



United Nations  
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Cultural Organization

# UNESCO survey on intercultural dialogue 2017

Analysis of findings



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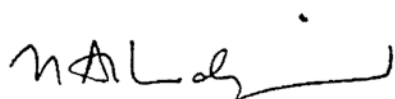
**Analysis of findings**

# Foreword

While intercultural dialogue is widely recognized for its instrumental role in building the conditions for peace and sustainable development, rigorous data is not readily available. Such a shortfall creates barriers to evidence-informed policy-making and the measurement of progress made, threatening the advancement of the imperatives highlighted in Agenda 2030, and SDG 16 in particular, as well as in the UN Secretary-General's 'Sustaining Peace' agenda.

This survey – the first of its type – takes stock of how Member States conceptualize and operationalize intercultural dialogue at the national level, as well as mapping how it is considered useful in the future. It confirms that intercultural dialogue is an important prerequisite for peace, the prevention of violent extremism, respect for human rights and the promotion of mutual understanding. Moreover, it also shows that Member States have a wide range of institutional structures and policies in place to support intercultural dialogue. However, the survey's findings also identify a need for better knowledge on the exact drivers of effective dialogue, the dimensions of an enabling environment for dialogue, and on the types of intervention needed to bolster the effectiveness of dialogue.

In this spirit, it is our sincere hope that the findings from this Survey will be an inspiring first step towards the creation of a more solid base of data through which to advance intercultural dialogue across the world, extending the reach and impact of the International Decade for the Rapprochement of Cultures (2013–2022), for which UNESCO is lead agency in the UN system.



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# Executive summary

There is growing recognition that intercultural dialogue is of vital importance to a host of key development and security concerns, including addressing the root causes of conflict and sustaining peaceful societies. This recognition has been further refined in recent years through UNESCO's International Decade for the Rapprochement of Cultures (2013-2022), the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in 2015, relevant UN General Assembly resolutions and the UN Secretary-General's reform of the peace agenda in 2016, which marked a shift in focus towards sustaining peace. It was reaffirmed by UNESCO's renewed focus on conflict prevention and the high priority accorded to intercultural dialogue by its Member States as a means to achieve the goals of the 2030 Agenda.

The present report sets out the key findings of the first UNESCO survey on intercultural dialogue conducted among its Member States. The survey takes stock of the current understanding and operational mechanisms and strategies of

intercultural dialogue at national level. It assesses the main issues and opportunities, current policies and legislation, available data and resources, and main stakeholders in this field. The resulting information permits an initial inventory of country-specific intercultural dialogue policies that will function as a point of analysis for future monitoring and inform future policy-making.

The questionnaire for the survey was distributed to 199 National Commissions for UNESCO in six official United Nations languages with a submission deadline of Spring 2017. There was a response rate of 21.622%. The respondents represent all geographic regions, including countries with large, middle and small populations, and over half are from developing economies.

The survey consisted of 17 quantitative and qualitative questions and was structured around three main sections: (i) Definition, (ii) State of Affairs, and (iii) Operational Dimension (see the Annex). The following summary compiles the key findings.

## I. Defining intercultural dialogue

### KEY FINDINGS

- Context is crucial to defining and applying intercultural dialogue.
- Intercultural dialogue is a necessary environment for social cohesion and peace, and is instrumental in achieving related goals.
- Intercultural dialogue is increasingly recognized for its contribution to maintaining peaceful societies and preventing conflict.
- Intercultural dialogue is a wide-ranging concept and multi-stakeholder engagement is key to ensuring its implementation.
- Economic development is regarded as the least pertinent factor contributing to and resulting from intercultural dialogue

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## II. Policy framework

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### KEY FINDINGS

- The majority of respondents (71%) state that an intercultural dialogue policy is in place in their country, while only 38% of respondents confirmed the existence of a definition of intercultural dialogue at national level.
- Religious communities and faith-based organizations can provide an entry point for intercultural dialogue and support the implementation of policies and activities.
- Cultural ministries, agencies, centres and foundations are frequently charged with the promotion of intercultural dialogue.
- 33% of respondents report that local or municipal administrations are responsible for the administration of intercultural dialogue.
- The media and educational programmes in schools and universities function as particularly effective mechanisms for supporting intercultural dialogue.
- 57% of respondents confirm the existence of a special financial provision for intercultural dialogue in their country.

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## III. Challenges

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### KEY FINDINGS

- Past and present conflicts and violence represent significant and complex challenges to bringing different people together in dialogue.
- The absence of a national policy and a well-articulated definition of intercultural dialogue can weaken governance and implementation, which is compounded by limited political will and funding.
- Increased migration has placed particular pressure on education systems that struggle to integrate migrants of different cultural and religious backgrounds.
- Exploitation of the media can generate and propagate negative stereotypes, prejudices and hate speech.
- Deep-rooted prejudices and rigid social norms may prevent societies from being open to other cultures.

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## IV. Enabling factors

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### KEY FINDINGS

- An environment based on respect, tolerance and acceptance is essential to enable intercultural dialogue to thrive.
- A comprehensive understanding of cultural diversity among all citizens should be supported by quality education, a strong media sector and adequate knowledge dissemination.
- A favourable policy framework with clear and specific priorities is necessary to guide intercultural dialogue, and should be supported by mechanisms with defined competencies.
- An inclusive approach to participation in intercultural dialogue processes and policy-making enables greater engagement and ownership.



# 1. Background

Today's global context is characterized by a rich diversity of peoples, communities and individuals who live in increasing proximity. Rises in population, migration, forms of new technologies and media are bringing people together in a 'meeting of cultures'. These tools have also emboldened new forms of creative expression and ways of sharing culture, and have opened up pathways to communicate with one another.

However, the growth of this interconnectedness and interdependence has also provoked divisive agendas and identity-related tensions that seek to fray the bonds of solidarity within societies and undermine peace and security. Violence and extremism have grown to alarming levels. Breaking the cycle of violent conflict is fundamental to efforts to achieve sustainable development across a complex and rapidly changing world. The need for dialogue, tolerance, respect and mutual understanding among different cultures has never been so crucial.

From a governance perspective, countries face several key challenges. Increases in migration and population growth and rapid advances in technologies require more effective responses on the part of policy-makers in order to maximize opportunities, combat challenges, and adapt to the speed and voracity of change. Borders are becoming more porous with cultural flows not bound by territory, while the movement of peoples has become increasingly difficult to monitor. Conflicts have become more complex, with both internal and international actors and drivers. While intercultural dialogue is recognized for its capacity to nurture the values and principles that underpin peaceful societies, its interventions may not produce a 'quick fix' or tangible, short-term gains. Moreover, the pressure for short-term results may be incongruent with the reality of a country's social and institutional factors, which may not be amenable or receptive to change.

There is growing recognition of the capacity of intercultural dialogue to address a host of key development and security concerns. Examples include a greater focus on addressing conflict prevention and efforts to ensure peaceful societies over the long term. The principles of intercultural dialogue are embedded in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted

in 2015, whose 'comprehensive, far-reaching and people-centred' vision marks a key turning point in the international policy landscape. Countries pledged 'to foster intercultural understanding, tolerance, mutual respect and an ethic of global citizenship and shared responsibility'. There are significant areas of policy coherence between intercultural dialogue and the core concerns of SDG 16: 'Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels'. Similarly, the UN Secretary-General's reform on the peace agenda signalled a shift in the UN approach to peace and security, with a new focus on 'sustaining peace'. The adoption of General Assembly Resolution 70/262 and Security Council Resolution 2282 in 2016 highlighted the importance of conflict prevention and addressing the root causes of violence. According to these resolutions, advancing international peace and security is contingent on a comprehensive, cross-sectoral and integrated approach.

The shift toward conflict prevention and sustaining peace also lies at the heart of UNESCO's renewed strategic focus. In response to a questionnaire on UNESCO's programme and budget for 2018-2021 (39C/5), 68% of Member States and Associate Members identified intercultural dialogue as a high priority area and one where UNESCO should capitalize on its multidisciplinary expertise and enhance intersectoral approaches to help Member States implement the 2030 Agenda. Intercultural dialogue thus serves as a key conduit to achieve these goals.

As UNESCO's International Decade for the Rapprochement of Cultures (2013-2022) reaches its mid-point, the findings from the UNESCO survey on intercultural dialogue presented in this report offer an opportunity for reflection. They also identify key actions to help countries implement the Action Plan and Roadmap for the Rapprochement of Cultures.

# 2. Methodology

### Purpose

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The UNESCO survey on intercultural dialogue was conducted to take stock of the current conceptual understanding of intercultural dialogue and assess how it is reflected in current policy and legislation. It also identifies challenges and opportunities at the operational level and provides insights into how future prospects are shaped from a policy perspective.

The survey was the first to examine the implementation of intercultural dialogue by Member States. As such, the questions and responses were intended to explore available information and establish a point of analysis for comparable data, and to analyse the situation, trends, challenges and existing gaps and opportunities. The survey also provides a platform for Member States to articulate their concerns, challenges and ideas with regard to intercultural dialogue, so as to move forward with actions from an informed and consolidated perspective.

The survey focused in particular on the following questions pertaining to intercultural dialogue:

- How is intercultural dialogue defined and applied at the national level?
- What policies and legislation are currently in place to promote intercultural dialogue?
- What resources are available to Member States have at the national level?
- What opportunities does intercultural dialogue provide and how can they support and advance the priorities of Member States?
- What challenges do Member States face related to intercultural dialogue?
- How can intercultural dialogue sustain long-term development and shape peaceful societies at the national scale?

### Scope

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The content of the survey was explicitly policy-focused, exploring the analysis of policy, legislation and relevant institutional frameworks from the perspective of Member States.

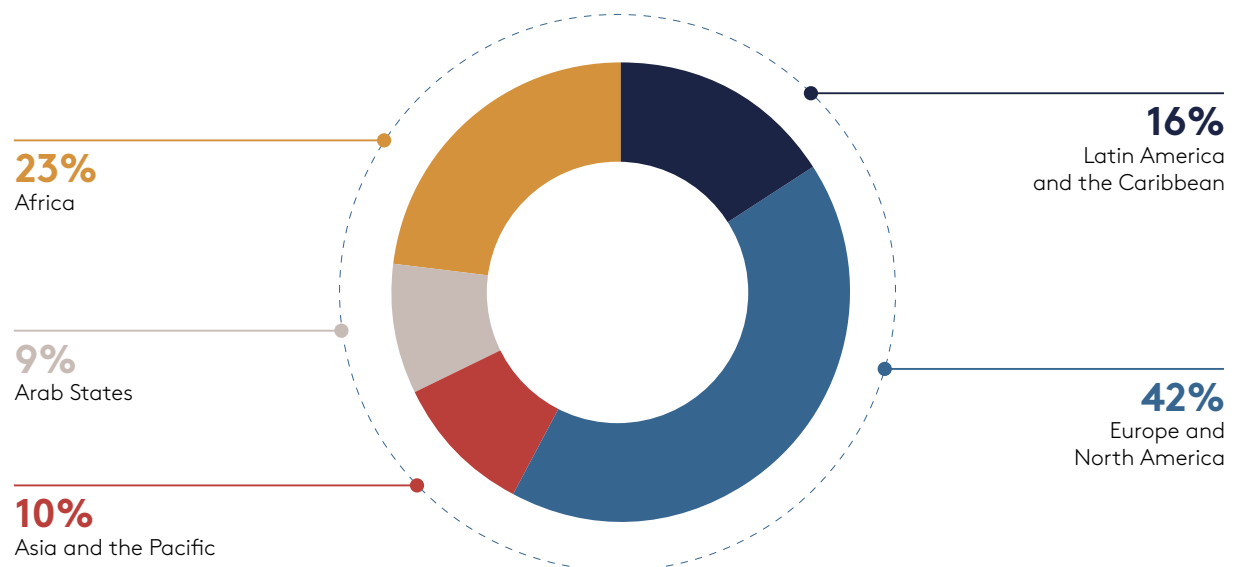
The survey was jointly prepared by the UNESCO Sector for Social and Human Sciences and the UNESCO Institute for Statistics. It was reviewed by the UNESCO/UNITWIN Network on Interreligious Dialogue for Intercultural Understanding, in order to ensure coherence with existing knowledge and ongoing research in the area of intercultural dialogue. The survey was structured around three main sections: (i) Definition, (ii) State of Affairs and (iii) Operational Dimension, and consists of 17 multiple choice and long-form questions (see the Annex).

