



ANNUAL 20 REPORT 23

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“ *Our members remain consistently dedicated and unwavering in their efforts to foster peace by create safe spaces for intra and inter-faith dialogues within their communities.* ”

Dear friends, partners and colleagues, I am delighted to present to you Faith to Action Network's Annual Report 2023.

The report offers an opportunity to share with you some of our interventions within the yea 2023. Reflecting on the accomplishments made makes me feel both humble and proud. All that has been achieved is an acknowledgement of the power of pooling together efforts by staff, Steering Council members, network members, partners and donors around the world. It demonstrates the joint and steadfast committed to serve humanity and improve the bonds that bind them together. In 2023, we focused our commitment to advancing family health and well-being; women rights and gender justice; and peaceful, just and inclusive communities.

Our members remain consistently dedicated and unwavering in their efforts to foster peace by create safe spaces for intra and inter-faith dialogues within their communities. They have been actively involved in advocating for gender mainstreaming within faith institutions, transforming positive

masculinities through community dialogues and holding dialogues on the rights of women within religions, both vital steps towards a more equitable society. They have worked to advance health and wellbeing of individuals and families. Their relentless advocacy has pushed for the inclusion of faith actors in policy-making spaces, amplifying our collective voice for positive change. The experiences shared by our Members and partners in December 2023 during the Inter-religious Convention raised hopes that the contributions the faith community makes in development is getting some spotlight. The experiences demonstrated dynamism and innovation in programming, immense progress in documentation and resilience in serving hard to reach communities.

I will not recount all our successes in 2023. Instead, let me tell you how moved I have been by seeing women who are Network members rise into positions of leadership in their religious institutions. Let me take this space to express great admiration for, and shine the spotlight of honor, on two Faith to Action Network members:

“

Pastor Esther Muhagachi, the first woman in the Tanzania Mennonite Church to be ordained.

Pastor Esther Muhagachi describes her challenging journey towards ordination. As a woman who studied theology (Masters of Dignity in her case), she could not be ordained. The main reason for not being ordained is that her church constitution could not allow her to be ordained as she is a Bishop's wife. Listen to her story [Here](#)

The advocacy work yielded results with the constitution of the Tanzania Mennonite Church being amended. Pastor Esther Muhagachi was ordained on January 22nd 2023. She is among the only five ordained women in Tanzania Mennonite Church.



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“

Pastor Sally Azar, became the first ordained Palestinian woman pastor in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land. Sally grew up in the church, her father who is now a bishop, was pastor when she was growing up. After school, Sally studied theology in Lebanon and in Germany.

In 2006, the Evangelical Lutheran Synod decided that women could also be ordained. However, it took some time for society to accept this step. Through dialogues were held to help clarify on the issue of the equality of women and men in the church and society. This was facilitated through a Womens Desk that was established in 2008. The dialogues established that it was mainly the women in the churches who were against a female pastor, not necessarily the men. As the first Palestinian women pastor, Sally joins four other ordained women in the Middle East in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land, one in Syria and three in Lebanon.

Pastor Sally will be working in the Jerusalem and Beit Sahur communities. You can view Pastor Sally's ordination on <https://www.globalministries.org/elcjh1-to-ordain-the-female-pastor-in-palestine/>. Coincidentally, Pastor Sally was ordained on the same date as Pastor Esther Muhagachi, January 22nd 2023.



”

The very moving stories of these heroines, who rose to leadership with inspiration and peer support through the Faith to Action Network, give me hope that change is possible with relentless effort.

Let me also note with sadness the passing-on of a founding member of the Faith to Action Network board, Dr. Douglas Huber. Dr. Huber was a tireless supporter of women's health during his career, and his stalwart support for the Faith to Action Network was foundational for us. He guided and nurtured many talents that continue the work he dedicated his life to. Dr. Huber remains sorely missed.

For more details, please visit our website. If you would like to engage more directly with our work, please contact the Faith to Action Network team by emailing info@faithtoactionnetwork.org.

With thanks,

Peter K. Munene,

Chief Executive Officer

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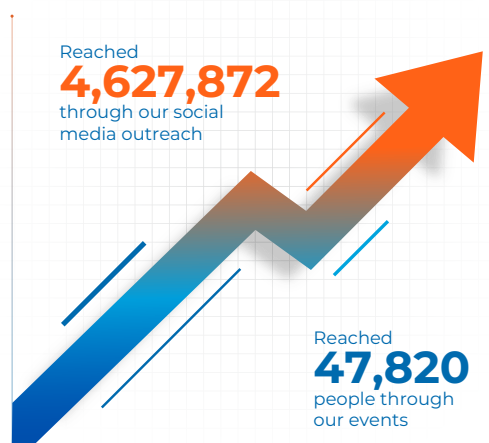


EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2023, Faith to Action Network focused on consolidating gains from the previous few years. The secretariat supported knowledge creation and learning through interviews; group discussions; trainings; webinars; conferences; one-on-one advocacy meetings with decision-makers; social media outreach; public hearings policy dialogues and exchange visits.

This hard work, and all the behind-the-scenes labor that makes it possible, contributed to achievement of impressive results.

We reached an unprecedented **4,627,872** through **our social media outreach** and reached 47,820 people through our events. We can count **17** policy changes resulting from our work at international, regional, national and subnational levels.



To illustrate, as part of its work in the “Young Women for Awareness, Agency, Advocacy & Accountability” (YW4A) program, implemented in collaboration with World YWCA and its members, Equality Now and KIT Gender, **12 religious institutions have transformed their religious norms and practices towards greater gender equality in Egypt, Kenya, Palestine and South Sudan.**

Faith to Action Network worked with religious leaders, who participated actively in trainings on gender equality and conducted faith-based gender audits that led to the development of 18 tailored gender plans. Now, **320 faith-based change agents actively mobilised support from within their religious organizations to implement these gender action plans.**

Through its work in the Joint Initiative for Strategic Religious Action (JISRA) programme, the Faith to Action Network secretariat achieved the following impressive results:

- Community members’ endorsement of violence to support and defend beliefs has dropped from 16.5% to 10% from 2021-23.
- Participation of community members in inter-religious grassroots initiatives has increased from 50.9% to 61.7% from 2021-23.
- More community members have actively participated in grassroots conflict-resolution in Ethiopia (+66.2%), Indonesia (+24.7%), and Uganda (+43.3%)
- F2A and its members contributed 24 times to policy changes at the United Nations, African Union, East African Community and at national level in Ethiopia, Kenya, Indonesia and Uganda.

