



GNRC ANNUAL REPORT

2018 – 2019

Committing to a World Without Violence

March 2019

Produced and Published by:

Global Network of Religions for Children Secretariat | Arigatou International – Nairobi

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The **Global Network of Religions for Children (GNRC)** is a global-scale inter-faith network of organizations and individuals specifically dedicated to securing the rights and well-being of children everywhere.

GNRC members come from all of the world's major religions and many other spiritual traditions. We share a commitment to making the world a place where every child can enjoy not only the right to survive, but also to thrive, making positive contributions of his or her own to a world of peace and dignity for all.

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AACC	:	All Africa Conference of Churches
ACRL	:	African Council of Religious Leaders
AI	:	Arigatou International
BRAVE	:	Building Resilience Against Violent Extremism
CAN Pakistan:		Child Advocacy Network–Pakistan
CGTN	:	China Global Television Network
CRAVE	:	Community Resilience Against Violent Extremism
CRC	:	Convention on the Rights of the Child
CSCR	:	Centre for Sustainable Conflict Resolution
CUEA	:	Catholic University of Eastern Africa
CVE	:	Countering Violent Extremism
DPAC	:	Day of Prayer and Action for Children
EEC	:	Ethics Education for Children
FECCLAHA:		Fellowship of Christian Councils and Churches in the Great Lakes and Horn of Africa
FCA	:	Finn Church Aid
GCERF	:	Global Community Engagement and Resilience Fund
GNRC	:	Global Network of Religions for Children
GPeVAC:		Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children
IATF- Religion:		Inter-Agency Task Force on Religion and Sustainable Development
IDEP	:	International Day for Eradication of Poverty
IIN	:	Inter-American Children’s Institute
KAICIID:		King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz International Center for Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue

LAC	:	Latin America and the Caribbean
LTLT	:	Learning To Live Together
NCA	:	Norwegian Church Aid
NGO	:	Non-Governmental Organisations
OCSE	:	Online Child Sexual Exploitation
PBUH	:	Peace Be Upon Him
P/CVE	:	Preventing/Countering Violent Extremism
PVE	:	Preventing Violent Extremism
PWA	:	People living with Albinism
REDLAMYC:		Latin American and Caribbean Network for Children and Adolescents' Rights
RPP	:	Regional Peace Programme
SDGs	:	Sustainable Development Goals
SRSg-VAC:		Special Representative of the Secretary General on Violence against Children
U.A.E	:	United Arab Emirates
UN	:	United Nations
UNICEF:		United Nations Children's Fund
UTSS	:	Under The Same Sun
VAC	:	Ending Violence Against Children
VOA	:	Voice of America

PREFACE



A CALL TO END VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN

Guided by the 10 Panama Commitments on Ending Violence Against Children made during the GNRC 5th Forum held in May 2017, remarkable efforts have been made by members of the Global Network of Religions for Children (GNRC) in the year 2018 - 2019.

GNRC's grassroots efforts are inspired by diverse faith practices and a strong belief that every child is priceless in dignity and deserve to grow up safe and sound. Violence against children is one of the gravest challenges facing the world today, but it does not receive attention commensurate with its scope, scale and nature.

Violence is the leading cause of death and injury of children in the world. The evidence is overwhelming. UNICEF reports that in every five minutes, a child is killed in a violent act. About 1 billion of the 2.2 billion children around the world endure different forms of physical and sexual violence, irrespective of ethnicity, nationality, race, religion or

income levels. In 2012 alone, 95,000 children between the ages of 15-19 died as a result of violence.

The causes of violence against children are complex and varied. They include socio-economic causes such as poverty and social exclusion, and many other deeply rooted political, cultural and familial factors. Ending today's unprecedented violence against children calls for extraordinary and urgent collaboration among religious and spiritual communities, UN agencies, international and multilateral organizations, governments, civil society, the private sector, media and most importantly with children.

As the world gears to celebrate the 30th anniversary of the 1989 UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), on 20th November, Arigatou International will undertake a consultation in May 2019 on the Multi-Religious Study on the Contributions of Religious Communities to the CRC. The findings will be presented during the CRC commemoration. The CRC has inspired governments to change laws and policies and protect children from all forms of physical, mental or sexual abuse. GNRC reaffirms her moral imperative to protect children from harm, as enshrined and protected in the teachings of all of the world's religious and spiritual communities and in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and its optional protocols; bringing faith communities together to address violence against children.

The report highlights the different sections of GNRC five goals i.e. Preventing Violent Extremism, Gang Violence and Organized Crime, Ending Child Poverty and Supporting Vulnerable Children, Protection of children from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse and Network Building and Strengthening. We believe that all people share a universal calling to care for all the children of the world hence, all the tools and approaches GNRC offers are designed to bring people together, to build a better world for children.

Thank you.

Dr. Mustafa Y. Ali,
Secretary General, GNRC
Director, Arigatou International – Nairobi

AN OVERVIEW: GNRC 2018 – 2019

The Panama Declaration on Ending Violence Against Children with its 10 commitments has guided GNRC's work since the GNRC Forum in May 2017. Based on the Declaration and GNRC's mission and vision, the Secretariat formulated five Goals to guide the network, namely:-

1. Network Building and Strengthening through Partnerships, Collaborations and Advocacy;
2. Ending Violence Against Children;
3. Ending Child Poverty and Supporting Vulnerable Children;
4. Protecting Children from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse; and
5. Nurturing Spirituality and Ending Violence in Child Up-bringing.

In addition to the above stated goals, the network made deliberate efforts to give prominence to voices of youth and children throughout the reporting period. Below is a summary of activities for 2018/19.

Network Building and Strengthening through Partnerships, Collaborations and Advocacy

GNRC's Presence and New Networks

As highlighted below, the GNRC Network is currently present in 55 countries. A number of networks were established, contact persons identified and others were re-invigorated, launched or are at discussion stage.

Africa: GNRC–Sierra Leone, GNRC–Senegal and Somalia have been established; GNRC–Cameroon and Ghana have Contact persons identified; and discussions are ongoing in Egypt.

Asia: GNRC–Sri Lanka has been formally launched; and GNRC–Bhutan Network was re-invigorated.

Europe: GNRC–Germany: Contact person has been identified; GNRC–Portugal: Discussions to re-invigorate the network are ongoing.

Middle East: GNRC–Jordan has been formally launched; GNRC–Yemen and Iraq have Contact persons identified; GNRC–Sudan and GNRC–Palestine: engagement with contact persons is ongoing but it has been difficult to support the networks due to the political situation.

Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC): GNRC–Nicaragua was re-launched; GNRC–Peru and Uruguay have been established; GNRC–Venezuela: Discussions to form the Network are being explored; and Northern Triangle Project (Honduras, Guatemala & El Salvador) is being concretized.

2018 – 2019 GNRC's Response to the Panama Commitment

53

Listen to Children with empathy and respect, welcome their wisdom and gifts and continue to work side by side to address violence against them

101

Educate leaders and communities **on violence against children**



46

Embrace internationally agreed strategies and mechanisms to address violence against children

29

Ensure **safe spaces for all children** in religious places especially for the victims of violence and abuse, and vulnerable children such as those with disabilities



28

Partner with global programs and make the most of existing tools for addressing the root causes and drivers of the violence children face



43

Strengthen cooperation and partnerships across Arigatou International Initiatives



10

Increase personal and institutional commitments to take concrete actions to address the challenges voiced by children

26

Strengthen communities by offering education in positive parenting and ethical values

03

Identify and challenge patriarchal structures and practices

39

Work to generate greater social and political will for legislation, policies, and increased funding of programs to protect children

Regional Meetings: Regional meetings have strengthened the GNRC through learning and sharing by members, and participation of new partners in the hosting countries. Since the Forum, meetings have been held in Europe (Macedonia), Asia (Sri Lanka) and two in the Middle East (both in Jordan). The meetings focused on ending violence against children and child poverty.

Partnerships, Collaborations and Advocacy

Children as Human Rights Defenders: The Committee on the Rights of the Child holds a Day of General Discussions (DGD) in Geneva every two years, focused on specific articles of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) or a related subject. Several GNRC

members took advantage of the online support provided by Child Rights Connect to conduct children-led consultations, supported by the GNRC Secretariat, entitled, "Children as Human Rights Defenders." Seven GNRC Networks participated and sent their contributions to Child Rights Connect.

G20 Interfaith Forum, Buenos Aires, Argentina: Ms. Silvia Mazzarelli represented the Secretary General, GNRC in the G20 Interfaith Forum in Buenos Aires in September 2018. In her presentation, she put emphasis on the urgency and importance of placing children at the center of development agenda and welcomed Argentina's emphasis on new technologies for change.

Protecting Children on the Move;

Rome, Italy: In October 2018, global leaders met under the aegis of Faith Action for Children on the Move Global Partners Forum to discuss, reflect and contribute in addressing violence against children on the move. Target audience comprised government, spiritual leaders, and international and grassroots organizations.

World Youth Forum, Egypt: five thousand (5,000) participants from across the world including youth, faith leaders, and representatives of governments from 160 nations met for the 2nd World Youth Forum in Sharm el Sheikh, Egypt on November 2018 to seek sustainable solutions to the world’s current issues including development and innova-

tion; water security; and the role of soft power in countering violent extremism and terrorism.

The President of Egypt, H.E. Abdel Fattah Al Sisi, the President of the State of Palestine, H.E. Mahmoud Abbas, and the Governor of Makkah, Prince Khalid bin Faisal Al Saud, graced the event.

UN Inter-Agency Task Force on Religion Faith Advisory Council: The Secretary General of GNRC, Dr. Mustafa Y. Ali and Director of Prayer and Action for Children, Ms. Rebeca Rios Kohn, were nominated to serve on the Faith-based Advisory Council to UN Inter-Agency Taskforce on Religion.

TARGET 1.1

1 NO POVERTY



ERADICATE EXTREME POVERTY FOR ALL PEOPLE EVERYWHERE

44 Activities

TARGET 4.7

4 QUALITY EDUCATION



ENSURE THAT ALL LEARNERS ACQUIRE KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS

79 Activities

TARGET 5.2 and 5.3



ELIMINATE ALL FORMS OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS INCLUDING FORCED MARRIAGE AND GENITAL MUTILATION

27 Activities

TARGET 6.0

6 CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION



ENSURE AVAILABILITY OF WATER AND SANITATION

1 Activity

TARGET 6.6




PROTECT AND RESTORE WATER RELATED ECOSYSTEMS

1 Activity

TARGET 8.0

8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH




PROMOTE SUSTAINED, INCLUSIVE & SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC GROWTH

7 Activities

TARGET 8.7

8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH



END FORCED LABOUR, END MODERN SLAVERY AND HUMAN TRAFFICKING

3 Activities

TARGET 16

16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS



END FORCED LABOUR, END MODERN SLAVERY AND HUMAN TRAFFICKING

3 Activities

TARGET 16.2



PROTECT CHILDREN FROM ABUSE, EXPLOITATION AND TRAFFICKING

110 Activities

Responding to Agenda 2030: Ending Violence Against Children

Interfaith Alliance Forum for Safer Communities Forum, Abu Dhabi, U.A.E: Arigatou International led by Rev. Keishi Miyamoto, joined over 450 global leaders in advocating for a world free of online child violence in November 2018. The Forum realized the Declaration on Ending Online Child Exploitation and Abuse of Children.

Engagement with End Violence through the CSO Forum: Arigatou International GNRC is a member of the CSO Forum- a Civil Society group of International Organizations that seeks to link End Violence and its activities to national and grassroots partners in efforts to ensure children are protected from all forms of violence.

Advocacy Actions: GNRC members conducted Advocacy Actions during the International days, addressing various child rights issues ranging from ending child poverty, ending violence against children and many others. These were: The Day of Prayer and Action for Children, the International Day of Peace, and the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty the Safe Internet Day and the Day of the African Child, among others.

Addressing Violence Against Children

Grassroots Actions by GNRC Members

Members contacted several activities to address violence against children. A few examples are highlighted below.

Harmful Cultural Practices: Albinism-phobia in Tanzania associated with witchcraft has led to killing of innocent People living with Albinism. Using the LTLT Approach, about 110,000 people were reached through campaigns to educate on albinism and its causes, while addressing myths and misconceptions.

Preventing Violent Extremism: GNRC–Ethiopia in collaboration with Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus (EECMY) advocated for an end to violent extremism through sports and held interreligious dialogues with members of different faiths.

Lenga Ugaidi na Talanta initiative: The initiative involving GNRC–Kenya sought to address violent extremism by channeling youth’ creativity towards countering violent extremist narratives. This included a short film, poetry, and music competition targeting Kenyan youth below 35 years in the fight against radicalization, violent extremism and terrorism.

Regional Peace Program: Youth leaders from Eastern Africa region have been participating in a three year program on preventing violent extremism. Each year the youth were mobilized under a specific theme for instance ‘Media and Preventing Violent Extremism,’ aimed at building community resilience against violent extremism, with a view to promoting sustainable peace in the region.

Preventing Violence in Schools: GNRC–Romania conducted debates in

Bucharest schools to raise awareness among parents, teachers and students on the effects of violence in schools as well as identifying solutions to end the problem. The event reached 1,114 participants from different religious backgrounds

Gang Violence and Organized Crime: GNRC members in Ecuador organized a match through the streets of the Historical Center of Quito and a sit-in at the Plaza Grande to advocate for freedom of worship and to create awareness on violence against children. The event concluded with the reading of a declaration on the elimination of violence against children followed by an interfaith prayer.

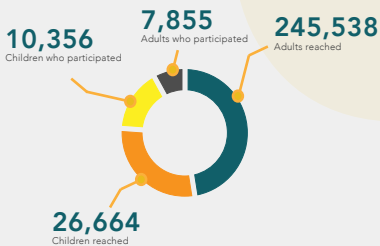
Ending Child Poverty and Supporting Vulnerable Children

Several GNRC Networks made attempts to help vulnerable children affected with poverty:

- **GNRC–Sierra Leone:** Donated school materials like uniforms, shoes and bags to vulnerable children.
- **GNRC–Lebanon:** Taught English language to refugee children and youth to build their language and communication skills.
- **GNRC–Sri Lanka:** Established a temporary education center in Meethotamulla, an informal settlement with limited resources and space.

GNRC Coverage and Reach 2018 – 2019

Protecting Children from Violent Extremism, Gang Violence and Organised Crime



Nurturing Spirituality and Ending Violence in Child Upbringing

- ★ Children who participated: **7,650**
- ★ Children reached: **13,565**
- ★ Adults who participated: **1,444**
- ★ Adults reached: **29,189**



Ending Sexual Exploitation and Abuse of Children

- ⚙ Children who participated: **7,945**
- ⚙ Children reached: **9,160**
- ⚙ Adults who participated: **843**
- ⚙ Adults reached: **25,212**

- Gender Parity
- Faith Inclusivity



New GNRC Networks

AFRICA

- * Ethiopia
- * Somalia
- * Cameroon
- * Ghana
- * Sierra Leone
- * Senegal

ASIA

- * Sri Lanka
- * Bhutan

EUROPE

- * Germany: Contact person identified
- * Portugal: Plans are ongoing

MIDDLE EAST

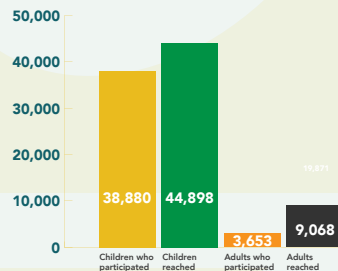
- * Jordan
- * Yemen
- * Egypt: Contact-identified (al-Azhar University)
- * Iraq: Contact identified
- * Sudan & Palestine:

Difficulties in establishing network due to political issues

LAC

- * Nicaragua
- * Peru
- * Uruguay
- * Venezuela: Plans are ongoing
- * Northern Triangle Project (Honduras, Guatemala & El Salvador) is being concretized

End Child Poverty and Other Welfare Activities for Children and Youth



- **GNRC–Mexico:** In partnership with UNICEF and Save the Children supplied hygiene and medical kits, food, warm clothes, shoes and toys to families migrating from Central America (Honduras, Guatemala & El Salvador) to the US.
- **GNRC–Malaysia:** Conducted a training workshop to equip Rohingya women and girls with financial skills for self-sustainability through the WORTH Project.

Protection of Children from Sexual Exploitation & Abuse

Online Child Violence: Faith leaders from Sub-Saharan African countries met in Nairobi, Kenya for the 3rd Pre-Event Workshop to discuss the challenges of online child sexual exploitation in Sub-Saharan Africa, and created awareness of the problem and advocated for its ending.

- **Children’s Workshop in Rwanda:** GNRC–Rwanda conducted workshops for children, focusing on Ending Sexual Exploitation and Abuse of Children. The workshop was attended by six hundred (600) children and youth from Kigali.

Nurturing Spirituality & Ending Violence in Child Up-bringing

South Africa: Learning To Live Together (LTLT) principles and values have continued to be imparted in children and youth by GNRC–South Africa. Through the LTLT program, participants affirmed their commitment to

prevent, heal, reduce and ultimately end violence against children.

Tanzania: GNRC–Tanzania has been active in training the community and youth through the Leadership Mentorship programs that have equipped the participants with peacebuilding and entrepreneurial skills to start up their own businesses. The focus has been youth, caregivers and guardians.

