Karsten Lehmann / Patrice Brodeur

Final Remarks

Insights into the Interdisciplinary Field of the Study of Interreligious Dialogue

The present book started from a two-fold observation: On the one hand, the last two decades have seen a dynamic increase in the mere numbers of activities that are explicitly labeled as Interreligious Dialogue (IRD). On the other hand, research in the field is widely focusing on the general, conceptual level. As described in greater detail in the introductory chapter, we so far have primarily anecdotal evidence to understand concrete IRD activities in their socio-cultural contexts.¹ At the moment, there are primarily two exceptions to this rule: First, those analyses dealing with the history of IRD in different (national) contexts that underline the significance of the different actors in the field as well as their reactions to their respective socio-cultural settings.² Second, those analyses working on the significance of IRD in the wider field of religious encounters that elaborate on the specific characteristics of IRD in front of the much wider set of encounters between religions in history.³

Accordingly, the case studies that form the center of the present book all set out to answer a number of very basic questions that focus on the understanding of IRD activities in their respective socio-cultural contexts – such as: What are those groups active in IRD actually doing? Are there groups and individuals that are systematically excluded from IRD activities? What socio-political motives underlie day-to-day IRD activities? What happens inside the organizations that form the centre of most IRD activities? To what an extent are they able to implement the general ideals of IRD into their concrete activities? What can we learn from success and failure in the field?

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1 Mar Griera and Alexander-Kenneth Nagel, “Interreligious Relations and Governance of Religion in Europe: Introduction,” *Social Compass* 65 (September 2018): 301–11; Magdalena Nordin, “Secularization, Religious Plurality and Position: Local Inter-religious Cooperation in Contemporary Sweden,” *Social Compass* 64 (2017): 388–403.

2 David Cheetham, Douglas Pratt, and David Thomas, eds., *Understanding Interreligious Relations* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013). See for example the respective research undertaken at the Center for Religious Studies at the University of Bochum, ed., *Religions, Encounters, Traditions*: <https://ceres.rub.de/en/research/profile/religions-encounters-traditions/> (accessed: 24.5.2020).

3 Catherie Cornille, ed., *The Wiley-Blackwell Companion to Inter-religious Dialogue* (Oxford / Malden: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013).

Following these general questions, the preceding chapters provide their readers with a wide range of insights into the early history of several important international IRD organizations. Together, they cover a wide range of major individual and organizational actors that have shaped the modern development of interreligious dialogue up to the present. Using an empirical approach, they describe, on the one hand, how these actors put their ideals of IRD into practice. On the other hand, they highlight some of the challenges they were confronted with, while implementing their understanding of IRD, especially when working as pioneers in the establishment of organizational structures to promote their activities.

It is now time to compare the results of these separate case studies in order to provide a broader historical and sociological understanding of the phenomena in question. We do so through a three-step argument: First, we describe the over-all social forms international IRD activities have been taking from around 1900 up until today. Second, we present two trends that have shaped the modern history of these activities – (a) a trend towards public activism and (b) a trend towards official representation. Third, we discuss a set of recommendations that draw upon these observations to better understand present-day IRD activities within the framework of their organizational development.

1 Early Establishment of a Loose IRD Movement

To take the first of these three steps, the present chapter returns to the concept of the ‘IRD movement’ that has already been discussed in section 2.2 of the introduction. It refers to the predominant conviction in present-day IRD-related research that the century-old history of interreligious encounters gained new momentum in the late 19th century with the 1893 World’s Parliament of Religions. In this literature, the so-called ‘Parliament’ is often referred to as the starting point of the modern IRD movement.⁴

Notwithstanding a few references to older examples of dialogue, almost all analyses in the preceding chapters point to the 1893 ‘*World’s Parliament of Religions*’ as the initial reference for the work of the organizations and individuals they have been studying. They do not, however, refer to any form of personal or structural continuity. The ‘Parliament’ serves as an ideal point of reference.