An external mid-term evaluation of the JISRA program finds that this strategy has been effective, with JISRA “challenging the harmful norms and practices” and making “notable efforts to promote inclusion and challenge othering...” including changes in attitudes towards violence.

WHO ARE WE?

The Faith to Action Network is a global interfaith network of 110 Baha'i, Buddhist, Christian, Confucian, Hindu and Muslim faith organizations. Our members represent a tremendous reach across the world: faith institutions, local and national faith-affiliated organizations, and both national and international networks. They are well-placed to advance our strategic pillars, which in 2022 focused on women's rights in families, communities, nations, continents and globally.

“Within the Faith to Action Network, the words and actions of a senior religious leader have the same value as those of a youth leader or a woman leader from a local faith organization.”

They have demonstrated passionate commitment towards a world where the rights of women and girls are realised, with a decisive investment

by faith communities. Faith to Action Network members are diverse: hierarchical, vertical, centralized, decentralized, formal, informal, elite, grass-root movements, clergy, laity and others. The Network values this diversity: it enables us to mobilize members based on their wide range of strengths and flexibility.

Faith to Action Network offers a non-hierarchical home for all these forms of faith-based action and see members as the prime drivers for change. Within the Faith to Action Network, the words and actions of a senior religious leader have the same value as those of a youth leader or a woman leader from a local faith organization. This allows Faith to Action Network to work with many different types of faith organisations and at different levels in faith hierarchies. Its focus lies not on formal representation and hierarchy, but rather on where it is possible to create change for the better. The Network brings together diverse actors who have one thing in common: a desire for progressive and positive transformation. The Network prioritizes grassroots work to drive change, and we bridge local to national to regional to international for cross-fertilization of ideas and momentum.





OUR VISION

A world in which interfaith collaboration advances healthy, inclusive, just and peaceful communities.



OUR MISSION AND APPROACH

The Faith to Action Network mobilizes faith actors for interfaith dialogue and collaboration to advance family health and wellbeing; women's rights and gender justice; and peaceful, just and inclusive communities, consistent with one's faith.

To build an accountable movement that can achieve this mission, we accompany our members in organizational and capacity development, including resource mobilization. We amplify faith voices, conduct advocacy and communicate messages for change, including social and behavioral change. We collect and disseminate evidence, implement demonstration projects and convene safe spaces for learning.



PRINCIPLES

1. Respect for human rights
2. Pluralism, inclusion and appreciation for diversity
3. Focus on common ground, fairness and solidarity
4. Knowledge-based, oriented to innovation and learning
5. Accountability, integrity and transparency
6. Professional and solution-oriented
7. Transformative, seeking to catalyze meaningful change



FAMILY HEALTH & WELL-BEING

FAMILY HEALTH AND WELLBEING – ADVANCING SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH AND RIGHTS

Family health and well-being is at the core of our work. Faith to Action Network takes every opportunity, at national, regional and international levels, to find ways to help advance sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR), including for adolescents, which remains highly sensitive and stigmatized in many cultures and religious communities where we work.



INTERNATIONAL AND REGIONAL ADVOCACY INTERNATIONAL AND REGIONAL ADVOCACY

At the February meeting of The Network of African Parliamentary Committees on Health (NEAPACOH) in Uganda, F2A Network called upon national parliamentarians from Benin, Burundi, Chad, Eswatini, Gambia, Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Mali, Namibia, Niger, Senegal, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe to build on faith actors' role in advancing health in communities; expand religious community participation in decision-making spaces; invest in strategic faith partnerships to challenge destructive social norms; review, invite and consult adolescent youth; promote localized solidarity initiatives; and engage in legislative reform. The F2A Network, working with Network member SUPKEM and

other partners, helped achieve concrete policy commitments from parliamentarians in Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda to improve funding for reproductive, maternal, newborn, child and adolescent health (RMNCAH) budgets; increase access to comprehensive, age-appropriate, quality and timely information, education, and adolescent and youth-friendly adolescent sexual and reproductive health and rights (ASRHR) services; and advocate for multi-sectoral mechanisms to address teenage pregnancy; among others.

Also in 2023, the F2A Network lobbied the East Africa Legislative Assembly (EALA) to revise and improve its SRHR bill with recommendations consistent with faith values and teachings. The Network, working with the Peace actors Forum issued joint statement releases and organized a meeting where members resolved to approach addressing lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and intersex (LGBTQI) issues with sensitivity and a commitment to the values of inclusivity, tolerance, non-discrimination and non-violence. Online and virtual consultation meetings with religious leaders to discuss the theological rationale in support of the EAC SRHR bill. The consultations were held in Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, South Sudan, Tanzania and Uganda, reaching 480 religious leaders and 60 policy makers. The Christian and Islamic theological rationales in support of the bill was shared with the religious leaders and policy makers.

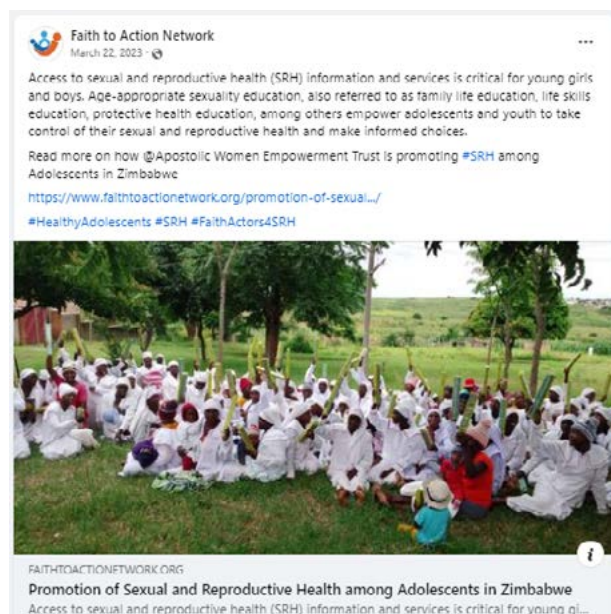


In October, F2A Network influenced 76 religious leaders and faith actors of different faiths from 26 African countries, the United States and Europe who gathered for three days in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, for a “south-to-south” learning workshop on interfaith action to drive progress on FP2030 commitments. The Network made two key presentations, enabling participants to: see the value of undergoing institutional gender audits, using the F2A Network tool, to advance gender justice; and understand the importance of international regional advocacy and to advance access to family planning and ASRHR in their countries.

