



# **THE POWER OF INTERFAITH DIALOGUE**

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A practical guide for youth workers  
and organisations on implementing  
interfaith dialogue in their practices

# SALTO-YOUTH STANDS FOR...

'Support and Advanced Learning and Training Opportunities within the Erasmus+: Youth in Action and European Solidarity Corps programmes'. The European Commission established a network of eleven SALTO-YOUTH Resource Centres to enhance the implementation of the EU Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps programmes, offering young people valuable non-formal learning opportunities.

SALTO's **goal is to support the implementation of the [European Erasmus+: Youth in Action](#) and [European Solidarity Corps Programmes](#)** focused on priorities such as social inclusion, diversity, participation, digital, green, and solidarity initiatives. It also supports cooperation with regions such as EuroMed, Southeast Europe, Eastern Europe and the Caucasus and coordinates all training and cooperation activities and information tools for National Agencies.

SALTO-YOUTH provides **resources, information and training** for National Agencies and European youth workers focused on these European priority areas. Most of these resources are available at [www.SALTO-YOUTH.net](http://www.SALTO-YOUTH.net) including the [European Training Calen-](#)

dar, the [Toolbox for Training and Youth Work](#), the [Trainers Online for Youth \(TOY\)](#) database, links to online resources, and more.

SALTO-YOUTH actively cooperates with other European youth stakeholders, including the National Agencies of the Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps programmes, the Council of Europe, the European Youth Forum, European youth workers and trainers, and training organisers.

THE SALTO-YOUTH INCLUSION AND DIVERSITY RESOURCE CENTRE [WWW.SALTO-YOUTH.NET/INCLUSION/](http://WWW.SALTO-YOUTH.NET/INCLUSION/)

The SALTO-YOUTH Inclusion and Diversity Resource Centre, based in Belgium-Flanders, works together with the European Commission to support the inclusion of young people with fewer opportunities in the Erasmus+: Youth in Action and European Solidarity Corps programmes. This contributes to social cohesion at large. SALTO Inclusion and Diversity also aids National Agencies and youth workers by providing training, developing youth work methods, and disseminating information via newsletters. By offering training opportunities, facilitating exchanges, and reflecting on inclusion practices and diversity management, SALTO Inclusion & Diversity aims to enhance the visibility, accessibility, and transparency of its inclusion & diversity efforts and make the inclusion of young people with fewer opportunities and positive diversity management widely supported priorities.

For more information and resources, visit the Inclusion & Diversity pages at [www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/Inclusion/](http://www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/Inclusion/).

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# INTRODUCTION

*How can faith serve as a resource rather than a barrier?  
How can youth workers engage effectively in interfaith  
dialogue to empower young people?*

These are crucial questions for anyone committed to fostering social cohesion and mutual understanding in today's multicultural societies. Often, faith is treated as a taboo, avoided rather than explored. This publication aims to shift that perspective by offering practical tools and insights that enable youth workers to harness interfaith dialogue as a potent means of connection and empowerment.

Interfaith dialogue is vital for promoting mutual respect and social cohesion. It equips youth workers with the methodologies needed to handle religious diversity, foster understanding, and bridge divides among young people. This publication details how interfaith dialogue can be integrated effectively and sensitively into various youth work settings across Europe and beyond. It is beneficial for organisations involved in the Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps Programmes and other youth initiatives.

The journey starts with a theoretical framework in **Chapter 1**, defining key concepts like faith, dialogue, and interfaith dialogue. **Chapter 2** examines how young people perceive faith and what they expect from interfaith dialogue. **Chapter 3** outlines the attitudes, knowledge, and skills that youth workers need to facilitate interfaith dialogue effectively. **Chapter 4** discusses why youth work should incorporate interfaith dialogue, addressing common misconceptions. **Chapter 5** offers practical advice, preparation steps, and inspirational examples from organisations across Europe and beyond that are pioneers in this field.

Whether you are new to this journey or already active in interfaith dialogue, this publication encourages you to deepen your understanding and expand your practices.



**WELCOME  
TO THE  
INTERFAITH  
JOURNEY!**



# SUMMARY

Faith plays a significant role in the lives of young people, particularly within today's increasingly diverse communities. As religious diversity expands, interfaith literacy becomes crucial for navigating this complexity effectively. However, faith often remains a taboo topic within youth work contexts, more often avoided than embraced.

**“The Power of Interfaith Dialogue”** underscores the importance of embracing religious diversity to equip young people with the skills needed to flourish in a multifaith society. This guide provides youth workers with practical tools and insights for incorporating interfaith dialogue into their practices. It presents a comprehensive framework for understanding and conducting interfaith dialogue based on real-world examples and established practices from across Europe and beyond. The publication covers essential concepts, the role of youth workers, practical methodologies, and inspiring case studies.

Whether you are beginning your interfaith journey or looking to enrich your existing practices, this guide illustrates how to engage in interfaith dialogue thoughtfully and sensitively. It is particularly valuable for organisations involved in the Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps Programmes and other youth initiatives.

You can download this and other SALTO youth work publications for free at [www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/inclusion](http://www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/inclusion).

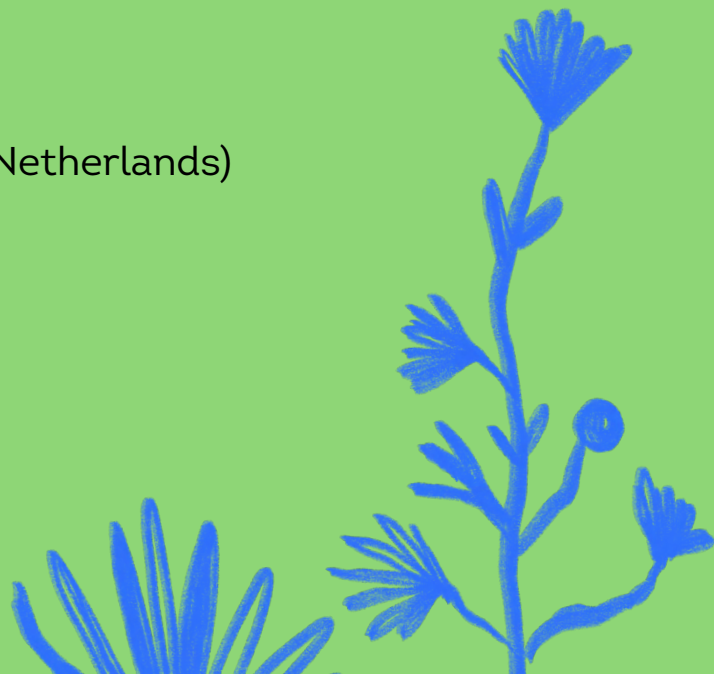
# A MESSAGE TO YOU

***To all who believe in the power of love,***

I invite you to move beyond binary thinking and the distinctions of 'you and I' to embrace the concept of 'us.' If there is to ever be an 'us', it is found in the richness of our differences, sheltered under the umbrella I call: "Faith." Faith manifests in various forms, grounded in both religious and secular beliefs. Yet, it is our faith in the power and interconnectedness of humanity that truly unites us and propels interfaith dialogue forward. This dialogue is not merely an exchange of words; it is a profound journey of mutual understanding where we explore one another's perspectives and values. It is a path walked by those who have opened their hearts to see beyond the limitations of their skin.

Thus, I invite you to embark on this journey with open arms because as you engage with others or facilitate encounters, you will also embark on a deeper exploration of yourself.

Fatima (Lebanon) and Lowie (The Netherlands)







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## CHAPTER 1

# UNDERSTANDING INTERFAITH DIALOGUE

Among all fields of research, the field of interreligious studies is known as the one that has the most discussions on the topic of its research itself. What exactly is religion? What is the difference between faith and belief? Should we call our activity interreligious, interspiritual or interconvictional?

Every definition has its limitations. And we certainly not pretend that this publication will end the discussion on the differences between the terms. But to create a common language, we start this publication by explaining some of the main concepts, terms and words in the field of interfaith dialogue.



## FAITH?

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Religion, faith, belief, conviction, worldview, spirituality. These terms can overlap, but they each highlight different aspects of how people relate to ideas, the divine and the universe.

- \* **RELIGION** is a structured system of practices, doctrines, rituals and ethical guidelines, that typically involves worship of a higher power or deity. The focus is more on the community (religare), as it is a shared set of rituals and worldviews.
- \* **SPIRITUALITY** stands for a sense of connection to something greater than oneself, which may or may not involve belief in a deity. It often relates to the search for meaning, purpose and personal growth. Spirituality is less institutional and more individualistic and personal than religion, often focusing on inner experiences and personal transformation.
- \* **FAITH** is a more personal dimension and can exist both in a religious and a non-religious context. It describes a personal trust or confidence in something or someone. In religious contexts, faith refers to trust of confidence in a higher power or religious truth.
- \* **BELIEF** is an acceptance that something is true or exists. It applies to both religious and non-religious contexts, like be-



believing in love, believing in afterlife, believing that people are good.

- \* **CONVICTION** is a firmly held belief about something, typically grounded in one's principles, values or life experiences. Convictions involve moral or ethical stances. They can apply to both religious and non-religious contexts, such as political beliefs.
- \* **WORLDVIEW** is a comprehensive framework or lens through which an individual interprets and understands the world around them. It encompasses a person's belief, values and assumptions about reality, life, and the universe, shaping how they make sense of experiences, make decisions, and interact with others.

The term you choose, determines the focus you want to put in your activity. If you call an activity interreligious, the focus is more on the community aspect. If you call it interfaith, you can stress the personal dimension.

It also determines if people feel included or excluded and the group composition of your project or activity. If you call the activity interworldview, everyone can participate, because everyone has a certain view on life and can talk about that which makes life valuable. This is important if you also want to include atheists, freethinking humanists, agnostic youth in your project and activities.



In this publication we explore the topic of faith in the religious contexts. We prefer faith over religion, as we want to focus on the personal dimension of young people. We will also use the term of **religious diversity** to describe the presence of different religions and faiths in society.



## FOOD FOR THOUGHT

What terms do you employ for religion, spirituality, faith, belief, conviction, and worldview in your language?

Which term aligns best with the work you conduct?



## LEARN MORE

ID Talks Interfaith Dialogue and Identity by Nyanchama Okemwa

Article: [ID Talks Interfaith Dialogue and Identity](#)

Podcast on [Spotify](#) & [Apple](#)

Video: [ID Talks Interfaith Dialogue and Identity](#)

Council of Europe: [Religion and belief](#) – part of [Compass: Manual for Human Rights Education with Young people](#)

## DIALOGUE?

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To define dialogue, Hicham Abdel Gawad, a writer and trainer specialising in Islamic-Christian dialogue, contrasts it with other forms of verbal exchange, such as polemics, controversy, and debate.

