



# GNRC

## ANNUAL REPORT

### 2022-2023

Strengthening and Reinvigorating the Network for Children





## Interfaith Cooperation to Build a Better World for Children

### About Us

The Global Network of Religions for Children (GNRC) is a global interfaith network of organizations and individuals specifically dedicated to securing the rights and well-being of children everywhere. GNRC members come from all the world's major religions and many other spiritual traditions. The GNRC is committed 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.

### Our Mission

To mobilize the potential of all religions to empower ordinary people from all walks of life to make unique faith-based contributions to the realization of every child's right to attain full physical, mental, emotional, spiritual, ethical and social development while seeking partnership with leaders, individuals, and communities, international, national, and regional institutions, grassroots organizations, and people of goodwill 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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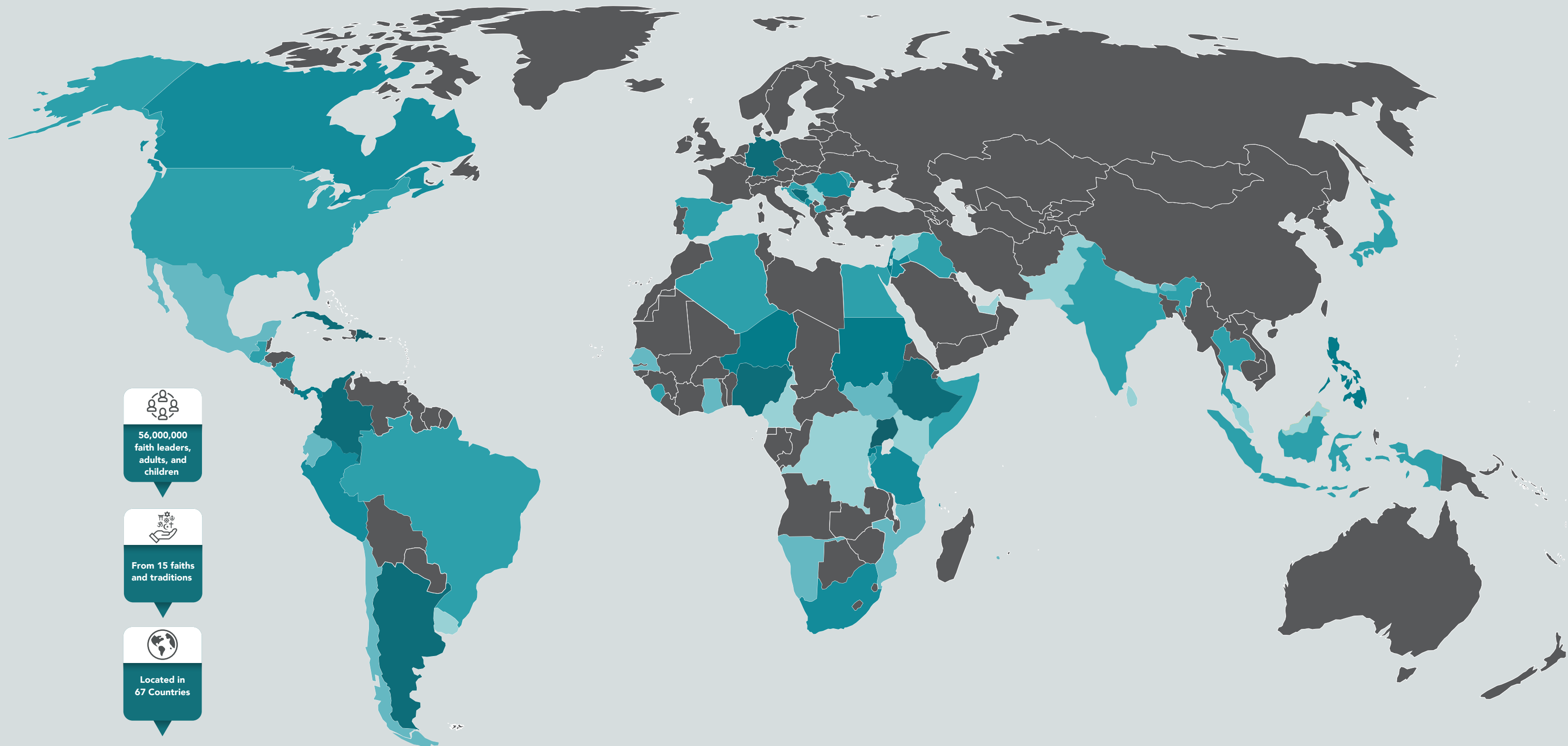
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# Building a Better World for Children

*GNRC Around the World*







## Acronyms and Abbreviations

<b>BiH</b>	Bosnia and Herzegovina
<b>BRAVE</b>	Building Resilience Against Violent Extremism
<b>CAN-Pakistan</b>	Children Advocacy Network – Pakistan
<b>CAYINSA</b>	Children and Youth Interfaith Network of South Africa
<b>CRAVE</b>	Community Resilience Against Violent Extremism
<b>DAC</b>	Day of the African Children
<b>DPAC</b>	Day of Prayer and Action for Children
<b>D.R.C</b>	Democratic Republic of Congo
<b>ECP</b>	End Child Poverty
<b>ForB</b>	Freedom of Religion or Belief
<b>GBV</b>	Gender-Based Violence
<b>GCCA</b>	GNRC Country Communication Associate
<b>GNRC</b>	Global Network of Religions for Children
<b>IAFSC</b>	Interfaith Alliance for Safer Communities
<b>IDEP</b>	International Day for the Eradication of Poverty
<b>IDP</b>	Internally Displaced Persons
<b>IGAD</b>	Intergovernmental Authority on Development
<b>IVD</b>	International Volunteer Day
<b>LAC</b>	Latin America and the Caribbean
<b>LTLT</b>	Learning to Live Together
<b>NCA</b>	Norwegian Church Aid
<b>PCVE</b>	Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism
<b>REV</b>	Reverend
<b>SDGs</b>	Sustainable Development Goals
<b>SH</b>	Sheikh
<b>ST</b>	Saint
<b>UAE</b>	United Arab Emirates
<b>UN</b>	United Nations
<b>UNCRC</b>	United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
<b>UNDP</b>	United Nations Development Programme
<b>UNESCO</b>	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
<b>UNICEF</b>	United Nations International Children’s Emergency Fund
<b>UNOCT</b>	United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism
<b>URT</b>	United Republic of Tanzania
<b>USA</b>	United States of America
<b>USAID</b>	United States Agency for International Development
<b>VAC</b>	Violence Against Children
<b>VE</b>	Violent Extremism
<b>YIA</b>	Youth in Action



## The Panama Commitments on Ending Violence Against Children





## Message from the GNRC Secretary General



### Looking into the Future with Hope

In 2022, one in six children lived in a conflict zone, and a record 36.5 million children lived as refugees or IDPs—the highest number in 20 years. This comes at a time when the effects of the destructive COVID—19 pandemic are being felt globally, triggering even graver violations of children’s rights.

In conflict zones such as Afghanistan, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Somalia, Mali, Nigeria, Cameroon, the Central African Republic, Ukraine, and more recently in Sudan, more children have faced increased challenges to their well-being. The need for concerted and collaborative efforts to end these conflicts, and focus on children and the vulnerable has never been more urgent.

As part of the solution, GNRC Network focused more on setting up or strengthening committees, improving religious diversity, building members’ capacity to respond to various child rights’ related issues, and ensuring child safeguarding and meaningful participation. During the Fiscal Year 2022/23, fifteen committees were launched: Eight in Africa, four in Asia, two in Europe, and one in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA).

The increased grassroots focus of the Network has enriched children and expanded inclusivity, especially spotlighting children living with disabilities. Those in remote rural villages, informal settlements, conflict and fragile settings, and other difficult situations are a priority in our work.

Driven by a passionate team of staff, co-coordinators, contact persons and GCCAs, and members, GNRC is living up to its mission of building a better world for children. In it, we say, and act to the best of our abilities, ‘leave no child behind’. In 2022, we reached 34,024 children and young people, with 642 faith leaders participating in our work.

