



The Network for Religious and Traditional Peacemakers (Network) is implementing the European Union-funded consortium project "Southeast Asia: Advancing Inter-Religious Dialogue and Freedom of Religion or Belief" (SEA-AIR). The 30-month project began in January 2019 and is being implemented in consortium with Finn Church Aid (FCA), Islamic Relief Worldwide (IRW), Sathirakoses Nagapradipa Foundation (SNF), World Conference of Religions for Peace (RfP), and World Faiths Development Dialogue (WFDD).



Southeast Asia: Advancing Inter-Religious Dialogue & Freedom of Religion or Belief

A European Union-funded project

SEA-AIR Project aims to contribute to an **improved consensus** and a **conducive environment** for the protection of **freedom of religion or belief** and for a **peaceful coexistence** of groups and individuals with **different** religious affiliations in **Southeast Asia.**

Specifically, the project aims to enhance local capacities to address discrimination on the grounds of religion or belief through interfaith understanding and mainstreaming at the country and regional level in South and Southeast Asian countries.

Theory of Change

When the capacity of pro-FoRB religious actors and change-makers is increased, they can initiate context-specific interfaith pro-FoRB approaches. Their positive results documented and disseminated through an effective communication strategy targeting both policymakers and communities leads to a social environment more receptive to pro-FoRB initiatives and policies at regional, national, and local levels.

Key Target Groups

The project's key target groups include religious clergy and traditional actors, women, youth and minority change-makers, NGOs and civil society groups, Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Secretariat, relevant South and the Southeast Asian States, and UN missions/agencies.

Final beneficiaries will include women, youth, minority groups and other individuals marginalized or discriminated on the basis of religion or impacted by escalating challenges to FoRB in target countries.

Project Components

The SEA-AIR project takes a multifaceted approach to understand the conflicts in one of the most religiously diverse regions in the world.



Strategic Country-Regional Analysis and Research

The SEA-AIR project is producing a series of training and communications materials for FoRB and peace practitioners. SEA-AIR staff produced seven country and regional FoRB briefs prior to its Expert Seminar in 2019 with participants representing areas of expertise related to FoRB such as gender, Islamophobia, hate speech, and international human rights law. The key findings and questions identified at the seminar informed the SEA-AIR research agenda. Project staff will conduct research to develop policy-relevant FoRB and social cohesion materials for the ASEAN Secretariat, and South and Southeast Asia States. Additionally, SEA-AIR staff are developing an Interfaith Resource Guide that will be available in English, Bangaldeshi, and Burmese for use by intra- and interfaith practitioners throughout South and Southeast Asia.



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Sustainable Capacity Building and Regional Networking

One of the aims of the project is to build the capacity and skills of local changemakers/influencers, and empower and support them to challenge discrimination and oppression of minority religions and FoRB in their own communities and contexts. Under the Interfaith Fellowship Program (IFP) of the SEA-AIR project, the staff selected 60 grassroots change-makers from 10 countries: Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, Sri Lanka, and Thailand. During two Fellowship Workshops in August 2019 and February 2020, Fellows took part in training sessions and activities focused on FoRB and religion's role in conflict, mediation, communication, peer learning, hardline engagement, inter and intrafaith dialogue, analysis, and process design. Mentors advised the Fellows after they returned home and they used the context analysis and process design skills learned to develop and implement plans of action. Additionally, SEA-AIR provides financial support to Fellows through small grants to design peaceful coexistence actions in the region.

SEA-AIR is also providing grant support to existing or developing Interfaith Councils or CSOs in Sri Lanka, Myanmar, and Bangladesh. This support aims to consolidate sustainable regional networks of traditional and faith orientated local change-makers in their work.

Toward further strengthening of regional collaboration, SEA-AIR partner organizations are collaboratively working with the Executive Secretary of the International Buddhist Muslim Relationship Forum (IBMF) to broaden its membership and community reach.

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Counter-narrative Communications Strategy

This component involves mainstream and social media to highlight voices of influential religious, traditional, women, youth, and minority change-makers to promote mainstream acceptance of FoRB and peaceful coexistence narratives in Myanmar, Bangladesh, and broader South and Southeast Asia.

To know more about the project, write to project.seaair@gmail.com

Country Profiles on FoRB

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