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Interfaith & Intercultural Dialogue: Issues and Promises

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„That since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed;"
Preamble of the UNESCO Constitution

2nd UNESCO Forum on Global Citizenship Education:
Preparing for post-2015: Building peaceful & sustainable societies
UNESCO, Paris: 29 January 2015

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Preamble: Requests for adaptation of PPT

- More focus on peace

- More questions for debate

- Building on yesterday's presentations

& discussions

- Pre-building on later presentations

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What is GCE?

- Global Citizenship Education aims to equip learners of all ages with those **values, knowledge and skills** that are based on and instil **respect** for **human rights, social justice**, **diversity**, gender equality and environmental sustainability and that empower learners to be **responsible global citizens**. GCE gives learners the competencies and opportunity to realise their **rights and obligations** to promote a better world and future for all.

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Dialogue promotes all three:

- Dialogue allows to identify multiple values, from multiple perspectives: *makes more explicit, what is often implicit*

- Dialogue results in increased knowledge about every participants (both self and others)

- The practice of dialogue develops a variety of skills:
  - Broader thinking (essential for critical thinking)
  - Better listening (compassionate listening for spiritual grounding)
  - Better purposes
  - Better actions
  - Broader meaning (for both self and others)
  - Better respect (of self and others)

- Conclusion: **Practice of dialogue promotes positive peace**

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Issues and Challenges (1)

- **Definitions**: in which language? Predominance of English
  - 'dialogue': broad vs narrow definitions
  - 'religion' vs 'faith' vs 'spirituality' vs 'philosophy' vs 'wordview'
  - 'intra-' vs 'inter-'
  - 'interfaith' vs 'interreligious'
  - 'interfaith'/'interreligious' vs 'intercultural' vs 'inter-worldview'

Question:

Can GCE adopt a multi-definitional, multi-linguistic approach?

Issues and Challenges (2)

- **Theories of 'Dialogue'**
  - Intra-personal & Inter-personal
  - Inter-communal & Inter-organizational
  - Cognitive sciences & Spirituality
- **Typologies of 'Dialogue'**
  - Dialogue of life, action, theological exchange, or religious experience (Vatican: PCID)
  - Dialogue of life, parliamentary style, institutional, theological, spiritual, inner (D. Eck)
  - 9 Guidelines for dialogue and relations with people of other religions (WCC)
  - Dialogue of Civilizations, Intercultural, Interreligious, Spiritual Solidarity (F. Daou)
- **Methodologies of 'Dialogue':** informational vs transformative
  - 'Harmony' Model vs 'Liberation' Model
  - 'Interreligious Dialogue for Peacebuilding' Model
  - 'Inter-Worldview Dialogue' Model

Question:
What guidance can UNESCO provide for contextualizing GCE?

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Issues and Challenges (3)

- **Hermeneutics**: both religious and otherwise
  - Spectrum truth-claims from objectivist (positivist-essentialist-literalist) to pluralist
  - spectrum of attitudes towards the 'Other' from exclusivist to inclusivist to relativist
  - A glocal approach to structuring interfaith dialogue: symbiotic global-local relations

Question:

Does 'dialogue' require a 'relativist' point of view?

Issues and Challenges (4)

- **Politics**:
  - Spectrum of ideologies and the various ways they overlap with above key words: 'culture', 'religion', 'faith', 'spirituality', etc.

