



VISIONHOPE

MIDDLEGROUND ACADEMY

TRAINING IN INTERCULTURAL
COMPETENCES FOR DEVELOPMENT
ACTORS

INTRO WEBINAR, APRIL 8, 2019, 10-12 AM

VISION HOPE INTERNATIONAL E.V.

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION



Agenda

1. Introduction of the Middleground Academy and Vision Hope International
2. **Interactive:** Online Quiz
3. „Religion and Development“ - Why do we need to increase religious literacy? An Empirical Overview
→ 5 minutes break
4. Institutional Development Cooperation and Religion internationally and in Germany
5. **Interactive:** Collection of Experiences, Good Practices, Lessons Learned
6. Outlook: the Classroom Seminar
7. Organizational Information about the Academy
8. Q & A
9. Homework

1. INTRODUCTION OF THE MGA AND VHI



Why Middleground Academy?

Background

- Most of German development activities take place in contexts in which religion plays a very important role, the **MENA region** being one of them
- A significant number of development organizations worldwide have a faith-related or faith-based background
- Development professionals, especially those coming from a secularized society, need to understand the religious dimensions in the receiving society
- Local staff from a religious background need to learn about secular worldviews
- Organizational capacities in the area of religion are often lacking and not structurally institutionalized

1. INTRODUCTION OF THE MGA AND VHI



The Middleground Academy

Objectives

- Enable a more **adequate and effective project implementation** by religiously literate development professionals
- Teach development professionals to **sensitively deal with religion in the receiving society and among local cooperation partners** based on a **deeper understanding of the cultural and religious context**
- Enable participants to **conceptualize projects** that are sensitive towards religion
- Reduce **prejudices and fears**
- Address the **general need for religious literacy** among development professionals and organizations
- On the organizational level: trigger a **multiplier effect to raise awareness** of the importance of religious literacy and intercultural knowledge and build capacity

1. INTRODUCTION OF THE MGA AND VHI



Vision Hope International e.V. – The Implementing Organization

- Est. 2002 by Matthias Leibbrand, current CEO
- Based in Emmendingen, close to Freiburg, Baden-Württemberg
- Vision: **Empowered people transform the world.**
- Mission: **Together, we work with local communities to create sustainable solutions in the world's most difficult regions. We work where our help is needed and where assistance is appropriate.**
- Values: **Love, Trust, Dignity, Passion and Courage**
- Geographic focus: Middle East and North Africa, esp. Yemen, Jordan, Syria and Tunisia

1. INTRODUCTION OF THE MGA AND VHI

Vision Hope International – Current projects

- Water and food security in Yemen
- Maternity hospital in Syria
- Vision Hope Kindergartens and family centers in Jordan
- Life skills projects for youths in Tunisia



HOPE IN NUMBERS

How many people do we reach with our current projects?



