

# Report

## RELIGIOUS STAKEHOLDERS' DIALOGUE WORKSHOP



### Overarching Theme:

Religions as Partners in Peacebuilding, Security and Development ?

**DATE:**  
26<sup>th</sup> February 2020

**LOCATION:**  
**TANGAZA UNIVERSITY COLLEGE**  
(Langata South Road; Karen – Nairobi - Kenya)

## INTRODUCTION

This Religious Stakeholders Dialogue Workshop was geared towards concluding the Exposure and Dialogue Program that took place from 19 to 27 February 2020 in cooperation with AGIAMONDO and its Kenyan partners:



## Speakers

1. **Rev. Dr. Stephen Anyenda**  
(CEO CICC, Mombasa)
2. **Dr. Hassan Kinyua,**  
(SUPKEM, Representative)
3. **Dr. Claudia Lucking-Michel**  
(AGIAMONDO, Managing Director)
4. **Rev. Dr. Sahaya Selvam, sdb**  
(Designate Deputy Vice Chancellor  
Academic & Student Affairs, Tangaza  
University College)
5. **Rev. Fr Innocent Maganya M.Afr.**  
(IRDIS Director)
6. **Rev. Fr. Willibard Lagho**  
(Vicar General, Catholic Archdiocese of  
Mombasa)
7. **Mr. Jörg Hilgers**  
(EDP Moderator)

## Welcoming Remarks

*Rev. Dr. Sahaya Selvam, sdb*

Rev. Dr. Selvam welcomed the visitors to Tangaza University College and gave a general picture of the university in line with its core mission of Social Transformation, along the line of its motto of “*Teaching Minds, Touching Hearts and Transforming Lives*”. He further pointed out to the rich encounter and role that Tangaza has played in enabling collaboration and dialogue with other faiths. He noted that Vice Chancellor Dr. Wan’gombe sends his apologies as he was not able to attend due to commitments made prior to this workshop.

*Dr. Claudia Lücking-Michel*

Dr. Claudia expressed her pleasure in welcoming all on behalf of AGIAMONDO and invited everyone to be open and participate actively in the workshop. She gave a general picture of what AGIAMONDO does and is involved in relation to interchange and dialogue programs. She also pointed to the importance of the special delegation’s visit to Kenya and thanked all who welcomed them and gave them the chance for exposure and encounter. She concluded by saying “together we are working to better the world”.

*Dr. Hassan Kinyua*

Dr. Hassan began by registering apologies on behalf of the SUPKEM chairperson who could not attend. He gave a general picture of SUPKEM in relation to inter-religious dialogue and highlighted on the importance of inter-religious dialogue quoting the Quran.

*Rev. Fr Innocent Maganya M.Afr.*

Fr Innocent welcomed the guests. By referring to role of the Civil Peace Service, he expressed his gratitude to the organizations that support the work of IRDIS and who also made this exposure and dialogue programme possible, in particular, AGIAMONDO and the German Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ). He requested Mr. Jorg Hilgers to introduce and breakdown the program of the day as well as give a background of the invited speakers of the day. Fr. Innocent proceeded to invite Rev. Dr. Stephen Anyenda to give the Keynote address.

## Keynote Address

### *Religious Leaders in bridging conflict: Using Silent Diplomacy*

*By Rev. Dr. Stephen Anyenda*

Dr. Anyenda thanked the workshop organizers for giving him the opportunity to share his views on how religious leaders can help in bridging conflict by use of Silent Diplomacy. He proceeded to offer some suggestions on how diplomacy is useful particularly in areas and levels where conflict exist.

## RELIGIOUS LEADERS

**Religion**, the home of **religious leaders**, has a strong and growing significance as a key source of identity for millions of people, especially in the developing world. (Prof Jeffrey Haynes 2009).

A **religious leader** is a person who is recognized within a particular religion as having authority within that body.

### **Religion**

Religion is defined ‘as a unified system of beliefs and practices relative to sacred things, that is to say, things set apart and forbidden — beliefs and practices which unite into one single moral community called a church, Mosque, temple, shrine, all those who adhere to them’. (*Durkheim, ‘The Elementary Forms of Religious Life’, p. 46.*)

Religion itself is a ‘social thing’, mainly existing in the two religious phenomenons of ‘beliefs’ and ‘rites’.

