



ANNUAL REPORT 2020/2021

# Getting Children to the Center of COVID-19 Response

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

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



### **About Arigatou International and its Global Initiatives:**

Arigatou International is “All for Children” and works with people from diverse religious and cultural backgrounds to build a better world for children, It has four Global Initiatives namely;

#### **Global Network of Religions for Children**

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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## Putting Children at the Center of COVID-19 Response

The year 2020 will forever be memorialized as the year of the COVID-19 pandemic and unprecedented global crises in its wake. Suddenly and quite sadly, children across the world had this new unseen monster disrupting every aspect of their lives and, threatening to cast a dark and powerful impact on their childhoods. Nobody was certain what impact the novel corona virus would have on children and it was deemed safest for children to remain indoors and out of school. This new reality not only severely disrupted critical services including learning and play, but also exposed millions of already vulnerable children to a multiple dip of adversity. Hardly six months into the pandemic, about 1.6 billion children were out of school, and hundreds of millions of families and households were experiencing severe disruptions in their livelihoods. It is estimated that by the end of 2020 over 117 million more children were newly poor (Global Coalition to End Child Poverty).

At this point, it was clear that our *world* at Arigatou International had been turned upside down, and that our work to eradicate child poverty, had been made, at once, that much more difficult and urgent. This, report, thus, details our interventions within the year towards protecting, empowering and supporting children in the context of and under the shadow of the COVID-19 pandemic. We also report on our results, footprints and impacts with regards to; child participation, community mobilization towards ending child poverty, peace building and building partnerships and synergies.

In April 2020, together with other initiatives of Arigatou International, we instituted a global COVID-19 response campaign which we styled 'Faith in Action for Children'. The campaign was premised on the critical role that faith plays for individuals, families and communities in emergency situations and invited religious leaders and communities to scale up and intensify actions in response to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on children.



The campaign climaxed in a *Global Week of Faith in Action for Children* which ran from the 16<sup>th</sup> - 20<sup>th</sup> November, 2020. The week brought together 1,720 participants including children from diverse religious, ethnic and cultural backgrounds. Participants were drawn from over 64 organizations globally, representing 86 countries. Within the week, we led a dialogue session with the theme; 'Together We Can End Child Poverty' and run a presentation on the finalists for the Children's Solutions Lab competition. We also formally launched the Children's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) Academy during the Global Network of Religions for Children (GNRC) 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary commemorations.

In addition, to this global campaign, Arigatou International - End Child Poverty worked with and mobilized partners to support communities, vulnerable families and children to mitigate the socio-economic effects of the pandemic. Together with our partners, we sought to bridge the digital divide in learning, distribute food materials and hygiene products to vulnerable families, raise awareness on safety protocols of COVID-19 and share knowledge and progress on the pandemic. These actions cumulatively reached 3,140 people directly and over 50,000 people through online spaces.

At Arigatou International, we not only believe in working for children but also working with them as agents of meaningful change in our societies. Our journey during the year thus stirred increased meaningful children participation in actions and processes towards alleviating child poverty. Of particular note was the Children's Solutions Lab process, which we inaugurated and ran in collaboration with our sister initiative, Ethics Education for Children. This campaign covered 37 organizations in 23 countries, with finalists emerging from; Cuba, India, Peru, Kenya and Serbia. The campaign was part of the broader annual *Together We Can End Child Poverty* movement which involved; mobilization of grassroots partners to take action(s) geared towards eradicating child poverty, the end child poverty 'photo campaign' and intensified online communication around the campaign. In total, the campaign reached over 19,950 people, most of whom were children. The campaign was also instrumental in helping us commemorate the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty (IDEP), on 17<sup>th</sup> October.

At End Child Poverty, we believe that peace is a prerequisite and a necessary condition for the redress of poverty. In recognition, we report on our efforts to promote peaceful co-existence in communities.

Our focus has majored on empowering communities to transform violent conflicts as well as advancing Freedom of Religion or Belief (FoRB) and Social Cohesion. Within the reporting period, we reached up to 2,000 people and over 100,000 others via mainstream/social media. These were reached through workshops, training and leveraging on international moments. We are also heavily engaged in peace work in the greater Eastern Africa and the Horn Region, through the Regional Peace Programme (RPP) and the Sudan Social Cohesion (SCC) Initiative.

To cap a difficult year, Arigatou International – End Child Poverty is alive to the reality that eradicating child poverty was never going to be easy, but remains emboldened by it's promise and possibility. This has been our driving force. We aspire to achieve a world where every child lives free from any form of poverty.

We are however aware that this 'world' will not be achieved without your support and accompaniment in all we do. We remain indebted to you, for your unwavering support.

