

# A global mapping: UNICEF engagement with religious communities



**Civil Society Partnerships**  
**Division of Data, Research and Policy, UNICEF**  
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## Acronyms

ANC	antenatal care
ARI	acute respiratory infection
AWD	acute watery diarrhea
BCC	behavioural change communication
BLI	Buddhist Leadership Initiative
BSCC	behavioural and social change communication
C4D	Communication for Development
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
CSO	civil society organization
CRS	Catholic Relief Services
CSP	civil society partnerships
DFID	UK Department for International Development
DPAC	Day of Prayer and Action for Children
ECCE	early childhood care education
ECD	early childhood development
ECD&F	early childhood development and family
EFP	essential family practices
EPI	expanded program of immunization
FBO	faith-based organization
FGM/C	female genital mutilation/cutting
GBV	gender-based violence
GIWA	Global Interfaith WASH Alliance
IDD	iodine deficiency disorder
IDP	internally displaced persons
IEC	information, education and communication
IYCF	infant and young child feeding
KFP	key family practices
MNCH	mother and newborn child health
OPV	oral polio vaccine
ORS	oral rehydration solution
OVC	other vulnerable children
PMTCT	Prevention of Mother-to-Child Transmission
RRM	Rapid Response Mechanism
USI	universal salt iodization
VAC	violence against children
WHO	the World Health Organization

## Executive summary

Religious communities—their leaders, institutions and faith-based organizations—play a critical role in promoting and enhancing the wellbeing of children. All faiths share the fundamental values enshrined in the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), including a belief in the dignity of the child. Religious institutions and faith-based organizations are often uniquely placed to reach the most vulnerable children, and often have the networks, resources and capacity to do so. Faith-based beliefs, traditions and practices can also provide emotional, physical and spiritual support to children in need and reinforce and strengthen child development priorities.

Despite sharing a common interest in, and commitment to, children’s well-being, collaboration between religious communities and so-called “secular” development actors remains challenging. A lack of trust and understanding between the two can undermine cooperation on behalf of children. As a result, the potential benefits of collaboration often remain elusive.

In an effort to transcend these challenges and better understand UNICEF engagement with religious communities, in June 2014, UNICEF’s Civil Society Partnerships (CSP) unit initiated a mapping of the organization’s global engagement with faith leaders, organizations and communities. One hundred and twenty-one UNICEF Offices participated in the study and provided information on their work with religious communities over the last five years. In total, 149 countries, territories and areas are represented in the mapping, 102 of which worked with religious communities.

An analysis of global trends in UNICEF engagement with religious communities highlights several key findings. Most of UNICEF engagement with religious communities has been with Christian and Muslim communities. Almost three-quarters of UNICEF engagement with religious communities occurred with Christian communities. UNICEF further engaged Muslim communities in 59 countries, territories or areas. In addition to Christian and Muslim communities, UNICEF engaged with eight other religious communities in 16 countries. By far the most common partners for country offices were religious leaders and institutions. Faith-based organizations and secular civil society organizations were identified in 61 and 34 instances, respectively. In nearly two-thirds of the cases, UNICEF collaborated with three types of partners or more.

The most common method of support was sensitization activities: all but five cases conducted sensitization programming, primarily with religious leaders. Capacity development, largely through training, was also significant and identified in almost three-quarters of cases. Support for advocacy and social mobilization was reported in just over half of all countries, territories and areas; service delivery was the least common method of support. Country offices tended to use a mix of methods to support religious communities: in 89 countries, they engaged in two or more methods.

Over four-fifths of programmes that engaged religious communities addressed issues of child protection. Health was the second most common area of programming, accounting for well over half of the countries. Education accounted for almost a third of programming with religious communities, while WASH, nutrition and HIV and AIDS were almost equally represented, constituting slightly more than a quarter of programmes each. Social inclusion comprised the next grouping, at approximately one fifth of country offices each. One quarter of country programmes with religious partners occurred in emergency contexts, and almost all of them addressed child protection or health issues.

With evidence of UNICEF’s extensive engagement with religious communities in plain view, UNICEF must now turn its attention to maximizing the benefits of its partnerships with these critical actors.

## I. Introduction

Religious communities—their leaders, institutions and faith-based organizations—play a critical role in promoting and enhancing the wellbeing of children. All faiths share the fundamental values enshrined in the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), including a belief in the dignity of the child. Religious institutions and faith-based organizations are often uniquely placed to reach the most vulnerable children, and often have the networks, resources and capacity for social mobilization to do so. Religious leaders are often highly influential in their communities, and are bestowed with a moral and philosophical framework to move people to action. Faith-based beliefs, traditions and practices can also provide emotional, physical and spiritual support to children in need and reinforce and strengthen child development priorities. Through schools, health clinics, or prayer services, religious actors are improving the lives of children across the globe.

Despite sharing a common interest in, and commitment to, children’s wellbeing, collaboration between religious communities and so-called “secular” development actors remains challenging. A lack of trust and understanding between the two can undermine cooperation on behalf of children. Religious organizations are often concerned about secular development agendas and fear being instrumentalized by their supposed partners. Similarly, development actors are often concerned about the use of religion to justify certain behaviours and practices that are contrary to their development objectives. As a result, the potential benefits of collaboration often remain elusive.

In an effort to transcend these challenges and better understand UNICEF engagement with religious communities UNICEF’s Civil Society Partnerships (CSP) unit initiated this mapping in June 2014 of the organization’s global engagement with faith leaders, organizations and communities. Understanding the nature and scope of the organization’s engagement with religious communities was seen as a necessary first step to improve collaboration with these actors. Through the mapping exercise, CSP has begun to build a foundation upon which UNICEF can learn from its own experience and improve the organization’s work with religious communities.

The mapping was designed as an internal reference resource for field and headquarters staff. With a better understanding of its own experience, UNICEF would also be better positioned to contribute to the larger discussion among United Nations agencies and other development actors—both faith-based and secular—on improving collaboration for children’s well-being.

One hundred and twenty-one UNICEF Offices (Country and Area Offices) participated in the study and provided information on their work with religious communities over the last five years. In total, 149 countries, territories and areas were represented in the mapping, 102 of which worked with religious communities during this time. Country offices were asked to provide information on four categories: religion(s), types of partners (i.e. religious leaders, faith-based organizations), methods of support (advocacy, capacity development) and core outcome areas (child protection, health); each also provided a brief narrative description of its programmes. In addition to direct outreach to the offices, a thorough desk review was conducted as well as over 30 in-depth interviews with field and headquarters staff.

The report is divided into the following components: Section II details the methodology employed and defines relevant key terms. Section III details trends in UNICEF’s global engagement with religious communities. Section IV outlines UNICEF engagement with religious communities by region on a country-by-country basis; the data is presented in both table and narrative formats. Section V offers a brief conclusion and outlines next steps in the mapping process.

## II. Methodology

### A. Data collection

This mapping study was designed to assess how and to what extent UNICEF engages religious communities<sup>1</sup>. To do so, the mapping relied on three sources of information: a desk review of available and relevant documents, exchanges with UNICEF Country and Regional Offices, and in-depth interviews with staff in those offices and UNICEF headquarter in New York and Geneva.

The mapping began with a review of relevant documents, including annual reports, project documents, country office websites, and the UNICEF intranet, among other sources. Several key policy documents were also reviewed, including: UNICEF’s “Partnering with Religious Communities for Children,” UNICEF’s “From Commitment to Action: What Religious Communities Can Do To Eliminate Violence Against Children,” UNFPA’s “Culture Matters: Lessons from a Legacy of Engaging Faith-based Organizations,” and “The UNICEF Strategic Plan, 2014-2017.”

To verify and supplement information gathered from the desk review, 121 UNICEF Country and Area Offices (i.e. Eastern Caribbean and Pacific Islands) were contacted by email and/or phone. These 121 COs provided information on 149 countries, territories and areas in which UNICEF implements programmes. Eighty-eight offices<sup>2</sup> reported engaging religious communities in 102 countries, territories and areas. Country and Area Offices representing 47 countries reported not having engaged religious communities in the period under consideration. No further information could be gathered for the remaining nine countries, territories or areas in which UNICEF may have worked with religious communities. The offices that participated in the mapping represent UNICEF regional divisions as follows:

<b>West and Central Africa</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>Eastern and Southern Africa</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>Middle East and North Africa</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>South Asia</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>East Asia and the Pacific</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Latin America and the Caribbean</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>Central/Eastern Europe and Commonwealth of Independent States</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>102</b>

In-depth interviews were also conducted to further inform the mapping. These interviews were held primarily with CO staff, including Country Representatives and Deputy Representatives and specialists from Communication for Development (C4D), child protection, HIV and AIDS, health and immunization, education, and WASH. UNICEF staff in New York and Geneva headquarters were also

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<sup>1</sup> The term “religious communities” is an inclusive term that refers to programme partners, including religious leaders and institution and national and international faith-based organizations.

<sup>2</sup> Three offices—the Office for Eastern Caribbean based in Barbados, the Office for Pacific Islands based in Fiji and the Gabon Country Office—provide support to religious communities in ten, five, and two countries, respectively. For the Barbados office, this includes: Anguilla, Barbados, British Virgin Islands, Dominica, Grenada, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent, Trinidad and Tobago, and Turks and Caicos Islands. For the Fiji office, this includes: Fiji, Kiribati, Solomon Islands, Tonga and Vanuatu. For the Gabon office, this includes Sao Tome and Principe.

consulted, with input from the Division of Data, Policy and Research, Office of Emergency Programmes, Public Partnerships Division, and the Civil Society Partnerships unit, among others.

All the information presented in the mapping was provided and/or verified by the country offices themselves. Edits and revisions were made for coherence, language and consistency of the report. As such, though a large majority of COs are represented in this mapping, other COs that may have also worked with religious communities are not reflected in this study.

## **B. Data categories and definitions**

This mapping captures examples of UNICEF engagement with religious communities over the last five years. In the context of this mapping, the term “engagement” is deliberately broad and inclusive. It reflects the spectrum of how UNICEF works with religious actors, from discrete, one-time events to long-term strategic partnerships (and everything in between). Similarly, the use of other terms to describe UNICEF’s work with religious actors—e.g. “collaboration” or “partnership”—are descriptive only and do not reflect qualitatively differentiated levels of engagement (i.e. deeper or more comprehensive).

The mapping did not attempt to assess or evaluate the quality or effectiveness of UNICEF’s global programming with religious actors. Such an exercise, while valuable, was well beyond the scope, mandate and resources of this mapping. Rather, the mapping is a snapshot in time of COs’ engagement with religious actors, and details the method and outcome areas of that engagement. As such, the mapping is not an attempt to provide programmatic guidance or identify good practice. When or if developed, both will draw on, and be informed by, the mapping.

The mapping identified 10 religions with which UNICEF engages. Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism and Voodoo each occupy an entry of its own in the tables, with at least three COs working with each. Zoroastrianism, Judaism, Jainism, Sikhism and Baha’i were also mentioned, and although not included in the summary tables, they do appear in the narrative descriptions for those countries. Whether a CO engages all the religions in a given country or only one does not necessarily reflect CO priorities or preferences; in some cases, for example, attempts to engage certain faiths may have been met with resistance or requested support may have fallen outside of UNICEF’s mandate; further, certain religious groups in a given country may simply not practice on a scale from which to engage UNICEF.

Interfaith dialogue or collaboration—e.g. a country programme intentionally designed to establish cooperative and constructive interaction between two or more religious communities—was also noted in the tables. Interfaith initiatives, however, should not be confused with multi-religious engagement; the latter refers to country programmes’ work with two or more religious communities in parallel, and does not necessarily denote efforts to improve relations between and/or among them.

UNICEF engages religious communities through five different, often interrelated, types of partners. Though host country governments are always UNICEF partners, they are not noted as such in the mapping unless ministries or officials were formal CO partners on programming with religious actors. This includes, for example, ministries of Public Health, Social Services, Community Development and Education, as well as the ministries of Religious Affairs and *Awqaf* and Culture and Islamic Guidance.



The category of faith-based organizations (FBOs) includes those entities that straddle both the religious and development worlds.<sup>3</sup> They service their communities in numerous ways, including, for example, through service provision (i.e. operating health clinics) and procurement (i.e. anti-malarial bed nets). FBOs exist at the international level, including for example World Vision or Islamic Relief, and at the national or local levels, such as the Ethiopian Interfaith Forum for Development Dialogue and Action (EIFDDA). Religious leaders and institutions comprise another category of partners, including official clergy (i.e. imams, pastors or monks) and religious structures, such as the Catholic Church. Finally, UNICEF partners with national and international civil society organizations to engage religious communities, such as Search for Common Ground.

The mapping further details the method or nature of UNICEF engagement with religious communities. This category includes: advocacy, capacity development, social mobilization, sensitization and service delivery. In the context of the mapping, these terms are understood as follows. Social mobilization is a “process that engages and motivates a wide range of partners and allies at national and local levels to raise awareness of and demand for a particular development objective through face-to-face dialogue.”<sup>4</sup> Advocacy is defined as the “continuous and adaptive process of gathering, organizing and formulating information and data into argument, which is then communicated to policy-makers through various interpersonal and mass media communication channels.”<sup>5</sup>

Capacity development for government counterparts has been one of the main UNICEF implementation strategies.<sup>6</sup> This strategy, however, also includes support for religious institutions, leaders and communities, as well as for civil society organizations; it is both process-oriented (e.g. supporting partners to meet given development objectives) as well as an objective in itself. As such, capacity development activities focus on training and technical assistance. Sensitization is a process of awareness raising or information dissemination, which featured extensively in UNICEF programming with religious partners. Though support for service delivery is diminishing in most countries, UNICEF continues to strengthen partners’ capacity to deliver services (including procurement services) where that capacity remains weak.<sup>7</sup>

The fourth and final category of information presented in the mapping focuses on UNICEF’s seven outcome areas, as outlined in UNICEF’s Strategic Plan 2013-2017: Health, HIV and AIDS, WASH, Nutrition, Child Protection, Education, and Social Inclusion. The data captured in the regional charts reflect these broad categories; the narrative descriptions, however, provide greater detail, including for example, highlighting immunization as part of the health outcome area or noting early childhood or girls’ education, as appropriate. The mapping also noted collaboration in emergency contexts.

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<sup>3</sup> UNICEF (2012). “Partnering with Religious Communities for Children,” Civil Society Partnerships, pp 9.

<sup>4</sup> UNICEF website. “Social Mobilization: Communication for Development,” available at [unicef.org/cbsc/index\\_42347.html](http://www.unicef.org/cbsc/index_42347.html).

<sup>5</sup> UNICEF website. “Advocacy: Communication for Development,” available at [http://www.unicef.org/cbsc/index\\_42346.html](http://www.unicef.org/cbsc/index_42346.html).

<sup>6</sup> UNICEF (2014). “UNICEF Strategic Plan 2014-2017,” Paragraph 36.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid, Paragraph 45.

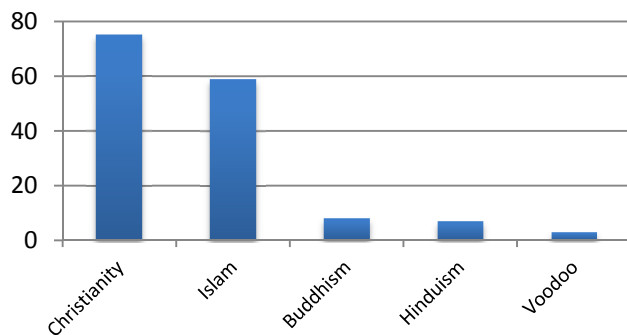
### III. Trends in UNICEF’s global engagement with religious communities

Over the last five years, UNICEF has engaged a wide range of partners in 10 different religions in all seven of UNICEF’s core outcome areas. In emergency and development contexts, Country Offices have provided religious communities support through multiple methods of engagement. The section below reflects an analysis of global trends in UNICEF engagement with religious communities. The unit of analysis is the individual country programme, and therefore does not suggest an overarching strategy per region or globally.

#### A. Religions

Most of UNICEF engagement with religious communities has been with Christian and Muslim communities. Almost three-quarters of UNICEF engagement with religious communities—75 countries in total—occurred with Christian communities. UNICEF further engaged Muslim communities in 59 countries, territories or areas. In all but four cases, UNICEF engaged with either Muslim or Christian communities, or both. In fact, in 37 cases, COs worked with both Christian and Muslim communities.

Country offices reported working with more than one religious community in slightly over 40 percent of cases. Though collaboration with more than one religion was common, only 17 COs reported working with religious communities in interfaith initiatives; of these interfaith initiatives, half worked in emergency contexts. In addition to Christian and Muslim communities, UNICEF engaged with eight other religious communities in 16 countries. Of these 16 countries, two thirds worked in a multi-religious setting.



UNICEF Engagement by religion and number of countries (at least three COs working with each religion)

In total, UNICEF worked with the following religions (number of countries): Christianity (75), Islam (59), Buddhism (8), Hinduism (7), Voodoo (3), Baha’i (2), Judaism (2), Zoroastrian (1), Jainism (1), and Sikhism (1).

#### B. Partners

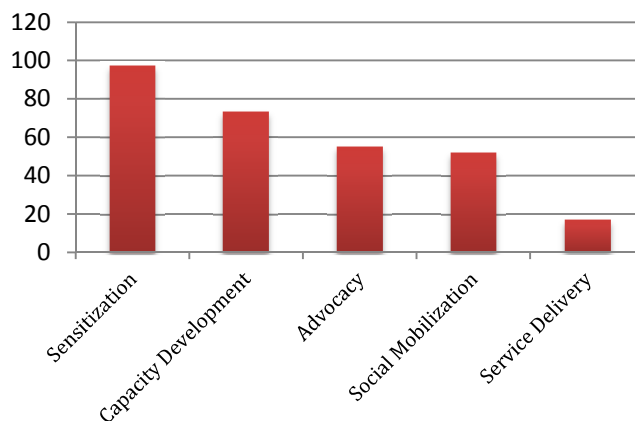
By far the most common partners for country offices were religious leaders and institutions; all but one of the 102 countries, territories and areas in this study collaborated with religious leaders or institutions. (e.g. clergy and houses of worship, respectively). Partnerships with government entities that focused specifically on programmes with religious communities were noted in 77 cases. National or local faith-based organizations were identified in 61 instances, while secular CSOs (international, national or local) were mentioned in 34.

International FBOs—such as Islamic Relief and World Vision—were partners in 27 countries. Further, in only three of the 102 examples of engagement with religious communities did COs work with just one type of partner. In nearly two-thirds of the cases, UNICEF collaborated with three types of partners or more. Over two-thirds of COs that worked with more than one religion engaged them

through national or local FBOs. Finally, four-fifths of UNICEF engagement with international FBOs worked with Christian communities.

### C. Methods of support

By far the most common method of support is sensitization activities: all but five cases—97 in total—conducted sensitization programming, primarily with religious leaders. Capacity development, largely through training, was also significant and identified in almost three-quarters of cases. Support for advocacy and social mobilization were reported in just over half of all countries, territories and areas. Service delivery was the least common method of support, found in only 17 cases.

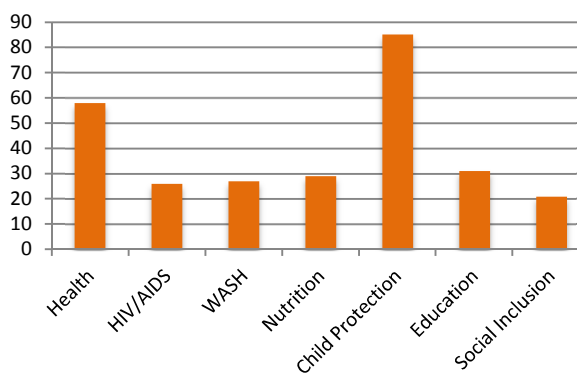


UNICEF engagement by method and number of countries

Country Offices tend to use a mix of methods to support religious communities: in 89 countries, COs engaged in two or more methods. In the remaining 13, almost all were sensitization activities that primarily focused on International Day of the Child.