1160 Family Centres, Jordan



600 Kindergartens, Jordan



9640 Maternal Hospital, Syria



9850 Youth Empowerment, Tunisia



214000 Food Distribution, Yemen



4200 Water Cisterns, Yemen



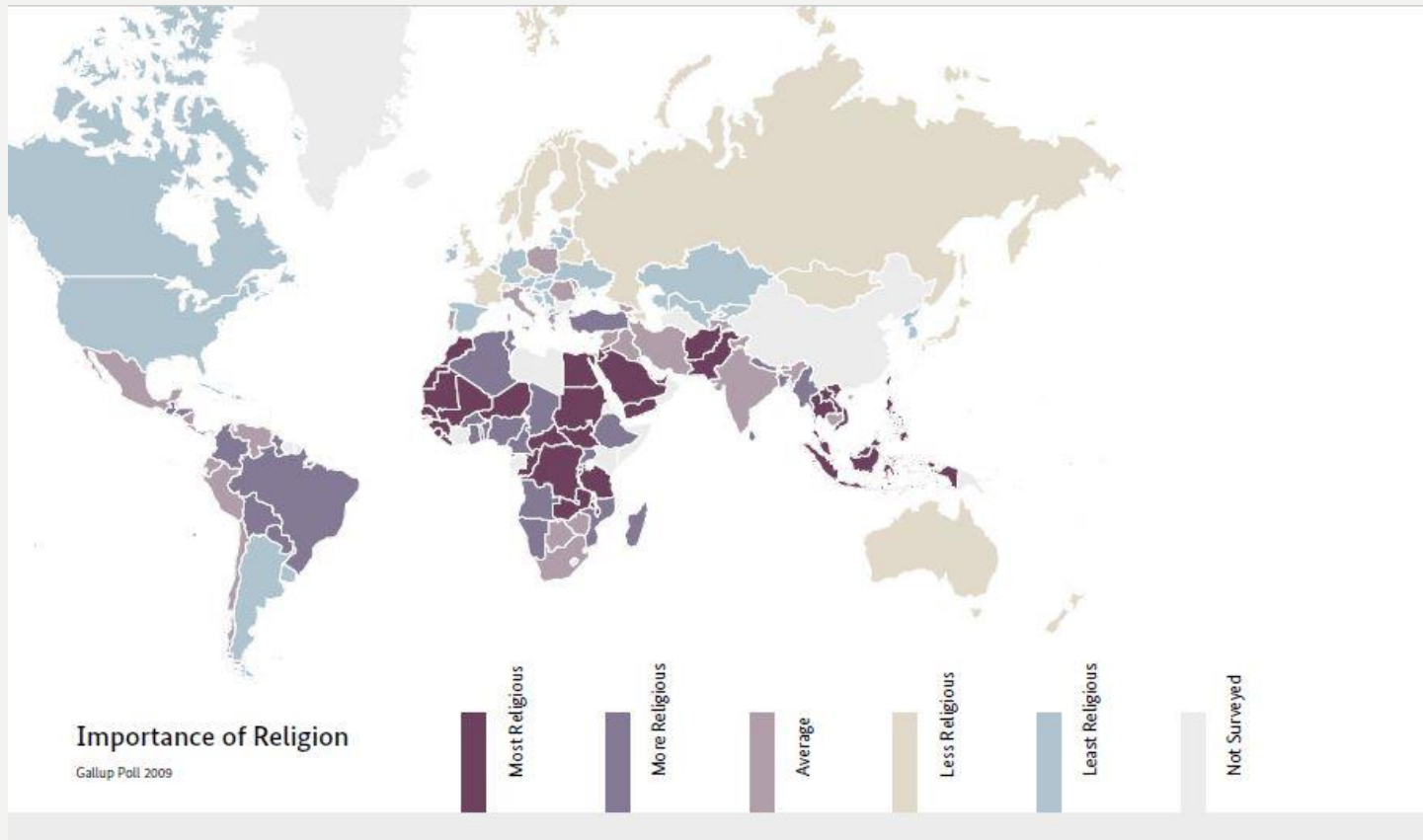
3890 "Cash for Work", Yemen

2. INTERACTIVE: ONLINE QUIZ



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3. „RELIGION AND DEVELOPMENT“ WHY DO WE NEED TO INCREASE RELIGIOUS LITERACY? AN EMPIRICAL OVERVIEW



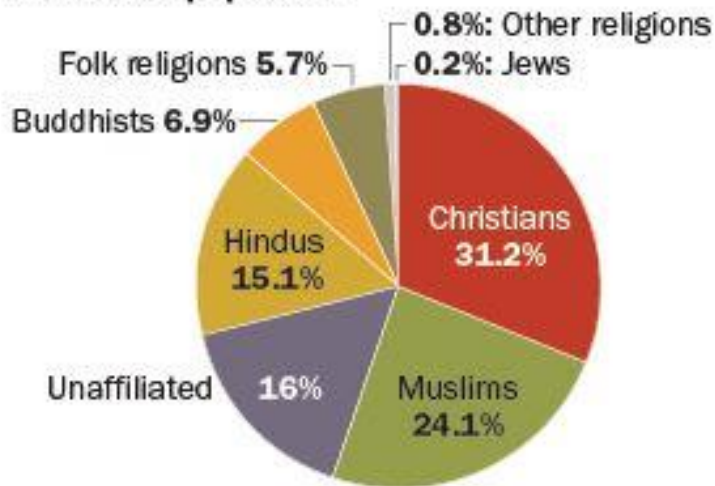
84 %

Source:
GIZ,
2016

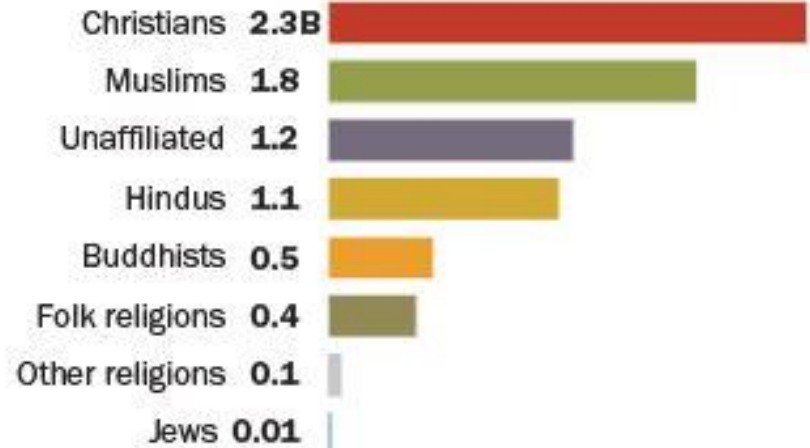
3. „RELIGION AND DEVELOPMENT“ WHY DO WE NEED TO INCREASE RELIGIOUS LITERACY? AN EMPIRICAL OVERVIEW



