

“Journey to a more healthy, inclusive, just and peaceful world”

Faith to Action Network Strategic Plan

July 2022 - June 2027



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1. Introduction

The Faith to Action Network partners with religious organizations for mutual learning and increased collaboration with each other, as well as faith-based organizations, governments and other stakeholders to advance family health and wellbeing, women’s rights and gender justice and peaceful, just and inclusive communities.

Founded with the Interfaith Consensus on Family Health and Well-Being in 2011, the Network has grown to include member organizations and collaborating partner organizations on 5 continents. This non-hierarchical network welcomes all forms of faith – lay, clergy, hierarchical, decentralized, religious institutions and faith-affiliated – that respect other faiths,

are interested to learn from others and willing to seek solutions and collaborate for the common good.

The Network is known for being a southern-born, southern-led global interfaith institution. Its focus on finding constructive, interfaith and intercultural solutions for human needs and rights, bridging disagreement and reducing polarization, is unique. The network and its members have profound experience brokering consensus on family health and wellbeing, championing women’s rights and gender justice and advancing peaceful, just and inclusive societies, which are at the core of the Faith to Action Network identity. Respect is at the heart



At Faith to Action Network’s annual convention, Nairobi, 2021.

of Faith to Action Network's mission: respect for human dignity, respect for women and respect for others.

The Network secretariat is headquartered in Kenya with a liaison office in Germany. At the time of this writing, the Network secretariat has 14 staff implementing projects with 31 subgrantees in 14 countries and regional hubs throughout Africa and Asia. It has a €3 million annual budget and a stable income projection for the coming 4 years, including a social enterprise trust for sustainable income generation. In 2021, its main activities were advocacy; experience sharing; research and demonstration; capacity strengthening; communications, including for social and behavioral change; and sub-grant management. The Network, its leadership and secretariat, are highly regarded for their integrity, responsiveness and commitment to achieving meaningful and tangible results. It is highly supportive of its members, increasing their capacity and visibility for work on Network thematic priorities.

Recent years have not been free of challenges. Covid-19 and related restrictions have made everyone's work more complex and complicated. The Network established a new European office, which required creating new governance structures under German law. The Nairobi office moved to a new, expanded location to accommodate increasing staff. Vacant positions resulting from organizational growth have increased the workload for other staff. The relatively rapid growth of Faith to Action Network operations has required equally rapid updating and development of management policies and systems, due to increased transactions, procurements, reports and donor compliance requirements.

Informants to this Strategic Plan have identified possible future challenges as well. Informants wonder how future pandemics, climate change and conflict will affect its members. They wonder if the Network's rising visibility will make it a target for individuals and institutions with extremist views. They wonder if member capacity challenges, especially relating to governance, could create a reputational risk for the Network.

In this changing context, the Faith to Action Network has undertaken to develop a refreshed and renewed Strategic Plan. This Strategic Plan builds on a nine-month research and consultation process (see Annex 1) to provide a high-level, five-year guide for Faith to Action Network operations. This Strategic Plan is crafted to clarify overall goals while enabling sufficient flexibility for the network to adapt to changing circumstances. Because our role involves accompanying faith actors on a journey that has different starting points for different actors, the Network's Strategic Plan provides high-level guidance while leaving the Network Secretariat sufficient flexibility to develop and adapt specific annual operational plans. These operational plans will enable the Network to monitor and report on progress towards the overarching strategic goals described herein for transparency and accountability to Network Members, the Steering Council, governments and donors.

2. Faith to Action Network Principles

The Faith to Action Network approaches its work with the following principles in mind:

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

Faith to Action Network members are diverse: hierarchical, vertical, centralized, decentralized, formal, informal, elite-based, grass-root movements, clergy, laity etc. The Network values this diversity: sometimes laic organizations are more flexible than the formal organizations run by clergy. Sometimes change can be encouraged at decentralized levels, when central levels are blocked.

Faith to Action Network fully recognizes this diversity and offers a non-hierarchical home for all these forms of faith-based action, and see members as the prime drivers for change. At 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 women leader from a local faith organization. This allows

Faith to Action Network to work with all forms of faith institutionalization. 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.



Interfaith and intercultural training of trainers, Yumbe, West Nile, Uganda 2019.

3. Faith to Action Network Vision

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

4. Mission Statement

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.



Community sensitization on peaceful coexistence by Muslim and Christian youth in West Nile, Uganda, 2018.

5. Background

5.1 Building consensus for human dignity and respect

The Faith to Action Network is determined to amplify our life-giving theologies and practices, constructively exploring consensus, and deepening and strengthening our responses.

We concede that we – the faith community – have a mixed track record, sometimes promoting empowerment and fostering protection; and at other times suppressing people’s rights and hampering their wellbeing. Sometimes we champion unity and harmony and other times we get stuck on our differences. Sometimes we address harmful practices on the ground while lobbying against policies that forbid these practices.

