

**The Role of Interfaith Education and Cross-Cultural Religious Literacy and
Human Rights Education in Combating Intolerance, Negative Stereotyping and Stigmatization of
Persons Based on Religion or Belief**
March 12, 2024, Restaurant Vieux Bois, Geneva
A side event during the 55th session of the UN Human Rights Council

Background

Interfaith education and developing collaborative networks are central to UN Human Rights Council's Resolution 16/18: to combat "intolerance, negative stereotyping and stigmatization of, and discrimination, incitement to violence and violence against, persons based on religion or belief." During the Geneva HRC meetings, a panel discussion explored different programs to highlight positive experience and to encourage cross country and regional collaboration. The UN ambassadors for the Gambia and Indonesia co-sponsored the event, which also looked to the Brazilian presidency of the 2024 G20 Summit and the role of the G20 Interfaith Forum.

The event featured four examples of relevant educational initiatives: the Cross-Cultural Religious Literacy program in Indonesia (Leimena Institute), the 20 year old Ethics Education Program of Arigatou International, the GO-HRE program focused on human rights education programs, and programs in Brazil.

Speakers and Moderator

- Moderator and opening remarks: Prof. W. Cole Durham, Jr., *President of G20 Interfaith Forum Association*

Panel:

- Ambassador Muhammadou M.O. Kah, *Permanent Representative of the Republic of The Gambia to the UN Office and other international organizations in Geneva.*
- Ambassador Achsanul Habib, *Deputy Permanent Representative of the Republic of Indonesia to the UN, WTC, and other international organizations in Geneva*
- Matius Ho, *Executive Director of the Leimena Institute, Indonesia*
- Maria Lucia Uribe, *Director, Arigatou International*
- David M. Kirkham, *Executive Director, GO-HRE (Human Rights Education), Geneva*
- Prof. Rodrigo Vitorino Souza Alves, *Brazilian Center for Studies in Law and Religion, Federal University of Uberlandia, Brazil*
- Prof. Katherine Marshall, *Senior Fellow at Georgetown University's Berkley Center for Religion, Peace, and World Affairs and Vice President, G20 Interfaith Forum..*

Highlights of the event

Cole Durham introduces the topic and speakers.

Ambassador Kah: Good afternoon. Good afternoon. As we gather here today, we are reminded of the powerful words and commitments enshrined in the Human Rights Council resolution on combating religious hatred and ensuring freedom of religion or belief. These resolutions, pillars of our shared human rights framework, called upon us to stand firm against the forces of intolerance and discrimination that threatened the very fabric of our societies. Before I go further, I want to wish you all a very blessed Ramadan. We just started yesterday and for some countries today.

Our dedication to combating religious hatred, therefore is not just a commitment to upholding individual freedoms. It's a commitment to preserving the peace and security of our collective human family. It is a

recognition that freedom of religion or belief and the respect of this freedom are indispensable elements in the foundation of the culture of peace.

In our world marked by unprecedented connectivity and complexity, the essence of our shared humanity is too often overshadowed by the divisions roughed by misunderstanding and fear. It is against this backdrop that my country, The Gambia, proudly leads the charge in drafting a resolution aimed at strengthening and promoting a culture of peace within the United Nations Human Rights Council, which will be tabled in a few days. This initiative is born from our conviction that peace is the bedrock upon which all aspirations for development, justice and human dignity must be built.

The urgency of our mission stems from a simple truth. In every corner of the world, individuals face persecution, discrimination, and violence simply for holding to their faith of practicing their cultural traditions. Such injustices not only devastate the lives of individuals, but also sow the seeds of broader conflict and instability.

It is our collective responsibility to confront and dismantle the mechanisms of hatred that foil such divisions. To this end, the role of education, in particular human rights education and the fostering of cross-cultural and religious literacy cannot be overstated. By empowering individuals with the knowledge and understanding of different cultures and religions, we can replace ignorance with insight, suspicion with empathy, and animosity with respect. This education is not a luxury, but a necessity for the survival and flourishing of our global community. It is the means by which we can transform the narrative from one of division to one of unity, highlighting our common humanity while respecting our diverse expressions of fate and culture.

The Human Rights Council resolutions serve as a clarion call for action to educate, to legislate, and to advocate in defense of the vulnerable and against the spread of hatred. They remind us that silence in the face of intolerance is complicity and they urge us to voice our solidarity loud and clear.

Today as we delve into the role of cross-cultural religious literacy and human rights education in combating intolerance. Let us draw inspiration and guidance from these resolutions. Let us reaffirm our commitment to fostering an environment where dialogue prevails over division, understanding over ignorance, and peace over persecution.

I'm indeed honored to be part of this discussion inspired by the resolutions of the Human Rights Council and motivated by the shared values that unite us in our diversity. Together we can confront and overcome the challenges of religious hatred and discrimination. Together we can build a world where freedom of religion or belief is not just a protected right, but a lived reality for all.

Thank you for joining us in this essential dialogue and for your unwavering dedication to these principles. I'm confident that through our collective efforts, we can and will make significant strides towards a more tolerant, respectful, and peaceful global community. And I thank you and God bless.

Cole Durham: I think you could recognize in that some of the echoes of someone who has recently served as vice President of the Human Rights Council and we're very grateful for Ambassador Kah be with us.

Next we'll hear from Ambassador Achsanul Habib, deputy permanent representative of the Republic of Indonesia. And I should tell you before this assignment, he was the Director of Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs in the Foreign Ministry of Indonesia. We're grateful to have you with us. **Ambassador Habib.** Thank you. Ambassador Muhammadou Kah of the Republic of The Gambia, the UN, distinguished panelists, excellencies, colleagues, esteem delegates and participants. A very good afternoon.

It is indeed my honor to attend and address this distinguished forum. The main theme of today's panel discussion is highly relevant with the increased instances of human rights violation against individuals based on their religion or belief across the globe.

Apart from the issues of intolerance, negative stereotyping and stigmatization, members of religious group and faith believers worldwide are also facing hatred, discrimination, and violent on daily basis. Failure to tackle this pressing issue will lead us to a more dangerous path towards insecurity and conflicts as history has taught us for many decades. And at this juncture, promoting cross-cultural religious literacy and human rights education plays an instrument role in creating and internment that denounces our form of religious intolerance and prejudice.

In Indonesia, an immense diversity of religions, cultures, and ethnicities has served as an indispensable asset for our nation building and developmental processes. At the same time, we are deeply conscious that our heterogeneity also presents challenges to our unity and social cohesion. Therefore, we share and attach the great importance of religious literacy and human rights education to foster mutual understanding and peace within our society.

This literacy in our understanding entails building knowledge and understanding about the significance of different religions and belief, including the one that we choose to embrace. It aims to nurture mutual respect and eliminate ignorance and misconceptions which breed the growing intolerance and prejudice.

Meanwhile, human rights education involves a more comprehensive learning about human dignity and fundamental rights that include the rights to freedom of religion and/or belief. It empowers individuals to be cognizant of their rights as human beings and defend themselves against any abuse and violation that undermine their inherent dignity.

Religious literacy and human rights education are mutually reinforcing and facilitate full respect and greater protection of proposed right to freedom of religion or belief. Introducing both concept into educational system for us will ensure that efforts to cultivate culture of tolerance and respect for human rights begin from the early stage of one personal development.

Promoting this goes beyond education in formal way is also crucial to reach larger elements of society, including members of different religious and faith groups and-

The Cross Cultural Religious Literacy Program in Indonesia is promoted through interfaith dialogue. As a Muslim majority country, about 87% of Indonesian society, we also actively advocate moderate Islam as a religion of peace and tolerance. Last year was an important milestone for Indonesia in advancing the message of moderation, tolerance, and religious literacy. Presidential regulation 58/2023 was promulgated to serve as national guidelines on enhancing moderation, tolerance, harmony among religious communities.

