

# End Child Poverty



## Together We Can End Child Poverty Campaign

Arigatou International Awareness and Advocacy Campaign



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



**ARIGATOU**  
INTERNATIONAL  
*All for Children*

End  
Child Poverty

# Together We Can End Child Poverty Worldwide Campaign

Photo credit: The Global Coalition to End Child Poverty



**END  
CHILD  
POVERTY**  
GLOBAL COALITION

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## ABOUT ARIGATOU INTERNATIONAL AND ITS INITIATIVES:

Arigatou International works with people from diverse religious and cultural backgrounds to promote children's rights and well-being at all levels—from the grassroots to the global level. This is accomplished through its 4 global initiatives which are:

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

A global-scale interfaith network of organizations and individuals specifically dedicated to securing the rights and well-being of children everywhere, envisioning a world where every child survives and thrives.

### **Ethics Education for Children**

Advancing values-based education for children with a transformative approach to interfaith and intercultural learning, placing children at the heart of all that we do and how we do it.

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

Bringing together diverse religious leaders and faith communities to influence and advocate for the policy, social, and behavioral changes needed to end violence against children.

### **End Child Poverty**

Building a world free of child poverty by addressing both the human and structural root causes of poverty through theological reflection and action, advocacy and knowledge-sharing, and grassroots action to assist children in poverty.

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## INTRODUCTION



As with each year, 'Together we can end child poverty' campaign not only provides us an opportunity to join the world in marking IDEP but also grants us space to intensify our work in creating awareness, building advocacy and rallying partners to take action against child poverty. In 2020, the campaign was anchored on the global theme; 'Acting together to achieve social and environmental justice for all'

**"I was very impressed by the work of our colleagues from other cities supporting vulnerable children. My colleagues and I are determined to take our own initiatives this year."**

Secondary School student from Romania.

Together we can end child poverty campaign was designed with this theme in mind with a bias on children. Our approach was based on the premise that social and environmental justice is key to ending child poverty as it addresses the underlying structural root causes of poverty including: corruption, gender inequalities, climate change, racial discrimination and racism, restrictions of Freedom of Religion or Belief (FoRB) and violence against children.

The campaign was designed against the backdrop and reality of the global Covid-19 pandemic that had struck almost everywhere in the world, within the same year, 2020.

*Jon*

Fred Nyabera,  
Director, Arigatou International, End Child Poverty

## OUR FOCUS

The campaign mainly focused on the following areas which resulted in impact as highlighted below:

### **Grassroots Actions Towards Ending Child Poverty**

Actions were carried out in 22 countries worldwide, representing 28 organizations and reached to over 19,950 children directly. They ranged from holding sessions with children and adults aimed at raising awareness on IDEP, donating material things like foodstuffs and stationery to children, holding interfaith prayers for children and initiating and supporting child-led initiatives to alleviate child poverty.

### **Children's Solutions Lab**

Arigatou International (End Child Poverty and Ethics Education for Children) launched and ran a meaningful space and participatory process for children from different backgrounds who came together to dialogue on how they have been impacted by poverty as well as proposing solutions on how education can help address child poverty. This process saw 37 organizations from 23 countries submit ideas to the lab, where 5 finalists from Cuba, India, Peru, Kenya, Serbia emerged.

### **End Child Poverty Photo Campaign**

The campaign had 19 photo entries from over 6 countries. Winners of the campaign came from Kenya and Indonesia. The campaign aimed at telling visual stories of what communities worldwide are doing to create a world free from poverty.

### **Online Campaign**

The campaign reached up to over 170,000 people online. It involved social media messaging, production of short informative awareness and advocacy videos, writing of blogs, statements and news articles and engaging in collaborative online communication with partners, especially members of the Global Coalition.



# TOGETHER WE CAN END CHILD POVERTY WORLDWIDE 2020 CAMPAIGN AT A GLANCE

IDEP was commemorated by our partners  
in **22 countries** from Africa, Asia, Europe,  
Latin America and Middle East.



Our partners including GNRC members from these countries organized over **35 activities** in commemorating IDEP.



These collective actions of our partners reached **28** organizations, including **19950** children.



The 4<sup>th</sup> End Child Poverty contest, as part of commemorating IDEP, had **19 photo entries** with final winners coming from Kenya and Indonesia.



Our online communication campaign reached **170000** online subscribers.



**37** organizations from **23** countries submitted ideas to the lab, where 5 finalists from Cuba, India, Peru, Kenya, Serbia emerged.

## WHY WE RUN THE CAMPAIGN

Over the years, we have mobilized our partners especially members of the Global Network of Religions for Children (GNRC) in commemorating IDEP. In doing this, we achieve:

- Increased understanding of the drivers of child poverty and actions that can be taken to alleviate Child Poverty,
- Opportunities to listen to children, create safe spaces for their meaningful participation and amplify their voices on issues regarding ending child poverty,
- Urge governments to take the lead in developing and implementing relevant policies in addressing child poverty,
- Engage more stakeholders and strengthen collaborations with existing ones towards promoting children's rights and ending child poverty.



