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INSTITUTO DE LA COOPERACION INTERNACIONAL DE LA ASOCIACION ALEMANA PARA EDUCACION DE ADULTOS
ИНСТИТУТ ПО МЕЖДУНАРОДНОМУ СОТРУДНИЧЕСТВУ НЕМЕЦКОЙ АССОЦИАЦИИ НАРОДНЫХ УНИВЕРСИТЕТОВ

**INSTITUT FÜR INTERNATIONALE ZUSAMMENARBEIT
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IIZ DVV

Building Bridges for Dialogue and Understanding

Results from the EU-Socrates Project
Tolerance and Understanding of our
Muslim Neighbours – 2002–2004

Beate Schmidt-Behlau (Ed.)



Education and Culture



Socrates

**International
perspectives
in adult
education**

47



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**Results from the EU-Socrates Project:
Tolerance and Understanding of our Muslim Neighbours**

Beate Schmidt-Behlau (Ed.)

**Institute for International Cooperation
of the German Adult Education Association (IIZ/DVV)**

International perspectives in adult education – IPE

The reports, studies and materials published in this series aim to further the development of theory and practice in the work of the Volkshochschulen (VHS) as it relates to international aspects of adult education – and vice versa. We hope that by providing access to information and a channel for communication, the series will serve to increase knowledge, deepen insights and improve cooperation in adult education at an international level.

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Heribert Hinzen

Foreword

There can be no doubt that both partnerships – the project „*Tolerance and Understanding of Our Muslim Neighbours (TUM)*“ and the network „*Intercultural Learning in Europe (NILE)*“ – have been most important experiences for our Institute in fostering European cooperation, since they started in the year 2002. They are both timely responses to ever growing concerns over the need for more and better inter-religious and intercultural dialogue in Europe, and indeed globally.

For us in the Institute for International Cooperation of the German Adult Education Association (IIZ/DVV), the reality of partnerships with colleagues and organizations in countries where the Muslim population is either a majority or a significant minority, has been a challenge we are used to in much of our work, predominantly funded by the Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ). Our Regional Office for the whole of West Africa operates from Guinea Conakry (more than 95% Muslim). Cooperation in Sierra Leone in the 1980s, a country with a Muslim majority and more than twenty ethnicities, concentrated on the collection of traditional stories and songs for use as cultural heritage in educational work with children, young people and adults. Projects with our partners on the peace and reconciliation process in the Stability Pact countries of the Balkan region are very important,

half the population of Bosnia-Herzegovina being Muslim, like the dominant majority in Albania. Our regional office for Central Asia operates from Uzbekistan, again with a strong Muslim presence. On the other side of the globe, cooperation with adult education partners in Indonesia, the largest Muslim country in Asia with almost 200 million people, started as long ago as the 1970s, and now continues especially in Banda Aceh and Northern Sumatra, where the Tsunami has just led to a catastrophe of unbelievable dimensions. Solidarity is asked for to support our local partners in conjunction with the efforts of the Asian-South Pacific Bureau of Adult Education (ASPBAE).

In view of the additional need and opportunity for inter-religious and intercultural dialogue after September 11, we intensified our cooperation in the Mediterranean region, which culminated in two major conferences, 2002 in Malta and 2004 in Cyprus, in which colleagues from all countries in the region participated, in close partnership with the European Association for the Education of Adults (EAEA). At the same time, a new project for cooperation with the Maghreb countries (Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia) started with special funding from the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs under the heading of Europe-Muslim Cultural Dialogue. The same sources have been

tapped for our professional exchange with Turkish adult education through study visits, placements and conferences. And in Afghanistan, education and training have concentrated on work with Muslim women.

As has been shown, professional cooperation and work within countries with Muslim majorities or minorities are quite a common feature of adult education, including that pursued by the IIZ/DVV, and are indeed welcomed by all partners. Sharing of information, exchange of ideas and experiences, and learning from one another are prerequisites for successful cooperation. At the same time, there is a clear sign that both sides must insist on mutual respect and acceptance of diversity.

The TUM Project was initiated to show the current state, or lack of it, of inter-religious dialogue between the Christian and the Muslim faith in selected European

countries, and how it could be improved. In this respect, this book is full of interesting reading for all those who wish to practise understanding and tolerance not only with Muslims as neighbours, but also with them as people who are part of our European societies.

Issues of intercultural and inter-religious dialogue will continue to be part of our work, even though this cooperation within TUM has come to an end. The NILE network will last for at least another year, and an extension for a further period is being considered.

The European Commission funded the TUM Project within its Grundtvig programme; this, and the additional support of the partners themselves, was instrumental in its success. We are grateful for this ongoing response to the challenge of *"learning to live together"* (UNESCO), and we thank all colleagues who cooperated on this important venture.

Beate Schmidt-Behlau

Tolerance and Understanding of our Muslim Neighbours

Introduction to the Project

“Learning consists of remembering knowledge that has lived in the soul of human beings for many generations” (Socrates).

From October 2002 to December 2004 the Institute for International Cooperation of the German Adult Education Association, in cooperation with other adult education institutions in Bulgaria, France, Germany, the Netherlands and the Theological Institute of the University of Birmingham, embarked on a European project with financial support from the European Commission under the Socrates Grundtvig I programme.

The partnership was composed of :

in Bulgaria: the organization ‘Znanie’, Sofia with **Emilia Ilieva**

in France: the Centre Théologique de Meylan, Grenoble with **Bénédicte du Chaffaut**

in Germany: the Centre for the Studies of Turkey, Essen with **Hayrettin Aydin** in the beginning and **Antje Schwarze** taking over from January 2004 onwards

and the Folk High School Bonn with **Jochen Buchholz**

in the Netherlands: Odyssee, Rotterdam with **El Batoul Zembib** as national coordinator and **Jumbo Klercq** for background support

in the UK: the Theological Institute of the University of Birmingham, Birmingham with **Jorgen Nielsen** for academic guidance and **Ian Draper** as researcher.

Two years later it can be concluded that the project has truly achieved its main goals of:

- expanding the cooperation and information exchange between adult educators, academics, Muslims and non-Muslims in the participating countries on a trans-national level
- identifying, testing and evaluating methodological approaches and concepts of intercultural dialogue, and developing these further to accommodate learning needs of multifaith and -cultural or multiethnic groups on a national level.

In light of the controversial discussion on Islam and the role of Muslims in Western society that has recently taken hold across Europe, the subject-matter of the project was extremely topical and high up on the public and political agenda – although



The German Team: Beate Schmidt-Behlau, Antje Schwarze and Jochen Buchholz (l to r)

not always in a positive form – in France, Germany and the Netherlands throughout the project period.

Why do I cite Socrates? Because in a way these thoughts provide a kind of spiritual frame to what happened in the TUM Project. They also give expression to the super-dimension inherent in all EU-funded projects, which is the European dimension. In the TUM Project, knowledge about the role and inter-linkage of different religions in forming Europe surfaced very clearly. Jorgen Nielsen summarized this at the concluding conference, organized in cooperation with the *Centre Européen Robert Schuman* in

Metz in France (November 2004) as follows:

“We have learned that before the national historical myths there were common European roots. Islam is a part of European culture just as Judaism is, Arabic is a classical European language just like our Latin and Greek. The Ottoman empire was in equal parts a European and an Arabic state. From this foundation, how do we develop our national and European identities as well as our understanding of ‘citizenship’? This is not only a question of human rights but also an encouragement to rethink our nationally dominated self-concepts.”

Needless to say, the project offered a multitude of learning experiences, too many even to be accommodated in this final publication. Still it is our hope that readers will find enough inspiring ideas from what has been selected in the form of experiences, discussions and reflections on an individual, on a national, and also on a trans-national level.

For further reading we recommend the project website: www.dialogue-education.org where some texts in their language of origin are additionally provided.

Europe’s Political Agenda Embraces the Concept of Diversity

At the dawn of a European Constitution that enshrines *“Respect for the Diversity of Cultures, Religions and Languages”* in an article of its own and demands antidiscrimination legislation to be enforced in each of its member states, the political

preconditions of the European Union give strong support to education initiatives concerned about intercultural learning, diversity or civic education, be it in or out of school, in adult learning or in vocational education and training.

Intercultural Dialogue has recently even been included in the list of *'basic competencies'* that education must cater for.

The same commitment can be recognized in the Council of Europe's (CoE) activities in the area of promoting a wide intercultural dialogue, and more recently with a heightened awareness for the necessity of including the *'religious dimension'* in its educational strategies and conceptions. The CoE's project: on *"Intercultural education and the challenge of religious diversity"* and the development by the Oslo Coalition on Freedom of Religion or Belief of a global interdisciplinary network *"to encourage school education that increases understanding and respect between people of different religions or world views and that fosters knowledge about and respect for freedom of religion or belief as a human right"* equally gives expression to this development.

Also the recent Declaration by the Standing Conference of European Ministers of Education entitled *"Intercultural education: managing diversity, strengthening democracy"* gives evidence of the willingness of all member states to recognize the role of intercultural education and look for new ways of cooperation.

Europe is moving forward in an effort to reconcile multi-religious and multicultural societies and it makes use of a human rights framework to do so. Article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that, *"everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance."*

Hopefully it will be possible that the human rights concept can form a stable bridge between the spheres of religion and politics which are at the same time separate and interlinked with each other in all European member states.

A state based on the principles of the human rights conventions, forming part of Europe's *acquis communautaire*, implies tolerance and respect for difference and diversity inside its national boundaries. It also implies the principle of inclusion and



TUM Coordinator El Batoul Zembib from the NL and Emilia Ilieva from BG with Bulgarian Trainer Vanya Ivanova (l to r)

participation of members of ethnic, religious, linguistic and language minority groups in the formulation of common values of the 'nation' state. Recent public discussions and sometimes even court rulings about the wearing of the headscarf, of slaughtering rituals, building of mosques or bilingual education are only a few examples that demonstrate that discussions are going on at the moment and no European country can draw back from taking difficult decisions.

So while – as it seems – European institutions have made substantial efforts in preparing the proper political environment for accepting and respecting the cultural, religious and language diversity of citizens, the real challenge lies on the one hand in the responsibility of the so called 'nation' states to overcome the still existing paradigm of seeing immigrants only as strangers and as a threat to a Christian Fortress Europe, and on the other hand in people's learning ability.

And this is – as the TUM Project clearly gives evidence – where education in all its different forms can play a leading role.

The Role of Adult Education – Some Guiding Principles in the TUM Project

The partners in this European project whom we might call – **united for dialogue in diversity** – were convinced that only with a special 'dialogue' attitude and a certain vision of inclusion could the 'TUM ship' be kept on course.

The basic elements of this commonly agreed attitude and vision have been formulated in the form of guiding principles that set the frame for the project and the handbooks.

In these guiding principles Adult Education is understood as the creation and encouragement of learning processes conducive to the building of constructive relations between Muslim and non-Muslim co-citizens. The project partners agreed that tolerance, understanding and respect as well as acceptance of cultural variety must be the foundations for such learning processes. Where prejudice, discrimination and racism are expressed Adult Educators should take responsibility for opposing any such acts. The value of Adult Education is seen in its ability to be supportive to intercultural learning processes that prepare individuals for multicultural living together. It can even take a promoting role for such learning processes by adhering to the following principles:

- be based on respect for human dignity
- be designed in a way to overcome negative stereotyping
- lead to intercultural competence for living in a multicultural reality
- give guidance on how to live with respect for differences
- promote mutual enrichment through cultural encounter
- stimulate curiosity and build up knowledge

- be based on inclusion (gender, age, educational level), participation and empowerment

In the activities of the TUM Project partners on national and local level some important pedagogical principles were seen to be of overall importance for a constructive dialogue between people from different faith groups:

- learning **with**, not learning about Muslims and non-Muslims
- learning as an enjoyable process
- a balance of a practical and theoretical approach
- an interdisciplinary approach
- in accordance with the scholarly and theoretical achievements of contemporary academic specialisations like Islamic studies, sociology, ethnology and pedagogy
- inter-relationship of general aspects and attention to differences within groups (gender, age, education, region, locality etc.)
- learning to listen to each other in an open environment
- personal encounter
- *“learning through experience”*
- interactive methods such as theatre of the oppressed
- *‘white highlands’* should not be left out – people who are not confronted with multicultural situations in their everyday lives can be motivated through, for example, an introduction to the arts

- the delivery format has to be appropriate to the needs and to the convenience of the various types of participants

The Learning Process in the Project Partnership

Not only did the diversity in the partnership itself – as far as institutional background and individual educational career were concerned – place high demands on the intercultural dialogue competence of the individual participants in the project, but also the very different contexts, histories, religions and religious make-ups, including different legal and political as well as funding structures for adult education provision, had first to be grasped and implications had to be discussed, before mutual understanding in the partnership could be developed.

Beyond very individual learning processes, which were naturally different and special for everyone, there were also common learning processes, which are worth mentioning.

Maybe the most valuable insight for all project partners can be demonstrated with a quote from one of the participants of the focus group meeting in the United Kingdom:

“It is important for adult education not to perpetuate the ‘our Muslim neighbours’ approach”, supported by a colleague’s statement: “it is good to provide educational materials, but if Christians and Muslims do not mutually accept each other, materials are irrelevant”. And belying its title borne out of non-

awareness at its moment of birth, one of the strengths of the TUM Project clearly was its emphasis on dialogue and inclusion of Muslims, non-Muslims, believers and non-believers throughout the discussions and the implementation process on the trans-national and national level.

Also the agreement on 4 selected goals, which seemed indispensable to us, in order to achieve a seriously meant dialogue, belonged to such a learning process. These were:

- to achieve a better understanding of dialogue between Christians and Muslims and its necessary socio-political conditions
- to recognize and overcome stereotypes
- to make all parties (Christian, Muslims, non-believers) take part
- to establish the necessary link with intercultural learning

In addition we determined some key questions about the target group applicable to all adult education activities, such as:

- Who are we addressing, who is the target audience?
- What is the level of knowledge, what is their experience of encounter?
- How do we reach them (development of course materials)?

It was important for our learning process to evaluate experiences of many years of Christian-Muslim relationship in the indi-



El Batoul Zembib, Jorgen Nielsen from the UK and Jochen Bucholz Waiting for the Guide to Boyana Church

vidual countries, from the example of France and the United Kingdom, but also to test new approaches and methods as in Bulgaria, the Netherlands and Germany.

A further learning process referred to our cooperation in the project team between people linked to the academic sector and knowledgeable about results of current research, and trainers/educators who are involved in practice, which was extremely enriching. As a European team we learned that we can grow together and even celebrate the wealth of our diversity, united by the everlasting question: **what vision do we have of religious diversity in Europe?**

Guide to the Publication

The publication is divided into 4 parts, following a certain logic of the project process.

Part I serves to give a contextual guidance to the actual debate and situation of Muslims in Europe. The first contribu-

tion, written by Prof. **Jorgen Nielsen**, shows very clearly that Muslims have been present in Europe ever since the rise of Islam and that it might be good for our nowadays very emotional discussions to increase our own awareness of these historical roots.

The second contribution by **Hakim el Ghissassi**, a well known French journalist and founder of the magazine *la Médina*, invites us to take a closer look at the questions through the eyes of a French European Muslim.

Both contributions will probably leave us with an even more modest aspiration in light of the difficult task of reflecting, coming to an understanding and engaging – as Europeans – in an intercultural dialogue about the values we want to build the future on.

On the other hand the activities of the project partners demonstrate in quite an impressive way that adult education can indeed be a powerful tool under certain conditions. But although the way to tolerance and peace goes through knowledge, knowledge is neither neutral, objective nor value free. And as long as the ‘immigrant’, is seen as a stranger and the Christian European Fortress is seen as being invaded by alien faiths, including Islam, intercultural education will face further difficulties.

In this regard **Part II** of the publication is an inspiring source not only of information on the diverse situations in the different countries of the TUM partnership, but also in terms of finding approaches, methods, models and activities that real-

ly work in practice. In all countries, except France, which joined the project at a later stage, round-table or focus-group meetings have taken place as a starting point for the project on the national level. The special composition of these groups including adult educators and representatives of different faith backgrounds from religious and secular institutions are mirrored in the results of the discussion, clearly demonstrating the potential for the **lead role of adult education** in fostering, promoting and sustaining **intercultural relations between Christians and Muslims and including other faith groups**.

Part III of the publication will lead into the world of discovery in the TUM Project. This part ultimately serves to share the fruits of activities and insights that have been the most rewarding parts of the project. Emilia Ilieva, the Bulgarian project coordinator, has named this: **“Finding the way by walking”** and this expresses really well what happened throughout the project on the local, the national and the trans-national level.

The evaluation conference of the TUM Project, held in Sofia in April 2004, could in itself be used as a case study, because of its multiple intercultural learning achievements in:

- **fruitful cooperation**

with the Goethe Institute Sofia offering a venue and excellent translation

- **trans-national sharing of information**

by the TUM partners of their activities with Bulgarian adult educators, and by Bulgarian adult educators of their work TUM partners

- **intercultural dialogue**

by interactive methods serving as stimulating bridges for discussion

- **public relations**

by the French project partner being given the opportunity to participate in a Bulgarian 'talk show' on Mel Gibson's film 'Jesus', showing at the time in Bulgarian cinemas.

Activities discovered and generated on national levels also contributed to the success of the closing conference, hosted by the *Centre Européen Robert Schuman* in the French city of Metz. The results of the 'World Café' demonstrate very well the issues that need to be tackled by adult educators engaged in intercultural, inter-religious and inter-faith activities.

Finally a grateful word of thanks goes to all those who made the project possible:

- To the European Commission for providing additional funding for core activities such as trans-national meetings, translations and publications.
- To all project partners who worked really hard to achieve the aims set out in the project proposal and to the institutions that set aside additional resources to complement the funding of the Commission.
- To all other participants in the project who openly shared all their enthusiasm, time and energy, demonstrating that visions and dreams of intercultural dialogue do work in real life.

Looking back on two years of hard work, inevitable frustration, lots of inspiration



Jochen Buchholz and Bénédicte du Chaffaut Preparing for the Final Conference

and of course also fun as an intercultural team, we cannot but admit that the idea of building a European knowledge society and promoting exchange, dialogue and understanding is indeed coming true by means of the Socrates programme. Many of the fruits of the TUM Project are results of ideas generated in the process of trans-national exchange of information and discussion. These experiences clearly demonstrate that in spite of historical, cultural and political diversity, adult educators can learn a great deal from each other in the process of European project implementation.

All readers are welcome to share any comments they have with the editor or any of the project partners, whose contact details are to be found in the annexe.

Bonn, January 2005

PART I

**OUTLINING
THE CONTEXT**



Jorgen S. Nielsen

Muslims and Christians in Europe – from Immigration to Dialogue

The Context

Through the 1990s Muslims in Europe have steadily risen up the scale of public awareness. In an international environment in which Islam had become a political factor since the Iranian revolution of 1979, the 'affairs' of 1989 (Salman Rushdie's book *The Satanic Verses* in the UK and headscarves in school in France) marked the politicisation of Islam also within Europe, or at least within western Europe. The events of September 11 and consequent international and security events only served to place Islam and Muslims at the top of public consciousness.

Within western Europe, questions of Islam and Muslims are closely integrated with issues of immigration and settlement of large populations from outside Europe in the period since 1945. However, the situation is not that simple. In fact, in broader historical terms the immigration to western Europe is only the fourth major episode of Muslim presence in Europe since the rise of Islam 1400 years ago – and throughout these centuries the presence of Muslims as traders, travellers, refugees, craftsmen, captives and diplomats has been a steady 'background noise'.

The earliest major episode was the conquest of the Iberian peninsula in the decades after the first military crossing to Gibraltar in 711 CE. This led to an Arab-Berber Islamic suzerainty which lasted until the last Islamic state, that of Granada, that fell to the Spanish *reconquista* in 1492. During the early part of this period from the late 9th to the mid-11th centuries, Islamic rule in southern Europe included Sicily. This period saw a flowering of intellectual and artistic culture in which Christians and Jews took an active part. This was the route through which Greek philosophy and sciences, absorbed, digested and developed by Muslim scholars, passed into medieval Europe and made a major contribution to medieval humanism and the European Renaissance. It was via this route that the foundations were laid for the first European universities. But as the political balance began to reverse in the middle and later centuries, Iberia also witnessed some of the iconic events of the Christian-Muslim clash: oppression under militant movements coming out of Morocco and Christian martyrs and, finally, the inquisition and gradual expulsion of all Jews and Muslims completed by the end of the 16th century.

This first episode left no Muslim populations in Europe, although it did leave a

cultural and intellectual heritage as well as rich memories which could be re-freshed at will for both positive and negative purposes. The next two episodes, however, did leave behind Muslim populations. The first of the two was a consequence of the Mongol expansions out of eastern Asia during the 13th and early 14th centuries. As fast as these empires appeared, they collapsed again. But they left behind them states ruled by successors to the Mongols, the Tartars. Settled around the northern coast of the Black Sea and in the Volga River basin these Tartar states survived for several centuries, only gradually giving way to the expanding Russian empire – the last major Tartar capital to fall to the Russians was Kazan in 1552. Tartar populations remained within the Russian empire in large numbers and have remained so until the present, despite horrific persecutions during the Stalin period. Regions which were later lost to Russian rule, such as Finland and Poland, retained Tartar communities from the empire period.

The third episode coincides extensively with the previous, but it left its effects above all in south-eastern Europe. The Turkish Ottoman state appeared in western Anatolia in the 13th century and quickly spread into the Balkans from which it put an end to the last remains of the Roman-Byzantine Empire with the conquest of Constantinople (Istanbul) in 1453. Through migration, settlement and conversion substantial Muslim populations appeared throughout the region. Many of these stayed behind as the empire contracted slowly in the two centuries

before its final defeat during the First World War. Today the largest groups of Muslims in the region are the Albanians and Slavic-speaking Muslims in Bosnia and Bulgaria. Ethnic Turkish communities are primarily to be found in Bulgaria and Greece.

Recalling these earlier episodes serves to remind us of a number of aspects of our theme. For one thing, a Muslim presence in Europe is not new: it is essentially as old as historical Islam itself. Secondly, those earlier episodes were the results of a power balance in which Europe was the weaker party. They were the result of Muslim empires. Thirdly, the circumstances were such as to emphasise the conflictual dimensions of the relationship between the two parties, so much so that memories of the positive and constructive aspects of the historical interactions have been marginalized. Most significant in historical terms, I suggest, was that the rivalry between the two sides expressed in all three episodes was an essential dimension of the construction of that Christendom, whether in its western Catholic or in its eastern Orthodox expression, which over the course of time came to form the underlying common dimension of Europe, despite its internal religious and national strife, which has given the region a sense, however mythological, of being a shared cultural space.

What characterises the fourth episode, then, is the extent to which it is a break with past experience, for both sides of the relationship. The fourth episode is the immigration of Muslim communities from various parts of the Muslim world into

western Europe. This was also initially the product of empire, but this time of European empires, with the migration going from the geographical peripheries to the centre rather than, as in the past, the other way round. On the one hand, the immigration was thus part of a larger political and economic relationship in which all colonial peoples were caught up: Vietnamese, Chinese, African, Afro-Caribbean and other non-Muslim ethnic and national communities just as much as groups which happened to be Muslim. But it was also an episode in which Islam and Christendom had preconceptions of the other inherited from the constructed memories of those earlier episodes, preconceptions which were to lie in wait for the appropriate condition to be mobilised anew.

Christians and Muslims

When Muslims started settling in western Europe – a process which actually started many decades before 1945 – little notice was taken of them other than as migrant labour. If they were identified as communities it tended to be either by nationality or some racial connotation, mostly skin colour. As people with possibly some form of religious adherence they were noticed only by small sectors within the churches. A more general response tended to be found in secular categories: the immigrants were part of the international exploited working class, or they were ‘black’. They were certainly only temporary, an attitude which allowed many parts of public and civil society to remain in denial, an attitude maintained

most stubbornly in the German refusal till the late 1990s to accept that it was a country of immigration. When cadres within the churches then did begin to take notice, the noticing varied significantly among European countries, depending especially on national ecclesiastical traditions. Very generally, it can be suggested that the interest grew either in the social welfare tradition, the *diakonia*, of some churches, while in others it was the overseas mission structures which first took up the question. When it was the former, it often contributed to further delay in acknowledging the religious dimension of the immigrant communities. When it was the latter, there was always a suspicion, surprisingly often not, in fact, justified, that the implicit aim was conversion; certainly for a long time – and still today – the border line between mission and dialogue remains blurred.

It was during the 1970s that western European countries saw the first moves towards an active engagement with Islam on the part of churches. In Britain, preparations for the 1976 World of Islam Festival challenged the churches to respond, and the then British Council of Churches established a working party which in due course became a committee for interfaith relations generally (remembering that Britain had experienced also major Hindu and Sikh settlement as well as Afro-Caribbean Christians, not to mention a much longer history of Jewish communities). At about the same time, in many Catholic countries the bishops’ conferences or other agencies established projects or appointed specialists to advise

them on relations with the new Muslim communities. For many years, members of the White Fathers and the associated White Sisters orders were particularly active in these initiatives, based on their extensive experience in North Africa and other parts of the Muslim world. Among still active bodies from this history are CIBEDO in Frankfurt and the *Secrétariat pour les Relations avec l'Islam (SRI)* in Paris. In Germany the Protestant churches also began to take an interest about this time, leading to the appointment of *Islam liaison officers (Islamreferenten)* in the various regional churches and federally in the EKD.

Ecumenical and international initiatives soon followed. In 1978 the Conference of European Churches (CEC), including Protestant and Orthodox members in both east and west, held a conference on Islam in Europe in Salzburg. This led to the CEC establishing a committee on Islam in Europe which first cooperated with and then merged with the equivalent work of the European Catholic Bishops Conferences (CCEE). Much more informally, in 1979 an annual meeting of European church specialists on Islam in Europe commenced, and is still active today, under the name '*Journées d'Arras*' (it met for the first several years in the French town of Arras and has since moved around the continent). The *Journées d'Arras* played a significant role during the 1980s and early 1990s. Its membership included many of the people who were also members of the official committees. The *Journées d'Arras* were a forum where they could explore issues much

more freely than was possible in the official settings. Often, topics which later came onto the formal agenda of the official bodies had first been explored and tested in the informal setting of the *Journées d'Arras*.

The Agenda Broadens

When the joint CEC/CCEE committee held the third conference on Islam in Europe in Leningrad in June 1990 it was blatantly obvious that radical changes were taking place. Many of the participants assembled in West Berlin and together crossed through the border controls to catch the Leningrad flight from Schönefeld in East Berlin. Returning by the same route two weeks later, the border controls had gone. Both in Leningrad and during a visit to Uzbekistan *glasnost* had taken over, and the old Intourist 'mind-ers' had disappeared. What could not be predicted then was the extent to which issues of Islam and Christianity were to change.

It was clear to most that the topic was acquiring a higher profile. In the previous year, 1989, the Rushdie affair in Britain and the first headscarf affair in France had captured the headlines and the public imagination. But the end of the cold war served to add a strong international dimension. Already in 1991 and 1992 we began to hear talk of '*Islam, the new enemy*', and then in 1993 this was focussed by the intense debate generated by Samuel Huntington's article '*The clash of civilizations?*'. This is not the place to enter into the how and why of this major change, merely to emphasise the way in

which public attention internationally has moved to Islam since the Soviet collapse.

Within western Europe this shift has been associated with a number of developments on the ground. Most important has been the growth to adulthood of the children of the immigrants of the 1960s and early 1970s, with demands for active participation in the labour market and in local and national public life, including in politics. The increasing politicisation of practical issues to do with Muslims and integration has been associated also with the growing attention being paid by the media and politicians to asylum seekers, an issue particularly exacerbated by the challenges to the existing nation-state orders of central Europe and tragically illustrated in the collapse of Yugoslavia. The growing profile of Islamic political radicalism internationally, occasionally slipping into acts of violence, was confirmed by the September 11 attacks in the US, introducing a strong focus on security considerations. Subsequently it has become extremely difficult in most places in Europe to discuss even comparatively simple practical issues involving Muslims without an expectation that it be placed in such much larger contexts. Just as it was common in Britain in 1989–90 for Muslims to be asked to condemn the Iranian *fatwa* against Salman Rushdie as a precondition for any kind of dialogue, so it has become common today that they have to condemn 9/11 before other items on the agenda may be opened.

In the academic world, it was only in the mid-1980s that interest in Muslim communities around western Europe began to

develop, mostly among social and political scientists. Until the Soviet collapse academic interest in Muslims within the Soviet system was primarily discussed in terms of questions of nationality. Focus on this subject has grown exponentially and in all disciplines since 1990. Outside the university, '*Christian-Muslim relations*' have become almost unrecognisable from what the phrase suggested a decade earlier. It was a concern among small groups of church-related specialists and the occasional Muslim community leader or individual enthusiast and was focused partly on theological and spiritual questions and partly on social welfare – '*charity*'. It has become an issue of high political priority, and few observers any longer think it ironic that international political institutions such as UNESCO, the Council of Europe, the European Union, the Organization of Security and Cooperation in Europe, previously pretending that religion did not exist in the public space, should now be explicitly and actively encouraging inter-religious dialogue.

The developments of the last couple of decades have arguably brought us to a point where we find ourselves in the middle of something like a *Kulturkampf*. Across Europe we thought, after 1945, that we had, on the whole reached a settlement of national and collective stability of borders, institutions, identities. The post-war institutions of national constitutions, and supranational projects such as the Council of Europe and the growth of what has become today's European Union, gave us grounds for feeling that the turmoil of religious and national con-

flicts which had characterised Europe through recent centuries was over and done with. Two generations later, this is no longer the case. It is not the old fault lines which are reappearing, although it often may seem like that. The world, our world, has moved on and is challenging the structures of the past. Islam and Muslims are not a small component of that challenge. It is a challenge to all of Europe. The parties of the right know this and are playing to the electorate's sense of uncertainty and nostalgia. Across Europe, the consequences of immigration (multicultural societies, ethnic and religious pluralism, etc.) and the relativisation of the nation state (supra-national sovereignty in the EU and NATO, and sub-national claims to autonomy) mean that everyone is having to negotiate new understandings of individual and collective self. The relationship between state, nation/*Volk*, citizenship, religion, community, transnational loyalties are no longer what we had thought they were. This may sound vague and theoretical, but it has immediate practical consequences: the French *laïcism* of the 1905 settlement, German and Danish nationality laws have to change. Religious identity and belonging are a major dimension of this process, as motor and as active participant, and we had better get used to it.

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Hakim El Ghissassi¹

European Islam, Islam in Europe or Europeans of Muslim Faith?

This paper is a personal testimony rather than a piece of academic research, and it will attempt to reflect the everyday life of Europeans of Muslim faith in general.

The terms and concepts used to describe these groups of the population, which are both new and old at one and the same time, produce all sorts of paradoxes and largely determine the questions we ask in our research, the policy decisions we take and the choices that society makes.

The terms ‘*European Islam*’ and ‘*French Islam*’ are not the same as ‘*Islam in Europe*’ and ‘*Islam in France*’, let alone ‘*citizens of Muslim faith*’, to say nothing of the term ‘*citizen*’ as such, since it is so difficult to define citizen and citizenship.

Tolerance and respect imply choices. Tolerate whom? The usual answer is ‘*others*’. Who are these ‘*others*’? How should they be defined and identified? Answers need to be found to these puzzling questions. Is one way out to think of these others, whom we are reluctant to identify and whose otherness we find it difficult to define, as beings who live alongside us in everyday life?

Fear of Otherness and of Being

From Rotterdam to Marseille, from Paris to Brussels, from Berlin to Stockholm, every time the topic of integration is discussed, including the question of whether Turkey should join Europe, religious issues crop up: the status of women, respect for the laws of the country, separation between politics and religion, relations with countries of origin, etc. One staff member of Rotterdam City Council told us: “*When the twin towers came down in New York, they fell on our heads; before, there was no reference to religious background, we spoke about Moroccans, Turks and Somalis, but today we lump everyone together as Muslims who don’t want to integrate and cause problems.*”

What promises to be a tumultuous debate about whether Turkey should become a part of Europe is built on a fear of Islam and of Muslim populations, while the strength of Europe rests on its capacity to incorporate peoples south of the Mediterranean, with whom there is a common history – Roman, Phoenician, Muslim, colonial and so on. The fear of Islam has to be removed, we no longer live in the

¹ The following is a translation by Peter Sutton of a more comprehensive paper by the author presented at the closing conference of the TUM Project, which took place from 11th to 13th of November 2004 in Montigny-Les-Metz. The complete original text in French is available on the project website: www.dialogue-education.org

geopolitical context of the conquests of the Middle Ages, expressions of radicalism in the Muslim world primarily affect the Arabs and the Muslims, and it is only by working together while respecting each other that these will be eradicated.

New forms of society have been created, and new relationships between individuals have appeared. The various treaties and charters on human rights, children's and women's rights today provide a legal framework that enshrines shared values aimed at the well-being of humanity and of nature.

Religious practice among Muslims does not differ from that observed in the other religious traditions, involving around 15 % of the population; the great religious ceremonies such as Ramadan and Eid el Kebir are more traditional and festive than ritual, and express a strong sense of belonging to a tradition. People from immigrant backgrounds wonder why their everyday lives have to be attached so absolutely to questions of religion.

In France, the tedious debate about headscarves is almost over. This debate cast a shadow over the true issues of society and integration, above all of the discrimination in employment and housing, the school failure, the high rate of petty crime and the *'invisibility'* in politics, government and the media of people from a Maghreb immigrant background.

Society does not trust these former colonial subjects who, it is claimed, are themselves turning into *'colonists'* – as some people put it – have no roots in the local

society, and are frighteningly inward-looking and uninvolved in the social debate. And the behaviour of some of our fellow citizens does not make things any easier. We hear surprising things, for example, when talking to young people in their local environment: *"Why should I go on studying when I know that once I've got my degree I shall have to wear a suit, which is a style of dress that goes against the teachings of the Prophet, not to mention the fact that the teaching is mixed and forces us to break the rules of our religion?"* When we look for the reasons behind this sort of statement which is, mercifully, very marginal, we find idleness, motivation sapped by a future without hope, dehumanized local living conditions, a high rate of unemployment due to discrimination, and a culture of dependency – we often find people registered as unemployed working on the side in the black economy, dealing in cars, labouring on building sites or running ethno-businesses. We gaze open-mouthed when we see these young people with no work and no resources driving around in brand-new cars. Why go to work when, with a little effort, you can live in the illusion of comfort? Those who fall for this argument usually end up in prison, swelling the numbers of inmates of Arab origin, who account for over 65 % of the prison population.

Under European directives, authorities to combat different forms of discrimination are being set up in European countries. Their mission will be to examine how to promote disadvantaged populations as well as to combat discrimination. For their

part, employers are also considering how to allow all citizens without distinction to climb the social ladder. Unless we stop cultivating fear of people from the Maghreb, of Arabs and Muslims, and unless these pious intentions are backed up by genuine policies to include and recognise the merits of these marginalized population groups, there will be little change. Discrimination is also found in national legislation. How can we explain that tens of thousands of citizens who have been living in France for decades still cannot vote in municipal and regional elections like their fellow European citizens because they do not have the nationality of the country, even though their economic, artistic, cultural and social activities demonstrate that they belong fully to the culture of the host country? This policy needs to be reviewed. How can we fight against discrimination if the law does not allow citizens who do not have French or European nationality to become government officials, doctors, pharmacists or fully qualified architects, and to put their skills and experience to the test every day? Legislation adopted in the 1930s, when parties of the far Right were exerting pressure on governments, forbade foreigners – at that time Poles and Italians – from employment in government and some other occupations, particularly medicine. What are we waiting for before we abolish it? Is a citizen who is a national of a European country but has only just arrived better integrated than someone from the Maghreb who has been putting down roots in France for decades?

Some people think that these population groups cannot be integrated, and this is reflected in the current unsettling debate about Turkey, because our notions of the West are based on ideology rather than civilization. In a world in which frontiers are tending to disappear and where the world citizen is gradually replacing the citizen of a nation-state, the red rag of religious allegiance is still waved to stir up fear of the 'other'. Until recently, during the Cold War, Turkey was accepted by all European and Atlantic institutions. It is a member of the Council of Europe and NATO. The concept of the West has always been somewhat questionable. Japan, for example, has been included in the West since 1945. Nonetheless, as a political term it was clear and meaningful because of the Cold War, despite differences and the neutrality of some countries. Since the Cold War ended, however, the concept of the West has been more complex and harder to define.

Cultural Diversity

Diversity and multiculturalism are realities in Europe. This is confirmed in the various initiatives of the European Union, through the medium of a Parliament which recognised the contribution of Islamic civilization to European culture in 1992 and is backing a Europe that is pluralist and open, and respects its minorities.

The presence of Islam and Muslims in Europe is nothing new.

The Muslims who came to help build Europe have settled and become citizens

who are responsible in the same way as their fellow citizens for improvements in the society to which they belong.

The 12 million Muslims of Maghreb, Turkish, Indian, Egyptian, Comorran, Malian and many other backgrounds are working with the society to live together and to become more integrated into European public life.

Despite an apparent lack of interest in the issue of Europe, Europe is present in our everyday lives: the euro, European standards and decisions, and cultural and religious diversity are some of the ways in which Europe expresses itself every day.

The presence of Islam at the heart of Europe raises questions about relationships between religion and politics, awakens old demons and encourages other traditions to become more visible and reactive in public life. A knowledge of Islam and Muslims will help to ease relations and to improve national and European cohesion.

The European Muslim landscape has been transformed, and the younger generations want to become involved in the spiritual, economic, political and cultural life of Europe. Although Muslims experience discrimination, they no longer want to shut themselves off in a spirit of vic-

Metz SOCIÉTÉ **Le Républicain Lorrain** rencontre

Positiver les différences

Montigny-lès-Metz, au cœur de l'Europe tolérante : depuis le 11 novembre et jusqu'à samedi, la ville reçoit en effet la clôture du projet européen « Tolérance et entente avec nos voisins musulmans ». Menée par Beate Schmidt-Behlau, cette initiative est dirigée par l'institut allemand IIZ DVV (confédération allemande pour l'éducation des adultes et universités populaires) et s'est donnée pour vocation principale l'insertion des musulmans dans l'enseignement européen.

Après 24 mois de projets pilotes menés en France, en Allemagne, en Bulgarie, aux Pays-Bas et au Royaume-Uni, enseignants, formateurs et représentants d'associations du Maghreb se sont réunis à la salle Europa pour confronter leurs expériences. Idée principale : étudier plusieurs méthodes didactiques destinées à intégrer et associer au mieux les minorités par rapport à la nation dominante. « Se donner les possibilités de comprendre l'autre et d'en tirer, pour les deux parties, du bénéfice », résume Richard



De gauche à droite: Jean-Luc Bohl (Conseiller Général de la Moselle), Pr. Jorgen Nielsen (Université de Birmingham), Bénédicte du Chaffaut (Centre Théologique de Meylan, Grenoble), Dr. Beate Schmidt-Behlau (IIZ-DVV), Monika Oels (Commission européenne), Hakim El Ghassasi (Revue La Médina), Richard Stock (Centre européen Robert Schuman).

Stock, du centre Européen Robert Schuman, également partie prenante de ce projet.

Tout au long des trois journées de conférence, les intervenants ont détaillé les expériences menées dans les divers pays. Reste à chercher comment les adapter ensuite, chacun chez soi.

En France, c'est par le biais d'une exposition à Grenoble, « Les Millénaires de Dieu », que s'est effectuée cette démarche vers la tolérance. De nombreux scolaires ont décou-

vert une réflexion sur la question de Dieu basée sur les trois monothéismes juif, chrétien et musulman. Une découverte qui a permis une meilleure compréhension mutuelle et qui pourrait aider à lutter contre les préjugés.

Article in the French Newspaper 'Le Républicain Lorrain' on the Occasion of the Final Conference of the TUM Project in Metz (France)

timisation, but to be full citizens and to work to gain the place that they deserve. The Muslim middle class is the spearhead of this active, enriching involvement.

One Islam or Many Islams

In order to point out the diversity of Muslims in Europe we often speak of different forms of Islam. How do Muslims regard this intentional plurality of their religion? It is said that Islam is one but Muslims are many. The distinctions that we sometimes make between one Islam and another are not perceptible to the ordinary mortal. Hence the confusion that surrounds the debate. In France, for example, the term Islam in France (*l'islam de France*) is sometimes used, and the former Minister of the Interior, Nicolas Sarkozy, argues along these lines.

Do we want a French Islam? Does such a thing exist? Do we transpose the religious history of France on to Islam in the hope that it will become a Gallic, French Islam like Catholicism or Judaism? What are the features of this Islam? What are its founding scriptures, its legal principles and its relations with society? The answers are not always clear, either on the part of Muslims, or of the public authorities or society. Do we simply want to be communicators and to follow the trends in the media? Should we be told that religion itself is only a media and communication event, to use modern parlance?

In an enlarged Europe heading towards harmonization of its laws, economies and religions, are there 25 different Islams?

Not to mention the Islams of foreigners who are not European citizens.

It is said that there is unity in diversity among Muslims. The main features of religious practice are the same throughout the world, while their cultural expression varies from one cultural region to another, one country to another, one village to another, and even one Muslim to another.

The absence of a clerical hierarchy means that interpretations differ, although they retain a common thread which does not undermine the foundations of the religion. Most of those who talk about the need for reform within Islam are not arguing for a refounding of the religion or for a return to religious purity, but for freedom of interpretation to reflect changes in society. Most of the scriptures offer this possibility. But we may come up against literalist readings which retreat into the original Islam. In the world of Islam, whether it is the majority or a minority religion, the biggest problem today is the education system and the transmission of knowledge, rather than the capacity of the written word to accommodate diverse readings and interpretations. The lengthy discussion of political and sociological aspects of the issue of Islam leaves no time to explore Muslim thought and theology.

Towards a Typology of European Muslims

The dismantling of the Ottoman Empire and in consequence the Khalifate, the colonial period and contact with the West

led to the birth of a reform movement (*Nahda*), which saw salvation in a genuine return to scripture, while stripping it of traditions and contextualizing it. The Arab League was born out of the ashes of the Ottoman Empire in 1952. Feeling the lack of anything that bound it together, the Arab world developed pan-Arabism, which reached its zenith in the Iraqi and Syrian Baathist Party and the Egyptian leader Gamal Abdel Nasser. The political context of the time, the desire of the Saudi authorities to limit the influence of pan-Arabism, which was associated with Marxist ideology, and the over-representation of the Arab as distinct from the Islamic world, led to the creation of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, OIC, in 1962. This had been a dream of the 19th century reformist Jamal Eddin al Afghani, in order to counter the figureheads of pan-Arabism, then under the influence of Gamal Abdel Nasser. With the eclipse of communist ideology and the weakening of left-wing ideology, and the advent of globalization, we are starting to hear talk of a liberal Islam which cannot yet be defined except in terms of opposition to religious practice and movements described as integrationist or obscurantist.

Religious practice among Muslims is no different than in other faiths. The majority, for example, claim to be Muslim without bothering to go to the mosque. As far as they are concerned, it is enough to say that they are Muslim. In recent years, however, we have seen an increase in observance of certain religious festivals such as Ramadan, Eid el Kebir and Mawlid. They are becoming marks of identity: the month

of Ramadan is a month of family celebration and solidarity, Eid el Kebir a day when people remember their culinary traditions, and Mawlid (the birth of the Prophet Mohammed) is a time reminiscent of Christmas. The culture is changing fast, and is having an effect on the society, which sometimes reacts negatively, but generally positively. In a globalized world, the younger generations more easily accept cultural diversity, and indeed take it as their own. Muslims are no exception to this trend.

European Muslims do not differ from other citizens in their relationship to the host society. How we define European Muslims depends on how we define Europe. According to a religious definition, we think of 12 million Muslims as a homogeneous block. If we think in terms of economics, we realise that the majority of these population groups lack financial security because of their background and the nature of immigration, which is largely working-class. If we think in political terms, we may view these population groups as a constituent force in European societies which gives Europe considerable international weight and influence. Most Muslims themselves would like to be defined as citizens and no longer want to be defined by reference to their religion, which they wish to practise in private, while expressing it communally at certain very specific times. This accounts for the three main demands of the Muslim population in Europe: to have dignified places of worship, their own burial sites, and Arabic language teaching. Other demands are not crucial.

Alongside the 85% of European citizens who do not attend places of worship, there are those who remain in daily contact with religion by practising it. This group is not homogeneous but very diverse, and so-called political Islam does not involve more than 1%. It is therefore possible to make the following sociological classification:

- The most widespread religious practice, in which Muslims attend the mosque not to use it as a political springboard or to proselytize but purely to meet as a group and to perform their individual religious duty.
- Political practice, which sees Islam as a solution to the ills of society and therefore strives to spread its ideas. This fringe covers the whole range of so-called political Islam, which aims to Islamicize society or even to establish an Islamic state, although this begs the question of what is meant by an Islamic state since this is not defined in original Islam. The point of reference is the historical development of the Khalifate as an Empire, not to say the Khalifate as a state.
- Fraternal popular practice which needs a point of reference and is in quest of communal life. This may come about if the way in which the group is organized reflects a desire to affirm its particularity as a strong political and economic entity

Conclusion

In Europe today, the main difficulty facing Muslims is the lack of a structure to

enable the dissemination of liberated Muslim thought and of an ideology that reflects social change and European history. It would be simplistic to say that Muslims have no experience of more than one religion. It would be fairer to say that present-day Muslims are imprisoned by an interpretation of the scriptures that seeks to dominate and to be the only truth, while it is in fact governed by circumstance and does not reflect the Islamic heritage. Politicised Islam stifles the expression of Muslim thought, which has always drawn a distinction between politics and religion. For a long time, discussion of Islam has been captured by movements with political aims. But the majority of Muslims belong to the tradition of making that distinction. And the evolution of some religious movements demonstrates this grassroots pressure to opt for the distinction. This is principally the case in Turkey and Morocco. The recent statements by the Islamic Brotherhood in Egypt, who aim to turn their brotherhood into a political party and even to change its name, tend in this direction. But this brotherhood retains its globalist standpoint: Islam is the solution, and its reform programme for Egypt presented in January 2004 places Islam at the heart of every change.

A long way away from Egypt, in France, secularity offers a huge number of opportunities for free Muslim thought that is independent of political power. Can Muslim religious leaders grasp this opportunity and work on their public statements, on the concepts that these contain, and on the necessary reform of the training of

clerics? Only they can do this, and they will need to use all their skill. Unless they make this effort, these aspirations will remain pious intentions. Despite everything there are hopes, however, that the coming generations will marry acceptance of secularity and a more objective view of Islam with a humanist spirituality that preaches a culture of peace.

