actionaid

INTER-FAITH

Dialogue

TOWARDS THE PREVENTION OF VIOLENT EXTREMISM
CHRISTIAN AND ISLAMIC PERSPECTIVES

A Facilitator's Guide

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FOREWORD

We count it a great honour to be asked to write the forward to this valuable tool for value-based Conflict transformation, Prevention and Mitigation at a point in history when this important intervention is required. The issue of religious motivated incitement and demonization of the other is on the increase, our sacred texts are used as instruments of manipulate and mind control of gullible followers leading them to embrace violence extremist behaviors.

This manual is superimposed on inclusive scriptural texts that provides the safe space for fruitful empathic Interfaith Dialogue bearing in mind mutual respect for the value of the other.

The manual has explored areas of common scriptural reasoning and reflection to enable her user engage the target beneficiaries in a respectful interactive manner to address contemporary issue that can lead to violence extremism and mass atrocities.

It dealt with areas of social relationships around matters of common ground as enshrined in their holy texts, encouraging the user to emphasize of areas connectors not dividers.

It is expected that this manual will catalyze a positive energy for collaborative engagement among the clergies and cleric who are at the frontline of driving the conversation and Dialogue, consequently preventing recruitment and radicalization of people into violent extremism.

We recommend religious leaders and followers to use this manual to guide adherents into expanding and deepening their understanding of the faith of others with an unbiased disposition for a better, harmonious and peaceful coexistence in the spirit of the golden rule which states that we do to others what we will like others to do us.

So then, whatever you desire that others would do to and for you, even so do also to and for them, for this is (sums up) the Law and the Prophets. Matthew 7:12

Not one of you is a believer until he loves for his brother what he loves for himself Fortieth Hadith of an-Nawawi, 13

ActionAid Nigeria, in developing this Inter-faith dialogue guide, aims at building bridges through which people of diverse faiths will actively join hands across religious boundaries to create strength through joint action, and in so doing serve as powerful models for peacebuilding in our increasingly diverse and conflict impacted communities.

It is our expectation that this manual will contribute towards building more just, equitable, peaceful, and tolerant societies as we empower religious leaders as agents of change and peace ambassadors.

Imam Muhammad Nurayn Ashafa
Imam

Rev. James Movel Wuye
Pastor

PREFACE

Nigeria is a multi-religious nation with diverse people practicing three main religions-Islam, Christianity, and the traditional African religion as a way of worship. Unfortunately, religion today in Nigeria has become a tool or weapon for provoking violence because of the views about religious obligation, hence, religious bigots have resorted to violence which contradicts both the religious and cultural principles which the society is known for.

Inherently, most faiths aim to bring peace to their followers and to humanity. At the same time, religious differences are often easily manipulated and used to mobilize communities and individuals for violence. Thus, learning to understand the meaning of religious differences — and becoming comfortable with the many diverse "voices" of religious and spiritual expression — reduces the possibility of ***religious radicalism and the intolerance, hatred, and violent extremism*** that so often accompany it. It can also motivate people to actively engage in building connections and relationship across religious divides and act to correct injustices in society.

Today, people of faith globally are stepping out boldly, courageously, to put their teachings and practices to work for the greater good — in building understanding across lines of division that tear our societies apart, in advocating for social justice, and in building peace. Faith-based peace advocates are creatively finding ways to deal with complex problems by using and further developing the resources for peace found in their religious and spiritual traditions. Ultimately, peacebuilding aims to prevent further violence and destructive conflict; heal individuals and societies from the effects of violence; and reconcile individuals and communities, so that ***a shared future*** might be possible.

The context of religious and violent extremism refers to advocating, engaging in, preparing, or otherwise supporting ideologically motivated or justified violence to further social, economic and political objectives.; Violent extremism can be exhibited alongside a range of issues including politics, religion and gender relations. Multiple drivers can fuel individual level of religious radicalisation leading to violent extremism. In Nigeria the push factors contributing to the spread of radical extremism include cultural, political, religious, and social economical drivers. While most solutions have focused on addressing the cultural, political, and economic factors, little attention has been given to exploring religious dialogue as a critical solution to the prevention of violent extremism.

ActionAid Nigeria, in developing this Inter-faith dialogue guide, aims at building bridges through which people of diverse faiths will actively join hands across religious boundaries to create strength through joint action, and in so doing serve as powerful models for peacebuilding in our increasingly diverse and conflict impacted communities.

It is our expectation that this manual will contribute towards building more just, equitable, peaceful and tolerant societies as we empower religious leaders as agents of change and peace ambassadors.

Ene Obi,
Country Director

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[1] U.S. Government Counterinsurgency Guide, January 2009, p. 2.
[2] wikipedia

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

PART 1:
SETTING THE STAGE:

What Trainers and Facilitators Need to Know

The first part of this manual is intended to set the stage by training facilitators of inter-religious dialogue to understand the basic concepts around dialogue, conflicts, violent extremism, radicalisation, and peacebuilding. It will prepare the facilitator to understand how to work with inter-religious groups, and the principles guiding inter-religious dialogue from the Christian and Muslim perspectives. It will build relevant skills in facilitation and management of group dynamics as well as enable facilitators overcome barriers and conceptual challenges to inter-religious dialogue caused by stereotypes and enabling them to find common grounds.

It will prepare facilitators to galvanise issues generated during inter-religious dialogue into action plans that can be addressed through local actions by communities of faith or engaging in advocacy actions that will translate issues at the local level into policy actions at the national or state levels.

It will enable facilitators and programme staff to document stories of change and lessons learnt that will inform future programming as well as enrich reports and feedback mechanisms for current interventions.

Module 1:
INTRODUCTION

1.1   An Overview of the SARVE III Project

Following successes recorded in the first (SARVE I) and second (SARVE II) phases of the project in Kogi and Nasarawa states respectively as well as current trends in the Northwest region of the country, ActionAid Nigeria received more funding from the Global Community Engagement and Resilience Fund (GCERF) to implement the third (3rd) phase of the SARVE project in Kano and Kaduna States through Democratic Action Group (DAG) and Global Peace Development (GPD).

The SARVE III project will raise awareness of the dangers of violent extremism, develop new and nurture existing effective response systems, promote peaceful coexistence, encourage shared positive alternative narratives, and build social cohesion among vulnerable groups. This will be achieved by empowering communities to identify threats and signs of violent extremism, peacebuilding initiatives, conflict resolution systems, platforms for inter-communal dialogue, and advocacy

The third phase of this project seeks to reach 36,000 direct (18,200 youths (12,600 male and 5,600 female), 4,160 women; 7320 men and 6,320 in-school children (3,160 male and 3,160 female) and 129,360 indirect beneficiaries (40,200 female and 89,160 male) by supporting the 24 benefitting communities across 12 Local Government Areas (LGAs) against injustice and inequalities through building tolerance as well as strengthening community agencies where violent extremists exploit.

1.2   Why this Manual?

This facilitator's manual on nter-religious dialogue is designed to contribute towards the achievement of the following outcomes:

a)   Serve as a participatory guide that will help lessen fear and mend divisions within religious communities, as well as among religions by deepening intra-faith and inter-faith dialogue

b)   Create a "safe space" for people of diverse faiths to work together in support of conflict resolution, healing, reconciliation, and prevention of violent extremism

c)   Facilitate interfaith platforms through which religious leaders will collectively learn to use their differences as assets in building resilience and contributing to more comprehensive, inclusive, and sustainable peacebuilding processes

d)   Enable people of shared and diverse principles, to develop the sensibilities, tools, and skills for dealing with differences of many kinds from an interfaith perspective; and

e)   Empower religious leaders, policy makers, change agents and community gatekeepers to best mobilize sustainable, constructive actions to prevent violent extremism

Inter-religious dialogue has the advantage of appealing to a global majority which include those who identify with a certain faith or tradition. Dialogue, whether inter-religious or inter-cultural, provides valuable support for involving and building bridges between all parties, regardless of social background, religious beliefs, national borders, or political and economic interests.

1.3   Who is this Manual for?

This manual is developed for facilitators of inter-religious and other forms of dialogue aimed at promoting peaceful co-existence, peace building and prevention of violent extremism in highly polarized societies.   It it is designed as a tool for civil society organisations working in the contexts of conflicts and violent extremism, as well as political leaders and policy makers seeking durable solutions to violent extremism. It will be a useful guide for religious leaders who seek to deepen their understanding of other religious faiths and therefore build bridges for peaceful co-existence alongside other social, cultural, political, and religious persuasions.

1.4   How to Use this Manual

This manual is a facilitator's guide designed to enable facilitators acquire skills for facilitating inter-religious dialogue and provides some sample topics that can be used during dialogue sessions. The manual is divided into two parts.

The first part of this manual is intended to set the stage by training facilitators of inter-religious dialogue to understand the basic concepts around dialogue, conflicts, violent extremism, radicalisation, and peacebuilding. It will prepare the facilitator to understand how to work with inter-religious groups, and the principles guiding inter-religious dialogue from the Christian and Muslim perspectives. It will build relevant skills in facilitation and management of group dynamics as well as enable facilitators overcome barriers and conceptual challenges to inter-religious dialogue caused by stereotypes and enabling them to find common grounds.

The second part sets out examples of key issues that should be discussed during the inter-religious dialogue sessions including exploring unity in diversity by examining the Christian and Muslim perspectives on inter- religious marriages, social justice, responsible citizenship, and other rights issues. This section also examines freedom of worship as a right, and the responsibilities of worshippers. It explores religion as an instrument of peace to prevent violent extremism, and the role of women in building peaceful societies.

The manual has been divided into modules, and modules have been divided into sessions. Each session has a session objective, and a discussion guide. Each session also has Facilitator's Notes that will enable the facilitator to provide useful guidance to the discussions of the topic being treated by the session. Each session has been allocated 30 minutes, and the facilitator needs to manage time to ensure that the session does not exceed an hour.

Each session in the second part of this manual has a task that participants are expected to use as an application for topic discussed, and this is supposed to be presented in the next session.

There is a Charter of affirmations for inter-religious dialogue for participants that should be shared to all participants and read at the beginning of each dialogue session.

Module 2:

DEFINITION OF CONCEPTS

This Module comprises 4 sessions which include the following topics:

2.1   What is Interfaith Dialogue

2.2   Radicalization and Violent Extremism

2.3   Peace Building, Social Cohesion and Peaceful Co-Existence

2.4   Religious Intolerance

Module 2:
DEFINITION OF CONCEPTS

WHAT IS INTER - FAITH DIALOGUE?

This session will enable participants to:

- Understand the *definition* of Inter -religious Dialogue
- Explore the nature and characteristics of dialogue
- Differentiate Inter -religious *Dialogue* from *Debate*
- Appreciate the *Importance* of Inter -faith Dialogue

OBJECTIVES

Time: 30 Minutes

DISCUSSION GUIDE

1. Welcome group members and let them know that today, we are going to be talking about Inter-faith dialogue and how it differs from a debate.

2. Agree on who will take notes for the group

3. Help the group to set ground rules which may include the following values guiding Inter-faith Dialogue:

   - Mutual Respect for Differences.

   - Acknowledgement and Empathy

   - Openness and Tolerance,

   - Equality and Striving to Eliminate Judgement.

   - Active Listening and Trying to understand the other and what is going on beyond one's own biases and preconceived ideas.

4.	Divide participants into 2 groups. Write the following passages from the Qur'an and from the Bible on flip charts and let each group read them:

- Group A: John 4:1 – 30; Surah al-Ankabut (29): 46 and Surah al-Nahl (16): 125; Surah al-Kahfi (18): 34, 37 and Surah al-Mujadalah (58): 1.

- Group B: John 9:1-34; Surah al-Ghafir (40): 5, Surah al-Nisa (4): 107 and Surah al-A□raf (7): 71.

5.	Ask each group to identify which verses are considered as dialogue and which are considered as debate and why.

6.	Ask participants what they think DIALOGUE means and how it differs from a DEBATE

7.	Let each group discuss why dialogue is important and present their responses in plenary on flip charts.

8.	Explain the meanings and importance of dialogue as in the Facilitator's Notes 2.1

FACILITATOR'S NOTES

WHAT IS INTERFAITH DIALOGUE

- The word dialogue is a combination of the two Greek words: dia, meaning "through," and logos, interpreted as "word or meaning."
- To engage in dialogue is therefore to engage in making meaning or foster understanding through the spoken or written word.
- Dialogue is a form of interaction between two or more individuals of different identities that emphasises self-expression and where each party strives to use active, empathetic & non-judgmental listening in the spirit of openness and understanding.
- Dialogue (hiwar), is therefore, different from debate (jidal).
- Al-Hammadi (2008) stated that, "dialogue exists in a peaceful atmosphere and based on the goal to reach the truth, while debate exists in conflicted situation and has an intention to defeat others.
- Each debate is a dialogue, however not all dialogues are debatable. Dialogue has an extensive and comprehensive purpose.
- Debate is competitive; dialogue is collaborative. Debate is divisive; dialogue is transformative.
- Interreligious dialogue, also referred to as interfaith dialogue, aims to create mutual understanding and respect by focusing on similarities and differences between faith groups and religious and cultural identities.
- Interreligious dialogue strives to create trusting connections that support people to live and cooperate with each other across religious and socio-cultural boundaries.
- Interreligious dialogue can assist in solving disagreements, issues, or tensions at risk of escalating into violent conflict, especially in contexts where cultural and religious identities are at stake or part of the subject matter.
- Interreligious dialogue supports people, institutions, and communities in addressing challenges (local, national, or global) through an interreligious lens and eases the cooperation needed to solve those challenges.
- Dialogue has proven to be an effective tool for promoting social cohesion and peacebuilding initiatives towards ending wars and building inclusive communities
- The results of a dialogue process usually contribute to resolving disagreements or taking steps towards a solution.
- Dialogue is a success when it leads to increased confidence and mutual understanding between the involved parties and the building or re-establishment of more trusting relationships.
- Inter-religious dialogue is not a way to discuss who has the "right" belief, nor does it have the purpose of converting individuals or groups to a certain religion.

Module 2:
DEFINITION OF CONCEPTS

2.2 RADICALISATION AND VIOLENT EXTREMISM

OBJECTIVES

This session will enable participants to:

- Understand the *definition* of Radicalisation
- Understand the meaning of Violent Extremism
- Explore the relationship between radicalisation and violent extremism
- Appreciate the *Impact* of religious radicalisation and violent extremism on the society and community

Time: 30 Minutes

DISCUSSION GUIDE

1. Welcome group members and let them know that in this session, we are going to be talking about radicalisation and violent extremism, their meanings, forms, causes and consequences.

2. Agree on who will take notes for the group

3. Remind the group of the ground rules set earlier which might have included the following:

   - Mutual Respect for Differences.

   - Acknowledgement and Empathy

   - Openness and Tolerance

   - Equality and Striving to Eliminate Judgement.

   - Active Listening and Trying to understand the other and what is going on beyond one's own biases and preconceived ideas.

4.   Divide participants into 2 groups. Let each group discuss the questions below, and present in plenary.

   • Group A: Read Qur'an 5:32; Qur'an 22:39–40; Qur'an 2:190; Qur'an 4:29; Qur'an 60:8; Exodus 2:11 - 15 and Acts 22:1 – 5. From these scriptures:

   • What do you understand by radicalisation? How do you know that someone has been radicalised? What are the causes of radicalisation? How do people get radicalized and what are the consequences? What are the views of the Bible and Qur'an on religious radicalisation? What additional scriptures can we find to substantiate these ideas?

   • Group B: Read Acts 23: 12 – 22; 1 Kings 18:40; Matt. 11:12; Qur'an 6:151; Qur'an 2:294; Qur'an 9:29; Qur'an 5: 51 and Qur'an 5:82; and Qur'an 60:8. From these scriptures:

What do you understand by violent extremism? How do religious leaders and religion contribute to violent extremism? What could be some consequences of violent extremism? What do the Bible and Qur'an have to say about violence and peaceful co-existence? How can religious leaders prevent violent extremism? What additional scriptures can we find to substantiate these ideas?

5.   Ask each group to present their responses in a plenary on flip charts.

6.   Conclude the session by sharing the ideas in the facilitator's Note 2.2.

2.2   RADICALISATION AND VIOLENT EXTREMISM

2.2.1 Radicalisation:

- Radicalisation is the process through which an individual or group develops extreme political, social, or religious beliefs.

- Radicalisation involves encouraging someone to develop extreme views or beliefs in support of violence or terrorist activities in opposition to a political, social, or religious order.

- Some reasons for radicalisation include relative deprivation of a social group—including grievances, injustices, victimization, and stigmatization

- There are many definitions of radicalisation, but this manual is specifically interested in the process by which individuals "radicalise to violence" - and not to just any type of violence, but to a specific type of illegitimate violence directed against civilians and non-combatants, also known as terrorism.

- There are 4 stages of the radicalisation process which include pre-radicalisation, self- identification, indoctrination, and aggression or violence

- The four-stage process begins by identifying some unsatisfying event, condition, or grievance ("It's not right") and framing it as being unjust ("It's not fair"). The third stage involves blaming the injustice on a target policy, group, person, or nation ("It's your fault") and the fourth and final stage involves identifying, vilifying, and even demonising the responsible party ("You're evil"), which facilitates the justification of or impetus to aggression.

- Some signs of radicalisation include isolating oneself from family and friends; talking as if from a scripted speech; unwillingness or inability to discuss one's views, and a sudden disrespectful attitude towards others.

- Radicalisation starts with being a sympathizer, then a supporter, then an activist and then a fighter for a cause.

- Factors contributing to violent radicalisation processes can be familial, social, gender-based, socioeconomic, psychological, religious, ideological, historical, cultural, political, propaganda, social media or internet-based.

- Self-radicalisation is rare. Evidence points to the influence of believers in a cause including neighbours, cliques of friends, religious adherents, and relatives through an indoctrination process.

- Becoming radicalised is a gradual process and one that requires progression through distinct states and happens neither quickly nor easily. Thus, a person does not become a radical overnight although the influence of a "catalyst event" may accelerate the process.

- The catalyst event has been described by Quintan Wiktorowicz (2004; 2005) as a "cognitive opening" which makes a person more receptive to the possibility of new ideas and world views. This shocking event or personal crisis shakes an individual's certitude in previously held beliefs, prompts them to re-assess their entire life and become open to a radical change of values and behaviour.

2.2.2 Violent Extremism

- Violent extremism is when a person or group uses fear, terror, or violence to try and achieve change.

- Violent extremism is the beliefs and actions of people who support or use violence to achieve ideological, religious, or political goals.

- Violent extremism includes terrorism and other forms of religious or politically motivated and communal violence.

- Violent extremism is caused by an avowed identity derived from strong religious beliefs and a strong in-group membership that stigmatizes and dehumanizes other groups and beliefs.

- The earliest Quranic verses dealing with the right to engage in a "defensive" jihad, or struggle, were revealed shortly after the hijra (emigration) of Muhammad and his followers to Medina in flight from their persecution in Mecca. At a time when they were forced to fight for their lives, Muhammad is told: "Leave is given to those who fight because they were wronged—surely God is able to help them—who were expelled from their homes wrongfully for saying, 'Our Lord is God'" (22:39–40).

- The defensive nature of jihad is clearly emphasized in 2:190, "And fight in the way of God with those who fight you but aggress not: God loves not the aggressors." At critical points throughout the years.

- Qur'anic verses such as 2:294 emphasized that warfare and the response to violence and aggression must be proportional: "Whoever transgresses against you, respond in kind."

- Most often, religious leaders misuse scriptural verses out of context to radicalise followers.

