

SORAPS teacher training course Handbook

Outputs information and guidelines for trainers



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1. Introduction

Religion is still an essential element in the cultural identity of various groups that make up our societies. As such, religions continue to influence large sectors of the world population and are neither confined to the so-called third world countries. In a globalized and digital world, information concerning religions from all cultures can be easily found in many kinds of media such as the news, films, books, comics, videogames and so on. At the same time, however, it is easy for such information on religions to come in the form of stereotypes and prejudices.

In the present context, characterized by strong migratory flows, recent terrorist attacks, an increase of intolerance and fear, stereotypes and prejudices about religions can jeopardize an already fragile social fabric and lead to discrimination, ghettoization and radicalization.

Educational systems constitute an invaluable resource that can be used to help foster mutual understanding and prevent the collapse of already delicate social structures. For this reason, it is important for humanities teachers (but not only) to have and be able to share a basic knowledge of the principal religious traditions. At the same time, it is even more important for them to understand the value and methods of learning and teaching about religions from a scientific, a-confessional and critical point of view that goes beyond any stereotypical simplification.

Further, since religions neither exist nor live in separate boxes, it is important to observe the various aspects of past and present religious pluralism and the way religions are embedded in various socio-cultural dimensions, such as migrations, contemporary pluralism, violence and fundamentalism, and even Human rights and freedom of belief.

In order to effectively conduct a lesson on religions from a dialogic approach, a knowledge of religious phenomena alone may not be enough. For this reason, an intercultural approach and methodology for participatory activity grounded on Global Citizenship Education can contribute to foster a learning environment that recognizes the value of religious and cultural diversity.

Moreover, methods and suggestions for teaching using ICT tools (web applications, tablets, etc.) can also be of value in teacher training so that lessons may be enriched by interactive multimedia use.

The goal of SORAPS Project, therefore, is to create a Teacher Training Course with the aim of strengthening the professional profile of teachers so that they may achieve an adequate preparation on topics related to the History of Religions, Contemporary Religious Pluralism, Intercultural Issues Management and Digital Literacy, and with an overarching focus on the theme of Stereotypes and Prejudices regarding Religions.

This training course capitalizes, combines and puts into use previously EU funded educational projects' results, such as the Digital Modules of the "[Intercultural Education through Religious Studies](#)" project and the Toolkit of the "[Schools for Future Youth](#)" project.

In this Handbook you will find all the relevant information on the main outputs that make up this training course, their nature, contents, accessibility and how to use such outputs in order to implement a SORAPS Teacher Training Course.

2. Project outputs

2.1. Outputs description

The SORAPS Project consists of 3 correlated Intellectual Outputs that lead to the same formative and informative goals.

1. Guidelines on Stereotypes and Prejudices in Religions

The first Intellectual Output (IO1) is the result of a thorough study of the existent literature on the issues of prejudices and stereotypes and the collection and re-elaboration of data through research, surveys and questionnaires in each of the partner schools. It consists of an agile yet accurate **publication** which **discusses the principal prejudices and stereotypes in the field of religious phenomena**.

Apart from a discussion the **main stereotypes and prejudices about Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism and Chinese religions**, there are also analyses of **topics** such as **Stereotypes and Prejudices on the concept of Religion per se** as well as of **Prejudices and Stereotypes of New Religious Movements**.

As a result of these considerations **Practical Conclusions** are drawn and provided as bullet-point suggestions at the end of each chapter, giving concrete guidance on how to treat the topics in schools.

2. Teacher Training Course Design

The second Intellectual Output (IO2) has been developed from IO1's findings. This is the main result of the SORAPS Project and consists of a **course curriculum** together with **all correlated training materials** to be used in order to implement the above-mentioned Teacher Training Course. This course has been developed to be carried out in a **blended learning mode**, i.e. both as face-to-face tuition and online training. However, in order to be sustainable, replicable and affordable with reference to the needs and schedules of teachers, the online phase occupies the greater part of the course which is introduced and concluded by **5 days of face-to-face sessions**. An **online-only modality** is also possible.

More information on the curriculum and training materials can be found in the next chapter.

3. Online Training Platform

The third Intellectual Output (IO3) is a **virtual space** dedicated to teacher training where the various **training materials** are **organized in a coherent manner**. It has been developed inside the free and open-source [Moodle environment](#). A **tag-system** has been implemented in order to easily browse through the topics of the training materials and a **series of activities are proposed** to assess (or self-assess) learning outcomes.

This platform is structured in a way that trainees can autonomously proceed in their learning process without external help or support. However, **tutors can be involved**. Expert tutors may support trainees in various ways, from acting as a technical “help-desk” to clarifying doubts concerning contents. Moreover, tutors may organize and facilitate online work groups of trainees using the forums and the other Moodle features.

More information and guidelines for tutors can be found in Chapter 4 of the present handbook.

2.2. How to access and use SORAPS Project Outputs

All SORAPS Project Outputs are free to be downloaded from the [OUTPUTS section](#) found on the SORAPS web site and are licensed with a [Creative Commons BY SA 4.0](#) license.