The role of religion in modern societies is an ethical one, which complements humanist ideas. Modern societies have introduced values of justice and freedom into political and social life. These values need to be applied. The activities of Muslim political movements need to be re-considered, and their position in relation to society needs to be redefined. Medieval classifications such as Islamic war, Islamic pact or Islamic evidence make no sense in a world undergoing globalization and fragmentation of cultures. The ability to define new universals based on existing ones and thankfulness for the contributions made by other cultures will turn into a source for coexistence and survival of the human values of justice and freedom.

Democracy cannot be used only to describe Western countries since non-Western states have also become democratic. Furthermore, to define the West in terms of cultural and/or ethnic values amounts to setting up the West in opposition to the rest of the world.

Nor can the West any longer be defined by the Atlantic Alliance, about the continuing need for which, in whatever form, there are now doubts. The United States has started talking about *coalitions* for particular purposes, rather than the permanent structure of the Alliance.

Developments in the West since the end of the Cold War raise questions today about the values and interests that unite or divide us. These are no more and no less far apart than they used to be. Our divisions over values are more complex than they seem, bringing the whole question of the philosophical identity of Europe into the open. Emmanuel Kant, the German philosopher, may perhaps help us to see more clearly and calmly in this labyrinth of our desires and fears by listening to others: "*Who are we? What may we do? What may we hope for?*"

PART II

**COUNTRY
SPECIFIC APPROACHES**



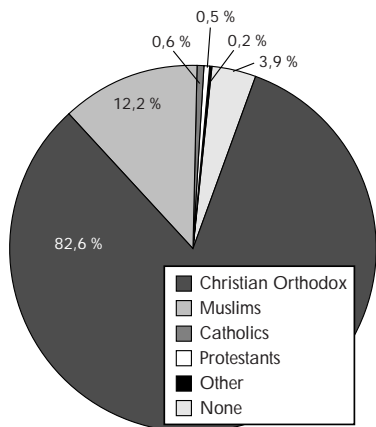
Emilia Ilieva

Muslim Minorities in Bulgaria

General Overview

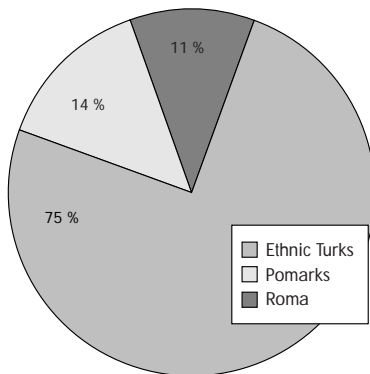
The Muslim population in Bulgaria is composed of ethnic Turks, Pomaks (Bulgarian Muslims) and Roma Muslims. According to the most recent census of 2001, 12.2% of the total population of Bulgaria is Muslim by religion, thus being the largest minority in a country with a predominantly Christian Orthodox religious affiliation.¹

Religious Affiliation



The table below provides information on the distribution of this 12.2% by constituent groups.

Muslim Minorities in Bulgaria



Muslims in Bulgaria

The appearance of Muslim populations in Bulgaria and in the Balkans in general dates back to the conquest of these territories by the Ottoman Empire at the beginning of the 14th century. The Muslim Anatolians settled in the present Bulgarian territories towards the end of the 14th century and have lived there ever since in compact communities. Present Muslim communities in Bulgaria, and in the Balkans generally, were formed through the ages "in most cases quite naturally, without violence, and under the influence of various factors."² The process involved

¹ Accessible at: www.nsi.bg/Census/Religion.htm

² For detailed analysis see Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations, vol. 12, number 3, July 2001, Bulgaria in Transition: the Muslim Minorities, by Antonina Zhelyazkova, p.285

both the conquerors from Asia Minor, Muslim migrants and a local Islamized population.³

Currently, Muslim communities in Bulgaria are to be found mainly in northeastern Bulgaria and the Rhodope Mountains. Most of them are **Sunni Muslims** since Sunni Islam was most widely promoted by the Ottoman Turks during their rule. However there are also **Shia sects** such as the **Kuzulbashi** and the **Bekitashi**.

Ethnic Turks

After the liberation of Bulgaria from Ottoman Rule in 1877/78 it became an independent state. Eastern Orthodox Christianity was declared the '*dominant religion*', although other ethnic minority groups were recognized as Bulgarian citizens with equal rights.

Most of the Ottomans at this time emigrated to the shrinking territories of the Ottoman Empire during the Russo-Turkish War and especially after the liberation of Bulgaria.

According to the statistics, in 1887 they accounted for 21.44% of the total population of the newly established Bulgarian state.⁴

Currently their successors live in compact communities mainly in southern and northeastern Bulgaria.

Pomaks

After the ethnic Turks, the Pomaks, called Bulgarian Muslims and/or Slavic Speaking Muslims, are the largest Muslim community. They are Slav Bulgarians who speak Bulgarian as their mother tongue while their religion and customs are Islamic. They live mainly in the southern part of Bulgaria with large settlements especially in the Rhodope Mountains. Pomak communities can be described as a "*colourful world situated between the Bulgarians and the Turks*", as Antonina Zhelyazkova poetically puts it.⁵ The Pomaks' view of their own ethnic identity is complex. Some of them identify themselves with the Turks, others with the Bulgarians, and a third group claim their real identity, namely that of Bulgarian Muslims.

Roma Muslims

The Roma minorities in Bulgaria are a sizable group. They settled in Bulgarian lands in the early 13th century and the majority of them adopted Islam in the 16th to 17th centuries. After the liberation of Bulgaria, however, some of them returned to their Christian traditions. Currently the Roma communities are very heterogeneous. As Antonina Zhelyazkova says: "*There are Roma Christians and Roma Muslims, but most of them use syn-*

³ Ibid

⁴ Statistics available at: www.nsi.bg/Census/Religion.htm

⁵ Ibid, p.290

⁶ Ibid, p.291



Emilia Ilieva and Bulgarian Trainer Desislava Stoykova

cretistic traditions and rituals and frequently observe the traditions of both religions...⁶

The Communist Regime in Bulgaria and the Muslim Minorities

The communist regime in Bulgaria brought uneasy times for the Muslim minorities. Guided by the wish to declare Bulgaria a 'one nation state', the communist leaders made various attempts to assimilate both Pomaks and ethnic Turks completely. The policy of forcible assimilation started in the 1950s with the closure of newspapers and schools and reached its zenith in a series of schemes to rename Muslims. In 1972–74, Pomak names were changed to Bulgarian, and in 1984–85 a mass renaming process started, aimed at the ethnic Turks. These events mark a period known in Bulgaria as the 'Revival'. It was based on the assumption that all Muslims in Bulgaria were Bulgarians who had adopted Islam during Ottoman rule and needed to be 'awakened' to their true national con-

sciousness and identity. The agencies involved in this process were the State Security Office, the People's Militia, the Red Berets and the army. This renaming campaign continued over several months and included various forms of coercion, from the trivial to the severe.

In the spring and summer of 1989, the ethnic Turks initiated massive protests in northeastern and southern Bulgaria with the request to have their names restored. This brought clashes with the army and the police, leading to death and injury to innocent victims. The opposition from the ethnic Turks provoked a change in Zhivkov's strategy, namely to let them leave the country by opening the frontier with Turkey. In the following months, from June to August, about 300 000 ethnic Turks who were Bulgarian citizens left Bulgaria and found refuge in Turkey. This mass exodus of ethnic Turks in 1989 is known in history as the 'Great Migration'.

Post-Communist Years

With the collapse of the communist regime in Bulgaria in 1989, the new democratic regime restored the rights of the Muslim minority. The greater religious freedom and the restoration of a multi-party system in Bulgaria made it possible for the ethnic Turks in Bulgaria to have their own party. Their main political party, the Movement for Rights and Freedoms, has on many occasions held the balance of power in the Bulgarian Parliament and recently became the coalition partner in the government of Simeon Sax Koburg Gotha, formed in July 2001.

Present Organization of Muslims in Bulgaria

Formal Structure

There is now an established system for the organization of Muslims in Bulgaria. One Chief Mufti and 12 regional muftis, interpreters of Muslim Law, head the Muslim hierarchy in Bulgaria. The General Mufti's Office is based in Sofia. The 12 Regional Mufti Offices appoint imams and monitor compliance with religious rules.

At the same time another 1200 Muslim voluntary organizations have been established in order to take care of the property and activities of the mosques (such as Sunday schools).⁷

Mosques

There are over 1000 mosques in Bulgaria.⁸ Prayers are in Arabic, but sermons are in Turkish or Bulgarian. In the Rhodope Mountains, where the large majority of Bulgarian Muslims live, the sermons are in Bulgarian. In Sofia, sermons at mosques are in Bulgarian, Turkish and Arabic. The Chief Mufti's Office reports that there are about 200 villages without mosques, where people need to go to neighbouring villages.

The Role of the Imam

The difficulty with the imams is that most of them are not very well educated, even though they are responsible for prayers

and all religious ceremonies. They are not very influential figures in the local community given their poor education, but this situation is likely to change as more students graduate from the High Islamic Institute in Sofia.

Women's Organizations

Attempts have been made in the past to establish Muslim women's associations, but none of them has taken root. Currently, with the almost equal representa-



Council of Ministers Building in Sofia

tion of men and women in the High Islamic Institute (see below) this will hopefully change. An attempt is now being made to set up and register an organization of the women who have studied at the High Islamic Institute (see below) in Sofia.⁹

⁷ The information has been taken from the Chief Mufti's Office in Sofia

⁸ Some estimates argue for about 1500

⁹ Chief Mufti's Office in Sofia

Islam and Education

High Islamic Institute

Established in 1998, the High Islamic Institute is the first independent Muslim institution of higher education in Bulgaria. The Council of Ministers of Bulgaria has issued a set of regulations for the Institute, in which it is described as a legal entity belonging to the General Mufti's Office.

The main aim of the Institute is to prepare Muslim clerics: muftis, imams and teachers of Islam for the religious primary schools and higher education colleges in Bulgaria (in Rousse and Shumen). The students graduating from the High Islamic Institute have a bachelor's degree and

could also work as teachers of the Koran, Islamic religion, and dogma.

Since 1998 about 400 students have graduated from the High Islamic Institute.

Islamic Schools

Turkey finances a number of Islamic schools in southern Bulgaria and provides training for many of the community's teachers.

Religious Education in Public Schools

The Ministry of Education has cooperated with the Chief Mufti's office in Sofia to initiate a pilot programme of optional Islamic education classes in primary schools. In Sliven, classes with children willing to study Islam for one hour per week have been set up in five villages, with 130 children taking part. The children use a textbook proposed by the Chief Mufti and approved by the Ministry of Education. If the pilot programme is successful, the programme will purportedly be made more broadly available in the school system. The classes are conducted in Bulgarian and are paid for by the Office of the Chief Mufti.



Tram in Sofia

Emilia Ilieva

Promoting Dialogue – Some Case Studies

Association ‘Tolerance’

Association ‘Tolerance’ is registered as a non-profit organization for the public good of municipalities in the Republic of Bulgaria. It has 38 member municipalities situated on a territory of 13733 sq. km. and numbering almost 730000 people, 350000 of which are representatives of the Turkish minority.

Representatives of the municipalities in the General Meeting of the association are mayors, chairmen of the Municipality Councils and deputy mayors.

The aims of the association are:

- Introducing the public to the problems of the citizens living in small municipalities in weak and underdeveloped economic regions, as well as to those of the regions with a mixed ethno-cultural and ethno-religious population.
- Support for the municipalities in these regions to create strategies for development and protection of their social, economic, cultural, historical and spiritual interests.
- Coordination of the national strategies, of the regional and local programs in the

interest of developing these municipalities, while preserving their administrative autonomy

Project Examples

The Association works on a number of projects covering various areas of social, economic and cultural aspects. It focuses especially on promoting ethnic, religious and cultural tolerance between the people in the regions with different ethnic populations. Sample projects:

- PARDERS – Public Administration in the Regions with Different Ethnic and Religious Societies www.parders.org an educational program for representatives of local authorities



Boyana Church with Wall Paintings from 1259



Boyana Church, a Museum of Bulgarian Art

- Providing humanitarian aid for municipalities in restricted regions and their citizens, community centers, libraries and others.
- The Third National Festival of Turkish Folklore.
- Presentation of the Turkish minority through a TV program – *'Tespih'*.
- Presentation of the Turkish minority through a radio program.

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Islamic Education in Bulgaria: the Challenges of Partnership

A Project by MINERVA Foundation

The aim of the project is to contribute to fostering the cooperation between teach-

ers from secondary and high Islamic schools and professors from the Sofia University *'Saint Kliment Ohridski'*.

This aim will be reached through series of exchange lectures between the High Islamic Institute and the Sofia University and a series of study visits of professors from both academic institutions. Additionally the project includes a students' essay competition on the topic *'The Other'* and a theoretical conference concluding

the project. All of these envisioned activities are expected to bring about a sustainable cooperation of the participating institutions and will help to give a positive image of Islamic education in Bulgaria.

The expected lecture exchange includes:

- 5 lectures at the High Islamic Institute led by professors from Sofia University on the theme *"Islamic History and Culture in the Context of Intercultural Dialogue"*.
- 5 lectures at the Sofia University (Intercultural Studies Department and Arab Society and Culture course) led by professors from the High Islamic Institute on the theme *"Universal Values and Constructive Interaction between Islamic and Christian Culture"*.

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Bosfor Obshtestvo – Bulgaria

is a non-governmental, non-profit organization established in 1999. It organizes cross-cultural exchange programs for young people and experts (18 – 30 years old) aiming at fighting against prejudices and ethnocentrism, maintaining greater empathy for cultural diversity and inspiring social activism and civic responsibility.

The organization is one of five registered and independent organizations sharing the same idea and acting under the same name: Bosphorus. Bosphorus partner organizations/groups are in Germany, Greece, Turkey, Romania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Slovenia, Hungary, Albania, Macedonia and Spain.

“Connecting Cultures through Mutual Dialogue” stands as the motto of the whole network based on the belief that only through personal experience and direct contact are prejudices best dissolved.

Project Examples

In 2002 Bosfor Obshtestvo – Bulgaria initiated its first bilateral project with Turkey in the form of three interrelated educational seminars focusing on the theme on the common history of the Ottoman Empire and the nationalism building doctrines of the two countries. Participants in these seminars are Bulgarians, Turks and Bulgarian Turks so that everyone is given the chance to express his/her opinion and make a clearer picture of their own position towards the *‘other’* regardless of the inherited stereotypes and various nationalistic interpretations. The BG-TR pro-



Boyana Church Built in the Epoch of Feudalism

gram of the organization pays special attention to involving the participants in the past seminars in various follow-up activities in order to be able to transmit their experience to others.

The success of this initiative and the enthusiasm of both coordinators and participants makes it a priority for the organization to work on the field of overcoming prejudices with specific emphasis on the Bulgarian – Turkish relations on in-country and inter-country levels.

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Interethnic Initiative for Human Rights Foundation

is a Bulgarian non-profit organization registered in 1996. During the last 7 years it has become one of the leading organizations in the field of minority rights and interethnic relations. The activities of the foundation are focused on education and training for minority groups; lobbying for minority rights; developing educational programs; publishing of relevant materials; providing methodological and financial support to local interethnic initiatives etc.

Sample Projects

- History and culture of the Roma population – in the course of the project the foundation prepared 16 school handbooks for students and teachers to study Roma history and culture. These were approved by the Ministry of Education and are now obligatory for all schools in lessons on literature, history and music.
- Developing intercultural experience in the school curriculum – the program is directed towards children in elementary school. It includes a set of educational materials and a program for teachers'/adult training. The set is composed of a Handbook for teachers, a collection of materials for the ethnic cultures in Bulgaria and a working note-

book for the students. The program for teachers'/adult training includes modules on basics of intercultural learning, human rights, interactive teaching, and developing strategies for intercultural learning at school, municipality, and regional levels. The program has been in use for 2 years in ethnically mixed regions. (See the selected literature lists)

- *Etnoreporter* – a monthly magazine including varied information on the minorities in Bulgaria and the Balkans.
- *Etno studio* – a music program on 'Darik' radio acquaints a wide public with the music of the minority groups in Bulgaria and the Balkans. The ethno music is presented together with information on the minority's culture and intercultural exchange.
- Annual Film Conferences – "*Documentary movies: ethnic challenges and human rights*" is a forum for documentalists from all over Europe with specific interest witnessed by movie makers from the SEE regions. Discussion panels after the movies reflect on the problems portrayed in the movies. The discussions are open to the wider public.

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Simeon Evstatiev

Results of the Round Table on the Contribution of Adult Education in the Context of Christian-Muslim Interaction and Mutual Understanding

Background

Historically and geographically, Bulgaria is the natural bridge between Christian and Islamic cultures, which have co-existed on its territory for centuries. However, due to the nature of the political events of today and the influence of the mass media, the public in Bulgaria perceive the Muslim world in terms of religious and political conflict, turbulence and violence. In this context it is important to realize that the population of Bulgaria continues to be ethnically and religiously mixed, for apart from the Christian Bulgarians there are considerable Muslim communities, such as the Turks, the Pomaks and the Roma. For all of them the cultural links with the central Islamic lands – the Arab world, Turkey and Iran – are becoming more and more important in the post-communist period. Gradually the notion of an *'Islamic threat'*, coming mainly from these central Islamic lands, has been shaped among Bulgarians. That is why critical questions continue to show mutual distrust and even condemnation between Islam on the one hand and the West on the other. The most important of such notions relate to the alleged incompatibility between Islam and

democracy, the fanaticism of *'Islamic fundamentalists'* and the secularization and modernization of Muslim societies and communities.

The long relationship between Christians and Muslims in Bulgaria has bred mutual understanding and co-existence. These qualities underlie the term *komshuluk*, which is specific to the Bulgarian lands, i.e. good, neighbourly co-existence which respects difference. Whenever disputes between the followers of the two religions arose they were settled in such a manner that this eventually established the lasting principle of tolerance in Bulgarian society.

This mutual understanding is most apparent at the level of day-to-day communication within society. Paradoxically, among the elite and in the higher cultural strata there is a marked lack of knowledge about Islam, its religious doctrines and its civilizing achievements. In view of this lack, and in the spirit of self-criticism, it must be clearly stated that this problem of ignorance and isolation is also true of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church, which is still to make the first move in establishing an official dialogue with Islam. Contem-

porary Orthodox Christian (in the broadest meaning of this term) perceptions of Islam and its followers are still close to those of the pre-Modern and Modern history of the Bulgarian people. Social, cultural and historical experience during Ottoman rule and thereafter has, in the course of the establishment of the modern Bulgarian national state, led to lasting stereotypes about *'the other'*, which still affect contemporary Christian Bulgarians' perceptions of Islam and its followers.

These stereotypes pose a threat to the established and stable model of co-existence between the mainstream society and *'others'* in Bulgaria, and cannot remain unchanged in the context of the intended establishment of an open society in Bulgaria, and the global trend towards open international dialogue. Especially after the events in the United States on September 11, there is an obvious need in Bulgarian society to revise these views through a more adequate understanding of Islam, its brilliant past and complicated present.

Therefore, an innovative educational methodology needs to be developed to deal more adequately with issues related to Islam and Muslims, taking as its starting point current educational and social needs in Bulgaria. There is a particular need for new forms of communication and learning between Muslim and non-Muslim citizens under the umbrella of adult education. This was basically one of the main subjects raised during the round table on *"The Contribution of Adult Education in the Context of Mutual Ac-*

quaintance and Understanding between Muslims and Christians in Bulgaria", held on 15 April 2003 in Sofia.

The Round Table: Towards the Formulation of Needs

This round table was successful because it provided a real discussion forum on the subject of Muslim and non-Muslim relations in adult education. The major challenges for adult education within intercultural and inter-religious dialogue were clearly outlined. The round table was able to raise very important questions concerning the relations between the mainstream society and the Muslim community in Bulgaria by building on the achievements of previous projects and current governmental and non-governmental activities in the country.

The participants were secular and religious academics as well as representatives of both governmental and non-governmental institutions, selected especially for this meeting. Moreover, many of the participants combined different types of activities and approaches to the intercultural and inter-religious issues, which increased the quality of the discussion and its output.

The round table was divided into two parts. The first was devoted to the presentation of what had already been done to develop adult education and encourage dialogue between Muslims and non-Muslims in Bulgaria. The attention of the participants was focused on existing *'good practice'* which could be used in the future as a model for solving inter-

cultural and educational tasks. The second part summarized the problems which existed in the area of adult education and outlined methods and strategies to encourage tolerance through this type of education.

Definitions

The presentation of previous projects and initiatives showed the urgent need for further activities to enhance intercultural and inter-religious adult education. As the round table discussions showed, it was necessary in the first place to **define the**

term Christian-Muslim relations or relations between Muslims and non-Muslims in Bulgaria. The point at issue was whether the project should focus on purely religious problems in adult education or should achieve its objectives within a broader understanding of Christian-Muslim relations, which in this sense could be defined as intercultural relations between Christians and Muslims. This broader definition seemed better suited to the project's overall goal because purely religious issues were only one aspect of the relations between Muslims and Bulgaria's mainstream society.



Birthday Celebration in a Bulgarian Restaurant

Selection of Target Groups

The other major question was the **selection of the project's target groups** on a national level. This question was important as it concerns many of the major issues related to the project's activities. Obviously, the target groups should be selected in a way that would turn the project's activities into a sustainable network of civic activists and other citizens involved in the accomplishment of major educational tasks. In this sense education as a whole could really be an umbrella under which adult intercultural cooperation should develop. Unfortunately, however, there is still no national strategy which could lead to the preparation of the much-needed teaching materials. That is

lack of exchange of information and practice. The absence of an official teacher qualification system as well as the lack of continuity in financial support for educational projects in Bulgaria are also major problems in the area of adult education. Previous and existing projects have very often been developed simply to fit the requirements of the donors, and not the needs of the different communities in Bulgarian society.

Obviously, teachers should be the project's core target group. However, the project can successfully accomplish its major tasks only if its target groups also include other professionals involved in enhancing intercultural dialogue on both the local and the national levels. Tentatively, the suggested target groups could include the following direct and indirect beneficiaries involved in adult education:

a. Direct beneficiaries

- teachers
- local government staff
- civic activists

b. Indirect beneficiaries

- police
- medical practitioners
- social workers



Participants of One of the Bulgarian Training Workshops

why the task of preparing the necessary handbooks and teaching materials still remains a key priority of non-governmental organizations. Moreover, within the non-governmental sector there is a

The project needs to provide mechanisms to involve the target groups in intercultural education and communication as part of the process of European integration. This should help teachers and local government officers, and hence young people, to accomplish their educational and

socio-economic tasks on the basis of experience in EU countries. In order to facilitate intercultural communication for the purposes of adult education, the project needs to establish sustainable structures.

Examples of 'Good Practice'

At this moment one of the best potential examples of successful 'good practice' in adult education is related to the so-called *School Boards of Trustees*. The members of the Bulgarian school boards are usually elected from among the parents of students. And if they are elected to represent the direct and indirect beneficiaries they could in a concrete way contribute to the sustainability of the project. Since the civic role of the school boards of trustees needs to be developed further, the project can use the boards as an existing mechanism to provide sustainability. Together with other local key figures selected from the direct and indirect beneficiaries, the school boards may be expected to contribute to the achievement of the project's goals and objectives.

Methodology

The success and the sustainability of adult education within the Bulgarian branch of the project *"Tolerance and Understanding of our Muslim Neighbours in Europe"* needs the development of a specific teaching **methodology** to contribute to the project's outputs and multiplier effects. The following major methods and steps may be proposed to meet educational and social needs:



Testing the Traditional Bulgarian Beer: 'Kamenitza'

- **Intercultural training methods for adult educators** in inter-religious, inter-regional and international relations. The interactive training modules should be based on the idea of creating a sense of community among the groups involved. Personal engagement will provide an opportunity to motivate participants to implement the project priorities and objectives on both the local and national levels.
- **Ethnological methods.** Approaches to the issues of intercultural communication and social and economic development should take into consideration local traditions and experience. These dimensions of the methodology will allow

the project to enhance the process of EU integration while preserving the local identity of the region and its population. The ethnological dimension of the methodology could also include case studies among the activities and publications of the project.

- Translation into Bulgarian and publication of a **scholarly book on Islamic history and culture**. This book should provide an additional mechanism to enlarge the project's multiplier effects because it can be used as a reference book by both adult educators and their students.
- **Preparation of a Handbook** to contribute to improved understanding of Islam and Christian-Muslim relations in the broad sense of the term. The Handbook should focus on the following:
 - It should be prepared in accordance with the needs of adult education in Bulgaria.
 - It should take into account the scholarly and theoretical achievements of contemporary academic specializations such as Islamic studies, sociology, ethnology and education.
 - The teaching material should be divided into major key subjects: tolerance, mutual understanding, human rights, local communities, religion, customs etc.
 - The Handbook should very carefully take into consideration the specific features of Islam as a doctrine and a social practice.

- It should also include case studies to provide examples of existing '*good practice*' in inter-religious and inter-ethnic relations in Bulgaria.
- The Handbook should aim at '*easy understanding*' for both the educators and the target groups. That is why it should rely on interactive educational methods and include typical examples of intercultural communication which can be easily remembered.
- The Handbook should take as its starting point the major positive achievements within intercultural communication in the country. It should avoid negative practices which could have a counterproductive effect on intercultural dialogue.

Conclusion

The proposed methodology is focused on communication methods aiming at improving mutual understanding within the Bulgarian community. The methods selected should be relevant to the actual social and cultural problems of Bulgaria as a country of cultural and religious diversity with specific needs, and as part of the wider process of European integration. In the course of its integration into the EU, the development of a democratic society in Bulgaria needs further enhancement of the intercultural dialogue between its mainstream society and the Muslim community. On both the local and national levels, there is still insufficient knowledge of '*good practice*' in solving the problems

of cultural diversity, and this should be made available.

The analysis of needs shows that:

- the project should focus on intercultural education rather than only on its religious aspects
- the project should try to involve both the Ministry of Education and Science and the Directorate of Religious Affairs of the Council of Ministers of Bulgaria.

Needs could be met successfully if the project is divided into three main stages:

1. Training of educators in Sofia.
2. After training, implementation and testing of the knowledge acquired in previously selected regions.
3. Final meeting of educators and evaluation of results.

References

Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations – Volume 12, Number 3, July 2001; Center for the Study of Islam and Christian Muslim Relations, University of Birmingham, Selly Oak and Center for Muslim Christian Understanding, Georgetown University, Washington, DC.

A volume devoted to the Bulgarian case, it contains a selection of articles by prominent Bulgarian scholars and researchers reflecting the history, presence and cultural features of the Muslim minorities in Bulgaria.

Relations of Compatibility and Incompatibility between Christians and Muslims in Bulgaria, Eds. Antonina Jeliaskova – BG, Jorgen Nielsen – UK and Giles Kepel – France, International Center for Minority Studies and Intercultural Relations (IMIR), Sofia, n.d. [1994].

The publication presents the results of a remarkable interdisciplinary study of the fields of compatibility and incompatibility between Christians and Muslims in Bulgaria. The study has been carried out by the use of historical, ethnological and sociological approaches and methods.

Muslim Culture in Bulgarian Lands, Eds. Rossitsa Gradeva and Svetlana Ivanova, International Center for Minority Studies and Intercultural Relations (IMIR), Sofia, 1998.

The publication reflects the findings of a program called "A study of the history and present day state of popular and high Muslim culture in Bulgarian lands". It contains various articles, depicting topics of a wide spectrum from the historically viewed spread of Islam through typology and methods of Islamisation, the Islamic religious and educational institutions in XVIIIth century, the Dervish brotherhoods in the Balkans, aspects of Sufism, specific rituals and architectural styles found in present Bulgarian territories etc. The publication is a bright mosaic of aspects of the past and present cultural developments of Islam in Bulgarian lands.

History of Muslim Culture in Bulgarian Lands, Ed. Rossitsa Gradeva, International Center for Minority Studies and Intercultural Relations (IMIR), Sofia, 2001.

The volume is a natural successor of the previous publication. It focuses the efforts of the scientists from historical, archeological, ethnological backgrounds on the history of Islamic culture. Special attention is paid to the different groups forming the Muslim community in Bulgaria.

Proceedings of the International Symposium on Islamic Civilization in the Balkans, Sofia, April 2000 – a publication in English and Bulgarian by the Research Center for Islamic History, Art and Culture, Istanbul 2002.

The symposium is the first large scale academic event organized by the Research Center for Islamic History, Art and Culture, Istanbul in collaboration with scholarly institutions in Bulgaria. It is a part of a long-term program relating to the

history of Muslim nations and Islamic civilization. The publication contains the presentations of all the participants and addresses diverse historical aspects of the specificities and dynamics of the development of Islamic civilization in the Balkans, the cultural and intellectual riches it produced, as well as sources and references needed for further studies.

I and the Other. Dimensions of Strangeness in Post Totalitarian Society, Maya Grekova, Sofia University Publishing House "Saint Kliment Ohridski", 1996

The book presents sociological reflections on the relation "I – The other" in Bulgarian reality in historical and present-day contexts. It contains a special chapter on the relations between Bulgarians and Turks during the Ottoman Empire, the "renaming process" of the Bulgarian Turks and generally the problematizing of Bulgarian – Turkish relations. An additional chapter reflects on the "otherness" between Bulgarians and Turks and other ethnic groups.

RaMO Program, Images and Meetings with Tradition, Petia Bankova, Interethnic Initiative for HR, Sofia 2000

The publication is a collection of materials for the ethnic cultures present in Bulgaria. It is a part of the "RaMO" Program for development of intercultural experience run by the "Interethnic Initiative for Human Rights" Foundation. The program has been piloted in 25 schools in 5 ethnically mixed regions in Bulgaria and aims at promoting classroom intercultural dialogue.

RaMO Program, methodological guidebook, Mariana Mincheva-Rizova, Ilian Rizov, Interethnic Initiative for HR, Sofia 2000

The methodological guidebook is a practical guide for teachers practising the RaMO Program. It has detailed information on the sources of the suggested educational material, the structure of the selected educational model, methodological approaches, techniques for classroom moderation, suggestions for adaptation to specific con-

ditions and evaluation. Additionally it has 12 developed themes/lessons for in-class use.

Islam and Culture, Ed. Galina Lozanova and Lyubomir Mikov, International Center for Minority Studies and Intercultural Relations (IMIR), Sofia 1999.

The publication is the result of a 5 year project called "Islam and traditions" (1994 – 1998). It is a collection of articles grouped in three main chapters: architecture, literature and folklore.

Intercultural Education, a guidebook edited by "Minerva" Foundation, Alexander Andonov and Plamen Makariev, Sofia, 1996.

The guidebook is one of the first publications in Bulgaria on intercultural education and represents a combination of articles with theoretical background and practical methodological lessons for intercultural learning.

Intercultural Communication and Civil Society – a collection of materials edited by Plamen Makariev, Minerva Foundation, Sofia 2000.

The result of the project "Developing the communication methods between the minority groups and the civil society in Bulgaria" subdivided into two main educational programs – for journalists involved in minority topics and for teachers working in mixed population regions, the publication presents a collection of articles of theoretical background. The structure of the publication focuses attention on three broad aspects: Philosophy of Interculturality, Intercultural Media Communication and Intercultural Education.

Intercultural Education in Bulgaria – Ideal and Reality, edited by Plamen Makariev, ACCESS Association, Sofia 1999.

The publication is the result of the work of an interdisciplinary team of researchers from history, philosophy, sociology and education in the framework of an international project "Civic Network for Cultural Pluralism and Multicultural Integration in SEE". It is a collection of articles analyzing the prospects and cases of introducing intercultural education in Bulgarian schools, the readiness of Bulgarian society to accept the "oth-

ers”, the pedagogic approaches used in interethnic education since 1989 etc.

The Philosophy of Prejudices, Reza J., Step by Step Foundation, Sofia 2000. (translated into Bulgarian)

The methodological guidebook is a detailed description of a two day training for breaking down prejudices. The book contains a detailed plan and program, and a variety of exercises and suggested techniques.

Balkan Identities, Institute for the Study of Integration, Sofia (Volume 1 – 2001, Volume 2 – 2002, Volume 3 – 2003)

A three-volume publication result of the “Balkan Identities in Bulgarian Culture from the Modern Epoch (XIX-XX centuries)” project which depicts the identity theme from various perspectives. The first volume focuses on defining the term identity and gives special attention to the XIXth century national and religious identities, the images of the two main minorities in Bulgaria – Turks and Jews – and the Bulgarian Revival period identifications. The second volume reflects on the other ethnic and religious communities in Bulgaria such as the Catholics and the gender and social identification of people in the XIXth century. Additionally it includes some analysis of the perceptions of foreigners of Bulgarians as described in the Western European literature from this period. The third volume is centered on the history of the Balkans in the period of the Ottoman rule and it presents some little-known facts which could play a major role in adjusting the historical perceptions on this time period.

The truth about the “Revival process”, Institute for the Study of Integration, Sofia, 2003

The publication is a collection of documents from the archive of the political bureau of the Central Committee of the Bulgarian Communist party. It is the first publication on this subject and plays an important role in clarifying the facts of the years 1985 – 1990.

Jews in the Bulgarian Lands – Ancestral Memory and Historical Destiny, Ed. Emmy Barouh, International Center for Minority Studies and Intercultural Relations, Sofia, 2001

The publication presents the results of a survey conducted in 1998 among the Jewish community in Bulgaria. The significant amount of information was analyzed in terms of the ethno-cultural identity of Bulgarian Jews, their social composition, the process of de-Judaization and re-Judaization, their economic activity, as well as internal stratification and attitudes to different groups.

Social Integration of Young Roma, Dialogue Development, Sofia, 2001

A sociological survey carried out in two municipalities in Bulgaria (Pazardjik and Smoljan) which focuses on the chances and levels of social integration reached through educational institutions and qualification courses.

Handbook: “Beyond Difference. Towards Tolerance and Dialogue Between Christianity and Islam in Bulgaria”

Developed in the framework of the “Tolerance and Understanding of our Muslim Neighbours in Europe” project, the handbook “Beyond Difference. Towards Tolerance and Dialogue between Christianity and Islam in Bulgaria” is the final product of the project implementation in Bulgaria.

The handbook is divided into two parts. The first presents theoretical information on the main aspects of the cultural and religious differences and ways of re-thinking those. The text is structured in three chapters: Chapter one ‘**Islam – Past and Present**’ introduces the history of Islam as a religion, its main postulates and the formation of the Muslim commu-

nities. Chapter two ‘**Cultural differences, Identity and Prejudices**’ deals with aspects of ‘difference’ and ‘otherness’, the prejudices and the stereotypes in the mutual perceptions of Muslims and non-Muslims and models of behavior and attitudes towards ‘the different’. Chapter three ‘**Tolerance and Dialogue**’ focuses on the necessity to start a gradual process of tolerance education and reflects on positive models of dialogue and interaction with “the different from us”.

Part two of the handbook presents the exercises that were used in the two training modules developed within the framework of the project – ‘Unveiling the prejudice’ and ‘Diversity Awareness’. They include various techniques for awareness-raising and re-thinking of the cultural and religious differences. Presented step by step, they include clear instructions to support any teacher/trainer in the process of creating more interactive learning environments.



Vanya Ivanova, Emilia Ilieva and Desislava Stoykova (l to r) at a Training Session

Introduction to the Training Part of the Bulgarian Handbook

“The greatest motivator to keep on learning is a colleague who comes from a seminar inspired”

The following examples give an insight into the practical implementation of the TUM Project in the Bulgarian context. The TUM Project partners had the opportunity to experience some of them at the training workshop offered in the frame of the evaluation conference in Sofia (report in Part III of this publication). To share the module with a wider audience they have been translated into English and can be downloaded from the website: www.dialogue-education.org

The two training modules *Unveiling the prejudice* and *Diversity awareness* were prepared and held as part of the TUM Project in Bulgaria.

They include diverse techniques for raising awareness and gaining knowledge about the cultural and religious differences and aim at creating an attitude of tolerance towards them. The combination of interactive methods, theoretical materials and discussions is based on Kolb's learning styles and involves experiences and reflection on the methodology and the theme on a cognitive, emotional and pragmatic level.

The exercises, based on successful European practices or created for the modules, were adapted by the trainers in line with the Bulgarian reality. Their actuality was verified during the training and enriched

with the feedback of the participants. The participants represented a colorful mixture of ethnic Bulgarians, ethnic Turks, Pomaks (Bulgarian Muslims) and Roma people coming from different parts of Bulgaria. The methods used during the events are described in the handbook *Beyond Difference*, which was published in Bulgaria as part of the TUM Project. They have been further used in other educational activities or as parts of training modules.

In this publication we enclose a detailed description of the methods, which include clear instructions to support any teacher/trainer in the process of creating more interactive learning environments. The structure of the two training modules is also given, though it should be considered that it was chosen with regard to the specific objectives, target group, environment, space, time and resources available for the implementation of the two training modules.

We truly hope this publication will support everyone who reads it in their next steps towards tolerance and understanding in Europe!

“It is not shameful not to know. It is shameful not to ask!”
Turkish proverb

Training Module I 'Unveiling the prejudice'

*Trainers: Emilia Ilieva, Vanya Ivanova,
Dessislava Stoykova*

The training brought together adult educators, NGO representatives, and institutes' education departments to participate in training dealing with the issues of prejudices, their origins and ways of overcoming the negative stereotyping.

The program was designed in a way that provided a phase of defining the notion 'prejudice' and thus setting the thematic frame of the training. Following that the phase on revealing the historical roots of the current prejudices in the Bulgarian society questioned their adequacy especially in the relation with the Turkish and Roma minorities. Afterwards through different interactive techniques the training urged participants to reflect on their personal behavioral models and aimed at raising their awareness of our personal responsibility as individuals.

Finally the training brought to the floor some issues of daily life that related to personal examples of facing prejudices and dealing with those.

The participants in the training were invited to both evaluate the training and give feedback and to make use of any of the methods that seemed appropriate to their respective fields of work.

The unofficial motto of the seminar became the Turkish proverb "It is not shameful not to know. It is shameful not to ask!"



Workshop Participants Active in the Bridge Building Game

Lessons we learnt:

- Facing 'the others' matters most in overcoming negative stereotyping towards them.
- Real life situations relate to people the easiest and promote participation of all.
- In mixed groups sensitive issues of experiencing prejudices are likely to 'pop up'. Those need enough time to be shared and reflected by the whole group. In this case flexible agendas are helpful.
- Work in small groups should be carefully prepared so that mixed participation is ensured.
- Some cultural differences are to be given special attention, e.g. wine drinking or music preferences.

Training Module II Diversity Awareness

Trainers: Emilia Ilieva, Vanya Ivanova, Dessislava Stoykova, El Batoul Zembib

The second training module adopted as a motto the quotation of Claude Levi Strauss, “*The discovery of others is the discovery of a relationship not a barrier*”. It was structured along three main pillars: the issue of identity focusing on the personal level of each participant; the issue of culture as reflecting a society more broadly and the issue of diversity as a characteristic for both a larger Europe and the world reality.

The second training was more content-oriented giving extra input and theory on the issues under question, still coupled with enough interactive techniques to be applied by the participants in their personal/professional life situations.

It provided a special section devoted to Intercultural learning where attention was accorded to giving in a concise form

some academic background to each participant.

Participants themselves were, as in the first training, mainly adult educators from diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds again from different parts of Bulgaria.

El Batoul Zembib from Odyssee, Netherlands joined the training and her contribution in providing feedback on the training structure and input in the discussions was well appreciated by all.

Lessons we learnt:

- Differences in the levels of experience and knowledge of the group requires attention to the different processes of ‘sinking’ of the information.
- Content on the issue of identity and culture was welcomed by Bulgarian adult educators (especially the translated materials from English to Bulgarian).
- Informal discussions among the participants on religion triggered unexpected learning opportunities.



Bulgarian Participants in the Training Session

“Unveiling the Prejudice”**17 – 19 October 2003, Bankja, Bulgaria**

Trainers team: Emilia Ilieva, Vanya Ivanova, Desislava Stoykova

Day 1**Opening of the seminar and introduction**

17:00 – 18:30

- ‘Messages’
- ‘Mingle’
- ‘My symbol’- ‘Getting to know each other’ exercises and ice-breakers
- ‘Interview’
- ‘The 3 I’ – Sharing expectations and fears
- Introduction to the goals of the training module and review of the programme
- Joint creation of rules/principles of the group

Film show and reflection

20:30 – 21:30

- ‘Mirror’
Introduction to the exercise
- ‘Paradise with two faces’ a movie by Vlado Trifonov. Documentary movie of relevance to the theme of the training module
- ‘Mirror’

Day 2**Topic: Prejudice – Formation I** 9:00 – 11:00

- Definition of the concept and theory: work in groups, presentations, discussion and sharing
- ‘Mirror’

Topic: Prejudice – Formation II 11:30 – 13:00

- Historical review of the reasons for the existing prejudices and stereotypes in the perceptions of Muslims and non-Muslims in Bulgaria.
- ‘Puzzle’

Lunch

13:00 – 14:30

- ‘Bread Sharing’ – Discussion in groups on the role of bread in the Balkans as a unify-

ing symbol. Collecting proverbs about bread.

Topic: Prejudice – Experience I 14:30 – 15:30

- ‘Signs’

Topic: Prejudice – Experience II 14:30 – 15:30

- ‘Step Forward’
- ‘Mirror’
Sharing about ‘Signs’ and ‘Step forward’

Sharing in small group**for the day**

17:30 – 18:00

Day 3**Topic: Prejudice – Facing I**

9:00 – 11:00

- Setting and solving cases from reality
- ‘Roundabout’

Topic: Prejudice – Facing II

11:30 – 13:00

- ‘Thoughts’
- ‘Mirror’ – Sharing for ‘Roundabout’ and ‘Thoughts’.

Lunch

13:00 – 14:30

- ‘Bread Sharing’ Discussion in groups on the role of bread in the Balkans as a unifying symbol. Collecting proverbs about bread.

Prejudice – Unveiling

14:00 – 15:30

- ‘Next steps’
- Questionnaire
- ‘The 3 I’ II – Evaluation of the training module
- Sharing in plenary – Feedback and recommendations
- ‘Tunnel of wishes’

“The discovery of others is the discovery of a relationship, not a barrier.”

Claude Levi Strauss

“Diversity Awareness”**20 – 22 February 2004, Dolna Banja, Bulgaria****Day 1****Opening of the seminar and introduction**

17:00 – 19:00

- ‘Messages’
- ‘Mingle’
- ‘My symbol’ – ‘Getting to know each other’ exercises and ice-breakers
- ‘Interview’
- ‘The 3 I’ – Sharing expectations and fears
- Introduction to the goals of the training module and review of the programme
- Joint creation of rules/principles of the group

Steps towards the otherness I

20:30 – 21:30

- ‘Mirror’ – Introduction to the exercise
- ‘Meeting point’
- ‘Mirror’

Day 2**Topic: Identity**

9:00 – 11:00

- ‘Personal choice’
- Definition of the concept and theory: work in groups, presentations, discussion and sharing

Topic: Culture

11:30 – 13:30

- ‘Onion of diversity’
- Definition of the concept and theory: work in groups, presentation, discussion and sharing

Topic: Awareness and Action

15:00 – 16:00

- ‘Orient express’

Topic: Diversity

16:30 – 18:30

- ‘60 seconds = 1 minute, or does it?’
- Definition of the concept and theory: work in groups, presentation, discussion and sharing
- ‘Images’

Sharing in small groups about the day

18:30 – 19:00

Steps towards the otherness II

‘Burning issue’ 20:30

Day 3**Topic: Intercultural learning**

9:00 – 11:00

- ‘Beyond the boundaries’
- Definition of the concept and theory: work in groups, presentation, discussion and sharing
- ‘Bridge towards the other’

Diversity Awareness

11:30 – 13:00

- ‘Next steps’
- Questionnaire
- ‘The 3 I’ II – Evaluation of the training module
- Sharing in the plenary – Feedback and recommendations
- ‘Flower’

Further Examples of Training Modules

Training Module: 'Signs'

Materials needed:

Colourful or white paper; colourful pencils/markers, scissors, tape, big sheets of paper

Group size:

10–25

Time:

60–90 minutes

Description:

1. The participants close their eyes and the trainer sticks signs* on their foreheads (so that they are not able to see their sign)

The exact instructions of the trainer are: *"Something will be put on your forehead. Information for yourself you can find from the other participants. You cannot talk during the exercise. Find the anyone similar to yourself."*

If it is necessary, the instructions can be repeated again, without additional explanations. After everyone receives his/her sign and the instructions are given, the participants can open their eyes and the exercise starts.

2. The trainer takes care that the rules are kept and watches carefully the reactions and behaviour of the participants, who can walk around to find similar anyone.

*The signs are prepared in advance. The number of the signs is equal to the number of the participants. All of them have a round shape. Some of them differ from each other in their colour. Also most of them have a second figure inside them. Some of these figures have different shapes and colours too. It is important that there are at least two signs, which are not identical with any of the rest. As well there should be at least two groups with the same signs in them (which differ in the number of the signs). It is good if there is a bigger variety. Example for twelve participants:



Questions for discussion:

Start with conversation about what has happened and after that move to what the people have learned and how we can relate it with reality.

- How did you build groups?
- Why did you stand exactly in this order/these groups?
- What instructions did you hear?

- What did you understand by the instruction 'find anyone similar'? Why?
- Does similar mean the same?
- What was your behavior during the exercise? Why?
- What happened to the ones who didn't 'belong' to the group?
- How did the people with 'identical' signs feel in the exact situation? What

about the people with 'different' signs? Why?

- Did you have a strategy? What was it? Why?
- What did you notice first – the colour or the shape? The commonality or the difference?
- Did someone try to separate the groups or to connect them with 'not-suitable'?
- What did you think?
- How did you react?
- Did you look for 'similar' people by yourself or did you wait for someone to direct you?
- Do we often follow external 'signs'?
- Do we act in a similar way in real life?

Tips for the trainers:

- During the discussion the participants are asked thoroughly and in detail about their experiences, thoughts and feelings in the game. An assistant of the trainer can write down key words and phrases on big sheets of paper or on pieces of cardboard. After this the discussion is guided to a comparison of what was said with real life and the specific topic of the training (for example Religion). The trainer can use the participants' written

words and phrases from the first part. He can take them out from the context of the game and use them in a more extensive discussion.

- The participants usually pay more attention to the brightness, the difference in the colours and details and don't notice the fact that all signs have a common shape.
- Attention should be paid both to the similarities and differences. An extreme focus just on one of them is not relevant to the meaning and the aims of the exercise and should be avoided.



The Bulgarian Training Handbook

Training Module: *'The Onion of Diversity'*¹

Resources needed:

Big free space in a room

Group size:

From 10 to 40, even number of participants required.

Time:

Up to 30 minutes

Description:

1. Participants are asked to form an inner and an outer circle (standing for the onion layers), people face each other in couples.