**Polemics** represents the most aggressive form of exchange, originating from the Greek word “*polemos*,” meaning “*making war*.” In polemics, all tactics are permissible—from personal attacks to humiliation—all aimed at winning.



**Controversy**, a step away from the abrasiveness of polemics, involves consistently adopting the contrary position to one's opponent. Derived from the Latin "controversus," meaning to turn the other side, it turns any assertion into a counterclaim, fostering a game of contradiction.

Both polemics and controversy align with the term "*le différend*," coined by Jean-François Lyotard, describing a dispute where resolution is unattainable.

**Debate**, while still competitive, introduces a baseline of mutual respect, often underpinned by a common professional or intellectual ground, like two scientists with differing views relying on shared scientific methodologies. Debates usually involve a moderator to maintain order and prevent descent into controversy or polemics.

Debate is associated with "*le litige*," implying a disagreement with the potential for resolution.

**Dialogue** transcends these forms by abandoning the aim to win, focusing instead on collaborative understanding. It is an effort to move beyond "*différend*" and "*litige*," acknowledging differences but seeking to build on shared insights. Dialogue does not erase differences but aims to constructively navigate through them.

Hicham Abdel Gawad proposes an ethical framework for dialogue founded on **authenticity**, **freedom**, **symmetry**, and **sharing**—vital in any dialogue, particularly in interfaith contexts:



- \* **Authenticity:** Participants engage without hidden agendas, maintaining openness about their intentions without any covert desire to convert others.
- \* **Sharing:** Participants commit to openly sharing their traditions, allowing others to learn from and be enriched by different perspectives.
- \* **Symmetry:** Ensures all participants perceive equal footing. If true symmetry is unachievable, the dialogue should openly address and work towards balancing any disparities, including those based on community size, gender, social status, or privileges.
- \* **Freedom:** The liberty to withdraw is fundamental; dialogue under compulsion is ineffective. Ensuring all participants can freely opt out is essential.





## ACTIVITY

- \* Authenticity
- \* Sharing
- \* Symmetry
- \* Freedom

These are the foundational elements of every interfaith dialogue. However, just as a skilled chef might enhance a dish with some secret ingredients, consider what unique additions you could bring to the mix. What personal touches would you add to enrich your interfaith dialogue?



## LEARN MORE

Hicham Abdel Gawad: [Musulmans et chrétiens - Pistes pour un dialogue sans angélisme ni pessimisme](#)

Hicham Abdel Gawad: [Les questions que se posent les jeunes sur l'Islam: Itinéraire d'un prof](#)

Hicham Abdel Gawad: [Des faits religieux aux systèmes symboliques: Comment parler des croyances en contexte laïque ?](#)



## INTERFAITH DIALOGUE?

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Interfaith dialogue is a broad term that covers various types of engagement between individuals of different faiths. These interactions may be spontaneous or organised, one-time or ongoing, and can occur within or between different faith communities...



### TRANSFORMATION

Interfaith dialogue is fundamentally transformative, offering participants a chance to better understand others and themselves. The prefix “DIA” in dialogue signifies change, indicating a shift across dimensions like time, space, perspective, or understanding. Dialogue should not be mistaken for *DUO-LOGOS*, which implies a conversation between just two individuals. Dialogue involves an



exchange that goes beyond a simple conversation between two or more people. The process involves participants being open to shifting their viewpoints and deepening their comprehension by comparing and contrasting different perspectives. Dialogue creates a space for collective transformation in terms of mindset and understanding.



### ACTIVITY

Create your own definition of interfaith dialogue. Make sure it's clear and resonates with everyone involved in your organisation.

## FORMS OF INTERFAITH DIALOGUE

To understand interfaith dialogue, consider categorising it based on activity types. A model often referenced, developed by the Roman Catholic Church, outlines four forms of interfaith dialogue:

**The dialogue of life:** This form involves everyday interactions in schools, workplaces, sports, or neighbourhoods, focusing on coexistence and shared human values rather than on faith or religious identity. It seeks to strengthen human connections among participants and is prevalent in many dialogue activities.



**The dialogue of joint action (Socio-religious dialogue):** Here, individuals from different faiths collaborate on social initiatives, such as peace movements or environmental conservation. Participants engage both as members of their religious communities and as citizens, emphasizing collective action, often referred to as the “dialogue of the hands.”

**The dialogue of religious and theological exchange:** This dialogue explores similarities, differences, and contradictions between religious teachings, aiming for an honest exchange without intentions of conversion (which is not dialogue). It typically involves those with a religious education, discussing the intricacies of their faiths, and is known as the “dialogue of the head.”

**The dialogue of religious and spiritual experience:** Participants share personal spiritual experiences and insights from their religious practices, such as prayer or meditation. This can occur during workshops, dialogue tables, or sharing circles and is affectionately termed the “dialogue of the heart.”

These diverse forms of interfaith dialogue contribute to the peaceful coexistence of people from different faiths at all levels international, national, and local. There is no hierarchical order to these approaches, nor is one universally applicable. The choice of method depends on the specific group, timing, conditions, and desired outcomes. Often, these approaches are combined and interwoven in practice to enrich the dialogue experience.



## ACTIVITY

### Ranking Interfaith Dialogue Types

In your organisation, evaluate the presence of each type of dialogue:

The dialogue of life

The dialogue of joint action

The dialogue of religious and theological exchange

The dialogue of religious and spiritual experience

Assign a rank to each type, with 1 indicating the most prevalent and 4 the least. Reflect on how each dialogue type brings value to your organisation.

## INTENTION

Interfaith dialogue can also be categorised by the motivations driving participants to engage. According to Melnik (2020), four main intentions include:

**Who is right?** Known as the Polemical Dialogue, participants enter this dialogue convinced of the superiority of their religious traditions, aiming to persuade others of their views.



**Who are you?** Called the Cognitive Dialogue, this involves participants eager to learn more about others, deepening their understanding of different beliefs and cultures.

**How can we live peacefully together?** This is the Peacemaking Dialogue, which focuses on resolving conflicts and fostering peace among diverse groups.

**What can we do to make the world a better place?** Termed the Partnership Dialogue, participants collaborate on initiatives promoting social cohesion and improving global conditions.

This model underscores the broad spectrum of intentions that draw people to interfaith dialogue, highlighting the importance of including not just those already open to and accepting of other faiths but also those who may initially be resistant. Effective facilitation can promote a shift towards openness, mutual acceptance, and harmonious coexistence, leveraging interfaith dialogue as a transformative tool.



## LEARN MORE

ID Talks Understanding Interfaith Dialogue by Meg Villaneuva

Article: [ID Talks Understanding Interfaith Dialogue](#)

Podcast on [Spotify](#), [Apple](#) & [Spreaker](#)

Video: [ID Talks Understanding Interfaith Dialogue](#)

Sergey Melnik: [Types of Interreligious Dialogue](#)

URI Europe: [ABC of interfaith dialogue](#)

TEDxDU: [The Interfaith Amigos](#) (video)

KAICIID: [Guide to Interreligious Dialogue: Bridging Differences and Building Sustainable Societies](#)

Hans Gustafson: [Everyday Wisdom: Interreligious Studies in a Pluralistic World](#)



## RISKS OF INTERFAITH DIALOGUE

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Organising an interfaith dialogue activity carries inherent risks. Without careful planning, such events may inadvertently reinforce stereotypes, leave participants feeling misunderstood, and fail to address the core issues at hand.

### BEING TOO POLITE

Participants in interfaith dialogues might hesitate to express themselves fully or not at all due to a fear of disturbing the harmony or offending others. This excessive politeness can prevent meaningful discussions and hinder addressing core issues.

Interfaith dialogues serve as ideal platforms to find the right balance between freedom of expression and religious respect. Mistakes are a part of the learning process; acknowledging and working through them can strengthen interpersonal connections within the group. It's crucial that participants feel they can openly engage without fearing unintended harm.

### AVOIDING SENSITIVE TOPICS

Certain subjects like LGBTQIA+ rights, religious violence, or local conflicts can be so divisive that they are often avoided in discussions to prevent conflict. However, by sidestepping these





'elephants in the room,' interfaith dialogues might fail to resolve underlying tensions, leading to frustration and disengagement. Instead, these dialogues should intentionally create safe spaces to confront and explore these difficult topics, fostering a deeper understanding and engagement among participants.

### EXAMPLE

Consider a workshop on faith and migration with ten participants, including a Christian from Palestine and a Jewish person living in Belgium whose mother originates from Israel.

Initially, the workshop facilitator avoids the Israel-Palestine conflict, focusing instead on general dialogue. However, the Palestinian participant eventually brings up the conflict with the following statement:

*You know what dialogue is really about? It's not just about what is said, but also about what isn't said. Everyone in this room is waiting for us to discuss Israel-Palestine. So, let's address it.*

This leads to a candid and challenging discussion. The openness transforms the session, enabling participants to share personal experiences and views about the conflict, ultimately bringing them closer through honest dialogue.



## FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Reflect on the controversial topics within your community. How can you constructively address these issues in your interfaith dialogues?

### ESSENTIALISATION AND IGNORING INTERSECTIONALITY

Essentialisation occurs when people are reduced to a single aspect of their identity—in this case, their faith. All behaviours are then interpreted and explained exclusively through this lens, ignoring other identity factors such as gender, ethnicity, age or class. By focusing solely on faith, there is a risk of oversimplifying complex realities and attributing everything to religious identity alone.

#### EXAMPLES

Two Muslim youths in a youth group opt out of hitchhiking during a trip. A youth worker asks, “Does Islam forbid you from hitchhiking?”

\*\*\*\*\*

A group of Christian students at a school declines to sell cookies for a fundraiser. A teacher inquires, “Did your priest advise against selling cookies?”



While interfaith dialogue often focuses on faith, it's crucial to recognise that other aspects of identity still play significant roles. In the first example, the youths might avoid hitchhiking due to unfamiliarity, youthfulness, or parental advice against riding with strangers. In the second example, the students might resist selling cookies due to reasons like socioeconomic factors, cultural norms, or internal group dynamics.

Intersectional thinking is vital in interfaith dialogue. Intersectionality involves understanding how various social identities, such as faith, gender, ethnicity, class, and sexual orientation, intersect and affect individuals' experiences and participation in dialogue.

### **POWER DYNAMICS**

In interfaith dialogue, acknowledging the power dynamics is critical. Dialogue activities often presume that all participants are equally free to express themselves, but social justice theories suggest otherwise. Some might feel more at ease sharing their views, knowing they will be accepted rather than contested.

Power dynamics, including social and majority-minority positions, persist within dialogue settings. Recognising that participants come from varied starting points is crucial. Social hierarchies inevitably influence the dialogue, yet striving for symmetry, as previously noted, is essential. Facilitators need to be mindful of these dynamics, address them openly, and take steps to ensure symme-



try. This can involve assessing group diversity, selecting inclusive venues, involving bridge figures, or using small group discussions to empower quieter voices.