The survey was distributed to all 199 National Commissions for UNESCO in six official languages. As of Spring 2017, UNESCO had received 43 responses

from 42 Member States and one Associate Member, representing a response rate of 21.622%. Out of these responses, 2% were provided by non-profit and non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

The participation of respondents enabled a representative sample covering all geographic regions. In terms of sub-regional groups, there were a low number of or no respondents from South-East Asia, Oceania, Western Europe and North America. In the case of European countries, over half of those who responded ascended to European Union membership after 2004, the majority coming from Eastern and Southern Europe. The high proportion of respondent countries of developing economies (57%) together with a strong response from fragile, conflict and post-conflict states is indicative of the importance of intercultural dialogue for these countries. Case studies and examples provided by respondents serve to illustrate the report and share good practices.

Figure 1. Survey participation by country and region

**AFRICA (10)**

Burkina Faso	Democratic Republic of the Congo	Madagascar	Rwanda
Burundi	Kenya	Namibia	Senegal
Chad		Niger	

**ARAB STATES (4)**

Kuwait	Lebanon	Palestine	Syrian Arab Republic
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**ASIA AND THE PACIFIC (4)**

Afghanistan	Bangladesh	Japan	Myanmar
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**LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN (7)**

Anguilla	El Salvador	Honduras	Mexico
Ecuador	Haiti	Jamaica	

**EUROPE AND NORTH AMERICA (18)**

Andorra	Belgium (Flemish Community)	Finland	Bulgaria
Austria	Croatia	Iceland	Turkey
Azerbaijan	Cyprus	Latvia	Slovenia
Belarus	Estonia	Lithuania	Spain
		Montenegro	Sweden

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### Limitations

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The survey was distributed to National Commissions for UNESCO with instructions to forward the survey to the relevant ministry or government department. Subsequent action by Member States was necessarily dependent on this course of action. As the survey targeted Member States and focused on national government, exploration of the interdisciplinary nature of intercultural dialogue and multi-stakeholder engagement is limited by the scope of the findings.

The wording of questions occasionally produced overlapping responses, with a similar question being asked in different ways. As a result, certain contradictions emerged in responses that depended on the interpretation of the questions. The terms 'migrant', 'immigrant', 'refugee' and 'asylum seeker' were often used interchangeably, which at times would obscure the understanding of a programme's specificity and target beneficiaries. As questions were not time bound, respondents periodically referred to the implementation of policies and/or specific actions that took place between 1990 and 2016, potentially hindering the establishment of a comparable dataset.

Out of the National Commissions that responded, 14% submitted multiple responses from different ministries, and an additional 2% submitted multiple responses from different government agencies, presenting information that was at times contradictory. In some cases, respondents commented on the work of several ministries and government administrations responsible for intercultural dialogue. In general, there was a deficiency of detailed examples of intercultural dialogue in practice, backed up by the means to evaluate and measure their impact. As different authorities may have responsibility for implementing intercultural dialogue, the reporting mechanisms of programmes hinge on the level of coordination between them and the degree of information-sharing in place. Out of all respondents, 4% submitted a joint response on behalf of multiple relevant ministries and government offices. In cases where a single country submitted multiple survey responses, one statistical figure for the country was accounted for in the analyses.

# 3. Defining intercultural dialogue

#### KEY FINDINGS

- Context is crucial to defining and applying intercultural dialogue.
- Intercultural dialogue is a necessary environment for social cohesion and peace, and is instrumental in achieving related goals.
- Intercultural dialogue is increasingly recognized for its contribution to maintaining peaceful societies and preventing conflict.
- Intercultural dialogue is a wide-ranging concept and multi-stakeholder engagement is key to ensuring its implementation.
- Economic development is regarded as the least pertinent factor contributing to and resulting from intercultural dialogue.

## Understanding intercultural dialogue

### Survey responses emphasize the importance of context in terms of how intercultural dialogue is perceived and understood.

Decades of development experience show that consideration of local cultural dynamics is crucial to the effective design, implementation and evaluation of policy and programmes. Survey responses also point to the importance of peace as a foundation for the effective functioning and cohesiveness of society. Country respondents stress that local history, geography and political systems all play a role in determining how intercultural dialogue is understood and applied in practice. To date, there is no universally agreed formal definition of intercultural dialogue or a single one-size-fits-all model of implementation. Instead, the emphasis is placed on the specific context of the country.

### How intercultural dialogue is defined is inextricably linked to the concept of diversity, which can vary within and between countries.

Values, behaviours and assumptions are shaped over time, and influence the ways in which intercultural dialogue is managed and the stakeholders that participate in the process. How diversity is interpreted and recognized, the elements that may be considered a threat to this diversity, and the aspects that are consequently included and excluded, vary within and between countries and are largely determined by contextual factors. In this regard, respondents state that intercultural dialogue is important not only with regard to a country or region's specific context, but also as a means of exploring one's own culture and values from the perspective of another

cultural community. Some respondents refer to the promotion of culture as a means of strengthening national identity as a policy and strategic focus of the country.

**Responses demonstrate two main streams of understanding intercultural dialogue.** The first conceives of intercultural dialogue as an environmental prerequisite for peace and social cohesion. The second understands intercultural dialogue as an instrumental tool for education and advocacy, and as a means to contribute to initiatives such as those seeking to integrate refugees and counter radicalization, discrimination and racism.

### Respondents underline the importance of intercultural dialogue to peace through its contribution to maintaining peaceful societies and addressing conflict prevention.

A notable trend that emerges in the survey responses is the contribution of intercultural dialogue to preventing conflict through the creation of the necessary foundations for peace and social cohesion. The Action Plan for the International Decade for the Rapprochement of Cultures (2013-2022), adopted by the 194th session of the Executive Board of UNESCO and endorsed by the UN General Assembly in December 2014, states that:

*Lasting peace rests on a complex and fragile fabric of interrelated values, attitudes and behaviours required both in the implementation of international treaties and in the course of daily life with the*

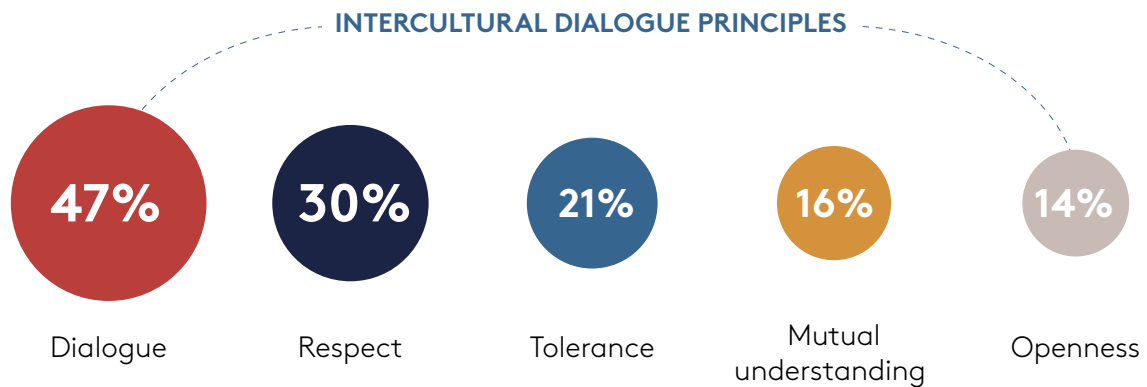


*practice of respect, tolerance, openness, mutual understanding and dialogue.*

Out of all respondents, 67% agree with this statement and cite one or more of the principles of the Action Plan as particularly pertinent to lasting peace. Almost half of respondents refer to dialogue

as a prerequisite for peace. The principles can also be mutually dependent – for example, mutual understanding hinges on the existence of dialogue. Another important element of intercultural dialogue for respondents is the acceptance of diversity, difference and the ‘other’.

**Figure 2. Importance of intercultural dialogue principles to lasting peace**

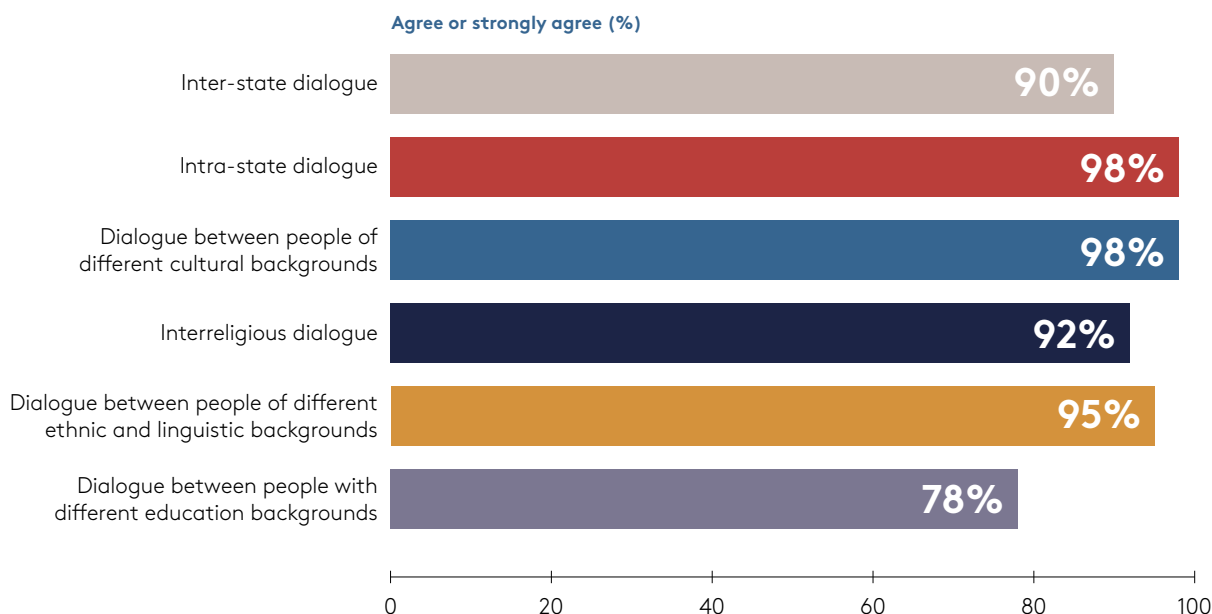


**Indicative example of a definition of intercultural dialogue from a Member State**

While the word ‘dialogue’ can often refer simply to a conversation between different people, the term is also used to describe a form of interaction between two or more persons/entities (who might hold opposing, differing or irreconcilable views) that emphasizes self-expression and reciprocal listening without judgment in a spirit of openness, and has a transformative potential. Validation of the other has an empowering effect. Dialogue therefore functions as a smart power tool of diplomacy.