Promoting participation and Safe Spaces for children and youth

Arigatou International – Geneva: An online forum for adults to support children’s online participation was created, and GNRC members and accompanying adults were invited to join. A GNRC Committee comprising of children and youth will guide the online platform content.

Asia: CAN Pakistan conducted workshops throughout the year for various stakeholders including police officers aimed at enhancing implementation of child rights and child protection laws and policies. Live TV interviews were also conducted by CAN Pakistan to advocate on the same. They also organized children and youth led panel discussion on children’s right to expression in schools, colleges and even at home.

1. INTRODUCTION

This report provides details of the network’s achievements between April 2018 and March 2019. The activities are categorized into a number of key themes; Preventing Violent Extremism, Gang Violence and Organized Crime, Ending Child Poverty and Supporting Vulnerable Children, Protection of children from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse, Network Building and Strengthening, and any other important activities that took place during the fiscal year. The report captures the affirmation to protect children from all

kinds of harm as enshrined and protected in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC).

As a faith inspired organization, we work together with our partners, united in this one single purpose; caring for children! Our members acted in the best interest of the children, guided by the 10 Panama Commitments on Ending Violence Against Children. GNRC is committed to creating an environment where every boy and girl can grow up safe and sound.

2.0 PREVENTING VIOLENT EXTREMISM, GANG VIOLENCE & ORGANIZED CRIME

2.1 Africa

2.1.1 Ethiopia

Countering Violence through Inter-faith Dialogue

With the intent to promote coexistence among people of different religions and creating safe space for children, GNRC–Ethiopia hosted a half-day sport festival in collaboration with Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus (EECMY) Peace Office on 7th July 2018 at Entoto Secondary School, Addis Ababa. The sport, specifically soccer, was the game of choice for the peace event. The event entailed several other activities including prayers by representatives of Christian and Muslim faiths and speeches. Fifty (50) youth attended the event.



Mr. Eyob Yishak, GNRC–Ethiopia Coordinator, shared how sports naturally disregards differences such as religion and race, and exists to build cohesion among people of different religious backgrounds. He stated that girls and boys experience violence irrespective of their ages or faith. Mr. Yishak added that it’s the responsibility of every Ethiopian to protect children from all forms of violence and exploitation within their own capacity.

2.1.2 Kenya

Interreligious Dialogue for Peace



GNRC–Kenya participated at an interfaith dialogue for peace on 11th and 12th of April 2018 at the Tangaza University College, Nairobi, Kenya. The interfaith meeting dubbed, “Muslim – Christian Engagement for Social Transformation in Africa: The Role of Academic Institutions,” was organized by Tangaza University College and Umma University. A total of 200 participants including professionals and religious leaders from the Christian and Muslim faiths were in attendance.

They discussed ways to enhance coexistence between members of the two faiths and specifically by adopting a social transformation methodology towards peace and development. Other organizations that participated in the interfaith engagement were Africa Muslims Agency, National Cohesion and Integration Commission of Kenya, Ziviler Friedensdienst Civil Peace Service and Ageh Mitmenschen. The Comboni Missionaries and Missionaries of Africa were also represented in

the interfaith dialogue.

The engagements also sort to assess the role of religious institutions and academicians in promoting cohesion and coexistence and ultimately peace between the two faiths. The issue of radicalization into violent extremism was identified as a major threat to peace and development. Stories were shared, and various solutions to the problem were explored at the meeting.

Workshop on Violence Against Children in Madrassas

GNRC–Kenya through BRAVE/CSCR held a Madrasa Committee Meeting on 14th March 2018 in Nairobi, Kenya to discuss the context of violence against children in Madrasas and possible solutions to preventing and ultimately ending the menace. The meeting was the second of its kind after the previous one held in December 2017. The 7 committee member organizations, comprising religious leaders and professionals, discussed various ways to end violence against children in Madrasas, and came up with resolutions and way forward on the issue.

The GNRC Coordinator, Kenya, Sh. Ramadhan Aula, put emphasis on the need for Madrasa teachers to first understand the curriculum to enable them to implement it effectively. He commended the concept note prepared by Mr. Munawar Khan, a member of the Madrasa Committee and an educationist from the Kenya Muslim Education Council, as a very elaborate concept towards research on Madra-



sas. The concept paper proposes a survey study on the number of Madrasas and Madrasa teachers both in rural and urban areas.

Members reviewed the different levels of violence in Madrasas and how to determine its extent. The meeting agreed to engage consultants to draft a concept note that can easily be understood and to develop study indicators for proper measurements. It was thus felt that a survey either by county or province was prudent, to help understand the different reasons behind violence against children in Madrasas, and to determine areas/counties in which the challenge is more rampant.

The need to educate religious leaders including Sheikhs, Imams and Ustadhs on violence against children was viewed as a major step towards preventing the problem.

GNRC Takes Part in the Isiolo Peace Link Training

Radicalization into violent extremism is a serious problem affecting Kenya. In the recent years, there have been several terrorist attacks in several parts of the country with an increased number

of youth and children falling victim. Isiolo is one of the regions affected by violent extremism.

This is due to the town’s proximity to the Somalia border with occasional issues of ethnic conflict, marginalization (whether real or perceived), remoteness of the region, high number of unemployed youth, unaddressed historical injustices and poor relationship between the public and security organs, among others.

Although Isiolo County has not experienced any major terrorist attack, there are several cases of youth from the county who have been recruited into terrorist groups. This situation compelled Isiolo ‘Peace Link’ to convene two workshops from 2nd – 5th July 2018 in Isiolo, Kenya.

A total of 110 participants including 90 youth from Isiolo, Marsabit and Moyale attended the first workshop. The Peace Co Brigade brought in to the workshop 20 officers from the Kenya Police Service, Administration Police, Kenya Prison Services, and Kenya Forest Service.



The focus of the workshops was on effective approaches to preventing and countering violent extremism as well as identifying key drivers of radicalization into violent extremism. It was also to debate the importance of partnership between peace builders and law enforcers.

Through the workshops, the most at risk regions were identified as follows: the Coastal Counties: Kwale, Mombasa, Kilifi and Lamu; Northern Kenya Counties bordering Somalia: Garissa, Wajir and Mandera counties; and Nairobi County, in particular Eastleigh and Pumwani areas. The counties are viewed as “hotbeds” of radicalization and have also experienced the highest number of terrorist attacks in the country.

Sh. Ibrahim Asmani Lethome, a member of the Arigatou International Advisory Group and member of the GNRC, facilitated some of the sessions. He shared some of the many P/CVE interventions both at the national level and county level initiated by both state actors and non-state actors.

Rehabilitation and Reintegration of Violent Extremist

GNRC members in Kenya were invited by the Government of Kenya to participate in a disengagement and rehabilitation of violent extremists’ workshop on 6th – 10th August 2018 in Naivasha, Kenya. A total of 35 participants including counselors and psychologists from Isiolo, Garissa, Nyeri, and Nairobi attended the workshop. The workshop

was part of a capacity building program, which the Kenyan government has embarked on, to enhance the skill-sets of local peace builders.

Discussions revolved around understanding violent extremism, the government’s disengagement approach and rehabilitation framework, community perspective on rehabilitation in Countering Violent Extremism (CVE), and psychological perspective in rehabilitation. Members also engaged through group work and presentations.

The Government of Kenya launched its Disengagement Program aimed at rehabilitating violent extremist’ returnees in March 2018.

GNRC–Kenya Takes Part in the Lenga Ugaidi na Talanta 2018 Edition

GNRC–Kenya Network in partnership with local organizations and the Government of Kenya launched the Lenga Ugaidi na Talanta 2018 Edition under the theme, “Fighting Terrorism through Art.” The event, which took place on 1st October 2018 in Nairobi, Kenya, was attended by representatives from the Kenyan Government, and International and grassroots organizations. Arigatou International (AI) was represented by Sh. Ibrahim Lethome, a member of AI’s Advisory Group, the Secretary General, Global Network of Religions for Children (GNRC), Dr. Mustafa Y. Ali, and GNRC Members in Kenya, among others.

During the launch, Sh. Lethome appreciated the efforts of all the partners in

developing the initiative. He added that the competition comes at a time when radicalization and violent extremism is a pressing issue in the Greater Horn and Eastern Africa, adding that there is no better way to address the scourge than through the children and youths' perspective – that is arts.



Dr. Ali encouraged Kenyan youths to actively take part in the competition and add their voices towards identifying the best solution to conflict resolution in the country and East Africa at large. He revealed that the winning pieces would be aired on Kenya's mainstream media, and the winners stand a chance for internship opportunities in reputable organizations.

Lenga Ugaidi na Talanta is an initiative that seeks to channel youth creativity towards countering the violent extremist narratives. This is a short film, poetry, and music competition targeting Kenyan youth below 35 years of age in the fight against radicalization, violent extremism and terrorism. The first edition of the competition, held in July 2017, was a success – attracting hundreds of youths across the country

under one course – to fight violent extremism. This year, the competition began on 1st October 2018 through 16th November 2018.

Prevention of Violent Extremism in the Mandera Triangle – Kenya, Somalia and Ethiopia

A two-day stakeholder's conference on De-radicalization, Prevention and Countering Violent Extremism discussed some of the most pressing challenges facing the people of frontier counties including: Mandera, Garissa, Wajir, Moyale and Isiolo; as well as residents in Ethiopia and Somalia bordering them. The theme of the conference, 'Stepping up community-led counter terrorism and de-radicalization efforts to combat violent extremism,' was the basis of the discussion. It was observed that terrorism and violent extremism had led to stunted growth in development, and prevented many children and young people from accessing quality education.

The GNRC Secretary General, Dr. Mustafa Y. Ali, was invited by the Governor of Mandera, H.E Captain Ali Roba, to advise the religious and political lead-



ers in the Mandera Triangle and frontier counties on how best to address violent extremism and terrorism from a community perspective.

Dr. Mustafa Y. Ali addressed the religious leaders and elders in Mandera town on 22nd October 2018, promising to work with local leaders. The Global Network of Religions for Children (GNRC) has as one of its core commitments to work with partners and leverage the capacity to address violent extremism, gang violence and organized crime. GNRC has been working in the region, building networks and initiating programs including the Building Resilience Against Violent Extremism (BRAVE) and Community Resilience Against Violent Extremism (CRAVE) to address the causes leading to children and young people to join violent extremist groups.

Youth Transformative Leadership Training

GNRC participated at the closing ceremony of 'Together for a New Africa' project held at Mariapolis Piero, Juja, and Kiambu County, Kenya on 8th January 2019. GNRC–Kenya was represented by Sh. Ramadhan Aula, the National Coordinator. This was the first phase of the three-year project intended to run till 2021. In his opening remarks, Sh. Aula introduced GNRC and the 10 Panama Commitments on Ending Violence Against Children.

The Focolare Movement in partnership with International Association of New Humanity, the Kenya National Commis-



sion for UNESCO together with other partners organized a training session for 105 youth from Eastern Africa and DR Congo to empower them with the knowledge, skills and mindset to spur positive and constructive change in the communities they live in. The training on transformative leadership, values and responsibility was held from the 31st of December 2018 to 8th January 2019 and attended by participants, both male and female, from Kenya, Burundi, South Sudan, Tanzania, Rwanda, Uganda and DR Congo.

This project is the brainchild of African students and alumni of the Sophia University Institute in Italy who felt the need to give back to Africa and take responsibility in positively shaping the continent of Africa, hence the title "Together for a New Africa". The project strives to bring about a cultural transformation as a path towards a new style of leadership. The focus audience are fellow African students aged between 20 and 35 years already involved in leadership who will in turn reach 1,000 youth in their local communities. The trainers were drawn from Italy and the respective countries where participants came from.

Youth as Actors in Peacebuilding

Arigatou International – Nairobi (AIN), led by End Child Poverty, is part of a consortium convened by the Norwegian Church Aid (NCA). This consortium consists of 6 organizations, (All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC), African Council of Religious Leaders (ACRL), Fellowship of Christian Churches and Councils in the Great Lakes and Horn of Africa (FECCLAHA), Hekima Institute of Peace Studies and International Relations (HIPSIR) and the Norwegian Church Aid). The consortium implements the Regional Peace Programme (RPP) in 12 countries in the Horn and the Great Lakes region, including: Burundi, Djibouti, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Kenya, Rwanda, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Tanzania and Uganda.

Through RPP, GNRC is working to prevent violent extremism and its impacts on young people. In response to the tragic terror attack that occurred in Nairobi, Kenya on the 15th January 2019, AIN supported 2 youth members from the RPP program to participate in a live TV discussion on: *Youth and Violent Extremism in Kenya* on KUTV, the youth shared on the push and pull

factors in regards to violent extremism, the misconceptions behind violent extremism and the signs of a radicalized a youth. The youth cited causes of violent extremism among fellow youth as: non-inclusion in policy formulation and implementation, unemployment, mis-interpretation of religious scriptures and peer pressure.

Youth have to be the central focus of CVE if governments and civil society desire to halt recruitment into violent extremist groups. Youth play different roles in violent extremism including being targets, drivers or change makers for solidarity and resilience.

2.1.3 Somalia

Dialogue Forum for Children and Youth

The GNRC Somalia in collaboration with Somali Women in STEM and Sima Children’s Nursery School conducted an interactive dialogue forum with local youth role models. The event purposed to inspire children through storytelling in a process where the youth role models shared their stories of success with the 17 children, who took part in the event. They dubbed the event, “Bridging the gap between local role models and rising children.”

The event which took place in Garowe, Somalia sought to build a mutual relationship between children and local role models while boosting the power of storytelling among children and with the youth. A mixture of fun, creativity and listening to each other’s’ ambitions



is what majorly characterized the full day event that was also attended by parents, teachers and Somali Women from STEM.

From the creative introductions of children, their future dreams were evident:

- “I am a dreamer”
- “I am the eternal hope of a lost nation even against the impossible odds of a patriarchal male dominant society that undermines the strength of a women and I am the new spirit”
- “You can call me the modern Queen Araweelo”

Six year old Fatima said that she wanted to be a doctor when she grows up so that she can save lives especially during child birth as well as treat victims of Sexual and Gender Based Violence, given that the scourge is widespread in the region.

In a fun session of sharing seats, the children learnt the art of collaboration and togetherness. “Our victory depends on how we work with each other side by side. Let us agree to accept and welcome one another” are some of the advices, seven year old Hamza gave. At the end of the event, hopes of a brighter Somalia were rekindled through the enthusiasm of the children. Replicated across other regions, indeed children can the destiny and future of our societies.

2.1.4 Tanzania

Advocacy and Awareness Campaign

GNRC–Tanzania used the Learning to Live Together program to instill values and ethics among their Peace Club members. The network continued with the implementation of its peace clubs program involving 17 madrasas, primary and secondary schools in Dar es salaam, Tanzania

The implementation of the program aimed to address violence against children, particularly corporal punishment and bullying. A total of 1,194 children were reached through the awareness program. The activities conducted included: visiting schools to monitor implementation of LTLT at the grassroots level, engaging the media to increase public awareness of the positive role of LTLT in Tanzania, and championing the HAKI YETU – Advocacy and Awareness campaign to fight against discrimination and mutilation of Persons With Albinism (PWA).



Tackling Negative Perception and Discrimination

GNRC–Tanzania in partnership with CEFA Onlus Tanzania and Under The Same Sun (UTSS), conducted 5 participatory workshops from 9th – 13th April 2018 to raise awareness on People living with Albinism (PWA). The workshop, which took place in Bariadi District, Simiyu region, Tanzania, sought to address albino-phobia through ethics education and instilling of moral values in the audience. A total of 158 participants including health workers, community development officers, social welfare officers, legal and justice officials, teachers, youth, children and the local government, benefited from the workshops.

The workshops encouraged community members to appreciate diversity and promote peaceful co-existence. Other activities conducted during the workshops included: drama, music, case studies and experience sharing. It was noted that people living with albinism in Tanzania have been persecuted, killed and dismembered, because of a cultural belief that certain body parts of people living with albinism can

transmit magical powers, or are cursed and may bring about bad luck.

GNRC–Tanzania reminded religious leaders, faith-based organizations and civil society organizations of their role of preventing such violence. They urged the community to educate the youth and children against such evil pursuits. Participants were urged to uphold the rights of every human being irrespective of their differences. They were also reminded of their obligation to respect the rights of other people and the legal consequences of infringing on those rights. GNRC–Tanzania, UTSS and CEFA aim to end albinophobia by engaging the community in constructive dialogue to end the discrimination.

Child Rights Workshop on Ending Gender Based Violence

GNRC–Tanzania organized a school visit on the 6th of February 2019 at Buyuni Primary School in Chanika Ilala Municipality to raise awareness among students about gender based violence especially on early marriage, and early teen pregnancies.

Education can be one of the most powerful tools to enable girls to avoid child marriage and fulfill their potential. The longer a girl stays in school, the less likely she is to be married before the age of eighteen (18) and have children during her teenage years. When girls have access to safe, quality education, the benefits are widely felt. Educated girls develop skills, knowledge and





confidence to make informed decisions including if, when and whom to marry. However education alone is not enough to end child marriage instead we need to address the root causes of child marriage and early pregnancies; gender inequality, poverty, insecurity, and the lack of economic and social opportunities for girls.

