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The Role Of Interfaith Dialogue In Enhancing Global Peacebuilding

¹Sahri, ²Himad Ali

¹UNUGIRI Bojonegoro, Indonesia, ²Xi'an University, China.

¹sahriunugiri@gmail.com, ²himadali@xu.cn

Correspondence Email: sahriunugiri@gmail.com.

Abstract: *In an increasingly interconnected and multicultural world, religious diversity has become both an asset and a challenge for global peacebuilding. Interfaith dialogue emerges as a pivotal tool for fostering mutual understanding, reducing religious tensions, and promoting social cohesion. This study adopts a qualitative comparative approach to examine interfaith dialogue initiatives in Southeast Asia and Europe, focusing on their strategies, challenges, and outcomes. In Southeast Asia, countries like Indonesia, Malaysia, and Thailand employ grassroots, community-driven approaches through platforms such as the Forum Kerukunan Umat Beragama (FKUB), Harmony Week, and Buddhist-Muslim peace projects, emphasizing cultural sensitivity and local engagement. Conversely, Europe, represented by Germany, France, and the United Kingdom, relies on institutional and policy-driven frameworks such as the German Conference on Islam, the French Conseil Français du Culte Musulman (CFCM), and the UK Inter Faith Network to manage religious pluralism and integration. The comparative findings reveal that while Southeast Asia excels in bottom-up, culturally embedded practices, Europe demonstrates the effectiveness of top-down, structured frameworks supported by government policies. Integrating these approaches offers a hybrid model for enhancing global peacebuilding. The study concludes that fostering interfaith collaboration and knowledge exchange is essential for addressing religious conflicts and achieving sustainable global harmony.*

Keywords: *Interfaith Dialogue, Global Peacebuilding, Religious Diversity, Social Cohesion, Multiculturalism.*

INTRODUCTION

In the era of globalization, the interconnection between nations has become increasingly complex, influencing social, economic, political, and cultural dynamics worldwide. One of the most significant consequences of globalization is the growing religious diversity resulting from migration, technological advances, and intensified intercultural communication (Halafoff et al., 2022). While religious plurality enriches societies by fostering mutual understanding and cultural exchange, it also introduces challenges related to identity politics, radicalization, and social polarization. As societies become more diverse, tensions between religious groups often arise due to differing worldviews, historical grievances, or political manipulation. This situation is



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particularly evident in Southeast Asia and Europe, regions that face unique yet interconnected challenges in managing religious diversity and sustaining peaceful coexistence.

In Southeast Asia, religious plurality is deeply rooted in the region's cultural and historical development. Countries such as Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, and the Philippines embody an intersection of major world religions, including Islam, Christianity, Buddhism, Hinduism, and indigenous traditions. Despite longstanding traditions of tolerance, Southeast Asia has experienced recurrent tensions triggered by competing identities, economic disparities, and political narratives exploiting religion for strategic purposes (Sidik & Dilawati, 2025). For instance, conflicts in Ambon and Poso, sectarian violence in Myanmar, and tensions in southern Thailand illustrate how unresolved grievances can escalate into interreligious violence. Such episodes highlight the urgent need to strengthen interfaith dialogue as a mechanism for conflict prevention and reconciliation. Without structured initiatives that foster mutual understanding, these societies risk deepening fragmentation and instability.

In contrast, Europe encounters religious diversity from a different historical and sociopolitical context. Increased migration from the Middle East, Africa, and South Asia has diversified Europe's demographic landscape, particularly in Germany, France, and the United Kingdom. While multicultural policies have sought to facilitate inclusion, xenophobia, Islamophobia, and growing populist movements have challenged efforts to build cohesive societies (European Council of Religious Leaders, 2025). High-profile incidents of extremism and debates around secularism versus religious freedoms underscore the complexities of integrating diverse religious identities within a historically Christian-majority context. In this environment, fostering interfaith engagement has become essential to prevent discrimination, strengthen human rights protections, and promote inclusive governance.

