



Going All Out to End Child Poverty

Our Story @10:

10 Years of Interfaith
Action to End Child Poverty

2012 – 2022



Contact and Editorial Information

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"As people of faith, we see the Divine Presence in every person, and thus it is our obligation to encourage each person, with patience and compassion, to realize the highest potential of the human heart. It is this Divine Presence—and this great potential—which are the eternal wellspring of the dignity of every child—indeed, of every one of us."

Rev. Takeyasu Miyamoto,

~ 10th May, 2002 ~

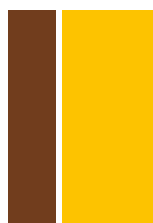


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List of Acronyms

| | |
|----------|---|
| AACC | All Africa Conference of Churches |
| ACRL | African Council of Religious Leaders |
| AMECEA | Association of Member Episcopal Conferences in Eastern Africa |
| AFLI | Africa Faith Leaders / Interfaith Initiative on the Sustainable Development Goals |
| APF BC | Asia Pacific Faith Based Coalition for Sustainable Development |
| APF BC | Asia Pacific Faith Based Coalition for Sustainable Development |
| AUC | African Union Commission |
| AWG | Advocacy Working Group |
| CEPA | Centre for Poverty Analysis |
| CRC | United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child |
| CSL | Children's Solutions Lab |
| CSW | Commission on the Status of Women |
| ECP@10 | End Child Poverty @ 10 |
| FBOs | Faith –Based Organizations |
| FECCLAHA | The Fellowship of Christian Councils and Churches in the Great Lakes and Horn of Africa |
| FfD | Financing for Development |
| FoRB | Freedom of Religion or Belief |
| GBV | Gender Based Violence |
| G20 | The Group of Twenty |
| GNRC | Global Network of Religions for Children |
| HCA | Hindu Council of Africa |

| | |
|---------|---|
| HIPSIR | Hekima Institute of Peace Studies and International Relations |
| HLPF | High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development |
| ICT | Information Communication Technology |
| IGAD: | Intergovernmental Authority on Development |
| IMF: | International Monetary Fund |
| IOM | International Organization for Migration |
| IRCU | Interreligious Council of Uganda |
| NCA | Norwegian Church Aid |
| NGOs | Non-Governmental Organizations |
| OAIC | Organization of African Instituted Churches |
| PaRD | International Partnership on Religion and Sustainable Development |
| P/C/TVE | Preventing/Countering and Transforming Violent Extremism |
| P/CVE | Preventing/Countering Violent Extremism; Prevent/Counter Violent Extremism |
| REJADH | Réseau des Enfants et Jeunes Africains pour les Droits Humains (African Children and Youth Network on Human Rights) |
| RFLP | Regional Faith Leaders Forum |
| RPP | Regional Peace Program |
| SCC | Sudan Council of Churches |
| SDGs | Sustainable development Goals |
| SFS | Somali Family Services |
| SIRC | Sudan Interreligious Council |
| SSCI | Sudan Social Cohesion Initiative |
| UN | United Nations |
| UNDP | United Nations Development Programme |
| UNGA | United Nations General Assembly |
| USSWAK | Umbrella of South Sudan Women Association in Kenya |
| VNRs | Voluntary National Reviews |
| YIA | Youth In Action |

“We believe in listening to children and empowering them for meaningful participation.”

~End Child Poverty~

About Us

Arigatou International

Arigatou International is a non-profit organization which strives to bring people from all walks of life together to build a better world for children. Arigatou International is “All for Children,” and draws on universal principles of common good to offer compelling new ways for people of diverse religious and cultural backgrounds to work together on children’s issues. Arigatou International develops and sustains unique multi-stakeholder initiatives designed to ensure that all children are treated with dignity, all children’s rights are respected, and all children have the opportunity to freely pursue their full human potential.

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

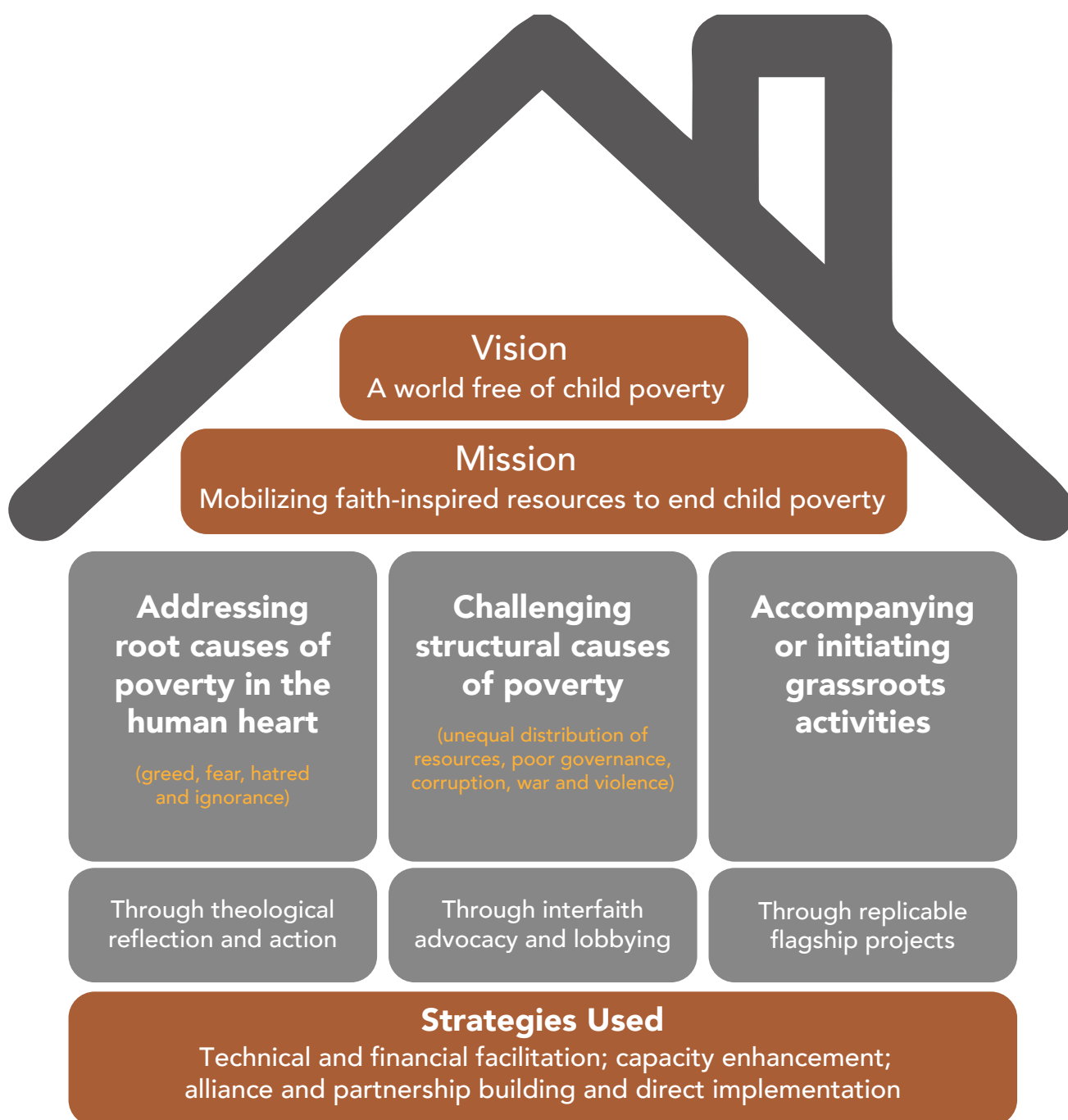
Bringing together diverse religious leaders and faith communities to influence and advocate for the policy, social, and behavioral changes needed to end violence against children.

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.

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



Foreword



I vividly recall the launch of the End Child Poverty initiative on the 16th of June 2012, during the Fourth Forum of Arigatou International's Global Network of Religions for Children (GNRC) in Tanzania. Over 470 participants from 64 countries, including faith communities, children, youth, Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), and United Nations officials, converged with a shared vision: to create "a world where no child lives in poverty."

In 2012, the staggering statistics painted a grim reality. Almost 385 million children were living in extreme poverty. Nearly 6 million children died of avoidable causes annually before their fifth birthday, and 58 million children did not attend primary school. This intolerable reality prompted the forum participants to take global action, acknowledging poverty as the gravest global

injustice and the most atrocious form of violence. This collective determination gave birth to the Interfaith Initiative to End Child Poverty—a global agency entrusted with the mission of eradicating poverty among children by mobilizing faith-inspired resources and communities to address its underlying structural and human causes.

Now, a decade has passed since that landmark moment in 2012, and it is crucial that we pause to reflect, express gratitude, and draw inspiration from the achievements made in fulfilling this ambitious commitment. Over the years, End Child Poverty has ventured into innovative approaches and methodologies to tackle child poverty. It has engaged in creative advocacy efforts, fostered partnerships and coalitions, and actively participated in global platforms. Furthermore, concrete strides have been taken at the grassroots level in various countries and communities worldwide to alleviate extreme poverty. At Arigatou International, we have consistently encouraged children to join us in finding imaginative solutions to address poverty. Among these commendable endeavors involving children, I find particular inspiration in the Children's Solutions Lab, which invites groups of children from around the world to propose and implement their own strategies to combat child poverty in their communities, as well as the SDGs Academy for Children.

“

... it is imperative that we bring child poverty to the forefront and prioritize investments in children.

”

However, as we reflect upon the work accomplished in the past decade, we find ourselves at a critical juncture. The world is grappling with multiple crises—the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, the impacts of climate change, violent conflicts, and pervasive poverty and inequality. While these challenges affect us all, their harshest blows are felt by the most vulnerable—the children. Therefore, it is imperative that we bring child poverty to the forefront and prioritize investments in children. We must redouble our dedication to both prayer and action for the well-being of children. The 10th anniversary of End Child Poverty presents a unique opportunity to place the most vulnerable and children living in poverty at the top of the agenda for faith communities, other communities, and the international community at large. It is a chance for us to reaffirm our collective commitment and take ambitious actions to build a world where child poverty no longer exists.

As we embark on this journey, I offer a heartfelt prayer for all the children still enduring the lingering anguish caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as its consequential aftermath and prevailing violence. I invite you to join us, not only to celebrate our collective achievements but also to envision a future for children that is liberated from poverty and all forms of violence.

I extend my deepest gratitude to you for joining us on this path towards a world without child poverty—and for the invaluable contributions you have already made to better the lives of children along the way.

Rev. Keishi Miyamoto,

President, Arigatou International.

Preface



At the inception of End Child Poverty, our mission was clear: to mobilize faith communities and resources in the fight against child poverty. We set out to harness the moral, spiritual, and other valuable assets of faith to address the root causes of poverty and drive social change on a broad scale, ultimately improving the well-being of children. Since that significant day on June 16th, 2012, we have embarked on a remarkable journey that has taken us across more than 50 countries, working tirelessly to combat child poverty and transform the institutions and spaces that perpetuate it.

Along this path, we have wholeheartedly embraced the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, recognizing its profound promise for children. We have integrated this agenda into our strategic frameworks, operational approaches, and measurement of results, aiming to bring about genuine transformation in the

lives of children. Our work is underpinned by a rights and capabilities approach rooted in faith and guided by the principles of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). Central to this approach is our deep belief in the agency of children, valuing their intrinsic worth and empowering them to champion their own cause.

To achieve meaningful impact, we have pursued various avenues for change. We have fostered interfaith dialogue, encouraging reflection and action to inspire collective efforts. Our global advocacy and influencing have aimed to shape policies and systems to prioritize child well-being. At the grassroots level, we have engaged communities, raised awareness, and organized initiatives to rally support for ending childhood poverty. Recognizing the importance of local initiatives, we have supported promising projects and initiatives while listening to and empowering children, ensuring their voices are heard and respected. Collaboration and partnerships have been key to our work, enabling the creation of a global knowledge platform and enhancing our own capacity to effect change.

As we look back at the past ten years, we reflect on the results achieved through these pathways. In the following pages, we share the stories of our initiatives, which have focused on developing tools for interfaith dialogue and reflection on childhood poverty, fostering regional and global advocacy coalitions, establishing a research and documentation center, and promoting annual grassroots global campaigns to ignite interest,



generate demand, and inspire action to eradicate child poverty. We also recount our experiences in responding to community-level innovations and actions aimed at alleviating child poverty, often witnessing astonishing outcomes as we empower children to become agents of change in the battle against poverty. Throughout this journey, we have been blessed to find unwavering support and forge invaluable partnerships. Without the collective efforts and grace of Arigatou International's Global Network of Religions for Children (GNRC), our grassroots work would not have been possible. We extend our heartfelt gratitude to all those who have joined us on this transformative path.

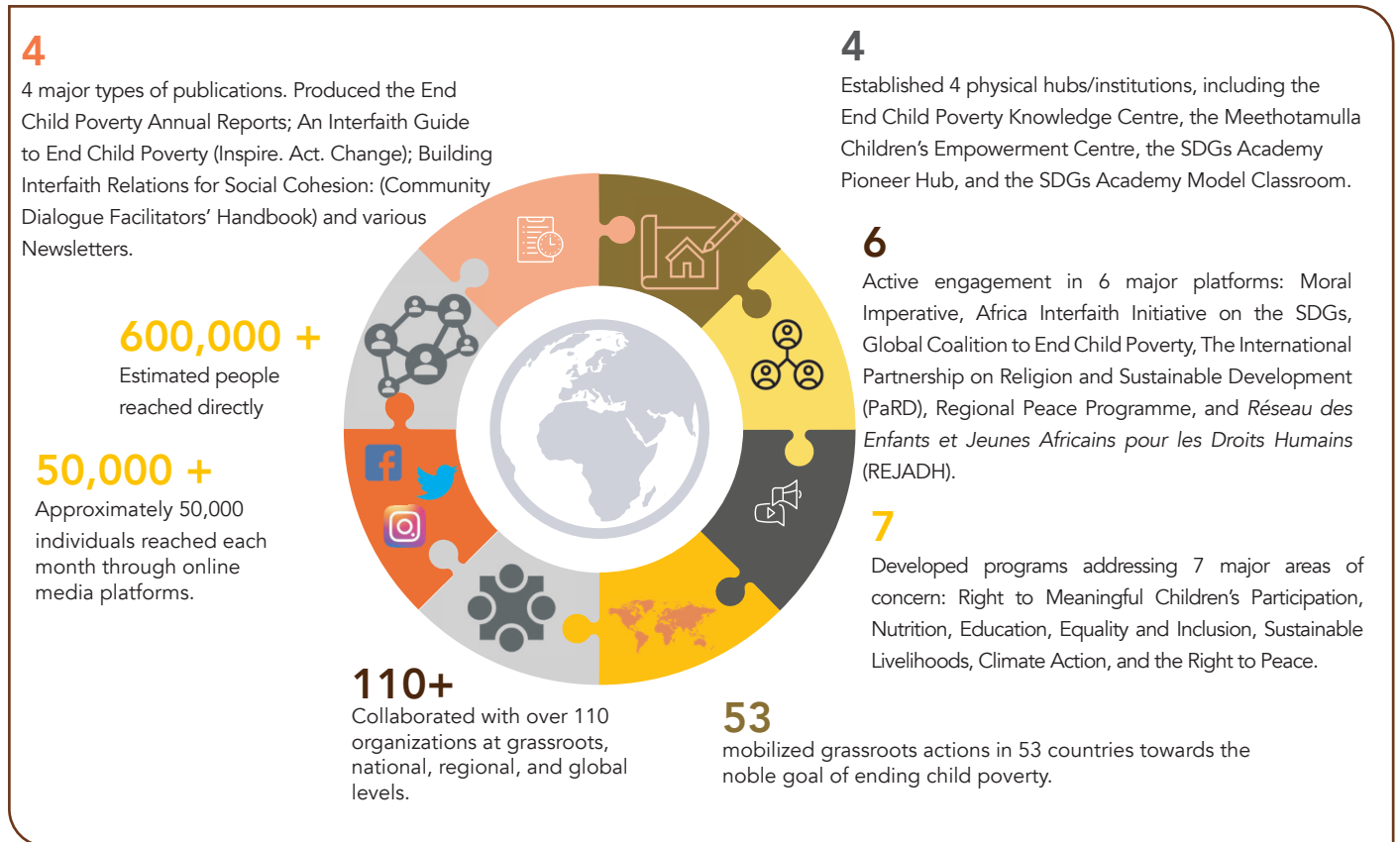
From the very beginning, we recognized that child poverty presented a multifaceted challenge that would require steadfast commitment. Over the past decade, we have learned crucial lessons about the persistent nature of child poverty, and we continue to reflect on the most effective approaches to mitigate its impact. However, we remain resolute in our conviction that this cause must be won for the sake of our children and humanity's genuine freedom.

