

Ethics Education for Children

Annual Report 2018 Fostering Interfaith and Intercultural Learning for Children Worldwide



ethicseducationforchildren.org

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A WORD FROM THE DIRECTOR

MARIA LUCIA URIBE Director, Arigatou International – Geneva

The world today is at the crossroads of technological progress and social, economic and political instability. On one side, we have more access to information and tools that allow us to communicate across borders; on the other, inequities, extreme ideologies, exclusion and discrimination are running rampant around the world.

When thousands of children and young people are skipping school to take to the streets, claim a better future, and demand better care for the global environment, we know that we are failing them as adults. When thousands of youth have to demonstrate to demand policies that provide them with decent opportunities, we know that our systems are failing them. When thousands of children take a stand on Universal Children's Day to say "NO!" to violence against children, to say "STOP!" to corporal punishment, gender-based violence, discrimination, and all forms of violence, and to say "LISTEN to us!" — we know that we are not doing enough to protect and work with children. Today, children and young people from all corners of the world are calling on adults to take care of our planet, our peoples and our future... their future. Children and young people are telling us that it does not matter what they are taught in school if we fail as human beings to care for one another, if they are not and do not feel protected and empowered, and if they are not provided with opportunities to make a difference in their communities.

It has become clear that we have privileged the education of the mind at the expense of the education of the heart.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, in Goal 4.7, declares that education should promote "sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity."



Ethics Education for Children is critical to achieving the 2030 Agenda. The cornerstone of sustainable development is education that helps children and youth to develop critical thinking skills and fosters collaboration and collective action, that nurtures empathy, respect for differences, and a sense of individual and collective responsibilities, and that helps develop the capacity to reconcile differences and create bridges of trust.

Our Ethics Education approach provides a conceptual framework, a pedagogical method and a set of creative tools that help children connect and learn from one another across religious, ethnic, gender and socio-economic divides. It equips them with the skills to enter into dialogue with one another, to become critically conscious about the world around them, and think about what they can do, individually and collectively, to transform their communities. Perhaps even more urgently today, Ethics Education nurtures children's spirituality — their innate capacity to connect with their inner selves, with others, with nature and with that they consider Divine or Ultimate — a spirituality that embraces the other, that strengthens their identity and belonging, and lifts them up to care for one another and to a greater purpose.

Ethics Education for Children is transforming the way education prepares learners for the challenges our societies face and the ethical demands of our times. We are driven by the voices of children, by the many educators who want to challenge vertical structures of education, and by all who understand that education must be part of the solution. We are driven by the conviction that education must contribute to building peaceful and inclusive societies.

As this report presents, Ethics Education for Children is working throughout the life cycle of children, and side by side with educators, families, religious communities, governments, civil society organizations, multilateral agencies, and children and youth. We are co-creating change with many partners around the world.

I invite you to join hands in action with us to transform the state of education and learning today, to work together with children and youth around the world who are demanding change, and to contribute to a better today and a better tomorrow for each and every child and for all.

Thank you for your interest in our work and for keeping the promise of building a world that cares for children — a world that includes and respects them, a world they are helping to shape.

Together we can make a difference.

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Maria Lucia Uribe Director Arigatou International Geneva

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



Launched the **Consortium on Nurturing** Values and Spirituality in Early Childhood, with the participation of 22 experts and representatives of faith-based organizations, civil society, international organizations, religious communities and academia to work together to improve the quality of early childhood.



Celebrated the **10th anniversary** of Learning to Live Together, our flagship programme for ethics education, which has reached more than 411,000 children in 45 countries.

Reached 7,112 children and youth with programs based on the Learning to Live Together programme, implemented by partners in nine countries.



Trained 213 new facilitators on the use of the *Learning to Live Together* programme, in collaboration with partners and GNRC member organizations in six countries.



Began the process of **adapting the** *Learning* **to** *Live* **Together manual** for use with younger children, from ages 6 to 11.

Reached more than 2,200 key actors and decision-makers in 12 countries in advocating for the critical need for creating safe, inclusive and empowering learning environments for children to grow and develop to their fullest potential.

Collaborated with a number of partners to enhance the quality of education using our innovative educational framework for ethics education and transformative pedagogy.



