

Article

Interreligious Dialogue as a Communicative Process: Intersubjectivity and Misunderstandings in Brescia

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Abstract

This article stems from the PRIN GOV_REL (Urban Governance of Interreligious Dialogue) research project carried out in four Italian cities in 2023–2025 and reports on some preliminary results of the empirical enquiry held in the city of Brescia. The Brescia area is characterised by high rates of residents with an immigrant background and a consolidated presence of religious minorities (Muslim, Orthodox, Sikh, Hindu and Protestant groups), many recognised centres (mosques, temples and Christian non-Catholic churches) and a significant commitment of ethnic–religious communities to local public life. This paper examines the creation of grassroots-level interreligious dialogue, seen as a communicative process. The empirical evidence is based on material collected by participant observations and semi-structured interviews regarding four initiatives that occurred in 2024. A socio-cultural analysis outlines the communicative frame: text; context; aims; acts; interlocutors and their power/freedom of expression; interactions; results. The article examines the communicative pattern of each initiative, considering an intercultural orientation and a pluralistic model of interfaith dialogue. It seeks to answer the following questions: what was the fundamental message that the promoters wanted to convey? How do the single actors communicate their perspective of religious “others”, and what results did they achieve or not achieve? The analysis leads to identifying the patterns that facilitate and/or hamper dialogue, taking into account misunderstandings and “cul-de-sac” aspects. Final recommendations highlight the recurrent breaking points that should be prevented and some premises to guarantee successful communication between members of different religions in multicultural urban spaces.



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[\(https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/\)](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/).**Keywords:** interreligious dialogue; communicative approach; multi-religiosity; social performance; urban spaces; interreligious leaders; calculus of interpretation; dialogical co-construction

1. Introduction

In the context of an increasingly multicultural society characterised by human mobility and superdiversity (Vertovec 2007), many social sciences and humanities have focused on the study of religious plurality, which modifies the scenario of relationships in both the private and public sphere and generates governance issues (Radamat 2009). The impacts produced (generally of discomfort, anxiety and uncertainty, see Ward (2013) can occur at different levels: at the micro-level in proximity of people’s daily lives; at the meso-level in organisations that mobilise material and symbolic elements of the faith communities; and at the macro-sociological level, which concerns institutions and the governance of public life.

Many studies have focused on the effects of confrontation and social disorganisation related to religious freedom and the rights of religious minorities in contexts of closure and of a monopoly of the religious field by majority denominations (McBride and Richardson 2012; Grim and Finke 2011; Breskaya et al. 2024). However, an increasingly consolidated strand of both theoretical and empirical studies analyses interreligious dialogue (IRD from now on) as a form of peace-making and balancing between different faiths, thus as a tool that facilitates the governance of cultural diversity, reformulates and sometimes prevents conflicts, and spreads a culture of conciliation and non-violence (Groff 2002; Körs et al. 2020).

In the field of theology, IRD is dominated by a hermeneutic effort, since it is based almost exclusively on textual fixation (Brown 2014, p. 2), the knowledge and interpretation of the written and/or oral holy word, and the mutual corroborations expressed by representatives of the various faiths. But for some time now, IRD has moved beyond the borders of theological subjects and has become the everyday experience of many people, with several social, cultural and communicative implications (Winkler et al. 2023). Given its grassroots nature, a “narrative” more than a “rational” approach (Danielson 2013; Al-Bundawi 2021) is needed to understand interfaith dialogue as a social act.

In this article, I will discuss IRD in communicative (what is transmitted and understood) and performative (what is achieved through communication) terms, as an experience of otherness constructed through codes and forms typical of mutual understanding or accommodation (Cornille 2013) between people inside and outside their community (Ipgrave et al. 2018). This can occur in a more or less institutionalised manner, mainly involving single persons at lower levels of the hierarchy. As a sociologist, I will consider the social positions of the actors involved and the unequal opportunities of access to resources, in order to qualify the efficacy of the different urban initiatives examined. After a brief introduction to the communicative perspective in the analysis of IRD (par. 2), I will present some empirical materials from the research project GOV_REL collected in the city of Brescia (par. 3), where I focused on four local bottom-up IRD initiatives with the aim of understanding how the communicative style and practice impact on the success of IRD. Beside some information on the single platforms/events, I will outline the fundamental message that the promoters wanted to convey; how the single actors communicated their religious belonging and mutual recognition, and the results—whether achieved or not—of the dialogical setting. The comparative analysis of the four encounters will lead to identification of: (1) the main drivers that foster mutual understanding, recognition and support between participants; (2) the recurrent breaking points that could be prevented in both planning and practicing IRD. The essay will offer recommendations for successful communication between members of different religions in multicultural urban spaces.

2. A Communication Perspective of the Dialogic Practices in a Multi-Religious City: Tools for Analysis

Communication studies are common to social scientists, humanists and artists; they use several disciplinary and interdisciplinary tools to deconstruct and interpret any sort of communication act and product, their messages, channels, situations, interlocutors, functions and performativity. In order to apply a communication perspective to IRD in urban spaces, the city needs to be considered as a laboratory of religiosity; that is, a common space for encounters or conversations about faith, spirituality and religion. In this context different social actors—both individuals and communities—express themselves as religious and non-religious, with more or less clear boundaries between traditions, in given and meaningful moments of public life. The speakers construct appropriate settings or “formats” for interreligious exchanges that are simultaneously physical, social and psychological (Brown 2013, p. 12). Each speaker pursues the aim of communicating their own identity

and singularity but also their openness to others. As IRD occurs in the public sphere, interlocutors may have other purposes: for example to increase their visibility (also looking to capture the attention of institutions), or to empower their faith community and stimulate the participation of believers. This is consistent with a dialogic form of communication. As [Anderson \(2013, p. 100\)](#) states, in dialogue, the presence of the other justifies and authenticates our presence in the world; it aligns and decentralises the self and mutual recognition (“we see and are seen”) and proves transformative, opening up possibilities for further exchange between and within subjects. For these reasons, many social actors engage in a dialogic setting, even if spontaneously and not fully prepared for the conversation (see also: [Interreligious Think Tank 2015](#)).

According to [Minnema \(2014\)](#), there are three modes of communicating one’s own religious belonging in an IRD setting, depending on the different and often overlapping views of the religious culture to be expressed: (1) a traditional style (IRD as a reproduction of roles and contents of the faith community); (2) a modern style (IRD as a meaning-making process, aimed at constructing the right public image against stereotypes); and (3) a post-modern style (IRD as a fluid and disengaged opportunity for mutual recognition among individuals).