Within this global landscape, interfaith dialogue emerges as a critical strategy to bridge divides and cultivate peaceful coexistence. According to the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations (UNAOC), interfaith dialogue is defined as an inclusive, structured process that fosters constructive communication between individuals and groups with different religious and



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Email: editormunif@gmail.com

cultural worldviews, with the aim of promoting understanding, respect, and collaboration (UNAOC, 2025). Through dialogue, stereotypes and prejudices are dismantled, shared values are identified, and pathways toward reconciliation are established. This aligns with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), which upholds freedom of thought, conscience, and religion as fundamental pillars of human dignity and peace.

In Southeast Asia, interfaith dialogue initiatives are predominantly grassroots-driven, leveraging local traditions and community relationships to foster trust. For example, Indonesia's Forum Kerukunan Umat Beragama (FKUB) operates at provincial and district levels, mediating tensions and building bridges between religious communities. Similarly, Malaysia promotes Harmony Week as a national platform to encourage interreligious understanding, while southern Thailand has implemented Buddhist-Muslim peace projects aimed at reconciliation (Sidik & Dilawati, 2025). Another significant case is the Silsilah Dialogue Movement in Mindanao, Philippines, which demonstrates how faith-based initiatives can successfully transform communities affected by prolonged conflict (Corpuz, 2025). These examples underscore the effectiveness of bottom-up approaches that prioritize local ownership and community participation in fostering lasting peace.

Conversely, Europe adopts a more institutionalized, policy-oriented framework to facilitate interfaith engagement. Structured initiatives such as the German Conference on Islam, the Conseil Français du Culte Musulman (CFCM) in France, and the UK Inter Faith Network create formal platforms where governments, civil society actors, and religious leaders collaborate to promote integration and mutual respect (RSIS, 2025). By embedding interfaith dialogue within national policies and legal frameworks, European states provide structural support for managing diversity while ensuring equal rights for all citizens. However, scholars argue that these top-down models sometimes fail to fully address grassroots realities, especially when institutional programs are perceived as detached from local contexts or insufficiently inclusive of minority voices (Hoffmann, 2024). This tension highlights the need to integrate community-based initiatives into broader institutional strategies to ensure that interfaith dialogue remains inclusive and impactful.



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Globally, interfaith dialogue plays a central role in advancing the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 16, which promotes peaceful, just, and inclusive societies. Multilateral organizations such as UNAOC and the United Religions Initiative (URI) spearhead cross-border initiatives to foster intercultural cooperation and prevent identity-based conflicts. The URI, for example, connects over 1,100 grassroots organizations across 100 countries, empowering local communities to design and implement solutions tailored to their unique contexts (URI, 2025). Moreover, platforms such as the Millennium Peace Summit of Religious and Spiritual Leaders and the Alexandria Process illustrate the potential of religious actors to complement traditional diplomacy in resolving global crises (Millennium Peace Summit, 2000).

From a theoretical perspective, interfaith dialogue aligns with Gadamer's hermeneutical concept of the "fusion of horizons", which suggests that dialogue facilitates mutual understanding by integrating diverse perspectives into shared meaning (Kanu & Nosike, 2025). Through this transformative process, interfaith dialogue transcends mere information exchange and fosters empathy, solidarity, and collective action. It redefines identities not as sources of division but as catalysts for cooperation and coexistence.

Implementing interfaith dialogue is not without challenges. In Europe, rising Islamophobia, distrust toward migrants, and political polarization often hinder constructive engagement (Abu-Nimer & Nelson, 2023). In Southeast Asia, religious pluralism is sometimes manipulated for political purposes, leading to identity-based polarization and undermining reconciliation efforts (RSIS, 2025). At the global level, ongoing conflicts such as the Israel-Palestine crisis and violent extremism complicate efforts to establish neutral and inclusive dialogue platforms. Addressing these obstacles requires innovative approaches, including digital interfaith initiatives that engage younger generations and expand participation beyond traditional settings.

This study aims to explore the role of interfaith dialogue in enhancing global peacebuilding by conducting a comparative analysis of Southeast Asia and Europe. It seeks to identify similarities, differences, and transferable lessons between these regions to inform effective



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strategies for managing religious diversity in a globalized world. By synthesizing grassroots practices and institutional frameworks, this research contributes to scholarly discourse and policymaking by highlighting models of dialogue that can strengthen social cohesion, conflict prevention, and sustainable peace.