Contributed to Faith and Children's Rights: A Multi-religious Study on the Convention Rights of the Child, which was developed by Arigatou International in collaboration with the former Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General on Violence against Children, UNICEF, the GNRC, and with the support of KAICIID and World Vision International, on the occasion of the 30th Anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

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CONSORTIUM ON NURTURING VALUES AND SPIRITUALITY IN EARLY CHILDHOOD FOR THE PREVENTION OF VIOLENCE



Affirming the human dignity of young children and their right to grow up in safe, healthy, loving environments

In this groundbreaking initiative, 22 experts working on early childhood, violence against children, education, and peacebuilding representing faith-based organizations, civil society, international organizations, religious communities and academia — joined the Consortium to share ideas and expertise with the aim of improving the quality of early childhood.

In July 2018, Arigatou International – Geneva launched the Consortium on Nurturing Values and Spirituality in Early Childhood for the Prevention of Violence to foster collaboration, share good practices and develop evidencebased and innovative approaches to integrating values-based education and spirituality in early childhood for the prevention of violence and the holistic development of children. Children thrive and grow in trusting relationships with people who love and care for them. Ideally, and for the most part, this happens within their homes. Sadly, it also cannot be denied that the home is the place where most abuses occur. According to the most recent UNICEF report, it is estimated that close to 300 million (three in four) children between the ages of two and four experience violent discipline (physical punishment and/or psychological aggression) by their caregivers on a regular basis, and 250 million (around six in ten) are punished by physical means.

The road towards ending violence against children is challenging, as many factors and actors are involved. As knowledge and awareness of the impact of violence in early childhood rise, there is a critical need for diverse actors to come together to support the holistic development of the child and their families, as well as to challenge cultural and social norms that justify and condone violence against children.

The launch of the Consortium took place in Geneva, Switzerland, preceded by a one-day public seminar on the intersections between early childhood development, violence against children, positive parenting practices, the critical role of nurturing spirituality in children that can break the cycle of violence in the family, and the role that religious communities play.

This initiative builds on the Panama Commitments to End Violence Against Children, developed and endorsed at the 5th Forum of the Global Network of Religions for Children (GNRC) in May 2017.

"Violence prevention must start in early childhood, and by so doing, every child can develop to their full potential."

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

What Will the Consortium Do?

- Raise awareness among and with religious communities and leaders
- Expand the knowledge base and research on the integration of spirituality in early childhood development
- Advocate for transformation that challenges cultural and social norms which justify violence against children in the family, school and community
- Integrate holistic approaches in early childhood that promote the spiritual development of children and the creation of safe and loving environments



ADVOCATING FOR NURTURING SPIRITUALITY IN EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT FOR THE PREVENTION OF VIOLENCE

Arigatou International – Geneva organized two panel discussions together with members of the Consortium:

Geneva Peace Week



09 November 2018



Geneva, Switzerland



"Contributing to Peaceful and Inclusive Societies: Working Together to End Violence in Early Childhood"



In collaboration with the Global Partnership to End Violence against Children, UNICEF, Islamic Relief Worldwide and World Vision International

Parliament of World Religions



06 November 2018



Toronto, Canada

"Ending Violence in Early Childhood: Working Together with Religious Communities"

In collaboration with UNICEF

The Consortium's First Contribution

A series of five roundtable discussions are being organized by the Consortium in Brazil, India, Kenya, Lebanon and Sri Lanka in 2019 within the framework of a project supported by the INSPIRE Fund. These roundtables aim to engage religious communities in reflections upon the importance of nurturing values and spirituality in children's early years and to encourage them to identify ways to challenge violence that is condoned by social and cultural norms. The roundtables also seek to prompt joint action by diverse stakeholders. A country-specific advocacy booklet for each of the five countries with scientific evidence on the impact of violence in early childhood, theological reflections, recommendations for action, and good practices will be produced based on the results of each roundtable. The booklets will be used to facilitate dialogue on these issues in local communities and to inspire joint action.



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COMMEMORATING THE 10TH ANNIVERSARY OF OUR FLAGSHIP ETHICS EDUCATION PROGRAMME

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In 2018, we had the joy of celebrating 10 years since the launch of Learning to Live Together: An Intercultural and Interfaith Programme for Ethics Education.

Reaching this milestone gave us the opportunity to look back and reflect upon the impact the programme has had and the contributions made by the communities of practice it engendered, as well as to envision our path for the years to come, based on all that we have learned and experienced with our many valued partners.