In my view, the city—with its historical, cultural, social and political features—is the “context” of IRD while the local experiences of interreligious communication are the “text” to be read and analysed. I argue that the deconstruction of the text–context connection is crucial for understanding meanings, situations and consequences of social practices. It is helpful to discover the tacit assumptions that lie under the explicit acts and words, as well as the plurality of meaning of each act of communication. As [Ipgrave et al. \(2018\)](#), [Dietz \(2018\)](#) and [Brown \(2013\)](#) explain, the manifold facets of IRD are well known: in the same practice one can see intentional and unintentional gestures; planned/spontaneous and accidental effects; prescriptive and non-prescriptive messages; grassroots, praxis-driven habits and the echo of top-down discourses emanated by institutions.

To reveal contradictions and continuities within and between the IRD practices, a multilevel analysis is required. Furthermore, to better address the interpretation, a critical perspective is also recommended: an IRD experience does not only consist of language and interaction, but has the power to construct a religious discourse, in Foucault’s terms ([Pihlaja 2021](#)) because it transmits knowledge and power together: ideology and tacit rules that stem from a given hierarchical social order and tend to reproduce it. Therefore, the strength or weakness of IRD initiatives lie in their authoritative and performative nature: authoritative because they can (or cannot) model roles in religious transmission and communication; performative because they can (or cannot) produce changes in the situation (“to make things with words”, according to [Austin \(1988\)](#)). Performativity is also referred by Alexander’s theory of social performance (2010) to all symbolic, ritual-like activities that can “re-fuse”, in a simple way, cultural elements that are disentangled in ordinary social life. Alexander’s notion of cultural performance seems to apply perfectly to IRD urban practices, as “the social process by which actors, individually or in concert, display for others the meaning of their social situation” ([Alexander 2010, p. 32](#)). It is also crucial to analyse the space dimension and understand social performances, because they do not exist in a vacuum but always design situated interactions where people, languages, setting, messages and discourse can emerge ([Warner 2021](#)).

One other tool for the communicative analysis of IRD practices is offered by the linguistic pragmatics applied to religious matter. After a reconstruction of the context surrounding interreligious exchange, [Wolf \(2021, p. 204\)](#) suggests examining the way by which the IRD participants negotiate the meaning of the encounter. He calls this negotiation “calculus of interpretation”.

In a new and intercultural situation, such as speakers who use a language other than their mother-tongue, communication can lead to ambiguous meaning and inferences, either by speakers or hearers, which in turn can bring about misunderstandings and a “communicative cul-de-sac” (Ibidem, p. 205). Still following Wolf, the analysis of the pragmatic aspects can focus on the “dialogical co-construction”: the way by which a speaker committed in a dialogic conversation integrates the opinion and viewpoint of others within his/her own discourse. This allows participants to “learn about their own prejudices and blind spots and discover new insights about their own faith and religious tradition” (WCC 2016, p. 18)

Dialogical co-construction is the ideal result of any dialogic conversation: understanding oneself as consisting of different voices and identities (that are evoked by the presence of others in communication). In IRD, this can occur when the encounter with another religious horizon discloses the truth in different ways. As Burrell (2004, p. 54) argues, there is a type of reconciliation and mutual learning: “Interreligious friendship is not just an expression of complementarity but a way of allowing the faith of others, with the access to the divine that it represents, to interact with our own faith commitment to draw attention to dimensions of our faith response which can effectively be blocked by the shadow-side of our tradition”.

3. Aims of Research, Object, Field, Method and Tools

This paper is based on a two-year research project in which four Italian universities are engaged¹ and focuses on the city of Brescia (Northern Italy). In 2024–2025, the research unit of CIRMiB (Center of Initiatives and research on Migration) at the Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore conducted 50 in-depth interviews with municipal, religious and secular actors, arranged four participant observations of local IRD initiatives and four focus groups with school representatives (teachers, school leaders and students), residents of multi-religious neighbourhoods and public administrators. As part of the overall aim of studying IRD as a tool of the urban governance of religious diversity and religious freedom, this essay has the purpose of understanding how the communicative style and practice matters in the success of IRD initiatives, with a special look at interactional aspects (intersubjectivity) and the overcoming of criticalities that can hamper IRD in its local manifestations.

Brescia is a medium-size industrial city (of approximately 200,000 inhabitants) located in Eastern Lombardy, capital of the manufacturing sector in Italy. It is highly multicultural with 18.5% of the population consisting of non-Italian residents.² With regard to the macro-areas of origin of foreigners, 45% come from European countries and about a quarter come from Asia (27%, with India and Pakistan as the prominent nationalities) and Africa (25%, mainly from Marocco, Senegal and Ghana). Many of them are employed in the manufacturing sector, and in construction and food/tourism activities. The household sector is also almost entirely ethnicised with 85% of job contracts in this sector assigned to foreigners. The greater area surrounding Brescia has many productive activities and farms which employ a significant number of immigrant workers (e.g., in agriculture 70% of contracts are assigned to foreigners). The area hosts several immigrant churches and places of worship for minority religions: a regional survey reported that in 2021, Muslims represented about 45% of the total religious affiliations among immigrants, followed by Orthodox (15%) and Catholics (15%) (Colombo 2022, p. 50). A local survey of 31 minority congregations in Brescia (Mignardi and Ambrosi 2021) reported that many of them still hold services in structures that are not built for religious purposes (such as industrial buildings, flats and garages) and are therefore difficult to recognise.

In order to cope with the growing religious pluralism, over the past 20 years the local Catholic Church has developed many joint initiatives with minority Christian and

non-Christian communities (Brazilian and Filipino Catholics, Greek–Ukrainian–Russian Orthodox, Islamic and Sufi centres, Hindu, Buddhist and Sikh Gurdwara temples) (Naso 2019). The Diocese of Brescia has also embarked on a course of study and self-training on the increasingly multicultural evolution of the assembly of the Catholic faithful and the need to practise interculturalism both internally and externally with other denominations and religious ministries (Colombo and Peano 2023; Diocese of Brescia 2023).

