



OVERCOMING ISLAMOPHOBIA

– promoting inter-religious dialogue and co-operation

Report of the study session held by
Ecumenical Youth Council in Europe and
Forum for European Muslim Youth and Student Organisations
in co-operation with the European Youth Centre Strasbourg
of the Council of Europe

European Youth Centre Strasbourg
19th – 26th March 2006



This report gives an account of various aspects of the study session. It has been produced by and is the responsibility of the educational team of the study session. It does not represent the official point of view of the Council of Europe.

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1. Greetings

1.1 Executive summary

Islamophobia is a serious phenomenon that currently affects many young people in Europe. Committed to exploring and combating the issue, EYCE (Ecumenical Youth Council in Europe) and FEMYSO (Forum of European Muslim and Youth Organisations) organised a joint study session titled “Overcoming Islamophobia – promoting inter-religious dialogue and co-operation”. The event gathered together more than 30 young people from all over Europe, from both Muslim and Christian background, to gain knowledge and skills about how to overcome Islamophobia. The study session, held 19th – 26th March 2006, was hosted by the Council of Europe in the European Youth Centre in Strasbourg.

The main aim of the study session was to provide young multipliers with information and practical skills about how to promote inter-religious dialogue and co-operation for overcoming Islamophobia in their national and local contexts.

The study session addressed the issue from various angles. The first days provided a theoretical background for understanding the roots of Islamophobia, whereas the rest of the week was dedicated to getting to know actual tools for doing inter-religious dialogue. Specifically, the tool “Making Inter-religious Calendar” was used. The week ended with making plans about how to use the newly gained skills, tools and knowledge back home.

One of the most important aims of the week was to engage the participants into inter-religious dialogue themselves. Therefore, much work during the week was done in small groups. Working together in changing mixed groups provided participants with numerous opportunities to engage in actual grass-root dialogue and to share experiences and viewpoints. Also the Questions & Answers session in which the participants shared information and experiences contributed greatly to this aim. This participatory approach was very successful and was in general considered to be one of the highlights of the week by the participants. Further, as the week also included regular Muslim and Christian prayers that were open for everyone to attend to, the participants also experienced the practical side of the religions. The prayers were much appreciated by the participants as they provided a unique opportunity to observe the practices of both religions, and many discussions took place related to the prayers. This deepened their understanding of the religions – also of their own.

In addition to the focus on dialogue and participatory learning, theoretical input was an important element of the study session. Many methods ranging from visual presentations, lectures, small group work and creative approaches were used throughout the week to ensure balance in various learning styles. As to the lectures, Bashy Quraishy from the European Network Against Racism held a lecture on “Defining Islamophobia” in which he clarified the background and definition of the concept of Islamophobia. Furthermore, as media has especially recently (“the Danish cartoons”) played an extensive role in how people analyse religious groups’ behaviour, Dr. Gavan Titley led a lecture and a workshop about the role of mass media in the construction of Islamophobia. These inputs offered new viewpoints for the participants and made them realise how the phenomenon is constructed also in their national contexts. Further, to gain an understanding of the current

situation of Islamophobia in Europe the participants also built an extensive European Market Place that presented the situation of Islamophobia in their respective countries. Provided with information about inter-religious dialogue, the psychology of Islamophobia, layers of identity, stereotypes and prejudices etc. the participants were equipped with essential knowledge about the reality of Islamophobia that young people are facing in Europe today.

As to the practical side of the study session, the main tool that was presented during the week for promoting inter-religious dialogue and co-operation was the "Process of Making an Inter-religious Calendar". Working in small groups, the participants created wall calendars for the year 2007, including holidays from both Islam and various denominations in Christianity, and sharing information and experiences while completing the task. The Calendar process was developed and modified especially for this study session. It is designed to provide space for actual dialogue and mutual learning to take place, to promote co-operation and to create shared experiences. It is a tool the participants could take home and replicate. The Calendar process received both praise and criticism from the participants, indicating that there is potential in this tool, but that it should also be further developed.

Potential other tools were also presented, and also some resource materials, e.g. Compass and Domino, were introduced to the participants. Numerous ideas for inter-religious youth work were invented during the week. All these were used in the end of the week when plans for future action were made. The participants developed projects to be carried out in their local or national contexts and made joint plans for future co-operation. Some plans have already been put to practice, and others are to come. EYCE and FEMYSO will be updated on the progress of these projects and will share the information in their networks.

The social programme of the week included among other things the Intercultural Banquet and Intercultural Evening, which were full in taste, music and colour. Being hosted in Strasbourg, the week also included an excursion to the town. The participants enjoyed the canals and views of town and experienced the charming atmosphere of le Petit France. Also a visit to a local Mosque for the Muslim Friday prayer was much appreciated. The inter-cultural and inter-religious aspects were kept in mind in all the social programme and the educational parts of the week. The participants were informed about differences in religious and cultural customs, and these were respected.

In the evaluation of the study session the participants indicated being very pleased with the variety of methods used, and were pleased with the construction of the programme. The week was in general considered to be a very good experience, and the participants felt they had learnt a lot. In particular, the smooth running of the week was appreciated, and the IPC received many thanks for doing a good job. Some criticism was expressed concerning especially the tools provided, language barriers, and the tight schedule of the week. All the suggestions will be valuable for the planning of future events.

A follow-up meeting on this study session was held between EYCE and FEMYSO in April 2006. The organisations are pleased to have trained young Muslims and Christians to act as multipliers in their local contexts to overcome Islamophobia by promoting inter-religious dialogue and co-operation. Seeing the real need for dialogue in Europe today and committed to further mutual respect and understanding both organisations are committed in continuing to work on this field in the future.

The study session was a very intensive and demanding event, but first and foremost a very enjoyable experience for everybody present. As the course director for the event I would like to express my deepest gratitude for the International Planning Committee for all the work they did in planning and implementing the week. Their commitment and enthusiasm made the event possible. I would also like to express my sincerest thanks to our External Advisor Yael Ohana for her excellent and professional support during the process, and to Agnieszka Teodorzyk for her invaluable help. Special thanks go to the Council of Europe for making this event possible.

Aura Nortomaa
Course director

14nd June 2006, Brussels

1.2 Greetings from the organisations

Dear brothers and sisters, dear friends,

The Ecumenical Youth Council in Europe is happy to present you the final report of the study session "Overcoming Islamophobia - promoting inter-religious dialogue and co-operation", which was held in the European Youth Centre Strasbourg, France, from the 19th to the 26th of March 2006.



The decision to hold yet another inter-religious training course by EYCE (this time again in co-operation with FEMYSO) was a very important step into continuing a successful training series.

In 2000, EYCE held its first-ever seminar on inter-faith dialogue in Norway. Although it was a necessary and rather rewarding experience, it was still a seminar ABOUT inter-religious dialogue, planned for an audience of Christian participants, not yet an inter-religious seminar.

EYCE has had the possibility to reflect on the outcomes of that experience ever since and also prepare itself for a challenge that in these four years became more and more pressing: the attempt to look beyond the borders of Christian faith and establish a dialogue with believers of other faiths, and first of all with the Religions of the Book: Judaism, and with the religion proclaimed by Muhammad, the Islamic faith. This was not meant to be a theological dialogue, but rather a dialogue focused on youth and social issues.

This reflection became a project that EYCE implemented through two inter-religious dialogues, one organized in November 2004 in Veria, Greece and another one organized in December 2005 in Malta. Both events had an enormous success and showed the potential of good cultural and youth co-operation between both EYCE and FEMYSO and participants coming from diverse cultural/social backgrounds.

This inter-religious dialogue continued as co-operation between EYCE and FEMYSO, financially supported by the European Youth Foundation. It is therefore that EYCE could organise another and similarly successful training event, this time a study session.

During the study session Christian and Muslim participants from all over Europe spent together fruitful time. As the theme of the study session was "Islamophobia", participants interacted and exchanged views, formally and especially informally. The structure of the study session helped but also some ad-hoc questions and answers sessions that everyone profited from. Thus the participants could tackle their own "Islamophobia" or, in turn, "Christianophobia". From the very beginning mutual suspicions faded in favour of the availability to listen to each other and to learn more about the other party, in a warm climate of mutual understanding and respect.

In the future, EYCE shall continue the series of trainings dedicated to inter-religious dialogue and will attempt at addressing more and more sensitive themes on this field. Hopefully, this shall be as successful as the study session in Strasbourg was.

Cristian Buchiu on behalf of the Executive Committee of EYCE

**“Dialogue: the key element to overcome stereotypes
and to increase co-operation”**



In co-operation with FEMYSO, a training course on inter-religious dialogue was already held by EYCE in November 2004. It enabled the organisations to establish guidelines for future dialogue. In 2005, EYCE and FEMYSO agreed to implement annual inter-religious activities.

The international seminar on **"Overcoming Islamophobia: promoting inter-religious dialogue and co-operation "** which took place in March 2006 was especially underlined by the presence of young people. It was a first way of "BREAKING the barriers between the borders", of approaching the other, of visualizing Europe in terms of richness. Certain dynamics and solidarity between the participants were created thanks to the exchange of points of views, their experiences, their lives and the problems encountered in their respective countries related to the education of human rights and Islamophobia. What is more, they were able to express their expectations for the future and for the construction of Europe.

The aim of this seminar was to foster inter-religious dialogue, to promote respect amongst youth from diverse backgrounds, to emphasize the equality of rights of all people and to explore further tools and methods useful for overcoming Islamophobia in European societies. We therefore encourage all the initiatives going in this direction and ideas for cooperation between Christian and Muslim youth organisations on local, regional, national and international levels. More significantly, we have to keep in mind that the fight continues and especially within their respective countries, we have to continue to inform other members, to spread our knowledge and to organize actions.

With regards to the challenges facing youth and conviction communities in Europe and the broader world, the collaboration with EYCE enabled us to share best practices focusing on youth work and more specifically on a particular identity. EYCE is our main partner in Europe and we hope that our relations and efforts for European youth work will be further reinforced. We are - and are even more so today- convinced that our fight is about justice, respect, equality, anti-discrimination and the promotion of a more inclusive and cohesive society.

Thanks to our collective commitment, we already achieved a lot by **dialogue, the key element to overcome stereotypes and to increase co-operation**. Our faith allows us to go forward and to tackle the whole issue in the most respectful and efficient way in order to fight all forms of discrimination. We invite EYCE to be one of the pillars in this topic and to develop more seminars in this way for the 'European Year of inter-cultural dialogue 2008'.

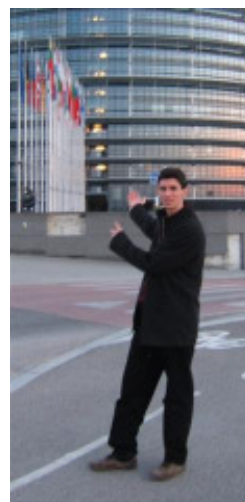
Najatte Kaaouss, General Secretary of FEMYSO, on behalf of FEMYSO

1.3 Greetings from participants

From Arpad Szabo, Romania, Reformed Christian

Between the 19th and 26th of March there was a study session called "Overcoming Islamophobia" in Strasbourg, France. The aims of this meeting were to learn about Islam, to discover the existing Islamophobia, to think about the facts that have led to it and to plan some actions to overcome it. For this reason we listened to many brief and concrete speeches.

During the week we started from theory and we arrived to practice. We heard about the history of EYCE and FEMYSO. In the evenings there were really good programmes organized so we could relax and enjoy this: "How good and pleasant it is when brothers live together in unity!" Psalm 133:1(Holy Bible). Highlights of the evenings were the Intercultural evening and the International Banquet. We could taste each other's foods and drinks and we could try to sing folk songs together, to dance and to rejoice in the Lord.



The thing that I liked most was that we did not only learn about each other's beliefs through presentations, but also (mostly) by dialoging in the coffee breaks and in the free time. We had the conclusion that what is presented in the media is not the truth, but Islam is presented in a negative way. The main idea of this session for me was how unfair it is that we use double standards when speaking about a person who is from the European Culture and one who is from a Middle-East or an African Culture with Muslim background.

I also loved that there was lot of action. We were moving all the time, being in small groups with different persons, and this way we learned that there is possibility to live one beside another (even though we don't have the same confession) and we are able to overcome those problems which are common in our lives.

As a conclusion I might say that I'm really happy that I could be there. It was a beautiful experience on overcoming differences. I think if everybody would approach the other the way we did during that week, there would be no war, or hate, or misunderstandings in this world.

God bless!

Arpad

From Anna Bratowska, Poland, Muslim

Dear Friends,

The week full of hard work, challenges and experiences has come to an end. The multinational meeting inspired me to broaden my knowledge of religious subjects. Thanks to the friendly approach of the participants, I had the opportunity to listen to the ecumenical prayers and to become familiar with some part of Christian faith in detail. Newly met people not only permitted me to make new friends, but also showed me varied ways to look at the world and its problems. Individual regions of the world struggle with different kinds of "phobias" and stereotypes which I understood during the seminar. Literally, by events like this one man becomes open to the world and other people's needs.



What remained after those days? After the seminar I often meditate, put in order captured knowledge and give it useful categories. I made a decision about my future activities. Thanks to the seminar I not only became more aware of the subject of Islamophobia but I also learnt how to estimate my skills and possibilities in real terms. This was a week of perfect activities (national presentations, lectures), common trust building (describing our feelings in homegroups) and comprehension (visit to the mosque and free time spent together). Knowledge, captured experiences and priceless friendships will stay with me forever.

If we were not to meet anymore, time would blur memory of adventures experienced together and only small part in us would manage to change the grey reality. Finally I think the seminar was successful.

Good luck My Friends!!!

Anna

2. Introduction to the study session

2.1 Background

EYCE's General Meeting decided in the year 1999 that EYCE should have inter-religious dialogue amongst its priorities in the upcoming years. This decision was further emphasized by the General Meeting in 2005 when inter-religious dialogue was listed as one of EYCE's main focus areas. The first EYCE-seminar on interfaith dialogue was held already in 2000 in Norway with the support of the European Youth Foundation. Even though the topic was inter-religious dialogue, the participants were still all Christians.

In 2004, EYCE and FEMYSO held their first training course together on the topic of inter-religious dialogue and conflict management. The course was held in Greece and was much appreciated by the participants that came from both Muslim and Christian background. During this course both organisations noticed that personal dialogue is the key element in increasing co-operation and overcoming stereotypes. EYCE and FEMYSO therefore agreed to foresee annual inter-religious activities to provide opportunities for young people from both Muslim and Christian background to meet and experience true dialogue together. In the year 2005 EYCE and FEMYSO held a seminar on "Gender and religion" in Malta, where the role of women in both religions was explored in depth.

Being aware of the situation young Muslims face in Europe today, FEMYSO held a seminar in EYCB in 2004 about "Islamophobia and its consequences on young people". Having discussed the findings of this seminar in the inter-religious working group of the European Youth Forum Jeunesse, the decision to focus on inter-religious dialogue in the future was further cemented in EYCE and FEMYSO.

Europe has a history of violence that has been motivated by religious reasons. At the same time Christianity and Islam promote peace as one of their main ethical values. EYCE and FEMYSO made the decision to explore this issue further, to further identify common values and to contribute to overcoming Islamophobia. Committed to promoting respect amongst youth of diverse backgrounds and to emphasize the equality of rights of all people, EYCE and FEMYSO decided to organise a study session together about how to use inter-religious dialogue to overcome Islamophobia.

2.2 Aims and objectives

The main aim of this study session was to provide young people with practical skills and information on how to overcome Islamophobia in their respective countries and organisations and to develop ideas for concrete co-operation between Christian and Muslim youth organisations on a local, regional and national level.

In addition, the experiences from past EYCE-FEMYSO inter-religious seminars show that true dialogue on personal level is the best way to promote inter-religious dialogue. Thus, to provide opportunities for grass-root dialogue to take place in this seminar was considered to be of essential importance.

From the reasons stated above, the aims of the study session were identified as follows:

- To provide information, tools, and skills to overcome Islamophobia
- To provide ideas for Muslim-Christian co-operation on local, regional and national level
- To promote tolerance, respect and equality
- To promote true dialogue in the context of inter-religious dialogue

Based on these aims, the objectives of the study session were defined as follows:

- To engage in direct personal dialogue aimed at overcoming stereotypes
- To further develop an attitude of respect and skills how to deal with religious diversity.
- To find common ethical and religious values that are based on peace and that are aimed at overcoming religiously motivated violence
- To empower young people of Muslim and Christian background to be actors in IRD
- To increase active citizenship in the field of overcoming Islamophobia and promoting inter-religious respect
- To develop a concrete tool that is easy to use and easy to adapt to national and cultural diversities. This tool shall be based on the skills acquired during the study session and will be useable by the participants, EYCE, FEMYSO and the Directorate of Youth and Sport and in future publications addressing Islamophobia and inter-religious dialogue.