Module 2:
DEFINITION OF CONCEPTS

2.3 — PEACE - BUILDING AND PECEFUL CO - EXISTENCE

This session will enable participants to:

- Understand the *definition* of peace
- Understand the meaning of Peaceful Co -Existence
- Explore the relationship between Peace-building and Peaceful Co-Existence
- Appreciate the *role* of religion in promoting peace in the society and community

OBJECTIVES

Time: 30 Minutes

DISCUSSION GUIDE

1. Welcome group members and let them know that today, we are going to be talking about Peace-building and Peaceful Co-Existence, and the role of religion in promoting Peace.

2. Agree on who will take notes for the group

3. Remind the group of the ground rules set earlier which might have included the following:

   - Mutual Respect for Differences.

   - Acknowledgement and Empathy

   - Openness and Tolerance

   - Equality and Striving to Eliminate Judgement.

   - Active Listening and Trying to understand the other and what is going on beyond one's own biases and preconceived ideas.

4.   Divide participants into 2 groups. Write the following passages from the Qur'an and from the Bible on flip charts and let each group read them:

   • Group A: Qur'an 16:125; Qur'an 2:256; Qur'an 4:140; Qur'an 10:25; Qur'an 2:208; 1 Cor. 9:19-22; Rom. 13:8-10; Genesis 3:1-8, Genesis 26:25-29; Genesis 35:4-47.

   • Group B: Matthew 5:43-48. Leviticus 19:18; Qur'an 16:127-128; Qur'an 10:10; Qur'an 45:14; Qur'an 22:40; Qur'an 2:190; Qur'an 8:61; Genesis 26:2-29; John 14:26–27.

5.   Ask each group to read, identify, explain, and present in plenary what these passages say about peaceful co-existence and social cohesion between people of diverse faiths.

6.   Ask participants what they think Peaceful Coexistence and Social Cohesion mean and how it can be promoted by our various Faiths.

7.   How can religious leaders promote peaceful co-existence and social cohesion?

8.   Let each group discuss why peaceful co-existence is important and present their responses in plenary on flip charts.

9.   Explain the meanings and importance of peace, peacebuilding, social cohesion, and peaceful co-existence as in the Facilitator's Notes 2.3

10.   TASK: Ask each participant to list the actions they will take to promote peaceful co-existence in their own neighbourhoods and communities of faith.

2.3   PEACE BUILDING, PEACEFUL CO-EXISTENCE AND SOCIAL COHESION

2.3.1 Building A Culture of Peace:

- Most religions teach and value peace.

- The teachings of Islam invite people to live a peaceful life based on belief, justice, and purity. Therefore, peace in Islam is an eternal constitution. Even the nature of war in Islam is a defensive one, not an offensive one, because the principle of Islam is peace and coexistence, not conflict, violence, and war.

- Galtung defines peace as "the absence of violence in every form" (Galtung, 1996: 9), whether direct or structural. Direct violence is manifested in various forms of intentional bodily harm, including killing, maiming, siege, and any other form of force to the body that causes harm and poses an affront to basic human needs. Structural violence is a form of violence that results from the presence of social structures whose cornerstones are exploitation and repression (1996: 198).

- Peace is more than the absence of war. It is also "the maintenance of an orderly and just society," orderly in being protected against the violence or extortion of aggressors, and just in being defended against exploitation and abuse by the more powerful (Howard, 1971: 226).

- There are many principles in Islamic teachings that provide a foundation for creative peacemaking. In Arabic salaam is translated as peace and is considered as one of the holy names of God. (Nasr, 2002: 217).

- Christianity and Islam are religions of universalism, tolerance, peace, and reconciliation. Islam teaches that life is sacred, and that the believer has a duty to uphold truth and justice. Social justice is the core principle of both Islam and Christianity.

- Pursuing justice in the face of oppression and suffering is the personal and collective duty of every Christian and Muslim. But Islam is often misunderstood as a religion of the sword that justifies the use of violence to spread the faith.

- Concepts of peace are at the core of the Islamic teachings. The term Salaam envisions a peaceful, harmonious social order of justice towards all without violence or conflict.

- The word "Islam" originates from the Arabic root Salam which means peace and submission to the will of God. Every Muslim is ordered to greet other Muslims with the words "Assalam-o- Alaikum" (peace be upon you).

- The first and cardinal principle of culture of peace is the acceptance of religious faith is optional. According to Islamic teachings, people are free to accept or not to accept a religious belief. Qur'an says: "Let there be no compulsion in religion: Truth stands out clear from error: whoever rejects evil and believes in Allah has grasped the most trustworthy handhold that never breaks. And God hears and knows all things." (Qur'an 2: 256).

- On this point, the Qur'an is unequivocal: "The truth is from your Lord, so whoever wills- let him believe; and whoever wills - let him disbelieve" (Qur'an 18:29).

- The message to non-Muslims is, "For you is your religion, and for me is my religion." (Qur'an 109: 6). These passages counsel tolerance and patience toward other faiths. Therefore, religious faith is a voluntary matter that individuals must choose freely and consciously and not compulsively.

- The message of the Qur'an is to respect dissenting beliefs and to recognize the freedom of others. This principle can in many cases prevent cultural violence and contribute to the realization of a culture of peace.

- The second principle in creating a culture of peace and a non-violent society is Islam's emphasis on peace as the primary law and non-violence. The Qur'an says God invites people to peace: "Allah invites to the Home of Peace, and guides whomever He wills to a straight path". (Qur'an 10: 25)

2.3.2 Peaceful co-existence and Social Cohesion

- Peaceful co-existence is a state in which two or more groups live together, respecting their differences and resolving their conflicts in a nonviolent manner.

- Peaceful co-existence and social cohesion is built on relationships characterized by a recognition and respect for diversity and an active embrace of difference, equal access to resources and opportunities, and equity in all aspects of life by the individuals and communities. This type of coexistence manifests social peace based on justice, equality, and inclusion.

- In several verses of the Holy Qur'an, God refers to Himself as as-Salam or "Peace". So, the spirit of peace and harmony is rooted in every norm and value of Islam.

- Peaceful co-existence is built on the pillars of (1) Dialogue - coming together by two parties in dispute to talk things over amicably; (2) Tolerance- Showing maximum understanding and accommodating someone who is against us, knowing that two wrongs cannot make a right and (3) Forgiveness- calling for reconciliation or settlement of disputes and letting things be.

- Where there is no peaceful co-existence, the community experiences insecurity, loss of lives, hatred, intolerance, conflicts and breakdown of law and order.

Module 2:
DEFINITION OF CONCEPTS

This session will enable participants to:

OBJECTIVES

- Understand the definition of intolerance
- Understand the concept of Blasphemy and Heresy
- Understand the meaning of Blasphemy in Islam and Christianity
- Explore the relationship between Blasphemy, Religious Intolerance and Violent Extremism

Time: 30 Minutes

DISCUSSION GUIDE

1. Welcome group members and let them know that today, we are going to be talking about religious intolerance and major concepts that constitutes intolerance in the contexts of Islam and Christianity, and how it contributes to religious intolerance and violent extremism.

2. Agree on who will take notes for the group

3. Remind the group of the ground rules set earlier which might have included the following:

    - Mutual Respect for Differences.
    - Acknowledgment and Empathy
    - Openness and Tolerance,
    - Equality and Striving to Eliminate Judgement.
    - Active Listening and Trying to understand the other and what is going on beyond one's own biases and preconceived ideas.

4. **Request participants to brainstorm major factors that are not tolerated among the believers of the two religions.**

- Group A: [Mark 3:22-30; John 10:33-36; Acts 13:45; Exodus 20:7; Qur'an 9:65–66; Qur'an 79:15 – 26; Qur'an 15:92; Qur'an 33:49; Qur'an 20:131; Qur'an 6:108](#)

- Group B: Rev. 2:9; 1 Tim. 1:20; Romans 2:24; Leviticus 24:16; Qur'an 9:74; Qur'an 6:108; Qur'an 43:8; Qur'an 4:157; Qur'an 23:71; Qur'an 4:140-141.

5.   Ask each group to identify what these passages say about blasphemy and religious intolerance.

6.   Ask participants what they think Blasphemy and Heresy mean and how it can lead to violent extremism in our various Faiths.

7.   How should religious leaders deal with issues of blasphemy by others of different religions? How did Jesus Christ and Prophet Mohammad (PBUH) deal with blasphemy against them and their message?

8.   Let each group discuss and present their responses in plenary on flip charts.

9.   Explain the meanings of blasphemy, heresy and intolerance from the Christian and Islamic perspectives as in the Facilitator's Notes 2.4

10.   TASK: Ask each participant to list the actions they will take to avoid blasphemies in their own faiths and other faiths different from theirs.

2.4 BLASPHEMY AND HERESY IN ISLAM AND CHRISTIANITY

2.4.1 Defining Blasphemy and Heresy:

- According to Merriam-Webster, blasphemy is defined as "the act of insulting or showing contempt or lack of reverence for God; and/or the act of claiming the attributes of a deity".
- "Blasphemy" denotes any utterance that insults God or Christ, Allah, or Muhammed and gives deeply felt offense to their followers.
- Heresy, on the other hand, refers to a belief or opinion contrary to orthodox religious doctrine or generally accepted belief

2.4.2 Blasphemy and Heresy in Islam

- In Islamic countries generally no distinction is made between blasphemy and heresy, so that any perceived rejection of the Prophet or his message, by Muslims or non-Muslims, is regarded as blasphemous.
- From the viewpoint of Islamic law, blasphemy may be defined as any verbal expression that gives grounds for suspicion of apostasy (riddah). Islamic law describes blaphemy as the expression of denigration (istikhfāf), contempt (iḥānah), or scorn (ḥaqārah) for God, the Prophets, the Qurʾān, the angels, or the traditional religious sciences based on revelation.
- In theological terms, blasphemy often overlaps with infidelity (kufr), which is the deliberate rejection of God and revelation; in this sense, expressing religious opinions at variance with standard Islamic views could easily be looked upon as heresy (zandaqah) or blasphemy.
- Prophet Muḥammad's (PBUH) opponents mocked his claim to be an inspired prophet and accused him variously of being possessed, a soothsayer, a magician, a poet, or an unscrupulous power-seeker.
- From the beginning, as the Qurʾān attests, the blasphemous language of the Prophet's opponents thus consisted of calling divine revelation a lie (takdhīb).
- Insult to the Prophet was particularly blasphemous, since Muḥammad was the chief medium of that revelation. Among Muḥammad's opponents the Qurʾān (sūrah 111) singles out Abū Lahab above all as destined to punishment in hellfire;

- The Qurʾān stresses the opposition that previous prophets experienced, as in the notable case of the pharaoh who called the revelation to Moses a lie, saying, "I am your highest Lord" (79:24).

- As a rejection of divine lordship, this saying is usually considered to be the height of blasphemy. Within the early Islamic community itself, the "hypocrites" (munāfiqūn) uttered blasphemous jests about God and the Prophet (9:65–66).

- Such mockery constituted infidelity (kufr) after professing faith (īmān) and invalidated whatever good deeds they might have previously performed (Qur'an 5:5).

- If blasphemy was punishable by death in Islam, then the Prophet would have been the first one to order the killing of hundreds of his foes who later became his closest companions.

- Except for very few earlier Arabs who accepted the Prophet as the Messenger of Allah, most people of Makkah opposed him, humiliated him, cursed or blasphemed him or even tried to kill him, yet he preferred to practice forgiveness and to seek the divine mercy for them (Qur'an 6:108; Qur'an 9:74; Qur'an 42:37; Qur'an 49:11).

- The Quran mentions many blasphemous utterances of the non--believers and hypocrites against the Holy Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), without mentioning any physical punishment for perpetrators.

2.4.3 Blasphemy and Heresy in Christianity

- Blasphemy in Christianity is generally defined as the act or offense of speaking sacrilegiously about God or sacred things, synonymous with irreverence and disrespect of God, Jesus Christ, or the Holy Spirit.

- Blasphemy is a term that appears in both the Old and New Testament. According to 'Smiths Bible Dictionary, blasphemy signifies the speaking evil of God and in this sense is found in Psalms 74:18, Isaiah 52:5, Romans 2:24, etc.

2.4.4 Relationship between Blasphemy, Religious Intolerance and Violent Extremism in Christianity and Islam

- It may mean also any sort of slander and abuse: (1 Kings 21:10, Acts 18:6, Jude 1:9), etc. Blasphemy was punished by stoning, which was inflicted on the son of Shelomith (Leviticus 24:11).

- It was on the charge of blasphemy that, both the Lord Jesus Christ and Stephen were condemned to death by the Jews.

- Blasphemy, most often, constitutes the basis for hostility and intolerance towards those who believe differently, drives extremism, undermines the rule of law, and leads directly to violence.

- Blasphemy laws encourage violent extremism by creating a culture of vigilantism in which extremists, claiming to be the

Module 3:

FACILITATING INTER-RELIGIOUS DIALOGUE

This module comprises 8 sessions which explore the following topics:

3.1   Principles of Facilitation

3.2   The Skills and Responsibilities of Group Facilitation

3.3   The Inter-Faith Charter & Principles of Inter-Religious Dialogue

3.4   Rights, Responsibilities and Skills of Inter-Religious Dialogue Participants

3.5   Inter-Religious Dialogue – Christian and Islamic Perspectives

3.6   Conceptual Challenges and Obstacles to Inter-Religious Dialogue

Module 3:
FACILITATING INTER-RELIGIOUS DIALOGUE

3.1 | **PRINCIPLES OF FACILITATION**

This session will enable participants to:

- Understand the *definition* & principles of Facilitation
- Differentiate *Facilitation* from *Teaching*
- Appreciate the *Importance* of effective facilitation

OBJECTIVES

Time: 30 Minutes

DISCUSSION GUIDE

1. Welcome group members and let them know that today, we are going to be talking about Inter-faith dialogue and how it differs from a debate.

2. Agree on who will take notes for the group

3. Help the group to set ground rules which may include the following values guiding Inter-faith Dialogue:

    - Mutual Respect for Differences.
    - Acknowledgement and Empathy
    - Openness and Tolerance,
    - Equality and Striving to Eliminate Judgement.
    - Active Listening and Trying to understand the other and what is going on beyond one's own biases and preconceived ideas.

4. Divide participants into 2 groups – A and B. Let each group appoint a group captain. Let the captain of each group chose a topic to be discussed by the group e.g., forgiveness; marriage; peace; etc.

5.   In preparation for a role play, let the captain of Group "A" TEACH them on the chosen topic, and let the captain of Group "B" FACILITATE a discussion around their chosen topic.

6.   Give each group 10 minutes to present their role play.

7.   In a plenary, ask participants the following:

- What did they observe in each of the role plays?
- What caught their attention the most and why?
- What is Facilitation and how does facilitation differ from teaching?
- What are the principles on which effective facilitation is based?
- Why is facilitation important in Inter-faith Dialogue?

8.   Explain the meanings, principles, differences between facilitation and teaching and the importance of facilitation as in the Facilitator's Notes 3.1

FACILITATOR'S NOTES

3.1 **PRINCIPLES OF FACILITATION**

3.1.1 Defining Facilitation:

- Facilitation is a set of skills used in working with a group, by enabling and supporting them to achieve their objectives in a way that involves and respects all contributions, builds ownership, and releases the potential of the group and its members.

- Facilitation refers to the process of structuring and guiding dialogues to help groups converse and collaborate more productively.

- It is the art and practice of making meetings easier (from the Latin root "facilis"), more effective, fun and productive for all the parties involved

3.1.2 Principles of Facilitation

Facilitation of Inter-Faith Dialogue is based on the following Principles:

- Democratic participation: Decisions are rooted in democratic discussions, not debate and arguments or an individual opinion.
- Respect for Diversity: Participants hear, share, and consider different perspectives and personal experiences and have an opportunity to discover areas of common interest or concern
- Equality & Mutual Trust: Participants have equal control in the group; everyone is honest and transparent about their feelings and the contributions of everyone are valued without judging or criticizing.
- Ownership: Participants take responsibility for their actions and own the decisions agreed upon by the group
- Cooperation: Participants seek to work together & cooperate rather than compete, with clear ground rules guiding group and individual behaviours.

- Clarity of Purpose: Participants have a clear understanding of what they want to achieve in the group session, and everyone is focused on the goal with minimal distractions or deviations.
- Positive Identity: Participants are accepted for who they are, feel positive about themselves and have a sense of belonging within the group.
- Positive Relationships: Participants have positive relationships with each other and build a sense of community and hold each other to high expectations or accountability standards.

3.1.3 How Facilitation Differs from Teaching

Facilitation is Different from Teaching in a few ways:

	TEACHING	FACILITATION
1	Starts from the teacher's own knowledge	Starts with assessing the knowledge of the group
2	Follows a pre-set curriculum	Addresses issues identified by the group
3	Delivers lectures to learners usually from the front of the room	Use practical participatory methods, e.g., discussions, games, and activities in which all participate
4	Information flows in just one direction – from the teacher to the learners	Information flows in many directions between the facilitator and group members
5	Focuses on enabling learners understanding of a given subject by **providing** the *right answers*	Focuses on enabling the groups' understanding by **asking** the *right questions*
6	Adopts a formal relationship with the learners based on the status of a teacher	Facilitators are considered as an equal and develop relationships with the group based on mutual respect and a desire to serve

3.1.4 Why Facilitation is Important in Inter-religious Dialogue

- Provides leadership direction and guides group processes and assists the group to arrive at a consensus and desired results
- Helps the group to understand its task and what is expected of them
- Creates and sustains a democratic participatory environment
- Helps the group to recognize and respect diversity and ensures inclusiveness and equality within the group
- Brings out the best in individuals and in the group and makes everyone feel valued and respected within the group

Module 3:
FACILITATING INTER-RELIGIOUS DIALOGUE

3.2 | **SKILLS & RESPONSIBILITIES OF GROUP FACILITATION**

This session will enable participants to:

- Understand the *Skills* needed for effective Facilitation
- Appreciate the *Roles and Responsibilities* of the Facilitator

Time: 30 Minutes

OBJECTIVES

DISCUSSION GUIDE

1. Welcome group members and let them know that today, we are going to be talking about the skills needed in facilitating inter-faith dialogue and the responsibilities of facilitators.

2. Agree on who will take notes for the group

3. Remind the group of the ground rules which may include the following values guiding Inter-faith Dialogue:

   - Mutual Respect for Differences.
   - Acknowledgement and Empathy
   - Openness and Tolerance,
   - Equality and Striving to Eliminate Judgement.
   - Active Listening and Trying to understand the other and what is going on beyond one's own biases and preconceived ideas.

4. Divide participants into 2 groups – A and B. Let each group appoint a group captain. Let the captain of each group chose a topic to be discussed by the group e.g., forgiveness; marriage; peace; etc.

5.   In preparation for a role play, let the captains of Group "A" and "B" facilitate a discussion around their chosen topic.

6.   Give each group 10 minutes to present their role play.

7.   In a plenary, ask participants the following:

- What did they observe in each of the role plays?
- What caught their attention the most and why?
- What skills did you observe the facilitators displaying?
- What roles do you think the facilitators played in the group?
- What are the responsibilities of the facilitator in Inter-faith Dialogue?

8.   Explain the meanings, Principles, and importance of dialogue as in the Facilitator's Notes 3.2

3.2   SKILLS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF FACILITATION

3.2.1 Facilitation Skills:

Facilitation is a set of skills used in working with a group, by enabling and supporting them to achieve their objectives in a way that involves and respects all contributions, builds ownership, and releases the potential of the group and its members.

- Be A Good Listener

  – Take listening seriously - resist distractions and refrain from speaking for others.
  – Focus your listening; listen for main points and suspend judgement
  – Use non-verbal cues like nodding to show that you are following

- Stay impartial!