The government of Indonesia last year initiated the Jakarta Plurilateral Dialogue in August 2023 with the aim of reinvigorating and mainstreaming global commitment to implement Human Right Council resolution 16/18, or what we call the Istanbul Process. In November 2023, the International Conference on Cross-Cultural Religious Literacy was organized by Ministry of Law and Human Rights in cooperation with the Leimena Institute to promote a peaceful and inclusive society. We are pleased to have the Leimena Institute as a strong partner and promoter of Cross-Cultural Religious Literacy in Indonesia joining this important event as a cross-cultural.

Talking about human rights education, the Ministry of Education and Culture in Indonesia plays a pivotal role in integrating human rights education into the national curriculum. This integration is intended to ensure that children are educated about their rights and responsibilities as per international human rights standards, and of course, the Indonesian constitution. The curriculum covers a range of topic, including the rights of the child, gender equality, non-discrimination, and the importance of diversity and tolerance, including religious tolerance in Indonesian society context. Furthermore, the government in Indonesia collaborates with civil societies and international organizations such as UNICEF has undertaken campaigns, workshops, and training programs aimed at teachers, educators, and students to effectively disseminate human rights, knowledge and principle of educational setting.

In the last part of my remarks, let me again reiterate our government's firm commitment to combating intolerance, negative stereotyping and stigmatization of persons based on religion and beliefs. Collective efforts is needed among countries and stakeholders, roles are also imperative. In this case, cooperation on cross-cultural religious literacy and human right education will be significantly helpful to complement other important undertakings of addressing this global concern more effectively. Let me commend the permanent mission of The Gambia and all of the co-sponsors for initiating this respective event. I look forward to seeing constructive discussion today and how it will enrich the conversation around this issue. And of course, to support our role in the foreign policy context, particularly at the human rights debate. Thank you so much.

Cole Durham. Thank you both of your excellencies for these thoughtful remarks at the beginning of our session.

Let me now turn to the panel itself. Let me just say a word or two about how the G20 Interfaith got involved in this project. We have worked for over the past decade with each successive G20 Summit, and over time we have become more highly focused on issues where religious communities can really make a difference in the formulation of general policy. I learned from Katherine that if you're not at the table, you're on the menu. So we've tried to help religious organizations and communities and actors be on the agenda in incredible ways that can be helpful to those leading governments and leading the kind of policy discussions that go on in that important place, like the United Nations sitting here in Geneva, but also in G20 countries and other countries.

Last year I remember working hard to recommend that the African Union become a member of the G20, and we were successful. Of course, it helped that Biden and Modi wanted this to happen, so we don't want to overstate our influence. But increasingly it's well understood that many of the issues that we're facing really have significant input from religious voices. Now, sometimes the religious voices are not exactly unitary, as you would know, but we found that by working and identifying common priorities, their important abilities to work together, make progress and contribute to the international dialogue that's going on. We'll talk a little bit more about that as we go forward. But let me say part of the context for this background, one of the areas that's very important to us is education. Because education is really critical behind a whole panoply of other kinds of interests and concerns that arise at the international level.

So it is particularly important to find ways, as you'll see today, that we can have cross-cultural religious literacy, that's really critical to understanding each other. Human rights education is very important. There are a number... I was thinking of Arigatou here, that has a lot of programs on education ethics and so forth. And we have local chair of our committee for the G20 next year in Brazil, Rodrigo Vitorino. I'll introduce these people as they're speaking, but the point I wanted to make here is that this is one dimension of finding ways to contribute positively in ways that religious communities can have a distinctive voice.

So I was also going to mention that we have represented here a number of groups, and one of the backgrounds for this particular session was a meeting on CCRL, that is whenever I use the initials, on cross-cultural religious literacy, but somehow when I use the abbreviation, then it takes over my mind. But we had with a conference organized working with the Foreign Ministry where the Ministry of Human Rights. So with Ambassador Habib, but also with Matius Ho, and at that we had Ambassador Kah present at that conference, and I was there as well. Some of the others of you here may have been there, but this is some of the background. We're learning important things about ways that education in these various areas can be significant. So we recognize that Ambassador Habib will need to leave at some point, but thanks to him and Ambassador Tóth for their participation and for hosting this event.

The speaking order is going to be the opposite of the order on the program that we sent out. I'll introduce people as they speak. Matius Ho is the executive director of the Leimena Institute in Indonesia. And the Leimena Institute has played a major role in developing cross-cultural religious literacy. He will tell more about what they've already achieved and the further impact. But the whole methodology of cross-cultural religious literacy is important, not only at the educational levels where they've already done a great deal of work, but also more generally. So let me turn the time now to Matius.

Matius Ho: Good afternoon everyone. My name is Matius Ho, executive director of Leimena Institute. First of all, I would like to thank everyone for attending this event, and especially also for the permanent mission of The Gambia to the UN office and also to the permanent mission of the Republic of Indonesia to the UN office for co-sponsoring this event and also for making the time to come. I know it's a very busy week. So here I'm going to talk about the cross-cultural religious literacy, that's part of the topic of today. So this a program that we do in Indonesia, and like what Professor Calderon just mentioned. I think through our discussion, especially last year in the International Conference that we did, we saw that there's a need as well to bring this discussion to a broader audience and to see how this can be also be beneficial and relevant, especially in the discussion of today's topic in combating intolerance, discrimination based on religion and belief.

So last week at the annual discussion at the UN Human Rights Council, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Türk, actually mentioned something that was very relevant to what we are doing in this program. He said that, "To strengthen social cohesion and heightened respect, I strongly recommend effective societal initiatives and to build societies in which expression of hatred have become socially and unacceptable requires inclusive faith literacy." So in a way, what I'm going to share here, the experience in Indonesia is actually this kind of social initiative that we are trying to do to strengthen social cohesion and heightened respect. And this is exactly what he's saying as the inclusive faith literacy, it is what we've been trying to develop for the last two and a half years in Indonesia.

And also in the UNESCO report for the Futures of Education in 2021, it talks about how the world becomes more divided and polarized, and then there's a need for pedagogies that foster cooperation and solidarity. And we are focusing that in Indonesia as an example, especially because of the religious diversity and how we can work together with people of different faiths. Just briefly, Indonesia is quite diverse with more than 270 million people. We have more than a thousand ethnicities, 600 languages. We have all of the world religions exist in Indonesia and also including the indigenous beliefs in Indonesia. We have the world's largest Muslim population in one country. But Indonesia is not a religious-based state. Basically, there's no state religion, and we are based on the state ideology of Pancasila, which means five principles.

But there has been a lot of concerns recently, especially last year. There was a survey by a prominent organization as well in Indonesia, that talks about how the number of students who are actively intolerant is increasing. And actually 83% of them think that Pancasila, the state ideology can be replaced. So that's actually a concern because Pancasila has been the state ideology that can unite the differences in

Indonesia. But in fact, if we look at the survey even years before that, in 2018, there's a nationwide survey done by a center at the state Islamic University in Jakarta that indicates that the teachers from Madrasah and schools from kindergarten to 12 years, there's a very high percentage of intolerant opinion. So that survey actually quite became a concern and opened the eye of many people as well, raised the awareness that because it looks like the... Of course, teachers are very important and how their view really influencing the students.

So it's not a big surprise. If we look at the survey last year about the students. But the survey also mention several recommendation, which is very interesting. The survey among the teachers say that, there's a need to introduce religious literacy and interfaith education, and also there's a need to introduce other religions. At that time, because the survey was among the Islamic religious teachers, it says about introducing other religions in Islamic religious education. But we also know, as a Christian who grew up as well in Indonesia, and while going to Christian schools, again, also testify that even in Christian religious education, we need to introduce other religions as well. And also in other religious education in Indonesia. So there is a need to know other religions.