The **Guidelines on Prejudices and Stereotypes in Religions** is a simple .pdf file available in English as well as in the languages of the consortium.

The *Guidelines* that refer to **the Teacher Training Course Design**, (i.e. general course structure, its presentation, objectives, unit division and a proposed time frame based on its first experimentation) are accessible as HTML pages in the OUTPUTS section.

All the written materials, including Intellectual Output 1, that have been produced for the implementation of the SORAPS Teacher Training Course are **available for downloading** in the OUTPUTS section **as a compressed file** for ease of use. The above cited *Teacher training Course Guidelines* are provided both in HTML and [eXeLearning](#) formats (for those who want to modify them), while the other files are in .pdf or .doc format. The files can be found in all the languages of the consortium plus English.

IMPORTANT! How to access the IO3 Online training platform.

Since the **Online training platform** has been developed inside a free and open-source [Moodle environment](#), in order to make use of it you will need to have this learning environment installed on the servers of your institution. People and institutions equipped with Moodle can find the **Moodle training course package** ready to be imported in the OUTPUTS section.

This file is in a .mbz format, which is a backup file for Moodle Courses. It contains all the materials without including the user's data.

In order to load the SORAPS Course, the Moodle administrator can proceed by first creating an empty course. Following that the administrator needs to go to Restore and upload the .mbz file. Detailed instructions can be found [here](#).

If you desire to have the exact same setting as the Moodle Course, you may have to check or make changes in the Course settings: once the course is restored, go to Course Administration Panel and click on "Edit settings". In the "Course format" section, select the "Buttons format". The second change is to enable completion tracking in the "Completion tracking" section.

However, in order to make it accessible to institutions and people who do not have access to a Moodle platform, a **non-interactive, open access version of this Online training platform** can also be found on the SORAPS web site. This version will only provide the contents but will have none of the interactive features of a Moodle Course.

Both the Moodle Course package and the non-interactive versions are provided in all the languages of the consortium as well as in English.

3. Teacher Training Course description

3.1. Course Structure

The SORAPS Teacher Training Course can be organized as a blended learning mode, i.e. with both face-to-face tuition and online training. The blended learning mode is the method the course was first tested during the SORAPS PROJECT life-cycle.

This modality starts with an initial 5-day session of face-to-face training followed by an online phase, and concludes with another 5-day session of face-to-face training.

Clearly, this modality presupposes the presence of a structured organization in which trainers make use of SORAPS materials to carry out the training course. However, individual teachers may also use the SORAPS course resources only as a form of autonomous self-learning.

Initial Face-to-face Training

A **first session of 5 days** takes place at the start of the course. In this phase trainers provide trainees with basic instructions on how to use the Online Training Platform and give an introduction to the various topics in the course that will be developed in the online training phase.

Online Training Phase

Most of the course consists of online learning activities in a Moodle Environment. Trainees will find learning resources like readings, images, educational videos, proposals for in-class activities and links to external resources (for example the IERS Digital Modules).

The materials are divided into **9 Units** which form a consistent training path that should be approached following the progression of Unit numbers, especially for Units 2, 3 4, 5 and 6. More information about contents can be found in the Contents section of this handbook.

In an **additional Unit/ section (number 10)** there is a series of **tasks** (compulsory and optional) to be completed within certain deadlines. The typology of these tasks and their deadlines reflect what was actually carried out during the trial implementation of the Training Course.

The online training phase is structured in a way that trainees **can autonomously proceed** in their learning process without any external help or support. However, **tutors can also be involved**. Expert tutors may support the trainees in their tasks in various ways, from acting as a technical “help-desk” to clarifying doubts concerning contents.

Tutors may also organize and facilitate online work groups of trainees using the forums and the other Moodle features. More information about tutors' tasks can be found in the Training Guidelines chapter.

Concerning the **duration of the online phase**, this is dependent on the time trainees can devote to study. As this course is intended as in-service teacher training, the first pilot of the Course, during the SORAPS Project life-cycle, was organized as a **max 4 hours/week workload** to meet the needs of teachers' working schedules. Since the **whole course workload** has been estimated to be **around max 117 hours**, it is expected that the **online course** will need a **time frame** of around **8 months**. Please refer to this [proposal](#) for a more detailed time frame of the online phase.

However, a shorter and more intensive version of the online phase is also possible.

Final Face-to-face Training

The final face-to-face session of 5 days is the occasion in which trainees share, discuss and evaluate the contents and skills acquired during the training course as well as its strong and weak points together with the trainers. Most of the session, however, is to be devoted to **workshops** in which trainees are trained and supported in the organization of a “Multiplication

Event” inside their schools/institutions where they will pass what they have learned on to other colleagues.

The contents of this session are also available as a written resource in Unit 9 on the Moodle platform.

Online-only Modality

The SORAPS training course may also be used as an **online-only course** by trainees who want to acquire its contents and competences autonomously and engage with the learning resources available on their own. The section 10 task may be used for **self-assessment**.

Since the contents of the first face-to-face session are just an introduction to the topics found on the Moodle platform and the contents of the final face-to-face training are provided in written form in Unit 9, there are **no substantial differences from the blended learning mode**.

