



Annual Report 2019/2020

# Building a better world for all children

[endingchildpoverty.org](https://endingchildpoverty.org)

 **ARIGATOU** | End  
INTERNATIONAL | Child Poverty  
*All for Children*

**Produced and Published by:**

End Child Poverty

Arigatou International — Nairobi

P.O. Box 43546 – 00100 Nairobi, Kenya

Tel: +254 20 257 39020/1

Mobile: + 254 733 945 971/ 705 320 970

🌐 [endingchildpoverty@arigatouinternational.org](mailto:endingchildpoverty@arigatouinternational.org)

✉ [endingchildpoverty.org](mailto:endingchildpoverty.org)

March 2019 - April 2020.

# CONTENTS



<b>FOREWORD BY THE DIRECTOR</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>END CHILD POVERTY AT A GLANCE</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>WHO WE ARE</b>	<b>5</b>
Our Guiding Principles	5
Why Ending Child Poverty Matters	5
Our Strategy and Approach	5
<b>THE BLUEPRINT – PANAMA COMMITMENTS ON ENDING VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN AND CHILD POVERTY</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>SNAPSHOTS OF THE YEAR IN REVIEW</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>INTERFAITH ADVOCACY AND LOBBYING</b>	<b>12</b>
How we approach interfaith advocacy and lobbying	12
Collaborating to Achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)	12
The Global Coalition to End Child Poverty	13
The Moral Imperative Framework	14
The African Children and Youth Network for Human Rights	16

In the Reporting Period	17
The Africa Interfaith Initiative on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)	18
<b>ADVOCACY THROUGH COMMEMORATING INTERNATIONAL DAYS</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>FLAGSHIP AND GRASSROOTS PROJECTS</b>	<b>21</b>
Right to Education	21
Right to Peace	22
Regional Peace Programme	22
Sudan Social Cohesion Initiative	24
<b>SPECIAL HIGH IMPACT INITIATIVES</b>	<b>25</b>
The GNRC Middle East Regional meeting	25
Expansion of the Nepal Poverty solutions	25
Ministerial to Advance Religious Freedom meeting	26
Campaign on Ending Online Child Sexual Exploitation and Abuse	27
Launch of Faith and Positive Change For Children Initiative	27
Spirit of the UN Award	27
Webinar with GNRC Coordinators in Latin America	28
<b>ADVANCING KNOWLEDGE TO END CHILD POVERTY</b>	<b>29</b>
The End Child Poverty Knowledge Centre	29
End Child Poverty Communication	31
Emerging Issues to ending child poverty: The Covid-19 Pandemic	33
<b>ARIGATOU INTERNATIONAL – BUILDING A BETTER WORLD FOR CHILDREN</b>	<b>34</b>
<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</b>	<b>35</b>



## FOREWORD BY THE DIRECTOR

Poverty is the worst form of Violence, and whilst poverty harms all human beings, it is more threatening to children. It denies them of their right to grow up free from deprivation and want, and develop healthily to their full potential. Arigatou International's global Interfaith Initiative to End Child Poverty (End Child Poverty) is alive to the fact that eradicating child poverty is not easy, but it is possible. This has been our driving force since End Child Poverty's inception in 2012. We aspire to achieve a world where every child lives free from poverty. This report provides a summary of our collective work in pursuit of our core commitment – *to end child poverty worldwide*. It presents our key results and the footprints we have made in the period covering April 2019 to March 2020. This year our main focus was on Child Participation, Partnership Development, and Strengthening as well as Peace Building.

As this report will show, we continued to advance child-led initiatives towards ending poverty. This includes the '*Poverty Solutions*' initiative, which started as an idea by a child within the networks of our partner in India, Shanti Ashram, and was contextualized and replicated in Nepal with a reach of over 500 children in 2019.

Participation of children was also a key rallying call in our annual campaign – *Together we can end child poverty worldwide*. This was in line with the first Panama Commitments of the Global Network of Religion for Children (GNRC) 5th Forum; *Listening to Children*. The campaign mobilized partners across seven countries (Democratic Republic of Congo, India, Lebanon, Malaysia, Pakistan, South Africa, and Tanzania) to hold *Listening to Children* sessions, events, and processes, reaching over 21,000 children. This was similarly a deliberate reflection of Article 12 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), which asserts that children should be free to form and express their views on matters affecting them.

We have achieved a wider reach and impacted our work through our grassroots, regional, and global partners. During the reporting period, we collaborated with the Global Coalition to End Child Poverty, the Moral Imperative to End Extreme Poverty, the African Faith Leaders Initiative on the Post 2015 Development Agenda (the Sustainable Development Goals), as well as enhanced synergies with sister initiatives of Arigatou International.

The existence of peace accelerates efforts to allay poverty. In this report, therefore, you will find extensive work around peacebuilding. One of the commendable achievements of the year is our presence in Sudan, under the Social Cohesion Initiative. Through this initiative, we have sought to promote peace in Sudan by fostering interfaith and socio-cultural interaction among religious leaders, youth, children, and women. Thus far, we have reached over 200 community leaders, including religious leaders, women, and the youth, through training on dialogue facilitation. This initiative further aims to focus on children, by working in synergy with Arigatou International–Geneva Office to apply the Learning to Live Together methodology towards ending child poverty and violence against children.

The disturbing statistics that, at any moment, 750,000 individuals are looking to connect with children across the globe for sexual purposes, stirred our participation and contribution in the global campaign for Online Child Dignity. Together with the GNRC and the Interfaith Alliance for Safer Communities, we aimed to raise awareness and challenge Online Child Sexual Exploitation, as a form of violence against children and as a driver of child poverty or the resultant effect of child poverty.

The work captured in this report was possible because of our many partners and children who have diligently accompanied and supported our efforts to contribute towards ending child poverty worldwide. We are highly indebted to you.



**Fred Nyabera**  
Director, End Child Poverty,  
Arigatou International

## END CHILD POVERTY AT A GLANCE



## WHO WE ARE



## OUR GUIDING PRINCIPLES

**We are guided by the principles of:**

- Building child-centered initiatives
- Integration of positive religious values in our work
- Promotion of faith-inspired initiatives
- Cooperation with like-minded stakeholders

## WHY ENDING CHILD POVERTY MATTERS

- Child Poverty does long term damage to children and society
- Children are twice as likely to live in extreme poverty than adults globally
- Poverty is a form of violence and may lead to violence against children
- There are proven and effective solutions, ranging from providing quality services for all children, to supporting households to have a minimum income

## OUR STRATEGY AND APPROACH

**We build our work upon:**

- Addressing the root causes of poverty in the human heart through **theological reflection** and action.
- Addressing structural causes of poverty through **interfaith advocacy and lobbying**.
- Advancing **flagship and replicable grassroots initiatives** with the aim to promote children's education; advance peace and transform violent conflicts; and promote the empowerment of families –particularly women caregivers of children affected by poverty.
- Addressing knowledge advancements through the End Child Poverty **Knowledge Centre**, which initiates research, gathers and disseminates relevant knowledge, and enhances the capacity of individuals and organizations to address child poverty.
- Building **strategic partnerships** with other organizations and individuals towards meeting our goals.