### D. Outcome areas

Over four-fifths of programmes that engaged religious communities addressed issues of child protection. For more than a quarter of those instances, child protection was the only type of programme implemented with religious communities, most of which took place in island countries in the Pacific and the Caribbean. Health was the second most common area of programming, accounting for over half of the countries; half of those included immunization programming. Education accounted for almost a third of programming with religious communities, while WASH, nutrition and HIV and AIDS were almost equally represented, constituting slightly more than a quarter of programmes each. Social inclusion comprised the next grouping, at approximately one fifth of COs each.



UNICEF Engagement by Method and Number of Countries

One quarter of country programmes with religious partners occurred in emergency contexts, and almost all of them addressed child protection or health issues. Almost three-quarters of emergency cases were in support of either Christian or Muslim communities, though not mutually exclusive. The mapping also demonstrates that UNICEF works with religious partners at both the national and sub-national levels in roughly the same number of countries and works at both levels in a slight majority of cases; only in the CEE/CIS region was there a marked difference, trending toward working at the national level.

# IV. Regional trends in UNICEF’s engagement with religious communities

## A. West and Central Africa

**Understanding the context:** Children in West and Central Africa have their rights violated on a daily basis to an extent that is worse than anywhere else in the world. Nearly two children out of 10 never reach their fifth birthday. They die from malaria, diarrheal diseases and vaccine-preventable diseases such as measles. Malnutrition is widespread in the region; in the Sahel countries, half of child mortality is related to under-nutrition in children.

Children that do survive their fifth birthday often do not go to school. Poverty and traditional beliefs keep 40 percent of children—girls in particular—out of school. Schools are also not always the child-friendly places they are supposed to be: many children face sexual and other forms of violence in school. Children in the region are also being abused and exploited in many ways, including child trafficking, child labor, children in armed conflicts, and as victims of harmful traditional practices.

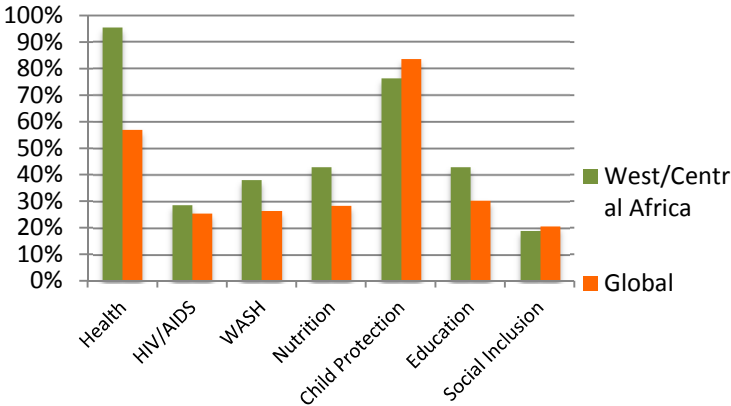
Particularly vulnerable are children orphaned by AIDS. Close to 5 million children in West and Central Africa are orphaned by AIDS and have to build their future (and that of their siblings) without the care and protective environment of one or both of their parents. Numerous conflicts and/or emergencies in the region also worsen the situation of children in the region.

*Source: UNICEF West and Central Africa Regional Office website (November 2014)*

### 1. Regional overview

Of the 24 UNICEF programme countries in West and Central Africa, 21 COs affirmed engaging with religious communities in the last five years. A high majority of UNICEF programming with religious communities in West and Central Africa are in partnership with Christian and Muslim communities. Only two country programmes also worked with Voodoo communities. Four-fifths of COs engage in multi-religious programming, significantly higher than the global average of approximately 40 percent. Interfaith programming is consistent with the global trend and occurs almost exclusively with Christian and Muslim communities.

UNICEF’s partnerships in West and Central Africa do not deviate significantly from global trends. For example, over a quarter of engagement with religious communities is with international FBOs in both the region and globally. COs in West and Central Africa also tend to engage significantly more secular CSOs in supporting religious communities (almost half regionally compared to a third globally). Methods of support in this region are also quite consistent with global trends.



UNICEF engagement with religious communities in West and Central Africa

does differ more visibly in the outcome areas. All but one Country Office support health programming in West and Central Africa, significantly higher than UNICEF engagement globally (approximately half). COs also implement WASH, nutrition, and education programmes at a significantly higher rate than globally (40 percent in this region compared to less than a third globally). This region also has a higher rate of engaging religious actors in emergency settings.

## 2. At a glance: West and Central Africa

Country	Religion					Partnership				Method of Support					Outcome Area									
	Christianity	Islam	Buddhism	Hinduism	Voodoo	Interfaith	National Government	Int'l FBO	National/Local FBO	Int'l/National/Local CSO	Religious Leaders/Institutions	Advocacy	Capacity Development	Social Mobilization	Service Delivery	Sensitization	Health	HIV/AIDS	WASH	Nutrition	Child Protection	Education	Social Inclusion	Emergencies
Benin	✓				✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	
Burkina Faso	✓	✓					✓			✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓		✓					
Cameroon	✓	✓					✓			✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓		✓					
Central African Republic	✓	✓				✓	✓			✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
Chad	✓	✓					✓			✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓						
Congo	✓	✓					✓			✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓		✓					✓
Dem Republic of Congo	✓	✓				✓	✓			✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓		✓					✓
Cote D'ivoire	✓	✓					✓			✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓						✓
Gabon	✓	✓					✓			✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓							✓
Ghana	✓	✓					✓			✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓						✓
Guinea Bissau	✓	✓					✓			✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓						✓
Liberia	✓	✓				✓	✓			✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓						✓
Mali	✓	✓								✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓			✓				
Mauritania		✓					✓			✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓							
Niger		✓								✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓						
Nigeria	✓	✓					✓			✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓							✓
Sao Tome and Principe	✓									✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓		
Senegal	✓	✓					✓			✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓						✓
Sierra Leone	✓	✓				✓	✓			✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓							✓
The Gambia	✓	✓					✓			✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓							
Togo					✓		✓			✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓							

## 3. Country snapshots

### Benin

In 2009, UNICEF partnered with the American Red Cross, the Church of Latter Day Saints and a number of national NGOs to increase awareness of measles prevention and treatment. Activities included identifying the most vulnerable populations to measles; developing key informational messages and dispelling erroneous myths; and bringing eligible children for vaccination. In Benin's three largest cities, megaphones mounted on cars, posters, audio clips and advertising spots were all used to sensitize the targeted audiences. The following year, in 2010, UNICEF partnered with the

Ministry of Health on an innovative, community-based programme to prevent child illnesses related to malnutrition. Outreach activities leading up to the campaign included engaging religious and traditional leaders; interpersonal communication at the community level led by social workers and volunteers; community mobilization; and the broadcast of TV and radio spots.

To better care for and protect children confined in Voodoo convents, UNICEF collaborated in 2011 with the National Association for the Defence of Religions and Traditional Customs (ANDRCT). The collaboration aims to strengthen a community dialogue with traditional and religious leaders and promote discussions of *vaudounsi* (ritual initiation). The partnership plans to improve care for children, reduce the confinement period, prevent violence and abuse and support the reintegration of children in schools and professional education. The collaboration also secures commitment by religious leaders to confine children only during the school holiday period which allows them to pursue a regular education. Activities include advocacy, awareness raising and sensitisation on children's rights and needs through information dissemination at the community level. In addition, "exchanges" are held with children after their confinements to inform them of their rights to health, education, and a healthy and balanced diet. ANDRCT has recently initiated a mapping of the conditions of admission and initiation of children in traditional voodoo convents in Southern Benin.

In 2011, UNICEF also collaborated with CARITAS on a range of child protection issues. This included integrating children's rights messages in the catechism and church programmes activities; providing support (accommodation, hospitality, health and education) for child victims of abuse, violence and exploitation; and promoting community dialogues to improve care for children.

In 2014, UNICEF, in collaboration with Catholic Relief Service (CRS), undertook a Standardized Monitoring and Assessment of Relief and Transition (SMART) survey in the region of Alibori, one the worst affected by flooding in 2012. The survey aims to provide data for the evaluation of the response to the nutrition emergency in order to assist the vulnerable population in the aftermath of the crisis.

### *Burkina Faso*

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In 2009, UNICEF worked with traditional and religious leaders in Burkina Faso to sensitize communities on the importance of polio immunization. With training from UNICEF, 2,400 religious and traditional leaders were at the forefront of communication efforts in the lead up to a synchronized eight-country polio vaccination campaign. Religious leaders challenged beliefs among village elders and encouraged community mobilizers to promote door-to-door campaigning, including in villages where conservative forms of Islam were practiced. The campaign reportedly resulted in 4,727 children ages five and under being immunized against polio, exceeding the original target. In 2010, UNICEF partnered with the World Health Organization (WHO), Rotary International, national/local authorities and religious leaders to support Burkina Faso's national polio vaccination campaign.

In 2013, UNICEF partnered with the High Commissioner, Provincial and Regional Directorates, municipalities, Administrative Center, and women's associations to support the social and sanitary protection of children. Activities in this three-phase programme include: *Phase 1 (preparatory)*: establishing a monitoring team and hold consultations with relevant counterparts in the areas of implementation. *Phase 2 (implementation)*: conducting consultations with village and department religious and traditional leaders, mayors and municipal councils and women's organizations to identify obstacles to hygiene and sanitation and linked causes. Additionally, a regional workshop to formulate advocacy messaging, including testimonies, radio broadcasts and performances from religious and traditional leaders on hygiene and sanitation good practice will be organized; latrines

will also be constructed. *Phase 3 (evaluation)*: conducting a lessons learned workshop on activities and challenges, from which recommendations will be drafted.

### *Cameroon*

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Since 2005, UNICEF has developed strong partnership through formal MOUs and close collaboration with a range of religious youth groups—including from the Adventist, Baptist, Catholic, Muslim, and Presbyterian, communities—to promote Prevention of Mother-to-Child Transmission (PMTCT) of HIV and AIDS, and to provide integrated care to children affected and infected by HIV.

In 2008, the *Ngaoundere* Chiefdom (also the head of the highest Islamic authority of the locality) received support from UNICEF to rehabilitate and equip a health center for women aiming to increase the antenatal, PMTCT, and vaccination indicators in the region. In 2012, UNICEF collaborated with the Cameroon Council of Protestant Churches and the Ministry of Family and Women Welfare to organize activities to promote PMTCT and child protection.

In 2013 and 2014, UNICEF partnered with the Ministries of Communication, Public Health, Women and Family Welfare, Basic Education, Youth, and Social Affairs to raise awareness and mobilize networks of religious groups, associations, and traditional and religious chiefs. These partnerships helped support initiatives in the areas of health, nutrition, WASH, infant and maternal care, child protection, birth registration and basic education. Activities to this end included community dialogues and meetings, health caravans, and advocacy sessions. For example, in 2014, a caravan of over one hundred vehicles carrying traditional and religious leaders and local authorities was organized in four of the most vulnerable regions of the country; more than two hundred traditional and religious leaders gave their commitments to sustain local initiatives to promote best practices with high impact on child and maternal health.

### *Central African Republic (the)*

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In 2013, UNICEF and the Ministry of Public Health of the Central African Republic concluded that Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) camps that did not comply with the SPHERE standards were conducive to the spread of disease. With the help of the Catholic Church, 363 Muslim and Christian religious leaders were trained on the promotion of key family practices; those trained, in turn, carried out sensitization efforts for almost 75,000 people in the IDP camps on these same issues.

In 2014, UNICEF, along with numerous donors (i.e. the European Union, France, the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in the Central African Republic (BINUCA), the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) and several NGOs collaborated with the Platform of Religious Confessions—the implementing partner—in supporting religious communities to provide more comprehensive and sustainable solutions to the crisis facing the country. The Platform of Religious Confessions is committed to contribute to the process of restoring peace and social cohesion by directly targeting communities in the most affected areas by the recent events. UNICEF is in the process of signing a partnership with the Platform, which is expected to: identify the factors and foundations of the crisis in the pursuit of social cohesion; organize inter-communal dialogues to restore social cohesion and peace; and, frame the reconciliation and peace process in CAR through good practice of others countries. This platform may also support the promotion of key family practices and support a roadmap for the survival and development of the child.



Also in 2014, UNICEF and the Search For Common Ground partnered to strengthen the capacities of children, parents, teachers and other rights holders and duty bearers to prevent and reduce violence, strengthen resilience, promote peace and encourage greater social cohesion. The collaboration sought to do so by establishing a religious dialogue and providing access for the population of Bangui to credible, reliable and non-violent information. A series of workshops with religious leaders was organized to better understand the foundations of the crisis in the CAR and to develop appropriate messages for peace and social cohesion.

UNICEF also supported religious leaders to develop advocacy messaging to positively influence parents in CAR to vaccinate their children against polio. UNICEF and Caritas also worked together to help improve child and women's access to health care.

### *Chad*

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In 2012, UNICEF partnered with the *Conseil Superieur des Affaires Islamiques (CSAI)* and the *Entente des Eglises des Missions Evangeliques au Tchad (EEMET)* to: improve access to, and utilization of, HIV services for youth (aged 10-24, especially girls); and to improve access for women of reproductive age and children born from HIV positive mothers to a package of treatment and prevention services in intervention areas. To accomplish these objectives, activities included: 1) organizing advocacy meetings and training for 26 imams in Doba; 2) training 75 women in predominantly Muslim areas on the promotion of ETME (mother to child transmission), CPN (prenatal consultation) and prevention of HIV; 3) producing radio spots on ETME, CPN and voluntary screening; 4) organizing debates for radio broadcast; 5) sensitizing a network of imams; and 6) organizing sermons.

CSAI and UNICEF partnered again in 2013 to promote routine vaccination against polio and to promote the role of women in sensitizing their communities on polio vaccination. Three information/sensitization sessions were held during Ramadan in which women health workers distributed sensitization cards that women used with their community/neighbors. The National Forum on the Immunization and Health of the Child in Chad was held in N'Djamena in July 2013. This Forum, initiated by the Ministry of Public Health and supported by UNICEF, brought together 50 participants (15 women) from N'Djamena and 13 administrative regions of the country. Following the Forum, Muslim and Christian religious leaders, widely sensitized on issues of sustainable partnership and leadership in immunization and polio eradication, made clear and strong commitments to child immunization and health. To ensure the implementation of these commitments, the leaders subsequently developed an integrated rolling plan for 2013-2014 (monitoring, campaigns and routine) to engage the entire Muslim community in Chad.

Follow up to that rolling plan included a series of community engagement forums with religious and other community and political leaders held between November 2013 and May 2014. The forums reached 950 key leaders in 11 cities across 5 regions in Eastern Chad and led to the development of 11 "engagement action plans" currently being implemented in five regions in support of polio eradication, routine immunization and essential family practices (EFP). Additional follow up forums are planned for early 2015 to assess progress and formulate next steps for the action plans.

The same partnership was established among Christian religious leaders in 2013. This has enabled them to provide information and raise awareness of Catholics and Protestants in the five southern regions of Chad. Further meetings were held with bishops, vicars, regional managers of the EEMET, and the Episcopal Conference of Chad.



## *Congo (the)*

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Since 2008, UNICEF has partnered with religious communities to promote child health and the adoption of essential family practices. The Country Office has worked primarily with Catholic and Protestant communities through service delivery and social mobilization and sensitization.

In the area of service delivery, UNICEF collaborated with the *Association des Pères Spiritains du Congo (ASPC)* from 2009 to 2014 to support refugees coming from the Central Africa Republic and the Democratic Republic of Congo; activities included construction of latrines in schools, distribution of supplies (school tables, furniture and kits), and management of child friendly spaces. The partnership with ASPC also supported non-formal education for indigenous children (“Observe, Reflect and Act” Schools) and capacity development of community health workers for education on nutrition.

In response to the humanitarian situation in 2012, UNICEF partnered with CARITAS on cash transfer for displaced persons and host families, and with Talitha-Koum, a local FBO, for support in education. UNICEF also worked with religious communities on the Project on Nutrition, in which 912 community workers were trained on the promotion of good nutrition and health practices through community- and faith-based organizations.

In the area of social mobilization and sensitization, UNICEF partnered with local churches and mosques to train 123 women board members of Christian and Muslim faith-based organizations. The project, known as “Gestes Qui Sauvent,” was designed to teaching parents how to administer first aid to children under the age of five, and promoted the adoption of essential family practices; these practices included: exclusive breastfeeding, use of oral rehydration solution for diarrhoea treatment, seeking health services in case of respiratory problems, sleeping under an impregnated bed-net, completing all vaccinations for under five children, deworming, and hand washing.

## *Democratic Republic of Congo (the)*

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In 2010, UNICEF signed a strategic partnership agreement with the five main religious networks in the DRC; namely: the Catholic Church, the Christ Church of DRC (Protestant), the Islamic Community in DRC, the Kimbanguist Church and Charismatic Church (*Eglise du Réveil du Congo*, comprising more than 50 Charismatic churches/communities). This agreement, in which the government was represented by the Minister of Public Health and the Minister of Education, targets all 11 provinces of the country to promote six key family practices (KFP) at the household level, including exclusive breastfeeding, vaccination of children and pregnant women, hand washing with soap, correct care of diarrhea at home, utilization of long-lasting insecticide treated mosquito nets and recognition of danger signs for timely referral. In Kinshasa and the Bas-Congo provinces, more than 12,000 religious leaders, teachers, mass media professionals and health workers were trained to promote KFP in their respective structures. Sensitization activities are subsequently carried in their respective communities through outreach to households, churches and mosques, youth groups, women associations, faith-based schools, media and health centers.

In conflict affected areas, UNICEF’s Rapid Response Mechanism (RRM) programme works with faith-based organizations to deliver essential household supplies and shelter materials, safe drinking water, appropriate sanitation facilities, as well as safe formal and non-formal learning environments to displaced children and families and to victims of natural disasters or epidemics.

In addition, due to their nationwide presence in most remote areas, select faith-based entities also act as fiduciary agents to facilitate money transfers to development partners and government services where there are no banking facilities.

### *Côte d'Ivoire*

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In 2009, UNICEF supported local authorities to eliminate the obstacles impeding girls' education. Mobilizing religious leaders and building their capacity to promote girls' education was a component of this initiative. UNICEF also provided support to non-formal education structures—i.e. Islamic and community schools—to enhance equitable access and educational success in communities where they already existed. UNICEF provided support for these schools in the form of educational materials; it also advocated before the Ministry of Education in support of their official recognition and contribution to the education of children in Côte d'Ivoire. Additionally, UNICEF supported deworming and regular medical visits for children in 150 Islamic schools.

Religious and traditional leaders in Côte d'Ivoire were among the leaders from eight countries in the region to receive support from UNICEF to mobilize communities around polio immunization. These leaders are subsequently at the forefront of communication efforts in the lead up to the synchronized eight-country polio vaccination campaign every year in Côte d'Ivoire.

UNICEF supported the Alliance of Religious Leaders against AIDS and Other Pandemics (ARSIP), comprising, Catholic, Evangelical, Muslim, and Protestant groups, as well as 30 faith-based NGOs; this support was designed to improve their respective capacities in coordination, advocacy and resource mobilization. Collaboration with ARSIP occurs primarily in the areas of health and HIV and AIDS, and most recently in Ebola prevention.

In 2011, ARSIP contributed to the communication campaign on key family practices (KFPs) in collaboration with the National Program for Child Survival. In 2014, based on lessons learned from neighboring Ebola-infected countries, UNICEF partnered with the Alliance for the Implementation of an Integrated Ebola Prevention and Key Family Practices promotion project in 25 cities and health districts. A total of 3,500 religious and faith-based community leaders are carrying out door-to-door visits to 30,000 households and establishing Ebola prevention committees in churches and mosques; 938 focus groups are planned as are 216 radio broadcasts and spots with religious leaders through a network of 22 local community radios and five faith-based radios. Religious leaders in the four largest cities in Côte d'Ivoire will organize social mobilization gatherings during which they will officially engage themselves and their religious communities in the fight against Ebola and in the promotion of key family practices.