### **Religion and Identity Politics**

While the notion of ‘identity’ is normally applied to individuals, it can also be a collective concept, extending to groups, communities and even countries in relation to their various ethnic, religious and cultural entities. As a result, individuals may feel personally injured when they perceive that others – whom they believe share their identity – are being ill-treated. The kinds of conflicts that can result are known as identity clashes – involving self-identified, often polarized, groups, within or between countries. Malek (2004) notes that ‘for an “identity” or inter-group conflict to occur, the opponents must assign an identity to themselves and their adversaries, each side believing the fight is between “us” and “them”’.

### **What are the key sources of identity?**

Many identities are based on shared values, beliefs or concerns that not only include religion but also extend to political ideologies, ethnicity, nationality or culture (Gopin, 2000, 2005).

### **Contemporary Conflicts and Identity**

Around the world various recent and current contemporary conflicts have religious components.

What they also have in common is a close link between religion and identity politics. It is to be established thoroughly whether religion is a root cause of the conflict or not, since it is – in many cases – a badge of identity and mobilizing vehicle for religious, ethnic, and political passions.

## DEMOCRACY AND POWER

*There are two forms of democracy.*

Democratic decisions can be taken by majority vote, which is the Western form. It has the advantage of being transparent, fast and efficient. But the downside is that it ignores minority positions.

The “Western model” (*as it is being applied in Africa, often; Editor*) allowed an elected leader to use power and the state machinery to advance his own and the economic interests of his ethnic group and exclude all others.

The alternative is *to take decisions by consensus*. This has the advantage of taking all minority positions into account. The demerit is that it can take an awfully long time to reach a consensus the larger the number of people involved. In the West, the basic economic and social unit is the individual; in Africa, it is the extended family or the collective.

The Western says, *"I am because I am."*

The African says, *"I am because we are."* The "we" denotes the community. *“Ubuntu”*

### **At Africa's traditional village level, a chief is chosen by the Queen Mother of the royal family to rule for life.**

His appointment must be ratified by the Council of Elders, which consists of heads of extended families in the village. In governance, the chief must consult with the council on all important matters.

Without this council, the chief is powerless. If the chief and the council cannot reach unanimous decision on an important issue, a village meeting is called and the issue put before the people, who will debate it until they reach a consensus. If the chief is "bad", he is being recalled by the Queen Mother, removed by the council of elders, or abandoned by the people, who will vote with their feet to settle somewhere else.

### **THERE IS HOPE**

The problem with Africa, as President Kennedy would say, is that *“liberty without learning is always in peril and learning without liberty is always in vain.”* There was something fundamentally flawed with the earlier democratic experimentation in Africa. The seeds of democracy were not properly planted and none of them were homegrown. It was the *miscarriage of implementation* and had nothing to do with democracy, be it Western, Asian or Latin American.

### **Democracy is an idea; it is knowledge.**

Learning implies adaptation and internalization and there was none of that in Africa. Imitation is the first step towards learning. Children do it all the time, but over time, they mature and find their own authentic voice. They became authors of their own personality. So do nations. So do democracies. Africa must become the architect of its own learning. Liberty requires an informed and educated citizenry. An educated citizen is easy to govern and hard to enslave.

### **PEACEMAKING**

Within most religious traditions, peacemaking is considered a sacred duty, and the peacemaker holds an exalted position.

### **Two specific characteristics and coeval concepts of faith-based Diplomacy:**

*“Forgiveness and reconciliation.”*

These techniques are most often used in the everyday activities of faith-based diplomacy. Building up small, problem-solving workshops for leaders. It is particularly the common religious practices such as praying and fasting that make the engaged leaders in the workshop aware of their common orientation towards the divine.

### **Religious peacemakers**

Religious peacemakers seek to help rebuild good community relations and encourage development of peaceful and constructive relations between previously warring communities.

### **Religion and diplomacy.**

Religious and diplomatic frameworks differ significantly; each recognizes the other's relevance to conflict resolution and human progress.