## THE BLUEPRINT – PANAMA COMMITMENTS ON ENDING VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN AND CHILD POVERTY



Violence against children and Child Poverty are some of the major global challenges affecting children. Perturbed by these challenges and with a firm desire to act on them, faith leaders from the major world's religious and spiritual traditions sought to reflect and come up with a faith-based framework towards addressing the scourge. It is during the Global Network of Religions for Children (GNRC) 5th Forum in Panama City, Panama in May 2017, that faith leaders, children, government officials, UN agencies, International Organizations, and grassroots organizations came up with the 10 Commitments on Ending Violence against Children. These are now popularly

referred to as the Panama Commitments on Ending Violence Against Children. These commitments came at the backdrop of the reality that the causes of violence against children are complex and varied. Hence, ending today's appalling violence against children calls for extraordinary and urgent collaboration among religious and spiritual communities and other stakeholders.

Within the year in review and beyond, Arigatou International – End Child Poverty has deliberately anchored its engagements on the commitments; with a keen interest in commitment 1, which states:



*Listen to children with empathy and respect, welcome their wisdom and gifts, and continue to work side-by-side to address violence against them.*

With respect to this commitment, we have strategically made 'Listening to children' a central part of our engagement, especially our awareness and advocacy campaigns. For example, in our annual global campaign – *Together we can end child poverty worldwide*, we made 'Listening to children' a rallying call in our mobilization and advocacy efforts, during which we marked the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty (IDEP), 17 October, 2019. Partners across 7 countries – the Democratic Republic of Congo, India, Lebanon, Malaysia, Pakistan, South Africa, and Tanzania - held *Listening to children* sessions, events, and processes, reaching over 21,000 children. This work also affirmed Article 12 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), which asserts that children should be free to form and express their views on matters affecting them.

Besides 'Listening to children' we also prioritised working closely with all initiatives of Arigatou International and the GNRC members worldwide in order to fulfil the 10 commitments in the **Panama Declaration on Ending Violence against Children.**



## SNAPSHOTS OF THE YEAR IN REVIEW

### April 2019

Held a faith Leaders and technical representatives meeting for the Africa Interfaith Initiative on SDGs. The participants sought to reflect on the contribution of faith communities and their leaders, towards the realization of the SDGs, while identifying possible advocacy avenues and opportunities for the Initiative.

### April 2019

Participated in the *GNRC Middle East Regional Meeting*, which reflected on violence against children and child poverty in the Middle East, and how Faith Communities can be resourceful in addressing it.

### May 2019

Participated in the *Nurturing Values and Spirituality in Early Childhood Development* dialogue, organized by Arigatou International – Ethics Education. This was part of a series of dialogues that were being held in various countries worldwide with a culmination in the International Consortium on Nurturing Values for the prevention of violence.

### June 2019

Began data collection for the *Baseline Household Survey* in Methotamulla, Sri Lanka. This survey was commissioned after we launched the Meethotamulla Children's Empowerment Center in December 2018.

### June 2019

Commemorated Day of the African Child with activities by our partners in Kenya and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), and an online campaign under the theme – *Humanitarian Action for Children in Africa*.

### August 2019

Held the 4th Youth In Action regional forum on peacebuilding, bringing together 33 youth from East and Horn of Africa to be equipped with leadership skills training on advancing Freedom of Religion or Belief (FoRB).

### August 2019

Joined our partners (Peace Service Centre) in Nepal for the expansion of the *Nepal Poverty Solutions* programme in Dang, Western Nepal, reaching up to 500 children in the initial phase.

### July 2019

Participated in the *Ministerial to Advance Religious Freedom* meeting in the United States, which shed light on building blocks for advancing religious freedom and religious freedom in development and humanitarian assistance.



### October 2019

Together with our partners in the Moral Imperative to End Extreme Poverty, we held a side event on making a case for securing better outcomes for poverty alleviation, revitalizing partnerships and strategic synergies between faith actors and multilateral agencies, to achieve development; during the annual meetings of the World Bank and IMF in Washington D.C, the United States.

### October 2019

Carried out our annual global campaign – *Together we can end child poverty worldwide* in which we marked the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty (IDEP), 17 October 2019. The campaign reached up to 27588 children in 22 countries.

### December 2019

Carried out the 16 Days of activism campaign together with REJADH. Six key actions were done during this campaign. The activities raised awareness as well as called for collective action to end Gender-Based Violence (GBV). We also had a robust online campaign during this period, reaching over 100,000 people online.

### September 2019

Conducted governance workshop for the board and executive committees of the Sudan Council of Churches (SCC) and the Sudan Interreligious Council (SIRC). The workshop equipped them with relevant skills and knowledge for implementation of the Sudan Social Cohesion Initiative, aimed at promoting peace in the country.

### September 2019

Marked the International Day of Peace with our partners from Comoros, India, Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda doing grassroots activities with a reach of up to 880 people. We also participated in the global online conversation, where we produced a short Peace Day video.

### November 2019

Held the 4th regional REJADH Action! Seminar with 22 youth from Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo, Mali, Somalia, and South Sudan. The seminar aimed at building the capacity of the youth by integrating sustainability into their planning for future growth and expansion of the network.

### November 2019

Together with all the Arigatou International initiatives, we launched the *Faith and Children's Rights Study*, through an event held in Nairobi. This was in view of the 30th anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

### November 2019

Joined the GNRC and other partners in the campaign against online child sexual exploitation, which is an emerging global lethal form of violence against children.

SEPTEMBER OCTOBER NOVEMBER DECEMBER

## THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION

Theological reflection and action is a way for Arigatou International—End Child Poverty to mobilise faith communities in mitigating the root causes of poverty in the human heart, including ignorance, greed, hatred, and fear.

Our primary approach is mobilizing faith actors to draw upon their spiritual, religious, moral, and social resources as a foundation for addressing child poverty and its root causes. Faith actors include faith leaders, faith communities, religious congregations, institutions of worship, faith-based organizations, and other faith-inspired institutions. Together, faith actors have unique comparative advantages, which can positively impact children's wellbeing. We, therefore, aim to work with various faith actors from different religions in order to utilise these faith-inspired assets for the wellbeing of all children and to overcome child poverty.

As a way to foster theological reflection, we continue to use our *Interfaith Guide to End Child Poverty*. This guide has been used to create content for our campaigns. During our annual *Together We Can End Child Poverty Worldwide Campaign*, we used this Guide in creating the campaign toolkit, concept note, and social media messaging, including the formulation of blog posts.

Since the launch of the Guide in 2017 during the GNRC 5th Forum, Arigatou International—End Child Poverty has made deliberate effort to popularize it through our website, the Knowledge Center, and by sharing it widely with our partners, including members of the GNRC. To this end, the Guide has been a rich resource for knowledge and reference in our

advocacy and lobbying approaches, as well as a suitable reference guide for our grassroots partners. In this manner, the Guide has been a tool used to build momentum towards the realization of the GNRC 5th Forum commitments on ending violence against children and ending child poverty. In the coming period, we shall seek to re-edit and reproduce an interactive online version of the Guide, thereby enabling an easier and wider reach.

Notably, within the reporting period, we also contributed towards theological reflections, from the Christian perspective on the study – *Faith and Children's Rights*. This was a multi-religious study by Arigatou International in commemoration of the 30th anniversary of the CRC, bringing together perspectives from 7 major religions from across the world. The study was later launched on the World Children's Day, 20th November 2019. This study discusses how religious leaders, who already embrace the moral responsibility to safeguard children, can be ideal advocates of children's rights.