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⁴ Anna Halafoff, *The Multifaith Movement: Global Risks and Cosmopolitan Solutions* (New York / Heidelberg: Springer, 2013); Vladimir Latinovic, Gerard Mannion, and Peter C. Phan, eds., *Pathways for Interreligious Dialogue in the Twenty-first Century* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016).

This confirms to what an extent this side event of the Chicago World's Fair has become the symbolic starting point for the activities of the modern twentieth, or twenty-first century organizations that self-describe as doing IRD. And it makes it even more unfortunate that we are actually lacking major archival material on this event (see chapter 2 of the present volume).

In addition, the first set of chapters highlights the loose character of this initial phase of IRD activities. On the one hand, the first half of the 20th century saw the gradual establishment of IRD organizations with a particular focus on theological discussions – some of them rather short-lived (e.g. the '*Religiöse Menschheitsbund*', see: chapter 3 of the present volume) and others still in existence today (e.g. the '*World Congress of Faiths*', see: chapter 4 of the present volume). On the other hand, it is interesting to see from the present archival work that there were almost no quarrels about the boundaries of what constitutes an IRD organization. The organizations analyzed in this book were rather open and/or unobservant vis-à-vis each other, and there were no explicit attempts to define boundaries in a way that would lead towards the exclusion of one another organizationally.

These observations further support two classic interpretations of the early modern history of IRD-activities: First, they support the idea that the 'modern dialogue movement' started off as an amorphous group of people trying to implement a general idea of IRD. The inclusive character of the organizations that were established to implement this general idea stands for a rather broad understanding of the activities in the field. Second, the above observations underline that the initial history of international IRD activities and organizational development was confronted with a particular resistance on the part of traditional religious hierarchies and institutions (mostly Christian). There seems to have been also very limited support from political parties or parliaments. And this has further shaped the character of IRD activities.

On top of this, the case studies underline a third aspect of IRD activities that has so far been frequently neglected: It is interesting to see that in a time of increasing globalization and the expansion of secular ideas⁵, most protagonists of the early history of the IRD movement perceived themselves as adding 'a religious voice' against what they characterized as an increasing secularization. This adds a whole new dimension to the analysis of IRD activities. Almost all IRD practitioners studied in this book follow – at least implicitly – a religious

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⁵ Steve Bruce, *Secularization: In Defence of an Unfashionable Theory* (Oxford / New York: Oxford University Press, 2011); Hans G. Kippenberg, *Entdeckung der Religionsgeschichte: Religionswissenschaft und Moderne* (München: Beck, 1997).

agenda in a context they perceived in the widest sense as secular, although this does not imply that this religious agenda was automatically anti-secularist from a political perspective.⁶ Sociologically speaking, this suggests a correlation between the emergence of IRD organizations, especially in the West, and the rise in secularization processes.⁷

As far as future research is concerned, it would be interesting to analyze more systematically IRD-activities as a reaction against processes of secularization and to see to what an extent the differentiation of the manifold strands of secularization helps to understand multiple forms of IRD activities around the world.⁸ In this respect, it could be argued that changes in the form of secularization processes, while they have often disempowered mainstream religious institutions politically, they have also triggered new forms of religious identities and dynamics, especially interreligiously (see: chapter 5 on the ‘WCC-Committee on the Church and the Jewish People’ of the present volume). This will provide the basis for much more dynamic analyses of IRD activities.

And this is exactly the point where the second part of the present analyses comes in: The identification of two major trends in the modern history of IRD activities.

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6 Indeed, the philosopher Charles Taylor has called this age the ‘secular age’, in which he demonstrates clearly that ‘religion’ and ‘religious actors’ did not disappear from the public space (as the secularization theory might have lead people to believe), but that religions and religious beliefs and practices were transformed. One such transformation is precisely the emergence of IRD activities and organizations at both grassroots and highest institutional levels in the course of the second half of the twentieth century. Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age*. Cambridge / London: Harvard University Press 2007.