3.2. Course contents

The contents of the course are heterogeneous and are organized in a logical manner. There are **5 Units** dedicated to **knowledge-based contents**. ***The Sense and Methods of Teaching Studies of Religions in Schools Unit*** is devoted to the exploration of the theoretical concept of religion itself and the methods for studying and teaching it. This is meant to be a preliminary step before the ***Stereotypes and Prejudices on Main Religious Traditions Unit***, which **offer** a general yet scientifically rigorous overview of a number of important religious traditions which are further presented *vís á vís* the most widespread stereotypes and prejudices. This content can then form the basis for topics with a greater focus on pluralism and contemporary issues (Religious Plurality in Contemporary Europe, Religions and the Media, New Age and New Religious Movements, etc.) that are explored in the ***Religious Plurality in Contemporary Societies & Media Unit***.

Widely debated topics like fundamentalisms are in ***Fundamentalisms, Violence and Religion Unit*** as well as a focus on Human rights is provided in ***Religions, Human Rights and Religious Freedom Unit***.

SORAPS also wants to provide an overall framework for **more competence-based** contents by way of introducing trainees to the ***Units Pedagogical Strategies in Multicultural Classes: laying the groundwork*** and ***Pedagogical Strategies in Multicultural classes: Concrete examples*** which offer insights drawn from Global Citizenship-based pedagogical strategies as well as materials to be used in multicultural classes. These are accompanied by practical examples concerning both the general topics on intercultural education and other issues more directly related to religions. Moreover, to further enhance teachers’ ability to actively involve students, a Unit devoted to the use of ICT tools in the classroom is also included: ***Use of Innovative ICT Methodologies Unit***.

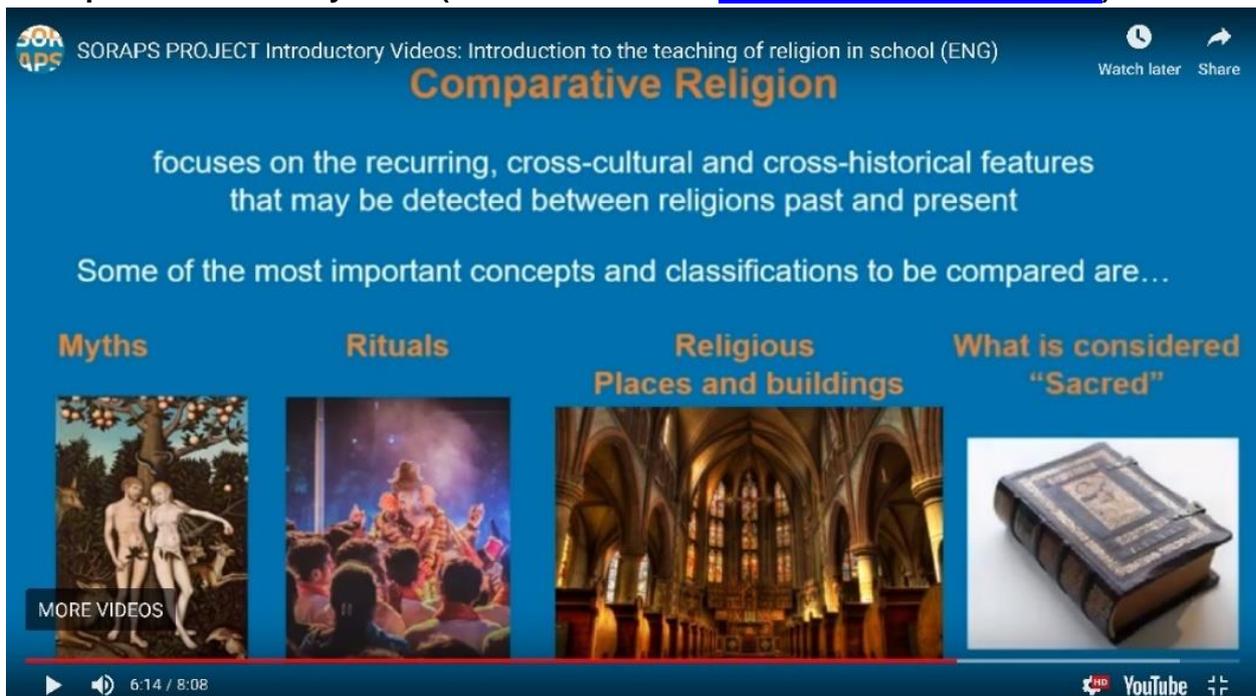
Finally, the **last Unit, *Methods of Teacher Training***, has been developed out of the final 5-day session of the trial SORAPS Course and it is basically its written equivalent. It is aimed at equipping trainees with basic competences and offers practical suggestions to share and disseminate what they have learnt to their colleagues, i.e. it is meant to **train future trainers**, thus ensuring the impact of the whole SORAPS Project.

3.3. Course materials

The **learning resources** available in the Training Platform are of a various nature (fact- sheets, introductory videos, external links...). Most of them function as an **introduction to**, and an **enrichment of**, the rich source of information about religions represented by the [Digital Modules of the Intercultural Education through Religious Studies Project](#), of which SORAPS is to be considered as the ideal follow-up.

