violence
- Stimac, Zrinka** Georg Eckert Institute for International Textbooks Research,
 Braunschweig, Germany www.gei.de
- Thurfjell, David** Södertörn University, Stockholm
- Uribe Torres, Maria Lucia** Arigatou International, www.arigatouinternational.org.

Annex B: Resources Cited

Books

- Stenou Katérina, *Images de l'autre. La différence : du mythe au préjugé*, Seuil : 1998
- UNESCO, *Arab-Muslim Civilization in the Mirror of the Universal*, Philosophical Perspectives, UNESCO : 2010

Curricula

- **World Religions Course**, International Baccalaureate Organization
www.ibo.org/diploma/curriculum/group3/WorldReligion.cfm

Education (types)

- **Citizenship** Education
- **Civic** Education
- **Confessional** Education
- **Ethics** Education
- **Global** Education
- **History** Education
- **Intercultural** Education
- **Intercultural Citizenship** Education
- **Interfaith** Education
- **Multi-faith** Education
- **Religious** Education

Events

- **Religions for Peace**: Conference on Welcoming the Other, 19-22 November 2013
- **Teacher Training on the Image of the Other**, League of Arab States, October/November 2013 (t.b.c.)

Guidelines and Conceptual Frameworks

- **Guidebook for History Textbooks Authors**, "On a Common path, New Approaches to Writing History Textbooks in Europe and the Arab and Islamic Worlds: the Case of the Mediterranean", ISESCO: 2012
www.isesco.org.ma/templates/isesco/publications/en/Guidebook/guidebook.pdf
- **'Guidelines for Educators on Countering Intolerance and Discrimination against Muslims**, Addressing Islamophobia through Education', OSCE, Council of Europe, UNESCO: 2011, <http://www.osce.org/odihr/84495?download=true>

- **'Intercultural Competences: Conceptual and Operational Framework'**, UNESCO: 2013, <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0021/002197/219768e.pdf>
- **'Toolkit on revision/adaptation of curricula, school textbooks and other learning materials** to remove cultural, religious and gender-biased stereotypes', UNESCO/Georg Eckert Institute: 2013
- **'Religious Diversity and Intercultural Education: A reference Book for Schools'**, John Keast, Council of Europe: 2007

Programmes and Initiatives

National

- **Adyan Foundation**, Implementation of the National Strategy for Citizenship and Coexistence Education in Lebanon, adyanvillage.net/study/2/41/National%20reform.
- **Book on the common values of Christians and Muslims** (Egypt), an initiative of Egyptian "Family House" (*planned for September 2013*).
- **Combating xenophobia through education** (Ukraine), an initiative of the International Renaissance Foundation (Open Society Foundations) (*planned*).

European

- **ENRECA** - The European Network for Religious Education in Europe through Contextual Approaches (Research Group), <http://wrap.warwick.ac.uk/53712/> (*on-going*).
- **Group of Experts on the Implementation of Recommendation CM/Rec (2008) 12** "Dimension of religions and non-religious convictions within intercultural education" www.theewc.org/news/view/the_joint.coeewc.group.of.experts/, an initiative of the **Council of Europe** and the **European Wergeland Centre** (*on-going*).
- **No Hate Speech Online**, an initiative of the Council of Europe - <http://www.nohatespeechmovement.org> (*current*)
- **OSCE**, Education Programmes - www.osce.org/what/education (*on-going*)
- **REDCo: Religion in Education**. A contribution to Dialogue or a factor of Conflict in transforming societies of European Countries? <http://www.redco.uni-hamburg.de/web/3480/3481/index.html> (*on-going*)

Euro-Mediterranean

- **Alexandria Education Conventions**, an initiative of the Anna Lindh Foundation and the Swedish Institute in Alexandria (*on-going*).
- **Mediterranean Dialogues**, an initiative of EUROCLIO – European Association of History Educators (*on-going*)

Global initiatives

- **Educational Support Programme**, Open Society Foundations, <http://www.opensocietyfoundations.org/about/programs/education-support-program> (*on-going*)
- **Ethics Education**, an initiative of Arigatou International, www.ethicseducationforchildren.org (*on-going*)
- **Faith and Globalisation Initiative**, an initiative of the Tony Blair Foundation, <http://www.fgi-tbff.org> (*on-going*)
- **Face to Faith Programme**, an initiative of the Tony Blair Foundation, www.tonyblairfaithfoundation.org/page/about-face-to-faith (*on-going*)
- **Historiana – Your Portal to the Past**, an initiative of EUROCLIO, European Association of History Educators, www.historiana.eu (*on-going*)
- **CLEAR Project (Concept Learning through Exchange, Analysis and Reflection)** http://www.euroclio.eu/new/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=3636:new-euroclio-partner-project-on-clear-concept-learning-through-analysis-exchange-and-reflection&catid=1255:news-and-announcements&Itemid=1839. It succeeds the Intercultural Glossary Project, an initiative of the European Wergeland Center and the Bundeszentrale für Politische Bildung, www.interculturalglossary.net/
- **UN Alliance of Civilizations**, Education about Religions and Beliefs, <http://erb.unaoc.org> (*on-going*)
- **World Day of Prayer and Action for Children**, an initiative of Arigatou International, <http://www.dayofprayerandaction.org>

Key Concepts

- Spirituality as an added value of interfaith and intercultural education
- The Self and “the Other” as a dynamic process.

