SMC
FAITH IN DEVELOPMENT

A guide to using the toolbox for religious literacy

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Welcome to SMC Faith in development guide to 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 Toolbox for religious literacy consists of a PowerPoint packed with resources for presentations and group exercises together with this guide to using the PowerPoint resource.

SMC hopes that this toolbox will help you and your organisation to develop greater religious literacy and thereby strengthen your ability to reach your objectives in a world where a majority of people identify with some religious beliefs. The toolbox is a rich resource. It can be used in a workshop lasting from an hour up to four or five days, or in several workshops over time, depending on how big a process you want to initiate, and the objectives of the learning process.

It is designed to aid any kind of organisation that wants to deepen its understanding of its own identity in relation to religion. And to deepen its understanding of the role and various identities of religious actors you will encounter in a specific context.
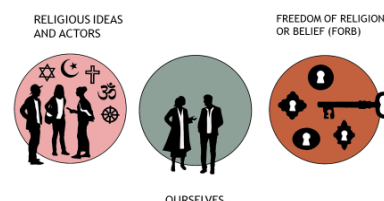
This guide provides an introduction and overview to assist facilitators wanting to use the toolbox to plan and deliver a workshop or facilitate a process.

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.

RELIGIOUS IDEAS AND ACTORS

FREEDOM OF RELIGION OR BELIEF (FORB)

OURSELVES

These three parts or streams are then looked at, on three different levels:

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

2. **Contextual religious literacy** - Strengthen context- and actor analysis through increased religious literacy.

3. **Practical religious literacy** - Identify relevant strategies in relation to religion and religious actors to reach relevant development goals.

How to use the toolbox

Think about the process in three steps! The PowerPoint based toolbox is designed to help you walk you through these three steps. However, you can also choose to work with just one step, or use some parts of each. The three steps are:

1. First a general orientation about the issues at stake.

2. Then a reflection about the context you are working in. This includes practical tools to assess your context in relation to the role played by religion, religious actors and your own organisation/community as well as the level of freedom of religion and belief (FoRB).

3. Lastly, a number of strategies, collected from SMCs experience, are presented along with some suggestions for your further planning and learning.

To think about before you start the process.

Know your target group/participants and set the objectives for the workshop! Will it be a short introduction to the topic? Or is it an extensive training with the ambition to prepare for starting a new project or program? Or is it an even more long-term process that you and your team come back to over time in order to map and explore new learning priorities?

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 toolbox. 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

Some slides are marked as possible handouts to participants. The handouts can be found in the last pages of this guide.

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. A suggested timetable can be found on page 13 below.

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

Consider how you place the participants in the room. If several organisations are present, it might be wise to have mixed groups in the first part of the process, but arrange so that participants from the same organisation can sit together in the last practical section.

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 1-6 provide an introduction to SMC-faith in development and its member organisations. 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 toolbox.

Presentation of the toolbox

Slides 7-21 provide an overview of the toolbox and the process that you are about to start. Use these slides carefully to ensure that your participants understand the structure of the process, but do not dwell here too long. Do not be tempted to start the process while introducing the map of what is to come. If you feel that this introduction is too detailed, please feel free to show slides 10-13, which summarises the overview.

If you want to hold a short session to introduce the toolbox without working through it in more depth, these 16 slides might be sufficient with the addition of one exercise, for example actor mapping, as an example.

If you want to give a general introduction to the role of religion and religious actors in development, you can use slides 23-40 and 44-49.

First level: General religious literacy. Slides 22-90

Religious ideas and actors. Slides 22-65

Slides 22-24 Introduction to general religious literacy.

Slides 25-27 Introducing the concept of storytelling. Including an ice-breaking exercise.