## Empower Children to Participate

Create opportunities to listen to children, and to work together with children in developing solutions to alleviate child poverty.



Members of the GNRC and other partners put forward great efforts in taking actions against child poverty, aligned to the following thematic areas:

### **Covid-19 Mitigation**

With warnings that the Covid-19 pandemic could push 150 million more people into extreme poverty by 2021; End Child Poverty mobilized its partners to carry out actions in various parts of the world with the aim of alleviating the socio-economic effects of the global Covid-19 pandemic. This included provision of digital learning materials to vulnerable children, training of teachers on emerging digital teaching methodologies, distribution of foodstuffs to vulnerable families.

### **Raising Awareness On IDEP and the Drivers of Child Poverty**

Partners took advantage of this commemorations to enlighten their societies on the drivers of child poverty and the significance of IDEP in alleviating child poverty. Among the drivers identified were; conflicts, Violence Against Children, unemployment and Gender Based Violence. Participants were encouraged to take advantage of IDEP to take actions while involving children in eradicating child poverty.

### **Supporting Child-led Initiatives to End Child Poverty**

End Child Poverty continues to encourage its partners to involve children to come up with ideas on ending poverty. In heeding to this key tenet of listening to children, some partners gathered children who shared ideas of what they had done/plan to do in order to alleviate child poverty. Children were guided and assured of adult accompaniment in their efforts to lift their counterparts out of poverty.

### **Material Donations**

Foodstuffs, stationeries, clothing, hygiene materials were donated to vulnerable families across the world. Distribution of material donations as well as skills and other resources has been part of the hallmark of End Child Poverty mobilization of partners in commemorating IDEP. These donations directly aid in addressing immediate poverty challenges for children.

### **Interfaith Prayer For Children**

In line with our approach of working with religious leaders and aligning our work from an interfaith perspective, some of our networks interfaith prayers are specially dedicated to vulnerable children and families gravely affected by the gruesome impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic. These prayers offered hope and were also an act of solidarity with the vulnerable, encouraging them that they would overcome poverty.

### **Awareness On The Sustainable Development Goals (SDG's)**

We believe that achievement of the SDG's will accelerate eradication of child poverty and its drivers. Similarly, efforts to eradicate child poverty compliment achievement of the SDG's especially SDG 1 on ending all forms of poverty. Our partners raised awareness on the SDG's while championing for meaningful involvement of children in efforts to end poverty and achieve the SDG's and the Agenda 2030 in general. Teaching children about the SDG's and involving them in its implementation is one of our newly unveiled process dubbed 'Children 'SDG's Academy' which was launched at the commemoration of the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the GNRC within the Global Week of Faith in Action for Children.



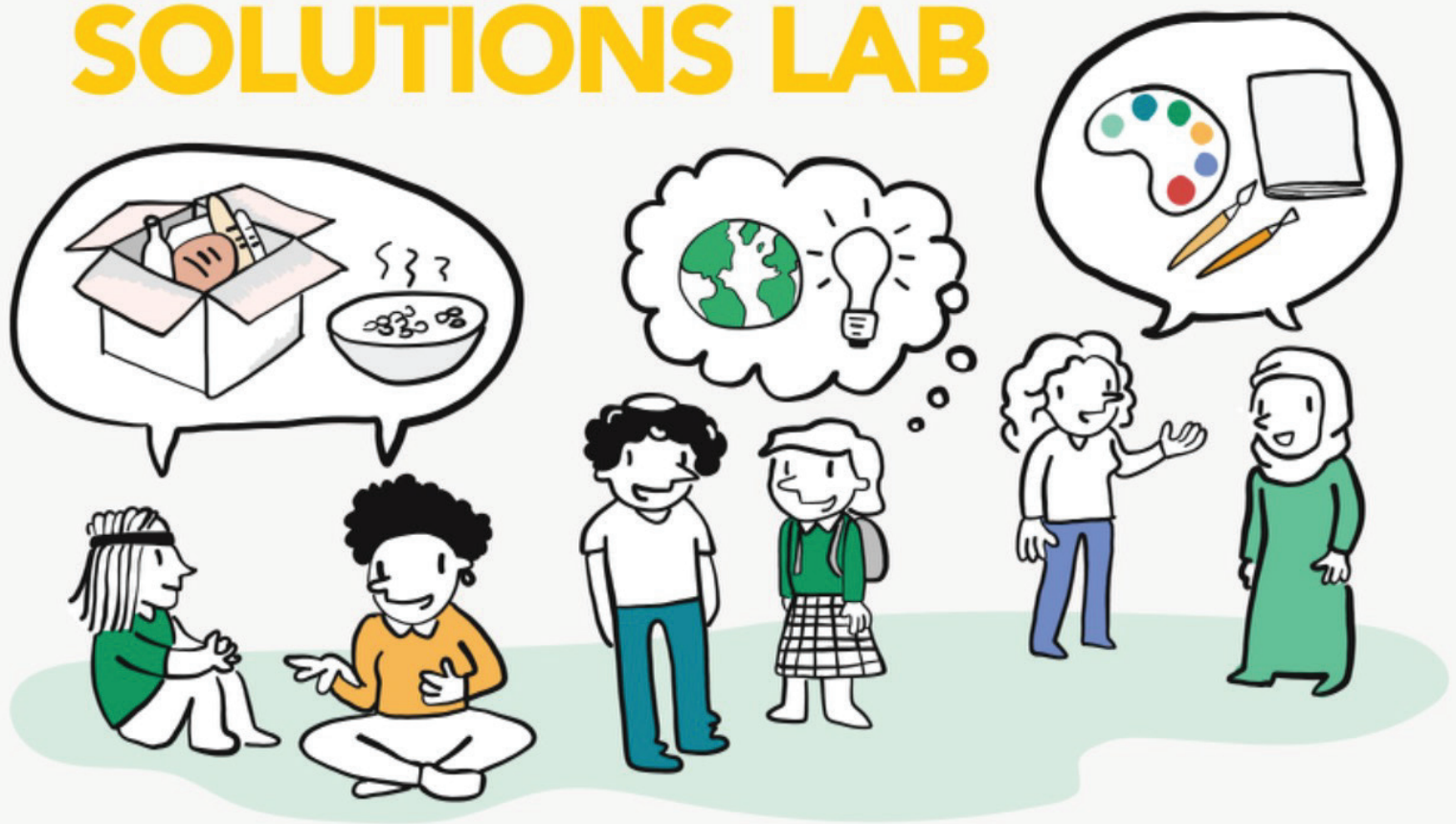
In collaboration with Arigatou International – Ethics Education for Children, we launched the Children's Solutions Lab as a meaningful space and a participatory process for children from different backgrounds to come together to understand, dialogue and take action towards ending child poverty through solutions focused on education. The Solutions Lab was premised on the rationale that every child has a right to live free of poverty and that working together, we can make this right a reality. At the virtual launch of this process, the Director of Arigatou International – End Child Poverty emphasized on this rationale by qualifying children as agents of positive change towards challenges facing them.