  – The most important thing to remember is that, as a facilitator, you should not share your personal views or try to push your own agenda on the issue. You are there to serve the discussion, not to join it.
  – Try not to interfere with the discussion unless you must.
  – Don't allow the group to turn to you for the answers.
  – Resist the urge to speak after each comment or answer every question.
  – Allow participants to respond directly to each other.

- Set a relaxed atmosphere

  – Welcome everyone and create a friendly and relaxed atmosphere.
  – Well-placed humor is usually appreciated.
  – At the beginning of the dialogue, remind everyone that the purpose of the dialogue is to work with one another to look at the issue at hand or find solutions to problems

- Also, remind them that your role as facilitator is to remain neutral, keep the discussion focused, and guide the conversation
- Start with the ground rules for participants, and then ask participants to add their own ideas. Ground rules might include:
  - Keep an open mind.
  - Assume the best intentions.
  - Don't be afraid to ask questions.
  - Disagree respectfully
  - Contribute to the conversation and make space for others.
  - The Vegas Rule of confidentiality: (what happens in the dialogue space stays in the dialogue space).
  - Create a Safe Space for All Participants
  -
- Acknowledge the hopes and fears that everyone brings to the table.
- While you want to remain impartial, it is also important to create a safe space for all participants.
- Interrupt expressions of prejudice but don't attack the person making them.
- Strategies include:
  - Asking for more information: "What led you to believe this about_____?"
  - Paraphrasing the feelings which you hear expressed: "If I am not mistaken, I hear you saying_____?"
  - Challenging stereotypes indirectly by asking for counterexamples: "Does anyone have an experience or know of an example that differs from what was just said?"

3.2.2   Roles and Responsibilities of the Facilitator

- Prepares for group meetings ahead of time and mobilizes group members and informs them of upcoming activities
- Follows up on group tasks and decisions to ensure implementation
- The primary responsibilities of the facilitator include elaborating on Issues, engaging participation, exploring all views, engineering creativity explaining tasks and evaluating outcomes.
- The facilitator is a guide, motivator, task manager, enabler, and planner.
- Other responsibilities of the facilitator include remaining neutral & impartial, keeping discussions focused deepening the level of sharing with probing questions, clarifying/summarizing key points, and creating opportunities for everyone to belong

Module 3:
FACILITATING INTER-RELIGIOUS DIALOGUE

OBJECTIVES

This session will enable participants to:

- Understand the *Inter- Faith Charter* and ground rules guiding interfaith dialogue
- Appreciate the *Core principles* of Inter-religious dialogue

Time: 60 Minutes

DISCUSSION GUIDE

1. Welcome group members and let them know that today, we are going to be talking about Inter-faith charter and the core principles guiding inter-religious dialogue.

2. Agree on who will take notes for the group

3. Remind the group of the ground rules which may include the following values guiding Inter-faith Dialogue:

   - Mutual Respect for Differences.
   - Acknowledgment and Empathy
   - Openness and Tolerance,
   - Equality and Striving to Eliminate Judgement.
   - Active Listening and Trying to understand the other and what is going on beyond one's own biases and preconceived ideas.

4. Give each participant a flash card and ask them to write one generalized negative perception that followers of their own faith (e.g., Christians) have about followers of the other faith (e.g., Muslims). Give one colour of cards (e.g., pink) to Muslims and another colour (e.g., blue) to Christians.

5.   When they are done writing, let them put the flashcards in a basket in front of the room and mix them up.

6.   Divide participants into 2 groups of Muslims (A) and Christians (B). Let each group pick up the cards the other religious group members wrote and, in their groups, discuss based on relevant scriptural references, the right perception that corrects the wrong perception.

7.   In plenary, let each group present their responses to the misconceptions of the other group.

8.   Ask participants how they felt reading what others think about their religion, and how the others felt after the responses to their misconceptions.

9.   Let each group discuss the following questions:

   •   What fears could participants have during an inter-faith dialogue?
   •   What expectations would participants have during an inter-religious dialogue?
   •   What principles should guide the way people relate and participate in the dialogue?
   •   What are areas of potential disagreement and how should such sensitive issues be handled?
   •   What can be done by both participants and facilitators to build bridges of mutual understanding and collaboration across religious divides during the inter-faith dialogue?

10.   Explain the Interfaith Charter & the Principles of inter-religious dialogue as in Facilitator's Notes 3.3

3.3   THE INTER-FAITH CHARTER & PRINCIPLES OF INTER-RELIGIOUS DIALOGUE

3.3.1   The Inter-Faith Charter – Ground Rules for Inter-Religious Dialogue

1   Have a good grasp of your own religious tradition - When engaging in inter-faith dialogue a person needs to bring with them a deeply lived experience of their own faith tradition to be able to share with others.

2   Come to dialogue to learn and grow, not to change the other – each dialogue participant needs to come with an openness to learn and to change in their own attitudes and perceptions, not out of a desire to change the other. In this way, all those who participate will be changed in some way because of the dialogue.

3   Be willing also to help your own faith community to grow and change - Since dialogue is a corporate activity, it is necessary that each person enters dialogue not only across faith lines but also with other members of their own faith community, to share with them the fruits of interfaith dialogue. In this way, the whole community can eventually learn and change, gaining ever more perceptive insight into reality.

4   Be honest and sincere and assume that others are equally honest and sincere - Real dialogue is built on mutuality and trust.

5   Respect the religious experience and identity of others and anticipate that they will do the same for you. - Each dialogue partner can best define what it means for them to be an authentic member of their own religion. This does not preclude a person changing, deepening, expanding, and modifying their self-definition and understanding because of the dialogue.

6   Don't assume in advance where points of agreement or disagreement will exist - Listen with empathy and sympathy and avoid presumptions about what the other will say. See how much is held in common while maintaining the integrity of your own religious beliefs. If there is a real point of disagreement, it needs to be respected.

7   Be prepared to participate in the dialogue on an equal footing - Each partner/participant needs to come prepared to learn from the other and to share their own understanding on an equal basis. There is no such thing as one-way dialogue.

8 Be self-reflective and prepared to critique your own tradition - In inter-faith dialogue, a person needs to combine healthy self-criticism with an ability to hold to one's religious tradition with integrity and conviction. A lack of such self-criticism implies that one's own religious tradition already has all the correct answers and that one has nothing to learn. Such an attitude makes inter-faith dialogue not only unnecessary but almost impossible.

9 Strive to experience the other's faith 'from within' and be prepared to view yourself differently because of an 'outside' perspective - A religion is not merely something of the head, but also of the spirit, heart and 'whole being', individual and communal. You must try to 'pass over' into the other's religious experience and then coming back enlightened and deepened.

10 Try to be aware of the cultural conditioning and historical memory we bring to dialogue – Some participants in the dialogue may come with painful memories of past injustices. It is important to be aware of how historical memory and cultural influences may impact on our dialogue, and exercise forgiveness and tolerance where needed.

3.3.2 Principles of Inter-Religious Dialogue - Building Better Inter-Religious Relationships

The following 10 principles serve as a guideline when engaging in interfaith dialogue:

- Establish a safe space: create a safe environment that encourages participants in the dialogue to express feelings, ideas, and even negative perceptions of others. Create a feeling of trust and openness by treating each other equally despite power inequalities and sharing time and space fairly among all participants.

- Agree that the main purpose of the dialogue is learning: The participants should approach the dialogue with the intention of learning about others and their perceptions of the subject of the dialogue. This is essential for success, as it counters the debate approach, which aims to prove one right and the other wrong.

- Use appropriate communication skills. Listening actively and with empathy, speaking with sincerity and respect, and knowing how to convey basic ideas or questions with clarity are all important communication skills to enable a constructive dialogue.

- Set proper ground rules: Ground rules help to facilitate dialogue and support the safe environment. The rules can be established together with the participants or laid out at the beginning by the facilitator.

FACILITATOR'S NOTES

- Take risks, express feelings, and confront perceptions with honesty. Dialogue aims to build confidence and provide a feeling of safety in the group. Participants should be encouraged to participate actively, speak openly and from the heart, and listen with attention to others' thoughts and feelings.

- Put relationships before issues. Dialogue is a transformative process, based on building relationships and trust between different personalities and identities to overcome misunderstandings and manage differences. See the other party as a partner, not a rival, and to notice a common interest in solving the issue instead of letting it be something that divides us.

- Expect to be changed: Dialogue provides the opportunity to walk in the shoes of others. By sharing perceptions, and resolving mis-perceptions when needed, we may discover some new perspectives. We should have flexible opinions and be ready to change. This is not about changing our values (although this can happen if we want) but about being open to changing our points of view, stereotypes about others and the way we perceive issues.

Module 3:
FACILITATING INTER-RELIGIOUS DIALOGUE

3.4 | RIGHTS, RESPONSIBILITIES AND SKILLS OF INTER-FAITH DIALOGUE PARTICIPANTS

This session will enable participants to:

Time: 30 Minutes

- Understand the *Rights* of participants during Inter-faith Dialogue
- Appreciate the *Responsibilities* of participants during Inter-faith Dialogue, and

OBJECTIVES

- Identify the *Skills* required by participants during Inter-faith Dialogue.

DISCUSSION GUIDE

1.   Welcome group members and let them know that today, we are going to be talking about the rights, responsibilities and skills of participants during Inter-faith dialogue

2.   Agree on who will take notes for the group

3.   Remind the group of the ground rules which may include the following values guiding Inter-faith Dialogue:

   - Mutual Respect for Differences.
   - Acknowledgment and Empathy
   - Openness and Tolerance,
   - Equality and Striving to Eliminate Judgement.
   - Active Listening and Trying to understand the other and what is going on beyond one's own biases and preconceived ideas.

4.   Divide participants into 3 groups – A, B and C. Let each group appoint a group leader and notetaker.

5.   Let the captain of each group discuss the following Questions:

- Group A: How would you like to be treated in an inter-religious dialogue meeting? What rights do participants have that must be respected during inter-religious dialogue?

- Group B: How should participants not be treated in an inter-religious dialogue meeting? What responsibilities do participants have towards each other in an inter-religious dialogue?

- Group C: What would you consider to be a successful inter-religious dialogue? What skills do participants need to have to make an inter-religious dialogue successful?

6.   In a plenary, let each group present their responses to the above questions and let others make inputs.

7.   Explain the rights, responsibilities, and skills of participants during inter-religious dialogue as in the Facilitator's Notes 3.4

3.4 RIGHTS, RESPONSIBILITIES AND SKILLS OF INTERFAITH DIALOGUE PARTICIPANTS

3.4.1 Rights of Participants During Inter-Faith Dialogue:

It is necessary to emphasise that for true dialogue to occur, it needs to take place within a protective environment of mutually accepted rights and responsibilities, rooted in two fundamental values: respect for the human person and trust in the process of dialogue:

- Each person has the right to define him/herself without being labeled by others
- Each person has the right to express his or her beliefs, ideas, and feelings
- Each person has the right to ask questions that help him/her understand what someone else has said
- Each person has the right not to change or be forced to change their views or values
- Each person has the right to expect that what is said will be held in confidence
- Each person has the right to equal participation and airtime

3.4.2 Responsibilities of Participants During Inter-Faith Dialogue:

During inter-faith dialogue, each participant has the responsibility to:

- Be willing to seriously question his/her assumptions about 'the other'
- Allow the same right of self-expression that s/he expects for him/herself
- Ask questions that respect the other's right of self-definition, even in times of conflict or disagreement
- Accept the others as equal partners in the dialogue, and acknowledge the dignity of the faith traditions represented
- Agree to hold what others say in confidence
- Seek first to understand, then to be understood.
- Withhold judgments and stereotypes about what others say.
- Honor and share "airtime."
- Be respectful of self and others.

- Listen actively and intentionally.
- Speak from personal experience using "I" statements and refrain from speaking for others.
- Ask "genuine questions" for better understanding.
- Maintain an open mind about the process and content of the dialogue.

3.4.3   Skills of Participants During Inter-Faith Dialogue:

- Each person should be able to evaluate and articulate his/her own attitudes, values, and positions on issues within the context of his/her religious tradition
- Each person should learn how to be more sensitive to what the other is saying
- Each person should learn how to respond to questions in ways that help others understand
- Each person should learn to deal with different points of view while maintaining his/her own integrity
- Each person should learn to deal with others from a position of mutual trust, based on an expectation

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FACILITATING INTER-RELIGIOUS DIALOGUE

3.5

This session will enable participants to:

- Appreciate the *importance* of Inter-religious dialogue in building a peaceful society
- Understand the Christian perspective of Inter-religious dialogue
- Explore the Islamic perspective of Inter-religious dialogue

OBJECTIVES

Time: 30 Minutes

DISCUSSION GUIDE

1.   Welcome group members and let them know that today, we are going to be looking at inter-religious dialogue from both the Christian and Islamic perspectives and the Biblical and Quranic scriptures that justify inter-religious dialogue based on the experiences of Jesus Christ and Prophet Mohammad (PBUH) as they interacted with other faiths.

2.   Agree on who will take notes for the group

3.   Remind the group of the ground rules set earlier which might have included the following:

- Mutual Respect for Differences.
- Acknowledgement and Empathy
- Openness and Tolerance,
- Equality and Striving to Eliminate Judgement.
- Active Listening and Trying to understand the other and what is going on beyond one's own biases and preconceived ideas.

4.   Divide participants into 2 groups - Group A (Muslims) and Group B (Christians).

5.   Let each group discuss the following tasks:

- Group A: How did the Prophet Mohammad (PBUH) relate and dialogue with gentiles, Jewish religious leaders, Christians, and Political leaders in his time? How does the Qur'an enjoin believers to relate with non-Muslims? How can we apply these principles in today's context in Nigeria to promote inter-religious Dialogue and peaceful co-existence?

- Group B: How did the Lord Jesus Christ and the Apostles relate and dialogue with gentiles, Jewish religious leaders, Christians, and Political leaders in their time? How does the Bible enjoin believers to relate with non-Christians? How can we apply these principles in today's context in Nigeria to promote inter-religious Dialogue and peaceful co-existence?

6.   Let each group discuss their questions and present their responses in plenary on flip charts.

7.   Ask what were the commonalities in the two group presentations? What does this tell us?

8.   Explain the importance of Interfaith dialogue, and the Christian and Islamic perspectives to Interfaith Dialogue as in the Facilitator's Notes 3.5

9.   TASK: Ask each participant to write down actions they will take to promote inter-religious dialogue by their own communities of faith with other faiths.

3.5 **INTERFAITH DIALOGUE – CHRISTIAN AND ISLAMIC PERSPECTIVES**

3.5.1 Inter-Religious Dialogue: A necessity for building a culture of peace.

- Interreligious dialogue increases the understanding that a believer has of the beliefs and practices of the other. This enhanced understanding can lead to a more peaceable coexistence in the pluralistic culture
- Interreligious dialogue also brings believers and practitioners to better understand their own faith. Because inter-religious dialogue touches on the differences between religions, they are forced to examine their own beliefs to support these positions. This examination increases their own self-understanding, helping them to differentiate between the truth and the cultural lenses through which people too frequently interpret each other's religions.
- Inter-religious dialogue increases our ability to love our neighbours. Dialogue will enhance our ability to see that each person is our neigbour. Moral relations developed through inter-religious dialogue will improve as clarified understanding of one's own faith and lives of neighbours erases misconceptions about other religions.

3.5.2 Inter-Religious Dialogue: A Christian Perspective

- Jesus and Paul engaged in dialogues with other faiths and adopted non-violent approaches in making their teachings known.
- At the climax of the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew Chapters5-7), he spoke the most significant, revolutionary words ever uttered. "You have heard it said, 'Love your countrymen and hate your enemy,' but I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you that you may be children of your heavenly God, for God makes the sun rise on the bad and the good, and he causes the rain to fall on the just and the unjust. Be compassionate as God is compassionate." (Mt. 5:43-48).
- Jesus engaged with Jewish religious leaders on various contentious subjects, questioning what they believed and providing answers to their questions, in the most non-violent manner and whenever they resorted to violence, Jesus avoided any direct confrontations or conflicts, even when they charged him for blasphemy.
- In Luke 10: 25 – 37, Jesus opened a dialogue with the Jewish teacher of the law, as well as in John 4: 1 – 40, Jesus engaged in an inter-religious dialogue with the Samaritans to pass across His teachings and they ended up changing their world views.

- In Acts 17, Apostle Paul engages in an inter-religious dialogue with the Athenians without discrediting their beliefs and even quoted their philosophers, acknowledging certain truths in what others believed without necessarily accepting the entirety of their religion as true (e.g., he quoted a Cretan poet, Epimenides (in Titus 1:12-13), thereby recognizing a notable truth in the beliefs of the Athenians.
- Through the clarified understanding of other religions because of interreligious dialogue, Apostle Paul was able to express his beliefs so that they will be correctly understood by people in other religions and cultures (1 Cor. 9:19 – 22). This can only result from "walking in the shoes of others"
- From a Christian perspective, dialogue should be viewed as a way for understanding how non-Christians perceive Christianity.

3.5.3 Inter-Religious Dialogue: An Islamic Perspective

- Peaceful co-existence is a state in which two or more groups live together, respecting their differences and resolving their conflicts in a nonviolent manner.
- The Prophet Mohammad (PBUH) dialogued with unbelieving gentiles and idol worshippers who refused to receive his teachings, and were instead asking him for miracles as proof that he was the Messenger of God (Qur'an 17:90 – 101) but the Prophet was gentle in responding to them, quoting to them the example of Moses whose signs were not accepted in Egypt, and saying he was sent "only as a deliverer of good news and a warner". He was never confrontational.
- The Prophet Mohammad (PBUH) dialogued with the Jewish Priests (and Rabbis) in Medina. Besides explaining to the Jewish leaders about the intention and passion of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) to live with them peacefully, he also seized opportunities to dialogue with their priests in clarifying the truth of his prophecy and teaching. However, he received a negative response from them, but he was non-violent in his approach, eventually this yielded fruits, as Abdullah ibn Salam converted to Islam from Judaism after listening to the Prophet Mohammad (PBUH).
- The Prophet Mohammad (PBUH) also had dialogue with Christians who were a minority in Medina and were mostly found in Syria and the Arabian Peninsula. His discussions with Adi bin Hatim al-Taᵢi and the Najran delegation visited him in Medina are examples of inter-religious dialogue between the early Christians and Prophet Mohammad (PBUH). The Hadith has it that he received them warmly, gave them food and even gave them space in his mosque for them to pray.
- The Prophet Mohammad (PBUH) dialogued with world leaders including Hercules - the Roman Emperor, Kisra, the Persian Emperor and An-Najashi - the King of Ethiopia, calling on them to embrace Islam as a religion of peace, safety, security, and prosperity.

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3.6 CONCEPTUAL CHALLENGES AND OBSTACLES TO INTER-RELIGIOUS DIALOGUE

This session will enable participants to:

- Appreciate the *conceptual challenges* of Inter-religious dialogue
- Understand the obstacles that hinder Inter-religious dialogue
- Explore the Strategies for overcoming the obstacles hindering Inter-religious dialogue

OBJECTIVES

Time: 30 Minutes

DISCUSSION GUIDE

1. Welcome group members and let them know that today, we are going to be talking about the conceptual challenges and obstacles often faced during religious dialogue and how to overcome them.

2. Agree on who will take notes for the group

3. Remind the group of the ground rules set earlier which might have included the following:

   - Mutual Respect for Differences.
   - Acknowledgement and Empathy
   - Openness and Tolerance,
   - Equality and Striving to Eliminate Judgement.
   - Active Listening and Trying to understand the other and what is going on beyond one's own biases and preconceived ideas.