These aims and objectives were further modified to more concrete objectives as:

- To increase knowledge of the two religions: not only theoretical knowledge, but also knowledge on practicalities, and knowledge on spirituality
- To explore where the fear of “the other” comes from
- To gain knowledge of the current European reality and context of Islamophobia
- To promote better understanding of each other
- To explore consequences of Islamophobia on young people
- To promote (European) active citizenship

2.3 Aims of the calendar process

One of the major objectives of the study session was to develop a tool for inter-religious dialogue, namely the process of making an inter-religious calendar. This process was planned to be the actual tool that the participants can take home and use in their respective contexts. The aims of the calendar process were identified as follows:

- To give the participants an IRD process that they can take home and use themselves
- To produce something concrete that the participants can have at their home as a reminder of IRD
- Give understanding of the day-to-day life of religions: how it works during the year & the lifecycle of religions
- Give a tool that helps in planning IRD events
- Increase knowledge of religious holidays

2.4 Programme of the study session

2.4.1 Main topics and flow of the programme

The programme of the week consisted of two main parts: first, exploring the definition and reality of Islamophobia and second, investigating practical ways to overcome it. Thus, the flow of the week could also be described as first defining what we were talking about, then exploring the reality about it, and then discussing what we could do about it.

In the very beginning of the week the participants identified a set of common values and a set of guidelines for inter-religious dialogue that served as a foundation for the work of the week. Besides this important task to learn how to work together, the first days of the study session were dedicated to exploring first the concept and then the reality of Islamophobia in Europe. Also concepts of stereotypes and prejudices as well as the role of media in the creation of Islamophobia were examined.

The second part of the week was dedicated to getting to know tools for how to overcome Islamophobia. Specifically, the tool “Making an inter-religious calendar” was introduced. The week ended with action planning: summing up what had been learned and developing plans on how to put it in practice on a national or local context back home.

As to the working methods used, we implemented the majority of the programme elements as small group work in various mixed group settings. One of the most important aims of the study session was to encourage participants to engage in personal inter-religious dialogue, and small groups are in general the best means to provide opportunities for true dialogue to take place. Judging by the feedback from the participants small groups were very appreciated and dialogue flourished. Other methods of the study session included two guest lecturers’ inputs, frontpage exercise, take a step – exercise, input about the Psychology of Islamophobia, creating various visual and other presentations, personal reflection etc. As prayers are an essential part of living religion, regular prayer times were included in the programme. Attending to one another’s prayers also provided the participants a unique chance to observe the practices of the other religion.

2.4.2 Practicalities from an inter-religious perspective

Due to the inter-religious nature of the study session, inter-religious concerns were taken into account in the planning and implementation of the week. These included e.g. scheduling suitable prayer times for both Muslims and Christians, making sure that these did not overlap so that participants could be encouraged to observe all prayers. Also, women and men were accommodated on separate floors. Participants were informed that physical contact between genders is not encouraged. All food that was served during the week was halaal. Regarding alcohol policy, the participants were informed that as different people may have different stands on alcohol consumption, mutual respect and dialogue will be needed. The participants were encouraged to find an understanding concerning alcohol consumption during the week together as an inter-religious exercise in itself.

2.4.3 Timetable

Timetable of the study session as executed:

	Sunday 19.03.	Monday 20.03.	Tuesday 21.03.	Wednesday 22.03.	Thursday 23.03.	Friday 24.04.	Sat 25.03.	Sun 26.03.	
8.15 – 9.00	BREAKFAST								
9.00 – 9.30	I P C M E E T I N G	OPENING WORSHIP	MORNING PRAYER (DENOMINATIONAL)						
9.30 – 11.00 Session 1		Introduction to seminar & practicalities	Defining Islamophobia (Bashy Quraishy)	Massmedia, Religion and Politics (Gavan Tittley)	Questions and Answers	TOOL	TOOL Finalising & Presentations		
11.00– 11.30		COFFEE							
11.30 – 13.00 Session 2		Introduction to EYCE, FEMYSO & CoE. & Expectations	Stereotypes, prejudices and intolerance	continued “Frontpage”	Introduction to TOOL	TOOL 12.30 Home groups	Debriefing		
13.00 – 14.00	LUNCH								
14.15 – 14.45	A R R I V A L S 20.30 Welcome drinks	MUSLIM PRAYER				E X C U R S I O N (Muslim Friday prayer at Mosque)	PRAYER	D E P A R T U R E S (Christian Services in town)	
15.00 – 16.30 Session 3		Religions: Islam & Christianity	Experiences and aspects of discrimination (“Take a step”)	Everyday life: Identity, cultural diversity, coping strategies	TOOL (Flexible coffee)		Action planning		
16.30 – 17.00		COFFEE					COFFEE		
17.00 – 18.15 Session 4		Common values and IRD basics	European situation: MARKET PLACE	Creating constructive relationships	TOOL (Flexible coffee)		Evaluation		
18.15-18.45		Home groups	Home groups	Home groups / Mid-term eval.			Closing Worship		
19.00 – 20.00		EVENING MEAL					TOOL (Flexible coffee)		MEAL
20.15 – 20.45		EVENING PRAYER (ECUMENICAL)							Free time
21.00 Evening Programme	Icebreakers	International Banquet	European Cultural Evening	Movie night	(Q&A continued)	Dinner in Strasbourg	Farewell Party		

2.5 Participants



The 27 participants (aged 19-31) came from different cultural and religious backgrounds within EYCE's and FEMYSO's networks. They were all actively involved in youth work in their national or local context and will be able to work as multipliers after the study session. No excessive previous knowledge on the topic was required, but having an attitude of respect and a willingness to learn were stressed. For a detailed list of participants, please see appendix 1.

Altogether the participants came from 18 different countries. However, it is worth noting that many participants were living in a country different from their country of origin. Thus the number of countries present at the study session was somewhat higher than the plain number indicates.

The participants came from the following countries:

Russia	1	Denmark	2
Finland	3	Slovakia	1
Romania	3	Macedonia	1
Poland	3	Albania	1
Estonia	2	Bosnia and Herzegovina	1
Germany	1	France	1
Bulgaria	1	Belgium	1
UK	1		
Hungary	1		
Italy	3		

2.6 International Planning Committee

The following persons belonged to the International Planning Committee that was in charge of the planning and implementation of the study session:

Aura Nortomaa (Belgium/Finland, Lutheran)
Course director, EYCE office
Cristian Buchiu (Romania, Orthodox)
EYCE Executive Committee
Daniel Barton (Greece/Czech Republic, Reformed)
EYCE
Ruth Bennett (UK, Muslim)
FEMYSO
Sami Danguir (France, Muslim)
FEMYSO
Yael Ohana
External Advisor, Council of Europe

The IPC received additional help from Agnieszka Teodorzyk, a trainee at the EYCS.

2.7 Guests

Bashy Quraishy (www.bashy.dk)

Bashy Quraishy is the President of European Network Against Racism – Brussels, which is a large European network against racism with over 600 member organisations. He is also a member of the EU Commission’s High Level Committee on the Social and Labour Market integration of disadvantaged ethnic minorities. Born in India and grown up in Pakistan, Bashy has studied in Germany, USA, and UK, and is nowadays residing in Denmark. There he is the Chief Editor of MidiaWatch, a quarterly magazine of media and minorities, the Chair of an media monitoring organisation Fair Play, and a member of the Advisory Council of the Danish Human Rights Institute. He has been active in the field of Human Rights, Ethnic Equality issues and Anti-discrimination work for a long time and contributes regularly to the Danish and European press with essays and TV debates as well as with lectures on various issues such as Islam in the Western Media, Multiculturalism, globalization, anti-semitism and Islamophobia. He is also the author of 10 books related to these topics. His last book is called “Danish identity – seen through brown eyes”.



In the study session Bashy held a lecture on “Defining Islamophobia” in which he explored the concept and background of Islamophobia.

Gavan Titley

Dr. Gavan Titley works as a Lecturer in the Centre for Media Studies at the National University of Ireland, Maynooth. His current research includes a co-authored analysis of the coverage of the Iraq war in the Irish media, and an exploration of media and transnational communities in Ireland. Gavan also has a long history in youth work and experience of working as a trainer, educational advisor and researcher. Most of his youth work has involved intercultural learning and anti-racism, conflict transformation, training for trainers, and more recently, citizenship issues.



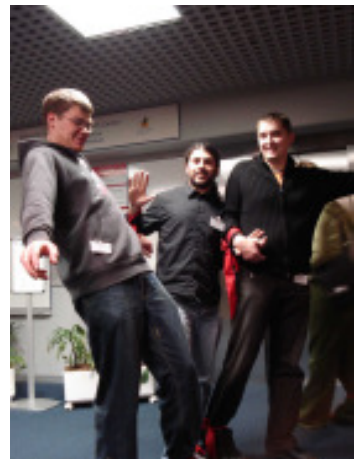
Gavan's recent publications include *Resituating Culture* (ed.) (Strasbourg, Council of Europe, 2004); with Andrew Newby, 'The "War on Terror" and Non-alignment' in *Peace Review*, 15:4 (2004), pp. 483-89; and 'Everything Moves: Beyond culture and multiculturalism in Irish public discourse', in *The Irish Review*, No. 31, 2004.

In the study session Gavan held a lecture on "Mass Media, Religion and Politics" and led & debriefed a frontpage-exercise workshop.

3. Day-to-day programme

This part of the report is based on the daily reports written by the participants. Participants in each home group were in charge of reporting for one day. For Monday, these were Madalina with Laur, Marco, Rola, Amani and Pavel; for Tuesday, Jaakko, Birgitte, Laura, Afrim, Anna B. and Krasimira; for Wednesday, Christina, Fatima, Arpad, Triin, Sedad and Jan; for Thursday, Linnea, Helen, Rafat, Klodjana and Anna P.; and for Friday, Miklos, Mari, Zuzana, Haoua and Annika.

For a list of the methods used, please see appendix 4. For materials and resources, please see appendix 6 (appendix 5 for calendar materials). For prayer materials, please see appendix 7.



3.1 Monday 20th of March 2006

The day started with opening worship with both Christian and Muslim prayers.

Icebreakers

We already had some icebreakers on Sunday. Today we also started with a couple of little games called "zip-zap" and "tropical rain" in order to wake us up. Then we passed on to the serious things: we gathered together and had each member of the group presented him- or herself. Everyone was asked to say their names, the roots of their names, the religion they belonged to, and the sweetest moment of the trip to Strasbourg (the majority was pleased to enjoy the spring in Strasbourg).



Introductions

The session continued with introductions to EYCE and FEMYSO. Sami Danguir, a member of the International Planning Committee (IPC), gave us a brief look on the history and the structure, the objectives and the vision of FEMYSO. Then we had a presentation of EYCE by the General Secretary of this organisation, Daniel Müller, who talked about the history, the structure, the aims to reach in the next future, the activities, and the partners of EYCE. After that we listened to the background of this study session, about the other joint seminars that had taken place in the last two years, and also the aims and the objectives of this study session. We also had a short presentation, held by the trainee Agnieszka Teodorzyk, about the Council of Europe and about the differences between this organisation and the European Union.

Expectations

Everyone was asked to write down on post-its their expectations for the study session (for a full list of expectations, see appendix 2). There were three different colours for three questions: “I want to contribute...”, “I would like to...”, “I would not like to...” The post-its were put on the wall for everyone to see. Most of the participants were on the same level of expectations – to be open-minded, being willing to communicate, to understand and not to discriminate anybody, etc.

In sum, people

- were willing to contribute to the study session with their past experiences, their knowledge of their own faith and of the topic, plus with their enthusiasm, curiosity, active attitude and willingness to learn
- wanted to learn about the two religions, to learn about Islamophobia and how to deal with it and to get tools, and to really meet and have dialogue with others
- did not want to encounter intolerance, be offended or blamed, be forced to do anything, nor to go home with empty hands

The structure of the programme of the week was then presented, and compared with the expectations.

Islam and Christianity

In the next session the basics of Islam and Christianity were presented. Sami explained us on a whole what Islam means and what obligations you have as a practicing Muslim. Immediately after that we were introduced to main historical and practical lines of Christianity. These presentations were welcomed because in this way we had on the table the terms of the dialogue in order to discuss the main issue: Islamophobia and overcoming it.



We were then split into two Christian and one Muslim group to talk about the differences we encounter within Christianity (in the first two groups) and within Islam (the third group). Roughly speaking, the conclusions were that the Muslims are different only for



the reason that they live in different countries and different geographical areas. The Quran is the same for all. The difference between shiia and sunni are about the heritage of leadership – the shiia believe it is inherited whereas sunni consider leadership to be more dependent on one's actions than heritage. Speaking about the Christians, they found out that they have a lot of different things in practicing their religion – the



services and liturgy, the ministry, the way the cross looks like, how the Bible is combined, the number of sacraments, the visual aspects of church architecture etc.

Common values

We then moved to talk about the common values we share. In mixed groups of four or five people we identified three important values we shared (religious, social, political values). Finally, all groups presented their values and we formed a flower of values where on each petal was one value. The values were:

- God
- Faith in God
- One single God
- Respect
- Respect the others
- Respect of Human dignity
- Treat others as you would want others to treat you
- Desire of knowledge
- Justice & Equality
- Responsibility
- Generosity
- Harmony
- Hope
- Truth
- Love (4 times)



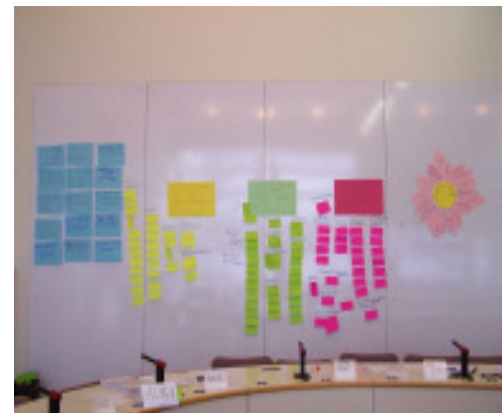
Guidelines to dialogue

In the next activity we talked in three small groups about some guidelines for inter-religious dialogue (for the three sets of guidelines, see appendix 6). We were to reach some conclusions about the main guidelines for dialogue. After that we formed three bigger groups to negotiate what the others had decided upon and to discuss why it was that guideline and not the other, how we can manage with that in the daily life, what is the experience related to that principle etc.



Finally we came together with the results and had five guidelines from each of the three groups. These were:

- Avoid judgment and stereotypes**
- Be willing to learn**
- Acknowledge common values**
- Be aware of your own prejudices**
- Try to get know people's background**
- Be respectful**
- Be clear on your own identity and faith**
- To listen more and to speak less**
- Integration requires two ways process**
- Respect the other**
- Be ready to change your points of view**
- Talk about terms of dialogue**
- Build trust and value it**
- Muslims aren't a homogenous group of people who think, act, and want the same thing**



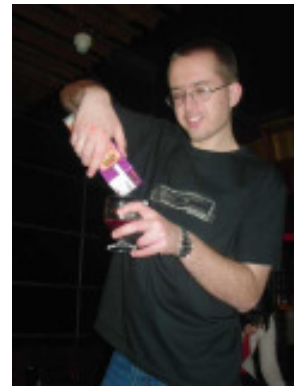
Home groups

In the evening, before dinner, we were put in home groups of five or six persons. The groups were moderated by a team member who asked us how we were feeling and why, what were the worst things, what we would change in that day etc. She/he also asked us to point out from a paper a blob with which we could identify ourselves: a blob that was somewhere in the tree, in a specific position, with a special expression and gesture. It was quite nice to talk about such a full day, to make comments and to think about the dinner :) We were feeling quite tired and exhausted after the day since the schedule was so tight, but we felt like we are in the beginning of something and are making contact with each other.

International Banquet



In the evening we organized an international banquet – with the help of the social committee – where everybody presented their traditional food and drinks from their own countries and tasted those of the others.



3.2 Tuesday 21st March 2006

Topics of this day were Islamophobia's different aspects: theory and practise – societal and personal

From the Christian morning prayer the general impression of a participant was that 'The Bible teaches how important equality and good relationships in society are. Both of the topics are very universal and they are very easily acceptable to any religion, culture or nation.'



