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The following report provides the overview of the research focus and material, as well as the preliminary research findings and policy recommendations according to the subtask 3.4 entitled "Promoting Religious Coexistence".

The report is based on the research of 3 members of the team who have worked with different methodologies including participant observation, interviews with leaders and practitioners of the organizations and analysis of the materials that they disseminate. Specific documents and statements issued by initiatives leaded by official representative bodies from Muslim countries are also analyzed. It is as well important to bear in mind that the origin or motivation of these initiatives, their scope and capacity to influence the audience that they are addressing varies considerably and therefore the conclusions will necessarily be different for each case study and its context.

The actual research results will be published in academic (peer reviewed) formats. This document will be discussed at the mid-term meeting in Granada and constitutes the basis for D3.7 "Final report policy recommendations WP3".

T 3.4.1: Analysing new spirituality

Lea Altnurme, University of Tartu

1. Research Focus and Material

This study focuses on the attitudes of groups of new spirituality towards religion and, above all, the expression of tolerance as a value. The beginning of a new mentality expressed as the New Age movement, emerged in the 1960s cultural turn as part of the then counterculture, and its ideals mainly reflect the intensified individualization process in Western societies. Today, this "new spirituality" can be defined as a globally spread religious culture, an environment in which cults, groups, training groups, lectures, seminars, discussion circles, camps, festivals, etc. are organised for a variety of purposes. The New Age base discourse talks about striving for mental self-development and well-being. The teaching and practice based on it is aimed primarily at the individual in order to meet his or her needs, even when he or she is in a group, e.g. Yoga. People do not aim to care about the needs of the group.

Ten informants from three groups have been included in this study: Spiritual Lecture Hall (4), Gaia Academy (3) and Lilleoru Community (3).

Spirituaalne Lektoorium (Spiritual Lecture Hall) was created in 2007 to bring together people interested in spirituality across a network covering Estonia. The aim was to open up the original

mindset of the people in a novel form of learning and to bring it into a powerful spiritual power and a wave of universal awakening.

Gaia Academy is an educational school that specializes in adult education. It was founded in Estonia by Toomas Trapido in 2015. Its website (www.gaiaakadeemia.ee) presents the school as follows: "Gaia Academy is an education institution for holistic lifestyle studies. Gaia Academy is part of Estonian Ecovillage Association and both are working together to contribute for sustainable development education. We offer different Gaia Education based courses for adults and host different other holistic courses."

Lilleoru Community (www.lilleoru.ee) was established in 1993 by Ingvar Villido, a Kriya Yoga teacher, and his followers. Since 2001 it is a teaching centre led by a non-profit organisation with 130 members. The main teachings are the Art of Conscious Change (created by Villido) and Babaji Kriya Yoga. It is the oldest and biggest new spirituality community in Estonia.

It should be mentioned that groups of new spirituality are not exclusive, so people can move freely between different groups and belong to several groups at the same time.

2. Research Findings

1) The attitude of members of the new spirituality groups to religion is tolerant, particularly to religious people, but not so much to institutionalized religion that is connected to power.

2) Members of these groups generally do not consider themselves to be religious, but they do consider themselves to be spiritual. The distinction comes from the notion that these members have of religion as an organized body or church in particular. They do not consider themselves to be bound by the church and its dogmatic truths because it is thought that institutional frameworks restrict spiritual development. Spirituality is associated with experience - that is why external authority is not sought. However, this does not mean that there is no external authority at all in the new spirituality environment.

3) While the attitude of members of the new spirituality groups towards religious traditions, even more towards religious people, is generally tolerant, at the same time it is also diminishing. In their attitude to religious people, their expression is that, while organized religion is restrictive, it may be of support or a safe haven for believers, they may need these boundaries and religious precepts in their lives to cope with the difficulties of life, maintain their mental balance, be able to set meaningful targets, etc. It is usually added that they themselves do not need such boundaries by expressing the idea that spirituality is something higher than religion.

4) Religious people (particularly representatives of Christianity, Islam or Judaism, less Eastern religions), however, are not considered tolerant by the representatives of the New Age groups under survey. The mission of these organized religions is seen as intrusive and aggressive.

The results are as expected, as they express the notions that have persisted for decades in the new spirituality environment. The New Age movement, which grew out in part of the hippie movement, became a legacy of the idea of peace, tolerance and peoples' friendship as a value, as well as opposing the institutions of society, including the Church.

3. Recommendations

When observing and regulating the relations in European societies, one should not forget the attitudes of people belonging to new spirituality groups. This is a growing phenomenon that embraces also the members of traditional churches or religious groups and seemingly nonreligious people. The influence of the particular organisations is not that big in society as the spread of the ideas and mentality of the new spirituality among population. In case of looser church organisations and discipline the influence of new spirituality may be remarkable also in connecting the spiritualities. Their attitude towards religion may be something that keeps peace in society and helps for coexistence without major conflicts.