And then also there's a need to expose teachers to positive experiences of diversity. So it's not just the knowledge, but the experience of interacting with people who are different. We developed this program based on the concept of framework, what is called the cross-cultural religious literacy, which is actually quite simple. It talks about how we need three competencies to live in a religiously diverse society, but not only to peacefully coexist, but we need to be able to learn to collaborate. So we believe that coexistence is necessary, dialogue is necessary, but it's not enough. We need to move beyond and have to be able to work together with people who are different from us. So first of all, the personal competencies means that for someone who is religious, I need to know my religion well. And then especially what it teaches me about treating others who are different from me. Because in many of the data about people who are motivated by extremist ideology, even though they claim to be under a certain religion, they don't really know about the religion.

Comparative competency means that it's not enough for me to understand my own religion, but how I can understand religions of other people, but from the perspective of that believer. So as a Christian, if I want to learn about Islam, then I need to go and meet the Muslim and learn from them. I need to learn from the Muslim ulama instead of just getting books from Christians who talk about Islam because it could be incorrect or maybe actually saying bad things. So that's very important. And the third one is collaborative competency, is that we need to be able to understand how we can work together and still remain different. So by working together, it doesn't mean that we need to try to blend everything together as if there are no differences, but how we can learn to still respect our differences and work together for a common good.

So that's basically the idea of the concept of cross-cultural religious literacy. And also we've taken into account some theory from the social psychology, in terms of how to address prejudice and stereotype. Because the main issue we are dealing with here, and especially about countering hate speech and others like that, is how we can address the issue of prejudice. So in this theory from Gordon Allport about the intergroup contact theory is that there needs to be certain elements when we design a program so that we can introduce the people who used to be from the majority and minority, but how they can work together for a common purpose. And from that program, they can sense that there is a perception of common interest and common humanity between them. So that's actually how we designed the program. So even though the name is religious literacy, it doesn't mean that you'll be very knowledgeable about certain religions. Of course, there's a discussion about religion, but actually the idea is how to introduce you to a different environment so that you can try to address this issue of prejudice and stereotype.

So we launched the program in 2021. We call this as the international program on Cross-Cultural Religious Literacy. We opened the program for teachers in Madrasah and schools from K to 12, but most

of the teachers actually from primary and secondary schools. And later on, starting in 2022, you also have other so-called religious educators from outside the Madrasah school teachers. This means in Indonesia we have religious extension workers or maybe preachers. But most of the participants are still Madrasah school teachers. So the idea is how we can develop a program where they can continuously learn about these principles and how they can apply it in their teachings.

So we've been working together with many institutional partners. So we actually start the program with Madrasah teachers because we've worked a lot with interfaith leaders. And many of the Muslim leaders and scholars in our network, they encourage us to start with the Madrasah teachers. So we've been working a lot with the National Mosque in Jakarta, and then we travel across state Islamic University and others like that. So we have about 20 partners right now. So the program that we do for the introduction is basically, because we began during the Covid, we begin with a five-day course where they learn about the concept of the CCRL. But also there is a session on Islam, of course, from Madrasah. For Muslim teachers, there'll be more sessions on Islam. Last year we began introducing this for Christian teachers. There are more session on Christianity, to help them understand from their belief about interacting with people who are different from them.

But also we use the Abrahamic religions example simply because it's easier to discuss that because there are a lot of similarity, but also a lot of conflict actually happening between them. So it's a good way to understand about the similarity, but also the point of conflicts between them. So we have session on Christianity being taught by a pastor, and then on Judaism taught by Jewish scholars or rabbi. The Christian teachers also learn about Islam from Muslim ulama.

So within less than two and a half years, we are quite surprised with the enthusiasm of the teachers. We train about 8,000 participants, but about 80% of that, 7,000 teachers graduated from the program. From the 37 provinces in Indonesia, right now we have 38 provinces. So the only province we haven't reached, simply because it's in the mountainous area in Papua, because they don't have internet signal. From 48 online classes...

For those who graduated from this program, we also offer more advanced courses and workshop. In the workshop actually, we train the teachers how they can develop lesson plans so that they can teach the principles to their students. In the workshops, they learn how to work together. And in cities, right now where we have both Muslim and Christian teachers, we invite both of them so that they can work together and then learn from one another. This year we are working with the Buddhist organization and Hindu and Confucianist as well. And then in that workshop, we take them to visit different religious worship places, which has usually become a highlight for them because for them it's usually the first time of their experience. For the Christians, to actually go inside the mosque and being welcomed by the Imam. And also, for the Muslim teachers to go to a church.

And then after that, we encourage them to send us videos of how they teach in the classroom using the lesson plans that they develop. It's all voluntary, and we are quite surprised that about 70% of them actually send us the video of how they teach in the classroom using the lesson plans that they develop.

So let me just show you a video of how interestingly here, some of the teachers who graduated from this program from a Christian school in Central Java, they actually initiated a program with the teachers in Madrasah, in a different city, who also graduated from our program. So they worked out a program where the Christian teachers brought the student leaders from the Christian schools to visit the Madrasah. And this is the first time that they had this kind of program. And you can imagine actually it took a long process for them to convince the leadership of the schools, at the Christian schools and the Madrasah, to have that kind of encounter. And all of this for us, it's encouraging because it was all their initiative

without any help from us. We only found out this by accident, and then we sent a team to make a video of this because we want to inspire the other alumni in the program to do a similar program as well.

As you can see in the video, the Christian schools were actually mostly Chinese. So it's also an interesting interaction between them, between the Chinese and the other ethnicities as well, in Indonesia. So last year we had this international conference and again thanks to his excellency, Ambassador Cowell, who was one of the keynote speakers in that international conference who encouraged us actually to bring this to a more global forum to discuss about the CCRL, because he convinced us that there is a great need for this. And also to his excellency, Ambassador Ha bib, who helped us actually design the breakout session at the time round table to discuss the CCRL in the Asian community context. So right now we are actually in discussion for the follow-up with also with the Minister of Foreign Affairs on that. So thank you very much.

Cole Durham. Thank you Mathias. Thank you for all the work you've done and sharing this with us. So our next speaker will be Maria Lucia Uribe, who is the leader in Geneva of the Arigatou Foundation, which does a lot of work, as many of you would know, on ethics, education, so forth. So this will be another perspective on this and the reach is now shorter, so thank you.

Maria Lucia Uribe. Thank you so much. It is a pleasure for me to be here. My name is Maria Lucia Tribe. I'm the executive director of Arigatou International Geneva. And Arigatou International is an organization that works for the rights and well-being of children through interfaith and intercultural collaboration. And the Geneva office here is in charge of our interactions and engagement with the mechanisms in Geneva, but it's also the secretariat of what's called, Ethics Education for Children. And our approach on Ethics Education is to promote intercultural and inter religious learning for children. And we have been doing this for 20 years. So we have developed an approach to do this through ethics education, which is what I'm going to present. I hope that we have some time to engage in more reflections. I'm going to present more the findings of the work that we have been doing in several countries with different ministries of education.

Arigatou International developed this model in 2003. It started to develop a model on ethics education for inter religious and intercultural learning. And this is what we call our ethics education framework. And it's a child-centered approach. It means that it's a child rights space, and it means that we consider the child at the center of the process. That we believe that quality education requires an understanding of the children, their origin, the culture, their beliefs and respect for those. And then of course that is the creation of safe learning environments as well for the child. So we embrace the principles of the Convention on the rights of the child, and that is embedded in all the approach. The approach on ethics of course, is about ethics, but it's also about values, common values, our common humanity, as Ambassador Cowell said in his introductory remarks.