4.   Divide participants into 2 groups - A (Muslims) and Group B (Christians).

5.   Let each group discuss the following tasks:

   • Group A: What prejudices and stereotypes do Muslims have about Christians? What are these prejudices based on, and how do they affect the ability of Muslims to freely relate with Christians? What roles do culture and the media play in reinforcing these prejudices? How can these stereotypes be overcome?

   • Group B: What prejudices and stereotypes do Christians have about Muslims? What are these prejudices based on, and how do they affect the ability of Christians to freely relate with Muslims? What roles do culture and the media play in reinforcing these prejudices? How can these stereotypes be overcome?

6.   Let each group discuss their questions and present their responses in plenary on flip charts.

7.   Ask what were the commonalities in the two group presentations? What does this tell us?

8.   Explain the conceptual challenges and obstacles to Interfaith Dialogue as in the Facilitator's Notes 3.6

9.   TASK: Ask each participant to write down actions they will take to reduce or break down cultural and religious stereotypes and prejudices that hinder cordial relationships between members of their own communities of faith with members other religions.

3.6   CONCEPTUAL CHALLENGES AND OBSTACLES TO INTERFAITH DIALOGUE

The importance of interfaith dialogue is clear, but there are often fears and obstacles that get in the way of genuine, open, and respectful dialogue. It is therefore important to recognise these obstacles and explore possible ways to overcome them. However, we must acknowledge that in some cases, it may not be possible to change people's minds on these issues, and while education and trust-building are important and fruitful tools, occasionally you may find that some people are simply not willing to engage in dialogue and forcing them to do so may be unfruitful or even outright counter-productive.

Some of these obstacles are listed below:

- I have nothing to learn!': Some people may claim that their religion gives them the whole truth and there is nothing to gain from dialogue with those of other traditions. This is perhaps the most difficult obstacle to overcome because those holding this view will be least likely to change

- Lack of understanding of one's own and other religions: Because the people are badly informed or educated on religious matters, they often become victims of sensationalisation, and vulnerable to media's interpretations of information and this ignorance often leads to social, cultural, and political conflicts

- Fear of losing identity: A common fear which prevents some people from engaging with inter-religious dialogue is the fear of losing their religious identity. There is always an unfounded feeling that mixing with people of different beliefs will water down their own, or harbor unreasonable suspicion of the motives of people inviting them to dialogue. They might worry that what is sought by the dialoguing partners is conversion or assimilation to the other group

- Prejudice and stereotypes: Religious prejudices and stereotypes are often deeply rooted in our societies and constitute an obstacle to inter-faith dialogue. These stereotypes and prejudices arise because of ignorance, fear of others, intellectual laziness, simplification, generalization, and reductionism, fear of losing identity, the influence of persistent historical images and interpretations, media manipulation and over-simplification, the exploitation of religion for political ends and social and economic exclusion:

- Religious Prejudices: With the increase of terrorist attacks globally in the recent years, Muslim communities have experienced an increasingly hostile environment towards them, characterized by suspicion. These prejudices have increased even more since the activities of Al-Qaeda came to global attention in 2001.

- To overcome stereotypes about others which can lead to religious prejudice, it is important to recognize that people are defined not only by their religion but by other characteristics such as age, sex, gender, ethnicity, political, cultural, and economic circumstances. It is crucial not to judge people on first impressions or appearances, and we should seek information from different sources, cross-checking information including using critical enquiry and be able to distinguish between the ideas and teaching of a religion and the practices of its followers.

- Disagreement over the role of religion in society: Different religions often have different ways of seeing their involvement in society. These different approaches to the social role of religion can, if not handled properly, prove problematic to inter-religious dialogue. These issues need to be approached in an informed way, with sensitivity and caution. Such sensitive areas may include the involvement of religion in politics, attitudes of religion to gender roles and to the use of physical force, and the role of religion in education. A typical case is the role of religion and the state in deciding the age of marriage or majority for girls and boys. Inter-religious dialogue will be most constructive when a distinction is made between cultural practice and religious duty, and at the same time maintaining respect, which ultimately reveals the wisdom that often lies behind practices with which we are not familiar.

- Perceived lack of expertise: Another obstacle to interfaith dialogue is the idea that it is an activity only for experts, to be done in formal settings, and that those with less experience such as lay leaders within religious organizations, women and youth are not qualified or able to take part in it. There may be a reluctance to engage with people of other religions until one feels that they have fully 'mastered' their own, or a reliance on those in leadership positions to take part in dialogue on behalf of their followers. This attitude needs to be resisted and countered as it is not only factually incorrect but may have dangerous consequences. The more Inter-religious dialogue is seen as something for a group of experts, the more it is removed from the everyday lives and activities of ordinary people.

Participants should also be reassured that they are not expected to know everything, and it is acceptable to not have the answer to every question - all our knowledge remains incomplete, and sometimes even the wisest religious leaders will recognize this.

It is impossible to deny the reality of grassroots inter-religious encounter. Modern society sees people of many traditions living side by side, and despite some tendencies towards isolation and separation, there are also many instances of people engaging with and learning from each other, through the dialogue of daily life and shared social and economic interactions.

Module 4:

ACTION PLANNING AFTER INTER-RELIGIOUS DIALOGUE
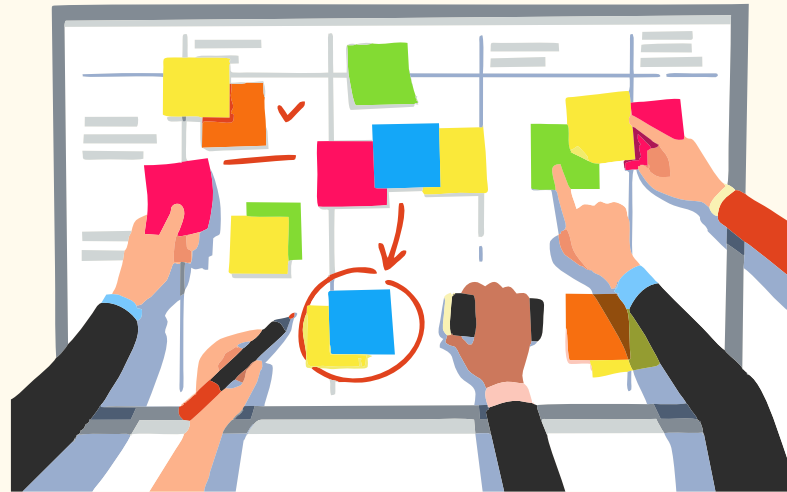
Module 4:

ACTION PLANNING AFTER INTER-RELIGIOUS DIALOGUE

4.1 | **IDENTIFYING KEY ISSUES IN INTER-RELIGIOUS DIALOGUE**

This session will enable participants to:

- Appreciate the *importance* of action planning after Inter - religious dialogue
- Understand how to Identify Key Issues during Inter - religious dialogue
- Prioritise Issues to address after Inter - religious dialogue

OBJECTIVES

Time: 30 Minutes

DISCUSSION GUIDE

1.   Welcome group members and let them know that today, we are going to be talking about identifying key issues that need to be addressed through concrete actions after inter-religious dialogue sessions.

2.   Agree on who will take notes for the group

3.   Remind the group of the ground rules set earlier which might have included the following:

- Mutual Respect for Differences.
- Acknowledgement and Empathy
- Openness and Tolerance,
- Equality and Striving to Eliminate Judgement.
- Active Listening and Trying to understand the other and what is going on beyond one's own biases and preconceived ideas.

4.	Divide participants into 2 groups - A and B.

5.	Let each group discuss the following tasks:

- Group A: What do we understand by action planning and why is it important after Inter-religious dialogue?
- Group B: What are the elements of a good Action Plan and what do you consider when prioritizing issues to address after an inter-religious dialogue?

6.	Let each group discuss their questions and present their responses in plenary on flip charts.

7.	Explain the meaning and importance of an Action Plan in addressing issues after an Interfaith Dialogue as in the Facilitator's Notes 4.1

8.	TASK: Ask participants to identify critical issues that can be addressed from Sessions 2.2, 2.3 and 2.4 and write down actions that can be taken by them and members of their own communities of faith to address the issues identified.

FACILITATOR'S NOTES

4.1   IDENTIFYING KEY ISSUES FOR PLANNING IN INTER-RELIGIOUS DIALOGUE

The purpose of inter-religious dialogue is to bring about changes and create a more peaceful and tolerant society where people of different religious traditions co-exist in harmony and peace. Every Inter-religious dialogue session is intended to solve a problem or address an issue that will benefit the wider society as well as deepen understanding across religious boundaries. To achieve this, action planning is necessary. An action plan is defined as a document or a checklist outlining the steps or tasks one needs to complete to achieve the goals they have set.

4.1.1 Importance of Action Planning in Inter-Religious Dialogue:

Action planning has several specific advantages over and above a list of things to do, or scheduling work using a calendar or diary:

- It provides an opportunity for reflection. Before beginning something, it is helpful to think about what has happened before, what actions have brought about success or partial success and what actions have not helped.

- It brings people together. Action planning can bring together individuals who are knowledgeable in work (experts), individuals who are experiencing the problem and stand to benefit from the change (beneficiaries), and individuals who can contribute to the desired change (resources). In many cases, a person can have more than one of these roles.

- It clarifies the objective. It is often assumed that if a group of people come together to create an action plan, they will have the same objective, but that is usually not the case. A sensitisation on forced child marriage, for example, may include people who are interested in influencing adults, people who are interested in empowering women and girls, people who want to work with young men, and people who want to create legal change. The emphasis of a planned action will change depending on the objective, and action planning provides the opportunity to clarify exactly what change is required.

- It builds consensus. Just as consensus on the objective can be achieved, consensus on priorities can also be achieved through the action planning process. Everyone involved can contribute their ideas, and gradually, through discussion, negotiation and compromise, the most important actions will emerge.

- It creates ownership and accountability. When people are involved in developing an action plan, they are more likely to contribute realistic suggestions that are often things they have some influence over. The involvement process creates a sense of individual and collective ownership for the action plan. This ownership allows for tasks to be allocated to different people, creating accountability. Individuals who are assigned tasks know they are responsible for these and that they will need to report progress at agreed intervals.

- It clarifies timescales. Setting out all the tasks that need to be done to achieve a particular objective and making decisions about how much resource is available for each task, allows for a realistic assessment of how long the overall action plan will take. Every action in an action plan should have a clear completion date.

- It identifies measures of success. Measures of success are like stepping-stones towards a larger objective. They provide a way of measuring progress towards that goal. For example, if an objective is to prevent early marriage, there may be many steps towards that goal, including community sensitisation, educating girl children, and tackling child marriage. Each of these steps can be measured to ensure it achieves its aim and contributes to the larger objective of preventing early marriage.

4.1.2 Identifying and Prioritising Key Issues for Action Planning in Inter-Religious Dialogue:

During inter-religious dialogue, several issues may emerge that need action planning to address. Sometimes, not all these issues can be addressed, and sometimes, different actors including policy makers and community leaders may need to be involved. To know which issues to address, they must be prioritised based on their importance and urgency. In identifying issues, take the following into consideration:

- Common Ground: Identify issues that are of common interest to a greater number of participants, and issues on which there is consensus across faith lines. Avoid contentious, doctrinal, or controversial issues that participants are not comfortable with.

- Social Impact: Identify issues that affect or benefit a wider section of the society and which when addressed, will improve good mutual benefits for both Christians and Muslims, as well as promote peaceful co-existence.

- Do-No-Harm: Issues identified should not have a backlash effect or long-term negative impact on the community or any of the religious traditions such as deepening stereotypes or gender inequalities, etc.

FACILITATOR'S NOTES

- **Available Resources:** Issues identified should be issues that can be addressed without requiring much financial and material resources. These should be actions that can be accomplished with little or no external human and financial resources, and for which the team has the technical expertise to handle.

- **Timeframe:** Issues should be such that results can be achieved within a short period of about a month, and which do not require long-term or indefinite waiting period to see reasonable results.

Module 4:
ACTION PLANNING AFTER INTER-RELIGIOUS DIALOGUE

This session will enable participants to:

- Appreciate the *Steps* in developing action plans after Inter -religious dialogue

- Understand how to implement action plans developed during inter -religious dialogue

OBJECTIVES

Time: 30 Minutes

DISCUSSION GUIDE

1. Welcome group members and let them know that today, we are going to be talking about developing and implementing action plans during inter-religious dialogue sessions.

2. Agree on who will take notes for the group

3. Remind the group of the ground rules set earlier which might have included the following:

- Mutual Respect for Differences.
- Acknowledgment and Empathy
- Openness and Tolerance,
- Equality and Striving to Eliminate Judgement.
- Active Listening and Trying to understand the other and what is going on beyond one's own biases and preconceived ideas.

4. Divide participants into 2 groups - A and B.

5. Let each group discuss the following tasks:

   • Group A: What are the steps to developing an action plan?

   • Group B: What are the key things to consider when implementing an action plan?

6. Let each group discuss their questions and present their responses in plenary on flip charts.

7. Explain the meaning and importance of an Action Plan in addressing issues after an Interfaith Dialogue as in the Facilitator's Notes 4.1

8. TASK: Ask participants to identify critical issues that can be addressed from Sessions 2.2, 2.3 and 2.4 and write down actions that can be taken by them and members of their own communities of faith to address the issues identified.

4.2 DEVELOPING AND IMPLEMENTING ACTION PLANS

The purpose of inter-religious dialogue is to bring about changes and create a more peaceful and tolerant society where people of different religious traditions co-exist in harmony and peace. Every Inter-religious dialogue session is intended to solve a problem or address an issue that will benefit the wider society as well as deepen understanding across religious boundaries. To achieve this, action planning is necessary.

4.2.1 Developing and Implementing Action Plans during Inter-Religious Dialogue:

Creating and implementing an action plan is a straightforward process. There are a few things you need to keep in mind while developing your action plan. These include:

- Step 1: Start with the end in mind. If you don't really know what you want to achieve or why you are creating an action plan in the first place, you are setting yourself up for failure. Once you are clear about where you are and where you want to go, it's time to start writing down well-defined goals or expected outcomes of the actions you want to take. What situation do you want to change and what will the situation look like once the issue is addressed? A <u>well-defined goal follows the SMART results approach. In case you are wondering, SMART is an acronym for "Specific", "Measurable", "Attainable", "Relevant", and "Time-Bound" results.</u>

- Step 2: Assign roles and responsibilities. Once you have set your SMART goals, it's time to write them down one by one and arrange them in order of priority. Once you have listed down all the tasks, it's time to assign them to your team members. Make sure that the entire team is involved in this process and the document is accessible to everyone. A great way to do that is to use the work plan template attached and collaboratively create action plan documents. Keep in mind that the tasks you assign to others are challenging yet attainable. If something looks complex, break it down into smaller, manageable tasks that are easier to accomplish.

- Step 3: Set deadlines for your action plan. While prioritizing tasks is key, it's important to have a deadline for each task you list on the action plan. Make sure the deadlines are realistic to not overwhelm the person responsible for it and always consult them to make sure both parties are on the same page.

FACILITATOR'S NOTES

- Step 4: Set Milestones. It's important to have milestones in place to motivate the team and to make sure you are on the right path. Milestones are nothing but small targets that lead to the final goal at the end. These targets give the team something to look forward to and encourage them to keep moving forward.

- Step 5: Find resources needed. Resources can be the time, money, manpower, or tools required to complete the tasks on your action plan. Make sure you have everything you need before you kickstart the execution of your activities.

- Step 6: Execute the action plan activities. Once the plan is in place, it is time to get to work. Execute the tasks according to plan, and document whatever outcomes you achieve. Take the activities one after the other.

- Step 7: Monitor the progress of all the actions taken. Keep checking in to see how the action plan is turning out and whether things are going according to plan. Make sure your team is on time to meet deadlines. If you are using a checklist, it becomes easy to check to mark the tasks that are completed and measure progress.

Module 4:

ACTION PLANNING AFTER INTER-RELIGIOUS DIALOGUE

4.3 | DOCUMENTING CASE STUDIES AND STORIES OF CHANGE IN INTER-RELIGIOUS DIALOGUE

This session will enable participants to:

- Appreciate the *importance* of documenting stories of change Inter-religious dialogue

- Understand how to document change during Inter-religious dialogue

OBJECTIVES

Time: 30 Minutes

DISCUSSION GUIDE

1. Welcome group members and let them know that today, we are going to be talking about documenting case studies and stories of change or success stories in the course of implementing action plans developed during the inter-religious dialogue.

2. Agree on who will take notes for the group

3. Remind the group of the ground rules set earlier which might have included the following:

   - Mutual Respect for Differences.

   - Acknowledgment and Empathy

   - Openness and Tolerance,

   - Equality and Striving to Eliminate Judgement.

   - Active Listening and Trying to understand the other and what is going on beyond one's own biases and preconceived ideas.

4.   Divide participants into 2 groups - A and B. Distribute copies of the Case Study below to each group.

5.   Let each group read the story and discuss the following tasks:

   a)   What do we understand by a case study? What is a story of change?

   b)   Would you consider this story a case study or a story of change? Why?

   c)   What interested you the most about the story?

   d)   Why is it important to document change and the impact of our inter-religious dialogue activities?

   e)   What are the key elements that make up a case study or story of change?

   f)   What is/are the lesson(s) we can learn from the story?

6.   Let each group present their responses in plenary on flip charts.

7.   Explain the meaning, importance, and key elements of a Story of Change in Interfaith Dialogue as in the Facilitator's Notes 4.3

Group Task

Religious Leaders Counter Violence Through Interreligious Solidarity

Tensions among religious and ethnic groups in the Central African Republic have created a fragile society plagued by conflict between armed groups. At the height of the violence, Cardinal Dieudonné Nzapalainga gave refuge to Imam Omar Kobine Layama and his wife.

His Eminence Cardinal Nzapalainga recalls: "I wanted to send a strong message to the world that we are brothers and not enemies. Even though many of the anti-Balaka [an alliance of militia groups] threatened to march on the Archdiocese to root out the Imam and assassinate him, we stood our ground, we defended him until the end."

Apostle Nicolas Guerekoyame agreed to host the Imam's younger brother and his family: "When the anti-Balaka learned that I was hosting a Muslim family, they threatened to attack my family and the church. This situation lasted until after six months. While he was still with us with his family, I was not the only one supporting them; the church had accompanied me in this task and was assisting him financially, morally, and spiritually."

This experience prompted their joint action, as expressed by the Imam: "Our presence as three is a strong message to the international community and others that demonstrates that the conflict in the Central African Republic is not interreligious, and that our (religious) communities have been held hostage by the rebel militias that are fighting over power. We do not want religion to be instrumentalized to destroy the country. This is why the three of us advocate together."

4.3   DOCUMENTING CASE STUDIES & STORIES OF CHANGE IN INTER-RELIGIOUS DIALOGUE

Some changes brought about through social development are straightforward to understand and measure. However, some kinds of change may be too complex to measure directly. In these situations, case studies or stories of change are often used as alternatives or supplements to quantitative reporting.

4.3.1   What "Case Studies" and "Stories of Change" signify in Inter-Religious Dialogue:

- A Case Study is a descriptive piece of work that aims to provide in-depth information on an intervention. It is often based on information acquired through tools such as interviews, focus group discussions, photography, or observations. They often focus on people (e.g., individuals, households, communities) or locations, organisations, policies, or the environment.

- Case studies are usually written, but can also be presented as photographs, drawings, or videos. In some circumstances case studies have been presented as songs or dramas. There is no fixed size for a written case study. A case study can vary in length from a few lines of text or paragraphs to an entire book.

- Stories of Change, though much like case studies, are more focused on change and usually attempt to show how an intervention has contributed to change within the lives of its targeted beneficiaries, or to other forms of change such as policy or organisational change. This means a story of change is not normally developed until after a project or programme has started, whereas a case study may be developed at any point.

