

MUSLIMS IN STATE AND SOCIETY WORLDWIDE

SOCIAL COMMITMENT AND POLITICAL PARTICIPATION
FROM AFRICA TO ASIA AND IN EUROPE



Konrad
Adenauer
Stiftung

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Foreword



Compatibility of Islam and democracy has been a controversial subject of debate around the world for many years. The discussions often arrive at conclusions and answers that have little to do with the realities in Muslim societies. In fact, there are Muslims in many parts of the world who coopera-

te in establishing and developing democratic societies entirely as a matter of course. To them, **Islam and democracy** are anything but opposites. They become involved in state and society as Muslims and do not see any contradiction between religious affiliation and involvement in social policy matters. This involvement is all too often not appreciated sufficiently or ignored altogether.

As an institution close to Christian democracy, the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung supports the efforts Muslims make towards democracy and the rule of law in Germany and globally. And it has done so for many years. To us, the fact that an individual is rooted in their faith is not a fundamental obstacle to their involvement in establishing and developing democratic societies. On the contrary, basing their political and social activities on **faith can provide people with orientation** and encouragement. This applies equally to Christians, Muslims and members of other faiths. **Practical experience** confirms this approach. The foundation thus collaborates with **partners** in many countries around that world who work for democracy and the rule of law as Muslims or who encourage understanding between members of different religions as citizens. Consequently, the scope of **the projects that we support** is wide. The topic of religious tolerance plays a large role for us in our activities. This **tolerance towards people of other faiths** is important to us not least because there have been many occasions over the years where we have seen social developments in some countries increasingly threaten to repress this fundamental attitude, which is so vital to people's coexistence and cooperation.

However, our experience also tells us the following: Religious tolerance is possible, but it needs to be supported and encouraged. It is precisely against this background that we decided to conduct **the project entitled "Muslims in State and Society worldwide. Social Commitment and Political Participation"** this year. On the one hand, the aim was to bring a selected number of our many partners in this area together and enable them to **network** and learn from one another. On the other hand, we wanted to facilitate the exchange of experiences across regions and continents – from Sub-Saharan Africa to Europe to Asia. Three **workshops** held in Istanbul (February), Singapore (April) and Casablanca (June) provided ample opportunity to exchange diverse experiences. These ranged from the provision of basic political education for Indonesian and Turkish Koran teachers and imams to inter-religious exchange in Bosnia, Lebanon and Tanzania to support for the rights of Muslim women in Pakistan and Jordan. A conference on the same subject will be held in Berlin in November 2013 to bring the project to a conclusion for the time being and simultaneously ensure that the various stimuli from the workshops can be utilised to inform not only our international work but also **the debate within Germany**.

One crucial insight from the workshops is that sustainable strengthening of democracy or successful development towards it is only possible if the actors acknowledge the **diversity** existing in the respective societies. The partners with whom the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung cooperates do so. The "Muslims in State and Society worldwide" project has illustrated impressively how diverse and multi-faceted political education work is in Muslim countries and societies as well and that there are Muslims all over the world who are committed to democracy and the rule of law, thereby answering the question of compatibility between democracy and Islam at a very practical and individual level.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Gerhard Wahlers".

Dr. Gerhard Wahlers
Deputy Secretary General

Dialogue on a par with each other

Interview with the Chairman of the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung on KAS activities in Muslim countries



Dr. Hans-Gert Pöttering, MEP, Chairman of the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung und former President of the European Parliament

Which objectives does KAS as a foundation based on the Christian view of man pursue in Muslim countries?

Let me start by stating that we are a political foundation, not a religious one. The key topics of our international work are democracy, human rights and the rule of law. The Christian view of man does, however, serve as a basis for us and spurs us on. The values derived from it, such as the dignity of the individual, their freedom to exercise free will and the fact that all people are equal, are of social and political significance. While some people in Islamic countries find these concepts difficult to comprehend, we have many partners in the Islamic world, including devout

Muslims, who share these convictions. And we are in discussions with many people who are of different opinions, but have a genuine interest and willingness to enter into dialogue. Attributions and catchwords such as “the West”, “Christianity” or “Islam” are not helpful at all. They do not do justice to the great variety of ideological and political stances amongst Muslims or the differentiated nature of our work.

Do the populations in the countries where you operate see it that way as well? Or is KAS perceived as an actor from the “West” and possibly even rejected as such?

That differs greatly. Our experience shows, however, that discussions will prove constructive when we are totally open about our stance and our objectives. Dialogue must always be conducted with the two parties acknowledging each other as equals, which means that neither party sees itself as morally superior from the outset. There are people in every part of the world with whom we conduct discussions on this basis.

Where do you see the challenges to KAS’ work in countries with a majority Muslim population?

The work we do in predominantly Muslim countries does not differ fundamentally from that done in other parts of the world. Wherever we operate, we put on events offering political education and political dialogue, which we develop and implement in close cooperation with local actors. While our offerings are in line with the general key concepts and guiding principles of our foundation, they are realised on the ground taking into account the particular political and social circumstances. This poses the continuous challenge of having to respond to new situational conditions. Many Islamic countries are currently in a phase of upheaval, which started over two years ago with the events in Tunisia, Egypt and

Libya. It is still by no means clear where the political developments in these countries will ultimately lead. In some countries, there are obvious signs of a trend towards recreating the old order. It is in these places in particular that our offering is not universally welcome. In Egypt and in the United Arab Emirates, our offices have been closed pursuant to a court order or an edict by the authorities. While we regret this, we will not let it deflect us from our goals because credibility is important for political dialogue. Be that as it may, we are carrying on with our work in many other predominantly Muslim countries, and we have even expanded our activities in some places. Besides this work, we also have a duty to do what we can to ensure that Christians will have a future within the Arab world. We therefore speak out against any form of discrimination or violence.

What does all this have to do with the work KAS does in Germany?

A great deal! And I am not just talking about the simple observation that in a globalised world social, economic and political tensions always also have an impact in other countries. What I mean is that we conduct many political debates, such as those our partners conduct in Muslim countries, here in Germany and in Europe as well, but starting from a slightly different perspective. The key question that keeps coming up is what type of politics a society characterised by religious and ethnic plurality needs. Because those countries that I refer to as Islamic countries for the sake of simplification also generally have ethnic and confessional diversity, and the situation of minorities is often difficult. In other words, both here and there the issues are minority rights and the negotiation of interests. In Germany, there is currently a debate about which – equitable – place Islam and other religions that immigrants brought with them can have in the fabric of relations between the state and organised religions. Cultural diversity is increasing, but at the same

time we need a foundation of common values to ensure the continued existence of our democratic community. Whatever differences there may be, everybody must agree on the democratic rules and respect different opinions as well as majority decisions.

The interview was conducted by Katharina Senge.



Dr. Hans-Gert Pöttering with project partners of KAS at a workshop in Casablanca in 2013

Religion and Human Rights: Not a Question of “Either – Or”

Irfan Abubakar is upgrading teachers of Islamic schools in Indonesia.
Focus: Human Rights

By Katrin Kampling



*Irfan Abubakar,
Center for the Study of Religion
and Culture, Indonesia*

“We have a big problem in Indonesia”, says Irfan Abubakar, “namely prejudice in Islamic schools.” The Director of the Center for the Study of Religion and Culture (CSRC) in Jakarta may be mind-mannered, but he means business where this issue is concerned. He explains that many teachers and pupils in Islamic schools in Indonesia have a strong prejudice against the concept of human rights. To them human rights are in actual fact attempts by Western governments to destroy Muslim culture in Indonesia. “In their heads there is only one logical sequence,” he says. “Human rights originate from the West. The West represents liberalism. And that can only bring about bad behaviour.”

The Center has been collaborating with the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung since 2002, conducting workshops on political Islam in Indonesia amongst other things. For the last three years, they have been making joint efforts to dispel prejudice against human rights in seminars. They ask heads of Koranic schools to allow young male and female teachers aged 25 to 35 to attend the seminars. Center Director Abubakar thinks that at that age people’s views are not yet that engrained. “Initially, we attempted to address the older generation, the school management,” he reminisces. But that did not get them anywhere. Instead, they hoped that the young teachers at the pesantren, the Indonesian Koranic schools, would be able to influence the future of the schools as well as their superiors. But the young participants are apparently also predominantly conservative in their outlook – and mostly male. “Many are afraid that they would have to choose between their religion and human rights,” says Abubakar. One way by which they attempt to counter this preconception is to jointly look for verses in the Koran that represent individual human rights.

To date, the CSRC has held these seminars in 17 Indonesian cities. But as there are approximately 20,000 pesantren in total throughout the archipelago, Abubakar’s work is nowhere near completed. “So far, we have only reached approximately one per cent of schools,” he states. But the Center Director is sure that they will achieve their goal with their seminars in the long term. “The participants understand that having a discussion can bear fruit and does not necessarily mean that you do not respect your elders,” he says. This is an issue because respect is valued greatly in predominantly Muslim societies. “Our goal is to end up with young Muslim activists who advocate human rights.”