Defining Islamophobia

The morning's first session was held by ENAR's President Bashy Quraishy. First of all, Bashy noted that he is honoured to be among young people, as they have critical attitude in a positive way and thus have good questions. Also, Bashy pointed out that unfortunately this kind of a study session is not too common in Europe.

Bashy's professional, enthusiastic and even provocative presentation gave good basis for lively debate. The debate handled things like the role of practising the religion in Islam, the role of Imams, the US interests and prejudices and other issues. Finally, Bashy encouraged everyone to participate in anti-racist work and to consider people as individuals, not as members of their culture.

Summary of Bashy's presentation

Bashy saw the overall development in identity definition in Europe as a shift from the racial/colour identity to religion/culture definition. The media creates and strengthens prejudices. Concerning Islam, the prejudice is that Islam is primitive and not European. According to media surveys 60 to 70 percent of the news coverage of Islam is negative. According to Bashy, the main reasons for the current focus on Islam are threefold. After the collapse of the Soviet Union there was a need for a new enemy. The fear of a fast growing religion and the competition it presents is another reason. Finally, it is a question of oil.

Bashy conceptualised Islamophobia as an unrealistic fear of Islam. The term has been used for example in the terminology of the Council of Europe and the EU. He gave a thorough presentation of how the image of Islam has been built in Europe historically. Today in history books the Golden Age of Islamic influence in Europe is referred to as the Dark Ages. Bashy also tackled the very sensitive issue of the pictures of Prophet Mohammad in the newspaper Jyllandsposten.



Eventually, Bashy gave some advice to the Muslim communities in Europe about how to reduce Islamophobia. In his opinion, the Muslims should respect the 'lay' law and learn the language of the country. He also gave some advice for inter-religious dialogue: speak and listen more, Europeans must get rid of historical ignorance, speak discretely, appreciate mutually, be aware of your own prejudices and Christians should remember that a Muslim is not a cultural ambassador of all the Muslim world.

Stereotypes and prejudices

We started the "Psychology of Islamophobia" lecture by commenting on the course leader Aura now wearing a scarf, and reflected on how appearance affects the way we perceive others. Next, five different pictures were hung on the wall and we were asked to write down stereotypes which could be linked with each picture.

We then listened to a lecture where the purpose was to become aware of how prejudices and stereotypes are constructed in our individual minds, and from this perspective to learn how to deal with them in order to overcome them.



Summary of Aura's presentation

Definitions

- Stereotype: A generalisation and simplification that helps us to think faster. Often one group has stereotypes of another group. Stereotypes can form a psychological perspective be positive, negative or neutral. Stereotypes influence our behaviour and problems arise when stereotypes are negative.
- Prejudice: When you make assumptions about persons in beforehand and without proof. The consequences are often intolerance and discrimination. Prejudices arise from guesses, and are fuelled by rumours and ignorance.

- Phobia: From psychological perspective Islamophobia is not really a phobia. Also, it is not really fear of the unknown, as people do not fear what they do not know but they fear what they think they know.

We also learned how perception works: how the image that the subject perceives may be different from the image the object presents, and how that may still differ from what the object is actually like. In other words, we do not perceive people as they are, and our perception is influenced by e.g. our own feelings of insecurity and threat.

After the lecture we selected one of the five pictures we wanted to work on. In small groups, we picked two negative stereotypes linked to the picture and discussed possible causes and cures for these. All groups then presented their findings (for the results, see appendix 6). As many groups mentioned gaining knowledge as a cure, a conclusion comment was that the attitude to want information comes from within the subject, so it is important to have curiosity to get to know the other – the solution is not only to provide information as people have to also want to get it.

Experiences and aspects of discrimination: “Take a step forward” exercise



In this game the participants had to imagine for 20 min that they were another person (with better or worse social status) and to imagine how it would be to think and to live like him/her. When in the role, everybody was asked to take a step forward if they could say “yes” to a statement that was read aloud (e.g. “You feel the media respects people like you”). The game was very exciting and provocative and all participants took part in it with their heart and soul.

One participant described the course of the game as follows: “At the end of the game we understood that there are people in our own world and society who haven’t got our opportunity for development, because of the lack of money, the religion, the health condition, the ideas and so on. In some situations we are also discriminated in our society. The most provocative question was ‘When did you realize that your neighbours aren’t in your level?’ Most of us began to think about the neighbours and friends and just people we know who have worse status than us and how many times did we help them! This game made us think in a different point of view!”

European Situation: Market Place

After Learning about Islamophobia, the psychology of stereotypes, and discrimination, we had the opportunity to present the European reality of Islamophobia. We, participants, could show on a poster how Islamophobia appears in our own country. We came from all parts of Europe from Albania to the United Kingdom. The main topics on the posters were: population, religious groups, ethnic groups, and language of our countries; how many Muslims live there, what age are they; does



Islamophobia appear in the country and how, are there organisations that work for inter-religious dialogue. Some posters were very creative, some were plain, but everybody took it very seriously because we wanted to share this information with each other and wanted to get to know the other countries.

It was clear that Islamophobia is present in different ways in different countries. The reasons for the situations are various. It can be because the nation is very homogeneous, like in Sweden, or there are other big problems like in Romania and Hungary who struggle with Romaphobia. Somewhere Muslims and Christians can live together like in Bulgaria. In some countries Islamophobia is strongly present in the media (Denmark), in some countries even politicians are Islamophobic (Belgium, France), and in some countries Muslims have to face verbal or direct abuse (Belgium, France, United Kingdom, Bosnia-Herzegovina). In general, it was evident that 11th September 2001 made everything worse.

Fortunately, and this is a hope for the future, we can say that every country has its own organisation for inter-religious work – an organization for youth, an ecumenical organisation, or an organisation supported by the state. These organisations share the need for inter-religious dialogue, try to raise the awareness about this problem and to share knowledge.

Homegroups

We met in homegroups to reflect on the day like we did on Monday. We liked that we were changing spaces now and that we were being flexible, even though there was still time frustration. We also enjoyed getting information. We were feeling quite happy in general, even though tired too. It was a pity that Bashy could not stay longer as it would have been good to talk more with him.

European Cultural Evening



During the European cultural evening the participants presented different traditions, plays, songs and dances from their own cultural context. The participants feasted and enjoyed the plurality of different cultural heritages until late in the night.



3.3 Wednesday 22nd March 2006



The day started, as usual, with a friendly announcement from the reception that we should wake up and, if possible, arrive to breakfast at some point. Breakfast was served in its usual goodness with cornflakes, loads of chocolate, bread and chicken ham. Those Christians who managed to move a bit faster got a price – Protestant Prayer.

Massmedia, Religion and Politics

We started the working day a little late, as usual, with the first session about Massmedia and Religion and Politics. Dr. Gavan Titley was the guest speaker of this session. His presentation consisted of two parts: a lecture about Islamophobia in the Media and a frontpage-exercise. In his lecture Gavan talked about how Islamophobia is constructed and presented in mass media and which elements contribute to this. The session ended with discussions and exchange of thoughts about the responsibilities of journalists and the consequences of the “cartoons crisis” and irresponsible articles.

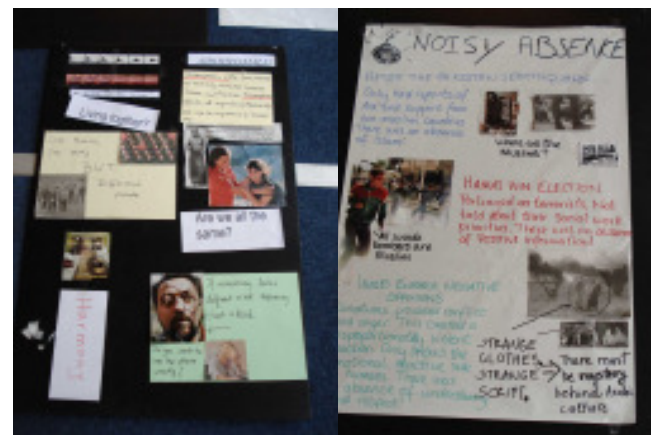


“Frontpage” exercise

In the exercise we were asked to create in small groups a front page of a newspaper showing how Islamophobia is experienced in our countries by the media. We did it by telling about situations in our own contexts and thereafter creating a front page by writing, drawing, cutting from newspapers, magazines etc. We discussed different examples of articles which produce Islamophobia and what made the articles Islamophobic. After having talked and discussed what to put on the front page we had about 2 minutes left to create it – and so we did!!!! The outcome of the front page: very informative AND a bit messy BUT another example of that the process can be more important than the product ☺

We then presented our front pages showing Islamophobia. Themes of these front pages were in general:

- Absence of positive references*
- Clear majority of negative references/ images*
- One sided reporting*
- Offensive/insensitive imagery*
- Direct link to terrorism*
- Disproportionate coverage of Islam/ Muslims*
- Islam even not mentioned when relevant*
- Non-Muslims speaking for Muslims*
- Incorrect information/ disinformation/lies*
- Misinterpretation of facts*



Making stories fit the current line
Encouraging the already existing prejudices
Black- white presentations - no room for complexity
Direct association with conspiracy; plotting to commit crime
Muslim acts of crime get front page coverage and crimes against muslims are published on page 3
Medias are not knowledgeable to the pain/ offense they cause – or are they?
Demonisation of difference
“We see what we want to see”
Showing Muslims in a one sided: no colors
-> they are sad and oppressed
Images of shouting, praying, angry Muslims -> stereotypes

Then we had a debate about the Danish cartoons of Muhammed; how are they Islamophobic? These were some points mentioned:

Shows a stereotype way of looking at Muslims – as suicide bombers/ terrorists
No respect for what is holy in another religion
Yes there is freedom of speech though not when it goes against other peoples allowance to speak
The freedom of speech has in Denmark never been threatened and the question is if the publisher of the Danish newspaper could have found another way to create a debate
The case is like the comment: “Calm down, it was just a joke” – said the big boy after he had hit the small boy in the school yard ...
Yes, freedom of speech for everybody but not always practically, there is also a freedom not to speak!
Clash of civilization between to voices in the debate – 2 extremists – those in the middle are not heard
AND results of the cartoons: burning of embassades, flags, demonstrations, people killed AND: Daneophobia

At 13 sharp the lunch was served. We will not add any comments about the cook. Those who know – know...

“Everyday life: Coping strategies, Cultural diversity”: Identity: Onion model



Participants were asked to think individually about their own identity: how do I identify myself? How do people identify me? They had to think of the factors that identify their identity and make a note of them in a drawing of an onion where each layer corresponds to a different part of their identity. Participants were then split into 6 groups, where everyone took 10 minutes to think of the layers of the onion. Everyone also described their neighbours with 3 factors that could identify them. After this they started to read aloud these factors and the person in question read his/her own points and explained why these factors identify him/her.

In the debriefing it was found out that in some groups all women identified themselves with their gender and also mentioned if they were married or not. Men did not usually do

this. Nobody identified him/herself in the way how he/she looked like. It was noted that how you identify yourself changes according to the context.

Agnieszka gave an input about how identity is composed from several things which make us unique. They give us also a platform to understand others and discuss with them. Identity has some elements that we can choose and others that we cannot.

Creating Constructive relationships: Roots and leaves



The fourth part of Wednesday started with identifying two positive and two negative things about living with differences at the local level. The discussion was first made in pairs and then in groups of four. We were asked to come up with practical ways in which the positives could be emphasized and the negatives addressed. In the groups we had to choose the most appropriate points. These answers we wrote on sheets of paper that had the form of roots and leaves. Then each group

explained their answers to the others and put the roots – the positives of living with differences at local level – and the leaves – the negatives – to a tree made on the wall.



The most popular negatives were about problems with communication, problems with integration, fear of assimilation, and cultural differences. Some positives, on the other hand, were: international fair trade, international sports and intercultural events (for a full list, see appendix 6).

Homegroups



The day was followed by the midterm evaluation in homegroups which at least for us meant some blobs again (have you ever before imagined yourself as a creature without a form – it really can be quite refreshing ☺).

Reflecting on the day: we enjoyed having theoretical input and felt the day was quite balanced. Anyway we feel the need to get some tools to really start doing something, since now we realise what the situation really is and want to do something about it. Some were feeling frustrated because of the language or some other concerns, like needing more time and more energisers, but we were quite happy in general. It feels like we are really doing IRD here.

Evening programme

And... surprise, surprise, the dinner was served. We continued the day with delicious bits and bites from garden, sea and the wilderness. The evening continued with fruitful discussions in freely composed small groups. Some people watched a movie, even though due to technical problems the movie started quite late.



3.4 Thursday 23rd March 2006

Questions and Answers

For this session we had prepared anonymous questions that we had put on posters on the previous day (for the questions, see appendix 6). There was a poster for each of the two religions and one poster for general questions. All these questions were used in the session to direct the discussion. Most questions were from Christians to Muslims or vice versa. A large number of different topics were brought up, both about basic beliefs and more abstract theological issues. Although we stuck to the questions from the posters, there was room for new questions sparked by those from the posters. Many of us felt that there were questions left unanswered in this session, and therefore we arranged a continuation of the session in the evening.

“Princess”

After coffee break we met each other for the second session this day. We started with an energizer. Agnieszka showed us 3 figures: dragon, princess and knight. The aim of this energizer was to choose and show a figure which would be “stronger” than the figure presented by the second group. It was evident that we were already thinking in the same way as every time both groups showed the same figure!



Introduction to the Calendar process

Then we explored how religion influences on the cycle of our day and year by walking around a big circle representing day/year. We talked shortly in small groups about the importance of the religion for us during these cycles of time.

The main part of the second session was the introduction to the tool (for all the materials and Calendar process methodology, see appendix 5). We got instructions how to prepare the calendar, what should we include in it, and what materials we could use. After that we were split into 5 groups and started working on the calendar.



Calendar making in small groups

“We discussed in our group the holidays and celebrations we have. Worked very well! We used symbols for each denomination, and the Muslims chose not to have a symbol. We put down our national days for each country, we also included 23rd march as a ‘Calendar’ day as a fun holiday, and our birthdays with pictures.”



“We worked out an idea for how we wanted it to be put together, but it took AGES just to work out the dates of the orthodox church (old and new style). This meant that we had to work very fast, and split up with different tasks. Because of this, unfortunately we didn’t discuss the feasts much at all.”

“Firstly we shared ideas, then brainstormed. We found some schemes for how the calendar would look. Then we brought together our feast dates. We organized them within the scheme of the calendar. Found materials to explain the feasts and also found photos to go with the explanations. It took a long time to bring all these things together because of the Lunar calendar and also because of the scheme that we chose. Unfortunately we missed the inter-religious dialogue because we were so focused on producing the calendar. But we had a great time working together.”



Q&A continued

In the evening Cristian started with the Q&A again. We talked about saints, human nature, sacrifice of Jesus (the crucifixion), why women cannot go to Hajj alone or be Imams. Someone asked how much the Christians know about what Islam says about Christianity. The answers were not always clear because of many different opinions.

3.5 Friday 24th March 2006

In the morning the work in small groups continued.

Excursion to Strasbourg

At noon many people left to visit the local mosque and experience the Friday prayer. Others had some lunch prepared by our lovely chef and headed for the centre a little bit later to enjoy the free afternoon. The “must-sees” were the mosque, the cathedral and from my point of view the museum of the contemporary and modern art. Riesling (white vine) tasted good and of course we had to have something flamed in the cafe. Some people did also some shopping or sun tanning.



In the evening we all went to a Northern African ethnic restaurant called Sable D'or and had some lovely couscous, chicken and vegetables, though the super friendly service was the main thing in my opinion. After that we walked in the sweet rainy night of Strasbourg and saw some gorgeous buildings in a very romantic lighting.



3.6 Saturday 25th March 2006

Calendar presentations

Making inter-religious calendar fits well in the line of creative workshop we did during the study session. I think here we had the best chance to realize the dialogue because we worked in small groups where everybody had to give something for the project. Each group was special, because of the individuals and complex because were formed by



members of more denominations. Making the calendar needed more time and more creativity. So the cohesion of the members in groups became stronger. So everything was given for a funny and developing presentation.

Each group presented their calendar and 2 or 3 months of the year, telling about the holidays of that month and explaining them. The groups also had to characterize the whole working process in a creative

way. I really appreciated the way that groups continued the creative and enthusiastic attitude of the calendar making process. We saw very nice performances. One group visualized their discussions filled with the will of knowing each other's traditions and also with jokes – which shows that making calendars was a really good to approach the other. Another group presented their work as a talk show in a TV where the denominations were deputized to speak about their feasts. Another group wrote a poem to the melody of a well-known Christmas-song to describe the working process. Without co-operation the calendars would not have been finished.