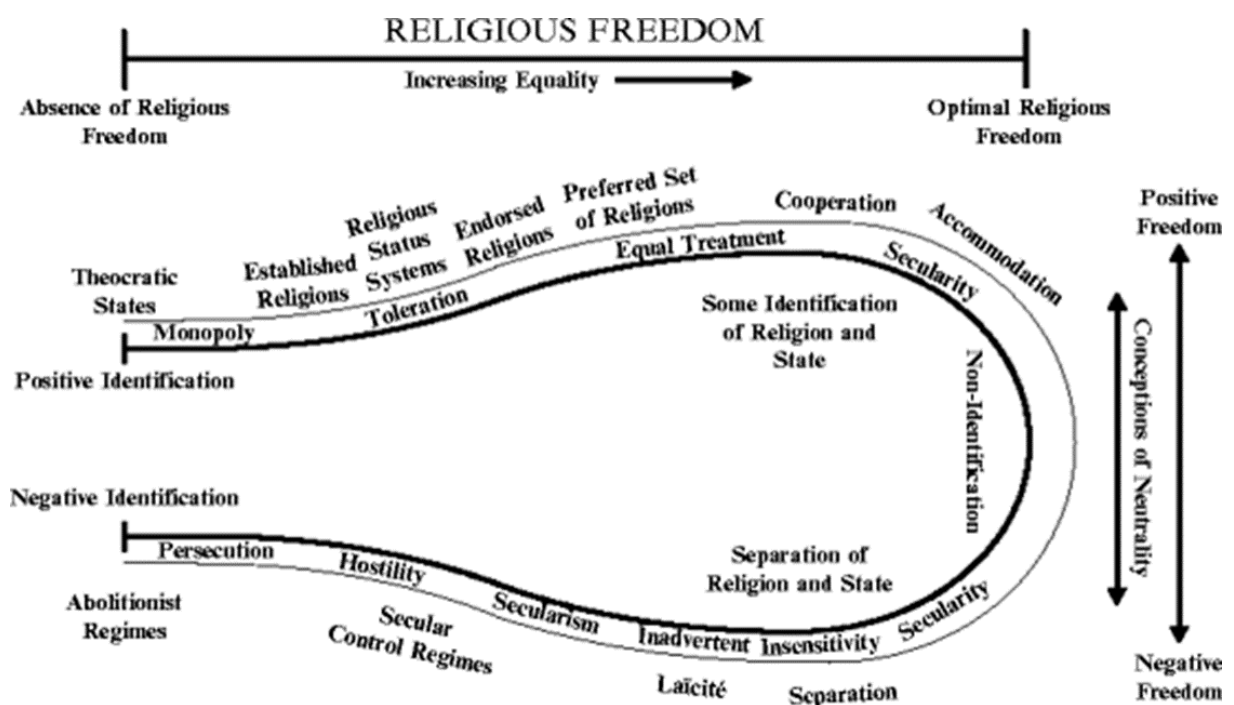The purpose is increased religious literacy

Slides 28-29 About the need to speak both the language of development and the language of religion

Slides 30-43 several exercises discussing what religion is. (You can select one or several of these exercises.)

Slide 32 This image might be helpful for your own understanding of religious freedom and secularization. For some groups it might go too deep into detail - feel free to leave it out.
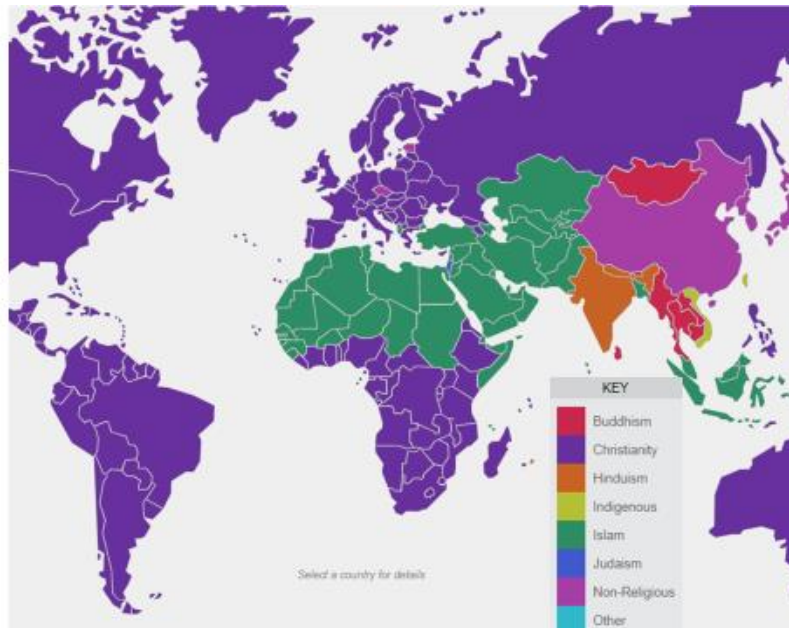https://classic.iclrs.org/content/blurb/files/Religious%20Freedom%20in%20a%20Worldwide%20Setting.pdfe:

Slides 41-43 SMC's Theory of change and the role of religion. If not applicable, this can be left out.