A Muslim’s faith does not automatically preclude him or her from supporting modern values. Abubakar is committed to the cause precisely because he is a Muslim. “My Muslim education has shaped my life and my self-image,” he says. He sees many areas where Islamic values and human rights coincide. And he wishes to pass this insight on.

Answers from the Imam instead of “Sheikh Google”

Since 2006, the KAS Turkey Office has been organising five-day intensive courses for imams from the Diyanet, the state authority for religious affairs, who will work in different Muslim communities in Germany in coming years. Since 2008, Prof. Rauf Ceylan from Osnabrück University has been preparing the imams for living and working in Germany on behalf of the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung. The German religious studies academic and Dr. Mahmut Fevzi Hamurcu, manager of the Diyanet department responsible for Turks living abroad, talk about the joint project in an interview.



Dr. Mahmut Fevzi Hamurcu, manager of the Diyanet department responsible for Turks living abroad (left) and Prof. Rauf Ceylan (right), Institute for Islamic Theology, Osnabrück University, Germany

What is your objective with respect to the imam training?

Prof. Raul Ceylan: We would like to have German-speaking imams. Imams who know the local living conditions and the problems of Muslim communities in Germany. Imams who can help young Muslims when they have religious questions. We have problems with radical groups. In their search for answers, young Muslims carry out research on the Internet and turn to “Sheikh Google”, where they frequently encounter radical imams.

Dr. Mahmut Fevzi Hamurcu: Indeed and this can easily take them onto the wrong path.

Ceylan: That is why we would like to have imams who can serve as competent contacts where religious questions are concerned.

Hamurcu: And language must not be neglected in this context because it can build bridges between the cultures. It is important that the imams can speak German.



Prof. Ceylan (left) at a KAS-workshop in Istanbul 2013

„Since 9/11 there has been an ‚Islamisation‘ of the integration discourse, which is a very bad development.“

Rauf Ceylan, Germany

What problems do the imams face when they come to Germany?

Ceylan: For one thing, there is the Muslim community with three generations of faithful. The first generation would like a Turkish-speaking imam because they either do not speak German at all or only poorly. Some among the second generation speak very good Turkish, but some do not. And the third generation speak very good German, but no longer much Turkish. This means that the younger people cannot understand everything when a (Turkish-speaking; editor’s note) imam gives a sermon during Friday prayers; they can hardly follow what he is saying. The language issue also arises during weekend lessons. Of course it is not only the language that creates difficulties but also the living environment of Muslims in Germany (which is unfamiliar to the imams; editor’s note). There is a general deficit that we hope to rectify with our programmes in the future.

Hamurcu: Several years ago, our imams started to summarise their sermons in German afterwards. They briefly reiterate the most important points made in the sermon. But that is just not enough. We need the whole text to properly understand the sermon.

Ceylan: But we can see that people are highly motivated to learn.

Which prejudices do the imams have when they come to Germany?

Ceylan and Hamurcu in one voice: They have fears, but no prejudices.

Ceylan: The participants have the same fears that my father had when he came to Germany in the sixties.

Hamurcu: Yes, it is a new world for the imams, which they find difficult to gain access to.

Ceylan: For many it is simply an opportunity to see another country and to learn another language. They have many goals, wishes and projects, and that also puts them under pressure. Working in a mosque is a 24-hour job. And the imams are not familiar with life here. One of their greatest fears is the education of their own children. I am referring to the results of the Pisa study and the social selection within our education system. And finally, most of them ask me whether they can also go to university or do a doctorate in Germany. They are very interested in higher education. (Addressed to Hamurcu:) Were you actually aware of this?

Hamurcu: Yes, I was. In cases where an imam has the capability of obtaining a master's degree or a doctorate, we do our best to find him a position in a mosque near a university so that he can realise his dream.

Ceylan: Earlier on I mentioned the three generations. They also have different ideas about what an imam should be like. The first generation would like a traditional imam. But young Muslims would like an educator, a social worker, who can speak fluent German. They have a totally different view of the position. Consequently, it is very difficult for the imams to fulfil such contradictory expectations. This affects particularly the younger imams, who behave like social workers – the first generation does not accept them as 'proper' imams.

Do the imams have prejudices against the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung as a foundation with a Christian background?

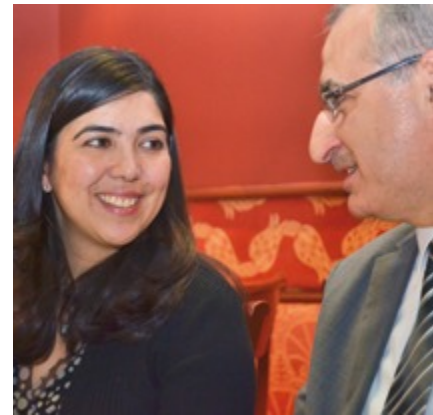
Ceylan: Of course they ask questions about that. I then try to explain to the participants that it is a win-win situation for all those involved. Of course we work against the background that we train imams because of the important role they play in the migration and integration process. But our offering also represents a great opportunity for the participants themselves. In the course of the five days, they receive an incredible amount of information as well as our telephone numbers and contact addresses. We try to answer all their questions so that they know what awaits them on their arrival in Germany.

Hamurcu: One could say that the seminars open the door for the imams. It is a great programme that helps imams to prepare for life in Germany. They can then come here without having to worry and start their work without any hesitation.

Mr Hamurcu, do you see programmes such as the new imam training in Osnabrück as competition?

Hamurcu: No, definitely not. On the contrary. Such programmes help us because the trainers there are much more familiar with the situation in Germany than we are.

The interview was conducted by Katrin Kampling and Christina Schmitt.



Meeting at a KAS-workshop in Istanbul: Politician Aygül Özkan and Mahmut Fevzi Hamurcu

Islam in Political Education

Political education events on the subject of “Islam in Germany” are attributed to the policy field of “Integration and Social Cohesion”, which is considered a cross-sectional issue at the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung and undertaken by every department. At the Schloss Eichholz Educational Centre in Wesseling (between Cologne and Bonn), a series of lectures is regularly held once or twice per year.

By Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff

The three-day seminar, **Islam – Religion and Societal Model** communicates basic information about Islam and the situation of Muslims in Germany. The seminar usually concludes with a visit to a mosque. There, participants have the opportunity to discuss questions of Islamic religion under the guidance of an Imam.

A **Training Course on Multipliers from Migrant Organisations** has been developed in cooperation with the Alliance for Democracy and Tolerance (Bündnis für Demokratie und Toleranz); as of 2013, two modules have been held with great success. The goal of the training courses is to support selected young people, to encourage civil engagement and nation-wide networking and, in doing so, to strengthen the work of organisations and clubs.

The series of seminars, **Migrants in Politics**, pursues the goal of improving integration through greater political involvement of migrants. Up to now, migrants have only been poorly represented in all the political parties and have thus been only narrowly able to contribute to the process of political decision-making. The primary target audience for this seminar is not immigrants, but rather people who are already politically active and who can be sensitised to the particular situation of migrants.

Every year the five-day seminar, **Arrival at an Immigration Society – Ethnic Diversity as a Model for Success**, takes place at Konrad Adenauer’s holiday home in Cadenabbia on Lake Como. This high-level event in this historic setting is devoted to the opportunities an ethnically diverse society presents. Successful speakers who have immigrated and belong to the Islamic faith are models for success and present perspectives on successful integration.



The civic education center at Eichholz Castle is the very starting point of the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung

Democracy Begins in School

“Education is the key to democratisation”, says Dr. Djayadi “Jay” Hanan. By means of political education he transforms teachers in Indonesia to role models.

By Christina Hecking

Indonesia is currently on its way to becoming a stable democracy. Since the Suharto dictatorship ended in 1998, the world’s largest island nation has accomplished a lot. One of the things people wanted was to change and rebuild the education system. The “Institute for Education Reform” (IER) at Paramadina University, founded in 2002, dedicated itself to this goal. Dr. Djayadi “Jay” Hanan, Associate Professor of International Relations, is a founding member and deputy director. For him, education is the key to democratising the country. “We believe that this democratisation process must involve every single person who lives in our country so that people can learn appropriate values and habits initially and then become accustomed to them,” says Hanan.

In accordance with these ideals, the IER formulated four guidelines: free education for everyone; a higher degree of teacher professionalisation; politically independent education and a democratic educational system.

School is the most important place

According to Hanan, school is strategically the best place to learn democracy. Among other things, this is because teachers are often role models for the younger generation. School is the focal point of the democratic educational process because the country’s future is taught there.

