



Arigatou International

Annual Report

April 1, 2019 – March 31, 2020

f /ArigatouInternational

▶ ArigatouInternational

 **ARIGATOU**
INTERNATIONAL
All for Children

The Message of Our Logo

The Arigatou Shining Heart Mark evokes the shape of the Japanese character for "heart," representing the compassion for children which is at the core of everything Arigatou International does.

The big, bold "ARIGATOU" in our name is one more way that we say "THANK YOU" for the privilege of being of service to the world's children.



The **Arigatou Gold** color shines with the energy and warmth of the hope, spirituality, compassion, and solidarity we strive to practice.

The upward-moving italicized design of "All for Children" highlights our commitment to serving, supporting, and empowering children in an active way that lifts them up, while working with partners and stakeholders worldwide to build a better future.

CONTENTS

ARIGATOU INTERNATIONAL — “ALL FOR CHILDREN”	2
OUR REACH, BY THE NUMBERS	4
MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT	7
MESSAGES FROM THE CHAIRS OF THE ARIGATOU INTERNATIONAL ADVISORY GROUP	8
ARIGATOU INTERNATIONAL’S GLOBAL INITIATIVES	10
“ALL FOR CHILDREN” — ADDRESSING CRITICAL ISSUES WITH A SPIRIT OF COOPERATION	12
Advancing Children’s Rights	13
Ending All Forms of Violence Against Children	15
Advancing Ethics Education to Achieve Transformation	24
Building a World Free of Child Poverty	30
Ensuring Child Safeguarding, Participation and Empowerment	31
ADVOCATING FOR CHILDREN WORLDWIDE	33
COLLABORATION — THE VALUE OF WORKING TOGETHER	37
SPECIAL FEATURE — HIGHLIGHTING CHILDREN’S RIGHTS AS THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC BEGAN	39
FINANCIAL INFORMATION	41
GOVERNANCE	42
Governance and Operating Structure	42
Arigatou International Advisory Group	44

Editorial Policy

Thank you for your interest in Arigatou International. In this annual report, we provide an overview of the main activities of the organization, including highlights from the work of our four global initiatives. We also feature a variety of efforts conducted in concert with members of the Global Network of Religions for Children (GNRC) and our valued institutional partners and collaborators. We hope this report will help you to get to know us better. We welcome your questions, comments, and feedback. Please contact us at: [tokyo\(at\)arigatouinternational.org](mailto:tokyo(at)arigatouinternational.org)

Period covered: Fiscal year 2019 (April 1, 2019 – March 31, 2020*)

Reporting scope: Information and data on the activities undertaken, promoted, and supported by Arigatou International, including its headquarters in Tokyo and its offices in Nairobi, Geneva, and New York.

Publication date: May 15, 2021 (Next report: October 31, 2021)

* The special feature on the launch of Arigatou International’s campaign to promote children’s well-being during the Covid-19 pandemic includes some information from the spring of 2020. In certain other cases, aggregate data is given for the calendar year 2019.

ARIGATOU INTERNATIONAL — “ALL FOR CHILDREN”



Arigatou International works with people from diverse religious and cultural backgrounds to build a better world for children.

Believing that every child is a precious treasure of humanity, Arigatou International draws on universal principles of common good to fulfill its “All for Children” mission. At the heart of our work is creating inclusive spaces for shared action to promote children’s rights and well-being. We encourage individuals and organizations to take action to ensure that all girls and boys grow up safe and sound, develop to their full potential, and are inspired and empowered to work with others to make a difference in their communities.

Arigatou International develops and sustains multi-stakeholder initiatives designed to ensure that all children are treated with dignity and that all of their rights are respected and protected. Engaging diverse collaborators, we employ interfaith and intercultural approaches to bring about positive change for children at all levels — from the grassroots to the global.

At Arigatou International, we value children for who they are and fully involve them in our work, always safeguarding their well-being, providing for their full participation, and affirming their human dignity. For Arigatou, children are deeply respected, fully recognized participants in shaping the world.

Arigatou International works together with diverse religious leaders and faith communities, international agencies, civil society organizations, governments, children and young people in more than 80 countries around the world, and its efforts continue to grow in reach, diversity and impact.

Across our four global initiatives — the [Global Network of Religions for Children \(GNRC\)](#), [Ethics Education for Children](#), [Prayer and Action for Children](#), and [End Child Poverty](#) — we are guided by the principles of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and committed to contributing to the Sustainable Development Goals, especially the targets related to children.

Arigatou International is an international NGO in special consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) and in consultative status with the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF).

Arigatou International was founded in 1990 by the Japanese Buddhist organization, Myochikai, whose members continue to support its work today with donations. The name “Arigatou” means “thank you” in Japanese, and it expresses the spirit of the Myochikai members, who are grateful to have the opportunity to support children around the world.



OUR REACH, BY THE NUMBERS

At Arigatou International, we are very grateful for all of the people and organizations who participate and partner with us in our activities around the world. Here is a glance at the reach of some of the projects we carried out or supported in fiscal 2019, some of which are featured in more detail in this report.



179

INTERFAITH PROJECTS
in 61 countries¹



155,157

CHILDREN EMPOWERED
as active participants in transformative
interfaith projects and campaigns

¹ Most carried out by GNRC members. Arigatou International provided seed funding, capacity-building, knowledge resources, technical assistance and leadership development.



420,250

PEOPLE

joined campaigns to promote child rights, end violence against children and promote interfaith cooperation to end child poverty²



8,932

PEOPLE

equipped by our training and capacity-building programs³



890

EDUCATIONAL SCHOLARSHIPS

awarded to vulnerable children in Kenya, Lebanon, Malaysia, Pakistan, Sierra Leone, and South Sudan

² 31,926 people in 42 countries participated in World Day of Prayer and Action celebrations; 27,580 children were reached on the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty (IDEP); and over 360,000 people were reached with online campaigns on #EndChildPoverty, "I am/We Are Generation Equality" and #ILeadPeace

³ Trainings provided by Arigatou International in the areas of ethics education, child protection, child rights, ending child poverty and prevention of violent extremism.



MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT



Rev. Keishi Miyamoto

President, Arigatou International

I would like to take this opportunity to express my sincere appreciation to those who have worked with us for all the valuable support and cooperation we have received in our effort to bring about significant changes to improve the lives of children around the world. I would also like to welcome all those who are newly interested in our work and share our concern for the future of the world's children. I am happy to share with you the first edition of the annual report of Arigatou International, which covers the fiscal year from April 1, 2019 to March 31, 2020.

The work of Arigatou International has revolved extensively around our four global initiatives since the year 2000, as they have worked with religious communities, international organizations, NGOs and so many other organizations and individuals, from the grassroots to global levels. I hope this report succeeds in presenting a succinct overall view of our far-ranging activities, by highlighting some of the major developments and recent achievements. Most importantly, I hope you will feel inspired and invited to dream big about the changes we can make — together — for all the precious children of our world.

During the year under review, we worked hard to increase the synergies among our global initiatives — the Global Network of Religions for Children (GNRC), Ethics Education for Children, Prayer and Action for Children, and End Child Poverty — and also with our valued partners and collaborators. This report highlights some of the progress in this area, reviewing this kind of collaborative work on several key issues that are critical to children's rights and well-being (see especially pages 12-32).

The year 2019 marked the 30th anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), which was a significant milestone for us, since religious communities have been actively engaged with the CRC since the preparatory process for its adoption. To commemorate 30 years of the CRC, we conducted a new research study, *Faith and Children's Rights: A Multi-religious Study on the Convention on the Rights of the Child*. We are deeply grateful to everyone who contributed to the study, in particular UNICEF, the former Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General on Violence against Children, the members of the Global Network of Religions for Children (GNRC), the International Dialogue Centre (KAICIID) and World Vision International. I would like to emphasize that the study report is much more than a scholarly work; since, from the outset, we designed it to serve as a valuable resource for creating new channels of dialogue among religious leaders, international organizations, scholars, human rights experts, and children and young people themselves, about how we can all work together to secure and promote the rights of every child.

We would welcome your questions and comments on the content of this annual report. Thank you once again for your interest.

MESSAGES FROM THE CHAIRS OF THE ARIGATOU INTERNATIONAL ADVISORY GROUP



Kul Chandra Gautam

Chair, Arigatou International Advisory Group,
Former Assistant Secretary-General, United Nations,
and Former Deputy Executive Director, UNICEF

There are many faith-based and inter-faith organizations in the world promoting worthy causes ranging from peace in the world, to helping the poor and vulnerable groups, empowering women, combating harmful traditional practices, protecting the environment, and spiritual development of their followers.

Arigatou International also contributes to all such activities, but with an exclusive focus on children. With the memorable motto of "All for Children," Arigatou is the world's premier interfaith organization whose primary and sole mission is protecting the rights and promoting the well-being of children. It does so through four principal initiatives: the Global Network of Religions for Children; Ethics Education for Children; Prayer and Action for Children; and Ending Child Poverty.

