

August 2019

Reducing anxiety to avoid exclusion & violence by developing emotional balance and communication skills

At the January 2018 session, the following mandate was suggested to the working group **intercultural cities**: “...to reflect on civilizational, societal, environmental and cultural aspects inherent to the integration of groups from various backgrounds, and also to reflect on town planning, as well as on public policies and private initiatives in terms of education. The **Intercultural Cities Network** of the Council of Europe will be associated to these reflections in order to gather good practices and identify obstacles to proper cultural integration in all of our cities, particularly in terms of immigrants.”

The coordinator of the working group, Gabriela Frey, proposed to explore with a team of experts the civilizational, social and cultural aspects of integrating people and to reflect on what exactly prevents individuals from acting according to the values of the society in which they live.

The two-year-project explored why, despite comprehensive ethical and legal frames, many people are drawn to destructive habits like discrimination, hatred and violence. The working group also intended to show that unconscious fears, anxiety and other uncontrolled emotions and the inability to communicate them adequately are a common cause of wrongdoing, such as discriminating, hate speech, mobbing, violence etc.

Many people are deeply concerned about the actual state of our world and wish for an end to all violence and suffering. But if we are honest with ourselves, we often do not even know how we can implement this in our daily life. In many situations we are faced with the choice to use our inner intelligence to understand what helps and what harms, what increases aggression and what lets our inner goodness shine through. We can also begin to learn the path of wise choices. With the help of effective methods, we can strengthen three natural qualities: **Wisdom, empathy and openness**.

One of the first questions that came up was: What is the difference between fear and anxiety?

Fear and anxiety often occur together but these terms are not interchangeable. Even though symptoms typically overlap, a person's experience with these emotions differs based on their context. Fear relates to a known or understood threat, whereas anxiety follows from an unknown, expected or poorly defined threat. Fear and anxiety produce similar responses to certain dangers. But many experts believe that there are important differences between the two. These differences can account for how we react to various stressors in our environment. (Retrieved from 6. 3. 2020: <https://www.verywellmind.com/fear-and-anxiety-differences-and-similarities-2584399>)

There are many areas of our society in which the often-painful effects of unconscious anxiety and uncontrolled outbreaks of emotion are manifested: discrimination against those who are weaker or different from us, hate speech, extremism, terrorism etc.

The team also wanted to show means and ways that nobody has to face anxiety and emotions helplessly alone. There are numerous proven and successful methods, well-trained mediators and coaches etc. to deal with anxiety and emotions appropriately. It was about the question in which contexts anxiety and uncontrolled emotions arise, in which forms they manifest in public, and **how best practices can be made more easily accessible** in order to be able to deal with them more effectively in cities, but also in rural areas.

A collection of good practices and techniques have been started in order to develop genuine equality, for women and real integration for ethnical, religious and sexual minorities. In addition, a first list of good practises and further fields of research that can still be carried out are indicated.

As the working group ends in April 2020, very few meetings were available and a wide field had to be investigated, it was nevertheless possible to present a small number of pilot techniques and

approaches. A brief summary of each presentation is given in this report. The full text can be requested from the coordinator.

INTRODUCTION:

Cities are becoming increasingly congested areas and their inhabitants are facing ever-greater challenges. A constantly growing population of diverse worldviews and cultures, migration, diminishing resources and living spaces, declining jobs, excessive stress in all areas of our digitized society are contributing to a rise of inner insecurity and fears.

Facing an unknown person or situation, we often do not know how to deal with uncomfortable feelings or associated diffuse anxiety. This can lead to the search for a guilty person or some external cause. These mostly unconscious feelings of insecurity are the breeding ground for increasing discrimination, fundamentalism, populism, hate speech, violence and terrorism.

“Fundamentalism comes about when we feel, we need something definite and solid to protect ourselves from those who are different from us. This arises from the fear of losing control, losing the ground underneath our feet. But whatever form fear hardens into it, it continues to escalate and results in actions that can do great damage. It escalates into wars, riots, violence and cruelty. It creates an ugly world, which breeds more fear.” (Pema Choedron)

There is a number of innovative and field-tested techniques that can be applied to better deal with one's anxieties and emotions. These techniques can enable us to realize that “the other” is a mirror of our own feelings but not its direct cause.

Getting rid of unpleasant feelings by fighting or harassing i.e. women or sexual, ethnical and religious minorities simply will not help. Suppressing fears and emotions or running away from them is not an alternative because it will not solve the problem. It makes much more sense to identify the root causes and use techniques to deal with them appropriately.

The working group started with this selection of possible approaches & field-tested techniques

1. Improving one's communication skills: a) Empathic communication b) Begin to deconstruct the enemy c) education in restorative justice
2. Developing emotional Balance
3. Dialogue between Religions and schools of thought: a) Spread the practice of interconvictionality - a value for our common humanity b) Identity Formation in Europe by Mutual Recognition in Interreligious Dialogue
4. Gender equality: a) Identifying gender based anxiety in Religions – b) Times of the City
5. For a dynamic and inclusive rurality

The following are summaries of the presentations made at the working group sessions. In addition, we list other areas of investigation (still to be undertaken), other techniques, recommended solutions and good practices that we have been able to collect.

1. IMPROVING ONE'S COMMUNICATION SKILLS

a) EMPATHIC COMMUNICATION - an effective teaching tool, Kari Flornes - GERFEC

Introduction - from personal experience

In 2006 I read Lisbeth Brudal's book "Positive Psychology" 2006 (Positiv psykologi), and I discovered the pedagogical tool "Empathic Communication". It is an effective pedagogical tool that can initiate personal and professional change. This tool can contribute to the transformation of people, dialogues and interpersonal encounters with structured interactions. The final objective of these activities is to "change society". (<https://www.empatisk.no/>)

Developing Empathy: a personal raise of awareness

The ability to show empathy exists in everyone from birth. But to develop this ability, one needs to be "nourished" (Brudal, 2006). Parents and teachers are the most important referents in this developmental process. My experience, having worked on empathic communication with students, leads me to conclude that empathic communication can initiate this personal change. Each person is called upon to tell his or her story, his or her emotions, and to take a critical look at that story. Empathy is the active support of the teacher. It induces motivation in the student who, feeling taken into account, dares to speak. For a teacher, it is very important to know the story of each student because this story is singular. With this knowledge, the teacher is more inclined to organize differentiated learning. For this the teacher needs to know his students, their qualifications and their personal history. Stages of Empathic Communication:

Empathic Communication

- Tell me
- What do you feel?
- What do you think about what you have told me?
- Would you like to hear my reflections?

Reflections after the dialogue

- What happened?
- How do I understand it?
- How do I explain it?

After completing the dialogue, the two people discuss what happened. It is also possible for a third person to play the role of an observer and participate in this conversation.

Conclusion

The purpose of empathic communication is to help the student find his or her own strength and strategy for solving personal problems. The two parties enter a neutral zone that will help the young person to regain coherence and meaning in his life. The most important thing is that the teacher creates an empathetic, secure framework, the first step in GERFEC's pedagogy. In this secure environment, the student feels free to talk about his or her life and difficulties and "empowered" to find his or her own solutions. Empathetic communication also gives teachers the opportunity to develop their personal and professional skills. These teachers create a relationship with students that gives them a deeper understanding of each person and an empathetic identification with each other. Through this skill, the teacher not only sees what the student is doing but at the same time tries to better understand why. He/she will thus be able to put him/herself "in the shoes of the students". This action makes him/her more competent to create an education that better responds to the intellectual and personal development needs of the students.

