



**ARIGATOU** | GNRC  
INTERNATIONAL  
*All for Children*

**GNRC ANNUAL REPORT  
2014/2015**





# Every child has the right to survive and thrive.

## About **Us**

The GNRC is a global-scale interfaith 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.

The Global Network of Religions for Children includes members from all of the world's major religious traditions. Together the GNRC is committed to creating a world where every girl and boy can grow up safe and sound—a world where every child has the chance to shine.

## Our **Mission**

To mobilize the potential of all religions to become a positive transforming force for children and invite the solidarity of people from all walks of life, while seeking partnership with leaders, individuals, and communities, international, national and regional institutions, grassroots organizations, and people of good will everywhere.

## Our **Vision**

A peaceful world where every human being takes full responsibility for children's dignity, safety, well-being and joy.



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**GNRC AROUND THE WORLD**



## MESSAGE FROM THE GNRC SECRETARY GENERAL



Esteemed Members and Friends of the GNRC,

It is my pleasure to dedicate this year's GNRC annual report to the late Rev. Takeyasu Miyamoto. The late Rev. Takeyasu Miyamoto's vision to improve the lives of Children, and for which he tirelessly worked for by establishing the Arigatou International and the Global Network of Religions for Children, is remarkable. He passed on in 2015, leaving behind an extraordinary legacy of service to the world's Children.

The 2014/2015 annual report presents a summary of key activities implemented by the GNRC

members in some 40 countries around the world. GNRC focused on Ethics Education for Children, Prayer and Action for Children, End Child Poverty as well as Peace-building to safeguard and protect the environment that children live in.

Once again I thank all those who have supported our work across the globe with the aim of achieving a better and peaceful world for children. I invite all of you to join hands in making this world a better place for all children.

Join the growing Network of grassroots workers, religious leaders, faith communities and governmental as well as intergovernmental institutions serving children, and be a part of the GNRC Network dedicated to serving the children of the world.

Respectfully,

Dr. Mustafa Y. Ali,

Secretary General, Global Network  
of Religions for Children  
Director, Arigatou International –  
Nairobi

## A TRIBUTE TO OUR FOUNDING FATHER

*Rev. Takeyasu Miyamoto, Founder of Arigatou International,  
Passed Away at Age 97*



Japanese Buddhist movement launched in 1950, his seminal ideas have grown to have a worldwide impact.

After studying with Myochikai's founder, Rev. Mitsu Miyamoto, from 1945 until her passing in 1984, Rev. Takeyasu Miyamoto became Leader of Myochikai, after completing 1000 days of ascetic disciplines to prepare for the task of succeeding her. As Leader of Myochikai, he emphasized the duty and potential of every person to practise "perseverance for the sake of good" and make a contribution to world peace, based on the teachings of Rev. Mitsu Miyamoto. He frequently taught on the themes of gratitude, change of heart, and honoring all those who came before us.

The entire Arigatou family is mourning the loss of Rev. Takeyasu Miyamoto, Founder of Arigatou International and Leader of Myochikai, who passed away on Thursday, March 26, 2015, at 3:50 am in Tokyo at the age of 97. He will be deeply and dearly missed.

A memorial ceremony for the family took place on April 2, 2015.

Rev. Miyamoto was a true pioneer of compassion and a rare spiritual leader who had the gift of inspiring people to go beyond all the usual limits in order to care for others, especially children. From a small

In 1990, Rev. Miyamoto established the Arigatou Foundation (now Arigatou International) "in response to the terrible suffering of so many children around the world" and gave it the mission of creating a better environment for children everywhere. Then, in the year 2000, he inaugurated the Global Network

of Religions for Children (GNRC), bringing together diverse people of faith from around the world to commit themselves to “making a contribution from the religious perspective to the promotion of child rights in the 21st century.”

At the United Nations Special Session on Children in 2002, Rev. Miyamoto was selected to address the General Assembly on behalf of people of faith around the world, and he pledged to bring diverse religious communities together to do more for ethics education, child rights, and ending child poverty.

Under Rev. Miyamoto’s leadership in the ensuing decade, from

those three pledges emerged three other global interfaith initiatives supported by Arigatou International: Ethics Education for Children, Prayer and Action for Children, and End Child Poverty.

While mourning this great loss, the Arigatou family is determined more than ever to continue the great work started by Rev. Miyamoto until every child on earth gets to grow up safe and sound, and ultimately, the whole human family lives in world peace.

Rev. Takeyasu Miyamoto is survived by two daughters, and one son, Rev. Keishi Miyamoto, who is President of Arigatou International.



“As people of faith, we see the Divine Presence in every person and consider it our obligation to encourage each person to realize the highest potential of the human heart.”