7 Lehmann, Karsten, “Interreligious Dialogue in response to secularization,” *Journal for Religion and Transformation in Contemporary Societies* 7 (in print); Peter L. Berger, ed., *Between Relativism and Fundamentalism, Religious Resources for a Middle Position* (Cambridge: Grand Rapids, 2010); Peter L. Berger. “A Market Model for the Analysis of Ecumenicity,” *Social Research* 30 (1963): 77–93.

8 Craig Calhoun, Mark Juergensmeyer and Johathan van Antwerpen, eds., *Rethinking Secularism* (Oxford / New York: Oxford University Press, 2011); Marian Burchardt, Monika Wohlrab-Sahr, and Matthias Middell, eds., *Multiple Secularities beyond the West, Religion and Modernity in the Global Age* (Boston / Berlin / München: Walter De Gruyter, 2015).

2 Two Major Trends in the Modern History of IRD Activities

Despite the manifold observations that have so far highlighted the loose character of the early IRD movement, it would be misleading to reduce IRD-activities to one single type of actions. Especially with regards to the 1970's and 1990's, the analyses of the case studies in this book underline two strands that have shaped the more recent history of the IRD movement and our understanding of it today: first, this movement reflects a trend towards 'public activism' at the same time as it also shows, paradoxically, a trend towards 'formal representation'.

2.1 Trend towards 'Public Activism' in Civil Society

The first of these two trends started during the decade from the late 1950s to the early 1970s that has been described as the 'Long Sixties' as well as a time of 'Religious Crisis'⁹. It can be said to correspond to a second phase in the development of the international IRD movement, associated with the foundation of organizations such as the Temple of Understanding (1960), the internal developments that changed the very character of the International Association for Religious Freedom (1969), and the organization of the first World Conference on Religions for Peace (1970). All these developments show how new IRD actors emerged in the field and how the focus of IRD activities moved away from primarily conceptual and theological discussions towards a wider socio-cultural engagement in topics such as international politics (Temple of Understanding), human rights (International Association for Religious Freedom), or peace and disarmament (Religions for Peace).

The complexity of these developments can be illustrated with a variety of examples from the case-studies: If one examines more closely the chapter on the '*Temple of Understanding*' (see: chapter 6 of the present volume), it is fascinating to see how early fund-raising documents of this organization describe their founder, Juliet Hollister, not only as an important integrative figure, but also underline her role as a female figure that provided input to the IRD movement without having substantive theological training. In other words, the documents pre-

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⁹ Arthur Marwick, *The Sixties: Cultural Revolution in Britain, France, Italy, and the United States, c. 1958 – c. 1974* (Oxford / New York: A & C Black, 1998); Hugh McLeod, *The Religious Crisis of the 1960s* (Oxford / New York: Oxford University Press, 2007).

sent Hollister as an opposition to traditional clerics, pastors or priests. They rather present her as a figure outside traditional religious hierarchies.

The emergence of what turned into the organization more recently called '*Religions for Peace/International*' provides another example (see: chapter 8 of the present volume). This organization started around an international event that wanted to illustrate how religions play a leading role for peace around the world, especially in the context of the Cold War, i.e. the war in Vietnam. In a very complex process, the emphasis of its activities diversified to include not only broader international questions related to the promotion of peace throughout the International Community (Disarmament, Peace Education, Sustainable Development, Women and Youth), mostly through the United Nations, but also a commitment to work *interreligiously* towards peace in a more concrete way from the ground up (i.e. local and national levels).

And finally, the changes inside the '*International Association for Religious Freedom*' also add a significant dimension to those important developments towards public activism in civil society. Starting out in 1901 as one of the first international IRD-organizations, the IARF is the first IRD organization that put human rights into the very center of its activities (see: chapter 7 of the present volume). In 1969, the protagonists inside the organization re-positioned IARF in the context of the expanding international debates on human rights.¹⁰ From this time onwards, references to human rights form an integral aspect of this strand of IRD activities.

