EFFECTIVE INTER-RELIGIOUS ACTION IN PEACEBUILDING

GLOBAL ADVISORY COUNCIL

Annual Meeting Report

June 15-17, 2016
Istanbul, Turkey

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Alliance for Peacebuilding (AfP), in collaboration with CDA Collaborative Learning and Search for Common Ground (SFCG) recently convened a group of 30 leading experts to discuss how to better measure the effectiveness of inter- and intra-religious action for peacebuilding. The meeting is part of a three-year program funded by the GHR Foundation entitled, **Effective Inter-religious Action in Peacebuilding (EIAP) Program** and took place in Istanbul, Turkey from June 15-17, 2016.

For this report, **inter-religious** is defined broadly. This includes the involvement of religious actors and institutions, engagements with a focus on religious narratives (text), programs that target religious dimensions of a conflict, or programs that promote peace within (intra-religious) between (inter-religious) religious groups. Action may take place at any level or scale in support of solidarity, cooperation, prevention of conflict, or conflict resolution and peacebuilding.

Inter-religious peacebuilders are those who define themselves as religiously motivated and who work, either at the political leadership or grassroots level, to prevent or end cultural, structural and violent conflict, with a particular emphasis on religious pluralism. They are often chosen because of their faith and/or influence. They may also operate out of a religious or faith identity (in coordination with or despite other identities) or leverage religion as a catalyst for conflict transformation. Therefore, **inter-religious action for peacebuilding** is the engagement of religious actors, institutions, identities, narratives, and/or groups to support peace, whether or not the conflict involves religious groups or identities and whether or not the methodology or operation of the intervention is religious.

The goal of the EIAP is two-fold: 1) to generate guidance on how to evaluate inter-religious action and 2) to develop a framework for ongoing learning regarding what constitutes effective inter-religious action in peacebuilding. In generating evaluation guidance, the EIAP addresses important questions regarding the fundamental criteria for assessing the effectiveness of inter-religious action and how inter-religious programming links with other peacebuilding efforts and related sectors such as development and diplomacy.

The purpose of the meeting was as follows:

1. To share best practices and lessons learned in evaluating inter- and intra-religious action for peacebuilding;

2. To provide input into the Guide for Assessment of Inter-Religious Action (GAIA);

3. To explore how to more effectively measure the impact of specific sub-sectors of inter- and intra-religious action for peacebuilding; and

4. To strengthen ties across a diverse group of stakeholders working in the field of inter- and intra-religious action for peacebuilding.

The meeting was facilitated by Sarah McLaughlin, Deputy Director of Learning and Evaluation at AfP, and Michelle Garred, Senior Advisor, Conflict Sensitivity & Peacebuilding Effectiveness at CDA. The first day included only EIAP Global Advisory Council members[1] and representatives from EIAP principal organizations (AfP, CDA, and SFCG). The focus of the first day was to identify specific guidance for measuring impact using an adapted version of the OECD DAC[2] peacebuilding evaluation criteria – effectiveness; relevance; consistency with values; impact; and sustainability.

The second and third day included a larger group, including inter-religious action practitioners (including religious leaders), academics and evaluators. Presentations were made on the following sub-sectors of inter- and intra-religious action for peacebuilding to identify additional ways to measure effectiveness and impact.

- The Role of Reconciliation in Inter-Religious Action for Peacebuilding

- Gender and Inter-Religious Action for Peacebuilding

- The Role of Inter-Religious Action for Peacebuilding and Humanitarian Response

- Engaging the Secular in Inter-Religious Action for Peacebuilding

- Inter-Religious Action for Peacebuilding in Violent Extremism

At the end of the meeting, the participants agreed that standard M&E practices applied to peacebuilding and broader development programs are also relevant to inter-religious action for peacebuilding programs/projects. This includes measuring impact, effectiveness, efficiency, relevance and sustainability for both learning and accountability purposes. On the other hand, due to the specific nature of these types of programs and the need to reconcile differences between adherents of different faith traditions, we must incorporate the following criteria and questions:

- Supernatural intervention in evaluation - How to factor in divine calling as a central component of motivation?
- Accountability to whom? Beneficiaries, donors, religious communities and/or the divine?
- Practices: how to evaluate anecdotes, cases and ritual? Religion is fundamentally about narrative and symbol.
- Focus on measuring the motivations and processes among religious communities.

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[1] The Global Advisory Council includes 11 leading experts in the field representing diverse religious traditions and geographical regions that include religious leaders, practitioners, and academics. Furthermore, a total of seven women sit on the GAC, representing a total of 64% of all members.

[2] OECD DAC Criteria - http://www.oecd.org/dac/evaluation/daccriteriaforevaluatingdevelopmentassistance.htm http://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/development/evaluating-donor-engagement-in-situations-of-conflict-and-fragility_9789264106802-en

- Gender specific investment of participation and voice. Did the differing values create an issue and how was it dealt with?
- Bias of the evaluator and sensitivity to faith issues.

We also identified key challenges and opportunities to include in our upcoming guide (to be published in early 2017). They include the following: How to evaluate this complicated perspective on the intersection of divine/human agency? How can we ensure that our guidance is faith sensitive? How can we measure sustainability in regards to relationships and the ability for connections across religious divides to endure, especially during times of crisis? Women and men experience religion in different ways and, therefore, we need to examine the impact of gender norms and roles. These are important questions that we will seek to incorporate moving forward with developing a guide to evaluate the effectiveness of inter-religious action for peacebuilding programming.

Religion can contribute to violence or peace through its role in identity formation, ideals, and organization. If religion or religious identity is directly invoked in the conflict, such as in the central belt of Nigeria, in Israel and Palestine, Sunni and Shia Muslim sects in the Middle East or in the case of Christian and Muslims in Central African Republic and Nigeria, or the 969 Movement in Myanmar, addressing the driving narratives and identities is also necessary to build peace. Religious organizations and institutions also provide effective structures for reaching out to the broader population and engaging them in the peacebuilding process.

Religions create a set of values, rendered more robust and powerful because they come from a divine rather than human source. This situates individuals and actions within a broader moral context, providing an explanation for why reality exists as it does, and how things could change to create a more just, ideal reality.[3] As a normative framework that addresses goodness, evil, and justice, religion creates a framework of understanding for followers, including supplying a goal for religious followers, and increasing individual and group motivation to pursue the ideal.

These values and meanings can be a powerful motivator for either conflict or peace. For example, a dichotomous, good-evil construct drawn from an interpretation of rituals, traditions, and texts may preclude religious zealots from discussing peacebuilding or human rights.[4] An alternative understanding of those same sources may emphasize sanctity of human life, empathy, and links peace to one's relationship with a higher moral authority.[5] For example, the Catholic focus on living theological language translates directly into politics, as Catholics acknowledge the sanctity of human life, and are driven to pursue reconciliation and the common good.[6]

However, evaluating the value of inter-religious programming requires discussion and innovation. For example, is a program's contribution towards the larger peace a relevant standard against which to measure a program focused on enabling people to have personal religious experiences and transformations? Engaging in good works such as peacebuilding may be an end in and of itself. And how can one plan for or measure the transcendental and divine aspects of inter-religious peacebuilding?