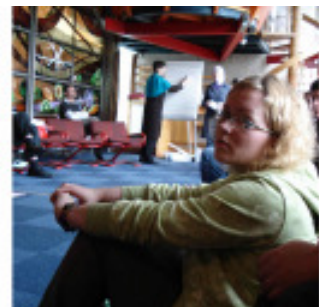
Debriefing of the Calendar process

We then spent some time debriefing the calendar process. We shared our feelings and thoughts about what we liked and did not like about the exercise, what were the best and worst moments, how we thought the exercise contributes to inter-religious dialogue and how we could use it ourselves, and what we would do differently (for the full feedback, see appendix 5).

In sum, both praise and criticism was expressed. The general opinion was that the work was too focused on making the product rather than on dialogue based on talking with each other. Due to this not all expectations were met.

The main idea of the making of the calendars was found to be the experience of practical work with a common aim. Some Christians were working together with Muslims for the first time. The joint focus helped us overcome the limits of theological discussions and it made use of a broader definition of inter-religious dialogue based on communication and co-operation. During the process we spent a lot of time explaining the holidays to each other and through this the diversity of the different Christian denominations was made apparent. The process resulted in a lot of new knowledge and a realizing of how much we actually have in common. The group dynamics were good even though people had different working styles and the need of structure was individual. The working atmosphere was good and full of enthusiasm, but after a challenging project we were glad to finish.

On a whole, the task was found to be challenging and the technical part of the work brought forth problems (for example with the pictures), as did the limited time frame. A common problem was that the project did not allow us to penetrate the subject on a deeper level, since people tended to work on their own area of expertise, that is the holidays of their own denomination. On the other hand everyone made use of their own special skills.



Action planning

We first had a look on the ideas of living together with differences that we had written on roots and leaves on Wednesday. We presented more thoughts and ideas about inter-religious co-operation that were added to the wall. These included:

- You have limited energy: focus on promoting positive aims
- Play winter games together
- Hyde park corner – open discussion place
- Drink tea and talk yourself (don't leave it for official persons)
- Invite press to activities
- Send reports to the other participants about what and how everybody of us did at his or her country after this study session and which results he or she got
- Send report of this seminar to others
- Media: write about this seminar
- Have 2 persons going around checking media and reacting
- Do practical work together: clean a lake
- Have balance in gatherings – 50% and 50%
- Keep places and meetings inclusive: take care of inter-religious needs
- In everyday life pay attention to IRD needs
- Chronicle – article: to muslim press,,to Christian press, to secular press
- Write about Islam/Islamophobia
- Research on Islamophobia and press: topic for your thesis?
- Organize a lecture, Q&A, panel, calendar, process
- Contact IRD organizations
- Dictionary of hatred
- Replicate this seminar!
- Muslims to schools to talk about Islam

Some resources were also mentioned:

- “All different all equal” campaign
- DOMINO
- COMPASS
- Living library

It was also mentioned that EYCE and FEMYSO are founding members of a European faith-based expert group (facilitated by the European Youth Forum) that currently produces a Tool-Kit about inter-religious dialogue for youth organisations.

After gathering these ideas and resources, we were introduced the Personal Action Plans and given time to write a plan of our own individually. After finishing our plan we had a chance to gather together in regional groups, or with people we otherwise planned to work with, and discuss what we wanted to do together.



All the plans and ideas were then shared together. The following ones were presented:

- Interreligious Voluntary Service for social causes (Poland)
- Interreligious Summer camps for kids or youth (sports, social work, etc) (Germany/Palestine)
- Interreligious youth Exchange or Interfaith study visits (Estonia)
- EVS in Muslim Country (Poland)
- Educational Games / Lectures in social/cultural centre on local level on theme "other religions" (Poland)
- Meetings of organisations from =/religious in local national context (Poland, UK)
- Interreligious Youth Council (on basis of existing structures) in Russia (Russia)
- Find the Muslim community and meet them (Estonia)
- Seminar for Muslim and Christian Youth on Democracy and HR in Palestine (Germany/Palestine)
- Workshop to train icebreakers to create contact between Muslim and other communities in Poland (Poland)
- Western Youth project in Muslim countries on Danish model already taking people to India (Denmark)
- Interreligious exchange of news – create positive distribution of examples (Slovakia and the whole group)
- Interreligious Conference using inter-disciplinary approach in Slovakia (Slovakia)
- Interreligious Work camp to create making path through all Slovakia clean forests (Slovakia)
- Medical/Social mission to assist Roma in CEE mixed groups (Slovakia)
- Interrel bus/mobility project travelling in shop and ecological work (Estonia)
- Dictionary of Islamophobia for use in schools and in public life (Bosnia and Herzegovina)
- Interfaith net portal (Estonia)
- Advocacy and Rights project to defend HFR of persons arrested in BiH and taken to Guantanamo (Bosnia and Herzegovina)
- Information campaign on ethical journalism in Romania (Romania)
- Reconciliation project between orthodox and muslim youth in BiH – internet forums (Bosnia and Herzegovina)
- Create new media – interreligious media + publish in Europe using new technologies (whole group)
- West and Islam – bigger project to be umbrella for actions of follow up to seminar - for EYCE and Femyso (whole group)

As a last exercise we wrote a "Letter to self" since "something usually happens at the airport on the way home, and people forget what they decided earlier". In these letters we wrote about our commitment to the projects we planned and our commitment to inter-religious work. The organisers will send us the letters after a few months so they will remind us of the importance of keeping up this work.

Evaluation and closing of the study session



The day then continued with evaluation of the study session. Please see section 4.1. for the results.

The study session was then officially closed in the last session of the day. The IPC members received thanks and applause for their work and the whole group was thanked for their energy and enthusiasm during the week.

The study session ended with a joint worship and a farewell party. In the farewell party big envelope for each participant was put on the wall so everybody could write something nice for everyone to take back home with. The party went on with music, dance and many talks till late in the night.

4. Analysis of the study session

4.1 Evaluation

The evaluation of the study session was done both on a daily basis in small reflection groups (home groups) and in a final evaluation session in the end of the week. The final evaluation consisted of the last meeting of the home groups, written evaluation forms, and of a group evaluation activity. The results from evaluation are summarized here: for detailed evaluation, please see appendix 3.

The on-going evaluation took place in the daily home groups that were facilitated by team members. These groups provided the participants a place to reflect, to share their thoughts and concerns, and to give the IPC feedback about the programme, the practicalities, and the group dynamics. One method that was used for triggering discussion in the groups was blobbies: choosing which figure in a picture you identify with. The blobbies were well liked, and in general the groups proved essential and appreciated by the participants. The groups also provided the IPC with valuable feedback about various matters. This feedback was reflected on in the daily IPC meetings in order to review and adjust the programme according to the needs of the group.

In the final evaluation the participants first had the opportunity to share their thoughts orally in the last home group meeting. Next, they individually filled in written evaluation forms. In these, the participants were asked to rate on a scale from 1 to 5 what they had liked about each programme element or practical issue. Space was also given for comments on each point. Lastly, the whole group took part in a “three baskets” evaluation activity. In this activity everyone was asked to write on small pieces of paper the sweetest thing of the week, what they would like to take home, and third, what they would like to throw away. Everyone in turn put their papers into baskets, stating what they had written – sharing what they wanted to throw away, however, was optional.



The evaluation of the study session was in general overwhelmingly positive. The programme was considered to be well balanced both in terms of balance between theory and practice, and in terms of using a variety of different learning methods. The general grassroot-approach to rely heavily on small group work as to provide the participants with space for dialogue was much appreciated by the participants. Especially the Questions and Answers session was highly valued as a means to share and to learn from others. The participants reported that they felt they had really been able to meet “the other”. Concerning the practical part of the study session, some participants were not satisfied with the Calendar process and criticized the amount of time the exercise took. Further, even though the participants generally were content with the theoretical part of the week reported having learnt a lot from the week in total, some felt uncertain whether they would be able to put what they had learned into practice. Lastly, the participants explicitly expressed being very pleased with the good organisation of the study session.

One of the challenges that the participants reported having faced during the week was the level of English used. Some considered the theoretical inputs difficult to follow, and some felt they were not able to express themselves well enough in small groups due to their language skills.

The participants felt challenged by the inter-cultural and inter-religious environment, as they were faced with various ways of life and faith and had to deal with sometimes also difficult dialogue. In general these kind of experiences were considered positive, even though some were described as very challenging.

4.2 Outcomes

4.2.1 Overview

The aim of the study session was to gather together young people from both Muslim and Christian background to gain knowledge and skills about how to overcome Islamophobia. The main aim of the study session was to provide young multipliers with information and practical skills about how to promote inter-religious dialogue and co-operation for overcoming Islamophobia in their national and local contexts.



The outcomes of the study session consist of the outcomes for the participants, outcomes for the organisations, concrete outcomes and future plans, and recommendations for future European youth work.

4.2.2 Outcomes for the participants

The participants that were present in the study session were young people from Christian and Muslim background who were active in the youth work in their national and/or local context. Outcomes of the session for the participants include the new knowledge and experience gained on personal, theoretical and practical level. All these aspects of learning, however, are naturally tightly interwoven and cannot be separated from one another.

As to the level of personal learning, the participants were faced with challenging questions and topics throughout the week. They were asked to explore their own stereotypes and prejudices, to think about their identity, to share experiences of discrimination, to discuss their views on various matters from religious and political to very personal. In other words the participants were provided with many opportunities for personal growth.

Especially the emphasis on small group work prompted the aspect of personal learning. The study session was from the beginning designed to provide the participants with numerous opportunities for personal encounters: possibilities for true sharing of thoughts and views. Instead of packing the program with much input from the outside, the participants were asked to actively contribute to the study session themselves by sharing their questions and wonders, their knowledge and experiences – and their visions. They were asked to actively engage in the inter-religious dialogue themselves. The theoretical input that was provided was meant – in addition to providing information and tools – to evoke thoughts and provoke discussion. The participants were challenged with different viewpoints and asked to reflect on the topic from various angles.

This approach led to deep and profound learning experiences. Meeting young people from backgrounds different from their own, working with them, and even making friends with them was a significant learning experience for the participants. The participants reported having learned a lot about both religions – also about their own – and about how young people just like themselves live and practice it. Sharing the daily life with people from different faith and having the opportunity to discuss various matters with ordinary people – not scholars – was important for the them and lead to learning on both cognitive and affective level. The participants told that they appreciated a lot the possibility to truly meet representatives from the other faith: for many, this was the first time they ever met someone from the other religion, and the experience was clearly important for them.



In the evaluation of the study session the participants reported having gained a lot of knowledge, testifying that theoretical learning was an important aspect of the week. During the week the theoretical input was introduced in various forms, such as in guest lectures, smaller inputs, and making the participants to share the knowledge they themselves had in thematic discussions and workshops. The participatory approach again involved the participants actively in the learning process. In the evaluation the participants reported that the study session had succeeded in providing them with a lot of information about the two religions and various aspects of Islamophobia, including its definition, construction, background, consequences, relation with media, and forms it can take. In the end of the week some participants even described having realized for the first time during this study session that Islamophobia really exists in their country, or that it is a problem for many young people in Europe. The study session can thus indeed be described as successful in raising awareness of the reality of Islamophobia.

The practical level of learning is especially tightly connected with the personal learning level, as the means to educate the participants about inter-religious dialogue was to involve them in the dialogue themselves. Thus, first and foremost the participants were put into direct personal contact with “the other” – with young people from different faith backgrounds, cultures, and nations. In addition to this aspect they were received

different tools that can be used in inter-religious work. Especially the Calendar process was a very practical experience of inter-religious dialogue for many participants, and was considered a good way to stimulate dialogue among young people by them. Some, however, criticized the approach and found the process to concentrate more on the technical side of the calendar making, expressing dissatisfaction with the tool.

Besides these two practical aspects, the participants were presented with various other tools and ideas about how to promote inter-religious dialogue in practice. Particularly, they expressed their interest in the Council of Europe materials Domino, Compass, Education pack “all different – all equal” and Living library. These were considered to be very good, and they were (where possible) given to the participants in electronic form in the end of the week.

The participants also came up with numerous other ideas and plans for inter-religious youth work and enjoyed sharing these with people with similar interests and enthusiasm. These tools, ideas and enthusiasm that the participants gained during the week will be essential for the inter-religious work they will take up in their own contexts in the future.



4.2.3 What was planned

The study session resulted in making many plans for local, regional and national inter-religious activities. The participants developed plans for the future both individually and with each other. Some participants from the same country agreed to meet up in the near future to plan future co-operation. Others planned to write articles or books or give lectures on the topic, whereas some outlined seminars and workshops (for a full list of planned activities, see Action planning in section 3.6).

The participants wrote their plans in Personal Action Plans that they took with them upon returning home. However, each of them also wrote a “Letter to self”, describing their commitment to the inter-religious work and persuading them to go on. These letters will be sent to them a few months after the event to encourage them to keep up their work.

4.2.4 What was produced

The concrete outcomes of the study session include the inter-religious calendars, a CD of materials for the participants, and this report.

During the week five inter-religious wall calendars were produced. This exercise was two-sided as the purpose was both to create the calendars and to create the process of making the calendars. The process is documented in this report and can thus be repeated and further developed in the future. The actual calendars, on the other hand, will be distributed in electronic format firstly to the participants of the study session. Secondly, the calendars will be used in the inter-religious work of EYCE and FEMYSO. They will be also included in the “All different – all equal” campaign of the Council of Europe.

A CD of materials, including pictures from the study session, documents from the guest speakers, materials from EYCE’s past events related to the topic, Council of Europe materials etc. was produced during the week. Especially since this CD included resource

material it was highly appreciated by the participants and will help them in the planning and implementation of their own projects.

4.2.5 Outcomes for organisations

For EYCE and FEMYSO the study session was a continuation of previous inter-religious work the two organisations have done together. Having succeeded to train young people about inter-religious dialogue and making them able to multiply this knowledge in their own contexts is an important outcome of the session for both organisations. The organisations also gained valuable information about the topic, namely Islamophobia, and were convinced of the importance of the joint work they are doing together for promoting mutual respect and understanding. The session strengthened the commitment of both parties to inter-religious work and gave ideas for further co-operation.

For both organisations working with Council of Europe's External Advisor and the resources available in the Youth Centre gave new experiences and ideas for pedagogical approaches. In particular, the IPC members developed further their skills in group leading and facilitation, and naturally learned more about working in an international environment. All these experiences will be communicated to EYCE and FEMYSO and will be useful in planning future events.



For EYCE, this particular event contributed greatly in meeting EYCE's priorities for the current working period. The last General Meeting listed inter-religious dialogue as one of EYCE's current priority work areas. In addition, organising an event where young people from different denominations come together is always an event of great importance for EYCE. Ecumenical training of young people is permanently one of EYCE's core priorities. Planning and implementing the Christian prayers during the week was an important ecumenical learning experience for the Christian participants, as was clearly appreciated. In the evaluation the participants expressed that they had greatly enjoyed the prayers in many ways. Bringing young people from different denominations together to discover their differences and overcome them by working together as outcome of this session corresponds directly with EYCE's aims and priorities. The study session also provided an excellent opportunity for EYCE to strengthen existing contacts with its member organisations, and even provided possibilities to make contacts with new partners. The strengthening and widening of EYCE's network is an important outcome of the event for EYCE. The event also gave the participants the opportunity to get to know each others' organisations and to make contacts – and to even plan future joint activities with other organisations from EYCE's and FEMYSO's networks. FEMYSO as well gained a lot from this study session as is committed to continuing the important work on inter-religious dialogue with EYCE and other partners.

The study session also included an introduction to Council of Europe and the Directorate of Youth and Sport and gave information about the upcoming campaign "All different, all equal". One of the outcomes of the session can thus be described as distributing knowledge about Council's youth work. Further, the study session provided a space for young people to learn about different cultures and countries, also meeting the Council's aims.

As a more concrete outcome, developing jointly in this event the Calendar process as suitable for EYCE and FEMYSO's use is an outcome in itself as it stands as an example of concrete co-operation of Muslim and Christian youth organisations. Being a tool that can be replicated and distributed, it also is a very concrete outcome of the study session. The actual calendars produced are particularly of importance as they can be used in the Council of Europe's upcoming campaign "All different, all equal".

Lastly, it should be mentioned that with this study session the co-operation between EYCE and FEMYSO has grown wider once again. The next step of the co-operation will be an activity that is organised 50 – 50 by EYCE and FEMYSO, with 50% of the participants coming from each of the two organisations. With all this experience inter-religious dialogue can be opened even further, including all the world religions. This is the commitment of EYCE and FEMYSO.