### **EXCLUSION BY METHODOLOGY**

Traditional interfaith dialogue methods often emphasise verbal communication, which may disadvantage those from communities that value collective, ritualistic, or action-oriented expressions. This methodological bias can inadvertently exclude rather than include. You can address this by employing a range of methodologies tailored to accommodate various communication styles and needs.

Youth work can play a transformative role. Youth workers can leverage non-formal learning, gamification, and empowerment skills to create diverse and inclusive interfaith dialogues. By employing varied methods, youth workers ensure that all young participants feel acknowledged and valued.



## LEARN MORE

SALTO Inclusion and Diversity: [Embracing Diversity](#)

SALTO Inclusion and Diversity: [Inclusion A to Z](#)

Robert Chambers: Power – [The elephant in the room](#) (video)

Kimberlé Crenshaw: [What is Intersectionality?](#) (video)

Maria Pisani: [A tale of Two Sophias: a proposal for critical posthuman youth work, and why we need it](#)

Mohammed Abu-Nimer: [Interfaith Dialogue: Managing Paradoxes](#)

Marianne Moyaert: [Towards a New Program for Interfaith Learning Reflections from an Interreligious Educator Working in the Netherlands](#)

Lucinda Mosher, Elinor J. Pierce, and Or N. Rose: With the Best of Intentions: [Interreligious Missteps and Mistakes](#)



## FAITH, CONFLICT, AND PEACEBUILDING

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Religion and faith often provide comfort but can also be sources of conflict. Conflict arises from irreconcilable differences in interests, values, expectations, or opinions, creating tension within or between individuals and groups. At its core, conflicts involve parties with actual or perceived incompatible goals. **They are omnipresent**, occurring in settings ranging from family and work life to international politics. While typically viewed negatively, conflict can also be a catalyst for meaningful social change, although it may escalate into violence.

In today's globalised world, we are surrounded by diversity in faith, culture, gender, origins, family models, and lifestyles. This diversity enriches societies but can also introduce varying values and perceptions that may lead to misunderstandings. When escalated, these **misunderstandings** can generate tension and, in some cases, destructive conflict. However, religious differences are rarely the direct cause of difficulties; most conflicts arise from misinterpretations, misunderstandings, or a lack of knowledge and communication.

On an individual level, religion or faith can be a source of intra-personal conflict as individuals grapple with faith-related ques-



tions or ethical dilemmas tied to religious teachings. Interpersonally, disagreements over religious practices or interpretations of scripture may create friction. Within religious groups, intragroup conflicts may emerge from power struggles or divergent views on social and doctrinal issues. Intergroup conflicts, such as historical or ongoing tensions between different religious communities, are among the most visible and impactful forms of religious conflict.

Dialogue is crucial for addressing interreligious and interfaith tensions, used to **prevent and transform conflicts** and promote sustainable, positive peace. Interfaith dialogue fosters communication and empathy, dismantling stereotypes and bridging divides between 'us' and 'them'. While religious beliefs may vary, common values like compassion and altruism can unite people. Interfaith dialogue underscores these shared values, reinforcing our common humanity.

Youth work and programmes like Erasmus+ and international youth camps empower young people to become agents of peace. These initiatives promote intercultural understanding by challenging stereotypes and fostering openness. Building bridges through cross-cultural friendships humanises "the other" and fosters empathy.

It's important to acknowledge that fostering peace through interfaith dialogue is a long-term endeavour. It's asking to running a marathon rather than a sprint.



Mamoun Khreisat, the Regional Coordinator of the United Religions Initiative in the MENA region ([URI-MENA](#)), shares his experiences:

*Over the past 20 years, my work with the United Religions Initiative (URI) has shown me the transformative power of interfaith dialogue. In the beginning, the biggest challenge was simply encouraging people of different faiths to come together for conversation. Over time, trust gradually blossomed, transforming these gatherings into cherished moments of joy and deep connection. The increased demand for participation speaks volumes about the importance of creating safe spaces for interfaith dialogue. Without safe spaces for open dialogue, people tend to build walls of ignorance, fostering negative stereotypes. Just as a seed takes time to grow, interfaith work is about planting the seeds of understanding. It's a marathon, not a sprint, a lifelong journey fuelled by love, empathy, and acceptance. Each individual's participation, at their own pace, contributes to a more peaceful and understanding world.*





## LEARN MORE

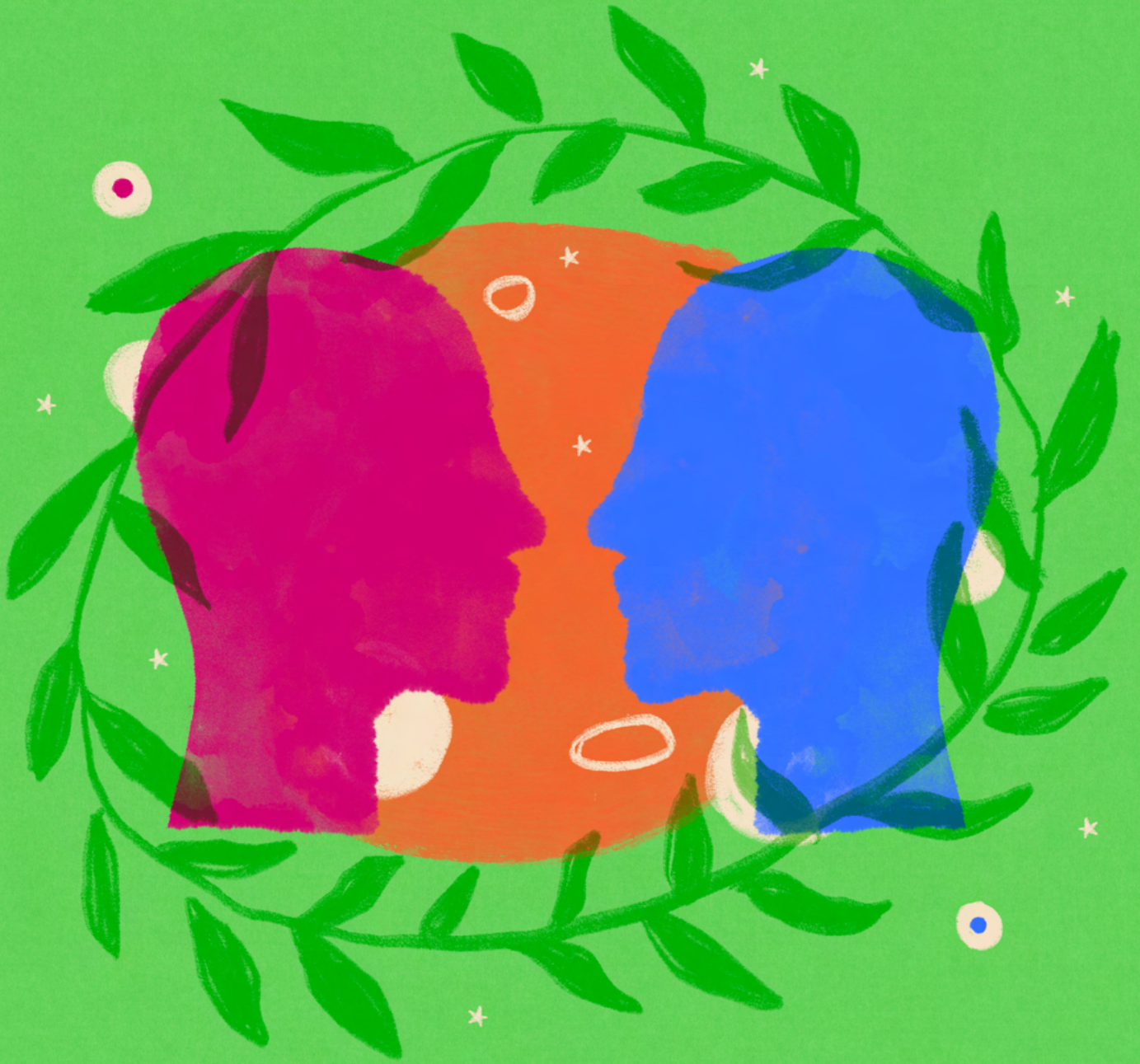
KAICIID and Scouts: [Dialogue For Peace Manual](#)

ID Talks Interfaith Dialogue and Peace by Mamoun Khreisat

Article: [ID Talks Interfaith Dialogue and Peace](#)

Podcast on [Spotify](#), [Apple](#) & [Spreaker](#)

Video: [ID Talks Interfaith Dialogue and Peace](#)



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## CHAPTER 2

# YOUNG PEOPLE AND FAITH

How do young people engage with religion or faith? How do they define themselves? And why are they involved in interfaith dialogue? This chapter will explore some trends among young people regarding religion and faith.

### ADHERENCE TO RELIGION

Young adults are less likely to identify with a specific religion or religious group than older generations. This trend is particularly noticeable in regions like North America, Latin America, and Europe, where religious unaffiliation among young adults is on the rise. ([PEW Research Center](#))

However, this does not imply that Generation Z (born 1997–2012) and Millennials (born 1980–1996) are completely disengaged from religion. Rather, they often reshape traditional practices and beliefs, approaching religion and faith in diverse ways.

Some statistics:



63% of Gen Z and 63% of Millennials believe in God or in a higher power or spirit, compared to 55% of Boomers (born 1946–1964). ([IPSOS](#))

79% of those aged 15 to 24 have friends or acquaintances from different religions or beliefs, compared to 63% of those aged 55 and older. ([Eurobarometer 2023 on Discrimination in the EU](#))

Among all age groups, the 15 to 24-year-olds are the most comfortable if the person in the highest elected position in their country is from a religion different from the majority. ([Eurobarometer 2023 on Discrimination in the EU](#))

This younger generation is breaking down traditional barriers, emphasising diversity, inclusion, and blending faith practices rather than strict adherence to one religious tradition.

### EXAMPLE

In 2017, [Axcent](#) organised an interfaith visit to Auschwitz with participants aged 18 to 25, representing a diverse range of faiths:

<b>Catholic</b>	<b>Catholic (before: Protestant)</b>
<b>Buddhist/Catholic/Searching</b>	<b>Searching</b>
<b>Catholic</b>	<b>Muslim</b>
<b>Jewish</b>	<b>Protestant (recently)</b>
<b>Anglican/Orthodox</b>	<b>Unbelieving</b>
	<b>Hindu</b>
	<b>Free-thinking</b>
	<b>Christian</b>



A significant number of young adults are also raised in interfaith households, where parents come from different religious backgrounds or where one parent is religiously affiliated while the other is not. In the United States, 27% of Millennials were raised in interfaith households. ([PEW Research Center](#))

These “interfaith natives” are adept at navigating multiple traditions and are comfortable in diverse faith environments. Their experiences challenge the traditional model of interfaith dialogue, which often assumes individuals belong to a single religious tradition.