These questions are the centerpiece for EIAP. This initiative seeks to improve the evaluation practices of inter-religious action peacebuilding. Driven by an interactive and whole of field process, EIAP consults key, diverse stakeholders in all aspects of its work to address the central and common

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[3] Harpyiken, K. "Faithful Brokers? Potentials and Pitfalls of Religion in Peacemaking." *Conflict Resolution Quarterly*, 25(3) 2008.; Gopin, M. "World Religions, Violence, and Myths of Peace in International Relations." *Bridge or Barrier. Religion, Violence and Visions for Peace*. Leiden: Brill, 2015. p. 49.

[4] Gopin, M. "World Religions, Violence, and Myths of Peace in International Relations," *Bridge or Barrier. Religion, Violence and Visions for Peace*. Leiden: Brill, 2015. p. 52.

[5] Said, A and Funk, N. "The Role of Faith in Cross-Cultural Conflict Resolution." Presented at the European Parliament for the European Centre for Common Ground, 2001. p. 39.

[6] Appleby, S. "Exploiting the Ambivalence of Religion: Transforming Conflict by Transforming Religion." *The Ambivalence of the Sacred: Religion, Violence, and Reconciliation.* Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2000. p. 14-15. Available at http://sacred-sovereign.uchicago.edu/rsa-ambivalence.html.

challenges of inter- and intra-religious action for peacebuilding. The EIAP Global Advisory Council (GAC) meeting served this purpose and greatly contributed to the development of a new guide on appropriate evaluation tools and methodologies for inter-religious action for peacebuilding.

The first day included members of the Global Advisory Council as well as EIAP principals (AfP, Search for Common Ground, and CDA Collaborative Learning Projects). The first session included a discussion around experience with monitoring and evaluation. Many of the participants have experience with monitoring and evaluation. We asked the participants to write down their perceptions of monitoring and evaluation, specifically what is the purpose? Below are examples of their responses:

Monitoring and Evaluation is…
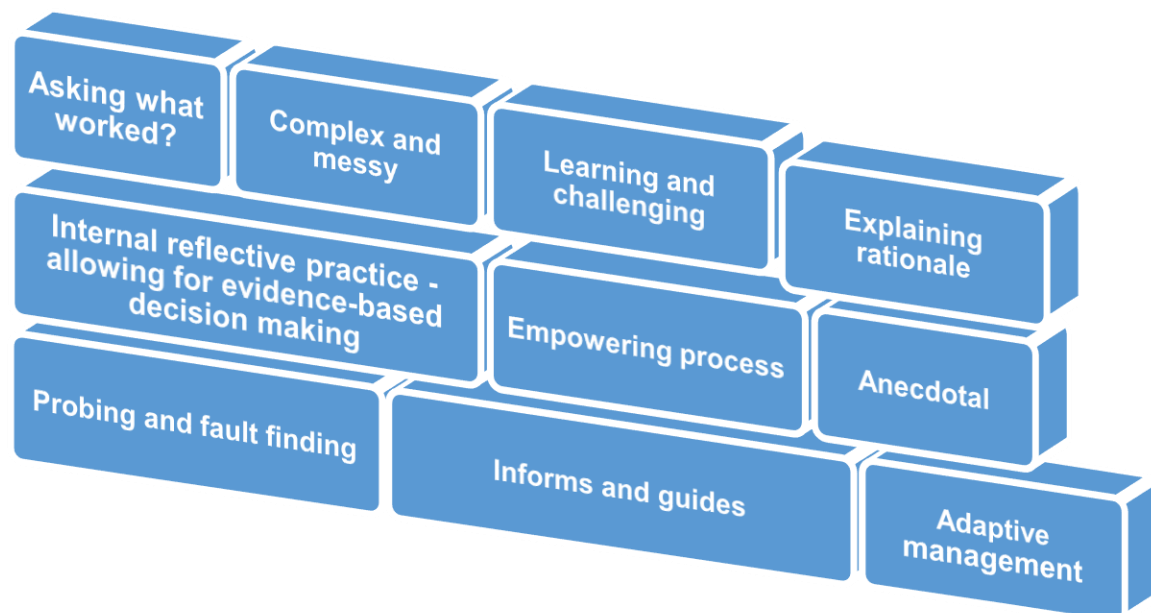
We then focused on key challenges to evaluating inter-religious action for peacebuilding. Four specific challenges were identified by the group and they include the following:

1. Where can we scale-up to attain and demonstrate greater impact?
2. Rationale for evaluation – how does it fit with one's faith?
3. Emphasis on the process, not just outcomes.
4. Learning vs accountability – what should be the purpose of evaluation?

CRITERIA FOR SUCCESS OF THE GUIDE

As mentioned above, EIAP is in the process of developing a guide to measure the effectiveness of inter-religious action for peacebuilding. Throughout this process, we are working with an external evaluator to evaluate the Guide itself. We asked the participants to identify criteria that we will use

to measure the success of the Guide. More specifically, was the Guide a useful tool for evaluating inter-religious action for peacebuilding? Below is the list of criteria:

- Guide is a living document => give feedback (input)
- Helps practitioners evaluate knowledge, attitude and behavior (KAB) change
- Includes cost-efficient, relatively simple methodologies for on-going internal monitoring and evaluation
- Includes well-articulated Theories of Change (ToC) that have direct relevance to peacebuilding and can be scaled up
- Helps religious peacebuilders understand how to have impact at the socio-political level
- Needs to be people-friendly, not tech friendly
- Needs to include the whole program cycle (design through evaluation)
- Needs to encourage project participants to play a large role in the evaluation process in addition to project teams
- Includes rigorous testing and review for conflict sensitivity (testing for unintended consequences in a variety of settings/contexts)
- Includes multiple levels of practicality, including use by local civil society organizations, professional evaluators, INGOs, etc.
- Viewed as practical or "acceptable" by donors
- Focuses on "how to" with references to specific topics for readers to examine further
- Integrates elements of context
- Includes other faith traditions beyond Abrahamic traditions
- Includes awareness and inclusion of faith and religious sensitivity
- Defines inter-religious action and inter-religious peacebuilding
- Mid-level M&E staff can successfully adapt the Guide to meet their M&E needs for evaluating inter-religious action for peacebuilding projects

OECD-DAC CRITERIA

The rest of the day focused on identifying criteria for the Guide that we are developing based on Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development's Development Assistance Criterion (OECD-DAC).[7] We used four OECD-DAC criteria – effectiveness, impact, sustainability and relevance. We also added one additional criteria that we strongly felt was important with this type of work - consistency with values. The participants split into five groups and looked at one specific criterion to identify key considerations and recommendations as it relates to inter-religious action for peacebuilding. Each group identified the following:

1. **Effectiveness**
   - One needs to first measure the impacts and who, if any, benefitted and did not benefit from these impacts.
   - Has the intervention effectively engaged women, youth and minorities?

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[7] OECD DAC Criteria - http://www.oecd.org/dac/evaluation/daccriteriaforevaluatingdevelopmentassistance.htm
http://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/development/evaluating-donor-engagement-in-situations-of-conflict-and-fragility_9789264106802-en

- Was the intervention (project) timeline realistic?
- Was the intervention effective in changing attitudes and behavior in the long-term? Esp. involving grievances, biases and patterns of revenge.
- Does the intervention responsibility and effectively engage the media (broader audience)?
- Empathy – step in one's shoes?
- Did you provide safe space – build trust and share experiences?