Building consensus where different views conflict, the Faith to Action Network stays on course for human dignity and respect. We have found that all our faiths cherish the values of love, acceptance, compassion and solidarity. Building on these moral resources, we endeavor to accompany and journey with people of faith. We seek to “listen with love,” and accept that human beings can make mistakes.

Our different religions are united in the belief that humans were gifted with conscience. This is the “inner voice” that enables people of different faiths to separate right from wrong. Conscience, joined with honest curiosity and tolerance, is a powerful resource that helps people of faith to respond to contested issues, alongside sacred writings and teachings found in our respective traditions.

The Faith to Action Network has identified three human needs that call for more respect when there’s dissent and disagreement:

- family health and wellbeing;
- women’s rights and gender justice; and
- peaceful, just and inclusive communities.



Young people during an interfaith pantomime training on peaceful coexistence, Cairo, 2019.

5.2 Family health and well-being

Faith to Action Network members invest in family health and wellbeing because it enables human beings to develop and enjoy full and fulfilling lives.

As communities of faith, we are called upon to attend to the “total person,” that is, address the person holistically. We are enjoined by our different religious traditions to address the physical, social, spiritual, emotional, occupational, intellectual, political, security, economic and environmental dimensions of wellness. Consequently, issues relating to family health and wellbeing are integral to our identity as communities of faith.

We are acutely aware of the numerous challenges that women, adolescents and young people face

in our communities. In particular, we are struck by the limited access to information and services, the high incidences of teenage pregnancy, gender-based violence and HIV infections that destroy or derail people’s lives.

Our faiths encourage all people, including adolescents and youth, to acquire life-giving knowledge. Accessing age-appropriate, accurate and up-to-date information about how our bodies function, promoting healthy sexuality and preventing violence, enables individuals to contribute constructively towards their communities and societies’ flourishing. We encourage our members to seek knowledge and services so that, alongside the teaching of our faiths, they can make informed choices.



Conversation on family health and wellbeing, Kenya, 2022. Photo credits:PSKenya/Ezra Abaga.



Medical outreach carried out by faith-based health workers at a beach on Lake Victoria's shores in Kenya.



Faith organisation using alternative transport methods to deliver medical supplies in hard-to-reach areas of rural Kenya.

5.3 Women's rights and gender justice

Faith to Action Network members believe that all people are created equal. We know that every human being is valuable and must be respected. Human beings possess inherent dignity.

We are concerned that women's leadership and participation is questioned, hindered and rolled-back in families, communities, societies and politics. Most worrying, women's inherent dignity is routinely violated, with 1 in 3 women globally experiencing violence. Many women's rights violations including child marriage, female genital mutilation and other harmful practices are justified in religious terms, in stark contradiction with the basic tenets of our faiths.

We concede that sometimes teaching and interpretations of holy texts and practice have

not demonstrated the basic truth that everybody is created equal. In many instances, problematic interpretations of sacred texts have allowed boys and men to have more opportunities than girls and women.

Therefore, we seek to promote the positive re-interpretations of sacred texts to reflect the dignity of all human beings. Our communities of faith will continue to strive to teach and exemplify the principle that all people, regardless of sex or gender, are created equal. We encourage our members to reflect on their internal norms and practices, revisit harmful traditions and amplify life-giving norms and practices. Drawing on our moral and physical resources, we champion women's rights and gender equality in laws, policies, societal norms and people's behaviors.



Commitments to ending violence against women and girls, during Faith to Action Network's annual convention, Nairobi, 2021.



Interfaith dialogue on Welcoming the Stranger, in Geneva, 2022.

We empower women and girls to participate fully in society as actors of change in all areas of life including health, education, peace and protecting the environment

5.4 Peaceful, just and inclusive communities

Different faiths make it clear: we are all responsible for each other's welfare. As human beings, we are not disconnected, operating without relation to one another. Each one of our traditions teaches that we have the responsibility of caring for each other. Drawing on the African concept of Ubuntu, "I am because you are, and because we are, therefore I am," we promote solidarity with all our neighbors, no matter who they are and what they believe in.

Societies are growing increasingly unequal, limiting young people's access to quality education and employment, relegating many

youths to the margins of society. We are appalled by the magnitude of social hostilities and conflicts involving religious and ethnic tensions.

Stigma and discrimination against fellow human beings goes against the basic tenets of our faith. As people of faith, we affirm the worth, value and dignity of all human beings. We refuse to associate with those who attack, demean and ostracize others in the name of our faith. We uphold the conviction that all human beings must be respected as equals and their dignity should not be compromised. Human dignity is central to all our approaches in our families, communities and broader societies.

The Faith to Action Network recognizes the value of collaboration among people of faith. Although some faith actors have sought to promote division, we resolve to champion interfaith collaboration. Our sacred texts underscore the importance of working together for the common good. We are confident that by sharing our resources

and experiences with people of other faiths, we contribute to peaceful, just and inclusive societies. In particular, we seek to address the drivers of community grievances and conflict,

including marginalization and discrimination, human rights abuses, environmental degradation and climate change, deteriorating socio-economic livelihoods.