#### Mustafa Y. Ali, PhD,

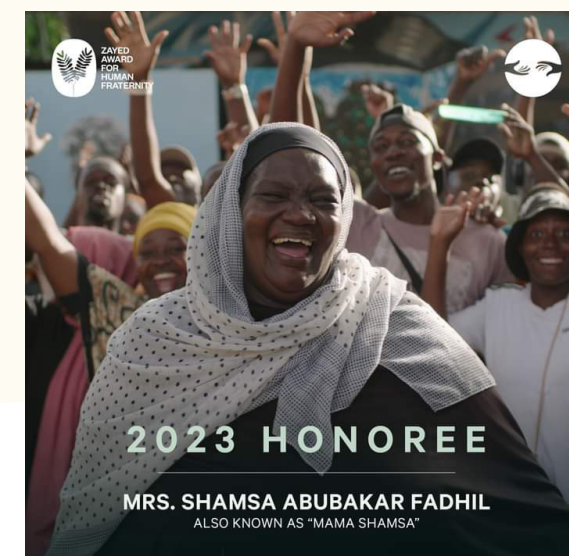
Secretary General, Global Network of Religions for Children (GNRC),  
and Director, Arigatou International – Nairobi

“ ... increased grassroots focus of the Network has enriched children and expanded inclusivity, especially spotlighting children living with disabilities.”

## 1. Preventing Violent Extremism, Gang Violence, and Organized Crimes

*“If we have no peace,  
it is because we have forgotten that we belong to each other.”*  
~ **Mother Teresa**

### A GNRC SPECIAL



**The Zayed Award for Human Fraternity** recognized Kenyan peacebuilder Ms. Shamsa Abubakar Fadhil also known as ‘Mama Shamsa’. The Zayed Award for Human Fraternity is an annual independent and international award recognizing individuals or entities across the world, who led by example, collaborating selflessly and tirelessly to bridge divides and create a real human connection, often at a great personal sacrifice.

Mama Shamsa is a Kenyan peace mediator and community mobilizer, she was recognized for nurturing youth in her home county, Mombasa, Kenya, and saving young people from involvement in violence, crime, and extremism, by providing them with counseling, care, and training.

Besides serving on many other platforms, Ms. Shamsa is a GNRC Member. She was a key support to, and actively participated in Arigatou International’s, GNRC project – Building Family Resilience Against Violent Extremism – Women of Faith in Action under the Global Community Engagement and Resilience Fund (GCERF). She particularly facilitated women’s and children’s sessions during forums.

*“My best advice to the world is that PEACE is a collective responsibility. If we are to create a nonviolent world with equal rights, we must begin with our children. Each parent should therefore take collective responsibility towards their children...We should change our ways of being selfish or the collision course is just around the corner where violence will triumph over peace and extremism over tolerance. Education is the key to this global challenge.”*

Mama Shamsa serves in the board of Arigatou International - Kenya and is also a GNRC Kenya Member.





The issue of violent extremism is not abstract. It has been on the rise in East Africa in recent years, causing anxiety among peacebuilding practitioners. Due to a lack of dedicated tools, The Goldin Institute, Chicago, and Arigatou International – Nairobi supported the development of the Community Resilience Against Violent Extremism (CRAVE) Resource Guide to fill that gap. Preceding the CRAVE Resource Guide, was the Building Resilience Against Violent Extremism (BRAVE) Training Manual and Resource Guide, by the Center for Sustainable Conflict Resolution (CSCR), aimed at addressing the rising radicalization and violent extremism, focusing on violent manifestations in Kenya and the greater Horn of Africa.

## 1.1 Promoting Peace



**Tanzania:** Youth in Action (YIA) Tanzania held forums between June and July 2022 focused on preventing adolescents and youths from participating in violent acts and sustaining peace as a prerequisite of inclusive growth and sustainable development in the community. The forums created spaces for dialogue on peacebuilding processes in promoting coexistence, trust building, appreciation of diversity, and increased participation, awareness, and influence of adolescents and youth in impacting community development. They partnered with youth-led organizations to promote peace narratives, bringing together 185 children and youths from faith-based initiatives.

### Using Sports to Promote Peace



**GNRC Colombia**, through the Creciendo Juntos Organization for Children, organized a 'World Cup' for Peace tournament to promote peace and reconciliation within the communities. Messages of peace and non-violence, conflict management, teamwork, and the effective use of free time were shared, benefiting 100 people (eighty children, five faith leaders and fifteen teachers).

**GNRC Argentina** held a children's sports event, *Games Without Violence*, to promote peace among children and their parents within their communities. Seventy-eight children and thirty-two adults took part in the event.

*'Sports have the potential to bring people together and promote understanding and cooperation.'*

**GNRC South Sudan** led by their contact person, Bishop Simon Nyamara, organized a football tournament between four teams on 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> February 2023. The tournament brought together 350 participants to promote tolerance among different tribes. Present were religious leaders from the Islamic and Christian faiths.

*"I commend the GNRC for the wonderful work of bringing together people from different tribes."*  
~ Local Area Chief

## 1.2 Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism



### Kenya: Creating Awareness

Rev. Maria Menego, GNRC Kenya Secretary, facilitated workshops on the importance of creating awareness on Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism (PCVE) due to the increased gangs in Mombasa, reaching 400 children. After identifying nearly twenty children involved with criminal gangs, they guided and counseled them.

### Sensitization

Together with the GNRC Women of Faith in Action, Mombasa, Rev. Maria organized sensitization workshops for children on PCVE in public social halls, guided by the Community Resilience Against Violent Extremism (CRAVE) manual. They set to address the pertinent issues in PCVE, including early warning signs, response, and the push and pull factors of violent extremism reaching 102 children.

### Alliance for the Protection of Children

The Alliance for the Protection of Children (APN), formed after the 5<sup>th</sup> GNRC Forum in Panama, implemented the PREVENIR project, focusing on Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador and Mexico. Nine grassroots organizations working with children at risk of capture by gangs equipped the children with different tools to capacitate them in their work.



## Strengthening the Network

### GNRC LAUNCH – South Africa

GNRC South Africa, led by their coordinator, Ms. Saydoon Sayed, launched their committee on 26<sup>th</sup> June 2022, in Durban, South Africa, at a ceremony that brought together sixty participants: among them leaders from six different faiths, namely, Hinduism, Christianity, Islam, Sikhism, Judaism and Bahai. Twelve GNRC South Africa committee members, children's representatives, religious leaders, and a professional from the Islamic Medical Association of South Africa attended the event.



*"Children should be the center of the house that needs to be nurtured and protected. They need to grow in an environment where they feel accepted and loved."*

~ Rev. Mike Vorster

## 2. Nurturing Spirituality and Ending Violence in Child Upbringing

*"Religion is the essence of man; the essence of man is his work and helping others."*

~ **Fr Josip Ikić, Bosnia and Herzegovina**

### 2.1 Learning to Live Together

*"Learn to live together like bees."*

~ **Mr. Francis Mofor, Advisor, GNRC Cameroon Committee**

#### Learning to Live Together (LTLT)



An Intercultural and Interfaith Programme for Ethics Education that creates educational experiences that empower children to develop a stronger sense of ethical awareness helping them become global citizens. The Learning to Live Together Program provides educators in formal and non-formal education settings worldwide with tools for designing, implementing, and evaluating intercultural and interfaith programs for children.

On 28<sup>th</sup> June, 2022, **GNRC Bosnia and Herzegovina**, led by "Mozaik" Visoko, convened a workshop on the LTLT that focused on peer violence, breaking stereotypes and prejudices among young people, promoting volunteerism and activism, conflict prevention, tolerance, empathy, communication and interreligious dialogue. The workshop had fifty-eight participants (twenty children and youths, four faith leaders, and ten teachers).

*"With our interreligious dialogue, we want to encourage others to promote peace and unity."*

~ **Ms. Ismeta Salispahic, Coordinator, GNRC Bosnia and Herzegovina**

**GNRC Peru** and Ethics Education for Children organized a four-day training for twenty-two representatives of faith communities on the LTLT approach. Present were representatives from Young Muslim Association and UNICEF Peru. Also, GNRC Peru adolescents committee jointly with Ethics Education for Children (EEC) held a meeting on 13<sup>th</sup> August 2022, to raise awareness among children on their rights. There were forty-nine participants (five men, twenty-four women, sixteen children, and four faith leaders), with twenty-three reached indirectly.



**GNRC El Salvador** organized two follow-up LTLT workshops. The first was with young facilitators, some of them being from the Catholic church and Mayan traditional spiritual beliefs. Together with Ethics Education for Children Initiative, they partnered with Nuevo Amanecer Association and organized the second





follow-up training for educators, staff, and childcare center teachers. The workshops reached one hundred and four participants (seventeen men, thirty-nine women, nineteen children and youths, fifteen faith leaders and fourteen teachers).

*"The LTLT workshop was essential to me because I learned why it is important to respect both our own identity and that of others."*

~ **Amir, GNRC Bosnia and Herzegovina**

## 2.2 Promoting Spirituality in Child Upbringing



**GNRC Tanzania** empowered fifty religious leaders, caregivers, and parents by emphasizing their role in promoting peace through nurturing the spirituality of their followers.