*Rev. Takeyasu Miyamoto*

## UPDATES FROM THE NETWORK

### Second GNRC Regional Meeting in Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina

A meeting organized by the GNRC took place from the 6th to 8th of June 2014 in Bosnia & Herzegovina at the Bosnia Hotel, Sarajevo.

The active youths in Bosnia had several proposals on how they can increase their participation with children’s work – which include: activities and advocacy work, helping flood victims and occasional trainings that touch on the lives of children.

On the last day of the meeting, the GNRC team and the youth had an open-air discussion about the values, challenges and future networking of members of the GNRC. In addition, a



meeting was held with the Pax Christi International board on future collaboration and mutual assistance to enhance each other’s activities.

The meeting concluded with the urgency of having an online discussion with members in Europe about the mission, vision and core values of the GNRC in context of its development plan.

“We must plant seeds of peace in the younger generation. Through interfaith dialogue and common action, we can manage and end conflicts and atrocities that continue to affect our children across the globe. Peace begins with me, and it is nurtured from the tender ages.”  
- Dr. Mustafa Y. Ali,  
Secretary General,  
GNRC

### Roundtable to End Child Poverty in Asia

GNRC Members from the South and South East Asia region participated in a roundtable consultation on Poverty Initiative themed ‘Maximizing the Comparative Advantages of Faith-Inspired Resources to Build Partnerships to End Child Poverty Beyond 2015 that took place from 27 to 29 October 2014.







The meeting was facilitated by Arigatou International's End Child Poverty Initiative and hosted by the Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement.

Dr. Kezevino Aram, Director of Shanti Ashram, challenged religious leaders and other stakeholders present to change their approach from "working for children" to "working with children".

A statement, endorsed by various organizations that deal with

children, their rights and well being materialized from the roundtable. The statement made a pledge to children across the globe that:

- ❑ The consciousness of our communities and constituencies on the plight of child poverty will be raised.
- ❑ There will be interreligious and intercultural dialogue, supporting theological reflection, prayer and action, to mitigate the human and spiritual causes of poverty including greed, hatred, fear and ignorance and contribute to finding lasting solutions.
- ❑ Advocacy against structural causes of poverty such as the unequal distribution of resources, corruption, bad governance and violent conflicts.



- Accompanying and supporting selected sustainable and replicable grassroots projects that aim to enhance quality education and retention of vulnerable children in school; transform violent conflicts that exacerbate poverty; and promote income-generating activities for low-income groups and families. GNRC members around the world are committed to eradicating child poverty, and have been working towards this end. In 2012 at the GNRC Fourth Forum, the third of the promises made by Rev. Takeyasu Miyamoto—that of addressing poverty, was launched in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania.

### Major World Faith Movements Commit to Pragmatic Action to End Child Poverty

Representatives from all Arigatou International's initiatives, selected faith-inspired groups, development organizations, civil society



organizations, United Nations agencies, educators and multi-lateral organizations meeting in Moratuwa, Sri Lanka committed to engaging in more pragmatic action to end child poverty. This was emphasized in a pledge read out by their representatives during the launch of the End Child Poverty Knowledge Centre by Arigatou International's Interfaith Initiative to End Child Poverty. The centre that is situated at the Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement Head Quarters will be a global knowledge hub for the eradication of child poverty.

### Fourth GNRC Regional Meeting; Latin American and Caribbean Region in El Salvador

From 27 to 29 October 2014, the fourth GNRC Regional Meeting for Latin America and the Caribbean took place in El Salvador at





“All of us in our own ways or spheres of influence can Teach about Peace. Let’s Teach Peace to Build a Culture of Peace starting from the formative years of a child. Building a Culture of Peace is one of the keys in creating different generations of peace builders toward our goal of building a just and peaceful society.”  
*Bai Rohaniza Sumndad-Usman, GNRC Member Philippines*

the Salesian retreat centre of Ayaguato. The meeting brought together more than 35 GNRC coordinators, contact persons and youth members from 10 countries of the Region: Argentina, Brasil, Chile, Colombia, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala and Panama, as well as staff from the GNRC Secretariat in Nairobi, Arigatou International Offices in Geneva and New York, and the Arigatou International Secretary General from the international headquarters in Japan.

The three-day meeting was organized in eight sessions. Each session consisted of a brief introduction on the topic, the presentation of good practices and experiences from countries in the region, and questions and answers.