2. Each couple has to find (very fast) one thing (habit, aspect, background, attitude) they have in common and find one form of expression for it (you can leave the form of expression free or indicate every time a different one: *'Sing a song'*, *'make a short mime'*, *'create a poem in two lines'*, *'express it with noises'*, *'express it with a symbol'...*).

3. Once this is done, the outer onion skin moves to the right and each new couple has to find a similarity and express it. You can as well give indications for the type of similarity (favourite food, what I disliked in school, family, music, habit, attitude, political statement...), going every time a bit *'deeper'* in our onions.

4. The couples can change several times, till the circle is finished (depending on group size).

Examples of similarities:

Find common favourite book; common style of clothes you wear, favourite dance, family ritual, place for spending your holiday, favourite hero from your childhood, superstition, concept of beauty, concept of justice, common dream, etc.

Questions for discussion:

- Was it easy for you to find commonalities?
- Were there situations when it was easier for you and such when it was harder?
- Which similarities/differences amazed you? Why?
- Was there a situation when you didn't find a commonality? How do you explain this?

Tips for the facilitator:

- The exercise can be a great icebreaker, but could also be used at the end of a unit, or to work out identity elements – it all depends on the questions you put!
- Attention: can be loud and chaotic!

¹ The exercise is published in Intercultural T-Kit, Council of Europe, November 2000, author Claudia Schachinger. Adaptation for the two training modules: the trainers team

Training Module: 'Mirror'²

Resources needed:

Notebook for each participant

Time:

Any

Group size:

Can be done during one particular exercise, unit or even a whole training.

Description:

1. At the beginning of the training the idea of self-observation is introduced. Participants are invited to '*observe themselves*' during the day with great attention, their behaviour, reaction to others, body language, preferences and feelings.

2. They keep a confidential '*research diary*' and note down any kinds of observation they consider important, as well as the circumstances, the situation, people involved, probable reasons, etc.

3. Participants receive a set of main guiding questions, depending on the focus of the observations. The observation could for example be used to talk about stereotypes: How do I perceive and react to others, to which aspects, in which way?

4. They could also be about culture: What disturbs and attracts me about others? Which reactions or behaviours do I like /dislike? How do I react to things different to me? What distance do I keep?

5. The framework of the observation (beginning and end) should be very clear,



Dutch-Moroccan and Bulgarian Muslim in Dialogue

maybe with some simple rules (respecting each other, confidence of diaries). It is important that the exercise continues throughout the whole time, as well as in breaks and free time. The exercise can be facilitated very easily if after every programme point a short break invites people to note things in their diaries

6. As a last step, a sharing can be initiated between two persons or in very small groups. If the group is very open and has a confident atmosphere, participants can be invited later on to discuss informally with others where they felt certain reactions, in order to exchange their

² The exercise is published in Intercultural learning T-Kit, p. 47, Council of Europe, November 2000, author Claudia Schachinger. Adaptation for the two training modules: the trainers team



A Typical Bulgarian Dress

perceptions and develop together new strategies for dealing with them.

7. A final round in plenary can enable participants to share how they have experienced the exercise, what was interesting or difficult, etc.

Questions for discussion:

Personal:

- How was it to observe myself?
- What was difficult?
- What did I discover?
- How do I interpret it?
- Why did I react like this?
- What does this say about me?
- Where do certain things come from?

- Would I react differently if I would be more (or less) conscious about doing the exercise? Are there parallels to my daily life and encounters with other people?

For sharing:

It is important to stress that people just tell each other what they want to tell, and take the exercise as departure points for further reflections and questions to themselves.

Tips for the facilitator:

- It always depends highly on how the atmosphere in the group is, if we are willing to question our own behaviours, if a positive tension can be created. The questions have to be specifically adapted to the purpose of the exercise (the more precise questions are, the better) and the process the group has gone through so far.
- Attention: It is not always easy for everybody to 'observe myself' instead of observing others – it is important to stress that we are asking ourselves questions, rather than others. It is also not easy to remain natural in this exercise.

Conclusions by the Project Coordinator

There are many ways to reflect upon a project implementation. I choose to reflect on the TUM implementation in Bulgaria beyond the questions of were the aims met, did we reach the envisioned outputs and have we selected appropriate success indicators.

I wish to focus on the human dimension, on the learning processes of the people that were involved at the different stages of project implementation and their experiences.

I want to delve into the core of sustainability – where true success lies – and reaffirm the conviction that people need to be inspired to see a reality that can be changed through setting personal examples.

Almost two years after the start of the project we have a handbook that walks the wavy road of keeping a balance between theoretical academic knowledge and practical suggestions for training on intercultural learning. We have two training modules designed in a flexible way to be used in its tested versions or in varieties of ways depending on trainers' creativity. We have a team of authors who found ways to cooperate among themselves and a team of young trainers who took the challenge of challenging others by practising unconventional teaching methods. We have people who came along to the training despite some skepticism of the unknown and left the training inspired with new ideas to bring back to their working environments.

This is the ground on which beyond humbleness, we need to admit that all efforts are well rewarded and if the project is compared to a series of drops of rain those drops watered fields that will give crops.

If we use another metaphor, the TUM Project in Bulgaria opened a door that some people have already chosen to walk through, some are still at the doorway and others are still looking from a distance.

My sincere hope is that those who entered will have the commitment to encourage others to come in and the will to find next doors that they walk together.

Emilia Ilieva

Bénédicte du Chaffaut

The Particular Features of the French Context

Before looking in detail at some examples of dialogue activities in the Grenoble region, we should first establish the particular features of the French context. Next, we need to consider how adult education sets out to deal with quite widespread ignorance of the Muslim world. Lastly, in the final section, we shall attempt to explore some interesting examples, which take place in a very broad range of fields using methods that are sometimes unique.

A Regime of Strict Separation Between Church and State

The peculiar institutional features of the French situation are quite well known throughout European countries. These features derive from the regime of strict separation between Church and state, which is unknown in most Western countries and is accompanied by total neutrality towards religions on the part of the state and the public authorities. This French secularism is unique in Europe.

The cornerstone of this separation is the Law of 1905, which provides in Article 2 that *“the Republic shall neither recognise nor remunerate any religion”*. Over time, this strict separation has nevertheless been interpreted and applied with some flexibility, being bent on several occasions, and there have been some com-

plete exceptions, especially in Alsace-Moselle. This concerns the recognised Catholic, Protestant (Reformed and Lutheran) and Jewish religions. It does not apply to Islam.

The law means that ministers of religion receive no public payment for carrying out their duties. However, the public authorities do in fact contribute to the exercise of religion by covering the costs of maintaining buildings put up before 1905, and through tax advantages. They officially recognise the role of ministers of religion by making salaried chaplaincy facilities available in upper and lower secondary schools, hospitals, prisons and the armed forces. More generally, this separation does not prevent numerous examples of association and collaboration between religions and the public authorities in delivering public services in a wide variety of fields, from education to health.

The state also guarantees the exercise of freedom of conscience and religious freedom, and collective forms of these rights, in other words the free exercise of organized religion. Moreover, the state intervenes if religions are subjected to abuse or blasphemy, as was the case with Scorsese's film and Benetton advertising.

In order to deal with the various problems relating to organized religion, the public authorities need to be able to talk to responsible bodies that are recognised by the communities concerned. A National Muslim Council has therefore recently been set up to remedy the problem of the lack of an Islamic structure and of interlocutors. This was due to theological and doctrinal divisions, and more particularly to the diversity of national origins of believers and attempts by foreign states to establish some form of hegemony. This body will allow a number of matters to be resolved relating to mosques and places of worship, training of imams, management of halal meat distribution and the issue of Muslim chaplaincies.

The French Approach to Integration

The French approach to integration has a number of peculiarities. First among them is the identification of nationality with citizenship. The traditional republican principle of equality of rights and obligations applies to all French citizens. This French national integration is essentially political, unlike in Germany where it is primarily cultural. It centres on values born of the French Revolution, which are French values par excellence. In this country of immigration, such integration has been practised by major national institutions – schools, the armed forces, trade unions and political parties – since the early 19th century, a hundred and fifty years before other European countries. The right to nationality plays a key role since it leads to citizenship. It has

made it possible to integrate foreign populations for two centuries.

Without calling into question the tradition of integration ‘à la française’, the French political authorities consider it necessary to give Islam as a religion a place in society. Hence the National Muslim Council. They believe that it is necessary to accommodate the various sections of the Muslim population in the social, but not in the political order.

On the Muslim side, an intellectual effort is needed to rethink Islam so that its religious, moral, intellectual and cultural dimensions are compatible with French citizenship. This is today the task facing Muslim intellectuals, just as it was the task throughout the 19th century of Jewish intellectuals to rethink how to maintain Judaism while respecting French citizenship.

The populations that owe allegiance to Islam are learning to make compromises, in the positive sense of the term, and to work out their place. A sort of contract is being negotiated from day to day with all authorities and agencies and is itself the product of social existence.

The Particular Features of the Muslim World in France

In France, there are no statistics on religious allegiance. It is therefore only possible to work from approximations. That being so, it is estimated that the potential Muslim population numbers some 4 million, i.e. 7% of the population, of which half are of French nationality. Most are migrants from North Africa (the

Maghreb), are Sunni, observe Malekite rites, and are of Arabic culture and language. This distinguishes the Muslim world in France markedly from that in other European countries. The SRI report: "*Islam in Europe*" gives the following approximations

- Muslims of North African (Maghreb) origin 2 900 000
- Muslims of Turkish origin 350 000
- Muslims of African origin 250 000

It is far from easy to give exact numbers for French Muslims. Three groups can be distinguished:

- Harkis and their descendants: between 450 000 and 700 000
- Those who have '*become French*': 100 000 applications per year
- Those who have '*become Muslim*': between 10 000 and 100 000

It is very difficult to distinguish between those who have become Muslim by conviction and those who have done so through marriage.

This Muslim population is made up of different generations:

- the first-comers, single men, known as the generation of invisible Islam
- the generations of family reunion, among whom Islam remained a private concern
- the generation of young '*beurs*' in the 1980s who began to play a part in society, demanding social dignity and recognition of their separate ethnic identity

- the generation of young Muslims in the 1990s who claimed both French citizenship and their religious identity

At all events, Islam is unquestionably a religion of French people. This is of immediate concern to politicians and, more generally, to the whole of public opinion. Muslims are French citizens. They enjoy the rights of citizens. The rights of citizens who are Muslims therefore need to be acknowledged. Hence, the presence of this religion has also to be recognised, specifically through a body representing it but also more generally in all the ways in which it affects society. It must also be realised that 80% of French people of North African origin are not '*religious*', and this secular Islam must also be borne in mind.

Muslim identity in France is currently undergoing genuine changes:

- A burgeoning of the voluntary sector that is unique in Europe and is bringing experience of freedom, responsibility, representation and delegation. Voluntary associations are creating a half-way house between the completely Muslim and the completely secular. It is above all young Muslims who are becoming involved in them.
- A Muslim intellectual life is beginning to develop: personalities are starting to emerge, and discussion is growing.
- Experience is spreading of new inter-religious pluralism: Muslims are discovering the presence alongside them of Christians, Jews, atheists and Buddhists.

Adult Education to Counter Mistrust and Ignorance of the Muslim World

Islam Still Has a Negative Image in France

Surveys have shown repeatedly that although Muslims are apparently becoming quietly integrated into French society, Islam retains a negative image in public opinion. There is a considerable gap between the way that Muslims want to live and the images of Islam that are circulating in French society.

Three successive surveys by IFOP, carried out in 1989, 1994 and 2001, have measured changes in opinion in two sample populations: one being 535 Muslims, and the other 1000 people representing the whole French population.

Muslims in France speak of Islam as quiet and of peacefully practising their religion. The majority of Muslims, more or less, think for example that it is possible to be integrated into French society and to practise the Muslim religion in private. They also think that the law should be the same for all. These figures suggest a sort of acclimatisation of the Muslim community to the French host country.

However, the second religion in France is still perceived negatively by the French, who identify Islam with words such as '*fanaticism*', '*submission*', and '*rejection of Western values*', while Muslims credit their religion with values such as '*tolerance*', '*justice*' and '*freedom*'. There is therefore a two-way ignorance which

continues to keep the two sides far apart. And as a result, Muslims are pushed to see themselves negatively in the mirror of French society.

In terms of image, Muslims in France may be the victims of the image that their co-religionists give to their religion in certain countries such as Saudi Arabia, and of fears of terrorism following September 11. Islam and Islamism are two related words that are used to describe a religion and its most worrying deviant form, and they are easily confused. Little is known about this religion, and it often comes to prominence today through its extreme forms, which only reinforces the negative image that goes back to the Crusades and has nourished all kinds of conflict over the centuries.

One fear has displaced another. In the register of collective fears, Islamism has taken the place of communism. This shift has been gradual, with a crucial turning point in 1989 with the fall of the Berlin Wall, the rise of the FIS in Algeria, the fatwah against Salman Rushdie and the Islamic headscarf affair in Creil.

To some extent this question of the headscarf is the ultimate sign of this malaise, as is evident in the recent passing of a law in France prohibiting the wearing of conspicuous religious symbols in schools.

The Law on the Wearing of Religious Symbols in Schools

This law, which is the outcome of the Stasi Commission, has just been passed and will come into force in September 2004. Article 1 provides as follows: *"In public primary, lower secondary and upper secondary schools, the wearing of symbols or dress by means of which pupils conspicuously display religious allegiance shall be prohibited."*

The statement of reasons for the law states that the word *"conspicuous"* means *"symbols and dress the wearing of which leads to immediate recognition of religious allegiance."* And it cites examples: *"the Islamic veil by whatever name it is known, the yarmulka and crosses of manifestly excessive size"*. This law was adopted by parliament on 10 February, by a crushing majority of 494 votes to 36.

The passing of this law may be said clearly to reflect the fears of French society: fear of immigration, fear of the vitality of Islam, fear of community instability, and fear of otherness. It also reveals the difficulty of facing up to the real problems of the social and occupational integration of young people from different backgrounds. René Rémond, a member of the Stasi Commission, said it plainly: *"We are getting worked up about an ultra-minority problem while the real challenge is social and occupational integration."*

This law reveals a twofold crisis, that of the French model of integration and that of the boundaries between secularism and religious expression. Many parliamentarians cling to the very Jacobin traditional vision

of a Republic that promises emancipation from particular religious and cultural ties. But this model of integration by assimilation is outdated. Individuals now lead independent lives and decide freely for themselves, and schools, within which the right to freedom of expression by pupils has been recognised, are no longer a sanctuary cut off from civil society.

In any case, there is no getting away from the suspicion that this law stigmatises the Muslim religion. The widespread reactions, both in France and internationally, suggest that this is the case. In the long term this threatens to reinforce the ghetto effect and to provide justification for attitudes of confrontation and exclusion on both sides. It is very disturbing to see that such attitudes are beginning to spread, including among some non-believers who have not waited for the law before applying it.

As well as the interpretation of a religious precept, the veil raises a broader anthropological issue emblematic of the relationship between men and women, which is felt far outside the walls of the classroom, in the whole of society, and not only in the private sphere. But is this relationship between men and women a matter for secularism? If the answer is yes, then the Republic carries within itself a model defining human relations with which citizens must comply. But if so, where does it come from? Who prescribes it? Who enforces it? And how does it stand in relation to individual freedom?

It will be obvious that there is an increasingly urgent need to help, through discussion and education, to create greater knowledge and tolerance of our

'*Muslim neighbours*'. This means integrating young people from immigrant backgrounds, understanding an Islam which is seeking its place in the French context, and grasping how people can live together while respecting cultural and religious diversity, with a sensible interpretation of secularism.

This task is being addressed by a range of agencies, both civil and religious, and by mixed partnerships of civil and religious bodies. This diversity would seem to be of appreciable advantage.

Mobilizing towards Greater Tolerance and Understanding

In France, the principal type of education or training is associated with policy on social action, and much of it is funded by the Social Action Fund. These courses are designed for social, cultural and health services and are aimed at professionals working on the ground, or more directly at the populations concerned. Their purpose is generally to raise levels of social, cultural and intercultural understanding of populations of North African immigrant background. With exceptions, they do not always comfortably accommodate the religious or inter-religious dimension. The experience of working with a group of foreign women to which I shall return at the end of this report, is of this kind. It was conducted under the auspices of the Dauphiné Office for Immigrant Workers and was funded by the Social Action Fund.

The second type of activity is of a more cultural nature, aiming rather at provid-

ing cultural information and knowledge about Muslim populations and Islam. It may take the form of courses on civilisation or religious study given by universities and cultural associations. The target audience is therefore the general public, as in the case of the '*Millennia of God*' designed by the Musée Dauphinois, on the occasion of the new millennium. This aimed at presenting the three main monotheistic traditions, including Islam, from a secular perspective.

The last type of activity is more specifically religious. These projects look more specifically at Islamic tradition and Muslim communities today. They are given by universities or Theological Centres in the traditional form of courses or working groups. They are aimed at the general public, who attend either out of personal interest or as part of a certificated course (a Bachelor's or Master's degree in theology).

Within the same institutions there may also be vocational training, for example for teachers or heads of private Catholic schools. In this case, a more secular stance is required. The aim is then to improve understanding of religious concerns in school curricula and to achieve better management of multicultural and multi-religious educational communities in private schools operating under state contracts, and in public schools.

The experiences which will be examined in the remainder of this report relate to these three types of activity.

Bénédicte du Chaffaut

Intercultural Dialogue Activities

Four Examples of Good Practice

The experiences examined here were all carried out in Grenoble, in the Département of Isère. They differ in their target audience and the educational methods used. Details will be given of four:

1. The first is an **exhibition for the general public entitled 'The Millennia of God'**, shown at the Musée Dauphinois in Grenoble, in 2000/2001.
2. The second is a **course on 'religious culture'** for teachers and heads of private Catholic schools.
3. The third is a traditional **adult education course for the general public on Islamic culture and religion**.
4. The last is a **social and cultural project working with foreign women**, the majority of them of North African origin, in a so-called '*sensitive*' area of Grenoble.

The first three were carried out through partnerships and courses provided by the Theological Centre of Meylan-Grenoble, and the last by a voluntary association working to integrate people of foreign origin, the Dauphiné Office for Immigrant Workers (*Office Dauphinois des Travailleurs Immigrés, ODTI*).

The status of the Theological Centre of Meylan-Grenoble (CTM) should be explained at the outset. It was founded in

the 17th century as a large interdiocesan Catholic seminary, and it became a continuing education centre in 1970. It is supported financially by the diocese of Grenoble, which provides some of its resources, but it is 85% self-financing from course fees and the student hostel which it operates.

CTM, as a theological training centre, is currently composed of an interdisciplinary team of theologians, most of them lay. In the traditional training sector it offers courses and working groups on the Bible, theology, Church history, philosophy, ethics and spirituality. These courses range from university to beginner's level. CTM also organizes a wide variety of inter-religious activities. This sector provides an insight into the three main monotheistic traditions, Hinduism and Buddhism, and religious study more generally. It is addressed to adults of all ages who wish to study intercultural and inter-religious questions.

One of the branches of another sector, '*vocational training*', focuses on training for teachers and school heads in an area called '*religious culture*', or more specifically the religious aspect of culture. It addresses both the question of educational communities with intercultural and inter-religious dimensions, and that of teach-

ing curricula containing the same dimensions.

The last sector is that of partnerships with cultural and university institutions in the city of Grenoble which seek the expertise of CTM in the intercultural and inter-religious field. Projects have been run with many institutions: the education department, public libraries, the Musée Dauphinois, the Museum of the Resistance, the Human Rights Centre, and the Grenoble Institute of Political Science. The *'Millennia of God'* exhibition falls within this sector.

An Exhibition for the General Public: *'The Millennia of God'*

The Musée Dauphinois sets out to be more than a museum of art and popular traditions and aims to be a *'museum of society'*, based on heritage but looking at its social roots. It is funded by the Département and occupies the site of one of the first convents of the Order of the Visitation, founded by Jeanne de Chantal at the instigation of François de Sales. From its position on the slopes of the Bastille, it dominates old Grenoble and is separated from it by the river Isère.

For years, the Musée Dauphinois has worked on a variety of topics: populations of immigrants to Grenoble, whether the Italians, the Armenians, the North Africans or the *'pieds noirs'* (French settlers returning from Algeria); Dauphiné culture in its traditional setting, with its life styles, occupations and traditions; or more recently industrial activities, main sectors of employment and working class culture.

The theme of the *'Millennia of God'*, chosen to mark the turn of the millennium, fits into this audacious sequence of changes of emphasis in museum content. The choice of this exhibition reflects consideration of the meaning of heritage today.

One unexpected issue arose out of this topic, namely that the religious heritage is, for most of our contemporaries, becoming merely an exotic curiosity. Museums are today repositories of objects of which the meaning and function have given way to purely artistic interpretation, although museums could become places



Information Folder for the Exhibition



Bénédicte du Chaffaut 'on Show' in Bulgaria

of knowledge and reflection about the relation between humanity and God.

Recognising that museums could take on the role of acknowledging the diversity of cultures, and particularly religious diversity, means showing how museums are well placed to play a part in the debate about the question of God today, in a society impregnated with almost 4000 years of Judaeo-Christian culture. This was the challenge taken up by the Musée Dauphinois at the turn of the millennium.

The team of conservators set out to adopt a secular approach, dealing with *'the notion of God'* from a secular standpoint in order to demonstrate its impact on history. Using a stock of sacred objects which had to be given meaning through appropriate settings, the aim was to enhance understanding of how belief in a single God had shaped our society, and how that belief had, through its social expression of religious concepts, modelled

our cultures and determined our past and present behaviour in a certain way.

A *'scientific committee'* was set up, comprising researchers in the humanities and leaders of religious communities, to discuss as an interdisciplinary group how best to carry forward the exhibition project, incorporating religious objects and references. CTM was involved from the start of the work. It played an integral part in the whole undertaking, providing advice, amending the draft texts and checking overall coherence.

The exhibition was built around three main ideas. The first part looked at the gradual emergence of the feeling of God. It led on to a description of the revelation of God made to Moses in Sinai as a common origin of the three revealed religions, and the specific messages of Judaism, Christianity and Islam were presented. The second part, *"God face to face with human beings and human beings face to face with God"*, showed the uniqueness of the monotheist message, established in the reciprocity of commitments between God and human beings. The third part examined the new lives of God, looking at the different forms of spirituality developing at the dawn of the third millennium.

The settings devised for the exhibition were original. It opened with a circle of large silhouettes of *'people praying'*, it then invited visitors to play with little wooden windows that opened to show the original religious meanings of secular festivals, next it showed religious objects used in everyday life or worship in living contexts, and it ended with videos of services from each tradition (Jewish,

Muslim, Catholic and Protestant). In the case of the Muslim tradition, everyday objects used during Ramadan were displayed, including dates, milk and cakes eaten to break the fast, and Zem-Zem water for the pilgrimage to Mecca.

A booklet was prepared by the Education Service of the museum for teachers to give to all pupils visiting the exhibition. This took the form of four main dossiers containing sample questionnaires. For certain themes, different versions of the sheets were prepared for varying levels of age and ability. They provided topics for discussion which each teacher could adapt for their own class.

Extracts from this booklet are given in an annex to this report (around a third of the total). These are particularly concerned with the two main parts of the exhibition, and more particularly with Islam:

- *“In the beginning, the birth of God”*, allowing pupils to appreciate more clearly the development of the notion of the divine and its fluctuation between monotheism and polytheism, and to grasp the main features of the three historic monotheisms by entering the ‘houses’ of God. By mixing texts, objects and reproductions, this part taught pupils to recognise the objects that are most sacred in the eyes of those practising these three religions, in particular the Koran and the prayer mat in the case of Islam, and provided information about the history of the communities.
- *“God face to face with human beings and human beings face to face with God”* looked at the issue of creation,

salvation and morality, and explored the religious rites and practices of believers.

The booklet required pupils to become involved in the exhibition and to study the works displayed, such as a painting by Lucas Cranach inspired by the text of the Ten Commandments, or the ritual objects used in ceremonies and festivals. It also assumed prior vocabulary work by teachers to acquaint pupils with difficult words such as atheism, anthropomorphism, Genesis, monotheism, polytheism, prophet, proselytism, sacrament, secularism, sura and theology.

Subsequent evaluation of visits by schools and the use made of the booklet confirmed its relevance, since it invited pupils, through their teachers, to involve themselves in the exhibition, and to try to explore it in greater depth through the works and games on offer. One hundred and fifty booklets were distributed to teachers, and four training visits were arranged to give 54 of them an introduction to the exhibition booklet.



Evaluating One of the Bulgarian Training Exercises

Eighty-two classes visited the exhibition, or 1150 pupils, 43 of these being independent visits and 39 guided visits. Many lower and upper secondary schools in the Grenoble conurbation and the Département of Isère were involved, and more generally the whole educational region extending from Drôme to Haute Savoie. The Educational Inspectorate also came to gauge the relevance and originality of the scheme.

The relevance of the booklet was obvious. It supported visits by making the investigation fun. Each teacher photocopied the section of the teaching materials of relevance to his or her pupils, according to the level of the class. Some classes with large numbers of North Africans were reminded of their own culture and religious tradition, identified closely with the exhibition and much appreciated it.

More generally, everyone realised how little they knew about the three traditions, especially the one to which they supposedly belonged, as well as the other traditions. Visitors were also surprised at the points of convergence between the traditions and the ground that these provided for dialogue. Girls seem to have been more receptive to these ideas than boys.

Overall, this unique experimental exhibition led to improved understanding between people as a result of finding out about religious traditions. It would therefore seem to be a priority to work with schoolchildren, through their teachers. In France today, this may help to improve awareness of the true nature of the Islamic faith and of its real practices, and can do

much to counter the very unfavourable image which attaches to it.

A Course in 'Religious Culture' for Teachers and School Heads

Meylan Theological Centre also makes provision in the area of '*vocational training*', and at one of its branches offers courses for teachers and school heads in so-called '*religious culture*', or more specifically the '*religious*' dimension of culture. At the same time it addresses both the question of educational communities with intercultural and inter-religious dimensions, and that of teaching curricula containing the same dimensions.

Discovering the three monotheisms

This course concerned the relatively little-known area of the three main monotheistic traditions, building to some extent on the approach previously adopted in the '*Millennia of God*' exhibition. The aim was to increase understanding of the three great traditions and the cultures to which they had given rise, and to look at the exact ways in which they influenced young people's culture and school life. A full day was devoted to each of the traditions. Thirty teachers and school heads took the course, the final evaluation of which was very positive.

Using the Internet to Learn about Islam

A general overview of Islam was provided at the start of the day with the aim of demonstrating the economic, social,

cultural, linguistic, historical and theological diversity of Islam and of overcoming prejudice and confusion. An interactive workshop was then arranged to explore methods of teaching that offered younger pupils lively ways of learning about Islam.

Using Internet research, teachers might ask pupils to find the total number of Muslims in the world, the eight states in the world with the largest Muslim populations, the countries in Europe with more than a million, the role of Muslim countries which do not share Arabic language and culture, and the countries where polygamy is either permitted or forbidden.

Young Muslims Between Tradition and Citizenship

Next, it was suggested that teachers should look at the way in which young Muslims were creating their own identity today in France by combining their citizenship with their Muslim faith, and re-interpreting the texts on which this was based. A meeting with the head of a school with a high percentage of young people of North African origin gave an insight into the twin current trends of disaffection among many young people towards the Muslim faith, matched by a return to the faith by some. Although the latter trend only concerns a minority, it is noticeable, reflecting a real desire to recover cultural and religious roots through identity and community, and to find meaning and an ethical basis to life; it is reflected in changes in how pupils speak and behave.

The evaluation of this course for teachers and school heads proved positive:

- first because it enabled the teachers to gain a clearer idea of the historical, religious and cultural foundations of Islam, of which many of them were not aware. Religious culture is seldom discussed in France, in schools or elsewhere, which makes it difficult to handle the phenomenon of religion in school curricula or to deal with the religious aspect of cultural phenomena
- secondly because it enabled them to understand their pupils better, especially those of North African origin: both the difficulty of passing on religion in immigrant families and the conscious or unconscious desire to take on the values of the host country, and the recovery of identity through re-appropriation of cultural and religious roots
- and thirdly, because it allowed them to manage their own multicultural and multireligious school communities better in educational terms by giving them the background with which to understand requests associated with religious festivals, for example. Mention might be made of the period of Ramadan, the rules of which are being followed by increasing numbers of young people in France and need to be accommodated sensibly in shared timetables.

Another course given by Meylan Theological Centre is aimed at improving knowledge of the Muslim world in France. This a course about Islamic culture and religion in France for the general public.

A Major Public Course Providing Information About Islamic Culture and Religion in France

CTM is a theological training centre which provides activities in the traditional training sector through courses and study groups on the Bible, theology, Church history, philosophy, ethics and spirituality. This provision ranges from university to beginner's level. CTM also organizes a wide variety of inter-religious activities. This sector provides an insight into the three main monotheistic traditions, Hinduism and Buddhism, and religious study more generally. It is addressed to adults of all ages who wish to study intercultural and inter-religious questions.

The provision includes a four-year course exploring Islam in greater depth: a general introduction to Islam, followed by the Koran in the second year. In the third year, students look at Islam in France. The fourth and final year examines the history and achievements of the dialogue between Islam and Christianity.

These courses are aimed at a very wide audience, leaders of voluntary bodies and movements, social workers, community workers, local government staff, local politicians, journalists and, more generally, anyone interested in these issues. The courses are held in everyday places such as public halls or social centres in order to reach out widely to all those with a religious or merely a cultural interest in these questions.

The course described here takes a twofold approach to learning about Islam in

France: the sociological and the religious. The syllabus is contained in Annexe 3 to the report. It begins by contrasting the reality of Islam in France with the burden of misconception and prejudice to which it is subjected. Using surveys by the major French public opinion agencies, which are mentioned in the first part of the report, the gap is measured between Muslims' perception of themselves and the ideas shaping the attitude of the general public. This gap leads on to observation of what is actually happening on the ground. And the next section of the course looks at four main aspects: changes in ritual practices in the French context, especially Ramadan, changes in the status and behaviour of women, the phenomenon of a return to the faith by a number of young people, and the institutionalization of Islam in France in the context of French secularism. The course pays considerable attention to discussion, which takes up a large part of the time, using the experience and questions of people who often have genuine first-hand experience but lack adequate knowledge of Islam. This ignorance of Islam is compounded by difficulties in appreciating the religious dimension of the search for identity among those who no longer always turn their backs on modernity and citizenship. Social workers are a case in point, frequently being trained in relative ignorance of cultural and religious particularities, the expression of which they may assume to indicate rejection of the values of the Republic and a retreat into the values of the particular community.

What is unusual about this course is that it is also open to people of Muslim culture and/or religion. For them, the course offers a way of finding out about their own tradition, with which they are often very unfamiliar. Their presence gives non-Muslims a real element of first-hand experience and testimony, which helps greatly by showing how Muslims really live in France.

Growing numbers of mixed Islamic-Christian couples are also following the course in an attempt to find their place in society, with their own requirements, particularly in relation to the education of their children. They symbolize better than anyone else the multicultural and multi-religious dimension of French society and the desire for mutual understanding.

The course has been given a very positive welcome. This is evident from what is said at the final evaluation: greater knowledge of Islam of course, but above all in-depth examination of the misconceptions and prejudices that influence people's view of Islam and Muslims, and ultimately a better realization of what needs to be done to re-interpret Islam when it operates in the French secular context. A significant core of people do in fact follow the whole course over four years, thereby obtaining a genuinely more mature view and perception of the Muslim world around them. In the current hardening of attitudes towards Islam, associated particularly with the international situation, there is sometimes a feeling that courses such as this are merely drops in an ocean of intolerance.

Let us now turn to a final example of adult education in Grenoble, an experiment in social and intercultural work with foreign women using culinary traditions, in association with the Dauphiné Office for Immigrant Workers.

Social and Cultural Work with Foreign Women Using Cookery: the Booklet '*Traditions, Festivals and Recipes*'

This experiment with a group of women, both French and foreign in origin, most of them from North Africa, ran for six years between 1992 and 1998 in the Teisseire district of Grenoble. It was sponsored by a steering committee representing various community agencies and the Dauphiné Office for Immigrant Workers.

Appreciating Traditional Maghreb Cooking by Exploring Other Culinary Traditions

The aims underlying this experiment were as follows: to appreciate the value of the North African (Maghreb) cultural heritage by working on culinary traditions and exploring other traditions of cooking found in the local community and encouraging the exchange of skills as a reciprocal discovery of cultural and religious traditions. This was the starting point for preparing a simple booklet recording the practical work and giving the women the opportunity to work on a computer. And lastly, the booklet was sold at cultural events, making the outcome

available to the local community itself and beyond.

A Way of Encouraging Awareness of Identity in the Women's Group

The weekly meetings were held in a private flat belonging to the Teisseire Social Centre. The women saw this location as a sort of intermediate space, an extension of the private sphere of the home, and easier to identify with for women who were isolated and seldom went out. It allowed the group to form a strong sense of identity.

In the course of time, adolescents joined the women's group during breaks in their school timetables or their working hours, lending it an intergenerational flavour. The flat was a place where they could identify with and take on their own culture, as well as a place for listening and talking to women from a variety of cultural backgrounds. Young mothers were enabled to attend with their children by the presence of a community library worker who brought books for children while the mothers took part in the culinary activities. A traditional family environment was thus recreated and played its role as a cultural envelope.

Handing on Skills in Learning Situations

The group of women saw cooking right from the start as a social activity and an outlet for discussion. Exchanging recipes was a very suitable medium because it acknowledged skills and manual dexterity. It was clearly rooted in simple everyday life

and called for acquired abilities. These were acknowledged by being transferred to other recipes, and each woman became learner and teacher by turns.

Some women who had serious reservations about the activity to begin with, either because they doubted their ability or because they did not want to go back to their culture of origin, eventually joined in and put hand to mixing bowl. They became reconciled to themselves through the activity of cooking.

Exploring a Variety of Culinary Traditions and Ritual Celebrations

Exploring a variety of culinary traditions was seen by the group as enriching everyday life and making it more exciting. The work done in the final year of existence of the women's group gave rise to a booklet entitled *Traditions, festivals and recipes*. At the front of the booklet, a text by the 6th century Arab poet Ibn Al-Ward summed up the project in its own way: *"I am a man who offers food to others from a common jug, while you put your dishes aside in a beautiful receptacle so that you may eat alone."*

The booklet covered the major traditional celebrations that accompany every cultural and religious tradition: in the case of Islam, these were circumcision, Ramadan, Eid-el-Seghir, Eid-el-kebir, and the Muslim celebration of marriage. For the Christian tradition, both secular and religious, they were Christmas, Epiphany, Candlemas, Shrove Tuesday, Easter, 1st May, marriage, birth and baptism.

The festivals were thus arranged in chronological order, with a short text explaining the meaning of the festival and the rites that went with it, and giving the traditional recipes associated with it.

The Example of Birth, Baptism and Circumcision

In order to explain the background to what happens when a baby is born, the text in the booklet explained that children generally used to be baptised very early in France but that children could now choose to be baptised. It also explained that people are automatically born Muslim in the Arab countries and that friends and family gather for a large celebration, with culinary dishes appropriate to the occasion. It was pointed out that rituals differ from one country to another. In Morocco, for instance, a cock has its throat cut if a girl is born, and a hen if it is a boy. The undoubted hygienic importance of circumcision was then discussed, as well as the religious significance of a clear sign of allegiance to the Muslim faith. Details were then given of the way in which the rite is practised in the Comoro Islands, with the herbal bath that precedes circumcision symbolising good luck. A small parallel text recounted the tradition of sugared almonds in France, blue for a boy and pink for a girl. The recipe accompanying this account was for Comoran pastries, the '*samosas*' which traditionally accompany the celebration of circumcision.

An extract from the booklet entitled *Traditions, festivals and recipes* about birth, baptism and circumcision is contained in Annexe 4 to the document.

The Production of the Booklet

This was not the most straightforward undertaking. Starting to write was quite an adventure for those who were able to do so, but the emotional support within the group was a key factor in the attempt. Those who did not join in the adventure of writing played their part by producing the drawings illustrating the booklet.

Next, the group had to face up to the more technical realm of word processing. Three sessions were arranged on a Macintosh, allowing a few of the women to acquire an introduction to this technique. The women gained in self-confidence while producing the written text, particularly through the opportunity to correct mistakes immediately, which mitigated their feeling that their French was poor, through appreciation of the strictness and



Project Partners in the Market Halls in Sofia

elegance of good page layout, and through the sociability of the activity.

Launching the Booklet in the Community

This was another important original aim of the project. The booklet was launched during a Maghreb Cultural Fortnight, so that the women were able to show themselves to be players in the community and to give an impetus to networking. This helped to raise the profile of the local area as such and of the intercultural ex-

changes taking place in it. The booklet also reached other districts through exchanges with other women's groups.

An Original Teaching Method Aimed at Creating Intercultural Dynamism

This was the main aim of this activity, the success of which was associated with a number of factors:

- the use of a deliberately participatory approach
- the attention given to the 'time' factor, the first thought in these face-to-face

Conclusions by the Project Coordinator

The benefits of France becoming a partner in the European Grundtvig Programme were very quickly confirmed. The issue of better understanding between the Muslim and non-Muslim population is of key importance in French society at the present time. This is the main conclusion to be drawn. And as this report demonstrates, the teaching methods used to achieve this objective call for creativity in quite a broad range of fields.

The fact that the Meylan Theological Centre in Grenoble has been able to offer courses for adults in the intercultural and inter-religious fields through its vocational training and cultural work sectors has proved extremely useful. The second conclusion to be drawn is namely the close relationship between questions in these two fields, and the consequent need for both to be taken into account when dealing with a given issue.

Lastly, aspects of the analysis relating to the peculiarities of the French context and the specific features of the approach used should be highlighted. These specific features raise issues for other European approaches, just as these raise issues for our approach.

The French institutional system, the particular nature of which was commented on in the first part of the report, gives France a unique secular context. The extent to which the expression of cultural and religious diversity is acknowledged and perceived as legitimate depends on whether this is interpreted narrowly or more generously. It is essential that secularism be seen as open by the Muslim

activities not being efficiency or the mere acquisition of skills

- the importance of a neutral location where exchanges of experience could take place
- the multiplier effect of the various activities in the local community, strengthening the impact of networking: a community library, an adventure playground and organized activities in the waiting room at the mother and baby unit
- the presence of mediators helping people to move from one place to another; this was made easier because the mediators were themselves networking with other professionals in the district
- the production and wide dissemination of a material outcome: the recipe book was physical evidence of the work done with the women's group and provided information to the outside world; it was a recognition of the work done and of the achievements of the group itself
- the creation of a dynamic of intercultural exchange within the women's group, going beyond networking in the community

populations living in France if they are to understand it, and the key to appreciating the French Muslim world is respect for its particular cultural and religious roots.

What is at stake is integration of young people from immigrant backgrounds, understanding of an Islam that is looking to find itself in the French context, and appreciation of a way of living together which respects cultural and religious diversity. Islam in France has its own particular history associated with recent post-war immigration. And immigration is a tale of accepting exile to varying degrees, deciding to '*put down roots*', finding a new identity in the host country and building a new citizenship. This French face of Islam, which is predominantly North African, also has to come to terms with its memories of colonization. This means creating and reshaping an identity which is understood and accepted by the host country.

For those who act as hosts, whether teachers, social workers, voluntary workers or all and sundry, a better understanding of this French Muslim world also means combating misconceptions and prejudices, and adult courses are excellent ways of setting about this task. They can also provide an insight into the cultural and religious dimension of the creation of identity. Trying to understand this task of reshaping identity means taking seriously the issue of living side by side in today's society. Working towards this even at the European level might be one way of ensuring peace in the future.

Bénédicte du Chaffaut

Annexes

Content

Annexe 1 – An extract from the teachers' guide to the exhibition: *Millenaires de Dieu*

Annexe 2 – Study course on the three monotheisms for teachers and heads of private Catholic teaching institutions, produced by the Theological Centre of Meylan-Grenoble (CTM)

Annexe 3 – Contents of a traditional course on French Islam, taught by CTM

Annexe 4 – Extracts from the booklet *Traditions, festivals and recipes* produced by migrant women living in the Teisseire district, Grenoble

Annexe 1 – An Extract from the Teachers' Guide to the Exhibition: '*Millenaires de Dieu*'

The Millenia of God

Foreword to Dossiers 1–4

This collection was designed and produced by the Education Service of the Musée Dauphinois for all pupils visiting the exhibition "*The Millennia of God – An old story with a long future*". It is presented in the form of four main dossiers of sample questionnaires. For certain themes, different versions of the questionnaires have been prepared for varying age groups and levels of ability. They offer personalised suggestions for discussion which teachers can adapt to suit their class and the content of their teaching.

Dossier 1

An Old Story with a Long Future

Teachers are offered three workshops to complement the first part of the exhibition:

1. The state of religions in the world at the end of the 20th century – As soon as young visitors enter the exhibition, this introduction provides them with a world map that can be used to differentiate between the different families of religions in the world and to describe their main figures and features. It can be used to date and measure developments in these religious trends over time. Such an exercise should be graded as appropriate to suit primary, lower secondary and upper secondary pupils, accompanied on each occasion by broader questions.

2. A world full of religious references – These carefully chosen pages of a half-

secular, half-religious calendar demonstrate the tensions between two tendencies in a world governed for a long time by religion which has over time chosen, as perceptions have changed, to distance itself from the world of the spirit. Two versions are offered to young visitors, listing the main religious festivals in the ancient Christian West and providing explanations. Another version is addressed more particularly to hostile pupils. It draws ideas together, encouraging discussion of the secularisation of behaviour.

3. The good and evil uses made of God – A catalogue of engravings and photographs commemorates the history and politics of religion through the ages. Each event is identified, dated (primary level) related to a key figure and set in a chronological context (lower secondary) with the aim of demonstrating the links uniting religious orders and politics, clergy and rulers.

Dossier 2

In the Beginning, the Birth of God

Three workshops guide pupils through this second part: they bring out more clearly the notion of the divine and its fluctuation between polytheism and monotheism, and end by introducing the three historic monotheisms.

1. In the beginning the texts displayed throughout the exhibition are the subject of a questionnaire. This section looks at the latest archaeological excavations and, with the help of maps, attempts to show the geographical origins of monotheism. Priceless archeological finds

then expand on this initial overview: the reconstruction of the Quafzeh tomb in Israel, and clay models, carvings and sculptures of mother goddesses from Cyprus, Malta and Lebanon. These lead on to the following, complementary sections:

2. Death and the afterlife

3. Gods in human shape: this archaeological section is based on a display case showing statuettes and ways of representing divinities.

4. Akhnaten, Abraham and Moses: this section tells pupils about great symbolic figures, the pharaoh Amenophis IV, Abraham and Moses. Having read about their lives, they will be able to name the religions revealed in writing: Judaism, Christianity and Islam.

5. Three revealed religions, three books: the three sacred books, the Torah, the Bible and the Koran, are presented in a case. The investigation continues with readings from them and identification exercises.

6. Judaism, Christianity and Islam: a deeper insight into the three monotheisms is gained from the use of three '*houses of God*':

- Judaism, the Alliance
- Islam, '*submission*' to God
- Christianity, the encounter with the Other

These three sections are crucial, mixing texts, objects and pictures. They enable pupils to name the objects that those practising the three religions regard as

most sacred, and they provide information about the history of the communities.

Dossier 3

God Face to Face with Human Beings and Human Beings Face to Face with God

The third part of the exhibition is split in two: *“God face to face with human beings”*, which raises the issue of creation, salvation and morality, and *“human beings face to face with God”*, which examines the religious rites and practices of believers.

God face to face with human beings

1. The Creation: the use of extracts from the sacred texts, the Torah, the Bible and the Koran, seeks to bring out the shared origins of the three religions. The illuminations in the Sauvigny Bible, produced in the late 12th century, show the stages of the Creation.

2. Salvation: a death mask from the second half of the 19th century and a funerary urn from the 21st century are juxtaposed to demonstrate changes in ritual and feelings associated with death. Pupils read and work on extracts from the Bible and the Koran, which provide guidance for thinking about heaven and hell.

3. Morality: starting from the reproduction of a painting by Lucas Cranach inspired by the words of the Decalogue, pupils identify the Ten Commandments and supernatural symbols and figures, before picking out the commandments that are common to the Bible and the Koran.

Human beings face to face with God

1. Rites and practices: this module displays a combination of sacred objects and acts from the three monotheisms. The questionnaire emphasises the points in common between the three religions: ceremonies marking the lives of believers, obligations, festivals, ritual objects, etc.

2. Men and women in the service of God: having identified the ‘leaders’ of the various Jewish, Christian and Muslim communities, pupils examine a Catholic ordination ceremony.

A 19th century postcard leads to consideration of the philosophical speculations of the dervishes and Sufism.

Dossier 4

The New Lives of God

The final part of the exhibition looks at new images and changes in religious sentiment during the 20th century.

Pupils are asked to do three exercises:

- to describe the monotheistic religions represented in France (primary level)
- to make a list of theological problems (lower secondary)
- to list new forms of expression: sects, astrology, neo-Buddhism, universal faith, ethics, etc. (upper secondary)

Upper secondary pupils are invited to think more deeply by showing how these ideas may reflect changes in society (upper secondary).

Before visiting the exhibition, it is recommended that pupils become acquainted with words such as anthropomorphism,

atheism, Genesis, monotheism, polytheism, prophet, proselytism, sacrament, secularism, sura and theology.

Text by Marie-Elisabeth Crépin in association with Isabelle Lazier, Curator, and Marion Vivier, Head of Department.

Grenoble, January 2001

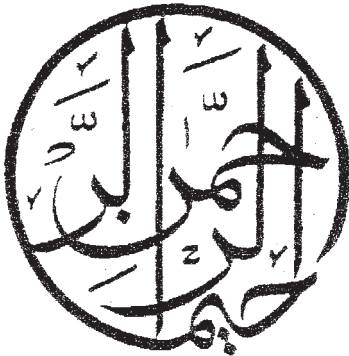
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Excerpts from Dossiers 2 and 3

The Millennia of God – Dossier 2

In the beginning, the birth of God

Judaism, Christianity and Islam – Islam:
Submission to God



You will now meet a second 'house of God'. The Koran and the prayer mat (exhibited until June 2001) are important

symbols of Islam. Take time to admire them before answering the following questions.