This process saw 37 organizations from 23 countries submit ideas to the lab, where 5 finalists emerged; we had the 'Children's Parliament' and the Bala Shanti programme of Shanti Ashram, India; 'Santa's Helpers' children's group', supported by the Sombor Education Centre from Serbia, 'Silver Lining Kenya', Expresarte Group from Peru, and 'Los ninios y ninas de Internet from Cuba.

**"Indeed, these are difficult days due to the many challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. Many children are currently away from school, their parents and caregivers affected by loss of livelihoods and many families facing inadequate access to quality healthcare. Millions of children, without immediate and collective interventions, could be pushed into deeper poverty as a result of the pandemic. It is my heartfelt desire that as we take action during IDEP 2020, we reflect on what social and environmental justice means for all children, and how we can work together to achieve this"**

Fred Nyabera  
Director, Arigatou International  
- End Child Poverty

# CHILDREN'S SOLUTIONS LAB



Do you have a child-led project to address poverty through education?



**We want to support it!**

The solutions presented by the children mainly focused on ensuring inclusive and seamless provision of education to all children, with a focus of vulnerable children, who have arguably been left behind in what is now commonly referred to as the 'Digital divide' in the education sector. Other solutions touched on provision of food donations to children as well as providing safe spaces for children to study. These finalists would be supported in implementing their ideas to address poverty through education oriented solutions.

## Children's Reflections from the Process

1. Massive school closures and lockdowns meant that children stayed at home and had to take online classes. However, this was not affordable for many vulnerable children. Most of them could not afford internet or digital learning gadgets to cope with their counterparts regarding online learning; leaving most of them mentally disturbed.

**"Through the Children's Solutions Lab, we want to focus on how education can help in ending child poverty"**

Maria Lucia Uribe,  
Director Arigatou International - Ethics Education for Children



2. Due to the closure of schools many vulnerable children had a lot of time in their hands as they could not afford online learning. Most of them went out playing with their friends and ending up being infected by Covid-19 in some cases while others were also abused in the course of play or at their households.

3. Child labour was on the rise as some parents/caregivers took advantage of the much time children had during school closures to ask them to do hazardous labour in order to earn a living for their families.

4. Lack of proper nutrition and awareness on the importance of education especially for girls caused many vulnerable children especially girls to miss out of school. This had been exacerbated by the Covid-19 pandemic as many parents could not afford sufficient food for their children and even sanitary pads for the girls, in addition to provision of school supplies.

5. Most vulnerable children were prone to peer violence and discrimination during school closures as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. Most of them did not have the requisite gadgets and internet to access online learning thus became victims of discrimination and stigma among their peers.

**"Children are most affected by poverty in current times. Children have low levels of self-esteem, lack of financial resources and these cause mental and physical issues and therefore we have come up with a solution to fight child poverty by conducting leadership programmes to children in the poverty stricken villages of Sri Lanka"**

Child from Sri Lanka

## RECOMMENDATIONS BY CHILDREN

Education programs should respond to the needs of those left behind who do not have access to Internet and digital learning gadgets, and those children with disabilities whose needs have not been prioritized during the pandemic.

