

Arigatou International

ANNUAL REPORT

April 1, 2023 – March 31, 2024



Arigatou International is...

All for Children

All that we do, we do for children; everything we do is for them.

We call **All** people to help build a better world for children;
we bring everyone together for this universal cause.

We give our **All** to protect child rights and enhance children's well-being;
the fate of children deserves our every effort, so we work at it with **All** of our heart.

We are **All** united in this single purpose;
caring for children takes precedence over all else.



WORKING WITH CHILDREN TO BUILD A HOPEFUL WORLD

Keishi Miyamoto

President, Arigatou International,
Convenor, Global Network of Religions for Children

As I introduce you to this year's annual report, I have to state the hard truth that more children than ever before in history are living in or fleeing from war today, facing imminent danger and massive infringements of their fundamental rights. Over 400 million children are living in actual war zones. That's one out of every six children on earth! The news is even worse if we consider all forms of violence: 50% of the children in our world — one billion vulnerable, growing human beings in need of tender care and support — are instead suffering from some sort of violence.

The work to create safe and inclusive spaces for shared action to promote children's rights and well-being has never been more important.

We must meet the ethical imperative to encourage individuals and organizations to join together in action to ensure that all girls and boys can grow up safe and sound, develop to their fullest potential, and be inspired and empowered to work with others to make a difference in their communities.

It was almost 25 years ago, in the year 2000, that Arigatou International inaugurated the Global Network of Religions for Children (GNRC) with a strong faith in the power of everyday people, taking action at the grassroots level, to transform entire communities. The most powerful impact of our work always comes from the local, grassroots level.

I am happy to report that last year alone the GNRC directly engaged 43,030 people in collaborative action for and with children — transforming communities, building resilience, and, step by step, building a peaceful, hopeful world for children.

Next year, in 2025, the GNRC will celebrate its 25th anniversary. In 2002, Rev. Takeyasu Miyamoto, then president of Arigatou International and the inaugurator of the GNRC, expressed the intention to generate "a silent revolution for children" when speaking on behalf of the GNRC to the Special Session on Children of the United Nations General Assembly. Today, the GNRC has grown into a large, global-scale network. The time has come for the power of the people to make revolutionary changes happen for children.

I would also like to take this opportunity to express my sincere appreciation to everyone who has worked with us over these many years. I also welcome with heartfelt gratitude all those who are newly interested in our work and share our commitment to build a hopeful world for children.

It is my prayer that our shared effort to build a hopeful world with and for children will pave the way to a peaceful world for everyone. Let us all dream together. A world where every child thrives is within our reach. We just have to stretch out our arms, together.

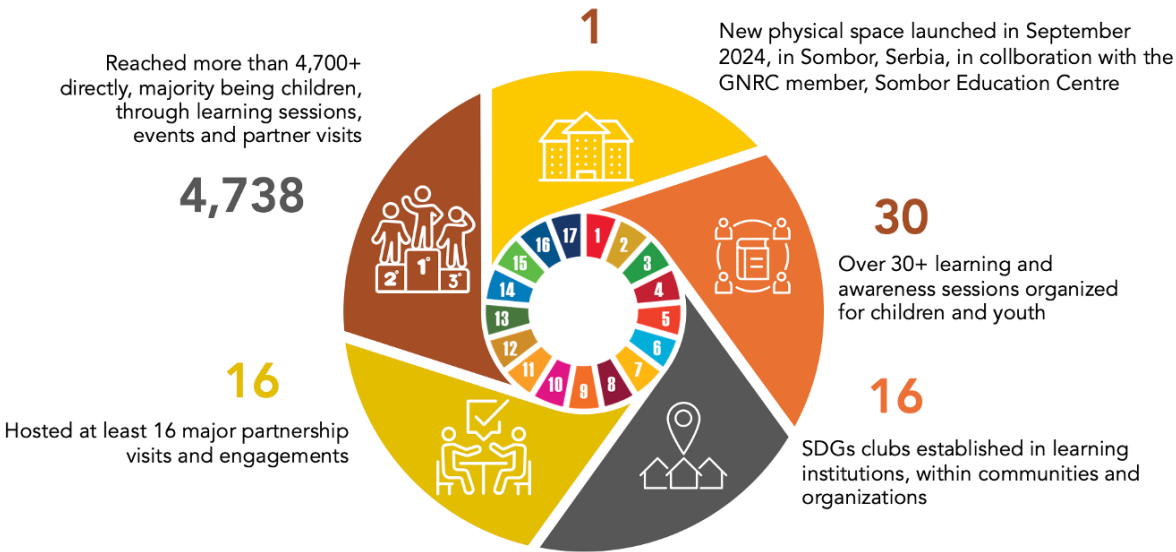
EMPOWERING CHILDREN AS CHANGE-MAKERS

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

SDGs Academy for Children

Our approaches include the **SDGs Academy for Children**, a safe space (both physical and virtual) and program for children’s participation, learning and action on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in general. The Academy seeks to bring children’s participation to the forefront of the effort to achieve the SDGs, while empowering children and the communities surrounding them to ensure sustainable development.