### GNRC Welcomes New Members from South East Asia

Thirty participants from 15 countries including GNRC members and Arigatou International teams participated in the GNRC meeting for South and South East Asia from 13th – 15th October in Moratuwa, Sri Lanka. The meeting, which was hosted by the Sarvodaya Movement in Sri





## Best Practices Presented by the GNRC at the European Parliament

The GNRC members from five European countries—Spain, Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Romania and Portugal presented Best Practices on coexistence at the European Parliament in Brussels on 19<sup>th</sup> March 2015. This important event was organized by Religions for Peace Europe in partnership with the Global Network of Religions for Children (GNRC), in the framework of the joint project “Welcoming Each Other in Europe: a call to non-discrimination”.

The event was hosted by Mrs. Anna Zaborska, Mr. Borslav Skipek and distinguished members of the European Parliament. It brought together 120 participants coming from 14 European countries, prominent personalities from the major religious communities,

Lanka focused on consolidating the GNRC network in South Asia, and introducing the network in South East Asian countries.

The three-day consultative and participatory meeting allowed participants representing their organizations from South and South East Asia to give their input on the mission, vision and objectives of the GNRC. They also shared about various ways in which they can and will implement GNRC activities in their respective countries.





religious leaders, women, children and youth. The delegations had the opportunity to present their best practices and meet experts, political decision makers, religious and social leaders from various communities and countries, through a succession of 7 Round Tables.

The event aimed at fostering peace building processes across Europe, articulating the contribution of the various delegations coming from Albania, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Finland, France, Ireland, Italy, Portugal,

Romania, Serbia, Spain, Sweden and the UK. Participants from all 14 of these countries continued meeting the 20 and 21 of March where they elaborated strategies at national and regional levels for an effective action for non-discrimination.

With the hostile feelings of xenophobia, discrimination and fear, this project intends to play an empowering role in the promotion of dialogue and common action among communities in order to favour pacification and harmonious living together.

## END CHILD POVERTY

### Our Journey Towards Ending Child Poverty



The measures to be taken to end child poverty will require immediate and long-term investment by government, civil society, faith communities and families in securing children's rights and well-being. Fortunately, the dividend for such investments far outweighs the cost. Spending on a child's health, nutrition, education, social, emotional and cognitive development is an investment in a healthier, more literate and ultimately more productive population.

We need to move from the conventional ways of fighting poverty to a holistic approach that includes not only structural poverty like corruption, poor governance

and inequality; but also, the spiritual causes; like greed, hatred, fear and ignorance that cannot be legislated—an approach to which Arigatou International, through the Interfaith Initiative to End Child Poverty is committed to.

It is unlikely that government alone, even while acting through bilateral and multilateral arrangements, can match the mission of the broad-based effort that is required to decisively scale back poverty. Any effort to eradicate poverty, especially in the post 2015 Development Agenda and Sustainable Development era, must result in a broad coalition between governments, multilateral organizations, civil society and faith-inspired organizations. Given this joint cooperation and the necessary resources, WE CAN END CHILD POVERTY!

*Prof. Abdulghafur El Busaidy,  
Chairman Arigatou International –  
Nairobi*



*"Poverty is multidimensional and multi-generational. However, unless we solve this problem, we will never be able to realize a world truly fit for children."*

*Rev. Keishi Miyamoto,  
President,  
Arigatou International*

## African Faith Leaders' Summit on the Post 2015 Development Agenda

GNRC Members from Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda attended the African Faith Leaders' Summit on the Post 2015 Development Agenda and called for special consideration of children's rights in the Post 2015 Development Agenda. The Summit, whose theme was Enhancing Faith Communities' Engagement on the post 2015 Development Agenda, was held at the Commonwealth Resort Munyonyo Kampala Uganda from the 30th June – 2nd July.

### The Pre Summit

The pre-summit event, which focused on the importance of participation by 'those affected,' gave women, youth, persons with disability, children and those living with HIV/AIDs an opportunity to engage and share on issues that have and/or are affecting them within their various groups and demographics.

"If we wish to create a lasting peace we must begin with the children. Africa is nowadays devastating with wars and one of the reasons is that the warlords of today were the children of yesterday who lost orientation from parents/guardians."  
Nsanzintwali Ayoub



Senator Harold Kipchumba, who is a Polio and Immunization Goodwill Ambassador from the Ministry of Health in Kenya and a GNRC member, Ms. Elizabeth Mwase, the Programs Manager for GNRC Tanzania, and Stacy Ndung'u, GNRC Communications Officer, represented the Global Network of Religions for Children during this meeting.

### The Summit

The Summit was attended by representatives from Arigatou International – Nairobi, Global





Network of Religions for Children, End Child Poverty, African Council of Religious Leaders, Symposium of Episcopal Conferences of Africa and Madagascar; All Africa Council of Churches; Organization of African Instituted Churches; Hindu Council of Africa; Council of Anglican Provinces of Africa; Union of Muslim Councils of Central, Eastern and Southern Africa; the Spiritual Assembly of the Baha'i; Arigatou International

– Nairobi; Fellowship of Christian Councils and Churches in the Great Lakes and Horn of Africa; and the Association of the Evangelicals of Africa with various Faith Leaders and more than 24 other organizations from across the continent.