2. Impact
- What are our motivations and interventions?
- Do No Harm
- How would a secular person evaluate the project? Or a person with a specific faith evaluate the project (bias issues)
- Does the religion/religious actors act as a catalyst or bridge for overcoming challenges and creating social links? Concept of solidarity and a common goal.

3. Sustainability
- More focus on relationships and ability for connections across religious divides endure, esp. during times of crisis
- Integration into institutions, including religious
- Different interests of the religious groups are treated fairly and meaningfully
- Participants demonstrate commitment to inter-religious action for peacebuilding
- Are the mechanisms already being used and/or relationships being tapped during this times of crisis/increase violence?
- Different framing based on project (limited) vs. religious nature (indefinite)
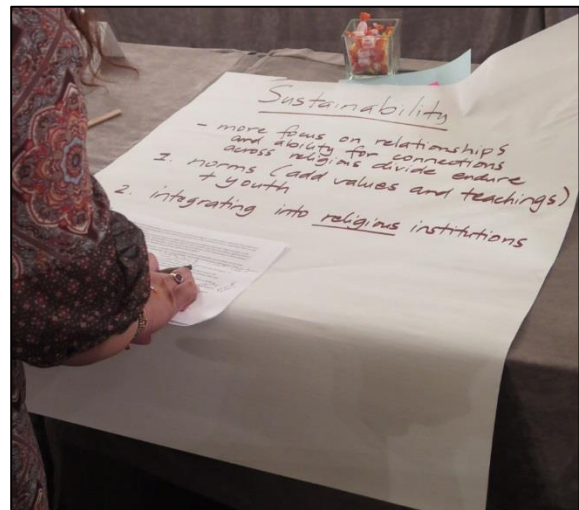
4. Relevance
- Is the presentation of the program components sensitive to all groups (all faiths) being engaged?
- Are the distinct perceived and real needs of all groups (all faiths) related to the issues being addressed?

5. Consistency with Values
- Is the program based on and operates on and is respectful of a common value of all people (dignity)?
- Faith sensitivity and conflict sensitivity (including religious language)
- Is the program sensitive to the differing religious needs of participants?
- Are the staff (implementers) diverse?
- Respect for polytheistic religions and those without faith?
- Did it help or hinder their work?

- Finding commonality among general values but also acknowledging particular divergent meanings given to those values by specific faith communities.

KEY THEMES DAY #1

At the end of the first day, the group identified key themes that will be put forward as recommendations for the guide to measure the effectiveness of inter-religious action in peacebuilding. The following were the most identified and discussed:

1. Engaging religious leaders at different levels
2. Measuring beyond individual change – social and political change
3. Terminology used is key
4. Provide safe space and ensure safety of those involved in programming
5. Learn and adapt from other contexts
6. Develop common strategies among all religious groups to address a common issue for greater impact.

OVERVIEW OF DAY 2 & 3

The second and third days of the meeting included a larger group of participants. In addition to the members of the Global Advisory Council and the EIAP principals, participants included leading experts in the field from academics to practitioners[8].

The goal of the second and third days with the larger group of participants was to examine specific sub-sectors of inter-religious action in peacebuilding to identify additional ways to measure the effectiveness of this work. The five sub-sectors included the following: 1) the role of reconciliation in inter-religious action for peacebuilding; 2) gender and inter-religious action for peacebuilding; 3) role of inter-religious action in peacebuilding and humanitarian assistance; 4) engaging the secular in inter-religious peacebuilding; and 5) inter-religious action for peacebuilding in preventing violent extremism.

ROLE OF RECONCILIATION IN INTER-RELIGIOUS ACTION FOR PEACEBUILDING

Dr. David Steele, Adjunct Lecturer at Brandeis University, discussed the role of reconciliation in religion. He emphasized the importance of understanding the different faith perspectives of reconciliation and its' role in personal and relational transformation. For example, Abrahamic (Christianity, Judaism, and Islam) terminology presents reconciliation as the restoration of right relationships. There are similar concepts in Dharmic[9] and Animist traditions where harmonious living, compassion, tolerance and personal transformation are emphasized. Yet, whatever the religious tradition, they have all informed the secular concept and practice of peacebuilding in how reconciliation transforms within and among individuals.

Dr. Steele also outlined the distinctive value of faith-based reconciliation. They include the following:

- Ability to understand a faith perspective when addressing the religious dimension of conflict
- Faith frameworks that balance reconciliation and justice
- Vast network is unmatched
- Understanding of relationship building as a long-term process
- Results not restricted to short-term funding
- How do you understand the 'other' without judging even if you don't agree with them? How do you understand their drive and underlying reasons from a faith perspective?

In promoting reconciliation practices, it is important to include supportive concepts and practices within each religious tradition, including text that condones violence and oppression. It is also important to also acknowledge certain aspects of religious text can be problematic. This is very

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[8] Please see Annex A for the complete list of participants for Day 2 & 3.
[9] Dharmic faiths or religions are the religions that originated in the Indian subcontinent; namely Hinduism, Jainism, Buddhism and Sikhism.

important since the ability of religious actors to respond to people in crisis is often seen as the first step toward reconciliation. How can we measure this?

He also emphasized the importance of obtaining anecdotal evidence (narrative stories) of personal transformation as evidence of effectiveness.

In regards to M&E, how does a particular faith community approach it? Who does it? What language and concepts do they use? He identified a number of critical issues to evaluate around reconciliation and religion:

- Motivation: question of agency and calling. How do you measure the transcendent?
- Value system: not primarily rational, cause and effect modus operandi. Primarily gut level, not head level. Frameworks of belief come second; after a subjective commitment.
- Practices: how to evaluate anecdotes, cases and ritual? Religion is fundamentally about narrative and symbol. Are there similarities to the current emphasis on storytelling in secular peacebuilding?
- Timeframe: it is important to look at effectiveness in the long-term since reconciliation cannot be confined to a project timeframe.
- Implications for theory of change, definition of success, methodology, and criteria used as indicators.
- How to include attribution of the divine?

GENDER AND INTER-RELIGIOUS ACTION FOR PEACEBUILDING

Rev. Susan Hayward, Director of Religion and Inclusive Societies, at the United States Institute of Peace (USIP), discussed the role of gender in inter-religious action for peacebuilding. She began by highlighting how men and women experience religion in different ways – looking at the impact of gender norms and roles. Women often tend to be more religious than men. Yet, men are significantly more likely to hold positions of authority and shape gender norms and behavior for their own benefit.

She also emphasized the importance of understanding that war is a gendered experience. More specifically, it often violently reinforces gender norms. This has also been true for peacebuilding. With the passing of United Nations Security Resolution Council (UNSRC) 1325 in 2000, there is a recognition that women have a role to play in peace processes. Yet, women who often participate in peace processes tend to be well-education, urban, and antagonistic towards religion. Many view religious peacebuilding as a threat to UNSRC 1325.

Moreover, normative religious peacebuilding often favors men over women, giving preference to male religious leaders. Indeed, it is important to engage male religious leaders around religion because it can lead to challenging religious gender norms (in their respective norms). Furthermore, one must look back at religious text and history that challenge these 'norms'. It is also important to be conflict sensitive by not reinforcing gender stereotypes when doing inter-religious action for peacebuilding work.

In order to include more women religious leaders and actors in this type of work, it is important to address two things at the design stage. First, to identify how gender will be perceived in specific activities and how they may reinforce stereotypes. Second, to recognize the significance of space. For

example, you may need to create a separate space for women so they can speak openly and feel safe, especially when discussing very sensitive issues.