## Components of intercultural dialogue

Figure 3. Essential components of intercultural dialogue



**The overwhelming majority of respondents agree or strongly agree that the six components (Figure 3) are essential parts of intercultural dialogue.** In particular, the findings demonstrate a strong consensus (over 95%) among Member States that intra-state dialogue, dialogue between people of different ethnic and linguistic backgrounds, and dialogue between people of different cultural backgrounds are essential components of intercultural dialogue. While dialogue between people of different education backgrounds is considered the least essential component of intercultural dialogue, 78% of respondents nevertheless agree or strongly agree that it is relevant.

**More broadly, the responses demonstrate a rich panoply of other relevant components of intercultural dialogue.** About 34% of respondents propose further components of intercultural dialogue, including: dialogue between political actors, age groups, government institutions and NGOs, socio-economic groups, schools, universities

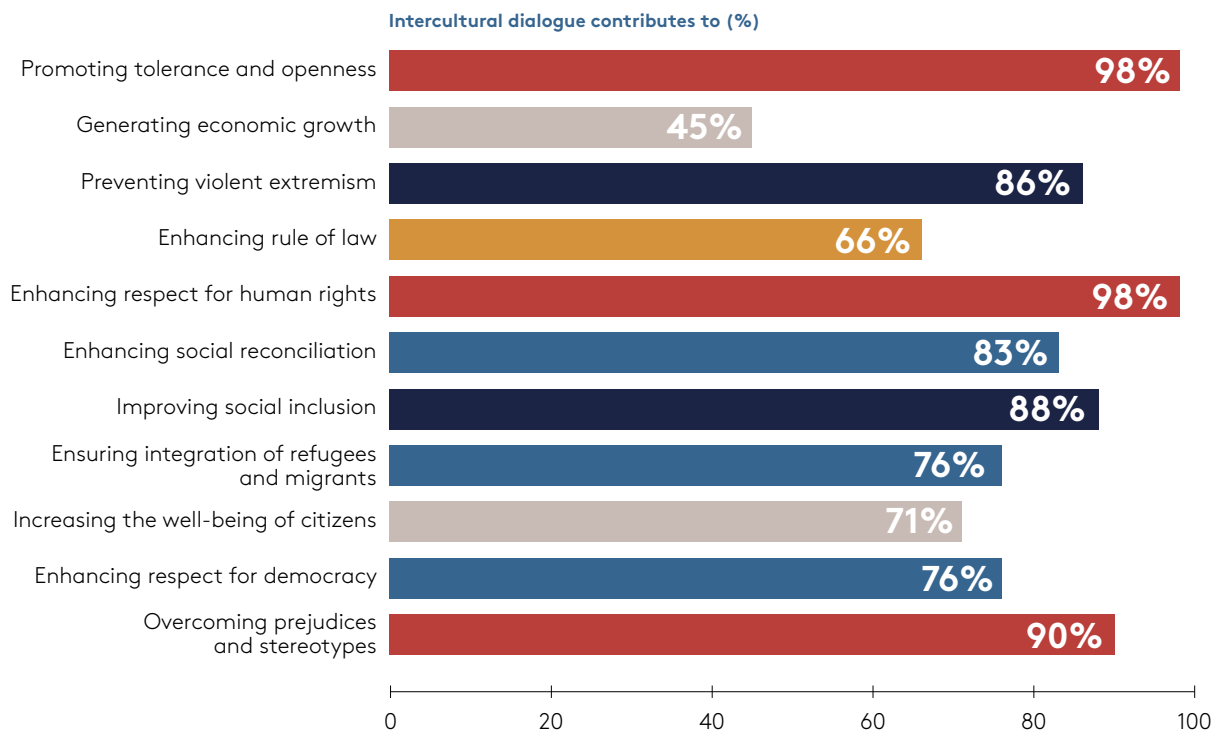
and families, as well as targeted cultural events and cooperation agreements. Gender equality and freedom from religious prejudice are also emphasized as important dimensions of intercultural dialogue. Here, responses underscore the inclusive and participatory dimension of intercultural dialogue – one that encapsulates broad stakeholder involvement. This indicates that intercultural dialogue is seen as a wide-ranging concept, with varied actors and institutions ensuring its implementation.

**The vast majority of respondents believe that intercultural dialogue contributes to a range of goals (Figure 4). Over 90% consider that overcoming prejudices and stereotypes, enhancing respect for human rights, and promoting tolerance and openness are most applicable to intercultural dialogue.** Respondents highlight the capacity of intercultural dialogue to enhance human dignity, mutual respect and reciprocity, strengthen communal harmony, and enrich intellectual, cultural and

social life. They also emphasize the critical role of intercultural dialogue in shaping diplomacy, education and civic culture, preventing ethnic, religious, linguistic and cultural divisions, and combating the prevalence of one conception

of national identity. The findings point to the consensus that respondents view intercultural dialogue as a key factor contributing to the achievement of related goals.

**Figure 4. The contribution of intercultural dialogue to relevant objectives**



**Figure 5. The role of intercultural dialogue in achieving outcomes**



**Respondents recognize the transformative potential of intercultural dialogue to bring about human rights and harmonious interreligious co-existence (Figure 5).** Other responses indicate that intercultural dialogue results in a reduction in xenophobia, hate speech and hate crimes, as well as a drop in violence against vulnerable groups. Similarly, intercultural dialogue is notable as a means to overcome prejudices, enhance gender equality, and improve safeguarding processes for the natural and social environment.

**In both sets of responses (Figures 4 and 5), the economic dimension is considered the least relevant.** Low consideration of the connection between economic development and intercultural dialogue reflects inconsistencies in the understanding of links between intercultural dialogue and peace. Other survey findings demonstrate that a majority of respondents recognize intercultural dialogue as a key enabler of peace and as a tool to bring about development outcomes. Ensuring a foundation of peace and

social cohesion enables programmes to effectively harness the economic drivers necessary for growth.

#### Azerbaijan: strengthening exchange and cooperation through dialogue platforms

The Baku Process is a platform for dialogue promoting an open and respectful exchange of views between individuals and groups with different ethnic, cultural, religious backgrounds. Azerbaijan is one of the world's unique places where different cultures and civilizations meet at the crossroads between East and West, North and South. Being a member of both Islamic and European organizations, Azerbaijan absorbs the values of both civilizations, thus enabling it to assume the role of a genuine bridge. Global development must be based on the diversity of cultures. This is the basic code of understanding human life – an open, progressive repository of wisdom, experience, knowledge, exchange, solidarity and ways of living together that widens the range of options open to everyone.

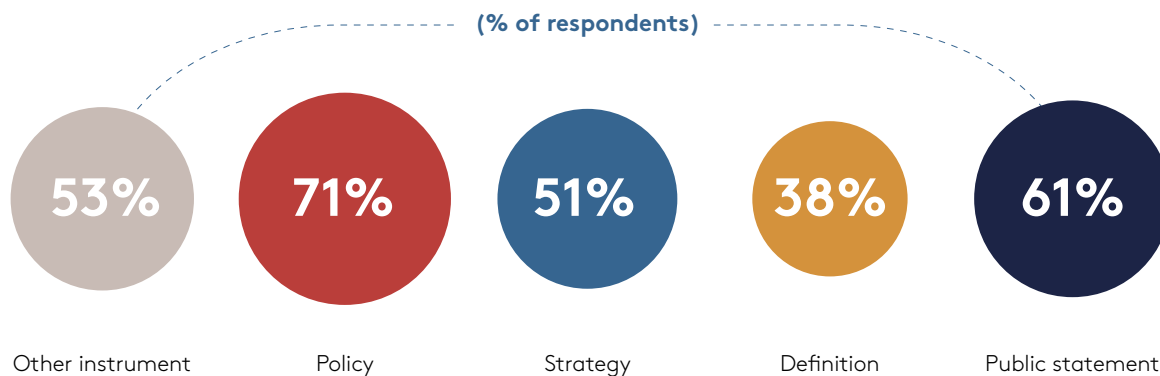
# 4. Shaping policy frameworks

KEY FINDINGS

- The majority of respondents (71%) state that an intercultural dialogue policy is in place in their country, while only 38% of respondents confirm the existence of a definition of intercultural dialogue at national level.
- Religious communities and faith-based organizations can provide an entry point for intercultural dialogue and support the implementation of policies and activities.
- Cultural ministries, agencies, centres and foundations are frequently charged with the promotion of intercultural dialogue.
- 33% of respondents report that local or municipal administrations are responsible for the administration of intercultural dialogue.
- The media and educational programmes in schools and universities function as particularly effective mechanisms for supporting intercultural dialogue.
- 57% of respondents confirm the existence of a special financial provision for intercultural dialogue in their country.

Policy and legislative mechanisms for intercultural dialogue

Figure 6. Countries that have adopted an instrument capturing key features of the concept of intercultural dialogue



The findings show that a high percentage of respondents have policies that capture the features of intercultural dialogue. Most respondents (71%) report that they have a specific policy on intercultural dialogue in place. More broadly, one respondent states that intercultural dialogue is defined as the cornerstone of all policies of the Ministry of Education and Culture, and this is overtly expressed in the policy priorities of the budget. The policies cited reflect the contextual nature of intercultural dialogue and a largely endogenous process on the part of countries.

While the majority of respondents have introduced a specific policy that captures the key concepts of intercultural dialogue, only 38% have a definition in place. The definitions cited demonstrate varied understandings of intercultural dialogue. Responses range from ‘something that promotes ethnic and cultural diversity’ and ‘the existence of communication and communication channels between different cultures’ to ‘recognition of the importance of indigenous cultures as bearers of cultural rights and part of an integral vision of human rights’.

The lack of definition or the existence of varied definitions suggests the contextualization of intercultural dialogue at the national level. However, it can also present certain barriers to achieving a common consensus for cooperation between countries.

#### **Ecuador: a constitutional framework that reflects intercultural principles**

*Ecuador is a constitutional State of rights and justice, a social, democratic, sovereign, independent, unitary, intercultural, pluri-national and secular State. It is organized as a republic and governed using a decentralized approach (The Constitution of the Republic of Ecuador, Article 1).*

**Several respondents report that, while a specific definition does not exist, their country's constitution or government bill is imbued with the principles of intercultural dialogue.** Out of all respondents, 2% state that terminology such as 'intercultural competence' and 'intercultural communication' is used in the action plans of governmental institutions and local municipalities. Another 2% state that the principles of intercultural dialogue are reflected but are not directly aligned with a particular terminology. For instance, one respondent refers to the use of 'inclusion' and 'super-diversity' instead of 'intercultural', to avoid defining people as belonging to a culture outside of mainstream culture.

