

Impact of Interreligious Projects Discussed at Montreal Meeting

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Montreal, Canada—On June 13, 2015, more than twenty people attended a program on “Toward the establishment of interreligious councils – an initiative in service of a culture of peace,” organized by UPF-Montreal. Among the participants were representatives of eight local, national and international interreligious organizations; academics; and religious leaders.

The program began with presentations on four projects of an interreligious nature: UPF’s objectives for an interreligious council at the UN, the Religions for Peace project, the Council of Religious Leaders of Montreal-North, and Families on the March.

A discussion followed the presentations in which three panelists spoke about the important role of religious networks within the social context. The panelists also identified characteristics of interreligious councils and addressed the necessary conditions for such initiatives to succeed in having an impact on social cohesion, locally and globally.

The last hour of the program was dedicated to a lively exchange on the impact of interreligious projects. The participants agreed that interreligious organizations should support and work with one another to establish interreligious councils, starting first at the local level. The local council would be created and its activities adjusted according to the needs of the community it serves. An elected official from the Montreal borough of Outremont expressed interest in creating an interreligious council for the borough that could contribute to harmonious relations with the Hassidic community. The participants, many of whom are from Laval, a city north of Montreal, also discussed developing or re-establishing an interreligious initiative in the city.

A follow-up meeting is planned for September 2015, and UPF was asked to coordinate it.