The IER began the “Teacher Training for Democracy” programme. Its goal is to train secondary and upper secondary school teachers in conveying the values and concepts of a democratic state to their students. According to Hanan, the Institute primarily addresses teachers of socio-scientific subjects. In the long-term, it is important to the IER to expand the network of students and teachers who have participated in the programme and to continue to support them as much as possible. For example, the IER has created a magazine that concentrates on educational topics and democracy for students. In addition, the publication of a book on “educracy”, or education and democracy, is planned for the near future.

KAS is a popular, long-term partner

The “Teaching Democracy” programme has been fully supported by the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung since 2007. “By the end of 2013,” Hanan says optimistically, “we’ll have expanded the programme to more than 30 regions throughout all of Indonesia.” General cooperation with the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung began in 2006. Hanan says this originated when the IER realised just how much the German foundation was interested in the political reform process and the democratic development in Indonesia. From the start, they have found a very good and suitable partner in the KAS.



*Dr. Djayadi Hanan,
Institute for Education Reform,
Indonesia*



”Societal progress only comes through education.“

Rita Pranawati, Indonesia

The IER wants to make a significant contribution to the upcoming 2014 elections in Indonesia through the “Teacher Training for Teaching Democracy” programme, ensuring that the population possesses a better political education and is more observant of national politics.

Hanan was a political activist himself during the transition period from the Suharto regime to democracy. He fought for democratic values and above all to be allowed to freely express his opinions in his country. It was not an easy time for him, but it was very informative: “I consider that time to be one of personal experience that showed me that democracy is the right path politically.”

Islam in Germany: Dialogue Between Science and Politics

What information should an Islamic religious education convey? What new demands have been placed on Imams in German society? What role do women play in mosque communities? How do various movements and Islamic schools relate to one another?

These questions are being investigated through a range of specialist conferences and publications organised by the department Politics and Consulting of the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung in cooperation with the Centre for Inter-cultural Islamic Studies at Osnabrück University.

In the meantime, the Centre is operating as the “Institute for Islamic Theology” and, in doing so, is one of five newly created and federally funded facilities for Islamic theory in Germany.

The joint conferences and specialist publications together with the KAS are establishing a regular exchange of experiences between politicians and scientists during this vital developmental phase for

German Muslims. Professor Bülent Ucar, member of the German Islam Conference and director of the institute: “This is the ultimate purpose of all of the support for the development process: That in the long term, everyone can profit and we can generate a win-win situation for both sides.”



Emerging from the cooperation with the Institute for Inter-cultural Islamic Studies at Osnabrück University several studies could be published.

UNESCO Chair in Tunis: Solutions for the entire Arab world



Haddad with the Chairman of KAS, Dr. Hans-Gert Pöttering (left)

By Anne Ludwigs

Even before the Arab Spring, they had been cooperation partners for many years: The Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung in Tunis and the “Chaire UNESCO d’étude comparative des religions” under its director, Prof. Mohamed Haddad. Following the Tunisian revolution in 2011, they extended their cooperation in a network. Since then, the Arab observatory for religions and freedoms has been monitoring the religious phenomena in the wake of the Arab revolutions, from which it has derived suggestions for the transition to democracy in Tunisia. Furthermore, it is also a matter of finding solutions for the entire Arab world, above all with regard to the problems with religious questions.

Like a think tank in the classic sense, the observatory works out analyses and suggestions for democratic development opportunities. The experts and researchers focus their studies on religious phenomena and contemporary Islamic discourses. Using scientific methods, they evaluate the problems of Arab societies and the processes involved in the transition to democracy. Their methods are the comparative analysis of discourse as well as sociological analysis. They document their analyses of the relations between religion, politics and society. Also, they present orientations and suggestions for rationally and peacefully resolving the problems of democratic change. The current developments in Tunisia are discussed critically in public forums.



”The truth is that Islam is not a unifying force among Muslim dominated countries. Rather than that it’s used by islamist parties in order to enforce their ideas. They have the idea that all of these countries face a Christian invasion that comes from the western sphere, especially from the US.“

Kamran Rajar, Pakistan

“The path to democracy is a long one”

In an interview, Ben Achour, the advisor to the President of the Tunisian party, Nidaa Tounes, describes the political landscape in Tunisia and criticises some negative developments in his country.



Rfaa Ben Achour,
Nidaa Tounes Party, Tunisia

What is the political landscape like in Tunisia after the revolution?

Schematically, the political system can be divided up into three areas: the Islamists and their allies, the Union for Tunisia and the left-wing parties. Our party, Nidaa Tounes, finds itself in a political alliance with 4 other parties, called the Union for Tunisia. As a result, we currently belong to the opposition in the country, because the ruling party is the Islamist Ennahda. However, there are also numerous small parties which cannot be allocated to any of the three main groupings.

Even during the first elections in October 2011, there were innumerable parties. Why was your party founded in addition to these?

The party was only founded in June 2012. Originally, Béji Caïd Essebsi, the former President of the Tunisian transitional government, did not want to found yet another political party. He merely called on the opposition to coalesce in order to avoid splitting the political vote, as had already been a feature of the 2011 elections. From a legal perspective, it is not possible to establish a federation comprising several parties in Tunisia, as a result of which a new party came about: Nidaa Tounes. The name means “Call for Tunisia”.

What is the party’s attitude to Islam?

Islam is an important feature of our identity, and forms part of our history. However, religion is an individual matter for the party members. The state monitored religious freedom and the peaceful practice of religious activities. Our party is secular-oriented, but not atheist.

You worked in the transitional government in 2011 and experienced the changes in your own country. How do you sum up the situation currently for Tunisia?

The country has fundamentally changed since then. The freedom of opinion is a particular positive aspect. The press has undergone development. However, there are also some very negative developments: religious extremism, social division, politically motivated killings and terrorism. Overall, the security situation in the country has worsened. To date, however, the Tunisian people has always managed to prevent political encroachments by the Islamic government into the democratic and modern development of the country. The path to democracy is a long one and contains many drawbacks. But we will tread a successful path.

The interview was conducted by Cosima Gill.

„Islam is a crucial part of our identity and belongs to our history. Nevertheless, religious faith as such is a personal matter of party members.“

Ben Achour, Tunisia

Motivating citizens

The Senegalese historian Penda Mbow is highly committed to a political education of the civil population.



Penda Mbow, Mouvement Citoyen, Senegal

By Cosima Gill

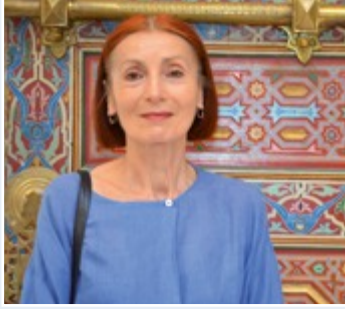
Penda Mbow has a primary goal that she is struggling for: She wants to strengthen democracy in her home country. This desire is woven into the fabric of her background. After studying history at the University of Dakar and achieving a doctorate at the University of Provence Aix-Marseille, she has taught continuously since 1986 whilst also getting involved in politics. In 2001, she worked as the Minister for Culture in the then government, and today she is also the deputy representative for Senegal at the International Organisation of La Francophonie. This organisation is not a purely cultural alliance, but also a political one, and links France with its numerous former colonies and a few other member countries. Mbow's office is regarded as recognition for her political commitment in her home country.

Political commitment for Senegal

Following her first ministerial office, Mbow decided to devote herself fully to civil commitment. In 2002, she campaigned for independent candidates to be able to take part in local elections. Together with her supporters, she subsequently brought the "mouvement citoyen" into being, which currently counts about 300 members. Since its foundation, Mbow has been the President of the organisation, and constantly pursues the objective of "extending the political leadership skills of the young elite." However, Mbow also thinks that the broad education of citizens has an important role to play. In terms of content, the following topics are important for the historian: ideals of peace, justice, work and equality.

„I am proud of the democratic development in Senegal, the crucial role played by civil society and the support we received from partners such as the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung.“

Penda Mbow, Senegal



More than ten years after the movement was founded, Mbow can look back on its achievements with satisfaction. For her, the commitment by the “mouvement citoyen” has already proved very successful. Since 2002, she says, the organisation has been involved in all political movements in Senegal, and has initiated numerous campaigns itself. She continues that the members of the “mouvement citoyen” have frequently been pioneers for the democratic renewal of Senegal. The Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung stands shoulder-to-shoulder with the “mouvement citoyen” as a partner, and has contributed to the movement’s success, for example in the form of seminars and joint publications.

Status quo in the home country

As President of the “mouvement citoyen”, Penda Mbow believes that the people of Senegal are already very mature in terms of political commitment: The citizens discuss political matters a great deal, and they are used to electing the country’s political leaders. “However, the population might be spending too much time on political debates,” says Mbow.