**GNRC Moldova**, on 25<sup>th</sup> February 2023, marked the spiritual day in an event where discussions around the plight of people and especially children in Ukraine were fostered. Participants prayed for peace for the people of Ukraine.

## 2.3 Interreligious Visits

In partnership with the Augustinian College of Chitré, the Islamic Cultural Center and the Jewish, Hindu and Greek communities, GNRC Panama organized interreligious visits to four communities. They involved graduating students, aiming to teach them about the diversity and richness of different religions. They were introduced to the LTLT approach, fostering a dialogue of respect. The activity had 109 participants.



## Coimbatore Vizha: Journey for Unity

### Celebrating Culture and Religious Diversity

On 4<sup>th</sup> January 2023, GNRC India held the 15<sup>th</sup> annual edition of the 'Journey for Unity', the first public interfaith outreach for 2023, as part of the Coimbatore Vizha. The interfaith-intergenerational journey celebrates the cultural and religious diversity of the city of Coimbatore.

Present at the event were 213 adults, with religious leaders from the Hindu, Christian, Islamic, Jain and Sikh faiths and traditions. 124 children from twenty-six schools participated. Together, they visited five different places of worship; Arulmigu Koniamman Thirukkoi, St. Michael Roman Catholic Cathedral, Athar Jamath Masjid, Shri Shankheswara Parshwanath Jain Temple, and Gurudwara Singh Sabha.

The participants came together at the newly dedicated Mahatma Gandhi Memorial at Pothanur for a special interfaith prayer for peace led by the different religious leaders. The children then shared their experiences.

Civil Society Leaders present reiterated the commitment to unity in diversity, led by Dr. B. K. Krishnaraj Vanavarayar.

*"This journey for unity has helped me respect the religious practices of others and learn about other religions."*

~ **Nisha, 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Student.**



## Strengthening the Network

### GNRC LAUNCH – Romania

GNRC Romania led by their coordinator, Ms. Laura Molnar, launched their committee on 3<sup>rd</sup> September 2022, in Sinaia, Romania. The launch brought together forty-four participants, including school representatives, religious leaders, experts in education, and psychologists, in a bid to strengthen and reinvigorate the Network. The event was themed, *Building an interfaith-inspired world for our children, our responsibility for their future.*

*"We strongly believe that everyone is capable of changing the world for the better."*

~ Tudor and Rebeca, Youths, GNRC Romania

## 3. Ending Child Poverty and Supporting Vulnerable Children

*"The shortest path to eradicating poverty in the long term is by starting with today's children – building structures and empowering families to ensure that they escape the vicious cycle of intergenerational poverty."*

~ **Rev. Keishi Miyamoto, President, Arigatou International.**

### End Child Poverty Celebrates 10 Years

*Looking back, Forging Ahead*



Thursday, 16<sup>th</sup> June 2022 marked the commencement of the 'All Out to End Child Poverty – Looking back, forging ahead' campaign, in a captivating virtual launch event that brought together over 100 participants. The event marked the beginning of a campaign, dubbed ECP@10, to celebrate global progress made by the initiative towards overcoming child poverty over the last ten years.

At the event, speakers recalled the initiative's launch ten years ago in Dar es Salaam Tanzania, during the 4<sup>th</sup> forum of the Global Network of Religions for Children. The event took stock of the milestones, challenges, and emerging trends in child poverty over the last ten years regarding the work of End Child Poverty. This was shaped through conversations between children and adults who included faith leaders, academia, and researchers.

Children shared their views on poverty, called on leaders and policymakers to put in more effort to respond to child poverty, and further pledged to take action to eradicate poverty in their communities.

**END CHILD POVERTY TURNS 10**

**END  
CHILD  
POVERTY @10**

Celebrating 10 Years of Working With and For Children





### 3.1 Children Solutions Lab



**GNRC Bosnia and Herzegovina**, led by 'Mozaik Visoko', conducted a Children Solution Lab writing workshop on 25<sup>th</sup> April 2022 aimed at sensitizing children on how to end child poverty in their community, build their skills in writing proposals, and conducting children's workshops. The workshop was attended by twenty-five participants.



The Children's Solutions Lab (CLS) aims to support young people in taking action to address poverty affecting children in their communities through solutions based on education.

The CSL seeks to promote ethical reflections among children about the root causes of poverty and how some cultural norms can impact the wellbeing of children and, ultimately, lead to child poverty. The initiative also aims to support children in finding local solutions to address these issues in their communities.

Get Involved

### 3.2 Welfare Activities

**GNRC Sri Lanka**, led by Sarvodaya in partnership with Singularity Sri Lanka and End Child Poverty (ECP), set up a community kitchen to provide food to vulnerable families during the political and economic crisis in Sri Lanka, reaching 1,000 people. In the same period, GNRC Sri Lanka organized food for children in eight school districts benefitting 4,200 children, 180 teachers and 250 pregnant and lactating mothers.



*"Caring for each other is a social responsibility."*  
~ **Ven Galkande, Faith leader, GNRC Sri Lanka**



**GNRC Bhutan** organized several clothe drives for needy children and households, donating clothes to schools. Together with the Care Wear Team and other partners, they organized an eight-day donation drive, benefitting approximately seventy-four households. In total, they benefited 516 children, five faith leaders, fifteen teachers, and 107 adults.



**GNRC Youth Serbia**, in collaboration with Primary schools, and the Center for Social Care, convened several learning lessons for disadvantaged children via a Zoom meeting, in Sombor. They offered courses free of charge facilitated by volunteers, aimed to improve the school achievements for the children and prevent them from dropping out of school. Twenty-eight people benefitted from the classes.



**GNRC Germany**, in partnership with JuBuk Germany, organized events in Turkey between 30<sup>th</sup> August to 8<sup>th</sup> September 2022 to empower differently abled young persons. The program directly benefited 107 participants (twenty-five children, twenty-five women, fifty men, and seven faith leaders) and indirectly reached 400 participants.

They also conducted a program at the Center of Unaccompanied minor refugees in Ioannina, Greece, to promote the inclusion of young unaccompanied refugees, reaching 165 individuals directly, and 500 indirectly.

**GNRC Macedonia** through the implementing organization The First Children's Embassy in the World Megjashi distributed food packages to low-income families in the months of December 2022 to March 2023. The activity aimed to spread the joy of the festive season. They impacted 450 people.





### 3.3 Ending Child Poverty



**GNRC Pakistan's** Community Life Foundation and End Child Poverty conducted a campaign on 17<sup>th</sup> August 2022, to raise awareness about child poverty. The campaign reached fifty-nine individuals (eighteen men, twenty women, sixteen children, three faith leaders, and two teachers). They also organized an art competition to raise awareness on child poverty reaching 128 participants.



**South Africa:** On 19<sup>th</sup> October 2022, GNRC South Africa organized a children's forum to raise awareness about the causes of poverty and methods for prevention. Eleven local schools were represented at the event with fifty-six individuals attending the event (forty-seven children, seven women, and two men). The children networked and learned from each other.

**Argentina:** To fight child poverty and protect the rights and well-being of children, in partnership with the Ministry of Social Development, they distributed six tons of food to 453 families in the city of Buenos Aires, reaching more than 1,300 children.



**Syria:** GNRC led by Kids Future organized an activity for displaced children living in refugee camps. They assessed the needs of school-going refugee children in the camps, providing them with capacity building on how to overcome difficulties in education and how to reduce the spread of school dropouts.



### 3.4 The SDGs Academy



Established by Arigatou International's End Child Poverty Initiative, The SDGs Academy for Children is a safe space (both physical and virtual) and programme for children's participation, learning, and action on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and the [Agenda 2030](#) in general. It seeks to bring children's participation to the forefront of the SDGs while empowering children and the community around them toward the realization of sustainable development.

#### Launch of the SDGs Model Classroom, Sri Lanka.



On 17<sup>th</sup> October 2022, GNRC Sri Lanka, End Child Poverty, and Sarvodaya launched the SDG model classroom in Sri Lanka. The event was attended

by representatives of different organizations, including UNICEF Sri Lanka, UNDP, Save the Children Sri Lanka, Asia Foundation, World Vision, and the Department of Sociology at the University of Peradeniya, among others. Eighty-seven participants were in attendance (ten men, fourteen women, fifty-five children, three faith leaders, and five teachers). During the event, 17-year-old Sanara shared the experience of her engagement with the End Child Poverty Knowledge Centre and how she was inspired to work on the SDGs.



