



# The KAICIID Peace Map – An emerging tool for the understanding of interreligious dialogue internationally

Karsten Lehmann, Ph.D. / Patrice Brodeur, Ph.D. / Jana Vobecka, Ph.D.

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## (1) Need for Empirical Research on Dialogue

Over the last few decades, interreligious dialogue (IRD) activities have become an increasingly significant dimension in the complex set of dynamics characterizing the phenomena of religions. In the last two decades in particular, there has been an increase in the number of institutions and organizations that include IRD in their international work, far beyond the increase in new IRD organizations per se (that is, those who put IRD at the centre of their mission). Moreover, it can be argued that IRD has become one of the central markers of the debates on the socio-cultural significance of religions in part because it reflects a relatively new approach to addressing the long-standing debates on the place of religion in the public sphere.<sup>1</sup>

This development is reflected in most recent research activities. There is a long tradition of research on IRD. So far the majority of these publications has been focusing upon conceptual reflections – e.g. the traditional distinction between dialogue of the head, dialogue heart, dialogue of life, and the dialogue of the hands.<sup>2</sup> In addition to this, the last decade has, however, seen a number of initial

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<sup>1</sup> Cornille, Catherine (ed.), *The Wiley-Blackwell Companion to Inter-Religious Dialogue*, Malden / Oxford 2013. Cornille, Catherine, / Corigliano, Stephanie (ed.), *Interreligious Dialogue and Cultural Change*, Eugene 2012 (Interreligious Dialogue Series).

<sup>2</sup> Moyaert, Marianne, *Interreligious Dialogue*, in: Cheetham, David / Pratt, Douglas / Thomas, David (ed.), *Understanding Interreligious Relations*, Oxford 2013, p. 193-217. Forward, Martin, *Inter-religious Dialogue, - A short Introduction -*, London 2001.

empirical analyses that either approach the impact of IRD activities or reconstruct the development of the IRD-discourse.<sup>3</sup>

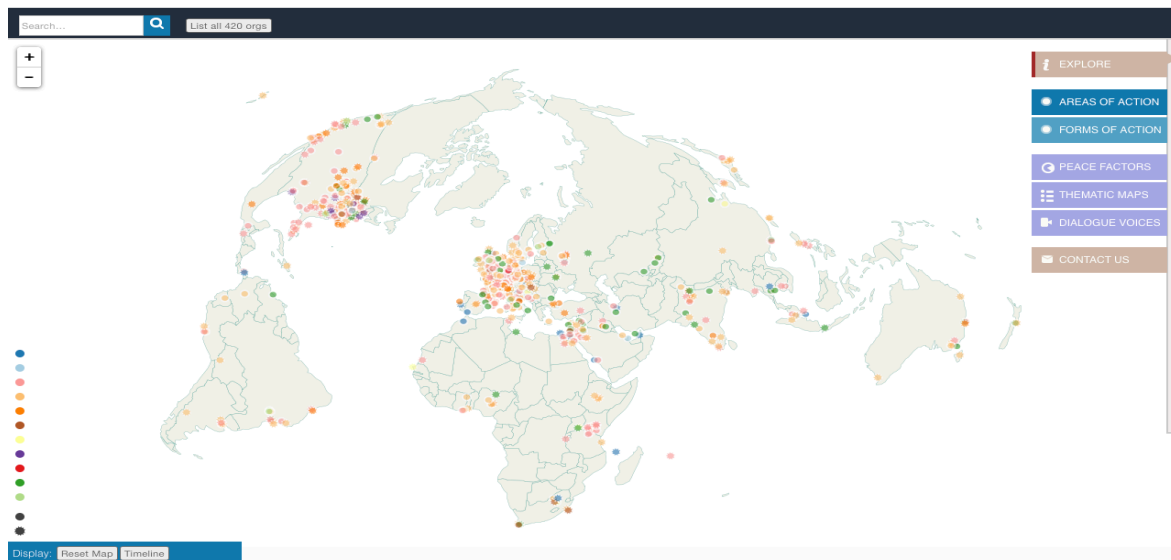
The Peace Mapping Programme (PMP) of the International Centre for Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue (KAICIID) sees itself in the context of the more empirical strands of most recent analyses of interreligious dialogue. It aims to become a tool for making empirical information on IRD organizations that work internationally publicly available - for researchers and educators as well as policy-makers and all those interested in and/or involved in IRD.