All of these organizational developments can be interpreted within the context of a newly emerging public activism¹¹. On the basis of rather open networks, the local groups of the respective organizations have been involved in manifold concrete activities around the world and have developed various internal implementation structures. These organizations no longer exclusively focus on dialogue between religious experts; they rather propose the grass-root implementation of IRD as a particular tool to tackle a wide variety of socio-political problems – with various actors from all social and institutional levels. They also start to prioritize middle- and long-term programmes over singular events.

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10 Samuel Myon, *The Last Utopia: Human Rights in History* (Cambridge / London: Belknap Press, 2010); Stephen Hopgood, *The Endtimes of Human Rights* (Cornell: Cornell University Press, 2013).

11 On the origins of this concept, see: Christian Smith, *Disruptive Religion: The Force of Faith in Social Movement Activism* (New York / London: Routledge, 1996); Margaret E. Keck and Kathryn Sikkink, *Activists Beyond Borders: Advocacy Networks in International Politics* (London: Ithaca, 1998).

These observations suggest linking the analysis of IRD to a more general process that has been dominating the recent academic debates on the History of Religions. Authors such as José Casanova and Jürgen Habermas have described this process as the establishment of religions in public space or the emergence of a post-secular society.¹² As far as the IRD organizations in this book are concerned, this means that they are more and more organized along the lines of Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs).¹³ A strong group of actors inside those organizations tend to perceive themselves as activists in civil society – first with regard to formal structures, and second with regard to human rights such as religious freedom, freedom of expression and a large variety of peace activities.¹⁴

However, this is only half of the story. In addition to this, our case studies help to identify a second trend that is in a way counteracting the first one – a trend towards ‘formal representation’ part of which is linked to policy-making.

2.2 Trend towards ‘Formal Representation’

Once again, this trend cannot be properly assessed without first looking back into history. As soon as one goes back to the early years of the modern IRD movement, it becomes clear that these activities were primarily shaped by individuals of rather small (and sometimes marginalized) groups within different religious traditions – in the earliest days, this frequently equated with Christian traditions in the West. Unitarians played, for example, a role in the early days of the IRD movement that is certainly greater than their numbers. Similar was the role of the modern lay Japanese Buddhist organization Rissshō Kōsei Kai in the leadership of the World Conference on Religions for Peace. And the same is also true for religious ideas in the traditions of Christian mysticism as well as peoples

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¹² Jürgen Habermas, *Glauben und Wissen* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2001); José Casanova, *Public Religions in the Modern World* (Chicago / London: University of Chicago Press, 1994). Eduardo Mendieta and Jonathan van Antwerpen, eds., *Power of Religion in the Public Sphere* (New York: New York University Press, 2011).

¹³ Josef Boehle, *Inter-Religious Co-operation in a Global Age* (Birmingham: University of Birmingham, 2010); Jeffrey Haynes, *Religious Transnational Actors and Soft Power* (London / New York: Routledge, 2012); Karsten Lehmann, *Religious NGOs in International Relations: The Construction of ‘the Religious’ and ‘the Secular’* (New York: New York University Press, 2016).

¹⁴ Elazar Barkan and Karen Barkey, eds. *Choreographies of Shared Sacred Sites: Religion, Politics, and Conflict Resolution* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2015); David Herbert, *Religion and Civil Society: Rethinking Public Religion in the Contemporary World* (London / New York: Routledge, 2003).

and organizations committed to religious pacifism that were highly significant for the early IRD movement.

Against this socio-cultural background, it is interesting to see that the case analyses that follow the breakdown of the bi-polar world-order suggest an increasing focus on formal religious representation,¹⁵ especially with the consolidation of the World Conference on Religions for Peace. In a less systematic way, the ‘*Council for a Parliament of the World’s Religions*’ is another good example for this trend, through not as successfully (see: chapter 9 of the present volume). It illustrates to what an extent its organizers were able to add representative voices to the celebration of this foundational event of the IRD movement. The history of the ‘*Oxford International Interfaith Centre*’ leads into a similar direction (see chapter 10 of the present volume), in as much as it focuses on the Centre’s major aims to bring together leading academics from different religious traditions in a joint middle- to long-term program.