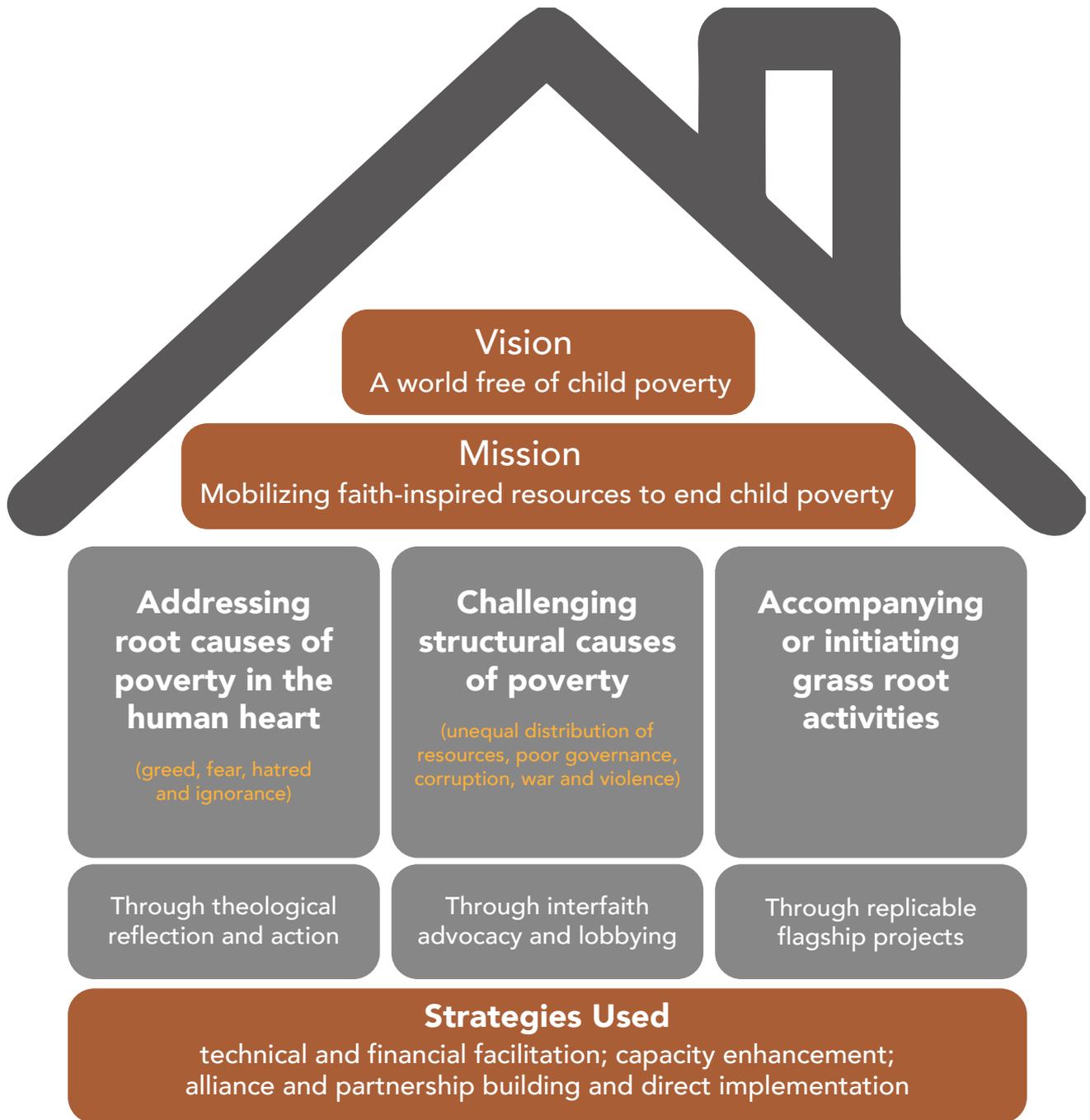
**Fred Nyabera, Director,**

**Arigatou international – End Child Poverty.**

## Why we focus on child poverty

- Children bear the greatest brunt of poverty; and, globally, are twice more likely to live in extreme poverty than adults. Children's precarious exposure to poverty has been made worse by the COVID-19 pandemic with millions more falling into deeper poverty.
- Child poverty causes lifelong damage to individual life outcomes with great costs for families and communities.
- Child Poverty is a denial of human rights that uniquely affects children.
- There are proven, effective and often inexpensive solutions to child poverty; including provision of social protection for all children, and supporting families with adequate social safety nets, which ought to be scaled up in the event of a crisis such as the COVID-19 pandemic.

## ENVISIONING A WORLD FREE OF CHILD POVERTY



The Interfaith Initiative to End Child Poverty mobilizes faith communities and faith-inspired resources to help build a world free of child poverty. As a global, multi-faith, child-centered initiative, End Child Poverty addresses the root causes of poverty in the human heart and the structural causes of poverty in society. This is accomplished through theological reflection and action, advocacy and knowledge-sharing and community-driven initiatives at grassroots and global levels to assist children in poverty. End Child Poverty believes in a world free of child poverty and invites all people of faith and good will to work together to make this vision a reality.

## OUR APPROACH

We work with faith actors, youth networks, grassroots partners, through coalitions, alliances and other stakeholders. In accomplishing our thematic areas, we represent our work through a rights-based approach namely: Right to Equality and Inclusion, Right to Peace, Right to Sustainable Development, Right to Livelihoods, Right to Nutrition and Right to Education. We firmly believe that these rights *need* to be accomplished so as to give rise to a better future free of poverty, for all children.

*“It is important to bring children together, in friendship and fraternity, (to) create safe spaces for children to grow and express themselves, (to) build their self-confidence and support their upbringing”*

Isabelle Pypaert Perrin, ATD Fourth World, Director General



## The Year in a Snapshot



Over **143 activities**



In **46 countries,**



With over **72 organizations**



Reaching over **23923 people** directly and on average, **55000 online hits** each month



Passionately engaged and proactive in **3 coalitions/working alliances.**

## THEOLOGICAL REFLECTIONS TOWARDS ENDING CHILD POVERTY

Arigatou International – End Child Poverty promotes the use of theological reflection so as to foreground and reframe understanding of the root causes of poverty in the human heart - including greed, hatred, ignorance and fear. This pillar of our work includes developing tools that faith actors can use to facilitate theological reflection and action. We also work with faith actors to create safe spaces for children to engage in age-appropriate and culturally sensitive theological reflection, according to their faith beliefs.

It has been some time since we published the Interfaith Guide to End Child Poverty. During this time, we have learnt a lot more about the root causes of child poverty and the possible connection to faith. These drivers includes complex issues such as fragility and conflict; local, regional and global crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic; forced migration and children on the move; as well as violence against children. We have also come to appreciate the value of the global commons and development infrastructure including the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), the 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and increasingly the Paris Agreement on Climate Change. Within the year, we commenced revision of the Guide to bring it up to date with these and other present day realities. This review will make the guide more relevant, resourceful and easy to use.

In the face of COVID-19, we also sought and gave impetus to the voices of religious leaders to better protect and empower children. These voices were captured in the form of blog articles, live webinars and recorded videos. Religious leaders and faith actors have become a focal point in community response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Working with them provided avenues to surface the concerns and mitigate the impacts of the pandemic on children. We plan to continue this work through the End Child Poverty – Knowledge Centre.



In addition, further to the findings of the Arigatou International's Multi-Religious study on the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), and in partnership with the Sarvodaya Movement in Sri Lanka, we plan to grow the Knowledge Centre to facilitate safe spaces for training children as child rights advocates.



## INTERFAITH ADVOCACY AND LOBBYING

End Child Poverty engages in interfaith advocacy and lobbying to mobilise faith communities and their leaders to provide redress for the structural causes of child poverty. Our strategies for this work includes intra, inter and/or multi-faith advocacy and lobbying on underlying causes of poverty in society such as inequitable resource distribution, corruption, poor governance, violence against children, and, violent conflicts. We anchor advocacy and lobbying on an enabling human and child rights paradigm that including the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), the 2030 Agenda and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and the GNRC Panama Commitments on Violence Against Children.

Our aim is to influence policy and social change, through high-level and grassroots-level advocacy and lobbying.

### How We Approach Interfaith Advocacy and Lobbying

- Commemorating relevant International Days or observances established by the United Nations (UN) and other relevant bodies.
- Engaging in collaborative platforms at global and regional levels.
- Supporting relevant advocacy campaigns initiated by Arigatou International and grassroots actors, including members of the GNRC, as well as other partners.



### COVID- 19: A CALL FOR GOVERNMENTS TO EXPAND CHILDREN'S ACCESS TO APPROPRIATE SOCIAL PROTECTION

In August of 2020, Arigatou International joined coalition partners in the Global Coalition to End Child Poverty to call on governments to scale up child social protection in the face of the COVID-19 crises.

The Global Coalition is a global initiative to raise awareness about child poverty across the world. Arigatou International—End Child Poverty is active within the coalition to increase and promote uptake of knowledge on child poverty, sponsor and promote in joint advocacy and awareness campaigns, and lead meaningful children's participation and involvement in work to end child poverty.

The Coalition statement decried current shortcomings in the global response that stress population wide “short-term social protection measures” with little attention “scale(d) up investments in child-focused and child-sensitive social protection to avoid failing an entire future generation”.

Coalition Partners called on governments across the world to:

- Progressively expand child and family benefits towards universal coverage, while ensuring all other social protection schemes are child-sensitive.
- Mobilize significant resources to maintain and increase spending for social protection, specifically addressing the gaps that exist for children and their caregivers.
- Ensure social protection systems are responsive to shocks and the needs and rights of marginalised children.

<http://www.endchildhoodpoverty.org/publications-feed/2020/8/31/joint-statement>

This statement was issued against the backdrop of fears that the pandemic would push 117 more children into poverty. As part of its work to stymie the impacts of the pandemic, the Coalition set up a 'COVID-19 and Child Poverty' resource on its website. The resource curated useful material on COVID-19, developed by Coalition members including Arigatou International's blog 'Urgent Need for Safety Nets for Low Income Families to Stem an Increase in Child Poverty'.