- How old is the mat of the brotherhood, and where does it come from?
- What is symbolised by the red background in the middle?
- From the text describing this exhibit, say what are the levels of spiritual progression:
- Complete the following table, indicating to what each of the levels corresponds:

HAQIQA

MA'ARIFA

TARIKA

SHARI'A

- Give a translation of the inscription 'masha Allah' which appears at the top of the niche.
- How old is the Koran shown in the display case?
- How many suras does it contain? How are the suras arranged, and why?
- How many verses go to make up the suras?
- How has the Koran been passed down over the generations?
- How is Arabic literature read?
- Give a synonym for sura:
- Take a few moments to look at the history of the Muslims:

- According to Muslim tradition, how did Mohammed receive the Revelation?
- Where is that site located today?
- In the eyes of believers, is the Koran solely the Word of God?
- How many names does tradition ascribe to the figure of Allah, "only creator God, almighty and merciful"?
- State the six elements on which the Muslim faith rests:
- What is meant by the word Islam?

ings to contemplate the notion of "a divinity that created all things"?

- You are shown a set of extracts from Jewish, Christian and Muslim traditions of Genesis. Pick out the phrases and points in common that are repeated in the Torah, the Bible and the Koran:

SACRED TEXTS	QUOTATIONS
TORAH	
BIBLE	
KORAN	

The Millennia of God – Dossier 3

God face to face with human beings and human beings face to face with God

I – God Face to Face with Human Beings

- From the text introducing this next section, "God face to face with human beings and human beings face to face with God", say what is meant by the Latin words religio and religiare.
- According to the beliefs associated with the Jewish religion, the Christian religion and Islam, what contract unites God and human beings?
- According to the three monotheisms, is it possible to define faith? How can believers express it?

God Face to Face with Human Beings – The Creation

- According to the introductory text, what phenomena have led human be-

- According to the Bible, what did God create
- on the first day: _____
- on the second day: _____
- on the third day: _____
- on the fourth day: _____
- According to the Torah, what did He create
- on the fifth day: _____
- on the sixth day: _____
- What did He do on the seventh day?
- According to the Koran, XV, 29, what did God create?

- A Dogon mask is shown alongside the images of Genesis. Is the religion of the Dogons a monotheistic religion?

- Name the creators of the universe according to the Jews, the Christians, the Muslims and the Dogons:
- What expression is used today to describe the creation of the universe?
- According to experiments conducted in recent years at the European Laboratory in Geneva, what happened 10 seconds after the Big Bang?
- Can this phenomenon explain the birth of the universe?

**God Face to Face
with Human Beings – Salvation**

- Copy out the quotations from the Bible and the Koran:

Ezekiel 37, 12: _____

Koran 20, 57: _____

- What message do these sacred texts convey to humanity?
- What is shown in the frescos of the church of Saint Chef in Isère?
- What is depicted by the miniature of the Ascension of the Prophet, a Turkish work from the 16th century?
- Give brief definitions of the following terms:

Jerusalem the Heavenly: _____

Hell: _____

**God Face to Face
with Human Beings – Morality**

- From the reproduction of a picture painted by Lucas Cranach in 1516 and the text of the Decalogue taken from the

Bible, set out in the following grid the Ten Commandments given by God to Moses:

- What supernatural figures accompany the people in these images?
- What does each of them symbolise?
- Using the text on the left, write out the commandments that are common to the Bible and the Koran:

BIBLE	KORAN

- What does Decalogue mean?

**God Face to Face
with Human Beings – Prayer**

- A Jewish, a Christian and a Muslim prayer have each been written out on the desks placed in front of the three pictures. Write the titles of these prayers:

Jewish prayer: _____

Christian prayer: _____

Muslim prayer: _____

- What is the name given to the artistic discipline used for the picture accompanying the Muslim prayer?
- Are Muslims permitted to depict the image of God?
- Give some of the 99 names of Allah:

II Human Beings Face to Face with God

Human Beings Face to Face with God – Rites and Practices

Islam, rites and practices – the five pillars of Islam:

- 1 _____
- 2 _____
- 3 _____
- 4 _____
- 5 _____

- Can you copy out the sentence which contains the first of the pillars of Islam:
- What is the place of Ramadan in the list of pillars of Islam, and what do you know about this religious festival that is so crucial for Muslims?

Synthesis of Rites and Practices



- Which days of the week are reserved for prayer by Jews, Christians and Muslims?
- What clothing is used by Muslims and Jews when they pray?

- Complete the following table, giving the names of the essential religious festivals of the three religions:

JEWISH RELIGION	CHRISTIAN RELIGION	MUSLIM RELIGION

Human Beings Face to Face with God – Men and Women in the Service of God

- Having studied the texts and images shown in this final section, answer the following questions:
- Give the names for the members of the clergy responsible for leading the faithful in the three religions and, with the help of the videos, state the buildings where ceremonies are held:

	JEWISH RELIGION	CATHOLIC RELIGION	PROTESTANT RELIGION	MUSLIM RELIGION
LEADER OF THE RELIGIOUS COMMUNITY				
NAME OF THE BUILDING USED BY THE COMMUNITY				

- Take time to examine the photographs of an ordination of two Catholic priests held in June 2000 at the church of Saint Joseph in Grenoble, and say what the main stages are:
- According to a 19th century postcard, how did the whirling dervishes express their religious faith?
- How would you define the term Sufi?

Annexe 2 – A Study Course on the Three Monotheisms for Teachers and Heads of Private Catholic Teaching Institutions, Produced by the Theological Centre of Meylan (CTM)

Session on the Three Monotheisms

Session for the attention of teachers and heads of private teaching institutions Co-ordination and organization: Bénédicte du Chaffaut

Three days (9h –16h 30):

- Judaism
- Islam
- Christianity

Objectives:

- Know better the three monotheisms and the cultures they have generated;
- Confront the founding and fundamental texts of each one of the monotheisms;
- Point out a few differences and common aspects between them;
- Locate their influence in the life of a teaching institution today.

Methods: presentations, discussion, work in small groups.

Coordinators of the days:

Georges Maurice, specialist in Judaism at the CTM

Bénédicte du Chaffaut, specialist in Islam at the CTM

Hendro Munsterman, director of the CTM, for Christianity

Judaism

9h	Reception of participants and presentation of the day
9h15	Geography of the Jewish people
10h	History of the Jewish people
11h	Break
11h15	What is a Jew?
12h15	Short Synthesis
12h30	Lunch
14h	Video on Jewish Passover
15h	The religious life of a young Jew
15h45	Break
16h	An experience of a trip to Auschwitz
16h30	Debate
17h	End of the day

Islam

- 9h Reception of participants and presentation of the day
- 9h15 General presentation of Islam
- 10h30 Break
- 10h45 Workshops: Make young people discover Islam through teaching
- 11h45 Short Synthesis
- 12h30 Lunch
- 14h French Islam and young people
- 14h45 Discussion from our own experiences
- 15h30 Break
- 15h45 Talk by Danièle Bethmont, director of a high school
- 16h30 Discussion
- 17h End of the day

Christianity

- 9h Reception of participants and presentation of the day
- 9h15 Talk: today's Christians in the world; birth and origin of Christianity
- 10h30 Break
- 11h45 Small group work on texts of the New Testament
- 12h15 Short Synthesis
- 12h30 Lunch
- 13h45 The heart of Christian faith; the main stages in Christianity's history; the Catholic Church, institutions, symbols and sacraments.
- 14h45 Workshops on texts of the Christian tradition
- 15h30 Break
- 15h45 Treatment of Christianity as a religious fact in high school
- 16h30 Discussion
- 17h End of the day

Annexe 3 – Contents of a Traditional Course on French Islam, Taught by the Theological Centre of Meylan (CTM)

Islam and Society: French Islam by Bénédicte du Chaffaut

Chapter 1 – Islam Between the Imaginary and Reality

*1 – A necessary appointment with Islam
An awakening of Islam*

Concern about this awakening
An ignorance that needs to be cured

2 – The imaginary and the weight of history

The image of the ‘Sarracens’ in the Middle Ages

The textbooks under the Third Republic
The Gulf War interpreted as new crusades

3 – Islam in France and its image among the general public

The quiet reality of Islam in France
A negative image in the general public
The need for concrete observation

Chapter 2 – General Presentation of Islam Presentaion

1 – Islam: a religion with varied cultural backgrounds

A civilization
Islam adapted to various civilizations
A world in fast change

2 – Islam today in France
Islam in France
The Muslim presence, in issue
Crossing to the other side of the river

3 – Some elements of approach of the Koranic revelation

Arabia of the VIth and VIIth centuries
Prophet Mohammed and the Koranic revelation

A first organization of society in Medina

Chapter 3 – Faith and Law, Between Norm and Adaptation

1 – The Koran, the Sunna, the Shari’a
The *Koran*, holy book of the Muslims
The *Sunna*, tradition of the Prophet
The *Shari’a*, Muslim canonical law

2 – Islam as an ensemble of rites and practices

1. The prayer
The rite of the Prayer
Reality of prayer as practised in France

2. Alms
The two forms of alms
The *Zakât* in France

3. Ramadan fast
The rite of the Ramadan fast
The reality of Ramadan, interdictions regarding food and the organization of ritual slaughter in France

4. The pilgrimage to Mecca

Chapter 4 – Family and Women in the Muslim Tradition and the Current World

1 – *The Muslim community*

Equality between all members of the community

Maintenance of a patriarchal model

The prevailing role of men in society

2 – *Women's status*

Improvement of women's status with Islam

Reopening the interpretation of women's status

The remaining dependent status of women

3 – *Family and women today in France*

Families with Maghreb origins in France

Socialization and matrimonial practices of young women

Schooling and access to the working world

Chapter 5 – Young People, Between Secularisation and Return to Faith

1 – *A certain reislamisation among the young Muslims*

Considerable weakening of practice

Reislamisation of some 16-24 year-olds

What is this reislamisation phenomenon responding to ?

2 – *Integration of Muslims in the French society*

1. Failure of social integration and of a certain integrationist ideology

2. Criticism of the consumer society's materialism and of the weakness of the norms that govern society

3. Integration through Islamic demands

3 – *Modalities of participation*

Islam as an alternative for young people searching for reference marks

Demand for social action

Participation on the political level

Chapter 6 – Institutionalization of Minority Islam in France

1 – *Organization of the Muslim community in France*

A desire for organization from the top

Voluntary organization from the bottom up, a long-standing process

Tendency to federation

2 – *Muslim associations in Grenoble*

Islamic associations and mosques

Associations with secular names, but with Islamic points of reference

Networking

3 – *Starting again the debate on secularity*

Secularity as a separation of politics and religion

Secularity as the affirmation, protection and organization of religious freedom

New questions introduced by Islam

Annexe 4 – Extracts from the Booklet *“Traditions, Festivals and Recipes”* Produced by Foreign Women of the Teisseire District, in Grenoble

Traditions, Festivals and Recipes

Sixth publication by women of the Teisseire district (and around) of Grenoble, of diverse cultural origins: Maghreb, Italy, France, Comoros, Portugal,...

Animated by Ariane Kalouaz-Bourdichon and Nadjet Benfredj, animators of the *Office Dauphinois des Travailleurs Immigrés* (O.D.T.I.).

Thanks to Nasser Assou! For his illustrations.

Project financed by the C.L.I. of Grenoble, the city of Grenoble, the F.A.S. Rhône-Alpes and the U.D.M.I.

Publication of the O.D.T.I. and of the municipal libraries of Grenoble.

Printing: Ville de Grenoble. Décembre 1998

Birth, Baptism and Circumcision

Formerly, in France, children were baptised as soon as they were born, often in the hospital. According to the religious rules, baptism must be done as soon as possible. Nowadays, children can choose to be baptised.

In Arab countries, one is born a Muslim. A ceremony is offered for the occasion, friends and family are gathered around culinary specialities adapted to the circumstance. Rituals which differ from one country to the other accompany this event. In certain regions of Morocco, a rooster's throat is cut for the birth of a girl, a hen's for the birth of a boy. Circumcision, of which the hygienic merits are undeniable, is, for boys, the confirmation of their belonging to the Muslim religion. In the Comoros Islands, circumcision is preceded by a herbal bath, symbolizing luck and happiness. A big party comes with this event.

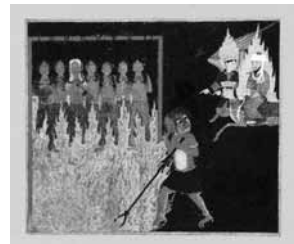
Exhibition Materials from 'Millenaires de Dieu'



Torah



Communion



Miniature 'Hell'

Little Story of Baptism

In France we offer blue dragées (a sort of candy) for a boy's baptism. Blue being the colour of the virgin of the sky and the sea, it is supposed to bring a little sweet-

ness to the generally agitated character of the boy. Pink is allotted to girls: near to red, it symbolizes strength.

Recipe for Samosas (Comorran fritters)

Ingredients:

- 500 g of chopped meat
- + 1 pack of rice pancakes
- 250 g of shallots
- 1 big spoon of flour
- 3 cloves of garlic
- a few leaves of fresh mint
- 2 spoons of pepper
- 2 big teaspoons of coriander
- ten 'hilic' seeds (Indian cardamoms)
- 2 cloves
- a pinch of nutmeg
- 1 teaspoon of salt



Chop the shallots finely and leave them on the side.

To the chopped meat, add the salt, pepper, Indian spices and the previously crushed cloves. Grate the garlic and nutmeg, then incorporate them in the meat and spices. Mix well the meat with the ingredients before browning it in a pan with a bit of oil, without cooking it. Add the shallots to the meat. Prepare the 'glue' to close the fritters, by watering the flour a little. Then cut the rice pancakes in half, fill them with the meat (one to two big spoons), fold them in the shape of a triangle and stick the edges. Fry them for 3 to 4 minutes in boiling oil. Take the fritters out when they are golden brown and drain them with paper towels. It's delicious with a spicy sauce!

Dirk Halm

Islam in Germany

Demographic Development and Current Situation

The presence of Islam in Germany is mostly the result of the migration flows of the last four decades, from the 1960s onwards. There had been Muslims in small numbers from the 19th century, but this was always a marginal phenomenon. The first communities of Muslims came into being after World War I, mostly in Berlin. In this period also the first associations were founded.

Large-scale migration of Muslims to Germany did not start until the first recruitment agreements were signed with countries in which Muslims were either the majority or a significant part of the population. These countries were Turkey (1961), Morocco (1963), Tunisia (1965) and the former Yugoslavia (1968). Although the German Government decided in 1973 to stop labour recruitment, the number of Muslims grew in subsequent years because of family reunification. Seeing their chances of returning to Germany disappear, many so-called '*guest workers*' decided to stay for a longer period and started to bring their families to Germany. The process of family reunification marks, in retrospect, the beginning of the change to a country of immigration.

Family reunification led to a profound change in the social structure of the immigrant communities and to new needs, for immigrant families as well as for the local and Federal authorities. In order to stop the continuing process of family reunification, the German Government decided in 1981 to restrict the age for children allowed to join their parents to the age of sixteen years. Efforts to reduce the number of immigrants by offering them financial aid to return home were not very successful.

The number of Muslim immigrants grew when a second wave of migration took off, in this case from other countries. The new Muslim immigrants came mostly from countries undergoing revolutionary upheavals or civil war, such as Iran and Afghanistan, and they generally had the status of political immigrants, asylum-seekers or refugees. After the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the civil war in Yugoslavia, another wave of Muslim immigration, mostly from Bosnia, reached Germany. But smaller Muslim communities also came from a variety of Asian and African countries.

The number of Muslims in Germany, which is still increasing to a small degree,

reached a total of around 3.4 million in 2004. It is not possible to give exact numbers for the Muslim population in Germany because of the lack of statistical data concerning the religious affiliation of immigrants from different countries. In some cases it is possible to give a nearly exact percentage, but in many other cases – for example, the former Yugoslavia and certain African countries – it is not possible. Another factor that will make it more difficult to determine the exact number in the future is the increasing rate of naturalization. According to estimates, there are currently around 700,000 Muslims who have already been naturalized. Since the new law on citizenship came into force in 2000, persons born in Germany can opt for German citizenship.

Muslims in Germany are concentrated in large urban centres and industrial regions such as the Ruhr in North Rhine-Westphalia. Only very small numbers of Muslims have settled in the Eastern part of Germany.

The biggest group among the Muslims are immigrants from Turkey, numbering 2.4 million and accounting for 75% of all Muslim immigrants in Germany. All other groups are present in much smaller numbers. Muslims from Bosnia do not exceed 165,000. Other sizable groups are from Iran (115,000), Morocco (80,000), and Afghanistan (72,000).

The majority of the Muslims in Germany – 80% – are *Sunni*. *Shiite* Muslims are only a small minority (3%) among all Muslims. They are mostly from Iran, Afghanistan or – in very small numbers

– from Turkey. Among the total of 3.4 million, there is also a substantial proportion of Alevi, members of a so-called heterodox group that differs in many points from *Sunni* and *Shia Islam*. It is estimated that there are around half a million Alevi Muslims.

Infrastructure of Muslims in Germany

The majority of the Muslim organizations in Germany are still based on mosque associations. According to estimates, about 2,200 **mosque associations** exist in Germany, mostly set up by Turkish immigrants and following *Sunni* Islam. The founding of associations did not begin until the process of family unification began in the early 1970s. Since there are no institutions such as the Christian Churches in Islam, there were no agencies providing support for their own citizens in Germany or other countries, as was the case with Spanish, Italian and Greek labour migrants in Germany. Thus the Muslims had to build their own religious infrastructure in the country. Most mosques are not recognizable from outside, having been set up in former factory buildings, supermarkets, offices etc., although Muslims started in the 1990s to build '*classical*' mosques with domes and minarets. In the same year mosques began to demand the right to allow the muezzin to call the faithful to prayer. Both of these developments caused some conflict with non-Muslim inhabitants in certain districts and towns. Many Christian-Islamic dialogue groups were established where there was a dispute between a local Islamic com-

munity and the non-Muslim majority population.

Besides the local communities, the **first umbrella organizations** of Muslims, in most cases branches of religious or political movements in the home country, were also set up in the 1970s. Nowadays there is a broad spectrum of umbrella organizations. Beside homogeneous organizations with members mostly from the same country of origin, there are also heterogeneous organizations with members from different backgrounds. Another difference concerns the level at which they operate. In addition to organizations working at the national or even European level, many others are active at the level of one Federal State in Germany. Over the last ten years, some unions have also emerged at the local level. In most umbrella organizations, membership is open to associations, but the Islamic Religious Community of Hessen (*Islamische Religionsgemeinschaft Hessen* – IRH) follows a new model of personal membership and has been accepted as the State's partner in matters concerning religious education.

In recent years a trend can be observed towards the establishment of a central authority to represent the interests of all Muslims in Germany. This trend has resulted in the creation of two councils that are not tied to specific ethnic groups, the Islamic Council of the Federal Republic of Germany (*Islamrat für die Bundesrepublik Deutschland*), established in 1986, and the Central Council of Muslims in Germany (*Zentralrat der Muslime in Deutschland* – ZMD). Both of them claim

to speak for all Muslims. One of their main aims is to be accepted by the State as its partner in matters concerning religious education. The ZMD has prepared a curriculum of its own for teaching religion, but no State government has yet recognized it officially. One reason is that they represent in fact only a small group of Muslims. The largest organizations are still associated with a particular national grouping, especially the Turkish Islamic Union of the Institute of Religious Affairs (DITIB), which brings together 740 – one third – of all mosque associations in Germany.

The Turkish Muslims are the best organized of Germany's ethnic and religious minorities. Besides the Union mentioned above, there are eight other Turkish-Islamic umbrella organizations. Bosnian and Albanian Muslims have also set up their own umbrella organizations, but these are very small.

None of the umbrella organizations mentioned above has yet gained official status, with one exception. In Berlin, the Islamic Federation of Berlin (IFB) has been recognized by a judgement of the administrative court as a religious community. This has opened the way for religious education in public schools in the German capital. As a 'new' religion in Germany, Islam does not have the same status as other established communities. Some Muslim organizations have applied for the status of 'public-law corporation' (*Körperschaft des öffentlichen Rechts*), but none has obtained this status yet.

The religious infrastructure of Muslims in Germany also includes other associations

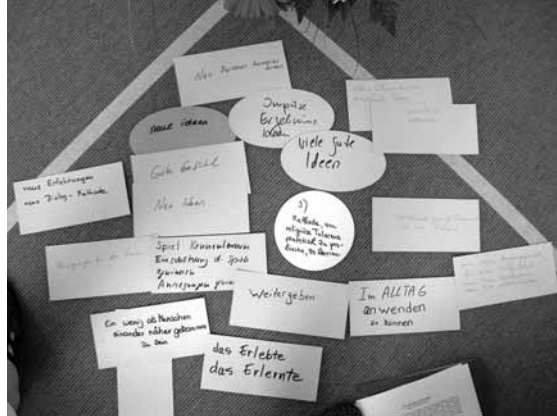
with specific aims or targeted at particular groups such as students, women, young people or entrepreneurs. Since Muslims have been requesting religious education, some organizations have established their own academies. For the last few years there has been a small number of Islamic kindergartens. There are as yet no Islamic schools recognized by the State. The only exception is a primary school which has been set up in Berlin and is recognized by the State under the law on private schools.

Religious Education

Religious education for Muslims is of three different types. One common type is Qur'an courses at mosques. It is one of the main tasks of each mosque association to teach the reading of the Qur'an and religious rites. Since the mid-1980s, mother tongue education (*Muttersprachlicher Ergänzungsunterricht*) has been provided for children in some German Federal States on a voluntary basis. Part of the mother tongue education is religious instruction for two or three hours a week.

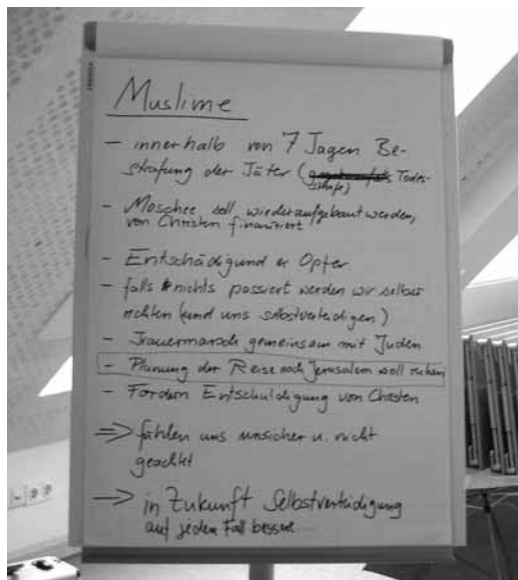
For some years there has been discussion of the introduction of religious education for Muslim pupils as part of the regular teaching in public schools. But this is not yet possible. As yet, no German university provides courses in Islamic theology to train the teachers needed to introduce Muslim religious education. The Government of North Rhine-Westphalia de-

clared some months ago that it was going to introduce a professorship at Münster University, and courses for teachers are expected to start this year. The Ministry of Education in this State began an experiment two and a half years ago in some primary schools, using mother



Participants of the German Summer School have marked their Expectations such as: 'many good ideas'

tongue teachers to give religious instruction. The number of schools participating in this experiment has now reached 55. The two umbrella organizations mentioned earlier also went to court, claiming the right to organize religious education on the ground that this was provided for in the Constitution. Under the German Constitution, what is a religion can only be defined by the religious community and not by the State. The court rejected the petition of the Islamic Council and the ZMD, arguing that neither organization could claim to represent more than a small proportion of the Muslims in that State.



The Muslim Group in the Role Play: 'Sensible Balance' Has Collected Some Suggestions on How to Solve the Conflict

Other States in Germany have also started initial planning, but no concrete steps have been taken toward the introduction of religious education or teacher training. In Hamburg, another model of religious education – inter-religious education – has been developed but not implemented yet.

Muslim Women¹

Family reunification brought Muslim women to Germany. Since most of these women did not work, they were not pres-

ent in German society. Many husbands restricted the freedom of movement of their wives, so that when they went out of their houses, it was mainly for shopping.

Coming mostly from rural areas, the first generation of women as well as men had low levels of formal education and their first priority was to return to Turkey, when they had made enough savings. So they did not take measures for their children to assimilate into German society. The girls had to go to school but education was not the priority of the family. Although the situation was not so easy for the second-generation women in school, some of them succeeded in breaking through some of the barriers imposed by Turkish traditions. Maybe not all of

them could study but at least some secured a vocational education or jobs in Germany.

The second generation were more aware of their situation in German society and they encouraged their children to be more enthusiastic in their attitude towards school. However it is also necessary to point out that there are also many other Muslim immigrants from countries other than Turkey. Since their immigration purposes, education, social levels and finally cultures were different, all Muslim immigrant groups were totally different from

¹ The passage on Muslim women was written by Emel Brestrich, born in Turkey and living in Germany for the last 6 years. The author is active in different inter-religious dialogue projects, also at a European level, and lives in Berlin

each other. Parallel to these Muslims, there are also some convert Muslims who are totally different than the immigrant Muslims. In these situations, Muslim women also display an immense variation of their external characteristics, their life style, their view on society etc. So it is not easy to classify the Muslim women under one title as '*Muslim Women*'.

Even though it is not easy to classify them under the same title, to make it more understandable I will analyse the situation of Muslim women with a focus on traditional Muslim women and modern Muslim women.

Traditional Muslim Women: Under this group I classify the first generation and some of the second-generation women. These women are generally less educated, some of them did not even attend any school. They can only speak their mother tongue so they cannot communicate with people from other nationalities. They move only in their own environment, they are family oriented and very much attached to their country of origin. So many of them do not have any systematic religious education as well. They practise their religion in the traditional way, and hold to religious pillars like praying five times a day, fasting during Ramadan, dressing in an Islamic way, having an assembly from time to time with some other traditional Muslim women to recite some verses from the *Qur'an* in Arabic but without understanding, rather meditative. When they gather in the mosque, they are generally subordinate to the men, They do not want to use the same entrance with the men so they have their

own section at the mosque and with a different entrance. They also listen to some sermons at the mosque that are generally made by a male hoja (preacher), but sometimes by female hojas as well.

As we all know, there are always exceptions in classifications. There are some here as well. I want to give an example of two women who belong to the first generation and who are not so highly educated (only three or four years of primary school education). They trained themselves with the sermons of some women hojas but it was not enough for them so they steadily ordered books from Turkey to improve their knowledge. Their good fortune was that that one of the women's brothers, who helped them a lot to gain more knowledge about Islam, was a professor of theology in Ankara. In fifteen years' time, they trained themselves in Islamic knowledge and had critical questions for the traditional male hojas (preachers). They had a lot of conflicts with the people who were used to the traditional way of understanding Islam, so from time to time, they were kicked out of some mosques but ended up by opening a women's mosque in Berlin.

Modern Muslim Women: Women in this group are educated, they speak the language of their host country, so they can communicate with the people other than their own family and community. They are aware of the situation of Muslims in Europe and the dynamics of the German society so they are keen on public work as well. They are organized under the mosques or some NGO's. At mosques they organize religion, Arabic, German,

computer etc. courses for women and children, develop libraries at mosques, create web pages and even publish some periodicals. They initiate some activities, organize conferences, and join in the national or international conferences.

Women's Rights in Islam

In Germany there are some Muslim women's NGO's as well. Some of them lead some projects which are subsidized by public sources. When the women are so active it is logical that they are also aware of their rights in family, community and society. Nevertheless life is not easy for these Muslim women. They are between two fires. Since they dress themselves according to the Islamic dress code, they are accused by the majority of being not emancipated and by the traditional Muslims of not being real Muslims or not understanding Islam correctly. Their activities and knowledge lead them to demand more tolerance, understanding and acceptance from the majority and more openness from the traditional Muslims. They cannot accept old-fashioned interpretations in Islam as well as some false Hadith (sayings of Prophet Muhammed) which are against women's rights. So they search in Islam and find new realities for these circumstances. Furthermore they want an interpretation of the Qur'an which holds the standpoint of women. But interpretation of the Qur'an from the point of view of women needs to be based on a profound knowledge of Arabic, Islamic theology and a feminist view of the wisdom of Islamic history, knowledge of the development of world

civilisation etc. This means that they have to fight in every corner.

To demand a new interpretation of the Islamic way of life, from the perspective of women, leads the Muslim women to be closer to feminism. Some of them call themselves Muslim feminists. But when they use the expression feminist, at once they receive objections from some non-religious feminists and from traditional Muslims. Some feminists say *"Islam is against all women's rights, that is why Muslims cannot be feminists."* The traditional Muslim view is that *"Islam has given all the rights to the women, so there is no need for feminism in Islam."* Since women's rights are the key elements of Western thinking, the work of emancipated Muslim women will lead Muslims to create a new way of living Islam in Europe, although modern Muslim women are between two fires with their activities and point of view.

Social and Cultural Change

Modernization and social change among the Muslim population in Germany have resulted neither in a strengthening of traditional religious understanding nor in the abandonment of Islam, although modernization and migrant lifestyles have brought about cultural and religious changes, with which the mosques can hardly keep pace. Resistance to change is found among the elderly and the less well-educated, who appear to cling to tradition even though they may not have deep roots in it and are increasingly moving towards a religious orientation that reflects local German resources and social processes. But the re-

turn to religion is also the answer for those who want to stress their non-German identity, even if they are well integrated and have German citizenship. These younger religious Turks nevertheless share a more liberal and pluralistic view of Islam than that of their parents.

Islam in Adult Education²

'Islam' played only a peripheral role as a subject of adult education until the 1990s, when it appeared on the agenda of many institutions of continuing education run by the Churches and secular bodies. After 9/11 there was a sharp rise in the number of educational initiatives. This was an urgent reminder that interfaith and intercultural dialogue is indispensable. The social majority was found to have not only fears and communication difficulties, but also a considerable lack of information about Islam. Consequently, nearly every town and village arranged sessions providing information on the religious foundations of Islam and its main religious groupings. In the next stage, these mainly introductory courses were expanded to cover topics such as '*Islam, a world religion*', '*Islam in Germany*' and '*Dialogue between Christians and Mus-*

lims'. Individual universities offered Islamic studies and provided teachers of religion with further subject-specific and methodological training. Extensive information sources were increasingly provided by the internet, where several organizations offered Islamic education, materials and other measures.

In the aftermath of the terrorist attacks the emphasis shifted to Islam as a political factor, Islamism and fundamentalism, and the use of this religion as a political instrument. For example, the State Institute for Education and School Development of



Muslim and non-muslim Women Evaluating the Summer School

Saxony published a collection of media materials on the theme of '*Islam and terrorist attacks*', a title which might be thought to spread negative signals. How-

² The chapter on Islam in Adult Education was written by Jochen Buchholz, active partner in the TUM Project, representing the Adult Education Centre of the city of Bonn

ever, this collection consisted of a very helpful outline of the Qur'an, worship, social situations and conflicts in everyday life, and included slides and films.

The discussion in Germany became fiercer following the controversial 'headscarf ruling' by the Federal Constitutional Court in September 2003. This drew attention to the place of Islam in a secular, democratic constitutional state. Institutions of adult and continuing education also emphasised that the Muslim minority in Germany must limit its worship to the legal framework provided by freedom of religion. The fundamental principles of the German Constitution: human rights, equal rights and freedom of speech were on the agenda for discussion. Discrimination against Muslim women was examined in continuing education courses. More and more informative visits to mosques were organized, where imams and the content of their sermons were the centre of attention.

The present environment is more difficult as a result of the critical economic and social situation, individual terrorist attacks against Muslim institutions, the emergence of anti-Semitism inspired by Islamism, and frivolous demands by certain politicians and the media.

The Need for Dialogue

Now more than ever, there is no alternative to dialogue. Muslim organizations in Germany realise this and are, along with their members, opening up for dialogue. For example, the Central Council of Muslims in Germany maintains the website

'Islam online', which offers information and services to Muslims and non-Muslims. It contains information on Islam and on the situation of Muslims in Germany and offers up-to-date coverage of relevant issues and a discussion forum which is open to everybody. Many institutions of adult and continuing education are reconsidering their teaching principles and are talking with instead of about Muslims. Meanwhile, a considerable number of highly qualified Muslim teachers have obtained a permanent position within German institutions of adult education. Intercultural and interfaith education for both the majority community and participants from a migrant background is becoming a matter of course in an increasing number of institutions of adult and continuing education. They are having to respond to this challenge at a time of limited funding.

Nevertheless, a disparity remains between the varied forms of Islam in Germany and its perception by German society and the partners in dialogue. The people involved actively in mosques are only a minority of the Muslim migrants who define themselves as religious. At the same time, very little is known about alternative developments in Islam within the migrant community, which focus on human and women's rights and try to reconcile Islam and modernity not only in everyday life, but also theologically. The use of dialogue and other methods to strengthen these developments is an important task for adult education and other actors in German society.

Results of the Focus Group Meeting on Promoting Dialogue

On 7 April 2003, the German Focus Group Meeting was held in Bonn. Participants came from a wide range of institutions and organizations, including Islamic organizations and the Christian community, as well as general and adult education. It was proposed that the circle of participants should be enlarged by inviting a representative from the Jewish community, and it was decided to invite the Jewish expert to forthcoming meetings.

The **aim** of the Focus Group Meeting of experts was to **determine the general framework of the relationship between different populations and faith groups in Germany**. An attempt was made to define the social, political and legal conditions that needed to be taken into consideration in order to improve tolerance and understanding between the Muslim and non-Muslim population in Germany. The second aim of the Focus Group Meeting was to identify ways of enhancing tolerance and understanding in the field of adult education. The experts were invited to contribute their knowledge and experience in order to gather positive examples and to identify existing shortcomings. The outcome of the meeting was intended to form the basis for the development of guidelines and teaching materials, which would be tested in the further stages of the project.

The Focus Group addressed **three main questions**:

1. The general framework and conditions structurally determining the relationship between Muslim and non-Muslim people within German society
2. The potential contribution of adult education to enhancing tolerance and better understanding between these two groups
3. The drafting of guidelines for the development of teaching materials in the system of adult education

1. The General Framework (Societal, Social, Political and legal)

A number of factors were mentioned in relation to the general framework for achieving tolerance and understanding between Muslims and non-Muslims.

Effects of Globalization

One expert called attention to the growing debate about globalization. In the context of terms such as deregulation and liberalization, globalization had had a negative impact on the social state and was affecting society in unforeseen ways. Globalization had had a disintegrating effect on society. One consequence was that it was harder to involve the masses

in education programmes, particularly adult education. This in turn contributed to the negative financial effect on adult education. It was proposed that an assessment should be made of the success of adult education programmes in achieving goals such as dialogue between cultures under such circumstances.

Differentiation

There was a call for more careful use of terminology in discussion of the general framework and conditions governing relations between the Muslim and non-Muslim population groups. The representative of the Catholic Church emphasised that this should include the term '*majority society*'. It should be noted that the majority society was not as homogeneous as was often presumed, and that it embraced a wide range of beliefs, including atheism, Bahai'i and other religions. Even the Muslims living in Germany were not homogeneous as there were different orientations among them. Moreover, other communities showed a great variety in terms of status under German law. Some were here as refugees, and some for work, including those who were here as illegal workers. The framework needed to take into consideration the backgrounds of the people taking part in the dialogue.

Legal Status

It was suggested that an examination should be made of problems in the legal field which hindered successful dialogue. The Muslim representatives in the group stressed the lack of equal status for Islam

in Germany, for instance in the law on corporate bodies. Islam as a religion in Germany had not yet been given equal status with Christianity and Judaism. One consequence of this was that Islamic organizations were not able to open their own cemeteries or to claim parts of existing cemeteries for themselves to cover their special needs, in the same way as the other two communities. Another consequence was that Islamic organizations were not offered any public funding for services such as advice or social care and were not allowed to provide services for public bodies such as the armed forces or pregnancy counselling.

Financial Situation

Another important point appeared to be the very weak financial situation of the Islamic community in Germany. Since Muslims in Germany do not possess their own facilities, they could never be the '*hosts*' but had to be the '*guests*' for dialogue and communication.

Prerequisites for Equality

The other questions which were raised for subsequent discussion were how the Muslim religion was regarded by the Church, and what was needed to achieve equality of representation in public bodies, such as on radio.

The Media

It was noted that the German media neglected to make reference to the religious festivals and symbols of religions other than Christianity.

Another participant criticized the approach of local government, which saw the issue solely in terms of integration and national security. Hence, allowing organizations to prepare proposals, particularly using multimedia devices, could be a valuable method of dialogue on teaching.

Outreach and Language

The failure of adult education programmes to reach the Muslim community was also noted. The mosque organizations did not take part in the learning and teaching process. The fact that materials were only in the German language was assumed to be another reason why they failed to reach people, immigrants in particular.

Identification

It was claimed that Islamic society in Germany lacked identity. The reason for this deficit was stated to be the absence of higher authorities or institutions in Islam. It was proposed that this issue should be considered within the framework.

2. Possible Contribution of Adult Education to Tolerance and Understanding Between Muslims and Non-Muslims

The following statements, comments and suggestions were made concerning the ways in which adult education might improve dialogue between Muslim and non-Muslim population groups.

It was noted that the most important issue was to prepare materials and find new methods of teaching in order to combat prejudice and claims of dominance. All religious groups from every denomination should be covered. Teaching guidelines for educators in adult education should be developed.

It was suggested that adult education could, in a multicultural context, offer '*learning by experiencing difference*'. In this way, adult education could contribute to the development of people's own identities, while not devaluing other identities.

One participant said that he had found adult education could not reach and influence people with a profound prejudice against immigrants and those they regarded as *strangers*. Empirical evidence showed that 13% of the population who supported ultra right-wing ideologies were resistant to change in opinion and behaviour. One very striking example of this was the fact that xenophobic sentiments and behaviour in Germany were most common in those regions where the numbers and percentages of immigrants were lowest, such as the States in the East of the country. This showed that prejudice need not lead to resentment. In society as a whole there were a significant number of people demonstrating a potential willingness to become involved in social and societal matters. Adult education should be able to reach this segment of society in order to improve relations between the different faith and belief groups and to fight prejudice.

Particularly for Islamic society, the social state, society and democracy needed to

be defined according to the Islamic tradition. It was fair to assume that this would help to legitimize the German state and society in their eyes, thus enhancing their feeling of allegiance to the State, and their wish to contribute to German society.

In order to widen tolerance and understanding in society in general, it was said that it would be necessary to involve members of political parties.

3. Guidelines, Methods and Materials in the Area of Adult Education

The third focus of the meeting was on principles and guidelines to be taken into account to improve tolerance and understanding between the different religious and faith groups in society. The experts were also asked to make proposals for the development of teaching materials in adult education.



Participants of the Summer School Discussing the Inter-religious Role Play 'Sensible Balance'

In relation to the failure of adult education programmes to reach the Muslim community, it was recommended that specific joint programmes for and with mosque organizations should be considered, and that other programmes should be offered to the mosque communities. The communities would thereby take a direct part in the learning process and have the chance to talk about themselves. Another option was to print bilingual material.

Participation

It was greatly stressed that educationists rather than administrators or politicians should decide on materials and methods. Concerning the development of teaching materials to improve dialogue and tolerance between different faith groups, one expert argued that the different faith and belief groups should present their own images of themselves, not

that these should be prepared by experts from other cultures.

Teaching Approach

As a general principle, one expert suggested that a subtler approach needed to be adopted. Teaching should not be instructional, and above all not moralizing. The aim of achieving tolerance and better understanding could be achieved through a creative, humorous and reciprocal manner of learning. Intercommuni-

cation between teacher and student should be used, instead of the current non-interactive teaching. And a differentiated approach to the issue of Islam should be used, looking not only at the problems created by September 11.

Authenticity

A representative of the adult education centres emphasised the importance of authenticity in the process of learning. Instead of learning about a topic in a conventional manner, aspects to which people related personally should be used and integrated into the learning process. One example highlighted was learning involving meetings with people from different backgrounds.

Training of Staff

It was proposed that briefings should be arranged for the educational staff of adult education institutions and organizations to promote tolerance and understanding.

Meetings should be organized to underpin this and address issues such as those mentioned above. Questions requiring urgent attention, such as communication between cultures in Germany, could be tackled. Teachers and educationists should also be part of these forums.

Proposals were made for teaching to improve relations between the different faith groups in society. In order to become naturalized, equal members of society in general, Muslims should be enabled to ask and learn about the religion and culture of the majority population. While it was often the case that the majority was mak-

ing the effort to learn about Islam, inter-cultural dialogue would be improved if this were done. As a proven teaching method, team teaching should be used as one principle of inter-religious and inter-cultural learning.

New Forms of Dialogue

Having observed a decline in interest in traditional inter-religious dialogue (such as conferences on Islam), one representative of the Evangelical Church proposed consideration of new activities for interfaith relations. As an example he mentioned the use of guided tours of specific areas, which was already successfully practised in some cities. Another positive example was cooperation between adult education centres and mosque associations.

Models

One concrete recommendation was that existing programmes and models from other countries should be analysed. The anti-racism programmes carried out in the United States were mentioned in particular, together with other models of anti-racist education.

It was important that differences were not neglected. The possibility of organizing projects including young people from different cultural backgrounds was mentioned. These projects should be global in nature and intellectually stimulating, such as the promotion of a project for Muslim and Christian young people on the redevelopment of Iraq.

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Antje Schwarze

Initiating Intercultural and Interfaith Dialogue in Adult Education

"The management of religious diversity (...) should be included in the larger contexts of intercultural dialogue and education for democratic citizenship. Calling attention to the religious dimension of intercultural education will serve to foster a dialogue of common identities, cooperation, and peaceful conflict resolution" (Council of Europe Project overview).¹

Introduction

From the 1990s onwards the presence of Muslims in Germany has increasingly been considered problematic. For this reason the Centre for Studies on Turkey² decided to be a project partner in the EU project '*Tolerance and Understanding of our Muslim Neighbours*'. In accordance with the project title, the project partners in Germany agreed on the following central question, which was also the lead question for implementation in Germany:

How can adult education foster respect and understanding between Muslims and non-Muslims?

In order to answer this question the initial step was to analyse the general conditions under which Muslims and non-Muslims live together in Germany. This involved examining the socio-political dimension, drawing up an inventory of present activities related to Islam within adult education (see Country report Germany for a detailed outline) and discussing different notions.

¹ In 2002 the Steering Committee on Education (CD-ED) of the Council of Europe launched the project '*The New Challenge of Intercultural Education: Religious Diversity and Dialogue in Europe*' following the decision of the Secretary General to make intercultural and interfaith dialogue one of the major axes of the Council of Europe's development. http://www.coe.int/T/E/Cultural_Cooperation/education/Intercultural_education/

² The Centre for Studies on Turkey, which is associated with the University of Duisburg-Essen, has the following objective: to promote German-Turkish relations and the level of knowledge and information about Turkey and Turkish migrants in Europe. This is effected through the preparation and evaluation of investigative projects, commentaries and reports as well as the organization of conferences. Thematic focal points are labour migration and economic, social, scientific and cultural relations with Turkey. www.zft-online.de

Socio-political Conditions in Germany

Muslims are the third largest religious grouping in Germany, after Protestants and Catholics. From the 1960s onwards it was mainly labour migration that brought them to Germany. Today their number is estimated at approximately 3.3 million.³ The attempt to establish Muslim communities in Germany has been accompanied by a series of conflicts (headscarf ban for Muslim teachers at state schools, Islamic instruction, building suitable mosques). There is a tendency to regard the religion of Islam as the sole cause of many of these conflicts.

After September 11 many majority community Germans became increasingly anxious and suspicious about Muslim people. Recent surveys⁴ demonstrate clear negative associations with Islam. Furthermore, recent events in the Nether-

lands in November 2004, after the assassination of filmmaker Theo van Gogh, brought about an emotional debate on the integration of Muslim migrants. Insensitive statements by politicians and media coverage indicate the presence of open hostility towards Islam within society. All this leads to an alarming internal political polarization. Fear of terrorism and violence are not dealt with as such, but are channelled into discussion of safety policy. Islam, Islamism, EU membership for Turkey, parallel societies, suppression of women, Middle East conflict, and the end of a multicultural society: in many discussions everything is mixed up. Only a differentiating examination can lead to the realization that separate social issues are reflected in the present debate. Often the majority community has not yet acknowledged Islam as part of the multifaith and multicultural state of affairs in Germany.



Participants of the Summer School Engaged in Dialogue

Images of Islam and Christianity

The perceptions and knowledge that non-Muslims have about Islam are often not based upon experience of authentic meetings. To a large extent the view of Islam among the German majority is strongly influenced by media coverage. Moreover, the German media do not address Islam as an issue. Instead, international news coverage (e.g. the

3 see religionswissenschaftlicher Informationsdienst: www.remnid.de

4 E. Noelle. Der Kampf der Kulturen. In: Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung vom 15.09.2004

war in Iraq or the Israeli-Palestinian conflict) indirectly determines the image of Islam.

The normal peaceful everyday life of the large majority of Muslims is unspectacular and therefore rarely covered. This generates a distorted view of Islam. Ignorance and stereotypes are widespread – regardless of level of education. ‘Muslims’ ‘Islamism’ and ‘terrorism’ are often used in one and the same breath, and the headscarf is equated with suppression of women.

On the other hand the image which many Muslims have of Christianity is strongly influenced by statements in the Koran. Furthermore, Christianity is often associated with crusades and colonial missionaries. The behaviour of evangelistic sects from the United States in many parts of the world adds to this bad reputation among Muslims with little religious education.⁵

Education and a differentiated approach are urgently necessary, given the ill-considered perceptions on both sides. A major task falls to adult education: to stimulate understanding between people from different cultural backgrounds. The objective is to overcome stereotypes and prejudices.



Introduction to the Interreligious Role Play: ‘Sensible Balance’

Islam in Adult Education

The number of information sessions on Islam offered by secular institutions of adult education (local community adult education centres, non-profit educational institutions etc.) has increased in recent years, especially in the aftermath of September 11. Adult educators are often heard to regret that it is difficult to reach Muslim participants. This is partly due to the fact that the courses are attuned to the needs of the German majority. (e.g. themes such as: does Islam suppress women?). To this date there are only few initiatives in the secular adult education sector that foster dialogue between Muslims and non-Muslims.

On the other hand there are many initiatives to promote Christian-Islamic dialogue at a local level in nearly all regions in Germany. These are usually part of the

⁵ See Bekir Alboğa, Leitfaden. Das Konzept der gläsernen Moschee – Erfahrungen aus dem islamisch-christlichen Dialog, in: Schmidt-Behlau, Beate/Schwarze, Antje (Hrsg.): Im Dialog zum Miteinander. Ein Leitfaden zur Begegnung mit Muslimen in der Erwachsenenbildung. IPE 49 IIZ/DVV. Bonn 2005

adult education offered by the Catholic and Protestant Churches. Yet they only have a limited scope, because their work mainly addresses people with religious ties. The main part of the German majority has a distanced attitude towards religion and feels less and less connected to the Catholic and Protestant Churches. Large groups of migrants are also not members of organized religion.



The Messenger of the King in the Role Play, Utah Kirchner, Talking to the 3 Religious Communities

Discussion of Concepts

When discussing the notions of tolerance and understanding, the project partners in Germany agreed to use the word **respect** in the central question. Because tolerance (Latin *tolerare*) merely means putting up with, it is broadened by including respect. Some experts in the German context even objected to the word tolerance if it was to be used in the sense of not caring.