As far as the future of her home country is concerned, she would welcome an improvement in the economy and a better education system. In general, she is proud of her country’s democratic past and the influence of the civil population, and she intends to strengthen both in future as well. The next parliamentary elections in Senegal will be in 2017.

„Islam is and has been a source for identity and will play an important role in the future.“

Sigrid Faath, Germany

“Global Connections Center Tawasul”: More power and a greater right for the civil population to be heard



Khalid Al-Haribi, Global Connections Center Tawasul, Oman

By Christina Hecking

Oman should become a role model – worldwide: as a pioneer of “social solidarity”. This is the ambitious goal that Khalid Al-Haribi has set for himself and his country. The Omani is involved in numerous projects as a “social entrepreneur”. He started this in 2000 after studying politics at West Virginia University in the USA. Al-Haribi’s main job since 2008 has been at the “Global Connections Center Tawasul” in Muscat. The Islamic meaning of the term “tawasul” is “mediation”. The goal of the project is to give the civil population more power and increase its right to be heard through increased training and education. The Center cooperates with domestic and international partners for this purpose.

Crossover between the public and private sectors

According to Al-Haribi, his country should become a role model in terms of “social solidarity”. The State of Oman in the eastern part of the Arabian peninsular should additionally function as a beacon with numerous partnerships between the public and private sectors, and organisations in civil society, in the area of social commitment. “It is not enough simply to communicate with one another. It is much more important to establish partnerships between the public and private sectors, and to work together increasingly. The most important aspect of this is for everything to take place on a political basis,” says Al-Haribi.



„ I think we could live together in the 21st century – Christians, muslims and so on. “

Hans-Gert Pöttering, Germany

The 36-year-old mentions “transparency”, “acceptance” and “assertiveness” as amongst the most important values and guiding principles. On this basis, other civil-society organisations, youth groups, media platforms and various institutions, both public and private, cooperate with “tawasul”.

Linked by shared values

When the cooperation with the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung started a few years ago, for example, Al-Haribi asked himself the question whether the partners actually fitted together, as with any new project partnership. However, he soon placed his confidence in KAS because of their shared values.

The Foundation is mainly involved in projects relating to establishing competence amongst the population. “We would like to encourage the civil population to show greater commitment and raise its voice. This is what we do every day in our work,” says Al-Haribi. Tawasul would like to link up citizens and their opinions with companies in order to achieve stability in the country and to do something to redress the imbalance between the primary and tertiary sectors of the economy (the service sector). “If you are not there for the ordinary person in the street, you cannot be satisfied with your work,” says Khalid Al-Haribi.

By way of an example, he quotes a dialogue project involving 40 young students from Oman. The young academics are linked to significant companies so that they will be able to move into responsible management positions themselves in future. The young people do not know about their rights and duties, he comments.

As far as the partners from abroad are concerned, Al-Haribi says: “With every individual nation, it is important to consider the requirements and traditions. Only in this way will successful cooperation be possible.”

“I collect success stories”

Shahmim Daudi (34) is a lawyer living in Tanzania. In a conversation with Luisa Meisel she explains how she tries to change people through the Inter-Religious Council for Peace Tanzania (IRCPT).

What is the Inter-Religious Council exactly?

It is an organisation that brings many religions together. We have a number of different religions in Tanzania. Almost half the population is Christian, the other half Muslim. But we also have Buddhists, Bahá'ís, Ahmadiyya. We try to organise meetings so that these groups come together and jointly discuss common topics that matter to them all, whatever their religion.

What sort of topics?

For instance equality between men and women, the fight against gender-based violence or the debate about the demand that women should be given the opportunity to take on leadership roles, roles where they are the decision makers. There are many topics and many challenges. The key word of 'tradition' is particularly important for us.

Why tradition?

Tradition determines many things: It prescribes the interpretation of our religion; tradition is the basis for many judicial decisions; tradition determines what women should be like and how they are perceived in the eyes of society. That is one example of where our organisation intervenes with its work. We enlighten people about women's rights. And not just the women, but the men as well of course. We try to tell them that it is in fact not so much a matter concerning just women. It involves me, you and every one of us. It is a matter that concerns us all. And as religious people we all say: when you exploit a woman that's a sin.

But can you give us an idea of what the day-to-day activities of the IRCPT involve? Do you travel to different places and try to speak to the villagers? Or is it more a case of you delivering instruction?

Yes, I do conduct seminars as well. But mainly I travel to the different districts and villages and observe whether the different projects that we initiate are actually being implemented. I am only a coordinator after all. It involves a great deal of speaking to people and trying to get them to call the points that the seminar focused on back to mind. I also travel around and collect success stories about everything we have achieved so far.



*Shahmim Daudi Mwariko,
Inter-Religious Council for Peace
Tanzania*



” Most of the constitutions in South-East-Asia grant equal rights. Yet the actual implementation is crucial.“

Borhan Uddin Khan, Bangladesh

Can you give us an example?

We have many good examples! It is amazing! People simply change when you don't stop talking to them. There was this Maasai girl from Babati, for example. We took her along to a training event, away from her village. She did not have very good reading or writing skills. The training was all about the Village Community Bank, VICOBA for short. When you have completed the training you need to set up a group of thirty people, who can then pool their money and manage their economic activities better.

A sort of self-made banking system for the villages in Tanzania?

Exactly. It works in a similar way to the Grameen Bank system in Bangladesh. It is a traditional model, which enables its members to borrow money from the group, a type of microfinance. This allows people to manage their economic activities better. There are only a few rules regulating the system to make it all work.

And how did things turn out for the Maasai girl?

She completed the training and returned to her village. And to our great surprise she changed her entire village community. She managed to set up three such VICOBA groups in her Maasai village, i.e. in a very remote region. She thereby reduced the existing gender-based inequalities because men and women met in these groups and discussed a great variety of topics. The girl herself is now very articulate, can take minutes at meetings and speak in front of the village elders. She is now awarded respect.

In what other ways do you approach people? How do you address people?

Normally, we try to convey to the village communities that change is possible if they undergo change themselves. We explain their rights to them and also their responsibilities where marriage and children are concerned. We also help them to set up small businesses and teach them how to manufacture various products such as soap or how to grow fruit and vegetables such as tomatoes.

What sorts of businesses do you mean?

That ranges from selling foodstuffs, agricultural products or fish to setting up a small shop for selling clothes. It always depends on the area and what the environment will support. Raising animals is another option.



Intense discussions during a workshop on the topic of participation

Is your work also influenced by the fact that you have to deal with so many different religions? You yourself are a Muslim. Do you have to change your approach depending on the religious community to which the people you talk to belong?

The strange thing actually is that there are no differences! No differences at all. And we are in fact dealing with something here that is also a global problem. I can assure you it has nothing to do with religion. It always depends on the interpretation of the laws and who happens to be in power at the time. Let's look at the problem of gender-based violence for example. That exists everywhere, after all, whatever the religion. Women are subjected to physical abuse. Muslims, Christians, Hindus... This type of violence exists practically everywhere and it does not distinguish by religious affiliation, not at all.

What is the greatest challenge for you in your work as a coordinator?

Time. Time is the greatest challenge. How can you find the right balance? I am the mother of three children. I engage in further education, I study. I work as a lawyer. I am involved in work for the IRCPT. So many things at the same time! But resources also represent a great challenge. If someone calls you and tells you: "I have this and that problem, can you please help me?" In most cases you could help the person just by providing some transport for them or by simply engaging a lawyer who could take on the case. But of course I can't do that in every case, even though I wish I could.



„What motivates me the most... I think it's the face of the participants when they leave the program with new ideas.“

Nayla Tabbara, Lebanon



” *There is only one reason why rural areas develop slower than cities: Information. Information is the key to development.* “

Shabmim Daudi Mwariko, Tanzania

And where does your motivation come from? Mostly from your occupation as a lawyer or mostly from your religion, Islam?

From both. My job gives me the tools to know how to proceed. My religion gives me the passion for the issue, why I should continue to be involved. In other words from both. Religion answers the why and my expertise the how.

Have you occasionally experienced social pressure in your efforts on behalf of the IRCPT? Or are your activities readily accepted on all sides?

Yes, there is some pressure. That is part of the challenges. Particularly when I seek a dialogue with the religious leaders and they have to engage with me, then I notice the pressure. How do I explain to them what the right way is and do so in a manner to ensure they understand me? Because they often think that these problems are nothing to do with them and that they were imported in the first place. So how can I get them to understand: nobody has imported this problem. It is our problem and it is we who should change. This is where tradition comes into it once again. How do you fight tradition and make others understand that by doing so you support a righteous cause? Sometimes you are forced to submit to tradition and the idea that the place of a man is here and the place of a woman there. And then I ask myself: How can I change this interpretation and ensure that women too stand up and ask to be heard?

And in spite of such difficulties you carry on.

I have to! Otherwise we remain stuck in the status quo. But we are here to make a difference.