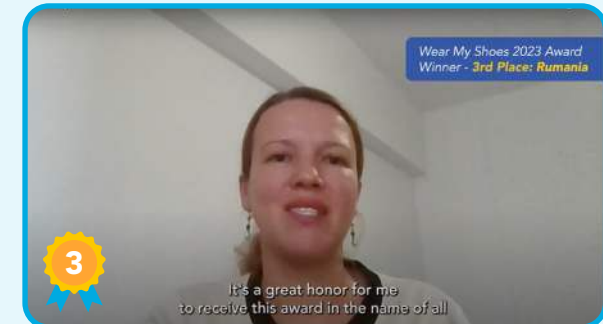
Our results: SDGs Academy for Children



Wear My Shoes Award 2023

This year, the **Wear My Shoes Award** sought to mobilize children and adults to respond to the climate crisis and its impacts on health, education, poverty, violence, justice, and migration affecting children. The global campaign highlighted the contributions of faith leaders, civil society, and non-profit organizations in advancing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and safeguarding children from the adverse effects of climate change. The campaign also supported ongoing multi-faith and multi-stakeholder efforts to ensure that children's rights remain central to environmental decision-making processes.

Fifty-two projects were nominated for the Wear My Shoes Award this year, and five top-place winners were selected, hailing from **Colombia, Cameroon, Romania, India, and Seychelles**, in that order.



Providing Innovative and Engaging Spaces for Empowering Children

Intercultural Meetups: Creating Meaningful Connections Across Borders

**198 children
involved, from
14 countries**

Intercultural Meetups are a key component of the learning cycle for children participating in our Ethics Education programs. These 90-minute online gatherings allow children to connect with their peers from different countries, providing a platform to share their unique cultures while cultivating an appreciation and understanding of diversity.

Meaningful interfaith and intercultural interactions like this can help children cultivate ethical approaches to social and cultural issues while developing empathy, compassion and care for others.

“

This process was very meaningful because children learned to respect each other. The students were very enthusiastic about participating in this activity, from preparation to execution. They were delighted to interact and make new friends from other countries. The hope is that these meetings will continue to build mutual learning.

— Teacher from Indonesia

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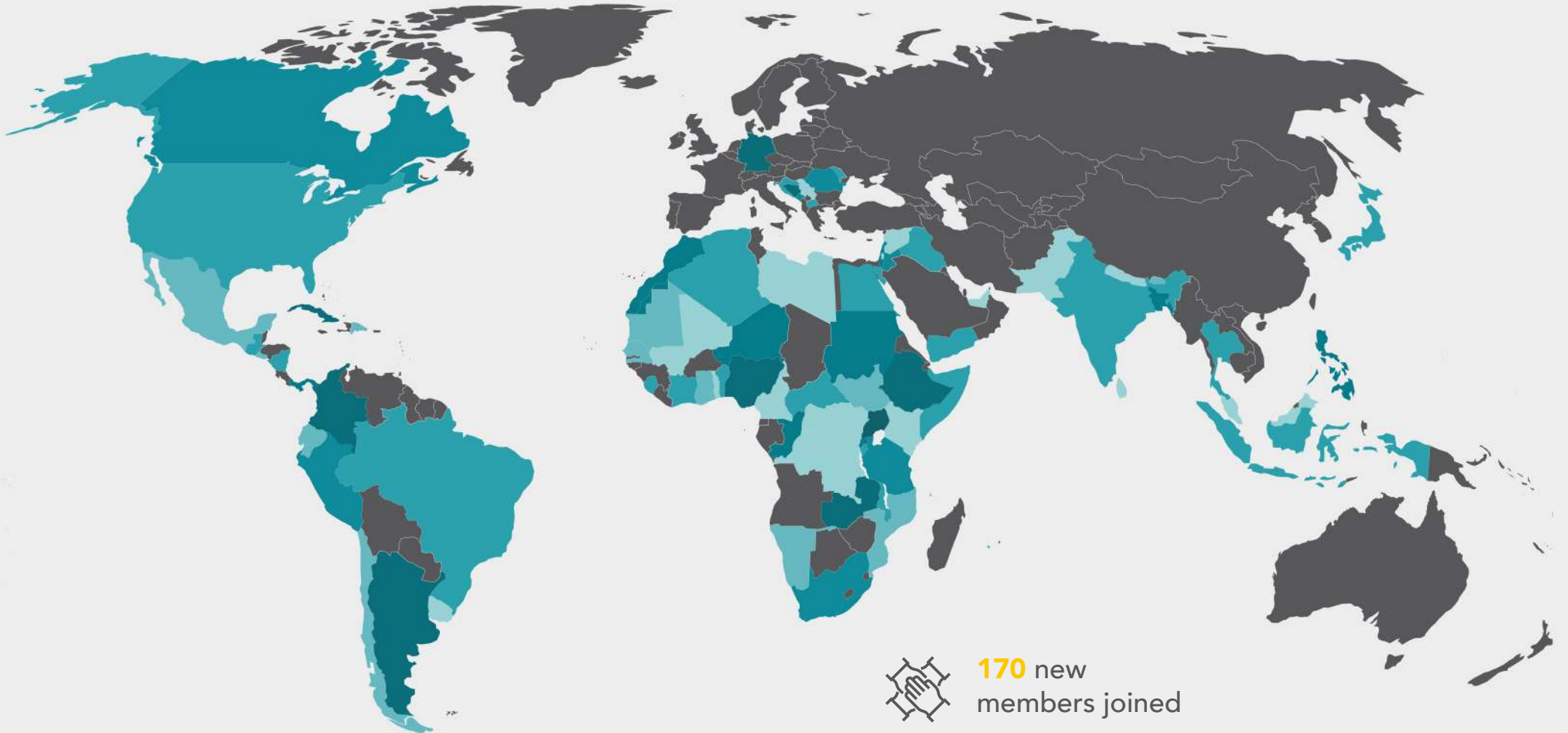
It was wonderful to see learners sharing their best practices. The ultimate goal was to support them in becoming global citizens who respect diversity and humanity through ethics education for sustainable development and for building a peaceful world together.