The two most recent cases in this publication – the ‘*United Religions Initiative*’ and the ‘*Universal Peace Foundation*’ add further complexities to this trend. The first stands for an organization (or rather a movement) that has been established from within traditional church-hierarchies to explicitly work on the grass-roots level (see: chapter 11 of the present volume). The second stands for the commitment of a new religious movement that has frequently been described as a ‘sect’ or a ‘cult’¹⁶ in a very specific section of IRD activities – the lobbying in the context of International Organizations such as the UN (see: chapter 12 of the present volume).

All these observations highlight a frequently neglected dimension to the analysis of IRD-activities – the question of representation. First, they provide further examples on the dynamic character of any type of formal representation – including the respective processes of inclusion and exclusion. Second, they underline that formalized representation is more easily achievable when religious traditions had developed more centralized religious institutions over centuries. However, since a majority of religious traditions tend to be more decentralized

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15 Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (New York / London / Toronto: Simon & Schuster, 1996); Scott M. Thomas, *The Global Resurgence of Religion and the Transformation of International Relations: The Struggle for the Soul of the twenty-first Century* (New York: Houndmills, 2005); Monica D. Toft, Daniel Philpott and Timothy Shah S., *God’s Century: Resurgent Religion and Global Politics* (New York / London: NW Norton & Company, 2011).

16 James A. Beckford and James Richardson, eds., *Challenging Religion: Essays in honour of Eileen Barker* (Abingdon / New York: Routledge, 2003); Eileen Barker, ed., *Revisionism and Diversification in New Religious Movements* (London / New York: Routledge, 2013).

than centralized, this may explain why Christian institutions played a more prominent role initially in the emergence of those worldwide IRD organizations that were more top-down in their approach.¹⁷

As far as the present day is concerned, the interesting thing is that the two above trends form two major strands in contemporary IRD activities. At times, these are simply seen as complementary to each other; at other times, they give rise to strong tensions between organizations and actors who may want to put more emphasis on some themes over others. The establishment of international organizations dealing with interreligious and intercultural dialogue represents perfect examples of this development. They are no longer only dominated by religiously motivated individuals that are primarily legitimated by their personal commitment to IRD. In addition to the voices of official representatives of major religious communities, these IGOs rather prioritize the voices of official representatives of governments or other international organizations, coming into conflict with the aims of the more activism-oriented initiatives.

To finally put all of this into a nutshell: Based upon the self-descriptions in the field, the analyses brought together in the present book, describe the more recent history of IRD activities along the lines of an increasing establishment of a rather loose movement that emerged around the turn from the 19th to the 20th century. On this basis, they underline the dynamic developments of this movement with regards to two entwined trends towards ‘public activism’ and ‘formal representation’. These trends shape the field of IRD activities today. They explain the emergence as well as the disappearance of specific topics and actors in the international field of IRD-activities.

These observations finally open up an opportunity to formulate practical proposals to the field of interreligious or interfaith dialogue.

3 Proposals to the Field: Learning from International IRD Activities

Expanding on the above action-focused approach this section identifies five concrete, present-day challenges that seem to be constitutive of the IRD movement in general:

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¹⁷ John L. Esposito, Darrell J. Fasching, and Todd T. Lewis, *World Religions Today* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014); Charles Taylor and Karin Wördemann, *Die Formen des Religiösen in der Gegenwart* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2001); John Fahy and Jeffrey Haynes, “Introduction: Interfaith on the World Stage,” *The Review of Faith & International Affairs* 16 (2018) 1–8.