Further, Coalition members joined in the 'Global Week of Faith in Action for Children', organized by Arigatou International. Of particular note was the participation by coalition partners, the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) and All Together in Dignity Fourth World who provided key speakers to the dialogue session, where they shared insights on challenges faced by children and solutions to overcome poverty in view of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Additionally, Coalition members took part in a roundtable session to catalyze actions to address the impact of COVID-19 on children. The roundtable was informed by the growing reality that collaborations among various stakeholders were key to an adequate response to the multi-dimensional impacts of COVID-19 on children.

We also actively collaborated with the coalition to develop a joint IDEP campaign strategy as well as promoting every member's campaign, programmes, and activities on IDEP. As part of collaboration, we jointly developed a communications plan with week-long messaging.

## Did you know?

1 in 5 children are living in poverty in the world's richest countries. Children are affected by poverty in rich countries too.

In 2017, an estimated 25 percent of children were at risk of poverty or social exclusion in the European Union, revealing that child poverty is a universal challenge that requires a global response.

- UNICEF



## LEADING THE CHARGE: ADVOCACY: ADVOCACY FOR GREATER INVESTMENT IN HUMAN CAPITAL

In September 2020, End Child Poverty, working through the Moral Imperative to End Extreme Poverty issued a rallying call for expanded investments in core human capital-health systems, education, social protection and inclusion as a front line response to the crises wrought by COVID-19.

The statement called on governments to “increase expenditure on essential health care and preventative services for all including equitable distribution of vaccines, increase the capacity for disease surveillance and ability to contain outbreaks and ensure universal access to safe and affordable drinking water and adequate sanitation for all in order to slow down the spread of infection”. The Statement also called on governments to “ring fence and implement policies and programmes” to ensure “access to and quality of education and (that) all children are in school and have access to (appropriate) school-feeding programmes.

The Statement urged governments to invigorate social protection, economic inclusion and decent work through “policies to address the underlying factors perpetuating economic exclusion and fragile contexts and reduce extreme poverty and inequality.”

Governments were also urged to “zero-rate taxes on essential foodstuffs, medical supplies and utilities”, “provide safety nets and relief to those performing jobs in precarious and informal sectors” and “ensure curfews and lockdowns are tolerable and limit the damage to livelihoods”.

Governments were urged to “support initiatives to end hunger and (promote) sustainable agriculture”, “prioritize the restoration of child services as lockdown measures wind down and ensure equal access (to critical services) for all children.

The statement also urged governments to “support growth that is inclusive and green and improve adaptation to climate change to help reduce economic, social and environmental risks”, “reduce and restructure public debt and seek moratorium on debt servicing or debt cancellation by key creditor nations to free up resources” needed to respond to the pandemic.

The Moral Imperative, a global faith-based platform to end extreme poverty and realize the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), was established in 2015 and works by building evidence, advocacy and collaboration between faith and development actors including the United Nations and the World Bank Group.

Arigatou International has chaired the Advocacy Working Group of the Moral Imperative for the last four years, and is a member of the Research Reference Group convened by the World Bank. Our engagement in the Moral Imperative provides us a global space to advance the agenda of ending child poverty.

As an outcrop of our engagement through the Moral Imperative, we are also taking part in the World Bank’s Research Agenda Working Group on Faith in Development, comprising of 20 experts from academia, civil society, faith-inspired/based organisations, and the World Bank Group. The outputs from this working group will inform the Bank’s research agenda and engagement with faith actors to foster operational collaboration and partnership to address complex challenges around the world, including the COVID-19 pandemic.

**“Listening to children is not just a policy strategy written on papers but it is a suitable approach towards addressing child poverty” – Shazmin Rafeeq**

## OPEN LETTER TO THE UN HLPF BY THE AFRICA FAITH LEADERS INITIATIVE

“We write to urge a rejuvenated purpose, encourage greater responsibility, shared ownership of processes and outcomes and joined up action in the efforts to achieve the Agenda for Sustainable Development.”

- African Faith Leaders Initiative on Sustainable Development Goals, Nairobi Kenya, 10<sup>th</sup>, July, 2020.

End Child Poverty sought to maintain and grow it's engagement and influencing work with the Initiative. It also helped mitigate the impacts of COVID-19 on the organizational effectiveness of African faith actors in development.

At the onset of the COVID-19 crises, and as part of the Initiative's global advocacy targeting the UN High Level Political Forum (HLPF), the African Faith Leaders issued a joint letter to African governments and development agencies calling for a rejuvenated collective purpose to achieve the SDGs.

Noting that COVID-19 “presents an opportunity to invest in SDGs”, the joint letter called for participants at the High Level Political Forum to take effective measures to revamp state and social sector capacity and capital, and “to embrace and enable a thriving public and social economy”, including “core human capital - child care, family security, public and primary health care, education, and appropriate financial intermediation.”

African Faith Leaders also urged that, “a COVID-19 cure or vaccine must be a global public good” and expressed concern “that despite the unprecedented public investment and subsidies availed to private organizations (to develop cures and vaccines), a right to private privilege by patent holders, and the imperative for profit, may deny millions of people in Africa access to such cure and vaccine once they are found.”

The leaders thus sought international assurances that “no life shall be lost because of the profit motif of industry” and urged “the UN High Level Political Forum and the global community to assert the right to access to medication and care for illness, disease or conditions for which a cure or effective management is available.”

Noting that “sustainable development goals go to the heart of who we are, and what we aspire for our children, faithful, communities, nations and the planet”, the leaders committed to lead as well as “to deploy (their) assets and infrastructure for purposes of achieving sustainable development.”

The leaders also committed to “engage and empower children and young people by - teaching them about SDGs; listening to and documenting their perspectives, and mainstreaming their issues and participation in various SDG processes.”

End Child Poverty actively canvassed for the letter from the African Faith Leaders Initiative and has adopted it as part of our work on the right to sustainable development.

In addition, End Child Poverty took part in the Initiative's regional workshop for 26 programmes and communication persons of member organizations within the initiative. This workshop, which took place in Nairobi, Kenya focused on enhancing the capacity of the youth and Faith actors in Africa to understand development effectiveness and partnerships for the SDGs. The workshop trained participants on advocacy, monitoring, effective communication, partnerships and development effectiveness for Faith Based Organizations (FBOs) and Faith leaders.

Furthermore, we have been supporting the platform to develop a website that will serve as a one-stop shop for faith communities in Africa to share, gather and showcase their engagement in achieving the SDGs.



## Universal Child Sensitive Social Protection

Social protection entails giving a helping hand to someone who has fallen or who is in need. This can be in the form of grants to small businesses, providing food in schools, and supporting families so that they can send their children to school. It also comprises policies, programmes and systems that address the specific patterns of child poverty and vulnerability and recognize the long-term developmental benefits of investing in children as well as the obligation to fulfill their rights.

However, when the word 'universal' is added to social protection, then it becomes much bigger. In situations like the current pandemic, governments are encouraged to provide social protection to all their citizens especially those living in vulnerable situations. Social protection policies and programmes are an essential element of realising child rights and breaking the intergenerational, vicious cycle of poverty. Policies designed and implemented with children in mind can significantly increase benefits for children including: educational attainment, health care access, adequate nutrition and reduction in risk of abuse, exploitation and neglect.