METHOD

This study employs a qualitative comparative research design to explore the role of interfaith dialogue in promoting global peacebuilding, focusing specifically on Southeast Asia and Europe. A qualitative approach was chosen because it allows for an in-depth understanding of the social, cultural, and institutional dynamics surrounding interfaith dialogue practices. Unlike quantitative methods, qualitative research emphasizes context and meaning, making it suitable for analyzing the complexities of religious diversity and dialogue initiatives across different regions (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The comparative aspect of this research enables a cross-regional exploration of strategies, highlighting similarities, differences, and transferable lessons that can strengthen global peacebuilding frameworks.

The research design is based on a comparative case study approach, which provides a detailed examination of interfaith dialogue initiatives in Southeast Asia—covering Indonesia, Malaysia, and Thailand—and in Europe, focusing on Germany, France, and the United Kingdom. A comparative case study method allows the researcher to examine both local realities and broader institutional frameworks simultaneously (Yin, 2018). The selection of Southeast Asia and Europe was deliberate because the two regions demonstrate contrasting yet complementary approaches to interfaith engagement. Southeast Asia relies primarily on community-driven grassroots initiatives, while Europe adopts policy-based institutional frameworks. Analyzing these contrasting models provides valuable insights into the effectiveness of different strategies in diverse sociopolitical contexts.

Data collection involved two primary techniques: literature review and case study analysis. The literature review focused on peer-reviewed journal articles, policy reports, and organizational



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documents obtained from credible academic databases such as Scopus, Springer, and Taylor & Francis. This stage ensured a comprehensive understanding of theoretical foundations, policy frameworks, and program outcomes relevant to interfaith dialogue and peacebuilding (Flick, 2018). In addition, six case studies were examined to illustrate practical applications of interfaith dialogue: the Indonesia Interfaith Dialogue Forum, Malaysia's Harmony Week, Thailand's Buddhist-Muslim Peace Project, the German Conference on Islam, the French Interfaith Council, and the UK Inter Faith Network. These initiatives represent diverse models ranging from grassroots community projects to state-supported institutional platforms.

For data analysis, this study applies thematic analysis following the framework proposed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014). The process involves data condensation, coding, and pattern identification to derive recurring themes. Comparative synthesis is then carried out to identify regional similarities, context-specific differences, and key challenges in implementing interfaith dialogue. This systematic approach ensures that the analysis is rigorous while remaining flexible enough to capture the nuances of both regions.

By adopting this qualitative comparative methodology, the study provides a comprehensive understanding of how interfaith dialogue contributes to conflict prevention, social cohesion, and global peacebuilding. It also highlights the importance of integrating both community-based approaches and institutional frameworks to create effective and inclusive models of dialogue that can be adapted across diverse contexts.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Interfaith Dialogue in Southeast Asia

Southeast Asia is a region marked by profound religious and cultural diversity, where Buddhism, Islam, Christianity, Hinduism, and numerous indigenous belief systems coexist within complex social, historical, and political contexts. Countries such as Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, the Philippines, and Myanmar are often described as microcosms of pluralism, yet this diversity presents significant challenges to maintaining social cohesion and peaceful coexistence.



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Throughout the region, religion plays a central role in shaping individual and collective identities, political participation, and cultural practices, making it both a driver of unity and, in some cases, a source of conflict (Sidik & Dilawati, 2025). Interfaith dialogue has therefore emerged as a critical mechanism for fostering understanding, reducing tensions, and creating inclusive pathways for nation-building.

In Indonesia, the world's largest Muslim-majority country, religious pluralism is embedded in the national philosophy of *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* (“Unity in Diversity”). The Forum Kerukunan Umat Beragama (FKUB)—established at provincial and district levels—serves as a structured platform for promoting dialogue, mediation, and conflict resolution among diverse religious groups. FKUB organizes community-based workshops, facilitates negotiations in areas prone to religious disputes, and works closely with local leaders to build trust across faith lines (Hasan, 2020). Beyond FKUB, initiatives like Interfaith Youth Camp Indonesia foster youth-led engagement, strengthening social harmony by involving younger generations in collaborative projects that transcend religious boundaries (Ali, 2022). These initiatives demonstrate Indonesia’s bottom-up approach, where religious and community leaders collaborate to preserve peace while respecting the autonomy of local traditions.