3.1 Look at History

Our first suggestion is linked to the ongoing efforts among IRD activists to promote peace – at least starting from the 1960s onwards. As the case studies analyzed in this book clearly show, the establishment of the IRD organizations from that second period onwards is strongly linked to the lofty ideal of ‘world peace’. Since the turmoil of the First and the Second World War, the idea of world peace has been a significant part of most – if not all – IRD encounters, directly or indirectly. Not only because people identified in one way or another religion as a basis of many violent conflicts, but also because many religious leaders and communities active in interreligious dialogue (from the local level to the global level) seek to promote peace through interreligious collaboration.

On the one hand, this increased interreligious collaboration has attracted more and more public attention, with the effect that IRD has begun to carry more power and influence on politics, especially in areas of conflicts. On the other hand, especially when IRD is practiced according to a harmony model of dialogue rather than a liberation one,¹⁸ the general idea of world peace pushes other dimensions of present-day society in the background – such as the injustices of global economy or the ongoing violations of human rights. This might bring a difficult bias to some of the IRD activities happening today, if they do not use a transformative, ‘positive peace’ framework.¹⁹

Our first recommendation is therefore that scholars and scholar-practitioners can look at the history of the IRD movement to capitalize on the concrete experiences that have already been made in the direction towards world peace. While there is a handful of books that each provide a valuable perspective on the history of this movement,²⁰ although they each cover only a segment of it, there is no book to date that includes an extensive and relatively inclusive coverage of that history. However, there is an increasing number of empirical sources of data on organizations currently working internationally in the promotion of

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18 Mohammad Abu-Nimer, Amal I. Khoury and Emily Welty, *Unity in Diversity: Interfaith Dialogue in the Middle East* (Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace Press, 2007), 64–65.

19 For more on the framework of ‘conflict transformation’, see John Paul Lederach, *The Little Book of Conflict Transformation* (Brattleboro: Good Books, 2003). For more on the framework of ‘positive peace’, see Johan Galtung, “Editorial”, *Journal of Peace Research* 1 (1964): 3–16; in which he first used the expression ‘positive peace’. For a more detailed theoretical analysis, see also Johan Galtung, *Peace by peaceful means: Peace and conflict, development and civilization* (Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, Inc., 1996).

20 For further examples, see Marcus Braybrooke, *Pilgrimage of Hope: One Hundred Years of Global Interfaith Dialogue* (London: SCM Press, 1993).

IRD in a variety of fields, including peace and reconciliation. Through future analyses of such new contemporary data as well as more archival research, the time is ripe for the production of a history that can reflect on the accelerating complexity of recent and current IRD activities – highlighting focal point of co-operation as well as conflict.

3.2 Discuss Tensions

The second recommendation builds upon what has been said earlier about the question of religious representation. The case studies included in this book have made it clear that, while the first period in the development of the modern IRD movement was dominated by a very specific group of individuals that were (a) highly interested in theological questions and (b) did not necessarily perceive themselves at the center of religious traditions, the second period has challenged this setup significantly through the emergence of the two concomitant and in a way complementary trends of ‘public activism’ and ‘formal representation’.

If it is possible to think of these two trends as complementary in some ways, they have considerable consequences for today’s IRD-activities. On the one hand, this ‘formal representation’ strand of IRD has led to more institutionally formalized structures both within some religious institutions and in an international NGO such as Religions for Peace/International. On the other hand, the ‘public activism’ approach tends to be critical of most forms of formal representation, rooted in more grassroots and progressive wings of some religious communities. At the moment it seems to be difficult to integrate these two strands of developments.