Universal child sensitive social protection then means putting the needs of the children at the center of public policy and implementation. Making sure that all programs are child sensitive is very important in ensuring universal child sensitive protection. To ensure that children are protected, the first step will be to listen to them. One of the aspect of universal child sensitive social protection is 'child grant' where governments are encouraged to provide financial support to families so that they can take care of their children. The pandemic has worsened the poverty situation for many families and 'child grants' can play a critical role in ensuring that all children have access to their daily needs. If well-coordinated, such initiatives can have significant impact in addressing child poverty (remarks from the Global Week of Faith in Action for Children).

David Stewart  
Chief, Child Poverty and Social Protection at the UNICEF,  
Member of the Global Coalition to End Child Poverty

## Building advocacy and lobbying through commemoration of International Days

We mark key international days and also support our partners, including members of the GNRC, to take action during these days towards ending child poverty in their communities. Marking these days allows for opportunities to:

- Increase understanding of the drivers of child poverty and what can be done to prevent and alleviate Child Poverty.
- Urge governments to take the lead in developing and implementing relevant policies addressing child poverty.
- Engage more stakeholders towards promoting children's rights and ending child poverty.
- Build commitment(s) for effective policies and practices and their implementation to end child poverty.
- Listen to children and amplify their voices regarding ending child poverty.

## Did You Know?

*The world's best bet for a sustainable future is to teach children now what can be done to end poverty and achieve sustainable development in a society that is getting more interconnected and multicultural. Children learning early in life to understand and work together towards a common vision and goals to address global issues like ending poverty is a masterstroke to build the future we want.*

Arigatou International -  
End Child Poverty



## GLOBAL MOMENTS:

### Growing Our Reach and Voice Through Global Celebrations

As a hallmark, we seek to grow grassroots reach, leadership and voice through purposive activism around international moments in particular the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty (IDEP) and the Day of the African Child.

Celebrating these moments provides opportunities to engage and collaborate with multiple stakeholders and agencies involved in alleviating child poverty at numerous levels and sites. Children are our greatest stakeholders in the processes leading to and actual celebrations.

#### *Celebrating International Women's Day through Local Activism*

As can be expected, our partners and grassroots networks celebrated the International Women's Day on March 8<sup>th</sup> in great style and we happily indulged them! Of particular note were celebrations by the REJADH network, the GNRC members, Shanti Ashram from India and the Peace Serviced Centre in Nepal.

The commemorations highlighted actions by women within our networks, and showcased their work for children especially in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The day was commemorated under the theme: Women in leadership; achieving an equal future in a COVID-19 world.

#### *International Youth Day: Youth Engagement for Global Action*

Also notable and not to be outshone was the week-long actions by our youth networks; drawn from the Youth In Action and REJADH, in marking the International Youth Day. Activism centered on educating youth to take active roles in decision making at local, national and global levels.

As well as enhancing understanding of the SDGs and targeted responses to the COVID-19 pandemic. Activities took place in Kenya, Somalia, Tanzania and Uganda and reached over 150 youth in-person and another 100,000 online.

#### *Youth Shaping Peace*

International Day of Peace: End Child Poverty supported Youth In Action groups from Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda in organizing events for the International Day of Peace. Through these events, the youth urged their counterparts to shape peace together by preventing and countering acts of violent extremism. The youth also discussed challenges in promoting peace; key among them was the global COVID-19 crisis. Activities attracted over 100 youth in-person and over 150,000 through social/mainstream media.

Fred Nyabera, the Director, End Child Poverty was also invited by the All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC) in Nairobi to offer reflections on the day's theme; *Shaping Peace Together*. He made the case for empowering youth ambassadors as well as local church and community peace actors to help shape a common peace agenda for Africa and beyond.

End Child Poverty also participated in the virtual commemoration of the Day of Prayer and Action for Children (DPAC) held as part of the Global Week of Faith in Action for Children. This commemoration took the form of a dialogue session between faith leaders, caregivers and children. Children were accorded opportunity to voice their concerns on how they can be assisted and empowered especially in light the COVID-19 pandemic.

## **IDEP 2020: ACTING TOGETHER TO ACHIEVE SOCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE FOR ALL**

The IDEP 2020 *Together We Can End Child Poverty* Campaign

The International Day for the Eradication of Poverty (IDEP) Campaign which we have christened "Together We Can End Child Poverty" is our flagship global and grassroots activist promotion effort. Through this campaign, Arigatou International – End Child Poverty commemorates the IDEP as a unique global moment to spread awareness, advocacy and action against child poverty. Activism for the day is often anchored on practical actions that touch on the root causes of child poverty.

The 2020 IDEP campaign was commemorated with the theme; 'Acting together to achieve social and environmental justice for all'. Accordingly, we grounded campaign messaging around social and environmental justice as prerequisites for ending child poverty. Social and environmental justice has emerged as an umbrella term encompassing numerous concepts and realities that inform underlying structural and root causes of poverty such as corruption, gender inequalities, climate change, racial discrimination and racism, restrictions of Freedom of Religion or Belief (FoRB) and violence against children. The campaign also sought to respond to the reality of the COVID-19 pandemic.



### **Main highlights of the campaign:**

#### **Grassroots actions towards ending child poverty**

Activities were carried out in 22 countries globally, with 28 participating organizations and reaching over 19,950 children directly. Activities 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 Solution's Lab**

We launched and ran a path breaking innovation, the Children's Solution lab - a meaningful space and participatory process for children from different backgrounds to come together and dialogue on how they are impacted by poverty and propose solutions on how education can help address child poverty. The 2020 lab reached upto 2,000 children representing 37 organizations from 23 countries. Five finalists from Cuba, India, Peru, Kenya, Serbia emerged.

#### **End Child Poverty photo campaign**

Photography is a great way of telling stories and propelling action against child poverty. It also does not require great organizing and team work. Anyone with a good phone can tell a story just by clicking away, thus participating in the larger Together We Can End Child Poverty Worldwide Campaign. The IDEP 2020 Photography Contest received 19 entries from 6 countries. The winning entries came from Kenya and Indonesia. The campaign sought to tell visual stories of what communities worldwide were doing to create a world free from poverty.

#### **#EndChildPoverty Communications Campaign**

This campaign 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. Campaign reached up to over 170,000 people online.

# 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.

## TOGETHER WE CAN END CHILD POVERTY CAMPAIGN ON THE MAP



- 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



**A photo can tell a deep story and start a transformative conversation**

*"There are many children struggling in poverty. I believe the best way to address this is by capturing images that depict the actual situation as well as images that speak for themselves. Whenever I come across a child in poverty, I capture the image, collect the child's details (and) hope that someday their situation will change through the images that I capture. I captured this image of a young boy on a hot afternoon in Kitui, 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,  
Winner End Child Poverty, IDEP 2020 Photography Contest

## SOLUTIONS FOR CHILDREN, BY CHILDREN

Arigatou International, through its initiatives; End Child Poverty and Ethics Education for children launched the Children's Solutions Lab as an enabling space and participatory instrument for children from different backgrounds to come together to understand, dialogue and take action towards ending child poverty through solutions focused on education.

The Children's Solution Lab aims to be a path breaking innovation premised on the notion that children are knowledgeable about their own situations and have invaluable contributions to ending child poverty. Further, children have the potential to be agents of positive change.