The President of Uganda, H. E Yoweri Kaguta Museveni, who was the guest of honour graced the occasion and shared his strong appreciation of those organizations that have included the interfaith aspect. He emphasised on the importance of the value of 'loving your neighbour as you love yourself'.

Arigatou International played a key role in the planning and organization of the Summit, with Rev. Fred Nyabera, End Child Poverty Director serving as Secretary to the Steering Committee.

"As the consensus focuses on building a new agenda for Sustainable Development from 2015 onwards, we at the Interfaith Initiative to End Child Poverty believe that the best interests of the Child must not only be placed central to poverty eradication but also included in the design and implementation of the Post 2015 Development Agenda, with specific indicators stipulated on the perceived benefits for children and the youth."

*Rev. Fred Nyabera,  
Director, End Child  
Poverty*







### Shanti Ashram, End Child Poverty and GNRC

The GNRC-India and Shanti Ashram organized the celebration of the International Day of Eradication of Poverty on 17<sup>th</sup> October 2014. The activity took place in several regions, through the collaboration of 30 different institutional partners as well as the participation of the Indian Government's Gandhigram Rural University. Their efforts resulted in the participation of over 26,500 children & youth from thirty institutions throughout India (including Namadhu Pangu, Coimbatore, Sarvam Trust, Pondicherry, Focolare Mumbai, Bangalore, Balagokulam, Delhi, and Kerala).

Nine young facilitators, all from the GNRC youth and specially trained by Shanti Ashram to lead the

events, organized a "Join together to end child poverty" – a symbolic hand impression by the children to end child poverty. the activity included hand impression, pledge taking, collection of grains for a food bank, taking pledge to end child poverty and the responsibility for the collection of food grains for children living in poverty. The event also included the launching of a video on the taboos of child poverty on YouTube and conducting an online photography contest.



Shanti Ashram also organized events for the World Day of Prayer and Action for Children from 1<sup>st</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> November 2014. Approximately 19,000 participants including children, youth and parents from 48 institutions throughout India such as Namadhu Pangu, Coimbatore, Balagokulam, Delhi, and Kerala.

Training programs, special prayers, fancy dress competitions, group discussions, cultural programs, shramadhan, and pictorial representation of the Logo took place along this period.

On the actual day, about 210 children and youth from 12 institutions gathered at Shanti Ashram where they pictorially depicted the Prayer and Action logo in the form of a Kolam. A Kolam is a geometrical line drawing composed of curved loops, drawn around a grid pattern of dots. Participants as well as organizers found the experience very important.

### Growing Together Foundation Poverty Alleviation

In Soacha, a sub-urban area of the Colombian capital where displaced people from the armed conflict have found refuge, GNRC supports the Growing Together Foundation poverty alleviation



programs through ethics education workshops with families to address domestic violence.

An industrial sewing machine was donated for a professional training course that will benefit fifteen women living in extreme poverty. These women also attend ethics education sessions twice monthly.

### Serving Children: Marking and Celebrating Children's Days











“There is no trust more sacred than the one the world holds with children. There is no duty more important than ensuring that their rights are respected, that their welfare is protected, that their lives are free from fear and want and that they can grow up in peace.”  
Kofi Annan

## International Day of the Street Child

With the theme “*Children are the future so open your eyes*” GNRC Tanzania together with MAKINI and the Dogodogo Centre held a press conference on 11<sup>th</sup> April at Habari Maelezo (Media Hub) to highlight the cause of street children – this vulnerable group that makes up for five thousand children in Dar es Salaam alone.

Lending support to the other global partners, GNRC Tanzania joined the local efforts to demand a day for every street child – to ensure their cause is heard by the global community and decision makers – for communities to understand *why* they are on the streets and to recognize that they too *have rights to be enjoyed and protected*.

On 12<sup>th</sup> April, GNRC Tanzania together with other partners gathered twenty street children at the Dogodogo Centre in Kigogo



and was able to hear and listen to their thoughts presented through creative arts. The Coordinator of the Dogodogo Centre, Mr. Sabas Masawe, briefed the group on the aim of the day and the efforts of the coalition.

## The Day of the African Child

The Day of the African Child (DAC) was commemorated by GNRC Tanzania in Dar es Salaam and Unguja on 16<sup>th</sup> June. Moreover, GNRC Tanzania engaged Peace Ambassadors through the use of social media to recognize this day.



In Dar es Salaam, GNRC Tanzania partnered with Dogodogo Centre, Plan International, C-Sema, SOS, KIWOHEDE and CYDAD in commemorating this day. The consortium agreed to organize and implemented the following.