## 7 ways we can build spiritual foundations for children

- Clarify your own spiritual beliefs
- Help children define spirituality
- Credit any habits of reverence
- Use daily events to teach spirituality
- Read religious text together often
- Lean on your spiritual beliefs in hard times and let your children know who you are
- Tell relevant stories to encourage learning and reflection

## Faith and Children's Rights:

A Multi-religious Study on the Convention on the Rights of the Child



## INTERFAITH ADVOCACY AND LOBBYING

Through interfaith advocacy and lobbying, Arigatou International—End Child Poverty address the structural root causes of poverty in society. These include violence, corruption, inequalities, war, and poor governance. In all, we aim to influence social and policy change.

### How we approach interfaith advocacy and lobbying

- i. By being part of collaborative platforms at global and regional levels so as to leverage advocacy opportunities.
- ii. By commemorating relevant international days/observances set by the United Nations (UN) and other relevant bodies.
- iii. Supporting advocacy campaigns initiated by our grassroots partners, including members of the Global Network of Religions for Children (GNRC).

Arigatou International—End Child Poverty also works towards building increased understanding and awareness on issues related to child poverty. We lay emphasis on measuring impact and utilizing evidence to support our actions towards overcoming child poverty. Further, our approach entails being part of regional and global policy and decision-making discourse, with the aim of bringing children's needs to the forefront. We specifically focus on children's wellbeing and children's rights by ensuring this is integrated and mainstreamed in all aspects of societal life.

### Collaborating to Achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

This advocacy and lobbying stream is made possible through our engagement in global and regional platforms.

They are:

- iv. The Global Coalition to End Child Poverty
- v. The faith-based action framework to end extreme poverty and realize the SDGs, also known as the Moral Imperative Framework.
- vi. The Africa Interfaith Initiative on the SDGs
- vii. The African Children and Youth Network for Human Rights/*Réseau des Enfants et Jeunes Africains pour les Droits Humains (REJADH)*

Through these spaces, we collectively push for an end to child poverty and advocate for the promotion of children's rights, dignity, and wellbeing. The platforms provide an opportunity for youth and faith leaders within our networks to amplify their voices and be part of the global and regional discourse concerning the SDGs. Through these platforms, we focus mainly on SDG 1 on ending poverty in all its forms, as well as SDGs 5 and 16, on gender equality and peace, respectively. We believe that the attainment of these SDGs accelerates efforts to end child poverty. Within these spaces, we also mobilize collective action around key international days, notably the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty (IDEP), which is covered in the subsequent section of this report.





## The Global Coalition to End Child Poverty

This is a global initiative to raise awareness about children in poverty across the world. The Coalition, through its multiple interventions, supports global, regional, and national actions to alleviate child poverty. It comprises of over 20 organizations, which aim to work together to achieve a world free of child poverty. Within the Coalition, Arigatou International—End Child Poverty contributes towards knowledge advancements through our End Child Poverty Knowledge Centre. We also engage in joint advocacy, especially in commemoration of IDEP, and leading *'Listening to Children'* as a way to overcome child poverty by directly involving them.

In the reporting period, Arigatou International—End Child Poverty authored an article in the Coalition's online platform, highlighting the significance and effectiveness of children-led initiatives in ending poverty. We outlined India Poverty Solutions as a case study; a simple child-led initiative to end poverty in India, run by our partner Shanti Ashram. This article also called on the need to listen to children's views and opinions on issues affecting them, as set in the CRC and Panama commitments. The article attracted conversations within the online

### Global Coalition – Milestones to end child poverty

- Build a national pathway to end child poverty by prioritizing child poverty and producing national child poverty measures.
- Measure child poverty routinely at the national level.
- Put child poverty on the map through broad child poverty advocacy and communication.
- Reduce child poverty through policy and programme change – ranging from cash transfers programmes to improving access and quality of education for the poorest children.
- Achieve the SDGs by ending extreme child poverty and halving child poverty by national definitions.

platform. Authoring this article was also a way of achieving a wider audience reach for our work, with possibilities of expanding and replicating such initiatives together with partners in the coalition.

Arigatou International—End Child Poverty also made use of online campaign messages specifically prepared for Coalition members to commemorate the International Day for



### 5 MILESTONES TO END CHILD POVERTY

- 1 Building a national pathway to end child poverty
- 2 Measuring child poverty
- 3 Putting child poverty on the map
- 4 Reducing child poverty through policy and programme change
- 5 Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals

Support the fight to end child poverty  
[www.endchildhoodpoverty.org](http://www.endchildhoodpoverty.org)

Eradication of Poverty (IDEP). Similarly, we shared our IDEP Toolkit and Media Pack with the Coalition members, for further dissemination and use by their constituents. Notably, we supported the online campaign led by Coalition members UNICEF and Save the Children offices in New York, USA, which focused on progress being made by countries to **end extreme poverty** by 2030, by analyzing the Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs). The Voluntary National Reviews provide significant data in evaluating the progress being made by various countries in

the implementation of the SDGs, in this case, SDG1. As a result of the collaborative efforts, we had a robust social media presence during the International Day for Eradication of Poverty (IDEP) campaign, reaching over 200,000 online subscribers.

The Coalition also published 3 newsletters highlighting key events, processes, publications, and the impact of the coalition as well as individual members. In all the newsletters, we made contributions relevant to the work we are doing towards the elimination of poverty.



## **The Moral Imperative Framework**

This global platform was initiated as a faith communities' response towards realizing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The platform is convened by faith leaders and the World Bank and provides faith-driven strategies to eliminate extreme poverty advancing the SDGs. Arigatou International—End Child Poverty has been part of the Moral Imperative platform since its formation in 2015, and we chair its Advocacy Working Group.

The Moral Imperative works by generating evidence, engaging in advocacy, and fostering collaboration between religious and other development actors, including governments, the World Bank, the United Nations, and the private sector.

Our engagement in this platform provides a global space where we can advance the core agenda of ending child poverty, even as we cooperate with others in meeting the overall objectives of the platform. The Moral Imperative also promotes



greater collaboration between faith actors, government organs, and civil society, all of whom are essential stakeholders in accomplishing our work.

Within the reporting period, together with our partners in the Moral Imperative, Arigatou International—End Child Poverty hosted a side event during the annual meetings of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). The event aimed at making a case for securing better outcomes for poverty alleviation, as well as revitalizing partnerships and strategic synergies between faith actors and multilateral agencies to achieve development; thereby resulting in advocacy actions by faith actors. The side event also formed a platform to draw debate on how to amplify faith actors' contribution towards ending extreme poverty through collaboration between faith actors and multilateral agencies at country and regional levels; and with special referencing to inclusive development, scaling-up investments in human capital development, women and gender equality, and ending child poverty.

The arising Moral Imperative's joint communiqué, we recommended deliberate efforts to expand what is termed "religious literacy," meaning solid information, at global and national levels, about the specific parameters of religious institutions and their development-linked work and approaches. It also called for the need to pursue research efforts aimed at providing evidence on features and results of distinctly faith-linked approaches. This would aid to dispel or limit misconceptions as well as identify patterns in fragmented information.

This seminal event formed part of our long-term advocacy efforts to call the government

and their citizenry to 'invest in children'. It was also a build-up to the 2018 meeting in Bali, Indonesia, where together with members of the Moral Imperative, we produced an outcome document on Investing in Children. In the 2019 event, the platform also reiterated on the need to invest in the wellbeing of children where it acknowledged the primacy of the state, family, and community institutions in advancing the strategic wellbeing outcomes for children and women.