#### **Bangladesh: integrating a gender perspective in media policy**

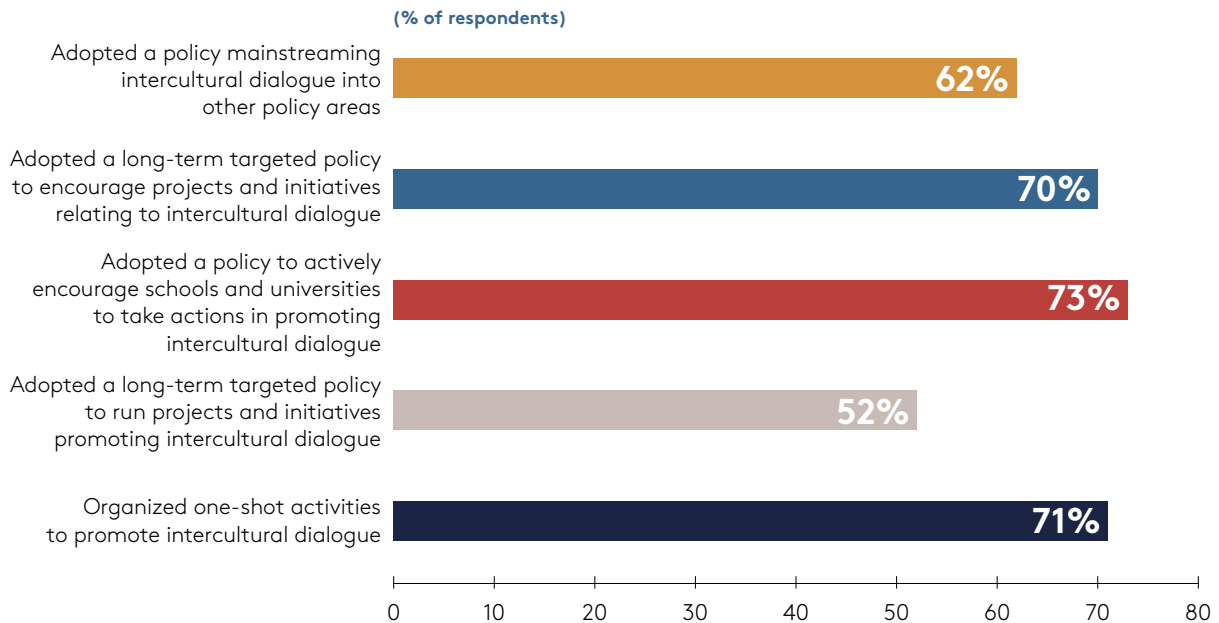
As part of Bangladesh's 2011 National Women Development Policy, the government sought to eliminate discrimination, defamation and negative stereotyping of women and girls in the mass media by promoting positive images, ensuring their access to the media, creating formal training for women and supporting equal opportunities in media management.

#### **Namibia: streamlining intercultural dialogue in national policies and strategies**

The 2001 Policy on Arts and Culture of the Republic of Namibia captures the principles of intercultural dialogue by promoting 'a united and flourishing nation, achieving sincere reconciliation through mutual respect and understanding, solidarity, stability, peace, equality, tolerance and inclusion'. Similarly, the Namibian overall development framework, 'Vision 2030', envisages a country where all cultures are viewed as equal and where the custodians of diverse cultures are open to cultural exchange and engaging in intercultural dialogue. The Namibia Development Plan (NDP 5) makes provision for strategies that promote unity in diversity, and includes programmes and projects focused on inclusivity and cultural tolerance.

**The majority of respondents (73%) report that adopted policies are related to education (Figure 7).** One respondent, for instance, reports that their country's Education Act refers to the awareness of one's own cultural origins and sharing in a common cultural heritage as a means of strengthening identity, and conceives of school as a social and cultural meeting place with the opportunity and the responsibility to enhance this ability.

Figure 7. Promoting intercultural dialogue polices and activities



**About 71% of respondents indicate that their country promotes intercultural dialogue through individual one-off activities**, such as conferences, festivals, cultural events and commemorative days. These include designated days for diasporas to celebrate their country of origin, social media campaigns, cultural exchange programmes, intercultural achievement awards, community radio segments, school curricula revision, international agreements, and civil society action in support of indigenous peoples and vulnerable populations. Monuments, memorials and artistic installations are also cited as playing a role in increasing familiarity with and recognition of various groups to heighten the visibility of cultural diversity and foster plural and inclusive environments.

**Bulgaria, Croatia and Latvia: harnessing cultural events to recognize minorities**

Bulgaria, Croatia and Latvia have initiated targeted events to foster the inclusion of Roma minorities. In Latvia, the Festival of National Minority Cultures is held every two years, and the country regularly supports activities organized in the framework of the DOSTA! campaign, 'Go beyond prejudice, meet the Roma!', together with NGO activities and projects at the regional level. As part of the Decade of Roma Inclusion (2005-2015), Bulgaria hosted a number of events celebrating the Roma culture of the country. Croatia regularly finances activities in relation to national minorities, including Roma populations.



**Several respondents state that mutual understanding and reciprocal knowledge of ethnic and linguistic diversity are central to their country's short-term and long-term intercultural policies.** This is particularly the case with respondent countries from the Latin America and the Caribbean region, which note that the recognition and celebration of indigenous cultures, particularly languages, contribute to intercultural dialogue at the national level. Among European country respondents, a notable proportion refer to intercultural dialogue mechanisms that address migrant and refugee issues. About 2% of respondents highlight the identification, conservation and research of cultural heritage as a key long-term policy.

**The responses emphasize the role of religious communities and faith-based organizations as a key entry point to intercultural dialogue and to support the implementation of policies and activities.** About 2% of respondents state that religious actors can help facilitate pathways to dialogue in peace mediation activities. Another 2% report on the capacity of religious leaders to combat the exploitation of religions and to avert

the transformation of certain religions into state religions.

#### Sweden: strengthening research on intercultural dialogue

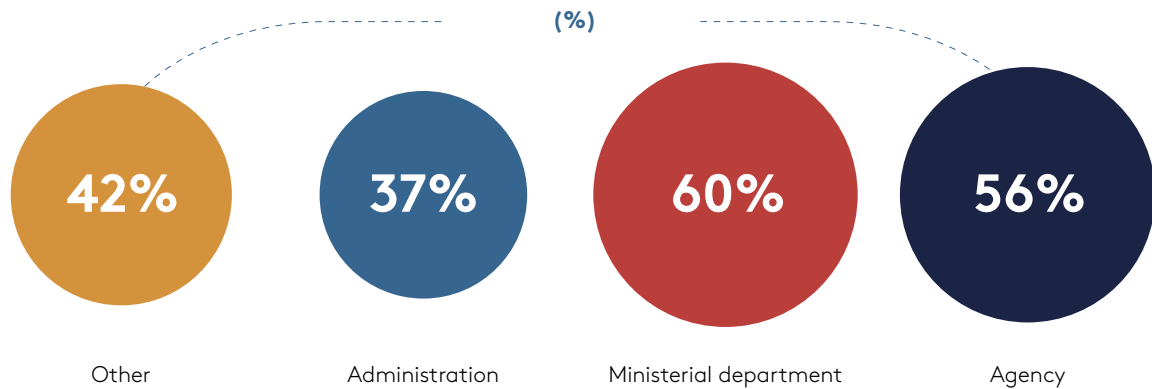
The Centre for Intercultural Dialogue and Research is a group of researchers from three universities: the University of Gothenburg, University West and the University of Borås in Sweden. The Research Council is contracted by the Västra Götalandregionen and tasked to pursue studies in intercultural dialogue. The Centre was established to address the mounting divide between the native-born and foreign-born populations. Key differences can be found in areas such as health, average life expectancy, education, housing, employment and electoral voting. Moreover, certain individuals are not in a position to participate in or influence decision-making processes in mainstream society, which carries increased social risks. The Centre contributes expertise to public administrations, schools and civil society to combat discrimination and racism, and encourages dialogue between peoples on a basis of equality.

#### Relevant normative instruments for intercultural dialogue cited by respondents

UNESCO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2005 Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions</li> <li>• 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage</li> </ul>
Regional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Council of Europe - White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue</li> <li>• Africa Union - Agenda 2063</li> </ul>

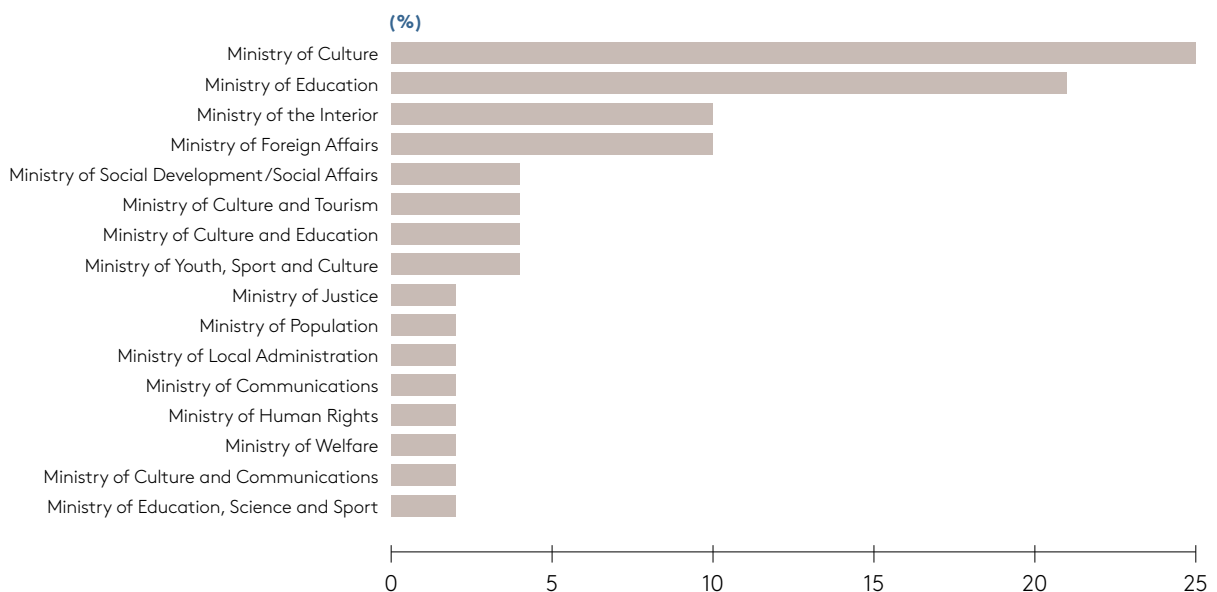
## Institutional responsibility

Figure 8. Institutional responsibility for intercultural dialogue



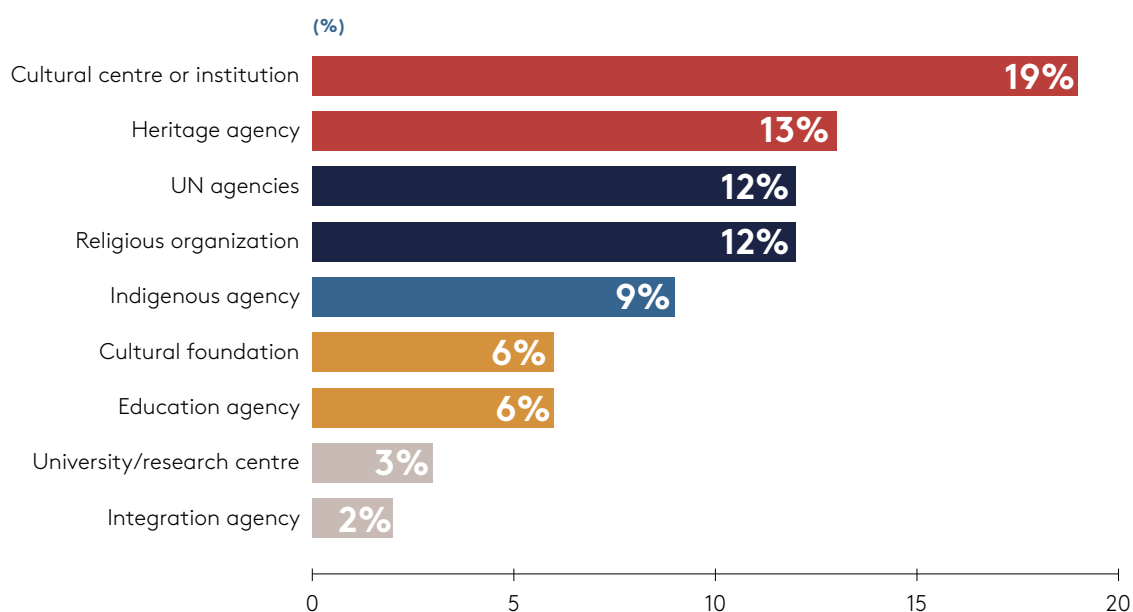
**At the national level, ministries are often charged with the implementation of intercultural dialogue, according to 60% of respondents (Figure 8).** Most respondents cite one to five ministries responsible for implementation, reflecting the interdisciplinary nature of intercultural dialogue and its complexity. Of these, the most commonly cited ministries are the ministries of culture, education, the interior and foreign affairs (Figure 9). In cases of inter-ministerial coordination of intercultural dialogue, one ministry often oversees implementation, depending on the focus of a particular activity.