### **Celebrating 25 Years of the Convention of the Rights of Children**

A workshop titled “Youth voices from Kwazulu-Natal-Celebrate 25 years of the Convention of the Rights of the Child” was organized by GNRC South Africa, Religions for Peace and INFO4AFRICA2 on June 4<sup>th</sup>, 2014. Youths from Youth Peace Forum alongside Children’s HIV Association (CHIVA) used the *Learning to Live Together* manual and the National Plan of Action for Children in South Africa 2012-2017 to guide group discussions. The event took place at the Manning Road Methodist Church Hall in Durban.

### **International Day of Peace Commemorated by GNRC Members in Nepal**

*May Peace Prevail in us: Inner Peace; Outer Peace!*



The International Day of Peace, which is observed around the world on 21st of September, was marked with various programs running for a week with the active initiation of Shanti Sewa Ashram (Peace Service







Center). The slogan was “*The Right of Peoples to Peace*”.

Some of the activities that took place include; the launch of the book “*Stolen*”, at Shanti Sewa Ashram written by Jerry Piasecki who is currently working with the UN for global peace education, an inauguration ceremony of Airtime Project among Nepal, Australia and Muhammad Ali Center where the children would be participating for creative writing, and an interaction program held at Shanti Sewa Ashram where students of grade eight from Hindu Vidyapeeth-Nepal interacted with mothers from a Women Study Club.

Members of HVP Peace Club and Volunteer Club held an awareness program with the school students and formed a board where they shared about peace. The main speaker and facilitators were members from the Universal Peace Federation (Mr. Piya Ratna), Bahai Center Nepal (Mr. Narendra Pandey), Religions for Peace Nepal (Mrs. Indira Manandhar) and Guru Chintamani Yogi.

Youth Society for Peace coordinated a “Thoughts of Youth” program where youth discussed about the various reasons and steps forward to be taken to control mind and body for inner peace.

## WORLD DAY OF PRAYER AND ACTION

### Bosnia and Herzegovina

The World Day of Prayer and Action for Children was celebrated on the 20th of November 2014 in Visoko at the Partizan sports hall - in partnership with "Mosaic", the cooperation of the Municipality of Visoko, Sports Association Visoko, religious communities and the GNRC. The activity allowed parents and students to interact – where students showed their creativity through devotional songs, dance, acting and folk dances.



*"Prayer in action is love, love in action is service."  
Mother Teresa*

A hand book on ideas for action on positive parenting translated in Pakistan National Language (URDU) was printed and distributed in hundreds among parents at St. Mary's School and in streets where these booklets were handed out to different people walking on roads, in vehicles, in shops (retailers) and in hotels. A lecture on positive parenting was also given to parents and teachers.

### Argentina

The GNRC members in Argentina organized two activities to celebrate the World Day of Prayer and Action for Children.

On November 20th, a DPAC celebration took place at the Michael Ham College, in Buenos Aires Province. The activity



### Pakistan

The World Day of Prayer and Action for Children was celebrated in Pakistan on November 20th 2014 with the theme "Promote Positive Parenting"/End Violence Against Children."



mobilized about 1,500 girls, including children with disabilities. They created a flight of “Kites for Peace” done in collaboration with GNRC partners in the Philippines, and in cooperation with the United Religions Initiative (URI). The celebration ended with an Interfaith Prayer done in Hebrew, Arabic and Spanish, led by Rabbi Aryeh Sztokman, Ms. Nancy Falcon and Maria Eugenia Crespo.

On November 21<sup>st</sup>, another Prayer and Action event took place in El Pilar, in the outskirts of Buenos Aires, in collaboration with GNRC

members and SERPAJ, a faith-based organization. Nearly 140 children and youth and 80 adults participated in the event under the slogan of “Strengthening the Child Protection System in Argentina”.

The “Information for advocacy for children’s rights” workshop had the aim of identifying situations requiring coordinated approaches and interventions between the State and civil society, due to their magnitude (such as school dropouts) or their complexity (e.g., adolescents in conflict with the law).



## PEACE BUILDING

### Strengthening Peace and Security within the East Africa Community (EAC)

*GNRC members participated in a conference on Inter-Religious collaboration to strengthen peace and security within the East Africa Community (EAC) in Kigali, Rwanda*



GNRC members attended an inter-religious conference facilitated by the East Africa Community secretariat. The five-day planning workshop held at Lemigo Hotel in Kigali, Rwanda from 16<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> September 2014 had representatives from the East African Community (EAC) including more than eighty religious leaders.

