SMC
FAITH IN DEVELOPMENT

A guide to using the short version of SMC toolbox for religious literacy

Working with change
in a religious world

Table of content

Welcome to SMC Faith in development guide to the short version of the toolbox for religious literacy

SMC Faith in Development describes religious literacy as: *An understanding that beliefs and religious actors play a significant role in shaping society, and our ability to relate to and work with these ideas and actors.(from SMCs Policy on religious literacy)*

"The short version of the Toolbox for religious literacy" consists of a PowerPoint of about 70 slides that will help you introduce the concept of Religious literacy. You can use it with a group or individually as an introduction to the topic.

If you want to do a workshop venturing into the field of religious literacy, with the goal of including religious literacy and cooperation with religious actors in your work, we recommend that you use the full "SMC Toolbox for religious literacy". This will demand more time.
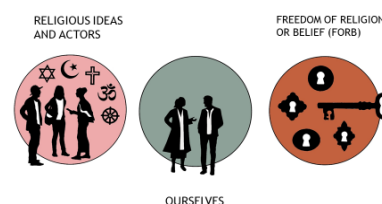
All the content of the short version is found in the first part of the full version, so there is no need to first do the short version and then later the full version.

More resources on religious literacy, and contact information, can be found on SMC's website. www.smc.global

Structure of the toolbox. What is the logic?

The toolbox has three parts or streams.

1. **Religious ideas and actors**-describing the actors we are to cooperate with and the religious reality we live in but might not always understand
2. **Ourselves** – reflecting on our own identity in relation to religion
3. **Freedom of religion or belief**- looking at the posssible limitations or possibilities set by the prescence or lack of this basic human right, both in terms of culture and legal frameworks.

In this shorter version, we look at the general level of religious literacy. This is the first out of three levels in the full version.

1. **General religious literacy** - Develop knowledge and reflection about the role of religions in rights-based development and the motivation driving our own organization.

To think about before you start the process.

Know your target group/participants and set the objectives for the workshop!

The process is designed to be participatory, and the outcome is dependent upon and determined by the participants' willingness to share and discuss.

Familiarize yourself with the resource material. Instructions for facilitators are included in the notes for every slide. You might find some of the slides repetitive or unnecessary for your process. Please feel free to leave them out.

Practical hints

Evaluate the technical possibilities in your venue. Three short films are included in the PowerPoint presentation - if you are not able to show them with a good sound system, consider using the slides that follow the films and do the talking yourself.

The toolbox does not include energizers or exercises to strengthen the group dynamic. Remember to include plenty of these in your plans! Plan a lot of time for the exercises and discussions.

It is good to entrust at least one colleague with documentation of the process.

Be aware that discussing the role of religious actors and the issue of FoRB is sensitive in some contexts, and may even have severe security implications. Consider this beforehand. In some contexts, it might be better to use other terminology to communicate around FoRB issues. This could affect which slides you can show openly in certain contexts as they speak about FoRB.

Overview of the content

Introduction and presentation of SMC

Slides 1-2 provide an introduction to SMC-faith in development. Please see www.smc.global for more information.