% of world population



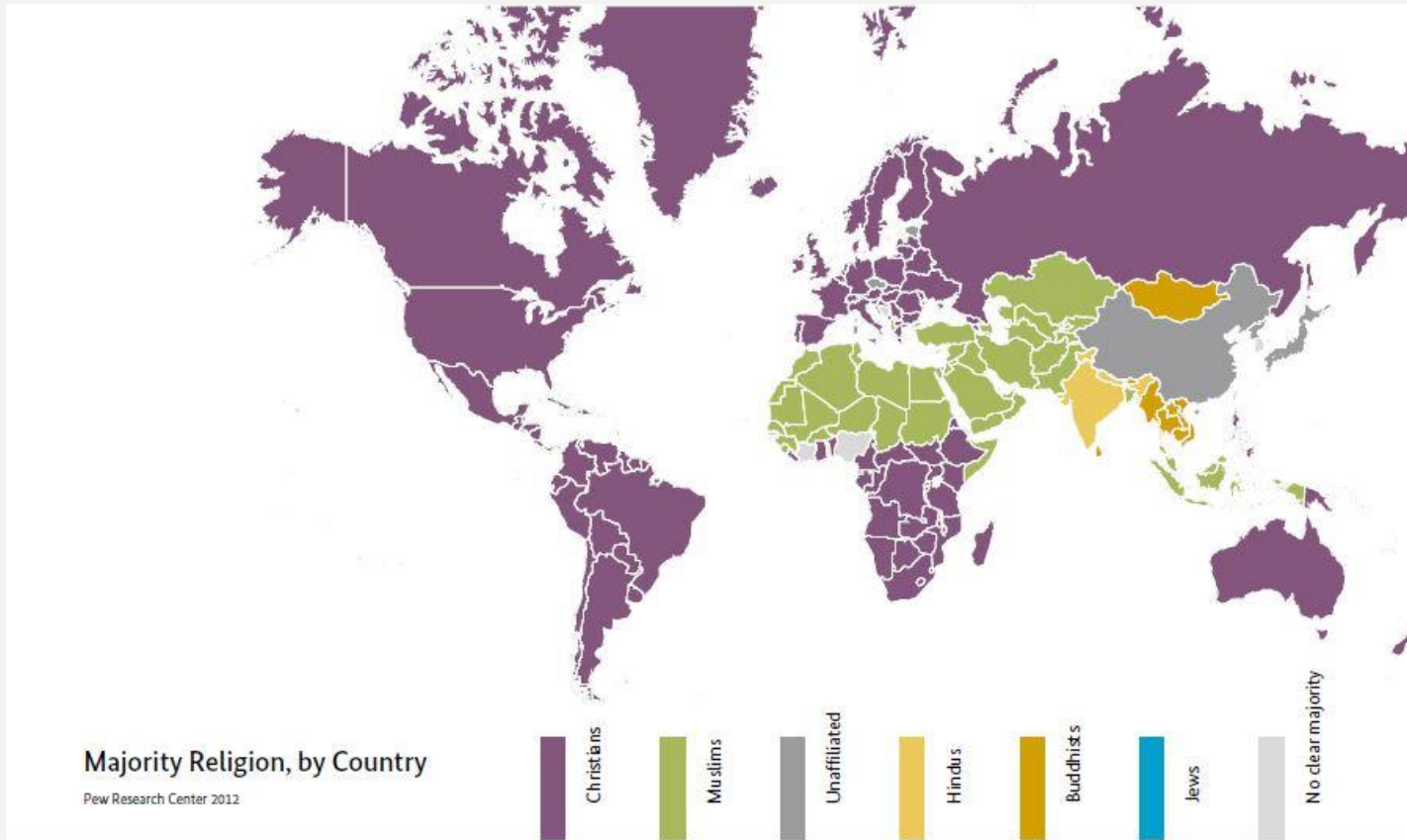
Number of people in 2015, in billions



Source: Pew Research Center demographic projections. See Methodology for details.
"The Changing Global Religious Landscape"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