T 3.4.2: Religious coexistence and toleration promoted by European ecumenical, interfaith and inter-convictional youth organizations

Priit Rohtmets, University of Tartu

1. Research Focus and Material

The research deals with interfaith youth cooperation in Europe, with a special emphasis on Belgium and Estonia, mapping collaborative organizations (regional and local organizations). It explores the various terms (and their interpretation) used for the cooperation (interfaith, ecumenical, inter-convictional) and examines the impact of national history, religious landscape, legislation, and other interfaith cooperation networks on youth cooperation across countries in different regions of Europe.

The research also deals with projects that have been carried out in the framework of youth cooperation and will look at the most important issues for young people, especially how history is perceived in helping the development of interfaith dialogue.

The research has been conducted since September 2018 and is due to end in April 2020. So far it has focused on following organisations and initiatives: Estonian Council of Churches, Orbit vzw, Axcent, Ecumenical Prayer for Peace. The research has been done through participant observation, interviews with the representatives of these movements and content analysis of materials distributed by the organisations. The fieldwork took place between January 2019 and June 2019. There is some research still ahead in connection with youth organisations in several European countries.

2. Research Findings

- The organizations, whose activity has been analyzed, in their work, are shaped by two aspects: the religious landscape of a certain country/region; the views of society on social and religious values.
- Depending on religious tradition and local national history, different terms are being used to describe the collaborative work. Interreligious and interfaith seem to be more traditional and common, while 'inter-convictional' appears as a newer term reflecting a more secular and diverse Europe. Convictions can be religious and non-religious.
- The identity of young people, even if taken to a place of historical significance, seem to be weakly related with history, and collaborative work raises more existential questions, which are connected with dealing with "the other" in present day context.
- Cooperation within the organizations seem to be more practically oriented, trying to understand the other through common practice, religious holidays, although finding common ground between historical roots of different religious traditions has gained some attention too.

3. Recommendations

The recommendations based on the research are not yet final, but some suggestions can be made already in the current state of affairs:

1. It would be advised for public institutions and public media to analyze the use of terms in promoting interreligious or inter-convictional dialogue with the youth. It can create a better understanding of religious and non-religious groups in different European societies. This has to be done fully recognizing the identity and history of different religious groups.
2. Interfaith and inter-convictional organizations are being funded by either religious institutions or (local) governments. They get very little recognition from international funding bodies. The

organizations can be encouraged to apply for funding (special programs, information campaigns). This certainly needs to be taken into consideration, taking into account the fact that youth organizations have great importance and perspective to influence young people of different religious and non-religious background.

3. Inter-faith youth work definitely may benefit from more international networking to be fully recognized in Europe. Although international organizations do exist, they currently hardly have any significance to young people of different European countries. It means that history and identity are perceived from a more or less local position.
4. Youth organizations such as the ones under scrutiny have very diverse backgrounds and relations/ties are of different background: some are related with one or several churches, some are related with certain members of clergy, some emphasize their independence. What seems to be common to them, is the aim to achieve an understanding between different religious groups or different convictions through common activity. A policy suggestion would be to focus on achieving mutual respect through common activity with the help of networking and role models, rather than through trying to achieve something with establishing a common identity.
5. Currently, youth collaboration of inter-religious organizations already includes migration and environmental issues, which need to be analyzed in the context of the history of different religious traditions. This is certainly something, where schools as well as state and European institution can give their support (creating material, financial support, know-how).

T 3.4.3: Muslim initiatives for religious understanding

Nadia Hindi, University of Granada

1. Research Focus and Material

The focus of this research is the Islamic narratives for promoting peaceful coexistence and how Islamic legacy and traditions inspires contemporary Islamic discourses.

The fieldwork focuses on three Islamic initiatives: the Amman Message (2004), the Conference of Mardin (2010) and the Marrakesh Declaration (2016). The materials include primary sources such as official publications, declarations, videos and websites and secondary sources such as previous research publications, reports and critical references expressed in popular TV shows and publications. The primary sources language is mainly Arabic, but official statements and declaration can be found in English version as well.

2. Research Findings

1. The Amman Message is the most thorough and comprehensive initiative for our purpose of examining initiative to promote religious coexistence and tolerance. It interrelates and addresses inter-Islamic and Islam-West tensions. In contrast with the importance of the Amman message, the Conference of Mardin and the Marrakesh Declaration had less impact and do not address issues that can be considered crucial such as the root reasons of extremism and the hierarchical historical, economic and political responsibility of global politics.
2. The three initiatives were developed as an urgent response to post September 11 long period of crisis. The Amman message is equally concerned with terrorism and Islamophobia, while the two other initiatives are solely focused on terrorism. Nevertheless, the main feature that the three initiatives share is their will to represent a "real" Islam opposed to anti-Islamic propaganda and violent acts committed in its name.
3. Therefore, the three initiatives try to offer a counter-narrative to extremism in the context of an international competition for Islamic authority and the modelling of a "western-friendly" Islam.
4. The evocation of the ethical dimension of Islam is crucial in these initiatives as well as the use of authoritative juridical tools and sources such as the Islamic consensus (*ijma'*), the Constitution of Medina led by the prophet Muhammad and the issue of fatwas. These initiatives are examples of how modernity and tradition are not mutually exclusive. On the contrary, they demonstrate that tradition changes and adapts to modern circumstances. Moreover, the three initiatives seek to inspire Islamic modernity.
5. Mostly, the so-called institutional or "official" Islam behind these initiatives leaves no room for deprived communities and youth concerns, the target group of anti-radicalization policies.