Books:

- Brudal, L. (2006) Positiv psykologi. Bergen : Fagbokforlaget
- Brudal, L. (2014) Empathic Communication: The Missing Link. Best Seller Publishing
- Sympathy and empathy – the difference: <https://www.hjelptilhjelp.no/video/forskjellen-mellom-empati-og-sympati-engelsk>

Examples of responses from practise:

- INTERNATIONAL CHILD DEVELOPMENT PROOGRAMME –ICDP : https://bestill.buudir.no/userfiles/products/46/8_tema_fransk_DIGITAL_enkeltsider.pdf

Web:

- Empathic communication: <https://www.empatisk.no/>
- The Norwegian path to inclusive and effective education: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/254242565_Adapted_education_The_Norwegian_path_to_inclusive_and_efficient_education

b) BEGIN TO DECONSTRUCT THE ENEMY, Communication in the service of the ethics of reconstruction by Gaudiose V. Luhaha, Doctoral Researcher in Ethics, University of Strasbourg

If the enemy is a construction, it is possible to deconstruct it by multiplying encounters and exchanges in ethical communication. **Ethical communication** in the post-conflict context is based on the courage to be prepared for what Michel Foucault calls the "parresiasitic game". This game is about having the courage to tell the truth against all odds, without perverting or embellishing it, without hiding anything and without worrying that by telling the truth, you risk irritating the other, provoking hatred or violence. This courageous "telling the truth" that opens and establishes a relationship with others is useful to the "city". According to Michel Foucault, "after having opened an essential, fundamental, absolutely necessary moment: the possibility of hatred and tearing apart", the truth of the parresiasites, when it is well received, when the other faces "accepts the pact and plays the game of parrêsia - can at that moment unite and reconcile", whereas the speech that tells the lie is harmful. In this "parresiasitic game", the presence of pairs who play the role of mediators is crucial. See Foucault M. *Le courage de la vérité, le gouvernement de soi et des autres II*, course at the Collège de France.1984, Seuil, Gallimard, 2009. In an example: the Gacaca courts, a concept that was introduced in Rwanda after the Tutsi genocide.

Examples of responses from practise:

- **The concept of the "parresiasitic game" in Rwanda the "Gacaca" courts** have been presented as a therapeutic action whose active principle is "truth". On the billboards presenting the "Gacaca" Tribunals, installed all over Rwanda, along the roads, one could read "ukuri kurakiza", which means "truth heals". "If we say what we saw, if we confess what we did, it will heal us." Thus, the face-to-face interactions between the protagonists of the genocide (perpetrators, survivors and witnesses) who were nevertheless neighbours, within the framework of these courts were organized so that the "telling the truth" that Michel Foucault talks about could happen. This approach to telling the truth obviously presupposes freedom and autonomy in the Kantian sense of the term. In this context, it is indeed appropriate to be able to overcome fear and get rid of any determinism (communitarianism or others), hence the importance of the presence of the "Other" who ensures mediation, in this case the assembly that constitutes the Gacaca jurisdictions. For the case presented, a legal framework appropriate to the context also served as a mediator.

Websites:

- Georges A. Legault, La délibération éthique au cœur de l'éthique appliquée, *Revue française d'éthique appliquée* 2016/1 (n° 1), p. 37-44. <https://www.cairn.info/revue-francaise-d-ethique-appliquee-2016-1-page-37.htm>, consulté le 13 octobre 2018.
- Luhaha GV, Rognon F. « Rwanda après le génocide des Tutsi: les juridictions «Gacaca » , une justice pédagogique, pénale et restauratrice », in *Éthique et santé* (2017). <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.etique.2017.03.002>

Books:

- Jean-Marie Colombani, "Communication", in *Dictionnaire encyclopédique d'éthique chrétienne*, sous la direction de Laurent Lemoine, Eric Gaziaux et Denis Müller, Édition du Cerf, 2013, p.420.
- René Girard, *La violence et le sacré*, Paris, Éditions Bernard Grasset, 1972.

c) EDUCATION IN RESTORATIVE JUSTICE – Martin Ramstedt (EBU) (legal anthropologist, independent mediator, Mindful Communication trainer)

Education in restorative justice as a communal approach to conflict resolution, complementing the existing legal systems of EU member states, should be part of the intercultural integration efforts of European **intercultural cities**. Restorative justice, above all aims at reconciliation.

As restorative dialogue between victims and offenders highlights the personal and interpersonal dimensions of crime, it naturally entails an appreciation of the importance to accommodate multi-perspectivity and ambivalence, as much as truth-telling, around harm and restitution, victims' needs

and offenders' obligations, as well as the range of legitimate stakeholders to be included in the dialogue.

This also means that we have to be aware of the anxiety and stress, which the conflicting mental perspectives on all these aspects of a case are prone to elicit in each of the stakeholders. Education in restorative justice therefore greatly benefits from mindfulness-based methods of anxiety and stress reduction, such as Deep Listening, Mindful Communication and related methods. The skills obtained in such an education are particularly required for the successful creation of safe containers for restorative dialogues, and – in extension of this – communities of care.

2. DEVELOPING EMOTIONAL BALANCE

- **Establishing an emotional awareness and the ability to constructively work with emotions**, by Dr. Axel Brintzinger EBU) – Teacher for CEB - Cultivating Emotional Balance

Cultivating Emotional Balance (CEB) is a 42-hour, secular, evidence based, emotion and mindfulness skills training designed to help participants improve emotional life by cultivating constructive emotional experiences, decreasing destructive emotional experiences and developing mental balance. The training consists of overarching conceptual knowledge and experiential exercises drawn from Western scientific research on emotions and traditional Eastern attention focus and contemplative practices.

CEB is designed to provide useful skills for individual development and interpersonal communication across non-clinical populations. CEB encourages participants to set their aspirations for exceptional mental health (genuine happiness) through attentional, emotional, cognitive and conative balances. The program creates choices whether to engage emotionally, and if so, to have a choice over how to engage. It enables people to have emotions work for and not against them by developing constructive emotional responses, to identify the root causes of suffering and to move towards genuine happiness.

CEB emerged during a Mind & Life dialog between behavioural scientists, a neuroscientist, a monk, a philosopher and the Dalai Lama in 2000. The 2000 meeting in Dharamsala featured many Western experts in different fields of science who spent a week in dialog with the Dalai Lama on “Destructive Emotions”. Paul Ekman, world-renowned emotion researcher and professor emeritus at UCSF, presented an evolutionary view of emotion, in which he maintained that emotions are not inherently destructive, for if they were they would not have been preserved over the course of evolution.

On the fourth day of the meeting, the Dalai Lama asked if something was going to happen to improve the emotional lives of people around the world. Ekman took up the challenge and said he thought an innovative training program could be developed combining Western exercises to develop more skillful emotional behaviour, with Eastern meditative practices. The Dalai Lama was enthusiastic, requesting that the meditative practices should be secular in nature, and Alan Wallace was approached to be the lead for incorporating meditative practices. He is a contemplative scholar and a prolific writer who spent fourteen years as a Tibetan Buddhist monk, ordained by H. H. the Dalai Lama, and runs the Santa Barbara Institute for Insight Studies.

Over the course of the next day, Ekman, Alan Wallace and scientists Mark Greenberg and Richard Davidson began to sketch out what such a training program would comprise and how its impact could be best evaluated. The name of the program, Cultivating Emotional Balance, was generated in that first day of discussion. Ekman and Wallace continued the planning of CEB with consultation from the original Mind & Life group on training program design and research design to capture the effects of the CEB training. The Dalai Lama gave the first \$50,000 and an additional \$800,000 was raised with help from Jon Kabat-Zinn, Dan Goleman and the Fetzer Institute to perform a thorough research trial of CEB. Paul Ekman attended the pilot study for CEB and he recruited Margaret Kemeny with expertise in clinical trials research projects to run the research. Margaret Cullen and Alan Wallace provided the training. Details on the findings from the original research study will follow at the end of the paper.

CEB is especially appropriate for the rising number of individuals working in high-stress occupations. In the preliminary clinical research trial, police officers and school teachers were considered, but

teachers were chosen in the hope that the benefits they received would be experienced by their students. CEB can create pathways to compassion via the ability to recognize the suffering of others and tolerate this distress more effectively. CEB is not explicitly compassion training, however learning how to meaningfully attend to the emotional experiences between the self and others coupled with attention focused meditation and practices of loving kindness, empathetic joy, compassion and equanimity fosters compassion and constructive interpersonal communication.