Similarly, Malaysia presents an important case study where state-driven policies are combined with community-based practices to strengthen multiculturalism. National events such as Harmony Week highlight Malaysia’s commitment to leveraging cultural diversity as a tool for nation-building. During this week, schools, civil society groups, and government institutions organize activities to celebrate religious traditions, encourage mutual understanding, and promote dialogue (Noor, 2021). Moreover, Malaysia’s Department of National Unity and Integration plays an active role in facilitating structured conversations between ethnic and religious groups, ensuring that dialogue initiatives align with broader policy goals of social cohesion. However, scholars note that sustaining inclusivity requires addressing socioeconomic inequalities that often underlie interreligious tensions (Hoon, 2020). Thus, Malaysia demonstrates the importance of combining policy frameworks with grassroots action to manage diversity effectively.



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Vol 1 no 1 (2025): June 2025

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Email: editormunif@gmail.com

In Thailand, religious pluralism is particularly visible in the southern provinces, where Buddhist and Muslim communities coexist amid long-standing socio-political tensions. Initiatives such as the Buddhist-Muslim Peace Project focus on reducing religiously motivated violence by creating safe spaces for dialogue and collaboration between local leaders and youth representatives (Wongsim, 2020). These programs emphasize community empowerment by integrating traditional practices with modern mediation strategies, enabling participants to address grievances peacefully while preserving cultural identities. Importantly, the Thai government has partnered with local NGOs and international organizations to provide resources for sustaining these initiatives, demonstrating the value of multi-stakeholder collaboration in conflict-prone regions.

Another notable example is the Philippines, particularly the Mindanao region, which has experienced decades of conflict involving Muslim and Christian communities. The Silsilah Dialogue Movement, established in Zamboanga City, has become a model for faith-based reconciliation by promoting “dialogue of life” and “dialogue of action” among diverse groups (Corpuz, 2025). Through education, cultural exchanges, and peacebuilding activities, the movement has successfully cultivated mutual trust and collective responsibility among historically divided communities. The impact of these initiatives demonstrates that faith-based actors are essential in mediating conflicts where religion plays a central role in shaping social identities.

The strength of interfaith dialogue initiatives in Southeast Asia lies in their grassroots orientation and cultural sensitivity. Rather than imposing external solutions, these programs are rooted in local contexts, relying on traditional leaders, community networks, and shared cultural values to facilitate dialogue (Anwar & Hakim, 2021). By involving community members directly, these efforts build social ownership, making peacebuilding initiatives more sustainable and resilient. Moreover, youth engagement is increasingly prioritized, recognizing the role of younger generations in shaping inclusive societies and countering radical narratives (Yusuf, 2022).

Despite these successes, challenges remain. Rising identity politics, socio-economic disparities, and digital misinformation threaten to undermine interfaith efforts. For instance, social media platforms have been exploited to spread religious intolerance and amplify sectarian



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Email: editormunif@gmail.com

divisions (Idrus, 2021). Furthermore, geopolitical conflicts, such as the Israel-Palestine crisis, often influence local perceptions and strain interreligious relations. These realities highlight the need for adaptive strategies that integrate digital literacy, policy reform, and transnational cooperation into interfaith dialogue frameworks.

Interfaith dialogue in Southeast Asia reflects a bottom-up approach that prioritizes community engagement, cultural sensitivity, and collaborative leadership. Initiatives such as Indonesia's FKUB, Malaysia's Harmony Week, Thailand's Buddhist-Muslim Peace Project, and the Silsilah Dialogue Movement in the Philippines illustrate the region's ability to harness diversity as a resource for peacebuilding. However, ensuring the long-term success of these programs requires greater alignment between grassroots initiatives and institutional support, as well as cross-border collaborations to address shared challenges. As Southeast Asia continues to navigate its pluralistic realities, interfaith dialogue remains a vital instrument for fostering social harmony, conflict prevention, and inclusive nation-building.

