Engaging Religious Actors
III. Why Religion Matters at USAID
Why Does Religion Matter to USAID?

Source: Gallup Coexist Index 2009 report

Figure 1. Religion's Importance

Is religion an important part of your daily life?
Percentage answering “yes”

- Bangladesh: 99%
- Djibouti: 98%
- Sierra Leone: 98%
- Senegal: 98%
- Pakistan: 98%
- Afghanistan: 97%
- Mauritania: 97%
- Niger: 97%
- Tanzania: 96%
- Malaysia: 95%
- Chad: 94%
- Mali: 94%
- Ethiopia: 91%
- Brazil: 88%
- Burkina Faso: 88%
- South Africa: 82%
- India: 79%
- Italy: 72%
- United States: 67%
- Israel: 50%
- Canada: 45%
- Germany: 44%
- Belgium: 37%
- Netherlands: 29%
- United Kingdom: 25%
- France: 20%
- Norway: 0%

Source: Gallup Coexist Index 2009 report
Define/identify the development objective

- Development objective must be:
  - Clearly defined
  - Secular in purpose
  - Serve as the foundation of all programming
V. Legal Guidelines
First Amendment—Establishment Clause

“Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of a religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof...”
Implications for USAID—GC Guidance

• USAID will only finance activities and programs that have a secular purpose and which do not have the primary effect of advancing or inhibiting religion. USAID-financed activities and programs may not:
  • Result in government indoctrination of religion
  • Define its recipients by reference to religion
  • Create an excessive entanglement with religion

• Assistance must be allocated on the basis of neutral, secular criteria that neither favor nor disfavor religion, and is made available to both religious and secular beneficiaries on a nondiscriminatory basis.
And now for a test…

Does this activity pass legal guidelines?

- Pass
- Fail
Does this activity pass legal guidelines?

- Pass
- Fail
Does this activity pass legal guidelines?

- Pass
- Fail
The Establishment Clause is there to protect you.

Avoid Legal Traps:
- Indoctrination
- Endorsement
- Excessive Entanglement

Don’t let the legal guidelines inhibit you from developing innovative approaches to engage religious actors from the community.
VI. Opportunities for Engagement
Role of Religious Actors

- Leader
- Gatekeeper
- Activist
- Advisor
- Interlocutor
- Oppressor
- Provider
- Politician
- Follower
- Advocate
- Agitator
Role of Religious Actors

Provider

Cambodia

Monks provide:

• Home-based care to people living with HIV/AIDS.
• Services to children who have lost parents to AIDS.
Role of Religious Actors

Advisor

Philippines

Solicit advice from Muslim legal specialists to:

• Ensure new forestry regulation legislation includes local traditions, religious laws, and other cultural norms.
• Address community concerns.
• Build consensus between disagreeing parties.
Community Mobilizer

Guatemala

Partnership with Local Catholic Churches.

- Establish youth outreach centers
  - Health, job skills, and literacy skills
- Crime prevention programs
  - Prevent new gang membership recruitment
  - Help former gang members
Guidelines for Partnership

- Federal dollars cannot be used for the printing and publication of overtly religious materials.
- Federal dollars may not be used for worship, religious instruction or proselytizing.
- Any religious activities must take place in a separate time or place from USG-funded activities and must be voluntary.
- FBOs must report how Federal funds were spent as is required by all grant recipients.
- FBOs cannot discriminate against any current or prospective beneficiary on the basis of religion or religious belief.

- FBOs CAN include religious references in their mission statement or other governing documents.
- FBOs CAN select board members on a religious basis.
- FBOs CAN use facilities without removing religious art, icons, scriptures or other religious symbols.
- FBOs CAN offer religious activities as long as they are voluntarily attended, privately funded, and separate in time or location from federally supported activities.

- When in doubt about USG-funded FBO activities, consult the Agency Legal Advisor.