3. „RELIGION AND DEVELOPMENT“ WHY DO WE NEED TO INCREASE RELIGIOUS LITERACY? AN EMPIRICAL OVERVIEW



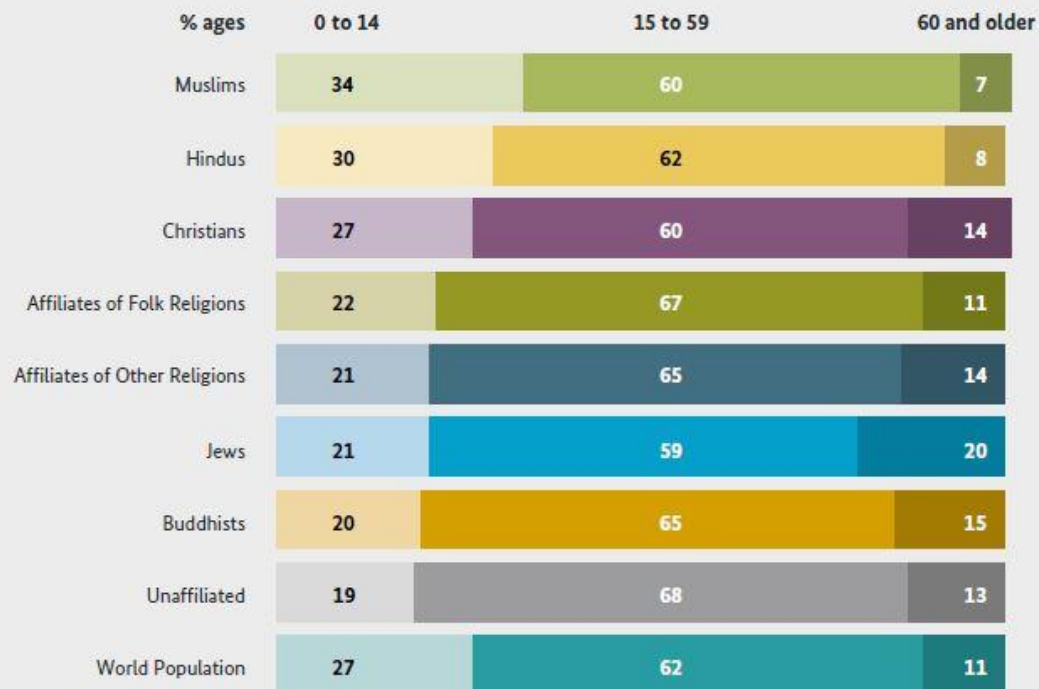
Source:
GIZ,
2016

3. „RELIGION AND DEVELOPMENT“ WHY DO WE NEED TO INCREASE RELIGIOUS LITERACY? AN EMPIRICAL OVERVIEW



Age Distribution of Religious Groups

Pew Research Center 2010



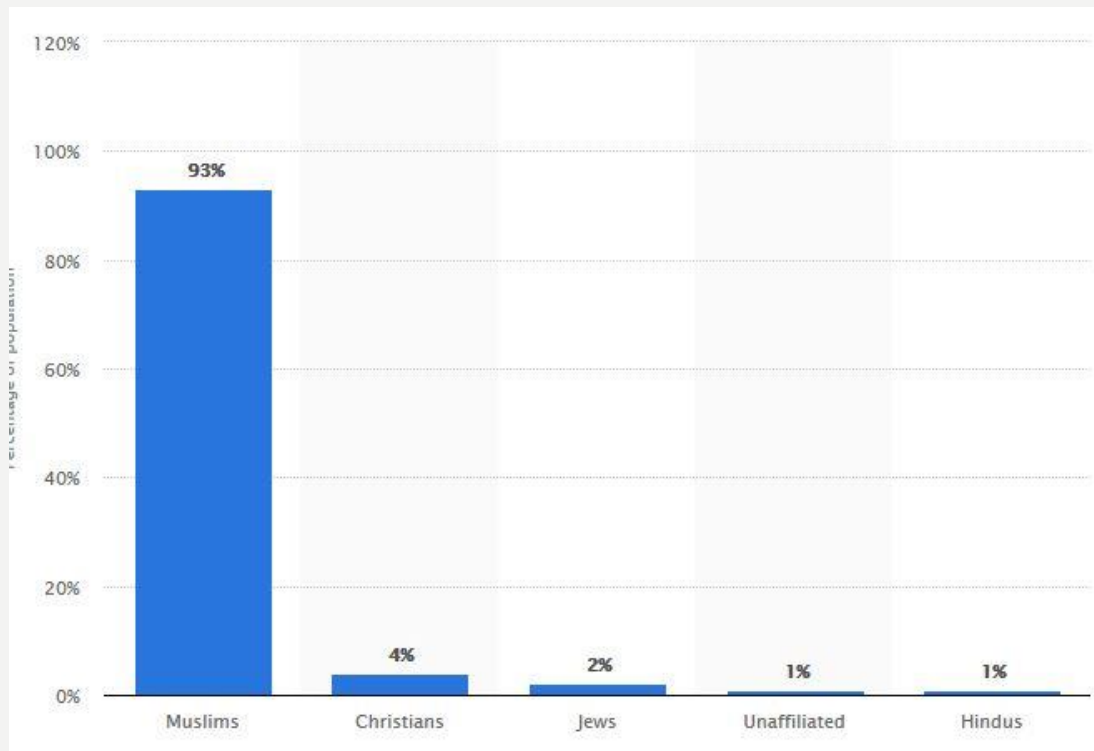
Figures may not add to 100% due to rounding.