Faith actors, policy discussants and policymakers, government officials, and representatives of the nation and international bodies (including World Bank, IMF, and UN organs), attended this side-event, which took place on 15th October 2019 in Washington D.C, USA.

Going forward, Arigatou International—End Child Poverty will build the momentum gained through the Advocacy Working Group processes, engaging in the global discourse on Investing in Human Capital, and providing advocacy grounded on practical action.

### **The Moral Imperative Framework at a glance**

1. Formed in 2015 and comprises of over 60 organizations
2. Focuses on faith-driven evidence, advocacy and collaboration to end extreme poverty
3. Held 3 major side events at the United Nations General Assembly, and 2 at the annual meetings of the World Bank and IMF; since inception.
4. Securing wellbeing of children in early childhood identified as a priority area.

## The African Children and Youth Network for Human Rights

This network, *Réseau des Enfants et Jeunes Africains pour les Droits Humains (REJADH)*, was formed by Arigatou International—End Child Poverty and our partners, the Norwegian Church Aid (NCA) and Changemakers Oslo, in 2016. The REJADH network comprises of young persons - children and youth – from 5 countries (Burundi, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Mali, South Sudan, and Somalia). These 5 countries particularly suffer the effects of gender-based violence due to conflicts and instability. These conflicts have also triggered and worsened child poverty in each of the countries. In view of this, we sought to empower young people as agents for positive change in their local communities, using targeted advocacy as our primary vehicle. REJADH continues to advocate against gender-based violence and its negative impacts on children and women. The network has mainly been involved in advocating for ratification and universal implementation of The Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on

the Rights of Women in Africa (otherwise known as the *Maputo Protocol*), as well as other relevant laws and policies.

Arigatou International—End Child Poverty supports the work of REJADH through resource mobilization; funding REJADH country-level and regional activities; facilitating capacity building opportunities, including advocacy and lobbying training; providing mentorship; and, offering technical and communication expertise to REJADH. By supporting the work of REJADH, we address Gender-Based Violence (GBV) as a structural cause of child poverty and its negative impacts on children. As a result, we address our GNRC 5th Forum Panama Commitments on ending violence against children. More specifically, we support REJADH actions that aim to generate greater social and political will for legislation, policies, and increased funding of programs to protect children from violence. We also support REJADH to educate their local leaders and communities about the different forms of violence against children, and what they can do to reduce and prevent such violence.



## In the reporting period:

Arigatou International—End Child Poverty, held the 4th regional Action! Seminar for youth leaders from 14th – 18th November 2019, in Machakos County, Kenya. The seminar brought together 22 youth leaders from the five REJADH countries. The seminar aimed at building the capacity of the youth by integrating sustainability into their planning for future direction and growth of the network. Discussions during this seminar were deliberately focused on highlighting harmful practices related to Gender-Based Violence. This was in line with the earmarked new REJADH strategy on harmful practices that aggravate Gender-Based Violence.

We also facilitated the participation of 15 REJADH youth leaders in the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD25) from the 12th - 14th November 2019, in Nairobi Kenya. ICPD25 presented an opportunity for these REJADH leaders to network with other leaders from International Nongovernmental Organizations (INGOs) and regional youth organs working to end Gender-Based Violence (GBV). Our focus area during the conference was addressing harmful practices that fuel Gender-Based Violence. To this end, the conference enabled the youth to learn and share experiences from their contexts. The conference brought together close to 10,000 participants from 170 countries. As a follow up to ICPD25, we supported REJADH in Burundi and the Democratic Republic of Congo, in collaboration with the Side-by-Side movement, to organize implementation workshops on the ICPD25 recommendations in their countries.

We further mobilised the REJADH members to commemorate the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence (GBV), from 25th November to 10th December 2019, under the rallying call “I am / We are Generation Equality.” This commemoration highlighted Gender Equality (Sustainable Development Goal 5) as a pathway to eradicate GBV, and also as an outcome of zero tolerance on GBV. In addition to the online campaign, which reached over 100,000 online subscribers, we also supported REJADH also organize 5 grassroots activities during the campaign period, reaching up to over 1,000 children and youth. Both the online campaign and the grassroots activities drew attention to the need for coming together as stakeholders to end violence against women and girls, which often is a driver of child poverty. Some of the key messages from the youth included a call to end rape as a form of violence against women and girls.

We supported REJADH advocacy and lobbying actions several locations, bringing together religious leaders, decision-makers, children, and women, with the aim to reduce, prevent, and end Gender-Based Violence. Some of these activities included: sensitization workshops on the Sustainable Development (SDGs) in the Democratic Republic of Congo; media advocacy programmes in Burundi, and the Democratic Republic of Congo; school GBV-sensitization workshops in Mali; and, awareness forums on harmful practices that perpetuate GBV in Somalia. REJADH also took part in national forums on GBV organized by partners, including the ACT Alliance members in their respective countries.





## The Africa Interfaith Initiative on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

This is a platform for collaboration among religious and faith-based organizations in Africa towards achieving the Post-2015 Development Agenda (the SDGs). It was formed as a response to the need for faith communities and faith leaders to engage in shaping the global development agenda by influencing and contributing to the achievement of the SDGs. This Initiative brings together over 50 faith-based and religious actors for the collective efforts to support and advance the SDGs. The initiative was officially recognized and strengthened by its Kampala declaration “From Lament to Action,” at the end of its seminal African Faith Leaders’ Summit on the post-2015 Development Agenda, held in Kampala, Uganda, in July 2014. This summit and the resultant declaration provided the road map for the efforts of faith actors towards understanding and implementation the SDGs. By being part of this initiative, Arigatou International—End Child Poverty is able to widen our scope of contribution towards the realization of SDGs and ending child poverty, particularly Goal 1 (End poverty in all its forms everywhere). We also leverage the platform for collaboration within the region and learn

from good practices from members within the initiative.

Within the year, Arigatou International—Nairobi led the platform is partnering with the ACT Alliance regional office in Africa, to organize faith leaders and technical representatives meeting with a view of reinvigorating the platform. The meeting, which was attended by over 40 faith actors from 20 different organizations, generated reflection on the contribution of faith communities and their leaders, towards the realization of the SDGs. Participants agreed on the need for more advocacy, awareness, and documentation by faith actors, as part of their efforts to contribute to the realization of the SDGs in Africa.

We also led the platform in conducting a youth consultation on the SDGs in Nairobi, Kenya. The 30 youth, drawn from the Eastern Africa Region, interacted with various concepts around the SDGs, including key terminologies, bodies, stakeholders, and also a systematic approach to the SDGs, that is: Discover, Engage, Advocate and Measure impact (DEAMi). After the consultation, the youth committed to participate in the SDGs advocacy processes in their countries, such as Voluntary National Reviews (VNR), as part of SDGs monitoring and evaluation.



## ADVOCACY THROUGH COMMEMORATING INTERNATIONAL DAYS

We mark key international days and also support our partners, including members of the GNRC, to take action towards ending child poverty in their communities.

In the reporting period, together with our partners, including members of the GNRC, we marked International Days as summarized:

### **Day of the African Child** – 16 June 2019

- Our youth network leaders from Kenya and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), held activities in commemoration of the Day of the African Child, reaching over 400 children and youth. Both events raised awareness on the rights of the child as well as the SDGs, especially SDG 4 on education. We also joined the regional online conversation on *Humanitarian Action for Children in Africa*, where we authored a blog post in this respect.