The municipal government also supports interfaith and interreligious initiatives in secular spaces, especially during religious holidays and the commemoration of historical interfaith episodes, and sometimes promotes IRD encounters directly. Among the 10 IRD initiatives mapped in the overall local research project, four were selected as the object of this study. These are IRD projects or platforms that are not only particularly structured and recurrent, but also emblematic of the grassroots level of interreligious dialogue: two of them are originally promoted by local institutions and then managed by volunteers and third-sector organisations; the other two are promoted and managed by single IRD intermediaries together with a local network of faith associations.

In all four initiatives, the local Catholic Church is present and plays a pivotal role since the promoters are Catholics and the IRD activities take place in Catholic churches and parishes (often, but not exclusively) (par. 4). Each initiative was developed in the past 5–10 years and is currently active. For each one, during GOV_REL research project a set of 1–3 non-directive interviews were administered to the promoter/s and the staff of the management group (for a total of 10 interviews), followed by one participant observation during a scheduled public event (for a total of four observed events). All events were open to a general audience, free of charge and required informal subscription and/or invitation.

The methodology of this case study is fully qualitative. The following research tools were used: a semi-structured interview guide, articulated in four content areas (background of their interreligious work in Brescia; current state of IRD; strengths and weaknesses of the local initiatives; opinions on urban governance of religious diversity and religious freedom), and a focused observation grid, including description and comments on the interactions that occurred and meanings (organization and spaces; interactions and languages; materiality; rituals and holy practices; discourses; awareness-raising concepts). The mapping and observation of the selected initiatives was carried out between March 2024 and February 2025.

4. Four Local Initiatives: Description and the Text–Context Pattern

In order to analyse the communicative patterns, a brief description of each initiative is needed. On the basis of interviews and in-field observations, the four projects are presented (with common features and distinctions) in Table 1, including references to the observed urban events. After the descriptions, I will consider the positions of interlocutors and their power of expression, the main purposes and messages conveyed, the urban spaces and the role played by the audience.

Table 1. (a)—Active interreligious dialogue initiatives promoted by institutions in Brescia. (b)—Active interreligious dialogue initiatives promoted by single leaders/intermediators in Brescia.

(a)		
Project/ platform title	1. "IN CAMMINO... ALLA SCOPERTA DEI LUOGHI SACRI E CULTURALI DELLA CITTÀ" (Interreligious walk discovering the sacred and cultural sites of the city)	2. "DÒSTI FESTIVAL DELLE ARTI E CULTURE RELIGIOSE" (Friendship Festival of Religious Arts and Cultures)
Short description of social performance	Starting from the school, people walk through streets (from the periphery to downtown) and visit 7 places of worship, where they are received by religious representatives	In different urban places (squares, religious places; cultural centres; schools and universities) several live art performances are offered (music and orchestra, cineforum, theatrical performances, poetry, visual and figurative art exhibition) + public conference and book presentation
Promoted by	State Upper secondary school "IIS Mantegna"—Teacher of Catholic religion, Diocese of Brescia	Ministry of Home Affairs and Council of Brescia; Diocese of Brescia and Catholic University (2017–2019); Dòsti Association (from 2019 onwards)
Since year	2017; once a year	2017; about every other year
Observed urban event (title, subtitle place and date)	"IN CAMMINO" (Let's walk) 9th edition of the project Brescia: from IIS Mantegna school to a mosque, a Buddhist temple, a Sikh temple, an Orthodox church, a Protestant church, a Catholic church 24 October 2024	"LE VOCI DEL DISARMO. PERCORSO INTERRELIGIOSO TRA I TESTIMONI DI PACE" (The voices of disarmament. An interreligious route among peace witnesses) 4th edition of the project; this event is part of the Festival della Pace (Festival for Peace) organised by the Municipality. Brescia: Catholic church <i>San Filippo Neri—Padri della pace</i> 12 November 2024
Number of participants	200–250 (students and teachers from the promoting institute + students and teachers from 2 other invited secondary schools + representatives of religious communities + general audience)	180–200 (general audience + members of the Dòsti association and performers + institutional representatives + faithful from the 8 religious networks involved in the performance)
Age of participants	Adults; teenagers	Adults; second generation youth; young scout members
Faith communities involved in the event	Islamic, Buddhist, Sikh, Orthodox, Protestant, Catholic, Hindu	Islamic, Buddhist, Judaism, Sikh, Orthodox, Protestant, Catholic, Hindu
Duration of performance	6–7 h	3 h
Performed rituals	Introductory public speech/presentation; questions and answers conversation; talk and prayer reciting; guided meditation; blessing by laying on of the head; circle time; eating and drinking together (ethnic food)	Introductory public speech; short monologue acted out by 8 testimonials of disarmament; music concert and singing together; exhibition of 3 artistic handcrafts; (some ethnic food/drink on the table)
Interviewees	The reference person, a teacher of Catholic religion, activist of the Diocese of Brescia and for Albanian cultural minority	3 members of the Dòsti Association; 1 city council member; 1 priest of Diocese of Brescia who was among the first promoters

Table 1. Cont.

(b)		
Project/ platform title	3. “INCONTRI DI SPIRITUALITÀ” (Spirituality Encounters)	4. “PATTO DI FRATERNITÀ INTERRELIGIOSA” (Interreligious Fraternity Agreement)
Short description of social performance	Series of four informal meetings in which children of different migratory and religious origin are invited with their families (users of the afterschool service) to experience together prayer and other conviviality and spiritual rituals; cooking and eating; planting of seeds; group discussion; prayer; walking and visiting	Series of informal meetings in which representatives of religious groups and associations that signed the agreement are invited personally. In each encounter a different format is planned and organised (city tours; conviviality; conference; group discussion; collective games; cooking and eating) with an average of 20–50 participants
Promoted by	The responsible of the Catholic Church Catechism	An interreligious leader, past entrepreneur in the food sector, member of a Catholic movement (Focolare movement), social and political activist
Since year	2021	2017 (until 2021 it was named “Agreement for an Italian Islam”, then opened up to multi-religious participation)
Observed urban event (title, subtitle place and date)	“VOGLIA DI VITA” (Zest for life) Fourth meeting of the series Brescia: Catholic parish Oratorio di Fiumicello (western multi-ethnic district)	“GIORNATA INTERNAZIONALE DELLA FRATELLANZA UMANA” (International day of Human Fraternity) Botticino (village near Brescia): in the Hindu temple Maha Shiv Shakti Mandir
Number of participants	50 (members of the parish church as catechists and priest + 1 representative of the Romanian Orthodox church; 4 Muslim women; several children and teenagers, 1 guitar player)	30 (old and young members of different Catholic organisations: Azione Cattolica, Comunione e Liberazione, Focolare, ACLI, Scout; young members of Islamic Cultural Centre; young members of the Hindu temple; young members of the Sikh temple; members of Islamic Sufi Association “Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba”; 2 representatives of the City council)
Age of participants	Adults; children; young members of the parish	Adults; young members of religious groups
Faith communities involved in the event	Islamic, Sikh, Orthodox, Catholic	Islamic, Sikh, Hindu, Catholic
Duration of performance	3 h	3.30 h
Performed rituals	Common prayer in different languages; Singing together; planting seeds together; circle time	Circle time; collective gaming; silent participation of a Hindu blessing and prayer
Interviewees	The promoter (catechist of Catholic Religion, activist of the Diocese of Brescia) + the co-coordinator of the event, a Muslim representative also appointed as a member of the city council + the past parish of the church	The promoter + three participants and co-organisers of Islamic, Sikh and Hindu community