In the project, respect was used in the sense of mutual recognition, willingness

to understand how others see themselves, and laying the foundations to live together.

When we use the terms **Muslims** and **non-Muslims**, we are aware of the problems involved with these fixed classifications. We apply this division because it reflects the view of the social majority in Germany. Our objective however, is to break free from religious classifications. We argue for a detailed examination of existing social problems, in which Islam is not regarded as the sole cause. We want to achieve an open attitude towards people from different cultural, ethnic or religious backgrounds. Religion is **only one aspect** of human identity. By non-Muslims, we mean people of persuasions other than Islam and we explicitly include people who dissociate themselves from any religion. In addition we are aware that Muslims practise their religion in different ways and with different levels of intensity.



The Moderators of the Role Play, Emel Brestrich and Aliyeh Yegane Discussing Next Steps

Antje Schwarze

Project Activities

Several project activities have taken place in Germany:

These included three Focus Group Meetings with representatives of Islamic organizations, the Catholic and Protestant Churches and adult education. One meeting focused on the role of women in interfaith dialogue.

The experts looked at the social, political and legal issues which strongly influence relations between Muslims and non-Muslims. They also discussed the use of different concepts, such as dialogue and tolerance, and activities in adult education that could promote understanding between both groups, giving an account of their own experiences and presenting examples of good practice. These discussions gave a valuable insight into the different perspectives of the participants (see page 105 about the German Focus Group Meeting).

Examples of Good Practice for Intercultural Dialogue Activities

In Germany, adult education boasts many successful dialogue projects and initiatives at local level. A further project activity was therefore to examine 40 out of the many dialogue projects across the country. About 15 projects were studied more closely by means of personal interviews, questionnaires and visits. We aimed by this means to learn about the

conditions and factors that determined the success of these projects.

Handbook for Adult Educators on Initiating Dialogue

It became evident that adult educators have to date given little attention to the topic of religion, especially with regard to intercultural learning. There is a lack of literature and concrete guidelines. Available publications mostly originate from the Catholic and Protestant Churches. Material on Islam is aimed at school education or work with young people.

This is how the idea arose of using the information gained in our research to develop a handbook providing guidance for adult educators on how to initiate tolerance-building activities between Muslims and non-Muslims in Germany. The objective of the handbook would be to document experience and insight gained in initiatives for intercultural and interfaith dialogue, and to pass on practical recommendations.

The first part of the handbook produced consists of short articles by 15 prominent experts representing different disciplines (Islamic studies, Christian theology, religious studies, education and politics). These articles provide adult educators with background information, which enables them to adopt a more discriminating approach to the topics of Islam and

Muslims in Germany. The authors write about the following issues: intercultural learning and religion, correlation between religion and migration, perceptions of Islam in Germany, dialogue from a Christian and an Islamic perspective, and reports of practical experience in the organization of dialogue initiatives.

The second part introduces ten examples of good practice from successful intercultural dialogue initiatives across Germany, and the third part of the handbook provides information about the use of role plays, because this method has proved to be especially fruitful in fostering intercultural dialogue. There is amongst other things a description of the role play '*Delicate Balance*', which was tested in two summer schools as part of the project. The final part contains practical information: addresses of Muslim associations, internet addresses and a reading list. The handbook will be distributed free of charge early in 2005 and will also be accessible on the internet (www.iiz-dv.de).

The Role Play '*Delicate Balance*'

A further project objective was to develop and test innovative teaching tools that would foster dialogue. Two summer schools with adult educators were organized in cooperation with the Heinrich Böll Foundation in Berlin,⁶ where the interfaith role play '*Delicate Balance*' was tested and evaluated.

This role play was developed by the UNESCO Chair of Cultural and Interfaith Dialogue, headed by Prof. Aviva Doron at the University of Haifa. It was inspired by the positive example of the school of translators in Toledo (Andalusia) in the 13th century. In this role play participants take on the parts of Jews, Muslims and Christians and are urged to solve an interfaith conflict together. The role play permits participants to experience the complexity of interfaith conflicts. Evaluation allows discussion of tolerance, prejudice and the relationship between the majority and minorities in society.

In the first part of the summer school the '*inventor*' of the role play, Professor Aviva Doron from the University of Haifa, was invited to give an introduction and to hold a training session. In the second part the role play was successfully tested in a larger multifaith group of women practically involved in intercultural dialogue on the local level. The summer school was evaluated by means of a questionnaire.

This role play became alarmingly topical after the events in December 2004 following the assassination of the Dutch filmmaker Theo van Gogh and the assaults on Muslim institutions in the Netherlands. These events indicate that it is essential to promote social dialogue through individual training as a means of conflict prevention. According to our experience this role play is a very suitable tool.

⁶ The Heinrich Böll Foundation, affiliated with the Green Party and based in Berlin, is a legally independent political foundation. The Foundation's primary objective is to support political education both within Germany and abroad, thus promoting democratic involvement, socio-political activism, and cross-cultural understanding. Its activities are guided by the fundamental political values of ecology, democracy, solidarity, and non-violence. www.boell.de

Selected Results from the Activities of the TUM Project in Germany

The experience gathered during the TUM Project in Germany can be summarized to provide some answers to the central question: *“How can adult education foster respect and understanding between Muslims and non-Muslims?”*. Despite the short time for the implementation of activities on the national level, it is evident that it is worthwhile to strengthen the leading role of adult education in the field of intercultural and inter-religious dialogue.

The Task of Secular Adult Education: to Initiate Successful Dialogue between Muslims and non-Muslims

By initiating intercultural and interfaith dialogue activities, adult education can promote mutual respect and make a major contribution to understanding between Muslims and non-Muslims. Being able to *“start a dialogue”* successfully is a necessary skill for interaction in a multicultural and multifaith context. The objective of these activities is therefore to teach **intercultural dialogue skills**.

The Religious Dimension Has to Be Included in Intercultural Education

- For many people, especially from an Islamic background, religion is an important point of reference for their everyday lives. The religious dimension

has therefore to be included in intercultural education.

- The best way to achieve better understanding between people from different cultural backgrounds is through personal meetings and dialogue. In a multicultural and multifaith society, as is the case in Germany today, these meetings can only encourage mutual respect and remove stereotypes successfully if they comprise conscious processes of intercultural learning.
- Intercultural learning supports the process of reflecting upon one's own identity and background and becoming aware of one's own stereotypes and images of *‘strangers’*. Ideally, intercultural learning leads to curiosity and openness towards people from a different cultural background. This is a good basis for successful dialogue.

What does *‘Successful Dialogue’* Mean in a Multicultural Context?

Successful intercultural dialogue is open to all people, regardless of religious persuasion or philosophy. It also includes people who dissociate themselves from religion, from the German majority and minority groups alike.

Within the TUM Project *‘dialogue’* means more than merely conversation. It includes all activities that promote better understanding between people from dif-

ferent cultural backgrounds or religious persuasions (e.g. joint construction of a playground, celebration of festivals, discussion of religious identities or visits to each other's religious services).

For each dialogue, mutually agreed concrete objectives have to be laid down by the participants. If there is better understanding after the dialogue than before, the dialogue has been successful.⁷

Ethic of Dialogue

According to our experience a dialogue can be called successful if it takes place within the framework of a certain ethic, involving mutual respect and openness. Experience has shown that time and time again there is a great discrepancy between the desired behaviour (almost all participants agree on the objective of tolerance) and the actual behaviour of participants. Therefore it is advisable to regard dialogue as a dynamic learning process, the objective of which is to develop an ethic of dialogue.

This ethic of dialogue is characterized by:

- The willingness to approach people from a different cultural or religious background without bias. A condition for being unbiased is the awareness of one's own views and images of 'strangers', which influence all of us.

- Interest in how others see themselves and the world.
- A conscious slowing down, especially to take account of different linguistic levels and cultural differences. In intercultural dialogue, it is therefore important to leave the other person time and space to formulate his/her thoughts.
- The willingness to accept the other person's emotions and not to judge the statements of the other person.
- The ability to observe one's own feelings and to handle them in a constructive way. This is very important for constructive dialogue, as discussions on Islam and integration can often proceed very emotionally.
- The attitude of not trying to convince the other person of one's own beliefs or values.

Practical Consequences for Adult Education

There are several ways to tackle the theme of religion in intercultural education. Organizing joint projects for people from different religious and ethnic backgrounds is a recipe for success. Constructive dialogue is possible when commonalities are the focal point and not differences.

⁷ Cf. Dr. Rudnick, Ursula: „In meines Vaters Haus sind viele Wohnungen...“. Überlegungen zum interreligiösen Dialog, In: Schmidt-Behlau, Beate/Schwarze, Antje (Hrsg.): Im Dialog zum Miteinander. Ein Leitfaden zur Begegnung mit Muslimen in der Erwachsenenbildung. IPE 49 IIZ/DVV. Bonn 2005

A suitable starting point is dialogue at the local, neighbourhood level. This way it is easier to tackle socially relevant issues such as the local implementation of Agenda 21. By cooperating with existing church networks, mosque communities and dialogue forums, secular adult education can benefit from their work and experience.

How Should Dialogue Be Organized?

Adult education has the task of creating a framework for successful dialogue:

- Religion is a personal matter – people will only be willing to have a deeper discussion if an atmosphere of trust has been created.
- The objective of dialogue is to shape constructive and confident relationships between participants. A good method is the use of fixed rules of dialogue.
- Learning from each other is better than learning about each other (e.g. by selecting authentic speakers from a Muslim background).
- The composition of the groups should be multiethnic and multifaitth and should consciously include people who dissociate themselves from religion.

- Participants need to explain their own objectives and interests in dialogue in order to prevent misunderstandings.
- The many years' experience of Christian-Islamic dialogue initiatives can be translated to an intercultural context.
- Speakers can be invited from religious communities, and visits made to mosques and churches.
- The organizing team should be multiethnic and multifaitth.

Themes and Learning Goals for Intercultural Dialogue

The '*ethic of dialogue*' described above can be taught individually, e.g. through intercultural and antiracist training courses, while peace education exercises and conflict-solving tools offer opportunities to acquire dialogue skills. However, religious issues are usually avoided, although these are the very issues which many people can connect with. The following proposals for a number of important learning goals are the result of experience gathered from the TUM Project activities in Germany.

8 Cf. Hans-Martin Glöel, *Brücke-Köprü: Begegnung für Christen und Muslime. Reflexion zu einem kirchlichen Konzept der Begegnungsarbeit*. In: Schmidt-Behlau, Beate/Schwarze, Antje (Hrsg.): *Im Dialog zum Miteinander. Ein Leitfaden zur Begegnung mit Muslimen in der Erwachsenenbildung*. IPE 49 IIZ/DVV. Bonn 2005

Working on Identity:

“You Can only Respect Others if You Know Yourself”⁸

In order to tackle the issue of religion it is very important to discuss identity:

- What determines my identity? (nationality, ethnic background, religion, age, occupation etc.).
- Religious or philosophical identity.
- To a large extent the German majority have mixed feelings (even including rejection of religion). Unconsciously, all the bad things in religion are associated with Islam.

Learning goal: consciousness of the individual expression of human identity. Religion is only one part of individual identity. There are no fixed associations. Identity and attitude are not determined by outward appearance (e.g. headscarf). Willingness to find out the identity of the person I meet.

Mental Images

Raising awareness of images of the other religion is another important aspect.

- What image do others have of us?
- Discussing the way in which you see yourself and others see you. This can lead to surprising results, e.g. Islam and Muslims are often treated as homogeneous in the media. Yet Muslims define

themselves by their national background, rather than by their religion.

- Demonstration of stereotypes about the other religion, ethnic group, etc.
- Getting to know each other's fears.

Consciousness of One's Own Cultural Background

- Consciousness of one's own cultural background in relation to religion.
- Awareness of religious ethnocentrism.
- Discussions on norms and values (e.g. relations between men and women, respect, family, etc.).

Spreading Knowledge of Religion

It is not only necessary to raise individual awareness, but also to spread knowledge of the religions of other people and of one's own. Experience has come to show that many Muslims and non-Muslims know little of their 'own' religion. An increase in religious literacy can be acknowledged.

- Basic knowledge about Islam, Christianity, Judaism and different beliefs and practices, sources, historical development, everyday life, diversity and cultural achievements.⁹
- The relationship between Church and State (secularization in Europe).

⁹ Lisa Kaul-Seidmann, Jorgen S. Nielsen, Markus Vinzent. European identity and cultural pluralism: Judaism, Christianity and Islam in European curricula. Recommendations. Herbert-Quandt-Stiftung. Bad Homburg. 2003. www.h-quandt-stiftung.de

- The correlation between religion, traditions, culture and migration (e.g. different cultural influence of Islam in the migrants' countries of origin).
- Basic knowledge of migration is important, given that Islam has come to Germany through migration.
- History: how Islam has influenced European culture, and how historical events have influenced the image of others – e.g. the Turkish siege of Vienna still influences the image of Muslims, and the crusades the image of Christians.

Social and Political Framework of Dialogue

Raising awareness and discussing the social conditions under which dialogue takes place between Muslims and non-Muslims in society, will enable a discriminating approach.

- The relationship between the social majority and minorities: Do they know each other's fears and worries? Where does dialogue take place? Who leads this dialogue?
- Asymmetry in dialogue: Who represents whom? Only 15% of all Muslims are organized. In Germany there is no Muslim elite, as is the case in other European countries. Representatives of Islamic associations are often laymen, facing professional representatives of Church and State institutions.
- The media plays a major part in the dissemination of images and stereotypes. **Media education** should there-

fore be given higher priority in adult education initiatives. The objective is media literacy, the ability to sort out information from newspapers, television and the internet. To this end, adult educators should receive **media and cultural sensitivity training**, in order to prevent the further ill-considered spread of stereotypes.

- The influence of international political issues on the relationship between Muslims and non-Muslims at a national level (e.g. the war in Iraq or the Middle East conflict).

Target Group Orientation

Adult education initiatives should be organized in an attractive and target group-oriented way. Each target group needs to be addressed in a different manner. People who dissociate themselves from religion will be more interested in a religiously neutral theme than, for example, in a session on Christian and Islamic prayer.

Even though it may not be easy for German institutions to reach **Muslims as a target group**, the following practical steps have proved to be successful:

- Approaching Islam in a **differentiated** way. Muslims are – just like other religious communities – not a homogeneous group. Instead, they harbour different religious and cultural traditions. Religion is practised with different degrees of intensity. If we do not wish to regard Muslims purely in terms of their religion, we must use concepts such as

Islamism, Muslims, etc., in a sensitive manner.

- Taking the first step and approaching Muslims, e.g. by contacting institutions (mosque communities, cultural associations, sports clubs, independent migrant organizations).
- Making personal contacts.
- Responding to the needs of this target group, which involves prior inquiry about their situation (usually the situa-

tion of migrants) and cultural background (this includes religion and traditions).

- Finding out the educational needs of migrants (migrants are more interested in continuing vocational training than in the umpteenth discussion on the headscarf).

Conclusions by the Project Coordinator

At the National Level

The TUM Project gave the opportunity to make contact with many adult educators, representatives of several religious communities and researchers from different disciplines. Their many years of experience and knowledge were very useful for the project. The theme "*dialogue with our Muslim neighbours*" is very important and topical in Germany. This became apparent through the positive response among participants and their great willingness to collaborate on the TUM Project.

One positive result of the project is the creation of a nationwide network of adult educators, both from secular adult education and from Christian and Islamic religious communities. Through this network further project ideas and collaborative initiatives are being developed, which will outlive the duration of the TUM Project.

At the Transnational Level

The European perspective, which was communicated through conferences and project meetings with partners, was very inspiring and enriching for me. Time and time again we were urged to broaden the limited German perspective and to look at the relationship between Muslims and non-Muslims in all of Europe.

Country reports came to life, for example, when we had the opportunity to pay a culinary visit to each continent in a street in the centre of Amsterdam, when

the multireligious past of Bulgaria became visible through the immediate proximity of a mosque, a Russian Orthodox church and a synagogue in the centre of Sofia, or when a drive through Birmingham showed us the diversity of Islam through four different mosques.

I learned how different political systems and philosophical traditions strongly influence the relations between Muslims and non-Muslims in European countries (e.g. colonial history in the United Kingdom, and strict separation of Church and State in France). A very enriching factor was the participation of Bulgaria as a project partner. This country has a long multicultural tradition as a result of its former inclusion in the Ottoman Empire. In France, Germany, the United Kingdom and the Netherlands on the other hand, Muslims came through labour migration to work. However, we found that all countries share one thing, namely that stereotypes and prejudices are widespread among Muslims and non-Muslims alike.

At the end of the project we all agreed that learning through practical experience, in combination with differentiated communication of knowledge, can foster respect and understanding between Muslims and non-Muslims. Promoting intercultural dialogue strengthens democracy in Europe.

I will never forget the personal meetings in the project. The different disciplines (theology, Islamic studies, education, ethnology, political studies and social studies) and the multicultural composition of the project groups created a productive and cooperative atmosphere. As a result the project was very fruitful and eventful.

Working on the project confirmed for me that intercultural learning is a constant learning process. There are always new things to learn. Even if it can be demanding at times, for me as a social anthropologist it is always enlightening and enjoyable to work in a multicultural context.

Through this project I got to know many people in Europe who devote themselves to the promotion of understanding between people of different religions and cultures. This encourages me to continue to work in this field.

We all agreed that respect and understanding are possible through an ethical attitude. To me, this is expressed in the following poem:

“Mindfulness, compassion and a hearty smile can change the world, if many people are willing” (Ursa Paul)¹
Antje Schwarze

¹ Ursula Paul is the spiritual head of *Heilhaus – Zentrum für Lebensenergie*, Kassel, www.heilhaus.org

Prologue

Christina Mercken wrote this report in the middle of 2003 at the request of Odyssee in the framework of the TUM Project in which we are participating as a partner. When we decided to do this we realised that such a project, focusing on the role that adult education could play in the dialogue between Muslims and non-Muslims, was very topical after September 11.

Now we know from just a few impressive names that the world has really changed: Afghanistan, Indonesia, Iraq, and Madrid. The TUM Project has never lost its topicality.

This was extra emphasized by the recent commotion in our country, the Netherlands, after the murder of moviemaker van Gogh by a fanatical Jihadist. The consequences are radical. Mosques burnt, probably by intolerant and violent right wing youngsters. Burning churches, Moroccan people criminalized. Terrorists in The Hague. The AVID – secret service – infiltrated by a terrorist? Politicians who are on a murder list. Bodyguards. An Imam who refused the hand of the Minister, the Minister who did not respect the religious arguments of this Imam. A school on fire. Crying children, angry parents. Madness rules.

The Netherlands has definitively changed. We have to accept that this all is part of our society as well. Even suspicious terrorists may be Dutch fanatical young men who have converted to Islam.

It would seem logical to rewrite and update this report, based on these events. However, time is too short for doing this now in a proper way, because a good analysis has at least to deal with more than one interpretation of these events. We have made the choice to do this and we will publish it later on the TUM website www.dialogue-education.org/

Reading this unchanged report from 2003 may give you the best idea about how roughly and fast the situation in our country has changed.

What has not changed though is the role that adult education has to play. More than ever an open, maybe hard, but fair dialogue is necessary. And Odyssee can play a key role in this debate. Just at the end of the week after the murder of van Gogh, El Batoul Zembib, Dutch coordinator of the TUM Project initiated – together with 5 other Moroccan women – an impressive protest demonstration at The Hague. The TUM Project has been a good stimulus for developing new initiatives and new methods to support and facilitate activities of local organizations.

Jumbo Klercq

November 2004

Christina Mercken

Muslims in the Netherlands

Muslims have been living in the Netherlands since the 19th century: the census of 1879 showed 49 Muslims living in this country. Their number increased slowly during the following century to 1.399 in 1960, the majority Moluccan immigrants. Since then the number of Muslims in the Netherlands has increased dramatically to 886.000 in 2002.

The first immigration wave took place during the 1960s, when Moroccan and Turkish immigrant workers arrived as well as Muslims from former colonies such as Surinam. The postcolonial immigration diminished after the independence of Surinam in 1975. In the late 1970s the Dutch government's '*family reunion policy*' resulted in a large-scale immigration of the wives and children of Turkish and Moroccan immigrants. The following decades saw the arrival of asylum seekers from specific parts of the Muslim world: Iran and Iraq in the 1980s, Somalia and Afghanistan in the 1990s. In addition there is a constant influx of smaller groups from all over the Muslim world that come for economic reasons.

The situation and integration of Hindustani and Javanese Muslims from Surinam differ from that of the Moroccan and Turkish Muslims. Unlike the Turkish and Moroccan men, who arrived alone and planned to stay temporarily, the majority of the postcolonial immigrants arrived with their families, intending to settle permanently in the Netherlands. Moreover, these postcolonial immigrants were already familiar with the language, institutions and values of Dutch society.

Of the 886.000 Muslims living in the Netherlands in 2002, over one third are children of immigrants, so-called '*second generation immigrants*'. They arrived as young children or were born in the Netherlands. Moreover, an increasing number of foreign Muslims have Dutch nationality: in 1999 66% of the Turks and 50% of the Moroccans had a Dutch passport. The Islamic population in 2002 forms 5,5% of the total population (in comparison to 31% Catholics and 21% Protestants) and is mainly concentrated in urban areas.

Most Moroccans living in the Netherlands are Berber. The Turkish immigrants are divided between Turks and the Kurds. Each

886.000 Muslims: country of origin

1000x	Western Muslims	Afghanistan	Iraq	Iran	Morocco	Somalia	Surinam	Turkey	Other
2002	40	31	40	26	275	29	31	309	105

CBS – Stat line

group has its own organizations etc. On the whole, Turks and Berber Moroccans are not able to read Arabic. This makes them more dependent on their imam for religious education or guidance.

Institutions

The Muslim community has many institutions, such as local and national 'umbrella' organizations for different ethnic groups and many mosques and prayer-halls. The exact number of mosques and prayer-halls in the Netherlands is unknown, but is estimated to be around 446. There is a high concentration of mosques and prayer-halls in the large cities (Amsterdam, Rotterdam and The Hague) in accordance with the demographic distribution of Muslims in the Netherlands. Most mosques and prayer-halls are organised on an ethnic basis. The very few 'multi-ethnic' or 'international' mosques and prayer-halls are mainly found in smaller towns that have only one mosque or prayer-hall. The greater the number of Muslims in a specific area, the more diversified the religious organizations become. When it is feasible, the ethnic division is followed by a further division according to some doctrinal difference ('denominations') within a single group. In addition there are many local, regional and national specialised organizations, such as Moroccan women's organizations or an organization for Turkish homosexuals.

Media

The subsidised Netherlands Muslim Broadcasting (*Nederlandse Moslim Om-*

Approximate number of Mosques (2000)

Turkish	221
Moroccan	150
Surinamese	35
Pakistani	10
Somalian and Sudanese	10
Afghan	5
Moluccan and Indonesian	5
Bosnian	5
Egyptian	4
Tunisian	1

roep) is granted limited time on radio (156 hours a year) and television (52 hours a year). They broadcast in Turkish, Arabic and Dutch to 30 thousand listeners and viewers. There are no known periodicals about Muslims, although some magazines and periodicals on immigration regularly publish articles on the religion of immigrant communities, in particular on Islam. Also, several local and national organizations publish bulletins, mainly for their own members. The amount of Muslim websites is growing rapidly, although many have a short life-span. Especially those aimed at the youth are popular.

Discussions on Islam

Up to September 11, 2001 an ongoing debate on immigration and the multicultural society, focusing on the significance of integration, existed in the Netherlands. In this debate, Islam was often presented as problematic. However, it was difficult

to differentiate between debates on ethnic minorities in general and specific debates on Islam, as the two were often considered to be '*one and the same*'.

'*White non-Muslim intellectuals*' led the '*Islam debate*'. It took place in the national media and focussed mainly on the problems non-Muslims encounter and on the differences between Dutch and Islamic culture. Political or national differences within Islam itself were largely ignored and the points of view of Islamic immigrants were seldom heard, except in specialist media. National debates aiming at finding sound solutions according to Islam for the questions that Muslims face in non-Muslim Western societies have been almost non-existent.

The national debate was characterised by a great demand for '*political correctness*'. Insulting or hurtful remarks, incorrect or exaggerated generalisations and demographic comments (such as '*the Netherlands is full*') were considered intolerant and therefore unacceptable. The central goal of the government and of the '*outspoken*' society seemed to be the creation of a multicultural society in which different social groups with different cultural traditions live together and share the basic moral values of freedom, equality and tolerance. Heated debates often erupted when these '*basic moral values*' were thought to be violated, whether by Muslims or non-Muslims.

The discussion themes in the Netherlands are: integration, religious and ethnic organizations, emancipation of Islamic women, Islam and education, and health-care

Integration

The debate on integration in the Netherlands is complicated, as there is no consensus about the meaning of the term. Some consider integration to be no more than an adjustment to Dutch society, accepting society's main values while maintaining one's own culture. In the eyes of others, integration equals assimilation and immigrants should adopt Dutch behaviour, norms and values. The debate is further complicated by the fact that most Dutch people are unable to define Dutch culture, let alone '*Dutch behaviour, norms and values*'. Only certain values, such as tolerance and equality, are clearly defined and shared by the Dutch majority. This becomes clear in the fierce reactions to situations where Islamic immigrants are seen to violate boundaries, such as the well-publicised incidents of disrespect for women (e.g. Moroccan boys molesting women in swimming-pools) and homosexuals (e.g. schoolchildren threatening homosexual teachers). The perceived integration problems and the Moroccan and Turkish tendency to seek marriage partners in their country of origin have led to stricter family immigration laws. Marrying spouses from the country of origin is seen as a serious threat to the integration of Muslims. In doing so, they are seen to place their children in a position of continual disadvantage.

Integration can also be thought of as providing equal social and economic opportunities for Muslims. Considered from this point of view, integration is failing. Although the average education level of second generation Muslims is higher than

that of their parents, it stays below that of non-Muslims. Moreover Muslims on average have lower incomes, a higher level of unemployment and of health problems and lower housing standards; many first generation Turkish and Moroccan immigrants do not speak the language (well). There are some positive developments though, such as an increase in politically active Muslims – in 1999 there were five Muslim members of parliament (three Moroccans and two Turks) and a number of Muslims have been elected in town councils – and the growing popularity of immigrant Muslim literary authors.

Finally, integration can simply be seen as interaction between Muslims and non-Muslims. Integration in this sense is mainly a problem amongst older citizens. For example, 62% of the Moroccans and 53% of the Turks over 55 years old never welcome a Dutch visitor to their house and more than one third of Dutch elderly (65+) never come into contact with immigrants.

The integration debate is very different for the younger generations due to their close contact with Dutch society in particular and western society in general. Many have non-Muslim friends and are therefore influenced by the society they live in. This can cause internal debates. For example, some young Muslims call for '*more modern imams*' who can speak Dutch, are familiar with Dutch society and are more pro-active, stepping out of the mosque and meeting young people on their own turf. Young Muslims in the Netherlands are faced with questions that result from living in a western society and with which their parents cannot help

them. The result is an extensive debate through specialised internet websites.

Religious and Ethnic Organizations

Mosques and Prayer-halls

The first and foremost function of mosques and prayer-halls was to offer religious services during Ramadan and other important moments in the Islamic calendar. These services were later expanded to Fridays and other days of the week. Over the years the functional aspects of these basic religious institutions have increased. They began to play an important role as social meeting points for Muslims in a non-Muslim environment. Later, when the immigrants' wives and children arrived in the 1970s, the task of religious education was added and the mosque's role as daily gathering place for the community was expanded. Mosques have assumed many functions of the infrastructure that was left behind in the country of origin. As a result, mosque buildings in the Netherlands are used for religiously coloured festivals and ceremonies that are not usually celebrated in or around mosques in the Muslim world, such as weddings, circumcisions and mourning ceremonies. In addition many mosques include shops that sell religious objects and products from the country of origin – these shops add to the social and financial basis of the community life around the mosque.

Over the years an occasional controversy has arisen about mosque buildings.

Neighbours and local authorities have not always accepted mosques and prayer-halls easily. Serious conflicts have surrounded the building of a new mosque or the transformation of an existing building into a mosque. The objections were often based on the broad community role played by mosques. Neighbours feared a constant influx of Muslim visitors into their neighbourhood during such religious festivals. In some cases local authorities and individuals tried to prevent the founding of a mosque. Local officials even claimed that "*mosques with their domes and minarets do not fit into the Dutch culture*". So far these protests have been unsuccessful, as all court verdicts have favoured the mosques.

Due to the strict division between state and church the Dutch Government abstains from subsidizing purely religious activities. This makes it difficult for mosques to find financial support for social and cultural activities of a more or less general nature that take place in a mosque building. Whether or not such subsidies are granted, depends on the local authorities. Not all municipalities recognise the broad community role of mosques or encourage initiatives.

The Role of the Imam

The more recent '*mosque controversies*' are focusing more on the imams than on the buildings themselves. Imams have been recognised by the Dutch government and they have been granted the same legal position of '*ecclesiastical officers*' as ministers, priests and rabbis. In response to their newly obtained position,

the Dutch government has created posts for imams in the army, hospitals and prisons on a par with the state appointed ministers, priests and rabbis already working in these institutions. There is however an insufficient number of imams living in the Netherlands. As a result many are recruited in the country of origin. These imams usually lack proficiency in the Dutch language and understanding of Dutch history and culture. Moreover, many claim that imams who are trained in Muslim countries are unable to understand the day-to-day problems of Muslims living in a non-Muslim society, especially the problems of the younger generations. These objections are held to be especially true for the imams sent by the Turkish government on a temporary basis and who hardly have any opportunity to become acquainted with the language and the life of Dutch society. Added to this, there has been an increase in incidents in which '*unacceptable preaching*' (such as preaching intolerance towards homosexuals) was translated and spread by the Dutch media, thus enhancing the allegations that these '*traditional*' imams lack understanding of western society, promote fundamentalism and are therefore unable to fulfil their ecclesiastical tasks adequately. Also, many Turks and Moroccans rely on their imam for religious information.

National Organizations

The first nationwide Islamic organizations were aimed at bringing together local mosque organizations. These are almost all divided along ethnic groups. Some

function merely as platforms for discussion and mutual consultation, others are more or less centralised bodies governing the local mosques as branch units. Many attempts have been made to found cross-ethnic national umbrella organizations. Political and ideological obstacles have hampered these attempts, as have contradictory influences from the countries of origin. As a result different Islamic organizations and individuals speak up at the same time claiming to voice the opinions of *'the Muslim community'*, yet at the same time contradicting each other. Moreover, certain imams who were *'popular'* in the media, have been denounced or have never been recognised as such by the Muslim communities they claim to represent. It is surprising that all this has not resulted in a general awareness of the pluralistic character of Dutch Muslim society. The conflicting views within that society however, do cause confusion in debates with the non-Muslims. They often lead the latter to focus on the more extreme points of view. As a result, there is a call for a higher degree of national representation, occasionally even by the government. An interesting request, considering that the officially recognised representative organ for Christian and Jewish organizations does not represent all their *'denominations'* either: the Jehovah's Witnesses for instance are not represented.

Emancipation of Muslim Women

In debates on Muslims in the Netherlands one often hears the claim that the oppression of women is intrinsic to Islam.

However, mainly non-Muslim or former Muslim women make these claims. On the whole it is the Dutch feminist movement that leads the public debates on the emancipation of Muslim women. These debates often contrast Islam with emancipation and are based on the belief that emancipation is only possible by conforming to western culture. Only few Dutch feminists are truly interested in the debates of Islamic women when they are not on western terms. Many Muslim women therefore feel that the mainstream emancipation debate is less concerned with their emancipation than with criticising and eradicating Islam, using feminism as a legitimisation. Moreover, Muslim women feel that these emancipation debates do not recognise the many years of emancipation work done by Islamic women's organizations to improve and strengthen the position of both Muslim and non-Muslim women – such as the work done by the Independent Residency Committee (*Comité Zelfstandig Verblijfsrecht*) which has been fighting for 20 years to separate a woman's residency right from that of her husband. In addition, the Muslim emancipation movement receives very little attention from the media.

Islamic women in the Netherlands often consider themselves to be strong, self-conscious individuals, who should have the right to emancipate in their own way and on their own terms. Something they feel they are doing, for example by promoting education and employment amongst their daughters. These women see the mainstream emancipation debate

as a hindrance to their work and their emancipation. For example, the mainstream debates often concentrate on headscarves as symbols of oppression. Yet, an increasing number of highly educated and independent Islamic women choose to wear these symbols of their religion. According to them, it is not the headscarf that stands in the way of their emancipation, it is prejudice and discrimination such as that shown by the editor of a well know feminist magazine, who claimed that she would never hire a Muslim woman who wears a headscarf.

Islamic Rituals and Festivals

Dress Codes

As mentioned above, the wearing of headscarves by Muslim women is frequently a subject of discussion, especially in cases where employers or schools deny their employees or students the right to wear them. At the same time, headscarves are becoming more widely accepted and are in certain (young urban) circles even considered fashionable. This is not the case for burqas, chadors or veils that cover women's faces. Although, according to some women, these coverings grant them more freedom of movement, they are generally considered degrading to women by Dutch society. In reaction to the negative response to headscarves and veils, some young women choose to wear them as a symbol of resistance against the '*repressive western society*' that does not accept their religion.

Circumcision

The circumcision of young Islamic boys is barely a point of discussion in the Netherlands. On the basis of the constitutional freedom of religion, the Dutch government accepts circumcision when performed by professionally trained circumcisers (paramedics).

Dietary Prescriptions

Dietary prescriptions were difficult to follow for the first Islamic immigrants in the 1960s and 1970s. Since then much has changed thanks to an enormous growth in Halal stores and restaurants, especially in urban areas. Those who can feed themselves do not need to run into problems. Problems occur when others organise the distribution of food centrally, as is the case in hospitals, prisons and the army. Although the Islamic dietary prescriptions are now included in the training courses of medical students and nurses, many still lack knowledge of these prescriptions or the means to follow them. The army has detailed regulations on this subject, but problems still arise, mainly during field exercises, due to a lack of instruction of responsible officers. Regulations are in place and it is expected that the problems will diminish over time.

Ritual Slaughtering

Islamic ritual slaughtering has been given a place in the Dutch legal system: specific abattoirs have been approved for Islamic slaughtering and Muslim butchers are granted exemption from certain business licensing requirements. Debates

on the subject are mainly led by animal rights activists. At first these groups sought to forbid '*barbaric slaughtering*', but their approach has changed. The '*Dutch Association for the Protection of Animals*' now seeks to diminish animal suffering and focuses its attention on convincing Muslims that Islam does not forbid electrical stunning of animals before slaughtering.

Islamic Holidays

Muslims have a right to take (unpaid) leave on religious holidays, unless this leave causes major economic damage to the employer. Attempts to change the existing rules in order to create more equality between Christian and Muslim holidays have been unsuccessful. The Supreme Court ruled that public Christian holidays, such as Easter, have been accepted by Dutch society as days when no work is to be done, regardless of the employee's religion. Although they find their origin in religion, these Christian holidays have become '*generally accepted days off*'. This legislation enables one category of employees to fulfil their religious obligations without loss of income, whereas this is not or only exceptionally possible for another category. A ruling many Muslims consider unfair, appealing to their constitutional rights of equality and freedom of religion. So far only a restricted number of Collective Labour Agreements (CAO's) have included paid leave on important non-Christian holidays. No special arrangements are known in respect to the weekly Islamic

prayer services on Friday that are required by Islamic law.

Funerary Rituals and Cemeteries

Most Moroccan and Turkish immigrants still prefer to bury their deceased in their country of origin, whereas Surinamese Muslims usually choose burials in the Netherlands. Because only a minority of Muslims bury their dead in the Netherlands, there is little debate on the subject at the moment. This is expected to change over time as Moroccan and Turkish funerals will increase when ties with the country of origin weaken. Some changes have already been made to the '*Bill on the Disposal of the Dead*' (*Wet op de Lijkbezorging*), making compliance with Islamic rules easier. It is now possible for example to bury the dead in a shroud without a coffin. But not all wishes have been granted. Although exemption has been requested, Muslims may still not bury their dead within 24 hours, as requested by Islam (Dutch law states a minimum of 36 hours after death). Neither are there Islamic cemeteries as of yet, although sections in public cemeteries have been reserved for Muslims in a number of Dutch municipalities.

Islam and Education

Religious Education in Mosques and Prayer-halls

Imams appointed to mosques also function as religious teachers. Because many imams are recruited from the country of origin, they are not always expected to

have communicative bi-cultural abilities. The large amount of '*traditional*' imams who do not speak Dutch results in a negative image of this type of education amongst non-Muslims, who often claim that it creates a basis for blind fundamentalism. Little is known about the religious education given in mosques and there are no exact figures on the level of participation by Islamic children.

Islam in Public and Christian Schools

70,000 (of in total 80,000) children from Islamic families are attending a public, Catholic or Protestant Christian school. In some cases Muslim parents specifically choose to send their children to private Catholic schools, because of these schools' positive attitude towards religion, their stricter discipline and the lower rate of foreign children. Muslim children in private Christian schools are obliged to attend lessons in Christianity, although an increasing number of these schools allow for some lessons on other religions, such as Islam and Hinduism. Islamic education in public schools is possible under certain conditions and only when applied for by the parents. At the present, Islamic religious education is given only in a few municipalities. This is partially caused by the stipulation that the lessons must be in Dutch and by the fact that it is far from easy to find imams who have mastered the Dutch language well enough and are acceptable to both the Moroccan and Turkish communities.

There have been some incidents concerning mixed swimming and gymnastics and the wearing of headscarves. Many

local authorities exempt Muslim female pupils from mixed school swimming, although these exemptions usually do not apply to gymnastics, because the girls can wear training suits. After a few attempts by schools to forbid headscarves, the courts have ruled this illegal. A recent case has allowed schools to forbid burqas, chadors and veils, agreeing with the argument that these coverings limit the communication between teacher and student.

Education in Modern Ethnic Minority Languages

Since 1974 primary and secondary school students can be taught in the language and culture of their country of origin. At the outset, the minority language programme was aimed at facilitating remigration. In the early eighties the programme was reoriented towards mastering languages and bridging gaps between different cultures in order to ensure equal opportunity in socio-economic and cultural affairs. In 1992, a three-pronged policy was recommended geared towards combating educational deprivation, including a programme to teach students from ethnic minority groups in their own languages. Originally called '*Education in Own Language and Culture*' (*Onderwijs in Eigen Taal en Cultuur - OETC*), the programme was officially named Education in Modern Ethnic Minority Languages (*Onderwijs in Allochtone Levende Talen - OALT*) in 1995. The new term recognised that learning these languages was not simply important to the ethnic minority groups them-

selves, but to the wider Dutch society, strengthening the economy and promoting interculturality. The main objective is to promote emancipation and participation. The underlying supposition is that children who are taught in their mother tongue and oriented towards their culture of origin will develop a positive self-image, will experience less academic problems and less of a gap between home and school. The language component has become the primary focus of the programme, with the cultural component being incorporated into intercultural education.

Education in modern ethnic minority languages takes place within the school or as an extra-curricular activity. In both cases the maximum duration is two-and-a-half hours per week. The subject is taught by qualified teachers who, in order to bridge the gap between the various cultures and to facilitate the learning of Dutch, are required to be fluent in Dutch. The schools are responsible for the execution of the programme; the state is in charge of quality control, while the municipalities are responsible for the coordination and alignment of local needs. Although the programme is supposed to be geared towards all language groups, municipalities in fact decide which language lessons will be offered, based on needs assessments. As a result local programmes are mainly geared toward Turkish and Arabic, although 60% to 70% of the students following these curricula actually speak Kurdish or Berber at home. Smaller language groups are barely in-

cluded in municipal minority language plans.

It is difficult for schools to find qualified teachers and suitable teaching materials. Teaching materials are often found in the country of origin, but these materials do not always suit the '*western perceptions*' of the students; moreover some languages are not official school languages in the country of origin. The foreign language teachers themselves also face difficulties; most language groups are heterogeneous, with students varying widely in age and language proficiency, and most language lessons take place outside the regular school curriculum, making it difficult for teachers to obtain information about their students. Language and cultural education are often combined in the lessons. As a result political and religious aspects are also included, making it difficult for the state to maintain control over the division between language and religious education. Furthermore the target group has grown tremendously over the years; the amount of children from an ethnic minority in primary schools has risen by 30% between 1995 and 2001, placing the programme under increasing budgetary pressure.

These obstacles, the changing goals over the years, and the varying political and social attitudes towards these goals have led to debates about education in minority languages. The government at one point considered stopping the programme altogether. Although the present coalition has declared this plan controversial, the future of education in the language of origin is still not certain.

Islamic Schools

The Dutch constitutional freedom of education (article 23) grants all religious groups the right to start a governmentally subsidised school if they can guarantee a certain number of students. This makes it possible to found Islamic schools that are funded by the government. The first Islamic primary school was founded ten years ago; now there are 29 in total. On paper, there is no difference between Islamic primary schools and other primary schools: the teachers teach in Dutch, the education inspectorate ensures the quality of the education and the required curriculum. Only three hours a week are assigned to religious education. Islamic schools may request exemption for government rulings that conflict with Islam, as may all religious schools in relation to their religion. The main problem Islamic schools face is a serious shortage of trained Muslim teachers. Most teachers in the schools are non-Muslims. In response, two teacher training colleges now offer training for Islamic education.

Although the Dutch cherish their '*freedom of education*', Islamic schools are highly controversial. Both non-Muslims and Turkish intellectuals claim that the schools hinder the integration of Muslim children, segregating them from Dutch society until they are twelve. Moreover, there are many claims that the schools do not promote openness and tolerance and by segregating the sexes limit emancipation and the understanding of women. Many Muslims and non-Muslims alike consider the social climate in these schools to be overly strict. Of the 29 Islamic schools, only

one is considered '*liberal*'. Because of this, some politicians are explicitly and profoundly against Islamic education. The negative image of Islamic schools has increased, due to widely publicised incidents such as teachers complaining bitterly about the rigid climate of the schools and the closing of one school because it only accepted Moroccan students (which is against the law). There are many calls for a stricter control of Islamic schools and for more frequent checks by the education inspectorate.

Despite the negative image of the schools, more and more Muslim parents choose these schools, because they feel that the Dutch education system is failing: immigrant children have lower grades and leave school with lower diplomas than Dutch children. Moreover, many Muslim parents have difficulties with the free morals within Dutch schools and they are seldom given the opportunity to join the school boards of Protestant, Catholic and public schools. By sending their children to an Islamic school, they hope to increase their influence and to improve their children's grades.

The first plans for an Islamic secondary school are being made in Rotterdam. In the same city the first Islamic university opened four years ago, although it is not (yet) officially recognised.

Healthcare

The first generation immigrants are reaching retirement age. It has become clear that many will not return to their country of origin and will spend their old

age in the Netherlands. Hence the older immigrants and their children as well as the health care system are facing new challenges. These aging immigrants have no role models, no examples of aging in a non-Muslim Western society. They are forced to find their own answers to unknown and unexpected problems. Traditional family care systems are often limited: Dutch housing is often too small for multi-generation living, families are living too far apart, daughters (in-law) are working, and an increasing number of Muslim children are no longer willing to look after their parents to the extent that is expected of them. In addition, immigrant seniors are not familiar with the Dutch care systems for the elderly, they have never been in a nursing home, they have not heard of home care, etc. As a result it is expected that they will receive a lower level of care than Dutch seniors. Moreover, many care institutions are not yet able to cater for the needs of these new elders, for example Turkish and Berber speaking staff are limited, while many first generation Turks and Moroccans do not speak Dutch. Some nursing homes attempt to cater for the needs of immigrant Muslim seniors. A first Islamic ward has opened in a Rotterdam nursing home. Yet, although intensive research has shown a great need for '*culture specific care*' among Turkish and Moroccan seniors, the beds on this ward for the most part remain empty. The reasons are unknown, but the consensus is that the Muslim community needs more time to get used to the idea of institutionalised Islamic care in the Netherlands. Many still feel that even if it is necessary, '*it is still not*

right'. Discussions on institutionalised care and children's care responsibilities are becoming more and more common amongst Turks and Moroccans. Outside the Muslim communities the care for aging Muslims is a subject of debate for professionals only.

The Effects of September 11

Shortly after the terrorist attacks on the United States on September 11, 2001, reports appeared in Dutch newspapers claiming that Moroccan youths in the town of Ede had taken to the streets to celebrate the attacks. Muslim spokes-persons reacted immediately, stating that this was a rare incident and emphasizing that Dutch Muslims were as shocked and outraged about the attacks as non-Muslims. Besides the incident in Ede, which was never officially verified, the overall mood in the Netherlands was one of non-Muslim and Muslim solidarity with the victims and condemnation of the attacks. At the same time, indications that the opinions of young Muslims differed from those of the political and social establishment were ignored. Many young Muslims, while not approving the attacks, showed understanding for the underlying motive. When a survey (from survey bureau Contrast) showed that 5% of Muslims in the Netherlands supported the September 11 attacks and two thirds showed understanding for them it was fiercely criticised, called dubious and non-representative, and was played down by the media.

Yet a follow-up survey by a renowned survey bureau (*Intomart*) showed similar results: 10% of the Muslims in the Nether-

lands supported the attacks and 73% thought that the Netherlands should not support the United States in the war against terrorism. That is not to say that Muslims approved the attacks, but that they did understand the motives underlying them. It slowly became clear that there was less consensus between Muslims and non-Muslims than most people thought.

Changed Attitudes Towards Muslims

The September 11 attacks in the US and the ideological division between Muslims and non-Muslims in the Netherlands resulted in an immediate and dramatic change in mainstream attitudes towards Muslims. The 'renowned' Dutch tolerance diminished enormously and many non-Muslims in the Netherlands no longer considered Muslims to be fully-fledged citizens in the sense that they had a right to their own ('deviant') opinion. Surveys showed that 60% of the Dutch were of the opinion that Muslims who supported the attacks should be expelled from the country, ignoring the fact that many Muslims are Dutch citizens and no country has the right to expel its citizens. 20% of the population (*Interview/NSS*) openly stated that they were less tolerant towards ethnic minorities originating from countries such as Morocco, Surinam and the Netherlands Antilles, and 21% wanted to refuse asylum seekers from Muslim countries entry into the Netherlands (*Intomart*).

The changed attitudes towards Muslims not only found expression in opinions and discussions, but also in verbal and

physical violence. Immediately following the September 11 attacks, many incidents of violence and discrimination against Muslims were reported, ranging from a bus driver refusing a passenger with a headscarf and telephone threats to Palestinian organizations, to arson against Islamic schools and mosques, increased hate messages on the Internet and an attack on a Turkish family. Attacks on Muslims increased for some time and there were indications that the situation in the Netherlands was worse than in other European countries. The attacks on Muslims did not show any real pattern and there were no signs pointing to organised or collective action. Over time the number of cases diminished, although the number of cases in which violence was used remained the same.