We express our profound gratitude to all those who have supported us on this journey, and we eagerly embrace the considerable challenges that lie ahead in our shared mission to end child poverty.

Rev. Fred Nyabera,
Director, Interfaith Initiative to End Child Poverty.

All Out: Key Results Dashboard

Our Results: Summary in Numbers



Summary: All Out Key Areas

| Impact Pathway | | Our Imprints and Outputs: Overview |
|----------------|--|--|
| 1. | Interfaith dialogue and action | Approach: Facilitating safe spaces for dialogue and cooperation |
| 2. | Advocacy and influence for positive change | Approach: Engaging in strategic collaboratives and partnerships for advocacy and influencing. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Africa Faith Leaders Initiative / Interfaith Initiative on the SDGs. • Global Coalition to End Child Poverty. • Moral Imperative to End Poverty and Realize the SDGs (Moral Imperative). • The International Partnership on Religion and Sustainable Development (PaRD). |
| | | Approach: Development and endorsement of policy papers and advocacy statements |

| | | |
|----|--|--|
| 3. | Community organizing and constituency building. | <p>Approach: Formation, establishment, and support of grassroots networks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth in Action (YIA) • <i>Réseau des Enfants et Jeunes Africains pour les Droits Humains</i> (REJADH) • Regional Faith Leaders Forum (RFLF) • South Sudan Children’s Peace Ambassadors Network • Accompanying members of the Global Network of Religions for Children (GNRC) |
| | | <p>Approach: Mounting strategic issues and awareness raising campaigns</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Together We Can End Child Poverty Worldwide campaign • Myth of Maputo campaign • I Lead Peace campaign • Faith in Action for Children campaign • ECP@10 campaign |
| 4. | Support for high-impact flagship innovations and community initiatives | <p>Approach: Initiating or leveraging existing high-impact flagship initiatives, particularly at grassroots community levels.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Right to Education programme • Project Nutrition+ • Livelihoods and economic empowerment programme • Regional Peace Programme (RPP) • Sudan Social Cohesion Initiative (SSCI) |
| 5. | Growing and mainstreaming the agency of children | <p>Approach: Accompanying and establishing initiatives promoting meaningful children’s participation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poverty Solutions: India Poverty Solutions and Nepal Poverty Solutions • Children’s Solutions Lab (CSL) • Arigatou International’s SDGs Academy for Children |
| 6. | Promoting and advancing knowledge, evidence, and best practice | <p>Approach 1: Supporting or collaborating with relevant institutions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishment of the End Child Poverty Knowledge Centre in collaboration with the Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement |
| | | <p>Approach: Development of publications and other resources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Act. Inspire. Change: An Interfaith Guide to End Child Poverty • End Child Poverty reports and newsletters • Campaign Toolkits • Videos, podcasts, and other multi-media resources. |
| 7. | Fostering strategic partnerships and collaboration | <p>Approach: Working together with members of the Global Network of Religions for Children (GNRC)</p> |
| | | <p>Approach: Cultivating strategic partnerships with other like-minded organizations</p> |

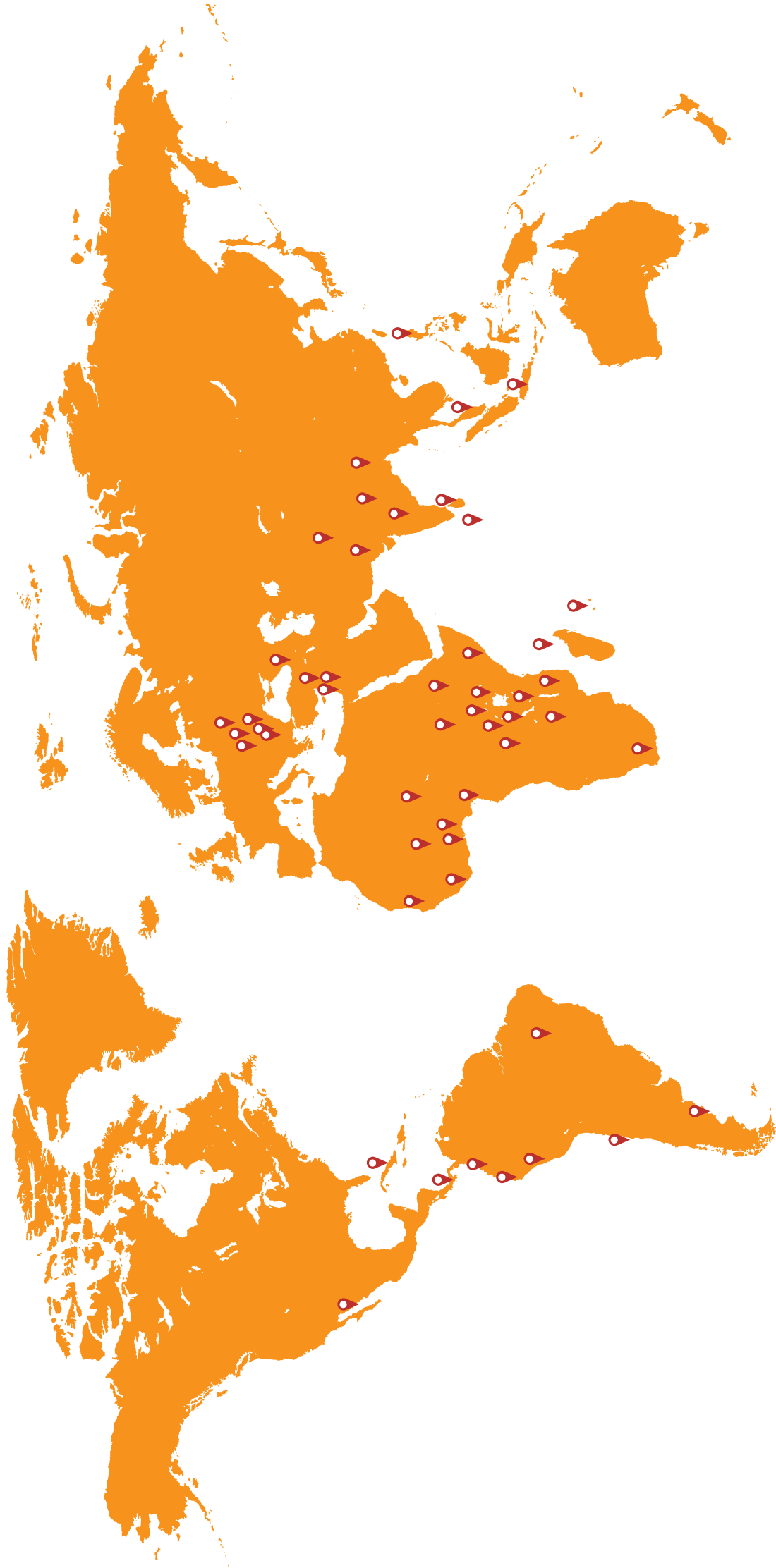




Our Global Footprint

Over the past decade, our efforts to combat child poverty have extended to more than 50 countries through the mobilization of Arigatou International's Global Network of Religions for Children (GNRC) members and other strategic partners.

TOGETHER WE CAN END CHILD POVERTY CAMPAIGN ON THE MAP



| Continent | Country | | | |
|-----------|---|---|--|---|
| Africa | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 📍 Burundi 📍 Cameroon 📍 Comoros 📍 Democratic Republic of Congo 📍 Ethiopia 📍 Ghana 📍 Ghana 📍 Nigeria 📍 Rwanda 📍 Senegal 📍 Sierra Leone 📍 Somalia 📍 South Africa 📍 South Sudan 📍 Sudan 📍 Tanzania 📍 Togo 📍 Uganda 📍 Zambia | | | |
| | Asia | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 📍 Bhutan 📍 India 📍 Indonesia 📍 Malaysia 📍 Maldives 📍 Nepal 📍 Pakistan 📍 Philippines 📍 Sri Lanka | | |
| | | Middle East | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 📍 Afghanistan 📍 Lebanon 📍 Palestine 📍 Syria | |
| | | | Europe | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 📍 Armenia 📍 Bosnia and Herzegovina 📍 Croatia 📍 Moldova 📍 Montenegro 📍 Romania 📍 Serbia 📍 North Macedonia |
| | | Latin America & Caribbean | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 📍 Argentina 📍 Brazil 📍 Chile 📍 Colombia 📍 Ecuador 📍 Panama 📍 Peru 📍 Mexico |

End Child Poverty Route to Impact and Results Framework

The Change We Seek

Our primary objective is to eradicate child poverty worldwide by addressing its underlying causes and risk factors. We are guided by both local and global aspirations for children, in line with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). We consider the existing conditions of childhood deprivation and poverty at local, national, and global levels, taking into account the significance of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Our Intervention Model and Approaches

Our approach involves a faith-inspired, stepwise, iterative, and multidimensional strategy that fosters innovation and action to overcome childhood adversity and deprivation. We focus on institutions and individuals actively involved in promoting child well-being and aim to eliminate child poverty. By faith-inspired institutions and actors we mean interconnected groups comprising individuals, organizations, institutions, agencies, processes, assets, and stakeholders who draw motivation from their faith to actively promote ideas, knowledge, innovations, practices, and evidence aimed at addressing and eradicating childhood adversity and deprivation.

Children at risk of poverty are our primary stakeholders, and we prioritize their active involvement and inclusion in evaluating results. We develop strategic and practical pathways that serve as the foundation for our role, core assumptions, and approaches to programming and capability development.

Our contribution involves supporting global, regional, national, and local efforts to combat child poverty by mobilizing the moral agency and institutional resources of faith communities. As an interfaith initiative, we leverage our own agency within these communities to drive change. Additionally, we acknowledge the importance of involving children in our response to child poverty and strive to empower their presence and agency.

By catalyzing and providing services to these collective efforts, we work towards our vision of ending child poverty and securing a brighter future for all children.

How We Determine Key Results

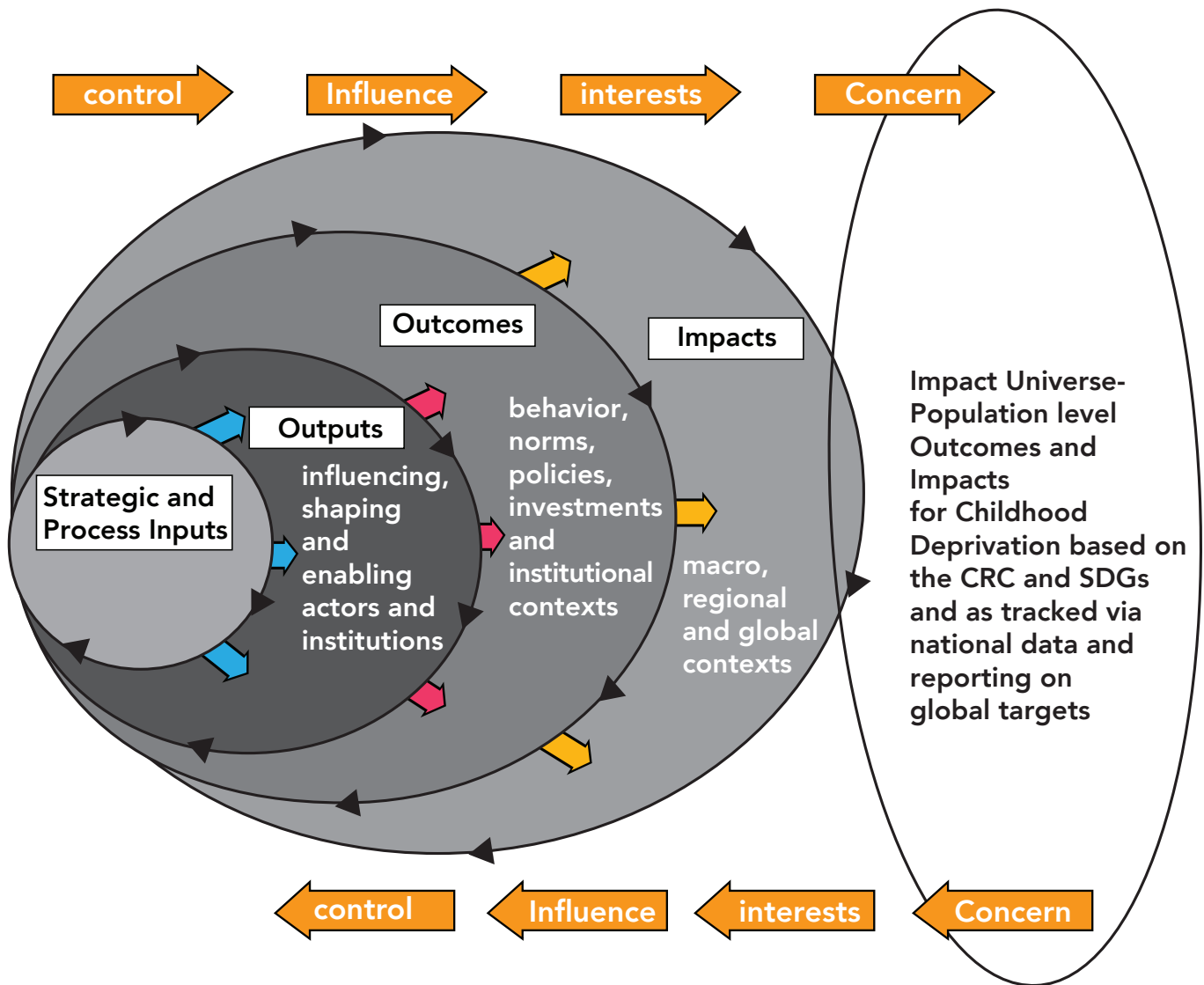
To assess our progress and measure our impact, we employ a comprehensive approach that considers various levels and factors along our chosen pathways to achieve results. Our key results encompass outputs, outcomes, and impact, taking into account the sphere of influence and our impact pathways.

At the output level, we track and monitor specific metrics, including goals, targets, milestones, and indicators. These metrics are derived from our program activities and serve as indicators of our performance and achievements.

For outcomes and impact, particularly those with longer-term implications, we rely on a combination of reporting from institutional actors and progress indicators at the global, regional, national, and local levels. We utilize national and regional targets and indicators, as well as relevant Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) targets and indicators, to gauge progress in addressing childhood adversity and deprivation.

We recognize that in an innovation system and network environment, not all longer-term outcomes and impacts can be solely attributed to the volume of outputs or intermediary outcomes. Therefore, we take into consideration the broader context and various contributing factors when evaluating the extent to which our initiatives have influenced these outcomes. We place great importance on ensuring the credibility and validity of our assessment and evaluation processes.

Our Route to Impact: Sphere of Control





“

We — people from all the world’s great religions and so many of its nations — commit to you, in solidarity, that we shall... strengthen our efforts to eradicate poverty, the root cause of the deteriorating environment that children face, giving attention not only to external causes but also to those that stem from the human heart, thus realizing fundamental solutions.

... (and that) we will do our utmost to exercise our leadership and set an example among the people, seeking to generate a universal moral force that will propel implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child — in both developed and developing countries — and mobilizing people from all walks of life to contribute to the Global Movement for Children.