At the inaugural session, 5 finalists emerged from Cuba, India, Peru, Kenya and Serbia out of 37 submissions from 23 countries across the world. Among the finalists, the Children's Parliament in India engaged more than 300 children from nine villages in discussions to brainstorm on what could be done to address issues related to education, health care and livelihoods.

It was the mass school closures that caused by the COVID-19 pandemic that motivated the children to devise solutions to support access to education. As learning suddenly shifted to digital spaces, the children discovered that most public-school students in the villages could not afford digital gadgets and internet to attend online classes. They also noted that younger children forgot basic alphabet and numbers. Based on this, the children decided on a project to support the younger children in a bid to ensure the most vulnerable do not fall behind even amid the COVID-19 challenges.

From **Serbia**, Santa's Helpers, a group consisting of five children aged 13 to 18 years from Sombor, has been collecting gift packs and donating to vulnerable children during Christmas and New Year's for several years. However, during 2020 and the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, something was different. The Santa's Helpers had noticed that children from disadvantaged families were more

afflicted by poverty, and that this was the reason they did not have the school supplies needed for learning putting them at a severe disadvantage. In response, Santa's Helpers put together 40 gift packs of schools supplies and equipment to be distributed to vulnerable children of between 7-16 years

In **Peru**, children were motivated to help other children who did not have access to internet to continue with their education during school closures and whose parents had lost their sources of livelihood during the pandemic. They wanted to ensure that families would have their own means to produce food and so they came up with the idea of a 'community gardening'.

The children coordinated with the leaders of an identified neighborhood to give 20 poor children food supplies. In addition, the children wanted to establish a space for learning for their peers who were left behind on education. They also set up a mobile library to function as a place where the children could read different books to support their education.

For the child who is too young to ask, we explain that we are doing things differently today to help make the world a healthier place for everyone. We can reassure them with the information that we have in an age-appropriate way and tell them stories of how previous generations have overcome great difficulties and challenges. We can all help by washing our hands, social distancing, staying home and sending virtual hugs to our friends and family.

During difficult times, our faith communities, traditions and sacred texts have also been great sources of spiritual support and strength. It is my prayer that every child can voice their questions and worries about what is happening in our world and that the adults in their lives will find the best way to answer them., openly and honestly. If we all do our best, we can all contribute the solutions

Rabbi Diana S. Gerson  
Associate Executive Vice President  
The New York Board of Rabbis

*"We live in Lima, the biggest city. Here in Peru, there are children whose families are poor. So, what we are doing is a project where children who are in extreme poverty can study and get a better education so they can have a better future."*

Martinez, Child from 'Expresarte'

In **Kenya's** arid and pastoralist North East, 11 children noticed the increasing hardships caused by COVID-19 pandemic leading to more girls being married off. The 11 children decided to raise awareness about the negative consequences of being married off as a child. They creatively passed these messages through drama skits to parents, local leaders and religious leaders.

In **Cuba**, a group of children going by the name 'Children of the Internet' supported children who were lacked educational materials especially digital gadgets and internet in the time of the COVID-19 pandemic. From their real life interactions with these children, they had noticed how the pandemic has affected learning by shifting learning from physical classrooms to digital spaces. These "Children of the Internet" have supported digital learning and distributed school material for over 30 vulnerable children in Cuba.



### Story Highlight Garissa, Kenya

*Saada and Suleina live in Garisa, Kenya where child marriage is still common. The two sisters are school going teenagers but their parents have decided to marry them off, in line with the community's customs. The marriage plans are concluded and Saada and Suleina are effectively wives to two men in the community. Saada however has decided that pursuing education is much preferable to being a wife. She defies her parents and walks out of the marriage, a risky decision for a teenager in this community. Fortunately her bravery is rewarded when she gets a scholarship ensuring that she can continue her education away from home. All the while, Saada has been trying without success to convince her sister Suleina to follow her example. Suleina is afraid to go against community norms.*

*Eventually Saada completed her education and ended up as a qualified nurse. Her concern for the education of the girls in her community led her to back home where she was employed a leading community health centers. Sadly one of her patients was her sister Suleina, now a mother who is surprised at this twist in fate. Saada attends to her sister passionately, like she does all her patients. She cannot however fail to regret the difference their life choices have meant for them. Having dropped from school so early, Suleina is unable to read the prescriptions on her medication and cannot also administer medicine in the right way to her children. Saada hopes the wisdom of her own decisions will convince her community about the value of an education, especially for girls and women. Maybe now, girls like her and Suleina will be free to follow their dreams"*

*"This historic pandemic reminds us that in today's world people are deeply interconnected globally. We are learning the valuable lesson that how one person behaves affects others and that our collective actions have the power to change the situation around the world in any direction"*

Rev. Keishi Miyamoto,  
President Arigatou International

## Illustrative summary of the Children's Solutions Lab finalists presentations at the Global week of Faith in Action for Children



"One of the great beauties of an exercise like this (the Children's Solutions Lab) is the ability to share across the world (in ways) that we never could in the past. That each one of these groups can learn from children from other parts of the world is important. We need to keep in mind that we do have in this time remarkable opportunities and possibilities to learn from each other (younger and older) and to find ways to make our dreams come true"

- Dr. Katherine Marshall,  
Member of Arigatou International Advisory Group



## FLAGSHIP AND GRASSROOTS INITIATIVES

Arigatou International - End Child Poverty supports faith communities by seeking out flagship grassroots initiatives that have great promise for alleviating child poverty through a rights-based approach. These initiatives ought to be child-centered, show integration of positive faith values, sustainable over the required duration, have a potential for high impact, and can be efficiently modelled and adapted across various situations. As with our advocacy and lobbying work, we are guided by rights-based frameworks such as the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals and the GNRC Panama Commitments on Violence against Children.



### Advancing Equality and Inclusion

End Child Poverty works to advance equality and social inclusion by promoting universal child-sensitive social protection, gender equality and children's participation. We place special emphasis on working with communities blighted by poverty, conflict and systemic marginalization.

To make this possible, in 2016, together with the Norwegian Church Aid 2016, we initiated and have now partnered with the African Children and Youth Network for Human Rights/Réseau des Enfants et Jeunes Africains pour les Droits Humains (REJADH) network, which is made up of youth from Burundi, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Mali, South Sudan and Somalia.

Our partnership with REJADH, has enabled us to confront gender-based violence (GBV) its negative impacts on children and as a driver of child poverty, and thus address Goal 5 and 16 of the SDGs.

In the year, REJADH has engaged their communities to mitigate the spread and impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. The youth has been a force for good from donating hygiene material to vulnerable women and children, spreading credible awareness messages on COVID-19 and fighting stigma. These actions reached over 300 women and children and were especially notable in Somalia.

The youth network also held training workshops on meaningful youth participation in decision making processes. These workshops, held mostly in Somalia and Sudan, attracted over 60 young participants, who were sensitized on their right to participate in political and decision making processes. The trainings paid special reference to, among other issues, eradicating Gender Based Violence, informed by the concern that governments have hardly moved to make tangible progress despite signing on and committing to global and regional commitments.

The training thus takes forward Arigatou International's Panama commitment 10 which stresses the importance of working towards generating a political and social will in order to protect children from violence.