Provide safe spaces for children to study both physically and online as well as be free to express themselves on matters affecting them.

Need for shared critical solutions of how education can end child poverty via formal and informal education by applying the knowledge learnt from school in practicing; for example, horticulture/simple gardening and poultry units, making ornaments etc.

Raise more awareness on the plight of vulnerable and marginalized children and the difficulty they face in accessing education especially digitally. This will be in light of calling for the need to provide quality education to all children irrespective of social status, gender and race.

Provide meals to vulnerable children in order to fill the malnutrition gap that often affects their concentration on studies and schooling in general.



## THE END CHILD POVERTY PHOTO CONTEST



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INTERNATIONAL | Child Poverty  
*All for Children*

[#SnapsforChange](#) [#EndChildPoverty](#)

**"There are many children struggling with poverty and I believe the best way to address this is by capturing images that show the actual situation, images that speak for themselves. Whenever I come across a child facing poverty, I capture the images of the real situation, and collect the child's details hoping that someday their situation might change through the images that I captured. I captured this image of a young boy on a hot afternoon in Kitui county, Kenya, as he took shelter under the shed where he helps his mother sell fruits by the roadside, whenever he's not in school"**

– Dennis Mureti, Editor's Choice Winner, 4<sup>th</sup> End Child Poverty IDEP Photo Contest

In our quest to create a world free of child poverty, we go beyond conventional social and economic approaches. Through this annual photo campaign, we always aim to go a notch higher and show child poverty, at the same time efforts being made to eradicate child poverty through photos.

These photos often tell great visual stories of what communities worldwide are doing to create a world free from poverty. Furthermore, the photo campaign creates a space for more people to take part in the 'Together we can End Child Poverty worldwide' campaign.

It enables people who may not be in a position to organize or participate in events, write stories or participate in social media campaigns, at least get a platform to show their efforts towards ending child poverty.

In the campaign, we asked interested participants to submit photos showing actions they were taking in their communities to address child poverty and how those actions were influencing social and environmental justice for children; in line with the International Day of Eradication of Poverty global theme; 'Acting Together To Achieve Social and Environmental Justice For All'.

However, cognizant of the fact that the campaign in 2020 came at a time when the then global landscape was experiencing massive socio-economic disruptions that are further exacerbating child poverty, at an accelerated rate; as a result of the global Covid-19 pandemic. In that regard, we encouraged participants to also show how Covid-19 had affected social justice for children.



**"The Sahabat Gorga Community collaborates with elementary schools throughout Indonesia to help improve children's literacy competencies through approaches to art, literature, and play. Because education should be a fun process for children."**

Sahabat Gorga  
People's Choice Winner, 4<sup>th</sup> End Child Poverty IDEP Photo Contest



## IDEP COMMUNICATIONS CAMPAIGN



The campaign aimed at raising awareness on child poverty and its drivers while at the same time amplifying actions that were being taken/had been taken to alleviate child poverty by ourselves together with our partners. In line with IDEP's communications strategy, we produced 11 campaign newsletters, 4 videos, published 2 blog articles, 3 news articles and more than 190 social media (Twitter, Facebook, Instagram) posts. These communications deliverables focused on supporting our partners' grassroots activities, the Children's Solutions Lab process, the End Child Poverty photo campaign and independent consistent online messaging as per the campaign strategy. We also prepared online social media messages and visual assets (info graphics, photos, posters) for use by our partners especially members of the GNRC and our youth networks.

Additionally, we were part of the Global Coalition to End Child Poverty's IDEP communications working group. Together with other coalition members, we jointly developed a communications plan with deliberate and consistent week-long messages for the Coalition, its members and other partners. Being part of this Coalition's communications activities widened the reach of our impact not only online but on our work in general. It was also a way to build synergies with the Coalition and its members. Similarly, the IDEP communications campaign increased our online reach and audience, with our following on social media growing significantly. This expanded online reach meaningfully contributed to our audience attendance in Global Week of Faith in Action for Children.

# FIND YOUR COUNTRY



## Together we can End Child Poverty Worldwide Campaign

- |                |                          |             |
|----------------|--------------------------|-------------|
| 📍 Argentina    | 📍 Bosnia and Herzegovina | 📍 Comoros   |
| 📍 Croatia      | 📍 Ecuador                | 📍 India     |
| 📍 Kenya        | 📍 Lebanon                | 📍 Macedonia |
| 📍 Malaysia     | 📍 Nigeria                | 📍 Moldova   |
| 📍 Peru         | 📍 Romania                | 📍 Serbia    |
| 📍 South Africa | 📍 Sri Lanka              | 📍 Syria     |
| 📍 Tanzania     | 📍 Togo                   | 📍 Uganda    |
| 📍 Zambia       |                          |             |

**Argentina:** Within the month of October, running up to the commemoration of IDEP, GNRC Argentina continued mobilizing faith communities, faith inspired organizations and the government in donating food and hygiene products to vulnerable families. Between October and November, they mobilized 12 tons of food and hygiene material to over 551 vulnerable families.