- Sometimes, case studies and stories of change may take the form of testimonials. A testimonial is a written or recorded narrative of an individual's experience of a situation. They are an attempt to see a situation purely from the point of view of the person providing the testimonial.

4.3.2 Importance of Case Studies and Stories of Change in Inter-Religious Dialogue

Case studies and stories of change can be used to:

- Showcase the biggest or most important changes to which the project or inter-religious dialogue has contributed

- Demonstrate the impact or describe the typical effect that an intervention has had on people, communities, or organisations.

- Provide more in-depth information in support of a particular finding, lesson, or conclusion.

- Compare two or more different situations or to compare change across different households, communities, or organisations. They may therefore be used to help explain why change(s) occurred in one circumstance but not in another, or to explore the implications of different interventions or approaches.

- Communicate significant learning(s) that can be used to help improve Inter-religious dialogues in the future, either within the project or programme that generated the case study or success story, or in a much wider context.

4.3.3   How to Document Case Studies and Stories of Change in Inter-Religious Dialogue

In documenting a case study or story of change, the following key elements should be considered:

- Introduction: This contains the title or headline of the case study or story of change; the purpose of the case study or story of change; The key messages coming out of the case study or story of change; and the type of case study or story of change (e.g., best case scenario, typical case, illustrative case, comparative case)

- The situation: Describe the situation prior to the activity or change being described; the challenges faced by the relevant project, programme, or organisation; the people, organisation(s) or situation(s) that were affected (or might be affected) by the intervention; what the intervention is (or was) trying to achieve, and what actions are being taken (or have been taken) to achieve it

- The change(s): The change(s) that have been realised (if any); whether they were planned or unplanned; positive or negative; the tangible and demonstrable changes that have taken place in people's lives; key changes that were expected to occur but have not; the evidence that shows what changes (if any) have occurred

- Analysis: The significance of the changes (or activities carried out); the potential long-term implications (for people's lives, organisations, policies etc.); an indication of how sustainable any changes are likely to be; the key factors that made the change(s) happen; an analysis of how any change was attributable to the work of the inter-religious dialogue or organisation; an indication of what other factors/efforts may also have influenced the changes

FACILITATOR'S NOTES

- Lessons and recommendations: Changes in intervention design that might be made (or might have been made) to improve matters; Lessons for other organisations working in similar areas or sectors of work

- Other: Photographs that could help show the activities carried out or changes realized; video or other media links that could be embedded into the case study; direct quotes or testimonials that could help add emotional context or bring the case study / story of change to life

Module 4:
ACTION PLANNING AFTER INTER-RELIGIOUS DIALOGUE

4.4	DEVELOPING ADVOCACY ACTION PLANS TO PREVENT VIOLENT EXTREMISM

OBJECTIVES

This session will enable participants to:

- Appreciate the *Steps* in developing *advocacy action plans* to prevent violent extremism

- Understand how to implement advocacy action plans developed during dialogue sessions

Time: 30 Minutes

DISCUSSION GUIDE

1. Welcome group members and let them know that today, we are going to be talking about developing advocacy action plans during inter-religious in preventing violent extremism.

2. Agree on who will take notes for the group

3. Remind the group of the ground rules set earlier which might have included the following:

   - Mutual Respect for Differences.
   - Acknowledgement and Empathy
   - Openness and Tolerance,
   - Equality and Striving to Eliminate Judgement.
   - Active Listening and Trying to understand the other and what is going on beyond one's own biases and preconceived ideas.

4. Divide participants into 2 groups - A and B.

5. Let each group discuss the following tasks:

- Group A: What is advocacy and why is it important in preventing violent extremism? Why is an advocacy action pan important and what elements should it contain?

- Group B: What are the key steps to advocate for an issue and who are the stakeholders to target with advocacy actions? How do you identify these stakeholders?

6. Let each group discuss their questions and present their responses in plenary on flip charts.

7. Explain the meaning and importance of an Action Plan in addressing issues after an Interfaith Dialogue as in the Facilitator's Notes 4.4

8. TASK: Ask participants (in their groups) to identify critical issues that can be addressed through advocacy from Sessions 2.2, 2.3 and 2.4 and develop an advocacy plan to address the key issues identified.

9. Let them present these action plans in the next inter-religious dialogue meeting.

10. Conclude the session by asking participants to express what caught their interest in the session and what they would like to do differently because of what they have learnt today.

FACILITATOR'S NOTES

4.4   DEVELOPING ADVOCACY ACTION PLANS TO PREVENT VIOLENT EXTREMISM

Advocacy is needed in inter-religious dialogue to bring about changes, influence actions, and create a more peaceful and tolerant society where people of different religious traditions co-exist in harmony and peace. Every Inter-religious dialogue session is intended to solve a problem or address an issue that will benefit the wider society as well as deepen understanding across religious boundaries. To achieve this, engaging with policy makers, decision makers and key religious leaders with influence is necessary.

4.4.1 Understanding Advocacy:

- Advocacy is the process of getting support from another person to help you express your views and wishes, and help you stand up for your rights.

- Community advocacy helps people feel more enabled to take control of their own lives and provides practical support to overcome social issues.

- Advocacy is a process to bring about change in the policies, laws and practices of influential individuals, groups and institutions

- Citizen-centered advocacy is an organized political process that involves the coordinated efforts of people to change policies, practices, ideas, and values that perpetuate inequality, prejudice, and exclusion. It strengthens citizens' capacity as decision makers and builds more accountable and equitable institutions of power.

- Advocacy is speaking up, drawing a community's attention to an important issue, and directing decision-maker toward a solution.

- Advocacy is working with other people and organizations to make a difference.

4.4.2 Steps to Advocacy:

a)   Select an Issue you want to Address: Identify an important problem that can be addressed through policy influencing or through the actions of decision makers within our faith traditions, communities, or government authorities.

b)   Analyse the issue: What are the root causes and consequences of the problem? Who is affected most by it? Why and how? What policies/laws already exist and how are they addressing the issue? What are the gaps/loopholes that need to be bridged?

c)   Develop your advocacy goal/objective: What long term change or results do you want to achieve through policy influencing?

d)   Identify the key targets: Identify the individuals, groups or organisations that have the greatest capacity or power and influence that can make a difference on the advocacy issue e.g. Clergy, religious, lay leaders or groups and institutions that have power to make policy, e.g. law makers.

e)   Identify the required resources: what is required to implement the actions that will bring about the desired changes? Consider all the human, material, and financial resources that you would need, and how you would mobilise them.

f)   Identify allies: Who are those who can likely support the issue? What influences do they have? Identify other individuals and groups with which you can collaborate. The wider your support base, the better. Build a critical mass through networking.

g)   Develop Your advocacy Messages: What messages do you want to pass across to your target audience and decision makers? What demands are you making? What actions do you want them to take? How would you get these messages across to them? This could include writing policy briefs, using the media (including social media), drama, posters, etc.

h)   Develop an Advocacy Action Plan: Organise your objectives, activities and required resources into a concrete plan with clear responsibilities and time lines.

i)   Implement, Monitor and Evaluate your Action Plan: Are the right audiences being reached? Are the messages giving the desired results? Are the resources adequate and what progress is being made? What adjustments or changes do you need to make to keep the process on track? What obstacles are you encountering and how can they be overcome?

4.4.3 Developing the Advocacy Action Plan:

The action plan summarizes information earlier generated which include advocacy objectives, alternative strategies, expected results and resource needs. Furthermore, it provides direction on what is to be done by whom and when. An example of action plan is presented in table below:

PART 2:
FACILITATORS GUIDE

Facilitating the Inter-religious Dialogue Sessions

The first part of this manual set the stage by training facilitators of inter-religious dialogue to understand the basic concepts around dialogue, violent extremism, radicalisation, and peacebuilding.

This second part sets out the key issues that should be discussed during the inter-religious dialogue sessions including exploring unity in diversity by examining the Christian and Muslim perspectives on inter- religious marriages, social justice, responsible citizenship, and other rights issues.

The last part of this section examines freedom of worship as a right, and the responsibilities of worshippers. It explores religion as an instrument of peace to prevent violent extremism, and the role of women in building peaceful societies.

Module 5:

UNITY IN DIVERSITY – EXPLORING ISLAMIC & CHRISTIAN PERSPECTIVES ON:

5.1   Introduction to Social Justice and Right to Life

5.2   Inter-Faith Marriages

5.3   Forgiveness and Reconciliation

5.4   Conflict Prevention and Peace Building

5.5   The Rights of Women and Girls

5.6   Social Responsibility and Good Neighbourliness

Module 5:
UNITY IN DIVERSITY – EXPLORING ISLAMIC & CHRISTIAN PERSPECTIVES ON:

5.1 INTRODUCTION TO SOCIAL JUSTICE & THE RIGHT TO LIFE

OBJECTIVES

This session will enable participants to:

- Define the concepts of social Justice and the right to life
- Appreciate the *Christian and Islamic views* of social Justice and the right to life
- Understand the provisions of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Nigerian Constitution with respect to the right to life.

Time: 30 Minutes

DISCUSSION GUIDE

1. Welcome group members and let them know that today, we are going to be talking about social justice and right to life from the Islamic and Christian perspectives.

2. Agree on who will take notes for the group

3. Remind the group of the ground rules set earlier which might have included the following:

   - Mutual Respect for Differences.
   - Acknowledgement and Empathy
   - Openness and Tolerance,
   - Equality and Striving to Eliminate Judgement.
   - Active Listening and Trying to understand the other and what is going on beyond one's own biases and preconceived ideas.

4. Divide participants into 2 groups - A and B.

5. Let each group read the following scriptures and discuss the following tasks:

Qur'an 70: 24-25; Qur'an 2:219; Qur'an 2:275 – 281; Qur'an 90:12 – 16; Qur'an 4:75; Qur'an 4:58; Qur'an 7:156; Qur'an 5:32; Qur'an 6:151; Proverbs 31:8-9; Psalms 82:3; Isaiah 1:17; Micah 6:8; Luke 11:48; James 1:27; Matthew 11:28; Luke 18:7-8; Genesis 9:5-6; Matthew 5:21; Matthew 5:38 – 39; and Romans 12:19; John 8: 1 – 11.

From the above scriptures:

- Group A: what do we understand by social Justice? What are the similarities in What the Holy Bible and the Holy Qur'an say about Social Justice? What is the Christian perspective on Right to Life?

- Group B: What is the relationship between social justice and right to life? What is the Islamic position on right to life? What are the international and national legal frameworks that guarantee the right to life in Nigeria? Under what circumstances can these provisions of the right to life be set aside?

6. Let each group discuss their questions and present their responses in plenary on flip charts.

7. Explain the concepts of social justice and right to life, and the Islamic and Christian perspectives vis-à-vis the UNDHR and Nigerian constitution as provided in the Facilitator's Notes 5.2

8. TASK: Ask participants (in their groups) to identify critical issues of social justice and right to life that can be addressed through advocacy and develop an advocacy plan to address the key issues identified. Let them present these action plans in the next inter-religious dialogue meeting.

9. Conclude the session by asking participants to express what caught their interest the most in today's session and what they would like to do differently because of what they have learnt today.

FACILITATOR'S NOTES

5.1   ISLAMIC AND CHRISTIAN PERSPECTIVES ON SOCIAL JUSTICE & RIGHT TO LIFE

Religion has always had a powerful role in shaping ideas of social justice, oppression, and liberation. Social justice usually refers to the just and equitable distribution of wealth, opportunities, and privileges within a society. Social justice is built on the principle of fairness, non-discrimination and equal access to resources and opportunities. Both Islam and Christianity promote the principles of equality and protection of the weak and vulnerable, including women's rights.

5.1.1 Islamic Perspective on Social justice and Right to Life:

- Islam emphasises on numerous principles that organise relationships among members of the society. One of the most important principles is social justice with all important values that it involves like peace, love, brotherhood, and prosperity.

- The importance of justice is manifested in being one of God's names in Islam. It is considered among the most important values underlined by the Quran and repeated in a number of its verses.

- God has required justice to be a necessary part of the behavior of every Muslim.

- Justice in Islam is not only practiced on Muslims, but on every human being regardless to his/her beliefs or religion.

- Justice as a concept refers to equality in giving rights and in abiding by obligations without discriminations for any reason, either for religion, race, color, etc.

- Social justice in Islam comprises equitable distribution of wealth (Qur'an 70: 24-25; Qur'an 2:219); prohibition of economic exploitation (Qur'an 2:275 – 281); provision of social security (Qur'an 90:12 – 16) and protection of the weak against the strong (Qur'an 4:75; Qur'an 4:58).

- Zakat, being the third pillar of Islam, is an important act of worship as stressed by being highlighted at least 82 times in the Quran along with Salat (e.g., Qur'an 7:156, 9:60, 19:31, 19:55, 21:73, 23:4, 27:3, 30:39, 31:4 and 41:7).

- Islam, in connection with social justice, lays down some rights for man as a human being, including the right to life (Qur'an 5:32; Qur'an 6:151).

5.1.2 Christian Perspective on Social justice and Right to Life:

- In Christianity, an interfaith marriage is a marriage between a <u>Christian and a non-Christian (e.g. a wedding between a Christian man and a Jewish woman, or between a Christian woman and a Muslim man); it is to be distinguished between an interdenominational marriage in which two baptized Christians belonging to two different Christian denominations marry, e.g. a wedding between a Lutheran Christian and a Catholic Christian.</u>

- As we look at the life of Jesus and the mandate given throughout Scripture, Christ-followers are called to "do justice"; to act and confront evil, to care for the vulnerable, and to make right that which is wrong. Throughout the Old and New Testament, the call to do justice is clear (Read Proverbs 31:8-9; Psalms 82:3; Isaiah 1:17; Micah 6:8; Luke 11:48; James 1:27)

- Driven by the compassion of Christ, Christians are called upon to engage in issues of injustice – protecting the vulnerable, fighting for those held in oppression, walking alongside the wounded, and pointing them to the One who heals, restores and redeems (Matthew 11:28; Luke 18:7-8).

- The Bible calls on believers, both jews and Christians, to protect human life, and desist from vengeance (Genesis 9:5-6; Matthew 5:21; Matthew 5:38 – 39; Romans 12:19)

5.1.3 The Right to Life in The UN Declaration of Human Rights and Nigerian Constitution:

- Article 3 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights provides that "everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person."

- This right is basic or fundamental because "the enjoyment of the right to life is a necessary condition of the enjoyment of all other human rights"

- The right to life guarantees that no person can be deprived of his life and personal liberty, except in accordance with the procedures established by the law

- Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (CFRN), 1999 (as amended) specifically provides for the right to life thus: 'Every person has a right to life, and no one shall be deprived intentionally of his life, save in execution of the sentence of a court in respect of a criminal offence of which he has been found guilty in Nigeria'.

- Limitations to the Right to Life in Nigeria include implementation of the Death Penalty by a Court of Law, defense of self or property, lawful arrest or preventing escape of a person lawfully detained, suppression of riot and mutiny, and death resulting from acts of war.

Module 5:

UNITY IN DIVERSITY – EXPLORING ISLAMIC
& CHRISTIAN PERSPECTIVES ON:

5.2 INTERFAITH MARRIAGES

This session will enable participants to:

- Define the concept of Interfaith marriage
- Appreciate the *provisions* of the Holy Bible and the Holy Qur'an on Interfaith marriage
- Understand the advantages and disadvantages of interfaith marriage and how interfaith marriages can contribute to peaceful co-existence

OBJECTIVES

Time: 30 Minutes

DISCUSSION GUIDE

1. Welcome group members and let them know that today, we are going to be examining the Islamic and Christian perspectives on inter-faith marriage.

2. Agree on who will take notes for the group

3. Remind the group of the ground rules set earlier which might have included the following:

   - Mutual Respect for Differences.
   - Acknowledgement and Empathy
   - Openness and Tolerance,
   - Equality and Striving to Eliminate Judgement.
   - Active Listening and Trying to understand the other and what is going on beyond one's own biases and preconceived ideas.

4.   Divide participants into 2 groups - A and B.

5.   Let each group read the following scriptures and discuss the following tasks:

Qur'an 3:199; Qur'an 2:221; Qur'an 60:10; Qur'an 5:5; Qur'an 4:4; Gen. 2:24; Amos 3:3; 2 Cor. 6: 14 – 18; 1 Cor. 7: 12 – 15; 1 Cor. 7:39; Deut. 7:3-4; Gen. 24:3 – 4; Joshua 23:12 – 13 and Mal. 2:11

From the above scriptures:

- Group A: what do we understand by Interfaith marriage? What are the similarities in What the Holy Bible and the Holy Qur'an say about marriage? What is the Christian perspective on Interfaith marriage?
- Group B: What are the differences between Islamic and Christian marriages? What is the Islamic position on interfaith marriage? What are the advantages and disadvantages of interfaith marriage? How can interfaith marriages promote peaceful co-existence?

6.   Let each group discuss their questions and present their responses in plenary on flip charts.

7.   Explain the meaning of interfaith marriage and the Islamic and Christian perspectives vis-à-vis the Nigerian Marriage Act as provided in the Facilitator's Notes 5.1

8.   TASK: Ask participants to research on what the [Ashtiname of Muhammad, the treaty between Muslims and Christians recorded between Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and Saint Catherine's Monastery of Sinai, says about Interfaith marriage.](#)

9.   Let them present these action plans in the next inter-religious dialogue meeting.

10.   Conclude the session by asking participants to express what caught their interest in the session and what they would like to do differently because of what they have learnt today

5.2 ISLAMIC AND CHRISTIAN PERSPECTIVES ON INTER-FAITH MARRIAGES

According to Article 16 of the <u>Universal Declaration of Human Rights, men and women who have attained the age of majority have the right to marry "without any limitation due to race, nationality or religion". However, various religions have their rules about who to marry or not to marry, based on religious grounds. Religion therefore plays an important role in determining who people choose as spouses.</u>

5.2.1 Islamic Perspective on Inter-Faith Marriage:

<u>Sharia</u>
- Has differing regulations on interfaith marriage, depending on, firstly, what is the gender of the prospective intermarrying Muslim, and secondly, what non-Muslim religion is adhered to by the person that a Muslim is seeking to intermarry with.
- Islamic Law allows a Muslim man to marry a non-Muslim woman provided that they are from among the <u>People of the Book (i.e. female Christians or female Jews).</u>
- Additionally, they must have been <u>chaste, and orthodox Islam mandates that all children be brought up Muslim. Beyond this exemption, a Muslim may not intermarry with females who are from outside the People of the Book unless they convert to Islam.</u>
- Thus, Muslim men are not allowed from intermarrying, for instance, Hindus, Jains, Buddhists, etc., as well as pagans or atheists.
- In the case of a Muslim-Christian marriage, which is to be contracted only after permission from the Christian party, the Christian spouse is not to be prevented from <u>attending church for prayer and worship, according to the Ashtiname of Muhammad, a treaty between Muslims and Christians recorded between Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and Saint Catherine's Monastery of Sinai.</u>
- It is worth noting that marriage is a sacred institution in Islam with very important objectives. In most cases, the objective is achieved through monogamy. However, in certain situations, a man is allowed to marry more than one wife, with the condition that he treats his wives with justice and takes the decision with Taqwa or God Consciousness.
- The primary occasion for the provision of polygamy in Islam is in war-time situations. During times of war, the number of men in the society is reduced due to war casualties. Consequently, there is an increase in the number of widows and orphans. For such situations, Islam gives the provision of polygamy so that the widows and orphans could continue to have the possibility of a family life after the passing of the husband/father (Qur'an 4:4).