### EXAMPLES

Mathieu is from a multicultural and multireligious family with roots in Rwanda, Belgium, Morocco, and Djibouti, with family members identifying as spiritual, Catholic, and Muslim. His family blends elements from different traditions, celebrating Christmas with halal meals and visiting various religious places. Mathieu personally identifies as Catholic in a spiritual sense and wears a cross around his neck. For him, actions and intentions are more important than attending church. He believes religion should serve humanity, not the contrary. He rarely discusses religion with his friends, as he does not feel the need to frequently share his religious beliefs.

\*\*\*\*\*



Maggie, who identifies as both Catholic and Jewish, also embraces a pro-choice stance. She often feels that her activist identity is not welcomed in her faith community and her religious identity is not always welcomed in her activist circles.

You can read more about Maggie's story in [With the Best of Intentions: Interreligious Missteps and Mistakes](#).



### LEARN MORE

PEW Research Center: [The Age Gap in Religion Around the World](#)

IPSOS: Global Religion – [Religious Beliefs Across the World](#)

Eurobarometer 2023: [Discrimination in the European Union](#)

PEW Research Center: [Interfaith Homes](#)

Lucinda Mosher, Elinor J. Pierce and Or N. Rose: [With the Best of Intentions: Interreligious Missteps and Mistakes](#)



## DIGITALISATION

Young people are at the forefront of digitalisation. In the EU, 97% of those aged 16–29 use the internet daily, a significantly higher percentage than the 86% observed across the entire population. ([Eurostat](#))

The internet also opens up new avenues for interfaith dialogue. Social media allows young people to connect with diverse voices globally, helping them find like-minded individuals and fostering a sense of belonging. It also enables them to access perspectives that would be unreachable without digital platforms.



### CASE STUDY

[VOEM](#), a socio-cultural organisation in Belgium, enhances connectivity through art, culture, and social engagement. In 2022, VOEM launched a metaverse for its staff, participants, and partners. This virtual world, known as [DiverzCity](#), comprises several 3D spaces where people can work, meet, hold events, or engage in games through avatars (digital doubles).

Within [DiverzCity](#) lies an interfaith village featuring a mosque, church, gurdwara, synagogue, and Hindu temple, allowing global interaction. Users can personalise their avatars with religious symbols, enhancing their digital identity.



## CASE STUDY

The [YouBeOn](#) Map emerged from the [Austrian Academy of Sciences](#) (ÖAW) project titled “Young Believers Online: Mapping On- and Offline Identifications of Urban Religious Youth.” This initiative examined how young religious individuals in diverse urban environments manage their online and offline identities. The research team developed a multifaceted map based on interviews with 41 youths in Vienna. This map includes three distinct layers: a geographical level highlighting places significant to the young people, a network of Instagram accounts that they follow, and a network of key ideas encompassing both concrete and abstract concepts that resonate with these youths.

This innovative map displays the intersections of various faiths through shared places, accounts, and ideas.

Digitalisation is reshaping how physical interfaith dialogue activities are organised. Social media platforms enable young participants to stay connected long after dialogue activities or youth exchanges have concluded. These online interactions can provide additional insights into one another, influencing the dialogue process. Participants gain a broader context by observing each other’s posts, shares, and the accounts they follow. This layer of digital interaction can significantly affect the dynamics of interfaith dialogue, especially on sensitive topics like the Israel-Palestine conflict.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Kjersti Siem provides a tangible example of the impact on interfaith dialogue among young people in her work, [“That’s Something We Never Talked About”](#).





### LEARN MORE

Eurostat: [Young People – Digital World](#)

YouBeOn: [YouBeOn Map](#)

VOEM Metaverse: [DiverzCity](#) (app) or [DiverzCity](#) (video)

Kjersti Siem: [That's Something We Never Talked About](#)

## REASONS FOR PARTICIPATING IN INTERFAITH DIALOGUE

- \* *I don't often have the chance to discuss this on the street, as conversations usually revolve around other societal topics.*
- \* *I stumbled upon this activity online, and it piqued my interest. Being new to the town, I thought it would be a good way to meet people.*
- \* *I wanted to gain a deeper understanding of various religions, encounter diverse religious practices, and exchange ideas.*
- \* *The diversity of the world intrigues me. I'm eager to learn about what others believe.*



- \* I've enjoyed other activities hosted by this organisation, so joining this interfaith event seemed like an exciting and new opportunity.*
- \* My family and community are actively involved in interfaith efforts. Choosing to participate was my own decision, aligned with my community's involvement.*
- \* I'm curious about different faiths. Reading books provides facts, but interacting with people offers insights into their experiences and beliefs.*
- \* Conversations with people of different beliefs always teach me something. Sometimes, they even make me question my own beliefs, especially those ingrained in me without reason.*
- \* Talking to others has helped me learn more about myself. It's interesting to explore where my ideas originate.*
- \* These conversations continuously expand and shift my worldview, which is what makes them so fascinating.*

Young people engage in interfaith dialogue for various reasons:

- Previous positive experiences with the hosting organisation.
- Recommendations from trusted individuals.
- Opportunities to form new connections in unfamiliar city or community settings.



- A desire to deepen their understanding of religious and faith-based concepts.
- An interest in scrutinising and reinforcing personal beliefs and identities.
- Commitments to promoting coexistence, peacebuilding, and the prevention of extremism and radicalisation.
- An eagerness to clarify misconceptions by sharing insights from their own traditions.
- ...

As a youth worker, it's important to recognise that your intentions for hosting an activity might differ from those of your participants. Additionally, participants may have multiple motivations simultaneously, or their motivations may evolve over time.



**TIP**

Ask the members of your youth group why they're interested in participating in interfaith dialogue activities. This can provide valuable insights and inspire ideas for future projects and activities.

**TIP**

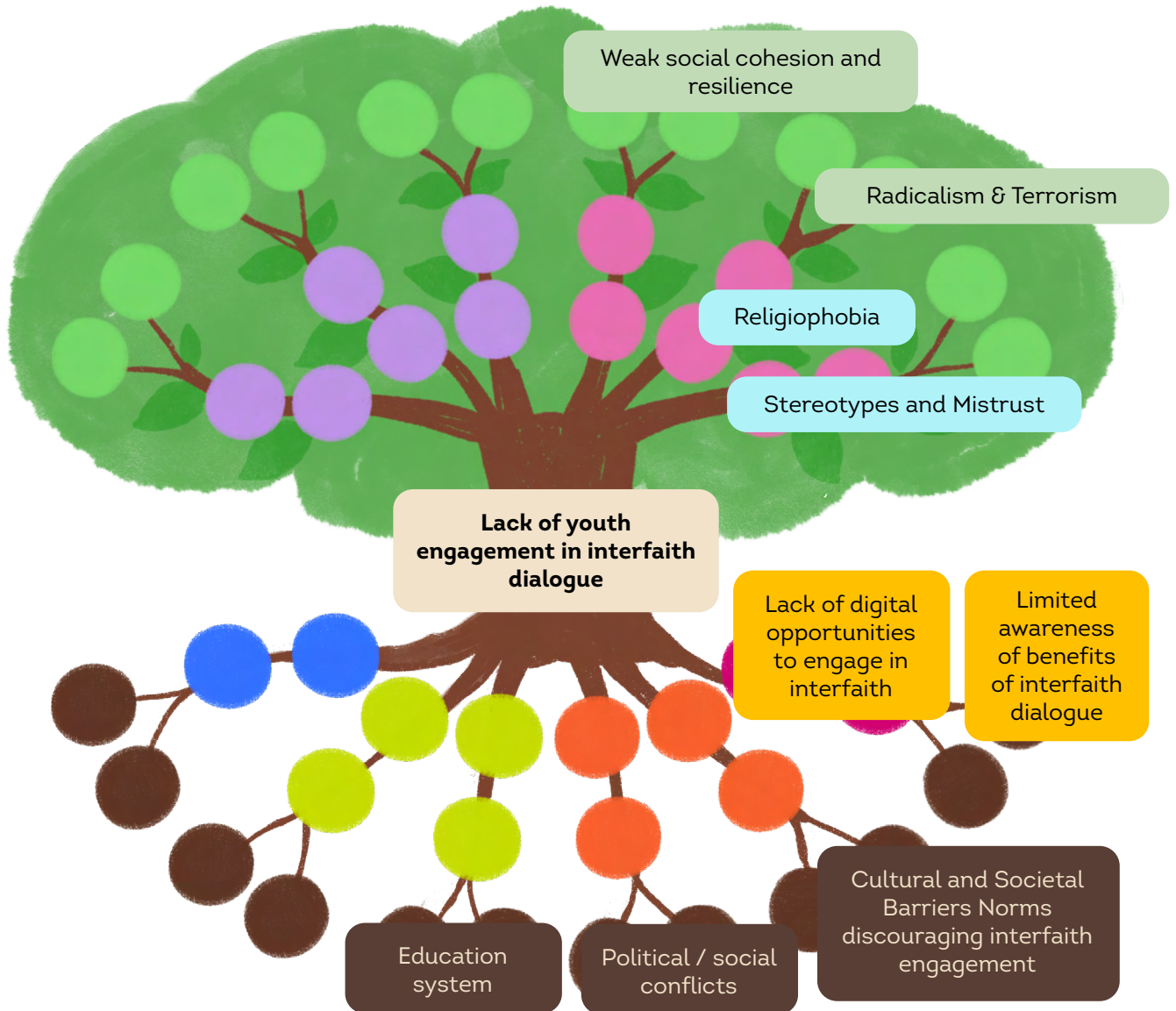
How to overcome obstacles for interfaith dialogue?

Various factors such as generational misunderstandings, geopolitical conflicts, multiple identities, and rigid categorisations might hinder young people's participation in interfaith dialogue activities. If you face such challenges in your work, using The Problem Tree could provide insightful solutions.

**The Problem Tree: A tool for analysis**

The Problem Tree is an effective method to dissect a problem by examining its effects and causes:

- **Trunk:** Represents the core problem to be addressed.
- **Branches:** Indicate the direct effects, which are the immediate and noticeable outcomes of the core issue.
- **Fruits:** Symbolise the impacts and indirect effects, which include the longer-term or less visible consequences that might be harder to identify or evaluate.
- **Upper roots:** Depict the direct causes or the immediate and apparent factors that contribute to the core problem.
- **Deeper roots:** Illustrate the indirect causes or the more profound, underlying factors that indirectly contribute to the core problem.