— Teacher from Nepal

OUR GLOBAL REACH

Interfaith Cooperation to Build a Better World for Children

GNRC Around the World



170 new
members joined



Arigatou International directly
reached **43,030** people in the
year under review



The Global Network of Religions for Children (GNRC)
is now active in **75 countries**, having added six new
national networks in the year under review

BUILDING THE FUTURE WITH HOPE: CONTINUING TO SUPPORT GRASSROOTS ACTION



"As we continue to lay the groundwork for the GNRC Sixth Forum in 2024, I am hopeful that this global gathering will serve as a significant opportunity to inspire cooperation and even greater dedication among religious communities and other key actors in the international community to shape a better, more hopeful world for children."

— **Dr. Mustafa Y. Ali**, Secretary General, GNRC, and Director, Arigatou International – Nairobi

STORIES

Turning “Heaps of Rubble and Dust” to HOPE – Syria

On February 6, 2023, devastating earthquakes struck northern and western Syria and southern and central Turkey, causing widespread damage and thousands of fatalities. The GNRC, working with Kids Future, a member of the GNRC, provided aid to affected families in Syria.



Coimbatore Peace Festival 2023 – India

On August 9, 2023, Shanti Ashram, a member of the GNRC in India, worked together with other non-profit organizations and school institutions to organize the 32nd Coimbatore Peace Festival. Under the theme, “Together Let’s Stand Up for Peace.” 730 children and youth commemorated the 78th Hiroshima Memorial Day, remembering the victims and underlining the need for world peace. Acknowledging the religious and cultural diversity of the city of Coimbatore and the entire Republic of India, they emphasized the importance of unity in diversity.



G20 Africa Regional Interfaith Meeting – Kenya

On September 21, 2023, the GNRC hosted the G20 Africa Regional Interfaith Meeting in Nairobi, bringing together 60 participants from five countries: Comoros, Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, and Rwanda. The meeting, organized in partnership between **Arigatou International** – Nairobi and the **Interfaith Alliance for Safer Communities** (IAFSC), convened senior Christian, Sikh, and Muslim faith leaders, representatives from faith-based organizations, government officials, media figures, representatives of civil society, and scholars to discuss and make recommendations for action on issues affecting vulnerable communities across Africa.



Interfaith Prayer for a Peaceful World for Children

“It is the responsibility of religious leaders and their communities to work together to change today’s world of violence and help create a peaceful environment for children.”

— Rev. Keishi Miyamoto, President, Arigatou International, and Convenor, GNRC



Advancing the Work of the Alliance for the Protection of Children (APN) in El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Mexico: Ongoing Implementation of the PREVENIR Project

Nine grassroots organizations working with children on the move and those at risk of being recruited by gangs gathered to finalize the Strategic Plan for the Alliance for the Protection of Children, setting the course for the continuing work of the PREVENIR project. Working together on capacity building since 2022, these organizations continue to expand the offer of services available and the number of children and adolescents reached every year.