The conference was chaired by Archbishop Bernard Ntahoturi and H.E the Deputy Mufti; Sheikh Abdul Hayyi Mukiibi, while Dr. Andries Odendaai and Sheikh Abulatif Shaban facilitated the conference—they called upon religious leaders

with an aim of establishing an EAC Inter-Religious Council to Strengthen Peace and Security within the EAC Region.

Members from the GNRC who attended the conference were; Professor Abdulghafur El-Busaidi—Chairman, Arigatou International—Kenya, Abdul Alawi-Kenya, Nageeba Tegulwa-Uganda and Sheikh Fadhili Soraga-Zanzibar. Also present were youth leaders, directors and *Women of Faith*.

The conference was the third of its kind; with the first held in Mwanza, Tanzania in May 2014

“If we are to teach real peace in this world, and if we are to carry on a real war against war, we shall have to begin with the children.”

*Mahatma Gandhi*



and the second in Bujumbura, Burundi in August 2014. During the prior conferences, the focus was on the importance of including the religious community, their leadership and a development agenda as part of the process of enhancing the commitment of promoting peace and security.

The conference enabled dialogue between religious leaders, member states, partners and government representatives on their respective roles in collaborating peace and security.

In conclusion, the workshop led to the birth of the EAC Interfaith body, which has the mandate of bringing religious groups from different faiths within the EAC countries into one structure that will work closely with the EAC Political Affairs office. Lastly, participants visited the 1994

Genocide Memorial Site to pay their respect to the lives lost.

## The CRAVE Program

The Community Resilience Against Violent Extremism (CRAVE) program is a program of the GNRC with the aim of tackling the ‘soft’ causes of conflicts which cannot be fought militarily. This program is premised on the assumption that religion has a fundamental role in resolving conflicts that are fueled by an abuse of religions. The program is niched at the intersection of the following fields: peace building, development and interfaith dialogue.

The program therefore is designed to bring to the forefront the religious and ethnic elements of conflicts and how these are mobilised to construct belligerent



'otherness' and eventually to destroy the 'other'.

## GNRC Youth Camp in Zanzibar

A three day Peace Camp with the theme of Community Resilience Against Violent Extremism (CRAVE) took place from the 18<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup> June 2014 along the Zanzibar International Film Festival (ZIFF) and was hosted by the GNRC Tanzania.

The event had youth participants from six countries (which include Kenya, Rwanda, Somalia, Sudan, Tanzania and Uganda) that have experienced and continue to experience violent conflicts and its effects. They had the opportunity to interact and share their experiences as well as come up with solutions that can aid in the fight against



violent extremism and most importantly in achieving a lasting solution towards world peace.

Facilitators, who include Rev. Fred Nyabera, Dr. Mustafa Y. Ali, Mr. Belall Maudarbux and Ms. Miriam Rubino, moderated the sessions on Peace, 5 stages of accepting the other, conflict resolution and art for peace respectively.

## Building Peace in Nairobi: CRAVE Training Workshop

The Global Network of Religions for Children (GNRC), held a two-day workshop in Nairobi, East-Leigh area from 26<sup>th</sup> to 27<sup>th</sup> January 2015.

In attendance at the workshop were participants from: the Global Network of Religions for Children (GNRC), the Peace Innovation Organization (P.I.O), Canadian





High Commission, the Government of Kenya (represented by Senior Assistant County Commissioner Kamukunji Sub-County, David Mbevi) and Sh. Ibrahim Lethome, a lawyer and a religious leader.

There was emphasis on the need to be vigilant and supportive to government or police work, and striving to safeguard their resources and assets such as the mosques and churches.

### **Building Peace in Mombasa: CRAVE Training Workshop**

The Global Network of Religions for Children (GNRC) conducted a two-day workshop in Mombasa town on 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> March 2015. The program aimed at creating unity and re-establishing mutual understanding between different religions in the rapidly growing cosmopolitan area.

In attendance at the workshop were Dr. Mustafa Y. Ali, Secretary General of the GNRC, the Government of Kenya (represented by Senior Assistant County Commissioner Mombasa Jude Wasonga), Dr. Ramadhan Suleiman- an advisor and strong contributor in many peace and youth initiatives, Sh. Ibrahim Lethome, a lawyer and religious leader, and several non-governmental institutions interested in youth reformation and empowerment as well as peace.

Dr. Ali shared with participants that humankind has a right to freedom of expression and worship towards desired religion. "If we have mistrust in religions amongst communities we will never resolve our problems, but if we speak out on our grievances then it will be a step forward towards promoting peace," Dr. Ali said. He continued that the society should be a model

in promoting a peaceful and entrepreneurial nation.

At the end of the workshop, the responsibility of peace ambassadors was left on the hands of the attendants; to guide and lead their subsequent public. The program focuses on promoting the goals of the organization towards protecting the lives and future of innocent children.