**Example of application:**

- **Trunk:** Lack of youth engagement in interfaith dialogue
- **Branches:** Missed opportunities for fostering mutual understanding and respect, increase in stereotypes and prejudice, growth of religiophobia...
- **Fruits:** Deepening divides between religious groups, escalation of polarisation, radicalism, and terrorism, inadequate skills in the next generation for peacebuilding and social cohesion...
- **Upper roots:** Insufficient awareness of interfaith dialogue's importance and benefits, limited access to interfaith activities and projects, scarcity of digital opportunities for engagement...
- **Deeper roots:** Divisive language in media and politics, cultural and societal barriers, insufficient investment in youth-targeted interfaith initiatives, historical mistrust, political or social conflicts...





## CHAPTER 3

# THE POWER OF INTERFAITH DIALOGUE IN YOUTH WORK

### ***Why engage young people in interfaith dialogue? Conversely, why not?***

Faith is a significant part of the lives and realities of young people. In today's increasingly diverse communities, interfaith literacy is crucial for navigating this diversity effectively. Youth workers who facilitate interfaith dialogue equip young people to flourish in diverse societies by promoting understanding, active citizenship, empathy, and tolerance. They also heighten awareness about extremist ideologies that could incite hate speech, exclusion, or violence. Educational centres, associations, social organisations, and youth centres, where individuals from varied social, cultural, and religious backgrounds converge, provide fertile ground for learning and experimenting with interfaith dialogue methods.





- \* *I learned to listen and to share who I am.*
- \* *I began to see others as opportunities, not threats.*
- \* *It improved my ability to relate to others.*
- \* *It encouraged me to open up and step out of my comfort zone.*
- \* *I learned to listen without judgment.*
- \* *I've changed; now I think more about how to express my convictions without causing harm and how to maintain calm during disagreements.*
- \* *My understanding of different religions has deepened.*
- \* *My sensitivity has improved.*
- \* *It has helped me break down stereotypes.*
- \* *I've gained more tools for resolving conflicts, even minor ones.*

Despite the clear benefits, misconceptions and prejudices about interfaith dialogue persist. Below are five common statements you might encounter when introducing interfaith dialogue in your field of work:



## **“We don’t discuss religion and politics.”**

Many youth organisations call themselves secular and say that this means they are not involved with religion or faith. However, secular does not mean the absence of faith in society. It means that the organisation does not belong to a specific religion or faith.

Many youth organisations claim secularism, interpreting it to mean disengagement from religion or faith. However, secularism signifies non-allegiance to any specific religion or faith, not the absence of faith in society. While topics like religion and politics are often avoided in casual conversation, avoiding these subjects may not meet the needs of today’s youth. Labelling faith as taboo only reinforces the notion that it is divisive or inappropriate.

Opening discussions on faith within your organisation or projects can foster a holistic approach, supporting young people in all life aspects. Youth work can offer a safe space for young people to learn how to discuss faith respectfully and appreciate differences without causing offence. Such dialogue provides valuable tools for becoming diversity-aware citizens, helping them recognise where dialogue ends and conflict begins.

Furthermore, interfaith dialogue serves as a potent tool for identity building, aiding young people in exploring and expressing



their faith, concerns, and doubts. Engaging in these discussions with sensitivity and respect equips them with essential tools for identity exploration and reflection.



## FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Why is it so hard to initiate conversations about religion?

What strategies can break the taboo surrounding religion and faith?

## “I am not religious myself.”

You don't need to be affiliated with a faith tradition to engage in interfaith dialogue. The aim is to foster understanding and social cohesion, not to convert participants to a specific faith. Whether you come from a religious background or not, your insights are valuable. If you are religious, you might find common ground with certain participants, sharing experiences that resonate with them. Similarly, if you are not religious, your perspective can still enrich the dialogue, connecting with those who feel connected to your stance.



However, as a youth worker, you should carefully consider when and how to share your personal views. Revealing your stance can sometimes create power imbalances within the group, making some feel favoured, or others feel marginalised. Your primary role is to ensure that all voices are valued and heard, as every participant's perspective contributes to the richness of the dialogue.



## FOOD FOR THOUGHT

What are the benefits and challenges of being a religious or non-religious youth worker in interfaith dialogue settings?

**“Religion and faith only cause conflicts.”**

While it's true that religious differences can lead to divisions, interfaith dialogue serves as a powerful tool to mitigate these tensions. This form of dialogue equips participants with the skills to respectfully discuss and listen to varying religious and faith perspectives. Like any educational endeavour, it involves navigating both challenges and successes.



One of the most significant hurdles is initiating the dialogue. The fear of potential conflict, being misunderstood, or saying the wrong thing can deter people from starting.



### FOOD FOR THOUGHT

What conflicts might arise in organising interfaith activities?

Develop at least one strategy to address each potential conflict you identify.

**“Interfaith dialogue will lead to atheism.”**

Contrary to the misconception, interfaith dialogue is not about converting participants to atheism, which would ensure its failure. Its purpose is not to erase religious distinctions or synthesise a single religious perspective.

Yet, it's essential to acknowledge that some discomfort may arise during interfaith dialogue. This discomfort often stems from



sessions that stray into debates, controversies, or polemics rather than genuine dialogue or from activities that covertly pursue an agenda. It's crucial to be transparent about the objectives of your interfaith dialogue activities. The success of interfaith dialogue is measured by the collective progress toward understanding and appreciating the differences that might otherwise divide us.



## FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Atheism is sometimes viewed as a threat to religious belief. However, not all atheists are anti-religious; many are open to dialogue and collaboration with religious groups. Reflect on the attitude towards atheism in your country: Is the atheist community largely anti-religious, or is it receptive to engaging with different religious and faith groups? How do religious communities view atheism? Are they open to including atheists in interfaith dialogues?

**“Isn’t interfaith dialogue the same as intercultural dialogue?”**



While interfaith and intercultural dialogues are intertwined, they focus on different aspects of human interaction. Intercultural dialogue centres on exchanging ideas and experiences across different cultures and discussing a broad range of cultural norms and practices. In contrast, interfaith dialogue specifically addresses life views and religious beliefs and practices held by individuals and groups.

It's important to realise that addressing religious diversity doesn't necessarily entail an intercultural project, nor do all intercultural projects engage with religious themes. Yet, both approaches provide valuable frameworks that, when adapted, can enhance practices in both areas.



## **FOOD FOR THOUGHT**

**Reflect on a specific intercultural project you have participated in:**

**What cultures were represented in the project, and how were they explored or addressed?**

**What faiths were present, and how were they explored or addressed during the project?**



## LEARN MORE

Kjersti Siem: [That's Something We Never Talked About](#)

Chris Stedman: [Faitheist - How an Atheist Found Common Ground with the Religious](#)

TEDxCSU: [Interfaith Cooperation - An Invitation for All Beliefs](#) (video)

KAICIID and Scouts: [Dialogue For Peace Manual](#)





4



## CHAPTER 4

# COMPETENCIES OF AN INTERFAITH YOUTH WORKER

***One person can make a difference  
and move mountains.<sup>2</sup>***

So here you are. Are you ready to embark on interfaith dialogue? Wondering what knowledge you need, how to act, and what to learn? This chapter outlines the essential attitudes, knowledge, and skills necessary for youth workers engaged in interfaith dialogue.

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<sup>2</sup>Comment by one of the participants of a study visit on interfaith practices in Malta in December 2024.



## ATTITUDE

\* **Role model:** The success of interfaith dialogue greatly depends on the youth worker's attitude, as it sets the tone for expected behaviours among participants. As opinion leaders for the youth, your actions should exemplify the behaviours you wish to see in your participants.

\* **Curiosity:** Genuine curiosity involves listening intently to "others" with the aim of truly understanding their views. This means asking questions not to challenge but to genuinely understand different perspectives.

\* **Openness:** Embrace the opportunity to expand your horizons by remaining nonjudgmental, discovering new viewpoints, and integrating fresh ideas into your worldview.

\* **Patience and depth:** Invest time to delve into unfamiliar ideas and perspectives, not to dismiss them swiftly, but to grasp their deeper meanings.

\* **Being yourself:** Authenticity is at the heart of interfaith dialogue. It's about recognising and valuing each individual's unique perspective on life. As a youth worker, bringing your own authentic self into the dialogue adds a personal touch that enhances the engagement.



## SKILLS

- \* **Interpersonal skills:** Building strong interpersonal relationships, prioritising human connection, being attuned to body language and emotional cues, and responding appropriately.
- \* **Communication skills:** Mastering active listening, facilitating conversations effectively, ensuring everyone's voice is heard, and establishing a common language for all participants.
- \* **Conflict resolution and mediation skills:** Employing techniques such as reflective listening, paraphrasing, and reframing to defuse conflicts and foster understanding.
- \* **Reflection skills:** Guiding participants to challenge their assumptions, identify stereotypes, and critically evaluate the relationship between faith and society.
- \* **Balance:** Maintaining a balance between seriousness and lightheartedness, injecting humour and fun when appropriate, particularly when navigating sensitive or controversial topics.
- \* **Flexibility and creativity:** Thinking outside the box and adapting your approach to meet the group's dynamic needs and the emergent issues within interfaith discussions.



## KNOWLEDGE

\* **Religious diversity:** Gain a broad understanding of various religions, including Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Judaism, as well as non-religious beliefs such as Free-thinking Humanism and Atheism. Start by familiarising yourself with the beliefs and traditions prevalent in your community and gradually expand your knowledge to encompass more global perspectives.

\* **Intrareligious diversity:** Develop sensitivity to the diversity within religious traditions, recognising the variety of practices and beliefs that exist within each. It's crucial to understand that the lived experiences of adherents may diverge significantly from the generalised descriptions and facts found in religious texts.

\* **Religious sensitivity and practices:** Acquire knowledge of specific religious customs and practices to avoid actions or words that might be considered offensive or disrespectful. This includes understanding appropriate behavior related to food, attire, holidays, and prayer customs.

\* **Historical awareness:** Maintain an awareness of the historical relationships—both tense and cooperative—between different faith communities at local, national, and global levels, as well as your organisation.



\* **Intersectional thinking:** Appreciate how faith intersects with other identity factors such as gender, ethnicity, and social background, which all play a role in the dynamics of interfaith dialogue.

\* **Dialogue techniques:** Learn about the nuances of dialogue and how it differs from debates, controversies, or polemics. Acquire methods to effectively facilitate interfaith dialogue activities that encourage open and respectful exchanges.

This framework provides the foundational knowledge needed to navigate interfaith interactions effectively. While this list is comprehensive, you may find that additional knowledge in specific areas is necessary depending on your group's context or specific needs. As an interfaith youth worker, these insights will help you to develop a unique approach that resonates with the diverse youth you engage with.



## FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Reflect on your unique approach as a youth worker: What personal attitudes, skills, and knowledge do you bring to the table when facilitating interfaith dialogue activities?