GNRC Sixth Forum Official Announcement

Arigatou International will convene the Global Network of Religions for Children (GNRC) Sixth Forum from November 19 – 21, 2024. The Forum will be hosted by the Interfaith Alliance for Safer Communities (IAFSC) in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates. It will bring together children, youth, religious leaders, policymakers, governmental, intergovernmental, and multilateral organizations, and grassroots child rights workers to discuss and recommend proposals for action on the most critical issues facing children globally.



ETHICS EDUCATION FOR CHILDREN: WORKING TO TRANSFORM EDUCATION

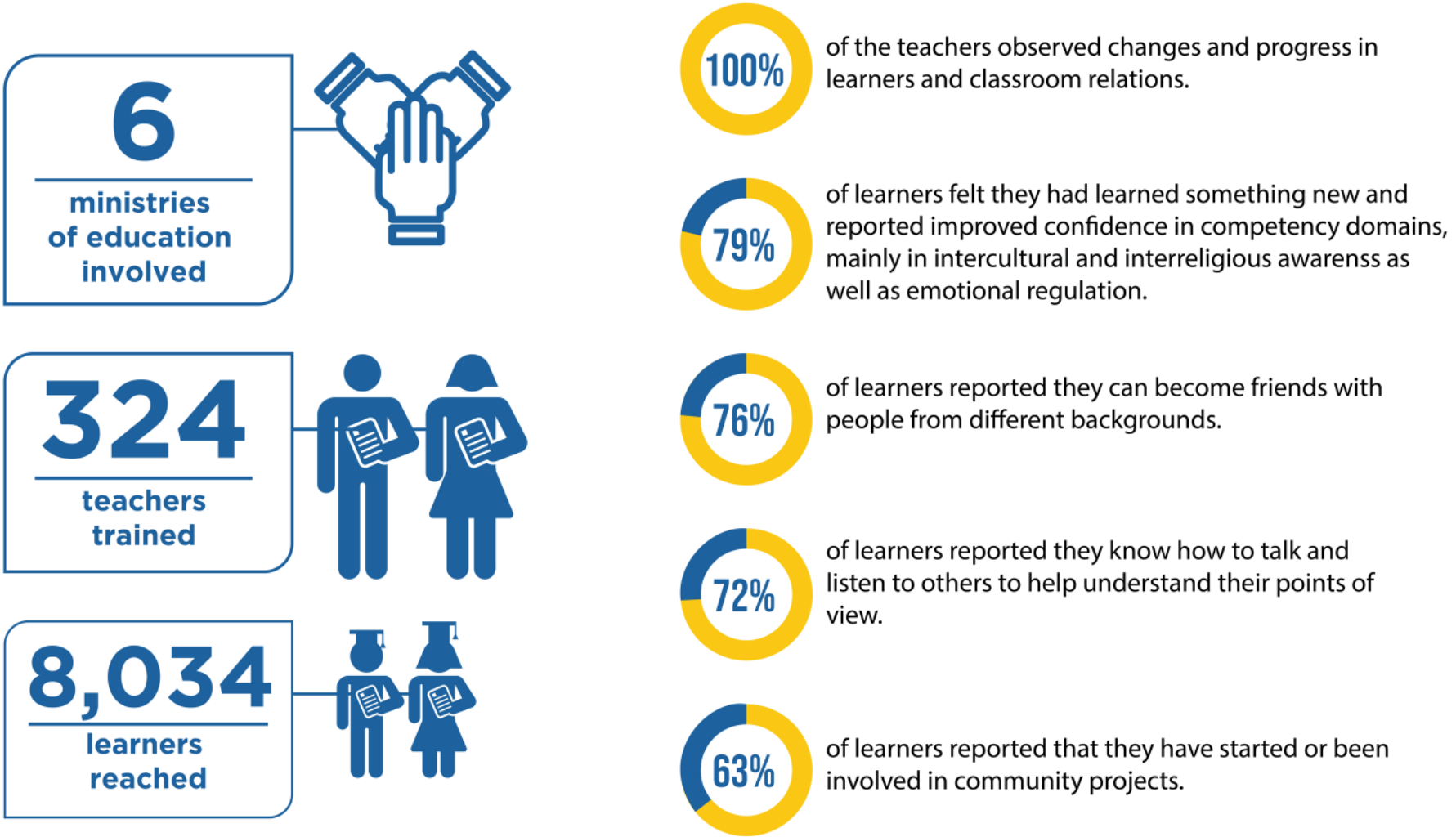


“In a world where children’s well-being is threatened by war, violence and the denial of their rights, the need to strengthen education for peace has become more urgent than ever. As polarization and discrimination based on religion, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status rise, Ethics Education stands as a force for change, fostering compassion, empathy, and solidarity. This year, through our partnerships, we reached 16,032 children across 14 countries, witnessing transformative stories of hope. These stories remind us that even small actions can spark lasting change. Let’s continue working together to build a peaceful world where every child can thrive!”