Other Erasmus+ Project resources such as the [Toolkit from Schools for Future Youth Project](#) are also employed. In fact, there are other learning resources that draw from this Project meant to provide e-pedagogical insight and practical guidance to carry out **participatory learning activities**.

Example of Introductory video (more videos at the [SORAPS YouTube Channel](#))



Examples of fact-sheets

IERS Digital Modules on Islam

- [Introduction to Islam I: History of Islam](#)
- [Introduction to Islam II: Themes](#)

Islam is a **monotheistic** religion believed by Muslims to be the **complete and universal version** of a faith revealed through prophets many times before the **unaltered** revelation through Muhammad.

Muhammad

Muhammad is considered by Muslim to be the **seal of the prophets**, i.e. the last prophet sent by God. Beginning at age 40, he preached to the people of **Mecca** to worship one God. Muhammad and his followers were persecuted, so they **migrated to Yathrib** (afterward known as Medina). Here, Muhammad established a political and religious community, the **Ummah**. After years of war, he conquered Mecca and, by his death, has unified the Arab tribes into one polity.

More information on:

- [The emergence of Islam](#)

← [Link to IERS Digital Modules](#)

Main doctrinal tenets of Islam

There is no unified creed, but there are a few points common to all Muslims. Islam is a **rigorous monotheism**, i.e. there is only one absolute and eternal God, creator of everything. The divine will is absolute, so everything has been decreed: belief in **predestination** is an important part of Islam. They also believe all human beings will be judged on the **Day of Resurrection** according to their deeds. God sent **prophets** to be his messengers. However, God does not speak directly to mankind (not even to prophets), so he communicates through **angels**. **Holy books** were dictated by God to prophets. However, the Torah and the Gospels have been distorted, and only the **Quran is the literal word of God**, revealed to Muhammad through the angel Jibril (Gabriel).



Figure 1. Muhammad receives the revelation from the angel Gabriel. Islamic ban on images is not as consistent as it is assumed. See IERS module Islam II, section 9, source 2.

2

INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION

Speaking of intercultural communication, we can find two extreme positions to the question: "Can people from diverse cultures understand each other, communicate?".

1) Different cultures are 'essentially' different, and thus they cannot communicate and understand each other.

History offers numerous examples of how far from reality it is to think about "cultures" as entities and essences, impermeable 'blocks', unable to even think about and communicate with the 'other'. On the contrary we see plenty of situations in which people from different cultures and societies communicated, mixed and developed as something new - with or without resorting to power or coercion. Without conceiving the possibility of communication and dialogue, it is impossible to think about the history of exchange and hybridization among e.g. the various civilizations of the Mediterranean Area, or the spreading and adaptation of e.g. Buddhism in Asian cultures. Noteworthy also, is the now more than a century old interest in Asian religions in the modern and Western world.

More information on:

- [The three monotheistic traditions in Medieval Spain and Sicily](#)
 - [Diffusion of Buddhism in Asia](#)
 - [Buddhism and Modernity](#)
 - [Daoism and the other religious traditions of China](#)
 - [Modern and contemporary Hinduism](#)
 - [Christians worldwide](#)
 - [Muslim minorities in Western Europe](#)
- (esp. source 3: "Halal" marriage)
 (esp. source 3a: "The house of one project for Berlin: a church, synagogue and mosque in the same building")

← [Links to IERS Digital Modules](#)

A more localized example revealing of how communication and understanding often cross the boundaries of otherness, especially through translation: during World War II British and American cryptologists could not only translate Japanese messages, but could do so even when they were written in a code explicitly designed to confuse Japan's enemies. So at least sometimes one can understand the "other", even if the other tries to impede it.

2) Different cultures have in reality the same root, so understanding and dialogue between people is not only possible, but it can - if conducted in the right way - even lead to total agreement.

3

4. Guidelines for trainers

4.1. Learning objectives

The basic learning objectives of the SORAPS training course are the following:

- to gain a basic knowledge of the theory and methods for a scientific approach to religions, the main religious traditions and of some aspects of contemporary religious pluralism;
- to learn a number of stereotypes and prejudices regarding religions and to critically understand them in the light of the above-mentioned knowledge;
- to be able to include the above-mentioned topics in the classroom using participatory activities and ICT tools and to share such competences with peers.

More specifically, these learning objectives can be further divided and expanded into:

Instrumental competences

Cognitive-based objectives

- to gain a basic understanding of the theoretical and pedagogical approaches to the scientific study of religions;.
- basic knowledge of a number of main religious traditions, their main characteristics as well as inner diversity.
- basic knowledge of various aspects of the contemporary multireligious situation, including fundamentalism and human rights issues related to religion.
- knowledge and critical understanding of a number of stereotypes and prejudices about religions.
- understanding of the logic and principles behind participatory activities.
- basic knowledge of the main strategies in using ICT tools in class.
- basic knowledge of the needs and challenges in organizing training activities for peers.