### **International Youth Day** – 12 August 2019

- We supported our youth network leaders from Kilifi County, Kenya, in hosting an SDGs awareness event bringing together 60 youth during the commemoration of International Youth Day. Through the event, the youth got a basic understanding of the SDGs. Such conversations with the youth are part of our

broader objective to mainstream the SDGs, in relation to ending child poverty.

### **International Day of Peace** – 21 September

2019 - We participated in the global online campaign, showing the need to involve children and youth in building peace. This was done by featuring youth leaders who have been actively involved in promoting peace within their communities in a video. Additionally, our partners from Comoros, India, Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda held grassroots activities reaching more than 1,500 people. The activities called for peaceful coexistence in communities while taking care of the environment, in line with the theme – *Climate Action for Peace*.

### **International Day for the Eradication of Poverty** - 17 October 2019

- Under our annual campaign – *Together We Can End Child Poverty Worldwide* – we mobilized our grassroots partners, including members of the GNRC, to take action towards ending child poverty. Our emphasis was on creating spaces to listen to children as a step towards empowering them towards ending child poverty, and also as a call in the GNRC 5th Forum Panama commitments and the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). In total, partners from over 25 countries organized more than 45 grassroots actions. These actions reached an estimated 28,324 people, including 27,528 children. We also organized our 3rd End Child Poverty photo contest, where we encouraged people to showcase their community action towards ending child poverty. This was also a way to involve



as many people in the campaign as possible, since the contest was open to the public. This contest attracted 26 entries globally, under the banner, #SnapsforChange. Additionally, our social media communication during this campaign supported the grassroots actions, raised awareness on issues around child poverty, while showcasing our work to the wider online audience. Over 200,000 online subscribers were reached.

*A detailed campaign report is available on our website.*

### **Day of Prayer and Action for Children**

– 20th November 2019 - We joined many across the world and the larger Arigatou International family in commemorating the 30th anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). During these commemorations, Arigatou International launched the “Faith and Children’s Rights: A Multi-religious Study on the Convention on the Rights of the Child.” The study provides an overview of how faith perspectives complement the framework of the CRC, thereby offering compelling ways to tackle child poverty from a faith perspective and with respect to the CRC. Government officials attended the Nairobi launch event, including representation from the President’s Office, alongside other stakeholders, including UNICEF. The government of Kenya lauded the efforts that were being put in place by faith actors to ensure child rights are upheld. The Director, Arigatou International – End Child Poverty, expressed optimism that the study would be helpful towards ensuring faith communities are active and play a key role in promoting the rights of every child. Over 500 participants, including children, attended the Nairobi launch event.

### **Why Do We Mark International Days**

1. To increase understanding of the drivers of child poverty and what can be done to prevent and alleviate Child Poverty.
2. International Days are opportunities to urge governments to take the lead in developing and implementing relevant policies addressing child poverty.
3. It enables us to engage more stakeholders towards promoting children’s rights and ending child poverty.
4. We are able to build commitment for effective policies and practices and their implementation to end child poverty.
5. International Days provide unique opportunities to listen to children and amplify their voices regarding ending child poverty.

We also joined the GNRC Kenya in the pre-launch event organized by the GNRC and several partners, on 19th November 2019, in Nairobi, Kenya. This event was attended by over 100 children and mainly focused on awareness on the Convention on the Rights of the Child, in view of the Faith and Children’s Rights study.

**The 16 Days of Activism** – 25th November – 10th December 2019 - Together with REJADH, we commemorated the 16 Days Of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence, through a youth-led campaign. Apart from online messaging, which reached over 100,000 online subscribers, REJADH also held 5 grassroots activities during the campaign period, reaching up to over 1,000 children and youth.

## FLAGSHIP AND GRASSROOTS PROJECTS

We advance replicable flagship and grassroots initiatives that aim to promote the wellbeing of children. In particular, these initiatives comprise:

- i. Right to Education
- ii. Right to Peace
- iii. Empowering women caregivers and youth
- iv. Supporting special high impact initiatives

### Right to Education

We believe that education is instrumental in uplifting children out of poverty. We continue to advocate for quality, universal basic education and children to remain in school for the duration of their studies, through our Right to Education Programme. In partnership with the GNRC and other organizations, we have been able to provide scholarships to supplement the payment of school fees,

purchase of uniforms, and other school supplies. Children affected by poverty, war, and violent conflict are the main beneficiaries of this scholarship. The program aims to ensure that:

- Children affected by poverty receive a quality education.
- Through supporting the Right to Education, faith communities uphold the rights of children.
- The knowledge we gather, document, and share, on relevant good practices related to promoting the Right to Education benefit faith actors.

In the reporting period, Arigatou International—End Child Poverty, together with the GNRC, supported children from 6 countries (Kenya, Lebanon, Malaysia, Pakistan, Sierra Leone, and South Sudan) under the scholarship programme, benefitting more than 200 children in these countries.





Notably, we conducted a monitoring and evaluation visit to our partner, Amani Village of Hope in Kenya. The visit aimed at monitoring the progress of the more than 50 children, who are beneficiaries of our scholarships. The visit also enabled us to interact with and encourage the children, and we also donate some foodstuffs, stationery, and clothing to the children. Amani Village of Hope currently hosts 148 children from vulnerable backgrounds.

In collaboration with ICAN Malaysia, a member of the GNRC in Malaysia, we offered over 20 educational classes to children living as refugees, mainly from Rohingya, Yemen, and Syria. Over 155 children who benefited from this programme, in which over 20 volunteers offered the classes, which were mainly held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. The children were mainly taught mathematics, art, life skills, and culture.

In the coming year, we will continue providing scholarships and mentorship to these children, with the aim of adding even more children to the programme. We will explore ways to raise funds for sustainability and expansion of the programme.

## **Right to Peace**

The common understanding that peace accelerates and amplifies efforts to alleviate child poverty always motivates us. In light of this, Arigatou International—End Child Poverty endeavors to establish and expand initiatives that promote peace, conflict transformation, and addressing the root causes of poverty, such as corruption, poor governance, and violence. Our primary

tool has been fostering interfaith dialogue, interfaith cooperation, and facilitating peace education. Through the Right to Peace, we have been able to contribute towards the achievement of SDG 16 on Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions.

Our Right to Peace initiative has been achieved through our work in the:

- i. Regional Peace Programme
- ii. Sudan Social Cohesion initiative

### **Regional Peace Programme**

Through this programme, we advance peace towards protecting youth and children from violent extremism, gang violence, and organized crime, as a pillar from the GNRC 5th Forum. The programme covers 12 countries in the East and Horn of Africa - Burundi, Djibouti, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Kenya, Rwanda, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Tanzania, and Uganda.

This programme is a nested partnership bringing together 7 organizations including Arigatou International—End Child Poverty, All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC), Africa Council of Religious Leaders (ACRL),







Fellowship of Christian Churches, Councils in the Great Lakes and Horn of Africa (FECCLAHA), Hekima Institute of Peace Studies and International Relations (HIPSIR), International Center for Peace, Human Rights and Development-IPHRD Africa, and, the Norwegian Church Aid (NCA).

In the reporting period, Arigatou International—End Child Poverty organized the 4th regional *Youth In Action* forum on Peacebuilding in Nyeri County, Kenya. The forum brought together 33 youth from the East and Horn of Africa, to learn and share experiences on Leadership. In line with the forum's theme, "Youth in Action: Leadership for Change," the young leaders were equipped with leadership skills and insights through storytelling and media. Notably, we introduced a new training of Freedom of Religion or Belief (FoRB) is a compelling way to enhance social cohesion, thus promoting peace. By equipping the youths with these skills and basic concepts on FoRB, we enabled them to be able to lead and mentor their peer

in their communities towards creating peace and, by extension ending poverty.