Rev. Takeyasu Miyamoto, (the late) President of Arigatou International,
Speaks at United Nations General Assembly Special Session on Children in 2002

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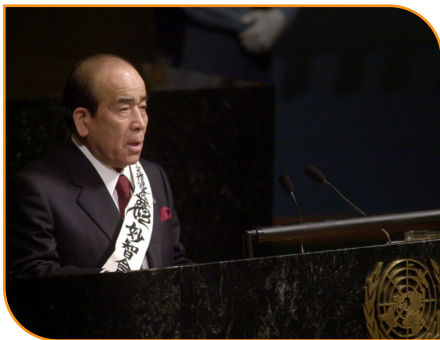
A Footprint in Time: Key Starts and Road Signs on the Path to ECP@10

UN General Assembly Special Session on Children: Global Leaders commit to completing the World Summit on Children’s agenda “A world fit for Children”. Arigatou International Founder, Rev. Takeyasu Miyamoto addresses the session.

GNRC 4th Forum: Participants affirm the cause of child poverty from a faith perspective. Interfaith Initiative to End Child Poverty (End Child Poverty) is created.

End Child Poverty Office: Secretariat is established in Nairobi, Kenya to concretize impact through faith-inspired social innovation.

2002



2012



2013



2022

10th Anniversary of End Child Poverty: End Child Poverty celebrates its 10th anniversary with the ECP@10 Campaign. As part of this campaign, the Model Classroom, the second physical space of the SDGs Academy, is launched in Colombo, Sri Lanka. Additionally, the ECP@10 Campaign introduces the Grow Trees With Children challenge, leading to the planting of over 23,000 trees.



2021

SDGs Academy for Children - Pioneer Hub launch: The first physical space of Arigatou International’s SDGs Academy for Children the Pioneer Hub, is established in Limuru, Kenya.



2020

Faith in Action for Children Campaign: Children’s Solutions Lab and SDGs Academy for Children are presented during the campaign.

End Child Poverty Knowledge Centre: Knowledge center is established in Colombo, Sri Lanka in partnership with Sarvodaya for eradicating poverty.

2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development: End Child Poverty aligns with the SDGs and joins global consortia.

Formation of regional youth networks: REJADH and Youth in Action networks are established to empower young leaders in advocacy and peace building.

2014



2015



2016



2019



2014 – 2022



2017

30th Anniversary of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child CRC: Multi-religious Study on the Convention on the Rights of the Child is developed.

End Child Poverty-GNRC Regional Meetings: 12 regional meetings are Convened in Africa, the Balkan regions, Latin America, Middle East, South-East Asia.

GNRC 5th Forum: Interfaith Guide to End Child Poverty is launched.

In Pursuit of “A World Fit for Children”

Our work is guided by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). These global commitments provide us with a framework of principles, aspirations, goals, targets, and indicators to assess our impact on children.

End Child Poverty, traces its origins back to the first UN Special General Assembly on Children in 2002, which was addressed by Rev. Takeyasu Miyamoto, the former President of Arigatou International. This assembly aimed to address the unfinished agenda of the World Summit for Children and reaffirm the commitment to promote and protect the rights of every child. The outcomes of this assembly, captured in the report “A World Fit for Children,” shaped the global agenda for children in the following decade. The engagement of End Child Poverty in addressing child poverty and advocating for children’s rights can be traced back to these formative moments, where a collective commitment was made to create a world that prioritizes the well-being of children.

The CRC and its optional protocols, along with other international treaties and instruments, set the standards for promoting and safeguarding children’s well-being. They provide a guiding ethic for our mission to advance and secure the dignity of every child.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted in 2015, serves as a successor to the Millennium Development Goals and offers a comprehensive vision for global development. We actively support the implementation of this agenda through our involvement in the Global Coalition to End Child Poverty, where we advocate for the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs, influencing global and national priorities to eradicate child poverty.

Additionally, we have convened faith-based advocacy platforms at regional and global levels to ensure that faith voices are heard in shaping and supporting the implementation of the SDGs. This includes the formation of a trilateral global faith-based network, uniting faith-based SDG (Sustainable Development Goal) coalitions from Africa, Asia, and Latin America and the Caribbean, with the goal of advancing the SDGs for the benefit of children.

Given the broad nature of the 2030 Agenda, we actively engage in global international development dialogues such as the Moral Imperative Framework and the International Partnership on Religion and Sustainable Development (PaRD). These partnerships enable us to raise awareness about child poverty and advocate for its elimination at international forums like the UN High-Level Political Forum on the SDGs.

“...we have convened faith-based advocacy platforms at regional and global levels to ensure that faith voices are heard in shaping and supporting the implementation of the SDGs.”

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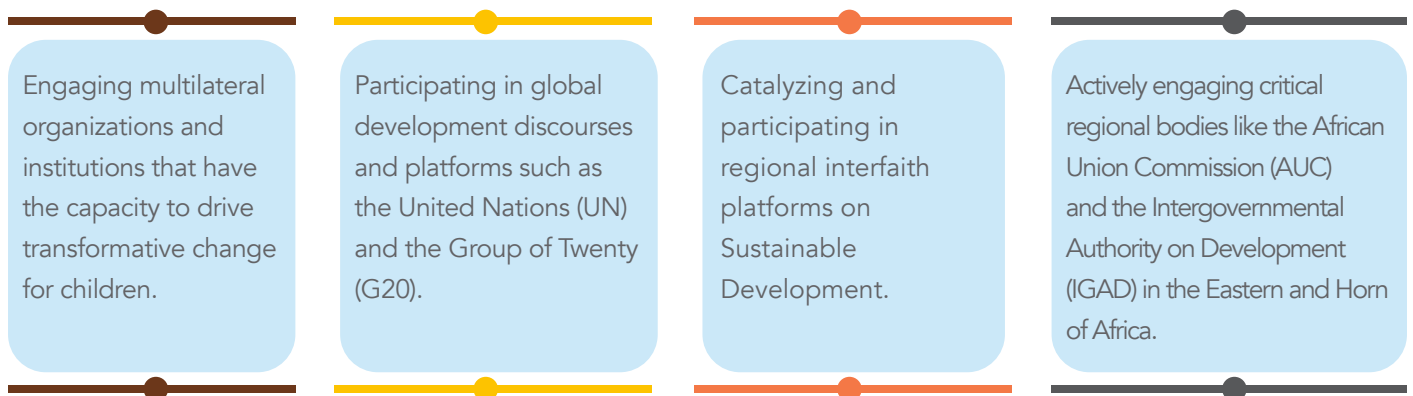


Global Advocacy and Influencing

A key aspect of our organizing model is that we catalyze and provide services to global, regional, national, and local efforts to end child poverty. We achieve this by mobilizing the moral agency and institutional assets of faith communities and by utilizing our own agency as an interfaith initiative. Our approach recognizes that a significant part of our work involves shaping the global conversation on poverty and exerting influence to drive meaningful action in ending child poverty. Moreover, this approach also functions as an economic model, enabling us to maximize the impact despite the limited resources at our disposal.

Our advocacy and influencing work is centered around active engagement and mobilization within influential global and regional development platforms. Our goal is to bring child dignity and the eradication of childhood poverty to the forefront and ensure their inclusion in mainstream discussions. In essence, we aim to shed a faith-inspired light on the global development arena, holding stakeholders accountable for the promises and commitments made to children.

Our global advocacy and influencing strategy consists of several key elements:



At the national and local levels, our advocacy and influencing efforts are integrated into other pathways, such as Organizing and Constituency Building.

We place special emphasis on our involvement in various global platforms, including:

| | | |
|----|--|--|
| 1. | Africa Faith Leaders/Interfaith Initiative on the Sustainable Development Goals (AFLI) | |
| 2. | The Moral Imperative to End Extreme Poverty and Realize the Sustainable Development Goals (Moral Imperative) | |
| 3. | Global Coalition to End Child Poverty | |
| 4. | The International Partnership on Religion and Sustainable Development (PaRD) | |

Africa Interfaith Initiative on the Post 2015 Development Agenda/ Sustainable Development Goals

The Africa Interfaith Initiative on the Post-2015 Development Agenda, later known as the Africa Interfaith Initiative on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), emerged in response to the need for faith communities and leaders to actively participate in shaping the transition from the Millennium Development Goals to the SDGs and the global development agenda. Arigatou International — End Child Poverty played a key role in establishing and contributing to this platform, with a specific focus on engaging youth and children and ensuring that the needs and rights of children are prioritized in Africa's sustainable development agenda. The Organization of African Instituted Churches (OAIC), a pan-African faith-based agency based in Nairobi, Kenya, co-convenes this regional platform.



The concept of this platform was conceived through extensive participatory consultations, culminating in the first African Faith Leaders Initiative on the Post-2015 Development Agenda (AFLI) Summit held on July 1-2, 2014, in Kampala, Uganda. Co-hosted by the Government of Uganda and the Inter-Religious Council of Uganda (IRCU), the AFLI Summit brought together faith leaders from diverse religious communities, including Baha'i, Christian, Muslim, and Hindu communities. Participants included representatives from the African Union, the East African Community, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Millennium Campaign, and the World Bank. During the Summit, faith actors issued the "Africa Faith Leaders Position Paper beyond the Post-2015 Development Agenda" and the statement "From Lament to Action" on July 2, 2014. These documents contained commitments and recommendations by faith leaders towards the post-2015 development agenda, which were instrumental in global discussions leading to the adoption of the SDGs.

The platform has provided a vital space for African faith leaders to raise their voices and actively engage in key forums, including side-events at several United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) meetings. In recent years, it has facilitated the participation of faith leaders in their respective constituencies through the dissemination of information, training, advocacy materials, and involvement in the National Voluntary Reviews (NVRs) processes of the SDGs. These efforts have enhanced their understanding and engagement with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Moreover, the initiative has forged partnerships with other regional faith-based organizations (FBOs) to establish a trilateral network for the SDGs, encompassing Asia Pacific, Latin America, and the Caribbean. This network includes the Asia Pacific Faith-Based Coalition for Sustainable Development (APFBC) and the Inter-religious Alliance for the 2030 Agenda in Latin America and the Caribbean (Alianza Interreligiosa).

"African Faith Leaders engaged the process leading to the Sustainable Development Goals and endorsed the outcome as a blueprint to a fairer, more equitable world where men, women, boys and girls, regardless of creed or origin can experience life free from the adversities of deeply running poverty, injustice, and threats to the environment.

We write to you at a critical moment in the global effort to implement and achieve Sustainable Development Goals. We have not lost faith in this possibility and commitment even in the current challenging crisis brought upon us by the global spread of the Corona virus. By the grace of God, we restate our commitment to help achieve the outcomes of sustainable development for our communities across our region and the world.

As faith leaders from the communities perhaps most affected by the ills of deprivation and calamity, we write to recognize and encourage gallant efforts made at local, national and global levels, while noting that we are far behind in our achievements, and time is short. 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.

Sustainable development Goals go to the heart of who we are, and what we aspire for our children (both boys and girls), faithful (both men and women), our communities, nations and the planet.

We recognize that the overriding challenge of sustainable development five years on is to translate the grand ambition and promise of the goals, into the concrete lived out realities of our people. With a decade out, it is time to mass leadership on a global scale and at national and local levels and across all sectors of society. We commit to, and offer to lead in this effort.

To be effective however, and given the limited time available to 2030, seeing also that there may be other crises in the horizon relating to climate, public health and the economy, and further seeing as there are not sufficient resources to go round, we urge governments and other actors to seek greater synergy and coherence in the efforts to deliver to the sustainable development. Specifically, we urge the establishment of mechanisms to eliminate systemic and large gaps in a joined-up delivery for the goals. We urge that there be a coming together in the making of plans, assessment of challenges, setting out of priorities and execution of actions.

Let us realize and seize the uniqueness of the moment, let us work to acquire and accelerate the necessary momentum.”

- Excerpt from the Africa Interfaith Initiative on the SDGs open letter on COVID-19, “Accelerated Action towards Agenda 2030: A Call to ‘Build Back Better’ with African Faith Actors” (An Open Letter to Africa Head of Government, Faith Actors and All People of Goodwill)”



The Africa Interfaith Initiative on the SDGs has concretized into a regional “open platform for faith actors in Africa to collaborate, build solidarity, and articulate common position around implementation of the Sustainable Development Agenda 2030”. Arigatou International, specifically through its End Child Poverty program, is committed to actively facilitate and support the growth of this platform. Our strategic participation in the initiative focuses on promoting meaningful engagement of youth and children, gathering evidence on the contributions of faith communities to the SDGs, advocating for SDG implementation, and fostering accountability among all stakeholders.

The Moral Imperative to end Extreme Poverty and Realize the Sustainable Development Goals

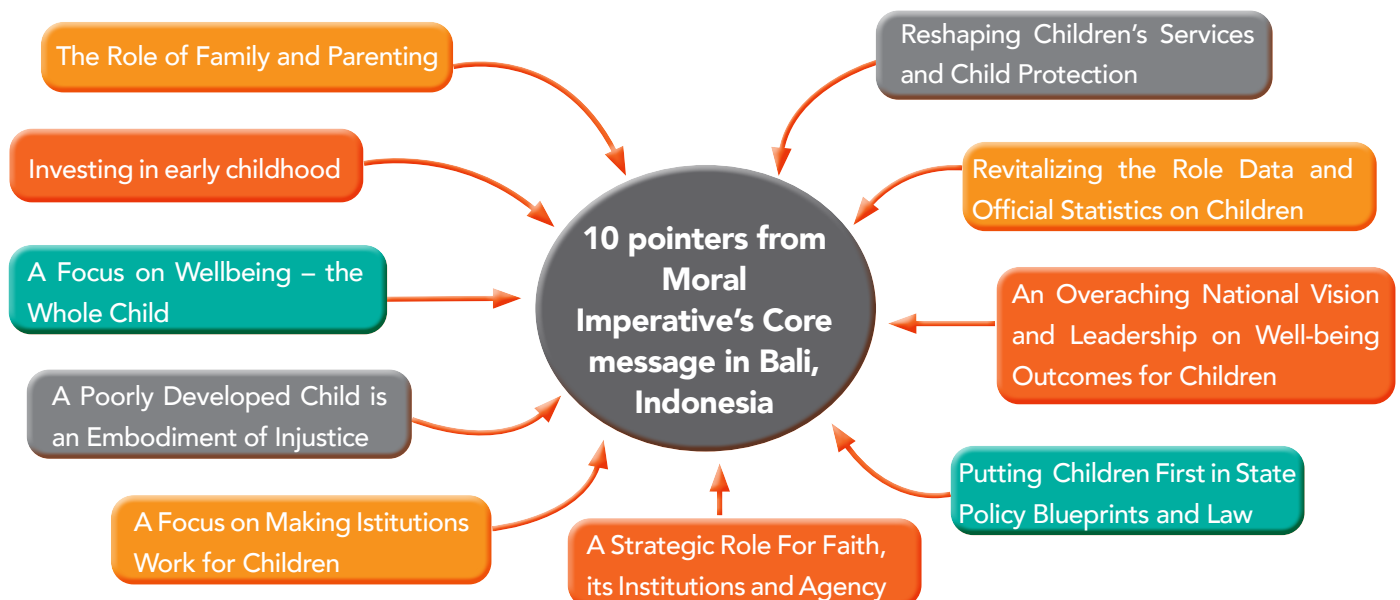
The Moral Imperative for Faith-Based Action Framework to End Extreme Poverty and Realize the Sustainable Development Goals, known as the Moral Imperative, is a global platform initiated by faith communities in partnership with the World Bank. Its primary goal is to end extreme poverty and promote sustainable development. The framework facilitates faith-driven strategies by generating evidence, engaging in collective advocacy, and fostering collaboration among religious organizations, governments, the World Bank Group, the United Nations, and the private sector.

Moral Imperative to End Extreme Poverty

A significant outcome of this forum was the 2015 joint position endorsed by faith and development communities, titled, “Ending Extreme Poverty: A Spiritual and Moral Imperative.” Over 50 global faith communities and faith-based development organizations have endorsed this founding statement. Arigatou International joined the Moral Imperative in April 2015 after endorsing the statement and is actively involved in its activities, serving in the Moral Imperative’s Steering Committee and chairing the Advocacy Working Group (AWG).