From Western psychology, “Emotional skills” is the novel focus of CEB. Emotional skills help people to better understand their emotional life, and thereby increase constructive and decrease destructive emotional engagements. The contemplative practice, while keeping to the Dalai Lama’s request for CEB to be secular, emphasizes the development of genuine happiness through connection to core aspirations. Genuine happiness focuses upon enhancing eudaemonic endeavors that further stable, non-stimulus-driven happiness versus a predominant focus upon hedonic, sensual and transitory pleasure. Eudaemonia is an Aristotelian term that describes the contentment that arises from what we bring to, not take from, the world and creates true human flourishing. Wallace’s four balances instruct the cultivation of genuine happiness and mental well-being through conative, attentional, cognitive and emotional balance.

Examples of responses from practise:

- South America
 - Albert Einstein Institute in Sao Paulo: [Gestão Emocional nas Organizações - Cultivating Emotional Balance](#)
 - Paz & Mente (Peace & Mind): a Brazilian transdisciplinary educational organization dedicated academically and professionally to the fields of Studies of Peace and Conflicts, Studies of Emotions, and Contemplative Science.: <https://www.pazemente.com.br/>
- USA:
 - Flourish Foundation : <https://www.flourishfoundation.org/>
 - Paul Ekman Group : <https://www.paulekman.com/projects/cultivating-emotional-balance/>
 - Eve Ekman: [https://eveekman.com](https://eveekman.com;); Atlas of Emotions--<http://atlasofemotions.org/>
- Australia:
 - CEB at TAFE, community college in Melbourne
 - CEB for Clinical care unit at University of the Sunshine Coast
 - CEB at Hummingbird House Children's hospital in Brisbane
 - Publications: Milicevic, A., Milton, I., & O’Loughlin, C. (2016). Experiential reflective learning as a foundation for emotional resilience: An evaluation of contemplative emotional training in mental health workers. *International Journal of Educational Research*, 80, 25-36.

Websites:

- Cultivating Emotional Balance (CEB) <http://cultivating-emotional-balance.org/>
- Introduction to CEB: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6t2sWDYgJFE>
- A key to mental reliance: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UYsl6ykUN2U>
- Wisdom Academy-Online Course: <https://wisdomexperience.org/courses/cultivating-emotional-balance/>

Books:

- **Ekman**, P. (2003). *Emotions revealed: Recognizing faces and feelings to improve communication and emotional life*. New York: Times Books.
- **Wallace**, B. A. (2006). *The attention revolution: Unlocking the power of the focused mind*. Boston: Wisdom Publications.
- **Kemeny**, M. E., Foltz, C., Cavanagh, J. F., Cullen, M., Giese-Davis, J., Jennings, P., Rosenberg, E. L., Gillath, O., Shaver, P. R., Wallace, B. A., & Ekman, P. (2011). Contemplative/emotion training reduces negative emotional behavior and promotes prosocial responses. *Emotion*, 12(2), 338–350.
- **Goleman**, D. (2003). *Destructive emotions: How can we overcome them? A scientific dialogue with the Dalai Lama*. New York: Bantam Books.

- „**Ekman**, P. (Ed.) (2008). Emotional awareness: Overcoming the obstacles to psychological balance and compassion. New York: Times Books.“
- **Wallace**, B. A., & Shapiro, S. L. (2006). Mental balance and well-being: Building bridges between Buddhism and Western psychology. *American Psychologist*, 61(7), 690–701.

3. DIALOGUES BETWEEN RELIGIONS AND SCHOOLS OF THOUGHT

a) **Spread the practice of interconvictionality - a value for our common humanity by Michel Aguilar and François Becker (G3I)**

The Group International, Intercultural, Interconvictional (G3i) is an Association in French Law. It is a working group, composed of men and women of different nationalities and a range of culture, religion and philosophy. It seeks to contribute to the development of European citizenship and society by promoting the better-founded operation of the ground-breaking concept of interconvictionality.

To serve this objective, the G3i has held two colloquia in Strasbourg:

- In 2007 at the Marc Bloch University in Strasbourg: "Social cohesion in a multicultural Europe, role and impact of currents of thought".
- In 2012 at the Council of Europe: "Becoming citizens of an inter-convictional Europe".

Indeed, one of the characteristics of Europe is the political, social, linguistic and cultural diversity of its peoples. The reduction of Europe's internal borders, the mixing of population groups and the intensification of migratory movements are currently drawing attention to its diversity. This development is accompanied by the emergence of a multitude of "beliefs" of all kinds: philosophical, religious, political, social or cultural. The full support of citizens in official institutions to which decision-making powers have been delegated implies that the legitimacy of these differences is recognised and that they are given the opportunity to express themselves.

While the 1950 Convention, which was the founding convention of the Council of Europe, and the 2000 Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union recognise the importance of these convictions and specify the conditions for their expression, they say nothing about how to take their diversity into account collectively.

The G3i therefore suggests that the Council of Europe and the European Union enshrine as one of their major projects the use of the concept of inter-convictionality, in other words the simultaneous recognition of their diversity of convictions, their reciprocal contributions and the possibility of overcoming their differences and aims in order to have a common approach.

Interconvictionality refers to dialogues, practices, institutions whose specific purpose is to organize encounters and confrontations between people of different convictions, claiming to be of religious traditions (Jewish, Christian, Muslim, Buddhist, etc.) or other forms of personal commitment (humanism, agnosticism, atheism, etc.).

This designation is the result of profound changes in mentality and attitudes by both religious and non-confessional groups, which have proposed to organize together an open, inclusive and respectful dialogue. It is this new practice that has taken the name of inter-convictional dialogue. The acquisition of an interconvictional approach profoundly changes the state of mind and behavior of individuals involved in it, but also the lives of various groups in civil society and the organization of political institutions. It involves the emergence of a new culture, both personal and collective.

Interconvictionality is to be considered an extension of the Council of Europe's Intercultural White Paper and as such can be a valuable support for the democratic consolidation of the European society.

Examples of responses from practise:

- Drafting of a complete charter and official submission to the CoE

- Participation of G3i members in multiple meetings of all kinds, particularly in France and Belgium, where we introduced the concept and where interconvictional discussions developed.
- With regard to interconvictionality, following a number of inconclusive interconvictional discussions (where no conviction takes precedence over any other), similar discussions are being prepared in several cities. It is an educational implementation with young people that will be in charge of the democratic processes of European society in a few years' time.
- **Learning to live better together with our different convictions: GERFEC and G3I have established together an education program with seminars held between 2015 and 2018 in Bergen (Norway), Birmingham (UK), Athens (Greece), Budapest and Strasbourg. The seminars were aimed at heads of INGOs and of national organizations with educational responsibility parents, directors of teacher training organizations, heads of institutions, in charge of education and guidance for young people...) as well as local councillors in member countries of the CoE. The seminar wished to enable participants to:**
 - Take cognizance of opinions and convictions that have come down to us;
 - Recognize the inherent dignity of each human being and develop attitudes that follow from that recognition;
 - Understand cultural diversity as an essential element of the riches of humanity
 - Develop attitudes with which to meet different convictions and to establish common projects. To move on from the "pluri-convictional" to the inter-convictional" so as to ensure that there is social cohesion.

Objectives:

- Personal: To acquire conceptual and emotional elements of inter-convictional dialogue and to connect with what is at stake in today's international context, to develop skills for dialogue and interconvictional practice through empathic communication, testing interconvictional approaches and conflict management.
- Groups: To analyse and manage complex conflict situations, to implement dialogue between people of different convictions, and to share the analysis.
- Policies: to learn how to create meeting spaces for people of all convictions and to initiate projects for institutions and NGOs based on the methodology of interconvictional dialogue.