Source: elaboration data from Gov_Rel research, 2025.

4.1. Interlocutors and Power/Freedom of Expression

All initiatives are managed by interreligious leaders (or “IRD intermediators”) who belong to the Catholic universe and have been highly committed over the past 5–10 years in the dialogical work among religions and faiths both inside and outside the Christian community. Given the same cultural matrix, the four IRD intermediaries have much in common according to their religious and sociocultural ideals: establishing world peace; openness and integration of residents with an immigrant background; encountering God in others as “brothers-in-God”; promoting social justice and cooperation; learning from the religious “other”. They show a strong dialogical attitude based on the conviction that,

despite significant disparities between cultures and religions, there is a basic stratum of human commonalities that makes it possible for people to communicate with one another and to discover points of contact with those belonging to traditions other than their own. Therefore, according to data collected by interviews and participant observations, all of them appear to be acknowledged leaders in dialogic communication, able to take and give the floor to the audience and help opposing views in negotiating their reciprocal issues.³ They know each other personally as members of interconnected networks and have frequent exchanges on the IRD work.

For each of them, the impulse to put in place interreligious encounters stems from: (1) curiosity about how newcomers and foreign residents live their faith and manifest their religious belonging; (2) conviction that the Catholic Church has an historical and pivotal role in giving room and including immigrant people (according to the Pastoral Orientation for Migrants and Asylum Seekers, see [Vatican State 2022](#)), and (3) a certain personal mental, psychological and spiritual preparation to engage deeply in dialogue, as a discovery task, or an extraordinary activity in a sensitive field that can achieve positive results. During the interviews, in recounting the history of their project, they often refer to negative signals of hatred, distrust and suspicion they had gathered from both sides, the majority and minority religious members, single persons as well as the institutions. Despite the profound commitment, and the concrete and successful proactivity in organising IRD opportunities, they admit that IRD is a long and difficult process and their project only a preliminary attempt to create the “preconditions for dialogue” (*faith, hope and love*, see [Gort 2008](#), p. 757).

Besides the Catholic intermediators, there are several representatives of minority religions (Islamic, Buddhist, Sikh, Orthodox and Hindu) who regularly participate in one or many IRD initiatives and whose physical presence does create the right interreligious and dialogical “atmosphere” ([Paulsen and Hvenegard-Lassen 2023](#)). They are first- and second-generation immigrants, observant believers and representatives of their religious and national community, engaged in a variety of cultural and social activities (in some cases also with a political responsibility) at local level. They are conscious that participation and commitment in IRD is a new learning experience for them. Some already experienced the “living together” between Christian and Muslims, Sikh, Buddhist and Hindus in their country of origin. They recognise that IRD can be difficult and “costly” in terms of isolation and misunderstanding by their own ethnic and religious network, but they do it because of strong convictions: (1) the feeling of urgency to foster the social and cultural integration of immigrants (in this case they play the role of “policy advocates”); (2) the belief that all religions have commonalities in the search for transcendence and truth, no matter the historical clash of civilisations (as “committed spiritual leaders”); and (3) the will to contribute to deconstructing reciprocal fear and stigmatisation (mainly the Muslim representatives) and to avoid social closure and exclusion of minorities (as “intercultural and conflict mediators”).

Playing the role of forerunners on public issues, they have learnt by experience how difficult but significant it is to conduct IRD in this city. In terms of active participation, they generally follow the line proposed by the promoters, without having direct leadership (as a matter of fact, none of the IRD initiatives mapped in Brescia are developed and/or promoted by a single or multiple minority representative or denomination). In this sense, it can be said that IRD for them is still a living experiment, not yet a comfortable one, in which the need to “be seen” prevails on the need to “see” the otherness.

During the four events observed, participants were self-enrolled or personally invited; thus, either the majority or the minority representatives expressed goodwill to come together and meet others, in a respectful, peaceful and fraternal environment. They used

an informal register to talk together; i.e., many participants called each other by name, avoiding the use of courtesy titles. Although during the spiritual rituals/services and the live art performances the general atmosphere was structured and quite formal (“the front stage” by Goffman (1959)), it then became more informal during the moments of conviviality (eating, drinking, singing, playing, chatting etc.) especially in events n. 1 and n. 3, in which many young people participated.

As for the communicative style, all the verbal interactions addressed to the whole audience occurred in Italian language; the presence of alloglots at the venue was a source of separate interpersonal communication (which may have disadvantaged or excluded some), but instead of disturbing the main interaction this seemed to attract the positive curiosity of the general audience: a sort of Goffman’s “backstage” of IRD in which looking straight at “the different” was allowed and even expected (e.g., watching and interrogating Muslim women wearing a veil; Hindus wearing saris and dhotis; Orthodox priests with long black garments; or the Protestant woman who spoke, etc.).

A three-way channel of communication (multi-modality) observed in events n. 1 and n. 2, occurred in and through institutional settings: what is said (“public speaking”); what is showed/performed (“public representation”), and the “private exchange” (words, gestures, clothes and other elements of perception lying under the personal and interpersonal domain). In the grassroots events n. 3 and n. 4, managed by a narrower network of participants, communication occurred by two channels only: public and private exchange (that is, group or interpersonal communication), and the inter-channels passage was easier and fluid; the frame distinction between stage and backstage (the “act” and the “feedback on act”) was extremely subtle.