As part of our engagement in the Moral Imperative, we also participated in the World Bank’s Research Agenda Working Group on Faith in Development, which comprises experts from academia, civil society, faith-inspired organizations, and the World Bank Group. The outputs of this working group will inform the Bank’s research agenda and engagement with faith actors, aiming to foster operational collaboration and partnerships to address global challenges, including the COVID-19 pandemic. Additionally, we are contributing to the World Bank’s Evolution Roadmap paper, exploring advocacy opportunities around faith and specific thematic/development issues.

Our involvement in the Moral Imperative has allowed us to participate in critical events such as the World Bank Group Dialogue Sessions with Civil Society Organizations, side events at the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA), and the Annual Meetings of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). Particularly noteworthy is our participation in the High-Level Advocacy Forum on Investing in Early Childhood Development in October 2018 during the Annual Meetings of the World Bank and the IMF. This event resulted in a core commitment for action called “Results For Children: The Moral Imperative’s Core Message for Action to Secure Wellbeing Outcomes for Early Childhood,” endorsed by over 60 organizations. This core message has significantly contributed to the strategy of the Moral Imperative’s Advocacy Working Group.



In September 2020, End Child Poverty made a rallying call through the Moral Imperative, urging expanded investments in core human capital, including health systems, education, social protection, and inclusion, as a response to the COVID-19 crisis. The statement emphasized the need for increased expenditure on essential healthcare, disease prevention, equitable distribution of vaccines, disease surveillance, access to clean water and sanitation, quality education, school-feeding programs, social protection, economic inclusion, and decent work to reduce extreme poverty and inequality.

Engagement in the Moral Imperative Framework provides us with global opportunities to communicate, advocate for ending child poverty, and collaborate with other stakeholders. The platform fosters interaction and collaboration among faith actors, government bodies, and civil society, contributing to our work both at the grassroots level and in high-level decision-making.

“As leaders from diverse religious traditions, we share a compelling vision to end extreme poverty by the year 2030. For the first time in human history, we can do more than simply envision a world free of extreme poverty; we can make it a reality. Accomplishing this goal will take two commitments: to act guided by the best evidence of what works and what doesn’t; and to use our voices to compel and challenge others to join us in this urgent cause inspired by our deepest spiritual values. ... We commit to working together to end the scandal of extreme poverty. ... Realizing this shared goal will require a revolution in social and political will, as well as new innovations and greater collaboration across sectors. We call on international organizations, governments, corporations, civil society, and religious communities, to play their essential parts and join with us in this critical cause.” – Excerpt from the statement, “Ending Extreme Poverty: A Moral and Spiritual Imperative,” 2015.



“As a proud father, Sustainable Development Goals take on an even deeper meaning and urgency. My sons will be coming of age just as the promise of these new goals will either be realized or broken. For the first time in human history, we no longer have to dream of a world free of poverty, we can actually achieve it within my sons’ generation. Sadly, poverty often comes across as an abstraction or an overwhelming challenge for far too many people. In religious terms, I often refer to poverty as a modern-day Goliath. Because just as the Biblical Goliath seemed invincible to the Israelites, poverty can also seem insurmountable, breeding a combination of resignation, cynicism and a sense of inevitability.

The good news is that the world possesses the tools, the resources and the knowledge to end extreme poverty within fifteen years. ”

Rev. Adam Russell Taylor, Lead Faith Based Initiative – World Bank Group. 17th October 2015.

The Global Coalition to End Child Poverty

The Global Coalition to End Child Poverty is a collaborative initiative comprised of various organizations and individuals committed to fighting child poverty worldwide. Co-chaired by UNICEF and Save the Children, the coalition's main objectives include addressing the root causes of child poverty, advocating for policy changes, and implementing effective interventions to improve the lives of impoverished children. The coalition operates based on a shared vision expressed in its founding statement, "Towards the End of Child Poverty: A Joint Statement by Partners United in the Fight against Child Poverty," which was issued in October 2015 and endorsed by multiple development agencies and civil society organizations including Arigatou International.



**END CHILD
POVERTY**
GLOBAL COALITION

"Child poverty is a challenge which should bind us globally. In almost every country in the world children are more likely to be living in poverty than adults, and compounding this, their particular life stage makes them more vulnerable to its devastating effects with potential lifelong consequences for their physical, cognitive and social development. While children themselves suffer the impacts of their poverty most severely and immediately, the harmful consequences for societies, economies and future generations can be felt nationally, regionally and even globally. ... This Joint Statement is issued by the Global Coalition Against Child Poverty together with other global partners concerned at the devastating effects of poverty in childhood on children and societies. Signatories of this statement share a vision of a world where all children grow up free from poverty, deprivation and exclusion. Working together as well as independently, partners aim to support the recognition of child poverty and the practical actions to alleviate it." - Excerpt from the Global Coalition to End Child Poverty, "Towards the End of Child Poverty: A Joint Statement by Partners United in the Fight Against Child Poverty," October 2015.

As a member of the Coalition, Arigatou International-End Child Poverty actively contributes to its activities. Firstly, we engage in advocacy efforts to raise awareness about child poverty and influence policies on a global scale. Leveraging our expertise and networks, we work to ensure that child poverty remains a priority and that policies are enacted to address its underlying causes and consequences. To this end, the Coalition has played a significant role in strengthening the impact of Arigatou International's annual campaign, "Together we Can End Child Poverty," by mobilizing actions to commemorate the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty on October 17th.

Secondly, we collaborate with other coalition members, sharing knowledge, expertise, and best practices in combatting child poverty. By forming partnerships, we aim to create synergies and maximize our collective impact in effecting positive change for children.

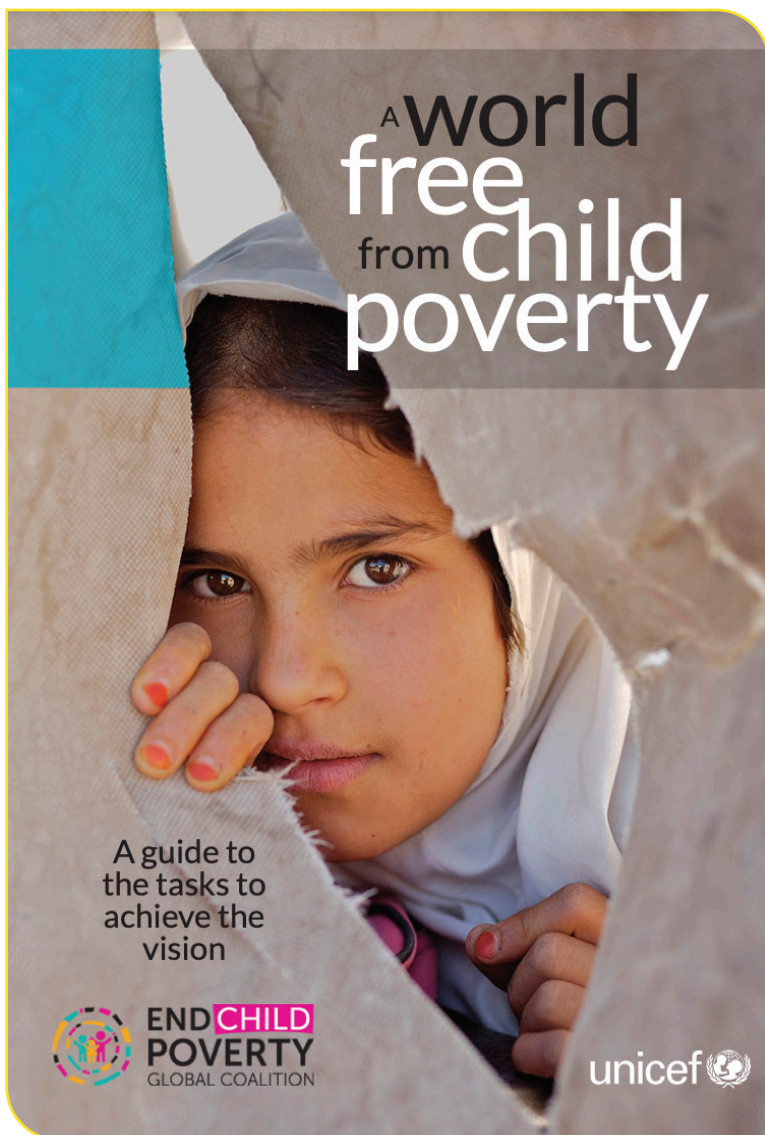


Additionally, we contribute to the coalition’s knowledge base on child poverty through research, data collection, and analysis. The goal of this is to generate evidence and insights that inform policies and interventions effectively addressing the multifaceted aspects of child poverty.

The Coalition has been instrumental in advocating for the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and prioritizing children’s well-being. It focuses on integrating the fight against child poverty into national strategies and global frameworks. The coalition emphasizes the importance of measuring child poverty at both national and global levels to track progress towards the SDGs and evaluate the impact of programs and policies. It has been at the forefront of pioneering work on monitoring and expediting national reporting and action on the SDGs, particularly with regard to children.

Furthermore, the Coalition advocates for specific interventions to reduce child poverty, such as expanding child-sensitive social protection programs universally, improving access to quality public services for the most vulnerable children, and pursuing inclusive growth strategies to reach the poorest and most deprived populations. These policy recommendations are articulated in the coalition’s advocacy statements, reports, and briefing papers. The publication “A World Free from Child Poverty: A Guide to the Tasks to Achieve the Vision,” co-authored by the coalition and UNICEF in 2017, serves as a valuable resource for advocating national processes aligned with SDG 1 on ending poverty.

Arigatou International remains committed to actively participating in and supporting the ongoing and future efforts of the coalition.



The International Partnership on Religion and Development

The International Partnership on Religion and Sustainable Development (PaRD) convenes governments, multilateral entities, academia as well as religious, traditional, Indigenous and other civil society actors in a safe space that provides continuity for dialogue, learning, and collaboration to better inform policy and practices in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the 2030 Agenda.



Through our involvement in PaRD, we have been dedicated to raising awareness about child poverty and advocating for effective policies and strategies that target its underlying causes. Our multifaceted approach includes various initiatives aimed at awareness raising, mobilizing religious communities, integrating ethical values into education, advocating for policy change, and fostering collaboration with like-minded organizations.

Of significance, through our participation in PaRD, we collaborate with governments, international organizations, and stakeholders to advocate for policies and programs that prioritize child well-being, poverty reduction, and social inclusion. We work to ensure that child poverty remains on the agenda of decision-makers and that concrete steps are taken towards its eradication.

In addition, we actively collaborate with other members of PaRD, sharing best practices, lessons learned, and innovative approaches in addressing child poverty. Through participation in knowledge exchange platforms and capacity-building initiatives, we strive to strengthen the efforts of religious actors in combating child poverty and promoting sustainable development.

Through our involvement in PaRD, we continue to work towards creating a world where every child has the opportunity to thrive, unencumbered by the burdens of poverty.

Key Results: Global Advocacy and Influencing

Our collaborative platforms have successfully facilitated the participation of faith actors in influential institutional and policy spaces. We have organized parallel events during important sessions such as the United Nations High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF), United Nations General Assembly (UNGA), International Conference on Financing for Development Conference (FFD), and the World Bank/International Monetary Fund (IMF) conferences. These platforms have allowed us to highlight the positive outcomes and evidence-based advocacy of faith communities at all levels, from local grassroots to global stages. Moreover, we empower children to advocate for their dignity, wellbeing, and rights in these spaces.



Community Organizing and Constituency Building

Actors and institutions at the national and local levels play a crucial role in either safeguarding or posing risks to the well-being of children. These levels are key in generating both immediate and sustainable positive outcomes in the fight against child poverty. It is essential to prioritize endeavors aimed at achieving enduring policy changes, institutional improvements, and comprehensive societal transformations at these levels. By organizing and mobilizing influential groups at the grassroots, we can pave the way for meaningful progress, primarily by fostering local awareness, community organization, and advocating for long-term solutions to address the root causes of child poverty.

Establishment and Support of Networks as Communities of Practice

Arigatou International's Global Network of Religions for Children (GNRC) plays a crucial role in the fight against child poverty, serving as a platform for global, national, and grassroots efforts. Leveraging the resources of the GNRC, End Child Poverty has established a fruitful partnership with community organizers and volunteers who make up the network's membership. The GNRC provides an invaluable grassroots platform for building support and addressing the urgent issue of childhood poverty. Collaborating with GNRC members and partners from nearly 50 countries, End Child Poverty has successfully implemented flagship grassroots projects and organized the annual "Together We Can End Child Poverty Campaign."

Additionally, in collaboration with strategic partners, Arigatou International—End Child Poverty has established various networks that serve as communities of practice. These networks not only facilitate the implementation of community-led programs but also offer opportunities for shared learning, exchange, and the strengthening of advocacy and knowledge advancement efforts.

Among these networks, the Youth in Action and Regional Faith Leaders Forum take center stage, as they were established as part of the Eastern Africa Regional Peace Programme. Similarly, End Child Poverty played a significant role in the formation of The African Children and Youth Network for Human Rights (REJADH), providing ongoing support since its inception in 2016. Furthermore, efforts have been made to support the South Sudan Children's Peace Ambassadors Network and the umbrella organization USSWAK (South Sudanese Women Association in Kenya), albeit to a lesser extent. Through these networks, young people are empowered as agents of positive change in their local communities, with targeted advocacy serving as the primary driving force.



Key Results: Addressing Gender Based Violence Through the African Children and Youth Network for Human Rights

Arigatou International—End Child Poverty, in collaboration with the Norwegian Church Aid (NCA) and Changemaker – Oslo, initiated the African Children and Youth Network for Human Rights/ *Réseau des Enfants et Jeunes Africains pour les Droits Humains* (REJADH) in October 2016 as part of the Ratification and Implementation of Continental, Sub-Regional and National Gender-Based Violence Policies Regarding the Protection of Children and Youth in Conflict and Post-Conflict Countries program.

REJADH comprises young people aged 13 to 29 from Burundi, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Mali, South Sudan, and Somalia. It was established under our joint program with NCA to provide opportunities for advocacy against gender-based violence (GBV) and its detrimental effects on children.

Through REJADH, End Child Poverty has created an enabling environment for young people to develop essential skills and capacities to sustain policy and social advocacy to combat gender-based violence and its impact on children and women. The “**Myth of Maputo Campaign**” led by REJADH has been highly effective in facilitating crucial dialogues on policies, laws, and practices related to GBV and gender equality at local and national levels. The campaign focused on advocating for the ratification and universal implementation of The Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa, also known as the Maputo Protocol. REJADH network members utilized this instrument as the foundation for their advocacy campaigns, community mobilization, and social activism, thus addressing violence as a structural cause of child poverty.

Since its inception, End Child Poverty has organized four annual regional forums called the Action! Seminar (2016, 2017, 2018, and 2019) for young people from the five countries in the network (Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo, Mali, Somalia, South Sudan). The Action! Seminar aimed to build the leadership, project management, and advocacy skills of young leaders, influencers, and young adults, empowering them to reduce, prevent, and end gender-based violence and its negative effects on young people and the community at large.

To ensure the sustainability of the network, End Child Poverty and the Norwegian Church Aid facilitated the registration of REJADH as independent organizations in four countries: Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo, Mali, and South Sudan. This allowed the country-level REJADH branches to mobilize local resources for the continuation of the program.

During the four years of leading the program that gave rise to REJADH, End Child Poverty further supported the network by facilitating youth-led trainings in their respective countries. REJADH members also undertook various local advocacy and influencing actions for change, including meetings with government officials, formation of local advocacy alliances with faith leaders, and organizing advocacy training with women and youth.

At the country level, REJADH members achieved significant accomplishments. For example, in Burundi and the Democratic Republic of Congo, their efforts resulted in direct audiences with the respective presidents of each country, along with other government officials, as part of advocating for an end to GBV. The government of Burundi also honored REJADH Burundi for their positive contributions as youth actors. In the Democratic Republic of Congo, REJADH gained recognition from the World Bank’s global Ideas4Action Program for

their innovative environmental project, "A Student, A Tree," which aimed to address climate change and poverty in their community.