Websites:

- Concept of interconvictionality <http://joomla.g3i.eu/interconvictionalite>

Books:

- Becoming citizens of a plural Europe: Interconvictional spaces and practices (French Edition) François Becker – June 24, 2016 ISBN-13: 978-2342052619
- Interfaith Education for all, Theoretical Perspectives and Best Practices for Transformative Action, Editors: Duncan Wielzen and Ina Ter Avest ISBN: 978-94-6351-169-8

b) Identity Formation in Europe by Mutual Recognition in Interreligious Dialogue - by Prof. Dr. Wolfram Weisse, Academy of World religions, Univ. of Hamburg

1. Introduction

1.1. „Interreligious dialogue can (also) contribute to a stronger consensus within society regarding the solutions to social problems“. ¹ This quote from the 2008 White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue “Living Together as Equals in Dignity” marks the first instance of religion being addressed in the context of intercultural understanding by the Council of Europe. Since then, awareness of the relevance of interreligious dialogue has grown throughout Europe and the world, a development to which the Council of Europe has contributed significantly. Yet the definition of the term “identity” in the 2008

¹ White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue „Living together as Equals in Dignity“. Launched by the Council of Europe Ministers of Foreign Affairs at their 118th Ministerial Session, Strasbourg, 7 May 2008, 22.

White Paper remains vague² and stands in need of further development. I therefore appreciate the opportunity to offer some thoughts on these questions.

1.2. Instead of “identity”, I prefer to use the term “identity formation“ which better illustrates the processual nature of individual identity in continuous development. Standing on its own, the term “identity” potentially implies a stable end result as the goal. In the interest of furthering a more responsible and better “living together“ in Europe, the term “identity formation” may also prove more useful as a way to highlight potential aims and processes that may aid us in reaching this goal.

1.3. A profound understanding of how identity formation derives from encounters was proposed by the French philosopher Paul Ricoeur.³ He argues that the quest for identity cannot be pursued while protectively shutting out others, but only in relation to them. Paul Ricoeur laid out a twin demand: We must both accept the other in his/her otherness and to recognise ourselves as active and responsible subjects in order to achieve mutual recognition and reassurance in the development of our respective identities. With Paul Ricoeur's ideas in mind, I will now present some instances of improving coexistence in the city-state of Hamburg, Germany, which contribute to successful identity formation by building up trust and mutual recognition in interreligious dialogue.

2. The Relevance of Interreligious Encounter for Coexistence in the City-State of Hamburg.

2.1. The city state of Hamburg with its 2 million inhabitants from more than 100 cultural and religious backgrounds is home to a great variety of initiatives that have dedicated themselves to improving mutual understanding and coexistence over the past 25 years. Here, strong societal actors work side by side towards the coexistence between religious and secular groups. Frequently, this is not an easy distinction to make: religious and secular are intertwined. This observation bears out the theoretical understanding put forward by the late sociologist Peter L. Berger who identified numerous overlappings and internal diversities in the fields of religious pluralisation and secularisation in his “Two Pluralisms”.⁴ Thus, we can regard interreligious dialogue as one factor in a broader field of intercultural dialogue with both religious and secular actors.

2.2. Developing the above-mentioned approach following Paul Ricoeur, we can tentatively conclude that identity formation in Europe needs to follow a given path: First, we need to overcome ignorance by coming to know each other better, and from there we must build up trust and mutual recognition. To describe this development in the author's original terms: We must proceed from “ignorance” to “knowledge/awareness” and from there to respective acknowledgments and then to “mutual recognition”. This is a remarkably good description of the developments we can observe in Hamburg. I will briefly mention two examples:

2.2.1.: Religious Education for all: (5) In Hamburg, all pupils in public schools are free to choose the subject “Religion” regardless of their religious affiliation or world view (the non-religious alternative is variously called “Ethics” or “Philosophy”). Its curriculum is designed with two priorities in mind: Learning facts on different religions and their ethical implications, and entering into an exchange with the different Christian, Muslim, Buddhist, Jewish etc. beliefs and secular world views represented in the classroom. Under these circumstances, the aim cannot be to bring pupils closer to a given religion or world view, but to give them more knowledge on multiple religions and world views, to allow them to contribute their own positions to classroom discussions, to better understand the positions of their classmates with their religious and secular views, and to develop more respect towards each other. This approach holds enormous potential for young people in Hamburg to overcome ignorance about other religions and worldviews, to gain knowledge, and to develop mutual respect. I do not want to exaggerate the effects this school subject has. There are also pupils in Hamburg advocating the exclusion and condemnation of religious and secular Others. However, empirical research has shown there is a clear tendency for pupils enrolled in “Religious Education for all” classes to overcome

² Here we read: „Our identity, by definition, is not what makes us the same as others but what makes us unique. Identity is a complex and contextually sensitive combination of elements.“ Opus citatus, 17.

³ Paul Ricoeur, *Wege der Anerkennung. Erkennen, Wiedererkennen, Anerkanntsein*. Frankfurt/Main 2006.

⁴ Peter L. Berger (2014). *The many Altars of Modernity. Towards a paradigm for religion in a pluralist age*, Boston / Berlin.

⁵ Wolfram Weisse (2014). *La religion à l'école dans le Land de Hambourg*, in: Jean-Paul Willaime (Ed)(2014) *Le défi de l'enseignement des faits religieux à l'école. Réponses européennes et québécoises*, Paris: Riveneuve, 67-81.

prejudice, to reach better mutual understanding, and to find their own position and identity formation strengthened by interreligious dialogue in the class-room.

2.2.2. Treaties between the Secular Government of Hamburg and Religious Communities, esp. Muslim Communities: (6) For a long time, Muslims in Hamburg were regarded as mere temporary “guest workers” who would leave the country again after their work contracts expired. Over time, it became clear that these Muslims, most of them from Turkey, had made the city their home, and they now form a significant community making up about 7% of the Hamburg's population. As in many other European countries, there is marked resentment against Muslims in Germany. Talks between the Hamburg government and Muslim organisations designed as a trust-building measure started about 12 years ago, and resulted in formal treaties analogous to Germany's state-church agreements signed in 2012. In these, the Muslim organisations recognized Germany's democratic society as the guiding framework for their members, embracing, among other tenets, equal rights for men and women. Conversely the government recognized the Muslim population as an integral part of Hamburg's society and guaranteed them the right to exercise their beliefs and rites, including traditional Muslim burials. Obviously, such a treaty does not prevent single individuals and groups on both sides from clinging to their prejudices, but they nonetheless constitute a greatly relevant factor of mutual recognition and thus pave the way for a civil and peaceful coexistence of different religions in the secular city-state of Hamburg.

3. Conclusion and Vision

The above-mentioned examples illustrate instances of successful coexistence at different levels in Hamburg with reference to the relevance of interreligious and intercultural dialogue. Interreligious Dialogue can thus contribute to building knowledge and trust in order to more clearly perceive common ground and differences with the intention of participating in the development of a society that respects differences – and at the same time fosters common values of mutual understanding. This is not always easy. Conflicts will inevitably arise, especially when religion is politicised (e.g. Muslims in Hamburg espousing Islamist positions advocated by Turkey or Iran). But my examples show concrete steps taken to develop values for all citizens in society, values shaping their own understanding and contributing to an identity formation which is of great relevance for improving how we live together in Europe.

Vision: Against this background, I propose to develop a vision: Instead of one systematically pursued European cultural “identity”, I would suggest the pursuit of cultural “identity formations” in Europe, contextually different, but sharing the aim to create awareness and encourage mutual recognition as a vital element of a core European value set. This will be shaped at different levels and by different actors, transferred into daily practice, tested, encouraged, and developed by many, including individuals and groups of different religious affiliations and world views, in an interreligious and intercultural dialogue, shaping and fostering the core value of a European identity formation – *reconnaissance mutuelle*.