UNICEF built a strong partnership with Caritas during the military and political crisis that erupted in 2002 and later in 2006; the partnership provided a WASH emergency response to 30,000 IDPs and host families from 63 villages in western Côte d'Ivoire. Building on this strong partnership, UNICEF worked with Caritas again on a multi-sectoral project in highly vulnerable areas affected by the 2011 post-elections crisis in Western Côte d'Ivoire. This partnership aimed to contribute to the reduction of poverty as well as the reduction of mortality and morbidity of women and children under the age of five; this was to be achieved by delivering an integrated package of services including on protection, health, HIV and AIDS, nutrition, education and WASH.

Work with Caritas in education involved establishing community schools (14 in total), which were integrated in the formal education system; creating 25 early childhood development centers; and sensitizing communities about forming mothers' clubs for the management of these centers. The

partnership is ongoing for the establishment of 14 ECD centers in the north and southwest regions and building mothers' clubs capacities in peacebuilding and social cohesion through the implementation of income generating activities. Later, in 2014 UNICEF's partnership with Caritas extended to nutrition and Ebola prevention.

Since 2005, UNICEF has held a partnership with the Association of Catholic Scouts (ASCCI) focused on behaviour change communication for HIV and AIDS prevention amongst adolescents and youth; community voluntary counselling and testing; referral to HIV and AIDS management centers; and provision of care and support to people living with HIV and AIDS and orphans and vulnerable children. The same objectives are sought in partnership with *Fondation Djigui*, a Muslim-based NGO, on capacity building interventions for Islamic religious leaders for the integration of HIV- and AIDS-related messages in their sermons. UNICEF has also collaborated with *Fondation Djigui* on ending Female Genital Mutilations (FGM) in villages in the north.

In December 2014, UNICEF initiated collaboration with ASCCI for the promotion of essential family practices in a township with a special focus on hand washing, exclusive breastfeeding, antenatal care, and birth registration.

Finally, UNICEF is also collaborating with five national faith-based community radio stations to promote campaigns on immunization, HIV and AIDS, girls' education and on Ebola prevention.

### *Gabon*

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In 2013, UNICEF supported the efforts of the Catholic Church, the Christian and Missionary Alliance, and the Evangelical Church of Gabon to stop violence against children. To coincide with the International Day of Child Rights, UNICEF launched its campaign, which included rallies and five Sunday services—attended by 5,000 churchgoers—who received messaging about ending violence against girls and boys. The UNICEF Representative launched the campaign in a speech before government and church leaders.

Similarly, on African Day of the Child in 2014, UNICEF, along with the Christian and Missionary Alliance, the Kango Mosque, and the Catholic Church, supported the training of Muslim and Christian leaders in Kango district on child rights and strategies to end violence against children. That same year (2014), the National Council of Muslims in Gabon, in partnership with UNICEF, trained 25 Muslim schools principals, 80 teachers and 1400 students on the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC); specifically, training focused on sexual abuse, the right to education, early pregnancy, and child labor.

### *Ghana*

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Ghana was one of eight countries from the region to receive support from UNICEF to strengthen the efforts of religious and traditional leaders to sensitize their communities on the importance of polio immunization. These leaders were subsequently at the forefront of communication efforts in the lead up to the synchronized polio vaccination campaign in 2009. Religious leaders challenged beliefs among village elders and encouraged community mobilizers to promote door-to-door campaigning, including in villages where conservative forms of Islam are practiced.

In 2013, UNICEF supported Christian, Muslim and indigenous African religious leaders, *Child Frontiers* and other FBOs to galvanize support of a broad spectrum of stakeholders for the development of a Child and Family Welfare policy. Consultations were held with government officials,

civil society organizations, Queen Mothers, chiefs and other traditional leaders from across the country to raise awareness and ensure national buy-in and validity of the Child and Family Welfare policy.

Since 2013, UNICEF has been engaging with religious organizations, such as the Christian Council of Ghana and the Muslim Council of Ghana, to promote key behaviours related to health, nutrition, education, child protection and hygiene and sanitation. These organizations have supported behaviour change efforts through community mobilisation and sensitisation carried out by their peer support volunteers and also through other community level mechanisms. During this same period, UNICEF also engaged with female traditional leadership in the country. The Council for Women Traditional Leaders—the overarching body for the Queen Mothers—has been actively working to promote key behaviours related to child survival, development and protection.

In 2014, UNICEF worked with the Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE) and the Muslim Relief Association Ghana (MURAG) to sensitize and mobilize communities in support of school enrolment for girls and women. The lack of trust in secular schools by many Muslim parents is the root cause of low enrolment and poor retention rates of Muslim girls in secular schools. To enhance acceptance and support of the rights of Muslim girls to secular education, MURAG has engaged key Muslim stakeholders, including imams, itinerant preachers, and women leaders, among others. To this end, two manuals were developed with assistance from UNICEF: “Guidelines from the *Hadith* and Quran to Support Secular Education” and “Child Rights in Islam.”

### *Guinea Bissau*

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In 2009, UNICEF supported the Guinea Bissau’s Ministry of Health in fighting a cholera epidemic. In addition to mobilizing funds, UNICEF supported a team of national and international experts specialized in emergency coordination, water and sanitation, social communication, public health and supply. UNICEF conducted a rapid assessment to better understand the population's awareness of cholera and how it is spread. Based on the results of this assessment, UNICEF worked with religious and traditional leaders to produce and distribute messages that emphasized disease prevention and proper hygiene.

To promote changing social norms and conventions, strengthen preventive interventions during epidemics, and protect children's rights, UNICEF has worked with a wide range of religious leaders, including: imams, representatives of the Catholic Church, priests and bishops, scout groups, non-governmental organizations from Muslim and Catholic backgrounds, and several Catholic and Muslim community radio stations. UNICEF trained religious leaders from these organizations to improve the delivery of more effective and comprehensive messages on child well-being.

Partnerships with religious leaders are a key element to accelerate the end of female genital cutting mutilation and cutting, as well as child marriage in Guinea-Bissau. A UNICEF/UNFPA joint programme engaged the National Network of Religious Leaders Supporting the Abandonment of Harmful Practices. To date, 895 religious leaders have declared publicly that there is no link between religion and FGM/C. In 2013, 170 religious leaders adopted a *Fatwa* condemning FGM/C. With UNICEF support, 166 communities have publicly declared the abandonment of FGM/C, child marriage and violence against women and children.

In 2014, UNICEF, in coordination with the World Health Organization (WHO), the Ministry of Health, and the General Directorate of Water Resources, consolidated its contribution to the National Ebola Prevention and Preparedness Strategy. Critical prevention and preparedness messages were

disseminated at the national, regional and sub-regional levels by various media channels; influential religious leaders and faith organizations were engaged to promote these efforts further.

### *Liberia*

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UNICEF and Religions for Peace have collaborated since 2011 to strengthen the technical and institutional capacity of the Inter-Religious Council of Liberia (IRCL) to ensure the preservation of family unity through the protection of vulnerable children (especially adolescent girls) against abuse in targeted communities.

In 2011, UNICEF worked with the IRCL to strengthen child protection mechanisms and systems to prevent and respond to violence and abuse against children. Activities included: social mobilization and advocacy to prevent and respond to risk factors affecting family unity and sustenance of young mothers and their children; increasing participation of children in preventing violence, exploitation and abuse; strengthening technical and institutional capacity of key members of IRCL (Religious Leaders of Faith, Women of Faith Network, and the Youth Network, among others); and strengthening community monitoring and national response mechanisms to prevent and respond to cases of abuse, exploitation and violence of children and vulnerable young women.

Over 20 Child Welfare Committees were established and members trained on monitoring and reporting of violence against children. Sixty communities have dedicated monthly religious services for children in the three counties. The messages are broadcast on the radio, and reportedly reach an estimated 60,000 people.

As part of the 2011 Day of Prayer and Action for Children (DPAC) Initiative in Liberia, UNICEF and IRCL supported religious leaders around the country to preparing sermons in mosques and churches focused on family and community-based care, and protection of children from violence, sexual abuse, exploitation and HIV. In regions in Eastern Liberia that hosted Ivorian refugees, community radio stations aired talk shows and debates on the role of religious leaders in protecting children during emergency and humanitarian situations. With UNICEF support, a National Conference of the Inter Faith Council was held in early 2012 to bring together religious leaders to discuss concrete actions to protect and promote the rights of all children in the country.

The IRCL's advocacy efforts include: promoting an increase in national budgetary allocations for children, currently representing only half a percent of the national budget; promoting the enforcement of the domestic relations law that mandates fathers to take care of their children. The IRCL also works with the Women and Children Protection Section of the Liberian National Police in reporting violence and abuse cases and conducting regular follow up on cases in which the Liberian National Police intervene. The Women and Children Protection Section sometimes requests the intervention of IRCL animators to engage parents who refuse to take back children who come in conflict with the law for petty crimes.

In 2013, UNICEF conducted several refresher trainings for IRCL staff and facilitators, including on child protection and participation, child rights violation, and monitoring and reporting. Training was also held for an additional 30 religious leaders on community mobilization, child rights and protection, monitoring and reporting of child rights violations in communities, prevention of family separation and promotion of family-based care, and Liberian law on children. These leaders also signed the code of conduct to protect children from abuse and exploitation, bringing the total number of trained leaders and signatories to 210. The IRCL also continued its mobilization of community leaders, religious and traditional leaders, parents, teachers and children through 90 community

dialogues with Child Welfare Committees in three counties. The discussions focused on community-based care for children, asking parents to keep their children in their families instead of sending them to orphanages. During the dialogues, religious leaders committed themselves to promoting the protection of children in their religious services on a monthly basis. An estimated 18,000 individuals from both Christian and Muslim faiths were reached in those communities.

Also in 2013, the Youth Desk, comprising youth representatives from both the Liberia Council of Churches and the National Muslim Council of Liberia, were trained by UNICEF on the Convention on the Rights of Child, Liberian Children's Law and on community mobilization. The Youth Desk subsequently was able to lead a community mobilization event promoting birth registration in Careysburg; an estimated 1,000 children and their parents attended the event. The Youth Desk continues to work with the national Children Representative Forum to carry out awareness in schools on prevention of sexual violence, abuse and exploitation, peer education on speaking out against violence, the importance for families to provide care for their children, and the benefits of staying in school.

In 2014, UNICEF and IRCL partnered to condemn sexual violence against children and call on the government, citizens and development partners to protect the welfare and rights of all children in the country. UNICEF supports the skills-development training programme for vulnerable adolescent girls in Careysburg with financial assistance from Rissho Kosei-Kai, an international Buddhist organization in Japan.

In response to the Ebola emergency, UNICEF is partnering with IRCL to train religious leaders and Community Health Volunteers to conduct outreach to members of area churches and mosques. Religious leaders play particularly important roles in (1) addressing traditional and religious practices that are fuelling the spread of Ebola, including burial practices, and (2) assisting in the development of messages that will resonate with religious communities and faith groups.

## *Mali*

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In 2009, UNICEF worked with traditional and religious leaders in Mali to sensitize communities on the importance of polio immunization. With training from UNICEF, 2,400 traditional and religious leaders were at the forefront of communication efforts in the lead up to a synchronized eight-country polio vaccination campaign. Religious leaders challenged beliefs among village elders and encouraged community mobilizers to promote door-to-door campaigning, including in villages where conservative forms of Islam are practiced.

In July 2013, UNICEF supported the development of action plans by the Episcopal Church, the High Islamic Council, and the Protestant Church. These action plans include the following core strategies: capacity building of stakeholders in interpersonal communication, participatory approaches and key messages on nutrition, education and on essential family practices; on communication and outreach; and on local advocacy. From January to March 2014, these strategies were put into action: 264 imams and preachers delivered sermons, including 18 radio sermons across confessional radios. Ninety Catholic priests and sisters realized 128 homilies and 56 collective talks. Partnership with denominations expanded opportunities to interact with the most marginalized and formerly hard-to-reach citizens.



## Mauritania

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In 2011, UNICEF, along with the Ministry of Social Affairs, Childhood and Family, the Child Rights Forum, the Regional Movements for Children, and the Imams Network for Child Rights, supported the Day of Prayer and Action for Children. The Minister of Social Affairs and the UNICEF Representative presided over a ceremony to distribute equipment for early childhood services and to present a *fatwa* forbidding violence against children. Five Regional Movements for Children and the main *Wilayas* (regions) also organized awareness-raising sessions focusing on non-violent forms of disciplining. UNICEF provided technical and financial support for these activities.

Through a partnership with *Regroupement des Imams Défenseurs des Enfants et des Femmes (RIODEF)* dozens of workshops and seminars at the national level in all regional capitals and most *Moughataas* were held. These meetings, held in 2012 and 2013, discussed all issues related to the rights of children and women and the prevention of diseases and epidemics. These workshops and seminars brought together hundreds of imams from across the country and from all ethnic groups to receive intensive training on addressing contemporary social issues in the context of Islam.

## Niger

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In 2012, UNICEF partnered with Faouziyya, a Nigerien faith-based organization, to promote key family practices (KFP). UNICEF provided Faouziyya trainers capacity building on interpersonal communication, communication for behaviour and social changes and on child rights. UNICEF also provided the organization financial support. Faouziyya subsequently organized village-level meetings for imams to lead discussions on hygiene, birth spacing and exclusive breastfeeding. Imams now can rely on content notes written in compliance with Quranic verses developed by Faouziyya.

## Nigeria

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In 2009, UNICEF worked closely with religious leaders to support Nigeria's vaccination programme. Support included high-level advocacy, including a request by the Egypt Country Office to Grand Shiekh of Al Azhar to issue a statement on the importance of vaccination that could be used to engage and mobilize religious leaders in Nigeria.

At the local level, community dialogues were the core strategic approach to promote ownership and participation in immunization services. These involved identifying vulnerable communities, briefing the *Mai Angwa* (traditional leader) who chaired and facilitated the dialogue, and ensuring that women, religious leaders and local organizations participated in the dialogues. Local service providers contributed by providing factual information and helping to create space for community advocates to incorporate local norms and proverbs into proposed behaviours; polio survivors were also given the opportunity to talk about the challenges they faced. UNICEF further supported the key action steps proposed during the dialogues.

In 2010, UNICEF mobilized local partners to promote the Equity Agenda and help scale-up progress for the most disadvantaged children. Efforts to strengthen inclusion and participation of vulnerable groups were carried out through community dialogues with Village/Community Development Committees, moderated primarily by traditional and religious leaders. UNICEF further facilitated (and often funded) advocacy meetings on equity and the rights of children between religious and traditional leaders and the government.

As part of the 2011 DPAC Initiative, UNICEF organized a national workshop with key religious leaders to engage religious communities as advocates for universal birth registration. The workshop resulted in a joint work plan with the National Population Commission on specific actions to improve coverage in under-performing communities. The effectiveness of interventions by religious leaders was assessed through regular on-site reporting using "Rapid SMS" technology. Under the same initiative, in 2012, UNICEF supported the Catholic Archdiocese of Abuja and the Abuja Women of Faith (an inter-faith association of Christian and Muslim women), in a rally on Ending Violence against Children. To promote birth registration, clerics from selected churches and mosques in underperforming Area Councils were trained; they subsequently mobilized their congregations and direct parents/care givers to birth registration centers.

In 2014, UNICEF initiated a partnership with the North Western zone of the *Jamatul Nasril Islam* (JNI) and the Federation of Muslim Women Associations of Nigeria (FOMWAN) to extend its U-Report SMS-based development communication platform to rural citizens in the largely Muslim North; UNICEF also worked with the Abuja Women of Faith on this initiative in the Federal Capital Territory.

UNICEF also works with the largest umbrella organizations of women of the Anglican and Catholic faiths. In 2014, working with these organizations through the platform of the August Women Meeting, a socio-religious platform unique to the five states in southeast Nigeria, about 300,000 women were reached with key messages on maternal and child health.

For the 2014 Day of Prayers and Action for Children, which was also Universal Children's Day and the 25th Anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, UNICEF partnered with the Abuja Women of Faith in organizing a street march featuring school children and several CSOs under the banner, "Stop Violence against Children."

### *Sao Tome and Principe*

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Partnerships with civil society organizations, including community-based FBOs, are UNICEF's key strategy to increase awareness and understanding of children's issues and mobilise support for child rights at the community level. Since 2012, UNICEF has worked with the Diocese Pastoral Children's network, a church-based organization, in an effort to raise awareness and promote positive behaviours in health, education, and child protection.

In 2012, UNICEF supported Pastoral Children's network activities through the celebration of World Family Day (15 May). In 2013, UNICEF supported the training of more than 100 community religious leaders and volunteers, mostly women and heads of families, in prenatal and child health. Trained leaders and volunteers conducted monthly home monitoring visits to more than 500 families in all six districts of Sao Tome and Principe. Volunteers ensure that pregnant women and children comply with the prenatal and postnatal visits and that children are vaccinated, their weight is monitored; they also increase awareness on good health and nutrition practices and the importance of early childhood stimulation/development. UNICEF supported the production and dissemination of several communication materials for use by the volunteers.

In 2014, UNICEF worked with the Catholic Church to celebrate the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the CRC by supporting a children's choir concert. Choir groups from around the country competed, with over 500 children and parents participating at the commemorative event.



## *Senegal*

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From 2011 to 2014, UNICEF supported numerous Islamic associations to combat female genital mutilation and cutting, and child begging. UNICEF partnered with *Réseau Islam et Population (RIP)* to develop and disseminate an Islamic “argumentaire” (or position) against both harmful practices. The argumentaire was a result of a lengthy, participatory process conducted by RIP; the process included seminars to train and sensitize imams and other religious leaders on the misinterpretation of the Quran used to justify such harmful practices as well as other rights violations. Trained imams disseminated these messages before and after prayers and during sermons throughout the country.

In 2014, UNICEF supported the training and sensitization of Senegal “Guides”, a youth organization affiliated with the church, on violence, child marriage and other child rights abuses; the training focused in particular on enabling girls to effectively serve as communication agents in their communities to combat these violations.

That same year, UNICEF and the Ministry of Health and Prevention engaged religious leaders on national immunization campaigns. In May 2014, the government held an international conference in Dakar on “Vaccination and Religions,” under the leadership of the President of Senegal. Numerous Christian and Muslim religious leaders from Senegal, Africa and outside the continent participated in the conference, which aimed to deliver strong advocacy messages on vaccination.

Religious leaders also supported initiatives such as fighting against child malnutrition and were involved in the 2014 Ebola campaign through C4D activities supported by UNICEF.

In the area of HIV and AIDS, especially the prevention of mother to child transmission, UNICEF has worked with Muslim and Christian leaders to raise awareness of, and promote, the uptake of services. UNICEF also works to support government collaboration with religious leaders for the prevention and control of emergencies, including flood controls, cholera and other infectious disease outbreaks.

## *Sierra Leone*

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In 2010, UNICEF worked with the Inter-Religious Council of Sierra Leone on three specific issues related to children: child marriage, girls’ education and male participation in support of child survival. UNICEF and the Government provided IRCSL technical support on these issues, as well as assistance in facilitating discussions at regional, district and chiefdom levels. IRCSL convened regular meetings of its members at all levels, conducted comprehensive education sessions on the plight of children, and committed to resolutions to be monitored at all levels. Influential religious leaders led selected activities, including radio and TV discussion programmes, awareness raising for child rights, and regional mobilization campaigns.

As part of the 2011 DPAC Initiative and with UNICEF support, radio programmes and community level discussions leading up Children’s Day (20 November) focused on violence against children and addressed positive discipline, child marriage and birth registration. The Inter Religious Council worked with religious leaders to plan Friday prayer and Sunday church services that focused on these issues.

In 2012, UNICEF signed an MOU with the Interreligious Council to renew their joint commitment to advocate for children’s rights at all levels and launch tactical initiatives for community mobilization to increase knowledge and community participation on children’s rights issues.