## LEARN MORE

URI: [10 tips to engage in interfaith dialogue](#) (video)

OHCHR - [#Faith4Rights toolkit](#) - 18 peer-to-peer learning modules

KAICIID: [e-learning courses](#), [publications](#) and [other dialogue tools](#) in multiple languages

The Network for Religious & Traditional Peacemakers: [training](#) and [research](#)

Religions for Peace: [European Interfaith Youth Network](#) (network)

Interfaith America: [magazine](#), [podcasts](#) and [videos](#)



## ACTIVITY

Consider the following scenarios that might arise during interfaith activities. How would you handle these situations? Reflect on the knowledge, skills, and attitudes you would employ, and discuss your strategies with your team.

**Evening interfaith city walk:** As you visit various faith-related sites, it becomes dark, and two participants need to perform the Maghrib prayer (the sunset prayer). They request to pray inside a church you are visiting. How would you facilitate their needs?

**Youth trip conflict:** A participant wishes to attend Sunday Mass at a nearby church, but it clashes with a group activity you've already scheduled. What steps would you take to address this?

**Dominant voices in dialogue:** During a trip to Andalusia, each dialogue session is overshadowed by three participants who consistently argue to assert their views, while others remain silent and merely watch. How would you manage this dynamic?

**Dietary requirements at a shared meal:** At an interfaith weekend event, a participant cannot eat the provided meal due to their religious dietary restrictions and asks for alternative options, though the catering is already confirmed. How would you resolve this issue?





**Housing request for Erasmus+ volunteers:** A volunteer requests gender-specific housing for religious reasons, challenging the existing mixed-group housing arrangement intended to foster interaction among all volunteers. How would you handle the logistics and the volunteer's request?



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## CHAPTER 5

# LET THE INTERFAITH JOURNEY BEGIN



### ***Ready, set, go!***

The framework is established, and the interfaith journey is poised to begin.

This chapter provides you with essential insights to embark on this transformative journey, covering everything from raising awareness and identifying key participants to creating a safe space and navigating potential conflicts. You'll discover practical examples and insights from organisations across Europe and beyond, illustrating their successful integration of these elements into their initiatives.



## RECOGNISE THE IMPORTANCE OF FAITH

The first step involves recognising the role of faith in the lives of young people. Faith impacts them in various settings home, the streets, media, or online even if your organisation doesn't explicitly focus on religious matters.

Once this recognition is in place, reflect on its implications: What does this mean for our work? How can addressing and integrating faith and interfaith dialogue into our activities benefit the young people we support?

The potential benefits are many. Young people may feel fully accepted and empowered, gaining the skills to engage meaningfully with one another and developing an awareness of diversity in society and the world. Moreover, such efforts can foster social cohesion, mutual understanding and a more inclusive community.

The next step is to open this discussion with your team. Are your colleagues as conscious of the importance of this topic? Establish a common understanding by exploring questions such as:

- Have we observed increasing religious diversity in our communities? Does this diversity mirror the makeup of our participants?
- Why should our organisation engage in interfaith dialogue?
- What does interfaith dialogue signify within the context of our organisation?



- How can we start integrating interfaith dialogue into our practices?
- What objectives do we aim to achieve as an organisation?
- Proceed by extending these discussions to other stakeholders in your organisation.



### CASE STUDY: THE NETHERLANDS

[Dynamo](#) is a youth centre in Eindhoven dedicated to empowering young people through activities such as sports, arts, concerts, and workshops. The organisation tailors its offerings to the interests and passions of its participants, providing support across a broad range of topics.

In 2020, Dynamo launched [NADA](#), a project aimed at supporting bicultural and religious youth within the LGBTQIA+ community. This initiative arose from the increasing number of young people Dynamo encountered who were struggling to reconcile their cultural, religious, and sexual identities. Being LGBTQIA+ often places [young people in a vulnerable position, and for those with religious](#) or bicultural backgrounds, this vulnerability is intensified, heightening the risks of isolation, depression, and even suicide.



NADA provides a safe(r), brave, and inclusive space where these young people can gather, express their needs, discuss challenges, and collaborate on solutions. While Dynamo does not have a religious background, they recognise the importance of religion to their participants: “If young people say religion is relevant, it is relevant. We should not question that.”

By 2024, NADA aims to engage approximately 50 young Islamic and Christian individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds in activities that range from karaoke and workshops to leisure park visits and making Pride flags. These “fun meetings” focus on togetherness and enjoyment. In “support meetings,” participants discuss various themes relevant to their group, tackle complex topics, and learn collectively. These sessions provide a space for sharing experiences, posing questions, and exploring how to handle specific situations.



### **CASE STUDY: PORTUGAL**

[Refugees Welcome Portugal ONGD](#) is committed to supporting the inclusion and well-being of refugees in Portugal. Their primary goal is to facilitate a welcoming environment and smooth transition for refugees into Portuguese society.



Although Refugees Welcome Portugal is a non-religious organisation, the majority of those they serve view religion as a crucial part of their identity, both personally and socially. One of their initial challenges involved reconciling the modern, secular view that religion should be private with its significant social role in emancipation, justice, and solidarity. Interestingly, when the organisation began, it was in mosques and Catholic churches where they found their first support and positive momentum to address local needs. In this regard, they view the role of religion in the inclusion of minority groups as absolutely essential, acknowledging its inherently supportive nature, which has frequently been the sole source of support in many instances.

Recognising the essential role of religion in the inclusion of minority groups, Refugees Welcome Portugal emphasises the importance of having a diverse and well-prepared team to promote cultural diversity and respect for various faiths and religions. Their most critical work starts internally. They also focus on educating their volunteers, partners, and supporters through intercultural events and open discussions designed to bring together people who might not otherwise interact. These events are not solely focused on discussions about religion; rather, they create open spaces for organic dialogue and idea exchanges. This approach allows participants to connect on a personal level and build relationships based on shared experiences and values.



## DEFINE THE TOPIC AND THE SCOPE

Recognising the importance of engaging with faith and interfaith dialogue is the initial step. Once understood, the next step is to define your organisational goals related to these areas and devise a strategy for achieving them.

As previously noted, interfaith dialogue is a lifelong journey, with each participant progressing at their own rate. There's no need to launch into comprehensive dialogue activities immediately. Instead, opt for an approach that aligns well with your local context, organisational culture, team, and participant dynamics.

A practical starting point might be to integrate faith awareness into your existing activities and projects. This could involve considering dietary preferences, prayer times, or significant religious holidays and festivals in your event planning.



### CASE STUDY: GERMAN

[East-West-East Germany e. V.](#) is an NGO focused on bridging young people from Eastern and Western Europe, acquainting them with democracy and human rights, and providing a safe space for non-formal learning.





Project themes are driven by the participants' needs and interests, covering a broad spectrum from mental health and resilience to human rights, arts, and language learning. The topic of faith naturally emerges due to the diverse identities within the groups. Their target demographic includes refugees from Ukraine, Syria, and Iraq, as well as immigrants from across Europe and beyond.

For instance, during a project coinciding with Ramadan (the Islamic holy month of fasting, prayer, self-reflection, and community) the organisation tailored its program and meal times to accommodate those fasting. Evening meals became communal events, and spaces were designated for fasting participants during the day. Discussions during these meals often included thought-provoking questions about faith, fostering dialogue and mutual understanding.

Another approach involves **incorporating interfaith dialogue into an existing activity or project.**



#### **CASE STUDY: BELGIUM**

[D'Broej](#) engages with socially vulnerable children and youth in Brussels. One of their methods involves taking young people on treks through mountains and forests: [the trek](#). During the hikes, young people learn to recognise, respect and possibly



push their own limits. These hikes encourage participants to recognise and respect their boundaries and provide opportunities for reflection and discussion about challenges encountered both during the trek and in their lives more broadly. Young people leave their comfort zone—literally by moving away from their neighbourhood, Brussels, and figuratively by challenging their habits and patterns. In nature, they confront themselves, recognising their strengths and weaknesses. For those who have become stuck—whether in school, in their job search, or in connecting with society—a timeout in nature, especially in the mountains, can be transformative.

Noticing the significance of faith in their participants' lives, the youth workers at D'Broej sought assistance from [Axcent](#), an *interfaith dialogue specialist*, to *diversify the religious composition of their groups and integrate interfaith dialogue into their activities*. This collaboration led to the launch of the [Carte Blanche](#) project, where religiously diverse groups share their time 24/7 and embark on nature trips, including visits to silent abbeys, the Pyrenees, and Andalusia, learning to coexist around the clock.

A further approach to engaging with faith involves organising activities that **directly address interfaith dialogue**.

These activities are designed to enhance knowledge and understanding among participants.



### CASE STUDY: AUSTRIA

In Austria, young people from various religious communities collaborated to create an interreligious calendar featuring important celebrations from Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. With financial and practical support from the organising communities, participants took full ownership of the project, choosing which holidays to feature and how to present them. At [Feiertagsgruss.at](https://www.feiertagsgruss.at), a selection of the most important holidays provides insights into their celebration, offering a glimpse into the rich diversity within each religious tradition.



### CASE STUDY: SPAIN

In Valladolid, [Fundación Red Íncola](#) has established an interfaith educational space called [En clave de Fe](#) at their offices. This space is open to school visits, youth groups, and organisations. It features an exhibition with images, maps, and religious objects that dynamically showcase religious plurality based on the pedagogy of coexistence. During visits and workshops, young people explore religious pluralism and learn the value of diversity in society. They discuss what unites them despite different convictions and how to promote coexistence based on tolerance and respect.



Additionally, Red Íncola created an interfaith suitcase containing items from Islamic, Buddhist, Hindu, and Jewish traditions. This suitcase allows them to bring the experience to schools and youth centres, helping young people discover shared values and the importance of living together.

Interfaith dialogue can also be **indirectly** approached by choosing a common topic and incorporating aspects of faith. Possible topics include mental health, gender, ecology, sports, technology, human rights, media, freedom of expression, or equal rights.



### **CASE STUDY: BULGARIA, ALBANIA, THE NETHERLANDS & BELGIUM**

The [United Religious Initiative](#) (URI) is a global grassroots interfaith network that engages people to bridge religious differences and work together for the good of their communities and the world. One of URI's impactful initiatives involves organising youth camps that unite young people from diverse cultural and religious backgrounds to work toward common goals. Drawing on their experiences, former participants facilitate these camps, inspiring the new generation.

In the summer of 2024, 20 young people aged 14-17 from Albania, Bulgaria, Belgium, and the Netherlands gathered in



The Hague for the interfaith camp [Seeding the Peace](#). The camp focused on peacebuilding, ecological justice, interfaith dialogue, and using the arts as tools for cultivating cultures of peace. A program highlight was a visit to the [Peace Palace](#), followed by an interfaith dialogue activity inspired by the Golden Rule found in various religious traditions: “Treat others the way you want to be treated yourself.”