5.2.2 Christian Perspective on Inter-Faith Marriage:

- In Christianity, an interfaith marriage is a marriage between a <u>Christian and a non-Christian (e.g. a wedding between a Christian man and a Jewish woman, or between a Christian woman and a Muslim man); it is to be distinguished between an interdenominational marriage in which two baptized Christians belonging to two different Christian denominations marry, e.g. a wedding between a Lutheran Christian and a Catholic Christian.</u>

- Almost all Christian denominations permit interdenominational marriages, though with respect to interfaith marriage, many Christian denominations caution against it, citing verses of the <u>Christian Bible that prohibit it such as –2 Corinthians 6:1415, while certain Christian denominations have made allowances for interfaith marriage, which is referenced in –1 Corinthians 7:1415, addressing originally non-Christian couples in which one of the spouses became a Christian after the marriage had taken place.</u>

- In the Old Testament, the children of Israel were forbidden from inter-marrying with non-Jewish tribes and even Abraham ensured that a wife was not taken for Isaac from an unbelieving nation (Gen. 24:3-4).

- While cases of polygamy are recorded in scriptures, it is evident that God's intension for marriage was monogamy, "and a man shall leave his father and mother and shall be cleaved unto his wife, and the two shall become one" (Gen. 3:24; Matt. 19:5; Eph. 5:31; 1 Tim. 3:2)

5.2.3 The Nigerian Law and Interfaith Marriage:

The Nigerian Constitution guarantees the rights to have a family life, and freedom of religion. To this end, it recognizes three forms of marriage, namely customary marriage, Islamic marriage, and statutory marriage. While statutory marriage is required to be registered by law, there is no law necessitating the registration of customary or Islamic marriages. Yet in recent times, statutory marriage has gained popularity amongst Nigerians regardless of cultural or religious affiliations. The law recognises interfaith marriage if there is consent.

Module 5:

UNITY IN DIVERSITY – EXPLORING ISLAMIC
& CHRISTIAN PERSPECTIVES ON:

5.3 FORGIVESS AND RECONCILIATION

OBJECTIVES

This session will enable participants to:

- Define the concepts of forgiveness and reconciliation
- Appreciate the *Christian and Islamic views* of forgiveness and reconciliation
- Understand the importance of forgiveness and reconciliation in peacebuilding

Time: 30 Minutes

DISCUSSION GUIDE

1. Welcome group members and let them know that today, we are going to be talking about forgiveness and reconciliation from the Islamic and Christian perspectives.

2. Agree on who will take notes for the group

3. Remind the group of the ground rules set earlier which might have included the following:

   - Mutual Respect for Differences.
   - Acknowledgement and Empathy
   - Openness and Tolerance,
   - Equality and Striving to Eliminate Judgement.
   - Active Listening and Trying to understand the other and what is going on beyond one's own biases and preconceived ideas.

4.   Divide participants into 2 groups - A and B.

5.   Let each group read the following scriptures and discuss the tasks that follow:

'Quran 5:95; 'Quran 42:40; Qur'an 60:7; Qur'an 41: 34 – 35; Gen. 32:11, Gen. 33:1-10; Gen. 50:15 – 21; Luke 15:11 – 32; Mark 11:25, —Matthew 6:1415; Matthew 18:21–35; —Matthew 5:2324; Mark 11:25; Luke 6:27–29; Luke 6:36-37; Matthew 5:7; Matthew 5:43 – 48 and Matthew 18:21–22

From the above scriptures:

·   Group A: what do we understand by forgiveness? What are the similarities in What the Holy Bible and the Holy Qur'an say about forgiveness and reconciliation? What is the Christian perspective on forgiveness?

·   Group B: What is the relationship between forgiveness and reconciliation? What is the Islamic position on forgiveness? Why are forgiveness and reconciliation important in peacebuilding?

6.   Let each group discuss their questions and present their responses in plenary on flip charts.

7.   Explain the concepts of forgiveness and reconciliation from the Islamic and Christian perspectives and their importance in peacebuilding as provided in the Facilitator's Notes 5.3

8.   TASK: Ask participants (in their groups) to identify critical issues that need forgiveness and reconciliation that need be addressed in their communities and develop an action plan to address the key issues identified. Let them present the action plans in the next inter-religious dialogue meeting.

9.   Conclude the session by asking participants to express what caught their interest the most in today's session and what they would like to do differently because of what they have learnt today.

5.3   ISLAMIC AND CHRISTIAN PERSPECTIVES ON FORGIVENESS & RECONCILIATION

Both Islam and Christianity emphasise the virtue of forgiveness as a spiritual imperative for all believers. Forgiveness means to pardon; to give up resentment, and grant relief to an offender. Forgiveness, in a psychological sense, is the intentional and voluntary process by which one who may initially feel victimized or wronged, goes through a change in feelings and attitude regarding a given offender, and overcomes the impact of the offense including negative emotions such as resentment and a desire for vengeance (however justified it might be).

Forgiveness is different from simple condoning (viewing an action as harmful, yet to be "forgiven" or overlooked for certain reasons of "charity"), excusing or pardoning (merely releasing the offender from responsibility for an action), or forgetting (attempting to somehow remove from one's conscious mind, the memory of a given "offense").

The difference between forgiveness and reconciliation is that forgiveness requires nothing from the person being forgiven. They don't even have to know that one is forgiving them. Reconciliation requires repentance from the offender, and even then, he or she does not dictate the terms of reconciliation.

5.3.1 Islamic Perspective on Forgiveness and Reconciliation:

Islam
*   teaches that Allah is the original source of all forgiveness and seeking forgiveness from Allah with repentance is a virtue. ('Quran 5:95)
*   Islam recommends forgiveness because Allah values forgiveness. There are numerous verses in Quran and the Hadiths recommending forgiveness. However, Islam also allows revenge to the extent harm done, but forgiveness is encouraged, with a promise of reward from Allah ('Quran 42:40)
*   Afw is another term for forgiveness in Islam; it occurs 35 times in Qur'an, and means "to pardon, to excuse for a fault or an offense".
*   In Islam, forgiveness increases the honor and prestige of the one who forgives. Forgiveness is not a sign of weakness, humiliation or dishonor. Forgiveness is honor, raises the merit of the forgiver in the eyes of Allah, and enables a forgiver to enter paradise. It expiates (kaffarah) the forgiver from the sins they may have committed at other occasions in life, and is considered a form of charity (sadaqat).
*   Islam calls on believers not to close the door to reconciliation (Qur'an 60:7) and to reciprocate evil with good deeds (Qur'an 41: 34 – 35) by offering kind words, gifts, and so on during enmity that can soften the hearts toward a more peaceful future.

5.3.2 Christian Perspective on Forgiveness and Reconciliation:

- One of the classical stories of forgiveness and reconciliation in the Old Testament is that of Jacob and Esau. Jacob wronged Esau in very fraudulent way, robbing him of his blessings and inheritance. After several years in exile, Jacob had to come back home. Fearing that Esau will "kill us all, the mothers with the children" (Gen. 32:11), Jacob places his trust in God and decides to reconcile with his brother. To do this, he first sends a series of peace offerings to Esau, hundreds of goats, sheep, camels, cows, bulls, and donkeys. But Esau's forgiving attitude towards his brother Jacob makes the reconciliation process very smooth and dramatic (Gen. 33:1-10).

- Another similar example is that of Joseph and his brothers. After selling him off to slavery in Egypt, they later come to Egypt to buy food in times of famine and met Joseph not only in charge of all the food supplies in Egypt, but the second in command after the King. In spite the ugly past, Joseph forgives them, receives them and reconciles with them (Gen. 50:15 – 21).

- Jesus asked for God's forgiveness of those who crucified him (Luke 23:34)

- The Parable of the Prodigal Son is perhaps the best known parable about forgiveness and refers to God's forgiveness for those who repent from their wrongdoings (Luke 15:11 – 32).

- Forgiving offenses is among the spiritual works of mercy, and forgiving others begets being forgiven by God (Mark 11:25, —Matthew 6:1415)

- Jesus used the parable of the unmerciful servant (Matthew 18:21–35) to show that His followers (represented in the parable by the servant) should forgive because God (represented by the king) forgives much more.

- Jesus placed high importance on seeking forgiveness and reconciliation in His teachings: —Matthew 5:2324; Mark 11:25; Luke 6:27–29; Luke 6:36-37; Matthew 5:7; Matthew 5:43 – 48 and Matthew 18:21–22. The ministry of the church and the ministry of every believer is "the ministry of reconciliation". We are called to reconcile men unto God, and unto one another (2 Cor. 5:18)

5.3.3 The importance of Forgiveness and Reconciliation in Peacebuilding:

- The inability to come to terms with one's anger or strife often can lead to stress disorders, mental health disorders, and relationship problems. Forgiveness is a personal decision.   In peacebuilding, reconciliation incorporates the search for truth, justice, forgiveness and accommodation between conflicting groups or people.

- Reconciliation helps in the reestablishment of friendly relations, by which the parties to a conflict or dispute build trust, learn to live cooperatively, and create a stable peace.

Module 5:

UNITY IN DIVERSITY – EXPLORING ISLAMIC
& CHRISTIAN PERSPECTIVES ON:

5.4 CONFLICT PREVENTION AND PEACE-BUILDING

OBJECTIVES

This session will enable participants to:

- Define the concepts of Conflict and Peace
- Appreciate the *Christian and Islamic views* of conflict prevention and peacebuilding
- Understand the role of religion in conflict prevention and peacebuilding

Time: 30 Minutes

DISCUSSION GUIDE

1. Welcome group members and let them know that in this session, we are going to be talking about conflict prevention and peacebuilding from the Islamic and Christian perspectives.

2. Agree on who will take notes for the group

3. Remind the group of the ground rules set earlier which might have included the following:

   - Mutual Respect for Differences.
   - Acknowledgement and Empathy
   - Openness and Tolerance,
   - Equality and Striving to Eliminate Judgement.
   - Active Listening and Trying to understand the other and what is going on beyond one's own biases and preconceived ideas.

4. Divide participants into 2 groups - A and B.

5.	Let each group read the following scriptures and discuss the tasks that follow:

Ephesians 4:31 – 32; Romans 12:18; 2 Timothy 2:24-26; 2 Corinthians 5:18; Matthew 18:15-17; James 1:19 – 21; 1 Corinthians 6: 1 – 8; Philippians 2:3-4; Qur'an 22:39; Qur'an 22:40; Qur'an 4:75; Qur'an 42: 40. Qur'an 10: 25; Qur'an 8: 61; Qur'an 2: 190; Qur'an 6:108; Qur'an 2:256

From the above scriptures:

- Group A: what do we understand by the concepts of conflict and peace? What are the similarities in What the Holy Bible and the Holy Qur'an say about preventing conflicts and building peace? What is the Christian perspective on preventing conflicts?

- Group B: What is the relationship between conflict prevention and peacebuilding? What is the Islamic position on preventing conflicts? What role can religion play in preventing conflicts and building more peaceful societies?

6.	Let each group discuss their questions and present their responses in plenary on flip charts.

7.	Explain the concepts of conflict and peace, and the Islamic and Christian perspectives on conflict prevention and peacebuilding as well as the role of religion in preventing conflicts and building peace in society as provided in the Facilitator's Notes 5.4

8.	TASK: Ask participants (in their groups) to identify critical issues that can lead to conflicts in their communities and develop an action plan to address these key issues to prevent them from escalating into conflicts. Let them present the action plans in the next inter-religious dialogue meeting.

9.	Conclude the session by asking participants to express what caught their interest the most in today's session and what they would like to do differently because of what they have learnt today.

5.4   ISLAMIC AND CHRISTIAN PERSPECTIVES ON CONFLICT PREVENTION & PEACE-BUILDING

Peace has two sides: negative peace and positive peace. Negative peace is the absence of personal violence; positive peace is an absence of structural violence or social justice. Peacebuilding seeks to address the underlying causes of conflict, helping people to resolve their differences peacefully and lay the foundations to prevent future violence. Peace is more than the absence of war. It is also "the maintenance of an orderly and just society," orderly in being protected against the violence or extortion of aggressors, and just in being defended against exploitation and abuse by the more powerful.

While conflict can be a precursor to violence, most conflicts can be resolved positively and do not progress to violence. To prevent conflicts, we must understand the root causes of conflicts.

5.4.1 Root Causes of Conflicts and How to Prevent Them:

- **Information conflicts** arise when people have different or insufficient information or disagree over what data is relevant. Allowing sufficient time to be heard, in a respectful environment facilitated by a neutral person can allow parties to clear up information disparities, therefore preventing conflicts.

- **Values conflicts** are created when people have perceived or actual incompatible belief systems. Where a person or group tries to impose its values on others or claims exclusive right to a set of values, disputes arise. While values may be non-negotiable, they can be discussed, and people can learn to live peacefully and coherently alongside each other.

- **Interest conflicts** are caused by competition over perceived or actual incompatible needs. Such conflicts may occur over issues of money, resources, or time. Parties often mistakenly believe that to satisfy their own needs, those of their opponent must be sacrificed. A mediator can help identify ways to dovetail interests and create opportunities for mutual gain. Conflicts between herdsmen and farmers are usually of this nature.

- **Relationship conflicts** occur when there are misperceptions, strong negative emotions, or poor communication. One person may distrust the other and believe that the other person's actions are motivated by malice or an intent to harm the other. Relationship conflicts may be addressed by allowing each person uninterrupted time to talk through the issues and respond to the other person's concerns or creating opportunities for mutual dialogue and understanding of each other's concerns.

- Structural conflicts are caused by oppressive behaviours exerted on others due to power imbalances. Limited resources or opportunity as well as organization structures often promote conflict behaviour. The parties may well benefit from mediation since the forum will help neutralize the power imbalance.

- Regardless of the cause of conflict, they can be prevented and if they occur, an experienced and neutral mediator can help parties shift their focus from fighting to resolution.

5.4.2 Islamic Perspective on Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding:

- it is important to note that in Islam, war is sanctioned only in exceptional circumstances and peace is the norm. The permission for war in Qur'an is given reluctantly and extreme conditions of persecution and oppression such as in self-defense (Qur'an 22:39; Qur'an 2:194), to defend Islam (rather than to spread it), to protect those who have been removed from their homes by force because they are Muslims (Qur'an 22:40), and to protect the innocent who are being oppressed (Qur'an 4:75).

- Islam emphasizes on peace in communication with all Muslim and non- Muslim people in a society and encourages its adherents to avoid war and violence. The Qur'an places limits on the use of force and acknowledges the right of retribution but states "those who forgive the injury and make reconciliation will be rewarded by God." (Qur'an 42: 40).

5.4.3 Christian Perspective on Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding:

- Jesus laid the golden rule of conflict prevention by asking that Christians treat others the way we would want to be treated, thereby building the foundation for peace (Matthew 7:12)

- Christians are called upon to seek peace as much as possible with all men (Romans 12:18), and rather resolve differences with each other within the Church rather than seek judiciary interventions from the courts (1 Corinthians 6:1-8).

- The Bible discourages revenge and repaying evil for evil, thereby preventing conflicts and cycles of intolerance (Luke 6: 27- 31)

- Christians are enjoined to resolve conflicts first with the offending party, and if no peaceful solution is found, the Church should be involved till a solution is found, or else the party that does not want peace should be treated as an unbeliever. (Matthew 18:15 – 17)

- Apostle Paul warned the Church against strife and conflicts: "The Lord's servant must not quarrel, but must be gentle to everyone, able to teach, and patient, instructing his opponents with gentleness" (2 Timothy 2:24–25).

- Christians are expected not to do anything out of "vain glory" but to consider others better than themselves in emulation of the character and humility of Christ (Philippians 2:3-4)

5.4.4 The Role of Religion in Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding:

- Religion provides valuable foundations for the culture of peace and the realization of a non-violent society. Any peacebuilding that does not bring justice to both victims and oppressors is a worthless effort. In both Islamic and Christian contexts, religious leaders can prevent conflicts and promote peacebuilding by preaching the virtues of social justice, love, truth, and equity.

- Religious leaders need to expand their skills and capacity building in conflict management and peacebuilding while ensuring they are not co-opted by the political agendas of national and international institutions.

Module 5:

UNITY IN DIVERSITY – EXPLORING ISLAMIC
& CHRISTIAN PERSPECTIVES ON:

5.5 THE RIGHTS OF WOMEN AND GIRLS

This session will enable participants to:

- Define the concepts of RIGHTS and OBLIGATIONS
- Appreciate the Christian and Islamic views of protection of the rights of women

Time: 30 Minutes

OBJECTIVES

DISCUSSION GUIDE

1.   Welcome group members and let them know that today, we are going to be talking about women's rights from the Islamic and Christian perspectives.

2.   Agree on who will take notes for the group

3.   Remind the group of the ground rules set earlier which might have included the following:

- Mutual Respect for Differences.

- Acknowledgment and Empathy

- Openness and Tolerance

- Equality and Striving to Eliminate Judgement.

- Active Listening and Trying to understand the other and what is going on beyond one's own biases and preconceived ideas.

4.	Divide participants into 2 groups - A and B.

5.	Let each group read the following scriptures and discuss the tasks that follow:

Qur'an 4:7-12; Qur'an 9:71; Qur'an 2:228; Qur'an 65:6; Qur'an 4:4; Qur'an 65:7; Qur'an 4:34; Qur'an 4:19;
–Titus 2:35; 1 Timothy 3:11; Judges 4:4-9; Numbers 27:1-11; Deuteronomy 25:5-7; 1 Corinthians 7:39; Romans 7:2-3; John 8:3-11; 1 Peter 3:7; Deuteronomy 22:5; Psalm 139:13; Colossians 3:19; Deuteronomy 24:17

From the above scriptures:

- Group A: what do we understand by the concepts of rights and obligations? What are the similarities in What the Holy Bible and the Holy Qur'an say about Women's Rights? What is the Christian perspective on the rights of women – what rights do Christian women have in society?

- Group B: What is the relationship between rights and obligations? What is the Islamic position on women's rights – what rights do Muslim women have in society? What role can religion play in protecting the rights of women in society? How can the state prevent the abuse of the rights of women

6.	Let each group discuss their questions and present their responses in plenary on flip charts.

7.	Explain the concepts of rights and obligations, and the Islamic and Christian perspectives on women's rights as well as the role of religion in protecting women's rights in society as provided in the Facilitator's Notes 5.5

8.	TASK: Ask participants (in their groups) to identify critical issues around women's rights in their communities and develop an action plan to address these key issues. Let them present the action plans in the next inter-religious dialogue meeting.

9.	Conclude the session by asking participants to express what caught their interest the most in today's session and what they would like to do differently because of what they have learnt today.

FACILITATOR'S NOTES

5.5   ISLAMIC AND CHRISTIAN PERSPECTIVES ON THE PROTECTION OF THE RIGHTS OF WOMEN

While everyone has rights which are fundamental and universal, women need special protection because of their status and vulnerability in society and the religious community.

5.5.1 The Concept of Rights and Obligations:

- Rights are legal, social, or ethical principles of freedom or entitlement; they are the fundamental rules about what is allowed of people or owed to people according to the law or some social contract, or ethical obligation.

- The state and society, including the religious community, have the responsibility or obligations to protect, to respect and to fulfil the rights that people (including women) are entitled to.

5.5.2 Islamic Perspective on Women's Rights:

- Islam has special consideration for women, and makes clear provisions for women to share in their family inheritance (Qur'an 4:7-12)

- Islam regards women as allies with men in rights and religious responsibility (Qur'an 9:71; Qur'an 2:228)

- The Qur'an provides for special protection and care for the woman when she is pregnant till she gives birth (Qur'an 65:6)

- In pre-Islamic period dower was paid to the wife's father or other guardian, which was used to signify gifts (sadaka) and could therefore be regarded as the woman's selling price in present time.