Source:
GIZ,
2016

3. „RELIGION AND DEVELOPMENT“ WHY DO WE NEED TO INCREASE RELIGIOUS LITERACY? AN EMPIRICAL OVERVIEW



Looking at the MENA region

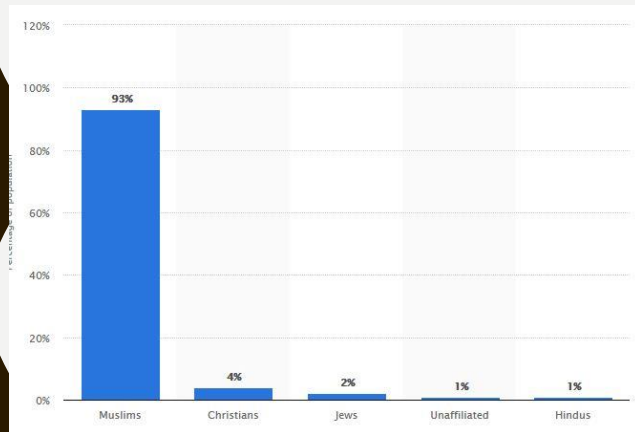


Percentage of population in the Middle East and North Africa that belonged to major religious groups in 2010, by religion
Source: Statista

3. „RELIGION AND DEVELOPMENT“ WHY DO WE NEED TO INCREASE RELIGIOUS LITERACY? AN EMPIRICAL OVERVIEW

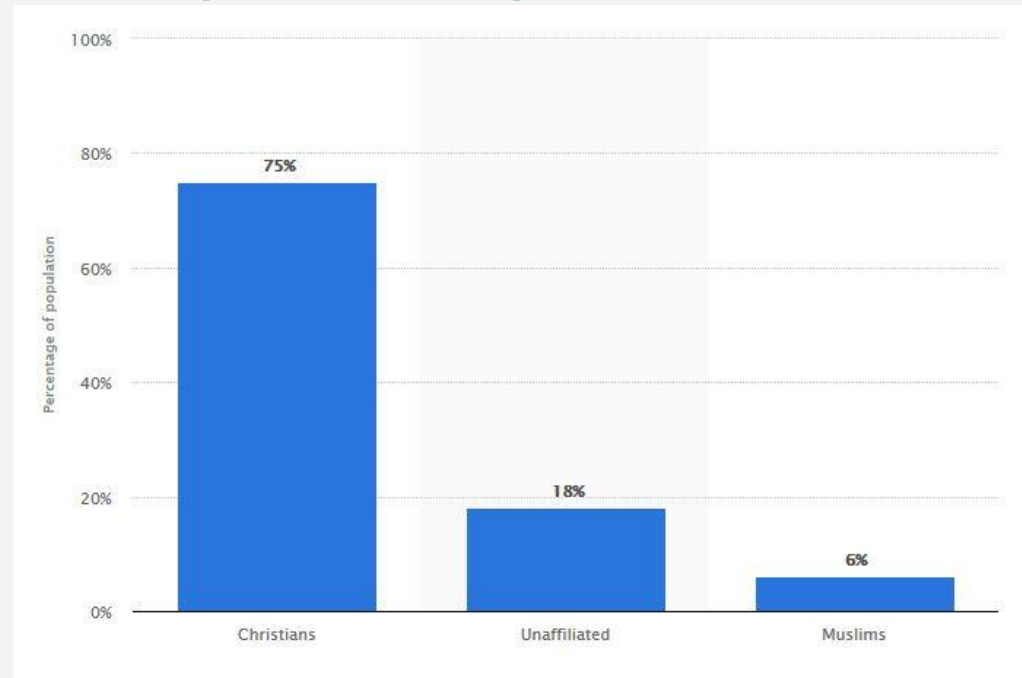


Looking at the MENA region – compared to Europe:



Percentage of population in the Middle East and North Africa that belonged to major religious groups in 2010, by religion

Source: Statista



Percentage of population in Europe that belonged to major religious groups in 2010, by religion, Source: Statista

3. „RELIGION AND DEVELOPMENT“ WHY DO WE NEED TO INCREASE RELIGIOUS LITERACY? AN EMPIRICAL OVERVIEW



Looking at the MENA region

Is religion an important part of your daily life?