During the workshop, students were enlightened on the challenges affecting young girls in the community and how poverty can magnify them. It was noted that girls from the poorest households are at greatest risk of becoming child brides. Child marriage often means early and frequent pregnancies, which lead to school dropouts or girls being excluded. When girls are married early, it can have a major impact on their ability to get an education. Many girls who become brides are taken out of school and have very little prospect of completing their education. At the same time, having babies too young causes serious health issues. Pregnancy and childbirth complications are among the leading causes of death in girls aged between 15 and 19) years old. Moreover due to poverty, the work that children (young girls) can

be forced to do might also be illegal; such as working with drug gangs or in prostitution which in turn leads to unwanted pregnancies and the contraction of sexually transmitted infections.

A movie in entitled, “hadithi za kume-kucha – Fatuma” was played to the students. The two hour film narrated a story of a young primary school girl by the name Neema who lived with her mother and Father. They end up forcing her into getting married due to the situation of poverty in the family. In the movie, Neema also faces difficulties to concentrate at school as a result of overworking in the farm and at home hence she ends up not performing well at school. The film enabled the children to see the challenges many girls are facing in their efforts to acquire quality education in Tanzania.

Child Rights Workshop Using LTLT

On 22nd February and 1st March 2019, 35 peace club members from Kam-bangwa Secondary school participated in a workshop on, “Ending Violence Against Children-Children’s Rights,” using the LTLT Manual. GNRC–Tanzania facilitators; Mr. Morris Ntila and Mr. Venance Temu sought to expand on the topic and raise awareness among children on Child Rights as provided by the Tanzanian Child Act 1997. Facilitators enlightened and shared knowledge with participants on how ethics education from the LTLT manual can be applied as a tool to overcome violence in our society.



A presentation entitled, “Putting yourself in other people shoes” was showcased where participants shared the grievances from their peer victims whose rights are not being about their peers who have been victims of early and forced marriages who long to come to school to learn, fulfill their potential, work and help their families and communities. But too often they are exploited, abused and simply disregarded. Too often marriage is seen as a higher priority than education. The low value attached to girls’ schooling means few other options are available to them.

Peace club members shared how parents are forced to sell their children (girls) through marriages due to the poverty that affects them so as to get ‘quick’ money. Participants acknowledged the need to involve key stakeholders in the community by providing economic support and incentives to girls and their families; to educate and rally parents and community members with regards to the rights of the child and encourage supportive policies and laws.

HAKI YETU (Our Rights) Project

Driven by the urgent ethical imperative on ending the deadly discrimination and violence against people with the genetic condition of albinism (PWA), Under The Same Sun (UTSS), a partner of GNRC–Tanzania celebrated their 10th Anniversary in Dar es Salaam on February 1st 2019, in which GNRC-Tanzania was honored to take part in. The event was not only colorful but it also portrayed the efforts and work that has been done to advocate the rights and save lives of children and People with Albinism (PWA) since 2009.

GNRC–Tanzania has been an active player with regards to UTSS main goal; ending all kind of discrimination and violence towards Persons With Albinism (PWA) whereby in March 2018, GNRC–Tanzania together with Under The Same Sun (UTSS), initiated a project dubbed, ‘Haki Yetu Project’, with the need to develop a holistic concept of tackling rights for children and young people with albinism which sees human rights as indivisible. The project has since been successful, in bringing awareness and advocating for the rights of “People With Albinism (PWA)” through engaging the community and its stakeholders in its grassroots activities.

The event was attended by prominent guests including Dr. Reginald Abraham Mengi. Further during the event, the youth shared the challenges they face daily in their lives, in which the honorable guest, Dr. Reginald Men-



gi showed his support by promising the youths who shared their personal stories to support them with employment opportunities and also help them in completing their education. This brought big smiles and hope for youths who were present at the event.

Tanzania Youth Dialogue

GNRC–Tanzania participated in a youth dialogue organized by the Tanzania Youth Coalition (TYC) on 14th March 2019 on the theme, “Youth Empowerment and Learning Opportunities.” Tanzania Youth Coalition is a non-governmental organization focused on making the voices of the youth heard in all policy platforms. The forum gathered 50 participants including youths, guests from the United Nations Information Centre (UNIC), motivational speakers from Vocational Education Training Authority (VETA) and National Economic Empowerments Council (NEEC).

The motivational speakers led the youth to discover different ways to lift themselves economically. Both representatives from National Economic

Empowerments Council (NEEC) and Vocational Education Training Authority (VETA) respectively advised the youth to explore opportunities from different government’ enabling funds for youth and women. Emphasis was also put on proper management of funds necessitating acquisition of skills from Vocational Education Training Authority (VETA).The representative from Vocational Education Training Authority (VETA) welcomed youth of all educational background to join VETA.

Consultation Meetings to Mark 30 Years of the Convention on the Rights of the Child

GNRC–Tanzania was privileged to be among five countries (India, Sri Lanka, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Uruguay and Tanzania) selected to conduct a study with children about Faith in relation to Children’s Rights. GNRC–Tanzania conducted consultations on 16th March 2019 with 16 children aged between 9-15 years from Muslim and Christian’s backgrounds. The meeting took place at the Kambangwa Secondary School, Tanzania.

The meeting sort to explore children’s understanding and opinion on the values that their faith community and other religious groups share with the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The meeting also aimed at identifying children’s views and recommendations on how they could be better protected within and by their faith communities and the role of religious leaders in the process.

In their introduction, Ms. Clara Mdume and Ms. Joyce Mdachi who facilitated the consultation introduced the children with some ice-breakers creating a friendly learning environment for children. Through interactive games and activities, the children acknowledged their faith and how their religion has played a big part in shaping who they are and how they live today.

Further the children noted that though the religious leaders have contributed in shaping their personalities, they said most of the religious leaders are not familiar with children's rights; whereby some stick to what they know from some narratives of divine and holy books thus are not ready to relate or have open discussions on issues affecting them.

Children asked religious leaders to learn, support and advocate for child rights so as to have a balanced view in child up-bringing and to mobilize members in the community to take child rights seriously, since they are trusted and listened to by majority of people in the community. This will then bring positive change and contribute to child protection.



2.2 Asia

2.2.1 Bhutan

Promoting Peaceful Coexistence Amongst Peers

GNRC–Bhutan through Youth Advocacy Network Bhutan conducted a workshop dubbed 'Caring Schools Leadership Workshop,' from 24th to 26th March 2019 to develop awareness, change attitudes, and build commitment to promote coexistence and prevent peer bullying in schools. Seventy (70) participants including children, teachers, parents and caregivers attended the workshop held in Yangchen Gatshel Middle Secondary School, Chamgang; Thimphu Bhutan. Representatives from the National Commission for Women and Children (NCWC), Department of Youth and Sports (DYS), Thimphu Dzongkhag Education Sector and the Ministry of Education (MOE) graced the event.

Caring Schools Leadership Workshop is an on-site capacity building and advocacy platform that offers the selected representatives opportunity to learn and implement comprehensive social and emotional life skills to handle different situations in life and also build their courage to speak/express their feelings. It also aims to build the capacity of young girls and boys to recognize the different kinds of violence and be agents of change in their schools and communities.

During the three-day workshop, the need to eliminate peer bullying in



schools and at homes was widely emphasized. Critical topics such as causes of bullying, effects of bullying, the bully and the bystander, were covered during the awareness program. Children and youth were taught about their role on ending bullying including, creating awareness and talking about the problem.

2.2.2 Nepal

Training Workshop on Peace and Tolerance in Schools

Nepal conducted a teachers training event in February 2019 with a wide range of suggestions with aim to promote a culture of peace and tolerance in classrooms.

The training was to provide a set of values and attitudes, training models and way of life based on respect, dialogue



and cooperation. Teachers were given a perspective on fundamental freedom of children and how to support them to build their future and address their needs at present; the rights of children as enshrined in the Convention on the Rights of the Child, including the right to education, right to identity and right to freedom from exploitation among others.

It was emphasized that it is the moral duty of teachers, parents, the society and the government to ensure that a child is protected from all harm. Values such as discipline, peaceful co-existence and tolerance among many others, were identified as some of the practices needed in child upbringing.

2.2.3 Pakistan

Workshop with Senior Police Officials on Child Protection

GNRC–Pakistan through its partnering organizations, Search For Justice and CAN Pakistan, conducted a workshop for senior police officials on 27th April 2018 in Lahore, Pakistan. The meeting dubbed, “Workshop with Police Officials on Legal Framework of Child Protection and handling of Child Abuse Cases,” aimed at analyzing the implementation of child rights and child protection laws as per international obligations. The Australian High Commission in Pakistan also supported the workshop.

45 police officials, both male and female from Gender Based Violence Cell of Lahore attended the event.

The workshop explored the Criminal Law (Second Amendment) Act 2016 and evaluated the Punjab Destitute and Neglected Children Act 2004 and functions of Child Protection and Welfare Bureau.

Empowering the Police Department to Protect Children from Violence

Search For Justice/CAN Pakistan, a member of GNRC–Pakistan, in partnership with the Pakistan Police Department and the Australian High Commission–Pakistan, organized a child safety training workshop in Sheikhpura, Pakistan aimed at increasing the effectiveness of police officers towards countering violence against children. Approximately thirty five (35) participants comprising police officers from the Child Safety Cell and government officials attended the workshop.

Case studies, Pakistan’s legal framework on child protection, non-violent approaches, understanding the offender and peaceful coexistence with the community were some of the areas covered during the workshop. Participants shared some of their successes in their line of duty including: creating awareness at the grassroots level,

encouraging community members to report any lawbreakers and educating the community on the vise.

Participants highlighted the one challenge they face as law enforcers; that of community shying away from reporting such cases for fear of victimization. Participants agreed that they have a duty to protect not only the community from harm but also ensure that children are safe. The law enforcers affirmed their commitment to protecting children of Pakistan from harm.

Advocacy Workshop to End Violence Against Children

Search For Justice (Children Advocacy Network – CAN Pakistan) organized a consultative meeting with key stakeholders including government officials, parliamentarians, media and civil society organizations to advocate for ending violence against children under the title, ‘Setting the way forward to end violence against children.’ Fifteen (15) participants attended the meeting, which took place in Lahore, Pakistan on 27th February 2019.

The child rights activists urged the government to introduce a comprehensive protection system that can secure the rights and safety of all children. Ms. Rashida Qureshi, the programs coordinator, Search For Justice, asked the Punjab government to expedite the process of developing a comprehensive child protection policy backed by efficient institutional mechanisms that will ensure government officials adhere





to set regulations and serve the children of Punjab.

She also demanded for adequate support to the children particularly free legal assistance and counseling services to victims of violence, conducted in a manner that ensures their dignity is protected. Tending to the victims of violence and striving to prevent violence in the country is essential to achieving Agenda 2030 of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) towards an inclusive and peaceful society.

2.3 Europe

2.3.1 Bosnia and Herzegovina

Life Skills Development Training

GNRC–Bosnia and Herzegovina in partnership with World Vision Zenica and other partners conducted a series of workshops (16 in total) focusing on skills development during the month of May 2018. The workshops helped to build children’s ability to recognize and utilize their potential and resources available to them to promote peace in the country. 24 participants – boys and girls – from age 11 to 18 participated in the workshops.

Capacities and skills such as inner strength, assertiveness, community social responsibility, communication, conflict resolution, peace building and sustainable development were taught to the children. GNRC–Bosnia and Herzegovina also promoted the 10 commitments of the Panama Declaration on Ending Violence Against Children. The children who trained during these workshops are expected to train their peers.

Building the Capacity of Visoko Community

GNRC Member, UŽ “Mozaik”, partnered with Ethics Education for Children in conducting a Learning to Live Together (LTLT) Training of Trainers workshop in Visoko from 27th – 30th September 2018.

22 women from Visoko community participated in the training. Ms. Vera Leal, Program Officer, Ethics Education for Children, Arigatou International, Geneva office, represented her office.

Key objective of the workshop was to train the trainers on ethical values who then train their communities. Participants were also informed about the role of GNRC as a network in securing the rights and wellbeing of children worldwide. They were also made aware of the opportunities for joint activities.

2.4 Latin America and the Caribbean

2.4.1 Mexico

Interfaith Meeting on Violence Against Children



Within the framework of Mexico's commitment as a path-finding country in the Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children, and to accelerate the achievement of the End Violence goals, a group of faith based organizations, under the leadership of World Vision Mexico and the technical guidance of UNICEF Mexico, opened a space for dialogue, discussion and analysis among faith based organizations to define concrete actions for the prevention and elimination of violence against children in the country.

The first meeting of the Faith-Based Communities for the Protection of Children and Adolescents took place on 25th May 2018 at the Methodist Church of the Holy Trinity in Mexico City, Mexico. This idea arose after the participation of some of these faith-based organizations at the GNRC 5th Forum in Panama in May 2017.

The event was organized by World Vision Mexico, the Anglican Church of Mexico and the Theological Community of Mexico. The Salvation Army, the Methodist Church, the Scalabrinian Mission for Migrants and Refugees, UNICEF and Arigatou International-GNRC also supported the event.

The meeting focused on achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, particularly SDG 16.2; ending abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence against and torture of children; SDG 5.2 and SDG 5.3 on ending violence against women and girls; and SDG 8.7 on ending economic exploitation of children. The event also sought to consolidate and magnify the efforts of faith communities to address violence against children, focusing on generating new and creative ways to work together and in partnerships.

Approximately 80 participants including representatives from the Mexico National System for the Comprehensive Protection of Children and Adolescents, international organizations, faith-based organizations, religious leaders and children, attended the meeting. They analyzed the different kinds of violence to which children are exposed to at home, school, community, institutions and social networks. They shared in groups on the state of violence against children, the causes and manifestations; the existing institutional responses to prevent the menace and the opportunities and solutions to address it.

Regional Meeting on School Bullying



On 27th April 2018, Ms. Silvia Mazzarelli, the GNRC–Coordinator for Latin America and the Caribbean and Ms. Ingrid Martínez, Member–GNRC–Dominican Republic, attended the Regional Consultation on School Bullying held in Mexico City, hosted by the Government of Mexico, in cooperation with the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR). The Special Representative of the Secretary General on Violence against Children (SRSG-VAC), the Inter-American Children’s Institute (IIN), the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), and the Latin American and Caribbean Network for Children and Adolescents Rights (RED-LAMYC) also supported the event.

The event aimed at identifying best practices to ensure the protection of children against bullying and cyber bullying and enhance the experiences and national actions to promote a culture of peace, and prevent and eliminate violence.

The event was organized as follow-up to the United Nations General Assem-

bly Resolution A/RES/71/176, “Protecting children from bullying,” adopted on December 2016, which requests the Secretary-General to report on the implementation of the resolution, and appeals the SRSG-VAC to support follow-up expert consultations at the regional level to share experiences and best practices.

Ms. Mazzarelli highlighted the importance of promoting democratic coexistence and ethical values at school to prevent bullying and cyber bullying. She briefly described some successful experiences of the GNRC in the region to prevent violence among children at school, through the implementation of the Arigatou International’s ethics education programme, Learning to Live Together. More specifically she mentioned the experiences in Ecuador, in El Salvador and Chile.

Meeting on Corporal Punishment of Children

The Government of Mexico organized the Inter-American Meeting on Corporal Punishment of Children on 25th and 26th April 2018 in Mexico City, to analyze and understand the current situation and the progress made to eliminate corporal punishment of children in the region.

The government worked in collaboration with the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) and other entities such as the Special Representative of the Secretary General on Violence against Children (SRSG-VAC),



the Inter-American Children’s Institute (IIN), the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), and the Latin American and Caribbean Network for Children and Adolescents’ Rights (REDLAMYC).

The objective of the meeting was to compare national policies and identify good practices and measures that have demonstrated success in reducing corporal punishment of children. The meeting also sought to identify the main and common challenges in the region.

70 participants attended the meeting including high-level government officials, representatives of international organizations, civil society organizations and two children from the Mexican community. Representing the GNRC were Ms. Ingrid Martínez, Dominican Republic and Mr. Alexandre Silveira De Souza, Coordinator, GNRC–Brazil. Also present was Ms. Silvia Mazzarelli, GNRC Coordinator LAC.



The meeting resolved to be guided by the definition of corporal punishment as per international human rights instruments, which allow for the identification of violent behaviors affecting children in different social and cultural contexts.

2.5 Middle East

2.3.1 Egypt

World Leaders Envision a World without Violence



The President of Egypt, H.E. Abdel Fattah Al Sisi, joined 5,000 participants from across the world including youth, faith leaders, and representatives of governments, representing 160 nations during the second World Youth Forum in Sharm el Sheikh, Egypt from 3rd – 6th November 2018. The President of the State of Palestine, H.E. Mahmoud Abbas, and the Governor of Makkah, Prince Khalid bin Faisal Al Saud, also attended the opening ceremony. In his speech, H.E. Al Sisi argued for the need to create a world of “hope, beauty, and humanity, without conflict, poverty, ignorance and illness,” and to help young innovators realize their dreams.

President Al Sisi called for a full and unreserved condemnation of the crimes committed by Daesh, and all the other extremist organizations in the world.