## *(the) Gambia*

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Since 2009, UNICEF has engaged the Supreme Islamic Council and the Gambia Christian Council in its polio and Meningitis A campaigns. Two weeks prior to the start of a nationwide campaign, imams and priests are oriented on the rationale, approach, target population and dates for the campaign. Imams and priests subsequently disseminate relevant information as part of their sermons, especially during Friday congregational prayers and Sunday church services. This approach seeks to both raise awareness and acceptance of targeted campaigns. In 2012, UNICEF helped establish the National Steering Committee of FGM/C, with representation from both Councils.

Also in 2012, with UNICEF's support, the Department of Social Welfare established Community Child Protection Committees to help create a safer environment for children; these Committees include imams and Christian religious leaders. Committees address violence against children at the community level, and serve as a link between communities, social workers and law enforcement agencies. UNICEF and the Gambian government have also engaged the Supreme Islamic Council on capacity building and advocacy efforts to abandon FGM/C. In particular, imams are being oriented as advocates for the abandonment of this practice.

In the Gambia, *Cadi* (Islamic) courts hear and determine matters of marriage, divorce and inheritance; as such, many of the litigants, beneficiaries and witnesses before the *Cadis* are often children. UNICEF and the Ministry of Justice collaborated to provide training to *Cadis* (Sharia judges) on child rights and protection issues, specifically focusing on the 2005 Children's Act. The training is expected to build the capacities of the *cadis* to treat children before them in a manner appropriate to their age and vulnerabilities and make decisions in line with the provisions of the Act.

Since 2014, UNICEF has collaborated extensively with religious leaders to combat the Ebola virus. This work has focused on social messaging and changes in religious protocols (e.g. burials).

## *Togo*

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In 2013, UNICEF partnered with the Ministry of Social Affairs to engage traditional chiefs and Voodoo priests in a dialogue on protecting children from harmful traditional practices. Thirty-five traditional chiefs and Voodoo priests subsequently held a national forum and signed a declaration of commitment to protect children against harmful traditional practices. The declaration integrates child protection into cultural and social practices and highlights seven key points on which traditional and religious leaders committed to take action. The national forum marked the end of a process of sub-national consultations in each of Togo's six regions, which brought together 160 village chiefs and voodoo priests, all of whom committed to find adequate strategies to reconcile child protection, tradition and culture in their communities.

UNICEF also works with religious leaders as part of a communication campaign focused primarily on immunization and cholera prevention and response. In particular, UNICEF works with religious radio and TV stations to broadcast educational programmes and spots.

## B. Eastern and Southern Africa

**Understanding the context:** Eastern and Southern Africa is a vast, geographically diverse region that stretches from the Red Sea in the north to the Cape of Good Hope in the south. Most countries in the region belong to the group of lower income countries with a gross national income (GNI) per capita income of less than \$955 per year.

Despite progress in many areas across Eastern and Southern Africa, vast numbers of children continue to live in dire circumstances and face extraordinary challenges in all aspects of their lives. Such challenges include, but are not limited to:

- Across the region, children continue to die from causes that can be easily prevented. More than 40 percent of child deaths were caused by pneumonia (17 percent), malaria (14 percent), or diarrhea (10 percent). Under-nutrition is also severe, contributing to nearly half of all under-five deaths.
- Chronic malnutrition is of a particular concern in this region, with more than 25 million, or 40 percent of children under five years of age suffering from stunting.
- Throughout the region, on average, less than half of schools have adequate water supply and sanitation facilities. In many communities, women and girls are burdened with the responsibility of collecting water, a household chore that can take up large parts of their day.
- With only 5 per cent of the world's population, Eastern and Southern Africa is home to half the world's population living with HIV. The region continues to be the epicentre of the HIV and AIDS epidemic, with 48 percent of the world's new HIV infections among adults, 55 percent among children, and 48 percent of AIDS-related deaths.
- Child marriage remains extremely common in the region. About one third of the region's women aged 20 - 24 were married before their 18th birthday. FGM/C is particularly prevalent in Eastern Africa; in Somalia, 98 per cent of women have undergone this practice, the highest in the world.

*Source: UNICEF Eastern and Southern Africa Regional Office website  
(November 2014)*

### 1. Regional overview

Of the 22 UNICEF programme countries in Eastern and Southern Africa, 21 responded to the mapping study, 18 country offices affirming engagement with religious communities in the last five years. As in West and Central Africa, engagement with Christian and Muslim communities dominated this region; whereas a COs engaged Christian and Muslim communities equally in West and Central Africa, relatively more worked with Christian communities in this region (over four-fifths compared to two-thirds). Roughly 60 percent of UNICEF engagement with religious communities was on a multi-religion basis. In addition to Christianity and Islam, UNICEF engaged with three Hindu communities and one Buddhist; interfaith initiatives were noted in five countries, proportionally higher than in West and Central Africa.

All but four country offices in the region partnered with national or local faith-based organizations, a significant percentage relative to the global average (e.g. less than two-thirds). Partnerships with government are also common, and collaboration with international FBOs, civil society organizations and religious leaders and institutions reflect global trends relatively closely. Country offices displayed considerable diversity in their partnerships, collaborating with three or more types of partners in over three-quarters of the cases.

Consistent with global trends, all the COs in the region implemented sensitization programming with religious communities. A relatively high proportion of UNICEF engagement in the region focused on capacity development initiatives; social mobilization programming was also considerably higher than witnessed on the global level, comprising two-thirds of the cases (compared to half globally). Like the diversity in partnerships, the areas targeted for support were also varied: all but three of the country offices provided religious communities support in three or more areas.

Though child protection was by far the most common area of programming with religious communities, well almost three-quarters of COs engaged in the area of health and over half engaged in the area of HIV and AIDS, double the global trend. Programming in WASH and nutrition were also higher than the global level, while education mirrored global levels; social inclusion programming, however, only took place in one CO, much lower than the global trend of 20 percent. Again demonstrating a high degree of diversity, more than half of the COs in the region engaged religious communities on three or more outcome areas.

## 2. At a glance: Eastern and Southern Africa

Country	Religion						Partnership					Method of Support					Outcome Area							
	Christianity	Islam	Buddhism	Hinduism	Voodoo	Interfaith	National Government	Int'l FBO	National/Local FBO	Int'l/National/Local CSO	Religious Leaders/Institutions	Advocacy	Capacity Development	Social Mobilization	Service Delivery	Sensitization	Health	HIV/AIDS	WASH	Nutrition	Child Protection	Education	Social Inclusion	Emergencies
Angola	✓						✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			
Botswana	✓	✓		✓				✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓		
Burundi	✓						✓	✓		✓	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓		
Comoros		✓					✓			✓	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓				✓	✓		
Eritrea	✓	✓					✓			✓	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓			✓	✓			
Ethiopia	✓	✓				✓	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓			✓	✓			✓
Kenya	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓			✓	✓			✓
Lesotho	✓						✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓			✓	✓		✓	
Madagascar	✓	✓					✓			✓	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓			✓	✓			
Malawi	✓	✓				✓	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓			✓	✓			
Mozambique	✓	✓					✓		✓	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓			✓	✓			
Rwanda	✓	✓				✓		✓		✓	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓			✓	✓			
Somalia		✓					✓	✓		✓	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓			✓	✓			✓
Swaziland	✓	✓				✓	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓			✓	✓			
Tanzania	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓		✓	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓			✓	✓			
Uganda	✓	✓					✓		✓	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓		✓
Zambia	✓						✓		✓	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓			✓	✓			
Zimbabwe	✓						✓		✓	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓			✓	✓			

### 3. Country snapshots

#### *Angola*

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In 2010, UNICEF actively advocated to strengthen the alliance between the Family and Promotion of Women Ministry (MINFAMU) and the top ten Angolan Churches to develop and support a social and behavior change communication (BCC) programme known as “Family Competencies Development.” The programme aimed to reach families on key messages related to child and mother health, HIV, hygiene, nutrition, early child development, birth registration and violence prevention. The programme was implemented through advocacy with government counterparts, BCC materials dissemination and social mobilization activities with churches and faith-based organizations.

From 2010 through 2014, UNICEF partnered with these churches and supported the training of 1,500 municipal trainers and 11,100 social mobilizers, who were also members of the church. Through these efforts, 34,900 families and 127,700 people were reached, 245,000 booklets for families were distributed, and 6,500 music CDs and radio spots were disseminated by local media. MINFAMU and partner faith-based organizations have increasingly appropriated the model, so much so that in January 2014, UNICEF began transferring the project’s management to MINFAMU, a process that ended in December 2014.

From 2011 to 2013, UNICEF promoted the celebration of the Day of Prayer and Action for Children with the top ten Angolan Churches (partners of the Family Competencies Strategy) by sensitizing religious leaders on early child development, birth registration and violence prevention.

In 2011, UNICEF’s social mobilization strategy on polio vaccination was implemented, which aimed to expand the number of partners involved in the field, especially churches and FBOs. Training of trainers workshops were organized at the provincial and municipal levels; trainers subsequently trained pastors and religious leaders to promote the adoption of high impact practices for prevention of poliovirus in their communities. Since 2012, UNICEF has promoted community-based management of malnutrition in six provinces affected by drought. Several churches and religious leaders were involved in the process of sensitizing communities and families to prevent and respond to infant and child malnutrition.

UNICEF and MINFAMU collaborated again in 2013 to conduct a qualitative assessment of the Family Competencies Programme. The assessment sought to identify possible changes in family practices on child survival, development and protection and to evaluate the role of the churches’ social mobilizers and community leaders. The findings indicated progressive improvement of knowledge related to good practice for the holistic development of children among the families counseled by social mobilizers and show the progressive engagement of churches and FBOs in the programme implementation.

#### *Botswana*

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Building on active advocacy efforts with Christian- and community-based organizations initiated in 2008, UNICEF advocacy for the realization of the Children’s Act in 2009 led to strengthened faith-based partnerships. In particular, in the lead up to the World Day of Prayer and Action for Children, 37 publications for 13 different religious organizations for the Baha’i, Muslim, Seventh Day Adventist and Ecumenical denominations were developed. The material, designed to raise the awareness of child rights among children and religious leaders, included sermon notes linking religious

observances and ceremonies with specific child rights, children's workbooks for Sunday School, and in-service training resource books and materials for religious organizations. In 2009 the Botswana Hindu Society and Gaborone Rotary Club procured mosquito nets through UNICEF's Supply Division.

### *Burundi*

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Religious actors are at the core of UNICEF 2010-16 strategy on children and women's rights. High-level religious leaders from the *Conseil Inter Confessionnel du Burundi* (Religions for Peace Burundi) have been mobilized through workshops to promote initiatives for the rights and development of the child in their religious structure. The partnership also engages select religious communities in the fight against the malnutrition, which affects three out of five Burundi children, through enhanced family practices in health, nutrition and early childhood care.

Key features of UNICEF's strategy are the integration of behaviour change messages for child survival and development into both core services of diverse religious congregations, and curricula of faith-based training centres. The approach is underpinned by a substantive research agenda and envisaged multi-disciplinary work on correlations between religious texts and key messages and family practices promoted through the partnership. The impact of developed materials and teachings in services such as pre-marital counsel and parent seminars will be evaluated in pilot and control communities to inform the scale-up of the partnership framework in support of the national Integrated Early Childhood Development Strategy and peacebuilding activities with adolescents.

### *Comoros (the)*

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In 2009, UNICEF supported the development of educational materials and the training of teachers for renovated Quranic schools; ECD and gender equality was the focus of the support. The schools were also used for holding regular medical consultations of the pupils and for hosting awareness campaigns to support equitable access to school and inclusive education.

In 2014, UNICEF engaged the Comorian Consumers Federation and the Office of the Grand Mufti (*Mouftorat*) in a sensitization campaign on breastfeeding. The campaign focused on the importance of breastfeeding, and involved awareness-raising, messages through the media and civil society organizations, panel discussion sessions, and sensitization meetings with midwives.

### *Eritrea*

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In 2009, the Ministry of Health, the World Health Organization and UNICEF conducted a consensus-building workshop to better harmonize data collection, validate and analyze the 2009 Global Report on Health Sector Response to HIV and AIDS. Among the key participants were representatives of the Eritrean Orthodox Church, the Eritrean Catholic Church, the Eritrean Evangelical Church and the Eritrean Muslim community.

In 2012, UNICEF provided training to religious leaders to advocate against female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C), promoting the message that FGM/C is not a religious rite. One hundred and ninety religious leaders were trained and became advocates against FGM/C. Moreover, the four main faiths in Eritrea (Orthodox, Catholic, Protestant and Muslim) have officially condemned the practice through the media, and continue to do every year on the occasion of the "Zero Tolerance Day on FGM/C."

From 2011 to 2012, UNICEF collaborated with the Ethiopian Interfaith Forum for Development Dialogue and Action (EIFDDA) to support emergency communication on acute watery diarrhea (AWD) prevention, promotion of emergency infant and young child feeding (IYCF) and measles immunization. As an umbrella interfaith organization, EIFDDA engaged four faith-based organizations from Christian and Muslim denominations to train 42 trainers who cascaded the training to 539 religious leaders in six regions. The trained leaders engaged in day-to-day promotion of messages in regular teaching platforms and religious festivals. UNICEF provided funding, technical support in the development of context specific multimedia messages and procurement of megaphones. Over 500,000 families and 3,000,000 pilgrims received integrated, tailored messages.

From 2012 to 2014, UNICEF provided funding and technical support to the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church's Development and Inter-Church Aid Commission (EOTC-DICAC) to strengthen community-based nutrition through scaling up of community-based production of complementary food in 10 *woredas*. EOTC/DICAC led community education and sensitization, public rallies, and demonstration and training for mothers of children under two-years old in complementary food production and preparation. The project aims to reach 18,900 children and 450,000 community members.

From 2008 to 2013, a UNFPA-UNICEF joint programme for acceleration the abandonment of female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C) has been implemented in six districts of the Afar region. Muslim religious leaders played an instrumental role as a "core group" of influencers and role models: by not cutting their daughters, Muslim leaders impacted their lineage groups and their communities more broadly; they also conducted community dialogues to bring about a wider community-level consensus on FGM/C at clan level. The programme also established advocacy teams known as anti-FGM committees, which consists of the *kebele* chairperson, clan leader, the religious leader (*kadi*), an elder and two ex-practitioners of FGM. Religious leaders played key roles in consultative meetings facilitated by religious scholars, eventually leading to the consensus that FGM/C is not a practice required by Islam. All six districts where the programme was implemented publicly declared to abandon FGM/C.

From 2013 to 2014, UNICEF collaborated with the Regional Health Bureau and Ethiopian Islamic Affairs Supreme Council (EIASC) in the Somali region to establish innovative strategies to mobilize communities during polio immunization campaigns and provide continuous messages on routine immunization, nutrition and sanitation to communities in hard-to-reach areas and pastoralist communities on the move. Members of the Council participated in advocacy events, facilitated training for imams, participated in polio campaign planning and review meetings, reported missing children or pocket areas to vaccination teams, and accompanied vaccination teams to households refusing vaccination. UNICEF provided funding and technical support to IASC for developing a standard set of messages framed in an Islamic context; training of 1,020 network functionaries; mobilizing Quranic school teachers to monitor polio campaigns; and disseminating messages in *Masjids*, Quranic schools and community meetings. The religious leaders ensured repeated message delivery from more than 2,500 *masjids* across the region; more than 2,000,000 people were reached directly.

In 2014, a strategic approach was adopted toward partnership with major religious institutions in an effort to drive social change and advocacy intervention across programmes. A national consultation workshop was conducted in June 2014 with leaders of major religious denominations and umbrella interfaith institutions. The workshop resulted in finding common ground for long-term partnership



with both the development and religious wings of these institutions; the workshop also resulted in consensus in addressing select thematic areas, including: maternal health, immunization, infant and young child feeding (IYCF), early childhood care education (ECCE), girls' education, violence prevention, female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C) and child marriage.

Following the workshop, UNICEF supported the Ministry of Women, Children and Youth Affairs (MoWCYA) and Ethiopian Islamic Affairs Supreme Council to organize a consultation workshop in August 2014 on FGM/C with Muslim religious leaders and religious scholars from all regions of Ethiopia. The workshop concluded by issuing a seven-point declaration on the denouncement of all forms of FGM/C. Specific statements in the declaration included: commitment to teach communities at all levels about the harm FGM/C, commitment to protect children and women from FGM/C, appeal to MoWCYA and partners to strengthen grassroots outreach particularly in hard-to-reach, pastoralist communities, and appeal to MoWCYA and partners to strengthen protection and legal enforcement related to the practice of FGM/C.

## *Kenya*

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Since 2009, UNICEF's key partners on its Child Survival and Development Programme include international faith-based organizations such as: World Vision Kenya, Medical Emergency Relief International (MERLIN), Samaritan's Purse, MERCY USA, Concern Worldwide and Islamic Relief.

In 2009, UNICEF sponsored the daily distribution of supplementary food at 36 Christian Children's Fund Early Childhood Development centers in the Turkana district. The program targeted 11,000 children under five years of age. Throughout 2009 and 2010, UNICEF continued to forge ties with the Inter-Religious Council of Kenya (IRCK) through a partnership on the annual Child Alive campaign on child survival, focusing specifically on maternal and newborn health. In particular, IRCK's Women of Faith Network was engaged to enhance awareness of the high rates of child and maternal mortality and to raise funds through an SMS campaign.

Since 2010, UNICEF has been also been working with IRCK and the Ministry of Public Health and Sanitation (now the Ministry of Health) to improve knowledge and promote best practice on child and maternal health, including breastfeeding and hand washing. UNICEF supported the compilation of a "Faith for Life (F4L)" manual, handbook and booklets; these materials comprise faith-specific scriptural references designed for congregational training of Protestant and Catholic Christians, as well as for Muslim and for Hindu communities. Approximately 12,000 religious leaders across four selected regions in Kenya have been trained in high-impact intervention areas. Seven regional workshops have been carried out on safe drinking water and hand washing, safe disposal of human waste and hygiene, HIV and AIDS, exclusive breastfeeding, nutrition and health-seeking behaviours. A training of 60 trainers responsible for training congregational leaders was also carried out.

Thirty-five generic sermons for Muslims and Christians on 10 key intervention areas have been developed and made available to 5,000 religious leaders. Forty-two generic teachings were also developed for six faith communities in support of messages on child and maternal health interventions. An emergency polio immunization campaign was carried out by the inter-religious platform, through which over half a million of under-five-year old children were reached. In May 2012, UNICEF convened the International Faith for Life Conference to provide a forum for local and international religious leaders to share experiences and learn from each other on best practices promoting child and maternal health. UNICEF also worked closely with the Christian Health Association of Kenya, an umbrella body for Protestant churches providing healthcare, as members of the national Expanded Program on Immunization/Polio Communication working group.



Since 2012, UNICEF and IRCK have partnered on the “Leveraging Inter-Faith Mechanisms for Conflict Mitigation” project, which was designed to shift attitudes and change behaviour underlying inter-ethnic violence in Isiolo. As part of this project, an Isiolo Interfaith Network was formed, and to date has: trained members on participatory skills; conducted a media advocacy campaign and held advocacy forums with women groups on FGM/GBV; organized interfaith/intercommunity forums on alternative initiation rites (often the cause of inter-ethnic clashes) and disarmament; and, held trust-building meetings with representatives of the Provincial Administration, religious leaders and other stakeholders.

UNICEF has worked with UNFPA, the Population Council and GIZ since 2005 on abandoning the practice of FGM/C. During this time, regular forums were held to build consensus among Muslim religious leaders that FGM/C has no basis in religion. To foster dialogue with communities and disseminate information on FGM/C, discussions have also been held across Northern Kenya with a range of community members: men, women, elders, youth and FGM/C practitioners. Religious leaders have facilitated community dialogues in delinking FGM/C from religion using religious text to clarify misconceptions on this issue. In 2010, UNICEF also supported eight religious scholars (two women) from Kenya to travel to Sudan to learn best practices for abandoning FGM/C; they are now key facilitators of change in northern Kenyan communities.