And ethics, we differentiate from morals. While morals are more about right and wrong, with ethics we are trying to understand why. Why, how we interact with others. Why are these principles and why those principles guide us in our behaviors and actions. So ethics is about critical thinking. It's about our relationship with others, our interconnectedness with one another. And when it comes to interfaith and intercultural learning, that's the basis. We live in plural societies, so all our interaction with others are mediated with the differences in the way we believe, in the way we see the other. And therefore, it is very much at the center of the pedagogy. And spirituality, not in the sense of teaching religion, but we believe that children have the right to develop spiritually. And that is the sense of interconnectedness with others, the sense of purpose and meaning in their lives. And that very often this is not taken into account in education. This framework was developed in collaboration with a group of experts on ethics, human rights, children's rights from UNESCO, UNICEF, religious leaders from different representations.

Some of the colleagues who are here were part of this address working with UNICEF colleagues that were involved with global ethics as well. The Baha'i community led several of the testings that we did when we launched the approach and the program that came with that. So I'm going to move faster here. And we have been working in collaboration with several organizations, ministries of education, ministries of social affairs, schools, religious communities, civil society organizations, UN agencies. So it's very broad. What I'm going to show is the work we have been doing, particularly with ministries of education.

We throughout the year we have been collecting evidence on how ethics education actually contributes to building peaceful, inclusive societies, contributes to inter religious and intercultural learning. So we know from this reviews, but also from our own experiences implementing our programs, that ethics education supports learners to become more academically diligent. Meaning that we see that children are more engaged, children are more willing to learn. Children particularly from my minority groups, are able to engage more because they feel more included and listened to. It's for the special learner-teacher relationships, because we challenge the vertical approaches of teaching. It is all about a transformative pedagogy, which is horizontal. So the child at the center, and it means that the child needs to be listened to, and the views of the child are taken into account in the construction of the learning. So for the improvement of learner-teacher well-being, as well as engagement of parents in school. So there is more possibility for the parents to be involved also in the learning process. So there is a whole school approach.

And from the evidence we have seen in the several workshops and trainings and programs that we have had, we have seen that this reduces prejudice among children, against people of different cultures, beliefs. Increases their capacity for conflict transformation. Children are more willing to solve the conflicts. And this is seen in the classroom, in the poses when they are interacting with one another, creating also projects together. So children are more willing to collaborate with others who come from different background, different religious perspectives. And it contributes significantly to improve children's relationship with others, decreasing conflict levels and increasing social [inaudible 00:34:36].

So we know this from the evidence, we know this from the literature, but we wanted to go a little bit forward and we wanted to go more directly work with ministries of education and get more evidence on this and that. This is what I'm going to show here. So we initiated this collaboration that is called an Ethics Education Fellowship, that was launched together with Guerra-Hermes Foundation for Peace, KAICIID International Dialogue Center, the Muslim Council of Elders, the Higher Committee of Human Fraternity, and UNESCO, and it's called Ethics Education Fellowship to contribute to global citizenship as a UNESCO education agenda, and to build peaceful and inclusive societies, particularly looking how we help building social cohesion.

The program has different components. We are working with six ministries of education, but the idea is that is experience sharing. So we're bringing these six ministries of education together, also monthly basis to share experiences to implement and to learn from one another. So there is a community of practice that is created. We do capacity building or capacity sharing, where actually we train people from the ministries of education to integrate this approach in the curriculum, in the classroom. And then they go and pilot it and use it with the teachers, and then at the classroom level. We have implementation, of course, for a period of time. It has been six to eight months implementation. And we did a monitoring evaluation learning process that had been structured in a more action research base. So we had a monitoring evaluation and learning coordinators in the country that collected the data. And we have different methodologies and different tools that were developed to understand the changes at different levels - at the ministry level, at the teachers level, and at the learners level.

So the countries that we work with are Bangladesh, Indonesia, Kenya, Mauritius, Nepal, Seychelles. So three countries from Africa, three countries from Asia. The countries were selected in collaboration with UNESCO, where they saw that countries were maybe more interested in this approach. And I think I have to say here that it is not always easy to bring a perspective on religion when you work with formal

education. We have found very often a stop, like no, we don't teach religion in education. And so the entering through the ethics approach has been very easy for us, because there is no country or ministry of education that said, "No, we don't want to integrate ethics or citizenship in the curriculum." But we have been very deliberating to say that, but this is to contribute to inter religious and intercultural learning. And that has been an opening to do that. But also a little bit of hesitation from some other ministries of education.

We reach around 8,234 students in the six countries. This is a pilot phase that took place in 2023, and there were maybe around 25,000 children reached, but the ones that were evaluated were around 8,000 children. In terms of the religions, so we encourage in each pilot that they were ... The children that were involved, that they came from different religious backgrounds. At times difficult because we were working with public education when countries, for example, like Nepal, most of the students are Hindus because Muslim kids go to maybe private schools or others. But we encourage this and you see the representation here. We managed to have a good religious diversity in all countries. And then there is also the monitoring and evaluation. So in terms of relevance, we have seen that the program was found to be well aligned with and supporting existing national curricular offerings, the strength and implementation of other values based educational programs of similar.

So we didn't want this, and this is in terms of sustainability, when we come with a program to be a one-off. So this is a project and we have several other projects at times very similar to what we are doing. So we said, this needs to be ... You need to find a house for this and integrate it in something that you already have, so it makes more sense for you. So it's not something that we come and impose, but it's actually something that you see there is a need in your country and that you can integrate it. And that has been, I would say, one of the most important aspects of this work, because it has really helped us to gain the ownership from the ministries of education. It has been relevant for ongoing educational curricular reform and it has been confirmed by a wide number of stakeholders.

So what we are seeing with this process is that now countries on the second phase are saying we want them to integrate this at the national level in the curriculum. So now we have good results, how we go further with that? In terms of effectiveness, a significant strength of this model is that we leverage support from several high level stakeholders. So we have the Ministry of Education, we have the UNESCO national offices, we have the National Commissions of UNESCO, that work as intermediaries, but we also have their curriculum development office. We have the teacher training institutes. We have universities involved. So there is a wide range of partners that are supporting the process. So it's not a one all little pilot in the country, but then others get involved and learn from the process, particularly looking at the second phase that we are started.

And we have managed to get a very good, what we call the fellows, which are five participants per country that were trained. And these are ambassadors for the program. And I think that is another learning from this. You need to have champions in the countries, and they have been our champions representing different institutions.

And in terms of the effectiveness of when measured at different levels, and I think I'm not going to do justice in all the evaluation, but I just took some of the aspects. So in the pedagogy, the pedagogy that is taught to the teachers is practical. So the teachers are taught how to integrate it in practical ways. So I don't know if you're familiar, the Council of Europe normally says that the teaching of religion is classified in three areas, teaching ... Learning religion, learning about religion, and learning from the religious other. Our approach is learning from the religious other. So there are no lectures regarding religion, but it's more how we interact with that religious other and how we, in a way, dissolve that identity, religious identity that at times is hidden or put under the carpet and not expressed in the classroom.

So some of the, as you see in the end line and baseline, the increase has been significant in terms of adapting the approach and developing a safe learning environment, a dialogue approach, and using this transformative pedagogy. Not only it is maybe positive all the time, we have seen that in certain places. They have been reluctant to engage, to talk about religion or to initiate dialogue, inter religious dialogue. And because teachers don't feel equipped to do it, even if they have been trained. We have also seen increased respect for an appreciation differences in schools through intercultural, inter-religion learning and cultural celebration event.