**Bosnia and Herzegovina:** Our partner from Bosnia, UZ Mozaik (member of the GNRC) in collaboration with women's association Mozaik organized food and hygiene material donations to 15 vulnerable families in the district of Visoko, Bosnia and Herzegovina. Religious leaders predominantly from Christian and Islam faith participated in distribution of the material donations as well as offering hope and solidarity to the families. By offering these donations (food and hygiene products), our partner alleviated the challenge of hunger and mitigating the spread of Covid-19.

UZ Mozaik also hosted a webinar with the theme "Together we can prevent poverty over children in the world" The webinar; attended by children, faith leaders and caregivers aimed at addressing data on child poverty in Bosnia as well as brainstorm innovative ideas on how to alleviate child poverty. In the webinar, children talked about their understanding and experiences on poverty, while faith leaders discussed how poverty affects children's physical and psychological development. The faith leaders called for collective solidarity, support and action from all stakeholders in helping children out of poverty. These actions by our partner in Bosnia directly reached to 120 people including 60 children.

**"Great energy on IDEP activities!  
I hope we will be able to  
overcome the challenges from this  
year and to continue to support  
our children in their initiatives"**

School counselor from Romania

**Comoros:** CAP NGO, Comoros held outdoor activities for children and youth, enlightening them about IDEP and their role in ending poverty and contributing to sustainable development in general.

**Croatia:** In collaboration with other organizations, GNRC Croatia held a month-long (October) film festival for children and youth. These films, produced by children enable them express themselves freely on issues around their communities and their views on how the issues can be handled. These films also promoted healthy relationships between children/youth and their caregivers as they could watch them together and discuss issues highlighted in the film. This month-long film festival dubbed 'The Children's Rights Festival' had 18,000 students register for school screenings to view the films virtually, due to the Covid-19 challenge. Some of these films were aired by the Croatian television (HRT) for the public to watch.

**"Each action that has a result of informing parents about child poverty and contributing to its reduction is a successful one for us."**

Participant Serbia

Our partner also held a webinar with 274 participants, around the topic of eradicating poverty amid the challenging times of Covid-19. The webinar was attended by parents and professionals who work with children and evaluation of the webinar showed that the topic was much valuable and that it needed to be covered much more by many stakeholders with concrete action in the follow up. Participants pledged to spearhead actions; however small to alleviate poverty levels that had increased due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

**Ecuador:** GNRC members from Ecuador held an online event on intergenerational dialogue between religious leaders and children; with the aim of sharing testimonies and experiences on empowering and strengthening the capacities of families to mitigate the effects of the pandemic and support the economy livelihoods of marginalized families in Ecuador. Children shared their ideas and recommendations on how faith communities could work more together in the fight against poverty. GNRC members agreed to develop a joint project in the area of child poverty to be implemented in the subsequent reporting periods. Our director took part in this session where he thanked the GNRC members for their relentless efforts in alleviating child poverty, amid challenges of the Covid-19 pandemic.



**India:** Our partner, Shanti Ashram held weeklong (12th -17th October) outreach sessions with over 250 children and youth from 10 learning institutions all of whom have been part of the India Poverty Solutions program. These sessions involved catching up with the poverty solutions ambassadors (children and youth) and sharing ideas and reflections on the India Poverty solutions program, 8 years down the line. The children and youth were also given opportunities during these sessions to share their ideas on how best to implement the program going forward, keeping in mind the unique as well as exposed challenges brought about by the Covid-19 pandemic.

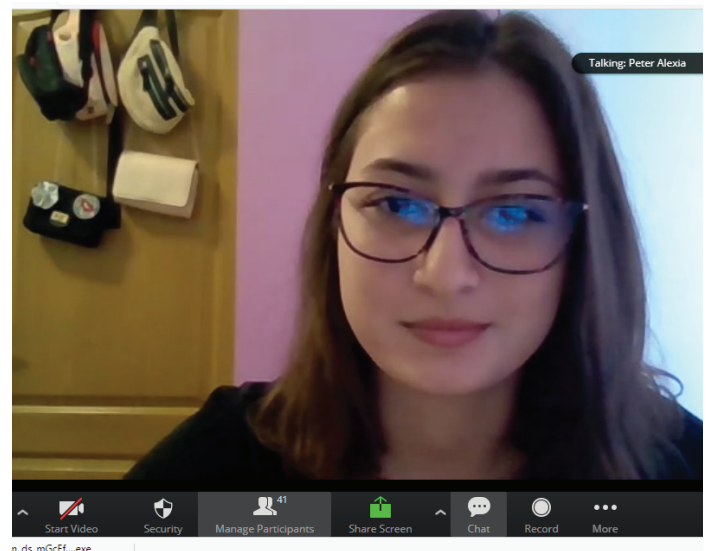


**Kenya:** Our Director joined women beneficiaries of the of the Family Resilience Project in Mombasa, Kenya in an event attended by the women, children and youth. The event, among other objectives aimed to commemorate IDEP. The project, supported by GNRC and Global Community Engagement and Resilience Fund (GCERF) aims to strengthen family resilience through women by empowering them economically through business grants. In turn, these women are able to support their families through profits from the grants thus lifting them out of poverty. Participants in the event were reminded about the meaning of IDEP and the 2020 global theme; 'Acting together to achieve social and environmental justice'