— **Maria Lucia Uribe**, Executive Director, Ethics Education for Children, and Director, Arigatou International – Geneva

ETHICS EDUCATION FELLOWSHIP DELIVERS POSITIVE TRANSFORMATIONS IN ASIA AND AFRICA

The Ethics Education Fellowship concluded its first phase, bringing about transformative changes in teachers and learners, as well as in formal educational institutions. The Fellowship aims to strengthen global citizenship and help build more inclusive, peaceful societies. Implemented in Bangladesh, Indonesia, Kenya, Mauritius, Nepal, and Seychelles, this groundbreaking work demonstrated the transformative power of ethics education and furthered the cause of learning to live together.



LEARNING TO LIVE TOGETHER: THE CHANGE STARTS WITH US

Since 2008, the Learning to Live Together program has been used by many teachers, educators and youth leaders to foster ethical values and spirituality in children. The program, with a constantly growing worldwide impact, provides tools for empowering children to develop a stronger sense of ethical awareness, global citizenship and respect for people of other cultures.

Since inception, 5,049 facilitators have been trained to deliver the program to children, and more than 447,008 children have participated, across 45 countries. Additionally, 50 trainers have been equipped and certified to train adults to become facilitators. Thanks to the unwavering dedication of our facilitators in the field, in the year under review the program reached 2,217 children in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Guatemala, India, Kenya, Peru and Romania. In addition to this, facilitators in Comoros, El Salvador, Macedonia, South Africa, Tanzania and Turkey integrated Arigatou International's Ethics Education Approach into their activities with children.

Insights from a classroom in Romania

"ALTHOUGH THERE IS STILL A LOT OF WORK, I HAVE NOTICED IN MY STUDENTS AN EFFORT TO THINK MORE ABOUT THOSE AROUND THEM, TO ACCEPT THEM AS THEY ARE WITHOUT LABELING THEM SO EASILY."

- ELENA-DIANA OPREA -



A Year of Impact: Nurturing Values and Spirituality in Early Childhood

This year, we celebrated the successful roll-out of activities using the *Toolkit—Nurturing the Spiritual Development of Children in the Early Years* across Brazil, India, Mexico and Pakistan. From challenging violence and neglect to empowering families and communities, this unique effort has supported positive changes among parents and caregivers, thereby fostering children's holistic development and helping to make family environments more nurturing and respectful.