Also, supported the *Youth In Action* participants to undertake over 15 grassroots follow-up activities in the communities in 7 countries: Ethiopia, Kenya, Tanzania, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, and Uganda. These activities reached over 3,000 children and youth in those countries, who acquired knowledge on peacebuilding and championing the prevention of violent extremism in their communities. Additionally, the youth-led *#ILeadPeace* online campaign reached to over 70,000 people online.

Together with HIPSIR, we also hosted a student-led Ideas Lab on Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism, bringing together over 200 participants, including 50 youth. This event, held in Nairobi, Kenya, in October 2019, aimed at providing a platform to the youth to share the best practical and replicable ideas on preventing, countering, and transforming violent extremism among

young people. The students would then be supported to implement these ideas back in their school communities.

Within the reporting period, we further participated in the *Insights Forum* organized by the Tony Blair Institute for Global Change and the Alliance for Peacebuilding, in Nairobi, Kenya, in November 2019. The forum aimed to engage with religious actors as vital players in preventing and countering violent extremism, identifying conflict and promoting peacebuilding, inclusive human rights and freedom of religious belief, and social cohesion in communities. This forum gave us an opportunity to present our Regional Peace Programme research findings, and share our work on *Youth In Action*, as well as learn some good practices from other likeminded organizations and institutions. The Insights Forum was also a great networking opportunity, thus building potential partnerships and widening the reach of our work while making us visible globally.

### **Sudan Social Cohesion Initiative**

The Sudan Social Cohesion Initiative is a faith-led initiative aimed at enhancing and strengthening social cohesion between different faith groups, and to protect and promote the fundamental rights of faith minorities in Sudan. The Initiative promotes interfaith dialogue, interaction, and cooperation by people of different faiths, and uses religious resources as tools for mobilization, building trust, and positive relationships between key religious leaders/institutions and communities in selected sites in Sudan. This is a new initiative arising from the aforementioned Regional Peace Programme, and it is spearheaded by the Sudan Council of Churches (SCC) and the Sudan Interreligious Council (SIRC). Arigatou

International—End Child Poverty supports their efforts through faith actors' capacity building and children's engagement within the initiative. Going forward, we aim to expand our contribution within the initiative by working with Arigatou International – Ethics Education for Children to introduce the Learning to Live Together methodology.

In commencing the initiative, Arigatou International—End Child Poverty led the partners in conducting leadership and good governance training workshop for the Boards and Executive Committee of the Sudan Council of Churches (SCC), and the Sudan Interreligious Council (SIRC). This workshop aimed at equipping the faith leaders with skills and knowledge on social cohesion in preparation for the implementation of the initiative. The workshop took place in September 2019, in Khartoum, Sudan, and was attended by over 25 participants from both SCC and SIRC together with other partners.

We also facilitated a training workshop for 36 Community Dialogue Facilitators in Khartoum, Sudan, in November 2019. This workshop aimed to train the community leaders, mainly religious leaders from the SCC and the SIRC, to spearhead advocacy and social actions on Freedom of Religion or Beliefs (FoRB), thus promoting social cohesion in Sudan. We also conducted follow-up training, later in December 2019, with over 100 community leaders, predominantly women and religious leaders from Khartoum. The training provided space for experience sharing and learning for the community leaders. In the year to come, we shall continue to support the work of these leaders for advocacy and social actions in their communities, towards promoting Freedom of Religion or Belief (FoRB).

## SPECIAL HIGH IMPACT INITIATIVES

These initiatives broadly address the root causes and drivers of child poverty. We partly regard them as high impact because of their likelihood to be successfully modeled and widely replicated, as well as scaled up in various contexts and regions. Within the year, we accompanied our partners, especially members of the GNRC, across the world in advance, and in some cases, starting these initiatives.

### **The GNRC Middle East Regional meeting**

Arigatou International—End Child Poverty staff, took part in this meeting, which aimed to reflect on the state of children in the Middle East, in relation to different forms of violence they face, and the nexus of such violence to child poverty. It further explored possible action by faith communities, with close reference to the Panama Commitments on ending violence against children. The meeting gave us an opportunity to call for the eradication of child poverty in the region as it is closely linked to violence against children. Participants acknowledged the fact that given the endless opportunities proffered by faith communities, religious traditions have established many social networks and assets to fight against violence against children and, by extension, child poverty. The meeting took place in Amman, Jordan, in April 2019 and was organized by Arigatou International—GNRC in collaboration with the Royal Institute for Inter-Faith Studies (RIIFS), and the Arab Woman and Child for Training and Development (AWCO), a member of



the GNRC Jordan. 75 participants, including religious and spiritual leaders, government officials, civil society organizations, peace practitioners, and members of the GNRC, participated.

### **Expansion of the Nepal Poverty solutions**

In August 2019, Arigatou International—End Child Poverty staff visited the Peace Service Centre (Shanti Sewa Ashram), a member of the GNRC in Nepal. The visit focused on strengthening the End Child Poverty initiatives and programmes within the region, especially the children, led Nepal Poverty Solutions. Through the visit, together with the Peace Service Centre, we were able to grow the Nepal Poverty Solutions to the Western part



of Nepal – Dang. In a colorful event, over 500 children attended the inauguration of the programmes in the region, from which 10 poverty solution ambassadors were selected. While spreading awareness about the programme in the region, our Director and the programme coordinator from the Peace Service Centre, as well as the manager of the End Child Poverty Knowledge Centre, participated in a radio talk show where they collectively emphasized the importance of the programme as a classic model to ending poverty. They also emphasized the need for faith leaders to work together for a better world for children. By growing the poverty solutions programme, we not only widen our work within the region but also step up efforts towards ending child poverty. Growing the Nepal Poverty Solutions also shows the need for more of such children led initiatives to end child poverty, as they are effective, community-based, and relatively simple to implement.

The Nepal Poverty Solutions has been in progress in Nepal since 2017 and is run by the Peace Service Center. The initiative has largely focused on the provision of education to

children through scholarships. Here, children have a traditional saving mechanism where they save money in small gourd-shaped containers (piggy banks) and, after a certain period, collect the money, which later is used to sponsor vulnerable children within the region. This initiative is a replication of the India Poverty Solutions, which was originally initiated by a child in Coimbatore, India, in 2012. After we supported an international practicum organized by our partner, Shanti Ashram from India, involving our partners in South East Asia, the India Poverty Solutions was adopted by some of the partners like the Peace Service Center - giving rise to the Nepal Poverty Solutions.

### **Ministerial to Advance Religious Freedom meeting**

Through our Director, Arigatou International—End Child Poverty participated in this meeting held in July 2019, in Washington D.C, USA. The meeting was organized by the U.S Department of State under the leadership of the Secretary of State. The meeting discussions focused on; building blocks for advancing Religious Freedom, emerging trends in Religious Freedom, and





Religious Freedom in development and humanitarian assistance. The meeting, which brought together 1,000 religious leaders and civil society, reaffirmed international commitments to promote religious freedom for all and focus on concrete outcomes that produce durable, positive change.

These discussions were relevant to our work, especially in the areas of peacebuilding, specifically regarding Social Cohesion, Prevention and Countering Violent Extremism, and Freedom of Religion or Belief (FoRB).