Rev. Hayward also emphasized the importance in promoting gender inclusivity in both participation and voice. More specifically, to include women religious leaders and actors when possible in this type of programming. They often have the freedom and ability to work across divides since many are not in positions of high authority. This is very important for advocacy work and creating coalitions. Furthermore, peace processes that include women religious leaders and actors often have greater impact *(ex. Women of Liberia Mass Action for Peace).*

Finally, she discussed how we need to better monitor and evaluate the role of gender in inter-religious action for peacebuilding initiatives. She highlighted the following considerations:

- Need to go beyond numbers (outputs) and use a gender lens (it is not just good enough to have women in the room);
- How did the project impact gender norms and behavior?
- How were women's priorities raised and/or incorporated in the project?
- Need to measure the influence and role of women as religious leaders and actors, including outside the home and within their communities.

THE ROLE OF INTER-RELIGIOUS ACTION FOR PEACEBUILDING AND HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE

Danielle Vera, Information Officer at Jesuit Refugee Service International (JRS), presented on the role of faith-based organizations (FBOs) in humanitarian assistance. More specifically, she posed the following question – can FBOs also build peace when delivering humanitarian assistance and, if so, how do you measure it?

JRS's work is guided by their religious motivation and shared values, underpinned by a respect for the dignity of each person's shared humanity. The majority of the people JRS serves are not Christian (an estimated 70%). Many of whom are Muslim. Their teams are mixed, welcoming people from diverse faith backgrounds to join their mission. This reality prompts them, as a FBO, to continually explore how their distinctive Christian motivation and ethos resonates with other faith traditions, by learning about, from and with them. This is what JRS calls interfaith action.

Ms. Vera said that one challenge facing NGOs is the "social separation" caused by differences based on tribe and faith in a respective country. However, JRS strongly feels that their presence and programs have helped overcome these challenges and, in many cases, created social links, by bringing together people from different ethnic groups; by acting as a catalyst and a bridge. This is largely due to two factors. First, they identify the divisions and tensions in the places where they deliver humanitarian assistance programming. This includes refugees and host communities. Second, they

recruit diverse program teams who represent a shared mission no matter their faith or ethnicity. This can be very powerful – even controversial – in places where violence is committed in the name of religion or ethnicity.

Furthermore, they do not proselytize which has been vital for building relationships and trust. This is crucial since they must work with local community leaders, including religious leaders, for their intervention to be successful. A place of worship (church, mosque, synagogue, temple, etc.) is often at the heart of a community. For many, it provides moral backing, hope and solidarity.

Danielle shared how a vaccination program in Pakistan, which can be very controversial due to fear and misinformation, was successful because it engaged religious actors and used religious text. She noted that it probably would not have had the same outcomes if they had engaged secular actors due to their lack of influence in the community.

Most recently, JRS has recognized the important role that it plays in building peace and creating better social cohesion through its humanitarian assistance programming. Moving forward, they would like to better evaluate the impact staff and team dynamics (including inter- and intra-religious dynamics) have on project implementation and effectiveness. Furthermore, JRS would like to conduct more evaluations of integrated projects that have both humanitarian response and social cohesion objectives.

ENGAGING THE SECULAR IN INTER-RELIGIOUS ACTION FOR PEACEBUILDING

Dr. Peter Dixon, Strategic Peacebuilding Advisor and Founder of Concordis International, discussed how to engage the secular actors and organizations in inter-religious action for peacebuilding. He first noted that secular is a modality and not a sub-sector. It is also complex since secular actors are not always secular, and religious actors are not always religious. Yet, there is a distinction between secular and religious peacebuilding. For example, the latter includes the belief in sovereignty of a higher being that leads to a long-term view of peace and reconciliation. Furthermore, religious leaders hold power that should not be underestimated or ignored. Therefore, how can secular and religious communities work together for peace? And how can secular actors and organizations effectively engage in inter-religious action for peacebuilding programming?

First, it is important to understand the beliefs and motivations of the secular actors and organizations. Also, do secular actors and organizations understand the implications when they use religion to justify a specific viewpoint? For example, when a secular actor or organization references a verse from a religious text and then states how it should be interpreted. It is important to recognize the consequences it may have on programming. Furthermore, at times, secular actors and organizations ignore religion and even see it as part of the problem. This may be due to them not

understanding religion and/or not being sensitive to it. At times, there is also resistance from religious organizations and leaders to engage with the secular, including civil society.

This is not to say that secular actors and organizations should not engage in inter-religious action for peacebuilding work. There are many similarities between religious and secular peacebuilding. There is a good deal that the secular peacebuilding communities and the religious peacebuilding communities can learn from each other.

In terms of monitoring and evaluating these types of programs, it is important to look at the degree to which it was sensitive to different religious traditions and perspectives. It is also important to assess the quality of relationships between the secular and religious partners and/or participants.

INTER-RELIGIOUS ACTION FOR PEACEBUILDING IN PREVENTING VIOLENT EXTREMISM

Dr. Amineh Hoti, Executive Director of the Centre for Dialogue and Action in Pakistan, discussed inter-religious action for peacebuilding in preventing violent extremism. Since 2000, there has been a nine-fold increase in the number of deaths from terrorism. Violent extremism and terrorism have both intensified and spread more rapidly than ever before. Also, there are growing right-wing political factions and parties across the United States, Europe, and Asia that feed into Islamophobia and, subsequently, increased attacks on Muslims. Furthermore, young people feel helpless because of a lack of role models.

Dr. Hoti set up the Center for Dialogue and Action to help prevent violent extremism in Pakistan through peace education. She reported that in villages and rural areas of Pakistan she met people who lacked basic human needs (lack of electricity, no clean running water, limited access to food, inaccessible quality education, poor security, etc.). This also contributes to creating an environment ripe for extremism. She designed a comprehensive university-level course entitled, 'Building Bridges' that is about teaching acceptance and accepting differences. It also promotes positive influence – that violence is not a legitimate expression of one's religion.

Dr. Hoti identified the following steps that must be taken to change the dangerous mindset of violence to have a broader positive impact:

1. *Dialogue and action* –emphasis on learning about and engaging around discussing different perspectives (religious, cultural, ethnic, etc.). This is in contrast to the extremist narrative which promotes one way, one vision.
2. *Focus on youth* – increased knowledge and awareness through educational programming in schools and universities. Important to encourage other perspectives.

3. *Participation of women* – must include women in a meaningful way.
4. *Engage policy-makers* – specifically ones that influence policy (ex – Ministry of Education)
5. *Educate the media* – they must become more pro-active and amplify positive stories about accepting differences.
6. *Engage security forces* – this includes the police and military at all levels.

Through monitoring and evaluation, the project has had the following impact: 1) prompted students to resist violence and work with others through deeper understanding; 2) resulted in an increase in mental security – knowledge that others are not threatening and giving them confidence; and 3) improved inter-group relations by opening spaces for dialogue.