The Learning to Live Together programme is designed to contribute to the realization of children's right to a full and healthy physical, mental, spiritual, moral and social development. It was developed in close collaboration with UNESCO and UNICEF, in a process of field-testing around the world with members of the Global Network of Religions for Children (GNRC). The 244-page manual provides a general educational framework that can be easily adapted for different social and cultural contexts, articulating theory and practice for nurturing children's ethical values and spirituality.

It was in 2002 that Rev. Takeyasu Miyamoto, then-President of Arigatou International, proposed in his remarks to the United Nations General Assembly the establishment of the Interfaith Council on Ethics Education for Children, to prioritize the development of spirituality and ethical values in children that foster in them esteem for people of different religions and civilizations, as an essential part of education and contribution to peace in the world. Then, in 2004, Arigatou International launched the Ethics Education initiative, together with the establishment of the Interfaith Council. Shortly after, a group of experts representing different competencies, skills, and religious traditions came together to develop the first draft of what would later become the *Learning to Live Together* programme. This four-year process was guided by the Interfaith Council and included ten pilot workshops with children who were part of the GNRC. These workshops served to test the programme in many parts of the world and in different contexts, and what was learned was incorporated into the manual before its finalization and launch in 2008.

--- 2008 Launch: Learn Together: A and Interfai for Ethics E is launched in H during the 3rd Fo Network of Relig Launch: Learning to Live **Together: An Intercultural** and Interfaith Programme for Ethics Education

is launched in Hiroshima, Japan, during the 3rd Forum of the Global Network of Religions for Children.

Implementation: The Programme is

in different parts of the world in

cooperation with GNRC members.

implemented with children

Published in English, French and Spanish

:-2010

Training of Trainers: Twenty-four educators from 17 countries

became the first people certified to train others as facilitators of the Learning to Live Together programme.

Good Practices Booklet: The first Good Practice booklet, Massa-Massar: The Journey, is published. The booklet features the experience of partners in Israel adapting *Learning to Live* Together to foster dialogue, learning and mutual understanding among Christian, Jewish and Muslim youth in Israel.

:-2012

New versions published: Bosnian, Croatian and Serbian



Systematization of training workshops: Training workshops are systematized to ensure quality.

2013-

Capacity Building: Training workshops for educators on how to use the Learning to Live Together programme begin. Since 2011, these facilitator trainings have been regularly organized every year in various parts of the world.

New version published: Japanese

2011 ----

New versions published: Farsi and Portuguese

2009----

-2014

Launch: The Good Practices booklet, Launch of Learning to Play Together, is published. It features the experience of adapting Learning to Live Together using physical education and sports in a multicultural school in Athens.

First Regional Workshop: The first region-wide training workshop for educators is conducted in Southeast Asia.

New version published: Romanian

-2016

Collaboration highlight: First onsite Advanced Training

in the ethics education framework held in collaboration with the Ministry of Social Development of Panama.

New version published: Arabic



Training of Trainers: Twenty-seven educators from 17 countries take part in the second Train the Trainers Workshop.



Adaptation: The process of adapting the programme for children ages 7 to 11 begins.

New version published: Bahasa

2018-

Monitoring and Evaluation: The programme is systematically implemented, monitored, and evaluated in El Salvador, Greece, India, Kenya, and Romania, and the results of this assessment are published.

Collaboration highlight: The Pilot Program to implement the *Learning to Live Together* programme in Tana River County in partnership with the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology of Kenya and the UNESCO Regional Office for Eastern Africa reaches 657 children. Many other such collaborative efforts have since taken place in formal and non-formal educational settings.

New version published: Swahili

2015



10 YEARS OF ACHIEVEMENTS









Facilitators Trained



Countries Reached

"Learning to Live Together is a program in which people learn to value the diversity of our humanity. With the Learning to Live Together programme, we try to recover and reconsider what makes us people, and that which makes us human beings."

— Mr. Larry Madrigal, Learning to Live Together Trainer, El Salvador

"Learning to Live Together provides tools and ways to allow for safe spaces, but at the same time, it also allows the teacher herself, or himself, to reflect on their own practices, their own prejudices, their own biases."

- Dr. Ilham Nasser, Director Pedagogy International Institute of Islamic Thought

"I learned that different religions have different types of praying and different types of worship places. I felt like I was in a whole new world because it was something new, I hadn't experienced before, I hadn't been before, and I hadn't seen before."