Anti-Islamic reactions following September 11, 2001

<i>Period</i>	<i>Number of incidents</i>
Sep. 11 – Sep. 25	17
Sep. 25 – Oct. 19	42
Oct. 19 – Nov. 23	12
Nov. 23 – Dec. 31	9

Source: Dutch Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia (DUMC)

Increased Fear Amongst Muslims

As the attitudes towards Muslims changed and incidents of violence increased, Muslims felt less safe and wel-

come in the Netherlands. A survey showed that of all Moroccans and Turks:

- 33,7% felt less welcome in the Netherlands
- 21,7% felt less safe since the attacks
- 18% reported an increase in violence and discrimination towards Muslims
- 18% reported an increase in insulting remarks made to them on the streets
- 20% felt that the Dutch views on Muslims had changed
- 55,2% felt that the media were sloppy in their reports on Islam
- 35,1% felt that the war on terrorism was in reality a war on Islam
- 75,4% felt that their relationship with non-Muslims had changed due to the attacks
- 56,1% chose to spend less time with non-Muslims

(Source: Foquz Ethno marketing, 2002)

A Changed Debate

The nature of the public discussion on Islam changed dramatically after September 11. Political correctness was no longer a leading guideline and there was little room for nuance or the middle of the road opinions held by the majority of Muslims in the Netherlands. The debate became highly polarised: one was either *'for us and against Islam'* or *'against us and for Bin Laden'*. Moreover, less distinction was made between Islam and fundamentalism and between fundamentalism and terrorism. The question whether or not Islam was compatible with

democracy became the main point of discussion.

Islam and ethnic minorities became major issues in the election campaign of early 2002, with one fourth of the voters stating that a political party's position on ethnic minorities and Islam would strongly influence their election decisions. A new intellectual Islamophobia became popular, as the rise of the populist politician Pim Fortuyn demonstrated. His views on Islam, which until recently would have been highly controversial, helped to dramatically increase his following. In Fortuyn's opinion Islam was a *'backward culture'*, a *'hostile society'* and *'an extraordinary threat to western culture'*. Despite some hefty reactions against his outspoken opinions, Fortuyn was highly popular and led his party (after his death) to landslide election results. Fortuyn also received support from many Muslims, who were pleased that Muslims were not considered victims in need of (politically correct) protection, but citizens responsible for their own position and role in society.

Although the initial polarisation of the debate and the directness and hostility of the opinions have tapered off during the last year and a half, the subject of Islam and ethnic minorities in the Netherlands is still open to a more critical approach than before. Most political parties have singled out the issue and the media now seldom ignore or ban more extreme points of view. At the same time, the debate on Islam still focuses mainly on norms (such as wearing a headscarf), confusing Islamic norms and rituals with regional or local

practices (such as female circumcision) that have nothing to do with Islam. The discussions on these specific norms are often held at the expense of common values such as respect, emancipation, freedom of speech, and freedom of religion.

When the ideological split between Muslims and non-Muslims became evident, many politicians and social commentators called for tolerance and dialogue. They believed that one should not try to ignore or cover up differences of opinion, as that would only lead to uncontrollable conflicts. Instead, they argued, one should promote open discussion. Also, the growing interest in and number of debates about Islam resulted in a spectacular rise in media attention on Islam. Muslims were more frequently heard in the media and almost all national newspapers and magazines published in-depth articles on Islam, significantly increasing knowledge of Islam amongst the general public.

Promoting Dialogue Between Muslims and non-Muslims

A large number of initiatives exist to promote dialogue between Muslims and non-Muslims in the Netherlands. Some are incidental, single debates and meetings; others recur regularly or are more structural. Also, there exist a growing number of organizations whose objectives include the promotion of dialogue or understanding between Muslims and non-Muslims. Many initiatives did exist before September 11, but the 'war on terrorism' and the Iraq war have triggered

new initiatives and revived old ones. The initiatives for such activities come from various groups, Muslims, Christians and/or Jews, ethnic or Dutch organizations or social work and education. The following list gives an overall idea of such initiatives.

Abbreviations

IDDM	= inter-religious dialogue initiated by Muslims
IDDC	= inter-religious dialogue initiated by Christians
IDDJ	= inter-religious dialogue initiated by the Jewish community
ICDE	= intercultural dialogue initiated by ethnic organizations
ICDO	= intercultural dialogue initiated by Dutch organizations
ICDW	= intercultural dialogue initiated by social work, education or adult education

Incidental Activities

IDDM – Islam in Daily Life

A two-day conference on Islam in daily life, with workshops and debates covering various themes, such as Islam in the medical world, Islam amongst other religions, Islam and family life, Islam and women, Islam and sexuality, Islam and education, Islam and politics, etc. The conference aimed to encourage contact between Muslims and non-Muslims, to promote discussions on Islam and to reduce prejudice. It was organised by TANS (Towards A New Start), an organization-team of young professionals and students who work together to develop

further the talents within the Moroccan community and to promote positive thinking among and about Moroccans.

IDDM – Muslims in the Workplace

A paper given on Muslims in the workplace, describing the problems Muslims encounter when working in non-Muslim organizations, such as the absence of space or time reserved for prayer and the difficulties of dietary prescriptions.

IDDM and IDDC – September 11, the War on Terrorism and the Social Effects on Dutch Society

The Inter-church Peace Council (*Interkerkelijk Vredesberaad*) and Forum, Institute for Multicultural Development, organised three discussion meetings following the September 11 attacks on the United States and the commotion in the Netherlands about the fact that many Muslims claimed to understand the attacks. The meetings were based on the assumption that a post-September 11 debate was a necessary challenging step in the development of a Dutch multicultural society and that no matter how harsh the debate might become, it should not be allowed to cause a divide in our society. The three meetings were:

- *Reflection meeting (bezinningsbijeenkomst)*: here a mixture of organizations (peace, immigrant, Islamic, and Christian organizations, political research centres, etc.) came together in order to define the challenge the Netherlands is facing during the 'war on terrorism'

- *Debating politics*: a discussion with politicians who stood for parliament on the challenges since September 11
- *Public conference*: a conference on the same subject held in 'peace week' (22–29 September 2002)

IDDC – Inter-religious Meeting on Iraq (*Interlevensbeschouwelijke bijeenkomst Irak*)

Before the start of the Iraqi war, Christian churches, Jewish communities and Muslim organizations came together for an inter-religious meeting on Iraq. The objective of the meeting was to ensure, by bringing together the different religious communities, that the war in Iraq did not develop into a war between religions in the Netherlands. During the meeting a '*Declaration of Commitment*' was signed by representatives from Judaism, Christendom and Islam. Elsewhere similar local and regional meetings were held. After the Iraq war broke out, the initial group gathered again to ensure that there was no risk of conflicts getting out of hand in the Netherlands. The inter-religious meeting was an initiative of the United Protestant Churches in the Netherlands, three Protestant churches that form a single church and have invested in communication and contact with Muslims since the 1970s.

IDDC and IDDM – Your Image of a Palestinian (*Jouw beeld van een Palestijn*)

A youth conference was organised by the Inter-church Peace Council (*Interkerkelijk Vredesberaad*) in cooperation with the Islamic University in Rotterdam. The aim of the conference was to encourage Muslims and Christians to discuss how different images of the Palestinian conflict develop in the Netherlands (for example through Muslims and Christians using different news sources) and to discuss the effects of these differences. The 65 participants were asked to fill in a daily checklist during the two weeks prior to the conference to help them gain insight into their own perspectives and the way in which they were informed about the conflict.

IDDM, IDDC, ICDE, ICDO and ICDW – Rotterdam in Dialogue

A series of activities during the war in Iraq was organised by '*Rotterdam in Dialogue*', a large-scale cooperation between 18 organizations, among them Dutch, ethnic, Christian, Muslim, and other organizations (such as the Humanist Peace Council and Rotterdam Library). The objective of the activities was to bring residents of Rotterdam together to exchange different points of view, so that the Iraq war would not drive them apart. Examples of activities are:

- *Create a Whole From Divided Pieces (Maak een geheel van verscheurde delen)*: people of all ages came together to create a collage from magazine cutting with artist and performer João Colagem, in which they expressed their feelings about the situation in Iraq
- *Closer to Peace (Dichter bij vrede)*: under the guidance of poet Shirley Cecilson the participants shared their thoughts and feelings on the situation in Iraq through poetry
- *Meditation in the Laurens Church*: a joint meditation for all social and religious organizations was organised every Thursday and Friday

ICDW – Muslims and Modernity

The annual Utopia lecture of 2003 discussed the hardened relationship between East and West. Historian Tariq Ali, who is of the opinion that the West is hypocritical and opportunistic in its relationship with the East, but who also expresses hard criticism of Islamists, gave it. The lecture was organised by *Eutopia*, podium for politics, culture and art.

Recurring Activities

IDDC – Allies or Rivals (*Bondgenoten of Rivalen*)

Encounter weekends are organised in different areas in the Netherlands during which refugees, immigrants and people living on welfare are offered the chance to come into contact with each other and get to know each other better. These three groups share their daily experiences, try to identify each person's role in society and to define the role they would like to fulfil. In addition a cultural exchange is organised by means of an intercultural festival. Special Allies or Rivals weekends are also organised for young people. The

first weekend was held in 1993. The many weekends have resulted in a book discussing the positions of these three marginal groups and the possibilities for collective advocacy. *Allies or Rivals* is an initiative of the Missionary Service, Heerlen, in cooperation with local and regional organizations.

IDDC – Art, Culture and Religion

A day on '*Art, Culture and Religion*', aimed at encouraging a positive dialogue between different religions and cultures, is organised once a year. Various subjects are viewed from a Hindu, Islamic and Christian point of view. This is combined with food, music, dance and information. The day is organised by the Student Pastoral Care of the The Hague School of Higher Education (*Haagse Hogeschool / HAASTU*) for a variety of associations and committees.

ICDW – Living with Immigrant Seniors (*Leven en wonen met allochtone ouderen*)

Courses in the province of North Holland are given for Dutch seniors in order to help them improve contacts between themselves and immigrant seniors and to encourage their participation in the multi-ethnic society. The course makes the participants more aware of their own prejudices and deals with subjects such as '*the meaning of aging away from family*', '*aging in another country*', '*diversity*', '*religion in church/mosque and on the streets*', and '*how to organise en-*

counters'. The course is an initiative of Pyloon, experts in education.

Structural Activities and Organizations Promoting Dialogue

IDDM – Are you afraid of me? (*Ben jij bang voor mij*)

'*Are you afraid of me?*' is an association of young Dutch people from different ethnic backgrounds, aimed at promoting constructive discussions on the multicultural society, mainly via Internet. '*Are you afraid of me?*' is based on the belief that the mainstream debates are lacking results because people are too afraid of each other. The Internet debates (www.benjijbangvoormij.nl) are very active, with more than 1500 reactions to certain topics, such as '*Islam*' or '*the multicultural society*'. In addition the association organised a demonstration and essay competitions.

IDDM – Islamic University Rotterdam

The Islamic University Rotterdam organises some ongoing activities aimed at improving relations between Muslims and non-Muslims, such as:

- *Interfaith Dialogue*: meetings and conferences that bring people from different religious backgrounds together. Scholars and academic staff from the university contribute to the Interfaith Dialogue group, which also works with other religious organizations in the Netherlands

- *(Re)training Imams*: the University is developing a (re)training programme for imams in the Netherlands, so that their training will comply in non-Muslim countries with both Western European conditions and the regulations of Islam. The training includes diverse educational subjects, such as Dutch language lessons, social orientation, professional orientation, general management, conflict management and Islam in modern Europe

IDDM – Submission (www.overgave.nl)

Submission is an Internet website created by Muslims hoping to improve relations between Islam and Dutch society by offering unbiased information on the Islamic religion to both Muslims and non-Muslims. A wide range of information is offered and visitors may also ask questions about Islam.

IDDM – Steering Committee Islam and Citizenship (*Stuurgroep Islam en Burgerschap*)

The Steering Committee Islam and Citizenship is an initiative of the members of three Muslim groups in the Netherlands and supported by the Ministry of Justice. Its aim is to stimulate social debates within the Muslim community and to broaden the debates to Dutch society as a whole when relevant. The underlying assumption of the committee is that Islam forms a rich source of values and norms that can be used to promote the integration of Muslims and to develop the con-

cept of citizenship further. This is done through publications, Internet debates, conferences (for example on Muslim women and emancipation) and '*Friday afternoon meetings*' during which concrete subjects are discussed, such as '*the value of Islamic education*', '*accepting or rejecting homosexuality*' and '*Muslims and partner choice*'.

IDDM – SPIOR, Foundation Platform Islamic Organizations Rijnmond (*Stichting Platform Islamitische Organisaties Rijnmond*)

SPIOR is a platform in the Rotterdam area in which 40 Islamic organizations come together: social-cultural mosque organizations as well as youth and women's organizations, representing a total of eight ethnicities (Turkish, Moroccan, Surinamese, Pakistani, Bosnian, Somali and Palestinian). The platform's three main objectives are to support kindred organizations, to encourage open communication with society and to develop and run projects for the Muslim community. Due to internal conflicts between the different ethnic groups, SPIOR has had some negative publicity. At the same time, the platform plays an important role in the appointment of imams in penitentiary institutions by working closely together with the justice department.

IDDM – Maroc.nl

Maroc.nl started in 1998 as a simple website chat-box for young Moroccans. The objective was simple: give Moroccan young people the opportunity to discuss

everything that interests them. The site has grown into a full-scale foundation, with Internet debates and information on Islam, news and games, and non-Internet related activities such as film evenings, parties, and the publication of a book of portraits of young Moroccans. Every day hundreds of young people visit the website. However, the site is not completely without controversy. Very few subjects are taboo and most are discussed openly, from arranged marriages to sexuality, from Islam to the Dutch. As a result, discriminatory remarks against (among others) homosexuals and Jews are not uncommon on the site. The Internet Discrimination Register (*Meldpunt Discriminatie Internet*) has filed official complaints against Maroc.nl

IDDM and IDDC – United Religions Initiative – Netherlands

A cooperation of organizations with similar goals came together to promote the dialogue between different religious groups through various activities, such as a mini-conference: "*Cohesion in society – who believes in that?*"

IDDM, IDDC and IDDJ – Triologue

The Triologue Foundation's objective is to stimulate dialogue and triologue between the Abrahamic faith groups, Judaism, Christianity and Islam, while laying emphasis on world peace and the importance of peace among religions. The Foundation organises lectures, workshops, discussions, publications and courses.

IDDC – Euro-Arabic Dialogue Programme (*Euro-Arabisch Dialoogproject*)

The Euro-Arabic Dialogue Programme started in the early 1990s during the first Gulf War. The goal of the programme was to offer a positive response to the supposed 'clash of cultures' between the Arabic / Islamic world and Europe. The project is aimed at three sectors: education, youth and municipalities. The focus is on three countries: Morocco, Palestine and Egypt. The Euro-Arabic Dialogue Programme organises a wide variety of activities in, about or with these three countries, such as 'education exchange' with Morocco, 'youth participation' in Egypt and 'sharing stories between Dutch and Palestinian schools'. The Euro-Arabic Dialogue Programme is an initiative of the Inter-church Peace Council (*Interkerkelijk Vredesberaad*), established in 1966 by nine churches in order to analyse issues of war and peace, to inform church members and society, and to recommend appropriate actions.

ICDO – Netherlands Association of Journalists Bureau Migrants and Media

The Bureau Migrants and Media is a department of the Netherlands Association of Journalists (NVJ), which organises projects, conferences, debates, cafés and other activities and publishes a newsletter and a website for professional journalists with the goal of promoting balanced coverage of ethnic minorities in the

Dutch media. Examples of incidental activities organised by the association are:

- *Islam for journalists*: a presentation on media and Islam, discussing the relationship between the two as well as examples of negative coverage of Muslims, followed by a guided visit to a Turkish mosque. The journalists were treated to a Turkish buffet, while the religious, social and cultural functions of the mosque were explained.
- *'It is time for subjective Journalism'*: a panel debate on the coverage of the Middle East conflict between journalists who considered their articles to be well-balanced and a researcher who claimed they were not.

ICDW – IHSAN Islamic Institute for Social Development and Participation

An Islamic association for the promotion of social participation aimed at finding ways to promote volunteer work that addresses social issues. This is mainly done through recruitment of volunteers, dissemination of information, and advice and training. The association organises sub-activities, such as the '*Workgroup Citizenship Rotterdam*', a series of brainstorm sessions on Islam and citizenship.

Results of the Focus Group on Promoting Dialogue

It was felt that a focus group was needed to gather information from the field regarding existing dialogue activities, the roles of different organizations in those activities, ideas and suggestions on the development of educational material and on the development of pilot-projects. A questionnaire (appendix A), was sent to all focus group members and formed the basis for the focus group meeting of July 3, 2003.

The questionnaire offers some interesting insights into the obstacles and possibilities of inter-religious dialogue in the Netherlands. **The most important conclusion is that all respondents agree that adult education can play an important and positive role in promoting and broadening dialogue between Muslims and non-Muslims.** A full overview of the questionnaire results can be found in the appendix.

Preconditions

The responses to the questionnaire and further interviews with the respondents show that the preconditions for promoting and broadening dialogue are not only important, but also extremely complex, due to the many contradictions in the field. There is, on the one hand, the belief that fundamental values, such as openness and respect, and the creation of safe places in which opinions may be

shared, are enough to create a truly mutually accepting society. Yet, on the other hand, the belief exists that we need to actively combat social exclusion mechanisms and discrimination and that more understanding, tolerance and mutual acceptance can only be reached through social and judicial equality. At times these two approaches seem to contradict each other, while they may also be combined to enhance progress. It is important for the development of the dialogue that fundamental points of view are neither ignored nor continually criticised. Moreover, the dialogue must focus on the diversity of experiences and approaches to personal religion. This focus implicitly supports a belief in the importance of a rich cultural and religious diversity within our late-modern society.

The Role of Adult Education

All respondents agree that adult education can play an important and positive role in promoting and broadening dialogue between Muslims and non-Muslims. The exact role of adult education depends on how the position of Muslims is viewed in relation to non-Muslims, as shown below:

An equal position with non-Muslims

- Interculturalisation: getting to know each other

- A cursory approach is possible, although it is more important that mixed groups are able to view each other's lives
- Learning to listen to each other in an equal and open environment
- Building bridges under professional guidance (with knowledge and understanding of religious backgrounds)
- Developing shared agendas based on mutually important social topics
- Courses on intercultural communication
- Organization of debates, dialogues and meetings

Muslims as a disadvantaged group

- Empowerment of ethnic groups in general and specifically of Muslims
- Promoting awareness of Dutch democracy

Adult educators who follow the 'equal' school of thought run the risk of alienating a large section of Dutch society consisting both of Muslims who believe their social position to be lower than that of non-Muslims – a belief accentuated by the upcoming Arab European League (AEL) – and of non-Muslims who supported Pim Fortuyn's statement that Islam is a 'backward culture'. Despite their totally different backgrounds and interests, both groups are fervently opposed to the idea that Muslims' position in society is equal to that of non-Muslims.

Exchange between participants (learning through experience) is an important aspect of adult education. Learning is not a natural process and is influenced by a va-

riety of interests. For example, it is in the interest of Dutch authorities that conflicts are kept under control and in the interest of Muslims that fear of Islam is dispelled. It is therefore important that participants make their personal interests explicit.

Target Groups

Adult education can play a role in revealing mutual relations in society by introducing terms such as fundamentalism and terrorism to the discussion and by inviting – and perhaps even challenging – Muslims to explicate what Muslims want. Such open discussions can help adjust mutual prejudice. **Yet it is not immediately clear on which target groups adult education should concentrate** in order to promote and broaden dialogue between Muslims and non-Muslims. Here too, we discover two approaches, as shown below:

The mixed approach – as diverse as possible

- Both Muslims and non-Muslims
- In ethnically mixed groups
- Aimed at both key figures and interested persons from all communities
- Aimed at young adults

Step by step – from separate to mixed groups

- Decisions on target groups to be made per situation and depending on the objectives of the activity
- Starting in separate groups and creating mixed groups step by step

- Promoting emancipation and empowerment in regular contacts
- Aimed at getting to know one's own culture first, before studying that of the other and accepting that we live in a multicultural society
- Openness to an intergenerational-approach (within one's own group)

Opinions are divided regarding the question whether or not it is necessary to work in gender-specific groups or not. The general advice is to approach each situation separately and to make decisions based on the objectives of the course or activity.

It is interesting to note that a large group of adult educators want to target young adults. The first (badly integrated) generations seem to be passed over quite easily. Considering the strong preference for the mixed approach, one would expect more openness to age-mixed groups. Although the mixed approach seems to be favoured as a method to promote dialogue, it is important that adult education keeps the potential and needs of the participants in mind. Starting in homogeneous groups is for some a useful and necessary step towards working in mixed groups.

The choice of participants and the decisions whether or not to start with a homogeneous group also depend on the subjects that will be debated. When discussing female emancipation, it is important that the participants have realized a certain level of empowerment within their own ethnic group. Another important consideration is language profi-

ciency. Language problems can make communication between Muslims from different countries difficult. When working in a mixed group one must agree at least on a collective language.

Activities

The most popular instruments for dialogue promotion, which are also considered to be the **most effective**, are **theme-meetings** and **joint meals**, closely followed by **creative activities** and **theatre** and **music festivals**. These form a well-known combination of activities through which multiculturalism is known to flourish. Volunteer work was also mentioned as an effective activity, especially in the cases where cooperation is necessary and achievements are reached together. Creative activities are especially popular amongst younger participants and meals form good starting (promoting acquaintances) and closing activities (celebrating the achieved results).

There are **doubts** about the **effectiveness of the more educational activities**, such as courses, study groups, and user-panels. These activities are often considered to be slightly awkward, while **dialogue activities should primarily resemble daily practice and encounters**. There are also doubts about activities based on mass media and Internet computer-technology (such as Internet newsgroups and phone-circles). Internet chat rooms and public debates are resolutely rejected. Public debates are considered ineffective because they often lead to exclusion (with well-spoken and bold participants dominating the discussion) and to polarisation. Although

public debates work well on television, they do little to combat existing prejudices.

The most **appealing activities** are characterised by **concrete results**, such as enhanced social participation, strengthened self-confidence and further developed competencies. The obstacles to realizing results can be divided into social and personal factors, as shown below:

Obstacles:

Social factors:

- The activity form does not appeal to people (any more)
- Lack of a good network
- Lack of financial means
- Not able to create a safe haven
- Not finding the right or representative contact persons for the target group
- Social pressure to participate
- Activities that are considered to be beneath the participants
- Activities that do not relate to the experiences of the participants

Personal factors:

- Participants are not interested in that activity or not convinced of its importance
- Hostility
- Fear
- Not open to change
- Low language proficiency

Collaboration

Dialogue activities can only succeed if the **target groups themselves are actively included in the activity**. Activities must also be as accessible as possible:

neighbourhood debates, parental participation in education, through club life or interest groups. But most importantly, dialogue activities flourish in a **climate of cooperation and increasing social support**. The different religious and cultural organizations must be included, as well as a wide spectrum of educational organizations, community centres, community development work, parent, senior and youth organizations, local politicians, social work, support organizations for ethnic minorities, churches, mosques and the local authority. The most important questions are **how** these collaborations can be realised.

The questionnaire responses on the role of respondents' own organization differ strongly. For example, education is not considered core business at all by the *'Steunpunt Minderheden Overijssel'* (support organization for ethnic minorities), while *'Osmose'*, although it does not consider itself a promoter, initiator or partner in education, does see a role for itself as executor, process-supervisor and supporter; *'Stimulans'* in turn sees a variety of roles for itself, but not that of initiator or executor; *'Multiple choice'* claims to be able to fulfil all roles; *'Kerken in Actie'* (Churches in action) state that they are and always will be a *'promoter'*, working closely together with the *'Raad van Kerken'* (Council of Churches) and the *'Samen op Wegkerken'* and various national Islamic umbrella-organizations. The conclusion is that support organizations do not have an obvious, ready to fit approach. The roles they can play are largely dependent on the local balance

of powers and the extent to which they can influence them. One organization states that it is mainly the interest groups which define the agenda. There is general consensus that where Islamic umbrella organizations exist (such as in Rotterdam and The Hague) they should be included when developing activities. In cities where no such umbrella organizations exist, interest groups and community organizations can be important partners, as can national organizations such as Forum.

The role of an organization also depends on the available expertise. *'Multiple Choice'*, *'Stimulans'* and *'Kerken in Actie'* all had a lot of experience in organising and supporting educational activities. Other organizations, such as *'Os-mose'* and *'Steunpunt Minderheden Overijssel'* had no such expertise.

Examples of Good Practice

Examples of good practice dialogue activities that were mentioned in the questionnaire are:

- *Stichting Maatschappij en Ondernemen/SMO* (The Business and Society Foundation)
- Installing a platform for Religion and Democracy
- Organising city debates in Haarlem
- Christian – Muslim encounters
- Dialogue groups
- Individual initiatives of Muslims to start a dialogue
- Study meetings for imams and members of the clergy

- Accessible encounters for Muslim and Christian women
- Study meetings for women
- Encounters based on reconciliation
- Excursions
- Open mosque days combined with propositions that stimulate exploration and conversation (in Baarn and The Hague)

Examples of Bad Practice

The bad-practice examples that were given did not include Muslims in the organization of the activities and therefore quickly developed into *'talking about'* rather than *'talking with'* Muslims. The respondents also identified some gaps in current practice, the three main ones being:

- A great need for participation in conferences and debates
- A need to decrease the *'distance'* between participants
- A need to break through the Dutch taboo on religion and especially Islam (*'they'* still believe)

Respondents also noted that pilot projects shouldn't always take place in the large cities, but that **attention should also be paid to smaller cities and towns**. It would be interesting to develop pilot projects in more rural areas through a collaboration of national organizations and to share widely the results of the pilots.

Educational Material

The respondents note that very little educational material is available. *'Kerken in Actie'* is developing the video *'Religion as*

a *bridge*' and uses flyers with information on the subject and a script to organise activities. Other existing materials include productions by Netherlands Muslim Broadcasting (*Nederlandse Moslim Omroep*).

Intercultural communication is considered to be the most important principle underlying educational material. There is no explicit request for educational material, but a handbook for setting up local projects is seen as a useful suggestion. Other ideas are games, audio-visual and digital materials aimed at changing perceptions and combating prejudice. It is interesting to note that materials based on conversation and discussion techniques are not deemed important, partly because of the supposed low effectiveness of debate activities mentioned earlier. Yet in the interviews with the respondents it does become clear that they are in need of conversation and discussion techniques that correspond to the needs and competencies of the target groups.

When developing educational material, the most important aspects to consider are:

Development

- Talk with Muslim groups.
- Work with development organizations such as the Netherlands Institute of Care and Welfare (NIZW) or Forum

Language

- Use the language of youth/street-language (not '*school-language*').
- Use simple, straightforward language

- Appeal to the participants

Content

- Emphasize the similarities

Form

- Use activities that are concrete and immediately applicable
- Use concrete examples
- Use appealing, colourful illustrations.
- Use exercise materials

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Annexe – Focus Group Questionnaire

The aim of the questionnaire was to gain more insight into the role that adult education plays and can play in promoting a broad social dialogue between Muslims and non-Muslims.

Preconditions

1. What do you consider to be the most important preconditions (social, political and judicial) for promoting tolerance and mutual acceptance between Muslims and non-Muslims?

The Role of Adult Education

2. Can adult education play an overall positive role in promoting and broadening the dialogue between Muslims and non-Muslims?

3. If yes: which concrete contributions can adult education make to promote tolerance and mutual understanding between Muslims and non-Muslims? (Continue with question 5.)

4. If no: why not?

5. Which target groups should be addressed by these activities?

- Muslim groups
- Non-Muslim groups
- Mixed groups with Muslims and non-Muslims
- Ethnically divided groups (all Dutch, all Turkish, all Moroccan, etc.)
- Ethnically mixed groups
- Gender specific groups (men and women separately)

- In gender mixed groups
- Key figures
- Interested persons
- Young adults (second and third generation immigrants)
- All ages
- Seniors (first generation immigrants)

6. How do you expect to fulfil the '*diversity principle*', if you choose to work with non-mixed groups?

7. Which adult education activities do you consider suitable for promoting tolerance and mutual understanding between Muslims and non-Muslims?

- Courses
- Theme meetings
- Public debates
- Study groups
- User panels
- Internet newsgroups
- Internet chat rooms
- Creative activities
- Theatre and music festivals
- Joint meals
- Phone circles

8. Which of these activities do you consider the most effective in promoting tolerance and mutual understanding between Muslims and non-Muslims? (*Give each activity a score from 1 to 5, with 5 being most effective.*)

- Courses
- Theme meetings
- Public debates
- Study groups
- User panels
- Internet newsgroups

- Internet chat rooms
- Creative activities
- Theatre and music festivals
- Joint meals
- Phone circle

9. What should be the most appealing aspect of an activity for the participants (self-confidence, competence development, social participation or social importance)?

10. What are the most important obstacles for such adult education activities?

11. With which organization must you collaborate in order to realise these activities?

12. Which other organizations have an interest in a productive dialogue between Muslims and non-Muslims?

13. Which role can your organization play?

- Promoter
- Initiator
- Partner
- Executor
- Supporter
- Other

14. How do you expect to deal with organizations that are not interested in a productive dialogue between Muslims and non-Muslims?

15. Does your organization have any (positive or negative) experience with adult education activities?

16. Which positive examples of promoting tolerance and mutual understanding between Muslims and non-Muslims can you name?

17. Which gaps in current practice are not or cannot be filled?

18. Do you know of educational materi-

al that is suitable for adult education activities aimed at promoting tolerance and mutual understanding between Muslims and non-Muslims?

19. What important aspects (content and form) should be considered when developing educational materials aimed at promoting dialogues?

20. What type of educational material is needed?

- Handbook for developing projects
- Thematic handbook
- Conversation and discussion techniques
- Game materials
- Audio-visual materials
- Digital material

21. What expectations should educational material fulfil in practice?

22. Do you have concrete proposals or ideas for developing educational materials?

Jumbo Klercq/El Batoul Zembib

The Socratic Dialogue Method

What is a Socratic Dialogue?¹

A Socratic dialogue is not a conventional conversation nor an exchange of information or statement of views made by participants. It's not a discussion; it's not focused on convincing others, or to show I'm right and you are not.

Neither is it the intent to expose your knowledge to show your excess power or status. It has also nothing to do with counselling; it has not the intention to teach others something about themselves or to help them to solve the problem. That could be an additional effect and sometimes it is necessary to achieve this, but this does not form the main objective.

In a Socratic dialogue the primary objective is how to explore collectively the primary thoughts based on shared values, reasonable argumentation and common research of a theme. The primary objective is to go beyond the individual awareness and therefore achieve insights that you alone would not achieve. The Socratic Method is all about achieving insights into our hypothesis, reasoning, way of thinking and vision. You review these with each other and look at their validity. Only on these grounds can you for-

mulate common principles and develop a useful and inspiring vision.

The second objective of this method is to learn the skills of dialogue instead of having a discussion.

Results

All activities are the result of the process of research whereby the participants' thoughts are tuned. And it contributes to more understanding of the different points of view.

The confrontation of the different opinions results in a transformation of old thought systems. New perspectives and a flexible use of differences is also one of the outcomes. The attitude of participants grows in a flexible way of dealing with mutual difference.

Operating Procedure

- The dialogue starts with the formulation of the question.
- Participants collect examples they have experienced in relation to the question.
- The participants choose one example for the investigation.

¹ The following explanation on the Socratic Dialogue Method is based on "Free space and room to reflect. Philosophy in organizations" [Boom, 2004] by Jos Kessels, Erik Boers and Pieter Mostert. See: www.hetnieuwetrium.nl

- Within the process of investigation the remarks of the participants are written on a flipchart. The aim of this is that everyone can watch the process. The effect of all this is that every one can follow the contents and the growth of the dialogue.

Guidelines to Establish Dialogue

At the beginning of a group dialogue session, the facilitator distributes these guidelines and they are read together. Although we approach the dialogue in a number of steps (see below), its core is always shaped by the attitude of the various speakers.

1. Take your time. A dialogue is a form of slow thinking, aimed at depth.
2. Listen. Ask questions. Put yourself in the other's place. See the world through his/her eyes.
3. Decisions need not be arrived at. To foster understanding and to gain insight into each other's views is sufficient result.
4. Do not think in opposition to the other ('Yes, but...'). Think along with the other, think together, as one mind ('Yes, and...').
5. Don't concentrate on solutions. Examine the reasons, values and views underneath a problem or a solution.
6. Make room for new thinking. Move beyond old patterns of thought.

A good dialogue bonds people; it creates space and fosters understanding.

Steps in a Socratic Dialogue

In Chapter II of *Free space and room to reflect* we described the most important steps in a Socratic dialogue. We list them briefly here. We formulated the steps so that they can be applied to longer and shorter versions, either in a group or in person-to-person conversations.

1. Formulate the theme to discuss.
2. Transform this theme of investigation into possible initial questions.
3. Select one question which is relevant to all participants. This question is the basis for the entire conversation.
4. Look for examples in your own experience where the initial question plays a role.
5. Each example should be explained briefly.
6. Select one example. Which is the most fruitful example in terms of examining the initial question? Let this example be the basis for analysis and argument during the entire conversation.
7. Let the example be told in sufficient detail so that people can take the place of the presenter. Ask about the facts (circumstances, actions, who, what, where, when, how) and about the felt experience of these facts (thoughts, emotions).
8. Ask the narrator to focus the example on a crucial moment (an act, experience or judgement) and ask him/her to describe this moment as a core statement, made by the narrator ("I").
9. Make a link between this core statement and the initial question. Concretize

the terms in the initial question following the example.

10. Ask the presenter about the motives for the act, the explanation of the experience or the reasons for the core statement. *'Why did you do this?'* *'How come you felt that way?'* *'Why did you think that?'* *'Was that the background of your action?'*

11. Test the justifications by having the others take the position of the presenter. Would they, given this example, have done, thought, felt the same at the time, or not? And why? Is that a good reason? On what basis is the argument valid? Every general statement should be amenable to concretisation in terms of the selected example.

12. Formulate the essence. What is the pivot point of the matter for you? On which values or principles do you base your view?

13. Seek consensus on justifications and core statements. Can all agree on these?

14. Make a link between this outcome and the investigation of the initial question. In what way this question has been answered, how far has it not been answered?

15. Recall the dialogue. What did you like? What bothered you?

Steps in a Brief Dialogue

Brief Explanation of *'Dialogue'* and *'Socratic Conversation'*

The term *'dialogue'* is primarily used as an indication of an investigating conversa-

tion – a conversation based on an initial fundamental question.

The conversations held by Socrates are called *'dialogues'*. More recently people call these *'Socratic Conversations'*, meaning conversations which can be held between ordinary people in a familiarized form of the method Socrates used.

A strong recommendation is to take as much as time as possible to have a Socratic conversation (preferably one to five days). However, often there is less time available, sometimes even just one hour. For these occasions the concept of a brief dialogue has been developed.

A brief dialogue is a compact version of a Socratic dialogue (duration about one hour). For a brief dialogue we follow a fixed pattern. We start with gathering and selecting problem cases in actual practice. One case is selected and discussed in accordance with the scheme outlined below. The method is very suitable for peer-group consultation. It should be remembered, though, that the intent in dialogue is to explicate, exchange and sharpen views rather than problem solving.

Four Steps in a Brief Dialogue

Concentrate on a practical case in which the presenter was involved and that he/she experienced as a problem situation.

1. Recount your experience briefly.
 - a. What factually happened (facts).
 - b. What you did yourself (action).
 - c. What the situation meant for you personally (feelings, emotion),

- d. What issue should be examined here (question).
2. The others pose explanation-seeking questions.
3. The others imagine themselves in the position of the presenter.
 - a. What would the situation mean to you? (feelings, emotion)
 - b. What would you have done? (action)
 - c. How would you reply to the question posed (under 1)? (judgement)
 - d. What would be your reasons? (view)
4. At the end all take a few minutes to formulate the crux for themselves, that is, the principles or values at issue here.
 - a. What touches you? What should we take to heart (essence)?
 - b. What courage is needed to do justice to that?
 - c. What must you give up for it (measure)?
 - d. What needs to be faced (prudence)?
 - e. Hence, what is required in (your part of) the organization (justice)?
4. Try for rapid selection of an example. List the preferences, let them be explained briefly, decide. Not everybody needs to like a specific example, as long as you can work with it.
5. Explore the example as well as possible by letting the presenter introduce the setting and context as concretely as possible (the '*film*'), have the others ask questions, and let the presenter explain. The intention is that the presenter sketches the example in enough detail so that the others get a complete picture and can imagine themselves in the place of the presenter. Ask explanatory questions about:
 - a. what actually happened (facts);
 - b. what the presenter did (action);
 - c. what the situation meant for him/ her personally (emotion).
6. Let the example focus on one crucial act, one experience or one judgement, the so-called '*hot spot*'. Trace what the presenter did, said and felt at that moment. Analyse the initial question in terms of that moment. First make that moment as concrete as possible by way of the questions asked under 5 above: what happened, what was done, what feelings were evoked? This description is the basis for joint inquiry into how you must interpret the event, act or experience. Write the hot spot on the blackboard (or flip-chart) in two ways:
 - a. the act or experience as such;
 - b. the interpretation of it in relation to the initial question.
7. Make sure a joint inquiry starts. Prevent participants from merely formulat-

Ten Tips for the Facilitator in a Socratic Dialogue

1. Be strict about procedure, but do not interfere with the content, even if you disagree with an analysis. Independent inquiry demands that the participants themselves determine the substance of their analysis.
2. Check that the initial question meets the criteria.
3. Check that the examples meet the criteria. Avoid negative examples; they evoke hypothetical thinking.

A Socratic Dialogue Weekend in Vlissingen

The general objective is: stimulating a dialogue

More specific: a dialogue between Muslims and non-Muslims

A dialogue needs a focus, a centre, an initial question.

A dialogue is also a personal conversation, therefore we have to formulate this initial question in a personal way.

We try to avoid abstract or emotionally charged words. The dialogue gets a better chance, when we formulate the question simply and in everyday language. It is no scientific research, but simple investigation. We want to understand better ourselves and others. Difficult terms are barriers for understanding.

A dialogue pays attention to one question; one is sufficient, more than sufficient. However, it needs to be a core issue, so to say *"yes, this is really the question!"*. With regard to our dialogue we have tried to catch this issue in the question: *"When are you included, when have you boarded, when do you participate?"*

'Meedoen' is a trendy Dutch word, especially when it is not only an ordinary

word meaning *"being present"* and *"being active there"*, but also a political word meaning *"to participate"* or in terms of our government *"people have to participate, take your own responsibility!"*. But also to children, family members, neighbours we say: *'kom, doe eens mee'* – *"join the family"*. Obviously we have an idea what it means to participate, to be present, to join the family. This image is based on a range of expectations: you are participating, if you do....., if you behave in this or in that way. How clear are these expectations, clear for ourselves, clear for somebody else? And... how stringent are these expectations? Do people have to correspond to these expectations, or do they have space to take part in another way?

In a dialogue we are investigating ourselves and other(s) focusing on images and expectations which we have about participating in society. This investigation happens via concrete examples from the participants, examples of own experiences, positive or negative. These examples are personal, but simultaneously very recognisable and in that sense even general.

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ing standpoints, opinions or judgements. Instead, let them help each other to think things through by suspending judgement and by asking questions (*'What is your question, and whom are you addressing?'*). Prevent debate; the point is not that that one wins or proves right. We are after creating a wealth of images and arguments. Also, avoid doing no more than advising the presenter. A Socratic dialogue is not about solving his/her problem. We use the case to engage in joint examination of our underlying views and motives.

8. Often, people tend to seek definitions for the terms used, before they begin the inquiry. But definitions come at the end, not at the start. Far more effective to make the terms concrete first, rather than define them.

9. Stick to the main thread, prevent side-tracking. Summarise, repeat and order. Make use of a flip-chart or blackboard to stay on course.

10. Ascertain that all participants can offer an argued answer to the initial question in relation to the case analysed. Let everybody in fact formulate that answer. Are the words expressive, do they point to essentials? Are they words that make a difference, that reach you, that engage you? Or do they just evoke derision and indifference?

Criteria for Initial Question

- The question must be of a fundamental nature; that is, it must relate to matters of basic principle.
- It should not be purely empirical in na-

ture; that is, it should be answerable by reason alone.

- The question must be simply formulated (no juxtaposition of complex concepts).
- There must be a shared commitment to finding an answer; there should be something at stake.
- It must be possible for participants to provide examples drawn from their own experience in which the initial question plays a central role.

Criteria for Working Example

- The example must be familiar from first-hand experience to the individual who introduces it. Hypothetical or *'generalized'* examples like *"I often experience that..."* are inappropriate.
- The example must be relevant to the question and stimulating for the other participants. Each participant must be able to relate to the example and the person introducing it.
- An example should not be overly complicated; simple examples are usually the most effective. If an example consists of a series of events the group is well advised to concentrate on one aspect or on one event.
- The provider of the example must be prepared to relate the example completely so that all group members can fully understand it and its relevance to the initial question.
- It is preferable that the example be one which is *'history'*. If the provider is still

actively engaged in the situation then the example is less appropriate: the risk is that the group will set out to solve someone's problem.

Report and Analysis of a Socratic Dialogue

In the course of the dialogue the views entertained in the group on some important question are explicated. The participants submit a large number of ideas, standpoints and arguments. To order and handle these it is advisable to prepare a report, an analytical summation of the arguments. The report can be the starting point for a subsequent round of investigation. It can also help to digest the dialogue or be used as basis for a summary of arguments.

To write an analytical summary of the arguments it is important that each participant first writes his/her own report. All reports are sent to the other members of the group and to the facilitator. The latter orders the reports into an analytical summation.

Scope of the Participant Report

The report is a means to improve understanding of one's own convictions and arguments, and those of others. Because it is also sent to the other participants it should be neither too long nor too brief, say, no more than about 800 words. Write in understandable prose, not in '*report jargon*'.

Present a brief description of the following elements:

- What happened in the example?
- Which is the presenter's crucial moment (action, thought, sentiment)?
- What is your own core statement?
- Which are the major arguments offered in the dialogue?
- Which general rules or principles are the basis for your own arguments (the big story)?
- What is, therefore, your answer to the initial question?

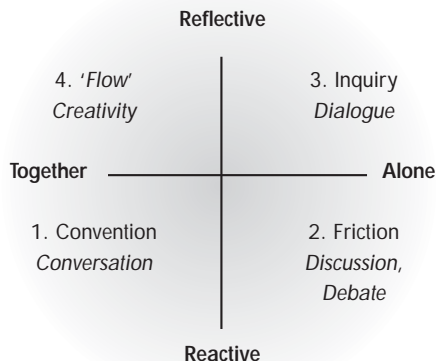
Scope of the Analytical Summation

This report presents a review and ordering of all arguments introduced. It serves as starting point for closer examination of the underlying views held by members of the group.

- Write out the initial question.
- State the names of the participants and the facilitator.
- Guided by the participants' reports draw a detailed picture of the example.
- Reduce the participants' arguments to two or more positions (statements) pertinent to the initial question.
- Collect, per statement, the arguments advanced by the various participants.

The Conversational Grid

At this point we will introduce a current model of dialogue developed by systems therapist C.O. Scharmer. Scharmer engaged in conversations with children in the presence of their families. Video recordings of these talks enabled him to develop a model of the different phases



or 'fields' in discourse. Philosopher and dialectician William Isaacs adopted the scheme for the analysis of discourse in organizations.

The model consists of two axes. The horizontal axis points out whether in our talking and interaction we stress togetherness, the importance of the whole and the group, or stand alone and pursue individual interests. The vertical axis illustrates whether in our communication we demonstrate reactive behaviour, induced by others, i.e. a dependent attitude, or reflective behaviour, self induced, i.e. an autonomous attitude. The two axes define four fields.

Convention

Characteristic for the first (lower left), is that participants show togetherness and reactive behaviour. They conform to prevailing conventions, they are polite, friendly towards each other, well mannered. This kind of talk we call conversation. In conversation we want a pleasant atmosphere, or at least not unpleasant,

and not abrasive. We are friendly and obliging, observe decorum, respect the rules of social conduct and don't upset the pecking order.

At some point this sort of communicating no longer satisfies. Conventions become restrictions, the rules a straitjacket, friendliness a fake. If against our better judgement we keep up the façade we are likely to lose our freedom. Freedom demands taking a stand. We may have to take some distance from the group, brush conventions aside, challenge the pack. In short, we shift to the second field (schematically represented on the lower right).

Friction

This is the realm of friction. Here positions are opposed, arguments countered, propositions criticised. Conversation turns into discussion or, if managed properly, debate. Participants are now on their own.

For the most part, friction is reactive. Even if couched in the friendliest of terms an attack prompts defence. Note that one needs courage or fortitude to make this transition. Any transition from one field to another implies a crisis to be overcome. In this case it is the crisis of daring to stand alone. It is the critical decision to defy existing arrangements and relationships and to challenge fellow participants. Chances are that you disrupt the group and risk your hide. This takes courage.

A discussion or debate can be an outstanding way to collect and test a variety

of relevant arguments. Equally, however, we can lose our freedom in it. When talking turns to friction and opposition, attack and defence, we tend to entrench ourselves. We marshal an armada of arguments to refute objections, to undermine the views of others, to convince others of our truth. A colleague has the floor, but no audience, because everyone is busy mentally repeating their next rebuttal. In short, we harness ourselves with mental blinkers, eyes fixed on the convictions that must win the day or at least be serious contenders: our own. Too often, disagreement with an idea is seen as dismissal of a person.

Well, a fractious discussion cannot be turned into fruitful dialogue or seminal debate as long as the participants do not practise temperance and moderation, that is, as long as inclinations and predilections are not reigned in by (self-)control. Without moderation a discussion cannot possibly attain the level where personal and shared freedom flourish together.

Inquiry

In the third field the attitude of inquiry is dominant, which makes discussion turn into dialogue, explorative talking. Here we have space and time to reflect, not only instrumentally but also substantially, on our original intentions. We have room to reflect on relevant values and significant principles, on what we deem authoritative. We have the freedom to initiate something, to re-initiate it, or stop it. We investigate our interests with a degree of disinterest and reinterpret them as we

compare and test different judgements, views and arguments in terms of validity and legitimacy. In a dialogue we start giving our freedom a shared form.

What happens is this: once we have created space to engage in shared reflection, we proceed to exchange our views and thoughts about things. But these are quite literally *'things thought'*. They are the thoughts of yesterday, stored and shelved in our memory as fixed (and probably formerly successful) patterns. We tend to look upon the explication of our *'thought'* as reflection. It might be more to the point to speak of (almost mechanical) retrieval, re-production. Real thinking, free thinking, is new thinking. That is quite a different thing.