Exchange visit on peaceful co-existence held in September 2021 Cairo, Egypt.



Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land raises awareness about peaceful coexistence.

6. The Journey of Change

People of faith, representing 85% of all people, hold the power to advance the Faith to Action Network mission and achieve its ultimate vision.

We believe that most people of faith intrinsically support universal health and human rights and would like to experience peaceful, just and inclusive societies. They are hindered from advancing this mission because of life circumstances, lack of information and or the influence of misinformation regarding how their faith speaks to these priorities.

In a world where rising polarization often results in the instrumentalization of religion for political authoritarianism and in opposition to the core values of universal health and human rights and peaceful coexistence, the Faith to Action Network can play an important role.

The Faith to Action Network helps religious leaders and faith-based organizations disentangle the core values of their faith from harmful traditions and political ideologies. This is done through creating safe spaces for intra-faith and interfaith dialogue and learning about gender equality, health and human rights and how to live in peace with diversity,

The Faith to Action Network sees our “theory of change” as a journey we take with faith actors, faith organizations, faith leaders, faith-inspired decision makers, to advance our mission. The journey is different for each organization, and the Faith to Action Network joins each organization from its starting point. Some are already well along the path, while others are just beginning. We expect the journey to include time for reflection, as well as celebration of successes along the way.



Interfaith peace march in Muyinga, Burundi 2019



- ✦ Increased trust and empathy for others
- ✦ Inspiration and new ideas
- ✦ Increased skills and resources
- ✦ Increased understanding
- ✦ Reduced misconceptions
- ✦ Expanded civic space and inclusive processes
- ✦ Increased skills and capacity for participation
- ✦ Increased acceptance, ownership and commitment



2



1



- ✦ All religions have life-affirming norms and values
- ✦ Beliefs, traditions and practices are often misunderstood
- ✦ Many faith actors have limited exposure to others' contexts and ideas
- ✦ Limited knowledge and capacity constrain faith-based action in support of family health and wellbeing; women's rights and gender justice; and peaceful, just and inclusive communities
- ✦ Change is possible within faith organizations
- ✦ Faith actors possess vast influence over social norms and public policies
- ✦ If faith actors are given voice and agency, they will use their capacity to influence positive reforms
- ✦ Polarization results from instrumentalization of religion for harmful purposes
- ✦ Decision-makers are informed by their own faiths and value systems
- ✦ Marginalization and discrimination, human rights abuses, environmental degradation and climate change, deteriorating socio-economic livelihoods are drivers of conflict

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



- ✦ Increased interfaith collaboration building on each other's strengths
- ✦ Faith actors use their own resources to deliver services, information and protect rights
- ✦ Faith actors widely broadcast messages of social change
- ✦ Public opinion shifts to support thematic priorities
- ✦ Policies and budgets improved and reflect increased accountability



- ✦ Intra- and inter-faith consensus on thematic priorities
- ✦ New knowledge and capacity applied
- ✦ Planning, implementing and accounting for internal reforms and actions
- ✦ Improved media reporting
- ✦ Decision-makers and opinion informers convinced for change
- ✦ Faith voices raised and contribute meaningfully to decision-making



7. Faith to Action Network Methods

To advance its mission, the Faith to Action Network creates safe spaces for learning and dialogue; raises faith voices; and manages for success. Capacity-strengthening, research, demonstration and development cross-cut all these approaches, as they help ensure continuous learning, improvement and upscaling.

7.1 Learning and dialogue

Although faith is a fundamentally private matter, religious practice is a highly social activity, deeply intertwined with friendships, family and other community relationships. Religion and faith bring moral and practical structure to people's lives in community with others. Faith institutions also provide spiritual, psycho-social and practical, tangible support on matters essential for health and well-being.

Because of the highly visible and social nature of a lived faith, people have good reason to fear social sanction if and when they question the practices of their faith communities. This fear of social sanction sometimes inhibits or constrains learning, development and critical thinking. As a result, harmful assumptions, traditions and practices can easily be misunderstood as based in sacred texts or religious beliefs and be passed from generation to generation unexamined.

The Faith to Action Network works to create safe spaces where people of faith, religious leaders and religious institutions can explore the root causes of intra- and inter-faith tensions that hinder family health and well-being, women's rights and gender justice and peaceful, just and inclusive communities.



Dialogue between representatives from Giriama African Traditional Religion, Muslim and Christian organisations, Kenya, 2021

7.1.1 Knowledge and evidence

Evidence on faith-based interventions and approaches to the Faith to Action Network priorities is fragmentary. Interfaith engagement is especially difficult to quantify for measurable results, since it is often very long-term with multiple factors, actors and perceptions involved in achievement of outcomes and processes. Such evidence is needed in safe spaces, so that faith actors can examine their assumptions, investigate the origins of their beliefs, and develop faith-inspired action based in real-world evidence. The combination of evidence and safe space enables faith actors to openly and honestly reflect without fear of judgement or social sanction.