4. GENDER

a) Identifying gender based anxiety in religions, by Dr. Carola Roloff, Visiting Professor of Buddhism at the Academy of World Religions, University of Hamburg.

When we speak about forming a European Cultural Identity we need to consider that identity is very complex and varies from person to person. Scientific research speaks about “intersectionality”, i.e., a complex relationship and mutual interaction between social differences. We can notice interactions between the inequality-generating categories of gender, class and race, sexuality, age, (dis)ability,

⁶ Wolfram Weisse (2016). Religious Pluralization and Secularization in Continental Europe, with Focus on France and Germany, in: *Society*, Vol. 53, Number 1 (January 2016), 32-40. Wolfram Weisse, (ed.) (2016). *Religiöse Vielfalt und Säkularität. Die Verträge zwischen Staat und Religionsgemeinschaften in Hamburg*, Dokumentationsreihe der Akademie der Weltreligionen der Universität Hamburg Nr. 4, Münster: Waxmann.

religion and nationality. Here I will concentrate on “gender identity” and “religious identity” which for various reasons are often ignored.

The relationship between the two categories “gender” and “religion” is by no means unambiguous. Both are categories in which identities are constructed and whose deconstruction or questioning can provoke great fears. As social categories, religion and gender are of central importance in processes of social exclusion and the “construction of the other”, also referred to as “Othering”. One's own is taken for granted, positive and superior, while the alleged other is categorized as not belonging and deviant, and is devalued.

Anne Hege Grung from the University of Oslo points out,

What is disturbing is the dynamics created when ‘women’ and ‘religion’ are claimed to be identity markers in a way that fuel fundamentalist, non-democratic, non-feminist movements, and ‘women’ and ‘religion’ are expelled from scholarly analysis and reflection and the public sphere. (2017, 165).

Religion, Women, Power Structures, and Structural and Cultural Violence

From 2016 to 2019, together with a team of young scholars, I undertook a research on gender and interreligious dialogue. This research started around the time when we had our CoE side event “Are Religions a Place of Emancipation for Women? Progress and Setbacks”, organized by Gender Equality Expert Dr. Anne Nègre (2016, 21 June).

Essentialist view of binary gender vs. a non-binary definition of gender in all religions

During that time I was quite surprised to learn about the different religious notions and interpretations of gender identity. At least three of the speakers clearly represented a very essentialist view of binary gender, taking man and woman as inherently and irreducibly different. They stated that women are of equal value (not inferior), but still cannot take the same roles as men, because of them being ‘different’. It was argued that because of being women they are not able or qualified to take on certain religious leadership positions.

Our interreligious research team consisted of four feminist theologians (two women and two men) from four different religions (Judaism, Christianity, Islam and Buddhism). In the process of research it turned out that in all four religions (as well as in other world religions) there are strands of essentializing gender (1). This means, it is not a question of religion, but a question of with whom the prerogative of the final interpretation remains. In all the religions at stake you can find sources deconstructing gender and supporting a non-binary definition of gender. Gender is not a fixed stable entity but fluid. Gender is not only socially but also theologically constructed.

Negative attitudes toward women and the feminine can be found in all religions

At the same time, in all religions, we can find a certain negative attitude toward women and the feminine. The Latvian Lutheran church decided in June 2016 to ban women's further access to the same offices as men. In the Catholic Church women cannot lead a parish and cannot become priests. The same goes for the Orthodox Church. In the ultra-orthodox traditions of Judaism women cannot become rabbis. And in two of the three mainstream traditions of Buddhism they cannot become fully ordained nuns, comparable to priests, and different from monks in Sri Lanka & Thailand, if ordained, the state refuses to enter their monastic name into their legal papers which leads to social disadvantage.

In many religions, for fear of the impurity of women or allegedly protecting them from men, we find **gender segregation**. In Israel, although forbidden by law since 2011, it still happens that women have to sit at the back of the bus or don't get transport at all, because they are considered impure. In many religious spaces women sit either on a different side, in the back behind men, or not visible on the gallery or in an extra room.

In public universities in Europe, since 1998, for example, Catholic theologians no longer receive professorships when they make ambiguous statements regarding women's ordination. They must publish against the ordination of women in order to qualify for a chair. In Germany, in 2017, women still hold significantly fewer chairs than men: in the Evangelic Lutheran Theology they hold 106 out of a total of 421 chairs (25%), and in the Roman Catholic Theology 73 out of a total of 353 chairs (21%).

Reasons for negative attitudes toward women in religions

Negative attitudes toward women in religion are partly based on maintaining power, and partly on ascetic misogyny. When ascetic purity or celibacy is presented as the spiritual ideal, women are often seen as threat. And when they demand equality, they are considered splittists, or even seen as agents or precursors of distraction and ruin of the whole tradition. On the other hand, often they are portrayed as weaker human beings who need male protection, which also keeps them away from equal positions.

Impact of negative attitudes toward women in religions

In many religions women have no equal access to (a) sacred knowledge, (b) participation in practices and rituals maintaining the future of their religious tradition (through forum participation, decision-making, problem-solving etc.), and (c) the existence of self-dependent monastic institutions. Thus they are partly excluded from equal participation and decision-making. That means they are excluded from the core of the religion itself.

Possibilities to act against discrimination of women in the field of religion

From the political side, the state should promote the actual implementation of equal rights for women and men and take steps to eliminate disadvantages that now exist. The religious sphere should not be an exception when it comes gender equality. The principle of equality must take precedence over religious freedom.

The laws that need to be implemented are:

- United Nations Covenant (UN Pact II), 1966, Article 3(2)
- European Convention of Human Rights, 1950, Article 14 (3)

Change cannot only come from the secular, legal side, but also has to come from the religious side. Textual evidence must come from the direct and original source: the authoritative religious texts themselves. Many men and women, with deeply engrained conservative patterns of behaviour will resist change and attempt to justify their beliefs and actions referring to the authoritative texts. Thus, it will be necessary to appeal to the repository of the very texts themselves, and to dismantle erroneous views, by means of hermeneutics, in order to promote progress. In this process, it is the cultural approach that will need to be transformed, not only the translation of canonical texts. Yet all such interpretations, whether local or global, will require to be both contextual and dialogical if they are to be accepted and the goal achieved.

On a grass root level it is important to raise awareness of such a basic problem in all religions. Our speech (including hate speech) and our actions (including all kinds of physical violence) are steered/controlled by our thinking and by our emotions. Therefore there is a growing interest in learning mindfulness. Mindfulness-based awareness does not only mean to observe one's own body and breathing, but also to control one's own emotions and thoughts. The goal is to become emotionally balanced.

(1) Gender essentialism: "The belief that males and females are born with distinctively different natures, determined biologically rather than culturally. This involves an equation of gender and sex." Retrieved from: <https://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/oi/authority.20110803095846595> (28.10.2019).

(2) International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. Adopted and opened for signature, ratification and accession by General Assembly resolution 2200A (XXI) of 16 December 1966, entry into force 3 January 1976, in accordance with article 27: Article 3: "The States Parties to the present Covenant undertake to ensure the **equal right of men and women** to the enjoyment of all economic, social and cultural rights set forth in the present Covenant." Retrieved from: <https://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/cescr.aspx> (28.10.2019)

(3) European Convention on Human Rights. Article 14: Prohibition of discrimination. The enjoyment of the rights and freedoms set forth in this Convention shall be secured **without discrimination on any ground such as sex**, race, colour, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, association with a national minority, property, birth or other status. Retrieved from: <https://www.echr.coe.int/Pages/home.aspx?p=basictexts&c=> (28.10.2019)

Examples of responses from practise:

- The **Academy of World Religions** at **Hamburg** University is the institutional home for research, teaching and contributions to society in the area of interreligious dialogue. It embraces a dialogical approach that concerns itself not only with religions coexisting but also with their interacting. *The AWR worked extensive on researches on Gender an Religion, financed with European funds...* For details see: <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/15507394.2019.1577709> (08.03.2020)

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b) **TIME OF THE CITIES (Temps des Villes)**, by Dr. Anne Bergheim-Nègre, Lawyer to the Court, President of University Women of Europe, Vice President in charge of Equality, INGO Conference

Ancient times are punctuated by the seasons, the sundials invented in 1500 B.C. by the Egyptians or for 4,000 years the Gnomon, a stick planted in the ground, the clepsydra. In China, incense clocks were used from the 6th century onwards, then in the 10th century hourglasses, oil or candle clocks, prefigured the spring clocks in the 14th century, ink clocks, pendulum clocks in the 17th century and then in 1954, atomic clocks.