At all events, most of the verbal communications were performed by the organisation leader and his/her staff; the minority representatives spoke for less time and were less prominent on the scene; however, a reciprocal acknowledgement was clear by every actor no matter whether they belonged to majority or minority groups, and was maintained by everyone until the event closure as an indicator of the strength of will to gain from the extraordinary moment of openness and exchange.

4.2. *Aims, Texts and Messages*

Crossing-checking data from interviews, participant observations, and advertising materials revealed the four initiatives seem to have an inner coherence between their explicit purposes and the message/s they convey both explicitly and implicitly.

The Interreligious Walk (initiative n. 1) conveys the fundamental idea of parity and universality among humans, which is a core content of public schooling and youth education. Dealing with diversity should be a need of every child/teenager who grows in a superdiverse social and cultural mix: each of them can feel both affiliated and a stranger at the same time, even in their own community. The promoters want to transmit the idea that the interplay between you/me; us/they; local/global is fruitful—and not detrimental—in the construction of one’s own identity. Instead of opposition, an interreligious walk suggests addition and complementarity, because “different” is not the same as “wrong”.⁴ Secondly, in a hyper-secularised world, this IRD experience wants to reinforce the acknowledgement of religion as a part of a people’s culture, and all the different forms of worship that respond to different cultural styles to meet a universal spiritual aspiration to be good, just and true (that is, similar to God). Therefore, the places of prayer and worship must be known, honoured, and cared for, because they are open and public spaces where each person will be welcomed in a friendly manner (concept of open churches). The third lesson comes from the direct experience of the rules of entry/participation in every temple: a sort

of citizenship education that conveys in practice the democratic principle; that is, the need for reciprocal respect between the guest and the host.

The Dòsti Festival of Religious Arts and Cultures (Dòsti=Fraternity or Friendship in Urdu language) (initiative n. 2) conveyed the idea of urgency in the deconstruction and reconstruction of the social representations of the religious “other”, going beyond a “folkloristic and didactic” approach to IRD to touch the soul and the emotional, rather than (or before) the rational side of speakers/listeners. In the society of communication, it has the ambition of creating a public and open repository—in both sacred and secular urban spaces—in order to host and showcase not only the self-representation of each religious community, but also the public debate around the religious topic among different denominations. The Dòsti Festival offers “total intercultural communication” (Colombo 2023, p. 8) with a fresh, appealing, inclusive and bottom-up approach, trying to avoid “both fundamentalist and traditionalist dogmatism and the cold disenchantment of a hyper-secularised religion reduced to a few tired rituals” (Ibidem). Secondly, the message of the Dòsti Festival is linked to the beauty that emerges from the art–spirituality link: like art, faith too aspires to beauty: like art, faith too is accessible to everyone. Thus, the artistic language becomes a stimulating agent for encounters between believers of different faiths, and between believers and non-believers, first and foremost as “a form of reasoning in which feeling and thinking are inseparably connected” (Arnheim 1969, p. V). The main purpose of the Dòsti Festival is to perform artistic harmony (e.g., in music, dance, figurative art, etc.) as a metaphor of the “social and cultural harmony”⁵ that must be built (Pizzetti and Colombo 2019). The versatility of many arts, blending sound and silence, movement and stillness, and patterns and spontaneity, allows for adjustments in the communication setting according to the actual context in which they are performed. Kalsen (2022), for example, refers to dance, as an ideal “platform of engagement” in IRD. Finally, the Dòsti Festival implicitly speaks to reciprocal image-building. There is need for a self-critical thinking by every religion:

- The minority religions should overcome the tendency to defend their public image by stressing the elements of distinction and singularity and try to interiorize the commonalities with other denominations;
- The Roman Catholic religion, as the major religion in Italy, must contribute to IRD with high responsibility and openness by giving the floor to others, offering spaces of expression, and practising democratic models for debate both inside and outside the Christian assembly.

The Spirituality Encounters (initiative n. 3) are based on a face-to-face experience of difficult co-existence in a multi-ethnic area, and on the conviction of the social and civic role of the Roman Catholic Church (the *Oratorio*) as a “responsible, intelligent and historically engaged actor”⁶ whose task is to “avoid religious wars” and welcome the non-native population, meeting their basic needs with concrete actions: childcare, social assistance and school guidance for second generations, and of linguistic tools for immigrant women often segregated to their domestic environments. Thus, the first message is friendship, receiving, listening to and including the “other”: not *despite* but *because* of his/her diversity. A second conviction is the sense of wonder. Faith is not only about what people have in common (although they belong to different religious community) but also a completely open and new field of exploration for each believer: thanks to the religious “other”, every human should and can renew their own belief, engaging in a long-lasting spiritual, theological and cultural research of “wonder”, a “perpetual walk” away from ignorance. Thirdly, IRD is intrinsically “secular” even if it takes place in holy sites. It is a neutral, cross-belief, transversal learning space where any gesture and any language is valid and worthy,

especially if received by “others” as a part of something universal. Every religious belief deserves respect.

The message conveyed by the Interreligious Fraternity Agreement (initiative n. 4) is based primarily on the conviction that religious belief is not only a sentiment or knowledge, but affects the everyday life of believers (the “embodied religion”, see: Barsalou et al. 2005; Jonkers and Sarot 2013) with the words, gestures and social actions that one’s own faith must inspire. Thus, IRD and fraternity must also be practised in everyday moments. The second message conveyed by this initiative is that God is love and He gives love to everyone no matter which group you belong to: this is the fraternity principle (“we are brothers in God, beloved by God in the same way”).⁷ In light of this, believers must commit themselves to their neighbour. Thirdly, IRD is a powerful means of de-segregation for social and linguistic minorities. Due to ignorance, indifference and poverty, each religious and national group tends to be ethnocentric and condemns itself to isolation and exclusion from the rest of the larger civic community. Through the medium of IRD, immigrants are called into action; and although, of course, not every immigrant person has such a sensitivity and will to engage in dialogue (the “problem of participation”), the call is addressed mainly to young generations who are more likely to learn how to speak and listen to each other both inside and outside their community. Finally, the message of the Fraternity Agreement is that of conversion: meeting the “others” ways of worship and rituals, and seeing the “other” in a new light require a “cultural, psychological and spiritual conversion”;⁸ that is, following Warner (2021, p. 22), an experience of reconsidering one’s own ethics and ordinary practice, as a transformative—yet agentive—religious learning.