F2A Network accelerated advocacy to increase the visibility and insights of the faith communities and their experiences in their communities at the April United Nations Commission on Population and Development (UN CPD), which met to discuss policy pathways for leveraging population and education for sustainable development. In collaboration with other faith actors, the Network submitted a written statement articulating faith-based recommendations drawn from the grass roots, as one way to influence the commission's outcome document.

RELIGIOUS ENGAGEMENT AT NATIONAL LEVEL

F2A Network, under the rubric of the Solutions Supporting Healthy Adolescents and Rights Protection (SHARP) initiative, developed an interfaith training guide for faith leaders in Rwanda, Kenya, Tanzania, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Zambia on ASRHR; created an intrafaith and interfaith dialogue guide for faith leaders to facilitate conversations on ASRHR within their respective communities; and prepared faith-based advocacy briefs, contextualized and validated during a faith leaders' training workshop.



F2A Network leadership and SHARP partners were trained on the resulting training guide and interfaith/intrafaith dialogue guide during a November workshop. In-country dissemination trainings are planned for 2024 in all the above countries.

In May, F2A Network hosted a workshop in Bujumbura, **Burundi**, where 25 faith leaders from different religions identified existing national and regional advocacy frameworks and used a faith-based ASRHR discussion methodology to reflect on how they use Holy Books to address ASRHR needs from the grassroots. They debated how to reconcile what the scriptures say versus the reality and how to ensure that communities, especially leaders, understand the significance of a holistic approach to ensuring a healthy and prosperous life. Participants agreed to urge their institutions to provide safe spaces for discussion and education on women's and girls' health for long-term community development, and further, through interreligious education, collaboration, and care. By using diverse constituencies and social media, mass media, and faith media communication channels, the newly trained faith leaders can position ASRHR on the public agenda with help from the Network.

MEMBER HIGHLIGHT

The Cadre des Religieux pour la Santé et le Développement (CRSD) aims to be a reference institution in Senegal and Africa to eradicate poverty and establish well-being for the individual and the family through the improvement of health and the promotion of universal education. A key F2A Network partner, CRSD develops and disseminates religious arguments to highlight the main provisions of the Holy Books on Health and education programs, mainly SRH; builds capacity for religious leaders, the media and others; and organizes dialogue and consultations for youth on SRH. In partnership with health technicians, CRSD conducts trainings for women on both religious and technical aspects of family planning. These talks emphasize religious perspectives on the importance of maternal and child health, while addressing the issue of different methods of family planning.



Methodist Church of Togo training on Sexuality Education and SRH for Religious Leaders and Sunday School teachers, Lomé

Twitter Space
Pre-Women Deliver Conference Conversation

How Do We Deliver for Youth?
A Discussion of Sexual Reproductive Health (SRH) Rights and Services for Adolescents

Speakers:

- Nwabuna Davis: SRH services and Family Planning Advocate
- Rev. Grace Ngonke: Theologian and Youth Mentor on SRH and Women's Rights
- Ahmed Wungwi Jaja: Chairman, Ghana SRH Alliance for Young People
- Imam Salim M. Chao: Healthy Youth and Adolescents Advocate
- Walter Nyambaga: Senior Politician and Health Reporter

Join us | **July 14, 2023 | 04.00-05.00 PM EAT** | **#HealthyAdolescents**

Funded by the European Union



WOMEN'S RIGHTS & GENDER JUSTICE

INTERNATIONAL ADVOCACY AND ENGAGEMENT

F2A Network participation in global platforms to amplify advocacy results and expand venues for faith-based organizations working on women's rights and gender justice. These engagements have contributed to increased visibility and influence at regional and international levels, shaping global discourse on gender equality and women's rights.

In October, we facilitated a roundtable dialogue during the Shaping Feminist Foreign Policy Conference as part of our Strategic partnerships programme under the JISRA programme. Our side event focused on the crucial role of women faith actors in implementing a feminist foreign policy. During the event, ELCJHL made a presentation on the YW4A Gender Justice work in Palestine that offers an inter-religious space for gender justice champions to strategize, share experiences, and learn from each other. They are key in reinterpreting and bringing out a feminist reading of religious texts and teachings.

Based on its success influencing the outcome document of the UN Commission for the Status of Women (UN CSW) 66th session Outcome document, UN Women invited the F2A Network to the UN CSW's CSO's expert group meeting, to provide input to the Secretary General's report on the agenda for UNCSW 67th session in 2023. At the Women Deliver conference, the Network presented to diverse audience how its gender audit tool can be used to enable faith institutions to identify



Training of more than 200 theological students and spouses (Kourbi Biblical School)



Women clergy leading worship before the National Independent Church Of Africa (NICA) Archbishop

the ways they fail to ensure gender equality and plan concrete actions to improve gender justice throughout their operations and communications.

RELIGIOUS ENGAGEMENT AT NATIONAL LEVEL

Under the rubric of the Young Women for Awareness, Agency, Advocacy, and Accountability (YW4A) program, the F2A Network has transformed social norms and practices of faith-based organizations that constrain young women's rights in, **Egypt, Kenya, Palestine and South Sudan**. The Network enabled inter-faith partners to become change agents (lay and clergy, men, women and youth) advocating for women's rights within their institutions, communities and societies. By working with Christian and Muslim communities, the Network has on-boarded grassroots faith voices, experiences and perspectives that are typically left out of broader women's rights and human rights work. The Network strengthened the technical capacity of faith institutions and faith actors through trainings, workshops and conferences, networking and experience sharing activities, catalyzing faith-based action for women's rights. The consistent implementation of the Network's Gender Audit Tool has enabled faith institutions to change their theological interpretation of harmful texts and practices and identify liberating texts and practices; they are now publicly disseminating this new interpretation, documenting and codifying in books, letters, and other institutional communications.