**Faith-based diplomacy** is primarily a strategy for restoring human relationships. Classical diplomacy mainly focuses on prevention and pays tribute to a *jus in bellum*. Faith-based diplomacy, on the other hand, addresses a *'jus post bellum'*, a 'morality of repair'.

### **How can these two approaches work together?**

We need to better appreciate and incorporate the other perspective,  
To build common understandings of key concepts and of specific issues, and  
To engage in mutual endeavor to resolve pressing international problems

### **WHAT IS SILENT DIPLOMACY?**

It is a distinctive approach in peace building, which allows dialogue to take place without public scrutiny, incorporating religious values and practice, in dealing with ideological, identity, and other similar conflicts, without having a dialoguing party's lose its face.

### **Why Dialogue?**

The aim of quiet diplomacy is to create conditions in which parties feel comfortable to act, in particular allowing parties calmly to evaluate positions and interests, to weigh options and consider independent and impartial advice.

### **BIBLE**

*Matthew 18: 15-17 "If your brother sins, go and show him his fault in private; if he listens to you, you have won your brother. "But if he does not listen to you, take one or two more with you, so that by the mouth of two or three witnesses every fact may be confirmed. "If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector.*

### **QUR'AN**

*Qur'an 49:9-10, "If two parties among the believers fall into a quarrel, make you peace between them [...] with justice and be fair. For God loves those who are fair. The believers are but a single brotherhood; so make peace between your brothers...."*

### **QUOTE:**

"No human life together without a world ethic for the nations. No peace among the nations without peace among the religions. No peace among the religions without dialogue among the religions." -- *Hans Kung, Global Responsibility (USA: STOCK Publishers, 2004), p.56.*

***I repeat, Silent diplomacy*** is a preventive strategy that uses quiet means to address conflicts.

It does so by allowing dialogue to take place without the public scrutiny that risks parties losing face or hardening their positions. Discretion therefore makes quiet diplomacy a distinctive approach – though, like others, one which may be more or less robust.

### **I want to mention the following examples.**

Top key religious leaders in the coast of Kenya established ***the Coast Interfaith Council of Clerics Trust*** to deal with matters of peace in the coastal region and the nation at large.

**The Council's accomplishments over the several years of its existence have been quite impressive.**

- Brokered peace between two tribes in Tana River County 2002
- Brokered peace between two tribes in Kilifi County 2018
- Development of counter extremism narratives and networks
- Assisting in the reintegration of returnees in conjunction with relevant government agencies

**On national level:**

**NCCK** - Peacebuilding efforts undertaken by the National Council of Churches of Kenya (NCCK). After Kenya witnessed sporadic and systematic violence following the December 2007 general election.

**CATHOLIC BISHOPS:**

Bishop Cornelius Kipng'eno Arap Korir as Bishop of Catholic Diocese of Eldoret. A cleric who cherished peace, cohesion and development in humanity

**Tangaza University College.**

training key peacebuilders in Africa and beyond

**BRAVE: *Muslim Clergy and Actors*:** Building Resilience Against Violent Extremism: Development of a training manual on true Islamic teachings

**LASTLY**

**Globalization**

There are many religions, cultures, languages, and races in the world today. Globalization, industrialization, urbanization, modernization, education and technology have brought social, cultural, economic and political changes all over the globe and in turn contributed to global plurality. Now we live in close proximity with people of other faiths, cultures, races and people speak different languages. The modern cities and urbanized cosmopolitan cities contribute more of this type of plurality. So, plurality has become a fact and it is a way of life. The situation demands openness to one another and understanding of each other as persons in relation, which includes relation to their faiths.

*I wish to thank the organizers for the opportunity and the audience for the attentive listening*

## **Key Stories and Lessons Learnt by the Exposure Participants' Group**

The participants gave examples as follows:

***Corruption***

- Firsthand experience of corruption on the very first day in Kenya, where the participant clearly saw a person taking money to speed up the process of getting access to a ferry boat.
- Another participant being a police officer himself spoke of how unthinkable it was for him meeting a fellow policeman stopping their car; witnessing how his 'colleague' urged the driver

to pay a bribe for just letting them pass, instead of enforcing the law. The participant was astonished that he actually learnt in practice what the participant group had been briefed about and how corruption works just the day before the exposure started.