This diverse array of topics, with interfaith dialogue being one among many, attracted a wide range of young people with various motivations. They not only engaged in meaningful discussions and activities but also built friendships and enjoyed their time together.

## DECIDE WHO CAN BE INVOLVED

Determining who should be involved is a crucial step once you’ve defined the scope of your action and how to integrate faith and interfaith dialogue into your practice.

One option is to explore the topic of faith with an existing group. The advantage here is that members already share a certain level of trust and familiarity, which can provide a solid foundation for sensitive discussions. However, challenges may arise, such as a lack of balance in the group’s composition regarding faith or difficulties for newcomers interested in the topic to feel welcomed or integrated.



Alternatively, you can form a new group, inviting young people with a broader religious diversity. While this approach helps avoid the familiarity bias of existing groups, it's essential to guard against tokenism—the superficial inclusion of minority members to appear diverse without genuinely addressing their unique perspectives or needs. Therefore, when reaching out to potential participants, consider their motivations and ensure your activities can be adapted to meet their needs effectively.



### **CASE STUDY: ISRAEL/PALESTINE**

In the 1970s, a Jewish convert to Christianity founded [Neve Shalom - Wahat al-Salam](#) (Oasis of Peace), a unique village aimed at fostering coexistence among the three main religious communities in Israel/Palestine. Today, it remains the only village in the region where Israelis and Palestinians, Jews, Muslims, and Christians live together. The community celebrates each religion's festivities and manages the complex relationships between them, providing a safe and empowering environment, especially for Palestinian residents with Israeli citizenship.

Within this unique village, [The School for Peace](#) was established, which organises dialogue seminars reflecting the broader societal diversity. These seminars ensure a balanced representation of different communities, genders, and age groups. Each session is co-facilitated by an Israeli and a Palestinian, using



both Arabic and Hebrew. This inclusive approach extends to youth groups, university students, professionals, and other community segments.

Through its workshops, training programs, and special projects, The School for Peace enhances participants' understanding of the conflict and their individual roles within it, motivating them to actively engage in changing the dynamics between Israelis and Palestinians. These initiatives empower participants to freely express their feelings, opinions, and positions, thereby promoting increased involvement and activism. Although religion is recognised as an integral part of group identities, the primary emphasis is placed on politics, reflecting the conflict's deep roots in political power and dynamics.

Engaging in interfaith dialogue also involves reflecting **on who is missing from the conversation**. This approach includes recognising the absence of specific religious communities and finding ways to thoughtfully integrate their perspectives.



#### **CASE STUDY: POLAND**

In the early 1990s, a group of avant-garde theatre performers entered the then-dilapidated Grodzka Gate, where they held their first NN Theatre premiere. During their time at the site, they uncovered its historical identity as the Jewish Gate,



marking the division between the Jewish community and the rest of Lublin's residents. Surprised by their own lack of knowledge about this significant history, they were inspired to reconnect with this Jewish heritage.

Today, the "[Grodzka Gate - NN Theatre](#)" Centre operates as a memorial site that draws international visitors. With only a small Jewish community remaining locally, the centre dedicates its efforts to acknowledging the absence of Jewish lives and finding meaningful ways to address this gap. It strives to create an emotional link to Poland's Jewish past.

To promote understanding and reconciliation, the centre organises joint visits for Jewish and Polish youth, who often have preconceived notions about each other due to limited personal interactions. The centre also holds joint prayers for the victims of the Nazi regime and runs a poignant project that tells the story of Henio Żytomirski, a young Jewish boy from Lublin who perished during the Second World War. This project utilises research and old photographs and includes a visit to the location of Henio's last known photograph. Participants are invited to write letters to Henio's last known address.

Through these historical dialogues, the Grodzka Gate–NN Theatre Centre addresses modern challenges like antisemitism, Islamophobia, and religious intolerance, thereby nurturing understanding and empathy among diverse communities.





When planning to initiate an activity, **finding relevant partners is crucial.**

Start by exploring your local area for existing interfaith practices or potential partners related to faith and interfaith dialogue, such as local mosques, churches, or temples. Consider various partnership possibilities, including expert contributions or collaborative projects. The critical factor is sharing a common goal for what you want to achieve despite differing religious identities or organisational backgrounds outside of youth work.



### **CASE STUDY: ACROSS EUROPE**

The [European Muslim and Jewish Leadership Council](#) (MJLC) launched an Ambassadors Programme aimed at developing a network of young leaders from Jewish and Muslim communities who are passionate about interfaith initiatives. Participants learn to implement projects that address community needs and enhance interfaith solidarity and social cohesion.

After completing the programme, ambassadors are encouraged to apply their newly acquired skills into practice by launching a small joint project in their local areas.

Upon completing the [Ambassadors Programme](#), new ambassadors Hind and Eidel from Vienna used their skills to establish



a “Dialogue Walk” in their city. They charted routes highlighting historical and contemporary connections between Muslims and Jews, including shared culinary traditions and stories of mutual aid during the Second World War. Their “Yalla City Walks” now offer educational journeys for classes and youth groups, revealing these often-overlooked interfaith links.

To expand your international partnerships, consider using tools like the [Otlas Partner-Finding Tool](#) or participating in international [training events](#) to meet potential partners.

Transnational partnerships can enrich your understanding of different realities and methods beyond your local context, providing a deeper insight into your practices and the unique challenges of your environment. For youth groups, these collaborations open avenues to new experiences, firsthand learning, and broader perspectives.



### **CASE STUDY: ERASMUS+ PROJECT (Italy, Spain & Belgium)**

“To Believe or Not To Believe? Why Not Living Together?” was an [Erasmus+ youth project](#) (KA2 small-scale partnerships) conducted by [Giolli Coop](#) (Italy), [Red Íncola](#) (Spain), and [Axcent](#) (Belgium).



This initiative utilised the Theatre of the Oppressed to facilitate interconvictional dialogue among young migrants. Giolli Coop brought its expertise in the Theatre of the Oppressed, Red Íncola contributed its experience in supporting young migrants, and Axcent provided its knowledge in interfaith and interconvictional dialogue.

The collaboration kicked off with an interconvictional dialogue seminar followed by training sessions in the Theatre of the Oppressed. Each organisation then implemented this methodology locally, adapting it to their specific realities. This practical application developed into a versatile approach for engaging young people from various convictions, which was later compiled into the [To Believe or Not To Believe toolkit](#).

For the partners in Spain and Italy, the concept of interconvictional dialogue was a novel introduction. Axcent, deeply rooted in Brussels's highly diverse environment, undertook a detailed analysis of its practices to clarify and effectively share them. This collaborative process encouraged Axcent to refine its methods while Giolli and Red Íncola incorporated a new concept into their repertoire.



### **CASE STUDY: BELGIUM & ISRAEL/PALESTINE**

The [Imelda-Instituut](#), a Catholic school in Brussels with over 80% Muslim students, experienced increasing tensions and polarisation due to the Israel-Palestine conflict. To address this, the school launched the [“Ambassadors of Dialogue.”](#) an Erasmus+ youth exchange project with Carmel High School in Haifa, aiming to cultivate dialogue and mutual understanding.

Interested students had to write a motivation letter and pass an interview with a jury to participate. The selection process ensured religious diversity by including eight Muslim and eight Christian students. The school conducted a thorough dialogue with parents to mitigate concerns, holding several information evenings.

In 2017, selected Imelda-Instituut students visited the Holy Land, joining their Haifa peers to visit key Jewish, Christian, and Islamic sites. Months later, the Haifa students reciprocated with a visit to Brussels to experience its diversity firsthand.

Participants were designated as “Ambassadors of Dialogue,” a lifelong title reflecting their commitment to fostering understanding and sharing their experiences. These Ambassadors often speak at various events, continuing to inspire others with their stories of dialogue.

Watch the documentary on the Ambassadors of Dialogue [here](#).



## KEEP IN MIND

When involving minors in activities, it's crucial to keep parents well-informed. While interfaith dialogue is not about converting participants, there can be concerns about this. Ensuring parental trust and understanding the purpose of the activities is essential for successful engagement.

## CREATE A SAFE SPACE

Interfaith dialogue thrives on **building trust**, serving as the cornerstone for meaningful interactions. The goal is not to convince but to enrich understanding among all participants. Establishing a safe space is critical for nurturing an environment conducive to sharing and learning, underpinned by mutual respect and attention to the needs of all involved.

Considerations for creating this environment include being mindful of religious sensitivities, such as the selection of the venue and timing of activities. Ensure the chosen location does not carry religious significance that could exclude some participants, and avoid scheduling events during major religious observances like Shabbat or Sunday services. When unsure, engaging in open dialogue with participants often helps clarify any doubts, preventing potential misunderstandings.



The **atmosphere** of the space also plays a crucial role. Demonstrate the behaviour you expect from participants: practice active listening, show empathy, and promote openness. Encourage participants to express their needs to feel safe, possibly through establishing a charter or pedagogical contract rooted in the Golden Rule: “Treat others as you would like to be treated.”



### **CASE STUDY: AUSTRIA**

At [Jugendzentrum Gewölbe](#) in Steyr, a youth centre that embodies inclusivity, young individuals aged 13 to 19 are warmly welcomed to engage in various activities that foster deep connections and self-expression. Here, they can participate in cooking, games, creative workshops, or receive homework assistance, all within a supportive environment where they can be themselves.

The centre’s diverse attendees come from varied geographic, social, and religious backgrounds, often sharing their beliefs and cultural traditions. The primary staff, affiliated with the Catholic Church, shares their faith if risen in conversation and through actions inspired by the principle of loving thy neighbour, a value taught by Jesus.

“Time out” is a spiritual initiative by the centre offering meditation and creative reflection sessions where participants can express their thoughts and prayers openly, write them down, or reflect silently while lighting a candle.



In the project [“Let the Peace Grow.”](#) Jugendzentrum Gewölbe collaborated with regional Catholic and Muslim youth groups to construct a tree sculpture from old wood, gathering community wishes and hopes at the town square. These were later buried beneath a newly planted tree in a local park, now a cherished spot for meditation and prayer.

[Discover the inclusive atmosphere of Jugendzentrum Gewölbe](#)  
(watch the video)

Creating a safe space also extends to the **language and methods** used. Choose your words carefully and utilise creative communication methods that go beyond spoken language. Engage in group exercises, collaborative projects, and artistic expressions to foster connections that transcend cultural and linguistic differences. This “language without language” is crucial for building understanding across diverse groups.

**Mistakes** are a natural part of any dialogue process. While it’s common to fear offending others, these errors should be viewed as learning opportunities. Foster an environment where openness and respect are paramount to move past superficiality, allowing for profound and transformative exchanges.