## Strengthening the Network

### GNRC LAUNCH – Kenya

In a bid to strengthen and reinvigorate the Network, GNRC Kenya led by their coordinator, Sh. Ramadhan Aula launched their committee on 27<sup>th</sup> October 2022, at the Savelberg Retreat Centre in Nairobi, Kenya. The event brought together sixty-two participants, from the Christian, Islamic, and Sikh faiths.



*"Children are very important, and are at the heart of what we do, building a better world for them. I challenge all of you to treat children as partners in creating a better world."*

*~ Dr. Mustafa Y. Ali, Secretary General, GNRC*

## 4. Ending Sexual Exploitation and Abuse of Children

*"We have to be more responsible with our words and behaviors."*

*~ Girl, 15, from Bistrita, Romania.*

### 4.1 Ending Child Abuse

**GNRC USA** and The Mama Bear Effect conducted training for parents on preventing child sexual abuse in a local community. The event involved 100 children and youth, thirty-five women and twenty men.



**GNRC Dominican Republic**, through Ethics Education for Children, initiated the conversation "Throw the dart against child labor. Hit the target!" to raise awareness among religious communities, and youth leaders on the negative consequences of child labor on society. The coordinator of the Department for the Eradication of Child Labor, and the Ministry of Labor, were in attendance. The event was live streamed on Facebook, reaching forty participants, including thirteen faith leaders from the Evangelical, Adventist, and Catholic Church.



**GNRC Argentina** and partners organized a workshop on 'Comprehensive Sex Education Law' where emphasis was laid on using education as a transformational tool for sex education. On 16<sup>th</sup> September 2022, they organized a sex education workshop to raise awareness on how to prevent child sexual abuse. The workshops reached 110 participants (men, women, teachers) and fifty-two children and young people.





The committee also organized a workshop to create awareness on preventing sexually transmitted diseases, which benefited fifty-eight children.

**GNRC Kenya** members from Mombasa County were invited by the county Government for a Children's Forum during the 16 Days of Activism aimed to raise awareness about gender-based violence (GBV). Children got to share their experiences and sensitize their community on the issue through poems. The event had 370 participants (sixty children and youths, three hundred women, five faith leaders, and five teachers).



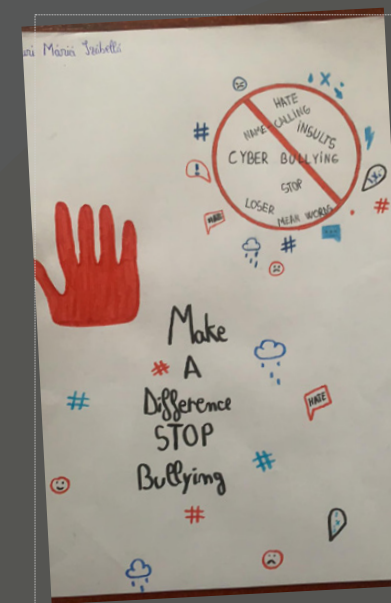
**GNRC Pakistan** led by Search for Justice and Children Advocacy Network (CAN-Pakistan) along with National Commission for Human Rights, established the Provincial Coordination Forum to end child domestic labor. The first meeting of the forum was held on 27<sup>th</sup> December 2022, where issues of child domestic labor and child sexual exploitation were discussed.

Representatives from the government committed to work towards ending the abuse and exploitation of children.

## 4.2 Promoting Safe Spaces for Children



**Cameroon:** On 9<sup>th</sup> February 2022, GNRC Cameroon held a radio talk show on one of the community radio stations on *Learning to Live Together*, indirectly reaching 2,125 individuals. The GNRC coordinator Mr. Alex Gwanvalla stressed the need for faith leaders to bridge the gap in the community and ensure that children live in safe spaces away from discrimination, harassment, and violence.



**GNRC Romania** organized a series of activities from 25<sup>th</sup> May to 15<sup>th</sup> June 2022, to promote the importance of children in raising awareness to end bullying in schools. The activities were held in fifteen schools in Bucharest, reaching 2,000 primary and high-school students, fifty-four teachers, and several members of the community, including faith leaders from the Christian and Muslim faiths.



*"Each child has the power and the responsibility to contribute to a safer environment in school. All children should feel valued, protected, appreciated, and free to express their opinions."*

*~ Ms. Laura Molnar, GNRC Coordinator, Romania.*



**GNRC Chile**, Prayer and Action for Children, and World Vision Chile organized the 5<sup>th</sup> interreligious adolescent meeting on 27<sup>th</sup> August 2022, to provide a platform for adolescents to express themselves. The event was attended by thirty-two participants including eighteen children and five faith leaders.

**GNRC Malaysia** organized an event on 19<sup>th</sup> September 2022 to provide psychosocial support to children. They organized fun activities for fifty children living in the city, where they engaged with other children through fun-filled activities and games.





**South Africa:** On 19<sup>th</sup> October 2022, GNRC South Africa organized a children's forum titled 'Dignity for All' to educate children on respecting others and their rights. The forum was attended by fifty-six participants (forty-seven children, seven women, and two men).

**GNRC Bosnia and Herzegovina** organized a mental health awareness workshop on 6<sup>th</sup> December 2022, aimed to educate participants on the importance of mental health and how to manage daily stress. The workshop impacted forty participants and indirectly impacted two hundred individuals.

#### GNRC Syria in Action





## Strengthening the Network

### GNRC LAUNCH – Bhutan

On Saturday, 27<sup>th</sup> August 2022, GNRC Bhutan launched its committee in Langjophakha Thimphu, Bhutan to strengthen and reinvigorate the Network. 113 participants attended the event, among them, faith leaders, men, women, and children.

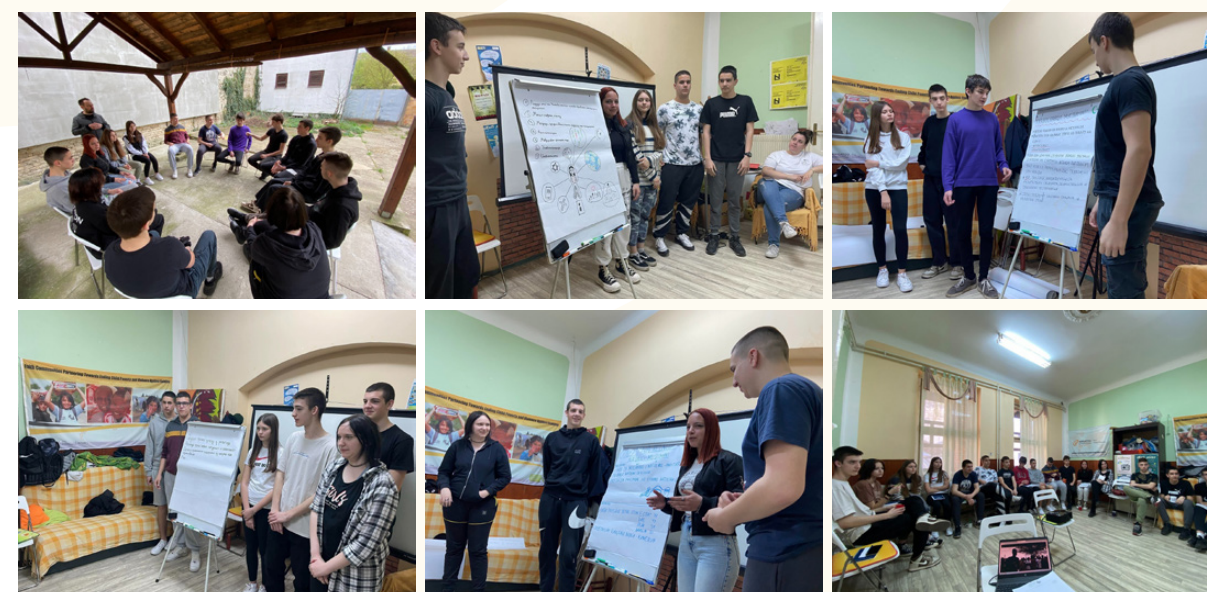
## 5. GNRC Youth

*"As young people, we should shape our narratives and way of thinking, and be at the forefront in advocating for peace. We should not enter conflicts because of our differences such as tribe, gender, or religion."*

~ **Student, Sokoine University**

**GNRC Romania** coordinator Ms. Laura Molnar organized an online meeting with the GNRC Romania youth committee to strengthen the committee as they planned for summer projects. Seven youths, two women, and two teachers participated in the event.

**Ecuador:** GNRC Youth Ecuador organized two meetings in April and May to share life experiences, training in human rights, and active listening. The total number of participants was ninety-six, including forty-seven children and youth.