Skill/ methods-based objectives

- to provide students with scientific tools and critical approaches to religions;
- to prepare and implement lessons on religious topics in order to critically analyze and discuss stereotypes and prejudices in religions;
- to design and implement participatory activities in class;
- to create and implement activities in class with the support of ICT tools and multimedia contents;
- to develop, plan and implement training activities for peers;
- to communicate effectively in English.

Technological ability-based objectives

- to make efficient interactive use of a digital learning environment;
- to use a number of ICT tools of pedagogical interest effectively;
- to acquire good levels of general digital literacy.

Interpersonal competences

Social skills

- to communicate effectively on the Online Platform using the available tools (forums, internal mail);
- to adopt a written style suitable for communication on the Online Platform.

Commitment to work

- to manage self-study time efficiently;
- to manage and organize work with on-line collaboration.

Systemic competences

- to understand the value, in terms of critical thinking and intercultural education, of an objective and scientific approach to teaching about religions and to put this competence to use in an effective manner;
- to share this awareness and related competences to both students and other teachers via various methods.

4.2. Face-to-face sessions

In this section we provide the agenda for the initial and final face-to-face sessions that took place when the SORAPS Training Course was trialed. Future trainers can use them as a guide to hold their face-to-face sessions. Face-to-face training was carried out in morning sessions lasting 4-4 ½ hours daily. Of course, the timetable can be modified to fit other scheduling needs.

4.2.1. Initial face-to-face training, 5 days

As previously stated, this session is meant to provide the trainees with basic instruction on how to use the Online Training Platform as well as gain an initial grasp of the various topics in the course.

Day 1

1. Introduction to the SORAPS Course - 15 min

a. Contents:

- *Aims and objectives of the SORAPS Project*
- *Presentation of the Course Topics*
- *Presentation of the Training Materials*

b. Methodology:

- Face-to-face Tuition*

2. Introduction to the Online Course Platform - 1h ½

a. Contents:

- *Introduction to Online Course platform use*
- *Practical information on how the online course is structured on the Moodle platform*
- *Practical exercise*

b. Methodology:

- i. *Face-to-face Tuition*
- ii. *Classroom exercises*

3. Introduction to the UNIT II: The Sense and Methods of Teaching Studies of Religions in Schools – 1h ½

a. Contents:

- *Unit Aims*
- *The importance of teaching of religions in today's world*
- *Methods and approaches in studying and teaching religion in school*
- *Introduction to the topics of Comparative Religions, the Sociology of Religions and the Philosophy of Religions*
- *Introduction to the main stereotypes and prejudices regarding the concept of religion in itself*

b. Methodology:

- *Brainstorming (definition of religions, reasons and methodology of studying and teaching religions in schools, etc.)*
- *Face-to-face Tuition*
- *Classroom Discussion (How challenging are these topics to you and your students' understanding of religions? How can we effectively convey these topics in class? How can we avoid endorsing stereotypical views of religions in class?)*

4. Introduction to UNIT VI: Human rights and religious freedom- 1h

a. Contents:

- *Unit Aims*
- *How to guarantee the fundamental freedom of religions from a cultural and legal point of view*
- *How religions are framed inside the most important Human rights policies*
- *Human Rights, Religion and the Study of Religion*
- *Human Rights and Religion: Contemporary issues and cases*
- *Religion, Human Rights and Law, with special regards to Europe*

b. Methodology:

- *Brainstorming (definition of "human rights", definition of "religious freedom", and definition of "secular state")*
- *Face-to-face tuition*
- *Classroom Discussion (How challenging are these topics to you and your students' understanding of human rights and religions? How can we effectively convey these topics in class? How can we stimulate active citizenships concerning human rights and religions?)*

Day 2

1. Introduction and presentation to UNIT I (Pedagogical Strategies in Multicultural classes: Laying the Groundwork) and UNIT VIII Pedagogical Strategies in Multicultural classes) – 1h

a. Contents:

- *Unit Aims*
- *Structure and sessions looking at pedagogical strategies in multicultural classes*
- *Introduction to Global Citizenship Education*

c. Methodology:

- i. *Face-to-face tuition*
- ii. *Group discussion*

2. Practical workshop - 3h

a. Contents:

- *Identifying learning difficulties, tensions and conflicts between students, negative (e.g. racist, homophobic, Islamophobic) behavior.*
- *Identifying differences as a way to address and overcome conflicts, misunderstandings and prejudice.*
- *How to consider class diversity as an asset.*

b. Methodology: Non formal Education Methodologies which are active and participatory

- *Observation process using questionnaires*
- *Group work*
- *Debriefing*
- *Team building*

Day 3

1. Introduction to Unit III ‘Stereotypes and Prejudices on Main Religious Traditions’: Forewords - 15 min

a. Contents

- *Unit Aims*
- *Motivation for the selection of topics*
- *Warnings to avoid essentialism, a use of definitions as heuristic tools*

b. Methodology:

- *Face-to-face tuition*

2. Introduction to Unit III ‘Stereotypes and Prejudices on Main Religious Traditions’: Three Monotheistic Religions 1h 45 min

a. Contents:

- *The relevance of teaching about the Three Monotheistic Religions in European Schools. (Why should we teach them?)*
- *The approaches used with these topics (historical, philological, cultural studies, focus on texts, focus on practices, etc.)*

- *Introduction to the most relevant historical moments, practices, beliefs and their relationships with the historical and cultural development of Europe*
- *Introduction to the most relevant historical transformations, developments and internal diversities*
- *Introduction to the main stereotypes and prejudices regarding the Three Monotheisms.*

N.B.: These 3 last points could be also be implemented by taking a single tradition as reference point, such as a case study, and stressing that a similar analysis will be employed also with the other religious traditions.

b. Methodology:

- *Brainstorming (discussing how the ideas of Monotheism contributes to European history and culture, the most widespread misconceptions or stereotypical views concerning these topics)*
- *Face-to-face tuition*
- *Class Discussion (Which topics would be more suitable to treat in your classes? Which stereotypes would be more apt to be discussed in your lessons? How to actively engage students in these topics.)*

3. Introduction to Unit III ‘Stereotypes and Prejudices on Main Religious Traditions’: East Asian Religions – 1h 45 min

a. Contents:

- *The relevance of teaching about the East Asian Religions in European Schools. (Why should we teach them?)*
- *The approaches adopted with these topics (historical, philological, cultural studies, focus on texts, focus on practices, etc.*
- *Introduction to the most relevant historical moments, practices, beliefs and their relationships with the historical and cultural development of Europe*
- *Introduction to the most relevant historical transformations, developments and internal diversities*
- *Introduction to the main stereotypes and prejudices regarding the East Asian Religions*

N.B. These 3 last points could be also be implemented by taking a single tradition as reference point, such as a case study, and stressing that a similar analysis will be employed also with the other religious traditions.

b. Methodology:

- *Brainstorming (The most widespread misconceptions or stereotypical views concerning these topics, What is the European self-understanding in the face of the East Asian Religions and how stereotypes about East Asian Religions contributed to form such self-understanding)*
- *Face-to-face tuition*

- *Class Discussion (Which topics would be more suitable to treat in your classes? Which stereotypes would be more apt to be discussed in your lessons? How to actively engage students in these topics.)*

Day 4

1. Introduction to Unit IV: Religious Plurality in Contemporary Societies & media – 1h 45 min.

a. Contents:

- *Unit Aims*
- *Motivation for the selection of topics.*
- *Presentation of the pivotal points of each topic (Religious Plurality in Contemporary Europe, Religion and Migrations, Religions and the Body, Religious feasts of the three Monotheisms, New Age and New Religious Movements, Religions and the Media).*

N.B. this last point could also be replaced by a more in-depth presentation of one or two case-studies, stressing how religions can be analyzed from different perspectives and in relation to different aspects of society and culture.

b. Methodology:

- *Face-to-face tuition*
- *Class Discussion (Which topics would be more suitable to treat in your classes? How to link them with your subject. How to actively engage students in these topics)*

2. Introduction to the Unit V: Fundamentalisms, Violence and Religions – 1h 45 min

a. Contents:

- *Unit Aims*
- *The Origin and Use of the term Fundamentalism and Related terms (Radicalism, Integralism)*
- *The relationship between Fundamentalism, Terrorism, Violence and Religions*
- *Some examples of Fundamentalism and religious violence in Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism*

N. B. this last point could also be replaced by a comparative presentation of 2 case-studies, stressing how the use of the theoretical framework for “Fundamentalism” highlights both the differences and similarities between religions

b. Methodology:

- *Brainstorming (on the origin and meaning of the terms Fundamentalism, Radicalism, Integralism and their relationship with terrorism, violence and religions)*
- *Face-to-face tuition*
- *Class Discussion (which topics would be more suitable to treat in your classes? How to link them with your subjects. How to actively engage*

students in these topics? How to avoid misconception and stereotyped views on these topics. How to promote a critical approach on these topics.).

Day 5

1. Introduction and presentation of UNIT VII (Use of Innovative ICT Methodologies) – 1h

a. Contents:

- *Unit Aims*
- *Digital competences for teachers*
- *ICT innovation in classroom: identifying needs and designing a school plan*

b. Methodology:

- *Face-to-face tuition*
- *Group discussion*

2. 10.00 – 13.30 Practical workshop

a. Contents:

- *Use of tablets in the classroom*
- *Blogging in the classroom*
- *Creating video tutorials and multimedia materials*
- *Visual thinking and learning in education*

b. Methodology:

In the computer room, the participants will work in small groups on one of the previous topics and they will analyze a case study.