274 trainers and facilitators

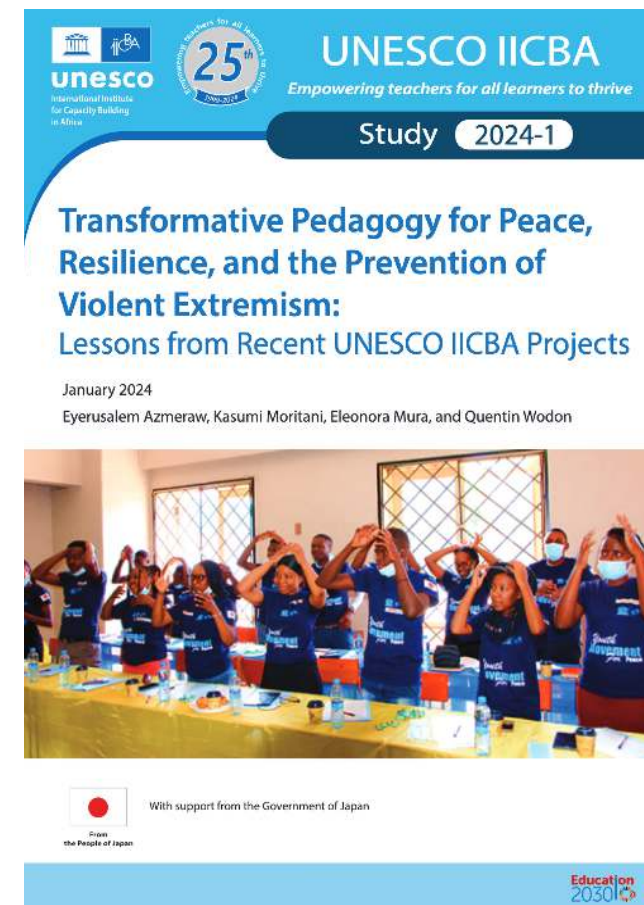
2,056 parents, caregivers
and educators

5,529 children



Advancing Peace and Resilience Through Education in Africa

We continued to work together with UNESCO IICBA in the development of a national consultation, a capacity-sharing workshop, and a teacher's guide in Burundi, supported by the government of Japan. This initiative has equipped 10,000 teachers and education lecturers to integrate a transformative pedagogy approach into their teaching practices. The program's overarching goal is to equip education ministry offices, teacher training institutes, and universities with the capacity to deliver high-quality, inclusive, and relevant peace-building education at both the higher education and school level. Arigatou International's Ethics Education Framework is at the core of this initiative.



PRAYER AND ACTION FOR CHILDREN: CHILD-LED ACTIONS FOR CLIMATE JUSTICE AND RESILIENCE



"Since the World Day of Prayer and Action was created in 2008, faith leaders from diverse backgrounds and communities and religions have joined hands to protect the rights and well-being of all children. Their collective commitment has encouraged policymakers to take action and illuminate a path toward a brighter, more inclusive future where every child can thrive. We propose to all like-minded partners who believe in putting children first — whether through policies, legislation, or budgeting — to join us in solidarity every year on November 20, to raise the status of every child in their own communities. Together, we can build a world that prioritizes health, education and the safety of all children and ensures that no child is left behind."

— **Rebeca Rios-Kohn**, Director, Prayer and Action for Children, and
Director, Arigatou International – New York

WORLD DAY OF PRAYER AND ACTION FOR CHILDREN 2023

The **World Day of Prayer and Action for Children**, launched globally from Mumbai, India this year, served as a global platform for fostering collaboration among faith communities, underscoring the nexus between spiritual values and environmental stewardship. At the launch event, child-led interfaith prayers and roundtable discussions underscored how people from diverse religious perspectives can advocate together for children's rights. The convergence of faith and action underscored the vital role of spirituality in shaping a more just and sustainable world, echoing the ethos of intergenerational solidarity and peace.



Caring for our Children is Caring for Our Planet Mumbai, November 17th and 18th

100 local child-focused
670 organizations
40 children representing
partner institutions



Over **75** speakers and
78 core volunteers were involved

Religious diversity:
Buddhism, Christianity,
Hinduism, Islam and Jainism.



“STRENGTHENING MULTI-STAKEHOLDER COLLABORATION FOR CHILDREN’S RIGHTS”

— An online course for States and faith-based civil society organizations

In the year under review, Arigatou International and the Interamerican Children’s Institute of the Organization of American States (OAS) co-facilitated the second edition of this eight-week online course. The course was attended by 22 State representatives and 24 faith actors from around Latin America. Participants highly valued this support in broadening their understanding of the importance of engagement between States and faith actors, as well as the opportunity to have in-depth reflections on key issues affecting children.

LITTLE BUDDHA: EXPLORING CHILD PROTECTION IN BUDDHIST COMMUNITIES ACROSS SOUTHEAST ASIA – A SCOPING STUDY

Highlights

Finalization and regional launch of *Little Buddha: Exploring Child Protection in Buddhist Communities across Southeast Asia – A Scoping Study*

Objectives:

1

Explore the current situation of violence against children by conducting a literature review of the five selected countries and addressing what is known about specific Buddhist communities.

2

Identify promising practices and mechanisms from Buddhist organizations to prevent and respond to violence against children.

3

Identify strategies and recommendations for Buddhist leaders and members of the Asian Network of Buddhists for Child Protection (ABC) to prevent and respond to all forms of Violence against Children (VAC) in their communities.

ARIGATOU INTERNATIONAL | Prayer and Action
All for Children



ENDING VIOLENCE LAB: PROTECTING CHILDREN FROM HARM

Understanding the importance of empowering local communities to implement sustainable child-focused advocacy, in 2021 Arigatou International's launched the **Ending Violence Lab**. The Lab supports year-round systematic grassroots' implementation of intergenerational advocacy to prevent violence against children. The implementation is based on the *Guide and Toolkit for Advocating for Children's Rights and Well-being: An Interfaith Approach*.

The Lab has been implemented in Chile, Ecuador, India, Nepal, Serbia, and Tanzania. To date, the Lab has built the capacity of 971 children and adults, in turn reaching over 24,860 individuals through their local advocacy actions and campaigns. In 2023, the Lab in India focused on preventing gender-based violence by addressing social norms. In Chile, the Lab kept the spotlight on children's participation and leadership in child rights advocacy.