**Lebanon:** Annas Linnas Association, in collaboration with faith leaders and faith based organizations organized a free medical eye check-up for children, on the occasion of IDEP 2020. This medical campaign came at the backdrop of increasing cases of eye problems for vulnerable children who could not afford medication, including purchase of glasses; thus affecting their eyesight especially in studies. This campaign saw over 20 children checked, treated and offered eye-glasses.

**Macedonia:** A virtual workshop was held for both primary and high school students who were enlightened about IDEP and the need for the values of empathy, kindness as well as being in solidarity with those who live in poverty. Specific focus of the workshop was on the digital divide occasioned by massive shift to online learning due to closure of physical learning in mitigation of the spread of the Covid-19 pandemic. The students were advised to assist where necessary their counterparts who could not afford internet and internet accessing gadgets for learning. In marking IDEP, some school materials were donated to vulnerable children. Also, the students produced some awareness messages on poverty through paintings and video, after the workshop.

**Malaysia:** I Can Malaysia held two training sessions for 13 teachers including 5 Rohingya ones. The training equipped the teachers on Montessori and Cognitive learning for children. By training teachers, their capacity is build towards providing quality education to children, which in turn opens pathways for them, out of poverty.





**Moldova:** Association of Professional and Business Women of Moldova organized an Information Campaign about IDEP. The campaign involved organized debate with children on poverty, a flash-mob with the same theme; 'Together we can end child poverty' and a mini exhibition with the of bakery products. These products were made by children and were distributed to vulnerable families, with the aim of mitigating hunger among them, which is as a result of poverty. During the flash mob children developed and displayed (on manila sheets) messages on poverty and what they had learned about IDEP.

**Nigeria:** Interfaith Youth and Peace Building Network of Nigeria and the Youth for Peace, Community of Sant' Egidio in Nigeria organized an inter-generational dialogue between Children and Community Leaders. The dialogue was centred on the role of community leaders and engaging children in achieving the SDGs particularly SDG 1 on ending poverty in all its forms. This dialogue paid attention to the Covid-19 pandemic with regards to recovering from the impacts of the pandemic while achieving the SDGs. The dialogue involved 31 participants including 16 children.

**"I was very impressed by the work of our colleagues from other cities supporting vulnerable children. My colleagues and I are determined to take our own initiatives this year"**

Secondary School student from Romania.

**Romania:** Education for Change (member of GNRC) and our partner from Romania held a webinar reflecting on the best ways to develop and support initiatives by children and youth aimed at eradicating child poverty. The webinar brought together 35 teachers and students who discussed about ways to develop their critical thinking, empathy and social responsibility. The webinar also offered a training to the students on how to build a safe context for them to plan and ensure sustainability of their projects and establish partnerships necessary for project implementation towards eradicating poverty. While sharing about some of the projects they had developed, the students also mentored their junior colleagues in taking up such initiatives in order to uplift children living in poverty in their communities. This activity was done under the theme; 'We act together for social equity' borrowing from the global IDEP theme, 'Acting together to achieve social and environmental justice for all.'

**Serbia:** Our partner, Sombor Education Center led four workshops on child poverty for over 50 children, youth and parents/caregivers. The workshops were conducted by children and youth who had earlier been trained about child poverty, discrimination and inequalities in Serbia and around the world. These workshops provided a safe space for children to share their views and experiences on poverty

Sombor Education Center organized an Art competition for children, the event aimed at raising awareness on the importance of children's rights and growing up in a safe and stimulating environment. Children expressed themselves through artwork. They also shared messages to the general public on non-violent communication and respect for children's rights is a basic precondition for a carefree upbringing.

After the event, the children were led in school material donation drive to vulnerable children, to aid them in their education.

**South Africa:** An awareness workshop for 42 children was organized by GNRC South Africa, aimed at raising awareness among the children on IDEP, in line with the global theme; 'Acting together to achieve social and environmental justice for all' The children were encouraged to actively participate and take actions in alleviating poverty in their communities. It was noted that children can be agents of change in their communities and thus can help mitigate challenges, including poverty in their communities.

**Sri Lanka:** Led by the End Child Poverty Knowledge Centre, a dialogue session with 20 children on environmental justice and the SDGs. The session was meant to 'listen to children' on their views for a clean safe clean environment, social justice and how that can go in ending child poverty and the SDGs in general. The children cited cases of environmental degradation in Sri Lanka, for example in the Methotamulla community, which has adversely affected learning for children in the area, thus affecting progress of SDG 4 on quality education. The students were enlightened that a safe environment was their right and they should contribute to keeping their environment safe as part of achieving the SDGs. This discussion with children was in line with IDEP's global theme; 'Acting together to achieve social and environmental justice for all.'