4.2.6 Recommendations for future European youth work

Judging by the outcomes of this study session, the need for personal encounters, face-to-face learning and gaining of positive experiences of "the other" is huge among youth from various faith backgrounds. There is eagerness to learn and potential for sharing. From this study session it is clear that providing space for these personal encounters to take place is a very effective method to promote mutual respect, understanding, and co-operation. Building on personal experiences and starting from a grassroots level is the way to create sustainable peaceful co-existence.

The outcomes of the study session explicitly outline the great demand of inter-religious youth work in today's Europe. The need to raise awareness of the problems, to create an attitude of respect and a willingness to co-operate, and to provide means how to do this are evident. The religious diversity of Europe is a very challenging reality the European youth faces and has to cope with now and in the future. It is of essential importance to educate young people need about inter-religious dialogue and provide them with the means to conduct it themselves in order to build a stable Europe of tomorrow.

4.3 Follow-up

The participants of the study session committed themselves to continue working on the plans they developed during the study session. They will keep the offices of EYCE and FEMYSO updated on the progress of their projects, and the organisations will distribute information about successful projects on their websites.

For sharing thoughts and information in the future, the participants set up an electronic email group. The group has been very active ever since its launch. On this list the participants have reported about inter-religious activities in their countries, about the progress of their own plans, shared articles and news on inter-religious topics, and discussed their thoughts about the issues. This email list will work as a forum of further development of the ideas and plans created in the study session.

Right after the event EYCE and FEMYSO published a joint press release of the event that was distributed through the networks of



both organisations. The press release was published on the websites of both organisations (www.eyce.org and www.femyso.org) and also published by the European Youth Forum Jeunesse. In addition, the press in Estonia, Denmark and Finland have been informed about the study session, and a lecture on the topic is planned to take place in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The participants were offered the possibility to join EYCE's Pool of Interested People, in which they will be informed about inter-religious activities and events. The participants will also be kept informed about EYCE's and FEMYSO's future activities.

Both organisations are committed to working for promoting inter-religious dialogue in the future and will continue to empower young people to take action on this field. An evaluation meeting about the study session was held between EYCE and FEMYSO in April 2006. In this meeting the study session was reviewed, the evaluation of the session was reflected upon, and general summarizing and planning of the reporting process took place. Future co-operation possibilities were also explored. Opportunities for future inter-religious co-operation will also be discussed in the faith-based expert group that is facilitated by the European Youth Forum.

As the expert group is currently preparing a Tool-Kit on inter-religious youth work and this Kit will be highly useful for the participants of this study session, the Kit will be sent to all the participants free of charge upon its publication. The Kit will bring further the learning process that started in the study session and will equip the participants with more tools and ideas for inter-religious youth work. Thus, it will serve as an excellent follow-up activity of the event.

The inter-religious calendars that were produced during the event will be published in electronic form and sent to all the participants of the study session. The calendars will further be distributed and used in EYCE's and FEMYSO's work on inter-religious dialogue, and will thus contribute to the "All different, all equal" campaign of the Council of Europe.

4.5 Conclusions

"Overcoming Islamophobia" is a huge topic, and this study session naturally succeeded only exploring a small part of the issue. There are various ways to address the issue of overcoming Islamophobia – or dealing with discrimination in general. Some stress the importance of laws and legislation; that these need to secure people's rights and that punishments should be enforced on those not respecting the human rights. Others take a more educational approach, declaring that the solution lies in changing people's attitudes and making them experience diversity as a positive, not threatening, thing.

The approach of EYCE and FEMYSO's joint events has always clearly been the latter one. The organisations believe that making young people to meet each other, making them to face diversity and to experience inter-cultural and inter-religious encounters on a very personal level will create a more understanding: a Europe of mutual respect. Educating especially young people to treat each other with respect and co-operation will build a more stable future.



This study session succeeded in taking a definite step into this direction. The participants gained a considerable amount of knowledge about the two religions, about Islamophobia from various aspects, about discrimination, prejudices and stereotypes, about identity, and about inter-religious dialogue. They also experienced inter-religious dialogue first-hand by engaging into it themselves and sharing the daily life with people from other faith backgrounds. Sharing daily life with young people from different cultural, religious and national backgrounds, witnessing differences and discussing various topics, plus working together for a common aim resulted in gaining insight and deep understanding about living in peace with differences.

Taken that the study session was in general very much appreciated by the participants, the challenges that were faced during the week and the criticism given will in total provide a good basis for developing future inter-religious events. The importance of this work is evident, as is the enthusiasm and commitment of young people to be involved in it.

Appendices

Appendix 1 List of team members, guests, and participants

Organisations

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Church of England

Appendix 2 Expectations

In this study session, I want to contribute by...

- witness of my Christian tradition
- with a good knowledge of the Bible
- insights into what it means to me to be Muslim + British/European
- in a cooperation between two religions to promote similar understanding of many aspects of important role of religion in social process
- availability to work against distorted images of Muslims (like “All Muslims are terrorists”)
- openness (open mind), helping other participants to be open-minded
- charity
- I think I need more time to be able to add something to this seminar but I would definitely want to take part in everything
- with situation & activities in my home country
- to the discussions
- (active) listening (to the others) and talking (about me)
- exchange of the points of view
- I want to contribute with/share my experience, thoughts & mentality
- my experience in IRD
- enthusiasm
- education
- my experience about Islamophobia in Palestine and about what they are doing to overcome it and to show some pictures which I brought with me from some meetings and seminars about the relation between Muslims and Christians
- honesty
- with my experience about dialogue in Eastern religions (Buddhism, Hinduism)
- experience about Islam and Danish culture/Christianity
- being able to fully be my self
- to reduce Islamophobia
- an invitation to visit out Church of England Youth Council :-)
- to more harmonious world
- questions
- structured thinking
- parties, music, songs, maybe dances
- presenting the YMCA in Romania
- how I feel living in a multicultural situation
- knowledge and experiences with anti-Semitism and Islamophobia work on an NGO level in the EU
- couple of papers deal with what do people want to do after the seminar

In this study session I would like to...

- exchange knowledge, experiences, ideas
- discover other cultures, religions and people
- find out/learn more/share about Islam, Islamophobia in different contexts, differences between Islam and Christianity, Quran
- make new connections & contacts & friendships
- to have fun
- understand how to deal with Islamophobia

- get a chance to speak to a lot of people individually or in SMALL groups
- understand patiently other people and their way of life
- experience Strasbourg and the building of the Parliament
- discuss the impact of Islamophobia in EU to the European security, contemporary issues
- practical ideas for how to initiate IRD at home
- definition of Islamophobia, positive approach
- useable results
- respect of other traditions
- who is promoting Islamophobia
- What can I do against Islamophobia, providing with tools
- ask/answer questions about culture, religious affairs
- to make excursions to different places in the city related to the topic of the seminar and to encounter the local culture; to have free time
- To discover achievements of previous experiences
- Euro-Islam & democracy
- comparison among different Christian organisations & share ideas of activities
- Set up links between Christian and Muslim organisations in my country, networking
- advancement of peace
- identifying benefits and difficult moments of Christians and Muslims living together
- take part in the prayers and the activities

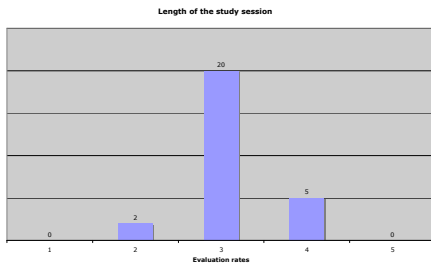
In this study session, I would not like to...

- convert anyone to my religion
- leave without getting something new and useful
- get into discussions which end up in enmity
- be sick, tired, kidnapped by an UFO, have my things disappeared
- disrespect
- be unreliable, unfriendly, not open-minded
- argue theological differences
- generalisations, blaming that leads nowhere
- people to judge one another
- be boring & bored (by a long discussions)
- do role plays or charades
- offend and be easily offended
- see my brothers as strangers, feel as a stranger when seeing other people not understanding my behaviour
- be forced into any activity that is difficult for me to do
- see any "blocks" meaning that everybody should feel free to hang around with everybody, not just the similar people
- talk about idealistic projects and think to realise its
- work too intensively
- go home with empty hands, not to apply the activities afterwards
- leave change without exchanging email addresses
- hear only politically correct views
- speak about IRD only
- stay 100 % of the time in the building
- have violence and intolerance among us

Appendix 3 Detailed evaluation

Numerical evaluation with comments

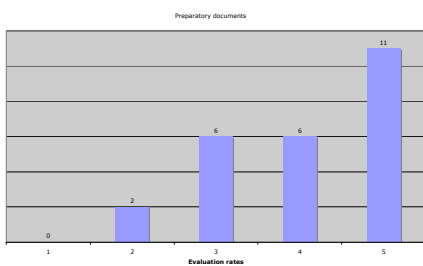
The individual written evaluation of the study session was done using an evaluation form. The participants were asked to rate each programme element on a scale from 1 to 5 (1 = did not like, 5 = liked a lot). Space was left for additional comments regarding each question. The comments are summarized below.



Length of the study session

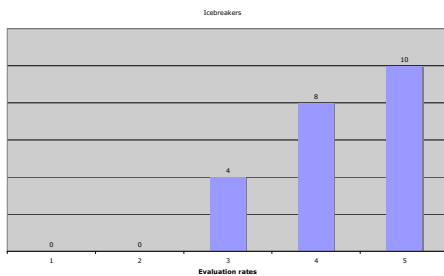
The participants considered the length of the study session suitable.

(Note: 1 = too short, 3 = suitable, 5 = too long)



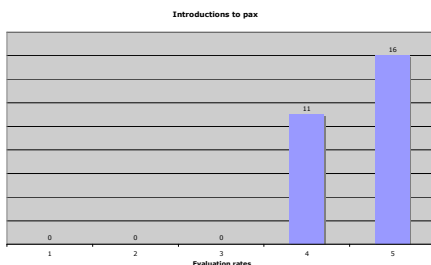
Preparatory documents

Participants were in general pleased with the preparatory documents. They were however missing a list of participants and information about some practicalities (e.g. whether to bring sheets).



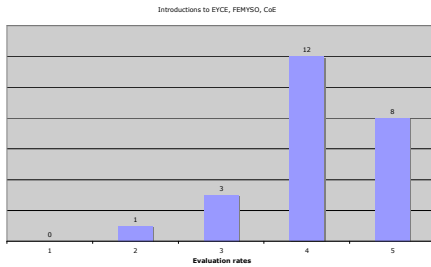
Icebreakers

Participants enjoyed the icebreakers in general, and appreciated that they took into consideration inter-religious matters – some would even have wanted to have more icebreakers. One idea was also given: having names + pictures on the wall to help learning the names of everybody. (Note: Not all participants were present for the icebreakers)



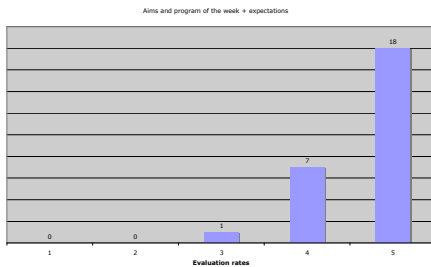
Introductions to participants and practicalities

Participants felt that the introductions were very clear and structured and that all necessary information was given. Some hoped for longer presentations of participants. Some did not quite follow due to language constraints.



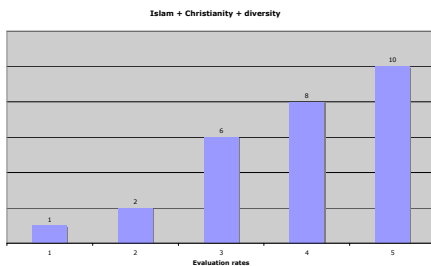
Introductions to EYCE, FEMYSO and CoE

Participants noted that the session was quite heavy right after other presentations: it was a long time to just sit and listen. Some had problems understanding Sami's presentation due to language. The presentations were considered short and giving an overview of the organizations – some were missing more down-to-earth examples of the work, or more information about co-operating with these institutions.



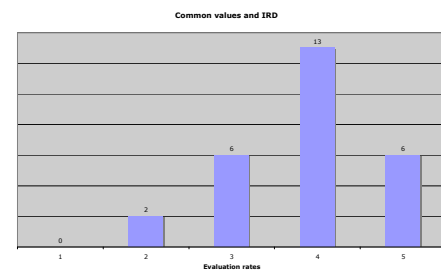
Aims and program of the week + Expectations

Some participants told they did not right away understand the meaning of explaining the week, but realized its importance later on. They mentioned learning about the aims during the whole study session. In general, participants expressed their satisfaction with the good organization of the week.



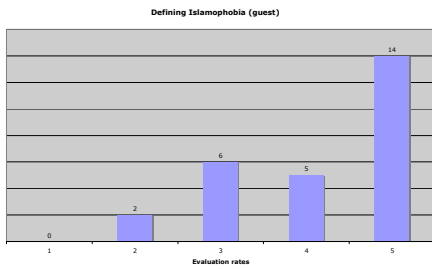
Islam + Christianity + Diversity

The presentations were in general not so appreciated by the participants, as they felt there was too little time and the presentations were unstructured and not informative. Participants expressed that they would have needed something deeper than just short introductions. However, they enjoyed the part of the session that they prepared themselves, and noted that the session was followed up with the Questions and answers session later.



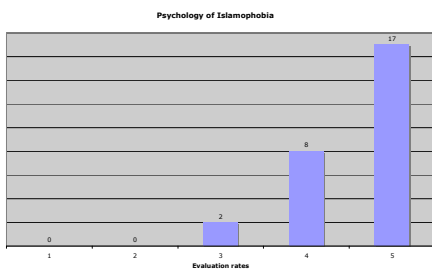
Common values + IRD

The comments were varied, expressing frustration with the short time frame and experiencing difficulties in negotiating with the small group, but also that it was found that we have quite many common values, that the exercise was good and important, and that the flower was nice. Some however noted feeling that they were only saying what everyone knew already.



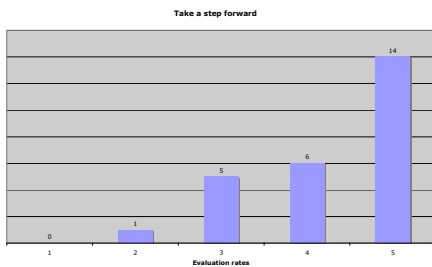
Defining Islamophobia (Bashy)

Opinions were somewhat divided. Some enjoyed the session greatly, noting Bashy to be chic, charismatic, intercultural and educated and the speech to have been inspiring, interesting and super. Others commented that Bashy was not the expert they had expected, that he was only expressing his own viewpoint about Islam, and felt that his presentation was assumptive and provocative.



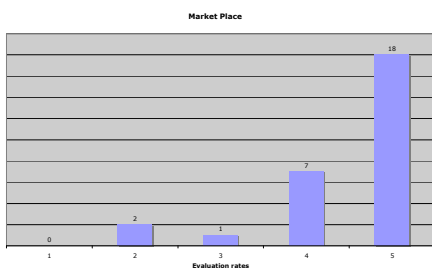
Psychology of Islamophobia

The session was described as very good and very well presented: participants felt it was interesting to analyse the issue from this angle. Compliments were given to Aura who was giving the input. Some felt that also information about how Islamophobia affects Christian people and how media makes people islamophobic should have been included.



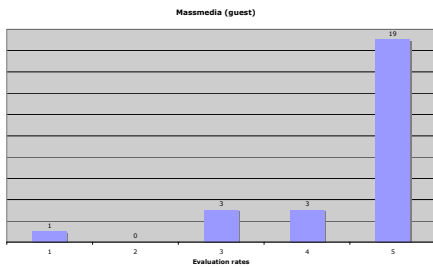
Take a Step Forward

This session was considered to be one of the best ones of the week, and was in general much liked by the participants. While some stated that they had had difficulties in getting into their role, the majority described the activity as extremely educative, useful and efficient. They explained that it helped to understand what it is like to be different.



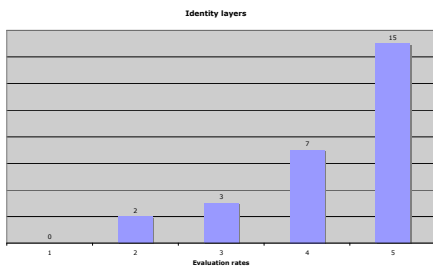
European Market Place

The Market was very much liked by the participants, who described it as great and excellent. In their evaluations they noted that it gave them the important possibility to show how Islamophobia is present in their countries, and to learn about the situation in other countries – and to get to know people from own country. It was however noted that the timing was bad as people were tired. It was also noted that the preparatory documents could have given more precise information about what to bring for the Market.