**Serbia:** GNRC youths in Serbia organized sensitization workshops for children and youths where they were reminded of their rights as children in inter-ethnic and interfaith contexts. Thirty-one participants attended the workshop. Rev. Fred Nyabera, Director, Interfaith Initiative to End Child Poverty, shed light on violent extremism and its prevention, focusing on the interfaith context worldwide.



**Pakistan:** Mr. David Paul, Contact Person, GNRC Pakistan, organized a session for ten GNRC youths to deepen their understanding of the work of the GNRC and their role in promoting peace and countering violent extremism.

#AllforChildren



## Strengthening the Network

### GNRC LAUNCH – Tanzania

GNRC Tanzania launched its committee on 31<sup>st</sup> August 2022, led by the coordinator, Ms. Joyce Mdachi, at the United Nations (UN) House, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. The event brought together forty-two participants from the Christian, Muslim, and Buddhist faiths. Seven committee members, including religious leaders, children and youth representatives, and a representative of persons with disabilities attended the event.

## 6. Advocacy and Partnerships to Protect Children

*"... multiple, simultaneous, and consecutive harms inflicted on the earth and its inhabitants, have produced unparalleled interlinked dilemmas. Solutions to resolve one crisis seem to be worsening others and producing new ones. We have pushed ourselves into the uncertain and ambiguous terrain—and into an interwoven and intractable polycrisis impacting the vulnerable."*

**~ Dr. Mustafa Y. Ali, Secretary General, GNRC**

### 6.1 GNRC Networks Engagements



**Tanzania:** On two occasions, GNRC Tanzania was invited, (by The Tanzania Early Marriage Network and 'Msichana Initiative') to explore ways to increase commitment and build a movement towards the amendment of the Law of Marriage Act of 1971 section 13 in Tanzania. The goal is to increase the minimum age for a girl to get married from fifteen to eighteen, as is for boys.

*"Community leaders should take a strong position on child marriage and implement by-laws that protect the girl child."*

**~ Asana**

*"I would like to recognize and appreciate the efforts of the late Sr. Jean Pruitt, the Myochikai and Arigatou International family and Secretariat, the Directors of the four initiatives, and Ms. Finike Gofomoka, Zamir Noorali, Ms. Elizabeth Mwase, and Mr. Yusuf Masanja, for making a difference in the lives of children."*

**~ Ms. Joyce Mdachi, Coordinator, GNRC Tanzania**

*"We live in a globalized world with huge potential for collaboration to protect children."*

**~Ms. Maria Lucia Uribe, Director, Ethics Education for Children**







**GNRC Guatemala**, took part in a breakfast meeting with potential partners. The meeting brought together fifty individuals from different organizations who discussed possible areas for collaboration during activity implementation.



**GNRC Colombia**, in partnership with UNICEF and World Vision, held a Children's Rights Forum at the National University of Colombia on August 19, 2022 to reflect on children's rights and the roles as religious leaders. Twenty-five participants took part in the event.

On 10<sup>th</sup> September 2022, **GNRC Malaysia**, in collaboration with the European Union, organized a meeting to empower civil society organizations inside Syria to build team capacities to promote peaceful coexistence.



**GNRC Panama**, in partnership with the United States of America (USA) Embassy, held a religious dialogue meeting on 29<sup>th</sup> September 2022, at the house of the USA Ambassador to Panama to promote religious freedom. The discussion yielded an atmosphere of camaraderie as they discussed the issue of corruption in state bodies. Religious leaders at the meeting expressed their satisfaction with the respect and credibility of faith communities in Panama. The event had twenty-seven participants.

## 6.2 GNRC Secretariat Engagements

### Joint Regional Strategic and Crisis Communication Workshop by United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism

The GNRC Secretary General, Dr. Mustafa Y. Ali, participated in the Joint Regional Strategic and Crisis Communication Workshop held by the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT/UNCCT) alongside the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) International Centre for Excellence for PCVE on 1<sup>st</sup> June 2022. The event advocated for the protection of children by preventing violent extremism, gang violence, and organized crime, which helped build partnerships to strengthen the GNRC Network.



### Faith4Vaccines: USAID Side Event to the Second COVID-19 Global Summit

Dr. Mustafa Y. Ali spoke at the second COVID-19 Global Summit on the role of global faith communities in addressing the pandemic and its second-order impacts in Kenya, focusing on food insecurity and disrupted education. The White House, Faith4Vaccines, and USAID co-hosted the event. He specifically focused on food insecurity, education, and orphans.



Arigatou International through GNRC LAC is a permanent member of the World Movement for Children in Latin America and the Caribbean (MMI-LAC), a strategic alliance of organizations that work for the promotion, protection and defense of the rights of children and adolescents in the region. On August 22, Ms. Maria Jose Ananias, GNRC LAC regional coordinator, participated in the annual meeting of directors in Panama, and in a subgroup on Violence Against Children, while Ms. Mercedes Roman, GNRC LAC regional advisor, in the Regressive Movement subgroup from where advocacy projects are generated.







## Strengthening the Network

### GNRC LAUNCH – Democratic Republic of Congo

On 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2023, GNRC Democratic Republic of Congo (D.R.C) launched its committee, led by the contact person, Mr. Jonas Habimana, in Goma. The event brought together eighty-six participants, children, and adults, among them the committee members of GNRC DRC. Religions represented were Islam and Christianity.



*"The help I got from GNRC Coordinator, D.R.C, Mr. Jonas Habimana, with support from the GNRC Secretariat, helped me enroll my children in school, and buy them clothes and shoes."*

~ Mama Josy, GNRC D.R.C

## FEATURE

### Commemorating International Days

International Day for the Eradication of Poverty



World Day of Prayer and Action for Children in Rome



Wear My Shoes Campaign







Freedom Day (South Africa)



Day of the African Child (Tanzania)



International Day of Peace (Tanzania)



International Women's Day (Ghana)