	Yes	No
Yemen	99 %	1 %
Egypt	97 %	2 %
Morocco	97 %	1 %
Palestinian Territories	93 %	7 %
Tunisia	93 %	5 %
Syria	89 %	9 %
Lebanon	87 %	12 %
Iraq	84 %	11 %

Source: Gallup,
2009

3. „RELIGION AND DEVELOPMENT“ WHY DO WE NEED TO INCREASE RELIGIOUS LITERACY? AN EMPIRICAL OVERVIEW



Looking at the MENA region– compared to Europe:

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	Yes	No
Italy	72 %	25 %
Ireland	54 %	46 %
Switzerland	41 %	57 %
Germany	40 %	59 %
France	30 %	69 %
United Kingdom	27 %	73 %
Denmark	19 %	80 %
Sweden	17 %	82 %

3. „RELIGION AND DEVELOPMENT“ WHY DO WE NEED TO INCREASE RELIGIOUS LITERACY? AN EMPIRICAL OVERVIEW



Humanitarian and Development Aid by Faith-based Organizations (FBOs)

- FBOs constitute almost 60 % of USA-based international development organizations (2016).
- According to World Bank estimates, 50 % of health and education services in sub-Sahara Africa were provided by FBOs in 2000.
- In India, the Catholic Church (less than 2 % of the population) is the second-largest provider of health and educational services after the government (2005).
- The Lebanese Shi'a organization Hezbollah (the 'party of God') operates an extensive social welfare system in Lebanon that partly substitutes state structures.
- Jama'at-i-Islami, an Islamic political party, in Pakistan and Bangladesh runs numerous welfare organizations working in the fields of education, health, water and sanitation, and poverty relief.

3. „RELIGION AND DEVELOPMENT“ WHY DO WE NEED TO INCREASE RELIGIOUS LITERACY?



INTERACTIVE!

Brainstorming question for all:

Why should we consider religion when thinking about development and relief?

Please write your ideas in the Q&A window.

Video: World Vision in working with Imams in Afghanistan

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=elj683sR8xA>

3. „RELIGION AND DEVELOPMENT“ WHY DO WE NEED TO INCREASE RELIGIOUS LITERACY?



Areas of Potential

- Relevance (in Society)
- Reach (and Presence)
- Religious Actors as Welfare Actors
- Religious Actors as Dialogue and Reconciliation Partners
- Religious Actors as Donors and Supporters

3. „RELIGION AND DEVELOPMENT“ WHY DO WE NEED TO INCREASE RELIGIOUS LITERACY?



Areas of Potential

- Relevance (in Society)
 - Religion is part of the 'hard landscape'
 - Normative value system
 - Relevant for people's motivation
 - Trust-building force, authority, influence on decision-makers and stakeholders ...
 - Non-material need
 - ...
- Reach (and Presence)
- Religious Actors as Welfare Actors
- Religious Actors as Dialogue and Reconciliation Partners
- Religious Actors as Donors and Supporters

3. „RELIGION AND DEVELOPMENT“ WHY DO WE NEED TO INCREASE RELIGIOUS LITERACY?



Areas of Potential

- Relevance (in Society)
- Reach (and Presence)
 - Presence: “Part of nearly every community on earth.” (UNFPA); strong networks on all societal levels
 - Stay longer
 - Transnational networks
- Religious Actors as Welfare Actors
- Religious Actors as Dialogue and Reconciliation Partners
- Religious Actors as Donors and Supporters

3. „RELIGION AND DEVELOPMENT“ WHY DO WE NEED TO INCREASE RELIGIOUS LITERACY?



Areas of Potential

- Relevance (in Society)
- Reach (and Presence)
- Religious Actors as Welfare Actors
 - Local Experience, insider knowledge
 - Important welfare providers in many countries
 - Positive messaging
- Religious Actors as Dialogue and Reconciliation Partners
- Religious Actors as Donors and Supporters

3. „RELIGION AND DEVELOPMENT“ WHY DO WE NEED TO INCREASE RELIGIOUS LITERACY?