### **Campaign on Ending Online Child Sexual Exploitation and Abuse**

We joined the GNRC, the Interfaith Alliance for Safer Communities and the University of Nairobi, in organizing and conducting a three – weeks campaign on online child dignity. This campaign came at the backdrop of disturbing statistics that at any moment, 750,000 individuals are looking to connect with children across the globe for sexual purposes, according to the FBI. This meant there are so many children exposed to an already affected by cyber-bullying, harassment, and sextortion. Therefore, the campaign aimed at raising awareness about this rampant form of violence against children and further urging stakeholders to come together to take action to end the menace.

In a stakeholder's forum during the time of the campaign, the Director, Arigatou International – End Child Poverty, shared that online sexual exploitation of children is a multidimensional problem that calls for multiple interventions, new thinking, and new approaches. By taking actions to prevent online child sexual exploitation, we significantly end a major and emerging form of violence against children, which

by extension, removes some children from poverty or makes it easy to address child poverty.

### **Launch of Faith and Positive Change For Children Initiative**

Represented by our director, Arigatou International—End Child Poverty, participated in the launch of this initiative on 16th October, 2019 in Washington D.C. This global initiative aims to support more focused, systematic, and at-scale engagement with faith-based communities and actors to influence positive social behavior change towards improving the wellbeing of children. At the launch, the initiative proposed documenting case studies of UNICEF-Faith actor collaboration in 17 countries, co-creating a theory of change, forming an Advisory Group of 20 partner organizations, and creating a web platform for the collection and sharing of these resources. By being part of this global initiative, we will be able to learn and share experiences on best practices regarding the wellbeing of children. The platform will also offer us a wider reach for our work.

### **Spirit of the UN Award**

Our Director was among the awardees of 'Spirit of the UN' 2019 in a ceremony held at the 777 Church Centre Chapel, in New York on 23rd October 2019.

The End Child Poverty Director was awarded for his relentless and impactful work in creating better lives for children by eradicating poverty,



as well as his extensive work in peacebuilding. The Spirit of the UN Award is the highlight of the yearly celebration of the Week of Spirituality, Values, and Global Concerns. The theme for the Week of Spirituality, "Spirit of the UN: The Call for a Life of Human Dignity – Reframing the Discussion on the SDGs and Agenda 2030," highlighting the efforts made by the United Nations and its members in improving the lives of people everywhere through the adoption of the UN2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development.

The award was further recognition of the End Child Poverty Director and the entire Arigatou International's work towards ending child poverty. Hence, this award widens our global reach, impact, and possible partnerships towards ending extreme poverty worldwide. Our Director was among the three other awardees globally. While accepting the award, the Director reinforced, *"Our engagement in creating a better world for all children is aimed at saving their lives, alleviating their suffering and maintaining their sacred human dignity. Now, this is a task that may appear daunting...but this noble award that I have received today, reminds me of the inspiring words of a wise woman who once told me 'Fred...you may not change the whole world...*

*but you can change the whole world for one child at a time, and I dare add...one generation at a time'."*

## Webinar with GNRC Coordinators in Latin America

In January 2020, together with the Secretary-General of the GNRC and the GNRC coordinator in the region, we held the webinar aimed at updating and raising awareness about the GNRC and End Child Poverty initiatives in the region. The webinar sheds light on the work of the initiatives globally with its resultant impact, including achieving the Panama Commitments on Ending Violence Against Children. This webinar came at the backdrop of the need to publicize the two initiatives in the region, for the coordinators to have a first-hand feel of the work of the initiatives. By the end of the webinar, the coordinators were able to distinguish between the initiatives, understand their scope of work, and were re-energized to fully and systematically engage in the work of the initiatives at a grassroots level in Latin America. The webinar also served to enhance more visibility for End Child Poverty and the GNRC in the region, thereby widening the reach of our work.



## ADVANCING KNOWLEDGE TO END CHILD POVERTY

Arigatou International—End Child Poverty promotes and advances relevant knowledge through:

- i. The End Child Poverty Knowledge Centre
- ii. The End Child Poverty Communication

### The End Child Poverty Knowledge Centre

The End Child Poverty Knowledge Centre is a global faith-inspired hub for research, resource gathering, networking, experience sharing, and knowledge dissemination. This centre also serves to build capacities of individuals and organizations working to alleviate child poverty. The Knowledge Centre was launched on 17th October 2014 in Colombo, Sri Lanka, in collaboration with the Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement. Serving as part of the commemoration of the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty (IDEP) 2014, the physical hub was set up in Colombo, hosted and co-managed within the premises of the Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement Headquarters. Further, the online hub of the center is embedded on our website and the Arigatou International – Online community.

In the reporting period, the online hub of the Knowledge Centre continued to serve as a source for relevant child poverty-related materials. These materials have been resourcefully used by our partners and during our campaigns. The material is curated from various Arigatou International sources, and from organizations and bodies



like the Global Coalition to End Child Poverty, UNICEF, African Union, and the Institute for Development Studies, among others.

At the same time, the End Child Poverty Knowledge Centre has been coordinating the household survey in Meethotamulla, Colombo Sri Lanka. The survey was commissioned as a follow up of the establishment of the Meethotamulla Children's Empowerment Centre during the GNRC—End Child Poverty regional meetings in South East Asia, held in December 2018. The Children's Centre led and run by the community in Methotamulla, the Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement and the End Child Poverty Knowledge Center, has been providing educational assistance to children in the flood-prone and income-poor settlement. The preliminary report of the survey is complete and included 467 people and 114 families in the underprivileged settlement. The data from the survey will support the development and implementation of future programs and activities at the Meethotamulla Children's Empowerment Centre.





Further, in collaboration with the Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement, the Knowledge Centre held 2 training workshops for 50 child facilitators on the Convention in the Rights of the Child (CRC). These children are expected to disseminate the knowledge they gain on Child Rights and Child Protection among other children and community members and the country at large. These trainings on child rights are a follow-up to the 30th anniversary of the Convention on the Right of the Child (CRC), marked in 2019. The objective of the workshops is to train a total of 350 Child Facilitators on Child Rights and Child Protection. The workshops have currently been halted due to the COVID-19 pandemic crisis. The workshops will resume once the threat of COVID-19 has been mitigated in Sri Lanka. The knowledge Centre hopes to adapt the workshop according to experiences and challenges faced in the area of Child Rights and Child Protection during the pandemic.

During the *Together We Can End Child Poverty Worldwide* campaign (where we marked IDEP), the Knowledge Centre also produced short social media videos in commemoration of the International Day for Eradication of Poverty (IDEP). The videos featured children and youth, who spoke about poverty as a challenge and some ways in which it can be addressed. The videos greatly accompanied our social media campaign for IDEP, attracting over 100 views on Facebook

### Resources found in the Knowledge Centre

- End Child Poverty Newsletters
- End Child Poverty Annual Reports
- Internal and External Statements on Child poverty
- Advocacy and Communication Toolkits on Child Poverty
- Internal and External Articles and Papers on Child Poverty
- Child Poverty related reports, research, and publications from partner organizations

during the IDEP alone. The videos also contributed to listening to children, which was a core pillar of the IDEP campaign and a primary commitment among the GNRC 5th Forum, Panama commitments on Ending Violence Against Children.