- Sharing experience on what had happened to his host in Mombasa another participant learned how difficult it is for straight-forward and non-corrupt individuals to run for public office or elective positions without facing threats and intimidation by powerful networks who want to ‘buy’ those independent candidates that stand for elections.

### ***Role of Men and Women in Society***

- One of the participants from the German visitors’ group expressed that there were both similarities and differences in the situations and roles of women in Kenya and in Germany. The participant was amazed at how women are trying to advocate women rights, and how they empower and foster one another in Kenya. The participant specifically learned from Muslim women activists and expressed that a lot still needed to be done in ensuring that women are given equal opportunities to take-up active roles in transforming the society, especially with regard to Muslim women.
- Another participant appreciated having participated in dialogues that aimed at solving communal conflicts such as killings of elders, and the experience of seeing women advocates being empowered and encouraged in their efforts – and of having been acknowledged as they do have a great developmental impact on the society.
- Staging a counter factual scenario, another (male) participant acted as a subordinate pastoral lay worker (i.e. without ordination) being accountable to women acting as the top ranking religious leaders in a (counter-factual) FBO in which he competently performs all professional duties in this religious mission but without being acknowledged for what he does.

### ***The relationship and roles of the State and religious institutions***

- Another participant narrated his exposure experience regards efforts to building peace and do land conflict resolution in a rural setting in Western Kenya. He expressed his surprise at having seen large farms on huge tracts of lands, some owned by multi-national companies, others owned by just one top-ranking politician. He asked who can properly and effectively address such injustices where land-use is being monopolized by an (inter-) national trade regime on one hand, and on the other why just one individual has so much land whereas others barely have anything to eat.
- Another participant narrated his exposure experience in Mombasa where he noted that the religious leaders he engaged with seemed to be afraid of really entering into dialogue for some reasons. He also noted that when the youths joined the dialogue, the mood changed as the youths engaged more in asking different pertinent questions. The participant sensed a temptation on the part of the religious leaders to avoid getting into a real contact with the youth for they were challenging and not easy to deal with. According to the participant the religious leaders tried to avoid a confrontation, probably with political leaders, hence, instead of engaging in real dialogue with the young people they talks in appellative manners and gave kind of moral instructions, only.
- Another participant who happens to be a member of parliament in Germany spoke of the need for follow-up meetings especially on the relationship between the State leaders and the religious leaders. To her, these two leadership factions are directly and strongly connected to the people, are supposed to serve the communities, and hence the way they act must be addressed and assessed continuously.

## First Response by Dr. Hassan Kinyua

Dr. Hassan thanked the participants for sharing their experiences openly and freely. He acknowledged the high moral values that are practiced and held in Germany and Europe at large while contrasting it to the practise as shown by bad leadership in Kenya. According to Dr. Hassan, Kenya has a “rotten” leadership system that has paved the way for the growth and explosion of corruption and other injustices. According to Dr. Hassan also some religious leaders take sides with politicians who belong to their churches or congregations instead of taking an objective stand.

*“Bribing in politics is a norm in Kenya that is steadily and deeply penetrating the religious circles given that corruption has entered people’s mentality in the Kenyan society where ninety percent of leaders face corruption allegations and court cases.”*

The lack of honest people in Kenyan politics is one of the key aspects that Dr. Hassan stressed about. He noted that the politicians are the highest paid individuals in Kenya and hence many people pursue politics to become rich and not to serve the people who elect(ed) them. For Dr. Hassan, more is desired and has to be done in terms of women empowerment as well as addressing land injustices that would require strengthening the weak land policies and looking at incoherence of relevant policies.

## Second Response by Fr. Willbard Lagho

Fr. Lagho highlighted the gap that exists between the leaders and the people which needs bridging. He quoted the efforts and campaigns being conducted by the Catholic Church against corruption, for instance this year’s Lenten campaign and the refusal of the new Bishop of Kericho to accept new vehicles “donated” by the Deputy President Mr Ruto to the Bishop’s personal use. To Fr. Lagho there is a need to appreciate honesty and honest people pro-actively, giving them incentives by public acknowledgement in the community and identify people of integrity who are to be appointed, elected or promoted in public institutions.