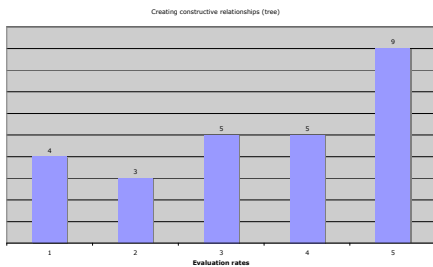
Massmedia (Gavan)

Gavan was considered to be clear, intellect, professional, a specialist and an expert, and his input was much liked by the vast majority. Some also described him as unbiased, which they appreciated. Participants stated that they learned a lot from this session. A few however noted problems with language, or felt that Gavan or jumped from one subject to another.



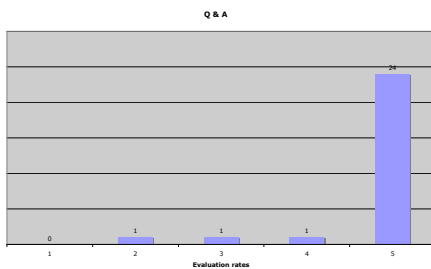
Layers of Identity

Participants felt in general that the session helped them to get to know themselves better, and some described the exercise as fun, great or as important for them. A few however also noted that the discussions in their small groups felt like forced intimacy or that they talked about only superficial issues, and therefore they questioned the usefulness of the activity.



Leaves & Roots

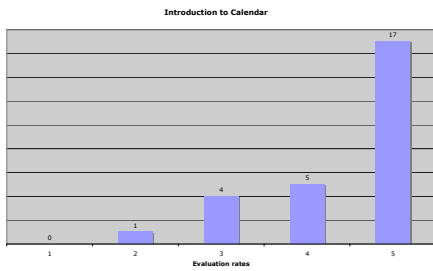
The participants were feeling confused about this exercise. They said they did not catch the idea and felt they were not being concrete enough. It was considered hard to come up with practical examples. Even though also some positive feedback was given, the exercise was in general considered useless, repetition of other exercises, and as waste of time.



Questions and Answers

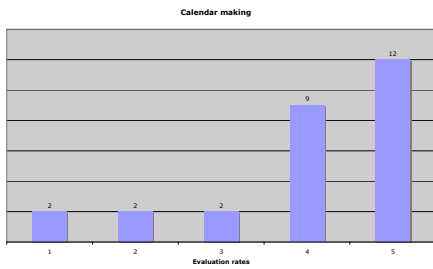
Much overwhelmingly positive feedback was given about this session. The session was considered to be one of the best ones of the week and many participants expressed their wish to have more sessions like this – even modified: in two groups, on a daily basis etc. They felt they could ask precisely what was on their minds without fear, and felt it was a good controlled way of making

dialogue. They also felt they learned a lot and that the session helped them to overcome Islamophobia in themselves. Also some criticism was given as some felt they needed more rules, or felt that some of the questions were not of good quality, or that some answers were dishonest. The low number of Muslims was also noted.



Introduction to Calendar process

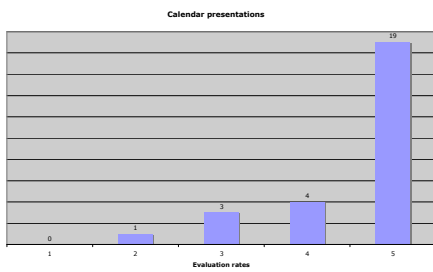
The instructions were considered to be very structured, clear and rational. Some however expressed that they did not understand the purpose of making a calendar in general.



Calendar making in small groups

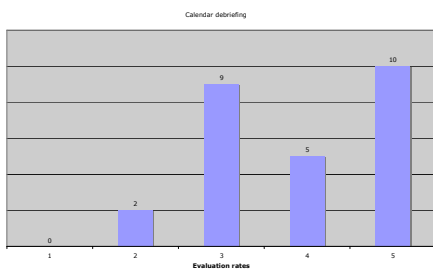
Opinions were divided, mainly based on what kind of a group people had worked in. Some said that their group had concentrated on making the concrete product instead of focusing on the dialogue, and therefore they had not learned anything from the exercise. On the other hand, some thought that the exercise make them closer and provided freedom to ask and answer. They felt

they learned from the exercise. Co-operation and openness of people was in general appreciated. Many expressed feeling stressed because of the time limit and found it stressful with all the dates and materials.



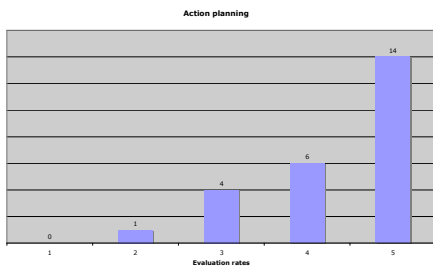
Calendar presentations

The presentations were considered funny and creative, even though not always understandable. Some felt that the session was too long since nothing could be done for the calendars anymore, and felt that there could have been more time for dialogue upon the calendars themselves. Some would have wanted to know earlier that they need to make a creative presentation.



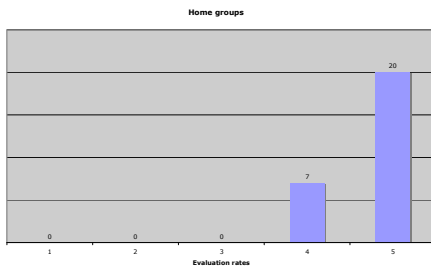
Calendar debriefing

The few comments mainly expressed that the session, even though ok, was a bit too long and tiring with many people saying the same thing.



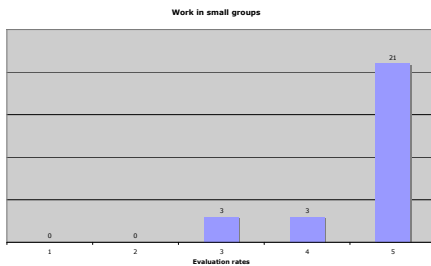
Action planning

People were pleased to have so many good, fresh ideas around. Some praised the session for forcing them to think concretely and that everything has been so much focused on action. Many participants however expressed feeling unsure whether these ideas will really turn into action. Some noted that they only had local ideas and were unsure how to use their new European contacts.



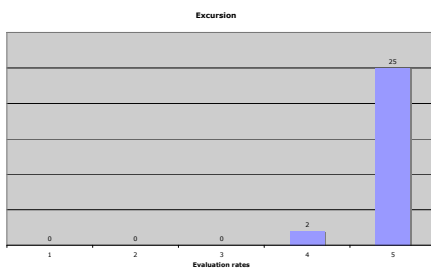
Home groups

The participants were really fond of the home groups. They felt it was good to have a place for talking about how they feel, to have time to breathe, and stated having had fun with the blobbies. Especially Daniel's and Cristian's groups were appreciated.



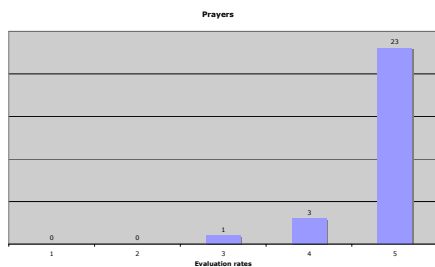
Work in small groups

The participants liked working in small groups a lot. They felt it was the best way to speak with each participant and to exchange ideas and break the borders: to really do dialogue. They preferred this way of working to plenary, even though some expressed the wish to have had more lectures.



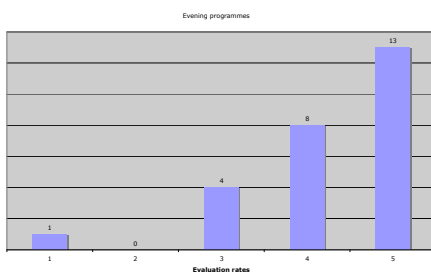
Excursion

Participants enjoyed greatly visiting Strasbourg and also the Mosque. Some wished that there would have been a guided tour to town, but the majority appreciated that the afternoon was not scheduled and that there was time for just relaxing and having informal talks.



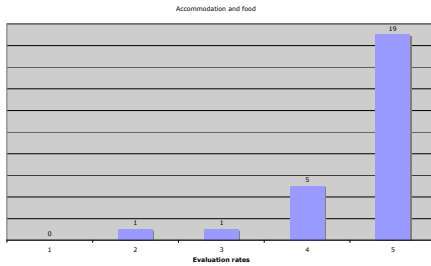
Prayers and worships

Prayers were considered essential, beautiful, and to be an extremely good opportunity to know the others from the religious practical point of view. The orthodox prayer was named to be especially good. Being together with other believing young people was a good experience for the participants. The prayer room received some criticism as it was considered to be unfriendly and not very cosy. Participants expressed their need to have a worship place where they could drop by during the day.



Evening programmes

In general, the evening programmes were considered fun. The International Banquet was mentioned as great, and the social committee received thanks. For some the programme started too late, and some felt that people did not really want to integrate. Some felt insulted by the occasional absence of IPC members. The problems with the video projector were also mentioned.



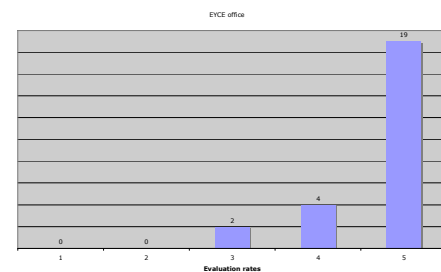
Accommodation and food

Food was (with few exceptions) considered excellent, and the participants really enjoyed the good attitude of the kitchen staff and sent them their warmest greetings. Accommodation was also considered good and own rooms appreciated, even though some would have liked to have their rooms cleaned during the week. Not having a possibility to use the sauna was noted with regret.



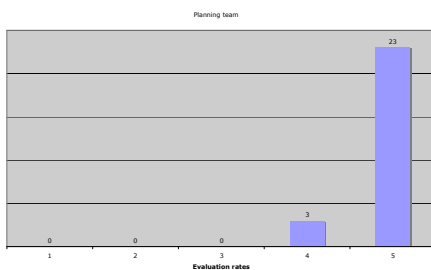
Youth Centre

In the few comments the Centre was considered as practical and having lots of space. It was however mentioned that the house needs decoration (“it looks like a fire station”). The staff was mainly considered helpful.



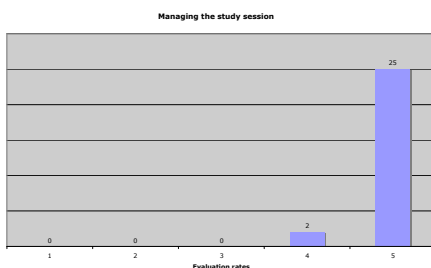
EYCE Office

The office was experienced as punctual, helpful and efficient. It was noted that the reimbursement process does not take into account that not all tickets can be bought in advance and therefore not be reimbursed, and therefore some people may experience financial difficulties.



Planning team

The extensive feedback was overwhelmingly positive, describing the team as gorgeous, very friendly, super, well structured and brilliant. Participants said that the team made them feel like they were at home, that they were taught how to work better, and they also noted that they enjoyed that the sessions were summarized. They expressed their thanks to each IPC member.



The way the team managed the study session

The very positive comments included expressions like helpful, organized, informative, well prepared, very structured, excellent and great. The participants felt that everyone knew well his/her job and that everything worked out really well. They however expressed some concerns about the schedule, wishing it would have been more relaxed or more balanced between the theoretical and practical parts of the week.

Open-ended questions

In the evaluation form the participants were also asked what were the most and least interesting moments of the week, what they had learned in the study session etc. The answers are summarized below.

MOST INTERESTING MOMENTS OF THE WEEK

The answers showed that participants had most of all enjoyed living with people from different backgrounds and learning from one another. They named situations where they could make contact and talk with each other, sharing thoughts and learning new things from real people – “not from theologians”. For example the Questions & Answers session was named in almost every answer, and was described as “true IRD”. Work in small groups was also appreciated for the same reason. On the other hand, both of the guest lecturers, Gavan and especially Bashy, were considered interesting and thought-provoking. Some additional programme elements that were named as most interesting moments of the week included Making of the calendar, Psychology of Islamophobia and parts of Action planning.

LEAST INTERESTING MOMENTS OF THE WEEK

Surprisingly many participants reported that they were not able to name anything as least interesting, stating that they had enjoyed the whole programme. As to the rest, the answers were very varied, indicating that whereas some people had enjoyed some specific programme elements, some had not. A session that some had considered as most interesting of the week (for example Psychology part or Gavan’s lecture) were considered as least interesting by some. Some other individual programme elements that were named here included identity things, introduction to EYCE, calendar debriefing, media part, icebreakers, leaves + roots exercise, Islam & Christianity, and expectations. Calendar making was mentioned in many answers, usually with a comment that as the participants had concentrated on making the product instead of talking with each other, they had not learnt anything about inter-religious dialogue.

MOST MEMORABLE MOMENTS

Many participants expressed their joy of visiting Strasbourg, naming various activities from sitting in coffee shops to visiting the mosque. The answers clearly indicated that spending many days totally indoors had been a bit too much for the participants. In addition to getting fresh air, the participants had clearly enjoyed “any common time with new friends”. Promoting understanding and engaging in personal dialogue was clearly important for the participants, and thus especially informal talks and Q&A session were mentioned often. Also calendar making and the frontpage exercise were experienced as good opportunities to talk and learn. Many had also enjoyed the prayers: experiencing each others’ traditions was appreciated as a practical way of getting to know the other religion.

DIFFICULT MOMENTS

Whereas many participants simply answered “none” to this question, there were also a few common sources of distress. First and foremost, the schedule of the week was considered to be very tight and people felt tired. However, this remark is connected to

the most enjoyable things of the week as the participants reported that they did not get enough sleep due to long discussions in small groups in the evenings. Second, some participants had problems with the level and/or speed of English used, and felt they could not follow all the presentations nor take fully part in discussions. Third, the calendar process was experienced as difficult by some people for various reasons: getting organised, keeping the schedule, negotiating things in the group etc. Fourth, group dynamics issues were mentioned in a few answers. Some participants reported having encountered intercultural difficulties, being afraid to ask things, or having experienced difficulties in dialogue with some people. Also personal things, for example not enjoying playing games or finding it hard to approach people, were also mentioned.

WHAT DID YOU LEARN IN THE STUDY SESSION?

The general feeling was that they had learned “a lot!”. The participants reported having learnt both theoretical things and having received practical ideas and tools. They reported having learnt a lot about themselves, their identity, the religions and denominations, Islamophobia and discrimination, inter-religious dialogue and co-operation – and that they learnt that “ it is a good thing and it also works”. Further, people felt that they had learnt how to be in dialogue, how to overcome differences, and what they could do in the future. However, some also noted that they had learnt that there are fundamental differences and that living together might still be hard. Meeting interesting and open-minded people in itself was mentioned as a learning experience for the participants. In sum, it was clear that the study session had changed the way many participants thought about Muslims and Christians, and that they had realised the seriousness of Islamophobia. Some participants even clearly stated that they had learnt how ignorant they had been.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE ACTIVITIES

The vast majority of participants expressed being very pleased with the way the study session was run, and simply wrote comments like “keep up the good work!” or “it was just perfect”.

The suggestions that were made were very varied, ranging from topic ideas (common values) to participant selections (the diversity was considered very good, but equal number of people from different backgrounds was missed) and to organisational details. As to these, some indicated the wish to be out of the building more often. It was also noted that it would be good to have a bit more relaxed schedule and more breaks, also in order to really give the feeling that people have the time and chance to say and ask what they want. The variety of methods used was considered good by many participants, even though some wished for more innovative programme and some hoped for more lectures.

Other wishes included to get more precise information about all programme elements before arrival and to have a more in-depth introduction round in the beginning of the week. The communication about travel arrangements was criticized by some. Some suggested involving Jewish people or inviting more Palestinians to study sessions. Finally, some suggested providing activities not only for leaders but for all sorts of active believers.

OTHER COMMENTS

The most common comment was “thank you!”. Participants mainly expressed being very pleased with the week and having enjoyed themselves. In addition, some diverse comments were made about an idea to organise a study session in a forest or somewhere where people could do something practical, about being displeased that the programme was constantly running late, and about wishing to keep in touch.