Faith to Action Network conducts, supports and promotes research and demonstration

projects that generate evidence. Faith to Action Network collects and analyses data for learning and decision making, as well as action research on specific questions to generate actionable information. This evidence is instrumental to the work that the Network and its members do in the safe spaces they create. Faith to Action Network events enable learning and provide access to experiences through resources and tools, drawn from evidence and participant experience.

Faith to Action Network also publicly synthesizes and communicates research findings to other faith organizations, governments and donors with the aim to promote collaboration between the public and private sectors on policy and delivery solutions.



Interfaith dialogue on sexual and reproductive health and rights with participants from 6 Southern African countries, Johannesburg 2019

7.1.2 Convening for learning and sharing

When not exposed to other contexts and beliefs, faith actors lack understanding of alternative contexts and viewpoints. With their own culture as unique reference point, they often cannot discern whether a standpoint is grounded in culture or in religion. Faith to Action Network learning approaches take participants out of their own context, and expose them to other cultures, opinions and approaches. This helps promote empathy for the feelings and needs of people with differing opinions, and prompts internal reflection on beliefs and evidence.

The Faith to Action Network convenes physical and virtual spaces and activities where religious actors can come together to learn without fear of judgement, censor or sanction. Safe space is

needed for people to get to know one another and engage privately, away from the full glare of publicity.

The Network's approach has been independently verified as leading to common engagement and action on Network priorities. Faith to Action Network dialogues are facilitated by eminent theologians from respected faith authorities. Faith leaders are exposed to trends and evidence and learn about religious interpretations and practices within their faith thus reducing misconceptions. This gradually builds consensus and ownership on Network priorities, ultimately sparking greater commitment and constructive action.



Intergenerational dialogue between young people and faith leaders in Southern Africa

7.1.3 Capacity strengthening

The Faith to Action Network strengthens the capacity of local, national, regional and international faith organizations for better advocacy, program implementation and accountability. We enhance understanding of our thematic priorities and strengthen capacity to integrate them sustainably into faith organizations and faith practices. This includes faith-based, rights-based, evidence-based and technical know-how to develop organizations and embed priorities in institutions, for example enhancing service delivery, dissemination of information, protection of human dignity and rights, interfaith dialogue. We strengthen technical know-how such as SRHR service delivery, sexuality education, preventing gender-based violence, interfaith dialogue and mediation. We enhance advocacy capacity, for example to analyze policies and budgets; plan and conduct strategic advocacy; develop advocacy materials; support policy dialogues; engage with media; and use social accountability tools and strategies.

We pair managerial capacity-strengthening with on-granting, to ensure accountable performance and effective, transparent financial management and reporting. We conduct formal organizational capacity assessments using structured Organizational Capacity Assessment (OCA) and Organizational Network Analysis (ONA) tools; conduct gender audits; support strategic, managerial, programmatic, communications and advocacy planning; and provide customized training, technical assistance, mentoring and experiential learning on our thematic priorities.

We adapt our capacity strengthening methodologies to faith organizations' institutional cultures and existing capacity. Using a South-South learning strategy, we facilitate national / regional / global dialogue exchanges among faith organizations, governments, CSOs, researchers and youth to share their experiences, identify lessons and gain skills. We disseminate their experiences internationally and organize faith participation in conferences.



At an interfaith training on positive masculinities, Nairobi, 2022

7.2 Raising faith voices

During an era of increasing political polarization, religions are often instrumentalized in support of extremist positions that harm rather than advance family health and wellbeing; women's rights and gender justice; and peaceful, just and inclusive communities. Positive faith voices and consensus statements on these issues are too seldom properly heard in these contexts, and so the Network seeks to raise the voices of informed faith actors who support our mission.

The Faith to Action Network has both the commitment and the ability to bridge learning at the grassroots with advocating internationally. Activities crucial to the Network's vision and mission include amplifying faith voices; advocacy and communication; and dialogue, collaboration,

convening and bridging, especially connecting local priorities to broader agendas. It brings genuinely local, community engagement to international decision-makers, fora and venues.

One important method for raising faith voices has been the establishment of a regional hub system. Regional hubs enable the Network to activate and mobilize faith actors regionally for joint planning and implementation; quick feedback and consultation; quick response when needed for response to urgent matters. Regional hubs help strengthen the coherence of member and partner actions in countries that are geographically proximate and share many common interests.