Qualitatively, this has been a lot what has been said. When children go, because we have different surveys and so on and tools, and when they go to show what they have learned, there is a little bit hesitation of time we see in how much they have ... Not children, but teachers in particular, how much they are using inter religious dialogue, for instance. But when we evaluate what happens in the classroom, we see actually that most of the time the changes happen around the appreciation of differences and diversity and learning about religious art.

So we have a competency framework that was developed for the learners. And these are some of the areas, self-awareness, better understanding of one another. So Mathias actually reminds me of your approach on the sales, the personal, with the other, the comparative and the collective. So we have competences in similar life. You need to learn about yourself, your own identity, relationship with others. Then it is this what we call the ethical reflections. And also you engage with the other and understand the other, but then you work together, the collective actions. So we have competences around those areas. In the surveys that were conducted, 77% of the learners reported that they were able to befriend people from other religions. They were taken to inter religious visits as well. They were exposed to dialogue, debates, and activities with children from different religions. So I think qualitative data also supports this.

And we had also surveyed with the different competences from the 22 areas that were evaluated. Eleven didn't show significant change. These were related maybe to collective actions and other aspects that were maybe more action-oriented. And we think that is because of the short-term of the implementation. It was six months, eight months, but there were six ... Eight areas from the eight that were, we found more substantive changes. Her average scores increased from 2.6 to four, demonstrated across areas of appreciating differences and similarities, increased awareness of religious and ethnic diversity, increasing relationship with people of different religious and ethnic backgrounds, but also self-awareness and better awareness of the feelings of others. So we saw a lot on this and actually all the focus groups and qualitative data demonstrates more on these aspects. I'm about to finish.

And so one of these aspects that we wanted to see how this contributes to social cohesion. And of course when you look at the evidence and theory about social cohesion, particularly in the classroom, there are three aspects which is enhancing social relationships, solidarity, but also sense of belonging. We have seen, through this pilot, particularly improvement in two areas, improvement in social relationships, which observe changes and positive attitudes toward people of different backgrounds, but also reflected in the higher participation engagement of the students, particularly from minority groups. That was reflected a lot. And I have these brackets here, particularly when the classes are small. So when the groups are small, you see more the engagement of the people from minority groups. The classes are big, the majority kind of dominates and then it is more difficult to see those changes. But increased trust and also collaborative projects that were developed.

In terms of solidarity, we look at more social cohesion aspects. We saw several projects that were actually developed by the children. So that's something that we promote. The children actually develop their own projects and come up with their own initiatives. There were a lot of issues on maybe climate issues and cleaning together, but also addressing issues of bullying in schools, where other projects addressing

problems in the classroom and trying to transform conflicts that they had. That aspect maybe was not picked up so much, as we said, maybe the duration was not long enough.

So generally speaking, we got an important buy-in from ministries of education in Seychelles. We got the approval from the president level, the Cabinet of Ministers, and the support from the religious communities despite challenges in the beginning. In Mauritius, there is an interest to develop on what they call an intercultural map, including religious places to integrate in the education system. In Indonesia, very much what Mathias was saying, there is already an interest because they have the Pancasila Principles, so they want to integrate with the Pancasila Principles, what they call the Pancasila learner profile. So it's more integrated in the pedagogy. So we are seeing all these important aspects of buy-in from the ministries of education. And in the second phase, the focus would be how then they can integrate it at the national level. And it has brought a very interesting discussion regarding interreligious and intercultural learning and dialogue that was not possible otherwise. In Kenya where we had worked before, interreligious visit was something that they would never imagine to do in the classroom level. And that had opened up that it is possible and teachers were equipped to do it.

Some of the challenges that we have found to get the full buy-in of the ministries of education, we need to make sure that it gets integrated in the curriculum. Otherwise, with the changes in governments, then this will disappear and it will become just one project. And we are seeing this now when governments in Seychelles are having changes. In Indonesia, there are changes. So they're saying we really need to get it integrated because we can be that then it is the project of this political party and the opposition would like to maybe challenge those. And so that is maybe a challenge we have. The hesitation times speaking about religion or approaching religion in the public education is a main issue, so that we have seen. And there have been requests that they need to engage more and strengthen the training on how to do this inter religious dialogue.

The religious communities in some country have a post the initiation of the project. One reason is that, for example, when there are majority groups, they feel threatened that we are bringing inter religious aspects. So that has been a learning to bring them from the onset of the project, the religious communities for discussions, so they feel included and not threatened.

There is an untapped potential for education to address wider questions of social condition in the outside classroom. And we are seeing, for example, in Bangladesh, hesitation to speak about the realities in the country between Muslims and Hindus. And of course, because of the context close to India as well, there have been a lot of hesitation and there is a need to further customize materials. We have been requested to work on early childhood as well, and what we call building the case for investment. If there is not a case with the evidence that this actually works, that has benefits not just for social cohesion, but learning outcomes for the child, engagement in the classroom and so on, then it is easier for the countries to get wider support. And this is what we are trying to do now. So I'm going to leave it here. And I hope that we can reflect together in some of these challenges.

Cole Durham. So thank you very much. And the next speaker will be David Kirkham, who I've had the privilege to work with for many years. I won't go into the background. It's a deal. He won't go into my background. He's now the executive director of the, I like to call it GO Human Rights Education. The GO is the Geneva office because it actually started here, but it's gone global, as you will see. So, David.

David Kirkham: I'll make a few comments drawing from some notes, but then I think I'd like to stand as well when I get into the PowerPoint. So one of the first things that strikes me is, first of all, the wonderful context that Ambassador Karl and Ambassador Habib set for the comments that the rest of us are making, as well as Professor Durham. But what really strikes me is how much harmony there is between what

Matias, Maria, and we are trying to do. And that actually quite energizes me, not to mention the energy that comes from these young people.

Many of you, like me, have sat through several sessions, perhaps, of the Human Rights Council over the past few weeks, and I acknowledge the value of the Human Rights Council. I applaud the opportunities to speak up that it offers to nations and interested agencies. So it's without deep cynicism that I offer the following critique. The Human Rights Council does a lot of good, but it's not without challenges. One hears in the contributions before the council some idealism, as well as some opportunism and much predictability. Many of you could write the script for the contributions of certain parties and nations. We have to have the Human Rights Council, but of course, alone, it's insufficient for human rights, respect, and adherence to prevail in the world.

Following 25 years of dealing with human rights as an academic, about 15 of which emphasize freedom of religion or belief, I recently spent a year and a half working with my wife on implementing freedom of religion or belief in very practical ways in an emerging nation, which out of respect for the people and the governments we worked with will remain unnamed. But let me say this, the governmental and legal structures and norms in this country would have seemed ideal for religious tolerance at its best, from the highest levels of the central government to the local levels, institutions and regulations were in place, at least on paper, to guarantee liberal worship or belief or broad conscience practices for all members of society. The realities, however, were quite different.

We worked within the framework of a strong interfaith community, all of whose members face the same challenges of finding acceptable places to worship, receiving government permission for congregations to meet, facing tri-monthly demands for renewing that permission within a slow-moving and non-transparent bureaucratic process, meeting seeming impossible demands for registration, which seemed straightforward enough when reading the legislation or talking to the local authorities, but really were an enigma trying to figure them out, and facing other challenges with regard to funding, transfer of funds, religious leadership recognition, and frequent visits by government officials to religious services and more.

So the realities and the nice talk, they sometimes contrast. We all know that. We all know that. So the idea is to take those high ideals that we hear so often repeated here for the Human Rights Council and other international organizations and try and transfer them into some kind of reality. So today I want to talk mostly about practical human rights education in general and the role of our organization, GO Human Rights Education, in particular. There's some theory behind what I'm going to say. Having been an academic for so long, I have to say that I'll try and reduce that to a minimum.