### *Lesotho*

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In 2010, UNICEF provided technical and financial support to the Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace to implement a project to bring a complete continuum of HIV and AIDS care and support (i.e. prevention, treatment, care, support and impact mitigation) to the communities surrounding the Lebakeng area. The project targeted approximately 1,500 orphans and other vulnerable children to the age of 17. Approximately 300 children were issued birth certificates, 700 received educational support (e.g. uniforms, shoes, hygiene kits), 80 secondary school-going age children were reintegrated into schools, and 360 participated in life-skills summer camps. Moreover, approximately 120 people, including teachers, community leaders and volunteers, were indirect beneficiaries of sensitization on child protection, child rights and psychosocial support.

In 2010 and 2011, UNICEF provided technical (training materials, facilitation methods, etc.) and financial support to Catholic Relief Services (CRS) in the roll out of the “HEAR ME” Project, designed to reduce the risk of HIV exposure among adolescents. The projects reached out to adolescents and community members through two separate but linked approaches: a) establishing “HEAR ME Clubs,” adolescent HIV peer support and education groups, and training peer educators and teachers as club facilitators to deliver key messages on HIV prevention and gender in the context of faith; and, b) working with communities to increase knowledge and awareness of gender and child rights and establish referral systems with service providers.

In 2012, UNICEF supported World Vision Lesotho to carry out a community mobilization and public awareness intervention to reduce child poverty. Activities included raising awareness of the National Information System for Social Assistance and the Child Grants Programme (CGP); training field teams and others on CGP processes; and developing and strengthening OVC Case Management and referral system through VACs at village, community council and district levels.

In 2012, UNICEF worked with World Vision to ensure that orphaned and other vulnerable children in Lesotho were empowered to cope with their life situation. This included interventions in education, vocational training, life skills development, nutritional support and social protection

within supportive communities. A social mobilization, public awareness and community development strategy was developed to enhance communities' engagement. At the same time, UNICEF and World Vision provided logistical and technical support to the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare to improve care for orphaned, vulnerable and malnourished children.

In 2013, UNICEF supported the Christian Health Association of Lesotho (CHAL) in carrying out integrated maternal and child health outreach services to select areas that are far from the health facilities. A tracking tool was developed to monitor clients who miss medical appointments and a system put in place that transfers their cases to Village Health Workers, who received a transportation allowance to follow-up clients residing in remote villages. Additionally, the district health management teams revived and/or established functional community support structures to support the provision of maternal and child health care services; health staff conducted discussion forums with key stakeholders in the communities, as well as advocacy/sensitization meetings for church leaders, who in turn passed on vital messages on maternal and child health to their congregation.

In 2014, UNICEF supported World Vision in the implementation of a project focused on a behaviour change strategy designed to mobilize communities to: increase knowledge on existing social services; advocate for the provision of social services to families in need; create local demand for information and services; stimulate communities to address the norms and values that perpetuate negative cultural practices related to breastfeeding, choice of food, abuse of children, children participation, health seeking behaviour of expectant women and nursing mothers. Also in 2014, UNICEF provided financial support to *Mophato Oa Morija*, a church-based organization, to strengthen existing youth structures in reaching young people with HIV and AIDS. Activities included training peer educators on sexual and reproductive health and HIV prevention; conducting monitoring trips to youth groups within the programme; and, organizing a stakeholders' meeting to review results and recommend next steps.

### *Madagascar*

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Since 2013 (not sure the date), UNICEF has engaged religious leaders in promoting improved development outcomes in health, education and social affairs services. Religious leaders have been active in community dialogues, developing action plans to promote essential family practices. UNICEF is currently conducting a study with a research consortium on the most influential social networks in Madagascar, and based on the results, UNICEF expects to partner with specific religious networks as a part of its C4D strategy.

### *Malawi*

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In 2011, UNICEF supported the Malawi Interfaith AIDS Association (MIAA) to conduct the commemoration of International Day of Prayer and Action on Child Protection. The MIAA is an umbrella organization of faith-based organizations, including: the Evangelical Association of Malawi, the Malawi Council of Churches, the Quadria Muslim Association of Malawi, the Union of Seventh Day Adventist Church, the Association of Christian Educators, the Christian Health Association of Malawi, and the Church of Central African Presbyterian. Key activities supported by UNICEF include stakeholders meeting of all faiths, commemoration of the International Day of Prayer, production of a variety of information, education and communication (IEC) materials, and drafting community letters containing messages on need to curb violence sent to churches and mosques.

In 2014, UNICEF worked with the MIAA to promote children's rights and sexual reproductive health rights of women. Specific activities included a study on child marriage; designated child protection days (whereby religious leaders focused on launching a national advocacy campaign on child protection within the church and beyond); introducing child protection interventions within faith community programmes; and promoting the voice of children as a meaningful influence in determining church activities. During the launch, ten religious leaders signed the Declaration of Commitment to take action on ending violence and abuse for women and children within their churches and mosques.

UNICEF also supported the MIAA to commemorate the National Day of Prayer and Action for Children on 20 November 2014. Representatives from various faith groups, children's NGOs and the government assembled to pledge action on violence against children under the leadership of MIAA. Children were represented at the event, and they played a key role in speaking out against early marriage, corporal punishment in schools, child labour and sexual abuse. This strong message was highly necessary, as two out of three Malawians experience violence during childhood. The children at the event encouraged parents to send their children to school, raise them with love and without abuse, and urged traditional leaders and parents to end harmful cultural practices.

To further combat all forms of child abuse, the MIAA and UNICEF produced a "Religious Leaders' Manual," which will be used to mainstream child protection in worship services, workshops in churches and mosques, and in training centres for religious leaders.

### *Mozambique*

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UNICEF in Mozambique is striving to create an enabling and protective environment for children and their families to achieve behavioural and social outcomes and establish social norms linked to health, equality, education, and protection. To promote social and behaviour change at community and family level, UNICEF will focus on promoting those key life-saving and protective behaviours that can make the difference for Mozambican children, with particular attention to the priority issues of nutrition, sanitation, early pregnancy, HIV and AIDS and child marriage.

In 2012, UNICEF identified the Inter-Confessional Council of Religions (comprising the Christian Council of Mozambique, the Islamic Council of Mozambique and the Catholic Church) as an influential group of leaders and who possessed the potential to stimulate significant social change. Since then UNICEF, in partnership with the Child Rights Civil Society Network (ROSC), has supported a series of workshops and consultations to strengthen relationships with these groups. These consultations served as a basis to develop a "Multi-Faith Guide for Religious Leaders" to promote positive behaviour change regarding health practices, education and child protection; the Guide incorporates biblical and Quranic passages and includes dedicated chapters on maternal and child health, promotion of immediate and exclusive breastfeeding, nutrition, early child development, routine immunization (including vitamin A and de-worming), family planning, HIV prevention, early child development, inclusion of children with disabilities, and prevention of violence and child marriage. The Guide was launched in June 2014 with a public advocacy event; 40,000 copies were printed, with the aim of distribution to the major confessions during training of trainers (TOT) cascade.

In the last quarter of 2014, the first TOT for religious leaders was conducted in high priority provinces, and involved almost 100 influential religious leaders. Religious leaders developed further training plans to target additional leaders at the district level, as well social mobilization plans at the community level through sermons, household counseling visits and mobilization of religious youth

groups. In 2015, in addition to scaling up these plans, religious leaders will also be involved in specific campaigns and interventions, including for example, the Child Marriage C4D strategy, mobilizing youth religious groups in the context of child participation and advocacy, parenting education in the context of ECD, and introducing of the Rotavirus vaccine.

### *Rwanda*

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In 2014, UNICEF began a partnership with the Rwanda Interfaith Council on Health (RICH) to collaborate with religious denominations, faith-based organizations, and their existing network channels to strengthen the family by building parents' knowledge and skills on positive parenting. Programming includes promoting the "1000 Days Initiative" at the grassroots level, and Early Childhood Development and Family (ECD&F) programmes at the community level; various approaches will be employed, such as Behaviour and Social Change Communication (BSCC), peer education and participatory learning activities. Religious leaders are being trained on the "1000 Days Initiative," and will work to place ECD&F policy in a religious context. Religious leaders will also participate in developing information, education and communication (IEC) materials and trained on conveying messages to their congregations. Activities to stimulate family dialogue on the "1000 Days Initiative" and ECD&F will focus on men's participation and family commitment.

In 2014, UNICEF deepened the partnership with the Rwanda Interfaith Council on Health to collaborate with Christian and Muslim groups and their far-reaching networks. Programming includes promoting the "1000 Days" communication initiative to combat against stunting, and supporting the Early Childhood Development and Family interventions (i.e. by encouraging a stronger role for fathers in child care practices). By the end of 2014, 333 religious leaders were trained on the "1000 Days" initiative and ECD&F concepts in the context of select verses in the Bible and Quran.

In December 2014, in advance of the festive season, a high-level advocacy meeting was conducted, in which the three most influential leaders—e.g. the Archbishop of Catholic Church, the Archbishop of Adventist Church and the Mufti of the Muslim community—joined the "1000 Days" campaign and called on all religious leaders in the country to promote ECD&F in their respective communities.

### *Somalia*

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In 2009, UNICEF, with support from government ministries, civil society, UN agencies and Islamic Relief, advocated for child rights based on Islamic rules and values, and promoted community awareness of polio eradication and immunization. From 2010 to 2013, UNICEF helped build the capacity of 667 religious leaders in Puntland and Somaliland to facilitate dialogue sessions on FGM/C abandonment at the community, regional and national levels. The training included information on de-linking FGM/C from Islam, the consequences of FGM/C, as well as modules to improve advocacy skills on this issue. It enabled prominent religious leaders to participate in the FGM/C abandonment dialogue and advocacy activities, contributing to sustained debates on FGM/C abandonment as well as positively shape and influencing the public debates in favor of FGM/C abandonment.

Religious leaders from southern and central Somalia were also invited to participate in these dialogues with a view to expanding the programme into these areas. The Religious Leaders' Networks in both Somaliland and Puntland have become an engine of social mobilization. The Networks currently comprise 400 committed sheikhs, including steering committees made up of 10 religious leaders each from Puntland and Somaliland. Through community awareness and advocacy events

organized by the Religious Leaders' Networks, public discussion on FGM/C abandonment—previously considered a taboo topic—is now possible among religious leaders and other stakeholders, including female circumcisers, child protection advocates, and women's group leaders.

### *Swaziland*

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In 2009, UNICEF collaborated with eight faith organizations and institutions—the National Assembly of the Baha'i, Swaziland Conference of Churches, the League of African Churches in Swaziland, Nazareth Baptist Church, Council of Swaziland Churches, Seventh Day Adventist, Islamic Faith, and the International Tabernacle—to support the expansion and strengthening of Neighbourhood Care Points (NCPs), community centres for the delivery of basic services to vulnerable children. The centres offer services in early childhood care and development (ECCD), psychosocial support, play and recreation, health care (National Child Health days), and food and nutrition. UNICEF helped support the establishment of 142 new community centres, and strengthen 625 existing NCPs, reaching approximately 44,000 children.

In 2010, UNICEF and the eight faith groups signed a pledge to work together to end violence against children; this pledge formed the basis for the ongoing partnership with the eight faith groups. Though this partnership was initially focused on ending violence against children, the faith groups have been involved in mobilizing their constituencies for various campaigns, including immunization of children and birth registration.

In 2013, UNICEF continued its engagement with these eight faith organizations to stop violence against children. In collaboration with the government and numerous NGOs, UNICEF facilitated child protection orientation sessions for these faith organizations and provided them with relevant information for their respective advocacy efforts. UNICEF also helps them in developing actions plans, monitoring progress and coordinating activities for the annual Day of Prayer and Action for Children. As part of *A Promise Renewed*, UNICEF also mobilized these faith organizations to raise awareness about health issues affecting children and the role that faith-based organizations should play in addressing child health issues.

UNICEF's Child Survival and Development programme, implemented in partnership with key government ministries and others, including World Vision Swaziland and Nazarene Health Institutions, aimed to strengthen and scale-up health and nutrition interventions, including Prevention of Mother-to-Child Transmission (PMTCT) and paediatric AIDS care. Key activities undertaken included, social mobilization for uptake of HIV services, capacity development of health workers, use of SMS technology to track mothers on HIV treatment to ensure adherence, community-based growth monitoring and decentralized mobile services targeting hard to reach areas. UNICEF's role focused on capacity development of health sector, advocacy for scale up of good practices in HIV programming, and generation of strategic information and documentation of good practices.

### *Tanzania (United Republic of)*

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From 2011 to 2013, UNICEF has worked with the Global Network of Religions for Children (GNRC) to commemorate the World Day of Prayer and Action for Children (WDPAC). UNICEF supported the production and airing of two radio spots highlighting the magnitude of sexual and physical violence in Tanzania and calling for action; the spots were aired on four major radio stations in Tanzania, which enjoy a 95 percent listenership. GNRC staff were also encouraged to engage their respective communities directly on issues of violence against children.



UNICEF also collaborated with GNRC on various other initiatives in support of child rights. Activities included orientation for journalists on violence against children and DPAC, and for five faith-based radio stations. GNRC staff also participated in a 15-minute TV programme to inform the public about the Day of Prayer and Action for Children, and how they could get involved. School Forums for Children were held in three districts to discuss violence against children; more than 2,400 children between the ages of 10 - 17 participated in the forums. To ensure the continued discussions, the GNRC supports over 100 school Peace Clubs. To reinforce DPAC messages, an SMS platform was used to send approximately 2,800 targeted messages to members of parliament, religious leaders, community leaders and teachers to get involved in the DPAC through their respective communities.

Since 2013, UNICEF has also collaborated with the Inter-Religious Council for Peace Tanzania (IRCPT) in supporting a wide range of religious organizations' response to violence against children in Tanzania. The IRCPT brings together nine religious organizations considered as mainstream religious groups with a majority of followers in Tanzania. Members of IRCPT include: the Ahmadiyya Muslim Jamaat; the National Muslim Council of Tanzania; the Buddhist Association of Tanzania; the Christian Council of Tanzania; the Hindu Council of Tanzania; the Mufti's Office, Zanzibar; the National Spiritual Assembly of the Baha'is of Tanzania; the Pentecostal Churches of Tanzania; and the Tanzania Episcopal Conference. The interfaith collaboration resulted in a joint public declaration on commitment from religious leaders to support national efforts in prevention of violence against children. The partnership has strengthened UNICEF collaboration with FBOs in Tanzania and galvanized wider support across different levels of society in responding to violence against children. The IRCPT is building an inter-faith forum at the national and sub-national levels to advocate and promote child protection issues. The interfaith platform is also serving a broader national strategy of building social cohesion among religious communities.

## *Uganda*

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During the 2001-2005 and 2006-2009 Country Programmes, UNICEF partnered with a number of national and international NGOs in Uganda affiliated with the Catholic and Anglican churches as part of its emergency programme. Partnerships with the Mothers' Union (Anglican Kitgum Diocese) and Caritas included a range of activities: HIV and AIDS sensitization of youth groups, WASH promotion campaigns, increasing immunization coverage of children below one year of age, construction of temporary learning structures and health facilities in the IDP camps, and support to orphans and vulnerable children.

In 2009 UNICEF worked with church and faith-based leaders at the national and sub-national levels on the timely enrolment, retention, and barriers to girls' education. In partnership with these leaders, particular, UNICEF organized Go to School/Back to School/Stay in School campaigns, using radio in particular as a means of communication.

In western Uganda, UNICEF supported Catholic Relief Services (CRS) before and during the 2010-2014 Country Programme to implement a Prevention of Mother-to-Child Transmission (PMTCT) programme. UNICEF supported CRS to implement activities in five districts to increase access to, and utilization of, PMTCT and Pediatric AIDS services through staff training and mentoring. From 2010 to 2014, UNICEF supported CRS to implement activities within the framework of the health sector strategic plan, contributing to the District Health Strategic Plans for HIV and AIDS, the national strategic plan for HIV and AIDS, as well as the joint United Nations programme on HIV and AIDS.

In 2010 UNICEF made a strategic shift to reduce the number of PCA partners (due to high transaction costs associated with PCAs) while ensuring greater programme coverage (greater geographical

coverage and reach to beneficiaries). As part of this strategic shift, UNICEF decided that for programming after 2012, UNICEF would support the three main faith-based organizations through their National Secretariats instead of working with lower level structures.

From 2011 to 2014, UNICEF engaged the Uganda Episcopal Conference (UEC) in participatory social change processes to promote family care practices, education and protection. In particular, the UEC was involved in: treatment for malaria, pneumonia and diarrhea for under five year olds; scaling-up Prevention of Mother-to-Child Transmission (PMTCT), family health days, Village Health Team supervision and functionality; oversight of quality improvement in primary schools; ensuring birth registration notification; violence helpline reporting and response; promoting social mobilization and advocacy; and fostering community dialogue through community resource centers/youth kiosks.

During this period, UNICEF also carried out an extensive programme of work with the Church of the Province of Uganda (CoU) to meet the holistic educational, health, socio-economic and psychosocial needs of Uganda's children and youth, their caretakers, and surrounding communities. Activities included: full immunization for girls and boys aged 12-23 months; distribution of appropriate treatment for acute respiratory infections, diarrhea and malaria to of children under five years in CoU health facilities; distribution of therapeutic feeding and care for severe acute malnutrition to severely malnourished children under five; provision of antenatal care, and PMTCT services by all 34 CoU accredited health units in project districts; establishment and equipment of youth and ECD centers linked to churches, communities and schools in hard to reach districts; vocational skill training and early preparation of children for primary school; community dialogues to advocate for children's rights and to create demand for the adoption of laws, policies and budgets that promote children's education and rights; provision of water supplies and improved hygiene and sanitation facilities to households within the CoU congregation; engagement of CoU religious leaders in the protection of children from the risk of exploitation, violence, neglect and abuse; sermons promoting family care practices, education and protection of children; provision of information on health issues, educational curriculum, government services and citizen rights in multi-media formats to over 200,000 youth, women, village health teams in the CoU and school spaces; integration of curricula on disaster risk reduction, emergency response and gender mainstreaming within church structures; notification of baptized children under five to the birth registrars.

Since 2011, UNICEF and the Uganda Muslim Supreme Council (UMSC) have implemented the project, "Keep Children Alive, Safe and Learning." Activities include: expansion of the availability of PMTCT services to more clinics; dissemination of messages about HIV transmission through various media (including UMSC-affiliated radio stations), Muslim functions and ceremonies, using bed nets to avoid malaria, proper nutrition, and other important issues throughout communities; use of mobile phones to track medicine stocks in order to ensure accountability at the both the local and national level; promotion of birth registration; organization of a national "Zero Tolerance for Violence" campaign; mobilization of youth groups to take action on promoting child protection; support to Early Childhood Development Centers to provide quality services for children from three to five years old; support to the Ministry of Sports and Education to successfully implement its Basic Requirements and Minimum Standards (BRMS) for schools, ensuring child-friendly standards; support to mentoring and school inspectors programmes designed to raise the quality of teaching in schools by improving curriculum delivery, lesson planning and teaching methods; support to the Government to improve the quality and safety of the school environment by increasing access to child-friendly water and sanitation facilities, improving personal hygiene behaviour, training teachers on safe school standards, and strengthening the effort to report violence against children in schools; supporting the Girls' Education Movement, a non-governmental organization already reaching

thousands of girls and boys in Uganda; support to Youth Centres, physical spaces at the village or parish level where young people can learn, play, and access information.

### *Zambia*

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In 2013, UNICEF partnered with the Zambia Anglican Council to work with communities deeply affected by HIV, specifically to address the developmental needs of children under the age of six. The project is designed to enrol 800 children and their caregivers, and train 40 Early Childhood Development (ECD) promoters and 12 lead professional volunteers. The project has established four community-based ECD centres in the Eastern province of Zambia that support the cognitive, emotional and physical development of children. The centres also offer a wide range of services including HIV prevention, voluntary counselling and testing, child health, nutrition, play and communication, child protection and economic security.