The interview was conducted by Luisa Meisel.

Towards a Deeper Understanding of Islam

Amina Rasul is a co-founder of the think tank “Philippine Center for Islam and Democracy” (PCID). In this interview she explains how it is possible to give the Muslim minority in a predominantly catholic country a common voice.



Amina Rasul, Philippine Center for Islam an Democracy, Philippines

What role does Islam play in Filipino society?

In the past, Muslims lacked a common voice. This acted as a barrier to peace and resulted in the social exclusion of the Muslim population. The perception of Muslims in the country was not based on the silent and peaceful sections but on the few extreme and militant voices. In parallel with our own problems in this country the international war on terror started, accompanied by the global debate on whether Islam and democracy are generally compatible. This situation had to change.

How was this problematic situation resolved?

To provide an answer to the problem I founded the “Philippine Center for Islam and Democracy” (PCID) with two other Muslim intellectuals, Abraham Iribani and Atty Nasser Marohomsalic, in 2002. The goal was to contribute to the global debate and to provide representation for the silent majority of Filipino Muslims. To be able to produce results, it is important to bring Muslim intellectuals together with members of the government, civil society representatives and academics at the same table to discuss topics objectively and professionally.

What issues does the PCID deal with precisely?

The non-profit organisation deals predominantly with topics relating to Islam and to democracy and is engaged in a search for peace, democracy and development in Muslim communities. In terms of content the projects of the organisation are divided between five committees: 1. Peace, 2. Human Rights, 3. Electoral Reform, 4. Autonomy and Governance and 5. Sustainable Development.

„ We need to study Islamic and democratic thoughts because Islam and Democracy work very well together. “

Amina Rasul, Philippines

What does the work of the organisation involve in practice?

The PCID projects can be divided into different categories: “Talk” means that we organise conferences and give talks; “Think” comprises all types of research assignments; the “DO” section deals with the organisation of activities and the provision of further training to partner organisations; and section “Direct” aims at making an impact on politics. The PCID works particularly intensively with young people, women and religious leaders. Since the organisation was founded, some 210 activities have been successfully implemented.

Which projects are implemented in cooperation with the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung?

In collaboration with the Adenauer foundation, we have brought out several publications on the subjects of freedom, democracy, human rights and others. The objective of these publications is to achieve a greater understanding of the Muslim philosophy of life among the general public. It is hoped that the Filipino translations in particular will encourage the population to look behind the negative façade of Muslim faith and that this will produce a deeper understanding of Islam.

Which projects does the PCID realise in collaboration with religious leaders of the Muslim minority?

Another important task of the PCID is to bring the religious leaders of the Muslims together in order to give their voice some weight in the political arena. We have succeeded in earning the trust of numerous community leaders and we are now able to collaborate with them as partners and reach the civilian population more effectively that way. This approach is important for developing peace, democracy and development in the Muslim communities. Previously, this had been very difficult to implement because of the fragmentation of the Muslim community.

How has the role of the Muslim population in the Philippines changed through the work of the PCID?

A decade on from when the organisation was founded, we are now frequently able to create unity among the Muslim groups and conduct important discussions. No other NGO currently has an equal reach within the Muslim minority. But our mission has not been completed by any means; it has in fact only just begun. On the one hand, we must analyse what has been achieved so far in detail to check regularly whether our key tasks are being fulfilled. And on the other hand we must make sure that the progress we make is sustainable in the long term.

The interview was conducted by Cosima Gill.

“The very values that are also most important to me”

At the KAS workshop held in Istanbul in February, Aygül Özkan spoke in very personal terms of the political commitment of Muslims in Germany. We summarise the talk given by the CDU politician with Turkish roots.

By Aygül Özkan

In 2010, a few days before I was to be sworn in as Minister of Social Affairs, Women, Families, Health and Integration in Lower Saxony, I was phoned by a party colleague. He sounded agitated: ‘The media will ask: “What God is she swearing by?” How do we handle that? What do you want to do?’ This hadn’t previously bothered me at all, but now I thought: ‘Will it really be an issue in the media – if I swear by God –, by *which* God I am swearing?’ And indeed it was. ‘What God does Aygül Özkan mean?’ many people asked. I found myself at the centre of a veritable media storm.

My Muslim background remains an issue to this day. Before I joined the CDU, many people said to me: ‘But you can’t join the CDU,’ or ‘That’s no party for people with an immigration background,’ or ‘Can a Muslim join a Christian party at all?’ But all of that is prejudice. And so in 2004 I joined the CDU. And as my political career demonstrates, one’s religious affiliation is unimportant.

My concern is to create opportunities for all. It is politics that establishes the climate in which this can occur. I didn’t want merely to criticise, but to play an active part in moving things forward. I chose the CDU because it represents the very values that are most important to me: family, solidarity and love of neighbour.

In my view, one of the tasks of politics is to ensure that everyone can participate in society, regardless of their age, origins, financial resources or state of health. It doesn’t matter where someone comes from or how old they are. What is important is whether someone plays an active part in society and does something for our country. My parents came to Germany as migrant Turkish workers in the 1960s. Our neighbours soon became our friends. Like many of the other children around me, I went to grammar school. It was a matter of course. I had always felt part of German society. But not all migrants feel they are welcome here. I believe that politically some things still need to change. Integration is a subject very close to my heart. Because diversity is enrichment. But diversity also needs cohesion. That is what I want to encourage.

From my parents I learnt that it is worth making an effort. I am convinced that someone who achieves something in Germany is usually rewarded for it.



*Aygül Özkan
Former Minister for Social
Affairs, Women, Family, Health,
and Integration, Federal State
of Lower Saxony, Germany*

” *We have to explain that Islam is not the reason for a lack of integration.* “

Aygül Özkan, Germany

Integration: A recent but important newcomer to the political agenda

The Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung has made social cohesion a central issue in its political consultancy work. Members of a newly created network of policy-makers, academics and administrators meet regularly to discuss aspects of integration policy.



Members of the Network with (first row from left): Bülent Arslan (Chairman of the Federal Network Integration of the CDU), Dr. Michael Borchard (Head of Politics and Consulting, KAS), Christian Wulff (former Federal President of Germany) and Cemile Giousouf (MP, first row, second from right), Dr. Hans-Gert Pöttering (Chairman of KAS, second row, second from right) and Armin Laschet (Chairman of CDU NRW, second row first from right).

By Katharina Senge



Exchange of experiences between federal states and local level.

Integrating into a new country and its social structures is a challenge both for migrants and for the society that receives them. For some time now, though, politics in Germany has no longer focused solely on the difficulties and problems associated with integration but has also considered the potential that immigrants bring with them. Germany is home to nearly 16 million people with a migration background; those of Turkish origin, who number nearly three million, form the largest group. By recognising their potential we acknowledge their life history. But people are also coming to realise that Germany, with its low birth rate and aging population, will have a continuing need for new migrants.

Immigration and integration are thus key socio-political tasks for Germany. In light of this KAS has set up the FORUM INTEGRATIONSPOLITIK – a network of stakeholders in integration policy that is intended to encourage debate and generate recommendations for action in this field. It has been supported from the outset by the German government’s Commissioner for Integration, Minister of State Prof. Dr. Maria Böhmer, and meetings are attended by experts and by integration politicians at federal, state and local level, including the CDU’s first Muslim member of parliament, Cemile Giousouf, and Younes Ouaqasse, the young member of the Federal Executive Board of the CDU. Networking is particularly important because integration is not only a

cross-cutting issue that affects domestic policy, social and labour market policy, education policy and other policy areas: it must also be borne in mind that many initiatives designed to promote integration need to be implemented at state and local level. The FORUM INTEGRATIONSPOLITIK therefore brings together the various political levels and facilitates the transfer of experience.



The federal government's Commissioner for Integration, State Minister Prof. Dr. Maria Böhmer, is regularly participating in meetings of the Forum Integrationspolitik.

Alongside the network, a working group of young integration politicians has been set up. The working group supports talented young people who are committed to integration and social cohesion in Germany. Muslims are represented in both networks, but religious affiliation per se is unimportant. The aim rather is to discuss shared views and develop shared positions, regardless of origin and religion. Issues relating to Islam and the situation of Muslims in Germany are of course regularly debated: they range from regional models of instruction in Islam to the radicalisation of young people and discrimination against Muslims in everyday life.

Hope for a Proper Nation

Elvis Kondzic was forced to flee his homeland when he was 16 years old. Today, he is involved at the party-political level in making sure that various ethnic groups in his country can come together.

By Christina Schmitt

„ My inspiration?
My time in Germany.
I could feel democracy,
feel Europe. “

*Elvis Kondzic,
Bosnia and Herzegovina*

Under no circumstances would Elvis Kondzic ever leave his country again. “His country” is Bosnia and Herzegovina. A young country, as he says: “And hopefully it will be a proper nation with a Bosnian mentality soon.” He sighs. And it sounds as if “soon” could still be awhile.