- Student from Bulgaria

"We have seen youth changing through their participation in the Learning to Live Together programs. They learn to create peaceful and harmonious environments in their communities. The most important role youth play is that they become the change we want to see in the world."

- Sylvia Ruambo, Learning to Live Together Facilitator, Tanzania

CELEBRATING THIS MILESTONE WITH OUR PARTNERS AND FRIENDS

Over the past 10 years, the Learning to Live Together programme has allowed many diverse participants to come together around a common goal: providing children with opportunities to develop mutual understanding and respect for one another and to work together to transform their communities. The 10th anniversary was an opportunity to celebrate the work of our trainers and facilitators in the field, the commitments and achievements of our partners, and the transformations in children and their communities. We also celebrated the relationships and bonds of trust that have been built through the program over the decade of working together.

Seminars

Arigatou International – Geneva, in collaboration with local partners, organized a series of seminars in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Colombia, Israel, and Sri Lanka, bringing together more than 224 participants to reflect on the critical need for learning to live together as contemporary societies face violence, discrimination, populism and violent ideologies. These seminars presented a good opportunity to strengthen relationships with our partners in the field and to further ethics education in the host countries and neighboring regions.

Meetups

Eight celebratory meetups were organized at the local level by our friends and partners in France, Kenya, Macedonia, Panama, Romania, and South Africa to commemorate the 10th anniversary of the Learning to Live Together programme.

The meetups provided a festive atmosphere to celebrate the achievements accomplished in each location, as well as to plan and build momentum for the future. They also served to raise community awareness of the need for values-based education for children and youth.



GLOBAL AWARDS

Arigatou International – Geneva set out to recognize the great contributions made to the *Learning to Live Together* programme over the years by children, facilitators, trainers and organizations by soliciting nominations for four global awards. After careful deliberation of the many worthy nominees by a diverse panel of judges, the awards were granted to the following people and organizations.



Most Inspiring Children-Led Project

The children of Shanti Ashram – India, for the Food Bank Project



Most Transformative Implementation Award

Centro Bartolome de las Cases – El Salvador, for the continuous and systematic implementation of *Learning to Live Together* over the last five years.



Most Committed Trainer Award



Dr. Angeliki Aroni - Greece



Mr. Vijayaragavan Gopal – India



Mr. Larry Madrigal – El Salvador



Most Committed Facilitator Award



Ms. Andrea Flores – El Salvador



Ms. Kaviya Balaguruswamy - India



Mr. Ravichandran Rangasamy - India



Ms. Andreea Vasile – Romania

The Story of Arun and the Food Bank

One of the strongest components of *Learning to Live Together* is that children and young people are empowered to take action and develop their own projects for community engagement and transformation. For this reason, the Most Inspiring Children-Led Project Award is very close to the heart of Arigatou International.

This award was granted to the children of Shanti Ashram, led by Arun, a boy from Coimbatore, India, who impacted the lives of thousands of people by initiating a food bank when he was only 14 years old.

After participating in the *Learning to Live Together* programme, Arun became more empathic to the needs of the most vulnerable and got inspired to collect food to support people in the community. With the help of other children from different religious traditions and the support of Shanti Ashram, he and his friends were able to provide food for many families in Coimbatore, reaching more than 23,000 people with a few years.

The prize for this award was full support for producing an animated short film. Arun and his friends created their own animated film showcasing the story of their project.

Arun's story is truly an inspirational one that shows what children can do when given the space and opportunity!

THE LEARNING TO LIVE TOGETHER PROGRAMME

Education around the globe has traditionally prepared learners for the job market. The Learning to Live Together programme supports educators who are reinventing and reimagining education, working to allow children to develop to their fullest potential — intellectually, relationally, and emotionally, and most importantly, spiritually.

TRAINING

Equipping individuals working with children and youth with the skills and knowledge to implement the *Learning to Live Together* programme is one of our priorities. We believe that onsite training that is customized to each group's context and needs is key to reaching children in an effective and systematic way. This is why we work closely with our partners in the field by providing customized technical support for local training workshops.

213 Marined

In the year under review, 213 new educators, social workers and youth leaders, as well as representatives of civil society and faith-based organizations, were trained as programme facilitators in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Colombia, El Salvador, India, Romania, and Sri Lanka.