- *Group work*
- *Case studies*
- *Oral presentation*

4.2.2. Final face-to-face session, 5 days

As noted above, this session is more focused on practical workshops than standard face-to-face tuition entails. Each of the workshops can correspond to 1 day of training and their overall aims can be summarized as:

- to get general feedback from the trainees about the online phase
- to present and discuss the activities that they have carried out in class during the online phase (where trainees are in-service teachers)
- to prepare “MULTIPLICATION TRAINING EVENTS” alongside the trainees to be held in their institution (or other venues)

Day 1

Workshop 1

Aim:

- to present the 5-day training session to trainees and to get general feedback about the online phase
- 1. 5-day training session: General Introduction (max 10 min)**
 - a. The entire agenda for this session should be presented to the trainees in detail so they become aware of the kind of activity they are taking part in and its goals.
 - 2. Team building activity (max 30min)**

The team building activity can be taken from Modules 1 or 8 to support group dynamics as well as to refresh trainees on global citizenship education methodology.
 - 3. What's happened so far?**
 - a. Feedback on the quality of the course from the teachers
 - i. General overview (choice of topics, organization of topics, general structure, etc...)
 - ii. Quality of the materials (in terms of structure, contents, language, usefulness)
 - iii. Quality of the activities (feasible? useful? too difficult? Any suggestions for different activities?)
 - iv. Constructive criticism (what went wrong? Which materials need to be changed, improved? What kind of changes would you suggest?)

Each teacher contributes to the discussion. Partners take notes of the improvements.

Day 2

Workshop 2

Aim:

- to present and discuss the activities that they have carried out in class during the online phase (in case trainees are in-service teachers).
- 1. Plenary Session (max 20min)**
 - a. An introductory session is useful to introduce a topic (taken from the Course Contents) to function as a point of reference for the discussion that follows. During the SORAPS trial the chosen topic was: Intercultural and citizenship education values of RE:
 - i. The 'intercultural nature' of the Study of Religion (see Unit 2)
 - ii. From a discussion about Religion, religions and stereotypes towards a general citizenship education (see Units 1 and 8)
 - 2. Teachers' experience:**

- a. Teachers share their experiences in delivering the contents of the online course and how this has impacted their students, focusing on
 - i. good practices
 - ii. opportunities
 - iii. challenges
 - iv. new questions
 which concern teaching religious and related stereotypes at school, also in light of the topics addressed during the plenary session.

3. Plenary discussion:

- a. Trainers and teachers brainstorm possible solutions to challenge and answer new questions

4. What is important to communicate to other teachers about SORAPS Contents?

- a. On the basis of the previous discussions, trainers and teachers identify the best element to be shared with other teachers in order to involve them in SORAPS Multiplication Training Events.

Day 3

Workshop 3

Aim:

- to prepare "MULTIPLICATION TRAINING EVENTS" alongside the trainees to be held in their institution (or other venues).

1. Introduction (around 15 Min)

Explaining the aim and structure of the Workshop and explaining what a "Multiplication Training Event" is. See the following information:

WHAT?

MTEs are events in which trainees' colleagues in the field of education, from the same institution and from other institutions, are expected receive training in

- 1) the topics of the SORAPS Course, and
- 2) using the SORAPS and IERS Outputs.

HOW?

Modalities are chosen to suit each institution. However, it is highly recommended not to limit such events to a single day. There are 2 key actors to be taken in consideration:

Key Actors 1) Trainees' institutions

- Organize the events, providing space and administrative support
- Involve and facilitate the participation of other colleagues
- Make good use of its network of formal and informal contacts to invite and involve colleagues from other institutions

Key Actors 2) The trainees of the SORAPS Training Course

- Express their (hopefully) positive experience to encourage more teachers to undergo the same training
- Illustrate the contents and modality of the course
- Share, by training other colleagues, the pivotal points of what they have individually learned (i.e. not merely repeating the contents, but what they have learned of relevant, or what they have made good use of in class).

2. Work in groups

Note for Trainers and Facilitators: if the trainees come from different institutions/countries, it is advisable to create groups with trainees of the same institution/country in this session as this will facilitate the planning of realizable MTEs.

Groups formed by trainees + 1 trainer/facilitator for support

Co-planning MULTIPLICATION TRAINING ACTIVITIES to be implemented in their institution/country

Things to be kept in mind:

- Insight received during the previous workshops
- Training needs of the teachers in each country
- Desired outcome of these activities
- Structure of the activities (Face-to-face tuition? Workshop?)
- Topics to be chosen for these activities and how to convey them
- Possible challenges and solutions.

Groups can use this template as a guide for MTE planning:

Examples of MTEs planned during the SORAPS COURSE trial can be found in UNIT IX.

Multiplication training event	
Type of Educational Institution	
Objective of the multiplication training event	
Desired outcomes	

Structure of the meeting	(presentation / workshop...)
When / where	
Action plan (what to do to prepare the event)	
Materials needed	
Communication dissemination /	
Evaluation of the event	

3. Plenary sharing to gather good practices (30 min)

Day 4

Workshop 4

Aim

- to further reflect on various issues concerning the MTEs: Contents, Values to be conveyed and Methods

1. Introduction (5 Min)

Explaining the aim and structure of the Workshop

3. Group work

a. Group CONTENTS

This group focalizes on finding the right contents and topics from the SORAPS and IERS materials best suited to encourage other colleagues to make use of them both for self-training and in class.