Keynote speakers at the opening ceremony stressed the need for discussions and exchange between experts in different fields and the need to impart knowledge to the young and using that knowledge to advocate and practice 'good' as enshrined in the cultural and religious practices.

The World Youth Forum brought together youth from around the world, together with decision makers and different influential persons to seek sustainable solutions to the world's current issues including development and innovation; water security; and the role of soft power in countering violent extremism and terrorism. The Forum also sought to address the role of world leaders in developing and maintaining peace; the empowerment of people with disabilities; and the role of voluntary work in building the future.

The United Nations Secretary General's Envoy on Youth, Ms. Jayathma Wickramanayake, noted that the convention harnessed ideas of young people across the world on the need for youth empowerment, upholding peace and development in the social, economic and political spheres.

The Secretary General, Global Network of Religions for Children (GNRC), Dr. Mustafa Y. Ali, represented the GNRC at the Forum. He participated in a pan-

el discussion on the role of soft power in addressing violent extremism and its ideological foundations. He shared GNRC's 5th Forum commitment to end violent extremism, being one of the challenges affecting the world's children and youth. "Today, many young people like you are engaged in GNRC Networks spread over 55 countries to address violence against children, against youth, and against communities," he added.



Dr. Ali informed the participants that GNRC's interventions were implemented through Building Resilience Against Violent Extremism (BRAVE) and Community Resilience Against Violent Extremism (CRAVE) programs targeting the Horn of Africa region. "Faith leaders and youth, supported by governments of Japan, Kenya, and bilaterally through the United Nations, are pushing back the ideology of terror and extremism," Dr. Ali commented.

3.0 NURTURING SPIRITUALITY AND ENDING VIOLENCE IN CHILD UP-BRINGING

3.1 Africa

3.1.1 South Africa

Learning To Live Together Training



GNRC–South Africa together with Religions for Peace held its fourth peace forum on 23rd October 2018 in Durban, South Africa with 55 participants including children, youth, teachers and parents. The children and youth came from: Holy Family College, St. Francis College, Youth Inter-Active and New Forest High School. The aim of the forum was to nurture spirituality and build children’s capacity to end violence against children and promote child-upbringing.

Participants also commemorated 10 years (2008 – 2018) of Learning To Live Together (LTLT); a programme championed by GNRC’s sister initiative, Arigatou International Ethics Education for Children; and the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty (IDEP) observed annually on 17th October.

Promoting Positive Coexistence

On the 12th and 16th February 2019, GNRC–South Africa together with Religions for Peace conducted two workshops in Durban and Mavela Ikhaya respectively, to strengthen the capacity of young people to promote the values of respect and empathy towards people of other cultures and beliefs in South Africa. A total of 79 participants under the age of 18 attended the events (45 from Durban and 34 from Mavela Ikhaya).



During the meetings, the lead facilitator and the GNRC Coordinator in South Africa, Ms. Saydoon Nisa Sayed spoke of the sanctity of religion in promoting peace. She noted that all religions promote positive values and coexistence among members of different communities. She added that the country has for a long time been experiencing incidences of conflicts related to xenophobia and it was high time children and youth were sensitized to

avoid such negativity in the society. She stated that ethics education needs to be promoted within the community to help people appreciate and tolerate the other.

3.2 Asia

3.2.1 Nepal

Positive Parenting Seminar



Dr. Chintamani Yogi of Shanti Shewa Ashram conducted a positive parenting seminar with the major objective to teach proper discipline that builds children's self-esteem at the same time correcting their behaviour.

The workshop focused in inculcating truth, peace, nonviolence, love and selfless service while raising children for peaceful society. Members were in agreement that violence towards children and poor parenting had led to deterioration in behaviour. At the end of the meeting the members felt highly informed and educated on how to create a better society. More than 80 parents attended the workshop. Other activities that were conducted yoga with children to promote inclusion.

3.3 Europe

3.3.1 Macedonia

Learning To Live Together

First children's embassy in the world Megjashi in partnership with Global Network of Religions for Children (GNRC) and Arigatou International Geneva organized an LTLT program on 12th March 2019 in Macedonia at the hotel Continental, Skopje. The workshop was dedicated to review the process of implementation of LTLT program in Macedonia.

It has so far been implemented by several of the participants who had earlier attended the LTLT training workshops that were held in Skopje from 2nd to 5th of March 2018. The workshop aimed to build the capacity of teachers and professional staff on how to use the LTLT manual in their work with children and young people. Their role as multipliers of the LTLT programs will ultimately contribute to advocating quality education for children in Macedonia and equal chances to the Macedonian, Albanian and Roma children.

Ms. Laura Molnar an International trainer of the LTLT program, in her session shared with participants her experiences of the LTLT program in Romani. The participants interacted with Ms. Molnar by describing the challenges they face while implementing the program. Ms. Molnar shared her own experiences and advised them to be more efficient while implementing the programme.

The LTLT Training Workshop offered an efficient and relevant tool in community mobilization and advocacy strategy to address child poverty and violence against children and to develop and strengthen the local GNRC network in Macedonia, taking into consideration that First Children's Embassy in the World Megjashi is a new GNRC member in the region. Participants were motivated to be involved with other Arigatou International initiatives. There was also discussion about possibilities to officially translate the LTLT manual into Macedonian language in order to make it more accessible to the practitioners.

The workshop brought together 19 participants, including members working in non-governmental organizations for disadvantaged children (orphan, refugees and children coming from poor families) and teachers from primary and secondary schools, working with Macedonian, Roma and Albanian children and youth.



4.0 ENDING SEXUAL EXPLOITATION AND ABUSE OF CHILDREN



4.1 Africa

4.1.1 Kenya

Africa Regional Workshop

43 leaders from Sub-Saharan African countries including representatives from faith-based organizations, governments, international and grassroots organizations have committed to prevent and end online child exploitation and violence. Participants met in Nairobi, Kenya on 7th August 2018 ahead of the 3rd Pre-Event Workshop of the Interfaith Alliance for Safer Communities Global Forum scheduled to take place in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates (U.A.E) in November 2018. The

workshop, which was organized by the U.A.E Government in partnership with Arigatou International – Nairobi, discussed the challenges of online child sexual exploitation in Sub-Saharan Africa, and created awareness on the problem, and advocated for its ending.

Speakers included representatives from the United Arab Emirates (U.A.E) Government, the Government of Kenya, Arigatou International – Nairobi, UNICEF-Kenya Office, World Council of Churches, Word Vision International, Islamic Foundation Kenya, Compassion International, ECPAT International, Center for Sustainable Conflict Resolution, and members of the Global Network of Religions for Children (GNRC).

Participants pledged to uphold online child dignity. They called for an end to the exploitation of children and youth from Sub-Saharan Africa.

The rapid spread of Internet across Africa has led to children being at an increased risk of online sexual abuse and exploitation. A report by Terres Des Hommes shows 54% of surveyed African children had seen online child sexual materials, while 10% of those surveyed have been approached by online contacts asking them to share sexualized images of themselves.

Faith leaders reaffirmed their moral role to protect children from harm by promoting and encouraging positive use of the Internet for the sake of children and youth.

The outcomes of the pre-event workshop including discussions on the topic of child protection in the digital world and the recommendations proposed formed part of the deliberations of the broader Interfaith Alliance for Safer Communities event.

4.1.2 Rwanda

Ending Online Sexual Exploitation and Abuse of Children

On 28th June 2018, GNRC in partnership with Ethics Education for Children and the Umbrella for Vulnerable in Rwanda conducted a one day workshop for children focusing on Protecting Children from Violent Extremism, Gang Violence and Organized Crime, and – Ending Sexual Exploitation and



Abuse of Children. The workshop, which was hosted in Kigali, Rwanda, was attended by 600 children and youth from the region.

Different experts in the field of child protection and child rights facilitated the event through lectures, case studies and practical examples. Facilitators discussed the online sexual extortion of children, which occurs when an adult tricks a child to self-generate sexual images, later using them to blackmail him or her by demanding sexual favors or money, and threatening to share the material.

They noted that usually there are intermediaries, such as a child's family member or people from the child's community, who force the child to "perform" in front of a webcam. The facilitators shared some of the sobering statistics on online child exploitation that shows 270,000 out of the 1.8 billion total images uploaded daily are child sexual abuse images. And 38% of abusers are the child's own parents, and 10% are other relatives of the children.

Participants agreed that the impunity must end and they must all come to-

gether to fight the problem through peer education, reporting to the police or child safety organization and staying away from any possible threat.

4.2 Asia

4.2.1 Pakistan

Advocacy Workshop to Protect Children



Search For Justice/CAN Pakistan through GNRC's support conducted a training workshop for parliamentarians on child rights and child protection in Pakistan. The workshop, which took place in Lahore on 2nd May 2018, was attended by 22 Members of the Punjab Provincial Assembly including the Provincial Minister, Mrs. Zakia Shah Nawaz. Media representatives and Civil Society Organizations also graced the event.

Participants were taught on the rights and responsibilities of the children and the importance of protecting young people from exploitation. The global context on violence against children was also highlighted to help participants understand the great responsibility they have in protecting children from victimization and abuse. Partici-

pants were also advised on preventive measures against radicalization and violent extremism.

They agreed to take up the following advocacy issues requiring legislation, policy formulation and administrative support:

- Increase the minimum age of marriage for girls from 16 to 18 years
- Prohibition of Child Domestic Labor (a contemporary form of slavery) in Punjab
- Formulation of Child Protection Policy in Punjab followed by a plan of action to address all forms of violence against children

4.3 Middle East

4.3.1 United Arab Emirates

Interfaith Alliance Global Forum

Rev. Keishi Miyamoto, joined other global leaders across the world in advocating for a world free of online child violence during the Interfaith Alliance Forum for Safer Communities forum that took place from 19th – 20th November 2018 in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates (U.A.E).

The forum was organized under the patronage of His Highness Sh. Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi and Deputy Supreme Commander of the United Arab Emirates (U.A.E) Armed Forces, and brought together more than 450 participants including religious lead-

ers, representatives from international and grassroots organizations, governments, faith inspired organizations, experts on sexual exploitation and abuse of children and heads of industries and business entities. GNRC members from across the world also attended the event.



The forum was supported by several global organizations including Al Azhar, Arigatou International, Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children, Gregorian University, International Justice Mission, Religions for Peace International, Shanti Ashram, The Center for Child Protection of the Pontifical, The Child Dignity Alliance, UNICEF, WePROTECT Global Alliance and World Vision International.

The forum discussed the world's social challenges and developed comprehensive solutions for protecting children and youth from online exploitation and cybercrime. It also created the opportunity to reflect on its scope, the impact on children and what religious communities can do to prevent, respond and partner with other institutions and individuals to protect the dignity of the child.

The forum reflected on U.A.E's efforts to defend humanity, promote positive values and eliminate the physical and cultural sources of extremism and terrorism, which aim to destroy justice and tolerance within the country and across the world. During the two-day conference, it was noted that more than (seven hundred thousand) 700,000 images of sexual abuse are uploaded every day across online platforms, hence the need to mitigate the problem.

The Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior of the U.A.E, Sh. Saif bin Zayed Al Nahyan, called for the world's religious leaders and nations to work together to end online child abuse and exploitation. "We are at a point in history where we all need to come together to further cultivate the safety and protection of our children," he said. Sh. Saif added that the U.A.E models values of tolerance and peaceful coexistence between all faiths and it embraces the more than 200 nationalities from different cultures living in the country. He further called on nations to work together to tackle the issue.

In her remarks, the Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General on Violence Against Children, Ms. Marta Santos Pais, noted the need for organizations to empower parents and caregivers towards securing online child dignity. "Technology is not bad, what is bad is how we use it. If we support parents and caregivers in understanding the cyber-space then children can feel more secure in the digital world," she stated.



The Chairman of the Emirates Fatwa Council, Sh. Abdallah bin Bayyah, referred to the sanctity of faith as a way to secure the rights and dignity of the child. "We have a great responsibility to take care of the young as bestowed by Allah and His Prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H)," he stated.

The Hindu Spiritual Leader, Her Holiness Mata Amritanandamayi Devi, advocated for a progressive world that advocates for protecting future generations. "Children are the flowers of the future; and child abuse destroys these flowers from blooming," she noted.

The Declaration for the forum was ratified at the Wahat Al Karama Memorial by religious leaders and international delegates from across the world, who pledged their efforts to preventing child abuse and exploitation as attributed by the forum and the Sustainable Development Goals. The declaration advocated for upholding online child dignity as a key priority in the society's progress. It also supported the implementation of laws and regulations that protect the rights and dignity of the child.

In his remarks, the Leader of Myochikai, and President of Arigatou International, Rev. Keishi Miyamoto, dwelt on the potential and risks of technology towards peace and development, more so, in safeguarding the rights and well-being of the child. Sighting different progress in child protection across the world, Rev. Miyamoto insisted that more still needs to be done to attain ultimate success. He was however saddened by the levels of violence and abuse of children through modern day technology. "Progress in technology has not made us truly happy," he stated. Rev. Miyamoto called to the world's religious leaders to secure the rights and the dignity of the child.

Participants pledged to promote dialogue and reinforce partnerships between international and grassroots institutions in order to prevent and end online child abuse and exploitation in the digital world. Participants also vowed to sensitize the communities at their capacities in securing the rights and dignity of the child. During the signing of the pledge, 2019 was declared "Year of Child Dignity" as a commitment to protecting children against



the dangers of the digital world.

The fight against child violence from abuse and exploitation of children is a key commitment across nations in securing the rights and dignity of the child. The first Interfaith Alliance for Safer Communities Forum in Abu Dhabi is just but a step towards a better world for children, more still need to be done.

4.4 Europe

4.4.1 Italy

Faith Communities across the World Commit to End Violence Against Children on the Move

The world's religious communities and spiritual leaders together with representatives from international and grassroots organizations and the Government of Italy met on 16th – 19th October 2018 under the aegis of the Faith Action for Children on the Move Global Partners Forum in Rome, Italy, to discuss, reflect and contribute to addressing violence against children on the move. Children on the move include all children who have migrated or been forcibly displaced across borders (refugees) or within the borders of their own countries (internally displaced).

The Forum was co-organized by a diverse group of faith-based organizations including ACT Alliance, Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) International, Anglican Alliance, Arigatou International, Islam-



ic Relief Worldwide, Joint Learning Initiative on Faith and Local Communities, Mennonite World Conference, Micah Global, The Salvation Army, Seventh-Day Adventist Church, World Council of Churches, World Evangelical Alliance and World Vision.

The Forum reviewed the evidence and approaches on how to work as faith actors to promote peace and sustainable development among displaced families.

In her remarks, the Special Representative of the UN Secretary General on Violence Against Children (SRSG-VAC), Ms. Marta Santos Pais, shared the staggering reality that 28 million children were vulnerable, unprotected and away from their homes. She asserted that the United Nations strongly believes that No child on the move should be subjected to violence.

The Secretary General, Global Network of Religions for Children (GNRC), Dr. Mustafa Y. Ali, participated in one of the regional panel discussions on 'Regional Focus: Middle East and Africa,' that explored the need to secure the rights and well-being of children on

the move in the two regions. He shared his experience in sustainable conflict resolution, prevention of violent extremism and interfaith dialogue specifically the work of Arigatou International in preventing violent extremism and transforming conflicts in which mostly young people, including children on the move, are involved in Africa.

Dr. Ali spoke of the need to protect the world's children from Violent Extremism, Gang Violence and Organized Crime; Nurture Spirituality and End Violence in Child Upbringing; and End Sexual Exploitation and Abuse of Children as ascribed by the Panama Commitments on Ending Violence Against Children. He shared some of the programs that Arigatou International supports in the Greater Horn and Eastern Africa including Building Resilience Against Violent Extremism (BRAVE) and Community Resilience Against Violent Extremism (CRAVE), which are intra- and interfaith peace-building programs that help faith communities, and especially the younger members, to understand and effectively respond to the scourge of violent extremism and terrorism.

Dr. Ali affirmed Arigatou International's belief that transformed religious and spiritual communities can offer moral teachings and model practices to prevent, heal, reduce and ultimately end violence against children. "It is high time we protect children on the move across borders through spiritual and psychosocial support." Dr. Ali noted.

Ms. Silvia Mazzarelli, GNRC Coordinator for Latin America and the Caribbean chaired a regional panel on the Americas to analyze the main problems affecting children on the move in the region, the main challenges to effective faith-related work for care of children on the move, and discuss concrete interventions to be included in the Forum's Action Plan. The panel was an opportunity to present the Alliance for the Protection of Children in El Salvador, Honduras, Guatemala and Mexico as an example of faith-based partnership to address the problem of violence against children in the sub-region.

Ms. Rebeca Ríos-Kohn, Director, Arigatou International – New York and Ms. María Lucía Uribe, Director, Arigatou International – Geneva also participated in the Forum and facilitated group discussions on the three thematic areas of the Forum.



5.0 ENDING CHILD POVERTY AND SUPPORTING VULNERABLE CHILDREN

5.1 Africa

5.1.1 Rwanda

Clean Water and Sanitation Project

6 CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION



GNRC–Rwanda committed to address the Sustainable Development Goal 6; on clean water and sanitation through implementing a project where it is expected to provide clean and potable water to the people in need in Rwanda. The objective behind the project is to increase access to clean and safe drinking water to rural villages through construction of drinking water plant and filtration unit and to carry out community sensitization, hygiene promotion and training on sanitation measures.