When Elvis Kondzic left his country he was 16 years old. The year was 1993. He does not like to talk about this time in his life, when his family was expelled from northern Bosnia. He lists dates and clarifies political correlations; the Bosnian War, which was to last until 1995, was in full swing. Because Bosnia and Herzegovina had declared themselves independent of Yugoslavia in a referendum in 1992, it was also recognised by western nations. Yugoslavia was beginning to collapse – and tensions between ethnic groups in Bosnia and Herzegovina were exacerbated. Bosniak, Serb and Croat units were fighting against one another. The Serb troops were advancing. And Kondzic’s family decide to flee.

In answering the question of what he experienced during that time and how his family fared, Elvis Kondzic hesitates. Then he says: “I wanted to fight as well. I was quite the young gun. I wanted to be proud, to play the hero.” Only his father could deter him from doing so. “He thought I would always regret fighting,” explains Kondzic. He seems glad that he listen to his father. When he fled before the war, he crossed through Croatia and eventually settled in Germany. Today, he speaks fluent German with no trace of an accent. He began training as an electrician. But when he finally had his diploma in his hands, he remained for only ten days. He then returned to “his country”, as he says. “In Germany I wanted to integrate and become a citizen. But that did not work out. So I’d rather go back.”

Back in Sarajevo, he saw how everyone – no matter whether they were Bosniaks, Serbs or Croats – suffered from the same problems: unemployment and a lack of infrastructure. “I became acquainted with democracy in Germany and saw that, through engaging, you can make it to the top,” he explains. Equal opportunities for everyone – that is what he wanted for Bosnia and Herzegovina. But first he tried to bring order to his own life. In 1998, he began working for the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung at the local international office. “We also worked on projects in Montenegro and Serbia. For me that meant working together with those who used to be our enemies,” he explains. It was a great challenge for him personally. But ultimately this work had a lasting effect on his career trajectory. “The KAS encouraged me to get involved with societal and political issues.”



Elvis Kondzic, Party of Democratic Action, Bosnia and Herzegovina

Today, Elvis Kondzic is engaged with the Party of Democratic Action (SDA) and is responsible for public relations. In addition to working, he is studying to receive his Masters in Political Science. Together he and his wife have a two-year-old daughter. He hopes that her future holds a Bosnia and Herzegovina that offers all citizens equal rights. For this reason he is trying to change things at the political level. His party, the SDA, which was largely created by Bosniak Muslims, is open to all. "I really hope that we can all develop a common Bosnian identity. That we can all be proud of our country together," he says. But until then, there are still many difficulties that need to be overcome; Many would continue to see themselves as Bosniaks, Serbs or Croats. And many still remember the war and the trench warfare between ethnic groups. "Something has to change," he says. Yet it would be wrong to suppress thoughts of the war, the fighting and the tensions. On the contrary: "When people forget the evil that has happened, it happens again and again. And no child should experience what I have experienced."

Participation Means Active Self-involvement

An interview with Dr. Michael Borchard, Head of the Department Politics and Consulting at Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung



Dr. Michael Borchard, Head of the Department Politics and Consulting at Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung

Mr Borchard, you advise politician. What is your advice to them regarding the issue of "Islam in Germany"?

I would advise candour and multiple meetings with Muslims. Ultimately Muslims should not be seen just as *Muslims*, but primarily as entirely normal citizens of this country with the same rights and responsibilities. Some do not want to be primarily defined by their religion at all.

But in debates about integration and integration issues, Islam still comes into play too quickly. Awareness of problems is always important, but young people, for example, are doing worse at school or getting into drugs not because they are Muslims but because of other causes. This is an important distinction. Of course some young people have experienced social exclusion in the

search for their identity and then find themselves in the hands of "false prophets" and radicalise. But that the opposite also occurs is too often overlooked. A religion that does not oppose our country's basic principles can impart values and thus provide positive accents. It goes both ways, but the second often plays a much smaller role in the discussion.

What role does Islam play in CDU policy?

One of the CDU's basic principles is that religion is an integral part of a religious person's identity. Religion impacts many people's moral feelings and behaviour, along with culture and cohabitation within a society. Our model depends upon this, in that religious communities are entitled to play a role in society. This model should be open to Islam. But of course this should not represent a false perspective of modifying our own Christian fundamentals. In recognising religious diversity in Germany, we of course must also recognise that Christianity plays a role in our country. Because of this, various CDU-led governments, be it the federal government or the regional governments have promoted both the introduction of Islamic education in state schools and the founding of the Institutes for Islamic Theology. There are also some Muslims who are involved with the CDU precisely because they feel they are in good hands in terms of their religion and values there.

"Islam" and "Muslims" are two buzzwords that many people have negative associations with. Aren't fears projected onto Muslims that in reality have nothing to do with them?

There have of course been attacks by Islamic terrorists in Europe in the past few years. Salafists, who are prepared to use violence at demonstrations, have been present in the news coverage. This cannot be overlooked. However, it should

also not be overlooked that hundreds of thousands of people in Germany live in peace with their religious convictions. What's always problematic is generalisation. You're right, the entire debate about Islam, which is diverse in and of itself, has been loaded with stereotypes and generalisations.

However, I find that a lot has changed. The media is by and large making an effort to report the news impartially, politicians have learned a lot about diversity within Islam, the German Islamic Conference has been in place since 2006, now the Professorship for Islam Theology has been set up and this year, the Foreign Minister invited Muslims to an Iftar meal. With all these improvements that far surpass pure symbolism, we are miles away from where we were ten years ago!

I wanted to ask you about just that: What has the state done over the past few years to enable Muslims in Germany to participate in German society?

Muslims are already a part of German society. Participation takes place by engaging with the community beyond one's own personal needs: through discussions with colleagues about societal issues, through neighbourhood projects and associations, clubs and politics. Participation also means having a stake in society. But then one has to ask: what is actually the state's role and what is left up to citizens' involvement?

Particularly the fact that voluntary engagement is still more common in organisations that have a lot to do with immigrants in their own community and less in organisations like the volunteer fire department, for example, which shows that we are still a ways from being representative of normal life. Muslims must be included, but it is also important that they themselves contribute to

these organisations. The same also holds true for political parties and is especially important for us as a political organisation.

Accordingly, in your opinion, what contribution must the Muslim population provide in order to be capable of participating in German society?

Aside from the engagement of every individual, there are also issues for Muslims within their own diverse community. The classic problem in dialogue and cooperation with the state is thus a question of whether there are one or many dialogue partners on the Muslim side who can truly represent the interests of Muslims in Germany.

With a view to the Muslim organisations, I have to say that I would sometimes like to see more critical thinking. On the whole, it is not unusual for lobbying groups to wish to demonstrate to their members that they are capable of being exacting and can bring about action. Both sides are responsible in focussing on an objective dialogue.

The interview was conducted by Fatima El Sayed, Political science student in Berlin.

Malaysia's "Dual System"

A lawyer from Kuala Lumpur wants his compatriots to get to know their constitution better

By Luisa Meisel



Syahredzan Johan, RamRais & Partners, Advocates & Solicitors, Malaysia

„ You keep knocking and knocking on the doors of those in charge. And you hope that one day, this door opens and somebody peers out and asks: ‚What’s that noise?’ Because then they will see, what it looks like on the other side of that door and maybe listen to what people have to say.“

Syahredzan Johan, Malaysia

In Malaysia secular and Sharia law coexist. Secular law is valid in all parts of the federal state, which gained its independence from Great Britain in 1957. However, the national religion is Islam. In many parts of the country, Sharia law applies for Muslims for matters of marriage, divorce or inheritance. Then a special Sharia court, whose religious judges can impose punishments for breaches of Sharia law, decides. "Our dual legal system inevitably leads to inequality," says Syahredzan Johan, a lawyer from Kuala Lumpur. "A Muslim can be judged for an offence against Sharia law, but members of other religions are not." He says he is involved in several cases that always deal with the right to religious freedom. Though this is a guaranteed constitutional right, in reality there are many conflicts. Even starting with the question of which court is responsible. For example, what happens if a man dies and the state holds that the man is Muslim but the family says he is not? According to what custom would the man be buried? Or what rights do children of someone who was not born Muslim but converted in their second marriage have? Johan says the problem would be solved if the highest civil court had the final say. But in reality, authority is often shuffled back and forth between various courts for so long that, in the worst case, those affected have no legal recourse available to them.

Johan believes that, because of this, many citizens do not take legal actions because they do not know their rights in the first place. For years, he has volunteered and campaigned to clarify people's rights to his compatriots – because then citizens would be protected on paper at least. Thanks to small brochures explaining the Malaysian constitution in language that is easy to understand, the "My Constitution Campaign" has already had great success. "People are more and more aware that they have rights and the state has violated them." But the chances of winning such a case remain slim according to Johan. Many judges are Muslim and would often not be able to separate their beliefs from their judicial duties. But more and more clients would come into his office and say: "I'm filing suit anyway."