In recognition of their impactful advocacy campaigns, members of REJADH were chosen to participate and represent youth in important policy discussions and learning platforms. This includes their involvement in global sessions of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) and the Goldin Institute Gather Fellow program. These opportunities highlight the significance of REJADH's work and their commitment to advocating for positive change. By investing in young people for leadership roles and promoting community-driven advocacy, REJADH serves as a prominent model of success.

"In my perspective, REJADH offers young people significant advantages, primarily by providing them a platform to express their opinions on societal issues that directly impact them, and empowering them to take action to address these challenges. By involving young people in the development of their nations, REJADH fosters their participation and contributes to their personal and professional growth. Additionally, the network creates valuable opportunities for cultural and professional exchange among youth from different member countries during its meetings. Personally, REJADH has played a transformative role in my life, as it has taught me self-confidence, enabling me to overcome my fears of public speaking and express myself without hesitation."

Testimonial by Ms. Haoua Diko, REJADH Mali



Implemented over **50** advocacy activities by trained youth leaders in their respective countries.



Established **REJADH** networks in five countries: Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo, Somalia, South Sudan, and Mali.



Directly reached an estimated **2,000+** individuals through youth-led activities at the community level.



Indirectly reached nearly **10,000+** people through advocacy media messages.



Conducted training for **45** youth leaders through four regional forums dedicated to REJADH youth leaders.

Key Results: Promoting Peace and Transforming Conflicts in Eastern and Horn of Africa

Arigatou International, represented by End Child Poverty, recognizes the significance of a peaceful and cohesive society in ensuring the well-being of children. As a result, it joined the Eastern Africa Regional Peace Program (RPP) in 2016.

The RPP is a collaborative effort involving seven organizations: the All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC), African Council of Religious Leaders (ACRL), Association of Member Episcopal Conferences in East Africa (AMECEA), 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 (NCA) as the convener. This partnership spans 12 countries in the region: Burundi, Djibouti, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Kenya, Rwanda, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Tanzania, and Uganda.



End Child Poverty's work within the Regional Peace Program focuses on equipping youth leaders, religious leaders, and faith actors with knowledge and skills in various aspects of peacebuilding. Particularly, the aim is to empower them to lead community and regional efforts in countering violent extremism and promoting freedom of religion or belief (FoRB). This work has primarily taken place in Ethiopia, Kenya, South Sudan, Sudan, Somalia, Uganda, and Tanzania.

End Child Poverty firmly believes that investing in and empowering faith actors will contribute to the region's transformation and the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), guided by the principle of "leave no one behind." Faith actors possess legitimacy and moral authority, especially in matters related to faith and religion. Their extensive reach within the community, encompassing diverse demographic groups such as women, men, children, youth, government officials, businessmen, academic institutions, media, and other stakeholders, cannot be underestimated. Promoting FoRB and fostering cooperation at interregional and continental levels, involving relevant actors and stakeholders from civil society and institutions, is crucial for a global governance system that addresses major peace-related issues. Cooperation also plays a vital role in building the capacity of faith actors as responsible civil society actors at regional and continental levels.

To facilitate this work, End Child Poverty established two platforms in collaboration with the Norwegian Church Aid (NCA) for engaging faith actors: the Youth in Action (YIA) network and the Regional Faith Leaders Forum (RFLF). Both platforms aim to empower and activate faith actors in leading peacebuilding, justice, inclusion, and social cohesion efforts within their communities. Various approaches such as dialogue, training, mentorship, learning and exchange visits, case studies, and research are employed. Additionally, faith actors implement peace initiatives in their local communities and collaborate across countries.

The Youth in Action (YIA) network comprises young peace builders and influencers from the seven countries in the Horn and East Africa region. Through YIA, End Child Poverty enhances the leadership skills and knowledge of young people while addressing pertinent issues in peacebuilding and conflict transformation. Arigatou International—Nairobi, in partnership with the Norwegian Church Aid (NCA), established the YIA network and has organized five regional forums since its inception in 2016 (2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, and 2021).

"After the (YIA 2018 Media and Violent Extremism) forum, I managed to bring together youth and women and inspire them to form social groups and networks, not just to express themselves and but also to initiate projects that promote peace in their communities. It is through this I realized that young people are willing to make sacrifices and demonstrate resilience to build their communities despite the challenges they face in their day-to-day lives. This engagement helped me get selected among the 100 Young leaders from East and Central Africa to participate for a 4-week Leadership training with Young Africa Leadership Initiative (YALI) East Africa Leadership Center" - Harun Mwadena (Kenya)

On the other hand, the Regional Faith Leaders Forum (RFLF) was established in 2020 as a platform for dialogue and collaborative action among faith leaders from the seven countries. This interfaith forum aims to enhance the capacity of faith actors in promoting social cohesion, freedom of religion or belief (FoRB), preventing and countering violent extremism (PCVE), and protecting social action for peace. Through the RFLF, faith actors have formed a community of practice focused on promoting FoRB and social cohesion in the region. Since its inception, End Child Poverty has convened two regional meetings of the RFLF (in 2020 and 2022) and supported country-level actions.

As part of the Regional Peace Programme (RPP), we facilitated research to understand the role of youth and faith communities in preventing and countering violent extremism (P/C/TVE), as well as the development and dissemination of faith-based narratives to address this issue. Our RPP work has also enabled a cohort of faith actors, including youth leaders, to gain enhanced knowledge, experience, and skills in various aspects of peace work, particularly in leading community and regional efforts to combat violent extremism and promote FoRB. Additionally, we have provided support to the Global Network of Religions for Children (GNRC) in its primary response to violent extremism through the Community Resilience Against Violent Extremism (CRAVE) process.

“The Regional Peace Program has unleashed the untapped potential within me, empowering me to recognize my own value and inspiring me to embark on the journey of establishing my dream company. Following a transformative forum experience in 2018, I founded HASNET Limited, an Information Communication Technology (ICT) company with a mission to provide youth with employment opportunities. More than 90% of our staff members are youth, reflecting our commitment to their empowerment. Furthermore, I established the HASNET Innovation Hub within the company, aiming to cultivate and nurture talent among young individuals by offering them support in their innovative endeavors. I am proud to share that some of the youth from our Hub have recently achieved recognition and won prizes at the Young Scientists Tanzania competition.” - Mustafa Hassan (Tanzania)

Furthermore, as an extension of our work under the Regional Peace Programme (RPP), End Child Poverty has supported the “Strengthening Social Cohesion Intra and Inter-group Relations in Sudan/Sudan Social Cohesion Initiative” in collaboration with FECCLAHA, HIPSIR, and the NCA in Sudan. This initiative, led by the Sudan Council of Churches (SCC) and Sudan Interreligious Council (SIRC), aimed to promote peace in Sudan by addressing FoRB as a fundamental human right. It facilitated interaction and joint actions among people of different faiths, utilizing religious resources as tools for mobilization and building trust and positive relationships between key religious leaders, institutions, and communities, particularly in Khartoum. Ensuring children’s participation and meaningful engagement has been a key focus for End Child Poverty, as we facilitated the establishment of peace clubs in several schools in Sudan. Additionally, we worked with the councils to develop a FoRB community facilitators handbook to assist local partners in engaging and training communities on FoRB.

Mobilized grassroots community peace actions in seven countries: Ethiopia, Kenya, Sudan, South Sudan, Somalia, Tanzania, and Uganda.



Established partnerships with over **40** organizations to lead peace initiatives in the respective countries.



Provided training on peacebuilding, social cohesion, and freedom of religion or belief (FoRB) to more than **380** faith actors, including youth leaders.



Implemented over 80 ripple activities in the countries where trained individuals made a direct impact on over **7,400** people.



Convened **seven** regional meetings for faith actors, including youth leaders, to promote collaboration and action.



Reached an estimated audience of **226,500** people through media platforms such as radio and online channels, amplifying the message of peace and unity.

Mobilizing Grassroots and Community Responses to Address Causes of Childhood Poverty

National and local actors and institutions have a significant impact on the wellbeing of children, serving as both protective factors and sources of risk. To achieve immediate and lasting positive changes in child poverty, efforts must focus on policy, institutional, and societal transformations at these levels. Mobilizing and organizing critical constituencies at the grassroots level is key to building local awareness, organizing communities, and demanding lasting solutions to child poverty.

Taking advantage of international moments, such as globally significant days, we sponsor grassroots campaigns and actions on child poverty to work effectively and at a global scale. These moments provide opportunities to increase understanding of the drivers of child poverty, advocate for preventive measures, and urge governments and authorities to take a leading role in alleviating child poverty. We engage stakeholders and foster commitment to local and community-led initiatives, while supporting our partners in their efforts to combat child poverty in their communities.

Before the COVID-19 pandemic, it was estimated that one billion children globally lived in poverty—equivalent to one in every two children. This poverty deprives children of their future, health, education, security, and overall well-being. For the sake of these children, we have launched grassroots global campaigns to raise awareness, promote reflection, advocate for change, and take action against childhood deprivation and poverty. These campaigns involve various actors, including faith organizations, community groups, governmental bodies, NGOs, and individuals. We provide campaign materials such as guides, messaging samples, and online resources, encouraging participants to join us in drawing attention to this issue and finding solutions.

Campaign activities encompass a range of interventions, such as providing material donations to impoverished children and their families, raising awareness about child poverty, advocating with decision-makers, training teachers on child development and poverty, and promoting spiritual actions like prayer. Additionally, our activities involve listening to children, raising awareness about the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and addressing different forms of violence against children.

Collectively, these campaign activities amplify our global call to end child poverty by mobilizing faith actors, civil society, and individuals who share our concern for children's well-being.

National and local actors play a crucial role in shaping the wellbeing of children, both as protectors and sources of risk. By focusing on policy, institutional, and societal transformations at these levels, lasting positive impacts can be achieved. Mobilizing critical constituencies at the grassroots level is key to raising local awareness, organizing communities, and advocating for lasting solutions to child poverty.

International moments, such as globally significant days, are utilized as opportunities to sponsor grassroots campaigns and actions on child poverty. These initiatives aim to increase understanding of the drivers of child poverty, urge governments and authorities to take action, and foster commitment to community-led initiatives. Collaboration with various stakeholders, including faith organizations, community groups, and NGOs, is instrumental in addressing childhood deprivation and poverty.

The staggering statistic of one billion children living in poverty globally highlights the urgency of the issue. Grassroots campaigns are launched to raise awareness, promote reflection, advocate for change, and mobilize action against childhood poverty. Activities range from material donations, raising awareness, and advocacy to training teachers, promoting spiritual actions, and addressing violence against children. By amplifying the global call to end child poverty and engaging diverse actors, these campaigns seek to improve the lives of children and ensure their well-being.

Key Results: Together We Can End Child Poverty Campaign and Faith in Action for Children Campaign

End Child Poverty has successfully mobilized communities, including GNRC members, to observe the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty since 2013. Their campaign, "Together We Can End Child Poverty Worldwide," has yielded significant achievements. These include establishing the End Child Poverty Knowledge Centre and SDGs Academy Model Classroom in Sri Lanka, organizing international photo contests, and mobilizing grassroots actions in over 25 countries.

These initiatives demonstrate a collective commitment to combat child poverty globally. The campaign focuses on raising awareness, advocating for action, and engaging communities. By fostering collaboration and community involvement, the campaign aims to increase knowledge, drive change, and implement tangible solutions. It emphasizes the belief that through collective effort, the lives of children affected by poverty can be substantially improved.

Arigatou International launched the "Faith in Action for Children" Campaign in response to the COVID-19 crisis. The campaign aimed to mobilize religious leaders and communities to address the impact of the pandemic on children, recognizing the strength of faith in promoting resilience among young people.

The Global Week of Faith In Action for Children, held in November 2020, marked a significant moment for the campaign. With participation from **1,720** individuals representing **86 countries** and **64 organizations**, the week-long activities focused on establishing the Children's Solutions Lab and the Ethics Education for Children initiative. Additionally, End Child Poverty organized a dialogue session called "Together We Can End Child Poverty Worldwide," bringing together children, religious leaders, and experts from nine organizations. The session explored practical strategies to combat child poverty, considering the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), ongoing COVID-19 responses, and long-term resilience-building efforts. During the discussions, children shared their pandemic-related challenges, shedding light on their vulnerabilities. End Child Poverty also seizes the opportunity to raise awareness, advocate for action, and engage in other international moments, albeit to a lesser extent. These moments include:

- Day of the African Child on June 16th, coinciding with End Child Poverty's birthday
- World Youth Skills Day on July 15th
- International Youth Day on August 12th
- International Day of Peace on September 21st
- International Day for the Eradication of Poverty on October 17th
- World Day of Prayer and Action for Children on November 20th

Our Results: Together we can end child poverty campaign

Annual **community mobilization** campaign since 2013, building momentum for increased awareness, advocacy and other actions towards ending child poverty.



An estimated **65,000+** people from over **45** countries, representing more than **50+** GNRC and partner organisations, participated in the campaign, focusing on the October 17th International Day for the Eradication of Poverty (IDEP)

Campaign communication reached more than **300,000+** online users, with **increased** activity and subscribers to our **website** and **social media platforms**. This was enhanced by joint online messaging with partners such as the Global Coalition to End Child Poverty and the GNRC members.



More than **200+** activities organized over the years, as part of the campaign



5 IDEP End Child Poverty photo contests held since 2017, with **115** entries from **15+** countries.

High-Impact Flagship and Grassroots Initiatives

End Child Poverty accompanies, facilitates or supports high-impact flagship and grassroots initiatives that address child poverty. We facilitate the development and implementation of innovative solutions at the community level and beyond. These initiatives are designed to be sustainable, capable of reducing poverty, and easily adaptable to different contexts. They prioritize children's rights, including access to nutrition, education, equality, inclusion, climate justice, peace, and freedom from violence. Additionally, the initiatives aim to empower caregivers and families while promoting the active participation of children. End Child Poverty has collaborated with approximately 60 organizations across nearly 40 countries to amplify local innovations and make a significant impact in ending child poverty.

Highlights from Selected Grassroots and Flagship Initiatives

I Right to Education

End Child Poverty recognizes the crucial role of education in breaking the cycle of poverty and empowering children. We believe that education not only provides knowledge but also equips children with the tools to exercise their rights, improve their well-being, and contribute to society. By aligning with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, we actively promote innovative initiatives to ensure access to education for at-risk children. Our advocacy efforts focus on advocating for quality, universal basic education for all children, with a particular emphasis on those in vulnerable situations such as conflict-affected areas, children living as refugees, as orphans and on the streets.



For the vast majority of children at risk, helping them access and stay in school is both a practical and strategic need. Our End Child Poverty education programme aims to ensure that children affected by poverty receive modest scholarships to ensure that each child attains quality basic education. We mobilize faith communities to uphold the rights of children, through supporting advocacy for children's right to quality education. In addition, we seek that faith actors benefit from the knowledge we gather, document and share, on relevant good practices related to securing quality education for all children.

To promote this universal children's right to education, End Child Poverty mobilizes communities towards the provision of scholarships, including through payment of tuition or school fees for children; supporting teachers and volunteers to provide quality education, including supplementing teachers' allowances or salaries; and provision of school supplies such as books, school uniform and nutritious meals for children, through a school-based meals programme.

Over the years we have partnered with numerous organizations in providing much needed monetary, material, psychosocial, infrastructural and other support to enable access, retention and learning for children in various countries.

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Supported children's education, in **19** countries: Bhutan, Comoros, India, Lebanon, Kenya, Malaysia, Moldova, Nigeria, North Macedonia, Pakistan, Peru, Rwanda, Sri Lanka, Sierra Leone, Serbia, Sudan, South Sudan, Tanzania and Zambia.



Awarded over **5,000** scholarship



Established the Children's **Empowerment** Centre in Meethotamulla, Sri Lanka, in collaboration with the Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement.