The End Child Poverty Knowledge Centre Manager also supports the GNRC South East Asia Regional Members through coordination and providing programmatic support and advise. In addition, the Knowledge Centre Manager also coordinates a local committee of high-profile religious leaders in Sri Lanka. This network is a local representation of the GNRC, committed to ensuring the wellbeing and safety of children. These religious leaders also actively engage in Arigatou International and the GNRC global platforms. For example, religious leaders from this committee have shared messages of hope and solidarity with communities across the globe suffering from the current COVID-19 Pandemic through the GNRC platforms. This committee meets on a quarterly basis and has been working collectively at a grassroots level to mitigate poverty and protect children since its formation in March 2018. Furthermore, this committee has supported advocacy and dialogue. In addition, the Knowledge Centre Manager is also a member multiple National level forums such as; The National Partnership to End Violence Against Children (NPEVAC); the National steering committee established by the Ministry of Justice on "Justice matters involving child victims and witnesses of crime Act"; UNICEF Sri Lanka Interfaith Network, and The Young Social Scientist Forum Sri Lanka. These diverse engagements enable us to learn and share information across many relevant spaces.

Going forward, we aim to equip the online hub of the center more, through our

intended website revamp. We will also effectively make use of the survey report and results in our approaches in the region and also as a benchmark for future interventions in other regions.



## End Child Poverty Communication

We have a deliberate communication system, which greatly contributes to our strategic work of increasing awareness, community mobilisation, building partnerships, and advocating for the eradication of poverty worldwide. Our communication also serves to enhance our visibility globally by promoting our identity as a compelling interfaith initiative to end child poverty.

Our main communication resource is our **End Child Poverty website**, supported by our active social media accounts on: **Twitter**, **Facebook**, and **Instagram**. We are also present on the *Arigatou International Online Community* through which we communicate about our events, share child poverty messages, as well as collaborate and get information from other initiatives of Arigatou International and our networks. In the coming year, we aim to create more traction on our website by revamping it. We also aim to make more use of YouTube as a social media platform by generating more video content.





## Emerging Issues to ending child poverty: The COVID-19 Pandemic

Towards the end of the year, the global COVID-19 pandemic had spread across most countries globally, and its effects on children, especially child poverty and violence against children, were realized. Having realized these dramatic effects of the pandemic on children, we came together with sister initiatives of Arigatou International to start a campaign that would respond to some of the effects of the pandemic on children.

The campaign – *Faith in Action for Children* – aimed to call on religious leaders and religious communities to increase their actions in response to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on children. The campaign affirmed

that Faith plays a critical role in emergency situations to strengthen resilience in children and young people, and religious leaders can make a crucial contribution to positively influence millions of followers to protect and affirm children's dignity. In its key messages for action by faith communities, the campaign recommended: the need to raise awareness increasing levels of Violence Against Children during the pandemic, supporting Children's awareness of COVID-19 and coping with social distancing, supporting efforts to ensure that children living in fragile and conflict-affected areas are not left behind, supporting parents to Nurture Ethical Values and Spirituality in Children within the Family and in places of shelter among others.



## ARIGATOU INTERNATIONAL – BUILDING A BETTER WORLD FOR CHILDREN

Arigatou International is a non-profit organization that brings together people from all walks of life to build a better world for children. Arigatou International is “All for Children” and draws on universal principles of the common good to offer compelling new ways for people of diverse religious and cultural backgrounds to come together to address children’s issues.

Arigatou International develops and sustains unique multi-stakeholder initiatives designed to ensure that all children are treated with

dignity, all children’s rights are respected, and all children have the opportunity to freely pursue their full human potential. Involving diverse partners, these initiatives emphasise both grassroots action and international advocacy.

Our initiatives are the Global Network of Religions for Children (GNRC), Ethics Education for Children, Prayer and Action for Children, and End Child Poverty. Our headquarters are in Tokyo, Japan.



[arigatouinternational.org](http://arigatouinternational.org)

### **The Global Network of Religions for Children (GNRC)**

is a global-scale interfaith network of organizations and individuals specifically dedicated to securing the rights and well-being of children everywhere.

Find us online:  
[gnrc.net](http://gnrc.net)

### **Prayer and Action for Children**

is a movement connecting people of religion and goodwill who are committed to work together toward a world fit for children where all children are free from violence.

Find us online:  
[prayerandactionforchildren.org](http://prayerandactionforchildren.org)

### **Interfaith Initiative to End Child Poverty**

is a multi-faith, child centered, global initiative that mobilizes faith-inspired resources to eradicate poverty affecting children.

Find us online:  
[endingchildpoverty.org](http://endingchildpoverty.org)

### **Ethics Education for Children**

promotes values and ethics for children and young people within the framework of the child’s right to education as stated in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Find us online: [ethicseducationforchildren.org](http://ethicseducationforchildren.org)



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Our work towards ending child poverty can only be possible if we work together. It is for this reason that we would like to appreciate all partners and everyone whom we walked together in 2019/2020 towards this goal.

We would like to specifically thank members of the Global Network of Religions for Children (GNRC), members of the Global Coalition to End Child Poverty, members of the Moral Imperative, our youth networks, and faith communities all across the globe.

We also thank our sister initiatives — the GNRC, Prayer, and Action for Children, and

Ethics Education for Children — and the entire Arigatou International family for their relentless support in achieving positive results and progress.

Most of all, we thank every child for whom this work is purposed and hope that being our primary audience, this report will not only give them a ray of hope but also offer compelling ways for them to get involved in efforts to end poverty affecting them.

### Together We Can End Child Poverty Worldwide







**ARIGATOU**  
INTERNATIONAL  
*All for Children*

End  
Child Poverty





## CONTRIBUTORS

We thank and acknowledge the following staff members and interns of End Child Poverty for contributing towards content and writing of this report:

- Fred Nyabera
- Nyambura Gichuki
- Kefe Innocent
- Acho Gerald
- Kavitha Vijaraj
- Joyce Owiyo
- Michael Adikwu
- Shawn Kairigo

We also thank the following for using their photos in this report:

- Caleb Wafula
- Goodwill Ngigi
- GNRC members from Moldova
- GNRC members from India
- GNRC members from Sri Lanka
- GNRC members from Nepal
- GNRC members from Bosnia and Herzegovina
- Mukuru Peace club, Nairobi
- Siraad Initiative, Somalia.

---

### End Child Poverty

Arigatou International — Nairobi

P.O.Box 43546 – 00100 Nairobi, Kenya

Tel: +254 20 257 39020/1

Mobile: + 254 733 945 971/ 705 320 970

🌐 [endingchildpoverty.org](https://endingchildpoverty.org)

✉ [endchildpoverty@arigatouinternational.org](mailto:endchildpoverty@arigatouinternational.org)

f End Child Poverty

🐦 @IIECP

📷 EndChildPoverty\_Arigatou



# "Together We Can End Child Poverty Worldwide"

—End Child Poverty

## End Child Poverty

Arigatou International — Nairobi

©End Child Poverty 2019

## Contact Us

End Child Poverty — Arigatou International  
Crawford Business Park, State House Road, Nairobi

P.O. Box 43546 – 00100 Nairobi, Kenya

Tel: +254 20 2573920/1 | +254 705 320 970 | +254 733 945 971

🌐 [endingchildpoverty.org](https://endingchildpoverty.org) ✉ [endchildpoverty@arigatouinternational.org](mailto:endchildpoverty@arigatouinternational.org)

f End Child Poverty 🐦 @IIECP 📷 EndChildPoverty\_Arigatou