- Islam approves dower (mahr) to be paid to the wife in case of regular marriage as respect to the wife and not as sell price. Dower may be a sum of money or any other kind of property of which the wife is legally entitled to get from the husband as a token of respect. It cannot be treated as consideration or exchange given to the wife for entering into the marriage contract. (Qur'an 4:4)

- Despite the rights and honour bestowed upon the woman in Islam, in many Muslim communities, women are not considered according to the rights given them. In many societies, Muslim are practicing their own cultures and customs and women are being subject to cultural issues, patriarchal features of their society and political oppression

- In Islam, women have the right to be well taken care of by their husbands, and to be provided their basic needs or "maintenance" (Qur'an 65:7) but many have used this to inflict domestic violence on women, on grounds that they spend maintenance on them (Qur'an 4:34)

- Islam forbids marrying women against their will or ill-treating them (Qur'an 4:19). So, any violence and coercion against women that is used to control or subjugate is oppression and is unacceptable in Islam – even if it is sanctioned by cultural practices

5.5.3 Christian Perspective on Women's Rights:

- Before looking at what the Bible has to say about social issues, we must always understand the context of a particular passage and the audience to whom it was addressed.

- The following is a list of rights God gave women:

1. A woman has the right to be treated as a woman the way God designed her. In other words, no one has the "right" to force a woman to behave as a man and defy her God-given gender. God placed beauty and grace in the female creation different from the characteristics He gave men (Deuteronomy 22:5). A woman who cannot accept her design as a female needs to be loved, counseled, and shown what it truly means to be a woman and vice versa.

2. A woman has the right to nurture and protect her own baby growing inside her body. No one has the right to force a woman to abort her child, and, by the same token, no woman has the right to force her baby's death (Psalm 139:13).

3. A woman has the right to flourish and grow within the boundaries God created for her, just as men do. Men do not have the right to inhibit that growth and freedom, as has been done in the past and is still practiced in many communities (Colossians 3:19).

4. A woman has the right to fair treatment because women are "joint heirs of the grace of life" (1 Peter 3:7). This includes equal opportunities to own property (Proverbs 31:16), receive an education, make personal decisions for herself, receive equal pay for equal work (Deuteronomy 24:17), and marry or not marry as she chooses (Numbers 36:6).

5.   A woman has the right to <u>serve the Lord according to her gifts and within the boundaries God set for His church (–Titus 2:35; 1 Timothy 3:11).</u>

6.   A woman has the right to lead, participate in political life and decision making at the community and institutional levels (Judges 4:4-9).

7.   A woman has a right to everything a man claims as his right, while honoring the God-given distinctions between the sexes (<u>Galatians 3:28).</u>

8.   A woman has the right to inheritance and own property, however, not on equal grounds with men (Numbers 27:1-11)

9.   Women under the laws of Moses, could be inherited if their husbands died without a child (Deuteronomy 25:5-7), thus undermining their rights. However, in the New Testament, women had the right to marry whoever they wanted if their husbands died (1 Corinthians 7:39; Romans 7:2-3).

10.   Women have the right to dignity and to be protected from abuse and torture (John 8:3-11; 1 Peter 3:7)

Module 5:

UNITY IN DIVERSITY – EXPLORING ISLAMIC
& CHRISTIAN PERSPECTIVES ON:

5.6 SOCIAL REPONSIBILITY &
GOOD NEIGHBOURLINESS

OBJECTIVES

This session will enable participants to:

- Define the concepts of Social Responsibility and Neigbourliness
- Appreciate the Christian and Islamic views of Social Responsibility and Good Neigbourliness

Time: 30 Minutes

1. Welcome group members and let them know that today, we are going to be talking about women's rights from the Islamic and Christian perspectives.

2. Agree on who will take notes for the group

3. Remind the group of the ground rules set earlier which might have included the following:

   - Mutual Respect for Differences.

   - Acknowledgment and Empathy

   - Openness and Tolerance

   - Equality and Striving to Eliminate Judgement.

   - Active Listening and Trying to understand the other and what is going on beyond one's own biases and preconceived ideas.

4.   Divide participants into 2 groups - A and B.

5.   Let each group read the following scriptures and discuss the tasks that follow:

Qur'an 4:7-12; Qur'an 4:36; Qur'an 2:264; Qur'an 9:60; Qur'an 21:73; Job 29: 12 – 16; Prov. 14:31; Isaiah 58:5 – 7; James 1:27; Luke 10:25 – 37; Luke 16:19 – 31; James 2:14 – 16

From the above scriptures:

• Group A: what do we understand by the concepts of Social Responsibility and Good Neighbourliness? What are the similarities in What the Holy Bible and the Holy Qur'an say about Social Responsibility and Good Neighbourliness? What is the Christian perspective on Social Responsibility to the poor and needy – what examples can we provide from the Old and New Testaments?

• Group B: What is the relationship between Social Responsibility and Good Neighbourliness? What is the Islamic position on social responsibility and good neighbourliness – what rights do Muslim women have in society? What role can religion play in promoting social responsibility and good neighbourliness in society? How can this reduce violent extremism and conflicts in Nigeria?

6.   Let each group discuss their questions and present their responses in plenary on flip charts.

7.   Explain the concepts of rights and obligations, and the Islamic and Christian perspectives on social responsibility and good neighbourliness as well as the role of religion in promoting thee in society as provided in the Facilitator's Notes 5.6

8.   TASK: Ask participants (in their groups) to identify critical issues and needs requiring interfaith social responsibility in their communities and develop an action plan to address these key issues. Let them present the action plans in the next inter-religious dialogue meeting.

9.   Conclude the session by asking participants to express what caught their interest the most in today's session and what they would like to do differently because of what they have learnt today.

5.6   ISLAMIC AND CHRISTIAN PERSPECTIVES ON SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY & GOOD NEIGHBOURLINESS

Social responsibility is a moral obligation or an ethical theory in which individuals are accountable for fulfilling their civic duty, and the actions of an individual must benefit the whole of society. It is about giving back to the community and looking after the welfare of the less privileged. It is also about protecting the environment and helping to address problems and needs around us in a responsible and inclusive way.

On the other hand, good neighbourliness is about being kind, compassionate and establishing good relations among neighbours to preserve the harmony of the neighbourhood. When neighbours get along and are friendly with one another, they will be more considerate to one another, and this can have a positive influence on each other's behaviour, leading to peaceful co-existence.

5.6.1 The Concept of Social Responsibility and Good Neighbourliness:

- Rights are legal, social, or ethical principles of freedom or entitlement; they are the fundamental rules about what is allowed of people or owed to people according to the law or some social contract, or ethical obligation.

- The state and society, including the religious community, have the responsibility or obligations to protect, to respect and to fulfil the rights that people (including women) are entitled to.

5.6.2 Islamic Perspective on Social Responsibility and Good Neighbourliness:

- Islam has special consideration for women, and makes clear provisions for women to share in their family inheritance (Qur'an 4:7-12)

- When Prophet Muhammad [PBUH] established his government in Medina, it was at a time of inter-tribal and inter-religious tensions. To encourage peace, reconciliation and security, the Prophet [PBUH] declared 'the Covenant of Medina' which laid down broad principles on which cordial relations could be established between Muslims and non-Muslims. The Covenant set out the principles for good neighbourliness and social responsibility: "The Jews shall bear their public expenses and so will the Muslims. Each shall assist the other against any violator of this covenant. Their relationship shall be one of mutual advice and consultation, and mutual assistance and charity rather than harm and aggression ... Charity and goodness are clearly distinguishable from crime and injury, and there is no responsibility except for one's own deeds.

- Qur'an calls on all Muslims to "do good to the parents, the relatives, the orphans, the needy, the near neighbour and the distant neighbour" (Qur'an 4:36)

- The Islamic principle of maslaha, which may be translated as "public interest", "preventing harm" or "benefit" for individuals and the society in general, is a very important concept of social responsibility and good neighbourliness and underlies the object and purpose of Sharia or Islamic law.

- The concept of benevolence (Ihsan) in Islam, or kindness to others is defined as "an act which benefits persons other than those from whom the act proceeds without any obligation", and is the highest form of social responsibility and requires believers to give without showing off or using hurting words to remind their beneficiaries of their benevolent acts (Qur'an 2:264)

- Zakat is an Islamic social responsibility principle referring to the obligation that an individual has to donate a certain proportion of wealth each year to charitable causes (Qur'an 9:60; Qur'an 21:73).

5.6.3 Christian Perspective on Social Responsibility and Good Neighbourliness:

- Christian Social Responsibility is a faith-based obligation to meet societal needs through the demonstration of God's love that positively impacts communities and individuals.

- Job was a believer in Social Responsibility and met the social needs of his community in a compassionate way (Job 29: 12 – 16), touching the lives of orphans, widows, persons with disability, the poor and needy.

- The Bible says: "He who oppresses the poor taunts and insults his Maker, but he who is kind and merciful and gracious to the needy honors Him" (Prov. 14:31).

FACILITATOR'S NOTES

- Fasting that has no social responsibility added to it is undesirable to God, for he desires a fast where that is free of "strife and contention" (Violent Conflicts), a fast that unlocks "the fetters of wickedness, and untie the cords of the yoke to let the oppressed go free; to break off every yoke... to share your bread with the hungry, and to take the wretched poor into your home; when you see the naked, to clothe him, and not to ignore your own kin" (Isaiah 58:5 – 7)

- The Bible defines pure and undefiled religion as one that takes care of the fatherless and widows in their affliction" (James 1:27)

- In sharing the story of the Good Samaritan, Jesus was calling the Church to her social responsibility to demonstrate the relationship between social responsibility and good neighbourliness. The man who "fell among thieves" and was seriously injured and left half dead was not known to the Samaritan, neither was he from Samaria nor a tribesman, but Jesus said the Samaritan acted like a good neighbour by showing him mercy and compassion, and he then called on the believers to "go and do likewise" (Luke 10:25 – 37).

- In narrating the story of the rich man and Lazarus, Jesus was pointing out the failure of the rich man to be socially responsible and his failure to be a good neighbour to Lazarus in his time of need (Luke 16:19 – 31).

- The Bible emphasises that the Christian faith must be substantiated with good works of social responsibility, otherwise it is of no benefit (James 2:14 – 16).

- The Bible enjoins Christians severally, in the Laws of Moses and in the teachings of Jesus, to practice good neighbourliness by avoiding paying evil for evil and loving their neighbours as they love themselves. In fact, Jesus called this one of the greatest commandments. (Leviticus 19:18; Matthew 7:12; Romans 13: 8 – 10; 1 John 4:21)

- The Bible says "If anyone says, "I love God," but hates his brother, he is a liar; for whoever does not love a brother whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen" (1 John 4:20).

Module 6:

FREEDOM OF WORSHIP – RIGHTS & RESPONSIBILITIES

6.1   Freedom of Worship as A Fundamental Human Rights

6.2   Rights and Responsibilities of Religious Worshipers

6.3   Religion as an Instrument of Peace to Prevent Violent Extremism

6.4   The Role of Women in Building Peaceful Communities

Module 6:

FREEDOM OF WORSHIP
RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

6.1 FREEDOM OF WORSHIP AS A FUNDAMENTAL RIGHT

This session will enable participants to:

- Define the concepts of Fundamental Human Rights
- Appreciate the rights of citizens to freedom of worship

Time: 30 Minutes

OBJECTIVES

1. Welcome group members and let them know that today, we are going to be talking about women's rights from the Islamic and Christian perspectives.

2. Agree on who will take notes for the group

3. Remind the group of the ground rules set earlier which might have included the following:

   - Mutual Respect for Differences.
   - Acknowledgement and Empathy
   - Openness and Tolerance,
   - Equality and Striving to Eliminate Judgement.
   - Active Listening and Trying to understand the other and what is going on beyond one's own biases and preconceived ideas.

4. Divide participants into 2 groups - A and B.

5. Let each group read the following scriptures and discuss the tasks that follow:

Qur'an 2:256; Qur'an 18:29; Qur'an 109:2-6–7; Qur'an 3:90; Qur'an 2:217; Qur'an 16:106–109; Acts 5:12–42
From the above scriptures:

- Group A: what do we understand by the concepts of Social Responsibility and Good Neighbourliness? What are the similarities in What the Holy Bible and the Holy Qur'an say about Social Responsibility and Good Neighbourliness? What is the Christian perspective on Social Responsibility to the poor and needy – what examples can we provide from the Old and New Testaments?

- Group B: What is the relationship between Social Responsibility and Good Neighbourliness? What is the Islamic position on social responsibility and good neighbourliness – what rights do Muslim women have in society? What role can religion play in promoting social responsibility and good neighbourliness in society? How can this reduce violent extremism and conflicts in Nigeria?

6. Let each group discuss their questions and present their responses in plenary on flip charts.

7. Explain the concepts of rights and obligations, and the Islamic and Christian perspectives on social responsibility and good neighbourliness as well as the role of religion in promoting thee in society as provided in the Facilitator's Notes 5.6

8. TASK: Ask participants (in their groups) to identify critical issues and needs requiring interfaith social responsibility in their communities and develop an action plan to address these key issues. Let them present the action plans in the next inter-religious dialogue meeting.

9. Conclude the session by asking participants to express what caught their interest the most in today's session and what they would like to do differently because of what they have learnt today.

FACILITATOR'S NOTES

6.1   FREEDOM OF WORSHIP AS A FUNDAMENTAL HUMAN RIGHT

6.1.1 The Concepts of Human Rights and Religion:

- Rights are <u>legal, social, or ethical principles of freedom or entitlement; that is, rights are the fundamental rules about what is allowed of people or owed to people according to some legal system, social convention, or ethical theory.</u>

- Human rights are norms that aspire to protect all people everywhere from severe political, legal, and social abuses. They are fundamental (they are essential and natural to the development of human beings and therefore require special protection by law from encroachment), universal (the same everywhere) and inalienable (cannot be taken away except under certain circumstances prescribed by law)

- Human rights are inherent to all human beings, whatever our nationality, place of residence, sex, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, language, or any other status. We are all equally entitled to our human rights without discrimination and these rights are all interrelated, interdependent, and indivisible.

- Religion refers to the attribute of the human being to go beyond himself into relationship with the divine or the supreme being to whom they owe devotion and worship.

- Religion is a collection of cultural systems, belief systems, and worldviews that relate humanity to spirituality and, sometimes, to moral values, intended to give life a meaning and to explain the origin of life.

6.1.2 The Concept of Freedom of Religion:

- Freedom of Religion or Belief is a human right which guaranteed under international law under Article 18 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) since 1966.

- Religious freedom protects people's right to live, speak, and act according to their beliefs peacefully and publicly. It protects their ability to be themselves at work, in class, and at social activities.

- Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience, and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief, in worship, teaching practice and observance (Section 38 Para. 1 of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria). Section 38(4) of the Nigerian Constitution disclaims any attempt at extending freedom of religion to cover membership of a secret society

- Freedom to manifest one's religion or beliefs shall be subject only to such limitations as are prescribed by law and are necessary in a democratic society in the interests of public safety, for the protection of public order, health, or morals, or for the protection of the rights and freedoms of others. Freedom of religion prevents government from forcing citizens to practice any single kind of religion

- Section 7 of the United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of all Forms of Intolerance and Discrimination based on Religion or Belief takes further the extent of the freedom to manifest and propagate one's religion to include Freedom:

  a) To worship or assembly in connection with a religion or belief, and to establish and maintain places for these purposes.
  b) To establish and maintain appropriate charitable or humanitarian institutions.
  c) To make, acquire and use to an adequate extent the necessary articles and materials related to the rites or customs of a religion or belief.
  d) To write, issue, and disseminate relevant publications in these areas; to teach a religion or belief in places suitable for these purposes; to solicit and receive voluntary financial and other contributions from individuals and institutions.
  e) To train, appoint, elect, or designate by succession appropriate leaders called for by the requirements and standards of any religion or belief.
  f) To observe days of rest and celebrate holidays and ceremonies in accordance with the precepts of one's religion or belief.
  g) To establish and maintain communications with the individuals and communities in matters of religion and belief at the national and international levels.

- The right to freedom of religion includes the right to change one's religion. This is in recognition of the dignity of a person to follow his thought, conscience, feelings, and above all, his will. This freedom is denied in some religious societies where anyone who renounces his or her faith, directly or indirectly is guilty of a capital offence sometimes punishable by death.

6.1.3 The Concept of Freedom of Worship:

- Religious freedom is more than the "freedom to worship" at a synagogue, church, or mosque. Freedom of religion is the right to choose what religion to follow and to worship without interference.

- Although the Qur'an clearly establishes the freedom of religion and worship (see Qur'an 2:256; Qur'an 18:29; Qur'an 109:2-6), changing religion from Islam to another is highly prohibited and considered a major sin of apostacy without forgiveness (Qur'an 3:90; Qur'an 2:217; Qur'an 16:106 – 109). In Islam, apostasy will be punished by God hereafter, and nowhere is death penalty prescribed here on earth for those who opt to change religion, except in the case of treasonable betrayal and war against the Muslim community.

- In the book of Acts, the Apostles were forced several times to denounce their faith in Christ, but they persisted in their preaching (Acts 5:12 – 42), thereby claiming their inalienable right to freedom of worship.

Module 6:

FREEDOM OF WORSHIP
RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

6.2 RIGHTS & RESPONSIBILITIES OF RELIGIOUS WORSHIPPERS

This session will enable participants to:

- Understand the rights of worshippers within and beyond their own religious traditions

- Appreciate the responsibilities of worshippers within the context of freedom of worship

OBJECTIVES

Time: 30 Minutes

1. Welcome group members and let them know that today, we are going to be talking about the rights and responsibilities of religious worshippers from the Islamic and Christian perspectives.

2. Agree on who will take notes for the group

3. Remind the group of the ground rules set earlier which might have included the following:

   - Mutual Respect for Differences.
   - Acknowledgement and Empathy
   - Openness and Tolerance,
   - Equality and Striving to Eliminate Judgement.
   - Active Listening and Trying to understand the other and what is going on beyond one's own biases and preconceived ideas.

4. Allow participants 5 minutes to review what was discussed in the last dialogue session, and share their experiences on the task that was given in the previous session.

5. Divide participants into 2 groups - A and B.

6. Let each group Read the following statements/scripture and discuss their understanding of these readings in the context of the rights of worshippers to freedom of worship and their responsibility of religious tolerance

- Group A: **In Islamic law (**Sharia), the consensus view is that a male apostate must be put to death unless he suffers from a mental disorder or converted under duress, for example due to an imminent danger of being killed. A female apostate must be either executed, according to Shafi'i, Maliki, and Hanbali schools of Sunni Islamic jurisprudence (fiqh), or imprisoned until she reverts to Islam as advocated by the Sunni Hanafi school and by Shi'a scholars.

- Group B: **In Deuteronomy 13:1 – 18, the Bible** requires the children of Israel (believers) to put to death anyone, whether a prophet, a family relation, or a citizen in the city where they live, who makes anyone to depart from serving the one true God to worship other gods whom they do not know.

7. Let each group answer these questions:

   a. What rights do worshippers have and what responsibilities are expected from them within the context of peaceful co-existence?
   b. What international legal frameworks protect the rights of worshippers and what are the limits to these rights?
   c. What is the responsibility of the state towards protecting and respecting the rights of religious worshippers?

8. Explain the concepts of rights and responsibilities of worshippers as provided in the Facilitator's Notes 6.2

9. TASK: Ask participants (in their groups) to ways I which the rights of worshippers are being violated in their communities and develop an advocacy action plan to address these violations. Let them present the action plans in the next inter-religious dialogue meeting.