Out of these, 80 were trained in Romania through Education 4 Change, an organization founded by Ms. Laura Molnar, Certified Learning to Live Together Trainer. Another 21 teachers were trained in India by Shanti Ashram, and 17 in El Salvador by Centro Bartolomé de las Casas.

Learning to Live Together Trainers

Over the years, we have trained 51 International Trainers. We consider them the greatest advocators of *Learning to Live Together*. They make possible the dissemination of ethics education by training new facilitators, furthering values-based education, and fostering transformations in their communities.

This year, Ms. Kaviya Balaguruswamy, a Trainer from India, went beyond geographical boundaries and carried out a series of workshops for teachers and children in three different localities in Sri Lanka, reaching more than 300 participants. The workshops helped children and youth to build positive relationships and mutual understanding in a community still affected by the aftermath of a civil war.

Introducing Ethics Education in Mauritius

In the context of an Intercultural Educational project implemented by the Council of Religions of Mauritius, a two-day introductory workshop on Ethics Education for Children was held for 27 teachers from schools of Islamic, Christian, and Hindu religious backgrounds. Through the workshop, participants learned how ethics education can be used to enhance the learning experience of children.

IMPLEMENTATION WITH CHILDREN

Implemented by more than 100 partners in the field in both formal and non-formal educational settings, *Learning to Live Together* has become a benchmark when it comes to providing ethics education for children. Its comprehensive framework provides the means to fostering values-based education, creating collaborative and participatory spaces for learning, and nurturing children's spirituality.

Learning to Live Together has benefited children and youth by helping increase their capacity to manage their emotions, deal with conflicts in positive ways, learn to reconcile their differences and learn to work collaboratively. It also helps them develop critical thinking by providing them with a learning space to dialogue with others, challenge their prejudices, question the normalization of attitudes that might exclude the other, and foster their capacity to embrace diversity and empathize with those belonging to different ethnic, religious and socio-economic groups.

7,112 Children and Youth Reached



In the year under review, our implementing partners in Bosnia and Herzegovina, India, El Salvador, Macedonia, Romania, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Tanzania and Uruguay carried out a variety of programs based on the Learning to Live Together programme, reaching 7,112 children and youth.



First-Ever Learning to Live Together Summer Camp

Arigatou International - Geneva and the United Religions Initiative - Europe joined together to conduct the first-ever summer camp based on Learning to Live Together. The camp brought together 14 participants from the Netherlands and Bulgaria, representing different religious and cultural backgrounds. Through a number of activities, which included visiting various religious and cultural sites, children learned about each other, reflected on values like empathy and respect for diversity, and explored ways to contributing to positive transformations in their local communities. Participants were also trained by CERITA on story-telling skills and reflected on their own learnings and ways to put them into action individually and collectively.

"Small changes are very important, because a lot of small changes are leading to a big change in the end, which can have a positive impact on the world and make this world a better place."

- Child participant of the summer camp





Encounters like this are rare in Europe, where most of the time this type of program is offered to older youth or structured within short formal education activities. This summer camp presented a unique opportunity for children to reflect on their common humanity and their shared responsibilities, and to deepen their spirituality by affirming each other's identities and lives.

LEARNING TO PLAY TOGETHER BOOKLET NOW AVAILABLE IN ROMANIAN

One in the series of Good Practices booklets, *Learning to Play Together*, introduces the use of physical education and play to promote mutual understanding and respect among youth living in multicultural societies. It has been translated into Romanian thanks to the efforts of our partners in the field. Special thanks go to Ms. Lucretia Baluta, former ASPnet Coordinator for UNESCO Romania.

Learning to Play Together has been introduced in schools in Romania as a tool for supporting peace and values-based education. It provides a framework that equips educators to integrate ethical reflection and support for children's spiritual growth into sports and games.

ADAPTING THE LEARNING TO LIVE TOGETHER PROGRAMME FOR USE WITH CHILDREN AGES 7 TO 11

Over the last several years, Arigatou International – Geneva has received strong requests from its network of facilitators and partners to develop a new edition of the *Learning to Live Together* programme for younger children. We have responded to these requests by launching a two-year process of adapting the manual for use in middle childhood (ages 7 to 11), which is being made possible by a grant from Smartpeace Foundation.