Further, caregivers receive advice and skills building at the ECD centers, while additional home visits ensured that targeted vulnerable families were connected to needed services. Collaboration with the Ministry of Health ensures that HIV testing, counselling and referrals are available periodically at ECD centers. All ECD centers have been linked to the nearest health facilities using a referral form that has provision for feedback on the type of services provided.

### *Zimbabwe*

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Since 2011, UNICEF has partnered with and Union for the Development of Apostolic Churches in Zimbabwe Africa to address a wide range of issues, including child protection, young child survival and development, WASH, basic education and gender equality. A study into access and utilization of Maternal and Newborn Child Health (MNCH) services among the Apostolics revealed low uptake of health services and the existence of “underground” Apostolic birth camps where women go to deliver their babies, often in substandard facilities.

In response, activities of the partnership include: development of a three-year strategic action plan to improve the welfare of children in Zimbabwe; a children’s conference that highlighted the practice of child marriage and school dropouts; a bishops’ conference, which secured the commitment of the Apostolics’ leadership to addressing priority issues; support for the Apostolics to host commemorations of the 16 days of activism against GBV for members of their communities; and provision of WASH facilities (i.e. water tanks and water bladders for them to use at their gatherings). UNICEF is also supporting formative research to inform the development of a package of interventions to improve MNCH outcomes in Apostolic communities.



## C. Middle East and North Africa

**Understanding the context:** The Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region covers countries and territories from Morocco to the Islamic Republic of Iran, including Djibouti and Sudan in sub-Saharan Africa. The region is home to nearly 418 million people, including 157 million, or 38 percent, who are under the age of 18.

The region is marked by significant disparities: Saudi Arabia, one of the region's richest countries, shares borders with Yemen, one of its poorest and most conflict-ridden. Disparities are also evident within countries: income, gender and geographical inequalities in MENA keep many children in a state of poverty and vulnerability.

All countries in the Middle East and North Africa have signed the Convention on the Rights of the Child and programmes are under way in most countries to make sure that their national legislation is aligned with the provisions of the Convention. However, across the region, children continue to be involved in labour, to be married off at an early age, to be recruited by armed forces and groups, and to be subjected to violence and such practices as female genital mutilation.

In conflict-affected countries, they are way too often subject to grave rights violations, including maiming and killing and gender-based violence.

Under-five mortality and maternal mortality remain high in the MENA region, as are rates of chronic malnutrition; for example, 415,000 children continue to die every year before their fifth birthday, while more than a quarter of the children under the age of five in Djibouti, Egypt, and Syria, and as many as 58 per cent of children in Yemen.

Whether in protracted crises like the State of Palestine, Sudan and Yemen, or in current and more recent ones, like Libya and Syria, children are seldom spared the effects of violence, unrest and conflict.

*Source: UNICEF Middle East and North Africa Regional Office website (November 2014)*

### 1. Regional overview

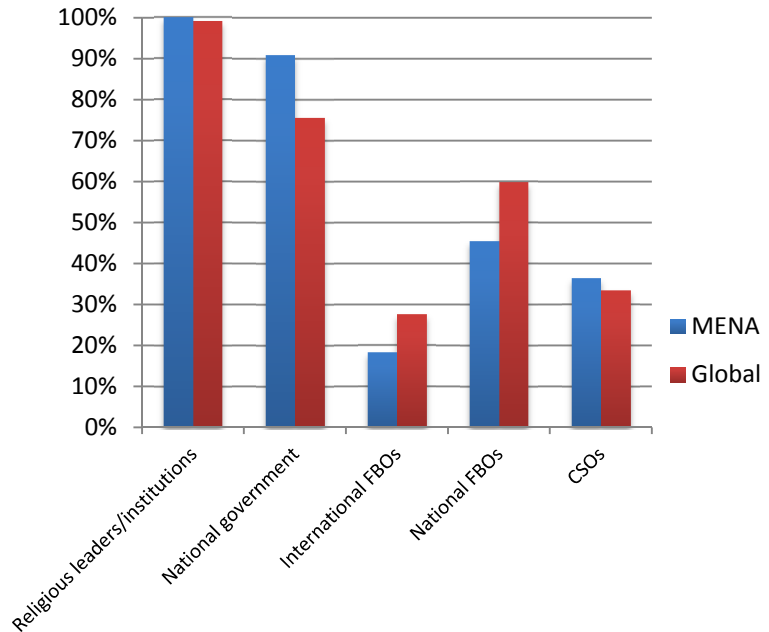
Of the 20 programme countries or territories in the MENA region, all participated in the mapping study, 11 of which indicated engagement with religious communities over the last five years. Not surprisingly, every country office reported working with Muslim communities; two offices also registered working with Christian communities. One country programme (e.g. Iran) also collaborated with Zoroastrian and Jewish communities.

Every CO worked with religious leaders and/or institutions, and all but one collaborated with national governments to support religious communities in their respective countries. Only two country programmes partnered with international FBOs; relatively few partnered with national or local FBOs (e.g. roughly half in the MENA region compared to almost two-thirds globally). Approximately half of MENA's country offices worked with three or more partners.

Programming in the area of sensitization and advocacy in the MENA region were consistent with global trends. Capacity development, however, was significantly higher, as nine of the 11 COs reported providing this type of support. Though none of the country programmes provided support

for service delivery, almost three-quarters of the COs in the region offered religious communities three or more types of support.

Though the MENA region is not unique in a preponderance of work in the child protection area, this region is unusual in that over half of the COs work on child protection alone; work on the other six sectors tracked global trends relatively closely. Emergency contexts counted for more than double the global trend, as six of the 11 COs reported working in such environments.



## 2. At a glance: Middle East and North Africa

Country	Religion					Partnership				Method of Support				Outcome Area										
	Christianity	Islam	Buddhism	Hinduism	Voodoo	Interfaith	National Government	Int'l FBO	National/Local FBO	Int'l/National/Local CSO	Religious Leaders/Institutions	Advocacy	Capacity Development	Social Mobilization	Service Delivery	Sensitization	Health	HIV/AIDS	WASH	Nutrition	Child Protection	Education	Social Inclusion	Emergencies
Algeria		✓					✓			✓	✓	✓	✓		✓			✓		✓	✓			
Djibouti		✓					✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓				✓	✓			
Egypt	✓	✓					✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓				✓	✓			✓
Iran		✓				✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓				✓	✓			
Iraq		✓					✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓				✓	✓		✓
Jordan		✓					✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓				✓	✓		✓	✓
Lebanon		✓						✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓				✓	✓			
Morocco		✓					✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓				✓	✓			
State of Palestine		✓					✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓			✓
Sudan	✓	✓				✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Yemen		✓					✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓			✓

### 3. Country snapshots

#### Algeria

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Between 2010 and 2013 UNICEF mobilized more than 300 (75 percent) *Mouchidat*, Algerian women religious leaders, to support mothers and families in adopting good practices of care, hygiene and diet, including young child feeding, development and learning. With training from UNICEF on interpersonal communication and key health and nutrition messages to protect the health of women and children, the *Mourchidat* reached the most vulnerable mothers and women in disadvantaged rural areas. With UNICEF's support, a toolbox with key messages was also developed, to ensure the quality of information and messages disseminated by the *Mourchidat*.

#### Djibouti

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From 2008-2014, UNICEF and UNFPA partnered with the Ministry of Muslim Affairs and Culture in Egypt, Djibouti, and Sudan to accelerate the abandonment of FGM/C. UNICEF supported the Ministry in Djibouti in capacity building, training of trainers, and the establishment of network of 33 religious leaders. These leaders benefited from exposure to, and exchange of, experience with scholars from Sudan and Egypt's Al-Azhar University. The network of religious leaders organized regular social mobilization and community dialogue throughout Djibouti in order to delink FGM/C from Islam. These community discussions were a platform to openly discuss questions related to children and women's rights in the context of Islam.

In 2013, the Ministry of Muslim Affairs and Culture, in partnership with UNICEF, organized a three-day national consultation with all religious leaders. The objective of the consultation was to discuss key child rights violations and renew the commitment and social responsibilities of religious leaders. Sixty-two religious leaders (men and women) participated, which culminated in a public declaration on the protection of children, including to stop practicing female genital mutilation and cutting. Religious leaders also developed an action plan for 2014, including a commitment to use Friday prayer to promote the protection of children and women from harm, including FGM/C and all others forms of violence. The Ministry subsequently conducted a workshop in June 2014 to follow up on the implementation of the agreed action plan. The workshop led to important outcomes such as the endorsement of religious leaders' public declaration by the 40 religious leader of Supreme Islamic Council and the production of seven key messages on children's rights.

#### Egypt

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In 2005, UNICEF and Al-Azhar University jointly developed a publication entitled "Children in Islam: Their Care, Upbringing and Protection." The manual includes research papers and extracts from Quranic verses, *hadiths* (sayings from the prophetic tradition) and *sunnas* (traditional social and legal norms and customary practices) that provide useful guidance on children's rights in areas such as health, education and protection. The partnership with Al-Azhar University has helped facilitate work with Islamic religious leaders in other countries, including Afghanistan, Iran and Nigeria.

In 2013, UNICEF and Al Azhar University launched "Female Circumcision: Between the Incorrect Use of Science and the Misunderstood Doctrine." The document advocates against FGM/C by providing a clear position of Islam on FGM/C: that there is no religious justification to this practice. UNICEF is currently working with Al Azhar to convene religious leaders in multiple locations around the

country, orient them on the publication, and promote discussion and awareness raising in their respective communities.

UNICEF, Al Azhar University and the Coptic Church are currently finalizing two publications that will reflect the position of religious scholars from Christianity and Islam on multiple aspects of violence against children. In the same process, a third publication on violence against children is currently being developed as a set of joint messages and positions from both religions.

### *Iran (Islamic Republic of)*

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Since 2005, UNICEF has worked with religious leaders in Iran to protect girls and boys of all age groups from maltreatment within the household, school system, and community. In 2007, UNICEF developed a booklet entitled “Disciplining Children with Kindness,” which contains the views of high-profile religious figures on non-violent upbringing of children. The booklet was distributed among universities, libraries, the Ministry of Education and other government organizations, to help various stakeholders better understand Islam’s views on raising children. UNICEF also developed an advocacy package for religious leaders that highlights the links between the Convention on the Rights of the Child and Islam’s views on how to treat children. The package, which includes a booklet entitled “Religious Leaders and Fighting Violence against Children, an Islamic Approach” and several brochures and posters, were distributed to religious leaders and religious organizations in 2009. The materials were prepared with a view to motivate religious leaders to speak out against child maltreatment, including corporal punishment, and to include this as a specific topic in public speeches, presentations, and writings.

UNICEF also produced a knowledge base for advocacy and promotion of child rights in Iran through the development of a “Comparative Study of Islam and International Instruments,” a collection of papers comparing Islamic *Sharia* (laws of Islam) with the CRC. The collection reviews articles on the CRC, with teachings of Islam extracted from the Holy Quran, lessons from the life of the Prophet, and the teachings of numerous imams.

In October 2011, the first national Inter-religious Conference on the Role of Religious Leaders in Preventing Violence against Children was held in Qom; in attendance were one hundred influential religious leaders from various faiths and religions, experts, intellectuals, and policy-makers. The conference, organized with UNICEF support and in partnership with the country’s judiciary and the Centre for Human Rights Studies of Mofid University, was designed to promote dialogue among religious leaders and communities on issues pertaining to corporal punishment, and to highlight the important role religious leaders can play in overcoming this phenomenon in both family and educational settings. A key output of the event was a declaration that committed participating religious leaders to advocate against child maltreatment and promote positive methods of disciplining; the conference also provided key recommendations on how religious leaders and other stakeholders could confront child maltreatment and protect children in their communities.

In 2012, on the occasion of the World Day of Prayer and Action for Children, UNICEF supported a discussion by key stakeholders on the importance of treating children with kindness and safeguarding them against maltreatment, and to highlight the important role of religious leaders and institutions in promoting these values and initiating action within society. Participants included religious leaders of the Muslim, Zoroastrian and Jewish faiths, NGO representatives and members of academia; numerous government agencies were also present, including the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance and the Qom Seminary.

As part of its 2012 – 2016 Country Programme, UNICEF promotes participation of religious figures in national programmes and debates focusing on the CRC and prevention of child maltreatment. In 2013, UNICEF provided significant technical assistance to the MENA regional initiative for engaging Muslim religious leaders/communities in protecting children against maltreatment.

In 2014, UNICEF supported the National Body on the CRC (situated under the Ministry of Justice, and mandated to monitor implementation of the CRC in Iran) to conduct technical dialogue sessions on the role of religious leaders in preventing selected themes of violence against children including discrimination and neglect. Participants of the sessions included religious leaders/scholars, experts, officials, and members of academia. This series of sessions places more emphasis on action-oriented outcomes, which will be presented to the Minister of Justice for review and endorsement.

### *Iraq*

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In 2009, UNICEF partnered with religious leaders, politicians and members of Iraq's civil society to support social mobilization campaigns for two rounds of national immunization days at the national and governorate levels. Through SMS messaging, the media campaign reached out to key community groups including women, youth and religious leaders.

In 2014, UNICEF supported religious leaders, among others, to raise awareness of the importance of vaccinating their children with oral polio vaccine. During the Eid Ul-Fitr sermons, religious leaders across Kurdistan advocated for polio vaccinations and immunization against vaccine-preventable diseases for every child in Iraq. UNICEF subsequently worked with religious leaders across the country to support mobilizing communities for polio vaccination, especially in conflict areas. Social community networks, especially religious leaders, played a major role in reaching children in conflict areas and displaced communities.

In partnership with the Association for Crisis Assistance and Solidarity Development Cooperation (WADI), UNICEF also engages religious leaders to support the elimination of FGM/C. Interventions at the community level seek to sensitize communities to the harms of FGM/C and raise awareness of this non-obligatory practice. In every awareness meeting, WADI staff show a 25-minute education film about FGM/C; the film features two famous Islamic leaders who explain how FGM/C is not related to Islam. In all such meetings, religious leaders are invited to speak to their respective communities; materials are also distributed, including copies of the Al-Azhar *fatwa* from 2006 in Arabic and Kurdish.

### *Jordan*

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Since 1997, UNICEF has partnered with the Islamic Center Society, a faith-based NGO, initially to promote local community development among impoverished communities in east Amman. This partnership evolved and expanded to include parenting programmes focusing on early childhood development and prevention from violence. Given the reach of FBOs—particularly to women-headed households and orphans—they were well positioned to partner with UNICEF on reaching children involved in child labour.

In 2000, UNICEF conducted an evaluation of its Better Parenting programming, and identified the need to further engage fathers in child-rearing practices. As a result, UNICEF began a partnership with the Ministry of *Awqaf* and Islamic Affairs to develop a manual for religious leaders to use during Friday prayers and other engagements with men in mosques. The partnership evolved over the years

to include messaging on violence against children and ways to protect children from violence whether at home or the schools.

In 2009, UNICEF launched the *Ma'An* (Together) Towards a Safe School campaign, a communication for behavioural impact campaign to reduce violence by teachers against children in schools. The campaign was anchored on a three track strategy: school-based activities to promote a new way of discipline among teachers; community-based meetings, celebrations and religious activities to encourage zero-tolerance of violence in schools; and a robust media-based coverage to make the campaign known. The campaign utilized traditional communication channels including mosques, religious leaders and community drama to influence families and communities.

After a comprehensive review of the social protection environment in Jordan, in 2011 UNICEF chose to support the institutional capacity building of the Zakat Fund (a faith-based cash assistance institution) to deliver child-friendly social protection programmes. UNICEF developed a manual on standard operating procedures and a computerized information system to enable evidence-based decision-making. Discussions are currently underway to support cash assistance programmes to un-registered refugees that are otherwise unreachable.

For the last few years, UNICEF's work with religious communities has expanded to include support for community centers located in Palestinian and Syrian refugee camps. In addition to supporting basic services (i.e. psychosocial support, etc), UNICEF has worked with imams on early childhood development and violence against children issues; the organization's plans to expand this work to address child marriage are also underway.

### *Lebanon*

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Since 2013, UNICEF has partnered with *Terre des Hommes Lausanne*, a Swiss-based international NGO, to combat child marriage and sexual violence. Together, they trained a volunteer pool of Muslim religious leaders on child protection, gender-based violence, and the Convention of the Rights of the Child. The collaboration also helped develop key messages for delivery during Friday sermons. Female religious leaders were also supported in developing sermons and focus group discussions on child marriage and other issues on a weekly basis.

In 2014, UNICEF, UNHCR and the Ministry of Social Affairs trained a group of 30 volunteer religious leaders from the Coalition of Islamic NGOs in north Lebanon on topics such as gender-based violence, child protection, and protection from sexual exploitation and abuse by humanitarian workers.

### *Morocco*

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In 2012 and 2013, the *Rabita des Oulema*, a national coalition of religious leaders was invited to engage in the development of the National Integrated Strategy of Youth, a process led by UNICEF. The *Rabita* was a member of the technical committee in charge of leading the process. Engaging with the *Rabita* was an opportunity for UNICEF to advocate directly with religious leaders on child rights.

In celebration of the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the ratification of the CRC, UNICEF, the National Observatory for Child Rights and the Ministry of Islamic Affairs worked to promote child protection issues. On the eve of the National Day of Children (May 25), all the mosques throughout Morocco related a message on the CRC, progress made to date and the remaining challenges.

In 2013, the *Rabita des Oulema* participated in the Regional Consultation with Muslim Scholars of the Middle East and North Africa, which significantly enhanced the involvement of the *Rabita* in various child protection forums, such as the elaboration of the national child protection policy and the implementation of national studies on sexual violence and abandonment of children with disabilities.

### *State of Palestine*

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Since 2007, UNICEF has been engaged with the Ministry of Religious Affairs (MORA, also known as *Awqaf*) as a key partner, predominantly on child protection matters. That year UNICEF began working with MORA on building the capacity of imams as advocates for child rights and as facilitators of awareness-raising on issues of the protection of children from violence, abuse and exploitation; imams were encouraged to work through Friday sermons, religious sessions and media talk shows. In 2011, this work expanded to include occasional sessions in schools during the development and piloting of the UNICEF-supported programme, “Policy of Nonviolence and Discipline in Schools” (2011 -2013).

In 2007, the Assistant Deputy Minister (ADM) of MORA became the focal point for child protection work in MORA and took it upon himself to train others on how child rights and child protection are inherent components of Islamic teachings and how they are part of Quran verses and *Hadith*. The ADM also served as a trainer on child rights in Islam to imams, women religious educators and other child protection NGOs.

In 2010, UNICEF and MORA also collaborated on HIV and AIDS awareness raising and behavioural change activities through Friday sermons in selected areas in the West Bank. Training was provided to religious leaders in the West Bank to promote HIV prevention and stigma reduction. In 2012, UNICEF and MORA partnered again to promote breastfeeding related issues. More than 110 women religious educators received training on awareness raising for breastfeeding and communicating relevant messages to women who are young, pregnant and lactating.

In 2013, MORA helped UNICEF develop the “Guidance Note for UNICEF Country Offices in the Middle East and North Africa/Engaging Muslim Religious Communities to Protect Children against Violence.” This included active participation in the high level regional meeting in Cairo and providing input on the guidance note.

### *Sudan (the)*

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In an effort to renew the commitment to children’s rights in 2009, UNICEF prioritized advocacy initiatives for the celebration of the Day of the African and Arab Child and the anniversary of the CRC. In a document distributed to religious leaders across Sudan, UNICEF appealed to all religious leaders to pray for peace. The UNICEF Representative publicly called for religious leaders to engage on child rights issues, noting that faith-based organizations are often able to reach deprived and marginalized children when others cannot; through the press and in-person presentations, the UNICEF Representative helped to create awareness amongst congregations about children’s rights and needs.