As a relatively small organization, Arigatou's contribution to such big and weighty issues is necessarily modest. However, as this report illustrates, in partnership with many other organizations, Arigatou strives to make a meaningful and catalytic impact in harnessing the power of inter-religious cooperation to help safeguard the best interests of children.

**Dr. Kezevino Aram**

Vice-Chair, Arigatou International Advisory Group
President, Shanti Ashram

Arigatou International has developed a network of faith-inspired organizations and partners who work together to address major challenges that children face collectively including poverty, violence and social inequities, and this includes working WITH children. Its convening role in mobilizing faith-based organizations to work together has been appreciated, and its interfaith framework is a model to study and adapt.

I am also delighted that the Consortium on Nurturing Values and Spirituality in Early Childhood for the Prevention of Violence has been drawing attention and furthering the understanding of spirituality and its critical impact in early childhood development. Lessons that we can study and integrate into our work will not only enrich what we do, but will also offer new ways of thinking around making early childhood services an essential piece of social infrastructure around the world.

As Vice-Chair of the Arigatou International Advisory Group, it has been my joy to see how the active participation of children and young people has increasingly become a differential, and a distinguishing feature of Arigatou International's work. May the luminous presence of our CHILDREN move us from praying together with children to ACTION for the well-being of children!

ARIGATOU INTERNATIONAL'S GLOBAL INITIATIVES

Arigatou International operates four global initiatives supported by its offices around the world: the Global Network of Religions for Children (Nairobi), Ethics Education for Children (Geneva), Prayer and Action for Children (New York) and the Interfaith Initiative to End Child Poverty (Nairobi). The directors (see page 43) and staff of the initiatives work together closely, pursuing synergies while addressing key issues facing children, such as those featured on pages 12-32 of this report:

- Advancing Children's Rights
- Ending All Forms of Violence against Children
- Advancing Ethics Education to Achieve Transformation
- Building a World Free of Child Poverty
- Ensuring Child Safeguarding, Participation and Empowerment

Global Network of Religions for Children

The Global Network of Religions for Children (GNRC) is a global-scale interfaith network of organizations and individuals specifically dedicated to securing the rights and well-being of children everywhere. GNRC members come from all of the world's major religions and many other spiritual traditions. The GNRC currently has a presence in 61 countries around the globe.

GNRC members are committed to creating a world where every girl and boy can grow up safe and sound—a world where every child has the chance to shine.

Every four or five years, the GNRC holds a global forum, bringing together GNRC members, religious and civil society leaders, and children and young people to advance the work of the network.

The GNRC Secretariat is operated by Arigatou International – Nairobi, which provides technical assistance to GNRC members, promotes their activities, and coordinates their activities to build a better world for children.

[Visit us online](#)

Ethics Education for Children

Ethics Education for Children promotes values-based education for children, supporting the child's right to education, as set out in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, and contributing to children's holistic development. It utilizes a transformative approach to interfaith and intercultural learning, placing children at the heart of all of its work.

Ethics Education for Children is committed to safeguarding the dignity of all children, ensuring their meaningful participation, and empowering them to become agents of positive change and drivers of collective actions who can help build just, peaceful societies.

Ethics Education for Children is managed by Arigatou International – Geneva, a global knowledge hub which serves as a unique nexus for dialogue, partnership development, and collaborative action to advance ethics education for children.

[Visit us online](#)

Prayer and Action for Children

Established in 2008 and based in New York, Prayer and Action for Children convenes diverse religious leaders and faith communities to promote interfaith cooperation and advocacy for the rights of children, to promote policy changes that benefit children and to influence positive social and behavioral change to end violence against children.

In collaboration with members of the GNRC, Prayer and Action for Children leads the World Day of Prayer and Action for Children on November 20, the anniversary of the CRC and Universal Children's Day. The World Day promotes prayer, meditation, and other forms of worship and encourages a wide range of actions year-round to advance the well-being of children and raise their status. It includes children's participation in activities whenever possible to ensure their voices are heard. In the period under review, the World Day was celebrated in 42 countries around the globe.

Prayer and Action for Children is guided by the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Panama Commitments to End Violence against Children.

[Visit us online](#)

Interfaith Initiative to End Child Poverty

The Interfaith Initiative to End Child Poverty mobilizes faith communities and faith-inspired resources to help build a world free of child poverty.

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.

End Child Poverty is managed by Arigatou International – Nairobi, which supports the programs of the initiative, promotes engagement with faith-communities and other diverse partners, and facilitates grassroots actions to assist children in poverty.

[Visit us online](#)

All for Children

ADDRESSING CRITICAL ISSUES WITH A SPIRIT OF COOPERATION

At Arigatou International, children are at the heart of all we do. We look for the global and local trends that impact children the most and focus all of our resources on the areas where interfaith and intercultural cooperation can make the biggest difference. We seek out partnerships and cooperative relationships that make the most of the respective strengths of the organizations involved to protect, support, and inspire children. We believe that everyone — because “All” means “All” — has a role to play in building a better world for children.

Yet Arigatou International is not only “All for Children,” but also “All with Children.” This means we do everything we can to help create safe spaces and learning opportunities — free from any form of violence — where children can fully express themselves, participate wholeheartedly, engage with people of different cultures and beliefs, and become actively and positively involved in transforming their communities.

So, to the children of the world: We want your input. We need your help to shape our work. Together, we can build a more peaceful, just, and inclusive world.

At Arigatou International, our hope is that “All for Children” will become a global rallying cry — bringing together diverse stakeholders from every nation to join hands to ensure that every child can thrive. When we all work together, we can provide empowering learning opportunities, contributing to a world free from poverty and all forms of violence, where children’s rights are fully upheld. To do our part,

Arigatou International strives to develop compelling programs, approaches and tools that equip and inspire people to protect and promote the rights and holistic well-being of children.

This section highlights five distinctive but interconnected thematic areas that Arigatou International, along with our many deeply valued collaborators, focused on during the year under review.

- Advancing Children’s Rights
- Ending All Forms of Violence against Children
- Advancing Ethics Education to Achieve Transformation
- Building a World Free of Child Poverty
- Ensuring Child Safeguarding, Participation and Empowerment



Ms. Henrietta Fore, UNICEF Executive Director, and Rev. Keishi Miyamoto, President, Arigatou International, before the start of the special session on children co-hosted by Arigatou and UNICEF during the Annual Kofi Annan Faith Briefings, a side event of the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development in New York, July 15, 2019.

"ALL FOR CHILDREN"

ADVANCING CHILDREN'S RIGHTS

Faith and Children's Rights: A Multi-religious Study on the Convention on the Rights of the Child

Arigatou International developed *Faith and Children's Rights: A Multi-religious Study on the Convention on the Rights of the Child* in 2019. The Study marked the occasion of the 30th anniversary of the adoption of the Convention, which is the most widely ratified international treaty on human rights in history. The Study is the work of numerous partners, including religious leaders, scholars, human rights experts, and is enriched by the voices of children. Key partners include UNICEF, the former Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General on Violence against Children, the Global Network of Religions for Children (GNRC), the International Dialogue Centre (KAICIID) and World Vision International.

The Study examines the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), for the very first time, from the perspective of seven major religions. It highlights the significant role played by religious communities in advancing the rights and well-being of children over the past 30 years. Most importantly, the Study seeks to identify the common values shared among different religions and the principles of the CRC. It seeks to promote continued action by faith communities to implement this international treaty. Another important goal of the Study is to encourage further action by faith communities in the protection of children from violence.



Panelists and partners at the official launch event.

In 2019, the 30th anniversary of the CRC was highlighted in celebrations in 23 countries for the World Day of Prayer and Action for Children, which Arigatou International promotes from its New York office. Additionally, World Day observances were focused on launching the Study Report in Argentina, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Comoros, Ecuador, El Salvador, Pakistan, Panama, and Rwanda.

A **policy brief** was also developed by Arigatou International's Geneva office to highlight the specific recommendations from the Study on how to encourage further implementation of the CRC as a key legal and ethical framework for safeguarding children's rights and how to address the many risks facing children today. The brief provides strategic policy recommendations for strengthening cooperation between religious communities and governments to advance the implementation of the CRC and strengthen child protection.



Carlos, a young person from Brazil, presents the newly published Study Report to Rabbi David Rosen, KSG, CBE, International Director for Interreligious Affairs, American Jewish Committee, at the official launch event in Geneva.



"This study can help us to connect with our religious leaders. It encourages us to advocate for our rights in our schools, to raise awareness through workshops — for example — and to report when our rights are violated. It helps us to know that we are not alone in all of this and that we have someone to rely on."

— Lamija, a young person from Bosnia and Herzegovina, speaks at the official launch event for the Study in November 2019

"ALL FOR CHILDREN"

ENDING ALL FORMS OF VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN

Ending Violence against Children: A Prerequisite for Ensuring the Rights of Every Child

Children around the world are affected by multiple forms of violence every day, including in digital spaces. The causes of violence against children are complex and varied and must be addressed by targeted measures. Ending today's appalling violence against children calls for extraordinary and urgent collaboration among religious and spiritual communities and other stakeholders to implement targeted evidence-based interventions.