KEY THEMES OF DAY 2 & 3

After the presentations, the participants split into five groups (one for each sub-sector) to identify specific recommendations for improving how to better evaluate the impact of inter-religious action in peacebuilding. The recommendations will feed into the development of the guide. Below is a summary of key recommendations for each sub-sector[10]:

I. **Role of Reconciliation in Inter-religious Action for Peacebuilding**
1) Recognize everyone has a value system that may or may not be influenced by faith, including the evaluator.
2) Develop capacities to evaluate the ability of conflicted parties to address value conflicts effectively. How well is the reconciler able to recognize the specific values, yet help parties to explore areas of potential commonality?
3) Clarified what is meant by reconciliation using language/concepts acceptable to given tradition(s)
4) Understand that faith communities have their own perspective on accountability, and therefore, their own approach to M&E and that their perspective may be different from those held by secular M&E practitioners.
5) In many instances, impact or effectiveness is not tied to measurable outcomes, but to an understanding of faithfulness to God, to the faith tradition, or to a personal sense of calling which has been legitimized within that faith community (i.e. motive and loyalty are sometimes valued more highly than "results")
6) Given that religion is fundamentally about narrative and symbol, how to evaluate anecdotes, cases and ritual as they relate to reconciliation.
7) Finding effective ways to evaluate attitudinal and behavioral change, especially involving grievances, biases and patterns of revenge.
8) Discover ways to monitor and evaluate faith-based action towards reconciliation which is motivated by some degree of suprahuman agency.
9) Peacebuilding, including reconciliation, is a long-term process. If you are restricted to a project/program timeframe, it is important to measure the process (i.e. – process tracing).

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[10] Please refer to Annex B-F for a complete list of recommendations for each sub-sector.

II. **Gender and Inter-religious Action for Peacebuilding**
1) Gender analysis should be conducted prior to the design of the project with results feeding into the design and implementation.
2) Vital to ensure gender sensitivity and focus throughout the M&E process.
3) Evaluating the impact of larger gender perceptions of current gender norms. More specifically, have gender norms changed (positively or negatively)?
4) Did the intervention meet the identified needs and achieve different results based on gender?
5) How did it impact the relationship between men and women?
6) Were there any particular opportunities and/or challenges that women or men faced during implementation?
7) Did disempowered voices feel empowered to speak and lead (ex. - women religious leaders and actors)?
8) Were there any unintended consequences – positive and/or negative - in respect to gender relations and outcomes?

III. **Role of inter-religious Action in Peacebuilding and Humanitarian Response**
1) Initiate more evaluations of integrated projects that have both humanitarian response and social cohesion objectives.
2) Use both a peacebuilding lens and humanitarian response lens to assess the evolving context and identify indicators of success.
3) Evaluate the role of the program team
4) Use of narrative forms of evaluation; applying a bottom up approach when considering impact of social cohesion in humanitarian response (more reflective measure of community behavior change)

IV. **Engaging the Secular in Inter-religious Peacebuilding**
1) Evaluation should explore the organization's recognition of the religious context of the intervention from the conflict analysis through the programming, and final evaluation.
2) Evaluation should test whether the intervention recognized the religious dimensions of the context.
3) Evaluation should test whether the choice of partners was affected by preconceptions about religious traditions. If there were preconceptions, how did it affect the impact of the project/program?
4) Evaluation should test whether the donor's or organization's religious biases affected the inclusivity of the program, including the selection of partners and participants.
5) Evaluators should consider how their belief system affects their evaluation of a program. This should also be considered when selecting an evaluator.
6) The evaluation should test whether the use of a religion (including religious text, values and/or religious leaders) was perceived as exploitative or respectful/sensitive by the participants and partners.

V.   Inter-religious Action for Peacebuilding in Preventing Violent Extremism

1) Moving from individual evaluation to group evaluation (contextualized application, utilizing the methods that are best fit for the evaluation needs and contextual considerations)
2) Moving from informal to more formal methods (because this is often new and may bring added value for religious actors)
3) Rigorous conflict sensitive review of evaluation process and what will be shared out since this is sensitive programming
4) Focus on measuring how one's belief translates into action (i.e. - are they willing to commit violence due to their beliefs?)
5) Use of benchmarks for measuring change that leads towards the higher level change *(capture the process)*

CHALLENGES, OPPORTUNITIES & NEXT STEPS

Over the course of the meeting, the participants identified specific challenges and opportunities for measuring the effectiveness of inter-religious action for peacebuilding. Both challenges and opportunities will be addressed in the development of the guide (to be published in spring 2017).

CHALLENGES

Over the course of the three days, a number of challenges were identified that we will address in the guide. They include the following:

1. Bias of the evaluator – need to recognize that the evaluator will have biases in reference to religious action for peacebuilding programming but how can you mitigate them?
2. Ensure engagement of marginalized groups – need to ensure that we measure the impact of groups whose voices are often not included.
3. Evaluation of violent extremism programming needs to be more rigorous and conflict sensitive.
4. Measuring the effectiveness of both humanitarian response programming and social cohesion outcomes.
5. Big value clash around gender norms and sexual orientation in many religions. How do you address this?
6. Measuring impact beyond the individual and community levels (peace writ small). Did the project make linkages with key people and/or at the socio-political level? If yes, how did it?
7. How do you balance project timeframe vs. beneficiary expectations?
8. Timeframes are often determined by project/donor when peacebuilding is a long-term process, and some religious actors may have eternity in view.
9. Identifying the distinction among religion/ethnic/cultural divides – which is the real dividing factor(s)?

OPPORTUNITIES

Despite the challenges listed above, the group identified a number of opportunities for evaluating the impact and effectiveness of inter-religious action for peacebuilding.

1. Measuring the impact around gender norms in religious traditions. Key evaluation question – did the differing values related to gender norms create issues, if so, how were it dealt with? Gender specific investment and impact of participation and voice in inter-religious peacebuilding work.
2. Supernatural intervention in evaluation – how to measure the divine calling or divine action as a central component of motivation?

3. Engaging communities in evaluation – community defined indicators (ex – Everyday Peace Indicators)
4. Overlap between faith and secular – how can they work together for great impact?
5. Increased disaggregation for particular religious groups in order to identify specific impact.
6. Focus on specific dynamics of inter-religious action (ex – humanitarian response initiatives) and the impact on increasing or decreasing social cohesion. What role can this type of programming play in building peace?
7. Focus on measuring the motivations and processes among religious communities with particular emphasis on the transcendent.
8. Measure beyond knowledge and attitudes and focus on action. How has specific interventions results in changes in the actions of participants (ex – positive interactions with the 'other')?
9. Evaluating the process and not just the outcomes (ex – process tracing).
10. Evaluating the role of 'mixed' teams and impact their have on the project (vs. if it was only implemented by people of one faith/religious group).
11. Evaluating the role of religious actors and specific community members in providing access to specific communities (ex – JRS getting access in Mindanao in areas that are predominantly Muslim).
12. Practices: how to evaluate anecdotes, cases and ritual? Religion is fundamentally about narrative and symbol.

NEXT STEPS

EIAP is currently developing the draft of a guide[11] to measure the effectiveness of inter-religious action for peacebuilding. A number of organizations will then test the draft guide as part of their evaluation process of a specific project/program (late 2016/early 2017). In order to identify organizations to test the guide, AfP will release a call for proposals on September 1. Organizations will receive funding to test the guide. They will also attend a free training in November 2016 to learn how to use the guide.

The feedback from the testing process will then be incorporated into a revised version of the guide that will be published in the spring of 2017. The guide will be made available on numerous websites, including AfP and DME for Peace. The aim of the guide is to improve how the individuals and organizations working on inter-religious action for peacebuilding measures the effectiveness and impact of this important work.