Appendix 4 Methods used

Catch the name

All people stand in a circle. One starts by saying a name of another person and throws a ball to him/her. Respective person continues by saying whom he/she got the ball from, his or her own name, and names another participant and throws to ball next to this person. It is possible to add another ball to make it more complicated.

Getting to know the place

Ask participants to form groups of 3 which should take into consideration our ‘physical contact policy’. Every person in the group has to bind himself/herself to the second one (the person in the middle to both other members of the group). The joints should be: (1) somewhere between the ankle and the knee (shin) and (2) somewhere between the wrist and the elbow (forearm). For making joints it is possible to use scarves (various types) or bandages. Do not use ropes, strings or something like that (it’s too thin, it hurts, it unties during the game or it is hard to be untied after the game). The teams receive a list of places where they have to go – places we want them to know where they are (e.g. both plenary rooms, prayer room, television, cyber centre, Austria room, roof terrace, sauna). On each place there is a piece of a puzzle: a part of a postcard or a poster cut in pieces. The task for ‘cripple teams’ is to collect all pieces of the puzzle and take them to assigned person who is waiting in the Austrian room. It is nice to grant a prize for the winner team (as a motivation).

I bring a letter for...

See Education Pack, pp.183-184, for detailed instructions.

Everybody sits in a circle and one person stands in the middle. S/he says “I bring a letter for... everyone wearing something red”. Those wearing red will then have to stand up and change places as the one standing in the middle tries to get a seat too.

Tropical rain

The group stands in the circle and repeats a gesture after someone, one after another. When the round comes back to the first person s/he then makes another gesture and so on. Everything is to imitate the noises you can hear in the jungle when it is raining: the wind, the first drops of rain, the storm, etc. The energy goes from very smooth to something strong (the “storm”) and calms down.

Zip-Zap

Everybody is in a circle with one person in the middle without a chair. S/he says zip or zap to somebody. Zip stands for the person on the right and Zap for the person on the left. If the answer (the name of the person on the right or on the left) comes too late or is wrong, this person has to go to the middle and the previous one takes her/his chair.

Expectations

The participants were asked to think about their expectations for the study session focusing on three things: what they could contribute, what they would like to happen, and what they would not like to happen. They were asked to write their expectations on sticky notes and gather them to a wall where they stayed for the rest of the week.

Differences within religions

To discover the differences within each of the two religions, the participants were divided into two Christian and one Muslim group. They were asked to discuss the following questions: What differences are there within our religion? Are there differences in what we believe in? Are there differences in the way we do certain things? Do people have disagreements? The groups then shared their findings.

Common values flower

In small groups, the participants discussed which values they hold important and share with one another. Each group had three pedal-shaped coloured papers and was asked to write one value on each pedal. The pedals were then attached together to form a flower or common values.

Inter-religious dialogue guidelines

The participants were divided into six groups. Three different sets of guidelines (see appendix 6) for inter-religious dialogue were handed out to the groups so that two groups were always discussing the same set. The groups were asked to choose which guidelines they considered to be most essential for inter-religious dialogue and for the week they were heading for. After this the two groups that had worked on the same set were put together and this group was asked to agree on 5 most essential guidelines together. The three sets of 5 guidelines were then gathered to a wall to be the inter-religious guidelines for the study session.

Causes and cures of stereotypes

Five Islam-related pictures were hung on the walls. The participants were asked to go around, look at the pictures and write on sticky notes which stereotypes they thought could be linked with each picture. The notes were put next to the pictures. After an introduction to the psychology of stereotypes, the participants were asked to pick a picture they wanted to work with. All those interested in the same picture were asked to have a look on the stereotypes put on their picture and to select two negative stereotypes of them. Each group was asked to try to think of possible causes for these stereotypes, and also of possible cures for them. The results (cause-stereotype-cure constructions) were then shared with the whole group.

Take a step forward

Instructions can be found in COMPASS – Manual on Human Rights Education with Young People (Council of Europe), p. 217.

In this exercise the participants take a role of a privileged or non-privileged person, and silently take steps forward according to whether they can answer yes to statements like “I have access to medical care”. The following debriefing was used in the study session:

Debriefing of the exercise in the whole group, people sitting on the floor.

- How did it feel to step forward
- How did it feel to step forward often or not at all?
- For the ones who stepped forward often, when did you begin to realise that some people were left behind or not moving as fast as you?
- How did that make you feel?
- Did anyone feel discriminated against?

Reveal the roles

- On which basis did those who felt discriminated feel that?
- Can you recognize any of the situations of discrimination described or referred to in your local/home situation?

Please share with the people in your small group your personal views about: “What does this exercise tell us about Islamophobia and other kinds of discrimination?” and “Which of these have you experienced?” You can share your thoughts with the whole group later if you wish.

Market place

Each participant had been asked to bring with them material about their country and organisation from home. The participants were given stands and material to make a visual presentation of their countries in their respective country groups. They were asked to present their country, the situation of Islamophobia in their country, and their organisation and its work on inter-religious dialogue. Each country had a chance to present their own stand to everybody as people walked through the market.

Front page

Instructions can be found in COMPASS – Manual on Human Rights Education with Young People (Council of Europe), p. 135.

In this exercise the participants prepare a front page of a newspaper using old newspapers and analysing how the news are constructed and what is considered important.

Identity onion

Using a picture of a layered onion, participants were asked to individually think which factors identify them; what they consider to construct their identity. Next, they were asked to take a look at their neighbour and list things that could describe this person's identity. In small groups people were then asked to share what they thought constituted other people's identity and compare these with how each person had described him/herself. Results were discussed with the whole group.

Roots and leaves

Participants were asked to discuss in pairs the positives and negatives of living with differences. In groups, they were then asked to share their points and think how the positives could be emphasized and the negatives addressed. These means to take action were written root-shaped (for emphasizing the positives) or leave-shaped (for addressing the negatives) papers. A big tree was created on a wall of these papers.

Questions and Answers

Prior to the day of this activity three big posters were put on a wall: one for “Questions for Muslims” one for “Questions for Christians” and one for “Other questions”. The

participants were told that they could write down all those questions they have that are still unanswered and put them on the posters. All the questions were then gathered together and grouped by the moderator of the session. In the Q&A session the moderator read aloud one question at a time (keeping a balance of questions for Christians or Muslims and grouping connected questions) and moderated the answers and the discussion. The participants answered the questions themselves.

Religion and time circles

The participants stood in a big circle that had signs for night, morning, day and evening on the floor. They were told to face left, and silently walk around the circle, reflecting on how religion affects their daily life. After coming back to where they started from they were asked to share their thoughts with those standing close to them, and later shortly with the whole group. The exercise was then repeated with changing the four signs for winter, spring, summer and autumn, and asking people to think how religion affects their year as they walked around the circle again – this time facing right. They were again asked to share their thoughts first in small groups and then with the whole group.

Action Planning

Each participant received a template for Personal Action Plan. The template included the following questions:

- Which problems/issues identified at this session do you consider important to work on when you get home?
- Why are these problems/issues important in your home context and to the young people you work with?
- What problem do you want to address? What do you want to DO to address the issue? How do you want to do that? When? With whom?

The participants were encouraged to share their plans in their country groups or with people they otherwise wanted to work with. All plans were later presented and shared with the whole group.

Letter to self

Each participant was given an envelope and a piece of paper. They were asked to write a letter to themselves reminding them of the commitments they had made and encouraging them to keep on working on the topic. They were to address the envelope to themselves, close the letter to the envelope, and leave it to the team. The letters will be sent to the participants a few months after the event.

Sweetest thing

Everyone was given three small pieces of paper: one of the “sweetest thing of the week”, one for “what to take back home” and one for “what to throw away”. There were three baskets on the floor: one with candy, one travel bag, and a trash can. Each person was to say what they had written (except for “what to throw away” which could also be done silently) and to put his/her notes in the corresponding baskets.

Appendix 5 Calendar methodology

Practical running of the activity

The participants had been asked to bring with them material, e.g. dates for their religious or denominational holidays, for the calendars. By already gathering material at home the participants started to orient towards the process already before arriving to the venue.

After an in-depth introduction to the activity in the study session, the participants were divided into 5 mixed groups. Each group created a wall calendar for the year 2007 including holidays of each religion. Participants were free to choose which holidays to include and how to present the meaning of the holidays in their calendar. Also the physical format was left up to the participants to decide, however keeping in mind that the goal was to scan the calendars later. They were encouraged to avoid using the computers, since this was thought to allow them more time talking about the actual topics and engaging in dialogue, instead of focusing on layout or technicalities. All groups were provided with access to colours and papers plus other materials, and with an access to digital camera and colour printing. They were given the timeframe but left to organise their work independently, after a team member had helped each group to start.

The calendars and the processes were presented to all on the last day of the study session. First, each group had the chance to pick 2 or 3 months they wanted to present. The following instructions were given for preparing the presentations:

You now have the chance to present your results from “Making the Inter-religious Calendar”. Make a presentation of maximum 10 minutes. You should present:

- your calendar
- the months assigned to your group
- your process of making the calendar

Of these the most important thing is your process. You might want to come up with a creative way of presenting your process of making the calendar: mime, drama, song, story – as you wish.

You have until 10.00 to prepare the presentation.

Creative ways of presentations were encouraged. In the debriefing the participants were encouraged to share their thoughts about how the process went and how the activity could be used in inter-religious dialogue.

The worksheet that was given to each group in the beginning of the work is included here:



ECUMENICAL YOUTH COUNCIL
IN EUROPE
Rue du Champ de Mars 5
B-1050 Brussels, Belgium

 www.eyce.org



*“Overcoming Islamophobia
– promoting inter-religious dialogue and
co-operation”*

MAKING AN INTER-RELIGIOUS CALENDAR

What are we doing?

You are making an **inter-religious wall calendar for the year 2007**. The calendar should include:

- The dates of the most important religious holidays of the two religions, Islam and Christianity. Some Christian denominations have different holidays: you can choose yourself which ones you want to include in your calendar.
- Information about the religious holidays: you can self choose the ones you want to present

Why are we doing this?

The most important aim of this exercise is:

- To provide you with **the process of making an inter-religious calendar**

This process will be a concrete tool that you can bring back home. Once you have experienced the process yourself you can multiply it at home, establishing your own inter-religious youth groups and making them create their own calendars in turn. Creating a concrete product together with people from different backgrounds is a way to establish personal contacts and provide space for real grass-root dialogue. This dialogue, we believe, is the way to increase mutual understanding and respect.

Other aims of this exercise are:

- To produce a calendar that can help you schedule inter-religious activities
- To give understanding of the day-to-day life and practice of the two religions
- To give understanding of the year-cycle of the two religions
- To increase knowledge of religious holidays
- To create a concrete product from the study session to have at your home
- To provide space for dialogue and personal encounters

How do we do this?

You can make your calendar the way you want! **Be creative!**

You have received readily-made templates for the calendars, including one page per month. Your task is to fill the pages in with whatever you want. You can put in pictures, drawings, photos, text, newspaper cuts – anything you wish.

- Please use the material you brought from home
- You will find paper, glue and other material on the second floor.
- There is a digital camera you can use
- We can make the maximum of 3 pages of color prints per group: please tell Agnieszka on Thursday evening if you want color prints.

There are only two things to consider:

- The calendars will be **scanned** later so we can distribute them to everybody. Please keep this in mind.
- We strongly encourage you to **avoid using computers**. Making the calendar yourself will allow you to concentrate more on the actual content of the calendar process – talking to one another and learning from each other – and less on technicalities.

What is the timeframe?

The calendars need to be finished on **Friday at 11.30**.

You have Thursday afternoon and Friday morning to work in your group. Please make good use of the time: discuss your holidays, their meaning, how you celebrate them and how they affect your life etc. Try to find creative ways to explain in the calendar what they are about.

You might want to make a plan on how to divide your time on Thursday and Friday, and how to proceed.

How do we present the results?

The calendars will be presented to everybody on Saturday morning. You will receive more information about how to present your calendar later.

Results from the debriefing of Calendar process

In the debriefing, the participants were, triggered by a few questions, to share their thoughts and feelings about the exercise. The comments are summarized here.

“I LIKED”

People spent time to explain festivals to each other and shared ideas. They felt the process raised new ways of thinking and allowed learning by doing (together). People also learnt a lot about the variety of feasts and celebrations. They explored their skills and contributed them for the task. For some this was the first practical experience of working together with a Muslim. Having a common aim was appreciated and people felt they can achieve a lot together.

“I DID NOT LIKE”

People felt that the technical part of the work was quite difficult and limited their possibilities for dialogue. Starting the work and being organised was challenging, and doing everything from the scratch was considered not to be good. Some people run out of time and some finished ahead of schedule. As people wanted to do a good product there was temptation to focus on the product instead of doing dialogue, which ended up people working on their own instead of sharing things together. They felt it was difficult to go deep in discussions.

“BEST MOMENT”

People enjoyed sharing knowledge and experiences about feasts, gaining information, and finding things in common. Laughter, good working atmosphere, common aim, having fun, and enthusiasm were mentioned, as well as the feeling of achievement when the task was completed. The presentations were also appreciated. For some the best moment was finding out that Prophet Muhammed has 2 birthdays.

“WORST MOMENT”

Many suffered from feeling rushed and being desperate to finish in time. The lack of time also contributed to not having enough time for discussion. Some lost materials or were competing about the same resources, and were feeling desperate. Telling about your holidays from practical side was considered challenging, and there was pressure to make everything understandable. Putting the calendar together concretely was also mentioned as a negative experience. Some felt disappointed realising that the 5 groups were all doing the same thing.

“HOW DO YOU THINK THIS ACTIVITY CONTRIBUTES TO IRD AND HOW COULD YOU USE IT?”

The best thing about the activity was considered to be that it provides an opportunity to discuss things together and to work together in practice. It was mentioned that inter-religious dialogue is in general moving towards becoming inter-religious communication and co-operation: being more active. This activity was described to be an example of how people can live together. People felt that it provides a joint focus around which various discussions can take place – and not only on theological level. The participants

felt that in general the activity helps people to be patient, open, constructive and understanding, and to overcome stereotypes. They also mentioned that having the calendar at home can help people to get used to different holidays and faiths.

“WHAT WOULD YOU DIFFERENTLY?”

The participants recommended that it would be beneficial to provide them with additional information resources, like a list of dates for the religious holidays, to take the focus away from the technical side of the task and to allow them to concentrate more on the dialogue. More extensive preparation in beforehand was also suggested. The participants would have also wanted clearer instructions on how to concretely divide the time and organise the work. As to the product, they suggested including in the calendars information about which celebrations guests would be welcome to attend, sharing the information gained with a school or a youth group. It was also suggested that it would be good to talk about the process in the calendar groups afterwards to engage more deeply in the dialogue.

Appendix 6 Resources and materials

Resources

COMPASS – Manual on Human Rights Education with Young People. (Council of Europe, 2002).

Education Pack “all different – all equal”. (Council of Europe, 1995/2004).

Final report. Intercultural and inter-religious dialogue – avoid conflicts. Training Ecumenical Trainers in Europe, TETE. 15th-22nd November 2004, Panagia Soumela, Veria, Greece. EYCE-FEMYSO.