Our work in this area during the year under review continued to be inspired by the [Panama Declaration on Ending Violence Against Children](#). In 2017, over 500 religious leaders from diverse spiritual traditions, girls and boys, women and men, from over 70 countries, together with representatives of governments, the United

Nations, and international and grassroots organizations, met in Panama for the 5th Forum of the Global Network of Religions for Children (GNRC) with one simple commitment: joining forces to end violence against children because every child deserves to grow and thrive free from violence.

To respond to the global epidemic of violence against children, they issued the Panama Declaration, complete with ten specific commitments to prevent, heal, reduce and ultimately end violence against children. From the time of the forum through March 31, 2020, Arigatou International has logged 122 programs and projects undertaken to fulfill the Panama Commitments by a total of 53 different organizations in 49 countries.



The Panama Declaration continues to inspire our work for a world free of violence against children of all ages and in all settings. Our work extends from ending violence in children's early

years, to preventing gender-based violence and violent extremism, to protecting children from gang violence and organized crime, to stopping online sexual exploitation and abuse of children.



GNRC Members Take Action

Empowering Girls to Protect their Rights in Pakistan

“It is important for every girl to receive information regarding laws and institutions available in Pakistan to promote gender equality by ending gender-based violence, as this information will not only give us a sense of protection but we will also be able to help our peers for fixing the circle of gender-based violence.”

— Bisma, a student

A workshop for dialogue between girls and key stakeholders on “Prioritization of Ending Gender-Based Violence” was held in Lahore, Pakistan, and

graced with the attendance of the first lady of the state of Punjab, Mrs. Parveen Sarwar. The event was organized by GNRC – Pakistan, under the leadership of Search For Justice – CAN Pakistan, collaborating with the National Commission for Human Rights, the Pakistan Girl Guides Association (Punjab), and the Australian High Commission of Pakistan.

The workshop was designed to empower women and young girls by enhancing their understanding of legal provisions as well as the workings of the national institutions that support women and young girls in cases of gender-based violence.



Ending Violence in Children's Early Years

INSPIREd Faith Communities: Nurturing Values and Spirituality in Early Childhood for the Prevention of Violence

Globally it is estimated that close to 300 million (three in four) children between the ages of two and four experience violence from their caregivers. The magnitude of violence impacting children in their early years⁴ prompted Arigatou International to establish the Consortium on Nurturing Values and Spirituality in Early Childhood for the Prevention of Violence in 2018. The Consortium membership includes 17 civil society and faith-based organizations, multilateral organizations, and academic institutions, as well as individual experts and religious leaders. The aims are to foster collaboration, share good practices, and develop evidence-based and innovative approaches for integrating values-based education and spirituality in early childhood for the prevention of violence and the holistic development of children.⁵

"Good parenting is uphill, but a possible task for which guidance is provided through scriptural wisdom."

— Swami Gunatitananda (Sri Lanka)

In 2019, the Consortium organized national roundtables in Brazil, India, Lebanon, Kenya and Sri Lanka, bringing together over 600 religious leaders, representatives of governments, faith-based and civil society organizations, experts on children's issues, academics, pediatricians and educators to raise awareness about the importance of children's well-being during the early years and contribute to the prevention of violence.

The Consortium launched a project entitled "INSPIREd Faith Communities: Nurturing Values and Spirituality in Early Childhood for the Prevention of Violence," producing five country-specific advocacy booklets to raise awareness about the importance of children's well-being during the early years. The booklets connect theological reflections with neuroscience to support parents, caregivers, educators, and their communities and inspire them to provide nurturing care and safe environments for children — the starting place for preventing all forms of violence against children. The project was supported by funding from the New Venture Fund to scale up the INSPIRE Seven Strategies for Ending Violence Against Children.

National Roundtables in 2019

 **600**
religious leaders



 **5**
countries

[Visit the Consortium website](#)

⁴ The Consortium specifically focuses on preventing violence against children ages 0 to 8.

⁵ Organizations participating in the Consortium include: Aga Khan Foundation, Catholic Relief Services, Early Childhood Peace Consortium, Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children, Guerrand-Hermès Foundation for Peace, International Network of Engaged Buddhists, Islamic Relief Worldwide, Office of the Special Representative to the United Nations Secretary-General on Violence Against Children, Pastoral Da Criança Internacional, Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement (Sri Lanka), Shanti Ashram (India), UNICEF, University of Montreal, World Bank, World Council of Churches and World Vision International. Individual experts include Mrs. Caroline Arnold, Most Rev. Bishop Duleep De Chickera, Dr. Ilham Nasser, Dr. Rashied Omar and Prof. Anantanand Rambachan

Ending Gender-Based Violence

Gender-based violence continues to be prevalent across the globe, exacerbating inequalities and poverty everywhere it occurs. To tackle its negative impacts on children, Arigatou International seeks to equip and inspire local communities to generate greater social and political will for legislation, policies, and increased funding of programs to protect children and youth from gender-based violence.

“What are the obstacles to prevention and elimination of gender-based violence in your community?” This was one of the questions posed to young leaders from Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo, Mali, Somalia and South Sudan as they sought to identify and provide possible solutions for the menace of gender-based violence in their countries.

Youth from the African Children and Youth Network for Human Rights/Réseau des Enfants et Jeunes Africains pour les Droits Humains (REJADH), helped to mobilize local communities

in these five countries to challenge gender-based violence. REJADH reached over 1,000 children and youth through an awareness campaign during the 16 Days of Activism Against GBV, December 10-25, 2019, as well as grassroots advocacy actions in their communities.

“We must stand up together, speak out together and take action against rape and all forms of violence against women and girls.”

— Warda, REJADH youth, Somalia

The network has been involved mainly in advocating for ratification and universal implementation of the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (otherwise known as the Maputo Protocol), as well as other relevant laws and policies. Arigatou International, in collaboration with Norwegian Church Aid (NCA) and Changemakers-Oslo, formed REJADH in 2016.



Ending Violent Extremism and Enhancing Social Cohesion

The number of children recruited to join or who become victims of violent extremist groups is on the rise. Violent extremism has a multi-dimensional impact on children — affecting their most basic rights, depriving them of access to education, and exacerbating extreme child poverty. Arigatou International seeks out evidence-based interventions for strengthening resilience against recruitment to violent extremism in local communities, as a key preventive factor for challenging this scourge. We know that poverty increases the likelihood of participation in violent extremist groups, and that empowering communities to become resilient also involves increasing economic opportunities. In light of this, in 2019, GNRC – Kenya with the support of Arigatou International, the Global Community Engagement and Resilience Fund (GCERF), the Goldin Institute, and the Islamic Foundation Kenya, embarked on a project to build the capacity of women to positively promote co-existence and respect, thereby transforming their communities.

Women benefitting from the project acquired leadership skills, knowledge on preventing violent extremism, entrepreneurship skills to develop a business, and projection plans.

This led to the creation of five small- and medium-sized enterprises based in Bombolulu, including the Breakthrough Women Group that ventured into the hair salon business, the Beba Nikubebe Women Group that specialized in egg vending, the Nafahirwa Women Group that opened a charcoal business, and the Pamoja Wamama Twaweza Women Group and Vitendo Tenda Women Group, which both focused on broiler chicken farming.

“Every religion has been used to perpetrate violence in the past and Islam is not an exception. We need a concerted effort in the fight against terrorism and violent terrorism.”

— *Sheik Ibrahim Lethome*

“I hope for you women leaders, you will inspire, you will influence people to achieve a goal, a target; and by this you will be creating peaceful resilient communities. As women leaders, by example, we have to be careful with our words and our actions.”

— *Rev. Jane Jilani*



SPOTLIGHT**Advancing Peace and Protecting Youth and Children from Violent Extremism in 12 African Countries**

The Regional Peace Programme covers 12 countries in the East and Horn of Africa - Burundi, Djibouti, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Kenya, Rwanda, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Tanzania, and Uganda. This programme brings together 7 organizations including Arigatou International, All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC), Africa Council of Religious Leaders (ACRL), Fellowship of Christian Councils and Churches in the Great Lakes and Horn of Africa (FECCLAHA), Hekima Institute of Peace Studies and International Relations (HIPSIR), International Center for Peace, Human Rights and Development-IPHRD Africa, and Norwegian Church Aid (NCA).

Through the program, Arigatou International supports youth from the 12 countries to develop leadership skills in advancing peace, with a focus on preventing and countering violent extremism (P/CVE), promoting Freedom of Religion or Belief (FoRB) and enhancing social cohesion.

The approach includes dialogue, training, mentorship, research, storytelling and media. The participating youth led community activities multiplying the reach of the project to over 3,000 children and youth, who were mobilized to act to prevent violent extremism and promote peace in their communities. The project also has an online component: the youth-led #ILeadPeace online campaign, reaching over 70,000 people online in the period under review.

