

Orian Assayag, Israel
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Report of my experience of the ICCJ conference in Lund:

I can say many things about my interesting experience I had in the conference, but in order to keep it short I will focus here on one thing. I will try to describe my point of view on the conference as a young woman who is mostly used to have “dialogs”, if you can call it so, with young Arabic Muslims from Israel. More precisely, I will try to focus on the differences I found between these two types of dialog.

First of all, I feel like the concept of dialog is much more natural to the European mindset. During the conference I had the feeling that I am not only engaging in interfaith dialog with Christians and Muslims but I am also exploring a foreign culture, and a new communication patterns, and I learned (or at least noticed or was inspired by) a lot from this two aspects, both from the dialog itself and also from the “European” and Ashkenazi way of making inter faith dialogs.

I think that the main difference is that in the interfaith dialog that I am used to from Israel, we are more striving to reach to the conflict point. We will bring up traumas, bias, clichés and fear that the other triggers in us and will try to somehow confront the other with it. The European dialog, in my eyes, is more “shy” and tends to avoid the conflict (at least the emotional aspect of the conflict) and will focus on reflecting over religious ideas and ideologies rather than examples from the more emotional sphere. I discovered few things about this pattern of dialog.

This “shy” dialog can create a not very meaningful interaction or it can lead to a dialog that doesn’t make any change and stays very much on the surface, but at same time I also discovered that this type of dialog contains a lot of patience in it. The non-impulsive, more rational in nature dialog can create a safe environment, where there is less confrontations but more space to admit your own side’s weakness, and allow you to take responsibility over your share in the conflict, or to be more open to the beauty of the other side’s religiosity.

I think that the dialog between the religions is very much influenced and shaped by the culture and mentality of the religious people. The impulsive and more emotional patterns of communication are more typical to the Sephardic and Arabic cultures. The rational and hold back patterns of communication are more typical to European/western Jews and Christians. I think that in through participating in the conference I received a better idea of what a good dialog is, which is in my opinion a balance between the two.

I think that both patterns of communication, the rational and hold back and the impulsive and emotional patterns of communication (if I may extreme it into almost an cliché) are necessary. It is not an easy to get to use both patterns in the right balance. What is it a balanced dialog, how to create a balance between rational and emotional communication patterns are hard questions. It is also not really possible to change it. Just because that one knows that it is important to create a balanced dialog doesn’t mean that one will be able to, the patterns of communication are rooted deep inside.

Still, human civilizations since forever were always shaped by interaction of one with the other, to some extent. While I was seating in the conference I was missing many times to hear the emotional, impulsive, direct and confrontational voice that I am used to. At the same time, I was also inspired by this more of a foreign voice. I think that now I will try to bring into the local dialog that I am part of some of the equalities I discovered in the conference. More of patience and respecting distance, more of a safe environment to explore in the rational mind the other one's religious experience.