  - Glocal power dynamics that affect reductive binary perspectives:
    - Specter of 'religious wars' in dominant secular societies
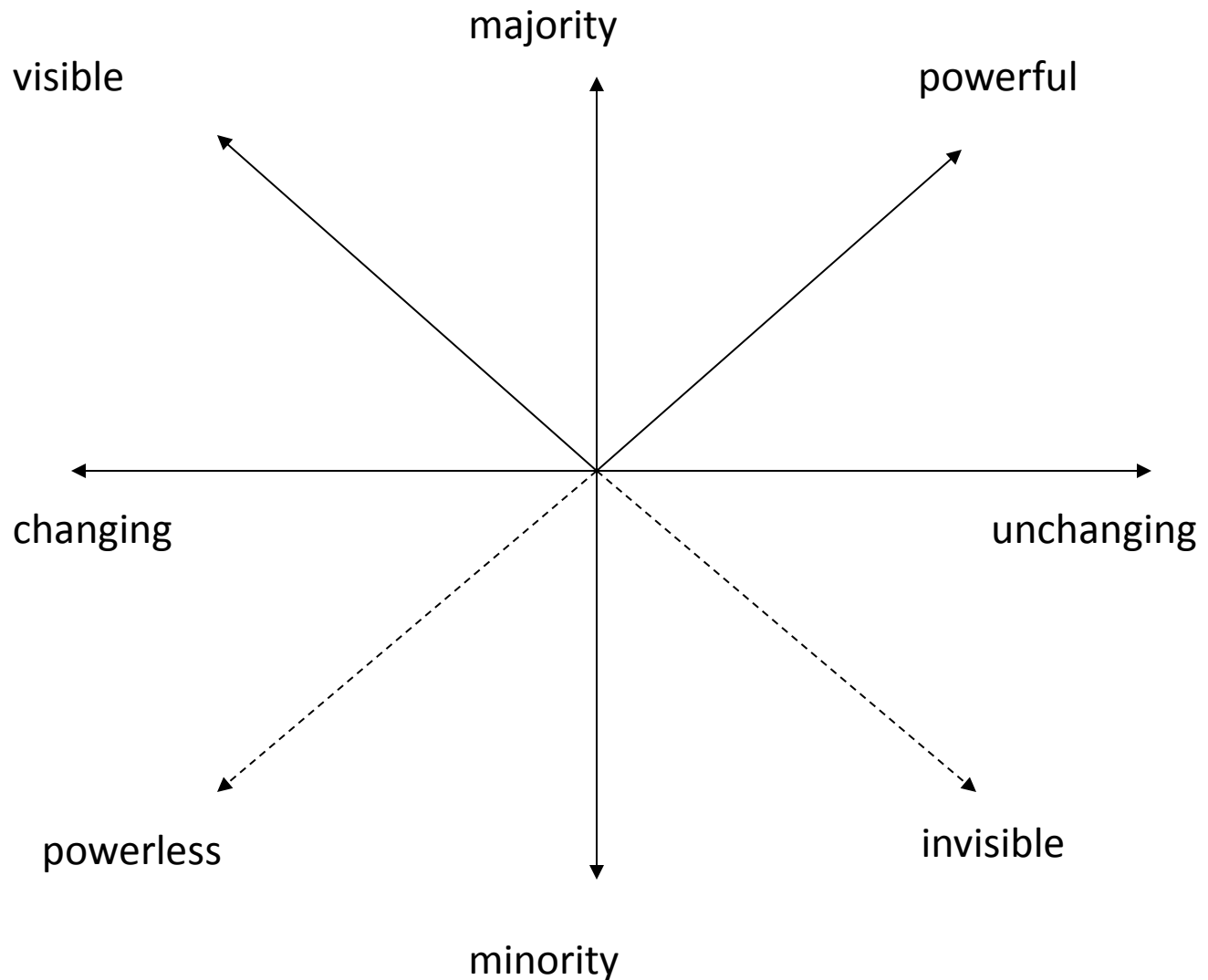   - Specter of 'secular imperialism' in dominant religious societies

Question:

How can a multiple identity and power dynamics approach be part of promoting both the value of diversity and critical thinking without falling into imposition of one perspective or another, while still challenging persons to take positions?
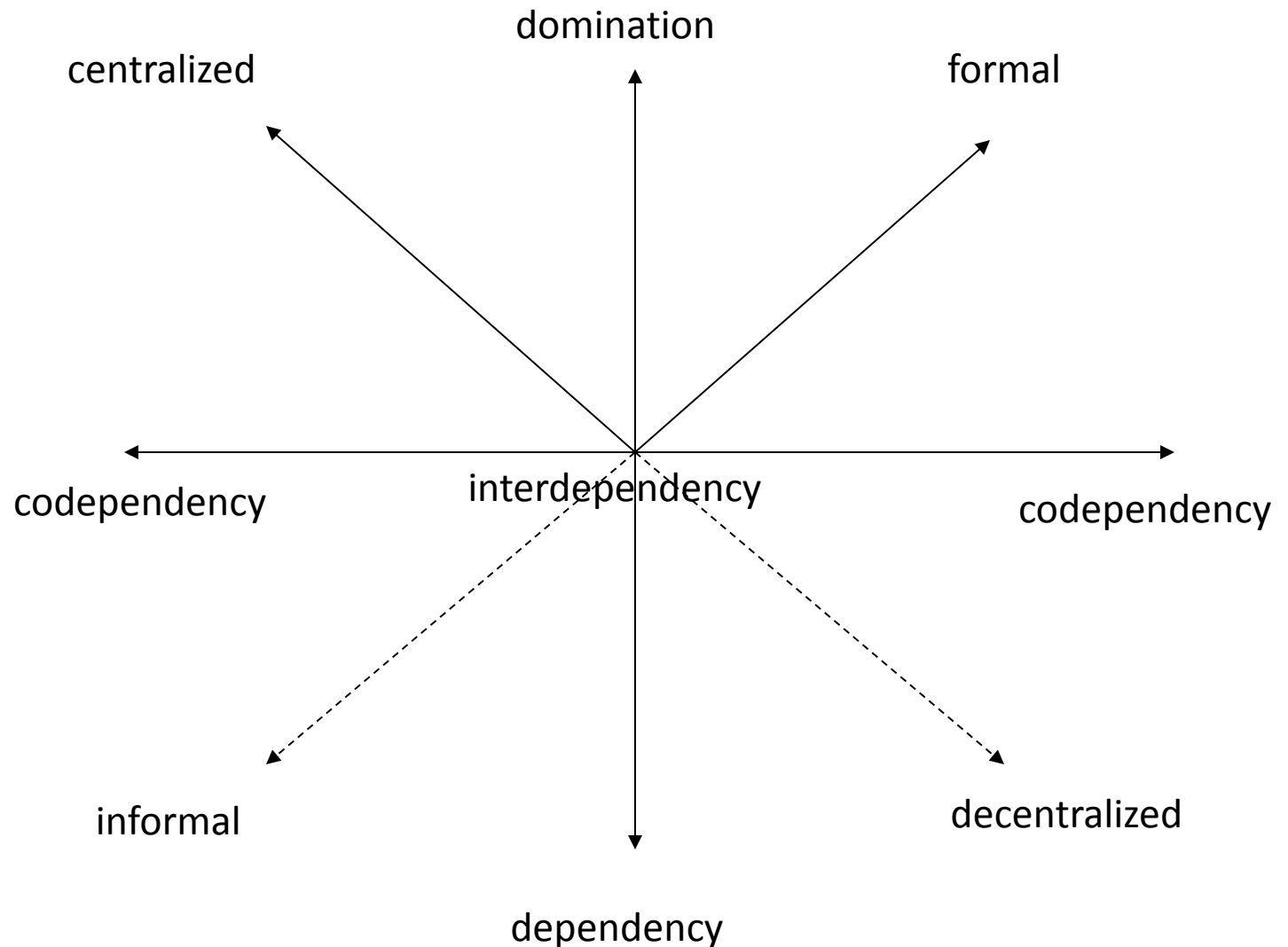
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Many different kinds of sub-identities:

- age, birth order, number of siblings,

- race, ethnicity, tribe, family,

- sexe, gender, sexual orientation,

- ability (physical, psychological, intellectual,spiritual)