In some instances, it might be necessary to establish a safe space within a single faith community before expanding to broader in-



terfaith dialogues. Balance is key to ensuring participants are secure in their identities and crucial for them to confidently explore and appreciate other perspectives.



### **CASE STUDY: FINLAND**

[FIN POLAR Kulttuurikeskus Ry](#), a civil society organisation in Finland run by migrants who live there, aims to support immigrants' integration and empowerment. Rather than pushing them to conform to Finnish norms, the organisation offers support and guidance to help them settle into their new environment effectively.

The organisation hosts youth meetings that bring together individuals from diverse backgrounds. These gatherings include engaging activities such as table tennis, shared meals, and expert-led presentations on universally relevant topics like empathy. Additionally, FIN POLAR organises interfaith dialogue sessions, discussions, and workshops designed to foster mutual understanding and respect. Interfaith dialogue is seen as a pathway to a more humane and inclusive world. Through these conversations, participants enhance their understanding of others, reduce stereotypes, and expand their perspectives.

Inspired by the teachings of Fethullah Gülen, which emphasise education, dialogue for peaceful coexistence, and addressing the needs of the underprivileged, the guiding principle is to metaphorically “have a chair for everyone in your heart.”





## NAVIGATE POSSIBLE CONFLICTS

Creating a safe space is key to minimising conflicts in interfaith dialogues. However, conflicts might still arise, similar to any interpersonal interaction. When they do, staying engaged and trusting the process and the community built within the dialogue group is vital. Investing time in addressing challenging issues deepens understanding and relevance to all involved.

In these situations, prioritise interpersonal skills and the relationships among participants, focusing on their humanity rather than the contentious points. Strive to find common ground that can unite the group, using shared interests as a basis for resolution.

In conflict or post-conflict settings, the choice of methodologies becomes even more crucial, taking into account fresh wounds and ongoing transgenerational trauma.



### CASE STUDY: BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

The [John Paul II Youth Centre](#) in Sarajevo provides a platform for young people to explore their faith and engage with diverse communities through non-formal education. The “Let’s Step Forward Together” project unites young Catholics, Orthodox Christians, and Muslims, fostering collective responsibility for their country’s future while appreciating its diverse heritage.



The program provides a diverse array of activities, including training for students and peer educators on communication skills and conflict transformation, workshops on religious customs, prejudices, and hate speech, and open sports events like a peace run. It also includes study trips to explore cultural and historical facets of the country, summer camps, seminars, cultural gatherings, and meetings with religious leaders where participants can inquire about faith-related topics. Additionally, the program encompasses voluntary work and local and international conferences to foster new collaborations and bridge gaps between educational institutions and civil society. Since its inception in 2013, the programme has engaged over 10,000 young people.

Although the project does not primarily focus on discussing historical issues, it does not avoid them. Facilitators permit the organic emergence of historical discussions among participants. The program's focus, however, is on building connections by emphasising shared humanity and commonalities, thereby setting a foundation for more sensitive discussions about the past when they arise naturally.

ID Talks Interfaith Dialogue and Reconciliation by Nadezda Mojsilovic

Article: [ID Talks Interfaith Dialogue and Reconciliation](#)

Podcast on [Spotify](#), [Apple](#) & [Spreaker](#)

Video: [ID Talks Interfaith Dialogue and Reconciliation](#)



### CASE STUDY: IRELAND

NorthWork Ireland is located at the border between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland, established in response to a resurgence of hostile language and bullying among high school students echoing their parents' experiences during the Troubles—a nationalist conflict in Northern Ireland that spanned from the late 1960s to 1998.

The organisation acts as a conduit for open communication and relationship strengthening among young people from the historically opposed Catholic and Protestant communities. Through arts and creative-based workshops, NorthWork emphasises shared experiences and connections. One notable initiative, the [Cross Border Creativity Project](#), highlighted commonalities, such as sharing the same clouds, sky, soil, and plants. Activities included using locally sourced clay for pottery, creating sky-inspired drawings, foraging plants for ink, and weaving with organic fibres.

These workshops provide artistic skills and foster critical thinking, empathy, and a deeper community understanding, thereby enhancing civic knowledge and engagement. While these sessions do not directly address religious issues, bringing young people from both communities together marks a significant step towards bridging religious and cultural divides.



### **CASE STUDY: LEBANON**

Lebanon, a Middle Eastern country with a diverse population of over 18 different religious communities, has seen persistent conflicts driven by fears of the “other” and entrenched “us versus them” mentalities since the Civil War in the 1970s. [MARCH Lebanon NGO](#), established in 2011, focuses on promoting social cohesion and intercommunal reconciliation through peacebuilding and conflict resolution.

MARCH’s efforts concentrate on young individuals aged 18 to 35 from religiously conflicting communities (Sunnis, Alawites, Shiites, Christians), including former fighters, ex-convicts involved in sectarian or armed conflicts, and women with family members who have participated in sectarian violence.

Interfaith dialogue at MARCH is a continuous, dynamic, and crucial process that adapts as communities evolve. The NGO utilises creative tools such as storytelling, theatre for reconciliation, music therapy, drama therapy, and collaborative construction projects to strengthen community ties. A particularly effective strategy involves organising debates where participants adopt opposing viewpoints, requiring them to research, ask questions, and engage with those they previously disagreed with. These debates encourage honest exchanges, breaking through superficial politeness to build trust, empathy, and a sense of belonging.



A significant achievement of MARCH is the establishment of a sustainable coffee shop centre, a new communal space actively maintained by the community members themselves. This venue has become a critical gathering place that was previously lacking, supported by the communities' shared commitment to love and understanding, thus enhancing their resilience against sectarian strife.



### TIPS AND TOOLS

KAICIID: [Dialogo!](#) – The game is designed for learning how to engage in dialogue effectively

SALTO Inclusion & Diversity: [The Sky is the Limit](#) – An Interactive Guide for Youth Projects on Interfaith Dialogue

European Network on Religion & Belief (ENORB): [Get the trolls out!](#) – A project aimed at combating discrimination and intolerance based on religious grounds across Europe

Council of Europe: [Religion and belief](#) – Part of COMPASS Manual for Human Rights Education with Young People

Dialogue Perspectives: [European Interreligious-Worldview Calendar](#)

# CONCLUSION

Interfaith dialogue transcends mere methodology in youth work; it's a dynamic process that enriches communities and transforms relationships. It doesn't demand grand gestures or intricate methods; the most meaningful actions are often the simplest. A welcoming space where individuals from diverse faith backgrounds can meet and connect often suffices to spark profound interactions.

Interfaith dialogue serves both as a preventive and proactive tool, paving the way for conflict resolution and community building. It embodies a mindset and a commitment to mutual understanding, nurtured through daily interactions. As a youth worker, you are uniquely positioned to integrate interfaith dialogue into your practices, promoting cooperation and shared experiences that transcend differences.

However, interfaith dialogue is not one-size-fits-all. It must adapt to the fluidity and complexity of your community. While practices from across Europe and beyond may inspire, they should always be tailored to your group's specific needs and context. Building networks and forming partnerships with local stakeholders and European and international partners is crucial.

Keep it simple and grounded. Start with a conversation, a shared activity, or even a coffee with local faith leaders or community members. Take that first step. Initiate the dialogue, create a space for authentic connection, and let the listening unfold.

**The possibilities are  
limitless, and the impact  
is profound.**

# ONE LAST MESSAGE TO YOU

Above the entrance to the [Peace Lab](#) in Malta, a message proclaims:

**You who enter here, make peace!  
Father with son  
Husband with wife  
The believer with him who cannot believe  
The Christian with the separated brother.**

Established at Hal Far, a site of intense aerial combat during World War II, the Peace Lab was founded by Fr Dionysius Mintoff, a Franciscan friar who believed deeply in the need for an open and unrestricted meeting place where people of all backgrounds and attitudes could mix together. What better place to foster peace than on land once scarred by war?

Since the 1970s, the Peace Lab has provided shelter, hospitality, and dignity to over 480 newcomers from overseas, carrying not just their belongings but their spiritual heritage. Today, it houses

55 refugees and immigrants, remaining one of Malta's most active voluntary organisations.

The Peace Lab regularly hosts a variety of events and activities, such as seminars, symposia, study groups, public discussions, film showings, work camps, conferences, radio programmes, and newspapers. Its volunteers have established two schools teaching English and crafts, built both a church and a mosque to ensure all can pray regardless of their faith, and constructed a clinic, library, and museum.

Fr Mintoff offers these inspiring words:

**All people must pray with rolled-up sleeves.  
To truly understand others' problems, you  
must live among them.  
Sometimes, the simplest act holds more  
power than all the power in the world.  
Go and unite what is divided.  
Blessed are the peacemakers.**







## GUIDE AUTHOR

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Fien Ingelbrecht brings over a decade of experience in interfaith dialogue to this booklet. With a master's degree in world religions, interreligious dialogue, and religious studies, she has significantly contributed to Axcent vzw, a pluralistic non-profit organisation based in Brussels, Belgium, dedicated to fostering dialogue and cooperation among diverse religions and convictions. At Axcent, Ms Fien has developed a variety of programs targeting youth, educational initiatives, and migrant communities. She is passionate about innovating new methodologies to enhance the impact and inclusiveness of interfaith dialogue.

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# EDITORIAL INFO

Published in February 2025 by SALTO-YOUTH Inclusion and Diversity Resource Centre [www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/inclusion/](http://www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/inclusion/) (Support & Advanced Learning and Training Opportunities within The Erasmus+: Youth in Action and European Solidarity Corps programmes).

Supported by the OeAD-GmbH, Austrian National Agency for The Erasmus+: Youth in Action and European Solidarity Corps programmes, <https://erasmusplus.at/de/>

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Faith is part of young people's life and reality, especially in today's increasingly diverse communities. As religious diversity grows, interfaith literacy has become essential for navigating this complexity. Yet, faith often remains a taboo topic within youth work contexts, avoided instead of embraced.

“The Power of Interfaith Dialogue” emphasises the importance of addressing religious diversity to equip young people with the skills to thrive in a multifaith society. This publication provides youth workers with practical tools and insights to implement interfaith dialogue in their practices. Rooted in real-world examples and good practices from across Europe and beyond, the publication offers a comprehensive framework to navigate interfaith dialogue. It explores key concepts, the role of youth workers, practical methodologies, and inspiring case studies.

Whether you are starting your journey or seeking to enhance your practice, this publication demonstrates how to implement interfaith dialogue meaningfully and sensitively. Specifically, this resource is designed to support organisations involved in Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps Programmes, as well as those engaged in other youth initiatives.

Download this and other SALTO youth work publications free at [www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/inclusion](http://www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/inclusion).



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