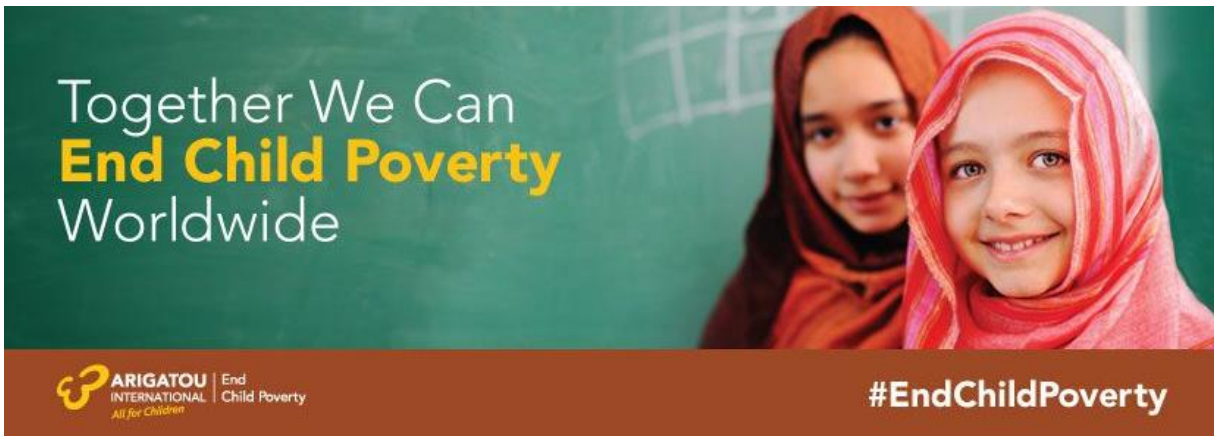


Ending Child Poverty: Enabling and Listening to the Voices of Children

"Every child has the right to a life free of poverty."

The International Day for the Eradication of Poverty (IDEP) 17th October 2018



Today, as the world commemorates the [International Day for the Eradication of Poverty \(IDEP\)](#) under the theme "Coming Together With Those Furthest Behind To Build An Inclusive World Of Universal Respect For Human Rights And Dignity," it is imperative to remember that, despite the significant progress that has been made in reducing extreme poverty, **an estimated 1 billion children still live in poverty globally – that is 1 out of every 2 children in the whole world**. As we join in the commemorations, it is important that we pause and consider the questions: what does it mean to come together for these children? how do we ensure their inclusion in development? and how do we secure their right to human dignity, while they are still children?

Perhaps a good place to start would be to learn to listen to children. At the [5th Forum of the Global Network of Religions for Children \(GNRC\)](#), held in Panama City, May 2017, participants from 70 countries including boys, girls, women and men as well as leaders and members of the world's religions and faith communities, the United Nations and numerous global and grassroots organizations, committed themselves to "listen to children with empathy and respect, (to) welcome their wisdom and gifts, and continue to work with them."

Listening to children requires that we first recognize that children have a right to active, free and meaningful participation in efforts to secure their own wellbeing. To do well with and for children, we are obliged to recognize that each child has a fundamental entitlement to a process of development that recognizes and enables their agency, their own affairs, circumstances and aspirations. It is not enough that we (as parents, family, faith communities, states or governments) have the best intentions for the child, or that we are committed to find the resources and programmes needed to achieve such intentions, rather we are obligated to make sure that children participate, contribute and are part of this journey.

As a Faith Inspired Organization, we at Arigatou International, believe that all children have rights and dignity, that must be upheld, protected and promoted. Childhood adversity, especially violence against children and child poverty imposes an unbearable cost on the lives of children. We believe that recognizing and enabling the individual and collective voice of children is essential to helping us feel and share in this pain, to grieve and suffer with them and to prompt us to action.

The question then becomes, how do we recognize, enable and pay attention to the voice of children? How do we help children find their individual and collective voice and how can we become active and informed listeners to what they are telling us towards ending child poverty?

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