

► Programme Leaders

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- Amb Mohd Alami Musa
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- Professor Abdullah Saeed
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- Dr Tony See
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► Dates

This SRP Executive Programme will run from 16 to 20 November 2015. Please refer to the RSIS website <http://www.rsis.edu.sg/research/srp/> for updates.

► Further information

Email your queries to Ms Agnes Lee Ai Keow at isaklee@ntu.edu.sg if you need clarifications.

About SRP

The Studies in Inter-Religious Relations in Plural Societies (SRP) Programme was inaugurated on 6 June 2014 by the President of the Republic of Singapore, Dr Tony Tan Keng Yam. It is the latest programme offered by the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS).

The SRP Programme aims to study various models of how religious communities develop their teachings to meet the contemporary challenges of living in plural societies. It will also deepen the study of inter-religious relations, formulate models for the positive role of religions in peace-building and produce knowledge to strengthen social ties between communities. The Programme seeks to be at the forefront in the development of scholarship and applied knowledge on the roles of religion and inter-religious relations in plural societies today.

SRP EXECUTIVE PROGRAMME



► Overview

This programme provides foundational yet incisive knowledge on the crucial role of religion in society, in various facets of life in plural settings and in relation to communal conflict and cohesion.

It is aimed at professionals in the areas of community development, defence, education, humanitarian relief work, international relations, religious leadership and security. The programme's aims are practical and it uses case studies drawn from real situations for discussion.

The programme is intended to increase knowledge and skills in managing and navigating religious diversity in times of peace and conflict. Grounded in empirical research and conceptual frameworks established by leading scholars, it allows issues to be understood and responded to in a holistic manner.

► Outcomes

By the end of the programme, participants will have:

- A sound introduction to the role of religion, including sensitivities arising from interaction between communities, in plural societies.
- An acquaintance with teachings within religions that may be harnessed as resources to forge inter-religious relations and social harmony.
- Links to networks and resources that participants can harness after completion of the programme.
- Practical knowledge and experiences relevant to engaging diverse religious communities and building models of religious harmony.

► Key Features

- Seminar-based programme where participants engage members of the SRP faculty with backgrounds in the study of religion, conflict resolution, peace-building and dialogue.
- Engagement with the major Southeast Asian religions (Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam and Taoism) and secularism.
- Experiential learning where elements of the programme are conducted within external key religious institutions.
- Dialogue and networking opportunities with local apex religious and community leaders as well as opportunities for participants to share experiences.
- Exploration of policy issues in managing diversity.

► Themes

Participants will explore the following themes:

Global Impact of Religion Today: This theme will examine relevant trends in the practice and expression of religion, adopting a Southeast Asian perspective. Issues to be explored include:

- Secularisation and de-secularisation.
- Religion, nationalism and politics.
- Communal conflicts.
- Global issues of human development.

Clarifying Concepts and Contexts: This theme provides an understanding of what lies behind social, cultural, political, and religious encounters by:

- Clarifying concepts and terms such as “fundamentalism” and “extremism” and “radical” or “moderate”.
- Exploring the complexities in understanding what religion means in different traditions and cultures.
- Debating public-private contestations in religion and common space, for example the right to exercise specific practices such as dress codes or dietary restrictions.

Religious Rationalisation for Conflict and Resources for Peace Building: This theme will introduce the major Southeast Asian religions (Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam and Taoism) and their perceived link with regional conflicts or tensions, as well as possible contributions to social cohesion. It will cover:

- Local case studies.
- Religiously-linked acts of violence.
- The potential of each religion to facilitate peace and its resources to promote social harmony.
- Religiously inspired tools for dialogue and peace-building, and some of the theories behind them.

► Outside the Classroom

Participants will visit key institutions that have contributed to building religious harmony in Singapore such as:

- Inter-Religious Organisation.
- Harmony Centre.
- Religious Rehabilitation Group Resource and Counselling Centre.

They will also network with key religious and community leaders through:

- Dialogue dinners.
- Round-table discussions (with local inter-faith practitioners) on co-existence, tolerance and the religious Other.
- Luncheon talks.

The Executive Programme will end with participants considering ways to develop a model to enhance inter-religious relations and the common space within their countries or organisations.