New thinking requires that we let go of our old thoughts, fixed truths and evident convictions, so that we can look upon a question with unclouded eyes. We all are afflicted with a large number of unshakeable convictions, with built-in blind spots and fixations. Francis Bacon (1561-1626) termed them *'idols'* or illusions: images coloured or distorted by our personal perceptions, needs, desires, character and so on. Dialogue is the outstanding means by which we can liberate ourselves from idols and fossilised thoughts – on condition that we step out of our usual patterns of thought and ingrained mental routines. We need fortitude for that, and moderation as well. But we also need something of an entirely different order. We need imagination, the power to think new, as a *'beginner'* in the sense described above. Imagination is the basis of discrimination, that is, the abili-

ty to distinguish importance and unimportance, relevance and irrelevance. And it is the basis of prudence, the ability to be realistic, to stand apart from our numerous illusions. Without imagination we, paradoxically, cannot see things as they really are.

Flow

All of us can recall when a group actually succeeded in *'thinking the new'* and we were able to come up with truly new ideas. This is an inspiring, thrilling and even euphoric experience, evoking a strong *'we'* feeling. Nowadays we use the term *'flow'* with reference to an experience like that. The classical term for it is *metanoia*, literally *'turn of thought'*, or shift of perspective. This is what goes on in the fourth field of our scheme. Isaacs compares this phase of conversation with a jazz band jam session. A jazz band improvises. And just like in a conversation, the musicians can rely on patterns they have long since used and perfected, or they can think of something new right then and there on stage, something they never played before which suddenly adds a new dimension to the old themes. The audience knows the difference. Without this spark the players may display great skill or even perfect technique, but the sound is dull, it does not swing, there is no soul in it. Alerted to the flow the group begins to *'shine'*. You see the concentration and intense involvement with each other and the music. What you hear is an electrifying eruption

of creativity and sheer joy. It is an amazing mix of discipline and surrender, of autonomy and togetherness, of freedom and commitment. This is the kind of freedom we are talking about, the freedom that arises in a well-conducted dialogue.

The Workshop in Vlissingen

In Vlissingen people from different cultural and religious background came together for a weekend seminar. The general objective of the workshop that was organised in the framework of the TUM Project was: stimulating a dialogue between Muslims and non-Muslims.

One of the results of the workshop in Vlissingen was a DVD in Dutch of 17 minutes length that can be seen as a report and as an instructive example of setting up a dialogue.²

The session started with an investigation about what people call a dialogue. A second exercise was to sum up as many questions as possible that could be used for holding a dialogue. The discussion was focused on concrete and personal situations in which the narrator plays a decisive role. The participants were stimulated to concentrate on the exploration of the question behind the examples and were challenged to suppress any judgments in order to uncover the different foundations of their views and ideas.

In the video it can be seen that the result will not always be better understanding. There is a scene where an example told

2 The DVD can be borrowed for viewing from the main office of Odyssee

by one of the participants irritates another participant. Her irritation grows when she mentions that other participants don't feel any irritation, but even express admiration.

The example is about a woman being a 'good sister'. Several participants understand 'sister' as a compliment for the way in which the woman cares for others, but the irritated participant is angry because she thinks that the 'sister' hides the fact that she is very oppressed as a woman, due to the Islamic religion. The discussion amongst the participants exposes the different views on oppression, women and Islam and results in a strong con-

frontation. At the end of the day the friction is discussed and recognized as a reality.

The next day further exploration of this example enables the participants to analyze prejudices and interpretations and to look at what really happened to and between them as participants in this dialogue. Friction shows a challenging way out of the confrontation and how to bring the dialogue forward.

It is not a matter of convincing the other or of defending one's own views or judging about others.



The Holy Land I Love.

Lithographs by David Roberts. Palphort Ltd. P.o.B.2, Herzlia, Israel, p. 27

Ian Draper

Migration of Muslims to the UK

This paper briefly outlines the general situation of Muslims in Britain, dealing with the emergence of Muslim communities and institutions and then dealing with particular issues which are of contemporary significance. Muslims in Britain are not a monolithic community either ethnically or theologically and therefore throughout this paper are referred to in the plural as 'communities'.

Emergence of Muslim Communities

The first established pattern of migration of Muslims to Britain occurred with Yemeni migrants, usually employed as seafarers, in Cardiff, Liverpool, Manchester, South Shields and London during the mid-nineteenth century. Yemeni communities were also established, later, in the Midlands. The most significant Muslim migration occurred in the post-WW2 period, comprising mainly Pakistanis and Bangladeshis. The dynamics of this migration to the UK were predominantly a push-pull process in which employment was the predominant factor – in Pakistan, for example, during the 1950s, there was little employment whereas there was surplus employment in Britain. The migration process of these communities became highly organised by means of sponsorship and patronage and this chain process developed a selectivity factor concentrating the origins of many Pak-

istani migrants in particular, on a few areas in Pakistan, such as Cambellpur, Rawalpindi and Jhelum. The networks that developed were significant in terms of family and extended kinship links. The basic process of migration was established by means of pioneer migrants in the 1950s who sponsored subsequent migration which, in turn, led to the development of self-sufficient communities which developed a structure of socio-economic relations independent of the structure of mainstream British society, at that time. The Commonwealth Immigrants Act (1962) provoked increased migration from Pakistan, which led to single male primary migrants bringing their families to join them in the UK. This development is significant as it established the need for religious provision for children and encouraged observant Islam. Similar patterns can be observed of Bangladeshi migration, albeit during a later time period. This pattern, in particular, provoked the emergence of identifiable Muslim communities.

In addition to the predominant Pakistani and Bangladeshi communities in the UK, there were smaller communities of African, Turkish-Cypriot, Malaysian and Arab Muslims. More recently, there has been the arrival of Muslims from Eastern Europe, in particular from Bosnia.

There are also convert Muslims in the UK, a process which has been taking place on a small scale since the nineteenth century. It is difficult to establish figures as the 2001 Census does not allow for cross-referencing of ethnicity against religion, although some estimates are that the number is approximately 5,000. There are observable patterns of conversion, however. The main channels are through marriage (predominantly women) and through Sufi movements, although the latter is of lower significance in recent years. The Islamic Foundation in Leicester runs a New Muslims Project, which indicates an increase in conversion to non-Sufi Islam. Converts are significant in that they have, to some extent, dominated key areas of the development of institutional Islam in the UK, in particular education.

Development of Muslim Institutions

As local communities of Muslims in the UK organised themselves during the period of post-early 1960s migration, there developed the establishment of house mosques. Many house mosques were established with the purpose of providing religious and community services for specific ethnic groups in particular local contexts. The house mosques were often linked to particular religious groups from the originating countries, e.g. Barelwi, Deobandi, Jamati Islami, Shi'a. These mosques became social focal points of the emergent and growing communities and with the need for educational provision for children, provided an Islamic education based on the madrasa system of rote learning of Qur'an and basic in-

struction in Muslim ritual practice as well as language instruction in Urdu.

By the 1970s, the house mosques began to form networks increasingly based on shared theological perspectives. Additionally, congregations grew, particularly for the jum'a prayers and Eid celebrations which necessitated the need for expansion to accommodate worshippers. As a consequence, by the late 1970s, there began to develop a process of the building of purpose-built mosques which included accommodation for education and social needs.

By the 1980s, Muslim communities across the UK began to engage more pro-actively with political concerns and became involved with local government in particular. This expanded into drawing attention to and engaging with Muslim agendas at a more extended political level to include concerns of the provision of Muslim family law, burials, education etc. Many local government Muslim politicians, although members and representative of mainstream UK political parties (usually Labour), were often, behind the scenes, sponsored by religious and community organizations who used them as lobbyists for Muslim concerns.

By the mid-1990s, there were circa 840 mosques and approximately 950 Muslim organizations of varying sizes, some being small local groups while others were local or national umbrella organizations. There emerged, also, a trend of organizations (and individuals) attempting to become representatives of the Muslim communities as a political voice.

Contemporary Situation

Population

In 2001 the official Census for the first time included a question on religion. Of the total Muslim population of 1.7 million, the largest group of Muslims in terms of ethnicity, in the UK, are of Pakistani and Bangladeshi origin, numbering 1 million. The remaining 700,000 are made up of a number of other communities, some of which are not insignificant, especially the Turkish and Indian Muslim communities: Algerians, Bosnians, Jordanians, Kurds, Lebanese, Mauritians, Gulf Emirate Arabs, Nigerians, Palestinians, Sudanese, Syrians, Tunisians and converts (both white and African-Caribbean). The ethnic distribution of Muslims in the UK varies from area to area, with the most diverse communities being based in the London and SE area. There are significant communities of Muslims of Pakistani origin in the Midlands and Northern towns.

Population growth of SE Asian Muslims in the UK is relatively high compared to the average rates for the UK population overall. As a consequence, there are significant numbers of young people in the Muslim populations in the UK. This has an impact on educational provision and support for young people in Muslim communities. Initial patterns of extended households have been declining, with more young married families living in separate houses – this has an impact on housing provision in predominantly Muslim areas, but there is also a trend of younger Muslim families moving away

from traditionally established Muslim areas, especially those in professional employment. However, the demographics of Muslim families has led to the predominance of Muslims living in concentrated areas of UK cities and towns and experiencing disproportionate rates of unemployment and reliance on means-tested benefits.

Muslim Women

The situation of Muslim women has been somewhat different than for men, where men have, on the whole, maintained a superior position of social and familial power. Primary migration was almost exclusively led by men, and cultural, and to some extent religious, patterns have led to Muslim women being significantly disempowered, although there has been an increasing shift towards increased assertion on the part of Muslim women over the past two decades. One of the significant issues has been arranged, and more significantly, forced marriages. Arranged marriages have been a part of the cultural and social practices of many Muslim communities in the UK and are not essentially Islamic in origin and have affected both males and females. This practice is on the decline and there is an increased pattern of families allowing young people to initiate contact with potential marriage partners with the agreement of the families. There have, however, been a number of cases of Muslim young women being tricked into marriages, usually during holidays to Pakistan.

This has led to intervention by the government to try and prevent its occurrence. There has been a considerable trend for Muslim women to address the issues of discrimination in their own communities, often asserting their right to equal treatment on the basis of Islam, highlighting that much disadvantage for women is based in cultural factors and not religious ones. Various Muslim women's organizations, which have been established to deal with particular problematic issues for Muslim women, have been, on the whole, of a religious nature, for example, the An-Nisa group founded in 1985. Muslim women have been at the forefront of the assertion of Islam over culture in the UK, and wearing of hijab has become a symbolic statement of being Muslim for many women, although for others it can be a vehicle for social freedom in the face of a growing assertion of religious identity amongst Muslim men in the UK.

Education

In terms of education, there were patterns of Muslim children not being able to access the curriculum fully due to lack of English language skills, as often the language spoken at home was not English. This situation was exacerbated by the social and cultural contexts in which Muslims found themselves. Evidence in 1991 suggested that educational achievement amongst main Muslim communities in the UK was significantly lower than other communities, but by the mid-1990s, this situation was changing. Of particular note, was the increased educational achievement of Muslim women. There is

concern, during the present time amongst educationalists in the UK, that Muslim boys in particular are underperforming in school and there are a number of initiatives, including mentoring schemes, to address this problem. One of the responses from Muslim communities to the issue of education has been to initiate their own provision. This ranges from the establishment of full-time Muslim schools (some of which are now state funded) to the provision of privately run tutoring schemes which are orientated to providing additional educational addition to state education. In principle, the latter are not of a religious nature, but some schemes do substitute the madrasas, which are still providing a religious education, increasingly modified from the early models to include theological education in addition to the recitation of the Qur'an and ritual training.

The issue of Muslim schools has been of particular importance to some Muslims, but by no means all. The range of Muslim schooling extends from the established and innovative Islamia School in London, which was established by Yusuf Islam (formerly Cat Stevens) and is now state-funded, to traditional residential madrasas which provide a curriculum based on the madrasa movements of Pakistan (as well as the statutory state curriculum). During the 1990s, there were significant campaigns to persuade the government to state fund Muslim schools, highlighting that such funding existed for Christian and Jewish schools, but this movement was a representative issue concerning the recognition of Islam in

parity to Judaism and Christianity in the UK, rather than indicating that the majority of Muslims wished a Muslim school education for their children.

Employment

In terms of employment, the majority of Muslims, when first arriving in the UK, were disadvantaged in terms of socio-economic position. This situation has not changed to a great extent for the majority of communities and many of Pakistani and Bangladeshi origin are still employed in semi-skilled or unskilled sectors of industry, which means that they are prone to poor working conditions, poverty, poor health, poor housing and low educational achievement. There is, however, evidence of some social mobility amongst Muslims from these groups and many entrepreneurial successes have taken place as well as evidence of second and third generation children achieving increasing academic success and many obtaining professional employment. There is evidence that employment trends are shifting towards the service and technical industries, with significant numbers being self-employed as a means of self-empowerment in the face of discrimination and disadvantage.

Religious Discrimination and Islamophobia

The 1997 Runnymede Trust Report on Islamophobia highlighted the negative stereotyping that was taking place of Muslims in the UK in the British media in particular. Such media representation re-

inforced, and perhaps reflected, a general anti-Islam trend in Britain and following the attack on the Twin Towers in September 2001, Muslims in Britain have felt significantly more vulnerable. On the whole, Muslims feel that they are seen as outsiders in Britain and despite significant shifts towards acceptance as an integral part of British society, there is an increasing perception that the wider society perceives them as 'other.' There are a number of push-pull factors in this situation, not least racial and cultural discrimination and prejudice on the part of wider 'white' British society, but international events, such as the Iranian Revolution of 1979 and more recently 9/11, as well as the Rushdie Affair in particular, have forced many Muslims to socially polarise in their relationship to the wider society.

There has been also a trend amongst younger Muslims in particular (though not exclusively so) to explore and assert a new Muslim identity in contradistinction to the cultural Islam of the older generations. This has expressed itself in the visual artefacts of Muslim identity in terms of the hijab, beards and 'Muslim' clothing. Additionally, Muslims have increasingly asserted themselves against discrimination by making demands through either political lobbying or other forms of protest, for increased provision of Muslim needs in the arenas of education (such as prayer times, provision of halal food etc), employment and health and social services provision. Such assertion has achieved much at local levels and there is increasing evidence of Muslims finding

a more significant role in public life, but there is also trend of resentment amongst certain, particularly disadvantaged, members of the wider society which focuses on Muslims in particular and which has led to the success of the British National Party, for example, in local government in towns with significant Muslim populations.

Muslim Organizational Representation

In response to the assertion of Muslims in demanding equal access to public services and representation, there has emerged a move for some sort of organizational representation. There has, in the past, been some concern as to the degree of representation of some Muslim organizations, particularly at a national level, but there has been a more concerted effort to form some representation which covers as wide an ethnic and theological base as possible. Various attempts have been made to achieve this objective, including the Muslim Parliament in 1992. In 1996 the Muslim Council of Britain was established, which provides more legitimate representation, likewise the UK Action Committee on Islamic Affairs, established in 1988. The funding of such organizations, however, has been problematic as little is provided by central government as religious organizations are



In Medieval Spain Christians, Muslims and Jews Cooperated for the Benefit of All. Source: UNESCO 'Delicate Balance' Roleplay

ineligible for funding and lottery funding is rejected by Muslims on theological grounds. Despite the problem of representation, however, various Muslim organizations have been successful in highlighting and lobbying on behalf of a number of significant issues, such as education, and appearing on national media to provide the Muslim perspective to increasingly Islam-orientated news events. Muslims generally, in the UK, have recognised the need, especially since 9/11, to have articulate and moderate representation and there is increasing acceptance of such centralised organizations to provide this.

Interfaith Relations

To some extent, the interfaith movement has been at the forefront in addressing issues of prejudice against Muslims. At both a national and local level, the Church of England in particular has been engaged in dialogue with Muslims to find common social and theological understanding. Following 9/11, there was an increased desire to engage in some mutual support of Muslim communities, who felt particularly vulnerable at that time. Additionally, academic institutions, such as the Centre for the Study of Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations at the University of Birmingham, have for many years been involved in the study of Christian-Muslim relations at a more theological level and increasingly the Islamic Foundation at Leicester has engaged with these issues. The Interfaith Network in the UK, which has representation at both local and national levels of many religious communities in Britain, has also actively encouraged discussion at theological, social and political levels.

Conclusion

The situation of Muslims in Britain is essentially fluid and there is increasing evidence, despite discrimination and Islamophobia, of many Muslims taking their place as an integral part of wider British society. However, there is also a trend towards political and Islamist Islam amongst certain disenfranchised minorities, particularly young people. Muslims are not a monolithic community any more than Christian societies are and it could be argued that there will be increased theological and, as a consequence, social diversification rather than cohesion as Muslims address the increasing challenges of being Muslims in Britain.

Results of the Round Table Discussion on the Contribution of Adult Education in the Context of Christian-Muslim Interaction and Mutual Understanding in the UK

Introduction

On 30th of April 2003 a round table discussion took place with representatives of a range of different institutions (see participant list) involved in adult education at the level of academic and religious education courses to discuss the main research question of the TUM Project.

Prof. Nielsen introduced the project and explained his own involvement and circulated the TUM proposal document. He outlined the main research question and subsidiary questions.

He pointed out that the purpose of the present session was to pool information and to register considerations to be taken into account based on the experience of those present. He also drew attention to the fact that adult education in Germany and Scandinavia is better developed, structured and financed and receives more government funding than in the UK. The nearest UK equivalent is the Workers' Educational Association (WEA), but UK adult education provision is more dispersed and diverse (WEA, local churches, the *'life-long learning'* agenda, community groups, university extramural studies departments, etc). In addition, the extent of Muslim participation in civil society is much further ad-

vanced in the UK than in Germany. These differences had to be borne in mind when looking at the context and wording of the proposed document.

Discussion

Everyone present gave a personal response to the main questions:

A.S.: His experience was in a university context, particularly Birmingham. He emphasised the need to discover what Muslim institutions were available to address the concerns raised, i.e. to inform the general public about Islam and to give Muslims an opportunity to interact with the wider society. However, he was not optimistic about the acceptability of the level of provision available in Muslim institutions, which he thought were generally not well organised with regard to standards, guidelines and courses. Muslim institutions could therefore be invited to participate in partnerships with educationalists to increase educational awareness. **Teaching Islam to Muslim adults is a relevant form of adult education if courses are open to the public.** He would like to see well-resourced courses and well-produced resources that showed the diversity of Islam.

A.W.: His main experience was in training Christians. There had been greater readiness for this since 9/11. He thought the CSIC summer schools had served this purpose well and encouraged the revival of a similar programme. **Clergy training was a key area** because they should know more about Islam than the general public and were opinion formers. It was important that there should be input in their training and in the early years of their ministry. However, **lay people were often more receptive** because they often had more practical experience of interaction with Muslims in everyday life. They wanted basic knowledge, an opportunity for encounter with Muslims, an understanding of the '*Islamic map of Britain*' and how this related to the rest of the world, and a chance for Christian reflection on the situation. In areas where there were no local Muslims, input into the programme by '*live*' Muslims or at least via video was very important. He emphasised very strongly the **importance of encounter and also of leadership training among young people**. He pointed out that universities and other educational establishments were willing to make space for almost any course as long as students could be recruited.

G.T.: He endorsed the previous contributions and referred to his **work with Standing Advisory Councils for Religious Education (SACREs), statutory bodies established by local government**. He **suggested that an interesting project would be to work with Muslim communities to produce educational materials**. He is involved in setting up **young people's faith**

forums and reported that in Bradford there was a '*young people's SACRE*' to discuss religious education. He is involved in teacher training and emphasised the **significance of the presence of Muslim teachers of religious studies** and other subjects **in British schools**.

A.S.: He said that as far as the Muslim community was concerned, the desire was for education to be provided in a way they could access. He said there were many people, **especially women**, who were educated to degree level and wanted further education, but **at their own pace and in a form compatible with their home lives**. There would be a demand for **live-in crash courses of approx. 10 days**. There is always a need to understand why Muslims are as they are, so education was needed not only on the teachings of Islam but on the **background to the situation of Muslim communities**. **Distance learning** could be developed so that people could work alone with occasional guidance. It was important to fit their timetables.

A.M.: His main experience is in university teaching at Heythrop, mostly post-graduate. In his experience, the churches have always had an input into education and have been at the forefront of making a faith-based approach to engagement with the Muslim community, which Muslims appreciate. This faith-based approach was about Christians coming to an understanding that from the point of view of both theology and history (Islam is part of Christian history) and encouraging Christian communities to be open to engagement with the Muslim tra-

dition and sacralise this encounter. It was important to remember that there were more church-based universities in continental Europe than in the UK, so **the faith-based approach** ought to be more relevant for that context. He emphasised that church-based education had a unique and distinctive contribution to make which would be influential in agenda forming.

J. Nielsen asked whether, if churches had taken the initiative in education about Islam 30 years ago, it would have been met with suspicion by most Muslims. Is there now more trust?

A.S.: responded that the situation had changed and there **was now more trust among Muslims resident in the UK for more than a generation**. But newcomers, e.g. refugees, had the old suspicions. The response to any church-based education programmes would depend on how long established the Muslim community was in the locality. E.g. there would be more suspicion in Italy than in France or the UK.

A.M.: emphasised the importance for churches of trying to really understand the Muslim theological position.

A.W.: said that there is also Christian suspicion of Muslims '*wanting to take over*'. It is therefore important to work with positive groups on both sides. Both A.W and

G.T.: emphasised the **importance of personal encounter** for breaking down prejudice and stereotypes.

A.S.: commented that there were similar patterns of suspicion between Muslims and Hindus.

A.S.: thought there was a tendency to underestimate the willingness of the receiver and was concerned that dialogue could become simply an exchange of information. He emphasised that unless there was **self-awareness and an ability to self-relativise among the participants in dialogue** it would not lead to in-depth mutual understanding. **Muslims were generally less self-aware and this led to a power imbalance in dialogue.**

M.I.: agreed that there had been a huge growth in interest and demand for knowledge of Islam, but the negative side to this had been the emergence of ill-prepared and sometimes wrong education about Islam. He also made the point that Christians had a role not only in relation to **Christians but also as mediators and facilitators between faith and secularism** because while being, like Muslims, people of faith, they were also '*at home*' in Western culture. He emphasised that education could not take place in the abstract – **encounter was vital**. He said there was a need to **target key sectors:** professionals, opinion formers, public authorities, community leaders with their communities, and young people. He gave the example of an '*Intercultural Leadership School*' for emergent leaders across communities where a few days living together had led to on-going friendships. **It was important for adult education not to perpetuate the '*our Muslim neighbours*' approach.**

S.v.S.: commented that education about Islam had to be **at different levels for different groups**. '*Learning about Muslims*' for non-Muslims involved **learning about**

oneself and one's prejudices. It was important to hear what the community's felt needs were. He thought there should be two researchers if it was to be realistic to expect attitudes in the various communities to be picked up.

A.B.: said he was **not happy with the title** – Muslims were here to stay. He said it was good to provide educational materials, but if Christians and Muslims were not mutually accepting of each other, materials were irrelevant. Returning to the UK after 35 years away, he found that alienation had increased among 3rd generation Muslims. They speak the vernacular and so could not use the language as an excuse, but they still felt alienated. There was a strong sense of injustice sustained by the media presentation of the international political situation which could not be removed by friendly meetings. Both sides needed to realise that accepting each other as an integral part of one's identity did not at all mean accepting each other's beliefs.

A.D.: referred to his experience of quoting the saying of Jesus in the Qur'an 19:33 to Christians and asking them where it came from. The response to discovering it was in the Qur'an was either, *'I didn't know that'* or *'Why didn't they tell me?'* He was concerned about evangelism taking place (in Iraq) under cover of aid, but thought it was best to get on with the business in hand. There **were more shared positives that could be built on than divisive negatives** and these should be emphasised.

M.I.: re-emphasised the need for encounter, but said communities are social-

ly and geographically divided so encounter has to be made to happen. **People have to be taken out of their comfort zones.**

A.M.: commented that churches have an important contribution to make to the wider society so this is not simply a *'religious'* matter. He also emphasised the importance of encounter.

G.T.: said he took very seriously A.S's comments on the **need for self-relativising.**

A.W.: stressed that **encounter should be proper and followed up** and it could then bring about real change. It was possible and better to build trust before dealing with difficult issues and this would lead to more effective dialogue.

G.T.: pointed out the importance of **'bridge people'** who were known and trusted in *'both camps'*.

S.v.S.: spoke about the role of the structures we work with. For example, imams and clergy hold positions of respect and influence – what is there about this that could enhance involvement between communities and what could be an impediment.

J. Nielsen: pointed out that in his experience people only wanted to hear what was comfortable and simply kept circulating within the areas where they were at ease.

A.B.: in his experience in Jordan, Christians and Muslims lived for long periods in a relationship of acceptance but avoided talking about religion. Conflict was introduced by religious debate, so it could

be said that **discussing religion can have negative effects.**

J. Nielsen: pointed out that it is because religious issues are swept under the carpet that they cause conflict when they are raised in fragile situations.

A.S.: responded that it is not only the geographical, but also the cultural boundaries between communities that are contested. There is a need to **create challenging encounters among Muslims living in diverse communities** in order to create a mature self-awareness so that they are enabled to make an effective contribution, otherwise the field is left to transnational extremist groups.

A.W.: agreed that the differences between Muslim contexts and between levels of politicisation need to be acknowledged and said the role of Christians in supporting moderates can be appreciated (e.g. the Archbishop's group of consultants).

Participants

Representatives of the following institutions met for the round-table discussion:

- Al-Furqan Islamic Heritage Foundation, London
- Centre for the Study of Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations (CSIC), Dept. of Theology, University of Birmingham
- Al-Tajir World of Islam Trust, London
- Archbishop's Interfaith Consultants
- Senior Lecturer in Islamic Studies, Heythrop College, University of London

- School of Education, University of Birmingham
- Markfield Institute of Higher Education/Islamic Foundation, Leicester
- Westhill Religious Education Centre, School of Education, University of Birmingham
- Hon. Senior Lecturer, Centre for the Study of Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations (CSIC)
- Church of England, Leicester

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The migration process: gifts and offerings among British Pakistanis, Werbner, P, Oxford: Berg, 1990

An anthropological study of the impact of migration on traditional social networks and their continuity.

Islamic Britain: religion, politics and identity among British Muslims, Lewis, P, London:, I.B.Tauris, 1994.

An in-depth study of the impact of and responses to the Rushdie affair of 1989 with particular reference to Bradford where it started.

Ian Draper

Summary of Activities in the TUM Project in the UK

In the UK, Adult Education is defined in a multiplicity of ways. Although there is a government strategy which includes Adult Education and Lifelong Learning, the focus is essentially on education and skills related to employment. The strategies of government were to encourage people to acquire basic skills, both maths and literacy, as well as vocational training and re-training, with a view to enhancing employment prospects and furthering the national economy. Strategies included personal funding to encourage people to enrol on eligible courses, such as the now discredited Individual Learning Accounts (ILA) which were set up in 1999 but closed in 2001 due to suspicions of fraud. ILAs provided funding to individuals to enable them to attend courses, priority given to returners to work, those made redundant, single parents and the unemployed. Details of the UK government approach to Adult Education and Lifelong Learning can be found at www.lifelonglearning.co.uk

Adult Education, in this context, was provided by specialised vocational centres and Colleges of Further Education. An Adult Learning Inspectorate was established in April 2001, drawing together Adult Education and work-based training. Adult Education as a formal sector of the government education service in

the UK is, consequently, more orientated towards skills and vocational training and education or formal qualifications rather than orientation and awareness courses.

For the purposes of examining Adult Education and Islam, it is essential to widen the scope of government definitions of Adult Education. Education for Adults, as opposed to school students and recent school leavers, is provided by a wide range of institutions. These can be identified as follows:

Local Authorities: most local authorities in the UK provide Adult Education courses which range from vocational courses, which fall within the government's strategy for lifelong learning, to hobby orientated courses, such as cookery, flower arranging, astrology.

Colleges of Further Education: FE colleges provide similar ranges of courses to local authorities, but also provide traditional examination courses for GCSE and 'A' levels as well as vocational courses. Many of these courses are evening based. Hobby courses are also provided, but there tends to be a greater focus on accreditation.

Universities: through departments, variously named as Lifelong Learning, Continuing Studies, Extra Mural Studies, Pub-

lic Programmes Office, universities provide a range of courses which include general introductions to subjects and accredited courses which can be used towards degrees. Many of the courses are organised and delivered by individual academic departments within universities.

Workers' Education Association: The Workers' Education Association is the UK's largest voluntary provider of adult education, funded in part by the Learning and Skills Council in England as well as the EU and National Lottery. It was founded in 1903 to support the educational needs of working people and has a commitment to provide access to education for all. The range of courses is vast, some 10,000 courses each year to 110,000 adults. Courses are delivered according to local needs, often in partnership with local community groups.

Religious Bodies: many churches in the UK provide courses for adults, most often in religious subjects. Many dioceses of the Church of England have an Adult Education division which oversees these courses. Many of the courses are Christian in nature, such as the Alpha course. Other religious groups, to a lesser extent, organise formal courses, usually on religious issues also.

Private Institutions: there are private institutions which provide courses, often vocational or professional training, but also cultural, for example Farncombe Estate Adult Learning Centre in Broadway.

Islam and Adult Education

In surveying the provision of courses on Islam intended for adults, a range of institutions provide courses which cover Muslim topics.

Local councils and Colleges of Further Education predominantly provide either community focused courses, such as Arabic, delivered to Muslims or qualification based courses such as GCSE and 'A' level; there are exceptions such as Bradford and Airedale council, which provides an introductory course on Islam. This represents a shift compared to ten years ago, for example, when courses under the auspices of local authorities often included general introductions to Islam. The change could be as a consequence of political factors or most likely because this provision has been taken over by universities.

Universities provide a range of courses on Islam, orientated towards non-Muslims, some focused on credit bearing modules and formal certificates and diplomas, others non accredited, for the general public. Examples of these courses can be found in the case studies, but others include:

- University of Oxford: Understanding Islam and the Muslims
- University of Reading: Islam and Christianity: confrontation or co-existence?
- Cardiff University: Introduction to Islam
- Leeds University: Women in Islam; Introduction to Islamic History and Civilisation

- Trinity College Carmarthen, University sector college of West Wales, Introduction to Islam

Some of the university provision is in collaboration with religious institutions, such as the Birkbeck Certificate/Diploma which is delivered in partnership with the Muslim College.

WEA provides a number of courses. These courses are locally provided and include courses on politics, history, art and general introductions.

Religious groups provide a range of courses on Islam. Predominantly, these are Christian institutions, and range from sympathetic introductions to Islam to evangelically orientated courses. Examples of these, include:

- Malvern churches: Understanding Islam
- Moseley, Birmingham St Mary: Understanding Islam
- Cardiff, City United Reformed Church: Relations between Christianity and Islam
- Ealing Abbey, Benedictine Study and Arts Centre: Christians Understanding Islam
- Guildford Diocese: Islam, the Church and the West

Jewish institutions also provide courses:

- London Jewish Cultural Centre: Judaism, Christianity and Islam: Living with Difference
- Leo Baeck College: various seminars including Islam

Muslim provision tends to focus on formal courses orientated towards Muslims, though not exclusively, for example, those provided by the Mu'ath Centre in Birmingham. Orientation courses are not extensive and when they occur tend to be day seminars, such as one provided by Sufi Muslims in Glastonbury in 2001 in collaboration with a local parish church or a number of seminars run by the Amina Trust in Birmingham (also Sufi based) over the past ten years. The main provider of structured courses on Islam, specifically with an objective of furthering non-Muslim understanding of Islam is that provided by the Islamic Foundation. Islamic Relief (Birmingham) is also involved in the provision of courses on Islam to both schools and work places.

In terms of private institutions of adult education, the Farncombe Estate Adult Learning Centre, run by Group 4 (a global security services company) and focused mainly on managerial professional training, runs a course on Islamic Art and Culture.

In addition to formal courses, other exhibitions and arts orientated events take place across the country, focusing on Islam and Muslims. These exhibitions and arts events, sometimes with accompanying seminars, provide an informal educational experience on Islam for participants, for example al-Khayyal theatre events in London and Birmingham and Portrait of Islam photography event (Robin Laurance) at the Midland Arts Centre in Birmingham.

Case Studies

Methodological Issues

Identifying courses relevant to the project has necessitated exploring resources available on the Internet, personal networking and literature searches. Much Adult Education provision is local by nature and not necessarily nationally advertised, and consequentially no research could be fully comprehensive without a great deal of local contact across the UK. It is likely, therefore, that larger institutions, such as universities, advertise their courses widely whereas local institutions, and possibly Muslim institutions and groups in particular, do not. This might account for the apparent disparity in the provision of courses by Muslim institutions if they have only been propagated within a tight geographical area. Therefore, much of what has been identified for the Case Studies has been limited by public awareness of the course and access.

A problem that has arisen in conducting fieldwork and interviews has been obtaining cooperation from individual tutors for courses. The nature of much locally based Adult Education provision, especially non-accredited, is that teaching is bought-in and based on fixed contracts and therefore institutions have little directive influence over individual tutors and teachers. The consequence of this has been that although initial approaches to institutions have been positive, the individual tutor has been given the option to make contact and in many cases has not. Cooperation in the research is essential and therefore pressure or over-

persistence is counter-productive, and so other institutions and examples have had to be identified and pursued when it has been clear that particular course tutors were not going to cooperate with the research. The nature of the courses is that they are not, essentially, public access unless enrolled, therefore approaches have had to be made institutionally with the exception of personal networking. To enrol on courses for the purpose of this research was judged ethically unacceptable.

Not all course tutors produce formal teaching notes or handouts and there is a significant degree of possessive copyright in the UK, where there is serious reluctance to share any course materials other than outlines. Additionally, many courses in the UK at post-school level, particularly in the Humanities, are based in reading lists and teaching materials will focus on these. Consequentially, actual teaching material has been difficult to obtain and that which has, in the form of course notes, handouts and participant evaluation, has been left to the tutors' discretion in terms of its use. Additionally, any confidential material cannot be included in the report feedback or the accompanying Appendix.

Birkbeck College, University of London

Certificate/Diploma in Islamic Studies

This course is a university level course, delivered in association with the Muslim College. The aim of the course is to provide an academic grounding in Islamic

Studies for *“religious, social or cultural reasons.”* The course consists of two levels, the Certificate and the Diploma. The entry requirements for the Certificate do not expect any formal qualifications except the ability to read, write and speak English fluently. The Diploma requires the completion of the Certificate or other appropriate qualifications.

The duration of the course is two-three years for the Certificate and two-four years for the Diploma and attendance requirements are one morning or evening a week for each module. The variation in the length of the course as a whole depends on the number of modules completed and therefore makes the period of time to complete flexible according to the individual needs of the students.

Teaching is based on lectures, seminars, language exercises (where appropriate) and class presentations by students. Assessment is by coursework. In general the pattern of study, for the Certificate, is to take the Introduction to Islam module and then take any two modules. The Introduction to Islam functions as a core course unless students can show that they have previous experience. Usually no more than two modules are taken in each year.

The modules cover a range of topics beside the Introduction to Islam. These include Qur’an and Hadith, Shari’ah, Islamic History and Culture, Muslim Theology and Philosophy, Social and Political Issues, Introductory Arabic, Arabic Texts and Islam and the Media. Diploma students take an extra module above the requirements of the Certificate course.

The course is delivered in different locations including the Muslim College, the School of Oriental and Religious Studies at Woking, London School of Economics.

Open University, Department of Religious Studies

The Open University is a pioneering university for access to Higher Education in the UK. As such, it provides modular courses which can aggregate towards a degree. The teaching methods of the OU are predominantly based on students working through module handbooks, supported by a course tutor, and attendance at a summer school as part of their degree requirements. The vast majority of OU students are part-time and usually in employment.

As such, the Open University’s Department of Religious Studies does not provide specific courses on Islam. Two modules are particularly relevant to Islam, however. These are module A213 World Religions and module AD317 Religion Today: Tradition, Modernity and Change.

Module A213. The aim of this module is to introduce the basic tenets of the religion in question, provide an overview of the religion, emphasising internal diversity, and provide an examination of the religion using scholarly enquiry in a non-confessional manner.

The entry requirements for the course do not insist on previous knowledge but it builds on the Arts Level 1 course Introduction to the Humanities, which provides basic skills in essay writing and study skills. Assessment is by seven tutor-

marked assignments and an examination. The module counts towards a degree.

Units 5 and 6 of this module deal with Islam.

Module AD317. This module looks at how religion is played out in the modern world. The course deals with both formal and informal religion, including New Age.

This is a Level 3 course and so the entry requirements for this course insist that courses from Levels 1 and 2 have been completed. Assessment is in the form of six tutor-marked assignments and a final essay. The module allows students to choose what they study.

Islam is dealt with at a number of stages through the module, including Block1: From Sacred Text to Internet, where representations of Islam are examined with special reference to Egypt; and Block 2: Religion and Social Transformations, which examines the challenges of globalisation.

Manchester Metropolitan University Faculty of Humanities and Social Science

Certificate of Higher Education in Islamic and Middle Eastern Studies

This is an undergraduate course, requiring two years part-time study of one evening per week. The programme is designed for “*professional and lay people who wish to deepen their understanding of Islam and the Islamic world.*” In addition to course attendance, a one-day

study trip is also arranged to a major Islamic and academic centre in the UK, designed to allow students to observe the interactions between Islam and British society. The course places an emphasis on British Muslim communities.

The course content includes introductions to Islam, Early Islamic History, Islamic Theology, British Islam and current political issues in the Muslim world.

Assessment for the course includes both written examinations and assessed coursework.

Diploma of Higher Education in Islamic and Middle Eastern Studies

This course builds on the Certificate course. Entrance to the course requires the Certificate or a BTEC HND or equivalent qualification in Islamic Studies. As such, it deepens the level of academic coverage compared to the Certificate.

The course content includes Islamic Law, Shi’ism, Sufism, Islam and the West, Muslim Families and Customs and Gender and Politics in Islam.

Assessment is as for the Certificate.

Both the Certificate and Diploma are orientated towards providing grounding in Islamic Studies for professionals who deal with Muslims, such as teachers, police officers, social workers and health workers.

Islamic Relief

Islamic Relief has a designated project manager who provides and coordinates a variety of talks and short courses. The courses are a part of Islamic Relief’s ac-

tivities in advocacy, campaigning for policy change at a global level, focusing on development education. Much of this is orientated towards examining how lifestyle and behaviour in the developed world have an impact on global issues, from an Islamic perspective. Part of this work deals with how these perspectives are shared with other secular and religious perspectives and highlight that there are shared values and common perspectives on social justice and environmental issues.

These courses, workshops and talks take place in schools, colleges, workplaces, teacher training institutions, school INSET. Much of the content of the workshops is at the discretion of the individual tutor, but material has been produced in the form of a booklet which outlines the teaching of Islam and is provided to participants in workshops. The audiences for many of these sessions is variable, given the context, and therefore the tutor has to adjust the presentation and content accordingly. Other agencies are occasionally involved to provide variation and specialist skills, such as Mimar workshops.

Workers' Education Association

Courses with an Islamic theme

WEA provides a number of courses with an Islamic theme at different centres around the UK. These courses are not accredited and are orientated towards people who have an interest in Islam for professional or personal reasons and run for differing time periods from 4-6 weeks or day courses. Courses are run under three

disciplinary categories: Religious Studies, Social Science and Art History.

Courses cover different aspects of Islam and are individually determined by local tutors. The Understanding Islam course in Tring covers the origins of Islam, history, faith and culture; the Understanding Islam course in Marlow focuses on the practice of Islam and Muslims in Britain. Other courses being run during 2003/4 include Islam: History, Culture and Contemporary Issues; Islam and its Culture; Buildings of Islam: Islam – A Way of Life; History and culture of the Islamic World; Islam and the West: a Clash of Civilisations; and Buildings of Islam. Courses are set up by individual tutors with specialist knowledge and experience and, as in the case of the Tring courses, can be extended according to the interests of the participants.

Portsmouth Diocese

Next Steps: Islam

This course is run by the Portsmouth Diocese Adult Education department. The course builds on the programme of the Adult Education department and is entitled Next Steps as it is intended to move beyond the basic programmes of Christian education.

The course has no formal entry requirements and is not accredited. It covers the basics of Islam, particularly faith and practice, based on the Five Pillars, and also on the history of Islam and Islam in the contemporary context. This course is essentially provided for members of Christian congregations and is established to pro-

vide an insight into Islamic belief and practice with a view towards greater tolerance.

Woodbrooke Quaker Study Centre

Understanding Islam

This course was delivered by members of staff of the Centre for the Study of Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations, University of Birmingham. It was designed for participants to gain an overview of Islam and covered, in five sessions, the areas of Islamic Religious Thought, the Qur'an, Politics, Christian-Muslim Relations and Women in Islam. The course included reading requirements in addition to lectures.

Woodbrooke runs a number of courses and weekend workshops which address a number of areas in religion and spirituality, especially Quaker spirituality. A weekend workshop has already been available on the works of Rumi and one is planned on Sufism. The course on Islam, which has subsequently been followed up by individual sessions, especially on Muslim women, was provided to local Quakers to provide an insight into Islamic belief and practice in the context of international events. The course was very well subscribed.

Islamic Foundation

Muslims in Britain: Cultural Awareness Training

The Islamic Foundation provides a two day residential course which is designed to provide non-Muslims with an insight into the beliefs and practices of Muslims.

The course is aimed at professionals who deal with Muslims, such as social workers, police, teachers, health workers, probation officers, youth and community workers and human resources staff.

The course provides all material and participants are issued with a certificate of attendance. There is assessment. The two day residential is limited to 20 participants and day courses are limited to 30 participants. The course is usually funded by employers, due to the cost, and very few individuals attend self-funded.

The trainers are drawn predominantly from the Islamic Foundation staff.

The course covers a number of areas divided into seven sections covering Muslims in Britain; Beliefs and Practices; Mosque and Community; Festivals and Life Cycles; Islamophobia; Family and Gender Issues; and Community Cohesion. A substantial course handbook is provided which covers all areas in greater detail with follow-up material and reading guidance. Much of the course provides an opportunity for professionals, in particular, to have contact with Muslims who have specialist knowledge. As a consequence, the format of the training includes lectures, accompanied by extended discussion and questions, which allow participants to discuss areas and specific issues which are of concern to their individual areas of work. The standing of the Islamic Foundation, with its wellappointed premises and teaching facilities, enhances the value of this course to the professional bodies whose staff attend it.

Evaluation of the Findings

Overview of the Provision of Adult Education on Islam in the UK

Although there is some structured management of areas of education which includes the remit of Adult Education in the UK, principally Life Long Learning, coverage of courses which provide subjects such as Islamic Studies is not included. This means, as outlined in the introductory section, that Adult Education courses on Islam are not overseen by any central body and that such provision is at the discretion of individual providers. These providers cover a number of sectors, Local Authorities, Colleges of FE, universities, WEA, religious bodies and private educational training and consultancy companies. The content and orientation of courses, therefore, are determined by the provider. University and other post-18 provision is, to a large extent, orientated towards certification and qualification, WEA is based on participant interest, private companies on employment based training and religious bodies on either dialogue or professional orientation with a particular bias.

The disparate nature of UK provision means that, in the context of the TUM Project as a whole, it is not dealing with a single agency nor, on the other hand, is it in need of initiating new provision as such. Courses on Islam, many orientated towards tolerance, understanding and reconciliation, if not explicitly then implicitly, are available in the UK and the very disparate nature of the courses

means that there is a full range of approaches and levels of study available. The study conducted during this research has not identified any need to initiate provision, except maybe distance learning, but there could be a useful role in gathering information to act as a resource base of appropriate courses according to specific needs and perhaps advise particular agencies on gaps in the provision. There would also be a useful role in co-ordinating with other similar research projects, such as that currently looking at Islam in Higher Education in the UK.

The courses on Islam that have been examined as part of the case studies, cover the full range of provision and reflect three identifiable categories based on the nature and intention of the courses:

- Provision for Muslims
- Provision for non-Muslims
- Academic

The educational sectors providing these courses do not necessarily clearly fall into the above categories. It is obviously clear that church based courses are essentially aimed at non-Muslims, in particular Christian congregations, in helping them understand the underlying nature of Islam in the context of both contemporary and historical events. Such courses are, essentially and of necessity, superficial and are introductory. Courses provided by the Islamic Foundation, on the other hand, though introductory, cover material at a greater depth utilising a range of specialists who can provide more focused learning. These courses are essentially for non-Muslims also.

Academic courses adhere, at least implicitly, to a more objectified approach which deals with empirical evidence and analysis. These courses also, on the whole, provide certification which gives some sense of continuity for those participants who want to study further, but also provides added value. Enrolment and participation in such courses does not explicitly identify students as Muslims or non-Muslim, but in practice there are disparities. Both the MMU and Birkbeck courses attract a significant number of Muslim students whereas the Open University course (not explicitly an Islamic course) does not. There are various reasons for this. One is the nature of the OU course, which is mainly distance taught and is not exclusively studying Islam, and also the Birkbeck course is in partnership with the Muslim College and therefore implies more explicit Muslim student recruitment. Both Birkbeck and MMU provide a far greater depth of study. Muslim students, also, are more likely to want to study Islamic Studies. Another factor, which can be observed in other contexts also, is that the majority of the tutors on the courses that attract Muslim students are themselves Muslim, which can also be accounted for by the large number of Islamic Studies graduates being Muslim due to the reasons outlined above.

The latter point, about who teaches, can be significant for both non-Muslim and Muslim participants in terms of courses on Islam. In the context of contemporary events and the increase in Islamophobic attitudes, Islam is suffering significantly from a negative image. In terms of pro-

viding Adult Education about Islam, there is a greater need for a provision of such courses than in previous times. However, in the research presented here, some non-Muslim participants, though wanting to hear what Muslims had to say, were also cautious of bias and wished to be provided with a more objective account, as they saw it. Likewise, there has been a tendency in recent years amongst Muslims to be cautious of non-Muslim teachers of Islam and whether they too, present material with bias. This was something that tutors were conscious of during the research – those with non-Muslim participants, in particular, wished to provide their students with access to Muslims with whom students could experience some dialogue, while providing an objectified commentary. The Islamic Foundation course, though exclusively staffed by Muslims, also wished to provide an ‘*encounter*’ with Muslims in a broader sense (with an evening for participants to meet representatives from the local Muslim community). The issue of the acceptability of who teaches a faith is not an exclusively Muslim issue, but in the context of Islamophobia and the ‘*orientalist*’ debate, Muslims are considerably sensitive to it.