**Syria:** Our partner, Kids Future team gathered children from a refugee camp in Syria and enlightened them on the significance of IDEP as an avenue for them to make their voices heard on child poverty. In this view, our partner prepared awareness messages for children with IDEP's theme; 'Acting together to achieve social and environmental justice for all' among other messages. We promoted these messages on social media as well as other forums like the Global Week of Faith in Action for Children.



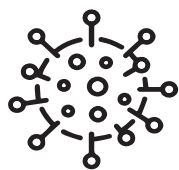
**Togo:** Child Hope Association, our partner from Togo, organized an intergenerational dialogue between children and religious leaders was aimed at mobilizing religious leaders, parents/caregivers and policy makers to prioritize the rights of children in responding to the impacts of Covid-19. Religious leaders observed that the children's right to health had been threatened, the right to education abused, restrictions on movement and school closings, all of which had put children at increased risk of violence, abuse and exploitation.

**Uganda:** Youth Leaders for Restoration and Development (YOLRED) organized an art fare for 17 children to express themselves on issues of poverty through art (drawings and murals) YOLRED established art as a creative way children could best express themselves and their views on poverty affecting them. They guided the children to express issues within the view of the IDEP theme; 'Acting together to achieve social and environmental justice for all' The children were also led through a tree planting session, aimed at sensitizing them on the need to protect the environment.

**Zambia:** Franciscan Missionary Sisters for Africa (FMSA) from Lusaka, Zambia organized a prayer session for over 300 primary school children. Children were advised (by religious leaders) on the need to work hard in their studies as a way to guarantee them a better future free of poverty. Adults and caregivers in the prayer session were also encouraged to invest more in children as that would be the right investment in the future. After the prayers, vulnerable children were identified among the 300 and were provided with meals and a few were supported with school materials and fees.



## CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES ON CHILD POVERTY



### Covid-19 Pandemic

Arguably, children have not borne the brunt of the immediate health threats posed by the coronavirus pandemic. But as the pandemic mutated into a global economic crisis, millions of children were estimated to be left carrying disadvantages that will limit opportunities for the rest of their lives. The Global Coalition to End Child Poverty estimates that the global downturn in economic growth could push 117 million more children into poverty by the end of 2020. The World Bank in its latest report calculates that 150 million more people could be pushed into extreme poverty by 2021, wiping out more than three years of progress in poverty reduction.

Experts have observed that children who were already disadvantaged by poverty and more vulnerable are being affected even more gravely by the pandemic and their very development and even survival are threatened. They are suffering grievously from the loss of family members to the pandemic, a serious disruption of school life, an alarming increase in various forms of violence against them, a noticeable deepening of poverty. UNICEF reports that of the 1.5 billion children affected by school closures, 463 million are unable to access remote learning; threatening their right to quality education, which could potentially fall them in poverty. The world bank further accounts that the Covid-19 pandemic could increase learning poverty among children by an additional 72 million to 454 million.

However, there is need for all stakeholders to act now collectively to reduce poverty and inequality within the framework of addressing the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic. That done, the World Bank predicts that extreme poverty levels could return to pre-crisis levels in just three years, rather than in over a decade. UNICEF suggests that one such way of reversing the devastating impacts of the pandemic on child poverty is universal child sensitive social protection.

## Climate Change

Climate change is unquestionably an ongoing threat to poverty reduction and experts warn that it will intensify in coming years. Perhaps, the reason why the IDEP theme was centred on 'Acting together to achieve social and environmental justice for all' Climate Justice is related to poverty in that; while the biggest polluters and consumers (therefore contributors to Climate Change) are economically powerful and wealthy countries; the people who suffer the consequences the most are income-poor countries. Climate Change has resulted in floods, prolonged draught leading to famine and hunger, prevalence of some diseases, accelerated desertification, forest fires, crop failures and other such natural phenomena affecting people, their livelihoods and wellbeing. Compounded with other strains on resources, these environmental disasters have a devastating effect on poor populations. Often times, children bear the indirect brunt of climate injustice particularly those already living in poverty. For instance, children are forced to migrate (with or without adults) in order to escape the natural disasters as a result of Climate Change, or in search of economic opportunities. Recent analyses by the world bank estimates that climate change will drive 68 million to 135 million into poverty by 2030.