### **Forgiveness and Reconciliation Training Workshop**

GNRC with support from the Goldin Institute and Arigatou International conducted a three day training workshop that took place at the Alokolum National Major Seminary in Gulu, Uganda between 6-13 June 2014, and was coordinated by the Interreligious Council of Uganda and the Acholi Religious Leaders Peace Initiative.



In attendance were fifteen participants from different districts in the northern region who underwent an eight day training on forgiveness and reconciliation conducted by the Fundación Para La Reconciliación based in Colombia, and using the ESPERE Model (Schools for Forgiveness and Reconciliation). Participants belonged to different occupations including, teachers, NGO representatives, pastors, youth group leaders and former child soldiers.





“God created the best world for children, I felt by heart to maintain the world accordingly and working together to help the children to receive all opportunities in much better way”. *David Paul - Pakistan*

Participants were dedicated to learning about forgiveness and reconciliation. During the forgiveness phase, participants were helped to understand that forgiving people was for their own good as it helped them to ‘lift off the burden of bitterness they carried and begin a life free of poison’. The process was activity packed and entailed personal reflections about offenses and offenders, leading to an understanding of motivations behind offenses and ultimately helping the offended to begin looking at the other ‘with new eyes’ and perspectives. Such clear understanding leads one to the realization that human weaknesses are inherent in the nature of man and that while in many occasions we focus more on how others have offended us, we also need to realize that we often offend others, hence need to make forgiveness a

way of life.

## Deepening Interfaith Collaboration: Dialogue Days with Religious Leaders and Media Practitioners

The King Abdullah Bin Abdulaziz International Centre for Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue (KAICIID), in cooperation with Arigatou International, GNRC and the support of KAICIID’s Expert for Africa Programs, Ambassador Mussie Hailu, held an open public event themed “Dialogue Days 2014” in Nairobi, Kenya on November 17th. In a spacious marquee in the grounds of the Serena Hotel, around 120 attendees, including press, gathered at round tables to discuss the impact of media on interreligious relations.

The panel was comprised of nationally renowned speakers



representing the Kenyan government, Islamic and Christian religious representative bodies, and the media. The panelists were Farah Maalim Mohammed, former Deputy Speaker of the Kenya National Assembly; Agnes Aboum, President of the World Council of Churches; Mwenda Njoka, spokesman in the Office of the President, Interior and Coordination Ministry; Ibrahim Lethome, who represented Muslims in Kenya as a Commissioner in the Constitution of Kenya Review Commission (CKRC) that drew up the new constitution for the country; David Makali, leading journalist and former managing editor of *The Standard*; and Mike Waltner, Head of Initiatives at KAICIID.

The panel was moderated by Dr. Mustafa Y. Ali, GNRC Secretary General. Diplomatic representatives from Canada, Austria, Spain



and Saudi Arabia attended. Organizations such as the Supreme Council of Kenya Muslims (SUPKEM), the Organization of African Instituted Churches (OAIC), Union of Muslim Councils in Eastern, Central and Southern Africa, the Islamic Foundation, Sikh Supreme Council of Kenya, Finn Church Aid and Jamia Mosque Association were also present.

### **GNRC and the Augustinian College of Chitré Interfaith Tour**

On May 9, 2014 the GNRC and Augustinian College of Chitré conducted an interfaith tour with sixty adolescents of the Augustinian College located in the province of Herrera, in the central part of the country.

The adolescents aged 15 and 16 visited five sacred temples of the





City of Panama: the Episcopal Cathedral of San Lucas, the Catholic Church of Don Bosco, the Greek Orthodox Cathedral, the Hindu Temple and the Israeli Kol Shearith Synagogue. The main objective of the visit was to discover the diversity and richness of the Catholic, Episcopal, Greek Orthodox, Hindu and Jewish religions.

The interreligious dialogue was an opportunity to ask questions and exchange ideas and experiences. At the end of the day the adolescents showed their appreciation for the experience and committed to be more respectful to people of other faiths and to value the richness of diversity without resorting to prejudices.

The religious leaders who spoke to the 60 teenagers were: Father Walter Smith, Isis Navarro, Father Hector Quirós, Dr. Ermolaos

Antoniadis and Rabbi Gustavo Kraselni.

### **Palestine and Israeli Youth Building an Ongoing Cadre of Young People**

*The Pluralistic Spiritual Community Center at Wahat al-Salam~Neve Shalom*

This is a program for Palestinian and Israeli youths, focused on building an ongoing cadre of young people that would meet throughout the year. The plan included training group facilitators to run courses for 20 Palestinian and Israeli youth leaders, from the mixed cities of Ramle, Lydda and Jerusalem.