## (2) KAICIID Peace Map as an emerging tool

The Peace Mapping Programme (MP) aims to:

- display the location of all organizations that do interreligious dialogue on an international level,
- present their activities in a systematic and comparable way based on their own website information
- explore links to understand better their contexts through a variety of indices, thematic maps, and personal narratives
- provide a virtual space that can be used by researchers, educators, policy-makers, and IRD activists alike.

At the heart of the PMP lies an interactive website – the KAICIID Peace Map – that displays a world map with links to organizations doing IRD internationally:  
<http://peacemap.kaiciid.org/>



<sup>3</sup> Dussert-Galiant, Delphine, Le Dialogue interreligieux, - Entre Discours officiels et initiatives locales -, Rennes 2013 (Sciences des Religions). Klinkhammer, Gritt / Frese, Hans-Ludwig / Satilmis, Ayla / Seibert, Tina, Interreligiöse und interkulturelle Dialoge mit MuslimInnen in Deutschland, - Eine quantitative und qualitative Studie - Universität Bremen 2011.

In its current first phase, the Peace Map is based primarily upon an extensive IRD Directory. This directory is a database that includes more than 400 organizations that comply with three criteria:

- refer explicitly to doing interreligious dialogue,
- have a live website in at least one major world language and
- maintain offices in at least two countries.

Every single one of the colourful dots that appear on the Peace Map represents the headquarters of one of the more than 400 organizations. By clicking on those dots, the Peace Map provides the users with very detailed Info Cards that contain information on all of the following items:

- the organization's name in English
- the main address
- the focus of its activities
- the website address
- the email address
- the type of organization
- the religious affiliation (if any)
- the language(s) used in the organization
- the aims
- the understanding of interreligious dialogue
- the kinds of interreligious dialogue activities
- the location of those interreligious dialogue activities
- the applicable keywords
- the date of the last update

The map provides various tools to answer a number of central questions that both researchers and practitioners may have about IRD organizations internationally, such as:

1. What is interreligious dialogue?
2. Where are organizations located?
3. In what fields is IRD used as a methodology?

### **(3) Three guiding questions**

#### **(3.1) What is interreligious dialogue (IRD)?**

The PMP does not provide one specific definition of 'dialogue'. This is not by mistake. As far as the collection of data is concerned, the PMP directory provides a field for the definition of IRD according to each organisation, if mentioned in its website. The KAICIID Peace Map therefore does not promote any one particular definition. Its own definition just appears in the IRD definition field of the PMP Directory, as for any other organisation.

More important to note is the philosophy the above choice underscores when it comes to theory and methodology of the KAICIID Peace Mapping Programme. It starts from an emphasis on an organisation's own point of view on the definition of IRD. It also strives towards non-hierarchical inclusion by letting each definition and

organisation speak for itself (i.e. self-description), thus aiming to be inclusive of all organisations using IRD

The PMP therefore provides two avenues to learn more about IRD. First, the website represents a virtual place to quickly access these of different concepts of IRD. The user can easily download each definition, to the extent the organisation is explicit about it on its own website. Second, the PMP includes a specific section called 'Dialogue Voices' that KAICIID has produced together with the French organisation 'Coexister', whose ten months (2013-2014) project 'Interfaith Tour' provided interviews with over a hundred IRD actors in forty countries on all continents. So far these Dialogue Voices bring together short video clips of more than twenty IRD practitioners from around the world, most of whom reflect on their respective concepts of dialogue.

The PMP underlines the multitude of existing understandings and definitions of IRD. It shows that dialogue is a very dynamic concept, inviting further explorations. If only for this one reason, the KAICIID Peace Map is a tool that goes beyond a mere database of IRD organizations working internationally. For example, it also serves as a tool for potential networking between IRD actors and any person interested in learning more about this quickly expanding field worldwide.