MOBILIZING COMMUNITIES TO END CHILD POVERTY



“Children are the present and the future of our world. Their creativity, innovation and imagination are essential to finding new pathways to shaping the world we want. We must meaningfully engage children in our collective efforts to end all forms of poverty and realize sustainable development. We are bound by a shared commitment to create a future that cherishes and uplifts every child. Let’s envision, collaborate and activate solutions that honor the dignity and rights of every child.”

— **Rev. Fred Nyabera**, Director – End Child Poverty

Promoting Peace

The Eastern Africa Regional Peace Programme (RPP) is both a programme and a nested partnership. It is spearheaded by the Norwegian Church Aid (NCA) and six other organizations, including Arigatou International's End Child Poverty initiative. The current reach of RPP covers 12 countries in the East, Great Lakes, and Horn of Africa regions: Burundi, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Kenya, Rwanda, Sudan, South Sudan, Somalia, Tanzania and Uganda.



Scholarships at Amani Village of Hope, Kenya

The Amani Village of Hope in Siaya County, Kenya provides wholistic care and housing for children affected by poverty and multiple vulnerabilities, including children who have been abandoned or neglected, children living with HIV/AIDS, and orphaned children. More than 120 children currently call this safe space a home. In partnership with Arigatou International, the Amani Village of Hope provides more than 20 scholarships annually to enable children access to primary and secondary school education.

"Seen, Heard, Engaged": The Africa Children Summit 2023

The inaugural Africa Children Summit was a unique space entirely designed for and by children to be "Seen, Heard and Engaged" in an effort to amplify children's participation in societal life and continental policy outcomes. At the summit, children discussed their concerns in areas such as education, climate change, violence against children, online child protection, and health, and proposed possible solutions. Arigatou International Nairobi supported the participation of a delegation of children from Kenya. The summit welcomed policy makers, public officials, representatives of civil society organizations, and parents and caregivers, to listen to and dialogue with the children. Held April 10–12, 2023 in Nairobi, Kenya, it brought together over 400 people from nine countries (Kenya, Mali, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, and Zimbabwe), and had over 400 virtual participants from all over Africa and beyond.

Our Results — Together We Can End Child Poverty Campaign



Mobilized grassroots actions in over 10+ countries.

Activities included awareness sessions, material donations, capacity building sessions and tree planting.



Deployed online messaging for the campaign reaching an estimated 70,000 people online.

Collaborated with other Arigatou International initiatives and other partners, primarily the Global Coalition to End Child Poverty, in this online campaign.



Global commemoration

Joined the IDEP commemorations by the Global Coalition to End Child Poverty focused on the theme "Decent Work and Social Protection: Putting Dignity in Practice for All"

The International Day for the Eradication of Poverty (IDEP), October 17th, 2023



PICK A TOOL



Toolkit — Nurturing the Spiritual Development of Children in the Early Years

A Contribution to the Protection of Children from Violence and the Promotion of Their Holistic Well-Being

Download the toolkit [here](#)



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

Download the study in English, Spanish and an executive summary in French [here](#)



Little Buddha: Exploring Child Protection in Buddhist Communities across Southeast Asia – A Scoping Study

Download the scoping study [here](#)



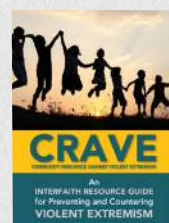
Advocating for Children's Rights and Well-Being: An Interfaith Approach

Download the guide and toolkit in English and Spanish [here](#)



Best Practice Cases from the Children's Solutions Lab: Empowering Children to Bring Positive Change to Their Communities

Download booklet [here](#)



An Interfaith Resource Guide for Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism

Download the guide [here](#)



Learning to Live Together: An Intercultural and Interfaith Program for Ethics Education for Children

For working with children ages 6 to 11, download the manual [here](#)
For working with children 12 and above, download the manual [here](#)

GLOBAL AND REGIONAL ADVOCACY

Igniting Change: How We Advocate for Ethics
Education and the Spiritual Development of Children