10. Conclude the session by asking participants to express what caught their attention the most in today's session and what they would like to do differently in terms of conflict prevention based on what they have learnt today.

6.2   RIGHTS & RESPONSIBILITIES OF RELIGIOUS WORSHIPPERS

6.2.1 Rights of Religious Worshippers:

- In the previous session, we saw the provisions on the right to freedom of religion guaranteed under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR 1966) and the 1981 Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief. These International instruments confer on worshippers the following rights:

   a)   The freedom to have or to adopt a religion or belief of their choice, and freedom, either individually or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest this religion or belief in worship, observance, practice, and teaching.

   b)   The right not to be subject to coercion which would impair their freedom to have or to adopt a religion or belief of their choice.

   c)   The freedom to manifest one's religion or beliefs without any limitations except as prescribed by law and are necessary to protect public safety, order, health, or morals or the fundamental rights and freedoms of others.

   d)   The right to manifest once's religion not only includes ceremonial acts but also such custom as the observance of dietary rights, the wearing of distinctive clothing, head coverings, participation in rituals associated with certain stages of life, and the use of language customarily spoken by the group.

   e)   To be provided with religious and moral education of their children that is in conformity with their own religious convictions.

   f)   The right not to be subject to coercion which would impair their freedom to have a religion or belief of his choice.

   g)   The freedom to manifest one's religion or belief subject only to such limitations as are prescribed by law and are necessary to protect public safety, order, health or morals or the fundamental rights and freedoms of others.

   h)   The right not to be subject to intolerance and discrimination by any State, institution, group of persons, or person on the grounds of religion including any distinction, exclusion, restriction, or preference based on religion or belief.

   i)   Right of parents or legal guardians to bring the child up in their religion or belief;

   j)   Right of the child to education in religion or belief, in accordance with the wishes of parents, and the right not to be compelled to receive education against their wishes;

   k)   Right of the child to protection from discrimination and to education for tolerance;

   l)   The right of every child to have access to education in the matter of religion or belief in accordance with the wishes of his or her parents or legal guardians and shall not be compelled to receive teaching on religion or belief against the wishes of his parents or legal guardians, the best interests of the child being the guiding principle.

   m)   The <u>rights of faith-based businesses to operate according to the fundamental beliefs of their owners.</u>

   n)   The right of religious individuals, institutions, and communities to express religious truths in their private lives, and to bring those truths into political life through their respective claims about justice, peace, equality, and freedom, and to seek the agreement of their fellow citizens on a basis equal to all others in society.

o) The right to be protected from acts of genocide defined under the UN Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crimes of Genocide (1948) as "acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such, killing members of the group; causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group; deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part; imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group; forcibly transferring children of the group to another group"

6.2.2 Responsibilities of Religious Worshippers:

• Freedom of Religion or Belief is a human right which guaranteed under international law under Article 18 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR 1966) confers on worshippers' certain responsibilities including:

a) The responsibility to bring up their children in the spirit of understanding, tolerance, friendship among peoples, peace and universal brotherhood, respect for freedom of religion or belief of others, and in full consciousness that their energy and talents should be devoted to the service of God and their fellow men.
b) The responsibility not to disseminate falsehood or to circulate reports which may outrage public decency, or to indulge in slander, innuendo or to cast defamatory aspersions on other persons (Article 12, Universal Islamic Declaration on Human Rights, 1981)
c) The responsibility not to hold in contempt or ridicule the religious beliefs of others or incite public hostility against them; and to respect for the religious feelings of others (Article 12, Universal Islamic Declaration on Human Rights, 1981)
d) The responsibility to worship within the provisions of the law necessary to protect public safety, order, health, morality and the fundamental rights and freedoms of others.
e) The responsibility to obey the norms and rules established by their religion in conformity with the civil laws in force.

Module 6:
FREEDOM OF WORSHIP
RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

6.3 RELIGION AS AN INSTRUMENT TO PREVENT VIOLENT EXTREMISM

This session will enable participants to:

Time: 30 Minutes

OBJECTIVES

- Understand how Religion contributes to conflicts and violent extremism in the Nigerian society

- Appreciate the role of Inter-religious dialogue in the prevention of conflicts & violent extremism

1. Welcome group members and let them know that today, we are going to be talking about the rights and responsibilities of religious worshippers from the Islamic and Christian perspectives.

2. Agree on who will take notes for the group

3. Remind the group of the ground rules set earlier which might have included the following:

    - Mutual Respect for Differences.
    - Acknowledgement and Empathy
    - Openness and Tolerance,
    - Equality and Striving to Eliminate Judgement.
    - Active Listening and Trying to understand the other and what is going on beyond one's own biases and preconceived ideas.

4. Allow participants 5 minutes to review what was discussed in the last dialogue session and share their experiences on the task that was given in the previous session.

5. Divide participants into 2 groups - A and B.

6. Let each group discuss the following questions:

Group A:

       a.   How does religion contribute to conflicts and violent extremism?
       b.   What are the consequences of these on our society?

Group B:

       c.   How does Inter-religious Dialogue contribute to preventing conflicts and violent extremism?
       d.   How can religious leaders contribute to peacebuilding in a religiously polarized society like Nigeria?

7.   Explain the role of religion in driving conflicts and violent extremism, as well as the role of inter-religious dialogue in the prevention of conflicts and violent extremism as provided in the Facilitator's Notes 6.3

8.   TASK: Ask participants (in their groups) to identify potential causes of conflicts based on religion in their communities and develop an action plan to address these key issues using interfaith dialogue. Let them present the action plans in the next inter-religious dialogue meeting.

9.   Conclude the session by asking participants to express what caught their interest the most in today's session and what they would like to do differently because of what they have learnt today.

6.3   RELIGION AS AN INSTRUMENT TO PREVENT VIOLENT EXTREMISM

6.3.1   How Religion contributes to conflicts and violent extremism:

- It was Lord Jonathan Sacks (1948–2020), a British Orthodox Rabbi, Philosopher and Author who said: "If religion is not part of the solution, it will become part of the problem."
- Different religious and cultural backgrounds bring diverse values and perceptions of what is right and wrong. Misunderstandings sometimes occur in our communications due to differing world views and perceptions, which are often shaped by cultural and religious diversity.
- However, disagreements, disputes, and conflict are common in all groups and parts of society, even in groups that identify with the same family, culture, or religion.
- Religious extremism can contribute to conflict escalation as extremists see radical measures as necessary to fulfilling God's wishes.
- All religions have their accepted dogma, or articles of belief, that followers must accept without question. This can lead to inflexibility and intolerance in the face of other beliefs.
- Sometimes, scripture and dogma are often vague and open to interpretation, and conflict can arise over whose interpretation is the correct one, a conflict that ultimately cannot be solved because there is no <u>arbiter. The winner generally is the interpretation that attracts the most followers.</u>
- Sometimes, crisis is largely the result of political manipulation with people using religious groups for their own political gains, leading to violent conflicts.
- Religious fundamentalists are primarily driven by displeasure with modernity and motivated by the marginalization of religion in modern society and by the need for purification of the religion, they can adopt extreme measures to restore the faith to a central place, and this can lead to violent extremism as a measure to preserve the faith from such marginalization and modernity.
- Religious nationalism too can produce extremist sentiment. Religious nationalists tend to view their religious traditions as so closely tied to their nation or their land that any threat to one of these is a threat to one's existence and they therefore respond to threats to their religion by seeking a political entity in which their faith is privileged at the expense of others. In these contexts, it is also likely that religious symbols will come to be used to forward ethnic or nationalist causes.
- The global media has paid significant attention to religion and conflict, but not the ways in which religion has played a powerful peacemaking role. This excessive emphasis on the negative side of religion and the actions of religious extremists generates interfaith <u>fear and hostility.</u>
- In virtually every pluralistic society, religious difference serves as a source of potential conflict. Because individuals are often ignorant of other faiths, there is some potential tension, but it does not necessarily mean conflict will result. However, a triggering event can be taken advantage of by extremists, escalating and transforming it from a laten conflict to a destructive one.

6.3.2 The Role of Inter-Religious Dialogue in the Prevention of conflicts and Violent Extremism:

- Interfaith dialogue is beneficial at all levels of religious hierarchies and across all segments of religious communities by breaking the silence, bridging gaps of <u>misunderstanding, facilitating the learning about other religions, and building respect for other faiths.</u>
- Through sustainable and respectful relationships based on dialogue and engagement, conflicts resulting from or exacerbated by fear, disrespect and misunderstanding between communities are less likely to occur, and, when they do, are less likely to devolve into violence.
- History seems to point to the fact that conflicts between religions has been one of the major causes of violence, although more often, through the misuse of religion for other, political ends.
- Sometimes, having a conversation or dialogue is enough to identify the root cause(s) of a disagreement, or to resolve existing misunderstandings and find common ground.
- Interreligious dialogue help in finding common ground, communicating across boundaries, understanding others' perspectives, creating trusting relationships, and bridging differences. In this way, dialogue serves to de-escalate tensions between groups and explore solutions for the common good
- Approaching intercultural and interreligious tensions, polarisation, and conflict by using dialogue is a widely acknowledged method of peacebuilding. Peacebuilding also refers to actions that work for justice and inclusion in a community and which contribute to social cohesion.
- Inter-religious dialogue contributes to a more socially cohesive society, which is a society that has high levels of trust and interaction across religious and cultural differences; where tensions between groups rarely lead to polarisation and destructive conflict; and that are more resilient in keeping the peace when crises and problems do occur.
- Religious concepts of human dignity, social justice, redemption, and forgiveness underpin key post-conflict reconciliation efforts, providing resources to help societies heal the shattering consequences of war.

Module 6:

FREEDOM OF WORSHIP
RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

6.3 THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN BUILDING PEACEFUL COMMUNITIES

This session will enable participants to:

- Understand role of women in building peaceful societies
- Appreciate the barriers hindering women's participation in conflict prevention & peacebuilding processes

Time: 30 Minutes

OBJECTIVES

1. Welcome group members and let them know that today, we are going to be talking about women's participation in conflict prevention and peacebuilding processes.

2. Agree on who will take notes for the group

3. Remind the group of the ground rules set earlier which might have included the following:

   - Mutual Respect for Differences.
   - Acknowledgement and Empathy
   - Openness and Tolerance,
   - Equality and Striving to Eliminate Judgement.
   - Active Listening and Trying to understand the other and what is going on beyond one's own biases and preconceived ideas.

4. Allow participants 5 minutes to review what was discussed in the last dialogue session and share their experiences on the task that was given in the previous session.

5. Divide participants into 2 groups - A and B.

6. Let each group discuss the following questions:

Group A:

    a.   How are women and girls affected by conflicts and violent extremism?

    b.   What roles can/do women play in promoting peace in our society?

Group B:

    c.   What are the barriers preventing women's participation in peacebuilding processes?

    d.   How can religious leaders and policy makers promote women's participation in conflict prevention and peacebuilding processes?

7.   Explain the role of women in prevention of conflicts and violent extremism, as well as the barriers to women's participation in the prevention of conflicts and violent extremism as provided in the Facilitator's Notes 6.4

8.   TASK: Ask participants (in their groups) to identify potential barriers to women's participation in peacebuilding in their communities and develop an action plan to address these barriers using interfaith dialogue. Let them present the action plans in the next inter-religious dialogue meeting.

9.   Conclude the session by asking participants to express what caught their interest the most in today's session and what they would like to do differently because of what they have learnt today.

FACILITATOR'S NOTES

6.4   THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN BUILDING PEACEFUL COMMUNITIES

During conflicts, women and girls suffer a range of harms, from sexual and gender-based violence inflicted by combatants, to the loss of their spouses and families, to the loss of their livelihoods and personal autonomy. While it is well known that violent conflict disproportionately affects women and girls and intensifies pre-existing gender inequalities and discrimination, the role of women as active change agents of peace in armed conflict has been largely unrecognized.

6.4.1   How Women Contribute to Peacebuilding and Prevention of Conflicts and Violent Extremism:

- Women play central roles as caretakers of families, advocates for peace, as peacekeepers, relief workers and mediators and everyone is affected when they are excluded from the peacebuilding process.
- Evidence indicates that women participants in peace processes are usually focused less on the spoils of the war and more on reconciliation, economic development, education, and transitional justice – all critical elements of a sustained peace.
- Networks of women groups and women-led organizations have been known to be committed to nonviolence and mediation, negotiating local ceasefires with armed groups and the release of hostages.
- Women are better negotiators and mediators of peace during conflicts because they adopt nonviolence, they are less threatening to the conflicting parties, and they easily earn the trust of the parties in conflict. They exert indirect influences on various segments of society and can earn emotional sympathy from those who drive conflicts. They can easily mobilise themselves into a critical mass to influence policies and public opinion about conflicts and can easily gain public support and support of policy makers. The "Bring Back Our Girls" campaign is largely women led and can engage in peacebuilding in Nigeria.
- Women peacebuilders have been known to pressured insurgents to lifts roadblocks and have documented human rights violations.
- An International Peace Institute study of 182 signed peace agreements between 1989 and 2011 found that when women are included in peace processes, there is a 35 percent increase in the probability that a peace agreement will last 15 years or more (United States Institute of Peace, 2017).
- Peace agreements are 64% less likely to fail when women participate (PRIO Centre on Gender, Peace and Security, 2020)
- Women have a much higher chance of influencing negotiations when they have their own independent women-only delegation and/or when they can strategically coordinate to advance common interests, for example establishing joint positions on key issues. This can be done by forming unified women's coalitions across formal delegations during peace negotiation processes.

6.1.2   Barriers to Women's Participation in Peacebuilding:

- Although women exercise power indirectly and informally as sisters, mothers, and wives within their community, they have little room to play formal leadership roles in resolving communal conflicts.
- Women's participation in conflict resolution and peacebuilding is limited by several factors, including:

a)   The prevalence of gender-based violence during conflicts generates fear and helps to silence campaigns for social, economic, and political rights by women.

b)   Women are most likely to have fled conflict and take on responsibilities such as primary caregivers and providers for dependents, which makes participation in peacebuilding more difficult.

c)   Cultural pressures against women putting themselves forward, that pressure women to refrain from travel, and not to engage in important public arenas.

d)   Where women do participate in peacebuilding processes, they lack the needed resources and may not have the required education, skills, or training to engage with conflicting parties or policy makers and other stakeholders.

e)   A lack of resources such as a lack of access to employment opportunities and to productive assets such as land, capital, health services, training, and education.

f)   Women's movements do not have established mechanisms to drive the gender agenda in post-conflict settings where male-dominated structures have not seen the need to implement agreed affirmative action.

g)   Women's groups often face higher criteria for participating on the peace negotiation able than other groups, and this limits their participation.

h)   Both men and women regard women's engagement in peace building processes as "difficult" or "dangerous". This socio-cultural perception reinforces the representation of women as victims rather than agents in (post-)conflict contexts.

I)   The governments and NGOs therefore have a lot to do to encourage and assist women in developing their role in post-conflict resolution and peacebuilding activities.

THE INTER-RELIGIOUS
DIALOGUE
CREED

- We confess our failures and lack of love, respect, and sensitivity to people of other faiths in the past. We intend to forgive one another, seek the forgiveness of others, and commit ourselves to a new beginning.
- We affirm that good interfaith relations can open the way to better interethnic relations and peace throughout the world.
- We recognise the building of true community (koinonia) both among persons and various ethnic and religious communities, as our primary objective. We need to develop an ecumenical theology that will be appropriate for the unfolding sense of a globalized world.
- We affirm the importance of promoting a culture of dialogue within and among all religious communities and indigenous traditions.
- We condemn violence and terrorism as being against the spirit of all true religion and we pledge ourselves to removing their root causes.
- We shall respect the integrity of all religions and ensure that they have the freedom to follow their own beliefs and practices.
- We believe that the different religions are enriched by identifying agendas in which they can collaborate, such as making peace, protecting the environment, eradicating poverty, and ensuring the human dignity of all.
- We affirm that it is important for us all to listen to and learn from other religions so that we can value religious plurality as a factor that enriches our communities.
- We endeavour to live out and explain the truths of our own religion in a manner that is intelligible and friendly to people of other faiths.
- Cultural diversity as well as religious diversity in our communities will be affirmed as a source of enrichment and challenge.

ANNEX

LIST OF PARTICIPANT AT THE INTERFAITH DIALOGUE MANUAL VALIDATION

S/N	NAME	ORGANIZATION
1.	Alh Bala Ali Kofar Kudu	Ministry of Religious Affairs, Kano state.
2.	Dr Tijjani Alh Sani	Bayero University Kano
3.	Dr M.Q Kagarko	JNI
4.	Pastor Timta	Eklisiyar Yanuwa
5.	Rev Murtala Mati	CAN
6.	Dr Shuaibu Mukhtar	JNI
7.	PastorGabriel	New generation/CAN
8.	Mrs. OluremN Bosah	CAN
9.	RevAdeyomoA Samuel	CAN President Kano
10.	Rev. Fr. Micheal Adegbola	Vicar catholic church
11.	Dr Nura Sani	Bayero University Kano
12.	Dr Najib Awwal Abubakar	Bayero University Kano
13.	Malam Sani Ashir	Bayero University Kano
14.	Taufiq Abubakar Hussaini	BUK/ JNI
15.	Dr Cynthia N Eze	Anglican
16.	Saratu Yakubu	Assemblies
17.	Jummai Rubben	ECWA
18.	Rev. Mikailu A. Atiku	Hosnna baptis Church
19.	Rev Lawan Ibrahim	ECWA
20.	Dr Nasiru Tijjani	Sa'adatu Rimi College of Education, Kano/JNI
21.	Dr Abdurra'uf Isa	JNI
22.	Dr Khamisu Muhammad Yusuf	Sa'adatu Rimi College of Education, Kano/JNI
23.	Dalha Sagir Sulaiman	JNI
24.	Dahiru Hamza	JNI

25.	Ali Ibrahim	JNI
26.	Aminu Sadi Abubakar	Aminu Kano College of Islamic Studies (AKCILS)
27.	Rev Samuel Adeolu	CAN
28.	Rev Shuaibu Baigi	CAN
29.	Dr Nura Sharif Awaisu	Aminu Kano College of Islamic Studies (AKCILS)
30.	Zubaida Shehu Umar	Aminu Kano College of Islamic Studies (AKCILS)/JNI
31.	Pastor Roland Usobo	CAN
32.	Taiye Agunyele	CAN
33.	Rev. Dr. Ubah Andrew	CMMRC
34.	Dr Umar Muhammad Kani	Aminu Kano College of Islamic Studies (AKCILS)/JNI
35.	Mairo Yakubu Usman	
36.	Saratu L Maigida	LIWEED
37.	Umar Haruna Maiturare	Aminu Kano College of Islamic Studies
38.	Auwalu Idris Kura	Aminu Kano College of Islamic Studies (AKCILS)/JNI
39.	Rev Barau Isah	ECWA
40.	Pastor Victor Ishaya	NASARA Baptis Church Badodo Kano
41.	Pastor. Yusuf Ayuba	Bampai Barrack Church
42.	Ali Ibrahim	JNI
43.	Malik Abubakar Hussaini	JNI
44.	Mal Umaru Bidda	JNI
45.	Auwalu Shehu Sharada	Teacher
46.	Ruth H. Okorie	WOWICAN
47.	Mr Taiye Agunyele	Baptist Church, Badawa
48.	Jummai E. Lado	CAN

SARVE III
SYSTEM AND STRUCTURE STRENGTHENING APPROACH
AGAINST RADICALISATION TO VIOLENT EXTREMISM

System and Structure Strengthening Approach
against Radicalisation to Violent Extremism Project,
SARVE I, II and III

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