After mapping and analyzing the past experiences of partners using the programme mainly with children 9 to 11 years old, a working group was established to advise the process. The group, comprising experts on peace education and interfaith learning, child rights, ethics, teacher training, children's and youth participation, and theologians, coming from different regions of the world and from different religious and nonreligious backgrounds, met 20-21 October 2018 in Geneva to provide recommendations and set the framework for the adaptation.

The process of adaptation will follow a collaborative and participatory approach, engaging in dialogue with groups of scholars, pedagogues, educators and religious leaders, and will include pilot workshops with children in Ecuador, Kenya, India, Indonesia, Lebanon, Panama, Portugal, Romania, and Tanzania.

The years from 7 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 decisionmaking. Ethics education programs can provide critical support by helping to nurture their critical thinking and spirituality and providing them with opportunities to explore relationships with others, challenge their prejudices and stereotypes, and learn collaborative skills.

We are very hopeful about reaching a broader age-range with Learning to Live Together, planting earlier in life the seeds of the skill of learning to live together with people of different cultures and beliefs.



Group of Experts: Ms. Sujata Bordoloi, UNGEI; Dr. Hasnah Gasim, Indonesian National Commission for UNESCO Ministry of National Education; Mr. Andres Guerrero, Child Rights Expert; Ms. Mary Kangethe, Kenya National Commission for UNESCO; Ms. Prabha Karthik, Navadisha Montessori School – Chennai; Mr. Mark Manns, UNESCO Bangkok; Dr. Ilham Nasser, Education Expert; Ms. Mercedes Roman, Sociologist and Child Rights Expert; Mr. Stephen Shashoua, Intercultural and Interfaith Education Expert, Ms. Rohaniza Sumndad-Usman, Teach Peace Build Peace Movement; Ven. Napan Thawornbanjob, Institute of Buddhist Management for Happiness and Peace; Dr. Angelos Vallianatos, Intercultural Education Expert.

CONTRIBUTING TO PEACEBUILDING AND THE PREVENTION OF VIOLENT EXTREMISM IN AFRICA

Arigatou International has developed an innovative educational framework for ethics education, which includes a transformative pedagogy approach that sits at the core of the Learning to Live Together programme. This framework has served as the foundation for a number of interventions to enhance the quality of education, focusing particularly on building peace and resilience in contexts of conflict and fragility.

During this period, our office collaborated with a number of partners including the UNESCO International Institute for Capacity Building in Africa (IICBA), the UNESCO Multisectoral Regional Office for West Africa (Sahel) and the Institut de la Francophonie pour l'éducation et la formation, to develop a comprehensive package of resources for teachers of primary and secondary schools in Africa.

These collaborations sought to equip teachers with innovative pedagogical approaches that redefine the role of educators and invite them to make a paradigm shift in adopting a transformative pedagogy that allows children to actively participate in their own learning and develop skills to positively contribute to their societies.

In this process, Arigatou International contributed to the development of the *Guide for Teachers on Transformative Pedagogy for Peacebuilding* for use in the Horn of Africa and surrounding countries, as well as of a *Guide for Teachers on Youth Empowerment for Resilience, Peacebuilding and the Prevention of Violent Extremism through Education* for use in the Sahel and surrounding countries. As part of the efforts of partners to build the capacity of teachers and teacher trainers in the region, Arigatou International developed a Train the Trainers course for training national trainers in more than 15 countries in Africa, reaching more than 8,000 teachers in the region through a cascading model. These guides and the training are designed to build the capacity of teachers to integrate a peace- and resilience-building approach into education for the prevention of violent extremism.

Our Ethics Education framework, which articulates theory and practice for nurturing children's ethical values, can be adapted easily to emerging thematic and different social and cultural contexts. It has been used to address a wide range of issues, including prevention of violence, violent extremism, racism, discrimination and exclusion, but also for youth empowerment, poverty alleviation, conflict transformation, reconciliation, interfaith collaboration and social cohesion.

"Transformative pedagogy requires a paradigm shift, moving away from pedagogical approaches based on vertical transfers of knowledge from the teachers to the learners, to an innovative and dynamic pedagogy that is learner-centered and transformative. One that recognizes the ability of learners to positively contribute to their societies."