Interfaith advocacy in Indonesia, 2022

7.2.1 Advocacy and representation

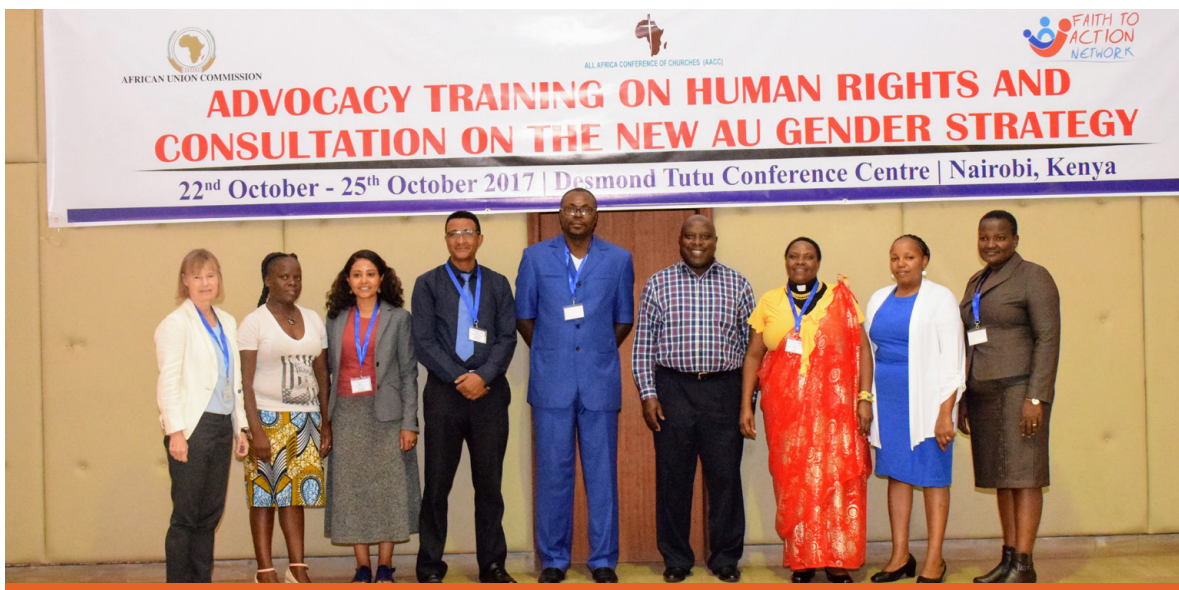
Faith organizations exert influence as strong advocates vis-à-vis authorities, impacting legal, health and education systems. Winning the support of faith leaders and faith organizations can have a snowball effect on policies in many sectors.

Faith to Action Network creates opportunities to engage in policy discussions at international, regional level, national and sub-national level. We broker partnerships and alliances between unlikely parties – interfaith, intra-faith, donors, governments, secular civil society organizations and private sector. We help broker faith resolutions and recommendations that provide powerful mandates and entry points to transform decision makers’ attitudes and weigh in on policy making processes.

Faith to Action Network develops timely and context-specific advocacy and communication

materials to help advocates and decision makers make informed decisions. These documents inform about topical issues through an inter-religious lens, referencing religious texts and traditions and explaining scientific evidence, and re-framing misunderstood terminology in faith-acceptable language. Complementing existing materials, these briefs are developed in collaboration with recognized theologians and faith leaders.

Faith to Action Network informs and educates faith-inspired decision makers, providing proactive and on-demand technical assistance when drafting new policies and programs, organizing national and international conferences. This activity can be formal by participating in or leading formal consultations, or when preparing for statutory meetings and technical working groups. It can be informal when parliamentarians ask for advice or for technical



Organizing team of the pan-African interfaith consultations on the new African Union Gender Strategy, 2017

input on policy documents. A particular focus is on supporting policy-makers to develop and roll-out consultative policy-making processes that engage faith actors to contribute meaningfully.

Faith to Action Network expands civic space for faith actors by creating its own spaces, facilitating participation in invited spaces and opening doors to closed spaces. Faith to Action Network facilitates participation of faith leaders and faith organizations in policy consultations. It encourages decision makers at international, regional and national level to include faith organizations into their national delegations to international policy making events and seeks an observer status in statutory planning meetings.

Faith to Action Network is highly skilled and effective in securing space for faith organizations on their national delegations, and observer

status during United Nations, African Union and East African Community summits and other events. Faith to Action Network also organizes constructive dialogues between faith leaders and organizations, media, government and development stakeholders to create consensus on different issues.

7.2.2 Communication

Faith to Action Network promotes communication guided by respect and sensitivity that offers alternative terminology, adapted to different cultural and religious contexts, to increase faith organizations' acceptance of informed content and help faith champions reach millions.

Many religions provide people with values offering moral warrants and normative symbols on family health and wellbeing, gender equality



Radio talk-show with Muslim Family Counselling Services in Ghana 2021

and women's rights and understanding and respect, and many local faith groups have developed methods and tools. However, values and practices are often interpreted and applied differently, with a disconnect between international religious dogma / schools of thought and local practice, between clergy and lay people. Together with leading religious authorities, Faith to Action Network addresses this disconnect.