**"Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts"**



**"Today, hundreds of millions of children are deprived of their potential in the face of the current health crisis. Hard-won progress in advancing children's rights is more under threat than ever. It is no longer just a health crisis but a real crisis of the rights of the child. Covid-19 is causing appalling consequences for young people and children at all levels"**

Ms, Abalo, President of Child Hope Association, Togo

## Fragile States

The poorest people, especially children suffer the most from violent conflict. It destroys their livelihoods while discouraging further investment in their communities. For instance, data shows that the extreme poverty rates nearly doubled between 2015 and 2018 in Middle East and North Africa, spurred by the conflicts in Syria and Yemen. For children, conflict means that they can barely attend school. In addition, the ripple effects of conflict causes violence on children, diseases and hunger, all of which cause them to live in poverty. By focusing on fragile states in our response to end child poverty, we contribute to alleviating the most vulnerable children from poverty. We have in the past and on going programmes supported Rohingya refugee children (affected by the conflict in Myanmar), children in South Sudan and Uganda.

## Violence against children



Our work towards ending violence against children is anchored on 10 commitments, inaugurated in Panama 2017 during the 5<sup>th</sup> forum of the GNRC. Violence against children is one of the critical challenges facing children today, and has been exacerbated by the Covid-19 pandemic. The Global Status Report on Preventing Violence Against Children 2020 found that with the Covid-19 pandemic, there has been a dramatic rise in Violence Against Children. The report notes that consequences resulting from the COVID-19 response have altered the intensity and frequency of risk factors for interpersonal violence. However, some argue that extreme poverty is one of the most extensive forms of violence in the world.

Poverty increases a child's risk to toxic socio-cultural norms that perpetuate violence and cause violence against children. For instance, economically motivated child marriages (marrying off a daughter to reduce household costs or to bring resources into the household such as bride price) and children's entry into commercial sex work can be possibly be linked to household poverty or child poverty in particular. Similarly, poverty contributes to inadequate care of children in several ways. Poor children are at greater risk of being left unsupervised or poorly supervised. This increases the risk of those children getting abused and violated. With no proper care, these children often revert back to the cycle of poverty. Therefore, not only does poverty exacerbate violence, but violence can also perpetuate poverty, thus it is not possible to fight one without the other.

## Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

The SDGs provide an ambitious global vision and common targets towards ending poverty, as in espoused in Goal 1: End poverty in all its forms everywhere. These include eradicating extreme poverty, reducing the population of children living in poverty, and providing child-sensitive social protection. Our work is anchored on the framework of the SDGs, with a view to lift children out of poverty. However, are cognisant that the COVID-19 pandemic will definitely roll back progress that had been made in achieving the SDGs, thus making the 'decade of action' a near mirage.

It is with this view that we inaugurated a space and program for children to contribute towards achieving the SDGs. The Children SDGs Academy aims at providing children with simplified multifaith learning tools on the SDGs to enable them contribute to ending poverty and the Agenda 2030 in general. The Academy is intended to provide children with an in-depth understanding of the SDGs by offering them a learning course with 3 modules, story-telling campaigns, multi-level mobile app. games and advocacy actions.



## Children's Rights

The Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC, 1989) sets out the civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights of every child, regardless of race, gender, social status and abilities. In particular, the CRC recognizes the right of every child to a standard of living adequate for the child's physical, mental, spiritual, moral and social development. Poverty hurts children's development and, in turn, leads to lower income and health in adulthood. Therefore, we believe that when child poverty is recognized as a denial of children's human rights then people in positions of responsibility and power are legally bound to promote, protect and fulfil children's rights. The Convention further acknowledges child participation as one of its principles. Children's opinions, particularly the voices of most vulnerable children, should be listened to and taken seriously in the development of effective policies and strategies to prevent and eradicate child poverty.



At Arigatou International, we believe that children have the potential to be agents of positive change working together to transform their communities; thus we encourage and support processes and programs aimed at creating platforms for meaningful participation of children. One of such spaces has been the Children's Solutions Lab, highlighted in this report. Our work around the rights and wellbeing of children has been well exemplified and documented in the Multi Religious Study On The CRC. Arigatou International produced this study in 2019, in commemoration of the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the CRC.

### Collaborating With the Global Coalition to End Child Poverty

The Coalition is a global initiative to raise awareness about children living in poverty across the world and support global and national actions to alleviate it.

IDEP often presents an opportunity for coalition members of work together and support each other's' work/campaign in raising awareness on child poverty, taking part in advocacy and supporting actions towards alleviating poverty.

Within this campaign, we worked with Coalition members in developing a communications plan with deliberate and consistent week-long messages for the Coalition, its members and other partners.

## CONCLUSION

'Together We Can End Child Poverty' campaign in 2020 happened in unprecedented times, arising from the new way of life occasioned by the Covid-19 pandemic. Notwithstanding, we, Arigatou International—End Child Poverty together many partners, braced the harsh socio-economic realities of the COVID-19 pandemic, and took actions towards empowering children and their communities.

Throughout this campaign, we were catapulted by the gruesome projections that the pandemic would push even more children in poverty. In sum, we remain steadfast to this cause of putting children first in interventions to eliminate poverty and more so, recover from the economic shockwaves of the Covid-19 pandemic.



## CONTACT US

Arigatou International – Nairobi  
End Child Poverty

P.O. Box 43546 - 00100 Nairobi, Kenya  
Telephone +254 20 257 39020/1  
Mobile: + 254 733 945 971/ 705 320 970



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