Fr. Lagho sees a need to empower women through education and the need of having student-centred learning approaches that make education attractive, especially in the area of sciences thereby attracting more learners, especially women.

On the land conflict issues, he noted a difficulty in getting solutions soon given the fear of addressing past land injustices and cases. Land in Kenya is a sensitive matter that is usually exploited by politicians in their campaigns during the electioneering periods capped by weak land policies. According to Fr. Lagho, land must be used for the common good of all the people. He called for the sensitization of people so that potential buyers avoid buying land from corrupt and non-scrupulous individuals.

According to Fr. Lagho there is a problem of access to information in Kenya as he witnesses a growing trend where-by individuals without proper religious knowledge and backgrounds were influencing youths on social media. To curb this, he cited a special CICC program aiming at educating and helping youths and young religious leaders equipping them with proper knowledge to be critical and selective in what they get through the internet or social media. He stressed the need of having such programs supported properly.

In conclusion, he affirmatively held that Religious leaders should indeed be the voice of the voiceless.

## Plenary Discussion

### *Salient points of learning/Issues to be tackled (Plenary)*

**Dr. Hassan Kinyua** spoke of an insight in the importance for trained religious leaders, and also admired the humility of the Germany politicians and other members of the delegation who were keen and objective in their observations.

**Prof. Dr. Nandera Hhando (University of Dar es Salaam)** spoke of the role of the religious leaders as complimenting the work of government in relation to Tanzania. She mentioned efforts made in the field of girl-child education in Tanzania of which she acknowledged the need to do more. She however noted that in Tanzania, the government was using religious leaders to pass government agendas in a way that some religious leaders would do without critically examining the facts or information given to them.

She sees a need to have religious leaders properly trained and identify those for leadership roles who have a true calling and dedication to the mission as they need to be oriented by proper values when complimenting government efforts.

As regards the undermining experiences of particularly Muslim women she demands for better opportunities of them to attain empowerment. Confirming the challenge of acknowledging women in religious roles and especially of women becoming priests like in the Anglican Church, she called for more directed efforts in placing women in such roles. Even if the Catholic Church denies women being priests, to her there are efforts to engage and appoint women in leadership positions as could be seen in view of the religious women orders.

Dr. Nandera also acknowledged the important role of universities in inter-religious dialogue and expounded on the role of cultural systems in a society that either support or hinder women from pursuing political or public appointments or offices.

**Samuel Minyaho (Catholic Archdiocese of Mombasa)** spoke on the roles of the State and Church. He listed what Kenyan society had inherited from the missionary societies such as some of the best schools and hospitals. As a result, he noted that even at present the best schools and hospitals in Kenya were those that were owned by the Church given that their services in terms of education and medicine were accessible and more reliable.

*“The Church has been more with the people than the State.... but there is collaboration. For example, Church-run dispensaries are being given state personnel. Taking the case of the area of the Diocese of Lodwar, would the Church leave the people and say, it is a responsibility of the State, something which is very abstract to the people, the people would suffer and this is what religious leader do not want.”*

According to Samuel, the lack of independent institutions, the gaps in Kenyan laws and judiciary as well as the weak institutional structures were the major causes of corruption. *“If our institutions are strengthened and if our laws are straight forward, then we can overcome this monster of corruption.”*

**Sister Jane Joan (AOSK)** referred to the topic of corruption and felt sorry for the fact that visitors had to face corruption upon arrival. She spoke of building strong attitudes among citizens especially with children to help reduce this phenomenon. She also saw a need for more focused research in this area.

*“We also have to look into our own Catholic Church and ask ourselves, is there corruption. Though we are running this campaign ‘Let’s break the chain of corruption’, we need to do a research in our own structures and come up with a research paper. If we do not do such, we are doing nothing.”*

**Brother Elvis Ng’andwe M.Afr. (Dar es Salaam)** mentioned efforts in inter-religious dialogue on the grassroots in Tanzania and how they are involving the young people and their families where there are Christians and Muslims. He gave some examples from his experience, emphasising the need for strong grass-root sensitisation.

