

Religious Diversity and Anti-Discrimination Training Programme



Europe's growing religious and philosophical diversity holds the potential for greater intercultural understanding but also for greater conflict. For this reason, the Religious Diversity and Anti-Discrimination Training Programme aims to create societies that recognize and respect trans-religious diversity with a variety of faiths, beliefs and convictions and that promote the values, the skills and policies of anti-discrimination.

This award-winning training programme was created by a diverse partnership of organisations, led by CEJI-A Jewish Contribution to an Inclusive Europe. The programme aims to achieve the positive potential of intercultural relations by including all people, no matter what their religious identification or belief, in the creation of inclusive societies.

Since 2000, 120 educators have been trained via 11 five-day courses to become "users" in the programme. They come from a variety of sectors, including schools, universities, public authorities, NGOs, private consulting firms and community groups. Countries where they work include: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Portugal, Romania, Spain, Switzerland, Turkey and the United Kingdom.



The Religious Diversity and Anti-Discrimination Training Programme is mentioned as a best practice in the publication "Human Rights Education in the School Systems of Europe, Central Asia and North America: A Compendium of Good Practice" - Published by the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR)

Impact:

An external evaluation conducted by the International Centre for Guidance Studies of the University of Derby assessed the short and long-term impact of the training programme on participants. The results are overwhelmingly positive.

From the Evaluation Report

A teacher of multi-ethnic groups said the programme had helped them to facilitate issues between students: following a conflict between a Bulgarian and a Roma child, the teacher used a 'Rites of Passage' exercise to make all the class aware of different beliefs and rituals and how important it is to respect each other.

A medical doctor said that the programme had helped in becoming more tolerant and understanding of people from different ethnic groups and religions.

A Catholic priest said that some of the activities and the emerging themes had informed his preaching to his congregation.

One participant reported that the programme had helped resolve issues in relation to the baptism of a child in a family where the mother is Catholic and the father is Muslim.

A human resource manager said that information gleaned from the course had proved useful in compiling fact sheets on granting time off to employees for significant religious events.

Belieforama

Creating a Community of Practice

The users of the Religious Diversity and Anti-Discrimination Training Programme are evolving into an active Community of Practice, called Belieforama. During the next three years (2009-2012), Belieforama will provide even greater assurance as to the quality of delivery of this training programme that deals with very sensitive and difficult topics, supporting the development of excellence in the new field of Religious Diversity training.

Annual users seminars, opportunities for further learning through thematic trainings and a lively web-based forum for material co-creation are just a few of the key outputs of Belieforama. In addition, emerging issues from local and European workshops on religious diversity are being gathered and analysed towards the preparation of a Policy Brief to be presented in 2012.

Up to 50 case studies of how individuals from all walks of life integrate the learning from the training into their personal and/or professional life are being collected for electronic and print publication, offering inspiration and practical ideas - showing that it is possible to find creative, innovative and effective strategies to live and work in religious diversity.

The BELIEFORAMA partners are:



Upcoming Thematic Seminars to Watch For:

- Overcoming Antisemitism
- Overcoming Islamophobia
- Reconciling Religion and Gender
- Reconciling Religion and Sexual Orientation
- Effective Action
- Religious Diversity Facilitation Skills

"I've learned some good strategies on how to integrate religious minorities and how to improve the intercultural communication and trust. Last but not least I've got a huge support of my intention to make a special effort in order to help religious minorities in their requests."

- Austrian Police Commander on a 5-day "training the trainers" course, Lisbon, Portugal, May 2009

"I am now more confident in my perspective of faith and my interactions with others in theirs. Thank you for allowing me on the course - it has helped me more than you will never know."

- Participant on a 3-day workshop, Derby, England, February 2008

"I want to emphasise that the production of the Handbook for Educators is a superb achievement of inter-religious, intercultural and interdisciplinary collaboration. There is no doubt that the Handbook as it stands would facilitate a great deal of learning."

- Professor Robert Jackson, Director of Warwick Religions and Education Research Unit at the University of Warwick, England

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Programme Evaluation:
2007 - 2009 EC Transversal Programme
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2009 - 2012 EC Grundtvig Programme
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