3. Recommendations

The documents produced in the frame of the three initiatives give recommendations that can be summarized as follows:

1. Almost all declarations revolving around these initiatives stress that official statements and media outlets should be more accurate in reporting news as well as avoid prejudice and hatred.
2. Official statements and media outlets should equally reject all ideologies, practices and calls for extremism, prosecution and discrimination regardless of faith and nationality.
3. Focus on ethic and common values between diverse religions and cultures.

4. Any event, statement or discourse should be described in its proper historical context.
5. Acknowledge European Islamic legacy. Islam and Muslims are and have been part of Europe.
6. Reflect on to what extent the public policies are imbedded solely into the majority culture and find means to be more diverse and inclusive.
7. Undertake and support proactive actions based on historical accounts of conviviality and complex social dynamics, shading away from simplistic and dichotomous representations of interfaith relations.
8. Unfold the meaning of tolerance and what it implies. Establish practical steps to achieve it beyond the rhetoric.
9. In addressing Islam or any other culture or religion be aware of the power relations involved as well as its intersection with other social categories such as class, nationality, ethnicity, gender, etc.
10. Be accurate in the use of the word terrorism. One of the declarations of the International Islamic Fiqh Academy Conference (Amman Message) states that "all acts, forms, and practices of terrorism are forbidden, and it is a criminal act classifiable as a war crime, wherever it occurs and whoever perpetrates it. Anyone who participates in terrorist acts directly or indirectly, through funding or support, individually or as a group or a state, is considered a terrorist. Terrorism can also occur between states".
11. Address the reasons leading to terrorism other than (religious) beliefs.
12. Allow Muslims to represent themselves in their diversity.
13. Look for Muslims interlocutors in a pluralist and inclusive ways. Islam is not a Church and should not be institutionalized as such.
14. Support Initiatives and projects aimed to build collective knowledge and trust among Muslims and non-Muslims in Europe through horizontal and equal relations.
15. The Topkapi Declaration (Amman Message) states "European Muslim youth should be seen as a positive force, which can benefit the labour force and social fabric of Europe. We strongly urge European governments to promote inclusiveness and dialogue. This should be done through measures such as education, to encourage greater mutual knowledge and understanding, as well as social programs to tackle socio-economic disadvantage. We applaud those European governments who have taken active measures to stem racism and who have legislated against overt and institutionalized forms of discrimination against minorities. We also acknowledge that the media has a role in ensuring accurate and responsible coverage".



Conclusions

This report covers initiatives that share as specific focus the promotion of peaceful coexistence. Some preliminary conclusions are as follow:

1. On terminology: the researchers who have contributed to this report use terms such as inter-religious, interfaith and inter-convictional dialogue which might seem synonyms for the same idea but actually have important nuances. It is advisable to highlight the context and the reasons for these slight but important differences and give a final recommendation to use them accordingly to their specific context.
2. On context: while the three research topics share the focus on dialogue and coexistence, the different contexts that inform them are so different that it is very important to give proper information and avoid essentialist conclusions about peace making and coexistence. Therefore, it will be important to take into account who promotes these initiatives, its goals, the capacities of its promoters, who benefits directly and/or indirectly from them, the authority and/or capacity to be influential… in short, the context determines the scope and capacity to be influential.
3. It is important to avoid reductive and schematic views such as an assumed binary opposition between religions and secularity, the second often understood as the overcoming of inter-religious tensions. This opposition often leads to the distorted assumption that secular, non-religious and "new" spiritualities overcome these non-modern religious tensions that are supposed to belong to the past. Therefore, it is important to avoid the erroneous conception that religious traditions live in the past and create the conditions for a dialogue that avoids these asymmetric perceptions that situate religions as outdated, and acknowledge that all of them live in the present and respond to present conditions.
4. The initiatives included in this report are very diverse and their capacity of influence is also very different, as well as the means by which they are promoted. In some cases, such as the Islamic initiatives, they can be described as top-down, while the others arise from grassroots associations. In spite of that, apart from the new spirituality cases observed, it is possible to conclude that many of them try to challenge the paradigm that opposes Islam –as religion but also as culture- and the West, excluding the first from the European history.
5. Linked to the previous conclusion, it is advisable to challenge not only reductive views about a clash of civilizations, but also distorted idealizations of the past.