At earlier stages of the project, due to tensions in the area, it was challenging to develop an ongoing group of youth leaders therefore the project begun by reaching out

to groups of youth in the region and building cooperation with other organizations. Progress in our programs working towards building relations and trust between Jewish and Palestinian youth and preparing the groundwork for the future.

### Amani Kwanza Project Launch

On the 18<sup>th</sup> March, 2015 the GNRC Tanzania in partnership with the Inter-Religious Council of Peace Tanzania (IRCPT) and The European Committee for Education and Agriculture (CEFA) launched the Amani Kwanza project at the Karimjee Hall, Dar es Salaam.

Invited guests included senior religious leaders of Tanzania, local government leaders, representatives of the diplomatic community, representatives of CSOs, the media and youth.

In her introductory remarks, the GNRC Tanzania Country



Coordinator, Ms. Mwase, gave a brief introduction of the project and the coalition partners indicating that the coalition partners recognize that Peace is an important prerequisite for sustainable development—at all levels—individual, communal and national level. It is in line with this that they designed the Amani Kwanza project—a multi-sectorial preventive program on building community resilience against violent extremism. This project aims at preserving a spirit of understanding, peaceful co-existence and dialogue among Tanzanians and helps mitigate and



address obstacles and threats to peace and development by:

- ❑ Strengthening peace and the setting for interfaith dialogue in Tanzania;
- ❑ Enhancing media's capacities to contribute to peace building and conflict resolution especially in view of the upcoming general elections;
- ❑ Set the foundations for the establishment of a national conflict early warning and response (CEWR) mechanism; and
- ❑ Improving conditions for holding free and fair elections and increase the electorate's interest in participating in them in an active and peaceful manner.

The religious leaders indicated their support for the Amani Kwanza, recognizing that it has come at the right time. In his remarks, Sheikh Alhaj Mussa,



Chief Sheikh of Dar es Salaam (Supreme Muslim Council in Tanzania), highlighted that the foundation of peace requires equality, observation of human rights, respect, forgiveness, love and tolerance.

Rev. Stephanie Franz, representing Bishop Malasusa of the Evangelical Lutheran Council Tanzania (CCT), welcomed the peace message referring to Psalm 133:1 emphasizing the need and obligation for co-existence.

His Excellency Ambassador Olivier Chave, Swiss Ambassador to Tanzania, cemented the fact that peace has to be nourished. It does not fall from the sky. He recognized that we are living in dangerous times where lack of education and employment can lead to extreme violence, underscoring the need to strengthen capacity to tolerate and love each other.

The Guest of Honor, Honorable Said Meck Sadiq, Regional Commissioner of Dar es Salaam, focused his speech on the youth as the easiest group to be coerced into violence. Moreover, he explained how both male and females suffer: young men are

sent to the frontlines whilst young women are raped and forced into marriage. He highlighted that when violence comes it does not end. Furthermore, he explained that violence is blind. All will be affected therefore we must keep the peace.



## LEARNING TO LIVE TOGETHER



"United, despite our diversity, we can achieve children's rights that will always be respected and put into practice, especially by the adults in the environments in which children develop."

Marco Lagutasi - Ecuador

### Mauritius

GNRC Mauritius in collaboration with the Council of Religions and the Surtee Sunee Mussulman Society (SSMS) hosted a three-day workshop in the capital city of Mauritius, Port Louis, from the 12th to 14th of August.

The workshop was launched by the former President of Mauritius, Mr. Cassam Uteem in the presence of the Minister of Education, Hon. Vasant Bunwaree and Hon. Abdullah Hossen, MP for the constituency.


In his opening address the Minister of Education welcomed the initiative and mentioned that he is willing to explore ways to impart the skills in schools.

Trainers from the Arigatou International – Geneva office, led by Mr. Suchith Abeyewickreme, facilitated the workshop. Participants comprised school teachers from both primary and secondary who hail from faith based and state schools.

### Brazil

During the first week of June 2014 the GNRC-Brasil organized an ethics education workshop on the use of the *Learning to Live Together* programme, in Salvador de Bahia. The aim of the workshop was to provide the educators with tools, techniques and methodologies to use ethics education as an instrument for building a culture of peace with children and families. Approximately 30 educators of different institutions participated in the workshop.





"We are many gloriously different strands of thread, offering ourselves to the Master Weaver for the sake of children. In our diversity is the potential for extraordinarily beautiful patterns of compassion. Our unique commitments to children, when woven together, can make a fabric strong and warm enough to protect children from the very coldest winds of this world. Let us therefore engage one another with more urgency and solidarity than ever, for we are each co-weavers of this tapestry of hope for the children of the world. "

Rev. Takeyasu Miyamoto



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