“The Network strengthened the technical capacity of faith institutions and faith actors through trainings, workshops and conferences ...”

Positive Masculinities

F2A Network in collaboration with Ibrahimia Media Centre (IMC) is rolling out an approach called “Promoting Positive Masculinities” to shift community actors' and faith organizations' social norms and practices toward promoting young women's rights to dignity, bodily integrity, and equal participation in decision making. Masculinities are social constructs shaped by social institutions that relate to perceived notions shared by both men and women about how “real” men behave and, more importantly, how men are expected to behave in specific settings to be considered “real men.”

176 adult and young men of faith have been trained to conduct transformative Positive Masculinities training and are cascading their learnings community dialogues, promoting (young) women's rights, and combating SBGV. A South Sudanese participant said, “I consider it very important, as it speaks to our nature as men and how to influence our families from childhood. It is very effective and has changed the mindsets of men including myself – I have learnt a lot and started having new views of things and ways of life.” Evaluators see emerging norms changes. A participant from South Sudan says: “I am an Imam since 2012....I have witnessed a lot of mistreatment against women. The specific thing I like about the program is the giving of hope for the future... that later they can see their daughters in better positions. Positive Masculinities helps men see the negative norms. I can marry a woman, but I will think twice to give away my daughter to another man as I am not sure of other men because of the norms that discriminate against women...”.

Addressing gender discrimination in Palestine

2023 saw the culmination of four years ground breaking work in Palestine. During this time, Faith to Action Network, its members and partners mapped discrimination in Personal Status Laws from Christian and Muslim Perspectives; produced a research paper titled “Women’s Participation within Religious Courts in Palestine, and the Importance of their Participation as decision-makers,” supported by YW4A and the ACT Alliance; held a Theological Reflections Workshop and a Webinar on Human Rights; developed a book titled “Women’s Leadership in the Holy Bible and their Ordination in the ELCJHL,” providing theological evidence that supports women’s ordination and their leadership in the church; and organized two conferences, one for youth titled “Youth Leading the Change”, and on Gender Justice from a National and Religious perspective. Our work has been widely disseminated online, as text and videos, including a short documentary-video capturing the journey of the YW4A program in Palestine, highlighting the efforts of community activists and dedicated faith leaders in dismantling entrenched patriarchal norms through video interviews.

In **Egypt**, we worked to integrate training curricula on gender justice for Muslim and Christian religious leaders. Al Azhar, the Coptic Church and the Evangelical Church have adopted training curriculum geared toward Muslim and Christian (respectively) faith leaders on the rights of women, implementation of gender progressive policies such as the creation of leadership positions for women, increasing public attention on the rights of women and on gender-based violence (GBV). The Coptic Church and the Evangelical Church underscored gender equality, explaining the root

causes and consequences of sexual and gender based violence (SGBV), and outlined preventive measures and post-GBV care strategies. The Coptic Church then amplified its voice against SGBV and scaled up awareness raising. They set up a WhatsApp hotline to encourage prompt reporting of sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment cases.

In **Kenya**, Network member faith institutions like the National Independent Church of Africa (NICA) and the Seventh Day Adventists played a pivotal role in raising awareness of gender disparities, resulting in: establishment of a Young Women department; drafting of a comprehensive Gender Policy; establishment of a scholarship fund for young women pursuing theological studies; facilitating young women enrolments at St. Paul’s University; instituting mechanisms to ensure adherence to the two-thirds gender rule where number of leadership seats are put aside for women; changing rules to incorporate female liturgical leadership in worship; and participating in media advocacy through TV and radio talk shows to create awareness and amplify women voices. Nyatike Evangelism One Accord increased representation of young women in leadership positions within the organization. Four young women and six older women were appointed to leadership roles, and faith leaders together amended the EOA Constitution. NEOA incorporated SGBV awareness in their Bible Studies.

In **Palestine**, the Al-Hakimat Interfaith Council was established to encourage dialogue and cooperation among diverse religious communities and other CSOs and bilateral organisations, notably the UNDP Sawasya II Project, to advance gender justice going forward. The UNDP Sawasya II is the primary UN programmatic vehicle for advancing the rule of law, gender justice, and human rights in the State of Palestine. It brings together the main UN entities and supports the Palestinian government in building a progressively functioning and increasingly inclusive rule of



Christine Fakry from the Coptic Orthodox Church in Cairo leading and presenting the gender action plan of the church

law system that respects, protects, and fulfils human rights and gender equality and promotes peace and security. F2A Network member, the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Jordan and the Holy Land (ELCJHL) has mainstreamed gender within its policies and frameworks. 2023 witnessed the election and ordination of women in decision-making spaces within the faith institution. The ELCJHL Gender Justice Ministry is actively advocating for women in leadership positions within the church and society by setting an example and using their lessons learnt to advocate to the other targeted faith organisations. They have organised sessions and campaigns to raise awareness about the importance of gender equality and challenge patriarchal norms in Palestine using their lived realities and will continue to campaign for this change for the foreseeable future.

In **South Sudan**, five faith institutions (Seventh Day Adventist, Episcopal Church of South Sudan, Pentecostal Church of South Sudan, South Sudan Islamic Council and Presbyterian Church of South Sudan) have addressed substantial gender disparities and challenge prevailing social norms. They conducted training both women and men on women's rights and gender equality and leadership skills development for young faith leaders and the provision of adult literacy classes; reviewing liturgies and prayer books to include gender equality; supporting projects for women (handcrafts, sale of water, table banking); and

creating safe spaces for young women to exercise their freedom of leadership, to express themselves, for capacity building and empowerment, to develop advocacy actions. The South Sudan Islamic Council elected a woman to a senior decision-making position. SDA of South Sudan trained women and men on women rights and gender equality; and provided leadership skills development for young faith leaders. The Presbyterian Church South Sudan (PCSS), reviewed church documents (liturgies, prayer books) to include gender equality and supported projects for women (handcrafts, sale of water, table banking). The Episcopal Church South Sudan (ECSS) prioritized education of young women, economic empowerment of young women and giving young women a space to exercise their freedom of leadership and to express themselves. The South Sudan Pentecostal Church (SSPC) prioritized having a safe space for women, capacity building and empowerment, and awareness and advocacy sessions. The gender actions were developed by the faith institutions' senior leadership and have been integrated into the organizational strategies and work plans to ensure longer term sustainability, including financially: the PCSS have purchased a water tank to support their women's economic initiatives through the sale of water, sale of vegetables and making handcrafts.