Figure 9. Ministries responsible for intercultural dialogue



**About 56% of respondents report that specific institutions are tasked with the promotion of intercultural dialogue.** In this regard, most respondents cite several agencies, the majority of which are state run. A high proportion of the examples provided by respondents are culture-related agencies, centres and foundations (Figure 10).

**Figure 10. National-level agencies responsible for intercultural dialogue**

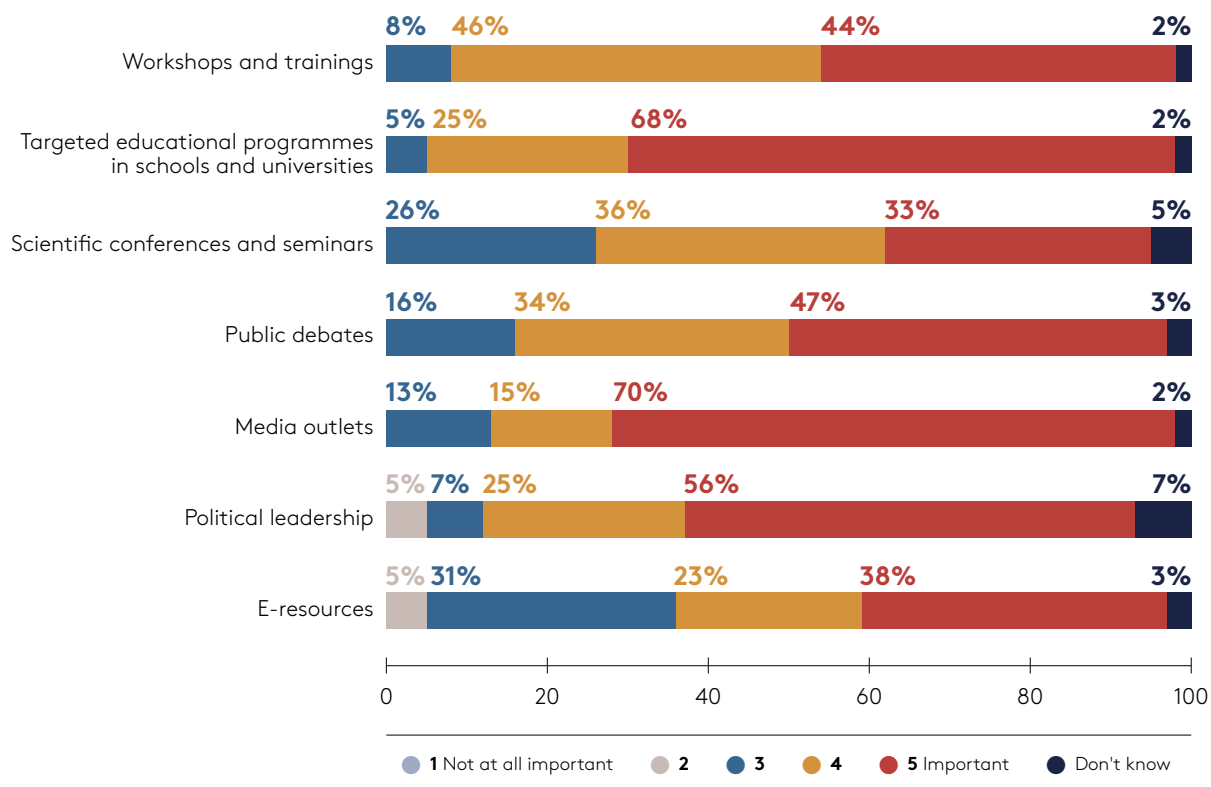


**The administration of intercultural dialogue demonstrates broad stakeholder participation.** District and local administrations, religious denominations, cultural heritage directorates, regional arts centres, universities, national secretariats of public administrations, municipalities, directorates of heritage and culture programmes are cited as responsible for the administration of intercultural dialogue. Other stakeholders include universities, UNESCO National Commissions and UNESCO Clubs, tourism boards, the British Council, national human rights institutions, public libraries and networks, national centres of education, NGOs, local cultural associations, peace institutes, and research centres for the sciences and arts. About 33% of respondents report that local or municipal administrations are responsible for the administration of intercultural dialogue in their country.

**About 14% of all respondents state that no agency, ministry, administration or other body is responsible for intercultural dialogue in their country.**

**Respondents highlight certain mechanisms as effective for supporting intercultural dialogue, in particular media outlets and educational programmes in schools and universities (Figure 11).** Among respondents, 70% rate media outlets and 68% regard targeted education programmes in schools and universities as crucial mechanisms for the promotion of intercultural dialogue. These findings are reiterated in the respondents' evaluation of stakeholder importance, which ranks education institutions and the media as important in the implementation of intercultural dialogue (Figure 11).

Figure 11. Contribution of activities and mechanisms to promoting intercultural dialogue



## Stakeholders

**Responses highlight a broad plethora of stakeholders involved in the promotion of intercultural dialogue.** These include national human rights institutions, traditional authorities and community elders, indigenous organizations, regional platforms such as the European Union Creative Europe programme, the Africa Union, youth organizations, NGOs and civil society organizations, artists, experts, unions, the private sector, and religious councils and leaders. About 80% of respondents from the Africa region cite traditional leaders and elders as significant stakeholders in intercultural dialogue.

**Building on the findings, certain correlations can be drawn between stakeholder relevance and other responses to the survey questions.**

Education institutions are considered key stakeholders in the implementation of intercultural dialogue, which reaffirms respondents' high estimation for the contribution of educational activities and mechanisms to promoting intercultural dialogue. Similarly, the role of national governments is rated highly, together with the contribution of civil society and the media. Relative to other stakeholders, a low importance is attributed to the role of international organizations, emulating earlier findings in the report that rank interstate dialogue as less important than intrastate dialogue.

## Rwanda: dialogue for justice and reconciliation

### Umushyikirano or the National Dialogue Council

The Government of Rwanda established Umushyikirano or the National Dialogue Council with the objective of nurturing a shared national identity. It acts as a forum where participants can debate issues relating to issues of the state of the nation, local governments and national unity, and draws on aspects of Rwandan culture and traditional practices.

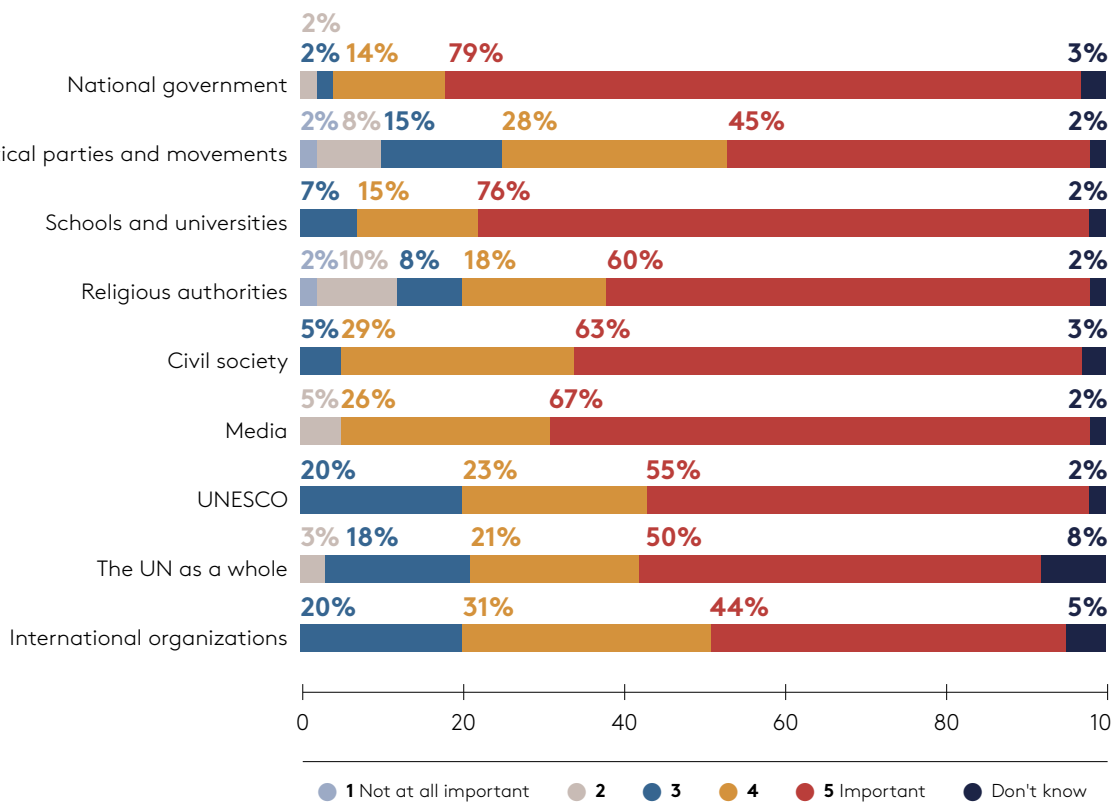
### Gacaca Jurisdictions

In the wake of the 1994 Rwandan Genocide, the country established a system of community justice referred to as the Gacaca Jurisdictions. From 2005 to 2012, it worked to bring about justice and reconciliation at local level. The system was inspired by the Rwandan tradition *gacaca* or 'justice among the grass'.

### National Unity and Reconciliation Commission

Established in 1999, the National Unity and Reconciliation Commission focuses on reconstructing Rwandan identity, promoting national unity and reconciliation, and building social trust and cohesion.

Figure 12. Stakeholder importance for the implementation of intercultural dialogue



## Financial provision

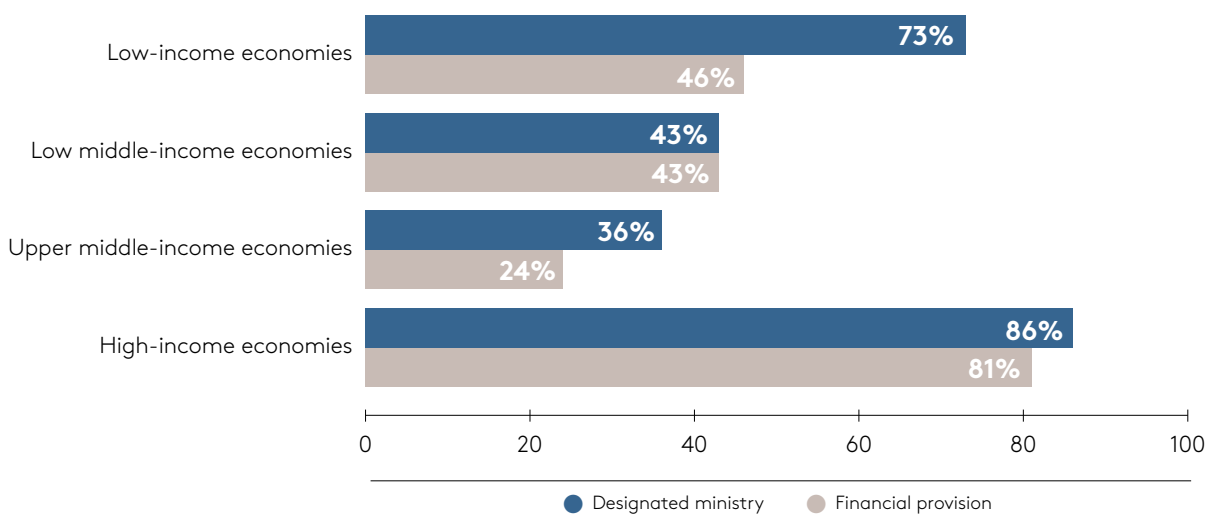
Despite a reported high percentage of policies in place for intercultural dialogue, only 57% of respondents state that their country has made a special financial provision for intercultural dialogue. Of these respondents, 81% are from high-income economies. Whether a country has a designated ministry for intercultural dialogue is also mirrored in the available financial provisions, with upper middle-income economies demonstrating the lowest financial provision for intercultural dialogue (Figure 13)<sup>1</sup>.