### **(3.2) Where are organizations located?**

The networking function is one of the main features of the PMP, offering different tools to find organizations active in the field of IRD internationally:

The most intuitive way to find partners is by clicking on the dots that you can find on the central map. When doing so, the name appears above the dot, and by further clicking on the name, the Info Card of this organisation appears on the left-hand side, with all of its fields. In addition, a visitor can find a potential partner by doing a search using a second tool – clicking on the two upper right hand tabs forms and areas of action. Clicking on any one of the words appearing in those two lists, and possibly combining them in Boolean searches, allows to find organisations involved in particular forms and areas of action using IRD. Finally, the Peace Map offers a third tool: a search according to specific countries. A simple click on any country helps to identify organizations doing IRD activities in those countries. At all times, any search result is downloadable free of charge.

The PMP offers a set of practical search tools for both networking and learning more about specific kinds of use of IRD. By presenting the information on a world map, it also helps to better understand the spatial component of IRD activities around the world. Of course, the organizations that do interreligious dialogue with an international scope are but the tip of the iceberg.<sup>4</sup> Yet, even from this limited view of IRD activities worldwide, and only through mining the data of the rich IRD directory included in the KAICIID Peace Map, it is now possible to make two

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<sup>4</sup> There are a number of interesting analyses on IRD in national and local contexts: Iwuchukwu, Marinus C., *Muslim-Christian Dialogue in Postcolonial Northern Nigeria, - The Challenges of Inclusive Cultural and Religious Pluralism -*, New York 2013. Merdjanova, Ina / Brodeur, Patrice, *Religion as a Conversation Starter, - Interreligious Dialogue For Peacebuilding In The Balkans -*, London / New York 2009 (Continuum Advances in Religious Studies).

observations: first, the majority of those organizations have their headquarters in the global north (primarily in Western Europe and the USA).; second, most of these organizations are active beyond their respective HQ countries, leading to the fact that collectively they are active in basically all countries around the world.

### **(3.3) In what fields is IRD used as a methodology?**

This worldwide involvement begs for a subsequent question: in what fields of action is IRD used a methodology? Mining our current data base helps us answer this question along two lines: first, the Peace Map includes the UN Development Index as well as thematic maps that help to identify areas of fragility and resilience around the world. On this basis, the users are able to situate IRD activities in specific geographical locations that can then be linked to a broader set of factors affecting that location. More remains to be done to increase those links between forms and areas of IRD actions with various factors using both indices and thematic maps. The present tabs for both of these offer the beginnings of a relational understanding of how IRD activities respond to particular socio-economic and political context.

Second, the Peace Map includes detailed, qualitative information on the self-descriptions of the organizations working internationally in the field of IRD. These self-descriptions *inter alia* highlight a particular focus on activities in the field of peace, youth, pluralism and women's rights. They also reveal multi-fold means to work in those fields: campaigning, networking, publication, educational programmes and capacity building. This new information sheds new light in the IRD field, giving a sense of the breath in the kinds of IRD activities carried out worldwide. However, it does not yet provide any sense of how impactful these activities may be on the ground in the short and long term. More in this area of linking monitoring and evaluation for impact measurement remains to be added to the Pace Map.

### **(4) Next Steps for the KAICIID Peace Mapping Programme**

At this moment, we are first and foremost committed to keep the data in the IRD directory up to date and to expand both the number of entries as well as the depth of information on each organisation. In particular, specific countries will be selected for in-depth national and local mapping of IRD activities, to add granularity to the current level of information. These will be linked to regions of conflicts: Nigeria, CAR, Syria/Iraq, and Myanmar. Moreover, additional indices and thematic maps will be added to increase the potential for contextual analyses of IRD activities. Finally, an additional section on monitoring and evaluation for impact measurement needs to be added to complete the usefulness of this new Peace Map.

**(5) Brief useful bibliography:**

- Cornille, Catherine (ed.), *The Wiley-Blackwell Companion to Inter-Religious Dialogue*, Malden / Oxford 2013.
- Cornille, Catherine, / Corigliano, Stephanie (ed.), *Interreligious Dialogue and Cultural Change*, Eugene 2012 (Interreligious Dialogue Series).
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- Klinkhammer, Gritt / Frese, Hans-Ludwig / Satilmis, Ayla / Seibert, Tina, *Interreligiöse und interkulturelle Dialoge mit MuslimInnen in Deutschland, - Eine quantitative und qualitative Studie -* Universität Bremen 2011.
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