Law and governmental structures are in themselves insufficient to guarantee human rights observance. Widespread human rights respect requires the legitimization and the delegitimization of certain values and attitudes by all societal institutions, law, government, yes, but also the arts, media, religion, the economy, schools, peers, and family. My tradition suggests that no other success can compensate for failure in the home when that failure is avoidable. But how do we compensate when the home falls short? Unwarranted governmental and other intrusion into the home is itself a violation of human rights. So we're left with the dilemma of how to spread the principles of human dignity, if those principles are not learned in the home.

It often falls upon educational institutions, both private and public, to try to compensate where culture and family life falls short. This is very sensitive. It requires a lot of goodwill and care to advance the notion of human rights without overstepping, without overstepping the parents, without overstepping other institutions. Everything I have to say today is with an awareness of that sensitivity. But education, however closely tied to government, can do much that the law cannot do directly and pick up where other institutions fall short. One of the most... I think I... Yeah. The need for human rights education is a basic

assumption of the Universal Declaration of the Human Rights, and it certainly is a fundamental assumption of the comments made by my colleagues today. So let me hand that back.

Well, we'll go from here. The mandate comes from the Universal Declaration of Human Rights itself. In the preamble, every individual, every organ of society shall strive by teaching and education to promote respect for these rights and freedoms. Other instruments, international instruments, treaties, and so forth have continued that mandate. For example, in 2004, the General Assembly of the UN proclaimed the World Program for Human Rights Education, which is ongoing now, to advance the implementation of human rights education programs in all sectors.

We start with the assumption that human rights violations will remain a persistent global problem unless children and youth receive human rights education, inspiring them to care and make the changes necessary to create a better world. So who should be doing this? Well, I love this quote from the Council of Europe. Since 1948, a huge quantity and variety of work has been and is being done in the interest of human rights education, that there are many ways of doing human rights education, as it should be, because individuals view the world differently, educators work in different situations and different organizations and public bodies have different concerns. Thus, while the principles are the same, the practice may vary.

Now, I'm not sure that Maria or Mathias, whether either one of them considers themselves engaged in human rights education. I personally do. What I heard was a lot of overlap, a lot of the same principles that we're concerned with. It's not a competition, and I can't reiterate that strong enough. There is room enough in this world for any good that anyone wants to do. And so again, I'm heartened as I listen to the two of you, and I say we need to be in this together and figure out how we can support one another as we move forward.

Who are we? Originally headquartered in Geneva, GO HRE now has offices in Geneva, the Philippines, Africa, Central America, the Pacific Islands, and the United States, and we're looking to branch out further. We're an affiliate of the David M. Kennedy Center for International Studies at Brigham Young University and Latter Day Saint Charities, and were supported by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints.

What do we bring when there are so many other organizations from these groups to Council of Europe, UNICEF, and others that are engaged in human rights education? I'm not sure we bring... Well, we bring our own perspective. What do we bring? Human rights education. That is... Okay, that's not going. Okay. Simple. Directed at children and adolescents. Our program is we have two different curricula, one for primary schools and one for secondary schools. All right.

In many countries, the approach to education is the teacher speaks and the children listen. Our program is not at all lecture oriented. It's very, very much getting the children involved. It's inexpensive. We actually provide the cost of our education materials, and much of it's provided online. Whoops.

It's adaptable to anyone, and it is cross-cultural, and it is adaptable to all diverse cultures and so forth. Okay, this is going to add 10 minutes to my presentation. Go ahead. Do you mind hitting enter? It's focused on fundamental values. We don't address every single human right, even though they're the purest in human rights theory that says you can't look at some and ignore others. But we are keeping focused on the most fundamental values shared by all cultures, all religions, that all children everywhere should find some appreciation of.

We are respectful of parents and local cultures. This education is based on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Please. And this is one thing that's very,

very important for us. This has the importance of freedom of religion or belief, of thought and conscience as a basic assumption to the education. We don't teach religion, but we make sure that freedom of religion and thought and conscience and belief are taught. And one of the reasons we got into this to begin with is that we did see that many human rights education programs either ignore this altogether or don't give it the attention that we believe that it deserves.

Next, if you don't mind. It is implemented and managed by the host countries. We will present them with the materials. We will help with the training of the trainers and the teachers and so forth. But in the end, it's implemented, adapted by the host countries according to their needs, and therefore it's sustainable. When we go away, the program stays. So let's see. All right, now what I'm going to show you is portion of what we would be showing if we were to introduce this to authorities in a country or constituencies or other groups that are interested, or even to our volunteers who come to help us. Whoa.

Again, the assumption, through human rights education, young people acquire the knowledge, skills... There we go. And commitment necessary to make a difference in their world. We call our teaching resources Collega, which means friend or colleague. Come on. Okay. There you go. Next one, please. That's our logo. It represents children and their books, celebrating human rights education. It suggests, again, child learning approach to teaching and learning about human rights. It focuses on children and youth worldwide, teaching them about their rights, as I've already said, according to the UDHR and the Convention on Child Rights.

This is actually from our website. We have lessons, right now, in English, French, Spanish, and Tagalog. We're working right now on Portuguese, and we're expanding into the future. Next, please. Here, briefly, I'll introduce you to the lessons, demonstrate what we think is the value of these lessons, and show you a little bit of the success that it's starting to have. Again, we're based on the UN instruments that have come out of Geneva and teaching rights. We believe teaching human rights positively influences self-esteem, attitudes, and behavior, that it's in the interest in every culture, every religion, every faith, or people even of no faith, to have the sense of these basic values.

Family, a beautiful thing.. You have a right to go to school, being born free and equal in dignity. And then bullying. You don't find the word bullying the Universal Declaration, but many of these, like rights against torture and things like that can be transferred, and this is where we start actually seeing some results in schools. Next, please.

These are the lessons we choose. We have 10 lessons. Each is divided into two parts, the way it's set up right now. So rights to equality. Equality in the alienable, human rights, freedom from discrimination. Again, freedom from bullying, which we interpret that from being taught not to torture, undignified treatment of others. Right to marriage and family, freedom of religion or belief, freedom of expression, right to legal recognition, protection from child labor and right to education. Please.

Each lesson that we teach ends with a challenge. We start with an introduction by going and reviewing the lesson from before. There's usually an activity, a song, or something that will be introduced, and then some kind of activity that teaches the principle, after the principle has been introduced. And then we end up with a challenge. So this is the kind of challenges that they might end up with at the end of a lesson. Make a new friend, watch someone who is sitting alone and spend time talking to them, or tell somebody in your family or a friend about your favorite human right, or find someone who has a different belief or religion than yours. Ask them to explain it to you. Listen carefully and respectfully and thank them for sharing, or practice doing kind things for someone in your family or in our classes. Tell your family you love them.

Copies of our manuals. I actually brought one. Again, we have different ones for primary school and for secondary schools. Please. We're familiar, again, this audience, I don't need to talk about at all to the origins of the Universal Declaration. Next, please. But I love this quote from Eleanor Roosevelt that helps understand our perspective.

"Where, after all, do universal human rights begin? In small places, close to home, so close and so small that they cannot be seen on any maps of the world, yet they are the world of the individual person, the neighborhood he lives in, the school or college he attends, the factory, farm, or office where he works. Such are the places where every man, woman, and child seeks equal justice, equal opportunity, equal dignity without discrimination. Unless these rights have meaning there, they have little meaning anywhere. Without concerned citizen action to hold them close to home, we shall look in vain for progress in the larger world."

When we teach human rights, we're not trying to teach children about atrocities that are happening on the other side of the world, as important that our attention is to those things as we grow and mature, but we are teaching from the child's perspective, from the child's world, which includes parents, siblings, classmates, and friends, their teachers, others that they know who are different than them and their neighbors. And so it's from that little world and broadening out that we approach it. Again, please.