II Support to Livelihoods

End Child Poverty recognizes that economic independence for families and caregivers is crucial in addressing child poverty. We offer various interventions and support for livelihoods, tailored to the specific needs and resources of individuals, families, and communities.

Our efforts focus on empowering women caregivers, particularly those from low-income backgrounds, through training, small-scale financial grants, and the formation of support groups. We also provide entrepreneurship and employability training, as well as small-scale business capital and mentorship for youth who are either heads of low-income households or affected by poverty or violence. Training sessions often include sessions on positive parenting.



In Ecuador, for instance, we provided support to indigenous families from the Compañía de Jesús community, who engaged in guinea pig farming. In Montenegro, we collaborated with the Better Life for the Countryside NGO to facilitate the establishment of a community-level agricultural greenhouse. Furthermore, in Rwanda, our partnership with the Umbrella for the Vulnerable enabled us to assist low-income families by providing them with goats and health insurance coverage. These initiatives reflect our commitment to improving livelihoods and empowering communities in various parts of the world.



Supported livelihoods, socio-economic relief efforts, and economic empowerment actions in **13 countries**: Argentina, Burundi, Colombia, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ecuador, India, Kenya, Malaysia, Nepal, Pakistan, Senegal, Tanzania and Uganda.



Directly reached over **1,370 individuals** and an additional over **3,700 households** through partnerships with GNRC members and other key partners.



Conducted socio-economic relief efforts and donations, including food donations, during the peak of the COVID-19 pandemic.

III Right to Nutrition

Project Nutrition+ is a collaborative effort between the Organisation of African Instituted Churches (OAIC) and Arigatou International's End Child Poverty initiative. It aims to improve the well-being of families by integrating sustainable farming practices, nutrition education, and health outcomes at the household level. Currently active in **Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda**, Project Nutrition+ provides nutrition education, trains clergy and farmers in sustainable agricultural practices, supports seed banks, and offers assistance to families with children under 5 years old to combat malnutrition. The project specifically targets vulnerable families, with a focus on children and mothers. It addresses the high rates of undernourishment in the East Africa Region, where approximately 30% of children suffer from stunted growth.

Project Nutrition+ has achieved significant milestones, including the training of nearly 300 clergy and farmers. Through integrated project activities, it has reached 515 households, facilitated collaboration among various groups, agricultural research institutes, and local government officials. The project has established 120 demonstration farms and 18 seed banks to promote climate-resilient crops and ensure food security. Additionally, households have been able to supplement their nutrition and generate income through small-scale kitchen or vegetable gardens.

This successful model of Project Nutrition+ can be replicated and scaled up in other regions, providing a comprehensive approach to address malnutrition and poverty.

- Nearly 300 clergy and farmers trained.
- 515 households were reached.
- 120 demonstration farms were established.
- 18 seed banks set up.
- Activities in 3 countries: Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda



IV Right to Peace

End Child Poverty firmly believes that peace is essential to address poverty effectively. We recognize that conflicts, violence, civil strife, and social exclusion driven by greed and prejudice have detrimental effects on communities. To tackle these issues, we engage in partnerships with communities to foster peace, transform conflicts, and address the systemic root causes of civic strife, such as corruption, poor governance, and violence, which directly impact children.

In the Greater Eastern Africa region, encompassing East Africa, the Horn of Africa, and the African Great Lakes, a prolonged humanitarian crisis has been exacerbated by conflict and near state collapse, making it one of the most unstable regions. With a combined population exceeding half a billion, the well-being of millions of children is at stake. Our initial efforts to promote peace and combat violence began with localized engagements in South Sudan and Somalia, within the Eastern and Horn of Africa.

One notable outcome of our work was the production of the “Blood of Your Child” advocacy video, narrating the South Sudan conflict from the perspective of children. This video was created by the Children Peace Ambassadors, an initiative of the Umbrella of South Sudan Women in Kenya (USSWAK), with support from End Child Poverty. Additionally, we supported the South Sudan Support Group - Nairobi, a platform uniting organizations committed to fostering a peaceful, just, prosperous, and democratic South Sudan.

In collaboration with the Somali Family Services (SFS) and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) - Somalia, we facilitated community peace dialogues in Baidoa (Jubbaland State) and Kismayo (Southwest State), Somalia, in 2016. These dialogues aimed to enhance community capacity for sustainable peacebuilding and counter violent extremism.

Furthermore, we provided emergency and humanitarian responses to child victims of violence and conflicts in Lebanon and Syria. These initiatives were carried out in partnership with Annas Linnas and Kids Future Syria, respectively.

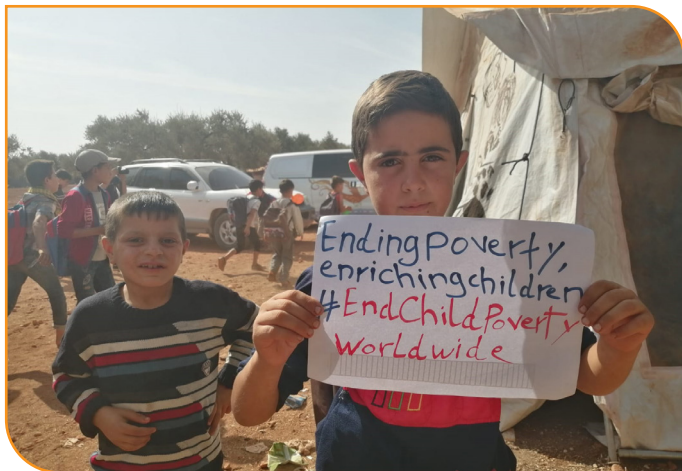
End Child Poverty is an active participant in the Eastern Africa Peace Programme (RPP), a collaborative effort spearheaded by the Norwegian Church Aid (NCA). Through the RPP, we work towards promoting freedom of religion or belief (FoRB), fostering social cohesion, and preventing, countering, and transforming violent extremism (P/C/TVE). As part of these efforts, we established the Youth in Action (YIA) network and the Regional Faith Leaders Forum (RFLF) as spaces for interfaith dialogue, leadership development, and peacebuilding skills enhancement.

Similarly, we participated in the Sudan Social Cohesion Initiative, which supported the work of faith actors through the Sudan Council of Churches (SCC) and Sudan Interreligious Council (SIRC). This initiative aimed to strengthen social cohesion, promote FoRB, and protect the rights of faith minorities in Sudan. By facilitating interfaith action and socio-cultural interactions among religious leaders, youth, children, and women, the initiative aimed to contribute to peace and harmonious coexistence across the country.

Our involvement in the Regional Peace Programme (RPP) and the Sudan Social Cohesion Initiative reflects our commitment to establishing and supporting networks and communities of practice dedicated to peacebuilding and social cohesion.

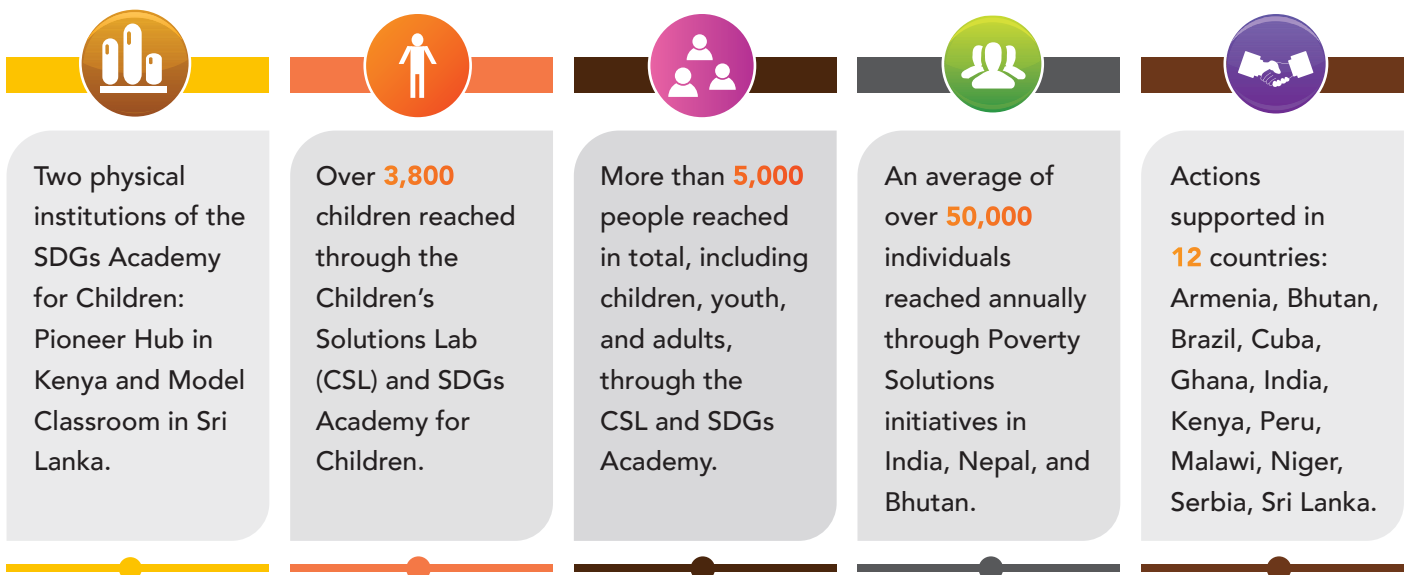






Meaningful Children's Participation and Agency

The Convention on the Rights of the Child places great emphasis on prioritizing the best interests of children and involving them to the fullest extent possible in decision-making processes. This principle formed the foundation of the 4th GNRC Forum, which led to the establishment of End Child Poverty. During the forum, the active participation of children played a crucial role in shaping the outcomes. End Child Poverty recognizes the importance of ensuring effective and meaningful engagement of children in decision-making by integrating their agency and involvement into its own processes. The results have been highly beneficial. By mainstreaming agency and meaningful participation, the positive impacts of embracing children can be observed in various areas. This is demonstrated through notable initiatives such as the India Poverty Solutions initiative, the Children's Solutions Lab, and the emerging SDGs Academy for Children.



The Children's Solutions Lab

The Children's Solutions Lab (CSL) is a groundbreaking initiative that was launched in collaboration with our sister Initiative Ethics Education for Children. It serves as a meaningful participatory space for children, aiming to empower them and support their efforts in improving their own well-being.

Within the CSL, children are invited to work together in groups, with the guidance of adults, to develop local solutions that address child poverty in their communities. Ethics education plays a crucial role in this process, as children are encouraged to engage in ethical reflections and critical thinking to identify the root causes of child poverty, including harmful socio-cultural norms. They are then challenged to propose ethical solutions to effectively address these issues.

Arigatou International plays a pivotal role in the CSL by providing resources and support to facilitate these discussions. They receive proposals from the children and carefully select the most promising solutions to receive micro-grants for implementation. Additionally, Arigatou International offers mentorship to the children, aiding them in turning their proposed solutions into tangible actions.

The Children's Solutions Lab

We are supporting creative children-led initiatives, aimed at tackling child poverty and the underlying ethical challenges, through education.



The foundation of the Children's Solutions Lab lies in the belief that children possess knowledge about their own circumstances and can make invaluable contributions to eradicating child poverty. Recognizing their potential as agents of positive change, the CSL aims to harness their capabilities and provide them with the necessary tools to make a lasting impact.

Since its establishment in 2020, we have supported 10 solutions proposed by 10 children's groups from various countries. Out of more than 120 proposed solutions, these ten initiatives were deemed the most promising and received support through micro-grants. The direct outreach of the CSL has already impacted over 1,500 children, with its influence steadily expanding over time.



Key Results: Children's Solutions Lab (CSL)

The inaugural round of the CSL 2020/2021 process witnessed the active participation of various children's groups representing 37 organizations from 23 countries. Among them, five children's groups from Cuba, India, Peru, Kenya, and Serbia were selected as finalists.

One remarkable finalist from the CSL 2020/2021 cohort was the Children's Parliament in India, which received support from Shanti Ashram, a member of the GNRC India. Their initiative made a significant impact by reaching over 300 children residing in nine villages. The Children's Parliament facilitated brainstorming sessions among their peers to address issues concerning education, healthcare, and livelihoods. These discussions were prompted by the widespread closure of schools during the COVID-19 pandemic.

As the children shifted to digital learning spaces, they encountered a sobering reality: most public-school students in their villages lacked the means to afford digital devices and internet access, preventing them from participating in online classes. Additionally, the children observed that younger students were struggling to retain basic literacy and numeracy skills. Motivated by these findings, the Children's Parliament designed a project to support non-formal education for these vulnerable younger children, ensuring they would not fall behind even during the height of the pandemic.

Anshifa, a child and valued member of the Children's Parliament in CSL India, expressed her satisfaction and enthusiasm for their educational efforts. She shared her experience, saying, "Me and my friends gathered and discussed to help our juniors in their education.



We prepared the budget for the same." Anshifa highlighted the transformative realization that, as children, they possessed the ability to assist their junior peers, stating, "I was happy because, so far, I was thinking only elders can give classes, but now we are able to help our juniors in their education."

Similarly, the children's group *Niños y niñas de Internet* (Children of the Internet) from Cuba, took action to support their peers who lacked educational resources like digital devices and internet access. Recognizing the shift from physical classrooms to online learning, the group facilitated digital education and distributed school materials to over 30 vulnerable children. They received assistance from *Centro Cristiano de Servicio y Capacitación B. G. Lavastida*, a member of GNRC Cuba.

In Kenya's arid and pastoralist North East region, the Children's Solutions Lab Garissa observed the escalating difficulties caused by the pandemic, leading to an increase in child marriages, particularly among girls. With support from Silver Lining Kenya, the children's group embarked on an awareness campaign to highlight the negative consequences of child marriage. They employed creative methods such as drama to convey their message to parents, local leaders, and religious figures.

Meanwhile, in Peru, the children's group *Expresarte* was driven to help those whose parents had lost their livelihoods due to the pandemic and lacked internet access during school closures. They devised a plan for "community gardening" to ensure families had the means to produce food. Additionally, they collaborated

with local leaders to provide food supplies to 20 impoverished children. The group also aimed to create a learning space for their peers who were falling behind in education. To support this, they established a mobile library where children could access various books. *Expresarte* received support from Christ the Savior Church, a member of GNRC Peru.

Reflecting on their efforts, Jhordy, a child and member of *Expresarte*, expressed the significance of their project in providing a better education for children in extreme poverty:

“We live in Lima, the biggest city. Here in Peru, there are children that don’t have money, they can’t afford to study. 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 get ahead and have a better future” ... “I also invite others to eradicate poverty, so together we can prevent extreme poverty to happen in Peru and in other parts of the world.” – Jhordy, child, member of *Expresarte*, CSL Peru.



In Serbia, a group of children from Sombor called *Santa’s Helpers* has been actively collecting gift packs and donating them to vulnerable children during Christmas and New Year’s for several years. However, with the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, they noticed a significant difference. Children from disadvantaged families were experiencing heightened poverty, resulting in a lack of essential school supplies that hindered their learning and put them at a severe disadvantage. In response, *Santa’s Helpers* took the initiative to assemble 40 gift packs containing school supplies and equipment, which would be distributed to these vulnerable children. This incredible CSL group received support from the *Sombor Education Centre*, a member of the GNRC Serbia. Reflecting on their journey, Ms. Ivana Barac, a supporting adult of *Santa’s Helpers* from the *Sombor Education Centre*, emphasized the transformative nature of this experience for both the children and the adults involved. She stated:

“We believe that this process has been a path of learning for children, but it has also been the same for us adults. Allowing children to generate ideas and implement them can lead to surprising and remarkable outcomes! Guiding children to propose solutions to overcome challenges was a major focus of this project. We firmly believe that providing them with a safe and supportive space is the key to encouraging them to rethink and propose valuable solutions to the obstacles they face.”

During the second round of the CSL 2022/2023 program, 84 groups from 38 countries participated, including five children’s groups from Niger, Malawi, Brazil, Ghana, and Armenia. These groups were selected as finalists for the CSL 2022/2023 phase.