Countries report financing intercultural dialogue through a mix of funds, foundations, institutions, government-funded agencies, institutions of public administration under the supervision of a ministry, and professional

integration programmes with provisions for language, accommodation and job-specific skills courses. Several respondents mention state-owned enterprises, institutions and NGOs that are funded by the government through the relevant ministries, such as national heritage and museums. Individual project-based activities can be financed by the government directly or via government subsidies to umbrella organizations. Some regional nuances in the data suggest a preference in the Latin America and the Caribbean region for funding national-level institutions in support of linguistic diversity. In Europe, the opportunity to apply for European Union (EU) and European Economic Area (EEA) grants was highlighted by respondents as a means of financing intercultural dialogue projects.

Country respondent	Designated ministry	Financial provision
Low-income economies	73%	46%
Low middle-income economies	43%	43%
Upper middle-income economies	36%	24%
High-income economies	86%	81%

Figure 13. Financial provision for intercultural dialogue



1 Based on the World Bank classification of gross national income (GNI) per capita.

# 5. Challenges

### KEY FINDINGS

- Past and present conflicts and violence represent significant and complex challenges to bringing different people together in dialogue.
- The absence of a national policy and a well-articulated definition of intercultural dialogue can weaken governance and implementation, which is compounded by limited political will and funding.
- Increased migration has placed particular pressure on education systems that struggle to integrate migrants of different cultural and religious backgrounds.
- Exploitation of the media can generate and propagate negative stereotypes, prejudices and hate speech.
- Deep-rooted prejudices and rigid social norms may prevent societies from being open to other cultures.

**Conflict, terrorism, violent extremism and radicalization.** A number of respondents emphasized that societies can be marked by the vestiges of former civil wars, genocides, colonization and political systems, which add a further level of complexity to efforts to bring different people together in dialogue. Multiple foreign missions may be operating inside the country, while the public face the constant threat of recurring socio-political crises. In the case of countries experiencing war and conflict, economic and security instability and restrictions on the movement of individuals and cultural products make it difficult to implement intercultural dialogue activities and/or foresee their long-term development. Several respondents cited terrorism as a key challenge for governments, in addition to the rising tide of violent extremism and radicalization. Addressing reoccurring violence also diverts policy-makers from dealing adequately with other policy areas.

**Insufficient policy attention, funding and political will to support intercultural dialogue.** The absence of a national policy facilitating intercultural dialogue and a well-articulated definition of intercultural dialogue are highlighted as factors that weaken intercultural dialogue governance and implementation. This situation is compounded by limited political will. The designated authority(ies) responsible for intercultural dialogue at national level may lack coordination, resulting in duplication of activities between different sectors. In cases of centralized policies for intercultural dialogue, different institutions and initiatives operating at urban and rural levels can be overlooked

and isolated. Inadequate funding and a lack of qualified professionals or available staff are common challenges to ensuring the long-term implementation of intercultural dialogue.

**Rapidly changing demographic contexts triggered by increased migration.** Several respondents report that their countries are grappling with efforts to support the integration of migrants, who often have vastly different cultural and religious backgrounds. Laws on access to nationality can also be perceived negatively as a way of segregating native-born and foreign-born populations. Managing cultural diversity and multilingualism is underscored as an ongoing challenge including ensuring that citizens have adequate access to the necessary tools and knowledge of different cultures. The impact of increased migration places particular pressure on countries' formal education systems. One respondent notes that perceptions of a country's history can provoke issues in implementing intercultural dialogue in education, particularly in promoting linguistic diversity, as competition may exist between the national state language and those of minorities. The need to develop a more inclusive educational system must be addressed across many and diverse disciplines. However, such efforts may be impeded by deficiencies in the necessary infrastructure and resources. Economic inequalities can also limit people's access to education and culture at the outset, and hence their access to opportunities presented by intercultural dialogue.



**Use of the media for divisive agendas.** The media can be exploited as a vehicle to generate and propagate negative stereotypes, prejudices and hate speech. Social media is also being exploited as a means to provoke hatred and violence. The media response to the current geopolitical context and incidents of violent extremism can lack accuracy and nuance, which may be further exacerbated by political movements and external hostile information campaigns. An absence of professional and responsible journalism at the national level also undermines the legitimacy of public information shared across different media platforms.

**Resilience of existing prejudices and social norms.** Respondents report that societies can have dominant customs and may not be open to other cultures. In a highly traditional and conservative society, outside influences can be viewed with caution and scepticism. The public may have fixed ideas about other cultures, be disrespectful towards other peoples and nationalities, or be ignorant of – or deny the existence of – other cultures. Respondents cite discrimination and racism as persistent obstacles to intercultural dialogue.

# 6. Enabling factors

### KEY FINDINGS

- An environment based on respect, tolerance and acceptance is essential to enable intercultural dialogue to thrive.
- A comprehensive understanding of cultural diversity among all citizens should be supported by quality education, a strong media sector and adequate knowledge dissemination.
- A favourable policy framework with clear and specific priorities is necessary to guide intercultural dialogue, and should be supported by mechanisms with defined competencies.
- An inclusive approach to participation in intercultural dialogue processes and policy-making enables greater engagement and ownership.

#### **An environment conducive to intercultural dialogue, characterized by respect, tolerance and acceptance.**

Respondents underline the importance of a socially cohesive and empowering environment that allows intercultural dialogue to fully function and thrive. This includes respect for social justice, tolerance among religions, equal opportunities and the promotion of human rights, including freedom of expression and gender equality. Peace, human security, and political, social and economic stability are considered the optimal milieu to ensure the functioning of intercultural dialogue.

#### **A clear understanding of intercultural dialogue and its benefits by all citizens.**

All actors must be equipped with the knowledge of different cultures, as well as behavioural norms, beliefs and values, such as gender and cultural stereotypes. This includes knowledge of particular cultural characteristics including one's own as well as those of the 'other'. This approach can be supported by the culture and heritage sectors through initiatives that promote cultural diversity and engage people in intercultural dialogue in meaningful ways. Respondents underline the importance of sharing good practices to promote a broader understanding of cultural diversity, such as via intercultural dialogue platforms and forums. Establishing communication and information outlets can strengthen public information as well as mechanisms to boost media literacy, and closer collaboration with the media can help reinforce positive images and messages of cultural diversity. Intercultural dialogue should play a significant, recognized role in education institutions and systems, and be coupled with adequate pedagogical approaches. Respondents also note that the development of closer ties between education and culture, especially through joint

projects, can further develop the transversal scope of intercultural dialogue.

#### **A favourable policy framework with clear and specific policies and plans that reflect the diversity of intercultural dialogue.**

Intercultural dialogue processes need to be supported by administrative and institutional support mechanisms with defined competencies. Respondents also point to the benefits of legal and regulatory protection frameworks, such as constitutions that protect the rights of different cultural groups and that stipulate spaces for intercultural dialogue. Policy needs to be supported by adequate political will, defined budgets for intercultural dialogue and the human resources to support programming.

#### **Inclusive participation in intercultural dialogue processes and policy-making.**

There is a need to promote broader, informed and engaged participation in intercultural dialogue and the design and implementation of related national policy among various actors. In particular, respondents note that the capacities of civil society actors should be enhanced, including by strengthening the NGO sector and boosting the role of local communities, academics, teachers, parents, artists, filmmakers and writers in promoting intercultural dialogue. The nature of participation should be rooted in inclusivity, respect for cultural differences and the equal dignity of all participants, and reinforced by a strong commitment from all stakeholders to find a common language in dialogue. Respondents encourage greater awareness-raising among political and religious decision-makers regarding the importance of intercultural dialogue, closer cooperation between heads of religious denominations, and greater participation and efforts on the part of religious leaders to reject the exploitation of religion.

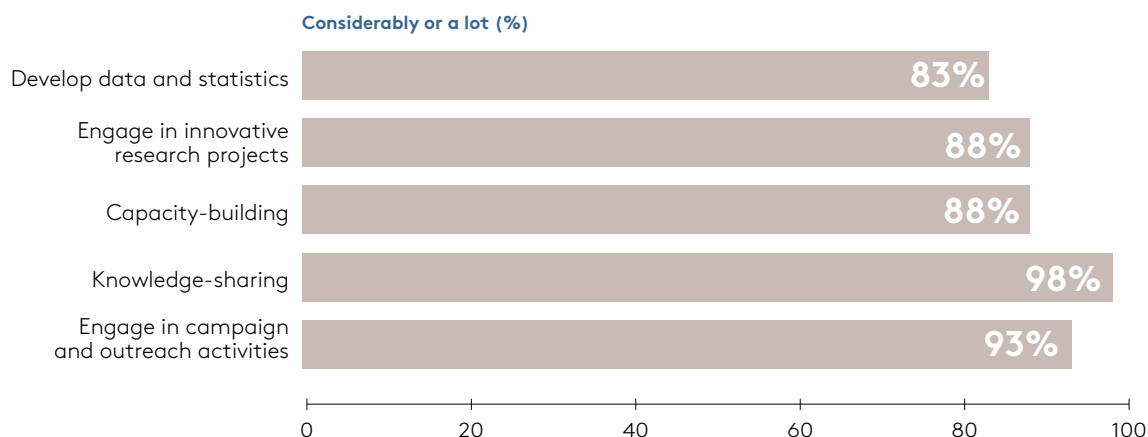
# 7. The way forward

Respondents underline several priority areas to advance intercultural dialogue. These priority areas and the associated proposals are outlined below.