However, the notes to slide 43 explains SMC's understanding of religious literacy and the rationale behind this toolbox and are helpful for you to read.

Slides 44-49 About the role of religion in the world

Slide 50 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 51 This is a short film from http://www.forb-learning.org looking at religion through six lenses. The following slides (52-59) 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 60-62 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.
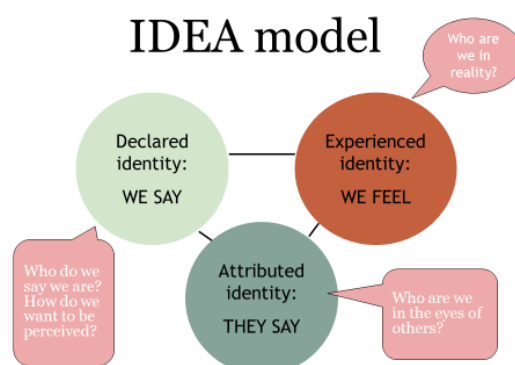
Slide 63 raises some questions about religion and gender.

Slide 64 gives some examples of the more problematic side of religion

Slide 65 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 66-76

Slides 68-76 Exercises to identify your own organizational identity. Typologies for different types of faith based organizations.

Freedom of religion or belief. Slides 77-89

Slides 77-79 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 78 is a film about FoRB www.forb-learning.org The following slide 80 can guide your re-cap of the film.

Slides 80-89 are exercises that will aid you in discussing FoRB and religious actors in relation to social change and power.

Second level: Contextual religious literacy. Slides 90-125

This is where you leave the general level and start looking into the specific context you are working in or planning to work in, concretely identifying and endeavouring to understand the religious actors in it.

Religious ideas and actors at the contextual level. Slides 90-95

Slides 90-95. These slides focus on three questions that you might or might not have answered before. The following part of the toolbox will help you in answering them in a more profound way.

 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?

Slides 96-97 Identify religious actors. It is very important to identify both the context and the religious actors in it as concretely and specifically as possible and to do so at the level most relevant to your work – e.g. at the community level. This will help you to focus!

Freedom of Religion or Belief in the context. Slides 98-109

Here we venture into Freedom of religion or belief (FoRB) at the contextual level before we look at our own identity.

Slide 98 Introduction.

The introduction is followed by three options for exploring FoRB in context. Either watch the film about "Galtung's triangle of violence" followed by a discussion, or do the exercise on the same theme, found on slides 100-106. A third option is to watch the film "Three phases of persecution" found on slide 107. You can of course use more than one of these resources.

Slide 99 A film about "Galtung's triangle of violence". The film is found on the FoRB learning platform.

Slide 100-106 Galtung's triangle of violence. This is a rather extensive exercise. Instructions are found in the notes to the slides.

Slide 107. Film from FoRB learning platform: Three levels of persecution. www.forb-learning.org. The film ends with a group discussion exercise.

Slide 108. Introduction to discussing stereotypes and prejudice as a part of religious persecution. US and THEM.

Slide 109 Process check - let us go back and see how far we have got in this iterative process of religious literacy

Religious actors and yourself in the context. Slides 110-125

Slide 110-117. Practical exercises for analysing and mapping various actors, and your relation to them, in your context. The result of these exercises is what helps us choose our strategies and develop our practical religious literacy. Consider the time you need for this exercise. If time is scarce, limit yourself to maximum three actors, to be mapped.

Slide 111. It helps to be very practical down to the point of drawing a map of the area you are working in. Identify the religious actors present in your context, but also other actors where religion might be an issue.

Slides 114-115. This is an example of how you can do a force-field analysis, mapping the, often complex, forces working in line with or against your goals.
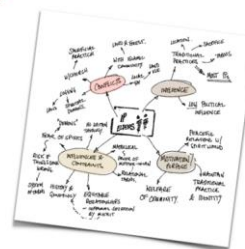
Slides 117 Actor analysis. This could be printed as a handout.