*"We must make sure that the notion that 'we are all in this together' does not become a trope that allows for ignoring the wide disparities in our societies and the fact that this virus has far more adverse consequences for some than it has for others"*

Dr. Keetie Roelen;

## Advancing Peace

Peace is a necessary and prerequisite condition for the realization of all human (civil, political, economic, social and community) rights and freedoms. As a single population group, children are especially affected by the breakdown of peace and the numerous negative factors that lead to this collapse. As such End Child Poverty continues to engage efforts that promote peace in Africa's Great Lakes and the Horn through multiple tiered partnerships and collaborations.

Through the Regional Peace Program (RPP), we work to empower communities to transform violent conflicts and drivers of conflict that cause child poverty. This includes ending violence against children, preventing and countering violent extremism (P/CVE), and advancing freedom of religion or belief (FoRB) and social cohesion. Our work here is accomplished through the a strategic and practical collaboration (Regional Peace Programme - RPP) covering 12 countries - Burundi, Djibouti, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Kenya, Rwanda, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Tanzania and Uganda - in the East and Great lakes region of Africa.

The RPP nests a consortium that has 6 other organizations including: All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC), African Council of Religious Leaders (ACRL), Fellowship of Christian Churches and Councils in the Great Lakes and Horn of Africa (FECCLAHA), Hekima Institute of Peace Studies and International Relations (HIPSIR) and the Norwegian Church Aid).

Over the last year, End Child Poverty supported 15 in-country activities in Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, Tanzania, Uganda and South Sudan. These in-country actions emboldened peaceful co-existence by addressing Violent Extremism and Freedom of Religion or Belief (FoRB) through training workshops, grassroots engagements and through mainstream/social media. Many of these activities also included actions to mitigate the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Together with partners, we have continued to foster peaceful co-existence in Sudan within the framework of FoRB, in the Sudan Social Cohesion Initiative. In collaboration with the Sudan Council of Churches (SCC), Sudan Interreligious Council (SIRC), Ethics Education for Children (our sister Arigatou International Initiative), we trained 24 faith actors on FoRB. We also trained 17 children workers from SCC and SIRC in their quest to form the Children Peace Ambassadors Network. Formation of this network was based on the recognition that children have agency, and can be empowered to build peace and strengthen social cohesion in their lives, in their homes, among their peers, and across the wider society. The training strongly relied on the *Learning to Live Together* Manual, developed by Ethics Education for Children.



Furthermore, we facilitated a learning and exposure visit for members of SCC and SIRC to Zanzibar, hosted by Zanzibar Interfaith Centre (ZANZIC). This visit provided avenues to highlight practical models of community interaction designed to build harmonious coexistence among people of different ethnic and faith groups. The exposure visits also included visits to different religious and historical sites and advocacy opportunities with senior government officials and religious leaders in Zanzibar. The visit and its accompanying activities were attended by 55 people from Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania.

## Right to Education

End Child Poverty is also engaged in promoting the Right to Education through increasing children's access to quality education. We specially target children affected by or vulnerable to multiple and crippling adversity such as violent conflicts, forced displacement, or lack parental or guardian care. Our work in education, also seeks to promote positive values and character in children as a way to mitigate poverty in the heart and mind. Our approaches include provision of scholarships to identified children, in partnership with the GNRC and other grassroots partners, support for the provision of learning resources such as books, computers, mobile phones and internet access, as well as supporting teachers and volunteers working with or grassroots partners.

In the past year, we have become acutely aware of the disparity in the impacts of COVID-19 pandemic on learning and education. Children from poor families and communities have received far less opportunity to continue learning compared to the well off. A brief released by World bank (December 2020) on the results of simulations estimating the potential impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic in learning poverty estimated that an addition of 72 million children could be pushed into learning poverty, escalating the total number from 382 to 454 million children globally. Perhaps even more worrying, hundreds of millions of children who relied on the school system to get at least one proper meal a day, or for essential services such as sanitation have had these services curtailed by the pandemic.

*"I would like to study and become a teacher but now I am away from my school since we are living in this camp after we were displaced"*

Maream,  
Girl, Kids Future Team, Syria



In collaboration with our partner and member of the GNRC from Moldova, we facilitated the purchase of digital learning equipment and Internet for over 15 children living in poverty. Having been trained by our partner on the use of the tablets, the children, like their counterparts in the country and many parts of the world were now able to take online classes.

Additionally, our partner; I CAN Malaysia, held over four training sessions for over 15 volunteer teachers to equip them with online teaching skills. In turn, the teachers were able to offer online classes to over 150 children (including Rohingya refugee children) within the year.

We also maintained partnership with GNRC members from Kenya, Malaysia, Pakistan, Peru Sierra Leone, Senegal and Zambia, where we provided scholarships and other educational support to over 300 children.



## Securing Access to Sustainable Livelihoods

Secure and sustainable livelihood opportunities are vital for the wellbeing outcomes of families and children. In recognition of this, and in collaboration with its partner, End Child Poverty endeavors to empower young people and women build secure and sustainable livelihoods. Of special significance for our livelihoods empowerment are caregivers of children living in poverty.

We approach livelihoods through empowerment to acquire own agency, and facilitate knowledge and skills development for enhanced employability or entrepreneurship, facilitate linkages with relevant community, financial and government services; and, provide seed funding for vocational training or business capital. We have thus far worked with and supported women and youth in Malaysia, Colombia, Kenya, South Sudan, Argentina, Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania.

In the coming year, we aim to strengthen this programme, by working with other initiatives of Arigatou International and partners. Our focus will be supporting vulnerable families and communities recover from the economic shocks of the COVID-19 pandemic.



## Right to Sustainable Development

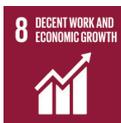
The last three decades have witnessed the evolution of the concept of sustainable development and implicit acknowledgment that individuals and communities have a claim to the right to sustainable progress. At End Child Poverty, we develop and promote knowledge necessary to realise sustainable development by aligning our work and endeavour to the global agenda for sustainable development including the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). We also carry out specific activities to spread awareness and education around the SDGs; document faith communities' (our partners') actions on sustainable development; and, participate in SDGs processes such as the national Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs).

Over the last year we brought to fruition the SDGs Academy for Children, an exciting space in which we aim to show and document children's participation and implementation of the SDGs. The Academy, modeled as a space and programming area aims to provide children with simplified multi-faith learning tools on the SDGs to enable them contribute to ending poverty and the Agenda 2030 in general.

The Academy plans to provide children with an in-depth understanding of the SDGs through an interactive learning course with 3 modules, story-telling campaigns, multi-level mobile app games and advocacy actions. The Academy is organized around 5 structured hubs one each for knowledge, innovations and solutions, capacity building, dialogue and, fun. These hubs are representative of the 5P's of the SDGs; People, Planet, Prosperity, Peace, Partnerships. The Academy was formally launched and introduced at the virtual commemoration of the GNRC 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary.



In the lead to the launch as part of its conceptualization we held numerous brainstorming and consultations meetings with other initiatives of Arigatou International, especially Ethics Education for Children. We also arranged several road show meetings with potential vendors to set up the online/digital space of the Academy. At the same time, we have been looking for opportunity to set up some physical spaces of the Academy, with Kenya and Sri Lanka as a pilots.



**Goal 8** of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) aims to promote economic growth and decent work for all.