Priority area	Proposal
<p><b>Policy and legislation</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop and adopt clear public policies that respond to the concerns of peoples of different cultural backgrounds.</li> <li>• Establish national action plans and strategies on intercultural dialogue that are adaptable to changing circumstances, and which are informed by consultative processes with actors at national and local levels.</li> <li>• Create institutional structures for the promotion and management of intercultural and interreligious dialogue at national and local levels, with clear functions and responsibilities.</li> <li>• Allocate sufficient budget and mobilize resources for intercultural dialogue.</li> <li>• Establish or reform laws on intercultural dialogue based on a national dialogue process.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Monitoring and evaluation</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create effective monitoring and evaluation mechanisms.</li> <li>• Identify quantitative and qualitative indicators.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Cooperation</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish bilateral and multilateral agreements to support dialogue and exchange between foreign countries and their cultural authorities.</li> <li>• Strengthen cooperation in intercultural dialogue, particularly but not exclusively between Muslim and Western societies.</li> <li>• Organize exchanges between different religious denominations, and create a platform for a youth network of different faiths.</li> <li>• Create international guidelines for intercultural dialogue and identify the relevant institutions and organizations to lead on action.</li> <li>• Expand cooperation between international and regional organizations, Member States, civil society and the private sector.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Dialogue spaces</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create secure spaces for intercultural dialogue, meeting places for cultural exchange, and places that promote social, cultural and religious diversity.</li> <li>• Set up dialogue opportunities at the local level.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Participation</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Foster the inclusive participation of multiple stakeholders in intercultural dialogue, in particular civil society.</li> <li>• Boost the active involvement of youth and women in intercultural and interreligious dialogue.</li> <li>• Support cultural and artistic activities and exchanges and recognize the role of artists and creators as catalysts of dialogue and mutual understanding.</li> <li>• Promote greater cultural diversity among employees of cultural institutions and organizations.</li> </ul>

Priority area	Proposal
<b>Programming</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Design and implement programmes that facilitate exchange among diverse culture groups.</li> <li>• Enhance and support joint initiatives between actors from different cultural and religious backgrounds.</li> <li>• Facilitate greater cooperation between culture and education sectors through joint projects.</li> <li>• Harness opportunities to use culture, particularly cultural heritage and the arts, more pervasively and effectively to promote intercultural dialogue.</li> <li>• Strengthen the capacity of intercultural dialogue as a means of conflict prevention and resolution.</li> </ul>
<b>Education</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adopt education policies that incorporate intercultural dialogue principles.</li> <li>• Make revisions to education curricula to integrate intercultural dialogue principles as a fundamental element of citizenship.</li> <li>• Introduce peace and cultural education into the formal education system at the local level.</li> <li>• Explore the positive impact of non-formal and informal education for the promotion of intercultural dialogue.</li> <li>• Encourage dialogue in schools between students and parents with different cultural backgrounds.</li> </ul>
<b>Communication and the media</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leverage the opportunities availed by the internet and digital media to expand communication of and participation in intercultural dialogue.</li> <li>• Promote cultural openness and diversity through education and the media.</li> <li>• Enhance awareness-raising about intercultural dialogue through targeted campaigns and projects that emphasize the varied stakeholders involved in intercultural dialogue.</li> <li>• Amplify voices of moderation, reconciliation and pluralism.</li> </ul>
<b>Knowledge-sharing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase dissemination of knowledge regarding intercultural dialogue through sharing best practices among Member States, publications and the establishment of an information hub.</li> </ul>

Figure 14. UNESCO actions to support intercultural dialogue processes



**In order to measure the positive impact of intercultural dialogue, most respondents suggest assessing the numbers of cases of conflict and violence.** In particular, respondents recommend the use of the reduction in hate crimes and hate speech as an indicator to effectively measure the impact of intercultural dialogue. This is evident in the findings from respondents across all regions, emphasizing the global relevancy of these issues and recognition of the role of intercultural dialogue in addressing conflict and violence. Other quantitative and qualitative indicators cited by respondents are as follows:

- *Quantitative:* legislation, policies, participation in cultural activities and decision-making, inclusion of minority groups, linguistic training and media coverage of the issue;
- *Qualitative:* tolerance, awareness and mutual respect, extremist and radical thought, public opinion on people from different ethnic backgrounds, student behaviour in school and social skills.

**93%**  
of respondents  
believe that  
UNESCO  
should increase  
cooperation in  
intercultural  
dialogue

- UN bodies and networks: UNDP, UNICEF, UNFPA, UNAOC, UNESCO-MILID UNITWIN, IOM, UNHCR, OHCHR, FAO, intergovernmental institutions
- Regional and sub-regional bodies, European Commission, Council of Europe, Africa Union, GAD/East Africa Community, Ibero-American General Secretariat SEGIB, Inter-American Court of Human Rights
- Ministries of Health, Foreign Affairs, Interior, Education, Culture, Family and Social Affairs, Tourism and Religious Affairs
- Arts councils, music councils and cultural foundations, observatories of cultural policies
- Schools and higher education institutions (e.g. Schools of Fine Arts)
- Civil society networks and institutions, NGOs, non-profit organizations, development funds and networks, local communities, religious leaders
- Youth organizations, cultural and youth diplomacy programmes, associations of young creators and cultural operators

# 8. Conclusions



The key findings of the UNESCO Survey on Intercultural Dialogue 2017 are as follows:

**1. Intercultural dialogue is increasingly recognized as a prerequisite for peaceful societies and for sustainable development to thrive.**

This particular finding emerges repeatedly in the responses, highlighting the capacity of intercultural dialogue to bolster more resilient societies in order to prevent conflict and sustain peace. This trend also reflects current international policy instruments, strategies and mechanisms that underscore the critical nexus between sustaining peace and sustainable development, notably the 2030 Agenda. Intercultural dialogue can support the prevention and recurrence of violent conflict by promoting peace and social cohesion, and hence the broader goals of sustainable development, whose achievement is necessarily reliant on the conditions of peace. Sustainable development thus underpins sustainable peace, while peaceful and inclusive societies create an environment conducive to sustainable development.

**2. Intercultural dialogue contributes to a range of goals, and is regarded as a positive and beneficial crosscutting instrument.**

Over 90% of respondents state that intercultural dialogue helps overcome prejudices and stereotypes, enhances respect for human rights and promotes tolerance and openness. In addition, intercultural dialogue is cited as a powerful tool to combat xenophobia, prevent conflict and violent extremism, and promote peaceful co-existence, positive civic culture and gender equality. However, the findings demonstrate weak recognition of the link between economic development and intercultural dialogue, contradicting to some extent the perception that peace and social cohesion act as enabling environments for economic growth. Nonetheless, the survey results confirm the high priority accorded by Member States to intercultural dialogue, as a contributory and transformative factor in achieving goals.

**3. There are broad variations in the way intercultural dialogue is understood, shaped and reflected in policy and legislative frameworks.**

At present, different definitions of intercultural dialogue reflect the individual context of respondent countries, with 38% of respondents reporting that a definition of intercultural dialogue exists at national level. However, the lack of a cohesive definition of intercultural dialogue is echoed throughout the data, despite strong indications that the majority of respondents consider intercultural dialogue to be highly important for a range of objectives with associated policies already in place at national level. This finding also points to the need for a stronger knowledge base on intercultural dialogue at national level. This would help clarify understanding of intercultural dialogue and its benefits among citizens, and shape a definition that is contextually relevant. Respondents view intercultural dialogue as essentially an endogenous process, in which a country's particular context is paramount to how it is understood and implemented. The principles of tolerance, respect and mutual understanding often underpin intercultural dialogue, while the form it takes may differ between societies, be locally specific and can be formal or informal. Out of all respondents, 61% note that the core tenets of intercultural dialogue are reflected in recent public statements, while 71% respondents report the existence of a policy in their country that captures the concept of intercultural dialogue. As intercultural dialogue is closely linked to the concept of diversity, the latter can influence the particular form of intercultural dialogue, the scope of the stakeholders involved and the extent of their inclusion in processes.

**4. Regional trends in intercultural dialogue policies reveal specific priorities.**

Most respondent countries from the Latin America and the Caribbean region highlight intercultural dialogue policies focused on the recognition and celebration of indigenous cultures, particularly through languages. Among European respondents, a notable proportion refer to intercultural dialogue as a means of addressing migrant and refugee issues. In the Africa region, intercultural dialogue is cited as

a means of reconciliation following conflict and former political regimes. Cultural and creative expressions are also referred to as an effective means to enhance cultural diversity and favour the promotion of intercultural dialogue. About 80% of respondents from the Africa region cite traditional leaders and elders as important stakeholders in intercultural dialogue.

**5. Responses reflect and in many instances prioritize the role of national governments in the management of intercultural dialogue.**

Respondents state that appropriate policy frameworks and political will are crucial to ensuring effective intercultural dialogue. Policies to promote intercultural dialogue require holistic, interdisciplinary and integrated approaches. In most cases, the focus of a particular intercultural dialogue programme and its target beneficiaries determine which national authority is responsible for its implementation. In other cases, where responsibility is spread across several ministries, the efficacy of intercultural dialogue processes is highly dependent on the efficiency of policy coordination. As highlighted by some respondents, even when policies and legislation are in place, rigid societal codes can prove remarkably resilient to change.

**6. Specific competencies are required to build on the intercultural principles of tolerance, respect, dialogue and mutual understanding.**

Today's global landscape is characterized by a diversity of peoples, communities and individuals who live in increasing proximity. Respondents highlight the contribution of awareness and respect for the culture of others, awareness of cultural context (including one's own culture) and enhanced social trust to improving intercultural competencies. The findings emphasize the crucial role of educational institutions in building and enhancing the resilience of societies, promoting citizen responsibility, and advocating for inclusion and pluralism.

**7. 73% of respondent countries report that their intercultural policies relate to education, highlighting the high priority attributed to the role of formal and informal education in facilitating**

**intercultural dialogue.** The education programmes cited include those targeting awareness raising and the integration of persons from different cultural backgrounds, safeguarding cultural diversity, inclusion of linguistic diversity and the promotion of civic responsibility. The emphasis placed on education policies is also echoed in future planned activities mentioned by several respondents.

**8. The media also emerges as a particularly effective mechanism for the promotion of intercultural dialogue.**

Respondents emphasize the importance of the media as a tool for communication and expression. Emerging technologies have opened up new pathways for sharing cultural expressions, providing access to information and promoting citizen participation. Respondents cite the significant rise in the use of social media as a means to enhance civil society voices and foster inclusive participation. They also highlight further use of the media as a means to enhance mutual knowledge of cultural diversity through content and programming, disseminating surveys and testing public opinion. At the same time, respondents express concern over the way that such tools can be exploited as a vehicle for hate speech and racism, as well as to undermine social inclusion and incite violence.

**9. Respondents highlight the importance of ensuring inclusive participation and access to spaces for intercultural dialogue.**

They state that policies should foster the full participation and engagement of all members of society, particularly women and youth. Respondents also underline the importance of establishing spaces for intercultural dialogue to take place. These spaces must be secure and ensure inclusive access to dialogue. Cultural institutions are a key example in this regard. Inclusive participation, characteristic of the interdisciplinary and multi-stakeholder participation of intercultural dialogue, also ensures that change is felt on the ground where it counts most.

**10. Faith-based institutions, communities, denominations and leaders are cited as effective entry points for intercultural dialogue.** They are also recognized for their role in supporting the implementation of policies and activities, and in peace mediation efforts. Respondents also cite closer cooperation between heads of religious denominations and stronger involvement in efforts to reject religious exploitation as important factors in enabling intercultural dialogue. Furthermore, 70% of respondents highlight the role played by intercultural dialogue in promoting harmonious interreligious co-existence.

**11. Intercultural dialogue requires multi-stakeholder cooperation and engagement.** Respondents highlight a range of actors and institutions involved in intercultural dialogue, varying from government ministries and political leaders to faith-based organizations and leaders, UN bodies, universities, cultural institutions, NGOs and civil society. They argue that the resilience of these processes depends on interdisciplinary cooperation, and that progress in intercultural dialogue requires multi-stakeholder cooperation, shared responsibility and strong leadership.

**12. The findings demonstrate a need for more comprehensive data development and collection methods, sensitive to the nature of intercultural dialogue and its less tangible and implicit forms of interaction.** Out of all respondents, 83% recommend that UNESCO support intercultural processes through data development and collection. Such efforts would help address the need for a more defined understanding of intercultural dialogue among all citizens. Promoting solid data development at national level would foster contextual investigation and take into consideration local specificities, as well as contribute to building national capacities for more robust policy-making and coherence. Reliable, relevant and comprehensive data are essential for tracking the impact of intercultural dialogue over time and for identifying strengths and weaknesses in its operation. This also has broader implications vis-à-vis the importance given to intercultural dialogue in implementing the 2030 Agenda and contributing to the UN's peacebuilding architecture and its emphasis on sustaining peace. Strengthened partnerships between civil society and public sector officials could support further research and the development of solid data for meaningful monitoring, assessment and evaluation of intercultural dialogue. In the case of a third of respondent countries, the administration of intercultural dialogue is ensured at local and municipal level, which presents an opportunity for further cooperation to advance data collection and share good practices.