For example, Topics can be chosen in order to show how religions can be treated in a number of school subjects and which IERS/SORAPS contents can be identified to help in this endeavor. Examples of result of this kind activity can be found in UNIT IX.

b. Group VALUES

The focus of the group is to reflect on the values and general aims best represented by the IERS and SORAPS Projects, the positive outcomes they support (in terms of personal/professional growth, of the broadening of perspectives...) and are to be expected from these MTEs.

c. Group METHODS

The focus of the group is to identify which methodology and types of activities to be implemented in the MTEs are best suited to transmit IERS and SORAPS PROJECT values. Inspiration for these activities can be taken from SORAPS UNITS 1 and 8.

4. Plenary Sharing to gather good practices

Day 5

Workshop 5

Aim

- On the basis of the results of the previous work in groups, trainees are required to identify a series of possible challenges in carrying out MTEs and how these challenges could be overcome.

1. Individuation and clustering of challenges

- a. Each participant identifies a possible scenario that could hinder the organization, practical implementation and reaching of desired results of an MTE. It could be a general MTE or the MTEs planned in the previous workshop. The *Wall Writing* activity could be useful here as a brainstorming technique. Participants write their ideas on small pieces of paper (e.g. "sticky notes") and stick them on a wall. The advantages of this method are that people can sit and

think quietly of their own points before sharing them with others, and the pieces of paper can be repositioned to aid the clustering of ideas.

- b. The workshop facilitator positions these papers on a vertical surface, identifying 3 or 4 cluster of ideas and naming them, e.g. "Event Management", or "Getting teachers involved" or "Misunderstanding SORAPS's aims".

2. Discussion on overcoming challenges.

- a. This is a Plenary discussion on how to avoid the various challenges that have been identified in order to obtain a series of practical hints & tips to be used as a reference during the planning and implementation of the MTE. Some examples of these challenges (and possible solutions) can be found in UNIT 9.

3. Final evaluation of the final face-to-face session and the SORAPS training course as a whole.

- a. An open discussion in which trainees share their final evaluations and trainers take stock of these observations for future improvement.

4.3. On-line session

During the online training session, tutors can add value and impact to trainees' learning path. A tutor carries out his/her activities mostly through the main communicative tool of the Moodle platform and, that is the Forum. The duties of a tutor in an online course consist basically in two general tasks:

1) to ensure that trainees can carry out their learning path in the smoothest way possible.

This means that tutors should make **sure that trainees have correctly understood** the course structure, how contents and the timetable are organized as well as the deadlines and the instructions of the various tasks. If needed, they should **provide additional instructions** and explanations to address any collective doubts. This also applies to the Course Contents. If trainees encounter difficulties in engaging with a certain topic, the tutor should help **clarify their doubts** and, if necessary, provide them with **additional learning resources**. IERS Digital Modules should be taken into account in this regard. Tutors should also be available as a form of **technical "helpdesk"** in case trainees have not become accustomed to the Moodle learning environment.

2) to improve and enrich the learning path of the trainees.

The simpler way to carry out this task is by involving trainees **in the Forum activities**, i.e. by providing clear **input in order to stimulate the trainees** to reflect and create meaningful feedback on this while at the same time engaging in peer discussions.

However, if proficient enough with the Moodle environment, a tutor can also make further activities available, if needed.

Forum input is usually textual, but other media, like pictures or videos may also be employed. For example, during the timeframe in which trainees should be studying Unit 1, a picture depicting a situation of conflict in a classroom can be employed to reflect on which kind of participatory activities could be applied, what could be the strengths and the weaknesses, etc.

Especially with regards to religious studies – related Units, tutors have quite a few resources to be used as input from the IERS Digital Modules. The more input is connected with 'realia' (a religious text, an actual piece of art, a pictures of a ritual) the more the trainees will feel confident to be engaging with actual, concrete facts.

Another point to be taken into account is to **avoid treating the Units as completely separate** learning objects. While the trainees are progressing in their learning paths, tutors should provide input that urges them to review previous topics such as, for example. during the during the timeframe in which trainees should be studying Unit 4, the input should also activate content acquired in Unit 3.

Modalities of such Forum activities (e.g. the number of words per feedback) **should be explicitly set** and explained at the start of the course or Unit.

Also, the task the Tutor sets is not limited to provide input, but also to **provide her/himself a general feedback to what the trainees have written**, in order to help trainees become aware of the direction their training path is taking (e.g. if they have correctly understood matters or in which topics a trainee shows particular predisposition). In case of low numbers of trainees, tutors could also consider providing personalized feedback.

Who are tutors? How many are required?

With regards to the profiles and numbers of tutors to be employed, we suggest having **at least 2 different tutors**: a tutor expert in the **field of Study of religions** and a tutor expert in the **field of pedagogy and teaching/learning activities**. Alternatively, a tutor with a profile that includes both kinds of expertise may be considered. It is highly advisable that the two tutors work together, fruitfully planning and implementing activities that stimulate both the use of contents (knowledge about religions) and pedagogical and teaching skills.

Concerning the ratio of the number of tutors to numbers of trainees, we suggest having **no more than 15-20 trainees per 2 tutors**. No more that 10-15 trainees in case of 1 tutor.

Tutors have to comply to certain ethics: be well disposed towards trainees, available to clear doubts, adapt the input to the level and interests of the trainees as much as possible, and respect her/his own deadlines.