The Academy, an initiative by Arigatou International - End Child Poverty is a safe SPACE and PROGRAM for people to learn about the SDGs through multiple activities



## Right to Nutrition

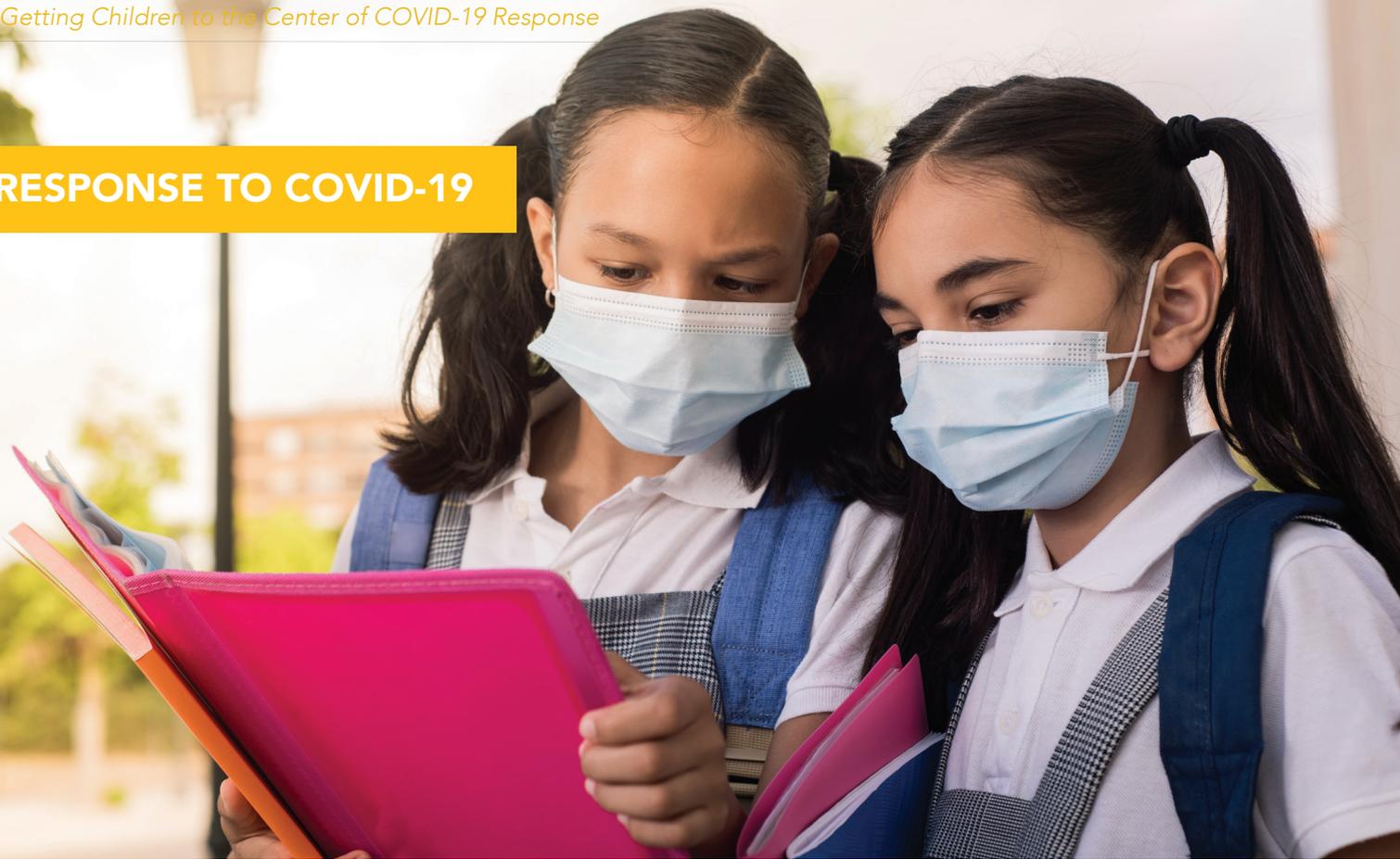
Before the onset of COVID-19 in excess of 144 million children under 5 were stunted. According to UNICEF COVID-19 is will to lead to an increase of this number by 3.4 million children.

In view of this grim reality of hunger for millions of children, End Child Poverty is working with the Organisation of African Instituted Churches (OIAIC) to expand the Nutrition+ Project in Burundi, Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda. Nutrition+ Project has several components including:

- Training of farmers (including church leaders) as resource persons to educate the community on sustainable agricultural practices, positive parenting, and provide pastoral care;
- Establishing or strengthening community-learning centres, for example, through setting up demonstration farms;
- Establishing seed banks; and facilitating farmer's access to relevant government and financial resources.

End Child Poverty is also prospecting to start a similar initiative in the Latin America region, in collaboration with the GNRC and grassroots leadership in the region.

## RESPONSE TO COVID-19



As the pandemic spread across the world and governments instituted public health measures to contain it, it became clear that its real costs and impacts would be unprecedented. It was also apparent that the pandemic and its economic and social costs would disproportionately impact those already vulnerable among them workers in the informal economy, women, children, migrants, refugees and internally displaced persons, low-income and single parent households.

At End Child Poverty, faced with this new reality, we rejigged our programming and activities to reduce the vulnerability of children and communities. In March 2020, we joined fellow initiatives of Arigatou International in instituting the collective 'Faith in Action for Children' campaign to rally religious leaders and communities to accelerate response to the pandemic impacts on children. The campaign's core motivation and theory of change has been that faith is a critical positive mobilizer in emergency situations, that is it invaluable to strengthen resilience in children and young people; and that religious leaders can make a crucial contribution to positively influence millions of followers to protect and affirm children's dignity in the face of crisis.

Thus, our work at End Child Poverty towards responding to the COVID-19 pandemic was well aligned and cognizant of these vulnerable populations, especially children. In March 2020, we joined fellow initiatives of Arigatou International in instituting the collective 'Faith in Action for Children' campaign that would rally religious leaders and religious communities to increase their actions in response to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on children.

The campaign's core affirmation has been 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. The campaign's rallying call has been 12 key recommendations, providing concrete ideas for religious leaders and communities to support, protect and nurture children's physical, socio-emotional and spiritual wellbeing.

The climax of this campaign was the Global Week of Faith In Action for children - 16<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> November 2020. Campaign activities culminated with the celebration of the World Day of Prayer and Action for Children, which marks Universal Children's Day and the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the GNRC. The activities brought together 300 children from diverse religious and cultural backgrounds. 1,720 people from 86 countries, representing 64 organizations participated in the week long activities.

As part of the weeklong events, End Child Poverty led a dialogue session christened – Together We Can End Child Poverty Worldwide. This dialogue session brought together children, religious leaders and experts from 9 organizations.

Participants explored practical approaches to overcome child poverty in the context of the SDGs and ongoing mitigation against COVID-19, and longer term work to build resilience and 'building back better'. Participating children expressed some of the challenges they faced in the face of COVID-19 and how these caused them to be vulnerable.

Participants at dialogue sessions made numerous recommendations for relief of child poverty in the COVID-19 scenarios. The most notable of these recommendations included universal child-sensitive social protection, starting up income generating activities for vulnerable families, listening to children and mobilizing faith communities to respond to the needs of children.

### Illustrative summary of the dialogue session 'Together We Can End Child Poverty' (Theory of Action: Together we Can End Child Poverty)





Further, by factoring mitigating the impacts of COVID-19 on children into our activities and partnerships, End Child Poverty reached about 3,140 people directly and over 50,000 people through online spaces.