4.3. Contexts: Urban Spaces, Media and the Role of the Audience

The four initiatives take place in different urban spaces (see Table 1) and over the years have aimed at increasing their public visibility and enlarging their audience. The locations are both in the city centre, in peripheral neighbourhoods and in one case beyond the city borders. According to the program of every single event, IRD activities were carried out not only in closed spaces—such as rooms, auditoriums and temples—but also outdoors, greatly amplifying the impact on the neighbourhood and the city (they have often developed “moving activities” either in closed or in open spaces). Many Catholic sites are involved, given the fact that in Brescia, as in the whole Italian territory, there is a vast presence of Catholic churches and parishes (about 500 in the whole Diocese of Brescia), not to mention the number of Catholic museums, educational and cultural centres, bishop residences and administrative offices of the diocese.⁹ Not all of these are engaged in IRD initiatives and programs.¹⁰

The media impact of the four events at the local level is heterogeneous and difficult to account for. The organisers mainly used social media (Facebook, Spreaker, YouTube and WhatsApp) either to spread information, to attract participants, or to give feedback after the events. The more institutionalised initiatives/platforms (n. 1, 2 and 4) were widely publicised. The Interreligious Walk was mentioned on the website and Facebook (FB) pages of participating secondary schools and the Diocese of Brescia Catholic religion teachers. The Dòsti Festival had significant circulation through the Dòsti Association’s website and FB/Spreaker pages, the Brescia Municipality website of the “Festival della Pace” (in whose program it was included), and it also had some coverage on radio (RBE)¹¹ and in online local newspapers (Quibrescia.it).¹² The Fraternity Agreement as a platform is covered to some extent by local and social media, and on the websites of associations that signed the “pact” (ACLI, Focolare movement, CISL, Diocese of Brescia; Islamic Centre, Sufi Islamic Association). It was also mentioned in local online newspapers.¹³ The observed event (n. 4) was covered by only the Vatican website¹⁴ and the ACLI association website.¹⁵ The

Fiumicello program of Spirituality Encounters (n. 3) had limited media circulation, mainly via the FB/Instagram pages of the group members and focused mailing lists.

The audience of the four initiatives was composed mainly of native Italians and Catholics, more or less observant, but not necessarily previously engaged in IRD (especially n. 1 and 2). The members of minority religious networks were numerous only when the event took place in their place of worship. Only initiatives n. 1 and 2 were open to the general audience: students and teachers from the participating schools; citizen non-members of any religious community; or single persons interested only in the artistic or cultural side of IRD.

Thanks to the participant observation, I was able to understand that the presence of a varied audience (invited, self-committed or occasional participants) played an important role of on-the-spot legitimisation of the event, as well as of the whole IRD platform and promoters. In short, it transformed the interfaith exchange from a “technical” to a “cultural and political” matter. In the open initiatives, the organisers declared and repeated step by step what the audience was expected to do during the performances. The large number of participants allowed some to deviate from the main action (i.e., some audience members abandoned the site before it ended) and the atmosphere emerged gradually as a sum of what was out of control and what was predicted by the format.

Instead, the more intimate initiatives (n. 3 and 4) were based on shared procedures, already known by the initiated members, whose identity and belonging were clear from the outset. The legitimisation of IRD could not be put under discussion as it was guaranteed by the clear roles played by every participant in that situation (organisers, supporters, invited, passive observers, occasional visitors, etc.). Even in these more focused initiatives the interaction created both intended and unintended mechanisms among participants, proving to be more an emotional, fresh and unpredictable “conversation of hands and bodies” than a rational and planned “exchange of heads and beliefs” ([Vatican Council for Interreligious Dialogue 1991](#); [Knitter 2013](#)).

5. Communicative Analysis of Intersubjectivity: Misunderstandings and Mutual Learning

As mentioned before, the multi-modal language used, the specific setting (closed or open; known or unknown; static or dynamic) and the unbalanced presence of minority and majority group representatives, allowed the insurgence of misunderstandings among participants in certain IRD exchanges. This occurred because IRD, rather than individuals, compares cultures and groups that are defined more by reciprocal stereotypes than by direct knowledge. When it comes to intercultural communication, participants are always requested to translate what is said, seen and done in the encounter in an intelligible set of messages, values and models that are meaningful for themselves.

In any IRD setting, translation is also needed to cope with multilingualism, a stratified set of goals that motivates different participants, and a multi-level content exchange (the dialogue of theology, of spirituality, of actions and of habits, according to [Vatican Council for Interreligious Dialogue 1991](#)). As [Wolf \(2012, 2021\)](#) pointed out, “speakers make hypotheses about what they can be expected to know . . . (and they) can use language forms incorrectly and generate inferences” ([Wolf 2012](#), p. 45). This calculus of interpretation can have negative effects on relationships and the process of reciprocal recognition, which brings to light the ambivalent aspects of the dialogic format. We observed such mechanisms during the encounters in Brescia.

During the Interreligious Walk (n. 1), a moment of non-recognition of words and speaking tone occurred inside the mosque between the hosts and the audience composed of students, teachers and other participating adults. The Q&A session was introduced by the

mosque director and managed by a veiled young woman “representative of Young Italian Muslims (GMI)”, available to reply “openly” to “every question you may have regarding our religious rules”. This is an extract from the field notes:

The interaction between the mosque representatives and the audience at first is one of serenity, joy, warmth towards those who ‘come to see us’. But when we move on to talk about burning issues (the veil, women, separation of the sexes during prayer, mixed marriages and mandatory conversions), it becomes critical: when an Italian student with a Muslim background disagrees with the description of the Islamic code for women, the mosque director does not let the GMI witness reply, snatches her microphone away and declares: “I don’t mean to intervene in women’s things however. . . Muslim women have to wear a veil like the Madonna in Christian paintings. What’s strange? Why don’t Christian women dress like that? The problem comes from the Christian not the Muslim women, there is no doubt!” There is a bit of breathlessness and embarrassment on both sides, it is clear that everyone needs to find the right words, and there is no agreement on what to say (we also note the different language levels used from the first- and second-generation Muslims). In the end, the event coordinator (an Italian teacher of Catholic religion) has to intervene several times with ‘dialoguing’ phrases, such as “We need to focus on higher issues than dress code or burquinis, we need to think about what religions have in common!” (and he asked the same student to ask another question). Before dismissing the assembly and offering tea with typical biscuits, the adults on stage exchanged handshakes. (But outside the mosque a girl declares herself perplexed, and three guys burst out with “It’s all right, though, taking off your shoes, the dress code for women, and then they come here and impose their rules on us! We cannot understand”).