Interfaith Dialogue in Europe

Europe has long been a region characterized by religious diversity and cultural pluralism, yet its contemporary context is increasingly shaped by the complex dynamics of migration, secularization, and religious pluralism. Over the past decades, significant waves of migration from the Middle East, North Africa, and South Asia have transformed Europe's demographic composition, resulting in vibrant multicultural societies while simultaneously presenting new challenges for integration and social cohesion (Roy, 2019). This transformation has sparked ongoing debates about national identity, citizenship, and religious freedoms, particularly in countries where historical secular traditions intersect with growing religious diversity.

One of the most pressing issues in Europe's pluralistic landscape is the challenge of integrating Muslim communities into predominantly secular societies. Public discourse often centers around the role of Islam in Europe, frequently linked to concerns about Islamophobia, radicalization, and identity politics (Cesari, 2021). Rising populist movements and political narratives that portray religious minorities as cultural "outsiders" have exacerbated polarization



MUNIF: International Journal Of Religion Moderation

ISSN(Online): XXXX-XXXX

Vol 1 no 1 (2025): June 2025

<https://journal.as-salafiyah.id/index.php/munif/index>

Email: editormunif@gmail.com

and strained intercommunity relations (Triandafyllidou & Gropas, 2020). In this context, interfaith dialogue has become a critical mechanism for fostering mutual understanding, reducing prejudice, and creating inclusive societies.

In Germany, the German Conference on Islam (Deutsche Islam Konferenz, DIK), established in 2006, serves as a government-led platform that facilitates collaboration between federal authorities and Muslim organizations. Its primary objective is to promote integration, religious freedom, and mutual recognition through structured dialogue (Foroutan, 2021). DIK organizes regular forums involving policymakers, academics, and religious representatives to address topics such as religious education, mosque construction, and combating extremism. By institutionalizing dialogue at the national level, Germany underscores the importance of embedding interfaith engagement within policy frameworks to strengthen inclusivity.

France, with its strong tradition of *laïcité* (state secularism), presents a distinct model of interfaith engagement. The Conseil Français du Culte Musulman (CFCM) was established in 2003 as a representative body for Muslim communities, providing a formal channel for dialogue between religious groups and the state (Fernando, 2020). The CFCM works to mediate tensions, manage religious affairs, and ensure Muslim voices are represented in public debates. However, France continues to face significant challenges in balancing secular policies with the accommodation of religious practices, particularly regarding debates on religious symbols and Islamic identity in public spaces (Bowen, 2022). Despite these tensions, the CFCM remains a crucial mechanism for promoting intercultural dialogue within a framework of secular governance.

The United Kingdom adopts a relatively decentralized and inclusive approach to interfaith engagement. The UK Inter Faith Network, established in 1987, connects over 180 faith-based organizations across the country, providing platforms for dialogue and collaborative initiatives aimed at promoting peace, tolerance, and social cohesion (Knott, 2020). The Network coordinates interfaith week events, supports educational programs, and facilitates joint responses to hate crimes and community tensions. Its model demonstrates how civil society-led initiatives can



MUNIF: International Journal Of Religion Moderation

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Vol 1 no 1 (2025): June 2025

<https://journal.as-salafiyah.id/index.php/munif/index>

Email: editormunif@gmail.com

complement government policies, empowering local actors to drive reconciliation efforts within diverse communities.

Across Europe, numerous other initiatives demonstrate the continent's top-down approach to interfaith dialogue, where governments, supranational institutions, and legal frameworks play a central role in shaping inclusive societies. At the regional level, the European Council of Religious Leaders (ECRL) promotes dialogue between different faith traditions and provides policy recommendations to the European Union on religious pluralism and integration (Weller, 2018). Similarly, the Council of Europe supports projects that strengthen interfaith education and address religious discrimination, framing dialogue as a cornerstone of human rights protection and democratic governance (Council of Europe, 2020).

The European model is not without its challenges. Scholars argue that institutionalized interfaith platforms sometimes fail to engage marginalized groups effectively, as they tend to prioritize established religious elites over grassroots voices (Foner, 2021). Additionally, rising digital misinformation and hate speech exacerbate divisions, demanding innovative strategies that combine policy-driven frameworks with community-based engagement (Hackett, 2022). Integrating youth participation, fostering digital literacy, and leveraging transnational collaborations are increasingly seen as critical components for sustaining meaningful dialogue.