EIAP has created a community of practice on DME for Peace that is updated on a regular basis with resources on inter-religious action for peacebuilding, including monitoring and evaluation. The community of practice can be found at http://www.dmeforpeace.org/eiap. We encourage your participation!

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[11] The current name - Guide for Assessment of Inter-Religious Action (GAIA) – will be modified based on participant input.

ANNEX A – LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

Global Advisory Council & EIAP Principals

Myla Leguro	Catholic Relief Services
Dr. Rick Love	Peace Catalyst International
Richard N. Tanto	Peace and Governance Consultant
Dishani Jayweera	Centre for Peacebuilding & Reconciliation
Shamsia Ramadhan	Catholic Relief Services
Dr. Sumaye Hamza	Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development, Nigeria
Dr. Sarah Bernstein	Jerusalem Center for Jewish-Christian Relations
Dr. Amineh Hoti	Centre for Dialogue and Action
Somboon 'Moo' Chungprampree	International Network of Engaged Buddhist and Spirit in Education Movement
Rev. Susan Hayward	US Institute of Peace
Sarah McLaughlin	Alliance for Peacebuilding
Ursala Knudsen-Latta	Alliance for Peacebuilding
Bob Berg	Alliance for Peacebuilding
Jack Farrell	Search for Common Ground
Rebecca Herrington	Search for Common Ground
Dr. Michelle Garred	CDA Collaborative Learning
Ricardo Wilson-Grau	Independent Evaluator

Other Participants

Clayton Maring	Catholic Relief Services & Tanenbaum
Deng Giguiento	Tanenbaum
Tom Bamat	Catholic Relief Services
Martine Miller	Network for Religious and Traditional Peacemakers
Jenny Vaughan	Mercy Corps
Claire Lorentz Ugo-Ike	Mercy Corps
Atalia Omer	Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies, University of Notre Dame
Sara Singha	Berkley Center for Religion, Peace & World Affairs, Georgetown University
Danielle Vella	Jesuit Refugee Services
Deepika Singh	Religions for Peace
Dr. Hippolyt Pul	Independent Evaluator

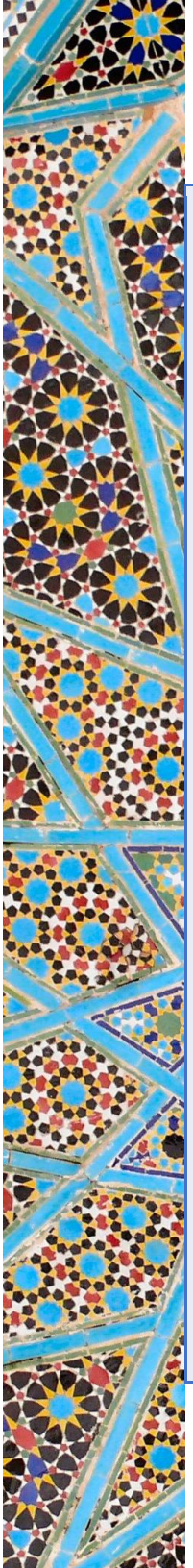| Dr. Peter Dixon | Concordis International |
| Dr. David Steele | Brandeis University |

ANNEX B – RECOMMENDATIONS FOR RECONCILIATION IN INTER-RELIGIOUS ACTION FOR PEACEBUILDING

	Recommendation: *What* should be done?	Explanation: *Why* is this necessary?
1. Ownership/ Sensitivity to value system	• Recognize everyone has a value system, including the evaluator • Recognize/learn about the value systems of all parties • Understand need to find some commonality of general values, yet acknowledge the particular divergent meanings given to those values by specific faith communities (e.g. different perspectives on justice, compassion, hospitality, etc.) • Develop capacities to evaluate the ability of conflicted parties to address values conflicts effectively? How well is the reconciler able to recognize the specific values, yet help parties to explore areas of potential commonality? • Need for ongoing evaluation; not wait till end of process	• Faith communities do not exert influence merely through generalized ethical frameworks that are proposed universally, but through the particular practices that demonstrate and give meaning to those frameworks.

| 2. Defining reconciliation: Language/ Conceptualization | • What language/concepts do they use?
• How well has the reconciler:
○ Understood and communicated a conception of reconciliation that is broad enough to include a range of possible understandings of what is meant by restoration and right relationships?
○ Used religious language, rather than just translating secular terms?
○ Clarified what is meant by reconciliation using language/concepts acceptable to given tradition?
○ Searched for supportive concepts/practices within each tradition, while acknowledging aspects that can be problematic
• Can the reconciler and evaluator understand the need to start with the beneficiary perspective, but allow for beneficiaries understanding of reconciliation to grow/change?
• Can the faith-based reconcilers handle effectively resistance by conflicted parties to the term reconciliation? | In order to assist individuals or communities with reservations or negative connotations regarding reconciliation, and adapt one's approach to address it effectively, it is important to be aware of typical reasons for resistance to the term, for e.g. when:

• Viewed as foreign: Western or Christian
• Equated with unacceptable compromise
• Fear that justice will be circumvented |

3. Accountability to whom? How understood?	• Very important to ask the community for their views. • Understand that faith communities have their own perspective on accountability, and therefore, their own approach to M&E and that their perspective may be very different from that held by secular M&E practitioners? • When working with faith communities, one must ask who does M&E for their community? What is their approach? How do they practice accountability? • Ask implementer and community not to be bound by donor expectations; • But don't be tied to anyone's starting perspective	• Accountability and evaluation may be understood and practiced very differently in many faith-based communities than it typically is within secular peacebuilding. • In many instances it is not tied to measurable outcomes, but to an understanding of faithfulness to God, to the faith tradition, or to a personal sense of calling which has been legitimized within that faith community. I.e. motive and loyalty are sometimes valued more highly than "results."

4. Subjectivity/ Experiential/ Narrative-based	• Understand the power of narrative stories about personal transformation; • Sensitivity to 'a modus operandi' that is not fundamentally focused around rationality and causality, but around multi-partisan solidarity. • Given that religion is fundamentally about narrative and symbol, how to evaluate anecdotes, cases and ritual? Compare the similarities to the current emphasis on storytelling in secular peacebuilding? • Understanding the central role clerics play as first responders when a community is grieving. How might we evaluate effectiveness of a grief process? • Finding effective ways to evaluate attitudinal and behavioral change, especially involving grievances, biases and patterns of revenge.	• Religious impulse – not primarily about management, but about inner spiritual transformation. • Primarily gut level, not head level. Frameworks of belief come second; after a subjective commitment.
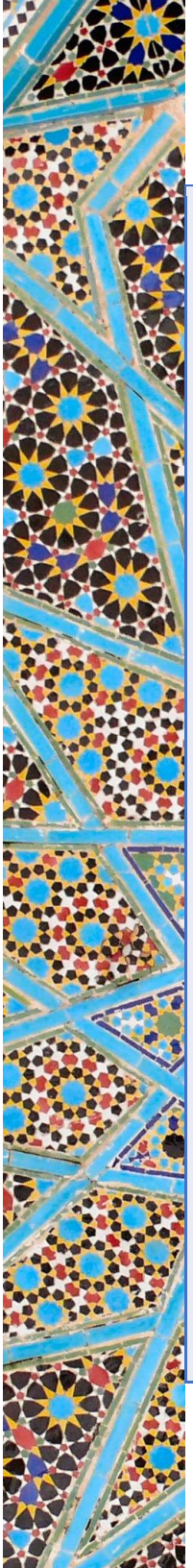
5. The intersection of divine/human agency; measuring the transcendent	• Discover ways to monitor and evaluate faith-based action which is motivated by some degree of suprahuman agency. • How to factor in divine calling as a central component of motivation? • How to understand a faith-based assertion of a belief in the action of a higher power, with or without human effort? • How to evaluate this complicated perspective on the intersection of divine/human agency?	• Belief in the activity of some kind of higher power is present, in some form, within all faith traditions. • A sense of connection with this suprahuman agency, whether called divinity or ultimate reality, is very important to many believers. • Being part of something that transcends oneself influences the way one evaluates success or failure, as well as one's outlook on any learning process.

| 6. Duration and complexity | Evaluate the effect on M&E of:

• The long-term duration of much faith-based reconciliation.