In the Spirituality Encounters (n. 3), during the symbolic sowing session (planting a seed for each denomination), a moment of non-recognition of gender roles was observed between Christian and non-Christian participants. The ritual of sowing was connected to the recitation of a prayer in the native language of speakers. From the field notes:

Three seeds are planted in the little garden of the oratory, to symbolise the Catholics, the Orthodox and the Muslims, the three religions present, personified by three women: Maria Regina (the Catholic promoter), Raisa (the Muslim co-promoter) and Gabriela (the Orthodox invited speaker). However, for the Muslims, since Omar is present, and according to Muslim precepts, if there is a man present, it must be the man who leads the prayer and the group of believers, so Omar becomes the person of reference for Islam at the meeting instead of Raisa, with a few doubtful and questioning glances from the Christians present at the meeting.

In the Interreligious Fraternity Agreement (n. 4) the whole meeting was influenced by an ambivalent leadership generating a non-recognition of age roles. On the one hand, the encounter was aimed at giving the floor to the new religious youth (second generation trainers of different religious background); on the other, their leadership was overshadowed by the presence of the senior leaders/promoters who actually controlled actions and speeches. From the field notes:

Starting session: The four young people (two Catholic, one Hindu, one Sikh) from the stage explain that “the idea today is to get to know each other, we will work together”. Giorgio (the older promoter/leader) is then called upon to speak, who initially says “No, the young people must speak, the young people!”, but then accepts the invitation, takes the floor, explains how the meeting will

run and its purposes (...) Group discussions: Those present are divided into groups, each led by a young guide; each of the 'guides' has a candle in his or her hand, intended to represent a symbol of faith around which they can unite. (...) The discussion is guided by questions prepared beforehand by the young group leaders. Post-discussion reports: each group should have made a report of what emerged in the discussion, but this part was skipped (...). Game session: A quiz game is played entitled 'How well do you know the different religions?': the quiz is projected on a screen, which participants answer online by accessing a QR code. The game is set up and led by one of the native Italian Catholic boys. It lasts a total of ten minutes. The questions concern Christianity (Catholicism and Orthodoxy), Hinduism, Sikhism, Islam. Giorgio (the older promoter/leader) scores the highest ... and everyone laughs: as the coordinator of the project, Giorgio has been in contact with the various religious communities for a long time, so the result was predictable (but the fact teaches us that when space is given to the knowledge of religions, interreligious dialogue ends up being a subject for experts and does not become experience, lived life: thus, the fresh curiosity of the youngest can be lost).

In the Dòsti Festival of Religious Arts and Cultures (n. 2), the symbolic and artistic language used in every section was meant to convey clear messages and unquestionable interpretations. Different artistic codes (theatrical performance with the "living library" method, a figurative art exhibition, spiritual music and songs) were proposed in order to reach a "communicative convergence" that should have inspired a "structured shared reflection on the theme of the event: the cross-religion concept of inner disarmament" (quoted by the leaflet of the event) in the audience. However, the neat distinction between *scene and backstage*; that is, formal and informal experiential plans, may also have produced a dysfunctional result. During the performances session (in which the audience was divided into three groups and confined to three separate rooms), actions went on as planned; the audience was requested to: (1) pay attention with the utmost silence to what is represented on the scene; (2) wait silently for the changeover between different witnesses or living books, and (3) participate with applause and by following the instructions on the route (the event's subtitle was "An interreligious route among peace witnesses"), but no space was given to direct participation and other informal reactions. Observing the audience, it was remarked that, while at the beginning there was a "palpable anticipation for the event, which reinforces the feeling of mystery and unites the crowd", once the performance took place—and the "script" was understood by participants—"this attention is dispersed, many people take videos with their mobile phones, lingering on the artistic details of the hall and capturing panoramic images of the crowd and the performers (...). Someone leaves the hall before one or the other performance was finished; someone goes to the table in the corridor and takes out the symbolic food and beverages brought by the performers". The non-recognition here pertains to the risk of losing the deep meaning of the encounter, by maintaining different opinions, views, and faiths separate and "disentangled".

To sum up, with different nuances in each of these encounters, the calculus of interpretation was a common step to overcome the complexity of IRD as a super-diverse communicative process, which generates anxiety and suspicion. This is concretely the main weakness of a social practice that is supposed to have no adverse effects: however, the evidence contradicts this assumption. As one IRD Muslim leader remarked, "many people, not because they are against dialogue, but are afraid of dialogue, of being 'engulfed' by dialogue... But it does not depend on religious facts or on dogma that one is against and one is pro... We feel that the Church tames you. Or institutions, whatever, make you

afraid of identity, not because you are against dialogue itself. But out of fear of losing identity".¹⁶

Different communicative strategies of "dialogical co-construction" were carried out by IRD promoters or leaders in order to overcome the single incidents, and to avoid communicative counterproductive reactions. According to Wolf (2021, p. 205) dialogical co-construction can be achieved when speakers and hearers go through a negotiation process: first by understanding oneself as consisting of different voices and identities, then by integrating the opinions and viewpoints of others within their own discourse. Language (verbal and non-verbal) is the medium by which speakers negotiate their identity.

In fact, following the incidents (or maybe thanks to them), reconciliation and mutual learning occurred in every encounter. The non-recognition caused by words and speaking tone (n. 1) in the mosque was overcome (thanks to the school leader) by shifting the focus of discussion and giving the floor back to the same interlocutor, continuing with the question-and-answer session, to allow the meeting to end peacefully and with handshakes. The non-recognition caused by gender roles (n. 3) in the parish and that by age roles (n. 4) in the Hindu temple were overcome (thanks to the respective leaders) by creating a non-scheduled feedback session after the concluding sessions. In this additional moment, without an audience, the organisers were able to explain to each other what had caused them embarrassment and fear, accepting the other's perspective as (part of) their own. In the Dòsti Festival (n. 2), where non-recognition of stage-backstage distinction occurred, instead of using explicit words, there was remarkable cooperation between organisers and audience. This reduced attention lapses and loss of authority of the figurants, maintaining the neat stage-backstage distinction (e.g., by using silence, gestural instructions, minimal movements to change position) as a fundamental characteristic of that type of encounter. This "conversation by gestures" no doubt helped prepare the audience to follow the ending musical portion of the event, where people fused (re-fused) into a single chorus and the formal-informal nexus was re-established.