Despite these obstacles, Europe's experiences offer valuable insights into how legal frameworks and government-supported initiatives can institutionalize interfaith engagement. While the region's emphasis on policy-oriented mechanisms contrasts with Southeast Asia's grassroots-driven models, both approaches highlight the transformative potential of interfaith dialogue in promoting mutual understanding, conflict prevention, and inclusive nation-building. A synthesis of these strategies—combining institutional infrastructure with community participation—offers a promising pathway for enhancing global peacebuilding.

Comparative Insights

Interfaith dialogue plays an increasingly critical role in managing religious diversity and fostering social cohesion across different sociocultural contexts. A comparative analysis of



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Vol 1 no 1 (2025): June 2025

<https://journal.as-salafiyah.id/index.php/munif/index>

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Southeast Asia and Europe reveals both significant differences and shared objectives in their approaches to interfaith engagement. While the strategies implemented in each region vary due to distinct historical, cultural, and political circumstances, both demonstrate that dialogue serves as a powerful mechanism for promoting mutual understanding, reducing prejudice, and supporting peacebuilding.

In Southeast Asia, interfaith dialogue typically adopts a grassroots, community-driven approach that prioritizes cultural sensitivity and local ownership. Initiatives are often embedded within traditional structures and rely on the active participation of community leaders, religious figures, and grassroots organizations (Anwar & Hakim, 2021). Programs such as Indonesia's Forum Kerukunan Umat Beragama (FKUB), Malaysia's Harmony Week, and Thailand's Buddhist-Muslim Peace Project demonstrate how dialogue platforms are contextualized within local cultural norms to build trust and mediate conflicts (Sidik & Dilawati, 2025). By focusing on bottom-up engagement, these initiatives address issues directly affecting communities, including land disputes, cultural tensions, and interreligious misunderstandings. This approach allows for greater inclusivity, as decision-making processes involve actors at the grassroots level rather than being imposed from above.

In contrast, Europe has developed institutional and policy-driven frameworks to facilitate interfaith dialogue. Given the region's commitment to secularism, interfaith engagement is often anchored in state policies, legal protections, and government-supported platforms. Initiatives such as the German Conference on Islam, the Conseil Français du Culte Musulman (CFCM) in France, and the UK Inter Faith Network provide formal mechanisms for collaboration between religious communities, civil society, and governmental authorities (Foroutan, 2021). These platforms aim to integrate religious diversity into national governance models while ensuring the protection of minority rights and compliance with universal human rights standards (Council of Europe, 2020). While such frameworks offer structural stability and policy support, they are sometimes criticized for limited engagement with marginalized groups and for prioritizing mainstream religious representatives over grassroots voices (Foner, 2021).



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Vol 1 no 1 (2025): June 2025

<https://journal.as-salafiyah.id/index.php/munif/index>

Email: editormunif@gmail.com

Another distinction lies in the cultural contexts underpinning interfaith initiatives. In Southeast Asia, dialogue integrates deeply with local traditions and is often influenced by indigenous practices, customary laws, and shared communal values (Ali, 2022). For instance, interfaith programs in Indonesia often draw upon the national philosophy of *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* (“Unity in Diversity”), while Malaysia promotes interreligious harmony as part of its multicultural identity. Conversely, Europe places greater emphasis on secular governance and equal citizenship, striving to create frameworks that transcend religious identity while protecting freedom of belief (Bowen, 2022). This difference reflects divergent historical trajectories: Southeast Asia’s pluralism evolved organically through centuries of cultural exchanges, while Europe’s engagement with diversity has been reshaped by recent migration patterns and debates over integration.

Despite these differences, both regions share common challenges in sustaining interfaith dialogue. In Southeast Asia, the rise of radicalism and identity-based politics has led to localized religious conflicts and polarization (Corpuz, 2025). Similarly, Europe grapples with Islamophobia, migration-related tensions, and the growth of populist movements that challenge multicultural ideals (Cesari, 2021). Both regions also face the digitalization of intolerance, where social media platforms amplify hate speech and misinformation, creating new obstacles for reconciliation (Hackett, 2022). Addressing these issues requires innovative strategies that combine traditional dialogue mechanisms with modern tools for digital literacy and cross-cultural communication.