Areas of Potential

- Relevance (in Society)
- Reach (and Presence)
- Religious Actors as Welfare Actors
- Religious Actors as Dialogue and Reconciliation Partners
 - Catalyst of social cohesion
 - Peace builder
- Religious Actors as Donors and Supporters

3. „RELIGION AND DEVELOPMENT“ WHY DO WE NEED TO INCREASE RELIGIOUS LITERACY?



Areas of Potential

- Relevance (in Society)
- Reach (and Presence)
- Religious Actors as Welfare Actors
- Religious Actors as Dialogue and Reconciliation Partners
- Religious Actors as Donors and Supporters
 - Transnational networks of support
 - Value and motivation of donor organization and networks

3. „RELIGION AND DEVELOPMENT“ WHY DO WE NEED TO INCREASE RELIGIOUS LITERACY?



Working Definitions: ‘Faith’, ‘World View’, ‘Religion’?

- How will we use terms like religion, faith, belief, worldview etc.?
 - Protestantism: Opposition of Faith and Religion (K. Bart, D. Bonhoeffer)
 - Catholicism: Communal Faith
 - Islam: Faith as six axioms (God, Angels, Revelation, Prophets, Judgement Day, Predestination), religion (dīn) sometimes identical with faith, sometimes identical with act of following Islam

3. „RELIGION AND DEVELOPMENT“ WHY DO WE NEED TO INCREASE RELIGIOUS LITERACY?



Associogram



3. „RELIGION AND DEVELOPMENT“ WHY DO WE NEED TO INCREASE RELIGIOUS LITERACY?



Functional definition

- “...the functionalist definition that focuses on ‘what religion does’ for society or a group.”
Heist and Cnaan (2016), following Carole Rakodi
- All aspects of religion, faith and worldview can become relevant, but only in so far as they ‘do’ something for our purposes, i.e. affect humanitarian and development work.
- All aspects are also interesting for the purpose of a continuous ‘self-assessment’
 - The MGA is based on a 3D view, taking serious Muslim, Christian and Secular worldviews. A 3D-view should not have a ‘blind spot’ in the center.

3. „RELIGION AND DEVELOPMENT“ WHY DO WE NEED TO INCREASE RELIGIOUS LITERACY?



Areas of Risk / Threat

- “Germany’s development policy is neutral in terms of religions and beliefs. It is not, however, neutral in terms of values. That is why, in our work with religious actors, we do not accept any form of discrimination against other religious actors or secular organizations.”
(BMZ, *Religious Communities*, 12)
- **“Respect for human rights standards and principles**, that is, a clear commitment to the universality, inalienability and indivisibility of human rights, including the principles of non-discrimination, equality of opportunity and participation.” (11)



Threat to values, esp. human rights issues

3. „RELIGION AND DEVELOPMENT“ WHY DO WE NEED TO INCREASE RELIGIOUS LITERACY?



Mitigation of Risks and Threats?

- Value-based Partner Selection
- Compartmentalisation
 - “Within the scope of our cooperation, no activities are allowed that serve to spread or preach a religion.” (BMZ Strategy 12)
- Fall-back on Democratic Dialogue

3. „RELIGION AND DEVELOPMENT“ WHY DO WE NEED TO INCREASE RELIGIOUS LITERACY? AN EMPIRICAL OVERVIEW



Video:Witchcraft and human rights

https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=146&v=sr8vLNva6-s

4. INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION AND RELIGION IN GERMANY AND INTERNATIONALLY



“Development donors, such as government and multilateral agencies, need to have a basic understanding of the religious context if their partnership with religious communities is to be successful.” (Deneulin & Masooda, 2009, p.6)

4. INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION AND RELIGION INTERNATIONALLY



International Organizations and FBOs – some milestones

- **1998** Development Dialogue on Values and Ethics by World Bank President James Wolfensohn and George Carey, Archbishop of Canterbury
- **1998-2002** A series of conferences of donor representatives and faith leaders took place. Evolved into the World Faiths Development Dialogue. Today: Faith Initiative by the WB
- **2000** Landmark World Bank study *Voices of the Poor*
- **2010** United Nations Interagency Task Force on Religion and Development
- **2010, 2016, 2018** African Union Interfaith Dialogue Forum
- **Since 2014** G 20 Interfaith Summits

4. INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION AND RELIGION IN GERMANY



Strategy on Religion and Development by the German Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) (2016)