Policy Documents

- **Council of Europe Recommendation** 1962 (2011): ‘The Religious Dimension of Intercultural Dialogue’, <http://assembly.coe.int/Main.asp?link=/Documents/AdoptedText/ta11/EREC1962.htm>
- **Council of Europe White Paper** on Intercultural Dialogue: ‘Living Together as Equals in Dignity’, 2008, www.coe.int/t/dg4/intercultural/Source/Pub_White_Paper/White%20Paper_final_revised_en.pdf
- **‘Toledo Guiding Principles** on Teaching about Religions and Beliefs in Public Schools’, ODIHR, OSCE, 2007, www.osce.org/odihr/29154
- **‘UNESCO Guidelines on Intercultural Education’**, 2007, <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0014/001478/147878e.pdf>

- **'UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity'**, UNESCO: 2001, http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php-URL_ID=13179&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html

Research

- **'Religion and Citizenship Education in Europe', CiCe Guidelines on Citizenship Education in a global context**, London: 2008, www.londonmet.ac.uk/fms/MRSite/Research/cice/pubs/citizenship/citizenship-05.pdf
- **'Euromed Intercultural Trends 2010'**, The Anna Lindh Report www.euromedalex.org/sites/default/files/AnnaLindhReport2010.pdf (2nd report announced)
- **'Intercultural Dialogue in Europe'**, Flash Eurobarometer 217, The Gallup Organization, 2007
- **'Investigation on school textbooks of four countries in the Middle East'** (Egypt, Iran, Palestine, Turkey), Wolfram Reiss, <http://www.eumed.net/entelequia/pdf/2006/e02a14.pdf>
- **'Images of Self and Other in Textbooks of Jordan, Egypt, Lebanon and Oman'** Eckert. Analysen 20011/1, Georg Eckert Institute: 2009, [www.edumeres.net/uploads/tx_empubdos/MENAreport - Educational Sector Reforms Curricula and Textbooks.pdf](http://www.edumeres.net/uploads/tx_empubdos/MENAreport_-_Educational_Sector_Reforms_Curricula_and_Textbooks.pdf)
- **'Interreligious and Values Education: Ways ahead for Europe'**, Lähnemann Johannes, Religions for Peace: 2008 <http://www.rfp-europe.eu/index.cfm?id=201654> (Map and Handbook)
- **"Interreligious Textbook Research and Development: A Proposal for Standards"** - Johannes Lähemann. In: M.L. Pirner/J. Lähnemann (Ed.): Media Power and Religions. The Challenge Facing Intercultural Dialogue and Learning. Frankfurt/M. (Peter Lang) 2013, p. 147-159.
- **Textbook representations of Islam in Europe: Portrayal of the 'Unfit' for Europe** Georg Eckert Institute, (2010)
- **Ofsted report on Non-Faith Education** (announced)

Reports of Events

- **European Commission Report: 'Sharing Diversity: National Approaches to Intercultural Dialogue'**, 2008, www.interculturaldialogue.eu/web/files/41/en/Sharing_Diversity_Final_Report.pdf
- **EUROCLIO Report: 'History and Citizenship Education in the Middle East and North Africa'**, www.euroclio.eu/new/index.php/resources-publications-a-websites/country-reports-mainmenu-403

Teaching Tools

Printed

- **'All Different, All Equal:** Ideas, Resources, Methods and Activities for Informal Intercultural Education with Young People and Adults', Council of Europe Youth Council, 2004
http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/youth/Source/Resources/Publications/Education_Pack_en.pdf
- **'Handbook for Intercultural Citizenship Education'**, Anna Lindh Foundation, (to be published in 2014)
- **'Learning to Live Together':** An Intercultural and Interfaith Programme for Ethics Education', Interfaith Council on Ethics Education for Children; Global Network of Religions for Children; Arigatou Foundation, 2008,
www.ethicseducationforchildren.org/mm/file/Learning%20to%20Live%20Together%20En.pdf

Websites

- **[1001-idee.eu](http://www.1001-idee.eu)** – **Muslimische Kulturen und Geschichte**, Georg Eckert Institute for International Textbook Research – www.1001-idee.eu
- **Historiana – Your Portal to the Past**, a cross-border online educational tool, EUROCLIO – www.historiana.eu
- www.interculturaldialogue.eu – Intercultural Dialogue and Cultural Policies, European Institute for Comparative Cultural Research
- www.culturalpolicies.net/web/intercultural-dialogue.php – Intercultural Dialogue and Cultural Policies, European Institute for Comparative Cultural Research
- <http://erb.unaoc.org> – Education about Religions and Beliefs, UN Alliance of Civilizations
- www.reonline.org.uk – Religious Education Online

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