Championing Children's Rights at the Heart
of Our Mission

Africa Union Child Participation Platform

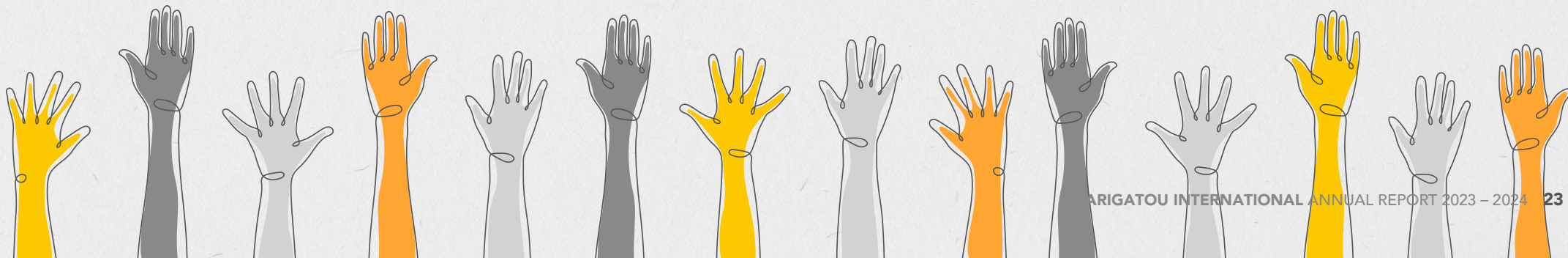
Africa Children's Climate Summit

The Tri-Lateral Partnership of Regional Faith-Based
Networks for the SDGs

WORKING TOGETHER TO REACH MORE CHILDREN

Today, Arigatou International is proud to work closely with a very diverse range of partners and collaborators at every level — global, regional, national, and local. We are also a member of a number of important coalitions, consortiums, global partnerships, and alliances.

To learn more, visit our [partnerships page](#)



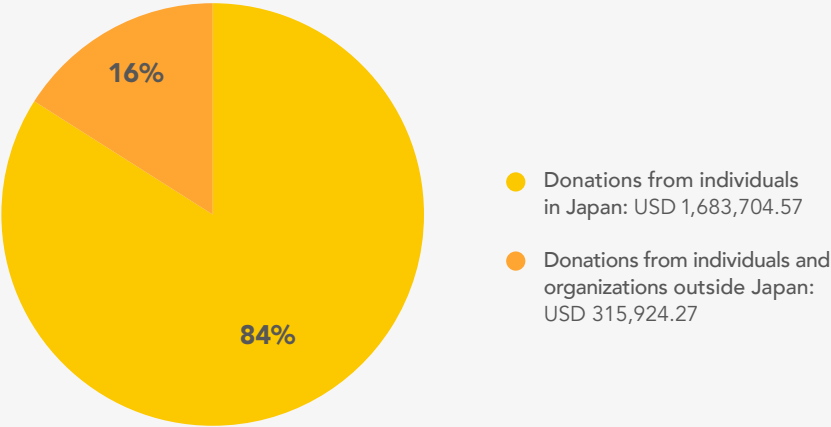
FINANCIAL INFORMATION

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

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

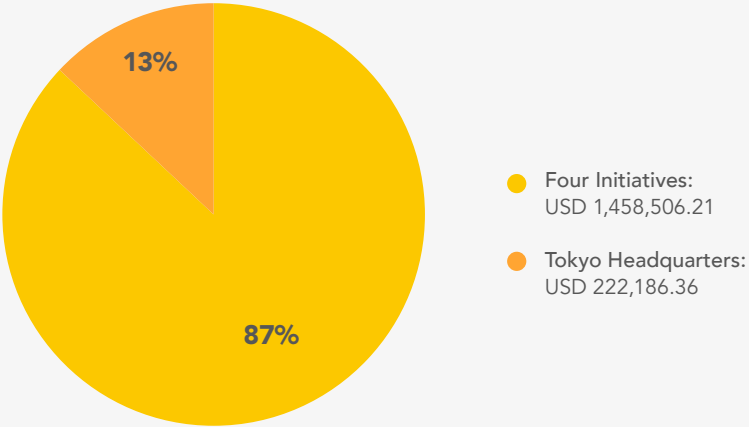
Arigatou International is profoundly grateful to all who support its efforts to build a better world for children.

INCOME April 1, 2023 – March 31, 2024



Total Income: USD 2,402,502

EXPENSES April 1, 2023 – March 31, 2024



Total Expenses: USD 2,619,956

Notes: Original figures in Japanese yen for individual donations in Japan were translated to US dollars at 149.67 yen to 1 dollar.
*Tokyo Headquarters expenses include assistance for children’s participation in educational and other programs, and general administrative expenses.

Arigatou International contributes to the progress of the localization efforts by supporting and strengthening the capacity of the local grassroots organizations of the Global Network of Religions for Children to access and manage funding opportunities from international donors with the goal to further the local implementation of the Arigatou International “All for Children” approaches.

GOVERNANCE

Governance and Operating Structure

Arigatou International is a registered general non-profit corporation in Japan whose mission is to build a better world for children. It was established in 1990 as the Arigatou Foundation by the Japanese Buddhist organization, Myochikai. Arigatou International is governed by a Board of Councilors and a Board of Directors, in accordance with Japanese law. To learn more, visit our website [here](#).

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



Arigatou International

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