The experience and capabilities gathered in the process of executing the activities and working with partners have also made us attractive in advisory and consultative forums to which we have taken with some gusto with a view to protect and uplift vulnerable children. In this stance, through our Knowledge Centre, we hosted a webinar focused on the importance of scaling up social protection for economic recovery post COVID-19, with a focus on Africa and Asia regions.

The webinar brought together speakers from; World Vision, Search for Justice, Pakistan, Sarvodaya movement, I CAN Malaysia, UNICEF Sri Lanka and Action for Fundamental Change and Development (AFFCAD) Uganda to discuss the socio-economic contexts of the regions in the face of COVID-19, and with particular attention to children and youth. Participants emphasized the need for stakeholders to collaborate with governments in strengthening existing social protection systems as a response to COVID-19 and to enable economic recovery.

Other noteworthy webinars we took part in include:

- The impact of COVID-19 on Children's Rights and wellbeing – the role of Faith communities; held on 27<sup>th</sup> April 2020, hosted by Arigatou International.
- The impact of COVID-19 on Child Poverty in Africa and beyond; held on 14<sup>th</sup> May 2020, hosted by the Global Coalition to End Child Poverty.
- How Faith Inspired organizations in Asia are supporting, empowering and protecting children during the COVID-19 pandemic; held on 15<sup>th</sup> June 2020, hosted by Arigatou International.
- Youth in Action: Building Peace and moving Dialogue online; hosted by KAICIID, held on 14<sup>th</sup> May 2020,
- How Faith inspired organizations in Europe are supporting and protecting children during the COVID-19 pandemic; hosted by Arigatou International, held on 28<sup>th</sup> July 2020.

In practical terms, we have also adjusted our programs, processes and events to fit the new realities posed by this global pandemic. We have shifted most of our events, operations and processes to online spaces, and have adjusted to this way of seeking to realize our vision of a world free of child poverty, while keeping communities safe from the COVID-19 disease.





## KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT AND DIFFUSION



We aspire to seek, generate and share timely knowledge relevant to ending child poverty, through Arigatou International's End Child Poverty Knowledge Centre as well as through our strategic communications.

The **End Child Poverty Knowledge Centre** is a physical hub co-hosted and run in collaboration with the Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement, in Colombo, Sri Lanka. At the same time we are revamping the online hub, hosted on our End Child Poverty website. The aim of the Knowledge Centre is to build capacities of faith communities and organisations through facilitating research, documentation of lessons learned and good practices, creating opportunities for dissemination of information. It also aims to help create linkages with other knowledge platforms like the Moral Imperative to End Extreme Poverty and the Global Coalition to End Child Poverty.

Within the year, the Knowledge Centre supported raising awareness work on the COVID-19 through publication of informative blog articles, posters targeting over 30,000 people and distribution of food and stationery materials for vulnerable families. These actions were done in collaboration with the Sarvodaya movement and the UNICEF Religious leaders forum from Sri Lanka.

## Strategic Communications

We are learning to be purposive and strategic with our communications assets to help us learn better from our practice and its impacts, to factor this in our work, to create stronger and more accountable bounded communities of practice around ending child poverty and to tell our stories more powerfully.

Over the last year, we embarked on a crisis communications strategy focused on raising awareness around the COVID-19 pandemic and to support our efforts (and that of our boundary partners) to mitigate socio-economic effects of the pandemic. With, the pandemic causing most activities and engagements to take place virtually, we revamped and scaled up our communications assets to rise to the new demand from campaigns, programming and our partners.

We envisioned a lot of actions maximizing on the use of converged communications and digital technologies. For the first time, we put together a communications strategy that was 100% virtual. Communication components of a typical campaign often involve drawing a vigorous social media campaign plan, production of communication assets and elements for ourselves and our partners and supporting actions by our partners (especially members of the GNRC) in their activities. As a result of much online engagements, we bolstered our audience and traction on both our website and social media platforms.

**During this reporting year, we have 'Put Children at the Center, through various online activities, we;**



**Produced 13 online newsletters; 8 email campaigns reaching an average of 300 people per email campaign.**



**Developed and published 29 website articles including news and blogs Posted an average of 90 posts on twitter, 45 posts on Facebook and 30 posts on Instagram; each month**



**Produced 6 videos and 40 partner videos with each attracting nearly 100 views on YouTube and other social media platforms**



**Our online communication had an estimated average reach of 55,000 people monthly**

An online interfaith prayer session and a series of webinars were organized by our partners worldwide coupled up with productions and online dissemination of visual materials and messages. Our youth networks from Kenya, Somalia and Tanzania used WhatsApp groups and virtual meetings to design and disseminate awareness posters on COVID-19.

The End Child Poverty Knowledge Centre in collaboration with the Sarvodaya movement in Sri Lanka, produced and disseminated digital posters on COVID-19 safety measures, reaching up to 30,000 people. Our annual campaign; 'Together We Can End Child Poverty' encouraged our partners to utilize digital communication in their actions within the campaign. The climax of this was the Global Week of Faith In Action for Children, which utilized on the digital communication technology as the entire week and its accompanying preparations took place exclusively online.







## LOOKING FORWARD: A VISION FOR IMPACT

Looking ahead, we anticipate that the development decade for children, families, communities and economies around the world will be taken up by responding to and winding down the devastating impacts of COVID-19. It is now evident that COVID-19 has dealt a severe blow to the 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals. It is also clear that unless urgent measures are taken at all levels of community and government, COVID-19 threatens to wipe off gains made in relation to child education, learning, food and nutrition security and violence against children. In addition old threats that have been in the horizon especially dangerous climate change and fragility threaten to further dim prospects for progress.

Consequently, a new level of ambition and leadership is called for at all levels of community and government to revert to the development trajectory before the pandemic, and to deliver to the global ambitions for sustainable development.

At End Child Poverty, we are convinced that we can rise to these new demands for action and restore the aspirations for a better and fairer world for children. Working collectively with partners at grassroots, regional and global interventions are determined to deliver results that are tangible and path breaking in supporting, protecting and empowering children to rise beyond the crises. We have also learnt that old ways, old models and old projects will not suffice in this endeavour.

## THANK YOU

Our heartfelt appreciation to all faith actors and partners who tirelessly walked with us during the unprecedented times brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Special thanks to all children whose optimism and enthusiasm, as well as genuine ideas and recommendations inspired us, even more, to continue working to build safe participatory spaces for children and youth.

We thank the GNRC members and our sister Initiatives at Arigatou International (Global Network of Religions for Children, Ethics Education for Children and Prayer and Action) for support, expertise and walking in solidarity in supporting, protecting and empowering children as they went through the pandemic.

A special thanks to the Tokyo headquarters and the Myochikai community for their relentless support. Last but not least, this would not have been possible without the dedication and hard work of all the staff members and volunteers at Arigatou International – End Child Poverty

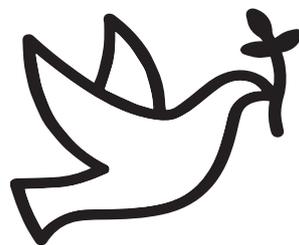
We treasure you!

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*If we wish to create lasting peace, we must begin with the children*

- Mahatma Gandhi

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**TOGETHER WE CAN  
END  
CHILD POVERTY**

Putting Children at the Center

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End Child Poverty

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