Human beings have always wanted to channel time, organize it. Church bells gave rhythm to collective life. The time of rest was dedicated to God. The desynchronization of timetables began in the 19th century with the industrial revolution: salaried working time joined agricultural working time, then maintained its flexibility.

These times that are imposed on ourselves, the time we impose on others, these conflicts of time that make us lose so much time, can be taken into account in the management of sustainable urban spaces that must be rethought in the face of our new ways of understanding time, a time whose limits are uncertain and varied for many.

Time is linked to urbanization

- In the 19th century, their layout borrowed from fixed schedules, identical for the majority, public services or private companies, few public services were then open at the same time-expenditure. And that was until quite recently. This organisation has had to become more flexible, more varied, more open to the expectations of citizens in a different relationship, and, is aimed at a very disparate public.
- How can we make cities more pleasant to live in, less anxiety-provoking, with demands for quality of life and respect for the environment over increasingly extended territorial spaces?
- These challenges opened up reflections by the United Nations, on the Habitat 1 Conferences, recognized the importance of cities and urbanization, then Habitat 2, stressed the importance of sustainable development and Habitat 3 on the need to evolve urban planning towards co-construction with civil society, to face urban challenges in the framework of sustainable development and since then climate change.

Time is an economic value

- Thus time is sociological, it can be related to the concept of social acceleration.
- Time also appears as an economic asset, a finite capital that is becoming increasingly scarce.
- Thus, the consumer/producer will be able to obtain the same satisfaction with different time-expenditure combinations, depending on the relative prices of goods and time. This is the principle of [indifference curves](#) well known to economists. But does this theory remain valid when wages no longer increase, which is the general case today??
- The consequence of the rise in this form of demand is an increase in the value of our time capital. As a result, it largely explains the growth of Western countries. Thus, time becomes a real stake for the techno-capitalist process, which will therefore seek to seize it
- One of the great sources of profit in the new economy is the transformation of time into an economically useful asset as in advertising, products are increasingly provided free of charge in exchange for a few seconds of attention from the user.
- The acceleration of time is essential for growth with the rise of economic models that strengthen the strongest and make the most vulnerable more vulnerable
- And we are entering a liquid democracy where social, economic or family permanencies are breaking down, as Sonia Bressler, the philosopher, explained to us.

Times of the Cities

It emerged particularly in Italy and Germany with the wish in the 1990s that more women would join the world of work, but without allowing the reconciliation of family and working life. Sociologists, town planners and demographers all over Europe have reflected on these issues, which have been highlighted under the name "Time for Cities".

- The Council of European Municipalities and Regions has elaborated the European Charter for Equality between Women and Men, Innsbruck 2006. This Charter is based on CEDAW and the Resolutions of the United Nations Conference in Beijing in 1995. Each signatory sets up an Action Plan for Equality and will revise it if necessary.

The principles of the European Charter for Equality between women and men

- The equality of women and men is a fundamental right
- To ensure equality of women and men, multiple discrimination and barriers must be taken into account
- Balanced participation of women and men in decision-making is a prerequisite for a democratic society
- **Elimination of gender stereotypes is essential for the achievement of equality**
- Integrating the gender dimension into all activities of local and regional authorities in order to advance equality.
- Action plans and adequately funded programs are necessary tools to move equality forward.
- As a result of these reflections in various countries, Time Offices have been set up in cities, and time management has been rethought for the benefit of all and women in particular.

Examples of benefits of time in the cities:

- In Sweden, night buses have been proposed in cities, stopping on demand to limit walking time at night, reducing the risk of assault.

- Municipalities or other territorial collectives create Offices or Agencies of Time to act on equality, make the territory more fluid, respond to constraints. The staggered working hours have been set up, opening on Saturdays and once or twice in the evening to make life easier for users.
- In larger towns, at the start of the school year, there are one-stop shops of the municipal administration throughout the town, open from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m. at the invitation of the associations concerned, giving parents the opportunity to make all the registrations for children's canteens, sports and various leisure activities in one place with on-site childcare.
- For single-parent families, or those where both parents work at night and who are close to 30%, childcare for children up to the age of 13 is provided in the family home at night, depending on income and according to the same criteria as during the day. This programme was initiated by the European Union.
- Or, as in Malta, the coverage of childcare costs for children up to 5 years old for all women who want to work. This has helped to lift women out of poverty, addiction, domestic violence against women and after 5 years the system has become virtual.
- In a city with traffic jams that make life impossible for everyone in the early morning, all the users and administrations were brought together and looked for solutions that were found: staggering the opening of bank branches, the opening of nearby schools, staggering the start of the school year for students. This has led to a daily reduction in traffic jams, the use of a single bus instead of two, with the result that fewer resources are needed, less stress, a better quality of life, less pollution and, in the end, very little effort is required.
- In Gerland, in the Lyon region, a diagnosis of this area of 22,000 employees for 35,000 inhabitants was made. All categories of legal entities, public or private, were brought together to discuss the difficulties associated with this place, travel, shops, absenteeism, childcare, sports halls, opening hours of public services, catering, disused spaces, etc.. Implementation was not easy, and the dialogue established has led to significant progress to everyone's satisfaction:
 - Job offers have been proposed in priority to the inhabitants
 - One company had an unoccupied space, another one of the employees wanted to do gymnastics at an affordable price, an agreement was reached with a moderate-priced rental of the room to do gymnastics for all. A crèche was shared
 - Bus connections have been redesigned between residential and employment areas.
 - The same for the fluidity of the traffic by shifting the schedules of the different operators.

What are the recommendations of the "Women-Friendly Cities" initiative ⁷?

- Dialogue, sense of belonging and territoriality: most of the good practices (at least five out of nine) identified have given an active role and voice to women in social and political life.
- Reclaiming public and private space: architecture, town planning and citizen intervention have been used as a means of resistance and reinvention of places of daily life. This is the added value of women architects, urban planners and activists.
- Participation and empowerment especially through art and culture (street art, graffiti by knitting...) often used as tools for civic and political action.
- Women's know-how is a factor in emancipation and the fight against globalization and the standardization of cultural expressions.
- Emphasize the intersectional approach: women are not a homogenous collective.
- Some calls are repeated: safety/security, non-violence, access to transport, provision of recreational space. Thanks to technological innovation (MappiNa and Ring applications) and

⁷ Seminar organised by the Foundation Jean-Jaurès, the French and Italian coordination of the European Women's Lobby, the Urban Planning Department of the University of Naples Federico II, l'IEMed and the association Genre et Ville, in Naples. Politicians, experts and civil society representatives exchanged proposals and good practices, 2017
file:///Users/Anne/Desktop/%20%20GENDER%20EQUALITY%20EXPERT/TEMPS%20DES%20VILLES%202019/Femmes,%20villes%20et%20territoires_%20l'exemple%20de%20Naples,%20ville%20refuge,%20ville%20rebelle%20_%20Fondation%20Jean-Jaure%CC%80s.htm

to solidarity, networking and the participatory approach, good practices have been vectors of change, of enhancement of abandoned places. Women re-appropriate the space".