• The fact that peace action is typically not project/program oriented

Examine the implications of all the complex factors listed here on theory of change, definition of success, methodology, criteria used to develop indicators | • Very many faith-based reconciliation efforts receive strong enough support from within their faith communities to continue over long periods of time. This can be due to internal financial support, institutional structures built into the religious organization, or volunteer efforts (which occurs in many developing countries)

• Many of the factors listed here can have enormous effect on the entirety of the M&E process. Therefore, they need to be considered carefully. |

	Recommendation Action 1: **M&E Design and Process – Gender Sensitivity.** *("part of problem or [modeling] solution" DJ)*	Explanation: *Why* is this necessary?
1	M&E Design and Implementation: gender sensitivity integrated throughout design and implementation process (e.g. space for/with women, mixed groups; gender disaggregated data (women and men religious actors; etc.)	Vital to ensure gender sensitivity and focus – not an afterthought to be haphazardly derived from results.
2	Gender Specialist – *despite or in spite of our best intentions?* *Question: Should inclusivity – broadly - be approached?*	Example: Religious actors in peace mediation research – failed to integrate gender into methodology given researcher held limited gender analysis capacity.
	Recommendation – Action 2: **Integration of possible gender focused questions?**	

| 1	Was a gender analysis conducted prior to the design of the project with results feeding into the design and implementation? -what concerns/needs were identified by men and women? Were they common or different?	Setting baseline understanding for theory or change – with gender sensitive lens/framing.
2	Were all genders included and how were they included in designing the project?	Provides insight into gender importance, needs, focus and implementation engagement.
3	Did all genders feel they were engaged meaningfully and equally in the project?	"Perception is sometimes everything." Offers insight into feelings of engagement and sustainability - buy-in, longer term commitment to process and outcomes.
4	What steps were taken to ensure gender sensitivity?	Provides insight into if gender sensitivity was focused and viewed as vital.
5	What is the impact of larger gender perceptions of current gender norms?	Have gender norms changed – for positive and/or negative? Example (interesting): Oxfam perception of positive change in gender norms.
6	Did the intervention meet identified needs/achieve different results for women and men, boys and girls? How did it impact the relationship between them?	Provides insight on whether or not women's, men's, girl's and boy's needs were effectively analyzed, understood and addressed.
7	Were there any particular opportunities and/or challenges that women or men faced during implementation?	Identifying challenges for transformation and opportunities for enhancement.

8	Did disempowered voices feel empowered to speak and lead (e.g. women religious, subordinate clergy)?	Provides insight into if engagement and support was effective – moving beyond numbers and in to quality of design and implementation.
9	Were gender groups invested in the sustainability of the project?	Provides insight into design engagement, implementation effectiveness and overall buy-in.
10	Where there any unintended consequences – positive and/or negative - in respect to gender relations and outcomes?	Provides insight into do no hard results.

	Recommendation: *What* should be done?	Explanation: *Why* is this necessary?
1	Initiate more evaluations of integrated projects that have the humanitarian response & the social cohesion objectives.	Absence of simultaneous evaluations of integrated programming; programs which have both social cohesion & human security goals.
2	The use of narrative forms of evaluation; applying a bottom up approach when considering interfaith peacebuilding.	More reflective measure of community behavior change.
3	Development of an "end goal" that dictates the establishment of short term goals that lead to the completion of the end goal.	Ensures that programming is consistent despite potential dependency on cyclical & short term funding.
4	Understanding, and measurement of, processes, as opposed to outcomes.	Allows for more fluid & flexible programming.
5	Using both a peacebuilding & humanitarian response lens to assess the evolving context & indicators of success.	
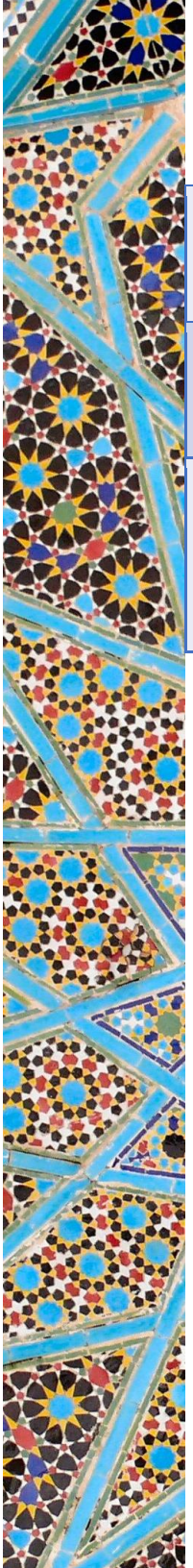
6	Better evaluation of program staff.	Can't expect people to work in a complex environment without contextual knowledge.
7	Closer work with donors.	Facilitates the development of a stronger relationship, particularly when working on a long term project.
8	With regards to lessons learned, who actually learned the lesson? Technical teams or the communities?	Greater understanding of developing sustainable programming.