Our steps and implementation, this I won't spend a lot of time on. Once we have internal agreement as to the viability of a project, where it comes to our attention, usually from an external source, a third party in a country that approaches us, then we will reach out to government and educational leaders with support from local contacts and constituencies. Again, we always go in with the local support, and then we'll sign a memorandum of agreement with the education ministry, school system, or other implementing organizations such as a private school, and then help undertake the teacher training and implementation. We do not go into the classrooms ourselves. Again, it's always local teachers. It's always through their curriculum. Again, please.

The vision, you can see that. I don't think I'll spend any more time on that. It's self-explanatory. Again, promoting tolerance and respect for teaching children and youth about human rights is one of our underlying, most fundamental assumptions. Thanks. Part of the mission is to teach children and youth about human rights and their individual worth, while fostering a culture that values the fundamental human right of freedom of thought, conscience, religion, or belief. Thanks.

That's Article 18. You're familiar with that? That's just the basis. We started with a pilot program in the Philippines. 650,000 children were taught in the pilot. The program is now being adopted on a nationwide basis, and we're thinking that 28 million children will have access to this in the Philippines within the foreseeable future. Thanks. We also have programs going on in Guatemala, Fiji, Ghana. And in the first two of these, Guatemala and Fiji, again, that's being adopted on a nationwide level. Ghana, we started differently. We started at the grassroots level working with local schools and districts and work up, and now it's finally come to the attention on a nationwide level, and we're hoping to get that support. But if we have to do it again, if you're doing anything similar, don't start at the local level and work up. If you can start at the top and work down, you'll have much greater success we've found.

We have pilot and upcoming programs in Mexico, Samoa, Tonga, we'll soon be in Cote d'Ivoire, and there are at least a half a dozen other countries, probably more, where at some level or other we're engaging in talks with government and education officials. Next, please. Okay.

Children: This little light of mine, I'm going to let it shine. This little light of mine, I'm going to let it shine. This little light of mine, I'm going to let it shine, let it shine, let it shine, let it shine.

David Kirkham: So that's one of our programs in the Philippines. And again, these are adaptable. You saw some of the activities they were doing, the little interactive where they build a chair. There's another country that says, "No, we don't want the students touching each other," so that's okay. These get adapted and the manuals can be, to some extent, adopted. So one more time. One more.

: I love the children's voices. Thank you very much for your attention.

Cole Durham. Time has been moving more rapidly, so we're just going to have to do very short versions on Brazil. Rodrigo Vitorino Souza Alves, and let me turn things over to him. He said his center just received a private... His is a little bit different. It's more looking at competency training and so forth. You will see his center just received a reward, which I have written down, the Prize for Capacity Building given by the Human Rights Prize by the Association of Magistrates of Rio de Janeiro. So they've been recognized, but I'll let you go quickly.

Rodrigo Vitorino Souza Alves. Thank you, Cole I promise I'm going to be very quick, or at least I'll try to. So the Brazilian Center of Studies in Law and Religion and its capacity building program is based at the Federal University of Uberlândia. The program was established in 2012 aiming to provide education on religion, belief, and human rights, as well as to promote religious literacy. For that purpose, we have been conducting several initiatives on human rights education and interfaith dialogue based on research projects and in collaboration with various institutions.

We have been establishing different types of collaboration, informal and formally, national and internationally, to promote those activities. We very much cherish these collaborations, and they have been truly important for the implementation, improvement, and expansion of our projects and initiatives. We have already equipped hundreds of people from various sectors in Brazil, although we focus on university students and professionals.

For example, I'm going to give a list of some of the activities we've been developing. So we've been equipping teachers of religious education from public schools. So in Brazil, there is religious education in public schools, although the method can be different from state to state, but there is a religious education in schools. It could be inter-religious or teaching about religion or confessional or denomination education. So our training aims to give them a human rights perspective so they can teach about freedom of religion or belief, about human dignity and rights-based education.

So [inaudible 01:15:02] rights-based education. We have also been equipping religious leaders on mutual respect, especially at our permanent forum for freedom of religion or belief. So we gather together leaders from different religions, as well as personnel that works for religious organizations, to discuss several topics. So we have round tables where they can bring their different perspectives and have dialogue on several issues related to living together.

We've also been training judges, lawyers, prosecutors, and other justice system actors, and this project has been developed in collaboration with the Norwegian Center for Human Rights at the University of Oslo with support from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Norway, and in collaboration with [inaudible 01:15:58] of the judiciary [inaudible 01:16:00] in Brazil. And the UN Faithful Rights toolkit has been very useful for this initiative. We also received support from a company, from Meta in Brazil, to promote educational activities relating to FORB online, to freedom of religion and belief online, to which the Rabat plan of action has been an important source.

We collaborated and are currently discussing ways to collaborate further with the international panel of Parliamentarians on Freedom of Religion belief, which is also supported by the Norwegian MFA, to equip Latin American parliamentarians on issues related to religion. With the International Center for Law and

Religion studies of BYU, the university BYU, we have been organizing an annual forum with more than 200 participants every year from diverse religious, academic, and professional backgrounds to find ways we can live together in a religiously diverse society. We are also translating a case book written by Professor Cole and Brett Sharffs to promote training programs for young scholars in Brazil.

We have a recently established collaboration, which has been mentioned in the report by the office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in January with the Brazilian Ministry of Human Rights and Citizenship, especially with its national coordination for religious freedom to develop materials and to organize capacity building activities, including civil servants from 10 major cities of each of the 27 states of Brazil, on religious freedom, respect for religious diversity, combating religious discrimination, strengthening state secularity or religion state separation and confronting hate speech. And finally, the current collaboration we have with the G20 Interfaith Forum. And Colin, Katherine and I have been meeting twice a week, or at least once a week, to organize this major event in Brazil for the organization of events and its annual summit in Brazil this year. It will certainly be an opportunity for improvement, learning and exchanges among the interfaith community and other sectors impacting positively our capacity building program.

There are other activities that we've been developing and some of them are under discussion and planning, such as more close collaboration with the organization of American States and the regional human rights system in the Americas. But I would like to conclude with a couple lessons learned. So first, is that peer-to-peer learning and interactive methodologies have been proved to be significant to all participants. They're meaningful to all participants from judges to school teachers and university students. So we would like to stress the use of peer-to-peer learning and interactive methodologies as our method of work. In almost all of these training activities, instructors should conduct themselves and the capacity building activities as facilitators, mediating collective construction of knowledge in dialogue with participants and valuing their experiences, previous knowledge and perspectives, as Mariachi said, regarding the children, that they should be the center of the process. So I think it should be in every stage of education we can learn from all the participants. Judges, teachers, students, they can all bring their own perspectives on any topic we are discussing.

And due to our methodology and our focus on promoting freedom, equality, non-discrimination, mutual respect, and human dignity, we have been able to bring together the most diverse groups from various religious and political standpoints in the same room, addressing the same issues in a very respectable manner. And finally, the UN Faith for Rights toolkit and the Rabat plan of action have been very useful for the creation of educational materials, as well as to develop methods and educational activities. And I am grateful to Michael, to Abraham, to dispatch and repertoire, Nazila, for their continued support on this matter. Thank you very much.

Cole Durham. So we're coming to the end of our allocated time. We thought we'd have more time left over for discussion, but we do have the opportunity at the end to gather around some food that is outside. But let me give the last word here to our panel to Katherine Marshall, who's the vice president of the G20 Interfaith. She's a senior fellow at the Berkeley Center in Georgetown. She is the executive director of the World Faith Development Dialogue. And for those of you who know her, she's one of the greatest coworkers, if you can imagine. So thank you, Katherine.