The underlying problem that causes this issue of lack of clean water is with the unequal distribution of water and poverty. Often, low income groups, those living in extreme poverty and people living in rural areas cannot afford a clean water supply and make do with unreliable water sources.

The Umbrella for vulnerable and GNRC–Rwanda water project, strives to build capacity at the community level to ensure sustainable access to clean water and sound sanitation through developing and extending water and sanitation services; including the construction of a water treatment plant, where it has the capacity to produce 10,000 litres per day of drinking water. This water treatment plant is now providing clean, filtered drinking water to 5 villages surrounding Kigabiro sector, Rwamagana District, Eastern Province of Rwanda.

The project long-term benefits cannot be sustained without active community participation hence by organizing and training community-based water committees it will ensure local commitment to managing and maintaining the systems; only the cultivation of local know-how can ensure its sustainability.

The United Nations considers universal access to clean water a basic human right, and an essential step towards improving living standards worldwide.

5.1.2 Sierra Leone

Providing Learning Assistance to Deprived Communities in Freetown

On 27th – 28th April 2018, GNRC–Sierra Leone distributed school learning materials to vulnerable children in Freetown. 45 children benefited, with each



child receiving school uniform, shoes and a school bag.

The activity was in response to GNRC's priority area on ending child poverty as a step towards securing their future. By ending poverty, violence against children is also prevented and children's resilience is built, leading to a just and peaceful nation. Poverty in Sierra Leone is widespread and has had devastating results on the people and its economy. According to Washington State University, 60% of Sierra Leone's population live below the poverty line and is now officially the world's poorest country.

Going forward, GNRC–Sierra Leone plans to contribute to the national campaign on ending poverty by educating the community on entrepreneurship skills to help them sustain their lives. GNRC also seeks to encourage and support the community to invest in agriculture and modern technology that can help shape the country's progress in future.

5.2 Asia

5.2.1 Malaysia

Financial Awareness for All

GNRC and Interfaith Initiative to End Child Poverty through I CAN Malaysia, organized a three-day intensive workshop from 6th – 8th April 2018 at International Islamic University in Malaysia to address the staggering levels of poverty that has led to unemployment and increase in violence.

The workshop replicated the WORTH program, an award-winning micro-banking program that empowers women to lift themselves and each other from poverty. WORTH's unique model brings women and girls together to save money, access credit and start small businesses.¹² participants including women and girls from different organizations such as the Refugee mothers from Rohingya, benefited from this workshop.

The workshop also sought to equip women with financial skills for self-reliance and reinforce their parenting abilities. By empowering women care-giv-



ers, the community can contribute to the global effort to end child poverty and violence against children, particularly in the family setting.

During the training, participants were educated on the detailed practice in mechanics of community banking such as accounting and banking cycle among others. The workshop also focused on managing loans, loan distribution and recording group transactions.

Roundtable Discussion on Women Empowerment

I CAN Malaysia organized a roundtable discussion on, “Women’s Empowerment,” on 17th August 2018 in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia to exchange views and share the understandings and decisions of participating organizations. The discussion also sort to develop concrete and actionable recommendations for the program to be adapted for women within the Rohingya refugee community in Malaysia.

Sr. Shazmin Rafeeq, Founder, I CAN Malaysia, mentioned that the program was a response to the commitments made during the GNRC 5th Forum held in Panama City in May of 2017.



5.2.2 Philippines

Promising future for IDP Children

The Green Releaf initiative in Philippines worked to assist IDPs in Marawi City after a terrorist-led siege caused the displacement of more than 400,000 of its inhabitants. Through Garden to Garden Releaf, it hopes to provide immediate support for food security, water, and waste management using permaculture solutions. The Child Friendly Space Garden is part of the Garden to Garden Releaf Project which is more focused on children. As a response during relief and recovery stages, Garden to Garden Releaf aimed to address food security, nutrition, and well-being for children.

Through simple eco-village and permaculture solutions, Green Releaf brought in the delivery of organic vegetable packs, installed a simple rainwater catchment set up, raised garden beds and waste segregation system. It started training 11 IDPs who are early adapters on designing and implementing regenerative solutions after emergencies and crises.

The project directly reached a total of 52 IDP students of the Pantar Central Elementary School, including 5 fathers who serve as IDP leaders. Indirectly the project has reached a total of 1,219 students of the Pantar Central Elementary School and 68 families from the Pantar Tent City.

5.2.3 Sri Lanka

A Call to End Child Poverty



GNRC Member, Sarvodaya Institute of Higher Learning, held a committee meeting on 10th September 2018 at the AI Muslimaath Center in Colombo. The local municipal council Minister, Colombo District Parliament Youth Leader, volunteers and Sarvodaya staff, attended the meeting. The aim of the meeting was to seek solutions towards alleviating the suffering of children living in the informal settlements of Meethotamulla. It is estimated that around 300 children live in this community, out of which most adolescents are unable to complete their secondary education.

Temporary Education Centre: A Ray of Hope for Children

Through efforts by Arigatou International – End Child Poverty in collaboration with the Sarvodaya Movement, a temporary education centre was established in the area. The temporary education centre was launched during the End Child Poverty and the GNRC Southeast Asia Regional Meeting in Sri

Lanka on 9th December 2018. Speaking during the launch, the director, Arigatou International – End Child Poverty, Rev. Fred Nyabera, was optimistic that the centre will provide good education for the children. “We believe that this is going to be a children’s empowerment centre that all of us will be able to accompany in the coming future for the wellbeing of our children,” he said.

Children noted that the proximity of the centre to most of their homes will make it easily accessible for studies. The education centre will be a supplement school institution for most children as well as a school for those who are not attending any school at the moment. The temporary education centre comes with a unique component to respond to the flood disaster that often affects the area. It can be folded and moved to another location in case of such disaster in the area.

With a core commitment to have a world free of child poverty, End Child Poverty through such programs as the temporary education centre hopes to eliminate poverty in the area.



5.3 Europe

5.3.1 Macedonia

Youth as Volunteers in the Community

The First Children's Embassy in the World - MEGJASHI (FCEWM), organized various training workshops for volunteers from 13th – 28th March 2019. The trainings brought together 54 participants including experts from the psychology department, ethics and peace-work and from the legal justice system. The trainings sort to enhance the knowledge and build capacity of high school students, university students and young individuals seeking to work in the social work department that focuses on ending violence and poverty in children. Further, the trainings aimed to build resilience on ending violence against children.

Key discussions on mobilizing communities to generate social will to end child poverty and violence against children were deliberated during the meeting. Discussions were also guided by the Panama Declaration on Ending Violence Against Children and the Interfaith Resource Guide to End Child Poverty, 'Act. Inspire. Change', with great reference to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

5.4 Latin America and the Caribbean

5.4.1 Argentina

Building Consensus for Fair and Sustainable Development



The GNRC Coordinator for Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) region, Ms. Silvia Mazzarelli, represented the Secretary General, GNRC in the G20 Interfaith Forum in Buenos Aires, Argentina from 26th – 28th September 2018, under the theme, "Building Consensus for Fair and Sustainable Development: Religious Contributions for a Dignified Future."

Ms. Mazzarelli had the privilege to speak in two sessions; the Second Plenary Session, "The Future of Work and the Urgent Challenges of Inequality and the Vulnerable," and the Parallel Session on, "Children: A Common Imperative for G20 Engagement."

Ms. Mazzarelli put emphasis on the urgency and importance of placing children at the centre of the agenda and welcomed this year's emphasis on new technologies and the interest that the Argentinian Government is putting on reflecting how technology is chang-

ing people's lives, including traditional work structures, social protection and education. She also emphasized the important role of faith communities in addressing the existing challenges of exclusion and social disintegration.

In a SDG8 discussion on, 'Promoting sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all', Ms. Mazzarelli highlighted the need to place children and young people at the centre of the world's agenda; not only because they constitute one of the most vulnerable populations, but also because they are the pioneers of digital technology in today's world. "Undoubtedly, digital technology has come to occupy a central place in life of all of us, but I think that, in particular, it has come to occupy a place central to the lives of children, adolescents and young people," Ms. Mazzarelli commented.

5.5 Middle East

5.5.1 Lebanon

Education as a Tool to End Child Poverty

Education is perhaps the most adaptable tool for unlocking resources required to address poverty and its crippling effects. Knowledge gives children the power to dream of a better future and the confidence needed to pursue a full education, which in turn will help generations to come.

In line with this, GNRC in partnership with End Child Poverty and Annas Linas, conducted a two months educational project for children and youth in Lebanon. The project was initiated on 11th June 2018 reaching to the unprivileged and refugee children living in Lebanon. The project entailed teaching students English, categorized into two; English Course Level 1 and English Course Level 2, taught on Monday and Thursday of every week.

The aim of the project was to equip children with knowledge and build their English language' skills to enable them access social amenities in the public spaces and to get jobs in Lebanon. It was also to enhance their communication skills in various platforms. The project brought together a total of 32 trainees.







6.0 OTHER CHILD RIGHTS ACTIVITIES

The Committee on the Rights of the Child holds a Day of General Discussions (DGD) in Geneva every two years, focuses on a specific article of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) or a related subject. These meetings are an opportunity to develop a deeper understanding of the contents and implications of the CRC. The outcomes of the consultations feed into a number of activities including the development of a publication, which will directly inform the discussions during the DGD, by being sent as a written submission to the UN Committee.

7 GNRC Networks took advantage of the online support provided by Child Rights Connect to conduct children's consultations in June, entitled, "Children as Human Rights Defenders." This was an opportunity for children in our networks to participate by sharing their views, which were then submitted online to the committee.

6.1 Asia

6.1.1 Sri Lanka

On 18th July 2018, GNRC–Sri Lanka conducted a consultation with 14 students from the Roman Catholic School in Moratuwa. During the consultation, the children were given an opportunity to express their thoughts and ideas regarding securing the rights of all beings.

6.2 Europe

6.2.1 Macedonia

GNRC Member, MEGJASHI, held a consultation workshop on Child Rights' Defense on the 22nd of June 2018 with facilitation. The workshop was attended by 12 primary school students between ages 13 -14.

The workshop aimed to educate participants on the importance of upholding child rights. Topics such as social justice, right to education, right to freedom of expression, right to proper health care as enshrined in the Convention on the Rights of the Child, were debated.

The importance of upholding the Panama Commitments on Ending Violence Against Children so as to address issues of bullying, harassment, and promoting unity and peace, was key in the discussion. Early child marriage was shared as one of the factors that could promote human rights injustice.



6.2.2 Serbia

Sombor Educational Centre, a GNRC member in Serbia, held plays aimed at creating awareness on violence against children in relation to the Panama Declaration on Ending Violence Against Children. The event, which took place on 27th June 2018, saw the attendance of 14 children, both boys and girls between ages 10 and 17, from the centre.

Participants showcased action plans for the past five years, in addressing child protection and promotion of human rights issues. Among one of the focus groups' activities presented during the workshop included the production of a video for preventing violence against children.

"We are not the owners of this world, we are only custodians – for our children, for future generations."

Dr. Mustafa Y. Ali,
Secretary General, GNRC,
Director, Arigatou International–Nairobi

7.0 PROMOTING PARTICIPATION AND SAFE SPACES FOR CHILDREN

7.1 Africa

7.1.1 Kenya

Building Safe Space in Religious Institutions for Children

In conformity with the Panama Commitments on Ending Violence Against Children, specifically Commitment no. 2 on Ensuring our religious places are safe for all children, and especially for the victims of violence and abuse, and vulnerable children such as those with disabilities, GNRC members in Kenya organized a consultative meeting on 3rd August 2018 to seek sustainable solutions towards ending violence against children in religious institutions.

In attendance was Sh. Ibrahim Lethome, Arigatou International Advisory Group Member, who explained the relevance of the project to GNRC; that addressing violence against children in religious institutions is key towards promoting and securing the rights and wellbeing of children. Fifteen (15) members including education practitioners, psychologists, lawyers, religious leaders and social organizations attended the meeting.

During the meeting, it was noted that despite the ban of corporal punishment in Kenyan schools in 2001, the practice continues unabated 15 years later. It was noted that although caning

remains the rule rather than the exception in many schools, it is only when things go wrong, resulting in injuries or fatalities that the community is reminded that the practice is outlawed.

Participants noted that corporal punishment in Kenyan schools had refused to go away despite ban, with teachers choosing to ignore the law, perhaps because there has been a half-hearted attempt to enforce it. It is only when a pupil suffers serious injuries or dies that the law is recalled from suspension, they said.

Media as a Tool for Peace Building

Arigatou International – Nairobi in partnership with Norwegian Church Aid held the 3rd Regional Youth Forum on Peace building from 3rd – 8th September 2018 in Machakos, Kenya. Sixty four (64) participants including youth leaders and youth influencers attended the youth-led event under the theme, 'Media and Preventing Violent



Extremism.’ The youth benefited greatly from facilitators and experts in the area of peace, as well as from partners, resource persons and Arigatou International – Nairobi staff. Participants were drawn from Eastern Africa region; Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, Sudan, South Sudan, Uganda and Tanzania.

The forum aimed to build the resilience of youth and their communities against violent extremism, with a view to promoting sustainable peace in the region. More specifically, Arigatou International – Nairobi in partnership with Norwegian Church Aid are working to equip young people with media knowledge, skills and tools to prevent, counter and transform violent extremism fuelled by the use/misuse of religion in the region. The ‘Youth In Action 2018’ also emphasized on interfaith dialogue, community empowerment through media, and youth peace education towards preventing, countering and transforming violent extremism.

Through this year’s forum, participants had the opportunity to learn more about the role of media in preventing, countering and transforming violent extremism (P/C/TVE), share lessons learned from their on-going grassroots work in P/C/TVE and exchange progress updates and strengthen cooperation among the network of youth leaders and practitioners working towards peace in the region. The youth leaders also developed their 2019 plans of action for sustained youth engagement in P/C/TVE.

7.2 Asia

7.2.1 Pakistan

Freedom of Expression for Children and Youth



A children and youth led panel discussion was organized by GNRC–Pakistan, led by Search For Justice and other partners including Child Rights Movement Punjab and Pakistan Girl Guides Association. The event took place during this year’s International World Youth Day on 12th August 2018. The discussion focused on pushing the Punjab Government to establish effective platforms in schools, colleges and communities where children and youth can exercise their right to expression without fear.

The Program Coordinator for Search For Justice, Ms. Rashida Qureshi, acknowledged that freedom of expression would offer children and youth safe spaces needed for them to come together, engage in activities related to their diverse needs and interests, participate in decision making pro-

cesses and freely express themselves.

This came at the backdrop of a unilateral opinion from the panelists that there is no concept of safe spaces in public educational institutions hence; children and youth face depression and mental stress.

Mr. Malka Sajjad, a young activist cautioned that the platforms for children and youth must be free from all kinds of violence, harassment and discrimination but should be safe, allowing for freedom of expression.

7.3 Webinars for GNRC Members

With Coordination by Arigatou International Office, Geneva, two webinars were conducted in April for Coordinators and contact persons; one in Spanish and the other in English.

The objectives of the webinar were to (1) introduce participants to the Arigatou International Online Community and to two particular groups within it: a closed group for children named Youth Zone, and an accompanying adults group named Together for Children's Protection and Participation; (2) share the idea of opening the platform to all GNRC children; (3) identify how the GNRC Coordinators and accompanying adults can support children's online participation and (4) identify ways forward in children and adult online involvement.

Twenty one (21) participants from 18 countries attended the webinar:- Argentina, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Bu-

rundi, Colombia, Comoros, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Guatemala, Malaysia, Macedonia, Maldives, Montenegro, Nicaragua, Pakistan, Romania, Serbia and Tanzania.

An online forum for adults to support children's online participation was created, and GNRC members and accompanying adults were invited to join.

7.4 Development of Arigatou International Child Empowerment and Protection Interactive Guide

In order to strengthen children's participation and protection in Arigatou International, and contribute to the 30th anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, a proposal to rethink the Guide on Child Participation and Protection was designed in order to make it more dynamic and child participation-oriented.

Instead of a downloadable written guide, an online dynamic platform that incorporates the topics on child protection and participation, becoming alive with the direct contribution of children and adults will be developed. A small committee of GNRC youth will be created to work on the platform and all projects involving children to ensure a child led approach. The committee will work closely with the Arigatou International Geneva staff.

7.5 Campaign for the Promotion and Realization of the Rights of the Child 20th anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child

In 2019, the United Nations (UN) celebrates the 30th anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, adopted on 20 November 1989.

To celebrate this historic event, Arigatou International with the active collaboration of a Youth Committee will carry out a campaign for the promotion and realization of the rights of the child.

Specific aims of the campaign are:

1. To raise awareness about the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and of the Violence Affecting Children around the world. To create capacity on its understanding, importance and how each of us, children and adults working with and for children shall contribute to its realization.
2. To involve children and youth locally and internationally celebrating the 30th Anniversary of the CRC, its promotion and raising awareness on the Violence affecting children. To encourage other children and young people to take part in actions for the promotion, protection and realization of their rights.