— Guide for Teachers on Youth Empowerment for Resilience, Peacebuilding and the Prevention of Violent Extremism through Education

FAITH AND CHILDREN'S RIGHTS: A MULTI-RELIGIOUS STUDY ON THE CONVENTION RIGHTS OF THE CHILD

Reaffirming our commitment to building a better world for children on the 30th Anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child

On November 20, 2019, the international community will mark the 30th anniversary of the adoption of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), the most comprehensive treaty on the rights of children, which has been ratified by virtually all United Nations Member States.

The enormous success of the CRC has resulted in the adoption of numerous laws being enacted, affecting national constitutions, policies, programs, and budgets to the benefit of children. It has also spurred notable achievements in health, education and child protection, all of which have improved the lives of all children in many parts of the world.

For this occasion, Arigatou International, in close collaboration with UNICEF, the former Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General on Violence against Children, and the Global Network of Religions for Children (GNRC), and with the support of partners KAICIID and World Vision International, initiated a study from a multi-religious perspective, seeking the input of experts on child rights, diverse religious leaders and religious and legal scholars in a series of roundtable discussions and other meetings focused on reviewing the CRC since its adoption.

The Study examines the ways in which seven of the world's major religions — the Bahá'í Faith, Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism, and the Sikh Faith — affirm the sanctity of life and dignity of the child, while reflecting upon how the values of these religions are compatible with the CRC's principles and norms. Also addressed is the important role that the CRC and these religions ascribe to the family as the natural environment for the full and harmonious development of children in an atmosphere of happiness, love and understanding.

The Study identifies some of the inconsistencies between religious values and actual practices, which result in shortcomings in the fulfillment of children's rights. These include harmful practices against children by some groups who have misused or misinterpreted religious teachings. The Study identifies the critical role played by religious groups as advocates for child protection and highlights a number of achievements and good practices by religious communities in promoting and protecting children's rights. It further provides recommendations for action for all the key stakeholders. Among these are proposals for interfaith dialogue on child rights among religious leaders, and dialogue among religious communities and human rights advocates and child protection practitioners to strengthen collaboration and build solidarity for children's rights. Ultimately, the Study presents the added value of the CRC as a guiding reference in any action that concerns the care and protection of children and provides a supporting framework for diverse religious communities to promote the realization of children's rights.

The Study builds on the "Faith for Rights" initiative of the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, including the commitments of the Beirut Declaration and the 18 Faith for Rights commitments, and has provided concrete opportunities to engage religious leaders and communities in the effort to fulfill children's rights, including presenting a critical analysis of interpretations and practices that negatively impact on children's well-being.

The Study represents a major effort by Arigatou International as a whole, to strengthen norms and values that support non-violent, respectful, nurturing positive and gender-equitable relationships for all children. It seeks to foster concrete opportunities for greater collaboration among and with religious communities to promote and protect children's rights.

The Study also offers an excellent opportunity for religious communities and other stakeholders to collaborate on the INSPIRE strategies to End Violence Against Children and for making Nurturing Care and the fulfillment of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development a priority for the well-being of all children.

The official global launch of the Study results will be held in Geneva on 19 November 2019, and parallel events will take place in a variety of locations.



The Study is expected to become an empowering advocacy and learning tool for diverse stakeholders, especially religious leaders and communities, faith-based organizations, child-focused NGOs, UN agencies and bodies, the CRC Committee, policymakers, program planning specialists, civil society, academics, students and a wide range of advocates of children's rights. A child-friendly version of the Study is expected to be developed to be used by children and youth groups.

The Study development process has been spearheaded by Arigatou International – New York, with the support of the Geneva and Nairobi offices.

As a contribution to the development and promotion of the Study, Arigatou International – Geneva co-organized a side event to the 40th session of the Human Rights Council on "Ending Violence Against Children – The Contributions from Religious Communities."

The discussions fostered reflections on the connections between religion and children's rights, and on the role of religious communities to challenge social and cultural norms that condone violence against children. Panelists addressed some of the concerns and reservations made on religious grounds to the CRC and shared good practices of how faith communities have contributed to its ratification, withdrawal of reservations, and implementation.

ADVOCATING FOR THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD



Promoting quality education and the prevention of violence to foster a culture of peace, and a better world for children

More than 2,200 stakeholders from all over the world received our message on the critical need for interfaith and intercultural learning as a means of creating a safe and peaceful world for children.

Raising awareness about the importance of integrating ethics education into schools, communities and families as a key and unique approach to ensuring children's full and sound development is at the heart of our mission. In addition to this, Arigatou International – Geneva, honoring the commitments made during the 5th Forum of the Global Network of Religions for Children in May 2017, has made working to prevent violence against children one of the main priorities of its advocacy work.