In Yerevan, **Armenia**, the children from the **Home of the Sun** group aimed to provide child-friendly activities as a form of trauma healing for children affected by the Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict. They achieved this through engaging in dialogues, community harvesting, and food preservation activities such as making fruit jam and canning vegetables. This safe and interactive approach, combined with counseling, proved to be particularly beneficial for the children. Additionally, the children prepared care packages containing the harvested produce, winter gloves, and cards with encouraging messages to give to children living in poverty.

The children’s group from **Brazil**, known as **“Passaporte para a Vida I,”** focused on addressing local sanitation and hygiene concerns in their neighborhood. They initiated dialogues with local government officials to advocate for the construction of a small-scale sewerage pipeline in an informal settlement. This pipeline aimed to resolve the problem of using an open sewer for selected households affected by poverty. Furthermore, the children aimed to conduct awareness sessions to educate the neighborhood about improved sanitation practices, including the management of household waste. Arigatou International continues to support this ongoing project of the CSL group, collaborating with their primary local partner organization, **“Lar das Crianças da Congregação Israelita Paulista.”**

“My Rights, My Future”, the CSL group from **Ghana**, conducted more than 20 outreach sessions addressing the challenge of early and teenage pregnancy, as part of the broader conversation on sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) and breaking the cycle of poverty. They had noted that early and teenage pregnancy was a problem rampant in their town, largely a fishing community with wide-spread poverty, leading to many children dropping out of school, mostly girls. The children led these discussions in 7 schools in the area, as well as different localities in the town where they live. They used educative posters and teaching materials, covering such topics as the causes, effects, and prevention of early and teenage pregnancy, emphasizing the importance access to quality education and retention in school for all children.

The CSL group from Malawi, the **“Inspired Children’s Club”** set up a nursery to grow tree seedlings for sale, with the aim to establish a small mobile library serving children on the streets, using the proceeds from the sale of these seedlings. Through support from the local organization **“Sparrows Girls Foundation”**, this CSL group organized reading sessions with street-connected children as part of preparation towards the mobile library. In addition, they held community dialogue with teachers, partners, community elders and other leaders, as part of their advocacy for children’s education.

In Niamey, **Niger**, the **“Club d’anglais du CES/RD1”** (English Club) of the school **“Complexe d’enseignement secondaire CES/RD1”** proposed the construction of a toilet for girls in the school. One of the largest and oldest public schools in the city with a student population of nearly 3,000 children, the school had no toilet for girls, and only 1 toilet for boys. As such, the girls needed to wait until they can go home or otherwise seek



to use toilets in the nearby homesteads, making them suffer interrupted learning. The CSL group organized awareness sessions for their fellow students, on menstrual hygiene and proper use of toilets, through use of drama skits and peer conversations. Through the CSL, the children also advocated and lobbied the local

government organs to build more toilets for the entire student population. One of the participating children, Nadia (female) reported, *“It’s the first time I’m involved in this type of project, and I think it’s a great project ... When I was speaking to the leaders on behalf of the girls, I spoke my heart as I explained the situation of the girls at school – how it was really inconveniencing to go home to use the bathroom.”*

These key results from the Children’s Solutions Lab demonstrate the power of children to drive positive change and address pressing challenges within their communities. Through their collaborative efforts and innovative thinking, young individuals have shown their commitment to shaping a better future for themselves and their peers.

SDGs Academy for Children: Empowering Young Champions of Sustainable Development

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are crucial for the well-being of all children and hold the potential to significantly reduce child poverty. However, it is important to understand what children know and think about Sustainable Development and how they can contribute to realizing these goals. In response to this challenge, Arigatou International established the SDGs Academy for Children.

The primary objective of our SDGs Academy is to provide children with simplified and easily accessible multifaceted learning tools on the SDGs, enabling them to actively contribute to ending child poverty and achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. This unique academy serves as both a virtual and physical space where children can learn about and become champions of sustainable development. They have access to age-appropriate and engaging content and learning tools focused on the SDGs.

Launched in 2020, the SDGs Academy for Children has made significant progress. The Pioneer Hub, the first physical site of the Academy, has been established on a beautiful campus with conference facilities in Limuru, Kenya. Additionally, the Model Classroom was set up at the headquarters of the Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement in Colombo, Sri Lanka, in partnership with the End Child Poverty Knowledge Centre. Efforts are underway to explore opportunities and partnerships to replicate or host physical sites in other regions and countries.

Through the Pioneer Hub and the Model Classroom, the Academy has reached over 4,000 individuals, including more than 2,600 children and 570 adults who actively engage with these spaces. The learning sessions have covered various topics, including introductory information on the 2030 Agenda, the use of robotics and drones for sustainable development, sustainable cities, gender equality, and inclusion.

Through the SDGs Academy, fruitful partnerships have been forged with organizations such as Kenya Flying Labs, ECOBANA, Mtoto News, UNICEF Sri Lanka, and World Vision Sri Lanka. The Academy has also facilitated children’s participation in advocacy spaces and represented Arigatou International at the SDGs National Forums in Kenya and Sri Lanka.

Furthermore, the SDGs Academy is developing a virtual platform as a proof of concept and has released the first version of the SDGs Academy branded SDGs Kids mobile games. This engaging app, available for download on Google Play and Apple App stores, provides offline education and entertainment for children aged 4 and above. It features a road-runner collecting SDGs points while overcoming obstacles, and users can earn points through quizzes on Sustainable Development and donate them to specific SDGs as a demonstration of “faith in action.”

The SDGs Academy aims to expand its reach and accessibility, particularly in schools and multiple contexts, through innovation and strategic partnerships. By doing so, it seeks to accelerate grassroots actions towards achieving the SDG targets and amplify the contribution of children in ending poverty.

India Poverty Solutions: The Story of Arun and Shanti Ashram



India Poverty Solutions is an innovative initiative driven by children and youth, aiming to unite communities and find simple yet effective solutions to combat child poverty. The core principle of this initiative is to empower children and youth to lead the way in developing and implementing poverty-alleviation solutions within their communities.

The story of India Poverty Solutions began in 2012 at the 4th GNRC Forum in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. It was there that Arun, a 14-year-old at the time, conceived the idea of community food banks and food-donation drives to support children who were going hungry at home and attending school on empty stomachs. Arun's inspiration to take action was fueled by his participation in the Learning to Live Together program facilitated by Arigatou International's Ethics Education for Children initiative.

The program initially offered various solutions to address child poverty, focusing on children's rights to education, health, participation, food, protection, and well-being. One of these solutions involved children establishing their own traditional savings mechanism known as the "anundiylor hundi." Through this system, young people collectively saved money over a designated period of time and allocated the funds towards members and various programs aimed at ending poverty. This approach fostered a sense of collective responsibility among families and communities, empowering children and youth to realize their potential and make a positive impact with the resources available to them.

Starting in Coimbatore, the program has expanded to other states including Delhi, Mumbai, Bangalore, and Kerala. Its goal is to mobilize at least 1,000,000 children and youth volunteers from major faith traditions across India, serving as "Poverty Solutions Ambassadors."

India Poverty Solutions, with the support of Shanti Ashram, End Child Poverty, and other partners, has experienced significant growth. It has incorporated many other ideas and volunteers from the broader Shanti Ashram network. The initiative has proven highly effective in empowering boys, girls, families, and religious communities in their fight against poverty and its root causes.

Through the dedication and efforts of these young champions, India Poverty Solutions is making a tangible difference in the lives of children and communities across India, bringing hope and change to those affected by poverty. benefiting from scholarship provided through the India Poverty Solutions in 2016

Poverty Solutions in Bhutan and Nepal: Empowering Communities for a Brighter Future Through collaborative efforts between Shanti Ashram and End Child Poverty, a learning visit was organized to India for members of GNRC from Nepal, Malaysia, and Sri Lanka. The purpose of this visit was to provide practical experience through field visits and interactions with successful implementers of India Poverty Solutions.

Inspired by this visit, the model has now been replicated as Nepal Poverty Solutions by Shanti Sewa Ashram, a member of GNRC Nepal. Similarly, in Bhutan, members of GNRC Bhutan were motivated to initiate Bhutan Poverty Solutions.

“I Know the Importance of Education” - Ms. Kalaivani, 19 years, India

Ms. Kalaivani, a 19-year-old student from India, shares her inspiring story of overcoming poverty through education and the support of Shanti Ashram’s Akkam Revolving Fund:

“I joined college and found that my family couldn’t make ends meet. I saw my parents work harder so that my sister and I didn’t feel the burden of poverty. They wanted me to learn and excel.

When I was in my 2nd semester, I got to know of Shanti Ashram and the Akkam Revolving Fund from my relatives. I received an initial revolving fund assistance of Rs. 15,000 and to date I have been a beneficiary of the scholarship and all other capacity building activities of the Ashram.

Today, I have a job, I have been placed in a multinational company and I am expecting my call letter very soon. I know that I am amongst the lucky few to get such a wonderful family and empowering assistance from a committed organization like Shanti Ashram. I will spread the importance of education to all and one day I will do the role of supporting girls to get educated and live a life of respect and dignity.” - Ms. Kalaivani, a (then) 19-year-old student benefiting from scholarship provided through the India Poverty Solutions in 2016.



The Knowledge Platform

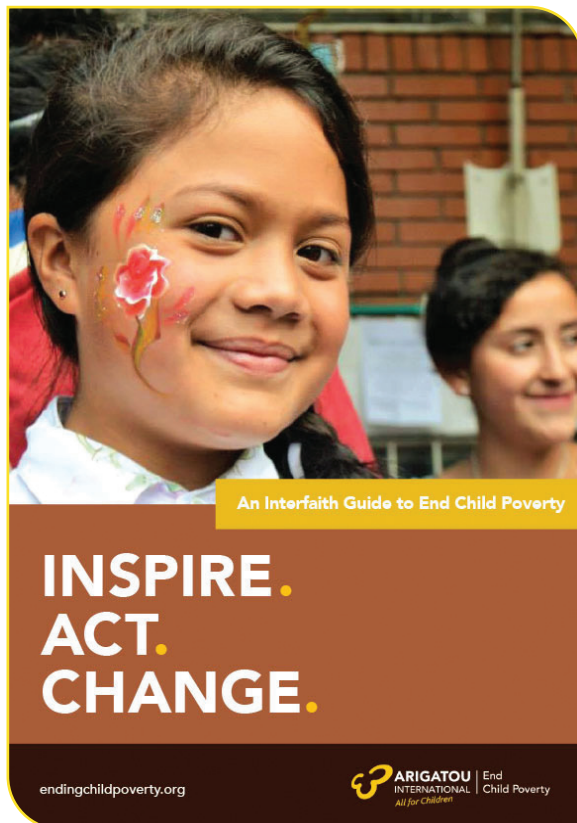
Promoting Knowledge, Evidence, and Best Practices

In order to tackle the challenge of ending child poverty, it is crucial to foster the development and sharing of knowledge, evidence, and best practices. These competencies are essential for achieving meaningful progress in this endeavor.

Interfaith Resources for Reflection and Action

Our work is grounded in the belief that addressing the root causes of poverty requires continuous reflection, contemplation, and action, starting from the depths of the human heart. We adopt an integrated approach to promote interfaith dialogue, reflection, and action. Through our programs, we actively create opportunities for faith leaders, actors, and communities to engage in concrete actions that address child poverty and uphold the dignity of every child within their preaching, teachings, and activities.

We strive to establish strong connections between the aspirations of children and the institutional networks, infrastructures, and leadership of faith actors and communities. By doing so, we aim to enhance their understanding of the impact of poverty on children and the role of faith in eradicating child poverty. Recognizing the importance of theological reflection, dialogue, and action on the status of childhood and children within our faith traditions and teachings, we have developed the “Interfaith Resource Guide to End Child Poverty: Inspire. Act. Change.”



This comprehensive guide serves as a valuable tool to mobilize faith communities towards the common goal of ending child poverty. It offers a wealth of resources, including child poverty data, impact stories, and practical suggestions for community mobilization, networking, and advocacy. The guide can also be utilized for educational purposes, training initiatives, and to enhance the leadership capacity of organizations working in this field. We officially launched the guide during the GNRC 5th Forum on May 10, 2017, in Panama City. It is readily available online and actively promoted through our extensive network of partnerships and programming.

We have established the End Child Poverty Knowledge Centre in collaboration with the Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement. This global hub serves as a source of research, resources, networking, and knowledge dissemination dedicated to addressing child poverty. The Knowledge Centre, with its physical location at the Sarvodaya headquarters in Colombo, Sri Lanka, and its online presence on the End Child Poverty website, aims to enhance the capacities of organizations working to reduce child poverty worldwide.

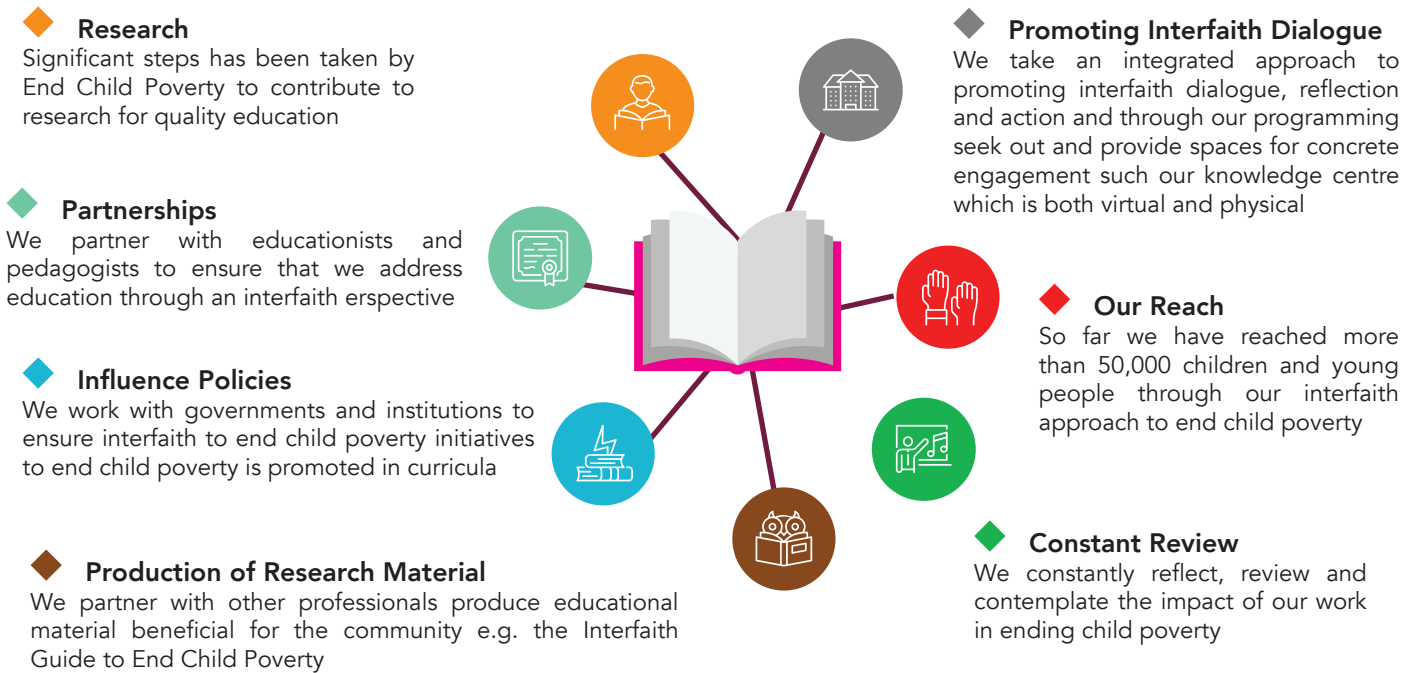
Considering the projected population growth and poverty challenges in Asia, particularly with India and China driving global growth, we strategically positioned the physical hub in Southeast Asia. This decision allows us to offer hope, resources, and opportunities to combat child poverty in the region. Since its establishment, the Knowledge Centre has been actively involved in organizing meetings, facilitating learning and networking events, and conducting capacity building initiatives in Southeast Asia. Participants include members of the GNRC from countries such as Sri Lanka, India, Pakistan, Nepal, Bhutan, and Malaysia.