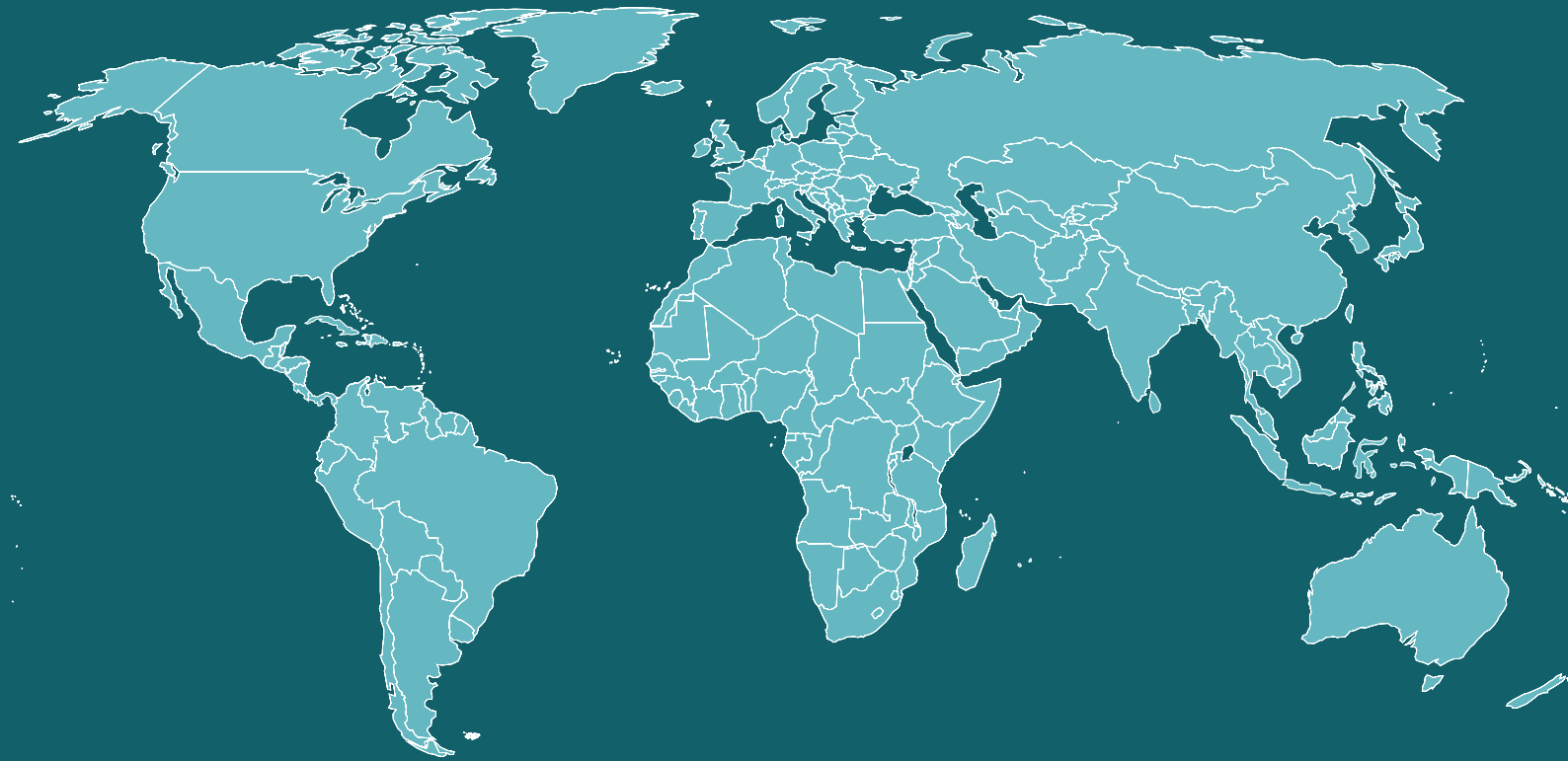


## 7. Strengthening and Reinvigorating the Network



"The strength of the GNRC network is engrained in the uniqueness of each of us and the efforts we put into making the world a better place for children."

~ Dr. Dorcas Kiplagat, Network and Programs Coordinator, GNRC



GNRC Reach 2022/2023

Reach		Direct Reach	Indirect Reach	Overall Reach
Children/Youths		34024		
Women		4955		
Men		2365		
Adults		276		
Faith Leaders		642		
Teachers		1070		
Without specific figures		9233		
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>52565</b>	<b>14980</b>	<b>67545</b>





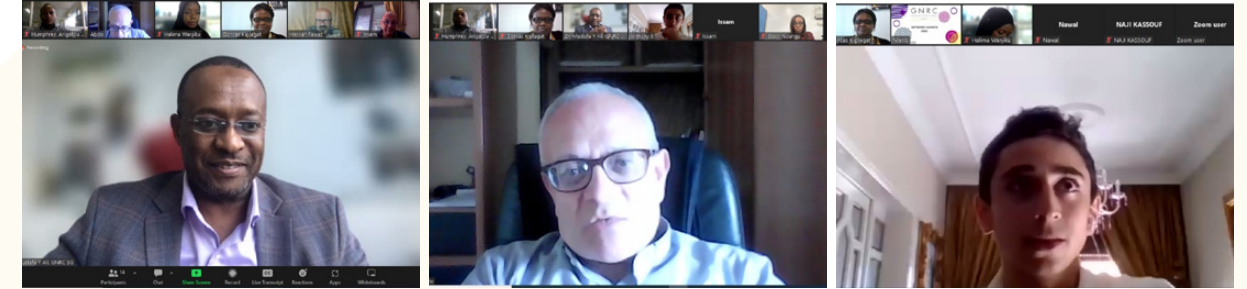
## 7.1 Launch of GNRC Networks and Committees

As part of reinvigorating, strengthening, and nurturing country committees and networks at all levels, fifteen countries officially launched their committees.



### Other Networks Launched Include:

#### GNRC LAUNCH – Lebanon



GNRC Lebanon, led by the coordinator, Fr. Abdo Raad, launched its committee on 8<sup>th</sup> June 2022. In attendance were eighteen participants from different faiths including Christianity, Islam, and Druze.

*“GNRC Lebanon is working closely with children by creating a safe space for them to share some of the challenges they face.”*  
~ **Anthony Saade, Youth, GNRC Lebanon**

#### GNRC LAUNCH – Bosnia and Herzegovina

On 20<sup>th</sup> June 2022, GNRC Bosnia and Herzegovina led by the coordinator, Ms. Ismeta Salihspahic, launched its committee. The event was attended by twenty-four participants, among them faith leaders, a psychologist, coordinators and contact persons from other countries, and children.

*“I commend GNRC Bosnia and Herzegovina for ensuring diversity in the committee membership, especially by including children.”*  
~ **Dr. Dorcas Kiplagat, Network and Programs Coordinator, GNRC**

#### GNRC LAUNCH - Comoros



GNRC Comoros, led by the coordinator, Mr. Akim Said M'Changama, launched its committee on 30<sup>th</sup> June 2022, in an event attended by twenty-nine participants. Among them GNRC Comoros committee members, faith leaders, children, and GNRC Coordinators from other countries.



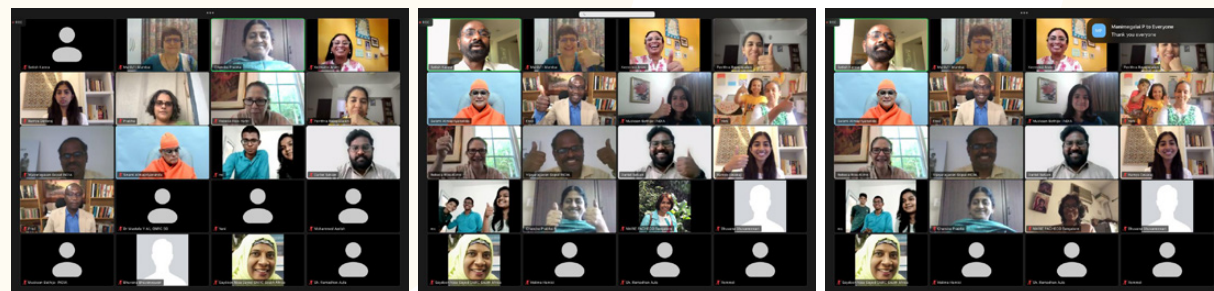




*"In our network, children are given priority so that they can get to know their rights and learn to be responsible. Our activities are directed at supporting vulnerable children, especially victims of sexual abuse. Together, we should work to eliminate social norms that perpetuate violence against children."*

**~ Mr. Akim Said M'Changama, Coordinator, GNRC Comoros**

### GNRC LAUNCH – India



GNRC India launched its committee, on 26<sup>th</sup> July 2022, led by the coordinator, Mr. Vijayaragavan Gopal, in an event that had over sixty adults and 120 children participants from different faiths, mainly Hinduism, Islam, Christianity, and Buddhism.

*"The committee will put in the best of efforts to achieve our common vision that every child has a right to a dignified life."*

**~ Mr. Vijayaragavan Gopal, Coordinator, GNRC India**

### GNRC LAUNCH – Pakistan



GNRC Pakistan led by their contact persons, Mr. Iftikar Mubarik and Mr. David Paul, launched their committee on 27<sup>th</sup> July 2022, in Lahore, Pakistan, at a ceremony that brought together twenty-nine participants. Among them were GNRC Pakistan committee members, children, representatives from different organizations and faith traditions namely, Islam and Christianity.



*"There is a need to empower children through consistent efforts so that they can identify the various types of violence and abuse and be able to react in such difficult situations."*

**~ Sheral, Child, GNRC Pakistan**

### GNRC LAUNCH – Uganda



GNRC Uganda launched its committee on 14<sup>th</sup> September 2022, led by their coordinator, Mr. Geoffrey Omony, in an event that took place in Gulu, Northern Uganda. The launch was the twelfth, in the bid to strengthen and reinvigorate the GNRC. Participants included faith leaders from different religious backgrounds, men, women, and children.

*"We are happy that the stakeholders we have, have children's interests at heart."*

**~ Mr. Geoffrey Omony, Coordinator, GNRC Uganda**

### GNRC LAUNCH – Burundi



On 15<sup>th</sup> September 2022, GNRC Burundi launched its committee, led by the contact person, Ms. Sandrine Nkurunziza, in a bid to strengthen and reinvigorate the Network. The launch took place in Bujumbura, Burundi, bringing together thirty-eight participants, including faith leaders, women, men, and children.

*"It is important to have peace at home."*

**~ Children, GNRC Burundi**





## GNRC LAUNCH – Indonesia



On 29<sup>th</sup> March 2023, GNRC Indonesia launched its committee, led by the coordinator, Ms. Nerlian Gogali, under the theme 'Preserve and Celebrate Interfaith Diversity with Indonesian Children'. GNRC members in Indonesia participated from five regions; Pontianak-West Kalimantan, Poso-Central Sulawesi, Ambon-Maluku, Jember-East Java, and Yogyakarta.