While discussing this point of the ‘*politicisation*’ of the provision of these courses on Islam, a negative observation can be made. It was apparent that some non-Muslim participants, who attended courses to understand Islam better so that they could facilitate tolerance and understanding, found that more knowledge could provoke greater disquiet and con-

cern about the nature of Islam. This was not confined to Christian courses. This aspect of the provision of courses needs to be considered carefully in the context of addressing the nature and delivery of courses and the responses of participants.

The pedagogic nature of the case studies was not explicitly addressed in the research, but a few observations can be made generally, which may be useful in looking at the provision of courses on Islam. Teaching methods were essentially dependent on the nature of the courses and individual tutors. Generally, in the UK, teaching methods are determined by individual teachers, although there are, in the school sector at least, formal models of good practice and some further and higher education institutions have very specific guidelines of teaching method expectations. In the case studies, the OU courses follow a very specific format which they have pioneered (and emulated elsewhere both nationally and internationally for distance learning courses). This format, involving course packs, designated texts, online resources, local tutors and tutorial groups and, on some courses, summer schools, is well evolved and established for distance learning. The courses at MMU and Birkbeck follow more traditional university methods, using a variety of media and Socratic methods. The Islamic Foundation course used formal lecture/seminar with the Socratic method and then '*encounters*' with Muslims. The non-certified courses, such as WEA and the church based courses, were dependent on the individual tutors, but those studied provided a range of

learning experiences, again encouraging '*encounters*' with Muslims.

This issue of the '*encounter*' with Muslims raises a particularly interesting and important point about the courses researched and the TUM Project on the whole. A study of Islam, devoid of contemporary existential social contextualisation, does not necessarily engender tolerance and understanding though it might provoke some theological and historical insight. The notion of a monolithic pristine Islam is problematic, but it is a notion that some Muslims advocate. Both theologically and socially, Islamic society and '*Islam*' have evolved, and '*encounters*' with Muslims can lead non-Muslims to understand them in a direct way rather than dealing with religious source material or historical commentaries. On the other hand, a study of religious sources can contextualise other contemporary Muslim perspectives, such as Islamism, and provide non-Muslim course participants with the necessary tools to relativise contemporary extremism.

Concluding Remarks and Recommendations

Courses on Islam for Adults in the UK are both disparate, covering a range of aspects and intentions, and decentralised and are provided by a multitude of providers. These two aspects are essentially positive. Courses can be orientated according to context and participation and individual institutional providers can initiate according to demand and audience. The Muslim community in the UK is

also sufficiently established to initiate its own courses according to local contexts, and the theological range of the community means that there is access to a range of theological perspectives (though it would be difficult for those unfamiliar with Islam to differentiate between them). What is perhaps more problematic in the UK is the need for training in the teaching of adults, as some Muslim groups, in particular, have problems locating relevantly qualified and experienced tutors and speakers, and also the problem of locating courses when there is no central register.

As a consequence, in the context of the TUM Project, the outcome of the UK research can draw the following conclusions and recommendations:

- There is adequate provision of Adult Education on Islam in the UK, covering a range of phases and sectors.
- There is a need for a central register of courses, though, which would outline the nature of the course, level of study and overall target audience with contact details.
- There is scope for a resource base which existing courses, and particularly unsupported individual tutors, can refer their students to.
- There is scope, also, for the implementation of an online/distance learning course, orientated towards non-Muslims, along the lines of the OU, which is specifically intended to provide an insight into Islam and Muslims with a view to engendering tolerance and understanding.

PART III

**FINDING THE WAY
BY WALKING...**



Vanya Ivanova/Beate Schmidt-Behlau

Evaluation Conference in Sofia

Introduction

In the framework of the SOCRATES/Grundtvig project "*Tolerance and Understanding of our Muslim Neighbours*", the conference and training workshops held in Sofia from 28th to 29th April 2004 gave proof of the validity of Mahatma Gandhi's words: "*Let's be the change we want to see in the world*". Devoted to inter-religious dialogue, tolerance and understanding, the two days on the one hand gave an opportunity to academic experts, adult educators, representatives of different institutions in Bulgaria and the TUM partners to share their experiences in the field. On the other hand it supplied participants with practical tools for multiplying their experiences and reaching out to more people.

And it also served – as one of its most important goals – to present the first Bulgarian handbook for adult educators on intercultural issues: "*Beyond the Difference. Towards Tolerance and Understanding between Christianity and Islam in Bulgaria*".

The purpose of this report is not simply to enumerate the facts and shed some more light on the real situation in the participating countries. It will focus on the questions that occurred during discussion of good practices – the results of the TUM Project. It will follow the logic of the conference and give the essence of all the

speeches and the different inputs, because each representative gave a distinct colour to this complex issue.

Opening

The conference was opened by Peter Anders, director of the Goethe-Institut Sofia, and host of the conference, who spoke about the importance and the real meaning of the word '*tolerance*'. Is it tolerant to let '*the others*' live in peace if '*they*' do not bother your life? Is talking about minorities tolerance as well? Tolerance should be perceived as curiosity, a willingness to understand '*the other*'. And he quoted Goethe, whose conclusion was: "*tolerance should lead to acknowledgment*". Wishing everyone enjoyable discussions, he pointed out that real success in this sphere could only be achieved if political will was based on social and religious practices.

Daniel Blum, the Cultural Attaché of the German Embassy, referred to the fact that the topic of the conference was a dominating one in reality nowadays. Conflicts, whether solved peacefully or in violence, are part of our daily life. The experience of the Balkans, having a long tradition in the dialogue between the two religions Christianity and Islam on different levels, should be taken into consideration and this for its part was already good practice.

Stanislavka Popova from Znanie (Federation of 'Knowledge') and Maria Todorova, director of IIZ/DVV – Sofia, representing the Bulgarian partners of the TUM Project, supported the idea by pointing out the significance of the individual playing an active role in shaping society and adult education and lifelong learning as one of the best practices for giving a hand to 'the other'.

After these official introductions and opening ideas Beate Schmidt-Behlau, the project coordinator of the lead agency, the *Institute for international Cooperation of the German Adult Education Association*, provided the audience with some background information about the project's overall objectives and activities. She summed up the main question raised by the project to be: *"how can adult education contribute to tolerance and respect for the diversity of otherness?"*

Muslims and Inter-religious Dialogue in Europe

As an introduction to the broader historical context of the subject matter and how the idea of Muslims and inter-religious dialogue in Europe was developed during the ages, Prof. Jorgen Nielsen from the Department of Theology, University of Birmingham, UK gave an overview of the situation. The different periods in the development of Islam in Europe (Islamic Spain, Mongol Expansion, Ottoman Expansion, the Western European episode)

and the real meaning of dialogue based on this historical approach, made Prof. Nielsen stress the point how constantly the term dialogue is misunderstood.



Participants of the Evaluation Conference in Sofia Discussing 'Burning Issues'

According to Prof Nielsen, tolerance does not mean compromise and negotiation, but mutual understanding, living together, not side by side. He raised questions such as: Why not celebrate diversity? Why, after the collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold war, does Islam seem to be the new world enemy? And how should public awareness be raised? He also commented that differences in identity should not be exploited. Prof. Nielsen concluded that much still needs to be done in educating people in spheres like national identity, citizenship, culture, religion, language, immigrant settlement, human rights, sense of belonging, etc.

The audience felt provoked enough to ask some questions: *"what if I do not want to*

celebrate diversity, am I obliged to do it and to simulate celebration?" Prof. Nielsen's answer suggested that celebrating diversity does not mean accepting everything, but it is important to give space for respect. And this is one of the main tools for avoiding and managing conflicts positively.

Another remark from the audience, whether tolerance leads to equality, was answered by Prof. Nielsen by stating that tolerance is something that should be felt with the heart and should preserve cultural habits.

Some Examples of Good Practice

After the overall introduction to the thematic issue, the TUM Project partners presented some examples of good practice from their countries.

The Socratic Method, the Netherlands

To begin with, El Batoul Zembib from the Dutch training institute *Odyssee* in the Netherlands, presented the '*The Socratic Method*'. This method had been adapted for the TUM Project and piloted with a group of adult educators.

The Socratic Method is a practical approach to dialogue, based on questions. According to the requirements, questions must be **fundamental, relevant for everyone, simple, exciting, stimulating, connected to relevant daily-life examples** etc. As an example, some of these questions were illustrated:

- What can we do as human beings to communicate better with each other in present-day society?
- Is there a worldwide difference between people?
- Is there a universal way of communication?
- When do we communicate like brothers and sisters?
- Why is the dialogue between Muslim and non-Muslim people not going well?

Ms Zembib also shared the frame of 4 phases into which each dialogue falls: 1. Politeness; 2. Friction; 3. Research. 4. Creativity. She finished her presentation with a video supplying visual information on the implementation of the Socratic Method and concluding the Dutch experience with the result that *"understanding oneself can only be accomplished by trying to understand the others"*.

The Day of the Open Mosque, Germany

Jochen Buchholz from the **Adult Education Centre in Bonn** and Antje Schwarze, representing the **Centre for the Studies of Turkey**, Essen gave another example of dialogue, practised in Germany. *"The day of the open mosque"*, started in 1997 as an initiative to promote inter-religious dialogue. The aims and importance of this good practice relate to providing personal contacts, getting to know Muslim habits and culture better, getting people

together, and overcoming barriers of entering another religious world.

This good practice of celebrating diversity is usually held on 3rd of October in more than 1000 mosques all over Germany. The most frequently asked questions are about wearing headscarves, the place of women in Islam, the five pillars of Islam, the daily religious duties, violence and jihad and fundamentalism. In this way non-Muslim Germans can inform themselves about Islam and correct their image through direct contact with Muslims.

The Exhibition '*Millennia of God*', France

Experiencing religion in the form of an exhibition through face-to-face encounter with sacred objects, was another good practice shared by Bénédicte du Chaffaut of the *Centre Théologique de Meylan*, in Grenoble. Named '*Millennia of God*', the aim of the activity was to deal with the '*notion of God*' from a secular standpoint using sacred objects which had to be given meaning through appropriate settings. The idea was shown how a belief in a single God could shape society and model different cultures. Showing the three monotheistic religions – Judaism, Christianity and Islam – and the interaction between humanity and God in them, the exhibition brought awareness to people of how little they knew about these

three traditions and the dialogue between them.

Experiences in Bulgaria

In the afternoon session the conference was enriched by some Bulgarian aspects. Plamen Makariev from Sofia University focused on the philosophical point of view on recognition and tolerance. Firstly he spoke about how the positive attitude towards cultural differences nowadays is expressed in two alternative aspects: tolerance towards the '*different*' person, which means refraining from discrimination or generally from violating the universal rights of anyone related to his/her cultural identity; or a step further – recognition of the values of the alien identity. According to Makariev, the first approach is characterised by liberalism and the second by multiculturalism. What is



Intercultural Dialogue at the Conference



Conference Participants Discuss Next Steps

the right approach? The right question should be: to what extent could the recognition be perceived as a positive one? Certain cultures have to gain public space in the cultural space in general. What is important according to Plamen Makariev is to create a space for respect and acknowledgment.

Prof. Milka Atanasova from Sofia University informed the audience about the current profile of adult education in Bulgaria. The speech started with some historical information on lifelong learning in Bulgaria, dating back to the 19th century and the judicial aspects concerning education. Then Ms. Atanasova pointed out that adult education as a separate subject is still not popular in the universities (there is just one Master's program at the New Bulgarian University, Sofia, supported by IIZ/DVV in Bonn and Sofia, and the possibility of another of this kind to start next year at Sofia University). Different forms of qualifications could be found in the non-governmental sector, but there is still a lack of skills and good prac-

tice. Adults are mostly interested in topics like: team work, conflict resolution, NGO work, proposal writing, project management, work with local authorities. One of the focal points was that the most important missing link is the attitude towards lifelong learning and adult education, and a stable social policy that should encourage Bulgarian citizens to develop their knowledge and skills.

Finally, Hasan Ayvaz, member of the High Islamic Council, gave his own biography as an example of intercultural learning. He himself was, at the age of 46, a Master's student in Diplomacy and International Relations at the New Bulgarian University. Quoting the Koran and its first aiet, starting with 'read' as a duty for every Muslim, he stressed the importance of lifelong learning. Talking from the point of view of Islam, he pointed out that illiteracy is judged a crime. Also he shared part of his experiences from the second training – a step in the implementation of the TUM Project.

The Burning Issue

The last – and most interactive – part of the conference, moderated by Emilia Ilieva from the organization Znanie, the Bulgarian coordinator of the TUM Project, was dedicated to bringing the question: **What brought me to the conference?** into general discussion.

The group sat in a circle with three chairs in the middle and three volunteers willing to discuss one by one the questions that were collected during the whole day. Everybody who felt they would like to be

in the place of one of the volunteers could come into the smaller circle and participate in the discussion.

The following were some of the questions:

- Are we aware of tolerance in our daily life?
- What are the ways of becoming more tolerant, are there any techniques that can guide us in this process?
- How can religious affiliation in Europe be a basis for dialogue and understanding, rather than difference and ignorance?
- Who am I and who are the people around me?
- What are the limits of tolerance?
- How does the dialogue in Bulgaria work?
- What are the relations between the religious communities in the other countries – the Netherlands and the United Kingdom?
- Do we have enough information about the backgrounds of *'the other'*?
- What is common and different in the different religions?
- Who is more interested in the event *'The day of the open mosque'* in Germany – the young generation or adults?
- How can a *'tolerant education system'* be guaranteed?
- Which are the common European values and how can they be implemented in the European constitution?
- What is the role of the media and politics of the EU in creating stereotypes, fostering tolerance and cultural diversity?

Some of the main points and ideas that occurred during the discussion were:

- What is needed is first awareness and then action.
- One of the main problems in inter-religious dialogue is the lack of knowledge of *'the other'*.
- Adult education needs more publicity.
- We have to practise tolerance, not just to talk about it.
- People from different religions should communicate intensively.
- The focus should be not only on *'the other'*, but on your own self. Through your own experiences the best practice can be reached.
- Subjects like inter-religious dialogue should be part of the school and university curriculum.
- Real changes do not happen fast.
- Dialogue should be done, not for the sake of dialogue in general, but for the sake of people.
- Good practice should be shared.
- Tolerance and understanding are only possible on a daily life basis. Why?
- Focus on the common values, not on the differences, anyway every one of us is unique.
- The aim is the common future, not the aftermath of the past.
- Responsibility for attitude and action is needed – this is a direct way to tolerance.
- What we want to achieve can be made with certain small steps.
- Christianity and Islam are two religions with so much in common; let us be focused on it!

The questions and the interactive method stimulated a lively discussion about the issue and contributed to the overall aim of the conference to reflect on the role of education in tolerance and dialogue matters. The first conference day was closed by Beate Schmidt-Behlau thanking the participants for their engagement, patience, and individual contributions making the day a rich experience for everyone.

Training Workshop 1 in English

The second day of the conference included two workshops, one in English language in the morning under the heading of: *'Unveiling the Prejudice'* and one in Bulgarian language in the afternoon entitled *'Diversity Awareness'*. The training included some of the exercises that had been piloted in the framework of the TUM Project in Bulgaria (October 2003 and February 2004). The idea was to share good practice and give the opportunity to more people to take part in them. All the exercises are published in the Bulgarian handbook *Beyond the Difference. Towards Tolerance and Dialogue between Christianity and Islam*.

The first workshop started with the movie of Vlado Trifonov – *"A Paradise with Two Faces"*, showing the interaction between Bulgarian Muslims and Christian families in a small village in the Rhodope Mountain.

Entry point to the discussion after the film was the question: *"What were these two faces, shown in the movie?"* Several suggestions were made, including the dialogue of the two religions, human dia-

logue and social conditions in contrast with the beautiful nature. It was not easy to reach a joint conclusion, because all the people in the movie were friendly and the dialogue between them went quite smoothly. There were other factors that showed what could be the reasons for making dialogue difficult such as the historical background (the situation of enforced changing of Muslim names in the mid-1980s) or the economic and social background – a region with not so many possibilities for work and constant migration to the cities. Shot in the late 1990s, the documentary creates a real image of a paradise in nature, a place out of time and with its own dimensions, where *'otherness'* is something normal and mixed traditions look forward to the future.

Exercise No 1: *'Step Forward'*

The next activity for the group was a role play named *'step forward'* serving to experience what it is like to be a certain person in society. The issue addresses social and religious inequality that is often a source of discrimination and exclusion. Everyone received a paper slip with a special role (ranging from a disabled young man who can only move in a wheelchair, an Arab Muslim girl living with her parents who are devoutly religious people, a HIV positive middle-aged prostitute and an illegal migrant in Germany to a Roma lady who never finished primary school). Based on these imaginary roles, participants had to react to different situations, stepping forward out of a line if they thought that the situation could be beneficial to them. At the end of

the exercise the base line of the group had been transformed into individuals in front, in the middle and at the back – mirroring a small society of diverse social statuses.

The reflection based on the individual experiences in the exercise showed the awareness raising component. Some of the issues were:

- We react to certain situations, based on our stereotypes and prejudices.
- Sometimes we are pushed to react in a particular way by the society.
- It is really hard to help when there is no dialogue (the exercise had to be done in silence).
- It is really hard to be in another role, you do not know how to react – information is needed.
- It is always a matter of personal choice.
- It is up to us how we react in different situations.

Exercise No. 2: *'The Signs'**

The second exercise of the morning called *'The signs'* focused on the commonalities and differences and what is more important for us. Again in silence with closed eyes everybody received a sign on her/his forehead. The task for everyone was: **to find anyone similar**. There were people who started to gather others immediately, there were people who did not react at all and waited for the rest to guide them to their place. At the end there were several groups, some of them with less, other with more people. Also there

were two people who remained alone and finally joined each other.

Some of the comments after the exercise were:

- Was it a game of cooperation?
- It is good for people to help each other.
- I felt lonely and helpless.
- The big group is stronger. They were smiling.
- Being single on the other hand makes you special.
- It was tiring to search for difference.
- It is nice to find somebody who is like you.
- Anyway we were one group!

The exercise illustrated very well behavioural patterns and communication skills and how much attention people pay to searching for similarity among difference. Actually as the facilitators afterwards confessed, the final result could have been one big group, because all the signs were circles, even if they differed in terms of colours. Some of the participants identified a language problem, saying that the word similarity might have been confounded with the word sameness and that the exercise might have been done differently, if the word had been explained in Bulgarian.

Phasing out

For a final reflection the group was divided into smaller working groups who were asked to answer the following questions concerning the issue of intercultural dialogue and adult education:

* The module is described on page 58

Successful techniques that I know...

The TUM Project inspired me...

My first next steps are...

Successful techniques that I know...

- Sharing other different interactive methods
- Games and exercises, creating atmosphere for dialogue
- Thinking for yourself and sharing with people
- Doing more practical things
- Cooking together
- Working in small groups

The TUM Project inspired me...

- To share and transfer experiences
- To get more knowledge about the different religions
- To share international experiences at local level
- To search and know more about Muslim people
- To understand that people should be given as much information as possible, not to act stereotypically
- To search for more interactive games
- To raise willingness for cooperation
- To look for methods that can 'unveil' prejudices

My first next steps are...

- To share my experience with colleagues in a friendly way

- To work on attracting adult learners to be educated in prejudice awareness
- To write down all the experiences
- To talk more about the situation of Turks in Bulgaria
- To learn more about the situation in South Eastern Europe
- To keep in touch with my new friends from the conference
- To share future ideas for joint work

Training Workshop 2 in Bulgarian

Exercise No. 1:

*'The Onion of Diversity'**

The first exercise showed that there is no topic/issue that is without common roots for two people – favourite music, book or dance, saying, belief or even stereotype. Sometimes it leads to a compromise, sometimes to negotiation, but when there is an honest reaction, things can happen easier and faster. To search for something common is really easy.

Exercise No. 2:

How Can We Overcome Prejudices?

This task was solved in small groups. Some of the answers were:

- Through awareness
- Through knowledge
- Through personal experiences
- Through acceptance

* The exercise is described on page 60

- Through information
- Through a direct contact
- Through common values
- Through positive thinking
- Through good attitude

Exercise No. 3:

'On the Train of Otherness'

This exercise on stereotypes and personal choice was done in several stages. Everybody received a train ticket from Sofia to Istanbul with the option to choose the people with whom to travel – the ones with whom one would most or least want to travel.

First, everyone decided for him/herself, then the choice was shared in small groups and every group was supposed to find a common choice.

In the discussion different issues came up:

- It was really difficult to make a common choice.
- It is much easier if you react on the basis of your experiences – I have had very good experiences with some of these types, but it was not the same for the people from my group.
- If we want, we can find in each of these people something good. All of them can be teachers for us in certain situations.
- It depends on my former experiences, whom I want to choose.
- For the people I have never met till now, I reacted on the basis of what I know from books, newspapers, TV...

- In a certain situation we are the ones who somebody chooses, let us be aware of this fact.

An endless discussion, an endless process, an endless road towards tolerance and diversity!

Let us thank now all these people who are ready to walk with us on the same road!

Participants in the Conference

For these two days more than 100 people took part in the conference. They were from different institutions in Bulgaria and from some other South Eastern European countries. Some of them were:

- National Agency for Vocational Education and Training, Sofia
- Institute of Sociology, Sofia
- Sofia University, Sofia
- New Bulgarian University, Sofia
- Institute for Balkan Studies, Sofia
- Employment Agency, Sofia
- IMIR, Sofia
- High Islamic Institute
- Federation *'Knowledge'*, Bourgas
- Gender Project, Sofia
- Ethno-cultural Dialogue Foundation, Sofia
- Local Municipality, Razgrad
- Ethno Reporter Magazine, Sofia
- Sofia Municipality
- Department of Secondary Education of Serres, Greece
- Board for Culture and Religion, Romania
- Institute for Social Work and Social Policy, Skopje, Macedonia

Semiran Kaya¹

Visit of the Chief Mufti of Bulgaria to Germany

The Bulgarian Chief Mufti, Inter-religious Dialogue and Mosque Open Day

There has been an Open Day at mosques in Germany for seven years. This initiative was taken by the Central Council of Muslims, but did not start fulfilling its true function of fostering contact between Muslims and Christians until after September 11. Before that date, all that mosques and Islamic communities offered was poster announcements and one-sided intentions, in which the 2,400 or so backyard mosques and seven classical mosques with domes and/or minarets were content to show off *their* version of Islam. The event attracted few interested Christian believers, to say nothing of secular Germans. Anyone curious enough to wander in was soon disappointed, since hardly any of the mosques had staff who spoke adequate German, to say nothing of the necessary organizational experience. As a result, the widely acclaimed '*inter-religious dialogue*' only took place on paper and proved to be a monologue – something found also among churches and Christian communities.

However odd it may sound, Mosque Open Day emerged in a new and improved light following the terrorist at-

tacks. When the faithful of the two different religions, who had previously been alien to each other, first met, they behaved towards each other with great politeness and respect, and yet were still seldom curious about one another. Confusion and ignorance about Islam and Muslims were so great, however, that copies of the Qur'an were almost completely sold out two days after the attacks, and Mosque Open Day acquired a particularly historic significance in 2002, when mosques and Islamic organizations truly opened up. The shutting-out of German society gave way to transparency, and this rethinking affected more than 1000 mosques in Germany in 2002 and 2003. Some 200 000 visitors a year now take advantage of the event. Since 1997, around a million interested non-Muslims have talked **to** the others, rather than about them, on Mosque Open day.

Lack of Dialogue between the Religions in Bulgaria

According to official figures, twelve per cent of the eight million inhabitants of Bul-

¹ Semiran Kaya is a journalist with a focus on Islam, Migration and Turkey

garia are Muslim. Unofficially, their number is put at twenty per cent. However, there is no dialogue between the Christian majority and the Muslim minority in Bulgaria. That is why the Chief Mufti of Bulgaria, Selim Mehmed, visited Germany in 2003 as part of the EU project *“Tolerance and Understanding of our*



Chief Mufti Selim Mehmed in Dialogue with a Representative of DITIB

Muslim Neighbours in Europe”. The aim was to give the Chief Mufti a comprehensive insight into and impression of ‘*Mosque Open Day*’ because he wanted to introduce this form of dialogue in Bulgaria: *“In Bulgaria, we have no dialogue between the religions, let alone inter-religious dialogue. What we have is an inter-ethnic quarrel. Because religions used to be forbidden, the quarrel reflects a historical anti-Turkish attitude. Many Muslim citizens are therefore still reluctant to admit to their religion or to abandon the Christian names that they were forced to adopt. As a result, fewer and fewer people are attending mosques,”* the Mufti said.

Inter-religious Dialogue versus Missionary Activity

Even though ‘*Mosque Open Day*’ focuses on Islamic living and beliefs, the four-day study visit by the Chief Mufti

concentrated primarily on how to bring about inter-religious dialogue. This process is often wrongly assumed to mean reciting a monologue, telling people things or even proselytizing. So that the Chief Mufti could gain an objective, critical overview, visits and discussions were not only arranged with various Turkish Islamic organizations and communities. It was equally important to involve the opposite side, namely the Evangelical and Catholic Churches. And so that the dialogue was not purely ‘*man to man*’, as is so often the case, the programme also included visits to and discussion with Muslim women at the continuing education centre, and with a female Christian pastor.

Once Chief Mufti Selim Mehmed had acquired a general impression of Muslim institutions, organizations and religious facilities in Germany, most of them for Turkish Muslims, the visit proper began. Dur-

ing his brief tour there were many surprises, much laughter, some disagreements and, albeit sometimes unwillingly, lessons that were learnt.

Cologne Cathedral and the Muslim Reaction

The first upset occurred in Cologne Cathedral. I was explaining the history of the Cathedral in Turkish to the Chief Mufti, a Bulgarian of Turkish descent, and told him that information for visitors was now available in seven languages. He thought the leaflet in Japanese very odd, but welcomed the simple notion of providing information in several languages. What was more revealing was his remark, *"I hope you haven't left the true path."* Without knowing my views, he had assumed that I was religious and regarded me as *'one of us'*, a Turkish Muslim, merely because I was talking Turkish to him. Many religious dignitaries are all too willing, wrongly, to regard such emotional blackmail and assumptions as openness to dialogue.

The Moment of Discovery and the Pope

The following encounter provided the Chief Mufti with an inter-religious moment of discovery. As a senior cleric, he not only joined in presiding over Friday prayers for more than 200 believers of the Turkish Islamic umbrella organization DITIB, but afterwards he also found himself once more talking to representatives of the Evangelical and Catholic Churches – on the premises of an Islamic or-

ganization. Muslims and Christians were meeting to exchange common experiences of and about inter-religious dialogue. *"We are lagging behind a bit. We don't have such meetings in Bulgaria. Any dialogue that there is takes place solely within the minorities. But the biggest problem in Bulgaria is the Orthodox Church. It sees itself as something special, with a higher status, which should not have any contact with other religious communities. This attitude only changes abroad, when people come face to face as a matter of necessity. But in the country itself, the Orthodox Church refuses to have anything to do with celebrations such as Ramadan, let alone inviting us to its services. Not even when the Pope visited the country. It regards the Muslim community as an oddity and does not take us seriously."*

Dialogue Does not Mean Political Correctness

Because the Chief Mufti wanted to learn from the example of Mosque Open Day how communities can be united and brought together, all speakers were asked to place the emphasis on any actual instances of inter-religious dialogue, and to illustrate these – as well as being quite open about and giving examples of problems. Mention was therefore made of the inadequate knowledge of German in many Islamic organizations, their internal disagreements over which umbrella organization was the true voice of Muslims, and why DITIB, which is run by the Turkish Ministry of Religion, still appoints

imams from Turkey instead of training them in Germany.

Old versus Young – Money versus Influence

“One of the main difficulties facing Bulgarian Muslims is that most imams are getting on in years. They frequently have no real theological training. I would like to replace them with younger, better trained imams, so that we can adapt to social realities. But financial difficulties do not allow this, even though there are enough applicants. I cannot pay them their 100 US dollars a month, so that we are obliged to rely on help from neighbouring countries.”

Open discussion of problems was particularly important as inter-religious dialogue had for a long time been no more than hinted at during Mosque Open Day. The real aim, of learning interculturally from one another, had thus gone unmet. The visitor dismissed suggestions that aid from Saudi Arabia was more likely to lead to the spread of clandestine radical Islamic influence than to contribute to dialogue.

Turkish Muslim versus German Secular

The differences that can occur even within a community over lifestyle, integration and attitude to religion became apparent during a visit to two contrasting ‘*Turkish streets*’ in Cologne. While one street of the Turkish community lived as part of German society, the other spoke, read

and thought exclusively in Turkish. The visitor found it extraordinary that Turkish areas, and even parallel societies, had grown up in Germany and were leading their own lives without difficulty. He welcomed the separate days in swimming pools for Muslim women, and the existence of restaurants run by Muslims. His short walk showed that even in a secularized society such as Germany, religious ties and feelings can have a considerable influence on perceptions of life and how it should be led. On the other hand, the Chief Mufti found two things puzzling, and even incomprehensible: first, the fact that many Turks in Germany cannot speak German, and secondly, the state of the mosques: *“I would never have imagined that mosques could be located in run-down houses or hidden away in backyards. These premises are appointed very sparsely, even drearily, and are not worthy houses of God.”*

Focus on Women

The Cologne Muslim Women’s Education Society (*Muslimisches Frauenbildungswerk Köln, BfmF*) provided the visitor with another example of how Islam can become involved more closely in society. This is a recognised education centre founded in 1996 by women, which supports and promotes Muslim girls and women out of public funds, according to their abilities and needs. The Women’s Education Society has made a name for itself by providing language and computer courses, assistance with dealing with public authorities, and occupational guidance. This particular visit was a gen-

uine highlight for the Chief Mufti, for whom it was something entirely new. Mothers are offered the incentive of child care while they learn. There are also rooms for prayer as well as a library and various meeting rooms, where for the first time, the Chief Mufti met Islamic women of every colour from Africa, India, Iran and Turkey, who had all prepared food jointly for the Mosque Open Day and were showing their husbands round the centre. The visit was full of cultural variety and openness, once the visitor had begun by retiring to the prayer room.

In order to demonstrate the variety and peaceful coexistence of cultures in Germany, each meal during the Chief Mufti's visit was taken at a restaurant of a different nationality. It is well known that meals help negotiations, but more than that, the palate can also help to break down prejudices. Very pious Muslims may sometimes come up against fellow Muslims whom they regard as unbelievers, Crusaders or some other legendary beast. When Sheherezade, in the person of a German belly-dancer, set about enchanting the Chief Mufti with her performance in an Arab restaurant, he reacted very calmly by diplomatically averting his gaze. Had he been a strict believer, this unintentional situation could have proved a *faux pas* par excellence on the part of the host.

Challenging Ignorance or Trusting in God?

The following example shows how difficult it is to tell someone about something

unfamiliar. One speaker who was actively engaged in inter-religious dialogue was so pleased that the Chief Mufti was visiting that he gave his talk in Turkish. The talk was prepared with every loving detail but included allusions to the critical issues of inter-religious dialogue. However, instead of listening patiently, the Chief Mufti turned away from the speaker and doodled on the blotter. The delivery was also constantly interrupted by members of the mosque walking in without knocking. The telephone and the continual ringing of mobile phones created more disruption. In the discussion that followed, the visitor spoke without pausing for breath, was extremely reluctant to stop for translation and gave only cursory thanks for the supporting documents, which had also been provided in Turkish. The entire situation escalated further because the partner responsible had not taken much trouble to prepare for the visit.

Why do I report this incident? Not only because people can demand tolerance when they fail to show it themselves. But also because it demonstrates how difficult it is to open up cultural and social institutions. No dialogue between religions can be arranged without extensive argument and controversy, which needs to go beyond cultural ignorance and false tolerance.

And because dialogue has become harder in a world that is becoming increasingly secular, only intercultural and inter-religious dialogue can help to encourage joyous, relaxed belief which is not aimed at attaining power and influence.

Emilia Ilieva

A Study Visit to the Socratic Dialogue Seminar in Vlissingen, Netherlands

Attending the Socratic Dialogue seminar, facilitated by Dr. Pieter Mostert and Ms. El Batoul Zembib was one of those experiences that have to be shared. It provided this glimpse into practicing dialogue in a multicultural setting that inspires and opens new 'doors' to reflecting upon the adequate methods of intercultural learning.

Defining dialogue as a mutual process of supporting each other's thinking gives so much hope for aware citizens who can learn how to practice the art of asking the right questions and letting others find their answers. It is a way that you do not impose your truth about the world, but encourage others to find their truths.

Additionally it exemplifies real life situations that serve as a convincing element of the numerous possibilities one has to practice intercultural learning. Furthermore the selecting of one life situation that becomes the group story goes from the stage of collecting all group members' experiences with intercultural learning. And when you bring

to one place all of this bright collection it is like a treasure that shines too bright to be neglected. Thus even skeptics get convinced.

The method is creative in itself and a seminar using it has multiple layers of reaching heightened personal awareness and real grass root action possibilities.

So attending the seminar in Vlissingen left me with a wealth of experience to reflect and inspiration to look beyond the known methods of intercultural learning.

Thank you and let's keep the dialogue going ...



TUM-Project Partners 'on Show' in Bulgaria

Beate Schmidt-Behlau

Results of the World Café in Metz

At the closing conference that took place from 11th to 13th November 2004 in Metz, France, participants met in the WORLD Café to discuss some of the most burning issues that the TUM partnership had developed in the form of questions:

1. What are the biggest challenges to adult education in the field of inter-religious dialogue?
2. How can we as adult educators contribute to the promotion of inter-religious dialogue in a more effective way?
3. How can we reach the people who are not interested in dialogue?

What are the biggest challenges to adult education in the field of inter-religious dialogue?

- To include all people in society we have to involve **all** groups in intercultural dialogue (i.e. the Germans from the former Soviet Union).
- Different cultural backgrounds and language competencies cause problems.
- In dialogue everybody needs to understand the conversation. Therefore people need to learn to give the others space to speak about their thoughts.
- Translators are needed, so one or two persons in a group should be identified who can take care of translation.
- How to change the historical mindset. Because people have certain images

about the others (Christians and Muslims) that are historically defined.

- How to spread intercultural skills.
- To identify who wants the dialogue.
- Sometimes it looks like some minority groups are not interested in dialogue, but it can happen that the majority just does not understand the signs of dialogue of the minority group.
- In inter-religious dialogue it is essential to show respect to the religion of the others. Sometimes we do not know which gestures we need to show, so that others feel respected (to show respect is culturally differently defined).
- How do we keep the doors for dialogue open? (Trust-building activities).
- To identify your own point of view.
- To make people aware about their faith.
- To speak about faith is a sensitive topic.
- How can we reach certain target groups (i.e. migrant women)?



Jorgen Nielsen Informs About Activities in the UK

- How can they be active after we have reached them?

How can we as adult educators contribute to the promotion of inter-religious dialogue in a more effective way?

With

- Good social skills.
- Knowledge, awareness and action.
- Network of good colleagues with multi-faith and multicultural background.
- Language competency.
- Take into account peoples anxieties.
- Build on personal contacts.
- Listen before speaking.
- Be sensitive towards the other and do not impose your knowledge.
- Practice an interdisciplinary approach and involve different spheres of life.
- Multiply the good practice (for ex. the 'god-parent' project of the city of Karlsruhe).
- See integration as a two way process with a 'give and take' balance.
- Listen with empathy – train communication skills.
- The majority community must make the first step.

How can we reach the people who are not interested in dialogue?

This was clearly the most challenging question discussed in the World Café, but participants were convinced that without finding ways of reaching the unconvinced, intercultural learning will not take hold in society. Some suggestion from practical experience were:

- Don't ever try it under the etiquette of intercultural or inter-religious dialogue, because you will never reach those who



Conference Participants in Metz

have already closed their doors. Instead:

- Invite people for a cup of coffee or tea without a concrete subject.
- Involve these people in other activities first to build a relationship of trust (i.e. parents of young children can be invited to language courses), plan street-festivals and music-festivals on community level.
- Plan regular meetings together with small groups of people with migrant background to talk about everyday life questions and problems. In this way friendships between migrants and people from the majority community can be built, that make dialogue easier.
- The overall goal must be participation in an inclusive sense. This can be achieved in small steps beginning with information, passing through the phase of consultancy and cooperation and reaching the stage of self-determination.

Voices of Participants in the Bulgarian Workshops

'Unveiling the prejudice'

"The seminar taught me that anything different has the same ground; that walking just ahead is dangerous – sometimes we need to see from where we have started and much more..."

Gulsun

"A great asset of the seminar was that participants were given the chance for self-reflection and achieving personal awareness on the issues of prejudices."

"This seminar filled me with positive energy, I have more self-confidence and I realized once again that I have a mission in my life. I wish that we keep on having such seminars that support people by touching their hearts." Ognian

"The structure of the seminar was dynamic and effective. It has a perfect logical framework."

"This seminar is a memorable experience for me."

Teodor

'Diversity Awareness'

"The seminar was very important for me as I had the chance for the first time in my life to spend time with people from different religious beliefs and I enjoyed working with them and building bridges."

Angelina

"The seminar was very useful to me. I wish that we have more such seminars – for example one in our local municipality where mixed ethnic groups of Bulgarians, Pomaks, Turks and Roma people are living."

Hasan

"The seminar was extremely useful and satisfying. It provided a close contact with different ethnic groups through personal experiences and contacts."

Alex

"The structure of the seminar had different logically related and successive entities that were developing as a spiral. The more you go along the further you go."

Ani

"In such a short time I have learnt so much about Identity and Culture and I have been able to critically reflect on their different assets on both personal and social level. Such seminars are really needed to break the fences between people and to understand 'the others'."

"I was happy to be here. I leave this seminar inspired! Thank you!" Ludmila

"I am just extremely satisfied with this seminar. It will support me in both my personal and professional life. Thank you!"

Arif

Annexe – Project Description

Tolerance and Understanding of our Muslim Neighbours in Europe

Summary

Muslim communities exist in nearly every EU country, often composed of immigrants from former colonies and labour migrants. The attempt to establish Muslim communities is accompanied by a variety of conflicts which can best be described as caused by serious prejudice, limited understanding and misconceptions between Muslim and non-Muslim people. The recent tragic attacks of September 11 have increased fear and distrust. Although some attempts have been made to foster understanding and information about different religious communities, what is needed is personal exchange and intensive dialogue, and the development of more successful approaches to promoting tolerance and understanding, and to combating prejudice. Among the participating countries, there is already some experience of this issue, governed by the individual countries' historical and socio-economic backgrounds. But with regard to the field of adult education, innovative methods of inter-religious dialogue and communication must urgently be identified and used to create worthwhile approaches and methods. As mutual understanding and tolerance are a fluid and complex process, it is important both to create new methods and to build on existing approaches in individ-

ual countries, and to attempt to find a common strategy for Europe. Inter-religious dialogue, and communication and discussion between Muslim and non-Muslim people, must be recognized as crucial elements of adult education.

The project objectives are therefore defined at trans-national and at national level.

- Trans-nationally, the project seeks to function as a forum for exchange and cooperation between academic experts, adult educators and Muslim and non-Muslim people in the different partner countries. On the basis of countries' experience, but with a shared dimension, guidelines will be formulated for a common strategy for adult education.
- Nationally, the project will set out to analyse, develop, provide training in and implement innovative approaches and methods of 'best practice' in the field of adult learning aimed at improving Muslim/non-Muslim relations, and at promoting exchange and dialogue. Moreover, national networks including Muslim and non-Muslim people will be created to serve as forums for ongoing exchange.

The first target group of the project is adult educators, who will profit from the

exchange, the training and the development of new approaches and materials. The second target group is, in a broader sense, the entire non-Muslim and Muslim population, through the impact on their perceptions, actions and means of communicating.

To achieve the objectives mentioned above, there will be the following main activities and outputs:

- case studies in participating countries to identify existing '*good practice*' in adult education and means of inter-religious dialogue and communication within the given country
- trans-national conferences to develop draft guidelines (researchers, adult educators, Muslim and non-Muslim people) and to share and analyse experiences
- development of handbooks / new materials for adult educators in every participating country
- training for adult educators in the new materials (summer schools)
- piloting and evaluation of the new materials
- publication of project results and findings on a website and in print

Rationale, Objectives, Target Groups

Rationale and Background

European countries are facing a variety of problems associated with the relations between growing Muslim communities

and the non-Muslim population. These arise from mutual prejudice and suspicion, and from a sometimes very limited understanding or even from misconceptions about the origins of '*the Other*'. While the specific problems are determined by the particular historical and socio-economic background of each country, national and local situations are influenced again and again by international developments such as the tragic attacks of September 11.

The biggest Muslim communities are to be found in France (about 5 million), Germany (about 3.2 million) and the United Kingdom (about 2 million). As settled minorities, Muslim communities want to establish their own religious lives. The unaccustomed presence of another religion causes fear, problems of perception and acceptance, and often leads to misunderstanding on both sides.

In Germany, for example, which has a 40-year tradition of labour migrants, especially from Turkey, it can be seen that social conflicts very often turn into ethnic conflicts, resulting in confrontation and rivalry between ethnic or religious groups. In Bulgaria, although the Turkish minority (about 9%) is well integrated and actively involved in political life, there is serious prejudice on both sides because of their shared history, of the ideological influences of communism, and of such economic reasons as a high rate of unemployment, especially in those areas with a high percentage of Turkish people in the population. It is evident that the attacks of September 11 renewed old concerns in Bulgaria about the Islamic factor

and the so-called '*Islam expansionist threat*'. And in the Netherlands, a spiral of negative stereotyping can be observed since the attacks, Moroccan and Turkish people frequently being regarded as fundamentalists; this in turn causes either fresh provocation from the Moroccan and Turkish population in the attempt to combat this kind of discrimination, or the opposite: a failure to react at all. In the UK, race and religion are often perceived as necessarily linked, reflecting an undifferentiated perception and exacerbating stereotyping. Moreover, Muslim and non-Muslim people live in segregated areas of many cities, which does not allow for communication between them.

Against this background, adult education can serve as an important promoter of cultural dialogue and communication, in the interest of growing European integration.

Aims and Objectives

- The project seeks to build partnerships between the participating countries and within the individual countries so as to develop and implement new forms of communication and learning between Muslim and non-Muslim people. The participating countries will have a platform for exchange of experiences and findings, which are to be disseminated within every country through existing and new networks.
- The project intends to bring together and analyse a very broad range of aspects, ideas and experiences by establishing a continuous, intensive dialogue between participating research institutions and fields of adult learning, involving Muslim and non-Muslim people in the process. We consider this to be an integral part of the project, so that it can deal with what is a multi-faceted and complex topic. This is reflected in the choice of partner organizations, which all have either a specific research focus or have long experience of working in adult education.
- The project aims to identify '*best practice*' in adult learning in the participating countries and to develop new approaches, methods and materials to be used in the field of adult learning. The case studies in each participating country will provide a deep insight into current problems and various useful approaches and methods in adult learning.
- The partners will discuss and develop trans-national guidelines on the basis of the case study results. These guidelines will be adapted to the situation and needs of each individual country within the project (through a '*handbook for adult educators*') but will also be published on the website and will therefore serve as guidance for other contexts.
- The project also aims to train adult educators within the participating countries to pilot the new materials and to evaluate the approaches and methods developed.
- The project intends to provide useful and up-to-date information and recommendations for adult educators in

order to support the process of enhancing mutual, differentiated understanding between Muslim and non-Muslim people in various learning contexts.

Contributing to mutual understanding and combating prejudice between Muslims and non-Muslims must be seen as a multi-faceted, fluid process. Although a lot of work has been done in the field of adult education in the partner countries on the specific issue of Muslim / non-Muslim relations, a sustained and continued effort is needed to bring experts together, to integrate Muslim and non-Muslim people, and to discuss these experiences and compile and pilot useful approaches, methods and materials for adult learning in a new and innovative way.

The project will give each country the opportunity to initiate an intensive dialogue and to train and pilot innovative approaches and methods in adult learning. The specific experiences will be summarized, jointly analysed, and placed in a European context so that they can be adapted to various situations.

The case studies, and the involvement of experts, experienced adult educators and '*people from outside*', will provide a focused and experience-based needs analysis, which is crucial for the collation of new and innovative approaches and methods in adult education. The training of adult educators will guarantee professional piloting, and the evaluation phase will provide dedicated feedback from practice. The impact of the project will rest on the one hand on fruitful interna-

tional exchange and, on the other, on the testing and innovative enrichment of previous concepts.

Pedagogical and Didactical Approaches

For the purposes of its trans-national element, the project will strive to apply good interactive conference teaching methods as it will combine presentations in plenary sessions and thematically guided workshops to analyse results and to work on the guidelines and the future project strategy. The findings and results of the case studies in the participating countries will be additionally enriched by the individual and experience-based input of the Muslim and non-Muslim conference participants. Nationally, the workshops for the compilation of materials, and especially the training of adult educators in summer schools, will in particular be based on the experience and background of the participants. Personal exchange and contact between Muslim and non-Muslim people are regarded as one of the crucial didactic approaches used throughout the whole project.

Envisaged Outputs

1. The case studies will identify the most important experiences and codes of '*good practice*' in each participating country. From literature studies and focus groups including adult educators, a report will be produced on 'best practice' in various fields of adult learning related to basic information about the situation of Muslim / non-Muslim relations in the

country. The case studies will be carried out in the national language, and a summary of the findings will be provided in English.

2. Transnationally, guidelines for training materials will be developed, containing recommendations for *'best practice'* based on the combined findings of the case studies. They will be provided in English and translated into the national languages of the project partners in order to serve as the basis for national adaptation.

3. Nationally, teaching handbooks for adult educators will be compiled. These will collate good experience and new and innovative approaches and methods, taking into account both the guidelines and the specific needs of each country. They will be produced in the national language, and the most innovative and important parts for the European context will be translated into English.

4. Training modules for adult educators will be developed and organised in every country. At the summer schools adult educators will be trained to use the new materials, and a working group will be set up to pilot the materials. These will be produced in national languages, and the most innovative and important parts for the European context will be translated into English.

5. A project website will be set up to document all project results and findings (case studies, interim reports and evaluations, guidelines, and handbooks for adult educators). The website will be set up in English, and summaries will be pro-

vided in national languages. Extended information in national languages will be made available by the partners.

Overall Working Methods

The project will adopt a participatory approach, which will be realised through the transnational workshops.

Through the preliminary workshop at the beginning of the project, all project partners will contribute to overall strategy, management and communication within the project. The joint development of the format and remit of the case studies will be crucial to the common basis for national work.

The development of common guidelines for the preparation of training modules and materials, which will take place during the second transnational workshop, will guarantee a strong basis for further national work on this element.

Information and Communication Technologies

Information and communication technologies (website, video conference, e-newsletters) will be used throughout the project. The project website will serve as a communication and feedback tool by providing the opportunity to follow the process, to feed in experiences and to use the published results. Each partner will have the opportunity to contribute in the national language and to feed the experience of other partners into their own work.

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