Faith to Action Network develops sound theological narratives. Knowledge of faith communities' laws and ideas helps faith leaders and groups understand their faith community's potential for change, engage its religious leaders and members, create trust, and develop a starting point for dialogue. These narratives challenge misconceptions about religious norms and practices. They provide vibrant alternatives.

Faith to Action Network supports stakeholders' messaging. When engaging with a faith leader or faith organization, Faith to Action Network analyses relevant power relationships and chains of influence, channels to influence the target individual/institution, perception and attitudes. With this in mind, Faith to Action Network develops careful communication materials, referring to religious texts and medical knowledge.

Faith to Action Network and its members can disseminate messages resounding with millions of followers. Faith to Action Network message dissemination uses digital technologies, social media, traditional media as well as religious media. Religious media include activities in places of worship, working with congregations, women's and youth groups, religious communication tools and radio-stations.

Faith to Action Network's communication addresses national, regional and international

audiences through articles in the printed, online and audio-visual press. The Network organizes press conferences, disseminates regular press releases and organizes media field trips. Visiting interfaith interventions of Faith to Action Network members gives journalists an in-depth view on their efforts and success in dealing with issues of family health and wellbeing, gender equality and women's rights and pluralism.

7.3 Managing for success

The Faith to Action Network is a trusted partner that is seen as delivering results with a high degree of integrity and commitment to inclusion. It uses both technical assistance and small grants to increase members' institutional resources and effectiveness, helping them have the connections, know-how and skills to engage with international decision-makers for resource mobilization and advocacy. It aims to achieve international standards of professionalism across all its endeavors while retaining effective communications colloquially with members operating locally.



Conversation on family health and wellbeing in Kenya, 2021. Photo credits:PSKenya/Ezra Abaga

7.3.1 Professional management

Faith to Action Network plays an important role as intermediary between international partners and donors and local, grassroots members. It strives to meet the highest standards of international professionalism and accountability, while boosting the capacity of its smallest members to do likewise. Doing so involves action at the international level of the Faith to Action Network secretariat and at the national and sub-national level with Faith to Action Network members.

Many grassroots faith-based organizations have inadequate management systems, structures and policies that can affect effectiveness, donor compliance and reporting. The Faith to Action Network works to assess and build capacity of its members' internal management systems, with monitoring and assessment throughout implementation to ensure quality

work and compliance. It addresses limited member experience in grants management and organizational effectiveness through needs and capacity assessment, training and knowledge-building. Of course, many community-based organizations have limited operational funding; the Network seeks to strengthen its members with financial planning, sustainability training and capacity building on advocacy and fundraising.

The Network secretariat's recent period of rapid growth has demanded increasing clarity and structure for its management structures and operations. The coming five years are important for structuring and putting the remaining elements of its accountable management and governance into place and monitoring their effectiveness.



Interfaith actions led by young people, Alexandria, Egypt 2021

7.3.2 Resource mobilization

Faith actors' capacity challenges result in part from lack of financial resources. Financial support for interfaith work has tended to be insufficient and poorly sustained. Furthermore, when great results are achieved, scaling them up for wider impact around the world requires money. For this reason, the Network secretariat and members conduct external liaison with collaborating partners and donors to mobilize additional resources that can help further scale-up the excellent work being done.

7.3.3 Grants Management

As a fund manager, the Faith to Action Network provides faith organizations with access to grants to finance interfaith interventions. We funded 39 grantees in 13 countries with US\$1.7 million in

2018-2020; and 31 grantees in 14 countries with US\$6.3 million in 2021-2025.

Faith to Action Network provides grants to promising interfaith interventions aligned to its core focus areas, led by faith organizations and mobilizing a variety of expertise and actors including cultural actors, actors in the education sector, civil society organizations and local authorities. The grants allow strengthening or complementing existing interventions, and leverage more resources, primarily from faith organizations. Faith to Action Network accompanies its grantees in managing funds efficiently, using project management tools, such as workplans, logframes, and following sound accounting and reporting standards.



Interfaith dialogue on Welcoming the Stranger, in Geneva, 2022.

7.3.4 Accountable governance

At a global level, the Faith to Action Network is governed by an international, multi-faith Steering Council. The Steering Council is a policy-making organ which lends strategic direction to the Network. The Council is comprised of representatives of its foundation members and others nominated to ensure diversity in representation as per criteria of membership. The Council members serves a three-year renewable term. Each Council term elects its Chairperson and Vice Chairperson, often from different religions. The head of the Secretariat serves as the secretary to the Council. The Steering Council has various working groups and committees that support and guide the Secretariat in its operations. These include: Research; Advocacy; Communication; Training; Membership; Resource mobilization; Finance, governance, human resource; and Audit.