Aiding Victims of State Violence

The Muslim Attorney Center and the Cross Cultural Foundation provide legal support in serious conflicts in Thailand

By Philipp Sümmermann



Pawinee Chumsri at a KAS-partner workshop in Singapore

A conflict between separatists and the government has dominated southern Thailand for decades. Since escalating in 2004, there has been an increase in violent disputes. There are said to have been more than 13,000 cases of violence since then and the number of dead is anywhere between 3,000 and 5,500.

This conflict has seen a multitude of human rights violations on both sides. Together with the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung, the Muslim Attorney Center and the Cross Cultural Foundation are trying to provide legal support in serious conflicts in Thailand. "We are helping victims of state violence in receiving legal assistance. We offer translation services and provide information through campaigns to educate people about their rights. Our focus is not only on incarcerated victims, but also on victims of torture or unlawful arrests," says Pawinee Chumsri, who works for the Cross Cultural Foundation as a lawyer.

The Cross Cultural Foundation was founded in 2002 and aims to promote understanding between Thailand's various cultures. For their rule of law programme, they work closely with the Muslim Attorney Center (MAC), which was founded in 2004 and is primarily involved in Thailand's southern and predominantly Muslim provinces. According to Chumsri, religion plays an important role, particularly as regards culture: "I'm not from the South, so people were incredibly wary at first. In the past, people from the South faced heavy discrimination. As a Buddhist, I must first build trust there. But when it comes to human rights, religion does not play a role."

The Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung's support of the programme is a great asset to their work. "KAS is widely accepted by the state. They have connections to the governing and opposition parties. Before we had to write very many letters. Now we are heard directly," says Chumsri. Generating publicity is an important part of their work. Progress can only be achieved if their activities are not limited solely to legal advice. "We want to work with the judicial system to achieve due process."

„To enforce human rights we have to educate people and inform them about their rights.“

Pawinee Chumsri, Thailand

“Women Should Earn Money”

The Behbud Association, a long-standing partner of KAS, promotes women’s rights in Pakistan – and is bringing men on board, too

By Philipp Sümmerrmann

In Rawalpindi near Islamabad, a small group of volunteers founded the Behbud Association in 1967. Its goal was to support women and their social surroundings. From this once-small group an organisation active throughout Pakistan has developed with offices in all major cities.

Shahina Akbar is active in the organisation. “I’ve suffered a lot because I didn’t know the law. I’ve also seen a lot of women and children suffer.” But then she found the Behbud Association – and began to get involved. Today she works with the organisation to clarify marriage contracts, the content of which married couples are often unclear about in Pakistan. “The contract is first presented at the wedding. There is no opportunity to read through it and it ends up being a blank signature. It is filled out by the elder family members. One only discovers later than one no longer has any rights.”

She campaigns against this deprivation of rights and organises information sessions and workshops. “I’ve spent the last five years making this secret document public,” she says, referring to a model for the marriage contract on which the text is now based. She is also battling at the political level. Akbar is a lawyer for Pakistan’s highest court; this resolute woman has been involved in numerous legislative procedures. She wants women to be informed of their rights. She also gives talks for men: “We are a mixed society but decisions are made by men. We have to bring them on board.”

The Behbud Association also provides education in other areas. The organisation runs numerous schools throughout the entire country. In order to provide the poorest of the poor with access to education as well, Behbud has established boarding schools in the slums across Rawalpindi and Karachi. Many girls are forbidden from attending regular schools and they are often too far away. Through these projects right in their community, the organisation is able to reach young children. “Children cannot travel a long way for education. So these schools are very successful,” says Akbar.

Reading and writing are skills that many adults in Pakistan do not have. 60% of the country’s women are considered illiterate, as are about one third of men. Because of this, Behbud offers adults Urdu classes. More than 1,000 adults have participated in the three-month-long courses and have gained basic reading and maths skills.

Behbud aims to combat poverty by opening up new income opportunities to people. For some time the organisation has offered various vocational training courses. Women learn to work as beauticians, how to grow mushrooms, how to sew or knit. These are activities that do not require big investments and can be done from home.



Shahina Akbar,
Behbud Association,
Pakistan

“Women should be educated and should be able to earn money, so that they, too, can push societal change forward.”

Shahina Akbar, Pakistan

“We then organise markets and invite all the women we’ve trained. Many people come to buy their products. The women profit in the process,” says Akbar. The organisation also runs several shops that sell their goods. The aim of the programme is not only to promote women through training, but their entire community. “Women should have an education and earn money so they themselves can promote change.”



Shahina Akbar (second from left) during a KAS partner workshop.

In her work, Shahina Akbar establishes dialogues between various groups, men and women. “Because of this I’ve never had any problems, even though I cover very sensitive issues,” she says. This approach is also apparent in the work of the organisation. As an interreligious organisation, many employees are Christian and workshops are attended by Muslim, Christian and Hindu women. “We are open to everyone and strongly maintain that,” says Akbar. Behbud has already achieved a lot, though there is much left to do. And Shahina Akbar is enthusiastic: “I love doing this work. I am very lucky to be doing what I am.”

Islamic marriage contracts – basics, reforms, cross-border effects



*Prof. Dr. Mathias Rohe,
Faculty of Law, University of
Nuremberg-Erlangen,
Germany*

Mathias Rohe is one of the leading experts on Islam and law in Germany. At a workshop with KAS partners in Singapore he spoke on Islamic marriage law. The laws on marriages, inheritance and divorces do heavily influence the social and financial situation of Muslim women (and men) in many regions in the world. Thus, following the presentation of Prof. Rohe, the participants – particularly those who are actively engaged in the promotion of women's rights – started an intensive discussion.

By Prof. Dr. Mathias Rohe

Marriage in Islam has a strong religious flavor. Nevertheless, its legal side is purely secular in nature. Marriages under Islamic law are based on a contract between the spouses. Traditional Islamic law is highly patriarchal and maintains Islamic supremacy over other religions. This is true for all schools of law despite their differences in important details. While males and females (should) enjoy equal dignity and respect, their rights and duties in marriage are fundamentally different, similar to European legal orders until the recent past. Women need a male representative (guardian) to conclude the marriage contract according to most of the different schools of law (except the Hanafis) irrespective of their age. Polygyny is permitted up to four wives. Inter-religious marriage is accepted in the Sunni schools only for Muslim husbands; the Shia forbids it in total. Patriarchal structures are apparent in the distribution of duties: The husband has to pay a dower to the bride, which largely depends on the social status of the parties. While the amount is negligible among the poor, it can amount to considerable sums among the well-off. Very often the dower payment is divided into an immediate and a deferred payment: the latter is due in case of repudiation, which might prevent husbands from easily doing so. Furthermore, high promised sums might be used as a bargaining tool regarding post-marital arrangements of custody over children – which is equally patriarchal – to the mother's favor. In addition, the husband alone is obliged to provide maintenance. If he fails to do so, the wife may apply for divorce, which is otherwise extremely restricted on her side, while husbands are entitled to unilaterally repudiate their wives without giving any reason. The wives have to care for the children and to be "obedient", e.g. ask for permission if they intend to take a job or even if they want to leave their house. Otherwise they are qualified "rebellious", which excludes them from maintenance claims. But they maintain their family name and keep legal control over their property.

The marriage contract opens remarkable space for improving the wife's situation. The spouses can e.g. agree on the delegation of the husband's sole right to repudiate his wife to her, which gives her access to divorce on equal footing. In addition, the husband may entitle her to continue her education, leave the house for work or other purposes, invite her relatives, etc. In addition, in inter-religious marriages the spouses may issue a bequest in favor of the other spouse, who otherwise would not

inherit from him. On a social level, such contractual provisions are usually restricted to the relatively small stratum of highly educated persons. Moreover, we must not neglect widespread and strong tribal or local customs e.g. in Afghanistan or Pakistan, which often prevail over Islamic legal rules to the disadvantage of the wives. Since more than a century traditional Islamic law has been “nationalized”, now being part of the respective state legal order. During the last decades, considerable reforms have taken place in many Islamic countries, mostly in favor of women. Thus, the minimum age has risen in many countries, polygyny is restricted or even forbidden (Tunisia), based on new interpretations of the relevant qur’anic rules. In some countries women are entitled to contract the marriage without a guardian. In other states like Iran or former South Yemen, former reforms were replaced by more patriarchal new rules. This clearly demonstrates the high degree of diversity in the interpretation of Islamic law, and its full dependence on the pre-understandings of its interpreters.