Country Focus: Strengthening Social Cohesion in Sudan

The Sudan Social Cohesion Initiative is a faith-led initiative aimed at enhancing and strengthening social cohesion between different faith groups, and protecting and promoting the fundamental rights of faith minorities in Sudan. The Initiative promotes interfaith dialogue, interaction, and cooperation by people of different faiths, and uses religious resources as tools for mobilization, building trust, and positive relationships between key religious leaders/institutions and communities in selected sites in Sudan. The initiative is spearheaded by the Sudan Council of Churches (SCC) and the Sudan Interreligious Council (SIRC); with Arigatou International supporting their efforts through capacity-building for faith actors and children's engagement within the initiative. Over 150 community leaders have been trained as Community Dialogue Facilitators, predominantly

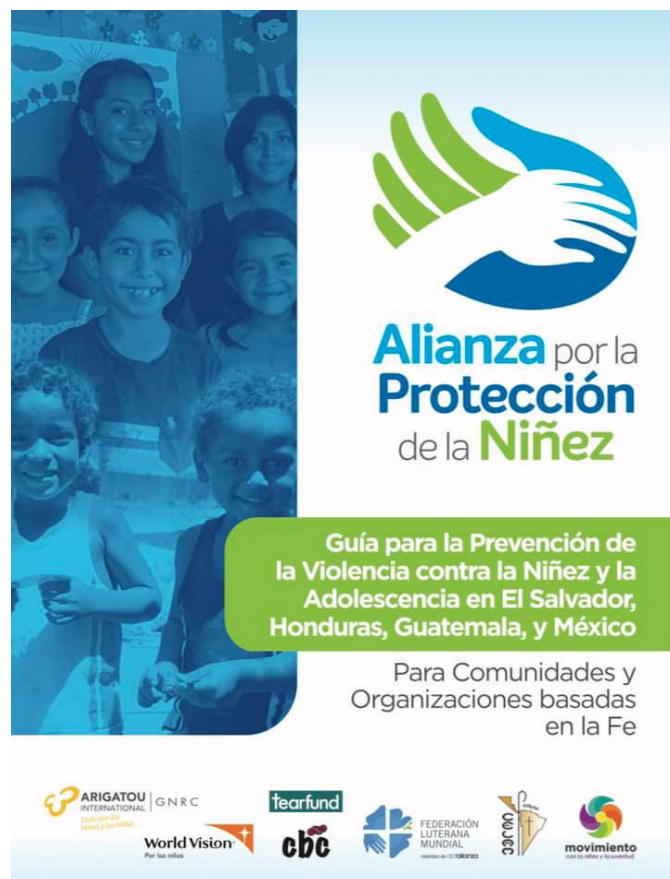
women and religious leaders from Khartoum. The training provided space for experience sharing and learning for the community leaders. In the year to come, the collaborating organizations will continue to support the work of these leaders for advocacy and social actions in their communities, working to promote Freedom of Religion or Belief (FoRB).



Protecting Children from Gang Violence and Organized Crime

Arigatou International and several partners established the Alliance for the Protection of Children in the “Northern Triangle” area in 2017, bringing together over 55 faith-inspired organizations and faith communities from El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Mexico. The Alliance focuses on preventing children from being recruited by gangs and other organized criminal groups, and on providing support to child victims. It also advocates for increased public investment in policies for the prevention of violence, the protection of groups most at risk (including children on the move), and the prohibition of physical and humiliating punishment of children, in all settings.

In early 2020, the Alliance developed the Guide for Violence Prevention to support the work of its members. The guide focuses on concrete strategies and actions that faith actors can carry out in primary, secondary and tertiary prevention.



Ending Online Child Sexual Exploitation and Abuse

At any given moment, 750,000 individuals around the globe are actively seeking to connect with children for sexual purposes, according to the Federal Bureau of Investigation in the United States. This staggering figure is only likely to increase as children are increasingly engaged in the digital world. Sadly, it also means that countless children have been exposed to online sexual exploitation and abuse, adding to the numbers already gravely affected by cyber-bullying and harassment.

Keeping children safe online: A top priority

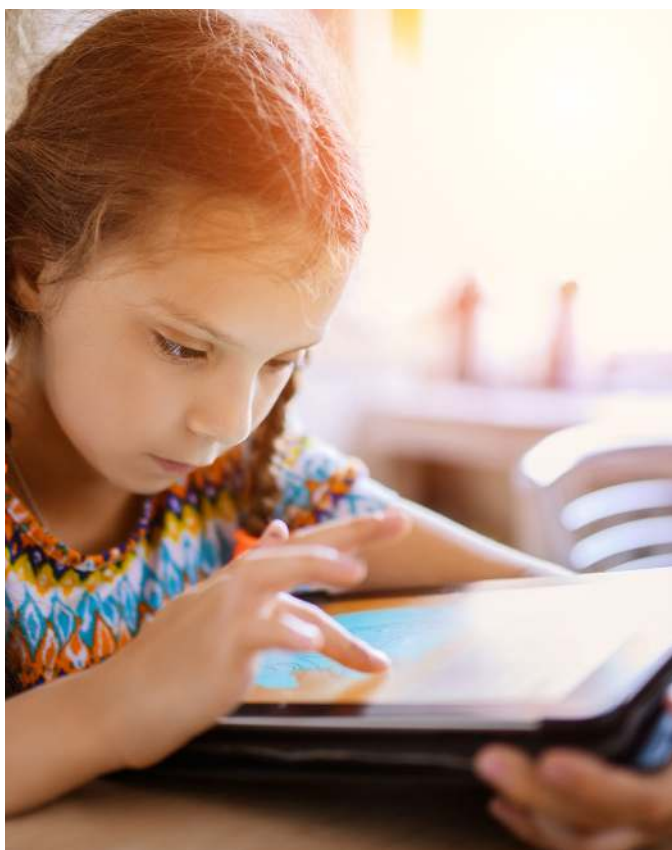
In 2019, Arigatou International co-organized a Campaign on Ending Online Child Sexual Exploitation and Abuse together with the Interfaith Alliance for Safer Communities and the University of Nairobi. The campaign sought to raise awareness about this rampant form of violence against children and urge stakeholders to join together to take greater action to address it.

“The statistics on online child sexual exploitation and abuse are alarming, and therefore faith and global leaders must unite against it. Leaders, elders and parents have to endure every day a life of constant fear concerning their children being exploited.”

— Rev. Dr. Samuel Kobia

Online sexual exploitation of children is a multidimensional problem that calls for multiple interventions, new thinking, and new approaches. Faith leaders have a significant role to play not only in ensuring their communities and facilities are safe spaces, but also by reaching out to children, parents and caretakers to strengthen their awareness and prevention strategies, and by helping to educate their communities about how to ensure digital experiences are safe.

Arigatou International is committed to supporting multi-religious strategies and approaches to prevent online sexual exploitation and abuse of children.



GNRC Members Take Action Preventing Violence Against Children in Lebanon

GNRC – Lebanon, with the leadership of Annas Linnas, organized a conference inviting 40 participants to dialogue on the role of faith leaders and educational institutions in preventing violence against children and child poverty. The participants included religious leaders from diverse Lebanese communities, principals from private and public secondary schools, and educators.

GNRC members also paid visits to Syrian refugee children and parents in their homes, encouraging parents to take good care of their children and try to discover and help them build their capacities. They also shared information with both parents and children on child rights and spirituality, particularly on having empathy for others and living peacefully together. The children expressed optimism about life and high hopes about one day returning home to their country, growing

spiritually and socially, and getting back to school. This effort reached 50 children directly and 25 indirectly. About 45 parents were also reached at home with basic support items including food.



"ALL FOR CHILDREN" ADVANCING ETHICS EDUCATION TO ACHIEVE TRANSFORMATION

Supporting children so they can transform the world around them requires specific educational approaches that focus on empowering them to become engaged and responsible citizens, able to respond to injustices around them and uphold the human dignity of every person.

For over a decade, Arigatou International has supported the implementation of *Learning to Live Together: An Intercultural and Interfaith Programme for Ethics Education*, which Arigatou designed to contribute to the realization of children's right to full and healthy physical, mental, spiritual, moral and social development.



The *Learning to Live Together* manual is available in 13 different languages.

Reach from April 1, 2019 to March 31, 2020



Since its launch in 2008, *Learning to Live Together* has reached more than 435,230 children in 45 countries, thanks to the initiative taken by more than 100 implementing partners.

Learning to Live Together (LTLT) has helped children and youth in strengthening their capacity to manage their emotions, deal with conflicts in positive ways, learn to reconcile their differences, and to work collaboratively with others. The LTLT programme fosters critical thinking in children and provides spaces for dialogue, challenging prejudices, and improving their capacity to embrace diversity and empathize with those belonging to different ethnic, religious and socio-economic groups.

In the year under review, LTLT activities were implemented systematically by local partners in 15 countries, benefiting 6,432 children and youth. The systematic implementation of the programme helps create safe environments for children to grow, learn and express themselves. It can open spaces to nurture values and spirituality in children, helping to bring about change in their own lives, their families and the community.