The outcomes of interfaith initiatives also differ. In Southeast Asia, dialogue has contributed to enhancing local cohesion, promoting tolerance, and resolving community-level disputes (Yusuf, 2022). By fostering understanding among diverse groups, these programs have strengthened social capital and facilitated coexistence within pluralistic societies. In Europe, interfaith frameworks have focused more on structural inclusivity and minority rights protection, embedding dialogue within legal systems and policy frameworks to safeguard religious freedoms and prevent discrimination (Knott, 2020). While Southeast Asia’s strength lies in its cultural embeddedness, Europe’s advantage comes from its institutionalization of diversity management.



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These insights suggest that there is significant potential for cross-regional learning. Southeast Asia could benefit from adopting Europe's policy-based protections to ensure inclusivity and accountability at the national level, while Europe could draw lessons from Southeast Asia's community-driven engagement to strengthen dialogue at the grassroots. A hybrid model that integrates local participation, institutional support, and digital innovation offers a promising pathway to enhance the effectiveness of interfaith dialogue globally.

The comparative analysis highlights that despite different approaches, contexts, and outcomes, both Southeast Asia and Europe demonstrate that interfaith dialogue reduces stereotypes, builds trust, and strengthens social cohesion. As religious diversity continues to shape global societies, fostering collaborative frameworks between regions is essential for addressing shared challenges and achieving sustainable peacebuilding.

CONCLUSION

Interfaith dialogue serves as a cornerstone of global peacebuilding, providing a platform for fostering mutual understanding, reducing religiously motivated conflicts, and promoting social cohesion in increasingly pluralistic societies. In a world marked by globalization, migration, and cultural interdependence, managing religious diversity has become both a challenge and an opportunity. The findings of this study demonstrate that interfaith dialogue is not merely a symbolic exercise but a transformative process capable of reshaping relationships, dismantling prejudices, and building pathways toward sustainable peace. By enabling communities to address tensions constructively, interfaith engagement supports the creation of inclusive societies where differences are respected and shared values are celebrated. A comparative analysis of Southeast Asia and Europe highlights two distinct yet complementary approaches to interfaith dialogue. In Southeast Asia, initiatives are largely grassroots-driven, rooted in community participation, local traditions, and shared cultural values. Programs such as Indonesia's Forum Kerukunan Umat Beragama (FKUB), Malaysia's Harmony Week, and Thailand's Buddhist-Muslim Peace Project emphasize bottom-up engagement, empowering communities to mediate conflicts and foster



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collaboration. Conversely, Europe adopts a more institutionalized and policy-oriented framework, integrating interfaith dialogue into national strategies, legal protections, and multicultural governance models. Examples include the German Conference on Islam, the Conseil Français du Culte Musulman (CFCM) in France, and the UK Inter Faith Network, which demonstrate how structured platforms can institutionalize diversity management and safeguard minority rights.

Despite these differences, both regions converge on the recognition that interfaith dialogue is essential for promoting trust, tolerance, and cooperation. This convergence underscores the potential for developing hybrid models that integrate Southeast Asia's cultural sensitivity with Europe's institutional support. Such models could enhance the effectiveness and scalability of interfaith initiatives, particularly in contexts where religious diversity intersects with socioeconomic disparities and political polarization. This study highlights the necessity of cross-regional collaboration and knowledge sharing to strengthen global peace initiatives. Transnational learning can help policymakers, educators, and civil society actors adopt best practices tailored to their unique sociocultural realities. Future research should also explore the role of digital platforms, youth movements, and innovative communication strategies in expanding interfaith engagement. Leveraging technology to connect diverse communities globally can amplify inclusive narratives and counter misinformation, making interfaith dialogue more accessible and impactful in the digital age. Interfaith dialogue emerges not only as a tool for conflict resolution but as a foundation for sustainable peacebuilding. By bridging cultural divides and fostering collaboration across regions, it offers a transformative pathway toward creating more inclusive, resilient, and harmonious societies worldwide.

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