6. Conclusions and Recommendations

The qualitative study carried out in Brescia provides fresh evidence about the conditions for bottom-up IRD; that is, the involvement of lay people and different congregations in grassroots exchanges that can touch spiritual, artistic and everyday life activities as part of a pluralistic frame (Keaten and Soukup 2009). Dialogue is a particular form of communication that leads people to a co-construction of meanings. Given its difficulty, it can only be triggered through conscious and particularly committed individuals who take on the task of communicating with others and through religious content, despite the possible obstacles that they may meet.

The multiplicity of initiatives proposed in the same urban area, with many points of intersection between them, is a strength because it reinforces the roles of the interlocutors (starting with the main IRD intermediaries) and the "dialogical policy" as a means of peaceful co-existence among religious counterparts (El Halabi 2022). Both the potential and the actual audience also play a reinforcement role for the dialogic setting. The reiteration of the platforms (as in the four we have observed) brings about training and mutual learning of both IRD intermediaries and participants. There is no formal procedure that can ensure the best result: all is new for everyone and will be renewed at every stage.

In the case of Brescia, other strength points of the context are the political sensitivity of local institutions; the mobilisation of the Catholic Church and its pastoral units and ecclesiastical movements; and the long history of integration of migrant people in work, schooling and welfare services. This positive frame supported IRD's communicative process, empowering the promoters in setting up the IRD initiatives.

However, no matter how perfectly planned, each encounter is unique and lives its own story because it is dependent on interlocutors and their communicative interactions. We reported misunderstandings and calculus of interpretations in every encounter. From an “authoritative” perspective—according to which the IRD initiative can model roles in religious transmission and communication—none seemed so powerful to produce such modelling. Instead, their “performative” side seemed significant; that is, each initiative was able to challenge the social situation, giving visibility to social inequalities, coping with the emerging breaking points and eliciting mutual learning. We cannot speak of religious-based learning but of an advancement in the capacity of intercultural dialogue (Colombo and Gilardoni 2021), by helping participants to overcome the “fear for identity” and to embrace their own vulnerability. The solutions adopted to overcome the non-recognition points are all based on language (silence and non-verbal language included; see Meets 2013) and can be recommended for their performativity as triggers of the dialogical co-construction: shifting the focus away from a conflicting discussion, but giving the floor to the same interlocutors; stepping outside the planned activities by improvising an open, communal space for reflection; and engaging in a conversation of gestures.

The ultimate nature of dialogue—as a social performance—is to expand the self (and the “us”) beyond a monologic view, calling participants to a greater responsibility towards the “other” (and the “you”). In the absence of the other, communication is deprived of the dialogic privilege: the privilege of encountering a partner in conversation. The four local initiatives teach us that every communicative act (managed by words, tone of the voice, speaking turns, programme amendments, rhetorical use of silence and gestures) in an IRD setting needs to be taken seriously as part of this responsibility and privilege.

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Abbreviations

The following abbreviations are used in this manuscript:

IRD Interreligious Dialogue
GMI Italian Muslim Youth

Notes

- ¹ The project GOV_REL (URBAN GOVERNANCE OF RELIGIOUS DIVERSITYI), funded by Ministry of University and Research (Bando Prin 2022NPTNEZ) is run by University of Padua as principal investigator, with University of Turin, University of Florence and Catholic University of Brescia as local units and associated partners. It pays close attention to the role of interreligious dialogue in the urban governance of religious diversity. The materials analysed here come from the first and second working packages and focus only on the city of Brescia: (1°) mapping the policy instruments, practices, and networks for governing religious diversity (negotiated by local municipalities and religious/secular actors) and, (2°) among the mapped initiatives, focusing on the establishment of interreligious dialogue initiatives linked to municipal actors and their roles in urban contexts.

- 2 All data are drawn from the CIRMiB yearbook Migrareport: <https://centridiricerca.unicatt.it/cirmib-centro-di-iniziativa-e-ricerche-sulle-migrazioni-brescia-cirmib-il-centro-di-ricerca>.
- 3 According to Ilie (2021, p. 138), “Dialogic ethics begins with the willingness to cooperate; it engages difference and promotes learning as a consequence of understanding and negotiating differences”.
- 4 Extract from the interview with the leader/ animator of the “Let’s walk” project.
- 5 Extract from the interview with the Vice-president of Dòsti association.
- 6 Extract from the interview with the past parish of the Oratorio Fiumicello church.
- 7 Extract from the interview with the leader/ animator of the initiative.
- 8 Extract from the interview with the leader/ animator of the initiative: “. . . I look only at that portion of God, that portion there, because I can’t see him all, just that portion there, my little window, I am already contemplating. . . how wonderful. Who said you have to pray like that? You can pray in any way! . . . So, I mean convert in this sense, of not taking anything for granted. And this becomes an inter-religious dialogue and has an impact on social dialogue”.
- 9 Some of the Catholic churches are lent to the Orthodox faithful.
- 10 According the director of Ecumenism—Interreligious Dialogue and Globalisation and Missionary pastoral work, “it can be said that over the last 10–15 years, thanks to the impulse given by the local Catholic institutions, IRD has spread meaningfully not only as a way to contribute to the urban governance of religious pluralism but also a tool for renewal of the Catholic religiosity itself which suffers for a declining participation by the faithful”.
- 11 Beckwith Evangelical Radio <https://rbe.it/2024/11/13/le-voci-del-disarmo-a-brescia/> (accessed on 27 April 2025).
- 12 <https://www.quibrescia.it/incontri/2024/11/14/le-voci-del-disarmo-ascolto-e-riflessioni-interreligiose-venerdi-alloratorio-della-pace/728625/> (accessed on 27 April 2025).
- 13 In *La Voce del Popolo*: <https://www.lavocedelpopolo.it/citta/patto-bresciano-di-fraternita-interreligiosa> Gazzetta delle Valli <https://www.gazzettadellevalli.it/eventi/il-patto-bresciano-di-fraternita-interreligiosa-492654>; and [Quibrescia.it](https://www.quibrescia.it) (accessed on 27 April 2025).
- 14 The Dicastery of Interreligious Dialogue of the Vatican published an online advise of this event, visible untile the end of April 2025, now canceled.
- 15 Acli Provinciali di Brescia APS, <https://www.aclibresciane.it/eventi/giornata-internazionale-della-fratellanza-umana> (accessed on 27 April 2025).
- 16 Excerpt from the interview of the Coordinator of Islamic centres in the Brescia area.

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