SAFE SPACES IN AI FORA

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- Challenges

- What is a Safe Space?

- Requirements for AI FORA's Safe Spaces

- Benedictine monasteries as Safe Spaces

- Safe Spaces partners in AI FORA

- Next steps

CHALLENGES

How can the loosers and critics of current distribution practices be locally encouraged and enabled to make their voices heard?

Where can ethical justice positions be addressed that are not part of the value set of those in power?

Where can these actors communicate on eye-level without being preconfigured, discriminated and intimidated by the environment?

The main risk of the AI FORA project is that individual stakeholder groups cannot express their opinions and contribute their specific value perspective or everyday expertise to the same extent, because they are suppressed or intimidated by their environment.

CHALLENGES

This danger becomes a risk when participatory formats and places where encounters take place are not neutral, but represent the interests of a stakeholder involved, and thus horizontal and inclusive communication is not possible: at university you have to be an academic, with a business tycoon you have to be rich, in politics you have to have power....

The need is: to have places, locations, rooms, where every involved person, stakeholder and the vulnerable people can meet and work freely and on eye-level.

WHAT IS A SAFE SPACE?

A first approach to the term "safe spaces" is offered by the London Dictionary: "A safe space is a place or environment in which a person or category of people can feel confident that they will not be exposed to discrimination, criticism, harassment, or any other emotional or physical harm".

However, during the design phase of the AI FORA project, it quickly became clear that this definition was not sufficient to cover the needs of the project.

The starting collaboration between social scientists and Benedictines in the country case studies identified a number of additional requirements

REQUIREMENTS FOR AI FORA'S SAFE SPACES

A place

- that is open to all people, that local stakeholders know and trust
- dedicated to the discussion of values and work on ethical issues
- with expertise and its own activities in the provision of social services
- where people are accustomed to interacting with academia and universities without being an academic institution themselves
- with expertise in balancing conflicting values
- with appropriate infrastructure in terms of space, staff and networks

During the planning phase of the research project, the AI FORA consortium used the Benedictine educational and conference facility Haus St. Ansgar, Kloster Nütschau, for a multi-stakeholder workshop on the topic of AI-supported social assessment.

In the final feedback session of this workshop, the very heterogeneous group of participants (international researchers, focus group from different professions, stakeholders from all parts of society) rated the venue as highly conducive to this kind of work and mentioned some of the criteria of the previous slide.

These findings prompted other case study partners to look for similar venues in their respective countries.
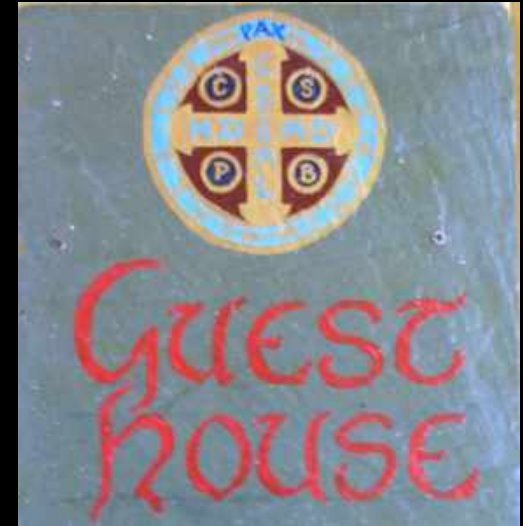
BENEDICTINE MONASTERIES AS SAFE SPACES

In collaboration with some Benedictine monasteries, the AI FORA project has therefore developed the so-called "Safe Spaces" concept.

Special interactive and participatory formats for "justice dialogues" are organized in the local Benedictine monasteries of the case study countries.

