



Engaging in intercultural dialogue and promoting mutual understanding

Thematic Priority 1: Decolonisation

The March 2024 document reads:

Centering decolonisation efforts enables us to confront historical injustices that have persisted. As civil society organisations, we have the opportunity to foster dialogue and reconciliation around these issues. It is imperative to address these historical injustices as they are ingrained within the systemic structures that perpetuate inequality and disadvantage.

- Marianne from Podium Voor Palestina brings advocacy experience for Palestine, which is directly relevant to the thematic priority. Her expertise in raising awareness and mobilising support can contribute significantly to addressing the priority.
- Kees from the Arab West Foundation possesses deep knowledge in development sociology and Muslim-Christian relations in Egypt. This expertise can provide valuable insights into understanding the societal dynamics relevant to the thematic priority. Needed: robust educational and awareness-raising initiatives Dutch government policies promoting cultural exchange and tolerance may inform initiatives aimed at fostering understanding among diverse communities.
- NIOD – an institute for war, holocaust and genocide studies has researched decolonisation very thoroughly. Related government policies include international agreements promoting peace and cooperation, such as the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly Goal 16 on promoting peaceful and inclusive societies.

Comments AWF for discussion: The statement “robust educational and awareness-raising initiatives,” is nice but is this feasible for our network? Colonisation resulted in “historical injustices that have persisted.” But how do we apply this to Israel and Palestine? We are dealing here with conflicting narratives. Where most Jews for ages have been speaking about return to their ancient land, most Palestinians speak of colonisation. Both views have strong faith-related connotations. The British mandate policy was deeply politically biased resulting in numerous injustices. At the end of World War II the newly established U.N. adopted after a lot of talking, resolution 181 to partition Mandatory Palestine at the end of the British Mandate (1947). The aim was to create independent but economically linked Arab and Jewish states with a proposal for a “Special International Regime” for the city of Jerusalem and its surroundings. The rejection of the partition proposal on the side of Palestinians and neighboring Arab states led to the Israeli war of independence that resulted in the Nakba and as well caused the devastation of many kibbutzim. The state of Israel was recognized by a majority of UN member states and in

1949 became a full member of the UN. In the June 1967 war Israel occupied Gaza, part of the Golan and the Jordanian annexed East Jerusalem and West Bank. None of these occupations were recognized by the world community.

The Arab-West Foundation, therefore, does not deny injustices of the past but believes in the right of existence of the State of Israel within the borders of June 4, 1967, and also in the recognition of a Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza with a special status for Jerusalem. The Arab-West Foundation would like to see the revival of a real peace process. Of course, all attempts to make the two-state solution impossible should be opposed. The Arab-West Foundation believes the current Israeli government is a disaster and we hope that in the next elections Israelis will vote for political parties that will make a two state solution a reality.

The March 2024 document on decolonisation reads:

- Action plans or strategies involve initiatives to address specific challenges within the thematic priority, such as programs targeting youth empowerment or cultural exchange. Some of these examples contain: educational reforms/curriculum reforms which means the inclusion of more comprehensive education about the colonial history as well as museum initiatives e.g.

Potential partners could include universities such as the University of Amsterdam, Leiden University and research institute Koninklijk Instituut voor Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde with expertise in the relevant fields.

Comments AWF: These are suggestions without any development in contacting institutions. Student protests at different academic institutions hardly had an effect on the cooperation between Dutch and Israeli universities. It is, therefore, unlikely that vaguely speaking of decolonisation with regard to Israel and Palestine will appeal them to cooperate with the Dutch network of the Anna Lindh Foundation.

The March 2024 document on decolonisation reads:

- Their added value lies in their diverse perspectives, resources, and networks, which can enhance the effectiveness and reach of interventions related to the thematic priority. Some of our individual members have experience with these topics, e.g. a Palestinian filmmaker and another individual member Maartje who is a podcast maker and addresses topics in relation to decolonisation. ElHizra, which is also one of our ALF members also promotes these issues through addressing the importance of literature.

Comments AWF: It is unclear who Maartje is. ElHizra does excellent and important work.

The Grote Midden-Oosten Platform responded to the following question in the ALF questionnaire

"Please identify potential national and international funding opportunities related to this."

The GMOP wrote:

National funding opportunities may be available through government grants for cultural exchange programs, educational initiatives, and community development projects. These are unknown at the moment.

Comments AWF: We made inquiries with Ms. Baukje Dijkstra of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. She was not aware of national funding opportunities. We also made inquiries at the The Hague Municipality and also here no funding opportunities exist for decolonisation activities.

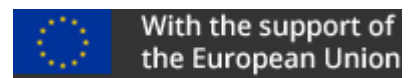
The March 2024 document reads:

"International funding opportunities may include grants from multilateral organisations, philanthropic foundations, and donor agencies supporting initiatives aligned with the thematic priority."

Comments AWF: We found this very vague. We are not aware of these international funding opportunities.

Conclusion: Centering decolonisation efforts enables us to confront historical injustices which is important but the focus on decolonisation with Palestine brings us to conflicting narratives as explained above. We believe the combination of the ALF Road to Inclusive Narratives Project (much needed with the current conflicting narratives) with peacebuilding and dialogue between cultures (thematic priority 2) could yield better results. The ALF Road to Inclusive Narratives Project is sadly still a pilot project in which the Netherlands does not participate.

De Anna Lindh Foundation is een intergouvernementele organisatie die maatschappelijke organisaties en burgers aan weerszijden van de Middellandse Zee samenbrengt om onderling begrip en vertrouwen te vergroten.



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