Slide 118 Process check again

Slides 119-125 Reflections and practical tools to assess what you need to do and to help you analyse the barriers and opportunities in the context.

Slides 122, 124 and 125 needs to be accompanied by handouts with questions for discussion. See the handouts at the end of this guide.

Third level: Practical religious literacy. Slides 126-140

In this level, you will start to plan your future work and choose which strategies to use, based on your previous findings and analysis.

Slides 126-128 Introduction and process check

Slides 129-137 Presentation of six different strategies for how to interact with religious actors. Print the six slides and post them around your room or leave them on the tables during the discussions. The examples are collected from SMCs study "Scratch the surface or dig deeper". This study is found on www.smc.global/larcenter.

Perhaps the participants will identify other strategies!

Slides 139-140 are the closing exercises, focused on how to plan your future actions. Be concrete and set goals for your work ahead. Also, consider time for evaluation.

Slide 141 contains links to three important resources

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

Suggested outline of a weeklong workshop

DAY 1: *Connecting and Introduction* *And general religious literacy*	DAY 2: *Religious Actors*	DAY 3: *Strategies & tools*	DAY 4: *Going Forward*
9:30-10:30 Why are we here? Introductions and connections Presentation SMC: Religious literacy Intro to process	8:15-10:00 Recap Day 1 Intro Day 2 Who are we- are we religious? The identity of our organization	8:15-10:00 Recap Day 2 Intro Day 3 Continued FoRB/Actor analysis	08:30-10:30 Recap Day 3 Intro Day 4 What next? Action plans Learning questions? Q's for follow up trip
10:30-11:00 Break	10:00-10:30 Break	10:00-10:30 Break	10:30-11:00 Break
11:00-12:30 Religion and Development General religious literacy The importance of the narrative.	10:30-12:00 Continue: Who are we- are we religious? The identity of our organization	10:30-12:00 How can we engage with religious actors	11:00-13:00 Sharing plans Recap from learning week Closing & Evaluation
12:30-14:00 Lunch	12:00-13:30 Lunch	12:00-13:30 Lunch	13:00 Lunch
14:00-15:15 Continued	13:30-15:00 Actor analysis in context	13:30-15:00 Strategies & tools	
15:15-15:45 Break	15:00-15:30 Break	15:00-15:30 Break	
15:45-17:15 General religious literacy FoRB	15:30-16:30 Actor analysis in context, continued	15:30-16:30 Implementing strategies & tools	
	16:30 - 17:00 Reflection time	16:30 - 17:00 Reflection time	
17.15-17:30 End-of day reflection			

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Handout slide 117

For each religious actor:

	We know nothing!	We know a little	We have a good awareness	How can we increase our understanding? What possibilities are there?
About the religion in general				
Organisation				
Theology				
Practice				
About the Actor				
Organisation and power structures				
Theology and religious language				
Religious practice				
Influence on culture and society				
About the actors relationships				
Influence on target groups				
Networks / Relationships				
Conflicts with other actors				
their perspective of us				

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Handout slide 122

Map out actors in relationship to us and the project goals:

Our relationship to their religious identity

	Shared practice				
	Good Knowledge		active / passive		active / passive
	Basic awareness				
	Inadequate				
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Relationship to project goals

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Handout Slide 124

Some questions to get you thinking...

- What are our unique opportunities to engage with this actor?

- Does their theology relate to our project goals in ways which we could appeal to? How?

- Do we have the ability to use a shared religious language to communicate about the project goal? What religious terms could we use?

- Would this actor provide access to new networks? How would we be able work with them?

- Do we have shared religious practices that strengthens our relationship?

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Handout Slide 125

... what questions do we have about our relationships with these actors that we need to learn more about.

Based on who we are, and who they are, what barriers might we face?

- Where might this religious actor actively resist working with us? Why?

- Does their theology conflict with any of our project goals? Or with us as an organization? How?

- If the FORB context does not allow us to speak freely, how will we work with this?

What risks do we face in making reference to religion or cooperating with this actor?

- Whom might we risk excluding?

- What conflicts could be escalated?