Another 10,025 children and youth were reached by programs in 18 countries through other activities carried out by Learning to Live Together Certified Facilitators and Trainers in the field, supported by local organizations.

Arigatou International – Geneva manages the Ethics Education for Children initiative.



At this workshop, children were able to voice their needs and share about their realities and the challenges they face, as well as their dreams and ideas. The experience revealed valuable information on how we can better support educators and teachers to work with children in this age range.

SPOTLIGHT

Tackling Violence in Kenya Through Values-Based Education

Using *Learning to Live Together* to contribute to a peace-building process, by enhancing dialogue, empathy, interconnections, and ethical reflections

More than 700 children from West Kenya were reached by the *Learning to Live Together* programme in the year under review, after 64 teachers from the counties of Baringo and Elgeyo-Marakwet were trained on its use.

This region has continuously experienced violent conflicts, which have been aggravated by an acute shortage of food and adverse weather conditions. It is against this background that the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology of Kenya, the Kenya National Commission for UNESCO, and World Vision Kenya, with the technical support of Arigatou International – Geneva, organized a peacebuilding intervention.

Teachers reported a positive impact on children, who have developed a better attitude towards neighboring communities, and also improved their dialogue and negotiation skills. The programme has promoted a spirit of living together, respecting one another as well as people of different denominations and ethnic groups, and it has also strengthened the relationships between teachers and students.



Adapting the *Learning to Live Together* Programme for Children Ages 6 to 11

The years from 6 through 11 are a time of important developmental advances that establish children's sense of identity. During these years, children make strides toward adulthood by becoming more competent, independent, self-aware, and involved in the world beyond their families. Research shows that a child's overall health and well-being during middle childhood affects their ability to concentrate and learn, develop and maintain friendships, and navigate thoughtful decision making.

Ethics education programs can provide critical support by helping to nurture children's critical thinking and spirituality and providing them with opportunities to explore relationships with others, challenge their prejudices and stereotypes, and learn collaborative skills. Following the global success of the *Learning to Live Together* programme for children 12 to 18, this adaptation process will help bring ethics education for children to a broader age-range, trusting that nurturing ethical values and spirituality earlier in life can make a difference in the lives of children, their families and their communities.

Throughout the year under review, Arigatou International – Geneva, with the support of GNRC members in Ecuador, El Salvador, India, Kenya, Portugal, Romania, and Tanzania, carried out a series of seven pilot workshops within the framework of the adaptation of the *Learning to Live Together* manual to middle childhood years, reaching a total of 250 children from several ethnic and religious communities. Six of the seven pilot workshops were preceded by a stakeholders' meeting, bringing together 175 participants from 45 different institutions, including religious leaders, educationalists, child protection experts, and other partners.

The adaptation process has been supported by the Smart Peace Foundation based in Switzerland.



PROMOTING A TRANSFORMATIVE PEDAGOGY TO CONTRIBUTE TO PEACEBUILDING, RESILIENCE AND THE PREVENTION OF VIOLENT EXTREMISM IN AFRICA

Arigatou International – Geneva served as a technical partner in the “Peace, Resilience Building and Prevention of Violent Extremism in Africa through Teacher Development” project, led by the UNESCO International Institute for Capacity Building in Africa (IICBA) and supported by the Government of Japan.

“This workshop is important because it allowed us to explore how we can prevent violent extremism using transformative pedagogy and ethics and how we can adapt some of the strategies and resources to work in universities.”

— Participant

The project empowered university instructors from 20 countries in Africa to build peace and resilience and prevent violent extremism through higher education. It built upon lessons learned from previous projects, within the framework of collaboration with UNESCO IICBA, implemented in the Horn of Africa in 2017 and the Sahel region in 2018.

In the framework of this project, Arigatou International – Geneva designed and facilitated a series of three workshops with 111 educators, which included both onsite and online sessions in English, French and Arabic. It also designed and structured a self-paced online training program on the topic to further support the participants and amplify the reach of the project to other educators across Africa.



University instructors from Algeria, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Libya, Mali, Mauritania, Morocco, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Somalia, South Sudan, Tunisia, and Uganda represented the 20 countries involved in the project.

GNRC Members Take Action

Advancing Values-Based Education to Achieve Transformation in Romania

GNRC – Romania, with the leadership of Education for Change (EfC), organized several workshops to nurture ethical values and spirituality in children and youth, to help them to strengthen their sense of identity, critical thinking, and ability to make well-grounded decisions, and to develop their abilities to work with people of other cultures and religions, while fostering their individual and collective responsibilities in a global community. A total of 3,000 students and 75 teachers and counsellors from schools and high schools in Bucharest and from five other regions of the country participated.

GNRC – Romania has built an effective LTLT Community of Practice encompassing teachers from Bucharest, Sibiu, Brasov, Bistrita Nasaud and Dambovita Counties. Twenty eight teachers

presented the results of the LTLT program and Education for Change (EfC) projects and identified, through teamwork, ways of increasing impact. EfC trainers introduced innovative methods of working with children.



DID YOU KNOW?

In the framework of supporting the most vulnerable children to access educational opportunities, Arigatou International's End Child Poverty initiative supported children from Kenya, Lebanon, Malaysia, Pakistan, Sierra Leone, and South Sudan with a scholarship program, providing educational assistance to over 890 children in these countries.

"ALL FOR CHILDREN" **BUILDING A WORLD** **FREE OF CHILD POVERTY**

Poverty is the worst form of violence, and while poverty harms all human beings, it is more threatening to children. It denies them of their right to grow up free from deprivation and develop healthily to their full potential. Since 2012, Arigatou International's global Interfaith Initiative to End Child Poverty has been working to achieve a world where every child lives free from poverty. Child-led initiatives to end poverty continue to be at the core of our mission.

Together We Can **End Child Poverty Worldwide**

"Together We Can End Child Poverty Worldwide" is an awareness and advocacy campaign call to action by Arigatou International's End Child Poverty initiative. Through this, we work with communities to challenge the root causes of poverty in the human heart and in the structural domains in society, and to build sustainable solutions. The campaign runs from October to December every year, with a highlight on the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty, October 17. The core of this campaign is children's active and meaningful participation, as well as its community-driven nature.

In 2019, we mobilized grassroots community campaign actions that reached over 27,580 children in 25 countries. These included listening to children regarding the challenges they face and solutions proposed to tackle child poverty. It also included actions to donate resources to assist children and families affected by poverty, as well as teaching children about the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC).

SPOTLIGHT **The End Child Poverty** **Knowledge Centre**

The End Child Poverty Knowledge Centre is a global faith-inspired hub for research, resource gathering, networking, experience sharing, knowledge dissemination and capacity-building for individuals and organizations working to alleviate child poverty. The Knowledge Centre was launched in 2014 in Colombo, Sri Lanka, in a collaboration between Arigatou International and the Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement. Today, it continues to serve as a source for relevant child poverty-related materials for our grassroots partners in the field.

The Knowledge Centre also works to equip children to serve as "Child Facilitators on Child Rights and Child Protection," so they can reach out to their peers about child rights.

INSPIRE. ACT. CHANGE: An **Interfaith Guide to End Child Poverty**

This Arigatou International resource guide was launched in 2017 during the GNRC 5th Forum in Panama. It is a practical tool to equip faith actors with knowledge and skills for tackling child poverty. The Guide was used in our advocacy, communication, and program activities throughout the year under review, including the October 17 International Day for the Eradication of Poverty, in commemorations in over 20 countries.



[View the Guide](#)

"ALL WITH CHILDREN"

ENSURING CHILD SAFEGUARDING, PARTICIPATION AND EMPOWERMENT

Creating environments where children are safe — physically, socially, emotionally and spiritually — can help them develop to their fullest potential. Ensuring that children are aware of their rights and equipped to respond in positive ways enables them to pursue their own well-being. Children are individuals in their own right, and their empowerment is a *sine qua non* for their protection.

To mark the 30th anniversary of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child in 2019, Arigatou International developed "All with Children," an online space (shown at right) where we share our approach to working with children, amplify the voices of the young people who work with us, and provide resources for advancing children's safeguarding and participation. Members of the GNRC Youth Committee contributed resources to its development.

This online space is part of our long-term strategy to work more closely together with children and young people, and it represents a concrete effort to strengthen our commitment to work not only *for* children but also *with* them.

DID YOU KNOW?

Arun, a child from India, and his friends, volunteering in Shanti Ashram, started the "Poverty Solutions" initiative. The children themselves collect resources for a food bank that now serves hundreds of families. This child-led solution to overcome poverty was contextualized and replicated in Nepal, reaching over 500 children in 2019, through the support of the Peace Service Centre – Nepal and Arigatou International.

Arigatou International is All with Children

Children are at the center of all we do and how we do it. We work to ensure the creation of safe spaces and learning opportunities free from any form of violence, where children can fully express themselves, participate, engage with people of different cultures and beliefs, and become actively and positively involved in our work and in their communities. Arigatou International is all for children, but also all with them.