- Agenda 2030 cannot be achieved without involvement of FBOs
- Aims to shape a value-based German development policy
- Recognizes the ambivalent nature of religion
- No religious mainstreaming
- **Objectives:**
 - New partnerships for sustainable development
 - Strengthen human rights and fight extremism
- **Criteria** for cooperation with FBOs (selection): respect for human rights, interest in improving living conditions, competence and capacity, moral authority and trust
- **Principles** for cooperation with FBOs (selection): respect and openness, no discrimination and proselytizing, transparency and accountability
- **Areas of action** (selection): increase cooperation with FBOs, foster interreligious dialogue, strengthen capacities of FBOs, build international networks
- **Examples:**
 - International multi-stakeholder partnership: Partnership on Religion and Sustainable Development
 - Jordan: Religious authorities help to use water efficiently
 - Lebanon: Strengthening civil conflict transformation

BM Müller: “A value-based development policy takes the contribution of religions seriously.”



5. INTERACTIVE: COLLECTION OF EXPERIENCES, GOOD PRACTICES, LESSONS LEARNED



Questions:

1. Which topics come to your mind that might be interpreted differently according to different world views? E.g. gender equality....what else?
2. In one sentence: Did you work on a project / hear about a project in which religion was a relevant factor?
3. What is the most pressing question that you have right now after listening to the presentations?

6. OUTLOOK: THE CLASSROOM SEMINAR



We will...

- ...study religious and ideological concepts from Christianity, Islam and secularism that can influence development projects
- ...get a deeper understanding of the cultural and religious context of the MENA region
- ...study and critically discuss the Middleground approach
- ...have a training in identifying and harnessing the Middleground - the overlapping area of ideological concepts from Christianity, Islam and secularism
- ...learn how to conceptualize projects that are sensitive towards religion
- ...develop practical sketches concerning intercultural competences in development organizations
- ...increase our religious literacy
- ...have inspiring discussions and a lot of fun! 😊

6. OUTLOOK: THE WEB PLATFORM



The Middleground Academy Web Platform is...

- ...a knowledge platform
- ...an interaction platform (forum)
- ...a place to download material about religion and development

Link: <http://middleground-academy.de/>

7. ORGANIZATIONAL INFORMATION

Training component	Dates	Information
1. Introduction Webinar	8 April 2019, 10-12 am	✓ 😊
2. Classroom Seminar PLEASE BRING YOUR LAPTOPS.	11 – 12 April 2019 in Bonn	<p>Time:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • April 11, 11 am to 6 pm • April 12, 9 am to 5 pm <p>Location: CJD Bonn-Godesberg</p> <p>Accommodation: CJD Bonn-Godesberg. The accommodation for 1 night will be paid for by VHI.</p> <p>Travel cost will not be covered.</p> <p>The classroom seminar is for domestic staff based in Germany. Field staff from abroad will join some sessions via video conference.</p>
3. Tandem Work Phase	April / May 2019	The MGA team at VHI will accompany this work phase and assist you which methodological and content-related questions.
4. Review Webinar	16 May 2019, 10-12 am	Presentation of results from tandem work phase, reflection, feedback, lessons learned, next steps...

7. ORGANIZATIONAL INFORMATION

Training tandems

- co-learning approach: tandems from domestic project personnel and field personnel on site.
- If you already have a tandem partner abroad, please let us know
- If you do not already have a tandem partner, you can use the Middle Ground Academy Information Sheet to reach out to your colleagues abroad
- It is possible to choose tandem partners from organizations that you do not work with directly
- Be creative!
- If you did not find any tandem partner yet, please get in touch. We will assist you in the search.

Training materials

- All training material will be made available online either via e-mail or via the web platform. The access data will be sent to you by e-mail.

Certificate of participation

- After successful participation in all training sessions, we issue a certificate for your references.

7. ORGANIZATIONAL INFORMATION



Bitte überweisen Sie den Teilnehmerbeitrag von 70 EUR **bis zum 8. März** auf folgendes Konto:

Empfänger: Vision Hope International e.V.

Postbank Karlsruhe

BIC PBNKDEFF

IBAN DE69660100750624520751

Verwendungszweck: Middleground Academy, Ihr Vor- und Nachname

7. ORGANIZATIONAL INFORMATION



If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact our Middleground Academy team at Vision Hope International.

Email: middleground-academy@vision-hope.org

Phone: +49 228 30 42 636 0

8. HOMEWORK



Think about a case (a project / a situation) in your work experience in which religion or faith played a role.

Shortly take some notes about this case or do a little background research about it.

Be prepared to very shortly present your case at the seminar (no material needed).

If you don't have a case from your work experience, research a case in relevant literature (for more information on relevant literature see www.middleground-academy.de "Wissensspeicher")

9.Q & A



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