The day to day running of the Network is Charged to the Secretariat. The Secretariat headquarters is based in Nairobi Kenya. The Secretariat is headed by a Chief Executive Officer supported by a management and administrative team, located

in Nairobi, and other countries where they can achieve the best results. The Network secretariat operates a European liaison office, which is supervised by the Network's CEO and assisted by a European Board.

The Steering Council and Secretariat are supported by an International Advisory Council. The Advisory Council is made up of a team of experts, personalities, networks, donors, and representatives of Faith to Action Associates and Supporters. The Advisory Council provides expertise and guidance on interfaith relations; approach of contemporary issues by different religions and resource mobilization.

The Faith to Action Network's work is managed to standards of international accountability, as assessed by various donors including Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs; European Union; Brot für die Welt / Bread for the World; United Kingdom's Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office; ACT Church of Sweden among others.



Faith to Action Network 2021 annual convention

8. Goals

To achieve its mission, the Faith to Action Network has identified the following goals. These goals will be advanced by the Network Secretariat and Members in a manner appropriate to and consistent with each institutions' own faith. Each of the following goals will be translated into operational plans that detail annual operational plans specifying actions, timing, milestones, indicators and methods for ongoing monitoring.

Goal 1
8.1. Family health and well-being
Goal Statement: Faith actors are empowered to lead change and take action for better family health and well-being.

Goal 2
8.2. Women's rights and gender justice
Goal Statement: Faith actors are empowered to lead change and take action for women's rights and gender justice within private, institutional and public spheres.

Goal 3
8.3. Peaceful, Just and Inclusive communities
Goal Statement: Faith actors are empowered to lead change and take interfaith action for peaceful, just and inclusive communities.

Goal 4
8.4. Grow and sustain
Goal statement: Faith to Action Network management will grow a trustworthy, inspiring and vibrant interfaith network with transparent, accountable governance and active, engaged members.



Young women are at the core of Faith to Action Network's Gender Justice Work

9. Strategic Objectives

The Faith to Action Network will advance the above goals by focusing on strategic objectives that apply its methods to all of its thematic priorities.

Strategic Objective 1.1: Learning and Dialogue

The Faith to Action Network will support faith actors' and faith-inspired decision-makers' learning and dialogue to advance family health and wellbeing; women's rights and gender justice; and peaceful, just and inclusive communities.

This includes conducting, supporting and **promoting knowledge and evidence; convening safe physical and virtual spaces** and activities where faith actors and faith-inspired decision-makers can come together to learn without fear; and **strengthening the capacity** of local, national, regional and international faith organizations for organizational development, better advocacy, program implementation and accountability.

Learning and dialogue include, for example:

- Developing and implementing demonstration projects in the areas of health, education, women's rights, peace and addressing drivers of conflict such as human rights, climate change, socio-economic marginalization.
- Linking faith actors to learning and sharing platforms on family health and well-being, women's rights and peace.
- Strengthening the capacity of faith actors to adopt and deliver sexual and reproductive health and rights information and services.

- Increasing faith actors' information access and practices on health, SRHR, women's rights and gender justice, and peace
- Strengthening faith actors' capacity to lead communities in transforming harmful gender, social and cultural norms.

Strategic Objective 1.2: Raising faith voices

The Faith to Action Network will help raise faith actors' and faith-inspired decision-makers' voices to advance family health and wellbeing; women's rights and gender justice; and peaceful, just and inclusive communities. This includes creating opportunities for **advocacy and representation** at local, national, regional and international levels; and promoting effective faith actor **communication and messages**.

Raising faith voices includes, for example:

- Enhancing faith actors' meaningful participation in SRHR, women's rights or peace policy processes, dialogues and experience sharing forums.
- Advocating for responsive global, regional and national SRHR, women's rights and peace policies and frameworks from faith-based perspectives.
- Positively influencing communities on social behavior change (SBC) through faith-based communication.
- Increasing the influence and leadership of women in faith communities.

Strategic Objective 1.3: Managing for success

The Faith to Action Network will help faith actors manage their work for success when advancing family health and wellbeing; women’s rights and gender justice; and peaceful, just and inclusive communities. This includes increasing the quality of our sector’s professional management; mobilizing resources for this work; managing grants; and ensuring accountable governance of our work.

Managing for success includes, for example:

- Expanding its internal collaborative structures
- Empowering governance structures to ensure accountability of Network operations
- Offering workshops, training and learning opportunities on organizational effectiveness topics such as leadership, governance, financial management, and communications
- Raising funds for the Network – its secretariat and members
- Implementing structured policies and procedures for effective staff, membership and partnership engagement



Young people during an interfaith pantomime training on peaceful coexistence, Cairo, 2019.

Annex 1: Strategic Plan Consultation

The Faith to Action Network 2022-2027 Strategic Plan was developed after an extensive consultation process. Beginning in October 2021, Bonstar consulting was engaged to propose and oversee a strategic planning process.