## Afternoon Workshops

The afternoon session had three parallel workshops based on the following themes:

1. Role of religion in preventing violent extremism (*session led by Mr. Joseph Opondo and Rev. Fr. Lagho*)
2. The role of religion in preventing political violence (*session led by General Bashir*)
3. Role of Religion in building social cohesion (*session led by Sheikh Yusuf Abuhamza and Mrs. Damaris Muthusi*)

## Plenary

The groups presented the conclusions of their workshop discussions towards the end of the day in the plenary

### 1. Role of religion in preventing violent extremism

*Note by editor:* This group chose to discuss the *role of religion in dealing with extremism*, hence, addressed a wider scope of needed actions. Their résumé is as follows:

- Advocate for more resources to combat youth vulnerability due to unemployment

Religious Leaders have a prophetic role. They should:

- Enhance or boost religious education
- Help improve Religious Literacy which is much needed for both men and women
- Protect against the abuse of religion
- Regulate the training of religious leaders (“normative interventions”; note by editor)
- Work towards the empowerment of women religious leaders (within their respective FBOs; note by editor)
- Create safe space(s) for dialogue among religious leaders and the youth
- Support the youth psycho-socially

### 2. The role of religion in preventing political violence

Religious leaders should:

- Work closely with all stakeholders to engage on critical issues that affect the public with the aim of finding sustainable and transformative solutions.

- Continuously undergo capacity building measures that promote social justice (also on grass-root level).
- Continuously promote peace and reconciliation among sworn enemies – e.g. in view of the Building Bridges Initiative, Southern Sudan, and DRC Congo.
- Continuously engage the youth who are vulnerable to political manipulation

### **3. Role of Religion in building social cohesion**

Assessment: Religions are challenged by culture(s) that erode religious values, which becomes obvious when, for instance, taking into account the competing identities of ethnicity (ethnic belonging) and religion (faith-based belonging). Religions are the source of social cohesion and can be also a source of conflict.

Hence, we need to

- Reflect on opposing values, norms and cultural practices
- Build “a new culture” based on the Golden Rule accepted by different faith groups
- Build strong(er) interfaith structures of concrete cooperation from grass-roots to higher levels using advocacy tools, promoting civic education and providing space for prophetic voices
- Must enhance our inter- but especially our intra-faith dialogue efforts
- Must give the people credible examples so as “to walk the talk”

## **Participants’ Take Home**

The moderator changed the indicated “Fish Bowl” methodology and selected specific representatives to give their “Take Home”. For an account of that please refer to the Google Drive online video document recorded being IRDIS-DIALOGUE WORKSHOP.mp4 (<https://tinyurl.com/tyc2mza>) as from minute 29:16.

## **Vote of thanks**

Firstly, by Rev. Fr. Innocent Maganya to all partners of IRDIS, the experts, resource persons and some of the exposure hosts present, the exposure host organizations and their representatives present.

Secondly, on behalf of the German EDP organizers by Dr. Claudia Lücking-Michel who thanked all partners and hosts for their extraordinary hospitality, dedication and commitment to this learning and dialogue process. Together with Ulrike Hanlon and Jörg Hilgers Dr. Lücking-Michel handed over gifts of appreciation to the key persons in this endeavour!

## Closing remarks

In the prayer copied below, Rev. Fr. Adrien Sawadogo, M.Afr, IRDIS programme leader, captured the overall objectives and the spirit of this exposure and dialogue programme:

### **Together for a better world**

We have come together to work for a better world,

We have reached out to each other,

Spent time with each other,

Talked to each other,

Listened to each other,

And learnt from each other.

Thus, we have been enriched by your light, you who are always with us.

You have given us this precious time, this precious experience.

We hand it back to you;

Bless the gifts we have received,

Help us bear the fruits of the rich seeds of Peace, Justice and Solidarity.

We entrust to your care and mercy, our visitors who are on their way back home; travel mercies grant unto them oh Lord.

For you are God who lives and reigns for ever and ever.

Amen

**Report prepared** by Milkah Bosibori (IRDIS) and Jörg Hilgers (EDP Association/editor)  
Nairobi, 26<sup>th</sup> of March 2020 – Bonn/Bad Münstereifel, 06<sup>th</sup> of April 2020