“ *The South Sudan Pentecostal Church (SSPC) prioritized having a safe space for women, capacity building and empowerment, and awareness and advocacy sessions.* ”

MEMBER HIGHLIGHTS

The F2A Network francophone West Africa hub, created in 2021, enables sharing of experiences, knowledge and opportunities from partners from **Burkina Faso, Togo, Mali, Cote d'Ivoire, Benin, Niger and Tchad**. Quarterly Online consultations on SRH, Gender justice and health issues have sharpened our working strategies and approaches. Exceptional sharing among hub members included an exposure visit between Niger and Burkina Faso members.

In **Burkina Faso**, F2A Network Member Action Sida des assemblées de Dieu (ASAD) has organized radio programs, training in theological institutions on Gender Justice, Sexual and Reproductive Health and Sexuality, reaching more than 1,560 people. In addition, DIAKONIA adopted "16 Days of Activism" campaign with sessions on GBV for women, girls and men. ASAD successfully advocated for women's rights with the National Council of the Assemblies of God.

In **Cote d'Ivoire**, 1,500 religious and traditional leaders were trained from 790 villages of 20 regions on women's rights, with a specific focus on the existing law and GBV. Religious leaders conducted 1,509 preachings on girls' and women's rights, 138-mini conferences for 6,453 people. Traditional



Women's movement strengthened in Dodoma, Ethiopia as a result of Women Interfaith Dialogue

leaders conducted 1,467 community conversations reaching 34,040 people. Muslim Religious leaders endorsed a Memorandum of Commitment for the Eradication of FGM and early marriage.

In **Togo**, F2A Network member Espoir Vie Togo created a Gender Desk to mainstream work on gender justice in all future projects. The Methodist church of Togo has developed projects on gender justice, and intensified activities on SRH within the youth and women desk. They trained Sunday school teachers and religious leaders on a curriculum developed for children 7-13 years old on body and sexuality education. Radio sessions were implemented through the Radio "Gloire à Dieu."



PEACEFUL, JUST &
INCLUSIVE COMMUNITIES

INTERNATIONAL ADVOCACY AND ENGAGEMENT

With support from the F2A Network and the JISRA program, religious actors in 2023 have reduced conflicts and improved coexistence. Tolerance and respect for other religious groups and denominations have significantly increased. Inter-religious collaboration has fostered unity, aided by activities like sports competitions, visits to places of worship, and interfaith dialogues. Messages of inter-religious unity and peace are broadcast through social media. Religious leaders actively resolve conflicts, mediating disputes between hostile religious communities, as well as those related to land and property.



F2A Network empowered religious actors to amplify citizens' voices in repressed political spaces, enhancing the participation of marginalized groups and held government institutions accountable, strengthening civil society diversity. The Network has expanded civic spaces, fostered cooperation among decision-makers, religious actors and civil society organizations, bringing a specific focus on elevating women's agency, despite harmful norms against it. The program also seeks to enhance

youth and LGBTQI+ participation. JISRA's advocacy efforts led to policy changes at various levels, prioritizing freedom of religion and belief.

We also helped organize online Regional workshops on "Freedom of Religion or Belief and Sustainable Development: on Achieving Gender Equality and Empower all Women and Girls" with International Partnership on Religion and Sustainable Development (PaRD).

Together with Al-Azhar University, Muhammadiyah and Muslim Family Counselling Services (MFCS), the Faith to Action Network organized a webinar "1st Dialogue on Women's rights and Islam: An Islamic Perspective on preventing violence against women and girls."

RELIGIOUS ENGAGEMENT AT NATIONAL LEVEL

In Kenya, the F2A Network worked with the Peace Actors Forum, a network of peacebuilding organizations, during a period of heightened activities to address escalating political tensions following political leaders' calls for mass action. At a consultative workshop for the Kenya Freedom of Religion and Belief (FoRB) trainers' network, we helped FoRB trainers navigate contextual issues and challenges in promoting FoRB with respect and FoRB for all. We helped develop a policy statement addressing the Shakahola Massacre, calling for tolerance of all faiths while respecting religious diversity.

To celebrate the International Day of Peace (IDP), we brought together 43 grassroots and middle-level religious leaders to commemorate IDP through a transformative dialogue forum themed "Regaining Lost Ground of Religious Institutions as Underwriters of Peace in Kenya." Religious leaders took stock of and developed actions to salvage public confidence in religious institutions and leaders as underwriters of peace in the often turbulent political landscape of Kenya.



May 28, Smart Campaign to Manage Plastic Waste with Interfaith Youth and Women in Ternate City, together with Ternate City Government along the coast of Mangga Dua Beach to Kota Baru Ternate Beach

The F2A Network collaborated with the Ethiopian Interfaith Forum for Development Dialogue and Action (EIFDDA) to create a space for faith actors to leverage Africa Union (AU) migration policy to raise awareness on discriminatory, harmful social norms and practices against religious minorities who are refugees, migrants, and displaced people. Together, faith actors submitted a declaration to the AU affirming their commitment to defend human rights and appealing for stronger partnerships with faith-based actors during implementation of the Migration Policy Framework for Africa and Plan of Action.

More than 500 young people of all faiths and non-faith gathered on February 4 in DebreZeit City, Ethiopia, to observe World Interfaith Harmony Week. They presented papers on the influence of religion on promoting peace and the use of interfaith youths as peacemakers in their communities and decided to start Peace Clubs in local churches and schools to promote ongoing young discourse, activities and skill-development. In Ethiopia, F2A Network collaborated with the Ethiopian Catholic Church Social and Development Commission (ECS SDCO) to provide interfaith dialogues to discuss peace in the context of freedom of religion and belief (FoRB) and engage with government leaders, religious

leaders, women, and indigenous leaders. The dialogues showed that Orthodox believers and leaders in Debre Tabor discriminate against other religions. Discrimination against Muslims included Orthodox lobbying of government bodies to refuse land for Muslims to build a mosque, as a means of eradicating Islam from the area. In fact, all of the local government officials are members of the Orthodox faith.