Our 3 Pillars of Child Involvement

- Safeguarding**
We promote children's safety and well-being in all our actions.
[LEARN MORE](#)
- Participation**
We listen to children and they share their views and work with us.
[LEARN MORE](#)
- Empowerment**
We provide opportunities for children to take an active role in society.
[LEARN MORE](#)

From the GNRC Youth Committee
Committee 2020 engaged in promoting online safety

Among the many projects the GNRC Youth Committee 2020 has been involved in this year, the members of the committee have been very active in raising awareness about the risks and threats that children face in the digital world. In this video message, they want to bring to our attention some behaviors that might put children at risk when they navigate on the internet.

Key Resources to Ensure Children's Safeguarding

Child Safeguarding is paramount to Arigatou International. Our Child Safeguarding Policy and Code of Conduct describes Arigatou International's commitment to ensure that all our programs and activities prevent and respond to any safeguarding concern. They provide comprehensive and clear guidelines for all our staff members, volunteers, and partners to keep children safe. Together with Arigatou International's Policy and Code of Conduct, we have also developed two resources to ensure that all children we work with are safeguarded and treated with dignity and respect.

[VIEW RESOURCES](#)

GNRC Youth Committee

In 2019, Arigatou International launched an international internship program open to youth ages 16 to 18 from around the world, leading to the formation of the GNRC Youth Committee. The youth on the committee provide support and input to the initiatives developed by Arigatou International, particularly in relation to children's safeguarding, participation, and empowerment. Together with their local GNRC groups, these young leaders are also involved in local projects to promote children's rights, end violence against children, find peaceful solutions to conflicts in their communities, and build a better world together.

Every year, the members of the GNRC Youth Committee are invited to serve as interns, and to design and carry out a unique campaign to promote the rights of the child. In 2019, the GNRC Youth Committee planned and participated in local and global activities to commemorate the 30th anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and supported the development of content for the "All with Children" online space at the Arigatou International website.



My skills and things I didn't know I could really do came to reality because of this internship. The internship taught me to be a giver and enhanced my moral value.

— Bertsy, Cameroon



I got the opportunity to do more. I even visited children in a home for vulnerable children. The internship was an opportunity to explore my talents.

— Saman, Pakistan



I have improved myself as a leader, and I came to know what I am capable of. As an intern, I got the opportunity to work with people around the world who became my friends also.

— Aakash, India



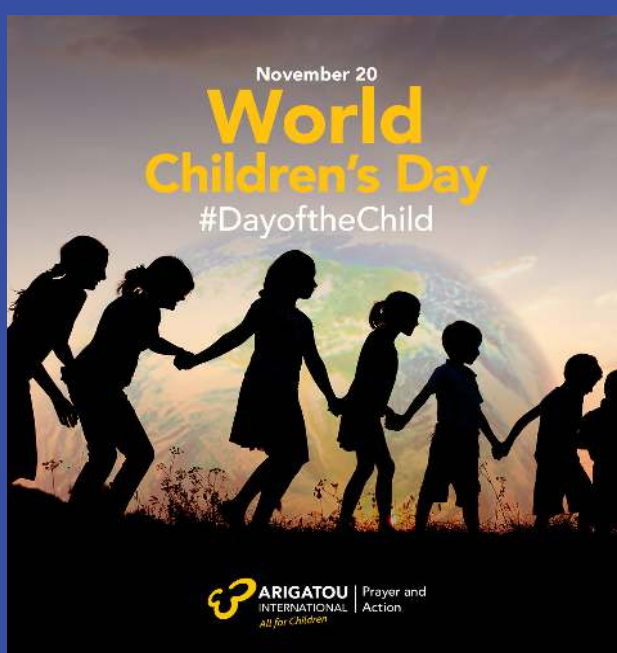
I learned a lot and I can say that the internship filled my expectations. I am grateful to all the staff and to Arigatou International.

— Sofía, Ecuador

ADVOCATING FOR CHILDREN WORLDWIDE

To achieve the greatest impact for children, we combine the programmatic work described thus far in this report with advocacy at the local, regional and global levels. Advocacy efforts, campaigns and the celebration of international days are effective ways of building momentum

toward substantial and sustainable change. Our advocacy covers five main areas of work: child rights, ending violence against children, ending child poverty, ethics education, and strengthening interfaith collaboration.



World Day of Prayer and Action for Children

Bringing people together to protect children's rights and dignity

Initiated by Arigatou International in 2008, the World Day of Prayer and Action for Children is commemorated every year on November 20, Universal Children's Day and the anniversary of the adoption of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). The World Day promotes spiritual and religious ceremonies and a wide range of year-round actions that bring together children and adults from diverse religious and cultural backgrounds to uphold children's rights and well-being. It connects religious and spiritual communities and civil society organizations in a common endeavor to advocate for a world that prioritizes children's rights and that allows them to flourish in caring, empowering and protective environments.

Since 2008, the World Day has brought together secular and faith communities working for and with children through over 300 activities in over 85 countries. In 2019, the World Day was celebrated in 42 countries across Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean, and the Middle East, engaging 41 partners and GNRC members who undertook 98 actions and reached 31,926 people. Overall, 94% of World Day actions in 2019 were interfaith, bringing together a total of 14 diverse religious communities. Arigatou International's Prayer and Action for Children initiative, based in the New York office, takes the lead role for Arigatou in promoting the World Day.

Arigatou International's Prayer and Action for Children initiative, based in the New York office, takes the lead role for Arigatou in promoting the World Day.



Photo Contest

Acting Together to Achieve Social and Environmental Justice for All

Show us what action you took, no matter how big or small, to address poverty in your community.

#SnapsforChange #EndChildPoverty

International Day for Eradication of Poverty

The International Day for the Eradication of Poverty (IDEP) is observed every year on October 17, as a global day of awareness, advocacy and action against poverty. Arigatou International has mobilized communities to commemorate IDEP annually since 2013, anchored within our broader “Together We Can End Child Poverty” campaign. Through this campaign and IDEP, we catalyze practical actions to address the root causes of child poverty in society and in the heart. At the heart of this campaign is children’s active and meaningful participation, as well as its community-driven nature. Additionally, we emphasize social and policy advocacy that contributes to the overall well-being of children, and to overcoming child poverty in particular.

Over the years, this campaign has grown to encompass over 245 activities in more than 40 countries. In 2019, our campaign and IDEP actions reached over 27,580 children directly, and engaged a total of more than 250,000 people with a combination of online and offline activities. Partners from over 22 countries joined hands to organize more than 45 interfaith grassroots actions. In the coming years we will continue to utilize this opportunity to ensure ending child poverty remains a priority concern at community, national and global levels.

Arigatou International’s End Child Poverty initiative, based in the Nairobi office, takes the lead role for Arigatou in promoting IDEP.

Advocacy Work at the United Nations in Geneva and New York

Arigatou International works closely with the United Nations to influence governments and other key stakeholders to strengthen the protection of children's rights and contribute to the realization of the Sustainable Development Agenda, focusing especially on the most marginalized and vulnerable children.

In Geneva, this work includes advocating at the Human Rights Council and the Committee on the Rights of the Child, organizing regular side-events during the Human Rights Council Sessions, and holding special briefings for Member States. In Geneva, Arigatou International is the co-convenor of the Working Group on Children and Violence of Child Rights Connect. Arigatou International is also a member of the Working Group on Children in Armed Conflict of Child Rights Connect, as well as the NGO Working Group on Human Rights Education.

In New York, Arigatou International is a member of the Multi-faith Advisory Council to the United Nations Interagency Task Force on Religion and Development. Arigatou International's advocacy work in New York includes regularly organizing side events during the sessions of United Nations General Assembly as well as at High-Level Political Forums.

Arigatou International works closely with and supports the mandate of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence against Children, and also collaborates at global, regional, and national levels with UNICEF.

Arigatou International collaborates closely with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in Geneva, particularly supporting the development and implementation of the "Faith for Rights" framework.

We are committed to bringing the voices of children into these spaces and actively facilitating their genuine participation in side-events and consultations as part of our advocacy work at the United Nations.



Sameer, a young person from Pakistan, speaks about child rights.

Helping to Shape Change through Global Advocacy Platforms and Networks

In our advocacy work, we join hands to amplify our reach and catalyze collaborative efforts for change. Arigatou International participates in several global platforms and networks. Rev Keishi Miyamoto, President, Arigatou International, serves on the Board of the Global Partnership to End Violence against Children. Arigatou International serves on the Steering Committees of the International Partnership on Religion and Sustainable Development (PaRD), as well as the Moral Imperative to End Extreme Poverty convened by the World Bank. Arigatou International also co-chairs the Advisory Group for Faith for Positive Change for Children (FPCC), which is a partnership between the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), Religions for Peace (RfP), and the Joint Learning Initiative on Faith & Local Communities (JLI). Arigatou International continues to support the mission of the African Children and Youth Network for Human Rights and the Africa Interfaith Initiative on the Sustainable Development Goals, contributing to regional efforts to strengthen child rights and advance the sustainable development agenda. We participate in a number of other global and regional advocacy networks like these, working closely with governments, multilateral agencies and civil society organizations. (See the following page for more information on our partners, collaborators, and membership in collaborative platforms.)