Our second recommendation is therefore that all actors within the IRD movement, wherever they may find themselves on this spectrum between ‘public activism’ and ‘formal representation’, need to get together to discuss where and when this tension results in counterproductive competition and misjudgment about each other, and where and when it might be the source of creative new methodologies to ensure greater conflict transformational impact for the IRD movement as a whole. In preparation for such discussions between all kinds of IRD actors, it would be useful to produce numerous case studies²¹ of these di-

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²¹ For example, see Heinz Streib, “Inter-Religious Negotiations: Case Studies on Students’ Perception of and Dealing with Religious Diversity,” in *Towards Religious Competence: Diversity as a Challenge for Education in Europe*, ed. Hans-Guenter Heimbrock, Christoph Scheilke, and Peter Schreiner (Münster: Lit Verlag, 2001): 129–149; for several examples of case studies based in the

verse IRD activities and knowledge production forms in order to first understand better the fields of tension and cooperation among what is ‘out there’ (i.e. monitoring the field), as well as to begin to analyze what impact each kind of IRD activities may or may not have had so far (i.e. evaluation).

3.3 Approach the Challenge of Inclusiveness

A third ongoing challenge, discussed from the beginning of the modern IRD movement in all IRD organizations studied in this book, relates to the notion of inclusiveness for at least three identity markers: gender, religion, and nationality. While the first period in the modern IRD movement was led by mostly Christian men coming from countries of what we call today the ‘global North’, the second period diversified to include still mostly men, but from more diverse religions and from a much broader variety of national backgrounds, including the ‘global South’. In the current third period of the IRD movement since 2001, the need to diversify the composition of who participates and organizes IRD activities becomes even more urgent.²² For example, there is a growing awareness about such challenges surrounding the inclusion of a wider variety of identities as well as more balanced numbers has resulted in some improvement in representation of more people from the ‘global south’ as well as more women religious leaders and, at times, younger religious leaders and activists too.

The challenges remain big when it comes to the presence of these groups in most IRD organizational structures. Up to now, the issues of inclusiveness – so important to IRD practitioners – are mostly not reflected in the formal structures of religious traditions. To give but very few examples: Men are still overrepresented in formal IRD-activities. Organizations from the global north are widely perceived as the central hubs of IRD-infrastructure. Buddhist and Hindu activities in IRD are under-represented on the international arena. To overcome these biases will be one of the most urgent medium-term issues for those active in interreligious dialogue.

It is, therefore, our third recommendation to use the insights that have emerged from the historical vignettes of this book to increase further under-

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United States of America, see the following link within the website of the Pluralism Project at Harvard University: <http://pluralism.org/casestudy/selected-case-studies/> (accessed: 24.5.2020).

²² This call for greater inclusion, in terms of both women and indigenous traditions (often referred to as ‘First Nations’ in Canada) was taken up by the latest Parliament of the World’s Religions, which took place in Toronto, Canada (1–7 November, 2018).

standing that awareness about these challenges of inclusiveness are not recent in the IRD movement, and while changes have sometimes been slow in addressing the dominant patriarchy in many traditional religious institutions, it is clear that many IRD organizations have taken a lead towards greater inclusiveness in a variety of ways that are part of promoting sustainable positive peace. This might have repercussions on the religious traditions as well as the wider field of state- and NGO-activities around the world.

3.4 Enhance inter-organisational Cooperation

A fourth challenge, somewhat related to the preceding one in the form of social class inclusiveness, has been identified in many chapters under the topic of ‘financial resources’. Almost all the present case studies include stories about significant lack of monetary resources to carry out, at one time or another, the IRD activities as envisioned by each IRD organization.²³ Here, the distinction between ‘public activism’ and ‘formal representation’ is of particular significance, in as far as it stands for a particular type of access to economic resources – especially in the case of various efforts at decolonializing parts of the IRD movement.²⁴

In this respect, our fourth recommendation is that this recurring financial challenge can best be addressed through inter-organizational cooperation that seeks to first clarify the strengths and uniqueness of each IRD organization in order to then understand better their complementarity and respective comparative advantage. Once this is done, it then becomes possible to imagine a number of ways inter-IRD organizational collaboration may lead to funding key collective activities that would benefit the image and impact of the IRD movement as a whole, thus increasing outside positive perceptions about the importance of IRD for world peace. Such improvement in the general perception about IRD might, in turn, open up new avenues for funding more impactful IRD activities.