*"We should respect other people's religion and learn about them so that we do not display ignorance towards them and their beliefs."*

*~ Ahmed, Child, GNRC Indonesia*

## GNRC LAUNCH – Cameroon

*"A radiant smile is worn by children at peace."*

## 7.2 Meetings

### Interfaith Alliance for Safer Communities



GNRC Secretary General, Dr. Mustafa Y. Ali, attended the Interfaith Alliance for Safer Communities (IAFSC) Board meeting in Geneva in June 2022. During the meeting, several project ideas under which Interfaith



Alliance and GNRC converge were discussed. These included Strengthening GNRC Networks in Mozambique and Nigeria with concrete grassroots projects geared towards preventing violent extremism in Mozambique and hate crimes in Nigeria. The other project idea was mobilizing faith communities to address gun violence in schools in the USA.

### Together we are Stronger

GNRC Bosnia and Herzegovina, in partnership with ECP, conducted a workshop titled 'Together we are Stronger.' The workshop aimed at strengthening the skills of women and young girls. Thirty-five participants attended the event (two men, twenty women, five children and youth, four faith leaders, and four teachers).

### Women Empowerment

On 25<sup>th</sup> November the Coordinator of GNRC Bosnia and Herzegovina, Ms. Ismeta Salihspahic, and other volunteers participated in a women's empowerment workshop in Visoko. Ms. Ismeta presented the work of GNRC Bosnia and Herzegovina at the event.

Additionally, she and two other volunteers met with a religious leader from the Islamic Community in the Bihac-migration center - both parties establishing common areas of future collaboration.

### GNRC Bosnia and Herzegovina's 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary



On 28<sup>th</sup> August 2022, GNRC Bosnia and Herzegovina hosted Dr. Mustafa Y. Ali, Secretary General, and Rev. Fred Nyabera, Director, End Child Poverty, as they celebrated their tenth anniversary, in Visoko.

### Strategic Direction and Plan







On 24<sup>th</sup> October 2022, the GNRC Secretariat team joined by three GNRC coordinators, Ms. Joyce Mdachi (Tanzania), Sr. Agatha Chikelue (Nigeria), and Sh. Ramadhan Aula (Kenya), had a day-long meeting. They discussed on strategic visioning to strengthen and reinvigorate the Network, a process that started with the GNRC Assessment in 2020.

### GNRC Serbia Monthly Meeting

GNRC Serbia committee, in partnership with Sombor Educational Center, conducted their monthly meetings in a hybrid event. During the event, the GNRC Serbia coordinator stressed the need to have regular meetings and create more social media platforms to realize the annual plans.

### GNRC USA Quarterly Interfaith Meetings

The New York Board of Rabbis hosted GNRC USA in their quarterly interfaith meeting to build connections as interfaith leaders by sharing their work. Seven religious' leaders from the Jewish, Christian, and Buddhist communities attended the event.

### GNRC Ecuador Management Committee Meeting

GNRC Ecuador held two virtual committee meetings to strengthen the Network in the country. Fifty participants were in attendance (ten men, sixteen women, twelve children, and twelve faith leaders). Speakers stressed the need to prioritize children's rights.

*"In these post-pandemic times, it is important to take children and adolescents into account, since their rights continue to be violated."*  
~ **Maribel León, San Luis Gonzaga**

### Secretariat Meetings



### GNRC Tanzania Partnerships and Faith Leaders Meetings

GNRC Tanzania participated in a meeting organized by the Government of the United Republic of Tanzania (URT). The session provided a platform for networking and brought together more than 120 civil society organizations. During the same month, the GNRC Tanzania committee met with Norwegian Church Aid (NCA) Tanzania management to reconnect and explore its support for GNRC Tanzania activities. The meeting highlighted the need to focus on areas of convergence and interest between the GNRC and NCA, such as peacebuilding, and child protection, specifically on eliminating gender-based violence and child poverty.

### The Second Regional Faith Leaders Forum in Nairobi, Kenya

At the second Regional Faith Leaders Forum themed *Faith Actors Promoting Social Cohesion and Freedom of Religion or Belief (FoRB) in Eastern Africa*, organized by ECP and partners and held in Nairobi, the GNRC Secretary General, Dr. Mustafa Y. Ali, convened a roundtable meeting for GNRC members in attendance. He lauded the members for the commendable work they were doing in their countries toward promoting the rights and well-being of the children.

### Ending Violence Against Children Lab Initiative in Chile

GNRC Chile, in partnership with World Vision Chile, organized interreligious adolescent meetings. The meetings had a total of fifty-five participants, among them twenty-nine children and five religious' leaders from the Christian, Sikh, Bahai, Sufi, and Church of Jesus Christ religions/faith traditions.

### Interreligious Dialogue

On 4<sup>th</sup> November 2022, GNRC Uruguay held an interreligious meeting to reconnect the committee members and introduce the new GNRC members to the committee. The meeting was attended by forty-six participants (twelve men, eighteen women, six children, and ten faith leaders). Sima Baher from the Bahai Community shared her insights on the importance of respect for diversity in promoting peace. Other speakers shared their perspectives on the role of faith communities in promoting social justice and equality.







## 8.0 GNRC Forums



GNRC forums bring together members, partners, like-minded organizations, faith leaders, grassroots workers, and young people (including children) from around the world every four to five years. They come together to take note of the Network's progress, share best practices, and discuss current global issues affecting children.

The 1<sup>st</sup> forum saw the inauguration of the GNRC (2000) in Tokyo, Japan. Other *Arigatou International* initiatives were launched in consecutive forums, that is, *Ethics Education for Children* (2004) in Geneva, Switzerland, *Prayer and Action for Children* (2008) in Hiroshima, Japan, and *End Child Poverty Initiative* (2012) in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. The fifth global forum (2017) in Panama, adopted the *Panama Declaration on Ending Violence Against Children*.

### The GNRC Sixth Forum



Looking at its silver jubilee in 2025 and 24 years of interfaith collaboration, action and dialogue in the service of children around the world, the GNRC will convene for its 6<sup>th</sup> Forum in Abu Dhabi, UAE (November 2024). The Forum will present a platform to reflect on and celebrate the successes and positive transformations since its inauguration. A three-day children's Forum will be held before the main Forum to serve as a space to gather children's voices, in preparation for the main Forum.



## Empowering Children with Disabilities in Montenegro



GNRC member Djeca Crne Gore-Children of Montenegro focuses on children and youth living with disability. Since 2016, we have provided sessions for children with psychologists, speech therapists, social workers, and personal assistants, free of charge, with support from donors. This is because it is a challenge to get experts who can work with children in areas where most people speak Albanian. Aside from the language barrier, large class sizes prevent individualized learning plans for children in public schools, raising the potential for bullying.

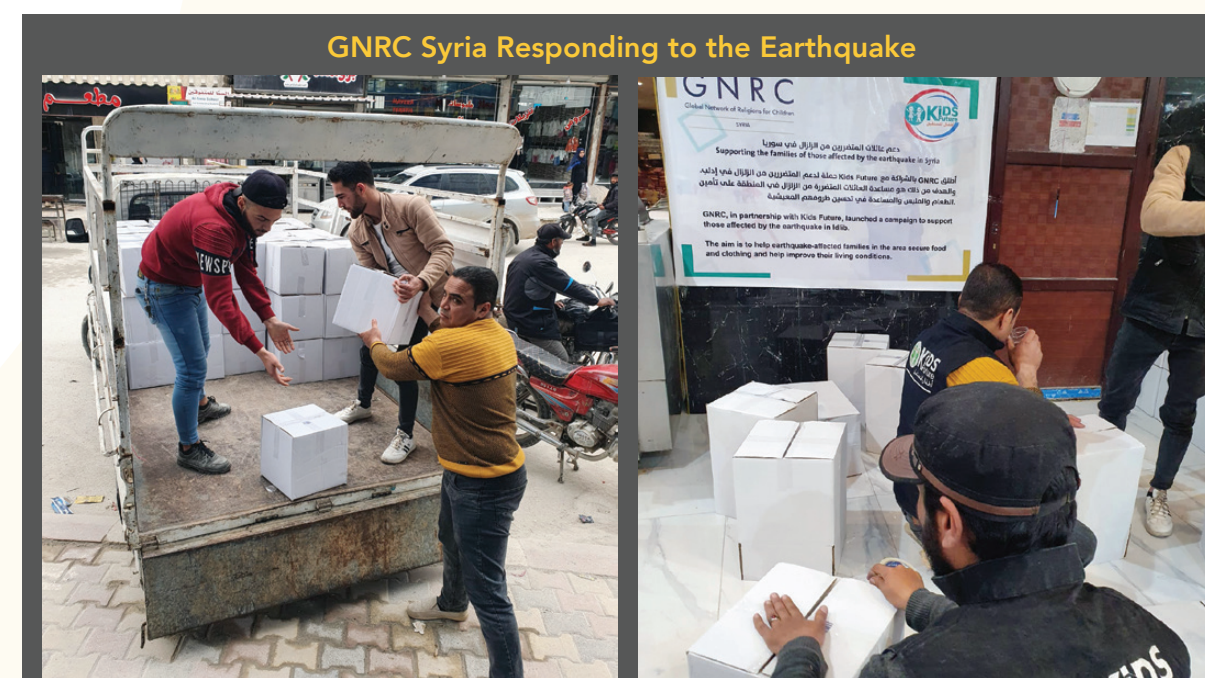
Despite challenges posed by COVID-19, we assisted twenty-one families whose children received daily hour-long individual treatments. We organized ten workshops with families to help them overcome stress and come to terms with their children's unique situations. The workshops helped them establish self-care so they can be of more support to their children. The parents also learned how to play with their children and stimulate their development. Additionally, we organized training for forty teachers on how to tailor educational plans to individual children, as well as develop transitional plans for those entering secondary school.