Islamophobia and its consequences on Young People. Seminar report by Ingrid Ramberg. European Youth Centre Budapest 1-6 June 2004. Council or Europe Publishing.

www.eyce.org

www.femyso.org

www.coe.int

Material table

During the study session there was an open material table where participants could examine and take copies of material related to the theme. Also material used and produced in the study session was put on the table, as well as material the participant had brought with them. Materials available included for example

- Bashy's lecture
- Gavan's slide show
- EYCE's and FEMYSO's materials and reports from previous events
- Materials from UNITED
- Materials from European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia
- Materials from Council of Europe's Intercultural Dialogue and Conflict Prevention Project
- Books, brochures and other materials from various countries

Materials from the study session:

Three sets of guidelines for dialogue

EYCE-FEMYSO 2004: GUIDELINES FOR DIALOGUE (summary by Aura Nortomaa)

1. Be clear on your own identity and faith
2. Be respectful
3. Acknowledge common values
4. Agree on common aims for dialogue
5. Be willing to learn
6. Avoid judgements and stereotypes
7. Pursue Dialogue in daily life

IKON 1998: GUIDELINES FOR DIALOGUE (summary by Aura Nortomaa)

1. Talk about the terms of dialogue
2. Respect the other
3. Be open and honest
4. Be critical, but in a constructive way
5. Respect what is holy to the other one
6. Recognise and admit your starting point, and prejudices
7. Be ready to change your viewpoints
8. Try to see things from the other's point of view
9. Expect the same from the other
10. Build trust and value it

BASHY QURAI SHY 2006: PRINCIPLES FOR GOOD DIALOGUE

- Be willing to listen more and speak less. That is why God has given us one mouth and two ears
- Do away with arrogance – cultural, racial, religious and intellectual. No one wants to be dictated to

- Use power of persuasion gently and kindly. Speak softly and be resolute and firmly to the mutually negotiated principles
- Start being appreciative, positive and give credit before criticizing
- Avoid a pointed finger because it has a lecturing posture. Besides, when you point one finger towards others, you are pointing three towards yourself
- Acknowledge that the society is more and more inter-cultural, inter-religious and inter-ethnic. One can be part of a society without looking, sounding or acting like the majority population
- Make people feel welcome and part of the larger society. Integration requires a two way process
- Be ware of own prejudices. Do not let own personal opinions cloud human judgement
- Try to get to know people's background. It helps to avoid misunderstanding
- While interacting with people of the Muslim faith, remember that they are not "Ambassadors" of their religion, culture or country
- Muslims are not one homogeneous group of people who think, act and want the same things
- 85% Muslim people are not practicing. They as well as those who do practice their religion, have the same worries as everyone -family, friends, jobs, social status and a wish to have a happy life
- Many Muslims do not understand Islamic concepts and mix religion with local cultural values
- Many Muslims practice the religion on a symbolic level instead of practicing the true teaching of the religion
- Politicians who do not deliver social reforms and are often not elected by voting, use the religion to silence the critics in Muslim countries
- Most Imams in Europe are not highly educated. They can not interpret Quranic teachings in a modern context because of language barriers and because of their own selfish economic interests and a strong desire to control
- Since the time of colonialism, most countries with Muslim majorities have been subjected to a vast propaganda from the West that Muslims are inferior. This has effected them psychologically and mentally
- Many among the Muslim communities live in a nostalgic state because of their great past history. They are scared to face the realities of today
- Most Muslim countries have a ruling class which is often Western educated and resist any religious revival which will challenge their absolute power

Causes and cures of stereotypes

Picture 1

Stereotypes:

OPPRESSION

Causes:

- Different than own life
- Different opinions
- Parents' opinion
- Bad interpretation of the tradition of the Prophet Muhammed

Cures:

- Explanation and dialogue
- Discussion with the Muslim woman
- Focus on way of life, see how they contribute
 - Equally criticize westerners

EXTREMIST

Causes:

- Rumor
- Media and news
- To practice religion means western society thinks that you are a fundamentalist.

Cures:

- Explain about the pure Islamic tradition.



Picture 2

Stereotypes:

FOLLOWING RELIGION WITHOUT THINKING
FORCED RELIGION

Causes:

- Lack of knowledge
- Different traditions

Cures:

- Dialogue on individual level
- Try to think like the other person



Picture 3

Stereotypes:

RELIGION OF VIOLENCE
JIHAD

Causes:

- Misunderstanding
- Mixing religion and national ideas

Cures:

- Knowledge about what we are talking about
- Understanding



Picture 4

Stereotypes:

BRAINWASHING BY SOCIAL CONTROL
EMOTIONAL IRRATIONALITY

Causes:

- Lack of knowledge
- Connecting Islam and irrational behaviour
- The media

Cures:

- Gaining knowledge about Islam
- Better balance in the media to include and let Muslims present themselves.



Picture 5

Stereotypes:

DOMINATION OF MUSLIMS

Causes:

- Fear of losing power, identity and security

Cures:

- Find it from within
- Mutual respect
- Focus on what you will get or receive by meeting the other, and take it as something positive.
- Creating space for positive experiences and personal meetings

RELIGIOUS DIVISION

Causes:

- Fear of war

Cures:

- Talking, listening, listening



Roots and leaves

Emphasising the positives and addressing the negatives about living with differences.

ROOTS – positives to emphasize

- More possibilities to learn about new things – and choose!
- International fair trade
- There are language courses for the minority (without paying). Learning new language provides possibilities to find better job
- Stimulating to do good
- Enriching
- Encourage diversity in organisations
- Bringing together different cultures and sharing experiences
- Experience with people who are not like you, develop your power of understanding the others

- Every day meeting with different culture provides you to get knowledge about it
- Volunteers guiding and helping newcomers to get into the respective culture of the country – to get used to the lifestyle – exchanging views
- An opportunity to learn from each other, connect our attitudes so that we can fight together against prejudices
- Increase knowledge and learn from each other. Make intercultural events - intercultural center. To be more open minded.
- International sports
- Opens our minds to learn what is happening throughout the world
- Hang around with different people – get enriched
- Presenting cultural diversity through ethnic restaurants
- Loosing the fear to learn
- Learning more about myself
- Seeing what others do differently you evaluate your own thinking/acting in a critical way. You get to understand yourself better.
- Helps to understand our own thinking
- Few cafes for women only
- Let the others help you strengthen your identity

LEAVES – address the negatives

- Making intercultural partys and meetings
- Medias presentations of feeling discriminated people
- Empathy
- Raising awareness and sharing
- Cultural differences
- Risk and fear of assimilation and change
- Differences in habits
- Fear of loosing tradition
- Ability to compromise
- Learn from critical incidents by reflecting them
- Cherish your culture when possible
- Balance your liberty and the other's rights
- Possibility of conflicts from differences, assumptions and fear
- Misunderstanding
- Communication problems
- Differences in policies for inclusion of minorities – research – lobby
- Increasing knowledge
- Ethnocentrism (group) – make them experience different reality: role models
- Self-understanding
- Be curious
- Learn about understand the other via various ways (visiting, eating, dialogues, travelling, reading, movies...)
- Free your mind and the rest will follow

Questions and answers

Questions for Christians:

- What is meant by “the church” in the Christian community?
- Can you explain what you mean by the church being the Body of Christ?
- Do you know what Islam says about Christians and Christianity?
- Can the women lead the prayer or be the head of the church? / Why can't women be priests in the Orthodox Church?
- When people say “Orthodox” is that the same with “Greek Orthodox”?
- Are humans sinful?
- Why are so many Christian churches? What does Reformation mean?
- Why are there 4 gospels?
- Why did Jesus have to die?
- How do you understand the Trinity of God?

Questions for Muslims:

- Why do women, but not men, cover their heads?
- What is your perception of the “Islam church”? compared to Christian church as the body of Christ
- Why Islam does not like dogs? Or do not see dogs as normal animals? Also the pigs?
- Do most Muslim understand Arabic?
- If Muhammad is the last prophet, how come the Bahai claim the last prophet is theirs?
- Is it possible to follow the rules of Islam in a western society? (Europe)
- Why is it ok to kill Jews?
- Why are the Muslims who want to convert to another religion killed?
- In my perspective there is a division in the Islam world; there are sunnis and shias; conservative and moderates; do you think the Islamic community is divided?
- Why cannot women go to hajj alone?
- What do you think of Wahabism?
- Why do you react very strongly when someone does not respect your religion? (respect is granted, not requested)
- What's the women position in heavens?
- Why do the bombers consider themselves as martyrs?
- What do you think of Christianity?
- Why do some Muslims not want to touch people of opposite gender, even just shaking hands?
- Do you think “EuroIslam” is possible? Maybe based on the Mutazilite school of thought?
- Why Christians call pay tax for Muslims as “al jisiah”?
- What does Islam not accept from Christian faith?
- What is Omah (ummah)? What is nationality for Muslims and Islam?
- What do the Muslim respect and honour from the EU traditions and habits?
- Why is not possible for a Muslim woman to go to hajj alone? Without man?
- Can women be imams? Why / Why not?
- Why angels are so important in Islam?
- What is Islam? What is Jihad? What is Martyrs? What is Shahada? What are you waiting from heavens?

Other questions:

- What do you think of the “Muslim Brotherhood?
- Do you think current Iranian theocracy is good/bad?
- What do you think of Turkey as a Muslim secular country / democracy?
- There are very many bad people in the world. But why only Muslims become suicide bombers?
- Why are the frontiers/borders of Islam all bloody (in Nigeria, Sudan, Palestine, Pakistan, Indonesia, India), especially against Christians?
- Do you know that the British Sir Richard Burton was the second European in history who travelled incognito/in disguise to Mecca and Medina during the hajj?
- Why are the pics of terrorist acts (?) considered as islamophobic?

Appendix 7 Prayers

MONDAY

Opening prayer

Let us pray in the name of the One God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. For His is the Kingdom, the power and the glory. Now and into ages of ages, Amen.

Presence of God C42
Morning has broken B28
Reading, I Cor 13:1-13
Ubi Caritas A11
Meditation
Lord's prayer
Blessing C5

English Translation of the Muslim opening prayer to this week's seminar

Recitation before the Fatihah
“I seek Allah’ s protection from saturn who is accursed”
Tasmiah
“In the name of Allah, the most kind and the most merciful”
Surah Fatihah
“Praise is only for Allah, Lord
Of the Universe.
The most kind, the most merciful.
The master of the Day of Judgement.
You alone we worship and to you alone
We pray for help.
Show us the straight way,
The way of those whom you have blessed.
Who have not deserved your anger,
Nor gone astray.”
Darud

“Oh Allah, let your peace come upon Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) as you have sent peace upon Ibrahim (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and his family. Truly you are praiseworthy and glorious.”

“Oh Allah, bless Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and the family of Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) as you have blessed Ibrahim (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and his family. Truly you are praiseworthy and glorious”

Surat 20. Ta- Ha verse 25-28

Followed by surat 19 Maryam verses 7- 33

TUESDAY

Morning - Lutheran

Introduction

Hymn ‘Loben den Herren’ in English

Bible reading: Gospel of John 6:5–13 (Jesus feeding five thousand men with five breads and two fishes)

Reflection. There was a symbol prepared on the floor. The symbol was a fish, which meant (as in the Bible reading), that sharing should be in our nature, as our elementary habit.

Silent reflection for couple of minutes

Prayer. The importance of both ‘love and treating other people well’.

Hymn ‘A Mighty Fortress is our God’

Blessing

Sending

The Bible teaches how important equality and good relationships in society are. Both of the topics are very universal and they are very easily acceptable to any religion, culture or nation.

Evening - Ecumenical

Taize song – In manus tuas pater

Reading: Russian, English, Italian, Danish – John 13:35-36

Prayer: Make me an Instrument of your peace

Our father

Blessing

WEDNESDAY

Morning – Protestant

We began with an invocation inviting our God, who is the Father, the Son and the Spirit to be with us during the day.

Then we went on, with the Bible reading in three languages: English, Italian and Hungarian. We were reading 1Kor 12,12-27 where is written, that there is only one body, Christ but there are many parts. We all are parts of this body having different roles. We

can't live, one without the another, we may not fill our self more important that the others.

After the Bible reading we stayed just a few minutes in quite, hearing a nice instrumental music. We went on with the prayers. This was a day when we were able to pray loudly. A few of us used this possibility. After the prayers, we prayed together the Lord's prayer everybody in his/her own language. After this we received gods blessing form Romans 15,13. For ending we just sang one or two songs.

Evening – Ecumenical

Psalm 40: 1-5

Song: B 25 v 1

Psalm 18: 30.32-34

Song: B 25 v 2

Psalm 46: 1-3

Song: B 25 v 3

Psalm 62: 6-9

Song: B 25 v 4

Psalm 67

Song: A 18

THURSDAY

Morning - Orthodox Prayer¹

Blessing & Opening Prayers

Glory to You, our God, glory to You!

*Heavenly King, Consoler, the Spirit of Truth,
present in all places and filling all things,
the Treasury of blessing, and the giver of life:
come and dwell in us, cleanse us of all stain
and save our souls, O Good One!*

Holy God! Holy and Mighty! Holy and Immortal! Have mercy on us. (three times)
Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Most Holy Trinity, have mercy on us. Lord, cleanse us from our sins. Master, pardon our transgressions. Holy One, visit and heal our infirmities for Your name's sake.

Lord have mercy! Lord have mercy! Lord have mercy!

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and for evermore. Amen.

Great Litany (adapted)

- *You are kindly invited to recite with us the answer to the request, **Lord have mercy** -*

¹ This Orthodox prayer is a selection of different prayers, songs, liturgical acts and fragments of service that are part of the larger service program that runs throughout the liturgical year. It is not performed as such in the usual Orthodox church, but it is adapted to offer a glimpse into the Orthodox liturgical atmosphere and to satisfy the needs of an improvised space and the lack of ordained personnel.

In peace let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For the peace from above and the salvation of our souls, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For the peace of the whole world, the stability of the holy churches of God, and for the unity of all, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For our Youth Program, all those who participate and help and for their families, that the Holy Spirit may protect and strengthen their faith, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For this city, for every city and country, and for the faithful who live in them, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For favorable weather, an abundance of the fruits of the earth, and temperate seasons, let

us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For travelers by sea, land and air, for the sick, the suffering, the captives and for their safety and salvation, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For our deliverance from all tribulation, wrath, danger and necessity, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

Help us, save us, have mercy on us, and keep us, O God, by Your grace.

Lord, have mercy.

Epistle Reading (chanted – first chanted in English /text below/ and then chanted in Greek)

Romans 5, 1-5

1 Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have[a] peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, 2 through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. 3 And not only that, but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; 4 and perseverance, character; and character, hope. 5 Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us.

Gospel Reading (recited – first recited in English, then partially in Russian, Romanian, Polish, Bulgarian)

Matthew 1, 18-25²

Christ Born of Mary

18 Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: After His mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Spirit.

19 Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not wanting to make her a public example, was minded to put her away secretly.

² This paragraph has been selected in connection with the Feast of the Annunciation, which is celebrated on the 25th of March in the Orthodox Church, 9 months before Christmas.

20 But while he thought about these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take to you Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. 21 And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name JESUS, for He will save His people from their sins."

22 So all this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying:

23 "Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel,"[d] which is translated, "God with us."

24 Then Joseph, being aroused from sleep, did as the angel of the Lord commanded him and took to him his wife,

25 and did not know her till she had brought forth her firstborn Son.[e] And he called His name JESUS.

Troparion of the Resurrection (short liturgical poem – chanted / 6th liturgical tone)

*Angelic powers descended to your grave
and the guards fell down and appeared dead
Mary came to the grave seeking
Your most pure body.
You conquered and despoiled
The Abyss
without being touched by it.
You the Giver of Life, then met the Apostles,
O Lord, risen from the dead, glory be to You.*

Easter Song (Old Slavonic version and Greek version)

English translation:

*"Christ is risen from the dead, trampling down death by death,
and to those in the tomb He has given life".*

Allelujah (Byzantine melody)

While the choir is singing *Allelujah*, you are kindly invited to come forward and light your candles from the big candle on the table.

Please then return to your seats taking care that the candles should be lightened at all times and then join us in reciting our Lord's prayer

Lord's Prayer (each one in his own language) and then **Closing Blessing**

FRIDAY

Morning - Protestant

First we had some prayers. Then Laura read psalm 118:17-21 and Laur read Malakai 4:2. We continued with a prayer for others and ended with a Celtic Blessing.

SATURDAY

Morning – Ecumenical

We entered the prayer room while some orthodox music was played in the cd-player. We joined the prayer via singing a Taize song followed by Bible reading John 14: 13-27 in English. After that we had a silent moment and some free praying concerning the gratefulness about this seminar and hopes that we will also create some inter religious activities at home. Then we blessed ourselves by joining hands as a sign of Christian unity. We sang another Taize song and listened to some more music.

CLOSING WORSHIP

Christian Prayer

Song B17 Many are the light beams
Reading Psalm 28 6-9
Meditation of the cross
Matt 11:28
Prayer of the cross
Nicean creed
Reading Fil 4:4-7
Candle lightning and prayer
Our father
Blessing

English Translation of the Muslim closing prayer to this week's seminar

Recitation before the Fatihah
"I seek Allah' s protection from saturn who is accursed"
Tasmiah
"In the name of Allah, the most kind and the most merciful"
Surah Fatihah
"Praise is only for Allah, Lord
Of the Universe.
The most kind, the most merciful.
The master of the Day of Judgement.
You alone we worship and to you alone
We pray for help.
Show us the straight way,
The way of those whom you have blessed.
Who have not deserved your anger,
Nor gone astray."
Darud
"Oh Allah, let your peace come upon Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) as you have sent peac upon Ibrahim (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and his family. Truly you are praiseworthy and glorious."
"Oh Allah, bless Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and the family of Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) as you have blessed Ibrahim (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and his family. Truly you are praiseworthy and glorious"
Surat 20. Ta- Ha verse 25-28
Surat 49. Al- Hujurat (The Dwellings)