In this spirit, Arigatou International – Geneva has been invited to share its expertise on ethics education and the prevention of violence against children by participating in several panel discussions, and to conduct practical workshops for practitioners at seminars and conferences in Bangkok, Caux, Dubai, Geneva, Haifa, Paris, Tunis and Venice. The office has also co-organized a number of panel discussions, convening more than 200 stakeholders and decision-makers within the United Nations framework.

With these interventions, Arigatou International – Geneva has reached representatives of United Nations agencies and Permanent Missions in Geneva, as well as representatives of governments, ministries of education, and civil society and faithbased organizations, together with members of academia, educators, and other stakeholders.

Our advocacy work aims to advance policy changes and improvements by issuing a strong call to act upon the moral imperative to put an end to violence against children, as well as to mobilize key actors in society to further ethics education for children in all educational settings, as a critical element for fostering a culture of peace.

By serving as Arigatou International's liaison to the United Nations in Geneva, we have continued to co-convene the NGO Working Group on Children and Violence under Child Rights Connect, bringing together more than 12 child-rights organizations and advocating for ending violence against children within human rights mechanisms. We also continued to participate in the NGO Working Group on Children in Armed Conflict, supporting its advocacy work in Geneva.

"I believe that today's gathering was another testimony to our commitment to education as a most powerful force in our hands to ensure significant improvements in peace, human rights, decent work, development, and international cooperation."

— Mr. Abdulaziz Almuzaini, Director of the UNESCO Geneva Liaison Office.



Co-organized **10 rountable discussions** in 6 countries



Participated in **9 international events** in 7 countries





Reached more than **20 representatives** of Permanent Missions to the United Nations in Geneva



Ms. Vera Leal, Ethics Education Programme Officer, Arigatou International – Geneva, at Global Citizenship Education for Peaceful Societies in South-East Europe: A Sub-Regional Capacity-Building Workshop on the Prevention of Violent Extremism, held on 2-4 May 2018 in Venice, Italy.



Panelists at the Seminar: Nurturing Spirituality in Early Childhood for the Prevention of Violence, organized by Arigatou International – Geneva on 2 July 2018 in Geneva.



Ms. Maria Lucia Uribe, Director, Arigatou International – Geneva, during her intervention at the Ninth International Forum of NGOs that took place in Tunis, from 26 to 27 September 2018.



Ms. Sabine Rakotomalala, Senior Adviser to the Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children, speaking at the panel discussion "Contributing to Peaceful and Inclusive Societies: Working Together to End Violence in Early Childhood," that took place on 9 November 2018 in the framework of the Geneva Peace Week and was organized by Arigatou International – Geneva and partners.



Ms. Maria Lucia Uribe, Director, Arigatou International – Geneva, participating in a panel discussion at the World Tolerance Summit held in Dubai from 15 to 16 November 2018.



Side event to the 40th session of the Human Rights Council organized by Arigatou International – Geneva together with several partners to celebrate the 30th Anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, titled "Ending Violence Against Children — The Contributions from Religious Communities."

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We feel very fortunate to be able to count on hundreds of skilled and passionate facilitators who implement the *Learning to Live Together* programme at the grassroots level. Our sincere appreciation goes to you for believing in the effectiveness of our programme, and to all the children and youth who have participated in activities based on *Learning to Live Together*, for your trust and enthusiasm.

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ABOUT US

Advancing ethics education for children, with an innovative approach to interfaith and intercultural learning, placing children at the heart of all that we do

Arigatou International is a non-profit organization that works to bring people of diverse religious and cultural backgrounds together to build a better world for children. Ethics Education for Children is one of Arigatou International's global initiatives.

Ethics Education for Children acts as a global knowledge hub, serving as a unique nexus for dialogue, partnership development, and action with the aim of further strengthening knowledge sharing, collaboration and action on ethics education for children and related topics, among a wide range of stakeholders, as well as with children and youth. We promote and advocate for the widespread implementation of quality values-based education within the framework of the child's right to education as stated by the Convention on the Rights of the Child, in an effort to realize the right of the child to a full and healthy physical, mental, spiritual, moral and social development.



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

—Rev. Keishi Miyamoto, President of Arigatou International, September 21, 2015

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