Our future plans include building stronger connections with institutions and practitioners to better respond to needs and engaging more local authorities.

I am most grateful that our efforts are being recognized countrywide, and I feel privileged to have been awarded the Iskra Philanthropy Award, a special recognition for civic contribution to the common good.

**Sabra Decević**

Coordinator, GNRC Montenegro







## Appreciating our Volunteers

The International Volunteer Day for Economic and Social Development, popularly known as International Volunteer Day (IVD), is celebrated on 5<sup>th</sup> December every year to offer an opportunity for volunteer-involving organizations and individuals to promote volunteerism, encourage governments to support volunteer efforts and recognize volunteer contributions.

GNRC's work is dependent on volunteers around the world, and to celebrate IVD, the Secretariat recognized and appreciated the work they do.



"Inspired by your commitment and profound spirit of volunteerism, I acknowledge and appreciate your hard work and dedication to building a better world for children." ~ **Dr. Mustafa Y. Ali**, Secretary General

"Thanks to your spirit of giving and beautiful souls, the GNRC has put a smile on the faces of many children." ~ **Dr. Dorcas Kiplagat**, Network and Programs Coordinator



"We want to recognize and appreciate the work that our coordinators and committees do throughout the year in education and interfaith participation for children." ~ **María José Ananías**, Latin America and the Caribbean Coordinator

"May you find renewed strength, grace, and fulfillment every single day as you continue working with and for children." ~ **Florence Omtokoh**, Executive Secretary



"We are humbled and grateful for your commitment to making the world a better place for children." ~ **Abdulsamad Alawi**, Administrative Assistant

"Your generosity is commendable. I want to specifically thank those who gave their time during the COVID-19 pandemic." ~ **Humphrey Macharia**, Programs Officer



"Many thanks to the Coordinators, Contact Persons, and Members for unconditionally giving their support in promoting children's rights and well-being." ~ **Halima Wanjiku**, Network and Programs Support

"Your commitment to the work that you do for children is an inspiration." ~ **Stacy Ndungu**, Communications and Outreach Manager



"Seeing the work you do for children gives hope for a world where every child's welfare is taken care of and with immense admiration, I continue to root for your work." ~ **Tracy Memusi**, Communications Support

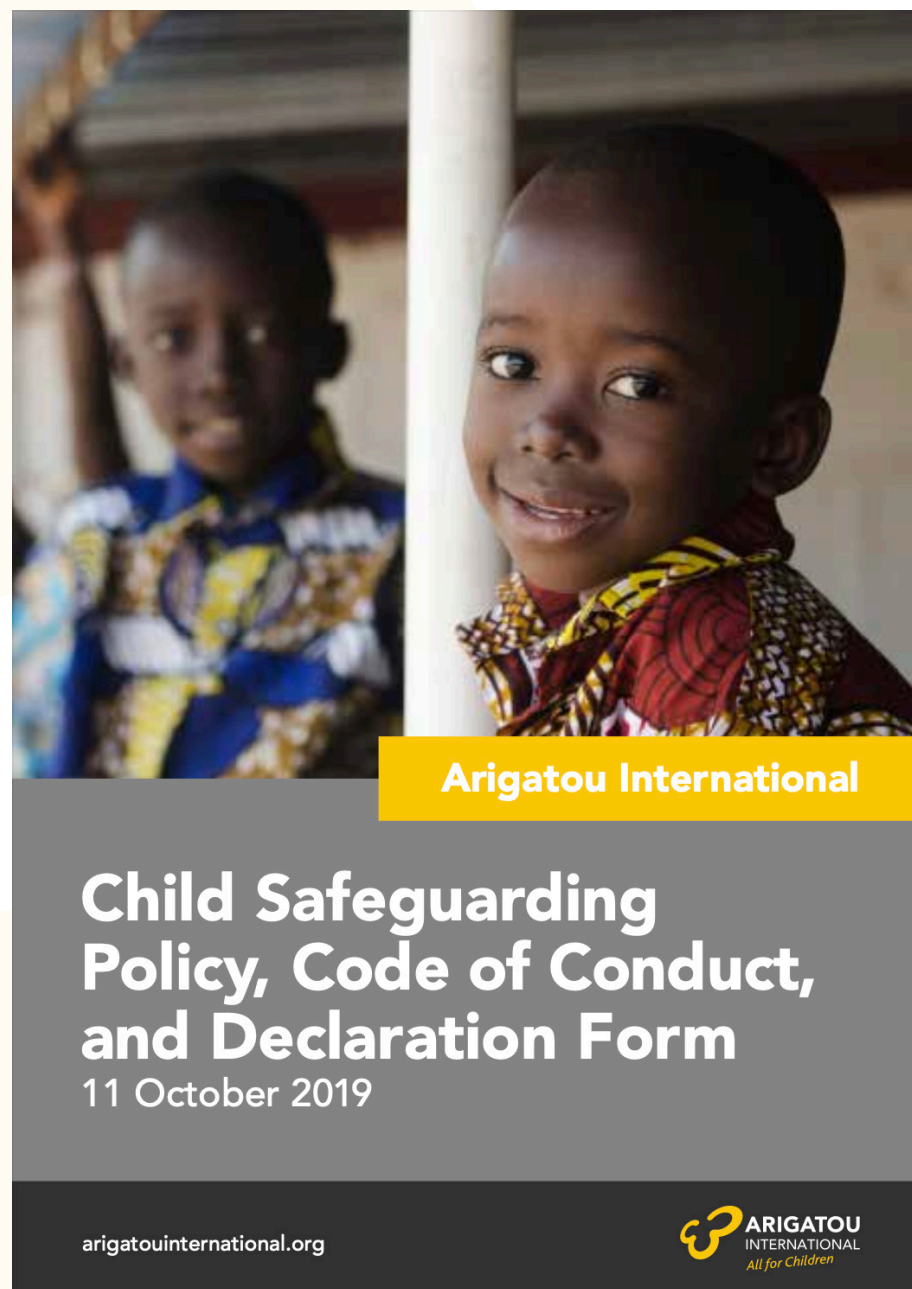


"We celebrate you" ~ **Yasin Lokale**





## Arigatou International Child Safeguarding Policy



Arigatou International is rigorously vigilant with regard to protecting children and preventing the ill-treatment or the violation of the physical or psychological integrity of the children placed under its responsibility.

Anybody working for and with children has a moral and legal imperative to respect and apply the Child

Safeguarding Policy and Code of Conduct (AI SPCC). The policy establishes a series of principles and guidelines that must be adhered to and respected by all those who work with Arigatou International to promote children's rights.

All individuals who work with Arigatou International are required to read and sign the document.

Child Safeguarding Policy, Code of Conduct, and Declaration Form 11 October 2019









The cover features a large circular graphic on the right side, composed of several overlapping circular segments. These segments contain various photographs: a group of children, a man and a woman in professional attire, a group of women in headscarves, and a man in a suit. A teal-colored semi-circular shape overlaps the top right of this graphic, containing the title text. The background is a light cream color with two large, thin, curved lines in teal and yellow that sweep across the page.

# GNRC Annual Report 2022-2023



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## Strengthening and Reinvigorating the GNRC Network for Children

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### Social media:

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/ArigatouGNRC?mibextid=ZbWKwL>

Twitter: [https://twitter.com/ArigatouGNRC?t=B\\_dDXPXnbZVZsN28ubpYdA&s=08](https://twitter.com/ArigatouGNRC?t=B_dDXPXnbZVZsN28ubpYdA&s=08)

Instagram: <https://instagram.com/arigatougnrc?igshid=MzNINGNkZWQ4Mg==>