The consultation process included:

1. Analysis of relevant contextual trends and “niche” analysis of comparable organizations.
2. An online survey sent to 139 people, of whom 93 people responded. Religious affiliation of respondents was 56% Christian, 22.8% Muslim and the remainder divided among interfaith, secular, Buddhist, Hindu, Confucian and Bahai. Most survey respondents (74.7%) were from Africa, followed by Europe (14.3%), then Asia (8.8%) and North America.
3. Seventeen in-depth interviews with external stakeholders, including representatives of present and past donors, as well as Muslim, Christian and interfaith partners and other organizations.
4. Faith to Action Network secretariat staff consultation by virtual meeting with breakout groups focusing on niche analysis, SWOT analysis, goals and sustainability discussion.
5. Ongoing consultation with the Faith to Action Network secretariat senior management team.
6. A “World Café” discussion facilitated at the Networks’ 2021 Convention in Nairobi, which was attended by 56 faith organizations from 26 countries.
7. Interviews and two facilitated discussions with the Faith to Action Network Steering Council.

The final Strategic Plan was approved by the Faith to Action Network board on 13 July 2022.

Annex 2: Glossary

Terms Definitions

Sexual and Reproductive Health

Sexual and reproductive health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being in all matters relating to sexuality and the reproductive system. (<https://www.unfpa.org/sexual-reproductive-health>.)

Family Planning

Family planning is the healthy timing and spacing of pregnancy using natural and modern methods of contraception.

Reproductive Health

A state of complete physical, mental and social well-being in matters relating to the reproductive system and its functions and processes. (<https://www.who.int/westernpacific/health-topics/reproductive-health>)

Gender Justice

Gender justice is the recognition that men and women are equal in dignity and ought to enjoy rights, responsibilities and opportunities equitably.

Women's Rights

Women's rights are the rights and entitlements claimed for women and girls to live free from violence, slavery, and discrimination; to be educated; to own property; to vote; and to earn a fair and equal wage (Global Fund for Women definition)

Inclusion

Inclusion means allowing equal voice and giving equal space to all groups, including the

aggrieved and marginalized so that they can engage with each other in productive dialogues and cooperatively work together.

Peaceful And Just Communities

Communities where people are conscious about their diversity/differences but embrace living together, accommodating one another, cherishing their diversity and drawing strength from their diversity and committing to resolve their differences peacefully or nonviolently, ensuring fairness and respect for all (the means are as important as the end)

Faith Organization

An organisation whose values are based on faith, religion and/or beliefs. The faith to which the organization is relating to does not have to be academically classified as religion. This includes many diverse organisations: hierarchical, vertical, centralized, decentralized, formal, informal, elite-based, grass-root movements, clergy, laity etc.

Faith Leader (Including...)

Women, men, young women and young men recognised by their faith community, both formally or informally, as playing authoritative and influential leadership roles to guide, inspire or lead others –e.g., religious or lay leaders, (religious) teachers, congregational leaders, other religious activists and influential stakeholders, including female and youth actors.

Faith

Faith is the belief, confidence or trust in

someone, something or doctrines or teachings of a religion.

Religion

Religion is a set of beliefs, practices or teachings related to someone or something.

Tolerance

Tolerance is the appreciation of diversity and the ability to live and let others live. It holds that people in all their diversity, especially from minorities, need to be accepted in society and their rights respected and accepted even if the majority disagrees with their ways.

ⁱ **UN WOMEN**: Gender justice entails ending the inequalities between women and men that are produced and reproduced in the family, the community, the market and the state. It requires that mainstream institutions - from justice to economic policymaking - are accountable for tackling the injustice and discrimination that keep too many women poor and excluded.

ⁱⁱ <https://www.who.int/news/item/09-03-2021-devastatingly-pervasive-1-in-3-women-globally-experience-violence>

ⁱⁱⁱ <https://www.pewresearch.org/religion/2021/09/30/globally-social-hostilities-related-to-religion-decline-in-2019-while-government-restrictions-remain-at-highest-levels/>

^{iv} Source: Marshall, Katherine (February 2017), “Interfaith Journeys, An exploration of history, ideas, and future directions”, Georgetown University, World Faiths Development Dialogue, available [here](#)

^v Veldkamp et al, 2016.

^{vi} **UN WOMEN**: Gender justice entails ending the inequalities between women and men that are produced and reproduced in the family, the community, the market and the state. It requires that mainstream institutions - from justice to economic policymaking - are accountable for tackling the injustice and discrimination that keep too many women poor and excluded.

^{vii} Source: Marshall, Katherine (February 2017), “Interfaith Journeys, An exploration of history, ideas, and future directions”, Georgetown University, World Faiths Development Dialogue, available [here](#)



Faith to Action Network

Hatheru court, Hatheru Road, Lavington, Nairobi, Kenya

Email: info@faithtoactionnetwork.org

LinkedIn/Facebook: Faith to Action Network

Twitter: @FaithtoActionet

Instagram: @faithtoactionnetwork

Website: www.faithtoactionnetwork.org