Katherine Marshall: Thank you. And I promise to be very short, I've ditched most of what I was going to say.

I think the most interesting question for us to reflect after hearing these remarkable stories, the four remarkable stories, is, where do they fit in the G20 process? And the G20, of course, is a part of the global governance system, all of which is under challenge. It's a part of the system that has the advantages of

being smaller than the UN General Assembly, for example, concentrates an enormous amount of power, has a relatively short history, is very informal (the G20 itself has no permanent secretariat). So in a sense, figuring out what the G20 is, is a challenge in itself. But we have undertaken to bring what we call, the best of the religious experience to the G20 process with the broader hope that by doing so, we will open some doors to contributing to global agendas.

We were speaking to someone yesterday who will go nameless, in Geneva, and his basic comment was, "If I ever hear once more that religion belongs at the table without specifics on what we bring, I'm planning to throttle them." In other words, that this has been said so often that it has almost lost its meaning. So what do the issues that we're talking about here today have to do with the G20? I come out of the international development world, and time and time again, the question of priorities comes up. In fact, one of my current theories is that the major ethical issue we face turns around priorities. What do you choose? Which issues do you look at? But when people talk about development, there are of course, many points of view, but one that you hear all the time is, what are the priorities? Number one, education. Number two, education. Number three, education.

And so, in a very broad sense, it is this critical importance of education and the next generation that we are, in a sense, looking at, but also trying to bring to the G20 process. There are four very quick comments that come, to some extent, out of what everyone from Ambassadors Kah and Habib, but also, each person here has said. There is a fascinating outcome of research, which is that there is enormous benefit of diversity. I mean, you look at biodiversity, you look at food diversity, whatever you say, diversity enriches life. It's the spice of life. It's critically important. And in the long term, there's a lot of evidence that diversity within societies is beneficial. But it's also very clear that in the short term, it's very difficult to manage. And in many senses, that is the immediate challenge that we're looking at. So first of all, this question of how do you have peaceful and inclusive societies within a rapidly changing, increasingly diversifying set of communities across the world?

And that, I think, is the central challenge. It's also clearly been a challenge during the human rights week. We and the Berkeley Center at Georgetown and WFDD had seminars, encounters, all around the world, looking at this question of, what's religion got to do with development, humanitarian affairs, et cetera? And there was a common theme that was troubling to us that we heard in place after place, that the education systems were failing to impart values. But the question then, of course, was whose values, which values? How do you impart them? And tremendously different views. But even today, hearing values, morals, ethics, trying to navigate the ways in which education should achieve one of its primary purposes, which is, to teach people to be good citizens, good people. How does that work out in this diversifying world? So this question of values is a second central theme for us.

A third in all this discussion is about, what's religion got to do with it? Why does it matter? For the SDGs, for human rights, et cetera, et cetera. Here the question that comes up all the time is religious literacy. In other words, if people don't have a basic understanding of what it is we're talking about, how do you take it to the next stage of doing something about it? And they are very different approaches to religious literacy. Obviously, religious literacy for judges or religious literacy for teachers or religious literacy for kindergartners are really quite different matters. And there are some very interesting approaches. Harvard Divinity School, for example, has a whole religious literacy program. But I think it still is a largely unanswered question: what are we talking about and how do we do it? And I think that's one of the interests of the discussion that we've had today. Each one of the presentations here has been focusing on an aspect of how do you combine this question of teaching values with teaching understanding, which is the objective, which supports critical thinking and so on.

We have a tremendous amount to learn about religious literacy, and I think we have a lot to bring to the G20 process in thinking about that.

And the fourth issue that comes out a bit here, though these are very optimistic people and optimistic programs, is that there is a general sense that something is seriously wrong in intergroup relationships. All of the indicators that we have, are showing a worsening, and there isn't a very clear answer as to why. I mean, clearly, politicians come in for an awful lot of blame, probably quite unjustly or exaggerated, the media, social media, et cetera. But this question of why are we seeing these increases in intergroup tensions, I think, is a real puzzle for us, and it certainly is at the center of the discussions that we've been able to participate in here during the Human Rights Council week.

So I think that those questions of what is happening and how do we find ways to benefit from diversity in ways that allow us to enrich our knowledge, our understanding, our compassion, our empathy, but also, to solve the polycrisis that we're facing, the permacrisis of the links between conflict and climate and so on.

A very quick final comment. As we look at the G20 and these questions of education and knowledge, we should not forget the trauma of the Covid crisis, which has shone a new spotlight on aspects of education. And clearly, the irony is, how many people would prefer not to remember, not to think about the Covid crisis, but would prefer to move on. Obviously, in many parts of the world, you had enormous learning losses, which are not going to be caught up easily. You also have enormous mental health issues facing the current young generation that there's a lot of very solid evidence that this has taken place in many places because of isolation, because of some of the trauma that was experienced, the accentuation of conflict, et cetera.

So I think that there is a benefit as we go to the G20 with our conviction that the kinds of programs that we're talking about here belong on the G20 agenda, that we need to set it in the context of the multiple crises that we're facing today that include the legacy of Covid, the need to think about future pandemics, the need to integrate the upheavals that are part of the climate changes, the conflicts that are happening in different places, the humanitarian crisis that we're seeing. Not to speak of the gender relationships and all of the other issues that we're facing, but all of them come together in the kind of programs, the kind of issues that we've been talking about today.

Cole Durham: I won't take more time. I think we've had a very rich program today. Let me just give a final word to Ambassador Kah.

Ambassador Kah. Thank you so much. I think they deserve a round of applause again. Once again, they're doing very well. This has been quite an illuminating exchange that we must continue. We are very happy to work with the team here to have other engagement like this, as we need it. I don't have much to add from what has been shared, different perspectives that are very valuable. One thing that is clear is the strengthening of educational frameworks. I think that came across very, very clearly as very, very important. Also, fostering dialogue. Constructive dialogue also came to me as a message that is very worth taking note of. Also at the national level, in the public space, I think legal and policy reforms are needed in quite a number of countries. Also, what came through to me is, the importance of community engagements. Community engagements at different levels are also very important. Also, the importance of safeguarding very vulnerable groups. I think that is also a message that I want us to take back with us.

Also, when you have intolerance, unfortunately, perpetuated by hate crimes, it requires swift response. I think rapid, thoughtful responses are also needed. Lastly, as I hear about the importance of education and the importance of enlightenment, I think in today's world, we cannot ignore the centrality of digital and artificial intelligence for tolerance and for good, because that's a new frontier that this thing is morphing into, and we have to be mindful of that. And while you work on your educational programs, I think this is an opportunity that will help broaden access and also increase competencies and capacities of engagement. I think Mathias rightly pointed out a point that I shared with him when we were engaging in

Jakarta. They're doing a fantastic work on the education space, and I'm sure others are doing the same. For me, I think broadening the learning interventions are also very important, which he touched on, that we have to infuse the learning in different stratas of the communities that influence religion, different facets of religion, so that these learnings of tolerance and respect and mutual respect will walk into the sermons of imams, of pastors in the community, because that is where the community goes to get inspiration.

And I think these learnings and this educational pedagogy should infuse more broadly and more holistically. I will stop there and say, our multi-faith cohabitation has been going on for centuries, and we must continue to engage in a multi-faith platform and environment. When we communicate, when we get close together, we reduce suspicion, hate, and intolerance. The culture of encounter, which has been propagated, I think, is also very important. When we encounter with each other, it breeds respect and tolerance. And I thank you so much for coming and looking forward to further collaborations. The Gambian mission and the Indonesian mission are very grateful and appreciative of this very important exchange and dialogue, and we hope that we will move out of this room to continue this great work that has been started. And I thank you so much.

Cole: Thank you very much. That concludes our sitde event.