“Violence has great impact on children’s physical, social and emotional development, and it hinders the economic and political growth of a country. There is need for the world to end violence against children and youth in all capacities.”

#AllforChildren

8.0 NETWORK BUILDING AND STRENGTHENING

8.1 Africa

8.1.1 Sierra Leone

Establishing the GNRC Network



Another moment of growth was witnessed on the 26th April 2018 when GNRC–Sierra Leone was established. Pr. Peter Alfred, Founder and Executive Director, Christian Outreach Justice Mission Sierra Leone, the current GNRC Contact person in Sierra Leone, enlightened the participants about the workings of the GNRC and its structure.

Members were taken through GNRC’s priority areas and goals including; Preventing Violent Extremism, Gang Violence and Organized Crime, Nurturing Spirituality in Child Up-bringing, Ending Sexual Exploitation and Abuse of Children, Ending Child Poverty and Supporting Vulnerable Children, and Building and Strengthening the GNRC Network.

The initial member organizations include the Christian Outreach Justice

Mission Sierra Leone, Women Actively Serving Humanity Sierra Leone, Maseray Children’s Foundation and Interfaith Network for Children’s Rights. The network members were elated to be part and founder members of GNRC–Sierra Leone and promised to be meeting at the end of every month to evaluate the progress of their work and discuss various activities in line with GNRC that are in line with the context of the country. Members also looked into ways to mobilize local resources to address violence against children.

GNRC–Sierra Leone aspires to conduct ethics education training for its members who will train teachers, parents, youth and children on positive morals and upbringing.

8.1.2 Tanzania

Child Dignity Forum

The Child Dignity Forum and C’ Sema in Collaboration with the Government of Tanzania organized a National Conference on Ending Violence against Women and Children in which GNRC–Tanzania was invited to attend and contribute to the agenda.

The event was held at the Dar es-Salaam University College of education, Tanzania. The platform gave space to participants including; Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO’s), Civil Society Organizations (CSO’s) and Researchers to air out their views about

the extent of violence towards children and women and suggested to the government possible remedies to end cruelty to these groups.

The Guest of honor was the Prime Minister of Tanzania Hon. Kasim Majaliwa who encouraged all stakeholders in attendance including Civil Society Organizations to work in harmony with the government by respecting laws and establishing an accountable and transparent relationship with the responsible ministry through providing reports and clearly informing the community.

Following the National meeting, as member of Tanzania End Child Marriage Network (TECMN), GNRC–Tanzania participated in the annual general meeting which was held on February 28th 2019 to set a new ‘advocacy path’ for the SAUTI MOJA movement in 2019. The main agenda which guided discussions was the progress on the Amendment of Legal Marriage Act (LMA) 1971 and the way forward. This platform creates a space for GNRC–Tanzania not only to widen and share its commitment on Ending Violence Against Children by faith Communities, but it is also a learning opportunity to gain advocacy knowledge and experience from partners contributing to addressing the fight against Violence.

8.2 Latin America and the Caribbean

8.2.1 Mexico

Establishing the GNRC–Network Mexico



GNRC–Mexico was launched on 24th May 2018, a day before the meeting of the Faith-Based Communities for the Protection of Children and Adolescents at the Methodist Church of the Holy Trinity in Mexico City, Mexico. World Vision hosted the meeting attended by a group of faith based organizations, including the Methodist Church, the Anglican Church, the Theological Community of Mexico, the Methodist Church, the Scalabrinian Mission for Migrants and Refugees and the Zen Buddhist Community.

GNRC chaired the meeting through her Coordinator for Latin America and the Caribbean, Ms. Silvia Mazzarelli. Participants discussed the opportunity of building a GNRC network in Mexico. During her presentation, Ms. Mazzarelli presented Arigatou International and her initiatives, with more focus on GNRC’s priorities and the follow-up to the Panama Commitments on Ending Violence Against Children.

Representatives from the faith based organizations expressed their interest in establishing and becoming members of the network. Their first task as GNRC members was to follow-up the outcomes of the first Meeting of Faith-Based Communities for the Protection of Children and Adolescents.

Members chose Ms. Silvia Correa, from World Vision Mexico, to be the interim coordinator with the task of leading the network. Ms. Mazzarelli formally launched the network during the first Meeting of Faith-Based Communities for the Protection of Children and Adolescents and invited other faith-based organizations to join the GNRC network in Mexico

8.3 UN Inter-Agency Task Force on Religion Nominates Arigatou International to Serve in the Faith Advisory Council

Arigatou International officials, Dr. Mustafa Y. Ali, Secretary General, Global Network of Religions for Children (GNRC) and Director, Arigatou International – Nairobi, together with Ms. Rebeca Rios Kohn, Director, Arigatou International – New York and Prayer and Action for Children, have been nominated to serve on the Faith-based Advisory Council to UN Inter-Agency Taskforce on Religion. They were nominated by members of the UN Inter-Agency Task Force.

The current Co-chairs to the task force are Ms. Tarja Kantola, Chair, Finn Church Aid's Board of Directors and

H.E. Faisal Bin Muaammar, Secretary General, King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz International Center for Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue (KAICIID).

The nomination of Ms. Kohn and Dr. Ali comes at a time when Arigatou International has increased its efforts in addressing violence against children, and mobilizing partners around the world to focus on this scourge.

The United Nations Inter-Agency Task Force on Religion and Sustainable Development (IATF- Religion) was formed in the year 2010 to provide guidance to UN's engagement with faith-based actors in peace building, development and human rights issues. In April 2018, the Task Force together with over 50 faith-based partners, agreed to establish an Advisory Council.

Some of the responsibilities of the Advisory Council are: to create awareness on religious representation and dynamics in peace building across the world; provide strategic advice to the Task Force in order to strengthen human rights-based policy advocacy; and to support engagement between the



UN and faith-based entities, among others.

8.4 GNRC Takes Part in Sarvodaya's 60th Anniversary



The GNRC Secretary General, Dr. Mustafa Y. Ali, and the Director, Interfaith Initiative to End Child Poverty, Rev. Fred Nyabera, led other GNRC members from South and South East Asia region in commemorating Sarvodaya's 60th Anniversary on 7th December 2018 in Colombo, Sri Lanka. 1,300 guests attended the event to celebrate the achievements of Sarvodaya in improving the lives of the Sri Lankan people.

Speaking during the celebration, the founder of the movement, Dr. A.T Ariyaratne stressed Sarvodaya's commitment in securing the rights and dignity of Sri Lankans specifically in promoting the wellbeing of youth and children. He noted that the success of the Movement for over half a century now would not have been possible without sacrifice, commitment, resilience, the will and passion to help the community. He pointed out that Sarvodaya does not take political, racial or religious sides

in its work, instead guides by inclusion for all. "For the last 60 years, we have had the principle of inclusion for all," he said.

During the ceremony, the partnership between Sarvodaya and Arigatou International was commended as one of the most successful interfaith partnerships in promoting peace and sustainable development for the last 18 years. Sarvodaya has worked closely with Arigatou International – End Child Poverty, Knowledge Centre to implement grassroots programs aimed at ending child poverty and violence against children. An example of such programs has been the cyber safety program for parents and children. Ethics Education for Children works with Sarvodaya Movement and GNRC members in Sri Lanka to nurture values and spirituality in children and youth, so they learn to live together in diverse societies.

The President, Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement, Dr. Vinya Ariyaratne, noted that Sarvodaya's philosophy is based on the teachings of Buddhism and celebrates the involvement of Sri Lanka's



bikkus (local monks), who play an active role in village life. “Hindus, Buddhists, Christians and Muslims live next to one another due to the values of love and peaceful coexistence nurtured in them,” he shared.

During the event, Sarvodaya members at the grassroots level who have been instrumental in their work were awarded. Participants to the event congratulated the movement for the strides they have made and encouraged them to pursue more actions on child well-being and peace in the country.

8.5 Arigatou International as Member of the CSO Forum

The CSO Forum continued to play her role, linking Civil Society Organizations to End Violence in efforts to ensure children are protected from all forms of violence. Some of the achievements during the reporting period are below.

Key political events with great potential to re-direct world leader’s thoughts to ending VAC, are set to take place in 2019:

- In July 2019, the HLPF will meet under the theme ‘empowering people and ensuring inclusiveness and equality’, and will assess progress on implementation of the SDGs, with special attention to SDG 16 and its target 16.2 to end all forms of violence against children.
- In September 2019, world leaders will gather in a General Assembly Summit to review progress in the

implementation of the 2030 Agenda and all the SDGs.

- In November 2019, the General Assembly will commemorate the 30th anniversary of the adoption of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), the most widely ratified United Nations treaty.

To support these discussions and inform the Global Sustainable Development Report, End Violence is developing a Global Thematic Report on Ending Violence against Children, to be launched ahead of the 2019 HLPF.

The CSO Forum as contribution to this process developed a report which was much appreciated by End Violence through a letter from Ms. Marta Santos Pais, Special Representative to the Secretary General on Violence Against Children dated 5th December 2018.

The report is presented in three sections; Introduction, Celebrating success and Challenges section.

At the introduction, CSO Forum presents Six key asks: 1) Increase funding to end violence against children; 2) Listen to and involve children; 3) Change harmful social norms and practices through state legislation, investing in systems, and public campaigns; 4) Report on states’ progress through Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs); 5) Invest in what works to prevent violence: Scale up existing practices and solutions efficiently by building on longstanding and documented good practices from civil society using exist-

ing guidance materials and tools, such as the INSPIRE strategies; And 6) Leave no one behind: Place greater emphasis on meeting the needs and ensuring the rights of the most vulnerable children.

Under 'Celebrating success', the report highlights key issues to end violence against children that the CSO forum champions and describes some of the successes at national level in many countries, focusing on:

- Child participation in decision-making processes, awareness raising, social norms change, campaigns, and media;
- Child-centered budgeting and public investment in children;
- Prevention and response to sexual abuse and exploitation of children – including informing laws and supporting emerging efforts to address online sexual abuse and exploitation of children;
- Prevention of gender based violence – including in and out of school settings;
- Elimination of child marriage and other harmful practices; and,
- Elimination of physical and humiliating punishment of children.

Other Contributions by the CSO Forum

- CSO contributed to the Agenda of the Executive Committee meeting through her representative especially on the issue of Country

Engagement particularly growing membership, the Safe to Learn Campaign being spearheaded by DFID, UNICEF, recommending that it be rolled at country level involving CSOs among others.

- Arigatou International honored her commitment to contribute towards the salary of Jenessa Bryan, the CSO Coordinator- an amount that would support 12 months starting August 2018 to July 2019.
- A criteria to evaluate the coordinator's work was also developed during the reporting period.
- Also, a Criteria and TOR to evaluate the IGNITE Project in Indonesia, Mexico, Philippines, and Romania were developed. These countries received funding from IGNITE to implement child protection projects.

8.6 GNRC Holds its South and South East Asia Regional Meeting

Arigatou International–Nairobi (AI—N) in partnership with Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement, organized a regional meeting in Colombo, Sri Lanka from 8th – 10th December 2018. The meeting brought together thirty five (35) GNRC members and partners from South and South East Asian countries with GNRC presence. The countries included: India, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Nepal, Philippines, Malaysia, Bhutan and Indonesia.

The meeting aimed to build momentum to implement targeted commitments



arising from the GNRC 5th Forum and encourage the implementation of End Child Poverty and GNRC’s activities in South and South-East Asia.

Welcoming the participants to the three-day regional meeting, the President of Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement, Dr. Vinya Ariyaratne, commended Arigatou International’s 18-year partnership with Sarvodaya in promoting peace and sustainable development. He pledged to continue strengthening the ties between the Sarvodaya Movement and GNRC Networks in South and South East Asia especially in Preventing Children from Violent Extremism, Gang Violence and Organized Crime; Nurturing Spirituality and Ending Violence in Child Up-bringing; Ending Sexual Exploitation and Abuse of Children; Ending Child Poverty and Other Child Welfare Activities; and Building and Strengthening the GNRC Network.

In her keynote address, Dr. Charika Marasinghe, a renowned psychologist and a Child Rights Advocate in Sri Lanka, shared about the role of faith com-

munities in preventing violence against children in the region. She noted that as the world is grappling with issues of violence, many problems were still attributed to faith beliefs, adding that the problem is everyone’s responsibility and needs our every effort to end it.

Dr. Marasinghe outlined the various stages of suffering of children including virtual suffering. She explained the socio-economic reasons as to why children suffer, giving country examples and statistics in Southeast Asia. She however encouraged participants not to lose hope in the fight to achieve a peaceful world. “There is a ray of hope in preventing violence against children and this can be achieved through creating strong, connected and resilient families, and having value based education system,” she stated. She called upon all the world’s religions and spiritual traditions to contribute to the global change on ending violence against children as advocated by the UN Sustainable Development Goals. “We cannot solve the problems of our children without understanding them. We need to open our hearts and minds



to the suffering of our children,” she concluded.

The GNRC Secretary General, Dr. Mustafa Y. Ali, acknowledged the difficult circumstances children are living in hence the need for faith communities to work together in Protecting Children. He encouraged GNRC members to share their work and best practices and seek solutions.



“Extreme poverty is one of the most extensive forms of violence in the world. It is perhaps the most brutal and unforgiving form of all poverty. It is also the cause of tens of millions of children going hungry, missing out on school, or being forced into child labour, with little access to shelter and health facilities.”

Rev. Fred Nyabera, Director,
End Child Poverty.

9.0 INTERNATIONAL DAYS OF COMMEMORATION

9.1 International Day for Peace

9.1.1 Africa

Senegal



The GNRC Coordinator in Senegal, Mr. Abdoul Aziz BA, led representatives from Citizen Movement for Peace and Harmony, and Dream Catheters in celebrating the International Day for Peace on 21st September 2018 in Artillerie, Senegal. The celebration comprised of speeches on universal human rights, music and distribution of food to the underprivileged. A total of 85 participants including 50 children and 35 adults attended the event. The Chief of Artillerie District, Mr. Mamadou S. Y., representative of women's groups, Ms. Mame Tall, Youth Representative in Artillerie District, Mr. Dicko, among others, graced the event.

Participants were made aware of the importance of preserving peace and securing the rights of every human being. Reference was made to the GNRC 5th Forum, which advocated for a world

without violence through interfaith co-operation. The event received publicity from a local radio station, Louga FM.

9.1.2 Europe

Bosnia and Herzegovina

GNRC–Bosnia and Herzegovina marked the International Day for Peace on 21st September 2018 by holding workshops with 75 primary and secondary school children from Visoko Municipality. Each child had an opportunity to creatively send out a personal message of peace as everyone else got the opportunity to participate in a discussion on a violence-free environment, thus strengthening the importance of personal contribution to peace building.

8 adults including Lejla Bešlija, Efedina Čehajić, Amila Bašić, Medina Čehajić, Minka Hasić, Materadija Asija, Dlakić Adisa and Vranac Čama also participated in the celebration.

Moldova

GNRC–Moldova through the Association of Professional and Business Women led children to celebrate the International Day for Peace on 21st September 2018 in Lyceum, Edinet, Moldova. The international day was celebrated through various activities such as drawing competitions and handmade exhibitions. The 250 children who attended the event also per-

formed poems and songs.

During the event, the representatives from Culture and Education Directorate, informed participants about the importance of upholding peace. He thanked participants for joining other peace builders across the world in celebrating the international day. "Each one of us must promote peace and love, and educate each other in the spirit of respect and understanding the International Day for Peace. We can be true models of peace through personal goodwill," he noted.

The Moldovan children got the opportunity to also learn the history of former peace messengers and builders in the country specifically in the Transnistrian Separatist region in 1992. The peace builders during the time were vocal in advocating for a peaceful nation and a world without violence and hatred.

9.2 International Day for the Eradication of Poverty (IDEP)

9.2.1 Africa

Burundi

GNRC–Burundi conducted a meeting with young house help girls in Bujumbura to observe the IDEP event. Living conditions of house helps girls in the country are harsh since most bosses mistreat and pay them low wages leading them to languish in poverty. During discussions, poverty was seen as a contributor to the diminishing lives of the house helps leading to adverse incidents of sexual abuse and harassment

in work areas, unwanted pregnancies, forced labour, school dropout among others.



The girls were informed that the salaries they perceive as meagre remuneration can help them to self-develop and reduce the impact of poverty on their lives. Some of the ventures for self-empowerment include trading, beading and agriculture. During experience sharing session, participants heard success stories of other girls whose lives changed through little savings and investing.

Comoros

Association Conseil de la Paix led other GNRC members to commemorate IDEP on 14th October 2018 at Maison de l'emploi, Comoros. The event sought to listen to children and get their perspective on poverty. GNRC–Comoros partnered with National Commission of Gender and Solidarity under the Ministry of Public Health, and the Office of Grand Mufti of Comoros. 37 participants including 20 children and 17 adults participated in the event.

The Director, Office of the Grand Mufti, Mr. Mohamed Safari, shared the importance of education as a means of eradicating poverty. Citing verses from the Holy Qur'an on child protection, he explained Islam's stand on violence against children and protecting the human generation. Mr. Safari also presented some bills adopted by the government and the office of the Mufti to control the teachings given in Quranic schools as well as the sermons made in places of worship, with the aim to fight extremist discourses. He recommended supporting faith-based schools to ensure safe learning environment for children including enforcing social practices such as hygiene.

Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)

GNRC-DR Congo together with BIFERRD organization conducted two consultative meetings with the Kinshasa community including children and youth on 17th October 2018. A focus group discussion involving members of the deprived families of Eastern DR Congo, and a consultation meeting with religious leaders, professionals, parents and caregivers to seek sustainable solutions to end poverty were conducted.



The meetings brought together 300 participants who shared how the problem had affected their community. Parents highlighted the issue of insecurity in the country brought by the on-going armed conflicts. The conflicts have affected the economy and development of the country. Food security has also been affected with farmers witnessing first-hand disruptions of agricultural land and its production.

"We cannot have access to our lands for cultivation because of the active armed groups," commented one of the parents. Violence, more so to women and children, has also affected learning in institutions to the extent that children can no longer go to schools or even seek proper healthcare, factors that are vital in a child's upbringing.

Children were given a platform to share their plight on poverty. It was realized that children are vulnerable to poverty making some orphans, abandoned, uneducated, unprotected or even unhealthy and ending without access to basic needs. The dangerous situation leaves children and youth unable to pursue their dreams.

Kenya

Celebrating the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty in Kenya ran on the theme, 'spreading love' at a children's home. Arigatou International – Nairobi in partnership with Centre for Sustainable Conflict Resolution (CSCR), a member of GNRC, visited the Good Samaritan Children's Home and Rehabilitation Center in Mathare,



Nairobi, Kenya on the 19th of October 2018.

Of the over 355 children in the home; 152 are in primary school, 153 are in secondary school and some 50 younger ones in a nursery school within the home.

Good Samaritan home receives abandoned, vulnerable and orphaned children from all corners of Nairobi County. Mr. Gichimu stated that the home is motivated to work for children who mostly lack basic needs.

GNRC members got to interact with the children who were full of life and hope for a promising future. With passion and desire for education, the children drew pictorials of what they aspire to be in future. From surgeons, accountants, doctors and teachers, the children anticipated a better future free of poverty.

Arigatou International – Nairobi's visit to the center is just one of the many efforts in ending child poverty. Children desire and can have a better future if we come together to end child poverty.

Nigeria

As part of the IDEP celebration, GNRC–Nigeria paid visits to 6 schools to grant scholarship awards to 45 children and conducted a workshop on Ending Violence Against Children between 9th and 11th October 2018.

Participants were educated about the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child as well as the Nigerian Child Rights; what constitutes violence against children and how they are perpetrated, their roles and responsibilities as parents and caregivers towards protecting and providing for children and practical monitoring and reporting mechanisms on sexual violence against children.

The events were organized in partnership with Mary Starseed Foundation and covered by News Agency of Nigeria.

Tanzania

The International Day for Eradication of Poverty (IDEP) is often a day of awareness, advocacy, reflection and taking action towards ending poverty in the world. This did not elude the minds of



GNRC–Tanzania youths when they organized awareness activities in Upendo Center Pugu in Dar es Salaam Tanzania and in Unguja, Zanzibar. The events took place on 17th October 2018.

Both events raised awareness on the rights of the child as stipulated in the Convention for the Rights of the Child (CRC). The events comprised plays, storytelling, reading and writing messages of poverty. The events were attended by 19 children and advocated on preventing child poverty.

9.2.2 Asia

Nepal

On behalf of the GNRC, the Peace Service Center organized a Mandala Art Therapy Program to pay tribute to the seeds of peace children on 17th of October 2018. The Mandala represents an imaginary palace that is contemplated during meditation. Each object in the palace has significance, representing an aspect of wisdom or reminder of a guiding principle. The Mandala’s purpose is to help transform ordinary minds into enlightened ones and to assist with healing.



Pakistan



Aware of the crucial role of the media in promoting strategies towards poverty eradication, Search For Justice organized a media briefing in honour of the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty on 17th October 2018.

In the media briefing, Search For Justice urged for social protection as a basic human right for children, as enshrined in the Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC Articles 26-27). Based on the Convention, children have the right to social security and an adequate standard of living, both of which can be guaranteed for children and families who live in poverty through publicly funded social protection programs.

Search For Justice did not only organize a media briefing and interviews as a means of eradicating child poverty through the media but also participated in a media dialogue on the role of the media in addressing violence against children.

9.2.3 Europe

Bosnia and Herzegovina



GNRC Member “Už Mozaik” partnered with Interfaith Initiative to End Child Poverty to commemorate the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty (IDEP), through conducting workshops between 17th and 29th October 2018 with participation of children and religious leaders under the theme, “Together We Can Eradicate Poverty in the World.”

A children’s workshop was organized in line with the theme, which gave the children a platform to be heard and engage in solutions towards ending poverty. Members of “Už Mozaik” and religious leaders further made a visit to the deprived communities in Visoko on 18th October 2018.

“Už Mozaik” organized their final activity that involved a round table discussion with key stakeholders, focusing on the theme of the international day. Representatives from different religions including; the Catholic Community, the Orthodox Community, and the Islamic community attended the

session. Also present was Ms. Ismeta Begić, President, “Už Mozaik”, and GNRC Coordinator, Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Montenegro

Guided by the theme, “Action for gathering food and clothes for families in need,” 10 students, members of GNRC Montenegro collected 35 boxes containing food and other items to support the needy in the community. The students also talked to the community about the importance of ending poverty and helping the ones in need.

9.2.4 Latin America and the Caribbean

Argentina

On 27th October 2018, GNRC–Argentina organized an advocacy event in regards to the promotion of the rights of children as well as to mark the day of Non-Violence. More than 300 children and youth attended the event at the central square of Pillar, on the outskirts of Buenos Aires, Argentina. The children and youth present exhibited their understanding of poverty and child rights through posters and banners. Encouraging the children and youth, Prof. Adolfo Pérez Esquivel, a Nobel peace prizewinner stated, “It is said that childhood is the future of humanity. This is only relatively true. I believe that children, adolescents and young people are the present, and that the future will be the direct consequence of the present. What we sow today, we will reap its fruits tomorrow.”



The advocacy efforts to end child poverty by the GNRC–Argentina culminated in an advocacy event held on 29th October 2018, in the National Senate of Argentina. More than 80 young people from different parts of Argentina participated in the event. The meeting aimed at monitoring the implementation of the recommendations issued by the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child.

Cuba

GNRC–Cuba celebrated the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty in Santiago de Cuba (Southern part of the Island), between the 20th and 23rd October of 2018. Various activities were held during the three days, targeting 62 children of different Christian denominations.

On 20th and 22nd October 2018 GNRC–Cuba visited institutions working with disadvantaged and marginalized children of Santiago de Cuba, including the Psychopedagogical Centre “América Labadi”, in Santiago De Cuba in where they donated materials to the vulnerable community.

Dominican Republic

GNRC members in the Dominican Republic celebrated IDEP in a moment of reflection and prayer for the many children who live in extreme poverty in the island. “*Interfaith Prayer for the Eradication of Child Poverty,*” was the theme of the event.

Additionally, one of the members of the network, Fundación La Merced, collaborated with a private school in Santo Domingo to collect food that was then distributed to children of Batéy Bienvenido, an informal settlement in Santo Domingo.

Ecuador

GNRC–Ecuador joined other GNRC members across the world in celebrating IDEP on 10th October 2018 at the Mennonite Christian Church in Quito, Ecuador. The GNRC Committee held a special meeting to assess possible project they can implement and contribute to End Child Poverty’s goal on eradicating child poverty in the country. GNRC members that participated in this special meeting were from: the Bahá’i Faith, the Mennonite Church, the Indigenous Church of Imbabura, San Luis Gonzaga School, Julio María Matovelle School and the organization of Franciscan Missionary Families.

Panama

GNRC–Panama celebrated IDEP on 13th October 2018 with focus on the overarching message for the year 2018 “Listening to Children” one of the 10

Commitments made at the GNRC 5th Forum in Panama in May 2017.



GNRC–Panama organized a workshop for 17 children to strengthen their capacities to be agents of change by promoting their participation and strengthening their ability to make good choices, thereby enabling them to live a dignified life, free from discrimination and poverty.

9.3 Day of Prayer and Action for Children (DPAC)

9.3.1 Africa

Burundi

GNRC–Burundi conducted various activities that culminated in the celebration of the Day of Prayer and Action for Children (DPAC) under the theme, “Protecting Children from Abuse and Exploitation.” in Bujumbura. A round table discussion for religious leaders on solutions to end violence against children was organized. Present during the discussions were 38 participants. Presentations on the different forms of violence against social workers were also made.

Comoros



GNRC–Comoros held a dictation, drawing and poem competition for children to celebrate DPAC and reflect on the CRC while encouraging children to work towards identifying their rights and promoting peace.

Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)



GNRC–DR Congo celebrated DPAC on 23rd December 2018 at a time when presidential, legislative and provincial election campaigns were going on. The children-led celebration was an important opportunity for the children to share their needs with the parents and the political-administrative authorities. Children and youth were accorded time to express themselves through

testimonies and messages. Moreover, they signed a petition addressed to Arigatou International that aligns to the Panama Commitments on Ending Violence Against Children

Rev. Thérèse Bimpa, Coordinator of the Africa Women of Faith Network, DRC said that DPAC is an opportunity for all sectors of the society to work together to end violence against children.

Kenya



GNRC members in Kenya led by the Arigatou International Advisory Group Member, Sh. Ibrahim Lethome, and the GNRC Secretary General, Dr. Mustafa Y. Ali, joined other GNRC members across the world in commemorating DPAC on 24th November 2018 in Kibra, Nairobi, Kenya. About 116 participants including 75 children and youth and 41 parents and caregivers were sensitized on various forms of child abuse and exploitation.

During the celebration, Ms. Riziki Ahmed, a psychologist and a member of the Centre for Sustainable Conflict Resolution (CSCR), advised caregivers to protect their children from negative behaviours such as substance and drug

abuse. She said that the society could collapse if it doesn't address children's risky behaviours.

Sh. Ibrahim Lethome stressed that no religion advocates for destruction and violence, hence need to use religion as a tool to promote peace and co-existence. He noted that the world is now grappling with radicalization and violent extremism which distorts peace, economy and even education.

Sierra Leone

GNRC–Sierra Leone held its DPAC celebrations at the Bayconfields Complex Hall, Freetown on 24th November 2018, attended by 78 children and 55 adults. The objective of the celebration was to engage religious leaders from Christianity and Islam in the fight against child abuses in religious institutions and communities and to pray for children.

GNRC–Sierra Leone partnered with Maseray Children's Foundation (MCF-SL); Women Actively Serving Humanity Sierra Leone (WASH-SL); and the Interfaith Network for Children's Rights (INCR-SL) to conduct the event.

Tanzania

GNRC–Tanzania brought together children and different stakeholders to celebrate DPAC on 20th November 2018 in Dodoma. 160 participants including 90 children with albinism and special needs and 70 representatives from CSOs, schools with Peace Clubs, media, religious institutions and the government attended the event.

“Ending Violence Against Children” was selected to be the theme of the event which related to the GNRC Panama Commitments. The event included an interfaith prayer and speech presentations from partners, children and invited guests.

Uganda

GNRC–Uganda led by Young Leaders for Restoration and Development (YOLRED) celebrated DPAC on 20th November 2018, in Gulu Primary School under the theme, “Accept the innocent child, stop child abuse and child neglect.”

The event, which was attended by 45 children and 21 adults aimed at creating awareness on child neglect and build capacity and talent of children through music as well as promote their spiritual well-being. Present during the event were political leaders, religious leaders, teachers and pupils.

9.3.2 Asia

Bhutan

GNRC–Bhutan celebrated DPAC on 23rd and 24th December 2018 with an aim to create awareness on child protection; how to respond and stop violence against children and the role of the community in preventing violence against children.

The workshop, which took place at the Samdrup Jongkhar Middle Secondary School, was attended by 30 students.

India

GNRC–India dedicated a whole week (14th - 20th November) to the theme, ‘Week For Holistic Welfare of the Children’, in celebration of DPAC 2018. The event was supported by Shanti Ashram, the Faculty of Disability Management and Special Education (FDMSE), Vidyalyaya Campus, Ramakrishna Mission Vivekananda Educational and Research Institute (RKMVERI), Belur, West Bengal and Arigatou International.



Participants were engaged in various activities such as nature trips, yoga, art and craft, awareness on interfaith co-existence and dances that promoted peace. The winners for the art and craft competition were awarded.

Nepal

Through the ‘Seeds of Peace’ Program, GNRC Nepal sought to promote the importance of education and peaceful coexistence during the Day of Prayer and Action for Children in November 2018.

9.3.3 Europe

Bosnia and Herzegovina



Bosnia and Herzegovina celebrated the World Day of Prayer and Action for Children on 20th November 2018 with participation of religious leaders from the Muslim and Christian Faiths in Visoko. Both Primary and High School children from Visoko participated in workshops that preceded the world day as well as the main celebration at the Franciscan Monastery Sports Grounds. 400 children and 150 adults participated in the events.

Romania

Marking the International Day of Prayer and Action, GNRC–Romania led by Education for Change Association conducted debates with schools between 8th – 28th November 2018 on ending violence. The debates raised awareness on the consequences of violence in schools. It also identified factors that sustain this grave problem in Romanian schools. The event brought 1,114 participants from different faiths.

Montenegro

GNRC–Montenegro conducted a series of campaigns to create awareness on violence in schools. They organized three workshops from 1st to 15th November 2018 in the Youth Club Tuzi. Participants identified violence in schools as a major issue and explored the reasons and solutions for the menace. It was noted that children who were victims of violent behaviours lacked confidence.

On 17th November GNRC–Montenegro gathered 28 pupils from secondary school aged 15 – 18 years for a visit to a Catholic Church in Podgorica and a Mosque in Tuzi. The aim of this activity was to learn each other's religious culture.

9.3.4 Latin America and the Caribbean

Argentina

GNRC–Argentina gathered 300 participants including children and youth to promote peace and spirituality as an effort to end violence against children in the country. Representatives from Network against Police Violence, the Youth Mobilization Institute, the Cultural and Community Center of EL Pilar and the Ombudsman's Office attended the event.

At the event, participants showcased their skills in music, dance and drawing. The young boys and girls shared flags with their wishes and claims written on them. Charts with recommendations by the Committee on the Rights of the

Child were also displayed during the event.

Brazil



GNRC–Brazil celebrated DPAC in three cities: Brasilia, Curitiba and Salvador do Bahia. The community was reminded on the importance of promoting human and ethical values common to all religious traditions: love, unity, peace, justice and care. The event also challenged the government and religious leaders to uphold the rights and dignity of children.

Colombia

DPAC has been celebrated in Colombia since 2006. In 2018, GNRC–Colombia established a strategic alliance with the Directorate of Religious Affairs of the Ministry of Interior of the Government of Colombia and with the International



Family and Education Network (Red Internacional Familia y Educación - RIFE).

The celebration was held on 26th November 2018 in the Congress of the Republic, with a thematic forum on children on the move, focusing on the situation of Venezuelan children, adolescents and youth who are migrating to Colombia and other countries in the region. The forum entitled, “Religions and Venezuelan Migrant Children,” analyzed the current situation of migrant children and the families, particularly in regards to the issue of violence.

Dominican Republic

GNRC–Dominican Republic celebrated DPAC on 23rd November 2018 with children of Batey Bienvenido, a poor and marginalized sector of Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic. 46 children including 27 girls and 19 boys attended the event. The importance of interfaith coexistence was also addressed.

Ecuador

GNRC–Ecuador celebrated DPAC in Quito and Guayaquil on 24th November and 15th December 2018 respectively, with the objective of promoting a space for prayer and reflecting on alternatives to violence against children in the country. GNRC members organized a march through the streets of the Historical Center of Quito and a sit-in at the Plaza Grande, where three governmental and religious institutions are located: The Government Palace, the Municipality and the Cathedral.



The event entitled, “Enlight a light for non-violence,” brought together 200 participants including 130 children and 70 adults from different faith communities. They marched through the streets of the city with torches and candles as a symbol of peace and non-violence. The event concluded with the reading of a declaration on ending violence against children.

El Salvador

GNRC–El Salvador celebrated the Day of Prayer and Action for Children from 7th to 16th December 2018 at the Lutheran University with various activities geared to celebrate the interfaith co-existence in the country, celebrate the virtue of coexistence, and celebrate the strides of Learning to Live Together programme.

Mexico

GNRC–Mexico celebrated DPAC on 1st and 2nd December 2018 in Tijuana. The main objective of the event was to offer safe and friendly spaces for children who are migrating from Central

America (Honduras, Guatemala and El Salvador) to the US, passing through Mexico. Caravans of families from Central America were fleeing from persecutions in their home countries, hoping to seek a better life in the US.

Nicaragua

GNRC–Nicaragua celebrated its DPAC event on 20th November 2018 at the premises of World Vision International, Nicaragua. The celebration was organized by members of GNRC–Nicaragua with 100 people attending the event. Prior to the event, children carried out peace activities within GNRC member organizations. The importance of respect and nurturing ethical values was advocated.

Panama

GNRC–Panama has been working all year round on addressing violence against children, with the aim of disseminating and implementing the 10 commitments made by leaders at the GNRC 5th Forum held in Panama 2017.