UNICEF has also partnered with a wide range of religious actors to promote better health outcomes. Among UNICEF’s partners were World Vision International, the Catholic Diocese of Torit, the Catholic Diocese of Wau, and the Diocese of Daikone, and women’s groups. On HIV and AIDS, these Dioceses were among UNICEF’s faith-based partners to provide behaviour change communication, voluntary counseling and testing, peer education and preventing mother-to-child transmission services.



In North Darfur, UNICEF engaged imams in broadcasting positive messages for better nutrition outcomes and humanitarian work. Imams linked messages to key Quranic teachings and encouraged men's participation to learn more about maternal and child nutrition. In 2010 UNICEF intensified and expanded its work with religious leaders for the promotion of positive nutrition behaviours. Key activities included sensitizing and mobilizing religious leaders in the state to address such traditional harmful practices as scarification, cutting, and burning as treatment for illness in children under five years. Other activities included discussions on infant and young children feeding (IYCF), in particular breastfeeding from a religious perspective; commemoration of Days of Prayer; and Peace Campaigns involving religious leaders and children in schools. The Children in Islam publication originally published in Egypt was reproduced in Sudan and widely distributed to all religious leaders. Also in Darfur, the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) partnered with UNICEF as part of its larger Education and Child Protection programme to distribute girls' uniforms and school materials for 11,400 students. UNICEF also supported UMCOR to distribute plastic sheeting to three schools in El Neem camp, benefiting some 1,100 students and together the two also completed repairs to four classrooms at Ulmomi Neem girls' school to benefit nearly 250 children.

In 2011, the National Council for Child Welfare, with UNICEF support and in collaboration with the Ministry of Guidance and *Awqaf*, organized the celebrations for the Day of Prayer and Action for Children. Activities included a talk about the rights of children in Islam, exhibitions, a carnival and special prayers for children.

*Alshuffa a' Alsoghar* Communication Initiative was conceptualized in 2013 as a long-term multi-sector and multi-channel high impact communication initiative to strengthen mothers/caregivers and families' knowledge and practice of key household practices for child survival, development and protection. In 2014, a network of religious institutions participated in the Direct Community Engagement and Social Dialogue prongs of the *Alshuffa'a Alsoghar* strategy. UNICEF is providing technical leadership and the services of a full-service communication company as well as funds for rolling out the multi-year initiative.

Between 2008 and 2014, UNICEF partnered with religious leaders and groups on a number of initiatives to promote child well-being. In doing so, UNICEF provided technical guidance and leadership, identification of relevant resource persons, and funding. Activities included: supporting a network of 600 religious leaders across Sudan trained as advocates for the Saleema Initiative on FGM/C; training for religious leaders as members of 205 community-based Child Protection Networks; and sensitization of national and sub-national religious leaders to promote and facilitate realization of key child rights. UNICEF also supported a high-level orientation workshop on Essential Family Practices for 70 national leaders of religious groups; participants discussed six essential family practices and reviewed a draft companion religious guide for the Sudanese version of Facts for Life (*Rasseel leel Haiah*). Subsequently, a series of one-day orientation workshops addressing key family practices took place. Areas covered included: 1) a health session on use of bed nets, immunization, and oral rehydration salts; 2) early initiation and exclusive breastfeeding, followed by age appropriate complementary feeding; and, 3) hand washing with soap as well as Universal School Enrollment and Retention and Child Protection (especially child rights to birth registration).

## *Yemen*

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In 2012, UNICEF partnered with the Health Education Center (HEC) of the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Endowment (in charge of religious affairs) to publish a guide for religious leaders to promote health awareness and support immunization campaigns in Yemen. In response to rising incidences of refusals and negative rumors about polio vaccines in certain conflict-affected areas,

UNICEF and the HEC successfully mobilized religious leaders to issue a joint *fatwa* in support of the polio vaccines and the vaccination exercise.

In 2013, UNICEF engaged 765 religious and community leaders in over 60 districts to elicit their support in promoting key life-saving care and protective practices. After the orientation, religious leaders infused some of these key messages in their sermons and/or conducted community mobilization activities around specific interventions and issues.

*Regional programme: Regional consultation with Muslim scholars of the Middle East and North Africa*

In April 2013, UNICEF and Al-Azhar University, with support from *Religions for Peace*, organized a Middle East and North Africa consultation in Egypt with Muslim scholars from the region. The consultation served as an initial step to interact informally with Muslim religious actors on key child protection issues in the region and share experiences and strategies to ensure more effective collaboration and engagement between religious actors and UNICEF. The consultation provided a space for scholars to informally discuss issues of common concern, particularly regarding child protection in emergencies and violence in schools and homes; it was also an opportunity to identify concrete actions religious actors can take to address these issues. The matter of social norms and how to distinguish between social norms and religious tradition was also discussed. Consultation participants included religious scholars from Algeria, Egypt, Iran, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, the State of Palestine, Sudan, Tunisia and Yemen.

As an outcome of the consultation, a *Guidance Note Engaging Muslim Religious Communities to Protect Children against Violence* was produced by the UNICEF Middle East and North Africa Regional Office. The Guidance provides practical advice to UNICEF Middle East and North Africa country offices and the regional office on strategies and actions to effectively engage Muslim religious communities to protect children against violence, strategic entry points and concrete actions Muslim religious communities can undertake to protect children from violence.

## D. South Asia

**Understanding the context:** South Asia is home to 1.4 billion people, or roughly one-fifth of the global population, and is one of the most densely populated regions in the world. The region's impressive technological and economic advances of the last decade have not always reached the general population, leaving millions living in poverty with inadequate health care.

Many areas of the region are affected by political strife, civil unrest, armed insurgencies and frequent natural disasters, and experience weak and sporadic coverage of basic social services, particularly in the critical sectors of health, water and education. These factors continue to threaten the survival and development of the most vulnerable members of the population, children and women.

Progress has been made in improving the wellbeing of children in South Asia, and most indicators show a positive trend. But much more needs to be done if the region is to meet its goals to improve the survival, growth and healthy development of its most valuable resource – children. Children carry the potential to revitalize this region – to eliminate poverty, accelerate human development, and most importantly, to lay the foundations of lasting peace and prosperity.

*Source: UNICEF South Asia Regional Office website (November 2014)*

### 1. Regional overview

All of the eight programme countries in the South Asia region participated in the mapping study, seven of which indicated engaging with religious communities over the last five years. Given the demographics of the region, perhaps it is not surprising that only one of seven COs reported working with Christian communities (e.g. Sri Lanka), while four reported working with Buddhist and Hindu communities.

Unlike most other regions, only four of the seven country offices in South Asia collaborated formally with national governments specifically on programming with religious communities. On the other hand, partnerships with national and/or local FBOs were relatively common, and followed the global trend quite closely. Once again, all COs worked with religious leaders and/or institutions.

Sensitization and capacity development were the most common types of support offered by COs in South Asia: all seven offered sensitization programming, while six of the seven carried out capacity development activities. Over half offered three or more methods of support.

South Asia programming was unusual in that only four of seven offices engaged religious communities on child protection issues. The other programme areas corresponded to global trends; the only notable exception is that none of the country offices programmed on nutrition with religious communities.

## 2. At a glance: South Asia

Country	Religion						Partnership				Method of Support					Outcome Area								
	Christianity	Islam	Buddhism	Hinduism	Voodoo	Interfaith	National Government	Int'l FBO	National/Local FBO	Int'l/National/Local CSO	Religious Leaders/Institutions	Advocacy	Capacity Development	Social Mobilization	Service Delivery	Sensitization	Health	HIV/AIDS	WASH	Nutrition	Child Protection	Education	Social Inclusion	Emergencies
Afghanistan		✓					✓			✓		✓			✓						✓			✓
Bangladesh		✓					✓		✓	✓		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓						
Bhutan			✓				✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓			
India		✓		✓		✓		✓		✓		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓					✓		
Nepal			✓	✓		✓		✓		✓		✓	✓		✓	✓				✓	✓			
Pakistan		✓					✓		✓	✓		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓							✓
Sri Lanka	✓	✓	✓	✓					✓	✓	✓				✓					✓				

## 3. Country snapshots

### *Afghanistan*

In 2011, UNICEF, in collaboration with Egypt's Al-Azhar University, trained 35 Afghan religious leaders as master trainers on child rights. The UNICEF-supported guide, "Child Rights in Islam," was used extensively in the training. The 35 master trainers conducted 34 training workshops, training a total of 3,500 religious leaders across the country.

### *Bangladesh*

In 2012, with UNICEF support, seven deputy directors of the Islamic Foundation trained 5,876 imams on the threat of avian and human influenza. Following the training, the imams engaged in mosque- and home-based counseling during *Akika* (the occasion of naming a child) and *Milad* (religious congregations offering special prayers organized mainly by families and groups), two widely practiced religious ceremonies. Eleven and half million congregants in seven districts received information on avian and human influenza preventive practices.

The Country Office is currently in partnership with the Divisional office of Barisal district (southeast Bangladesh), and the Islamic Foundation to engage over 500 imams in promoting WASH and basic hygiene practices; based on the Global Interfaith WASH Alliance (GIWA), this initiative is being conducted largely through open community dialogues. Trained imams will undertake various community-level activities to raise awareness among their communities, including sensitization in selected mosques, discussion on WASH issues during Friday Prayers (*khutba*), community dialogues, court yard meetings, and discussion during religious events, among others. Each trained imam will

also organize awareness-raising sessions in *madrasas* and secondary schools. The Islamic Foundation will also work with other religions on WASH sensitization.

### *Bhutan*

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Since 1989, UNICEF has partnered with the Religion and Health Project of *Dratshang*—the Central Monastic Body of Bhutan—to improve the quality of life of the Bhutanese people. In particular, this partnership has sought to support child monks and nuns by harmonizing religious faith and practices with new information from modern health care. The Religion and Health Project focused on improving the living conditions of child monks and nuns and engaging monks as agents of change. Activities included the establishment of new water and sanitation facilities and improvement of existing facilities; training of water caretakers and users on operation and maintenance of water and sanitation facilities; and training on HIV and AIDS and hygiene promotion.

In 2009, the government and religious bodies showed their commitment to protecting child rights by participating in CRC-oriented events, including holding the first meeting with the Commission for Monastic Affairs (*Dratshang Lhentshog*) on the issue of violence and abuse in religious institutions. Since then UNICEF has partnered with the National Commission for Women and Children, Royal Bhutan Police, *Dratshang Lhengtshog*, Bhutan Nuns Foundation, Ministry of Home and Cultural Affairs, Ministry of Labour and Human Resources, Bhutan National Legal Institute and CSOs (e.g. the Youth Development Fund and RENEW) to build a child protection system in the country.

In an effort to build a protective environment for children in monastic institutions, *Dratshang Lhentshog* established a child protection office and also formed a 13-member Expert Committee as an advisory body to Senior Management on policy and programming advice and guidance. An emergency shelter has been set up to support child victims of violence and abuse. UNICEF is working closely with the *Dratshang Lhengtshog* and the Bhutan Nuns Foundation on sensitization and awareness of child rights and child protection issues. UNICEF also aims to work with the *Dratshang Lhengtshog* to institutionalize alternative forms of discipline in monastic institutions.

To help promote more equitable educational outcomes, UNICEF supported a two-year English course in 24 monastic institutions from 2011-2012. Monks were taught basic English by recent graduates using the English curriculum followed in formal schools. UNICEF supported teachers' stipend for the two years, provided textbooks, and trained teachers on English instruction. In the current country programme (2014), UNICEF is again working with *Dratshang* to start a Basic English Literacy programme among selected monastic institutions. The curriculum will be the same that is offered to non-formal learners. Monks and nuns with English-language skills (formal school dropouts with at least a grade 10 background) will teach English in monastic institutes.

### *India*

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In an effort to promote polio vaccination and routine immunization, UNICEF provided financial and technical support for training of trainers workshops for Hajis at the state and district level. UNICEF also worked with religious leaders to sensitize graduates of 400 madrasas and religious institutions across the country to further advocate for the polio programme upon joining a mosque as an imam or becoming a religious leader. Eighty-five hundred mosques agreed to support the polio programme, 85 percent of which disseminate polio messages. Further support was offered during the festival of Shab-e-barat, including producing banners, endorsed by local religious institutions and religious leaders, and distributing 60,000 booklets highlighting that vaccination was in keeping with Islam.

The strategy developed in 2005 designed to reach out to underserved Muslim communities and help reduce resistance to the polio vaccine has also been employed to increase access to hard-to-reach, high-risk groups (HRGs) such as mobile populations, slum dwellers, and brick kiln and construction site workers. Engaging Islamic universities (Aligarh Muslim University and Jamia Millia Islamia), religious leaders and *hajjis* has helped change the atmosphere surrounding immunization, as preliminary data suggest an increase in both coverage and knowledge about routine immunization in high-risk areas.

In 2013, UNICEF entered into an agreement with the *Art of Living*, a national FBO, to change mindsets on priority issues facing children. The agreement sought to marry UNICEF's technical knowledge with the *Art of Living's* extensive outreach capabilities. That year, a pledge campaign was launched to change harmful views of young girls. Activities included: training and pledge-taking ceremonies, which were subsequently mainstreamed during *Art of Living's* courses; organizing five awareness-raising events in key states with particularly low indicators; workshops for youth leaders in four states; and strong social media and online component for online pledge taking. More than one million people reached by the programme pledged support for young girls. The campaign transitioned from "Pledge Now" to "Act Now," as communities organically moved towards organizing events and gathering to talk about young girls at the community level.

In 2014, UNICEF partnered with *Parmarth Niketan* (Secretariat for Global Interfaith WASH Alliance India) to create an inter-faith movement to end open defecation in India. The process was initiated with the establishment of a Technical Advisory Group, followed by a rapid mapping of pathways for faith-based messaging in India. In November 2014, the "Worship to WASH" and "Women for WASH" summit was organized. The Summit was a unique and historical gathering of more than 300 delegates, including renowned faith leaders from Hinduism, Islam, Christianity, Jainism, Sikhism, Buddhism and Judaism. Five hundred local children and over 100 frontline health workers and dozens of female saints also joined. The Summit focused on the urgent need to stop open defecation in India and create demand for 595 million people to start using toilets. Hand washing, menstrual hygiene management and other basic WASH behaviours were also addressed.

## *Nepal*

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In 2013, UNICEF initiated a partnership with Nepal's National Inter-Religious Network (NIRN) on preventing violence against children and adolescents. The partnership aims to strengthen the capacity of religious leaders to critically examine religious text with regard to child marriage, produce documentation on religion and marriage, and promote dialogue with children and adolescents. Moreover, a UNICEF-supported Action Plan to address child marriage through religious networks and platforms was produced with NIRN, and launched on the Day of Prayers and Action for Children. The Action Plan focused on capacity building of religious leaders to initiate dialogue at the community level, and developing communication material and exchange of good practices at the national and regional levels. UNICEF is currently assisting NIRN in implementing the Action Plan.

UNICEF and UNFPA also entered into the partnership with NIRN to address the child marriage issues at the district and community levels. The partnership is focused on capacity building among religious leaders on gender equality, human rights, child marriage and other harmful traditional practices; activities include training, research and regular dialogue and debate. After training, religious leaders will start discussing and denouncing child marriage and other harmful practices in private and public fora. Religious leaders are expected to begin to campaign to end child-marriage in six districts throughout their network.



## Pakistan

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In 2009, UNICEF partnered with the Inter-Religious Council for Health (IRCH) to improve maternal and child health care. Community leaders, religious groups, media, scouts and alliance members were actively involved in advocacy and social mobilization events on iodine deficiency disorders (IDD) through universal salt iodization (USI) and infant feeding programs. Communication materials produced to support efforts included information flyers for school children and religious leaders.

UNICEF has also worked extensively on polio eradication in Pakistan. Maulana Tayyab Al-Tahiri, a prominent figure representing the Ahle Hadith School of Islamic thought, was for years a strong and influential opponent of UNICEF's polio eradication program. Through a series of discussions to address his particular concerns, UNICEF was able to secure his endorsement of vaccinating all children under the age of five; he subsequently offered full support for vaccination activities in Swabi and other areas in his influence. He urged *ulema* (Muslim scholars) to support vaccination and oral polio vaccine as the only prevention to a lifelong disability.

In 2013, the International Islamic University, Islamabad held a conference for renowned religious leaders from polio endemic countries; this was a follow up meeting to an earlier gathering in Cairo, organized by Al-Azhar University. A joint declaration was signed by all participants attending the conference. The meeting also resulted in the formation of the National Islamic Advisory Group (NAIG) for Pakistan, which condemned attacks on health workers and announced that oral polio vaccine are safe and have no forbidden ingredients. A PCA was signed between UNICEF and the International Islamic University to support engagement of religious leaders in polio reservoir areas.

Additional polio eradication efforts include provincial level awareness seminars (held between 2012 and 2014) for more than 700 religious leaders from different sects, and chaired by the Minister for Religious Affairs. The objective of the seminars was to foster sustainable relationships and forge alliances with religious groups across Pakistan in order to gain support for polio eradication. Awareness sessions for members of the Council of Islamic Ideology and heads of Wafaqul Madaris Pakistan were also held to gain their support for polio eradication initiatives. Special messages addressing the public at large were recorded by these leaders for broadcast on electronic media. All these activities were supported and jointly hosted by UNICEF along with project management, monitoring and coordination.

The partnership with the Council of Islamic Ideology also sought to facilitate public discourse around polio vaccination in the context of Islam through the development of reference documents for religious leaders, communication materials for the general public and by publicizing this information through various mass media channels. *Fatwa* decrees supporting oral polio vaccines and vaccination from international, national and local religious leaders and institutions were compiled and put in a "Fatwa Booklet." More than 250,000 pocket-size copies were printed and distributed.

UNICEF also completed a social mapping in all the polio reservoir areas in 2014, identifying key religious leaders and institutions that do not support polio vaccination, their spheres of influence and a plan to reach out to each leader. UNICEF subsequently held individual meetings with these religious leaders to maximize support for polio eradication efforts in the country.

## Sri Lanka

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In support of the World Day of Prayer and Action for Children (DPAC) Initiative in 2011, UNICEF worked with the *Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement*, a national non-governmental organization, to

raise awareness about the importance of preventing violence against children and the role that religious/faith communities can play. UNICEF facilitated an interactive session with children to discuss the negative effects of corporal punishment as a form of discipline. Religious leaders, community leaders and youth also came together at this time to renew their commitment to end all forms of violence against children.

In 2014, UNICEF supported the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the CRC by working with leaders across religious and ethnic communities in support of common messages to combat violence against children; these messages were disseminated during religious services and ceremonies in the days up to and after Children's Day (20 November).

## E. East Asia and the Pacific

**Understanding the context:** The East Asia and Pacific region encompasses one-third of the world's population, and contains over one-quarter of the world's children, around 580 million children in total. The region has significant diversity: in peoples, cultures, environments, economies, political systems and potential. It includes some of the fastest-growing economies in the world as well as ten of the least-developed countries (e.g. six in the Pacific and four in East Asia).

Despite progress in many areas across the region, vast numbers of children continue to live in dire circumstances and face extraordinary challenges in all aspects of their lives. Such challenges include, but are not limited to:

- Violations of child rights and safety: trafficking, sexual exploitation, violence, abuse and neglect, child labour, child soldiers, children in institutions and unlawful detention.
- Lack of access to critical health services: too many children are still dying from problems in infancy, and from diarrhea and pneumonia, and too many mothers suffer ill health or do not survive childbirth.
- Exposure to emergency conditions: natural disasters (i.e. over 60 percent of the world's disaster victims live in Asia and the Pacific), internal violence and conflict (i.e. hundreds of thousands of people in this region are displaced within their own country due to the legacy of long-running conflicts and sectarian violence), and chronic emergencies (i.e. poor sanitation and health conditions prevail in many parts of the region, which at times can result in public health emergencies).
- Exposure to HIV and AIDS: given that the estimated number of children living with HIV in the region has recently doubled from 32,000 in 2000 to 64,000 in 2011.
- Malnutrition: to address the more than 85 million children under the age of five who are chronically malnourished or stunted. Several countries, including Laos, Papua New Guinea and Timor-Leste, have stunting rates above 30 or 40 percent.
- Poor sanitation and hygiene: approximately 670 million people do not have access to such facilities, and some 200 million people lack access to clean water.