To improve interfaith collaboration, ECS SDCO helped religious groups gain peacebuilding skills through trainings and peace dialogues. Exercises included encouraging participants to see each other as equals and write down positive qualities that others possess. Using these and other methods, participants came to understand that peace dialogue is possible and issues can be resolved peacefully, allowing diverse groups to coexist in harmony, where peaceful conflict resolution was previously nonexistent. Following two sustained peace dialogues, the groups decided to advocate for Muslims to be given land on which to build a mosque in town.

The peace dialogues have been instrumental in teaching the community that if there is a conducive environment for issues to be discussed peacefully, opposing groups can resolve conflicts in harmony and peacefully.



F2A Network member Ethiopia Interfaith Forum for Development Dialogue and Action (EIFDDA) awarded first prize of the HM King Abdullah II of Jordan Awards for UN World Interfaith Harmony Week 2023.

“ Using these and other methods, participants came to understand that peace dialogue is possible and issues can be resolved peacefully ... ”

FATAYAT NU WOMEN PREACHERS FOR SOLIDARITY AND RELIGIOUS TOLERANCE

Under the rubric of the JISRA program, Fatayat NU of West Java and experts engaged in a prolonged discussion with government representatives, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), youth organizations, other Islamic majority groups, minority groups like Ahmadiyya, Shi'ites, indigenous religions, Christians, and Baha'i on how to strengthen the capacity of young women's preachers at Fatayat. Out of those discussions, "The Guideline and Module for Solidarity and Religious Tolerance" were developed, consisting of eight chapters addressing core organizational principles; Islamic texts on tolerance; the practices of the prophet Muhammad and his Companions towards other religions; reinterpreting Islamic texts on women issues; and accommodating the Indonesian principles of diversity. These themes and case studies addressing sexual violence against women, religious persecution, and child abandonment equip women's preachers with knowledge for activities in their communities. Islam should bring peace and harmony not only to human kinds with different ethnic and religion, but also to nature. The Guideline and Module were disseminated among the Fatayat women's preachers through Training of Trainers (ToT), mainly in Garut and Tasikmalaya regency in West Java, Indonesia. The book has now been translated into English so it can be accessed and read widely.

CONFLICT PREVENTION RESULTING FROM SUSTAINED PEACE DIALOGUE IN DODOLA

Dodola, in south-central Ethiopia, has been heavily affected by deadly conflicts and violence for the last eight years. F2A Network through its JISRA program worked to harmonize intra-religious, inter-religious and extra-religious groups through awareness raising programs, equipping them with skills on peace-dialogue, organizing them into sustained peace-dialogue groups and supporting them through following up programs. The Network helped gradually build trusting inter-religious and extra religious relationships among groups including youth and adult men and women that enabled them to resolve “piled up” problems that led to conflict. Meanwhile, in neighboring districts where JISRA was not present, violence broke out, resulting in killings and property destruction. Thanks to the sustained interfaith and extra-religious sustained peace-dialogues in Dodola, the intra-, inter- and extra-religious community stood together for the first time, agreed not to contribute to the violence, but rather protect the property and people and resolve issues peacefully. When relationships are strong, parts of the community can use non-violent ways of resolving issues, using constructive problem solving to prevent the deadly violence.



ECO BHINNEKA INDONESIA

In Indonesia, our founding member, Muhammadiyah, fosters inter-religious cooperation by responding to climate change. Muhammadiyah initiated a program aimed to sustain harmony by inviting interfaith actors to work together to preserve the environment. The program known as “Eco Bhinneka”; “Eco” comes from the word ecology which means the interaction between living things with other living things and also with the surrounding environment. Meanwhile, “Bhinneka” comes from the values of the Indonesian society, namely Bhinneka Tunggal Ika, which means, although we are different, we are still united.

Eco Bhinneka has built a new organizational culture among distinct Muhammadiyah agencies, organizations and institutions – shifting norms relating to the use of plastic, bottled water, waste treatment and use of environmentally friendly goods. Muhammadiyah also created open space for interfaith dialogue and discussion with young people in four Indonesian provinces to discuss religious issues, tolerance, harmony openly, where these discussions have previously been seen as too sensitive to talk about in the public sphere, i.e., taboo. Dialogue and joint activity space has been built in Solo, Banyuwangi, Ternate and Pontianak. Eco Bhinneka also has shifted both the internal culture and public perception of Muhammadiyah, from closed to open and cooperative with several other agencies and civil society networks, including Ashoka and Green Faith Indonesia. Eighty-five people from various organizations participated in an online Eco Bhinneka event, “Short Training of Spiritual Inspired Changemaking Initiative,” encouraging youth and women to jointly tackle the climate crisis.



GROW & SUSTAIN

INTER-RELIGIOUS CONVENTION

In December, the Faith to Action Network hosted in Johannesburg, South Africa, an Inter-religious Convention: “Faith change-makers: Affirming human dignity, justice, and freedom for all.” The Convention brought together 160 faith leaders with diverse faith actors, academia, faith-based organisations and key stakeholders to advocate within faith communities on gender justice and women’s rights. The Interreligious convention created a space for faith actors from the YW4A program to share lessons learnt, best practices and methodologies such as the gender assessment tools and positive masculinities approach, which have promoted gender equality within their institutions. Spaces such as these give the faith community an opportunity for peer-to-peer learning to challenge gender-discriminatory norms and champion the rights of women. The participation of faith actors such as those from South Sudan and Kenya, in this space, also strengthened their agency and advocacy skills which will continue even after the program ends. The platform also provided networking opportunities and we saw an increased interest from other faith partners such as the Council of Churches in Tanzania and the All-Africa Council of Churches in YW4A partners such as the National Independent Church of Africa (NICA a YW4A partner) after they shared their experience in gender transformation as a result of the program.