Promoting Children's Well-Being

Our advocacy in Geneva seeks to promote children's well-being, for instance by highlighting the critical need to provide values-based education for children and young people within the framework of the child's right to education set out in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. In the period under review, we **engaged with more than 300 representatives** of United Nations agencies and Permanent Missions, as well as representatives of governments, ministries of education, and civil society and faith-based organizations, together with members of academia, educators, and other stakeholders.



COLLABORATION — THE VALUE OF WORKING TOGETHER

At Arigatou International, we recognize that collaboration is the key to securing children's rights and well-being worldwide. Early on in our history, we began participating in and supporting projects launched by UNICEF, UNHCR, and other organizations that share our commitment to children's survival and protection. Then, our 10th anniversary saw a major expansion of our collaborative efforts in supporting faith communities, with the inauguration of the Global Network of Religions for Children (GNRC) in the year 2000, a global network of faith organizations working for the well-being of children. In convening the GNRC, it was the deep conviction of our founder, the late Rev. Takeyasu Miyamoto, that people of every faith have a special moral obligation to care for the most vulnerable, especially children. He believed that people from every religious tradition could amplify their efforts to make the world fit for children by working together, not just at the global level, but at the grassroots.

Today, Arigatou International is proud to work closely with a very diverse range of partners and collaborators at every level — global, regional, national, and local. We are also a member of a number of important coalitions, consortiums, global partnerships, and alliances. True to our "All for Children" mission, we envision a world where everyone is actively involved in helping children thrive, and we work hard to provide platforms where all sorts of organizations and people can work together to ensure every child can grow up safe and sound and reach for her or his highest potential. Many of these joint efforts are featured in this report.

Partners

Here is a list of the organizations with which we have entered into agreements or other formal arrangements.

- Aga Khan Foundation Portugal
- Church World Service (CWS) Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean
- Comunità di Sant'Egidio
- European Wergeland Centre (EWC)
- Fundación Universitaria San Pablo (UNISANPABLO)
- Geneva Peacebuilding Platform – Geneva Peace Week
- Global Community Engagement and Resilience Fund (GCERF)
- Globalethics.net
- Goldin Institute
- Guerrand-Hermès Foundation for Peace Research Institute (GHFP)
- Inter-American Children's Institute (IIN-OAS)
- Interfaith Alliance for Safer Communities
- International Network of Engaged Buddhists (INEB)
- Japan Committee for UNICEF
- KAICIID
- New Venture Fund
- Norwegian Church Aid
- Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement
- Scholas Occurrentes Pontifical Foundation
- Smart Peace Foundation
- UN ECOSOC (special consultative status)
- UNESCO Regional Office for Eastern Africa
- UNESCO IICBA
- UNESCO's Multisectoral Regional Office for West Africa (Sahel)
- UNICEF (consultative status)
- United Religions Initiative (URI)
- World Vision International

Collaborators

Here is a partial list of the many other collaborators we work with around the world. Unfortunately, space does not permit every organization and individual to be listed, but we deeply value them all.

- Act Alliance
- Aga Khan Foundation
- Catholic Relief Services
- Child Fund Alliance
- Coalition Network of Religious and Traditional Peacemakers (NRTP)
- Cordoba Peace Institute
- Early Childhood Peace Consortium
- Focolare Movement
- Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children
- Guerrand-Hermès Foundation for Peace
- GNRC member organizations in 61 countries around the globe
- Initiatives of Change International - Caux Forum for Human Security
- International Society for Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect (ISPCAN)
- Islamic Relief Worldwide
- Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)
- Office of the Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General on Violence against Children
- Parliament of the World's Religions
- Pastoral Da Criança Internacional
- Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue (PCID)
- Shanti Ashram
- UN Committee on the Rights of the Child
- United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)
- United Nations Multi-faith Council (MFAC)
- University of Montreal
- World Bank Group
- World Council of Churches

Membership in coalitions, consortiums, global partnerships, and alliances

Arigatou International plays an active role in the following collaborative platforms.

- African Children and Youth Network for Human Rights
- Africa Interfaith Initiative on the Sustainable Development Goals
- Alliance for the Protection of Children (Honduras, El Salvador, Guatemala, and Mexico)
- Child Rights Connect
- Global Coalition to End Child Poverty
- Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children
- International Consortium on Nurturing Values and Spiritual Development in Early Childhood for the Prevention of Violence (conceived and convened by Arigatou International)
- International Foundation for Interreligious and Intercultural Education (IFIIE)
- International Partnership on Religion and Sustainable Development (PaRD)
- Joint Learning Initiative on Faith & Local Communities (JLI)
- Moral Imperative to End Extreme Poverty
- Religions for Peace
- WePROTECT Global Alliance

SPECIAL FEATURE — HIGHLIGHTING CHILDREN'S RIGHTS AS THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC BEGAN

Child-Focused Strategies and Creative Resources for Parents, Caregivers, and Religious Leaders and Communities

The Covid-19 pandemic has been an extraordinarily difficult global challenge. Local grassroots faith communities have been among the key responders to the pandemic, reaching the most vulnerable and marginalized groups and supporting children.

Seeing the great impact the pandemic was having on children early on, Arigatou International moved quickly to promote interfaith collaboration and action to address the direct and indirect impacts Covid-19 was having on children.

We joined forces with local and global partners around the world, launching the "Faith in Action for Children" campaign in April 2020. The campaign sought to equip religious leaders and communities, as well as child protection organizations, civil society, educators, parents and caregivers to increase their collaboration, with a specific focus on ameliorating the impact of the pandemic on children. Arigatou International created and widely shared a package of resources and carefully targeted approaches to support the diverse participants and stakeholders of the campaign.

Answering the Ethical Imperative

The campaign was built on the ethical imperative to come together in solidarity as one human community to protect the most vulnerable, especially children.

The campaign was designed to mobilize action at the local level in countries around the world. It focused especially on addressing the escalation of violence against children and their reduced access to social services, while calling attention to the negative impacts on their physical social, emotional and spiritual well-being. It also sought to amplify the voices of children and young people and create spaces for their reflections on the impact of Covid-19 and the transformations they would like to see in their communities.

The members of the Global Network of Religion for Children are participating in the campaign to reach and support the most vulnerable children and their families in local contexts.

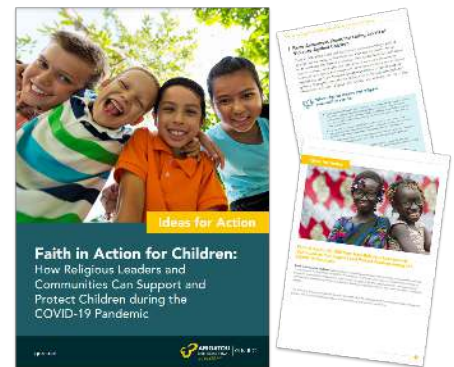
** Although this report covers the period from April 1, 2019 to March 31, 2020, the publication date allowed us to include this brief feature on the steps Arigatou International took to keep the focus on children as the pandemic hit in earnest in the spring of 2020.*



Recommendations for religious leaders and communities to support and protect children during the pandemic

From raising awareness about the increasing levels of violence against children, to strengthening intra-faith and interfaith collaboration, supporting parents trying to strengthen values and spirituality in children, and building solidarity in response to the needs of the most vulnerable children — each recommendation is followed by concrete examples of actions that can be taken by religious leaders and communities.

Download the English version [here](#).



Messages and actions to ensure children's well-being during the Covid-19 pandemic

Actions recommended in this poster series include listening to children and youth, ensuring online safety, nurturing positive values within the family, fostering children's spiritual well-being, and teaching children healthy routines.

Download the English version [here](#).



Resources for parents and caregivers

Based on Arigatou International's *Learning to Live Together* programme, these new resources include the *Activity Booklet for Children during the Covid-19 Pandemic*, which presents 32 activities customized for children 4 to 18 years old. The aim is to give parents and caregivers tools they can use to support children's socio-emotional and spiritual needs during stay-at-home periods.

Download the English version [here](#).



Recommendations for parents and caregivers to nurture children's spirituality and ethical reflection

These posters featured recommendations for nurturing children's spirituality and ethical reflection during the Covid-19 stay-at-home periods. They encourage parents to create moments for prayer or meditation and to nurture gratitude, connections and to listen to one another.

Download the English version [here](#).