- language, dialect, bilingual, multilingual,

- nationality, dual citizenship, refugee,

- social class, social status, professional status

- worldview, religion, spirituality, ideology,

- education, employment status, kind of work

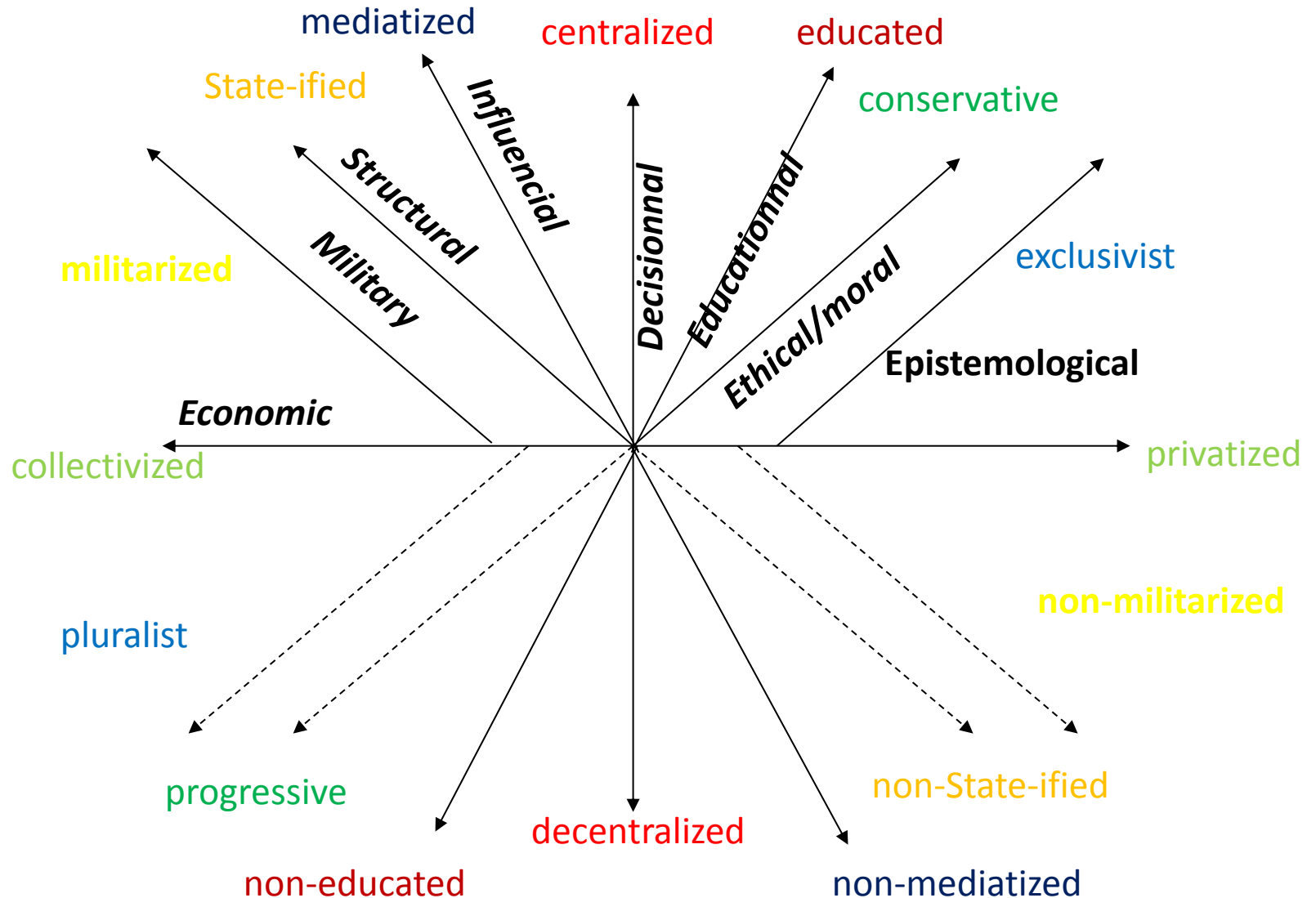- location, neighborhood, travel exper., networks

- etc., etc., etc.!

Prof. Patrice Brodeur, Ph. D. || Director of Research || 29 January 2015

(P. Brodeur 2015) p. 11

Vectors of identity construction & PD

Vectors of identity construction & PD

domination

centralized

formal

codependency

interdependency

codependency

informal

decentralized

dependency

Contemporary Analytical Vectors

mediatized · centralized · educated

State-ified · conservative

Influencial

Structural

Military

Decisionnal

Educationnal

Ethical/moral

militarized

exclusivist

Epistemological

Economic

collectivized · privatized

non-militarized

pluralist

progressive · non-State-ified

decentralized

non-educated · non-mediatized

Issues and Challenges (5)

- **Institutions**:
  - Networking existing institutions/organizations for greater collaborations
  - Openness to newly created or yet to be born institutions/organizations
  - Challenges to accept glocal symbiotic relations, within religious/cultural communities and IRD/IRF/IRC organizations
  - Dominance of Competitive Culture & collective 'self'-interests

Question:

How can a dialogical approach inform GCE when it comes to promoting sustainable inter-institutional/organizational cooperation?