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²³ See also Bud Heckman, “Funding for the Interfaith Movement,” in *The Interfaith Observer* (15 May, 2014): <http://www.theinterfaithobserver.org/journal-articles/2014/5/15/funding-for-the-interfaith-movement.html> (accessed: 24.5.2020). In addition: Paul Hedges, “Setting the Scene: Interreligious Dialogue in Plural Societies,” in *Commentary in Interreligious Dialogue* (Singapore: RSIS Commentary, 2018): <https://www.rsis.edu.sg/rsis-publication/rsis/co16222-setting-the-scene-interreligious-dialogue-in-plural-societies/#.XOuKBa35xsM> (accessed: 24.5.2020).

²⁴ See: Teresa Crist; *Decolonizing Interfaith: A Qualitative Study Exploring the Operative Assumptions and Categories of Interfaith Interaction* (Denver, CO: PhD-dissertation Iliff School of Theology at the University of Denver, 2017).

3.5 Undertake longitudinal Research

A fifth challenge comes with the organizational change from a focus on IRD events to IRD programmes. While this transformation has opened up new salutory avenues of funding, it has also made IRD organizations more dependent on increasing expectations that good practices in monitoring and evaluation must accompany programmatic development of any kind. Recently, a few manuals to train IRD actors in this direction have been published.²⁵ It marks a watershed new departure in making publically available a tool that can significantly improve the quality of IRD programmes so that they can eventually be evaluated better as to their real impact on the ground.

These developments are essential to work towards a more long-term commitment to dialogue around the world. They are, however, confronted with a difficult dilemma. On the one hand, they are necessary to attract new or consolidate existing sources of funding. On the other hand, most IRD initiatives are not in the position to adequately support such a medium- or long-term commitment.

Our fifth recommendation is therefore that academics and IRD actors on the ground work together to develop case studies and longitudinal research, from a variety of theoretical and methodological perspectives, on the impact of IRD activities and programmes.²⁶ The results of such studies will undoubtedly enable improvements in IRD programmes. It will hopefully also allow for a consolidation of the IRD movement so as to make all IRD organizations more effective and impactful in the long term, in terms of their own respective mission as well as those elements they share with other IRD organizations across the IRD movement worldwide.

We hope that this concluding chapter has helped the reader understand that from the unique learnings emerging from each case study included in this book emerges a broader picture of a dynamic modern IRD movement, even though the

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25 These include manuals to train the KAICIID Dialogue Fellows, as well as those to promote capacity-building in IRD for Peace and Reconciliation adapted to Nigeria, CAR, and Myanmar. Another manual has been produced that includes how to use IRD in Social Media, both in English and Arabic. In addition, a manual has been jointly produced in 2017 by the International Dialogue Centre and the World Organisation of Scouts Movement (WOSM). <https://www.scout.org/node/428031> (accessed: 24.5.2020).

26 The best recent example is the development, funded by Gerald and Henrietta Rauenhorst (GHR) Foundation, of the manual: Peter Woodrow, Nick Oatley, and Michelle Garred. "Faith Matters: A Guide for the Design, Monitoring & Evaluation of Inter-Religious Peacebuilding." CDA Collaborative Learning Projects and Alliance for Peacebuilding, September 2017. <https://www.dmeforpeace.org/resource/faith-matters-guide-design-monitoring-evaluation-inter-religious-action-peacebuilding/> (accessed: 24.5.2020).

scope of those case studies does not reflect the complexity of the rapid growth in IRD organizations in the last two decades or so, especially at the local and national levels. What our collective comparison has allowed us to do, though, is to present a few trends that can respectfully paint the broad strokes for a general picture of the modern IRD movement. Of course, more strokes can be added at a later stage with the addition of many more case studies. But suffice it to say for the moment that our concluding analysis hopefully provides not only conceptual tools to understand better the emergence and many current challenges of the IRD movement, especially through some of its main organizational development over the last century, but also useful recommendations for all IRD actors and stakeholders at large.

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