FINANCIAL INFORMATION

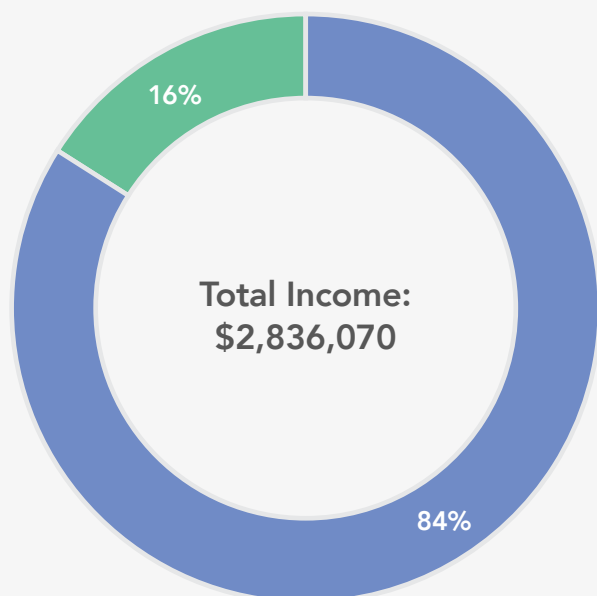
Practicing Careful Stewardship of Financial Resources

The majority of Arigatou International's funding comes from donations made by individual donors in Japan who support the organization's mission. The work of the organization around the world is also supported by many volunteers, by in-kind and financial contributions from project collaborators, as well as by project- or partnership-based grants from foundations or other institutional donors.

Much of Arigatou International's work involves catalyzing, mobilizing, equipping and inspiring other organizations and individuals. We participate in multi-stakeholder partnerships and apply our resources in a targeted manner that capitalizes on our globally unique core competencies in interfaith cooperation and children's empowerment and participation. In this way, we seek to strategically expand the direct and indirect impact of every contribution and grant we receive. Arigatou International is profoundly grateful to all who support its efforts to build a better world for children.

Income

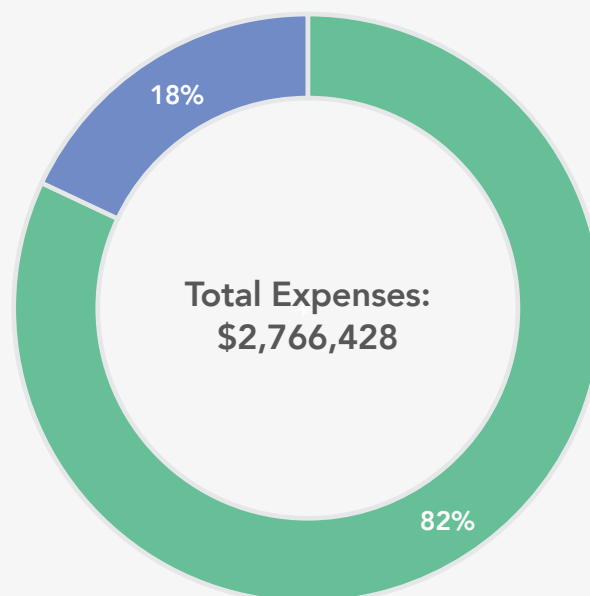
April 1, 2019 - March 31, 2020



- Donations from Individuals in Japan
- Donations from Organizations Outside Japan

Expenses

April 1, 2019 - March 31, 2020



- Four Global Initiatives
- Tokyo Headquarters*

Note: Original figures in Japanese yen for individual donations in Japan were translated to US dollars at 108.92 yen to 1 dollar.

* Tokyo Headquarters expenses include assistance for children's participation in educational and other programs, and general administrative expenses.

GOVERNANCE

GOVERNANCE AND OPERATING STRUCTURE

Arigatou International is a general incorporated foundation registered under Japan's public interest corporation system. It was established in 1990 as the Arigatou Foundation by the Japanese Buddhist organization, Myochikai, in order to help build a better world for children. In 2012, the name was changed to Arigatou International, accompanying its formal incorporation.

Arigatou International is governed by a Board of Directors and a Board of Councilors, in accordance with Japanese law. The Chairperson of the Board of Directors is Rev. Kenichiro Saito. The organization's operations are directed by the President of Arigatou International, Rev. Keishi Miyamoto, who also serves as the Chairperson of the Board of Councilors. The organization's day-to-day functioning is managed by a Secretary-General, who reports to the President. The Board of Directors has 6 members, 5 of which are outside directors. The Board of Councilors has 3 members.

The Board of Directors meets twice annually to deliberate upon and approve budgets and work programs, as well as other matters affecting the organization as a whole. Work plan and budget proposals are prepared and presented to the Board by the Chairperson of the Board of Directors. The fiscal year of the organization is from April 1 to March 31.

Members of the Board of Directors

Rev. Kenichiro Saito (Chair)
Chairman of the Board, Myochikai

Mr. Mitsuyoshi Banjyu
Tax Accountant

Dr. Keishin Inaba
Professor, Osaka University

Rev. Mitsuo Miyake
Chief Senior Minister, Konko Church of Izuo

Rev. Kazuhiro Motoyama
Chief Priest, Tamamitsu Shrine

Rev. Hidehito Okouchi
Chief Priest, Jukoin and Kenjuin Temples

Members of the Board of Councilors

Rev. Keishi Miyamoto (Chair)
President, Arigatou International,
Leader of Myochikai

Rev. Takashi Suzuki
Board Member, Myochikai

Rev. Yuji Suzuki
Board Member, Myochikai

Arigatou International is headquartered in Tokyo, Japan, and maintains offices in Geneva, Switzerland; Nairobi, Kenya; and New York, USA. Each office outside Japan is overseen by a director, who is appointed by and reports directly to the President of Arigatou International. Arigatou International operates four global initiatives from these offices outside Japan.

Directors of Arigatou International's Global Initiatives



Global Network of Religions for Children (Nairobi)

Dr. Mustafa Yusuf Ali

Secretary General, GNRC, and Director, Arigatou International – Nairobi



Ethics Education for Children (Geneva)

Ms. Maria Lucia Uribe

Director, Ethics Education for Children, and Director, Arigatou International – Geneva



Prayer and Action for Children (New York)

Ms. Rebeca Rios-Kohn

Director, Prayer and Action for Children, and Director, Arigatou International – New York



Interfaith Initiative to End Child Poverty (Nairobi)

Rev. Fred Nyabera

Director, Interfaith Initiative to End Child Poverty

Arigatou International's work is significantly extended by all the volunteer members and committees of the Global Network of Religions for Children as well as the close cooperation of its partners and collaborators (see page 37).

See page 41 for information on Arigatou International's funding sources.

ARIGATOU INTERNATIONAL ADVISORY GROUP

The Arigatou International Advisory Group provides strategic advice on how Arigatou International can make the most of its unique initiatives to help build a world where every child gets to grow up safe and sound. Arigatou International is very grateful for the significant collaboration and contributions that the Advisory Group members are offering to its work.



Mr. Kul Gautam
Former Deputy Executive Director, UNICEF, and Assistant Secretary-General, United Nations (Chair of the Advisory Group)



Dr. Kezevino Aram
President, Shanti Ashram (Vice-Chair of the Advisory Group)



Dr. Agnes Abuom
Moderator, World Council of Churches, Central Committee



Dr. Vinya Ariyaratne
President, Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement



Ms. Paloma Escudero
Director, Division of Communication, UNICEF



Dr. Azza Karam
Secretary General, Religions for Peace



Ms. Esther Lehmann-Sow
Global Director, Faith & Development, World Vision International



Sheikh Ibrahim Lethome
Secretary General, Centre for Sustainable Conflict Resolution, and Legal Advisor, Supreme Council of Kenya Muslims



The Most Reverend Felix Anthony Machado
Roman Catholic Archbishop of Vasai



Dr. Katherine Marshall
Senior Fellow, Berkley Center for Religion, Peace and World Affairs, and Professor of the Practice of Development, Conflict, and Religion, Georgetown University



The Right Reverend Dr. Barry Morgan
Former Archbishop, Church in Wales



The Most Reverend Julio E. Murray
Archbishop of the Anglican Church of Central America, Bishop of Panama



Prof. Anantanand Rambachan
Professor, Religion Department, Saint Olaf College



Rabbi David Rosen, KSG, CBE
International Director for Interreligious Affairs, American Jewish Committee



Dr. Mohammad Sammak
Secretary General of the Christian-Muslim Committee for Dialogue, Secretary General of the Executive Committee of the Christian-Muslim Arab Group, and Secretary General of the Islamic Spiritual Summit



Ms. Marta Santos Pais
Former UN Special Representative of the Secretary General on Violence against Children



CONTACT US

Arigatou International

3-3-3 Shibuya-ku, Tokyo, 151-0053, Japan

Phone: +81-3-3370-5396

Fax: +81-3-3370-7749

🌐 arigatouinternational.org

✉ [tokyo\(at\)arigatouinternational.org](mailto:tokyo(at)arigatouinternational.org)

f /ArigatouInternational

▶ ArigatouInternational

**"May every day find every
one of us continually embraced
in growing peace."**

— Rev. Keishi Miyamoto, President, Arigatou International

Arigatou International

3-3-3 Shibuya-ku, Tokyo, 151-0053, Japan
Phone: +81-3-3370-5396
Fax: +81-3-3370-7749