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Issues and Challenges (6)

- **Economics**:
  - Ups and downs of 'investments'
  - Culture of 'measuring impact', evaluating efficacy': weak M&E practices within IRD/IRF/IRC organizations

Question:

How can impact measurements be developed for the dialogical components of GCE?
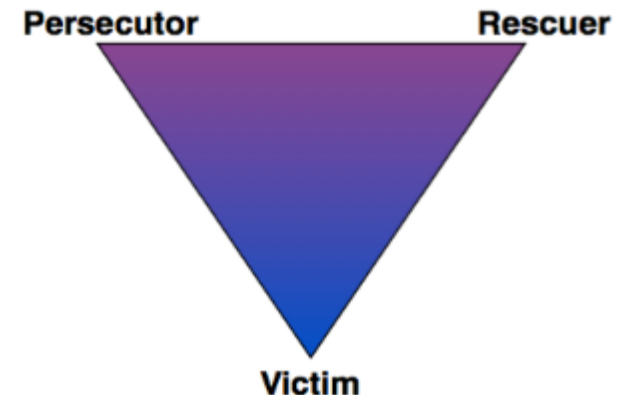
Issues and Challenges (7)

- **Ethics**:
    - Which memory?
    - Intentions vs interests (Who benefits?)
    - Institutionalization of dialogue

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Issues and Challenges (7)

- **Ethics**:
  - Which memory?
  - Intentions vs interests (Who benefits?)
  - Institutionalization of dialogue
  - Instrumentalization of dialogue
    - How to avoid falling into the Drama Triangle?

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Issues and Challenges (7)

- **Ethics**:
  - Instrumentalization of dialogue
    - How to avoid falling into the Drama Triangle?
  - Intelligent AND Compassionate Dialogue
    - Towards the 'TED" ("The Empowerment Dynamic")

David Emerald's TED* (*The Empowerment Dynamic) triangle provides an alternative to the Karpman Drama Triangle

Issues and Challenges (7)

- **Ethics:**
  - Which memory?
  - Intentions vs interests (Who benefits?)
  - Institutionalization of dialogue
  - Instrumentalization of dialogue
    - How to avoid falling into the Drama Triangle?
  - Towards the Empowerment Triangle
  - Towards inclusion
  - Challenges of communication/dialogue
  - Is 'dialogue' necessarily non-violent/
  - Do we need to subscribe to non-violence to be 'dialogical'?

Issues and Challenges (8)

- **Crises**:
    1. Meaning: End of meta-narratives? Clashes of Ignorances
    2. Tensions/conflicts between co-dependent religious/secular discourses
    3. Systemic transcolonial (both on-going colonial and post-colonial dynamics)
    4. Systemic transorientalist discourses and practices in an age of glocal identisms (ex: religionisms, nationalisms, genderism, etc.)
    5. 'Exported/imported modernity/ies' in the Two-Thirds World, esp. in majority-Muslim countries
    6. Lack of self-critical awareness of what in our 'Post/Ultra/Advanced modernity/ies' in "the West" leads to producing 'homegrown terrorism'
    7. Lack of proportionality in crisis-driven event-focused mediatization
    8. Lack of understanding of the transformative power of social media (in all directions)
    9. Transnational symbiosis in our glocalized world :
        - discursive (both ideological and media-tional)
        - economic neo-liberalism and rise in glocal inequities

Question:

How can dialogue serve as a means to transform multiple crises into meaningful opportunities through GCE?

Promises

- Modern history of Interreligious Dialogue proves its transformative value for:
  - Personal growth and transformation of individual worldview
    - Especially reduction of stereotypes and corrective to misperceptions
  - Collective transformation, especially for religious institutions
    - Esp. increased collaboration intra-religiously and interreligiously
    - Increased issue-based collaborations across religious/political sectors

- Beginning of transformation for secular governments
  - All four levels: municipal, provincial/state, national, international
  - Many sectors: health, **education**, army (i.e. chaplaincy), etc.

- Increased integration of IRD into INGOs (ex.: scouting)

Towards the World Education Forum (5/2015)

- **How can we map current practices in the teaching of 'dialogue'**
  - in formal education
  - in informal education
  - In life-long learning

- **How is the integration of 'dialogue' in GCE to be done?**
  - What definition(s)?   - Broad vs Narrow Definition(s), etc.
  - What approach(es)? - Contextual Choices

شكرا

谢谢

תודה

Danke

Gracias

ευχαριστώ

ありがとうございます

Thank you

Obrigado

спасибо

धन्यवादा

Merci