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## Moving ahead

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The findings of this survey underscore the importance of developing stronger data to more effectively mobilize dialogue, both as a value in itself and as a means to prevent and resolve conflict and sustain peace. This linkage was further highlighted by the adoption of Decision 202 EX/12 on the International Decade for the Rapprochement of Cultures by UNESCO's Executive Board.

There is widespread recognition of the efficacy of dialogue for developing both institutional and personal resilience, as a means to counter the global rise in extremism, violence and fragility. However, there is a scarcity of policy and practice-relevant data to measure the capacities of societies to facilitate dialogue. This deficit has led to conceptual fragmentation, limited operational engagement, and reluctance to use evidence in policies and action towards effective dialogue.

UNESCO will therefore launch a long-term, ambitious project to create a global corpus of data to measure the presence and efficacy of the dimensions of 'enabling environments' for effective dialogue, as well as their contribution to achieving core outcomes such as prevention of conflict and the protection of human rights. This

comprehensive dataset will enable the production of new knowledge that will help to:

- understand the drivers of effective dialogue for enhanced intercultural understanding in order to prevent and resolve conflict and sustain peace;
- understand which dimensions of the enabling environments for dialogue are strong and which require support;
- identify the types of intervention needed to bolster the effectiveness of dialogue as a standard and an instrument for advancing intercultural understanding to prevent and resolve conflict and sustain peace; and
- clarify the contribution of intercultural dialogue to key outcomes such as the prevention of conflict and the promotion and protection of human rights.

Ultimately, this project will improve the effectiveness of UNESCO's strategic programming over the course of the second half of the International Decade. It will also ensure that activities are responsive to the key global development imperatives of Agenda 2030 and the UN Secretary General's prioritization of prevention within his reform of the UN's peace architecture.

# Annex: Template of the questionnaire

In a world of growing diversity, intercultural dialogue and its promotion are steadily gaining momentum. Only recently<sup>2</sup>, UNESCO Member States ranked intercultural dialogue as high priority area in which the Organization should increase support to its Member States.

To respond effectively to this demand and to further advance in implementing the International Decade for the Rapprochement of Cultures (2013-2022)<sup>3</sup>, for which UNESCO is the lead UN Agency, a deeper understanding of intercultural dialogue are essential.

Indeed, since the launch of the Decade, deep fissures in social justice as well as surges of radicalization and violent extremism have escalated to alarming levels. These tendencies clearly demonstrate that aspirations to pluralism, tolerance and the building a culture of peace in our societies have not yet proven sufficient.

Existing mechanisms must be reviewed, new ones put in place and intercultural dialogue – the necessary foundation for the stability and thrive of our societies – strengthened.

The recently adopted 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development also gives fresh impetus and orientations within the scope of this Decade, as well as contributing to its upstream perspective. Grounded on a universal, integrated and human rights-based approach, the Agenda underscores the importance of managing cultural diversity and achieving a rapprochement of cultures as a prerequisite to creating and sustaining peace.

Against this backdrop, the following survey has been developed as a step forward in the International Decade for the Rapprochement of Cultures, in keeping with areas for special focus that have been identified<sup>4</sup>. It looks at the concept of intercultural dialogue, its current state, its operational dimension and its future prospects. It should allow us to “take the pulse” and entice UNESCO and its Member States to deepen their knowledge and enhance their actions on intercultural dialogue and to inform a more effective contribution to the implementation of SDG 16, to “promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels”.

The questionnaire has been prepared jointly by the UNESCO Institute for Statistics and the Sector for Social and Human Sciences. It has been reviewed by the UNESCO/UNITWIN Network on Interreligious Dialogue for Intercultural Understanding to ensure consistency with existing knowledge and ongoing research in the area of intercultural dialogue.

The results of the survey will be communicated to Member States once the findings have been analysed.

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## **I. Understanding Intercultural Dialogue**

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At this stage, intercultural dialogue is a relative loosely defined concept; no universally agreed formal definition exists. The principal purpose of this section is, therefore, to better grasp how respondents perceive and describe intercultural dialogue.

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2 Preliminary analysis of Member States and Associate Members replies to the questionnaire on the Programme and Budget for the period 2018-2021 (39 C/5), p.5

3 The United Nations General Assembly adopted in December 2012 resolution 67/104, proclaiming the period 2013-2022 as the International Decade for the Rapprochement of Cultures.

4 Decision 197EX/9 on “Report on the implementation of the International Decade for the Rapprochement of Cultures (2013-2022)”

Via a 5-steps approach, this first section allows us to identify the essential components of intercultural dialogue, to obtain further insights into its contributions and positive effects as well as to assess the relevance of its possible roles.

This section should hence result in a skeleton outlining the concept of intercultural dialogue across Member States and clarifying ideas about its potential, establishing thus a clearer framework and focus for UNESCO's future activities in this field.

1. The Action Plan for the International Decade for the Rapprochement of Cultures (2013-2022), adopted by the Executive Board of UNESCO at its 194th session and endorsed by the UN General Assembly in December 2014 states that: 'Lasting peace rests on a complex and fragile fabric of interrelated values, attitudes and behaviours required both in the implementation of international treaties and in the course of daily life with the practice of respect, tolerance, openness, mutual understanding and dialogue. Above all, dialogue is bound to play an increased role in the development of a universal global consciousness, free from racial, ethnic and social prejudices.'

**On this basis, how do you understand intercultural dialogue? Are there any elements in/ aspects of the above statement you wish to emphasize?**

2. Please indicate to what extent you agree or disagree that the following components are an essential part of *intercultural dialogue*:

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Partly agree/ partly disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	No answer
Inter-state dialogue						
Intra-state dialogue						
Dialogue between people of different cultural backgrounds						
Interreligious dialogue						
Dialogue between people of different ethnic/linguistic backgrounds						
Dialogue between people with different education backgrounds						

**3. Please rate if your country has formally adopted a public statement, a definition, a strategy, a policy or any other instrument capturing key features of the concept of *intercultural dialogue*:**

	Yes	No	In preparation	No answer
Public statement				
Definition				
Strategy				
Policy				
Any other instrument				

**If yes, please specify its content and nature**

	Content
Public statement	
Definition	
Strategy	
Policy	
Any other instrument	

**4. Do you think that *intercultural dialogue* contributes:**

	Contributes	Partly contributes	Doesn't contribute	No answer
Promoting tolerance and openness				



Generating economic growth				
Preventing violent extremism				
Enhancing rule of law				
Enhancing respect for human rights				
Enhancing social reconciliation				
Improving social inclusion				
Ensuring integration of refugees and migrants				
Increasing the well-being of citizens				
Enhancing respect for democracy				
Overcoming prejudices and stereotypes				
Please indicate other contributions of <i>intercultural dialogue</i> , if any				

**5. Please rate how relevant the role played by *intercultural dialogue* is in bringing about the following - 1 (not at all) to 5 (important):**

	1	2	3	4	5
Good governance and democracy					
Human rights					

Economic development					
Social policy and social change					
Harmonious interreligious coexistence					
Personal and social well-being					
Peaceful and constructive cohabitation					

## II. State of Affairs

This section concentrates on the past and ongoing promotion of and support to intercultural dialogue in Member States. With its focus on endorsed policies, on past projects and on mainstreaming efforts, it will give us have an idea of the state of play of actions taken by Member States.

More concretely, by asking the questions What? Who? and How? This section aims to assess the prominence of different stakeholders, the type of activities contributing best to promoting intercultural dialogue and the level of achievement in Member States in terms of measures already endorsed (policies, financial provisions, best practices, etc.). Moreover, it looks at the challenges encountered in doing so.

Ultimately, the analysis of the information collected should allow UNESCO to obtain a snapshot of the current situation in Member States and identify key gaps and challenges, with a view to tapping into opportunities for future programming and initiatives.

### 6. Please indicate whether your country has:

	Yes	No	Under preparation	No answer	If yes, please give further descriptions and add relevant examples:
Organized one-shot activities to promote intercultural dialogue					
Adopted a long-term targeted policy to encourage projects and initiatives relating to intercultural dialogue in					
Adopted a policy to actively encourage schools and universities to take actions in promoting intercultural dialogue					

Adopted a long-term targeted policy to run projects and initiatives promoting intercultural dialogue					
Adopted a policy mainstreaming intercultural dialogue into other policy areas					
Please indicate other measures taken you consider relevant to mention					

**7. Please specify if there are institutions tasked with a specific responsibility for promoting *intercultural dialogue* in your country:**

	Yes	No	No answer	If yes, please specify
Agency				
Ministerial department				
Administration				
Any other body				

**8. Is there a specific financial provision for promoting *intercultural dialogue*?**

Yes	
No	

**If yes, please specify**

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**9. Please indicate the extent to which the following activities contribute best to promoting *intercultural dialogue* in your country:**

	Can contribute	Partly contribute	Cannot contribute	No answer
Workshops and trainings				
Targeted educational programmes in schools and universities				
Scientific conferences and seminars				
Public debates				
Media outlets				
E-resources				
Please list other activities, if any, that have favoured the promotion of <i>intercultural dialogue</i> in your country				

**10. Please rate how important the following stakeholders are in promoting *intercultural dialogue* in your country 1 (not at all) to 5 (important):**

	1	2	3	4	5
National government					
Political parties and movements					
Schools and universities					
Religious authorities					
Civil Society					

The media					
UNESCO					
The UN as a whole					
Internationals organizations					
Please list other stakeholders, if any that have favoured the promotion of <i>intercultural dialogue</i> in your country.					

**11. Please specify, what are the challenges encountered by promoting intercultural dialogue in your country:**

**Kindly list up to 3 challenges:**

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### III. Operational Dimension

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This section tries to assemble guidelines for operationalizing intercultural dialogue. Through a step-by-step approach, it looks at the enabling factors and the conditions which should be met, from the very outset or achieved during the process, for intercultural dialogue to take place, to result in action and to be evaluated.

The insights stemming from Member States’ answers will create awareness and deepen our understanding of the operational dimension of intercultural dialogue, hence allowing UNESCO to actively support Member States in creating enabling environments for intercultural dialogue.

**12. Please specify which enabling factors need to be met for the positive effects of *intercultural dialogue* to unfold:**

**13. How would you put *intercultural dialogue* to work? How to move from words to action?**

**14. How would you measure the positive effects of intercultural dialogue?**

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## IV. The way ahead

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This last section looks at the future: what is the most efficient way ahead for intercultural dialogue? How can UNESCO best support the strengthening of intercultural dialogue? With whom should UNESCO enhance its coordination efforts?

This section constitutes an important source of inspiration and guidance for UNESCO in anticipating, prioritizing and shaping the next steps in promoting intercultural dialogue.

**15. Please indicate how you plan to engage in strengthening *intercultural dialogue* in the future:**

**16. Please rate to what extent the following UNESCO actions could support this strengthening process –1 (not at all) to 5 (a lot)**

	1	2	3	4	5
Develop global comparable data and statistics					

Engage in innovative research projects					
Capacity-building					
Knowledge-sharing					
Engage in campaign and outreach activities					
Please indicate other ways to strengthen this process					

**17. Should UNESCO increasingly cooperate with other international institutions/organizations/networks promoting *intercultural dialogue*?**

YES	
NO	
If yes, with whom and how?	



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INTERNATIONAL DECADE  
for the RAPPROCHEMENT OF CULTURES  
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