- Element of sustainability, ecology, recycling and waste recovery, providing spaces for younger generations, intergenerational (six out of nine practices).
- Working locally while connecting with other women nationally and internationally

Integrated approach or gender mainstreaming

In this field, as in others, the integrated approach is not yet sufficiently taken into account. If reflections of this type were systematically carried out with sociologists, town planners and elected representatives and if they were trained in these issues in their studies, in their professional practice or in their elected offices in close liaison with the various administrations, all users, employees and employers, the city would be more sustainable and better adapted to our current lives. The tools exist, the texts exist, the will is not yet present to move from de jure to de facto, as always. **To achieve genuine equality, INGOs and local elected representatives are the driving forces behind the integrated approach.**

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5. FOR A DYNAMIC AND INCLUSIVE RURALITY

- **For a dynamic and inclusive rurality?** (Michel Aguilar, EBU)

While, in a globalized society, metropolises are faced with the imperative of inclusiveness, the countryside continues to be emptied and must invent innovative conditions of rural inclusiveness in order to aggregate new populations capable of inventing a twenty-first century of rurality.

The same problems arise everywhere in Europe: 48% of farmers will retire in the next few years, new farmers will have difficulty accessing land, and crops and farming techniques will have to be modified to cope with increasing climatic pressure. While in many states many cities and urban communities have begun energy and environmental transitions, drawing on the immense resources of civil society, there are (almost) no similar initiatives in rural areas.

For all these reasons, the Comb Lab programme was launched in January 2019 in a 3500 km² hyper-rural area where 42,000 people live in the Auvergne (France). This programme, which has led to a fruitful collaboration between civil society and local elected officials, is based on three main lines of action:

- A social axis: empowerment (in the sense of Amartya Sen, winner of the 2008 Nobel Prize in Economics) of individuals and groups so that the populations affected by the coal and steel industry can regain their citizenship skills and dignity.
- A technological focus: Many houses are empty in our inner villages and a growing minority of young engineers and developers want to live and work outside the large urban areas. Calls for installation with technological development projects in rural areas are being prepared.

- An agricultural axis: the retirement of many farmers, the consequences of increasingly long and severe heat waves and changes in eating habits make it necessary to review farming methods and the economic model of farms in order to maintain family farms adapted to our times.

An initial working group made up of local elected officials and local stakeholders meets every month and works on the development of this programme.

Beyond the many inherent technical aspects, the **Comb Lab program** constitutes a societal value welcomed by all stakeholders and more broadly by the population. As a civil society initiative involving elected representatives, territorial bodies and field technicians, we demonstrate the vitality of civil society, the relevance of its initiatives in these difficult times and an important contribution to the vitality of local democracy

Examples of responses from practise:

- Contributions of local elected officials to a civil society initiative to develop inclusiveness in rural areas.
- Contribution of four universities to the Comb Lab program. Students participate in the development of the program. Inclusion of youth in a global transition program.
- For rurality, the work we are carrying out with the various authorities in the area is aimed at :
 - The maintenance of family farming that promotes inclusiveness and social dignity as opposed to the introduction of industrial agriculture that excludes local populations. That is real smart and inclusive rurality.
 - Our program contributes to the social "re-inclusion" of farmers. The farming world in France and Europe (source: European Commission) suffers from isolation: cultural, emotional, social isolation, distance from training. Farmers' suicide is the second leading cause of death after cancer. Our programme to promote the profession, access to training, regeneration of impoverished soils, aims at the inclusion of farmers in the social body that expects healthy and traceable food.

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- Biodiversité, Agriculture et Services Écosystémiques — sous la direction de Christian Amblard et Arnaud Diemer — Éditions Œconomia
- Agriculture de régénération — Mark Shepard _ Éditions Imagine Un Colibri 2016.
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Sites Internet:

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- Entretiens du nouveau monde industriel avec beaucoup de très bonnes vidéos en toute fin de la page d'accueil <https://enmi-conf.org/wp/enmi19/>
- Le baromètre de la fraternité <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1T8PN1PJzucxeQiCkGJFKXSJqaLz1hK9/view>

CONCLUSION:

Our life and everything around us is subject to constant change and impermanence. Scientific tests have proven that people are more afraid of uncertainty than of physical pain (Retrieved from <https://www.inc.com/mithu-storoni/this-is-why-youre-so-afraid-of-uncertainty-according-to-neuroscience.html> 6.3. 2020)

But if we take a closer look at our life situation, the "shaky ground" we are so afraid of is the fundamental reality of this world.

We will not be able to hide our anxieties and unpleasant emotions forever, to run away from them or to declare someone else guilty. This can in some circumstances lead to extreme behaviour, discrimination and violence. We should rather look at them carefully, recognize their deeper causes and learn to address them properly.

We increasingly witness the painful effects of unconscious anxiety and its uncontrolled outbreaks of emotion manifesting in discrimination or violence against those who are weaker or different from us.

A person who develops this unspecific feeling of anxiety is easily inclined to slide i.e. into exclusionary racial stereotypes, religious fundamentalism, misogyny and homophobia. He then subsequently justifies discrimination, rejects equal rights and opportunities for those who are different from him. But exactly this behaviour leads to further tension, which results in even more hatred and violence, which in turn fuels the fear even more.

Comprehensive legislation alone is obviously not enough to structure, safeguard and improve the quality of life in our society. To ensure that all members of our society can live together more harmoniously, they also need easily accessible help in difficult life situations, competent dialogue partners and solidarity.

IMPROVING UNDERSTANDING

An important factor in the prevention of fear-based discrimination and the resulting violence was seen in making people more aware of their own inner processes, improving mechanisms and providing information against misunderstandings.

In addition to the proposed techniques and methods, there is a need for "safe spaces" where anxieties, concerns and problems can be addressed openly and without fear of consequences or exploitation of the sensitive situation.

A free space in which the real causes of anxieties can be identified and discussed and in which approaches to solutions can be found and later implemented.

The very way public discourse is conducted, laws and measures are implemented, influences the intensification or reduction of fear-based experiences. Legal frameworks and public assistance must be made suitable for everyday life and accessible to all people, regardless of their origin, gender, sexual orientation or worldview.

The working group reflected on how such "safe spaces" could look like and which methods of assistance have already proven to be helpful for people in crisis situations to protect them from drifting to discriminatory or extreme behaviour.

A start has been made on collecting best practices and finding ways to make them available to as many people as possible that need them in difficult life situations.

The benefits of our work can be a genuine and meaningful contribution to an inclusive and more peaceful society, embracing all its diversity and potential.

Bibliography:

- **Taking the Leap**, freeing ourselves from old habits and fear, Pema Chodron, ISBN 978-1569570555
- **When things fall apart**, heart advice for difficult times, Pema Chodron, ISBN 978-1611803433

FINAL REMARKS FROM KARI FLORNES

I want to add some remarks concerning the actual situation of lockdown caused by the corona virus. Research in many countries tells us that “anxiety and exclusion” even discrimination and racism increase because of the many measures taken to avoid the spreading of CV19. Home-school, loss of jobs, constant fear of being affected in one way or another make life very difficult. All over the world people call helplines to call for help, mental problems, and suicide fear among a number of others.

The situation has also revealed lack of good and fair leadership and lack of proper measures to fight the virus. Few countries were prepared in terms of equipment, competences and adequate plans to take informed actions.

The problem is very serious because we know too little about the future. Since this situation affects all people all over the world, anxiety has increased considerably everywhere. How can we talk about reducing this anxiety facing this situation and propose positive ways to deal with it? I think you need a conclusion to describe this new situation unknown to inclusive cities when they joined and worked in the project. The importance of being part of the project might have had a significant importance to the way the CV19 situation was handled'. I saw in my city Bergen, a member of the project, that the good and open communication between minority groups and the politicians in the city played a major role when the virus was very active in the beginning of March. Very soon the information about CV19 was spread to all citizens in many ways. Information material was translated into many languages and sent to religious groups, NGO's, children, youngsters and adults, mostly on-line. Clear rules of hand washing, the use of antibac, social distancing with constant updating of information, on TV, social medias, aps, papers etc.