Various activities were carried out in November 2018 to mark the World Day of Prayer and Action for Children. On 17th November 2018, GNRC–Panama and the Ecumenical Committee of Panama organized a workshop with 15 children to develop key messages to be included in a joint children’s statement on violence against children.

Peru



Eight member institutions who are part of GNRC–Peru planned for the DPAC celebration aimed at addressing sexual abuse of children in the country, and enhance collaborations and action of faith communities to respond to the problem.

Local TV and radio networks were used to pass the message for 10 days. During the period, GNRC members Lidia Diaz and Esperanza Principio were interviewed by the Catholic TV channel JN19 about the initiative.

9.3.4 Middle East

Lebanon

GNRC–Lebanon conducted a sensitization event on the rights of the child among teachers and students on 26th November 2018. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted by the United Nations General Assembly at its 183rd session on 10 December 1948 was also shared.

150 children and 10 adults were present at the event.

9.4 International Women’s Day

9.4.1 Africa

Congo

The Democratic Republic of Congo-South Kivu REJADH youth network took part in an event to commemorate the International Women’s Day. The event took place from 7th–8th March 2019 at the French Institute in Bukavu. A total of 60 youths attended the forum. The event aimed at developing innovative solutions using new information and communication technologies in the protection of women against sexual



violence in the Democratic Republic of Congo. As a result of the event, participants agreed to come up with a mobile application called Zombo Alert which would be used to report violations of women's rights.

Commemoration of the International Women's Day is one of the global opportunities in which the GNRC network advocate for realization of the Sustainable Development Goal 5 on Gender Equality through elimination of Gender Based Violence (GBV).

Pakistan

GNRC–Pakistan together with St. Mary's Public School celebrated the International Women's Day on 8th March 2019 at the school's community hall in Karachi, Pakistan. Guided by 2019's theme, "Think Equal, Build Smart, Innovate for Change," participants celebrated the social, economic, cultural and political achievements of women in Pakistan and across the world. A total of 35 participants comprising women and young girls attended the event.

During the celebration, GNRC Member and Principal, St. Mary's Public School, Mr. David Paul, shared GNRC's commitment to uplifting the lives of women and young girls in the society. He added that women have a major role in the development of the society, especially in preventing all forms of violence against children.



10.0 ACTIVITIES BY GNRC SECRETARIAT



During the reporting period, the GNRC Secretary General, Dr. Mustafa Y. Ali, attended several meetings locally and internationally on behalf of Arigatou International – Nairobi and the Global Network of Religions for Children (GNRC). The meetings focused on the overall objectives of Arigatou International (AI) including management of the network, GNRC’s key priority areas and advocacy and partnership development. The details of the meetings and engagements are captured below:

10.1 Management and Advisory of AI and AI Initiatives

Dr. Mustafa joined the newly appointed Arigatou International’s Advisory Group (AG) Meeting in New York City, USA from 27th – 28th July 2018. During the Advisory Group meeting, he had

an opportunity to present about the GNRC to the AG. The Terms of Reference (TOR) of the AG were also discussed. Other issues discussed were the future course of Arigatou International’s Global Initiatives and how to strengthen the role of religious leaders and communities with specific emphasis and appreciation of interfaith cooperation.

To this end, Ms. Mercedes Roman, Advisor to GNRC–Latin America and the Caribbean and former GNRC Coordinator for Latin America and the Caribbean presented a special report on GNRC–LAC, outlining GNRC’s unique potential. They further discussed ways to strengthen existing partnerships as well as how to establish new ones. Immediately after the AG meeting, Dr. Ali joined other Directors for the An-

nual AI Director's meeting on 29th July 2018. Both meetings ended with key recommendations and next steps that will guide AI and AI initiatives moving forward and particularly in preparation for the mid-term review, scheduled for mid-2020.

10.2 Protecting Children from Violent Extremism, Gang Violence and Organized Crime

In line with the GNRC priority areas, Dr. Mustafa Y. Ali together with other GNRC staff took part in the 3rd Regional Peace Programme (RPP) Youth Leaders Forum on Peacebuilding under the theme, "Youth In Action: Media and Preventing Violent Extremism," from 3rd – 7th September 2018 in Machakos County, Kenya. Dr. Ali made a presentation on Effective Interfaith Communication to P/CVE. Giving pertinent examples and scenarios, he encouraged the youth to use the media responsibly and embrace peace and dialogue for peace and sustainable development. Following this presentation, he participated in a Global Café, a platform in which the youth interact with practitioners and facilitators to discuss more on Media and Preventing Violent Extremism.

The Forum was attended by fifty three (53) youth leaders and influencers; representing twenty one (21) organizations from Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, South Sudan, Uganda and Tanzania. The forum aimed to build a better understanding on the role of media in preventing, countering and transforming

violent extremism (P/C/TVE), and how to use media in P/C/TVE. Throughout the quarter Dr. Ali continued to give talks and lectures on preventing and countering violent extremism against children and youth in particular, in various fora including the national TV in Kenya.

10.3 Nurturing Spirituality and Ending Violence in Child Upbringing

At the beginning of the reporting quarter, Dr. Mustafa Y. Ali attended a meeting on Strengthening Families to Nurture Spirituality in Early Childhood in Geneva, Switzerland from 2nd – 4th July 2018. During this meeting he moderated a Panel Discussion on Early Childhood: Needs and Importance of Nurturing Values and Spirituality to End Violence Against Children in the Family and Promote Peaceful Societies. Other focus areas discussed included; the importance of working with religious communities to support families to nurture values and spirituality in early childhood, good practices on early childhood development, challenges, potential gaps and opportunities of working together and the common plan of action and deliverables of the Consortium on Strengthening Families to Nurture Spirituality in Early Childhood.

10.4 Ending Sexual Exploitation and Abuse of Children

The Government of United Arab Emirates (U.A.E) in partnership with Arigatou International – Nairobi organized



a meeting for faith communities in the Sub-Saharan Africa region to facilitate reflection on the subject of Child Protection and Child Dignity in the Digital World. This was a regional pre-event workshop which took place in Nairobi, Kenya on 7th August 2018 with participation of 30 representatives from all sectors and faiths including Christian, Muslim, Indigenous African, Hindu and Sikh faiths. Dr. Ali spearheaded this process.

The meeting aimed to mobilize support from religious leaders and their respective communities; spread awareness of online child exploitation within faith communities; to stir and encourage religious leaders and faith communities to take more ownership in the fight against Online Child Sexual Exploitation (OCSE) and to develop pledges and commitments that will form part of the broader Interfaith Alliance for Safer Communities scheduled to take place on 19th and 20th November 2018, in Abu Dhabi, U.A.E.

10.5 Advocacy and Partnership Development

Dr. Mustafa Y. Ali was nominated to serve on the Faith-based Advisory Council to UN Inter-Agency Taskforce on Religion, on behalf of Arigatou International. Together with Ms. Rebeca Rios Kohn, Director, Arigatou International – New York and Prayer and Action for Children, they were nominated by members of the UN Inter-Agency Task Force on Religion. Since their nomination, they have participated in two council meetings; on 4th September and 21st September 2018. The Advisory Council is expected to support the coordination of a more systematic outreach, interaction and engagement with faith based entities. Additionally, the council will enhance focus on and knowledge around religious representation and dynamics.

In pursuit of partnership development with like-minded organizations, Dr. Ali met with Dr. Assefa Bequele, Executive Director, Africa Child Policy Forum (ACPF) on 8th August 2018 in Nairobi. The two discussed possible areas of collaboration between GNRC and ACPF. Preliminary talks are on-going for a joint proposal on Child Protection in the Digital World: Building Pan-African Evidence and Consensus.

Moreover, in September, Dr. Ali joined other members for the Board meeting of Finn Church Aid (FCA) in Nairobi, Kenya. FCA is one of the friends and partners of GNRC and Arigatou International. FCA builds peace and

improves livelihood opportunities. This ensures that children live in safe environments.

10.6 Network Building and Strengthening

As a follow up to the GNRC 5th Forum outcomes, Dr. Mustafa Y. Ali has been engaging religious leaders in the Middle East in talks to build the GNRC network in this region. Following these discussions, the first follow up regional meeting took place in Amman, Jordan in September 2017. The next meeting will take place in March 2018. Middle East region is one of the regions with grave cases of violations and violence against children. It is expected that with a strong regional network, the GNRC will have greater impact in Ending Violence Against Children in the region and beyond.

10.7 Protecting Children and Youth from Violent Extremism

With Dr. Ali's leadership, GNRC–Kenya in partnership with local organizations and the Government of Kenya launched the Lenga Ugaidi na Talanta 2018 Edition under the theme, "Fighting Terrorism through Art". The event which took place on 1st October 2018 in Nairobi, Kenya was attended by representatives from the Government of Kenya, and International and grassroots organizations. Sh. Ibrahim Lethome, a member of AI's Advisory Group and GNRC Members in Kenya attended this launch. AI/GNRC representatives affirmed that there is no



better way to address the scourge than through the children and youths' perspective – through arts. In the spirit of involving and listening to children, they encouraged Kenyan youths to actively take part in the competition and add their voices towards identifying the best solution to conflict resolution in the country and East Africa at large.

Immediately after the launch, the SG attended a High Level Conference on Crises, Conflict and Cooperation in Zanzibar, Tanzania on 2nd and 3rd October 2018. During this Conference he spoke about experiences of preventing violent extremism and gave practical examples of what the young people can do to prevent and counter Violent Extremism. He met officials from the European Institute of Peace and members of GNRC–Tanzania. Discussions of this Conference centered on the conflict in Yemen and the dynamics in the Gulf and how this relate to stability and violent extremism in the Horn Africa.

In the same month of October, with invitation from the Governor of Mandera, H.E Captain Ali Roba, Dr. Ali attended a Stakeholder's Conference on Derad-

icalization, Prevention and Countering Violent Extremism in Mandera, Kenya on 22nd October 2018. The theme of the conference was; ‘Stepping up community-led counter terrorism and deradicalization efforts to combat violent extremism.’ It was observed that terrorism and violent extremism had stunted growth and development, and prevented many children and young people from accessing quality education. The children and youth in Kenya have been the target for recruitment into violent extremist groups, irrespective of their religious affiliation and ethnic backgrounds. He was therefore tasked to advise the religious and political leaders in the Mandera Triangle and frontier counties on how best to address violent extremism and terrorism from a community perspective.

Still in Kenya, he was part of a panel discussing the efforts to address violent extremism during the Bandung Conference which was held on 22nd and 23rd November in Nairobi, Kenya. The other panelists were CT and CVE experts and representatives from the Police and the defense forces from Kenya and the UK, civil society and faith-based organizations. All panelists spoke against the misinformation and misleading narratives on violent extremism and terrorism and helped the participants to understand various ideological foundations, giving examples of how to effectively and responsibly respond to this scourge.

At the global level, the SG participated in a panel discussion at the second

World Youth Forum in Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt on 5th and 6th November 2018. This Forum was attended by 5,000 participants representing 160 nations across the globe. Dr. Ali together with other experts and practitioners emphasized and encouraged the use of soft power in countering violent extremism and terrorism, particularly among the youth. The SG explained that some of AI’s programs like the Learning to Live Together (LTLT) and the Regional Peace Programme (RPP) can be replicated and used by youth in their respective nations and regions. The youth were urged to practice “the good” that is enshrined in all the cultural and religious practices. Gracing this World Youth Forum was the President of Egypt; H.E Abdel Fattah el Sisi, the President of the State of Palestine; H.E Mahmoud Abbas, the Governor of Makkah; Prince Khaled Al-Faisal, the United Nations Secretary General’s Envoy on Youth; Ms. Jayathma Wickramanayake and the Iraqi Yazidi Human Rights Activist and Nobel Peace Co-winner; Ms. Nadia Murad. In different words, they all called on all stakeholders to work together for a safe, poverty-free and just world.

Throughout the quarter, he was engaged in various seminars, conferences and debates on national television for discussions on Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism as well as other topical issues.

In mid-October, he joined other global partners working with and for children in Rome, Italy from 16th to 18th Octo-

ber 2018 for the Faith Action for Children on the Move Forum. The Forum focused on what the faith actors can and ought to do to promote peace and sustainable development among displaced families. Noting the urgency and importance to protect children on the move across borders through spiritual and psychosocial support, Dr. Ali shared the Panama Commitments on Ending Violence Against Children, highlighting AI's thematic areas and the work that AI supports to ensure that children and youth live in a world free of violence. Some of the Programs he mentioned were the Building Resilience Against Violent Extremism (BRAVE) and the Community Resilience Against Violent Extremism (CRAVE), which are intra- and interfaith peace-building programs that help faith communities, and especially the younger members, to understand and effectively respond to the scourge of violent extremism and terrorism. On the premise of safeguarding the rights of Children, the Government of the United Arab Emirates (U.A.E) hosted the Interfaith Alliance for Safer Communities Forum Abu Dhabi, U.A.E on 19th and 20th November 2018. This was under the patronage of His Highness Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi and Deputy Supreme Commander of the U.A.E. Armed Forces. The Interfaith Alliance Forum was supported by Al Azhar University in partnership with international organizations that include Arigatou International, Pontifical Gregorian University, Religions for Peace Interna-



tional, Shanti Ashram and UNICEF. Dr. Ali served on the Steering Committee. The guiding theme of the forum was "Protecting the Child's Dignity in the Digital World."

This global Forum followed a series of regional meetings in Cairo, Egypt; Nairobi, Kenya; Manila, Philippines; Abu Dhabi, U.A.E; and Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic. The participants called for joint international and interfaith solutions to combat international and local cybercrimes. They also urged global leaders to implement such efforts at the grassroots level to empower the community to protect children from online sexual abuse and exploitation. 450 religious and spiritual leaders participated.

10.8 Network Building and Strengthening

To crown the quarter, Dr. Ali attended the GNRC South and South East Asia Meeting in Colombo, Sri Lanka on 8th and 9th December 2018. This regional meeting was preceded by Celebration of Sarvodaya's 60th Anniversary. This was an opportune time to strengthen the GNRC in South East Asia Region.

The aim of this meeting was to build momentum to implement targeted commitments arising from the GNRC 5th Forum; formally launch of the GNRC Committee for Sri Lanka; and, official opening of the 'End Child Poverty' Resource and Education Centre – Meethotamulla.



10.9 Advisory, Partnership Development and Interfaith Cooperation

Serving as Members of the UN Inter-Agency Task Force on Religion, Dr. Ali together with Ms. Rebeca Rios Kohn, Director, Arigatou International – New York took part in meetings of the Taskforce throughout the year. This Advisory Council supports the coordination of a more systematic outreach, interaction and engagement with faith based entities. Additionally the council is expected to enhance focus on and knowledge around religious representation and dynamics.

Their participation and contribution to this task force is opening up Arigatou International to potential new partnerships globally.

The SG also worked closely with Finn Church Aid (FCA) and the Islamic Foundation (IF) throughout the year. As a Board Member in both organizations he took part at the planning and oversight of their operations. Both organizations are involved in humanitarian aid, development, advocacy, peace building, conflict resolution and capacity building. Islamic Foundations for instance supports over 11,000 children in schools and children's homes in Kenya.

Additionally, in an advisory capacity, Dr. Ali continued to participate and contribute towards Haki Amani; a national platform whose members are tasked with the responsibility to drive the agenda of a just, peaceful, cohesive and prosperous Kenya, that allows children and youth to thrive.

"Only together can we find sustainable solutions that will protect our children from the scourges of the war, violence and conflict that children have witnessed, and suffered from, for far too long."

Rev. Keishi Miyamoto
President,
Arigatou International

11.0 GNRC COMMUNICATIONS UPDATE

11.1 Social Media Reach

In this fiscal year, GNRC registered a new social media account – an Instagram page – in the month of September 2018. Since then, it has had more than 100 followers and more than 80 posts to its name.

GNRC's social media platform recorded a significant reach over April 2018 – March 2019. During this period, GNRC realized more than 39,000 Tweet Impressions, 3,747 Profile Visits and more than 400 Tweets to its Twitter account. Facebook recorded more than 200,752 likes and more than 3,000 reach.

11.2 The All for Children Online Community Platform

Even as the GNRC members and friends become acquainted with the operations of the online community which was established after GNRC 5th Forum in May 2017 to bring together professionals, representatives from government, international and grassroots organizations, the GNRC secretariat continues to revamp the platform. The redesigning of the community platform will increase the audience reach and invite more leaders and members of the world's religious and spiritual traditions, girls and boys, women and men, as well as international and grassroots organizations, to increase efforts to end violence against children.

11.3 Participation in the Broadcasting Media

GNRC members participated in discussions on television and radio programs to debate on transformative ways to peace and sustainable development, specifically on ending violence against children. Dr. Mustafa Y. Ali, engaged in various national and international television programs to discuss emerging issues affecting the world specifically security, conflict resolution, peace-building and sustainable development.

On several occasions, Dr. Ali participated in NTV's AM Live show, CCTN, Al Jazeera, Africa Live, Citizen TV and CNN.

GNRC Member, Search For Justice | CAN Pakistan featured in live TV programs such Bolta Lahore to debate on securing children's rights in Pakistan. Their Child Rights activist organization was also featured in live news such as Kohenoor News and Neo TV Network, and in national newspapers such as The Dawn and The News.





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