Nowadays, the application of Islamic marriage law is a global phenomenon. In cross-border cases, foreign law, including the law of Islamic states, has to be applied under the respective rules of Private International Law, limited by public order. Thus, the provisions of Islamic marriage can be enforced e.g. under German law in case that their outcome does not infringe the German public order; thus, German courts have accepted dower claims, and even maintenance claims by second-wives against their husbands, if the polygynic marriage has been validly concluded abroad. In addition, Muslims in Europe have started to conclude marriage contracts inspired by Islamic law under domestic (e.g. German) family law rules. This can particularly make sense in cross-border perspectives: While within Europe wives are protected by the principles of gender equality, such contractual provisions may be helpful in case they change their residence to Islamic countries. The most recent phenomenon can be found among young Muslims who enter into religious marriages without solemnizing them in a legally valid way in state institutions, which leads to social acceptance of co-habitation without mutual legal duties. In an era of globalization, an amalgamation of norms under the supremacy of mandatory domestic law is likely to continue. Sound information about this field is thus necessary more than ever.

For further reading: Mathias Rohe, Das islamische Recht, 3. Ed. Munich 2011 (C.H. Beck); an amended English translation will be published in 2014 by Brill, Leiden/Boston.



” *There is a democratic aspect to public space: People need space to express their opinions freely or to be able to demonstrate.* “

Zabra Ali Baba, Kuwait

Reduction in Violence through Acceptance of Political and Social Diversity

Sigrid Faath is an expert on Northern Africa and the Middle East. She conducts research as an Associate Fellow at the German Council on Foreign Relations (DGAP). On behalf of the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung, Sigrid Faath attended a series of workshops involving project partners from Muslim countries, some of whom are introduced in this brochure. Her report describes the work the partners do in advocating tolerant and diverse societies in spite of difficult socio-economic circumstances and cultural-religious tensions.

By Dr. Sigrid Faath

The projects of the KAS partners, which were at the centre of the three workshops on Participation and Education, Rule of Law and Equal Rights, Dialogue and Political Transition, aim at creating the right conditions for peaceful coexistence and fostering a mind-set that rejects violence as a means of political confrontation.

The KAS project partners came from predominantly Islamic states where violent battles for political and social power are being fought, with some parties making use of religious references and arguments.

The analyses of the current situation in the various countries presented at the workshops clearly demonstrated the crucial role for social peace played by measures aimed at changing perceptions and behaviours, dismantling concepts of the enemy and supporting efforts to have diversity accepted and respected in all its embodiments. In their presentations, the KAS project partners, who strive for social and political as well as religious change that will ultimately result in greater pluralism, freedom, equality, rule of law and less violent conflict, confirmed that social realities have undergone great changes in all the countries over the last two decades. **The pluralism existing in these societies has become clear for all to see and has triggered a demand for social and political debate.** Attempts by political and social actors to monopolise all thinking and acting and force them into the normative

straightjacket that runs counter to this pluralism are therefore bound to create conflict and elicit violence from the opposing parties in the pursuit of their causes.

In the past, the persistence and actionism of the entire religious-fundamentalist (Islamic) spectrum with its reductionist view of society frequently concealed the diversity existing in predominantly Islamic countries and communities from many European observers. This made the contributions by a large number of the workshop participants all the more important as they clearly illustrated that genuine social and political change in their countries will only take place if support is provided for measures that convince individuals consistently that they have nothing to fear from diversity and that overcome the political, religious and social compulsion to preserve "unity". Fundamentalist political parties, associations, institutions and people will not do this.

In their analyses of the current political and social problems and conflicts in their home countries, the workshop participants further confirmed an important fact: It is the case that numerous problems and conflicts are caused and exacerbated by the **precarious socioeconomic situation of large parts of the population**, particularly youth unemployment, and by some areas of the countries suffering from genuine neglect. But because all discussions and disputes are overlain by the "issue of religion", the measures for problem and conflict resolution must extend further. Socioeconomic measures and improved governance in economic and social areas alone are not



PD Dr. Sigrid Faath, Germany

sufficient to resolve the political and social polarisations and discredit violence as a means to settle disputes. Nor are they sufficient to create the right legal and cultural framework in which plurality, difference and tolerance are considered central values and no longer seen by some political and social groups as a “danger to religion and identity” that must be fought off – as is currently the case.

In the current political power struggles in predominantly Muslim countries, religion is still being used as a weapon. Since the upheavals in Northern Africa and the Middle East, Islamist organisations have been increasing their efforts to assert their monopoly on religious interpretation and to define the state and its citizens by religion. If they were to succeed in this, it would harden existing structures that are already splitting societies and making reforms towards a plural society that guarantees rights and freedoms more difficult. The identity between state and religion, as aspired to by the Islamists, would inevitably lead to a system that is not merely authoritarian but totalitarian.

In view of these issues, the workshop participants were made aware of the need for a “change in mentality”. In full knowledge that such a change in mentality will only come about very gradually, the urgency to take measures that can make a positive contribution was stressed. The measures deemed to be most important in this context are of an educational nature in the widest sense:

- They should change the perception (shaped by religion, culture, history and experience) of the individual and of groups.
- They aim at influencing behaviour and establishing a new relationship between the different groups of the population and between population and state.
- They should have an “enlightening” effect and explain terms such as secularism, liberalism, pluralism and the rule of law.
- The measures should further illustrate the opportunities arising for the inhabitants of a country with a plural, secular system, and
- they should foster the feeling of allegiance to the state and the citizens’ feeling of responsibility towards the community as well as driving forward the process of nation building, which is currently defined as “inadequate” or “incomplete”.

The participants of the workshop cycle confirmed the importance of projects aiming in this direction. They also demonstrated vividly that these goals can only be achieved with civil society organisations and political parties that want to establish a secular plural political system and that consequently advocate the separation of religion and politics in order to finally emerge from the dogmatic torpor. This will only be possible if even those who operate from a religious perspective feel able to ultimately approve such a plural system.

The most important insight gained by the KAS project partners as well as the conclusion arrived at by the workshops is as follows: Peaceful coexistence will only become possible once a plural, tolerant political and social system is accepted and aspired to as the necessary framework.

The authors from the KAS Journalist Academy (JONA)

This brochure about "Muslims in State and Society Worldwide" was produced in close collaboration by three main departments of the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung: European and International Cooperation, Politics and Consulting as well as Scholarships and Cultural Activities. For over 30 years, the latter has incorporated the KAS Journalist Academy, which a large number of the authors of this publication belong to. Overall, six scholarship recipients from the JONA programme in support of young journalists accompanied the workshops in Istanbul, Singapore and Casablanca in an editorial capacity in teams of two. We are introducing them to you on the next two pages.



Cosima Gill (24) studies in the Master program "South Asia and Global Security" at King's College in London. Since 2010 she is in the scholarship program of KAS journalism school. Cosima is particularly interested in the Kashmir conflict and Islam in South Asia. At the KAS partner workshop in Casablanca she learned that it is helpful to intensify the exchanges between Muslim communities.



Christina Hecking (23) studies Journalism and Communication Science in Hamburg and is in the scholarship program of KAS journalism school since 2010. As a reporter of the KAS conference in Casablanca she has learned that the Islam is a very fascinating and complex religion you could and should learn more about because it becomes more present in our daily life. Furthermore she has learned that religion and democracy strongly belong together.



Katrin Kampling (25) is a student of German and Islamic Studies in Cologne. She has been part of the scholarship program of KAS journalism school since 2010. Her interest in Islam stems from its diversity in its various regional contexts. As reporter at the KAS conference in Istanbul she had the chance to rediscover that fact.



Luisa Meisel (27) studied law at the universities of Heidelberg and Strasbourg. Since 2008 she is in the scholarship program of KAS journalism school. After her studies she moved to Berlin, where she is working on her thesis about the non-profit-sector, again supported by the KAS with a PhD-scholarship. Luisa Meisel is interested in Islam, because despite the differences she discovers many parallels to Christianity. As a reporter at the KAS conference in Singapur she learned, that there are religious conflicts in the world, that – sadly enough – we haven't heard about in Germany.



Christina Schmitt (24) is studying for a master's in Arabic in Leipzig. Since 2008 she is in the scholarship program of KAS journalism school. She lived in Cairo for about six months and since then she has been fascinated by the Arab world and therefore also by Islam. To this day, she is impressed by the way people live their daily lives in the faith of Islam, their readiness to help others and their contentedness with what has been given to them – no matter how little that was. As a reporter for the KAS conference in Istanbul she gained an impression of how much KAS is doing to facilitate cultural and religious exchange between the different religions and ethnicities.



Philipp Sümmerrmann (24) is studying law in Cologne and has been in the scholarship program of KAS journalism school since 2008. Not only because of his studies, he is interested in the question what law is and how legal certainty can be guaranteed. As a reporter at the KAS conference in Singapore, he was able to learn that even though legal cultures differ, the compatibility of Islamic with secular law raises similar questions worldwide.

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