In the project partnership, they function as intermediary network organizations specialized in interreligious, intercultural and intersocietal communication within and between societies
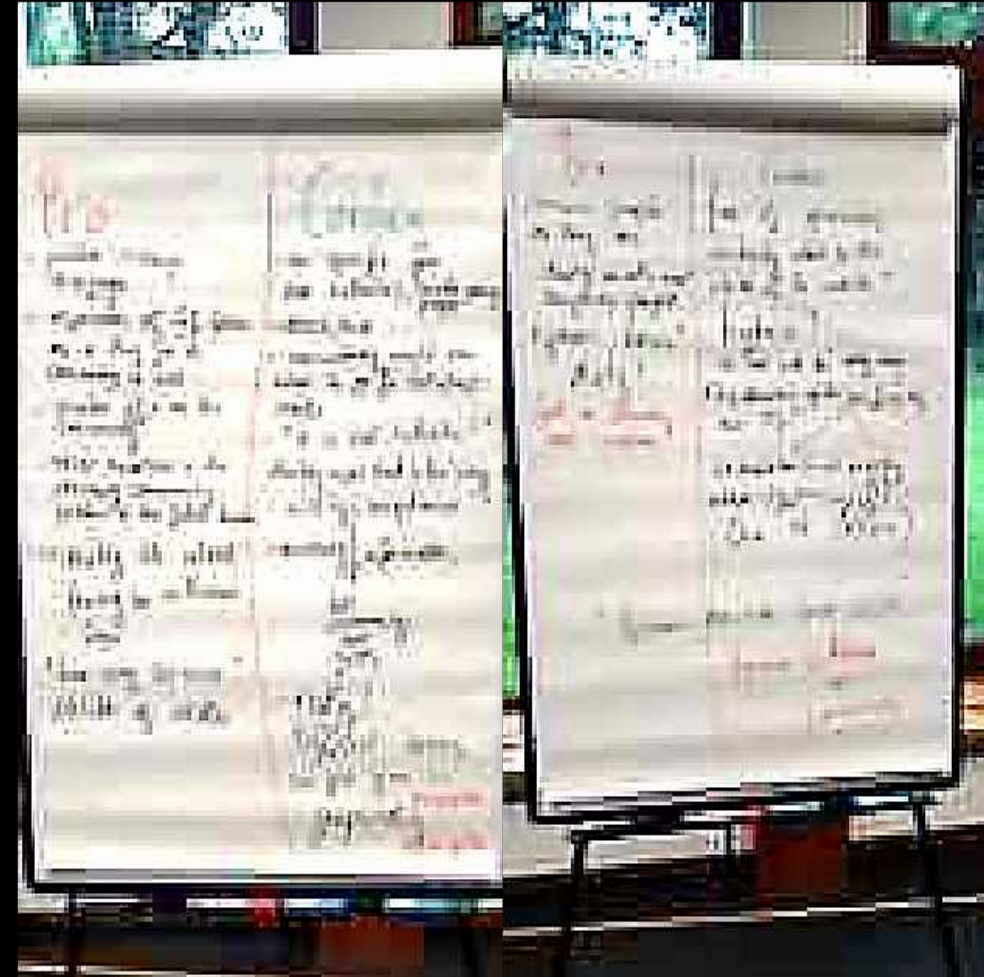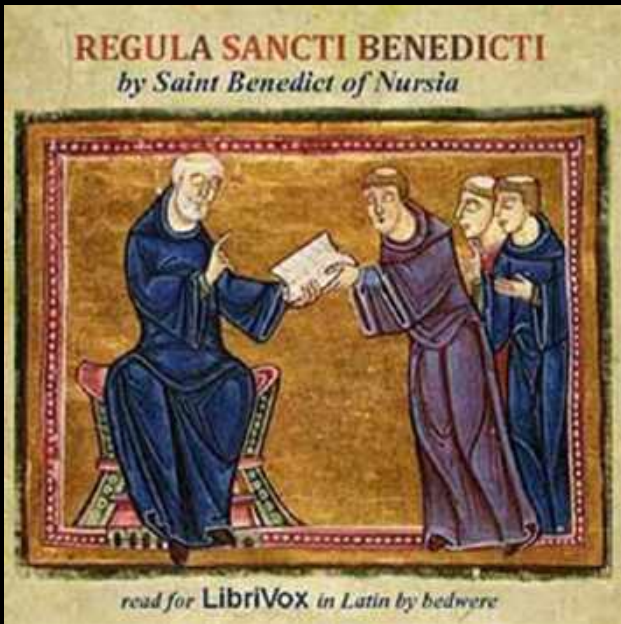
What is the case for and what is the case against Benedictine monasteries as Safe Spaces?

Is there really an elective relationship, an affinity, between the two?

These were the questions pondered at an initial meeting of Safe Spaces leaders, superiors of the participating Benedictine monasteries in September 2021.

BENEDICTINE MONASTERIES AS SAFE SPACES

REGULA SANCTI BENEDICTI
by Saint Benedict of Nursia

read for LibriVox in Latin by bedwere

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SAFE SPACES PARTNERS IN AI FORA

The following monasteries are

participating in the

project:

Montserrat Abbey
for Spain

SAFE SPACES PARTNERS
IN AI FORA

Saccidananda Ashram Shantivanam

for India

SAFE SPACES PARTNERS IN AI FORA

Kylemore Abbey

In Ireland (for working with the Chinese community)

SAFE SPACES PARTNERS IN AI FORA

New Camaldoli Hermitage

for USA

SAFE SPACES PARTNERS
IN AI FORA

Nütschau Monastery

as the Safe Space of the

German case study

In addition, monasteries in other
case study countries
have been approached and have expressed
interest

Next steps

- Assisi workshop on the role of technology for global goods provision in times of crisis

- May workshops in Montserrat Abbey, Spain and Kylemore Abbey (Ireland)

- USA workshop in late Summer in preparation

- Second Spaces Spaces leaders meeting to exchange experiences and review concept

- International publication on concept in combination with AI FORA's Ethical Observatory in progress