In Sri Lanka, the Knowledge Centre has developed strategic and operational relationships with technical institutes like the Centre for Poverty Analysis (CEPA) in Colombo. We are also working on the creation of the 'Interfaith Guide to Child Wellbeing,' specifically tailored to address the unique context of child poverty in Sri Lanka. Additionally, the Knowledge Centre houses a valuable collection of resources related to faith and ending child poverty. This collection encompasses newsletters, reports, briefings, papers, news articles, toolkits, and manuals, which are accessible online. As part of our commitment, End Child Poverty integrates the production and dissemination of new knowledge, continuously expanding the repository of openly accessible intellectual resources on our website.



We are immensely grateful to the Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement for hosting the Knowledge Centre and their continuous support. With their extensive experience in poverty alleviation and sustainable development, the Movement has identified 16 distinct areas for collaboration with the Knowledge Centre. Their proactive approach has led to various activities, including hosting local groups, providing training on motivation, self-reflection, and personality development for teenage mothers, organizing children's events focused on spiritual healing, mediation, and art therapy for children with behavioral and learning difficulties. Moreover, their efforts encompass child protection, child health, and the promotion of children's rights and well-being across 25 districts.

Our Contribution to Knowledge Generation



Looking ahead, our goals for the Knowledge Centre involve strengthening its research capabilities and further developing the online platform. By doing so, we aim to create a thriving repository of relevant, timely, and easily accessible information to support our collective efforts in ending child poverty.

A Yearbook Anyone? End Child Poverty Communications

At End Child Poverty, our communication efforts are structured around a 3-tier model that serves multiple purposes. Firstly, communication supports our strategic goals, performance, and brand. Secondly, it acts as a development practice, facilitating our campaigns, processes, advocacy, outreach, and programs. Lastly, communication operates at an operational level, supporting programmatic and administrative processes while promoting visibility and raising awareness of End Child Poverty and Arigatou International as a whole.

Communication plays a significant role in our organization, evident from the range of communication resources and outputs we have developed. These include active online and social media resources, online presence, publications, and campaign tools. The significance of communication strategies and tactics is exemplified by the substantial results achieved in strategy, programmatic implementation, and branding efforts.

The outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic posed a significant challenge to our communication efforts. Not only did it cause massive disruptions in the communities where we work, but it also imposed limitations due to social distancing requirements and office closures. During this time, End Child Poverty Communications implemented a crisis support strategy aimed at raising awareness about the pandemic and supporting our efforts to mitigate its socio-economic impact. As most activities and engagements shifted to virtual platforms, we enhanced and expanded our communication assets to meet the new demands arising from campaigns, programming, and partnerships.



Social media: We have developed a dynamic online and social media presence on major platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube.



Online reach: Through our website and social media platforms, we have consistently reached an average of **50,000+ users**. This reach has been further amplified during campaigns and important processes like the 'Together We Can End Child Poverty' initiative, the Children's Solutions Lab, the 'I Lead Peace Campaign,' and the 'ECP@10 Campaign.'



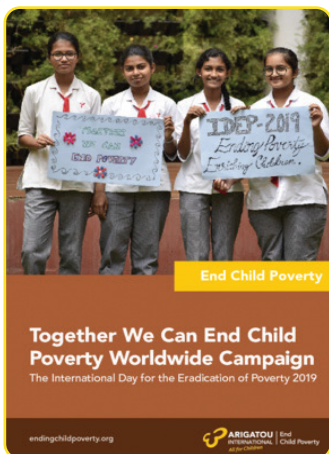
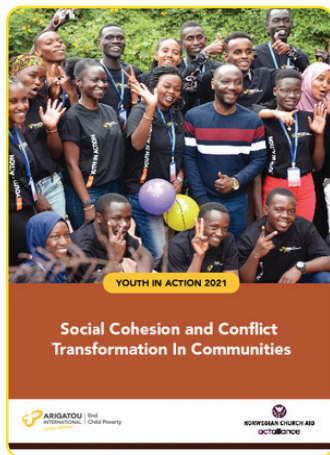
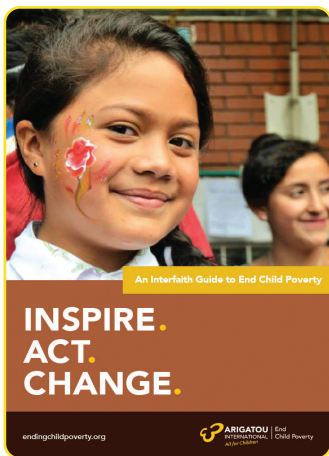
Advocacy: Our communication efforts have strongly supported our joint advocacy endeavors as part of the Moral Imperative, the Africa Interfaith Initiative on the SDGs, and the Global Coalition to End Child Poverty.



Publications: We have taken the lead or provided support in developing and disseminating various publications, including toolkits, handbooks, newsletters, and video content.

As we celebrate our 10th anniversary, we have revitalized our communication platforms. Our website has been revamped to provide up-to-date information, enhanced resources, improved aesthetics, and user-friendly navigation. Additionally, we have unified our usernames across all social media platforms to simplify identification and strengthen the association with Arigatou International. We believe these improvements will foster greater interaction with our audience and enable us to reach a wider range of potential partners and stakeholders.

Just in case you missed one of our core products, we welcome you to visit endingchildpoverty.org (website) or sample some of our annual reports and publications over the last decade .



Working Together for Collective Impact

At End Child Poverty, we firmly believe in the power of collaboration and strategic partnerships to achieve meaningful results for children. Our motto, “Together We Can End Child Poverty Worldwide,” embodies our commitment to engage individuals, communities, and organizations in taking action against childhood adversity. By fostering relationships and alliances, we seek to pursue shared visions, strategies, outcomes, and impacts that are beyond what any single entity could accomplish alone.

To facilitate our collaborative efforts, we have categorized our strategic relationships into a typology that reflects the complexity of our impact pathways and the varying levels at which activities are carried out. These relationships span across global coalitions and networks, such as the Moral Imperative to End Extreme Poverty and Realize the SDGs anchored by the World Bank, and global consortia like the Global Coalition to End Child Poverty co-chaired by UNICEF and Save the Children. Additionally, we engage in regional consortia and joint work platforms, such as the Eastern Africa Regional Peace Programme (RPP) nested within the Norwegian Church Aid (NCA).

We are deeply interconnected with our sister initiatives within Arigatou International, namely the Global Network of Religions for Children (GNRC), Ethics Education for Children, and Prayer and Action for Children. Each of these initiatives brings unique strengths to End Child Poverty and enriches our collective impact. We are grateful for their indispensable contributions and the valuable support they provide. Moreover, we recognize the invaluable resources and platforms offered by faith communities, their governing bodies, and related organizations. Together, we forge partnerships that support the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), establish stronger connections between faith and development, and tackle complex issues such as conflict and state fragility.

While global collaborations are essential, we understand that true change is driven by local demand and action. Therefore, we greatly value the agency and resourcefulness of thousands of local and national actors, including faith congregations, movements, and individuals of goodwill. It is within this context that we nurture partnerships along the results chain, creating a rich tapestry of relationships that expands our programming scope and reach. Drawing from the experience and expertise of our partners, we enhance our practices and develop the strategic capacity to achieve concrete outcomes beyond our immediate sphere of control and influence.

Over the years, we have built and relied upon the active collaboration and partnership of over 150 local, national, regional, and global organizations. We are grateful for their support, which has been instrumental in our work. Additionally, our participation in regional and global advocacy and influencing platforms has further strengthened our collective voice and impact.

By working together, we create a formidable force for change, advancing our shared goal of ending child poverty worldwide.



ECP@10 Campaign: Commemorating 10 Years of End Child Poverty

The ECP@10 Campaign, themed **“All Out to End Child Poverty: Looking Back, Forging Ahead,”** marked a significant milestone as End Child Poverty celebrated its 10th anniversary since its inception at the GNRC Fourth Forum in Dar Es Salaam, Tanzania, in 2012. Beyond being an event, the ECP@10 Campaign provided a platform to celebrate global progress in tackling child poverty, share our collective journey and stories, invite others to join the effort, and advance knowledge relevant to ending child poverty.

The ECP@10 Campaign was officially launched on June 16, 2022, during the Day of the African Child, through a virtual event that brought together over **100 diverse participants**. The event was live-streamed across various social media platforms, allowing even more individuals to engage. During this occasion, we reflected on the milestones, challenges, and emerging trends in child poverty over the past 10 years, as they relate to the work of End Child Poverty. Conversations between children and adults, including faith leaders, academia, and researchers, shaped the discussions.

Alongside the launch, we unveiled the **ECP@10 micro-website**, serving as a comprehensive hub for campaign information and engagement. The website featured an interactive public space where people could pledge actions to help end child poverty.

One notable accomplishment of the ECP@10 Campaign was the “Grow Trees With Children” initiative, which aimed to address the climate crisis and its disproportionate impact on children, especially those already living in poverty. Recent analyses by the World Bank estimate that climate change could push an additional 68 to 135 million people into poverty by 2030. During the ECP@10 Campaign period, we mobilized our partners, particularly members of the GNRC, to donate and plant over **23,000 trees and tree seedlings** in various countries, including Bosnia and Herzegovina, Burundi, Comoros, Ghana, India, Kenya, Malawi, Moldova, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Tanzania, and Uganda.

“

“This 10th anniversary is a unique opportunity for us to put the most vulnerable children living in poverty high on the agenda of faith communities and the international community in reaffirming our collective commitment to building a world free of child poverty”

Rev. Keishi Miyamoto, President, Arigatou International.

”

Furthermore, the ECP@10 Campaign garnered 110 pledges to combat child poverty, covering a wide range of areas such as advocating for policy and social change, promoting education and awareness, enhancing capacity building, fostering child participation, supporting tree planting, taking action on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and encouraging individual contributions.

To culminate the ECP@10 Campaign, we published the “Going All Out to End Child Poverty” report, documenting our journey over the past 10 years and highlighting the progress made. The Campaign, which spanned a year of dedicated actions, reached its conclusion in June 2023. End Child Poverty extends heartfelt appreciation to everyone who actively participated in this campaign and continues to provide unwavering support to our cause. Your commitment and contributions are invaluable to our ongoing efforts to combat child poverty.



Looking Forward

Reflections by the Director, End Child Poverty, Fred Nyabera

As we commemorate the 10th anniversary of End Child Poverty, it is a time for reflection and envisioning the future. It prompts us to pause and contemplate: where do we go from here?

First and foremost, we must strive to improve our efforts. We need to actively engage faith communities, emphasizing the shared belief that we have the power to end deprivation and poverty for all children.

Secondly, our advocacy for policy, structural, and social change must be strengthened. The solutions to global poverty are already within our grasp; we possess the knowledge of what needs to be done. Now, we must become more effective advocates for change, driven by spiritual, moral, and political imperatives.

Thirdly, we must ensure that existing global mechanisms and frameworks prioritize the well-being of children. This includes leveraging the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the Human Capital Development platform, and regional initiatives like the African Union's Agenda 2063 to deliver positive outcomes for children.

Fourth, we must find better ways to engage children, their families, and communities. Ultimately, the battle against poverty for each child will be fought at the local level, within specific families and communities. This necessitates improved collaboration with faith actors and stakeholders at the global, national, and local levels.

Fifth, we must rely on robust evidence and high-quality data. It is crucial that such data and statistics are utilized in the design and evaluation of policies, programs, and services once they become available.

Sixth, we need to deepen our understanding of the interconnectedness between global crises, such as climate change and ecosystem degradation, and poverty. It is evident that ending extreme poverty is nearly impossible without addressing the challenges of runaway global warming. Therefore, we must integrate climate action and climate justice into our work.

“
The solutions to global poverty
are already within our grasp ... ”

Finally, we will develop a comprehensive theory of change and strategy to guide our future work.

We express our gratitude to all who have made this journey possible. We appreciate the individuals who have embraced our call for grassroots organizing against child poverty, our numerous partners at local, national, regional, and global levels, and the countless individuals worldwide who prioritize the eradication of child poverty by dedicating their time and resources. We eagerly anticipate collaborating with all of you as we embark on the next steps of our journey.

To the hundreds of millions of children who wake up each day in the clutches of poverty, serving as a constant reminder of why our work is vital, you are our inspiration. We commit to staying the course, charting new paths, and working tirelessly to end the indignity of childhood poverty. We will act, advocate, educate, and collaborate to achieve lasting positive impacts and prevent any child from experiencing poverty. Your pain fuels our dedication.

Thank you!

Fred Nyabera,
Director, Arigatou International – End Child Poverty



Acknowledgements

“We wholeheartedly invite individuals, communities, and organizations to join us in taking action, as your involvement is crucial and indispensable.”

End Child Poverty extends heartfelt gratitude to all our partners, including the members of the Global Network of Religions for Children (GNRC) and faith communities worldwide, for their invaluable contributions to our mission. We recognize the power of meaningful and strategic partnerships and acknowledge that we cannot accomplish this work in isolation. We wholeheartedly invite individuals, communities, and organizations to join us in taking action, as your involvement is crucial and indispensable.

We would also like to express our deep appreciation to our sister initiatives — the GNRC, Prayer and Action for Children, and Ethics Education for Children — as well as the entire Arigatou International family for their unwavering support in driving positive change and progress. Above all, we extend our sincerest gratitude to every child, for it is with them in mind that we dedicate our efforts. We promise to continue serving with utmost commitment, striving to create a world free from child poverty and a brighter future for all children.

Together, We Can End Child Poverty Worldwide!

Meet the Arigatou International Directors

"Poverty is perhaps one of the worst violences committed on children and young people. We all have responsibility of ending this problem by 2030. We owe them that much."

Mustafa Yusuf Ali,
Secretary General, Global Network of Religions for Children (GNRC).



"Across all Arigatou International initiatives, we strive to look for modern innovative, sustainable, relevant and replicable solutions that we can support, aimed at ending child poverty."

Maria Lucia Uribe,
Director, Ethics Education for Children (Ethics Education).



"The power of prayer and worship can change the impossible to possible. To create a world free of poverty we must promote theological reflection and action to end child poverty."

Rebeca Rios-Kohn,
Director, Prayer and Action for Children (Prayer and Action).



"A commitment to reducing poverty and increasing the chances of success for children requires investment in the earliest years. Children deserve a society that cares and nurtures them for a better future."

Fred Nyabera,
Director, Interfaith Initiative to End Child Poverty (End Child Poverty).



END CHILD POVERTY STAFF: 2013 to 2022/2023

Director



Fred Nyabera,
Director, End Child Poverty
Arigatou International – Nairobi

Programs and Communications Staff



Nyambura Gichuki,
Programs Officer,
End Child Poverty



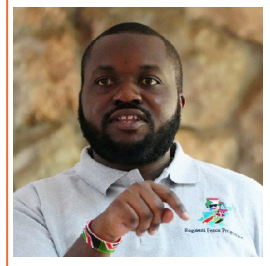
Kefe Innocent,
Communications
Officer, End Child
Poverty



Michael Adikwu,
Lead, Sustainable
Development



Hesha Perera,
End Child Poverty
Knowledge Centre
Manager



Felix Kiptoo,
Lead, Regional
Peace Programme

Finance and Administration Staff



Florence Omtokoh,
Executive Secretary



Yasin Lokaale,
Accountant



Abdul Alawi,
Administrative Assistant

Previous Staff



Gerald Acho,
Lead, Regional
Peace Programme



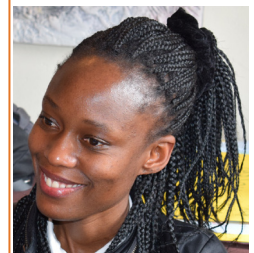
Ransi Karunarathna,
End Child Poverty
Knowledge Centre
Manager



Kavitha Vijayaraj,
End Child Poverty
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Dr. Sheillah Memusi,
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