In demonstrating interfaith action on advancing women’s rights and gender justice faith partnering for justice and peace, and co-creating freedom of belief and inclusive communities, the



GLOBAL DIALOGUE

Dialogue 6

Promoting Women's Participation in Public, Private and Political Life



Panel Speakers

Dr. Azizat Omotoyosi
Amoloye-Adebayo
Reader, Department of
Islamic Law, Faculty of Law,
University of Ilorin, Ilorin,
Nigeria



Dr. Abeer Abdwahed
Lecturer
International Islamic Center for
Population Studies and Research
Egypt



Lawrence Turo
Development Consultant
Fatima Zahra Women's
Organization,
Zimbabwe



Dr. Siti Syamsiyatun
Lecturer
UIN Sunan Kalijaga
Yogyakarta
Indonesia



Moderator

Kkadijah Hawaja
Permanent Commissioner,
Kaduna Peace Commission
Nigeria

Date: 11th May, 2023
Time: 3:00 PM EAT | 2:00 PM GMT+2 | 7:00 PM WIB | 1:00 PM WAT

Zoom link available in caption
French and Arabic interpretation available








Convention showcased contributions of the international interfaith community and their allies to achieving SDG 3: Good health and well-being; SDG 5: Gender equality; SDG 16: Peace, justice and strong institutions; and SDG 17: Partnerships for the goals. The Convention, further, contributed to the Inner Development Goals (IDGs), strengthening participants' transformational skills for sustainable development.

Given the persistence of hatred, conflict and suffering, there's urgency to uncover and amplify life-giving texts, traditions and practices that uphold human dignity and that speak in support of peace, justice and healing, and a world in which every human being is of equal value. Our sacred texts and practices underscore the importance of working together for the common good beyond our own religious community. We need to strengthen processes of translating life-giving theologies and practice into practical actions that improve human dignity. We need to equip ourselves with knowledge and skills to speak out against hatred, injustice, violence and abuse of power. Shared learning and know-how will emerge directly from examples of lived experiences and practice.

Recognition of Shared Values. The Convention helped participants to recognize the shared values and principles across different faith traditions. It brought together participants from across the religious spectrum and to learn from each other. It became clear from the sessions that the diverse religions of the world are committed to women's rights; peaceful, just and inclusive communities; as well as freedom of religion and belief (FoRB). This was illustrated by case studies from different continents and contexts. The Convention highlighted the importance of gender equality, dignity, justice, and peace, which are central to various religious teachings.



Foundations for Deeper Inter-Religious Engagement. Understanding the shared values and commonalities generated greater commitment to collaboration and the development of joint initiatives to address women's rights, promote peace and freedom of religion and belief. The coming together of the co-hosts and their members and partners to successfully execute the Convention was itself confirmation of the power of collaboration.

Enhanced Knowledge of Intersectionality of Women's Rights. The Convention helped to shed light on the intersectionality of women's rights, recognizing that women's experiences are shaped by multiple factors such as gender, religion, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, etc. It enabled participants to appreciate the specific challenges faced by women from different religious backgrounds. This will contribute towards more effective programming, leading to more inclusive and comprehensive approaches to promoting their rights and fostering peace.

Promoting Youth Participation and Intergenerational Dialogue. The Convention promoted the participation of young people from diverse faith traditions. This deepened understanding, promoting peace and building inclusive communities. Interfaith youth participation offered a platform for young people to develop leadership skills, learn from one another, and contribute to the emergence of peaceful and healthy communities. It empowered them to take an active role in promoting interfaith understanding, challenging discrimination, and advocating for social justice. They were able to interact with older generations and exchange experiences.

Highlighting the Strategic Role of Religious Leaders. The Convention brought out the strategic role of religious leaders within their respective communities. Presenters from diverse contexts, including Asia, Africa, America and Europe, emphasized the importance of engaging religious leaders as advocates for women's rights and peacebuilding in society. By leveraging their moral authority and influence, religious leaders are playing a crucial role in challenging harmful cultural norms, promoting gender equality, and advocating for peace within their communities.

Showcasing New Approaches, Methodologies and Perspectives. The Convention was a platform for faith actors to showcase their new approaches, methodologies and perspectives in addressing women's rights, as well as promoting peaceful and inclusive societies and freedom of religion and belief. There were many sessions where the presenters equipped participants with fresh approaches.

Empowering Women's Voices. The Convention provided a platform for women from diverse religious backgrounds to share their experiences, perspectives, and aspirations. This facilitated the amplification of women's voices, ensuring that

their concerns are heard and their contributions are recognized. Empowering women to actively participate in decision-making processes and peacebuilding efforts is vital for sustainable change.

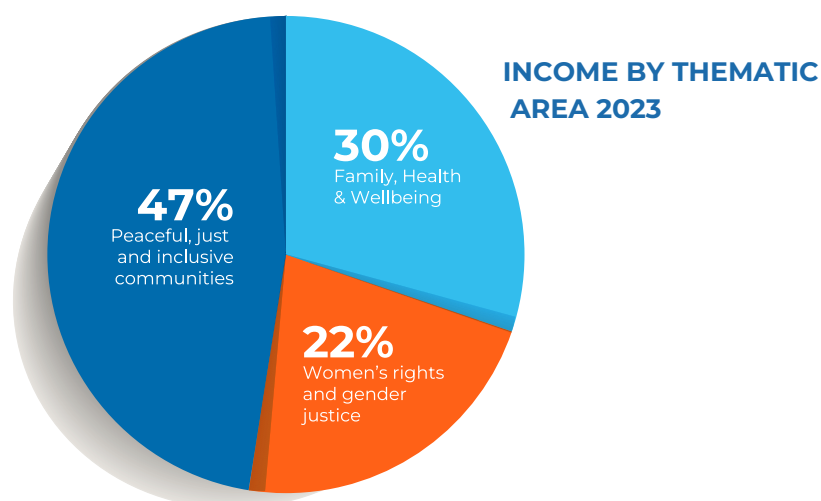
Interfaith Dialogue and Collaboration. The Convention was a forum for interfaith dialogue and collaboration, facilitating understanding, respect, and cooperation among different religious communities from different parts of the world. It provided an opportunity for participants to learn from one another, challenge stereotypes, and build relationships based on mutual respect and understanding. Through interfaith collaboration, collective efforts are being made to address the root causes of violence, discrimination, and inequality, promoting peace and justice for all.