ANNEX E – RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ENGAGING THE SECULAR IN INTER-RELIGIOUS ACTION FOR PEACEBUILDING
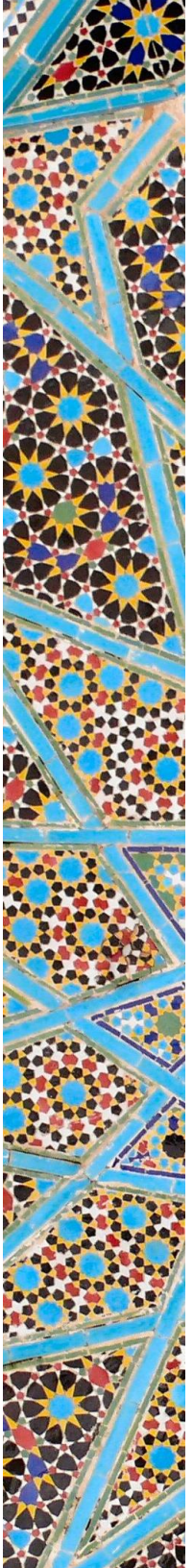
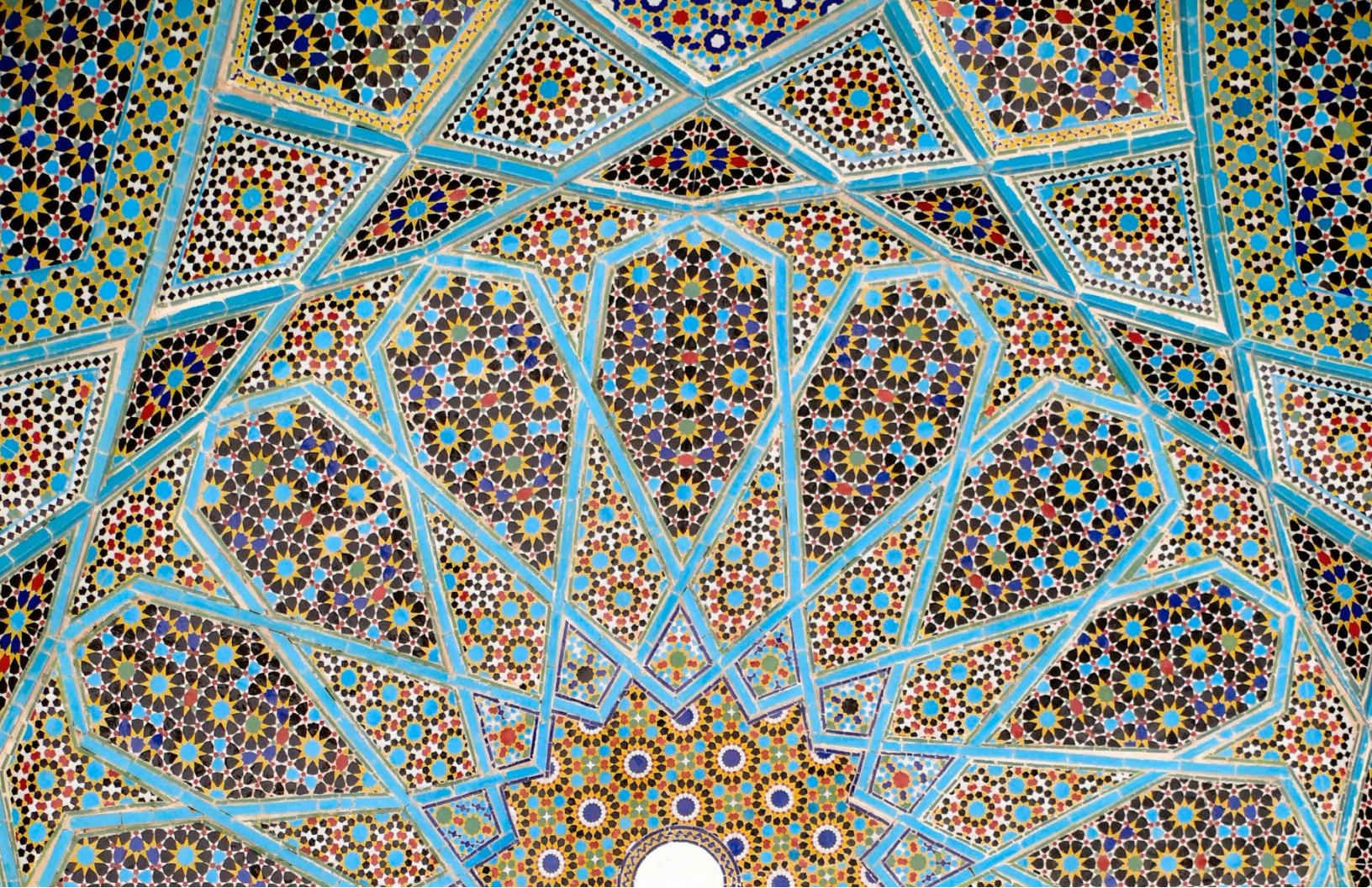|	Recommendation: *What* should be done?	Explanation: *Why* is this necessary?
1	Evaluators should explore the organization's recognition of the religious context of the intervention from the conflict analysis through the programming, and final evaluation	Because evaluators, peacebuilders and the community may have preconceptions/ biases/ ignorance/ assumptions about the divide and context
2	Evaluators should explore the degree to which the organization recognized the potential differences between secular and religious approaches from the conflict analysis through the programming, and final evaluation	Because evaluators, peacebuilders and the community may have preconceptions/ biases/ ignorance/ assumptions about the divide and context
3	The evaluation should test whether the intervention recognized the religious dimensions of the context	Because the perceptions and biases of the peacebuilders may affect the intervention design, long-term sustainability, and conflict sensitivity
4	Evaluation should test whether the choice of partners was affected by preconceptions or measured by their effectiveness	Because peacebuilders should partner with the most effective partners
5	The evaluation should test whether the donor or organization biases effected the inclusivity of the program, e.g. selection of partners, and participants	Because inclusivity is a key to sustainable peacebuilding
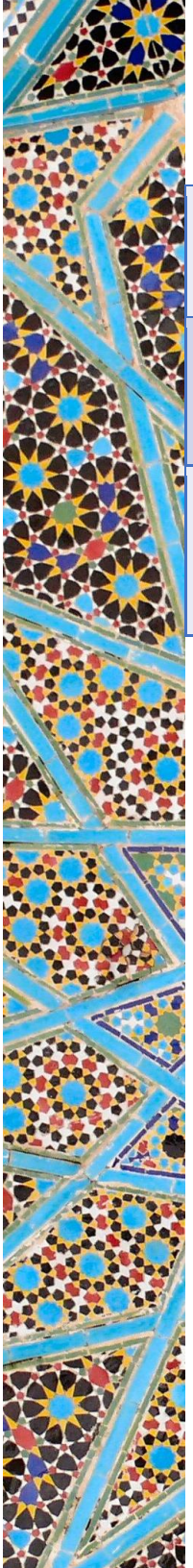
6	The evaluation should assess the quality of relationship between the secular and religious partners	Because poor relationships between partners decreases the effectiveness of the program
7	Evaluators should consider how their belief system effects their evaluation of a program, this should also be considered in selecting an evaluator	Because personal biases are powerful and can have unintended consequences
8	The evaluation should test whether the use of religion/belief system/religious leader was perceived as exploitative or respectful/ sensitive by the participants and partners	Because respectful engagement with religion develops trust which is key to sustainable conference

	Recommendation: *What* should be done?	Explanation: *Why* is this necessary?
1	Moving from individual evaluation to group evaluation ***contextualized application, utilizing the methods that are best fit for the evaluation needs and contextual considerations**	Disseminate best practice and lessons learned- multiplier effect Reflect various diverse perspectives and experiences and sharpen analysis Accountability from group process and transparency
2	Moving from informal to more formal methods *without going off the deep end	To put systems into what we already have- systematic organization Less distortion of facts Better nuance and sharpening of evaluation More rigorous standards, validation, and addressing weaknesses and gaps Bringing out things that were missed Comparative analysis Avoiding policing versus being empowered

	Recommendation: *What* should be done?	Explanation: *Why* is this necessary?
3	Moving from verbal to written	Increased documentation that is streamlined and accessible Broad dissemination and sharing of lessons learned To keep a historical record, to foster institutional memory To capture the small moments of change or progressive change Being better able to tell the stories in between and clarify the process
4	Rigorous Conflict Sensitive review of evaluation process and what will be shared out	Maintaining the safety of people we serve and partner with, ensuring we are doing no harm
5	Better measuring of the benchmarks that leads towards the high level change	Because a lot of what we do is long term behavior change, project cycles are short, and we need to capture the process of change
6	Better monitoring and process for determining who is doing the evaluation (language, identity, faith, experience) (ability to say things in different ways as needed) *Need to have a team in some cases	Responsible evaluation, ability to understand, communicate, process the impact, and share effectively