Feel free to leave this out if it is not relevant but please do give credit to SMC for producing the material.
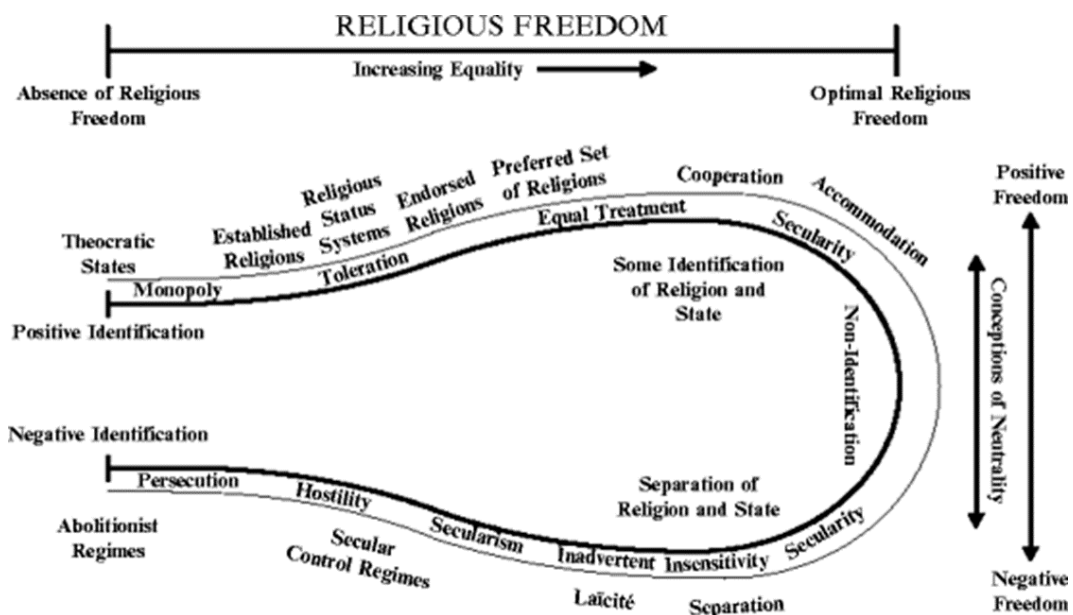
Presentation of the toolbox

Slides 3-8 provide an overview of the short version of the toolbox and an introduction

Religious ideas and actors.

Slides 9-10 About the need to speak both the language of development and the language of religion

The purpose is increased religious literacy

Slide 11-12 About secularism or religion. The image below might be helpful for you as facilitator.

Slides 330-20 Three different ways of describing what religion is. (You can select one or several of these exercises.)

Slides 21 explains SMC's understanding of religious literacy and the rationale behind this toolbox and are helpful for you to read.

Slides 22-27 About the role of religion in the world

Slide 28 This slide suggests a discussion about the idea of talking about religion from an outside perspective. Is it possible to separate yourself from being a believer to become an observer? How can we, if necessary, be objective?

Slide 29 This is a short film from http://www.forb-learning.org looking at religion through six lenses. The following slides (28-37) contain the same images used in the film. These could be used to re-cap the film, or used as an alternative to showing the film, if the technical possibilities are limited.

Slides 38-40 Are about religion's role in social/political change. Some examples of the importance of understanding the underlying theology of a specific group to grasp their socio-political strategy.
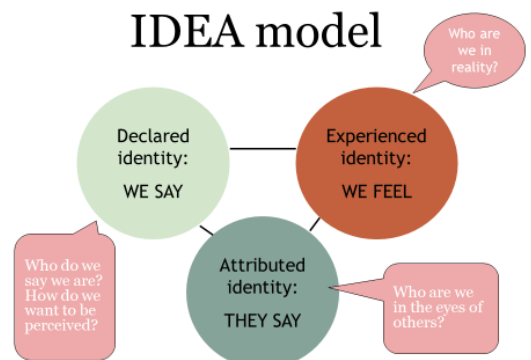
Slide 41 raises some questions about religion and gender.

Slide 42 gives some examples of the more problematic side of religion

Slide 43 is a discussion about instrumentalization of religious actors from the perspective of back donors

Look at yourself - at the level of general religious literacy.

Slides 44-54 Exercises to identify your own organizational identity. Typologies for different types of faith based organizations.

Freedom of religion or belief.

Slides 55-58 are about FoRB at the level of general religious literacy. The situation you are in, with the level of FoRB being very different in different countries or settings, will have an impact on the level of freedom to speak openly about these issues during the training. Please consider this beforehand.

Slide 56 is a film about FoRB www.forb-learning.org The following slide 80 can guide your re-cap of the film.

Slides 59-64 are exercises that will aid you in discussing FoRB and religious actors in relation to social change and power.

Slides 66-69. These slides focus on three questions that you might or might not have answered before. They will challenge you in your work ahead.

1. What religious actors and ideas are at work in our context?

2. How well do we understand these religious actors, and how can we learn more about them?

3. Does the context allow us to ask questions about religion and belief?

Here are some links to more resource materials.

http;//www.forb-learning.org

https://www.smc.global/larcenter/

https://fabo.org/course/Religion_and_Development

If you have further questions or remarks, please contact Petter Jakobsson at petter.jakobsson@smc.global