Advocacy and activism. The Convention established a basis for catalyzing policy advocacy and implementation. Participants collaborated to develop recommendations, action plans, and policy frameworks that promote women's rights, peace and FoRB. All the topics were discussed with the intention of seeking social and political change. This focused many discussions on faith actors' role in speaking truth to power, and raising their voice when they see injustice. They shared experiences and lessons on how to engage different power-holders at different levels, drawing on their faith traditions and resources. This included faith actors' advocacy work and also participation in decision-making. Participants will integrate many learnings in their ongoing advocacy and activism work. These learnings will be taken forward at local, national, and international levels, ensuring that Convention messages translate into tangible actions and positive change.

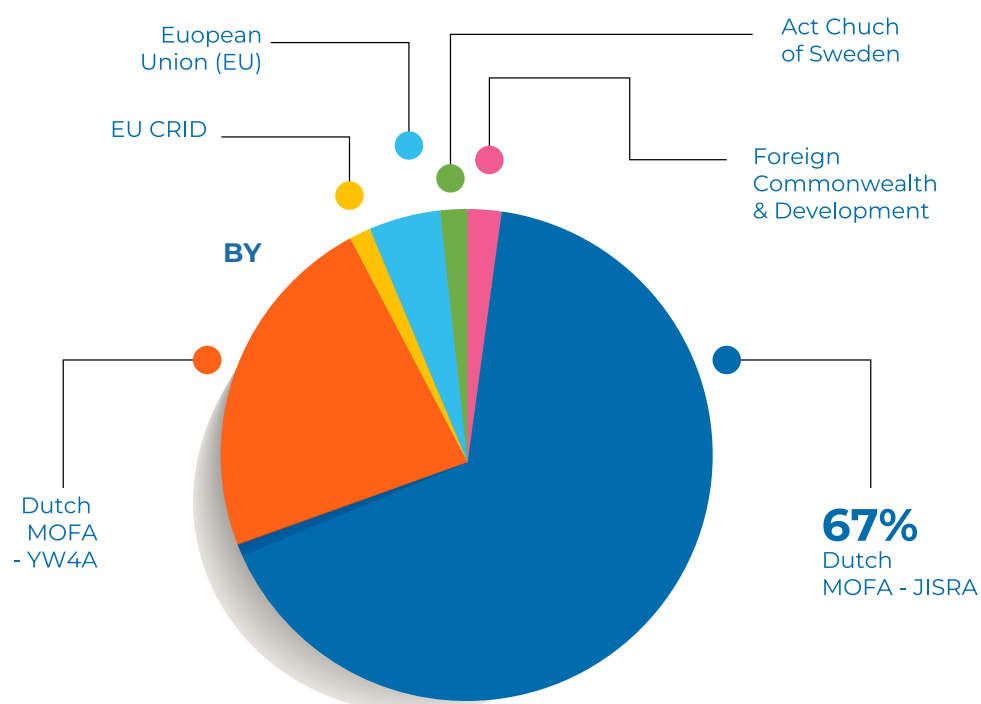
FINANCIALS

F2A Network income was € 2,245,238 in the year ended 31st December 2023, a reduction of € 259,531 compared with 2022, and a shift in funding under the thematic area of Family Health and Wellbeing, due to the close of 3 projects at the end of 2022. These were funded by FCDO through PS Kenya; GIZ Kenya through DSW and GIZ SADDCC Project. 2023 marked the start of a new 3-year project funded by Act Church of Sweden.

	Income 2022 (€)	Income 2023 (€)
Family Health and Wellbeing	€ 1,078,881	€ 680,125
Women's rights and Gender Justice	€ 436,396	€ 501,421
Peaceful, just and inclusive communities	€ 989,492	€ 1,063,692
Total	€ 2,504,769	€ 2,245,238



INCOME SOURCE 2023





GRATITUDE

THANKS TO OUR MEMBERS AND SUPPORTERS

We owe a great debt of thanks to our supporters, all those who contribute their time, knowledge, expertise and funding. We offer our sincere appreciation to:

1

Our members: Spread across four continents and representing Baha'i, Buddhist, Christian, Confucian, Hindu and Muslim faiths, our 110 members offer a rich diversity and immense opportunities to learn, share experiences and work together.

2

Our major donors: Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, European Union, Act Church of Sweden, Brot für die Welt

3

Our Steering Council Members: Council of Anglican Provinces of Africa, Al-Azhar University, Muhammadiyah, Cordaid, African Council of Religious Leaders – Religions for Peace, and Christian Connections for International Health. Their policy oversight and guidance has set a foundation deeply rooted in compliance and innovation.

4

Our partners: Mensen met een Missie, Search for Common Ground, Tearfund, Network of Religious and Traditional Peacemakers, World YWCA and their members, KIT Gender, Equality Now, Health Action International, Network of African National Human Rights Institutions, Eastern Africa National Networks of AIDS and Health Service Organizations (EANNASO), ACT Ubumbano, World Faiths Development Dialogue, ACT Alliance, Muhammadiyah, Religions for Peace South Africa, ACT Church of Sweden, AGIAMONDO

5

Faith to Action Network staff: They have done fantastic work under challenging circumstances, steered implementation of diverse interventions with many members and partners.





GET INVOLVED



BECOME A PARTNER

No one can solve the world's problems alone. Strong partnerships—with faith organisations, civil society organisations, aid agencies, corporations, foundations, governments, and local organizations—are needed to create a world where people live healthy, peaceful, quality lives. From Uganda to the Philippines, our partnerships tackle strategic priorities: sexual and reproductive health and rights; gender equality and women's rights; pluralism and understanding. To learn more, [click here](#).



BECOME A MEMBER

Join our work to mobilize faith organizations' support. Engage with people who matter. Be part of a strong community for networking, dialogue, sharing, learning and partnership. Access technical and financial resources. Raise your voice and be heard through representation in national, regional and international decision-making processes. To learn more, [click here](#).



JOIN US AT AN EVENT

Faith to Action Network values learning and sharing as a central part of our work. We host, attend, and present at countless events, conferences, workshops and trainings throughout the year. Watch for upcoming events, by [clicking here](#). To find us at an event, [click here](#).





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