I suppose there are many cities in the project where they have the same experiences. These experiences could be shared in the report.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION AND GOOD PRACTICES:

NONVIOLENT COMMUNICATION (NVC), is based on the principles of nonviolence-- the natural state of compassion when no violence is present in the heart. NVC begins by assuming that we are all compassionate by nature and that violent strategies—whether verbal or physical—are learned behaviours taught and supported by the prevailing culture.

NVC also assumes that we all share the same, basic human needs, and that all actions are a strategy to meet one or more of these needs. People who practice NVC have found greater authenticity in their communication, Increased understanding, deepening connection and conflict resolution.

The NVC community is active in over 65 countries around the globe.

- <https://www.cnvc.org/>
- <https://www.nonviolentcommunication.com/>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4srHE9R7H9w>

MIND BASED STRESS REDUCTION (MBSR)

Mindfulness-based stress reduction (MBSR) is an evidence-based program that offers secular, intensive mindfulness training to assist people with stress, anxiety, depression and pain. ...

Mindfulness meditation is the method by which mindfulness skills are cultivated... Information:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mindfulness-based_stress_reduction

Book: *A Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction Workbook for Anxiety*, ISBN: 1608829731 by Bob Stahl and Florence Meleo-Meyer

COMPASSIONATE CITIES

In a Compassionate Community, people are motivated by compassion to take responsibility for and care for each other.

- <https://charterforcompassion.org/>

CEDAW-CITIES:

„Make the Global Local“ and protect the rights of women and girls by adopting the principles of CEDAW in cities and towns across Europe.

How about introducing the US-Cities for CEDAW-Campaign“into Europe ?

- <http://citiesforcedaw.org/>

LGBT-FRIENDLY CITIES:

A more pro-active approach to inclusion. Tearing down walls of prejudices – prevent faith-based homophobia, biphobia & transphobia, See LGBTI-friendly cities:

- <https://nomadlist.com/lgbt-friendly-cities>

DIALOGICAL RELIGIOUS EDUCATION FOR ALL - City of Hamburg

The Hamburg "Religious Education for All" sees itself as a pedagogically and theologically responsible conception in view of the multicultural and multi-religious situation in Hamburg. "Religious education is addressed to all pupils, regardless of their respective religious and ideological convictions. It also offers those who do not have a distinct religious background or who see themselves as being at a distance or in contradiction to any form of religion, spaces of experience and learning opportunities. In view of their different social, ethnic and cultural, ideological and religious biographies, experiences and knowledge, the most important thing in religious education is to look together for orientation in feeling and thinking, in faith and action.

"In doing so, religious education follows an understanding of interreligiousness in which controversies and conflicts are by no means ignored, but in which the diversity of religions and cultures is fundamentally perceived as richness and opportunity. That is why the emotional and intellectual atmosphere in the classroom must be carried out by mutual respect and curiosity, by a keen interest in one's own and others' interests. No one must feel that their identity is being disregarded or threatened. All those involved in the classroom share responsibility for this."

Examples of responses from practise:

- **Common teaching of religion for all:** so far given by Protestant teachers, has now made further steps: Muslims, Jews and Alevis also give "religious education for all". In concrete terms this means that children and young people of different denominations will not be separated. They are taught together in rotation by Alevi, Muslim, Jewish, Protestant and perhaps also Catholic teachers of religion. At least that is the aim. The model, which is unique in Germany, was prepared for years in dialogue between the school authorities and the religious communities. The school authority coordinates it.

Websites:

- <https://li.hamburg.de/religion/material/4419346/art-einleitung/>
- https://www.deutschlandfunk.de/religionsunterricht-fuer-alle-ein-modell-fuer-hamburg.886.de.html?dram:article_id=469619

SIDE-EVENT at the Council of Europe: Are religions a place of emancipation for women?

Progress & setbacks

- In addition to the working group and report on "Human Rights and religions", Gabriela Frey (Coordinator for European affairs of the European Buddhist Union and President of Sakyadhita France) proposed to organise together with the gender expert of the conference of INGOs, Mme Anne Negre, an interreligious debate entitled: "Are religions a place of emancipation for women? Progress and setbacks."

<http://www.buddhistwomen.eu/EN/index.php/Texts/StrasbourgCouncil2016>

Les religions sont elles misogynes?

- Part 1: https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=2&v=siHgmhmbhbl&feature=emb_logo
- Part 2: https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=5&v=t6xxV6H40h4&feature=emb_logo
- Part 3: https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=1&v=ZuD6clzUI6o&feature=emb_logo

HEROES - Against repression in the name of honour: projects for the prevention of violence in various cities in Germany, in which young men with a migration background from social milieus work for gender equality and human rights against strict honour regulations and patriarchal structures. The project in Berlin was supported by the World Childhood Foundation in its first years. This was preceded by the Foundation's support for projects of the same name in Sweden.

"Nothing is more miserable than respect based on fear" Albert Camus

- <https://www.heroes-net.de>

ISOLATION & LONELINESS, the Isolation/loneliness of weaker, elderly, youngsters, minorities, single parents

- <https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2014/jul/20/loneliness-britains-silent-plague-hurts-young-people-most>
- <https://www.nia.nih.gov/news/social-isolation-loneliness-older-people-pose-health-risks>
- <http://www.besource.be/sites/default/files/pdf/TSE-Loneliness.pdf>

GRANNIES AIGAINST the RIGHT WING PARTIES a non-party, civil society platform for the defence of democracy, the social state and the rule of law, aims to connect older women and grannies all over the world to share opinions and resistance concerning the right wing and extremists movements' worldwide.

- <https://omasgegenrechts.at/grannies-international/>

THE LISTENING KIOSK (Zuhör-Kiosk): Scriptwriter Christoph Busch has rented an orphaned kiosk in an underground station in Hamburg and offers people passing by to listen to their thoughts and stories. The response is enormous.

- <https://zuhör-kiosk.de/>
- <http://un-gesund.de/forschungsprojekte/das-ohr-kann-mehr-als-zuhoeren/>

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER ACTIVITIES:

- Continuation of listing good practices and preparation of a toolkit
- **Proposal for seminars and training programs maybe in collaboration with the intercultural Cities Integration Academy**
<https://www.coe.int/en/web/interculturalcities/intercultural-integration-academy>
- Exploration and compilation of practical "safe spaces" as well as how they can be set up and made known.
- **The actual CV19 situation** affects all people all over the world. Anxiety has increased considerably everywhere. How can we talk about reducing this anxiety facing this situation and propose positive ways to deal with it?
We need to describe this new situation unknown to inclusive cities when we began working on this project. Participating in this project might have helped to show ways the CV19 situation could further be handled. Many cities have made same experiences that could be shared.

TEAM OF SPEAKERS & CONTRIBUTORS

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- **Claude VIVIER LE GOT** (FEDE) – Steering, problematisation. Chairwoman of the Education and Culture committee
- **Kari Flornes + Roseline Moreau** (GERFEC) - Empathically communication / Inclusive pedagogy at the heart of **intercultural cities**: inventing new paths...
- **Gaudiose Luhahé** – Begin to deconstruct the enemy, Communication in the service of the ethics of reconstruction, Doctoral Researcher in Ethics, University of Strasbourg

- **Dr. Axel Brinzinger** (EBU) – Teacher for CEB - Cultivating Emotional Balance
- **Michel Aguilar** (EBU & G3I) – European Charter of Interconvictionality
– Good practices, for what context, urban or hyper-rural?
- **Prof. Dr. Wolfram Weisse** – Identity formation in Europe by Mutual recognition in interreligious dialogue, Senior Research Fellow, Academy of World religion, Univ. of Hamburg
- **Dr. Carola Roloff** – (EBU) – Identifying gender based anxiety in religions
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