*Source: UNICEF East Asia and Pacific Regional Office website (November 2014)*

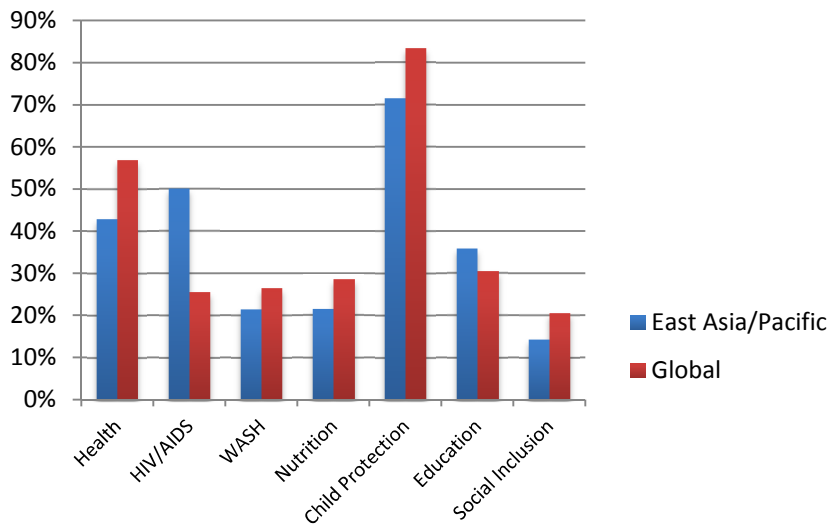
### 1. Regional overview

Of the 27 programme countries or territories in the East Asia and Pacific region, 26 participated in the mapping study, 14 of which indicated engagement with religious communities over the last five years. As might be expected given the demographics of this region, the proportion of country offices working with Islamic and Christian communities is relatively low compared to global trends; similarly, half of UNICEF engagement globally with Buddhist communities were found in this region. COs in East Asia and Pacific also work predominantly with only one religious community, doing so in over two-thirds of the cases in the region (compared to slightly over half globally).

UNICEF's collaboration with national and/or local FBOs was relatively high in contrast to other regions and globally, featuring in almost three-quarters of CO partnerships. CO engagement with national governments was slightly lower than global trends; two-thirds of East Asia and Pacific COs work with three or more partners. All but one of UNICEF's country offices (e.g. Tonga) conducted

sensitization programming in the region, and almost two-thirds of the COs also implemented advocacy and capacity development programming; the former was considerably higher than the global level. Half of the COs in the region provided three or more methods of support to religious communities.

The proportion of programming on child protection was relatively low in East Asia and the Pacific. Health and HIV and AIDS were addressed by approximately 40 and 50 percent of the COs, respectively, which is relatively low for the former, and relatively high for the latter. WASH and nutrition programming was also generally lower than global levels, and only one-third of COs worked on three or more programming areas.



## 2. At a glance: East Asia and the Pacific

	Religion						Partnership				Method of Support					Outcome Area								
	Christianity	Islam	Buddhism	Hinduism	Voodoo	Interfaith	National Government	Int'l FBO	National/Local FBO	Int'l/National/Local CSO	Religious Leaders/Institutions	Advocacy	Capacity Development	Social Mobilization	Service Delivery	Sensitization	Health	HIV/AIDS	WASH	Nutrition	Child Protection	Education	Social Inclusion	Emergencies
Cambodia	✓	✓	✓				✓	✓			✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓			✓				
China		✓					✓				✓	✓			✓	✓	✓							
Fiji	✓	✓				✓		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓							
Kiribati	✓						✓	✓			✓	✓			✓	✓	✓			✓				
Mongolia			✓					✓		✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓				✓	✓			✓
Myanmar	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Papua New Guinea	✓						✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Philippines	✓	✓				✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Solomon Islands	✓						✓				✓	✓			✓	✓				✓				
Thailand		✓						✓			✓	✓			✓	✓	✓							
Timor Leste	✓	✓					✓	✓			✓	✓			✓	✓	✓		✓					
Tonga	✓						✓							✓						✓				✓
Vanuatu	✓							✓	✓			✓			✓	✓				✓	✓			✓
Vietnam			✓					✓	✓			✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓				✓

### 3. Country snapshots

#### *Cambodia*

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The Buddhist Leadership Initiative (BLI) originated in Thailand in 1997 as part of UNICEF's regional strategy for Buddhist engagement in the response to HIV and AIDS in the Mekong sub-region. With UNICEF support, BLI was launched in Cambodia in 2000 by the Ministry of Cult and Religion (MoCR). BLI was designed to mobilize and enable Buddhist monks, nuns and lay teachers in collaboration with key Buddhist institutions and government agencies to lead community-level HIV and AIDS care and prevention, with a view to: increasing access to care and support for adults and children living with HIV and AIDS and children affected by AIDS; increasing community acceptance of adults and children living with HIV and AIDS; and building HIV resilience in communities, especially among youth. The programme expanded from seven to fourteen provinces over its twelve years reaching 2,300 adults living with HIV and 1,500 vulnerable children in 239 communes.

An evaluation was commissioned by UNICEF in 2012 to assess the organizational and programme performance of Cambodia's BLI between 2008 and 2012. The evaluation examined programme efficiency and effectiveness, provided recommendations on how to include other areas of child protection, and offered recommendations for programme adaptation and revision. Based on the evaluation, UNICEF and the MoCR adapted the BLI to respond to other priority child protection challenges, particularly working with religious leaders from the Buddhist, Muslim and Christian faiths to prevent and respond to violence against children. The evaluation findings and recommendations were presented and discussed during a national consultation held in 2013, with more than 80 participants, including government representatives, Buddhist monks and faith-based organizations.

In November 2013, in preparation for Cambodia's first Day of Prayer and Action for Children (DPAC) more than 100 religious leaders from three different faiths developed a joint understanding of the harmful consequences of corporal punishment and other forms of violence against children, as well as best ways to promote positive parenting and non-violent discipline. In December 2013, the annual National Monks Congress—attended by the Minister of the MoCR, members of the National Assembly, His Holiness the Great Supreme Patriarch, 1,000 Buddhist monks, and representatives of the Islam and Christian faiths—resulted in the inclusion of prevention of violence against children and promotion of positive parent-child interactions as key priorities in the Annual Monk's Declaration. This declaration, which involves leaders of all faiths, is drafted on an annual basis and sets out the priorities and activities for religious leaders in the succeeding year.

In 2014, Cambodia raised the visibility of violence against children with the release of Cambodia's 2013 Violence Against Children Survey (CVACS). In preparation of the launch, UNICEF collaborated with the MoCR and Buddhist leaders from across Cambodia to draft messages about Buddhism in regard to violence against children. The messages were presented during the launch of the CVACS in October 2014 and formally adopted during the Annual Monk Congress in December 2014. The outcomes and messages will support the development of advocacy materials to be distributed among Buddhist novices and inform the development of a comprehensive training on child protection targeting Buddhist monks.

Five hundred representatives from the Buddhist, Christian and Muslim faiths celebrated Cambodia's 2nd DPAC on 3 December 2014, under the theme "Stop Violence against Children." Following the two successful DPAC events, the MoCR will work with Cambodia's National Assembly to have the DPAC recognized as an official national event in the future. The role of the MoCR and religious leaders in

regard to violence against children was further reinforced by the Ministry's declaration of core commitments in response to the findings of the 2013 government-led CVACS. These commitments will form the basis of a five-year multi-sectoral and costed action plan to prevent and respond to violence against children in Cambodia.

### *China*

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In 2012, UNICEF partnered with the Ministry of Health (now renamed the National Health and Family Planning Commission) to halt the outbreak and prevent further transmission of wild polio in Xinjiang. To do so, UNICEF supported strengthening local capacity for delivering routine oral polio vaccines and communicating about the importance of vaccinations. As part of this intervention, approximately 6,000 imams and health providers received training to raise community awareness and improve practices to support demand for routine immunization services.

### *Fiji*

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In 2009, UNICEF celebrated the International Day of Prayer and Action for Children with an event entitled, "What Puts Young People Most at Risk to HIV and AIDS?" The event was chaired by the President of Fiji who, with the support of UNICEF, initiated a dialogue on HIV and AIDS amongst various FBO partners, including the Methodist Church of Fiji, the Fiji Muslim League, the *Sanatan Dharam Prathinidhi Sabha* Fiji, the Catholic Church, the Seventh Day Adventist Church, *Ahmadiyya Anjuman Ishaat-i-Islam* (Lahore) Fiji, the India *Sangmarga Ikya Sangam*, the Assemblies of God, the Fiji Muslim Youth Movement, the Fiji Muslim Women's League, the Latter Day Saints, the United Pentecostal Church, and Interfaith Search Fiji. At this event, FBOs requested assistance from UNICEF to develop strategies to enable them to address the issue of HIV from a faith-based perspective and subsequently prevent the spread of HIV in Fiji.

With the support of UNICEF, these FBOs held several consultative workshops and developed Fiji's Inter-Faith Strategy on HIV and AIDS (2013-2017). The strategy ensures that faith-based organizations participate actively to prevent the spread of HIV and AIDS from parents to infants with an emphasis on key messages for women and children. The strategy also covers HIV prevention in young people and at-risk groups through further dialogue and discussions with FBOs and messaging through their respective scriptures.

Since the launch of the strategy by the President in December 2013, FBOs have continued to meet to share experiences and lessons from their work within their congregations. Most FBOs developed HIV-specific policies for their respective congregations and made use of religious events and youth groups to conduct awareness on HIV and AIDS prevention.

### *Kiribati*

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In 2014, UNICEF engaged a wide range of religious stakeholders to promote the well-being of children, adolescent girls, youth and women. UNICEF convened a series of workshops with the Kiribati Catholic Church, the Kiribati Protestant Church, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, the Seventh Day Adventists, Assembly of God, Jehovah's Witnesses, the Baha'i, and the Ahmedia Muslim community. A joint strategy was developed as an outcome of the workshops. Together, they agreed to address three core areas: child survival and development; youth development and empowerment; and, ending sexual and gender-based violence. Participating churches and ministries established the Committee of Faith representatives, which has already



elected the first rotating chair and vice-chair. UNICEF has agreed to support the Committee and to serve as the secretariat. The Ministry of Youth and Social Affairs, the Ministry of Health and Medical Services (MHMS), and the WHO are members of the Committee; other line ministries, United Nations agencies and NGOs have also been invited to join.

To achieve its objectives, the Committee anticipates supporting pastor-led spiritual sessions at homes, hospitals and schools; organizing radio programmes and street dramas by church youth groups and pastors; and arranging visits to mothers and their children by church leaders, women's groups, youth leaders and health workers to promote awareness about school dropout. In support of these activities, UNICEF shared copies of the CRC, relevant research materials and information regarding on-going initiatives in these areas.

### *Mongolia*

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Since 2011, UNICEF has partnered with the National Center for Lifelong Learning (under the Ministry of Education) and local education departments to support non-formal education equivalency programme trainings to monastic boys enrolled in religious studies in Buddhist temples. In addition to monastic boys, out-of-school children were also engaged in similar education models, which were replicated across the country.

In 2012, the National Human Rights Commission, in collaboration with UNICEF, UNDP and other NGO partners, conducted a study on the situation of child rights of approximately 300 children in temples and churches in Mongolia. The study identified significant gaps in knowledge and awareness of child rights in religious settings, particularly in appropriate discipline for children, approaches to child health and hygiene, and efforts to enable child participation.

In 2014, UNICEF, in collaboration with the National Authority for Children, conducted a study to better understand the status of child rights in religious institutions. More specifically, the study sought to explore children's attitudes towards temples and monasteries, and the impact of religious doctrines on children's psycho-social condition, education and personality formation. At the time of writing, the findings, conclusions and recommendations were yet to be completed.

### *Myanmar*

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In 2012, UNICEF, in partnership with *Ratana Metta (RMO)*, a Buddhist FBO, and in collaboration with the Central Health Education Bureau (CHEB) of the Department of Health, piloted the "Faith for Children (F4C)" initiative designed to empower faith leaders on how to incorporate child health, education and protection issues and solutions into religious dialogues and gatherings. Authorities from all the 880 villages in four townships organized advocacy meetings with Buddhist monks and over 3,000 monasteries disseminated messages promoting key positive behaviours on child and maternal health during routine weekly/daily/special sermons and gatherings with community members; booklets combining theological reflections and technical information related to child survival, growth and development were distributed.

In 2014, a "Faith for Children Conference" was organized in order to provide a forum for faith leaders to exchange experiences, map out next steps and strengthen cooperation. The specific objectives included taking stock of the work carried out through the F4C initiative, scaling up interventions, and enhancing the capacity and role of religious leaders in promoting child rights. The conference was also an opportunity to discuss the development and protection agenda in Myanmar, share experiences from other countries on successful initiatives, and strengthen interfaith dialogue and

partnerships for children and peace. The faith leaders from Buddhism, Islam, Christianity and Hinduism signed a joint declaration in support of child rights. The conference was also an opportunity to publicly condemn the ongoing inter-communal violence and relaying the call for peace.

Later in 2014, “Faith for Children” was implemented in six new townships. The new phase expanded to Christian and Muslim communities, and focused more specifically on behaviour change. The new phase also launched an interfaith mechanism—the “Myanmar Inter-Religious Council (MIRC)” —to engage and empower religious leaders to collaborate in promoting child rights.

### *Papua New Guinea*

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In 2011, UNICEF engaged a number of faith-based organizations, including the PNG Council of Churches (whose network provides 50 percent of health and other services). Activities included identifying areas of weakness in existing partnerships and developing an approach to strengthen them; organizing forums to advocate for equity with identified partners and map out a concrete plan of engagement and action; and establishing and monitoring new partnerships.

For the first time, the 2010-2020 National Health Plan prioritizes prevention and response to violence against women and children. The Social Protection and Violence Prevention sub-programme designed a five-year strategy to guide the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the *Lukautim Pikinini* (Child) Act 2009 along with an advocacy and resource mobilization strategy to strengthen the capacity of child protection actors at the national and sub-national levels.

UNICEF also supported the development of a training manual for FBOs on the protection, care and support of the most vulnerable children in Papua New Guinea; 250 FBO staff were trained on the manual. After rolling out this training in Simbu Province, a Centre of Excellence was established in Kundiawa Catholic Diocese, which saw youth and catechists educate communities to identify the most vulnerable children and initiate appropriate, innovative and sustainable actions to support them.

In 2013, the Catholic Bishops Conference of Papua New Guinea, the highest decision-making entity for the Catholic Church in the country, issued a National Position Statement on child protection, making it a priority for the Catholic Church. Child protection positions are now a new structure within the Catholic Church system, and all Bishops are required to create posts within each diocese accordingly. The Seventh Day Adventist Church and other denominations also conduct child protection programs through their Children’s Ministries. UNICEF is also working closely with FBOs in select provinces to support them in running positive parenting programs in 2015.

In the area of health, UNICEF has supported church-run hospitals and health facilities in select provinces; these facilities were designed to provide quality services on the Expanded Program of Immunization (EPI), maternal and child health, nutrition, and PPTCT. UNICEF has also worked with church-based organizations on inclusive education for children with special needs. Finally, UNICEF is working closely with churches to implement community-based early childhood development centers in remote rural areas in select provinces.

## *Philippines*

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In 2009, UNICEF supported the development of an Islam-sensitive early childhood curriculum in 17 pilot pre-schools in conflict-affected areas. Follow-on programming at the sub-national level supported the adoption of this curriculum beyond conflict-affected areas.

In 2010, UNICEF partnered with numerous faith-based organizations to provide outreach education services to marginalized indigenous populations. That year, UNICEF also partially funded and immunization campaign to eradicate neonatal and maternal tetanus in Solana. The campaign relied on the backing of key local government officials and religious and village leaders; as an example of the key role played by religious communities, nuns at the local Catholic school promoted the use of vaccinations for teenage female students.

From October 2010 to September 2011, UNICEF and *Religions for Peace Philippines* carried out a pilot project in conflict-affected areas of the Autonomous Regions of Muslim Mindanao (ARMM). The project was designed to strengthen inter-religious mechanisms to advocate for the protection of children, to strengthen the capacity of religious communities in protecting children affected by conflict and to strengthen the capacity of child rights organizations to work with religious and inter-religious communities protecting children affected by conflict.

After the completion of this pilot project, the partnership between *Religions for Peace Philippines* and UNICEF continued through the “Multi-Religious Community-Based Approach to Assist Children Affected by Conflict” project (implemented between September 2012 and December 2013). Activities under this project included: the establishment of the Interfaith Council of Mindanao, bringing together the Christian, Muslim and Indigenous leaders, with a focus on breaking down ethnic and religious barriers at the local level; the engagement of children in the conflict mitigation process by facilitating multi-religious and ethnic peace-building events; the coordinated dissemination by religious leaders of key messages reflecting religious scripture and traditions that address child protection concerns (such as birth registration, child labor, family unity and child abuse); the support to Barangay Councils for the Protection of Children (the legislated bodies responsible for children’s issues at the sub-municipal level) through the development of a Child Protection Action Plan for their area and the training of focal points (serving as the link between the Barangay and the religious communities) to train on child protection and to assist in the implementation of the Child Protection Action Plan; and the organization of a community workshop for children with the key message that if children can exercise their rights they can meet their dreams.

In 2013, UNICEF partnered with the Catholic Bishops’ Conference of the Philippines to equip young people with proper knowledge, attitude and practices on HIV and AIDS. As part of the programme, a Life Skills Education Module with special emphasis on HIV and AIDS prevention was developed by the Bishops’ Conference and subsequently used by the 100 participating universities and colleges to develop their own Life Skills Education module. Further, school counselors and principals were oriented on basic HIV and HIV counseling and testing; participating schools and Catholic organizations and dioceses were recognized as referral sites for HIV counseling and testing and for continuum of care. Finally, Diocesan youth leaders were formed as peer educators in their dioceses, parishes, schools and communities.

## *Solomon Islands*

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In 2013 UNICEF partnered with the Government’s Social Welfare Department and the Solomon Islands Christian Association to train church leaders in providing guidance to their

congregations on issues relating to families including parenting, discipline, and conflict resolution. Church leaders also provide counseling to victims of violence and abuse at a community level and work with traditional leaders and families towards peaceful and just outcomes.

### *Thailand*

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In 2009, UNICEF supported the Young Muslim Association (YMAT) to review existing Muslim curricula related to reproductive health and HIV and AIDS. YMAT further engaged Muslim teachers in an effort to revise high school curricula to incorporate a more comprehensive treatment of sex education. The review also explored attitudes on gender awareness, HIV stigma and discrimination among Muslim teachers and religious and community leaders. In 2010, UNICEF also worked in partnership with YMAT to provide HIV and AIDS life-skills training to young people made vulnerable by violence.

### *Timor Leste*

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In 2009, UNICEF worked with the Ministry of Health to develop a national Multi-Antigen Campaign with key messages about Vitamin A, measles and tetanus toxoid. The campaign included formative research, pre-testing, materials development and engagement of district and village-level political, religious and traditional leaders. Information dissemination through radio/TV programmes was carried out by and for children and young people by 10 community radio stations, one national radio and one national TV station. The purpose of using such communication channels was to promote engagement of parents, educators, children, young people and community members on issues including Vitamin A, tetanus toxoid, measles, birth registration and sanitation and hygiene.

UNICEF partnered with *Pastoral da Criança* (in 2008, 2009, 2010-2012) on maternal and child health and nutrition. Collaboration included the following activities: provision of information on pregnancy and essential newborn care; community and social mobilization via regular home visits and monthly meetings using tools such as Facts For Life (FFL); referral support; monthly Celebration of Life (Weighing Day) where nutritious food was provided to children after weighing and immunizations were performed; promotion of continuum of care by establishing linkages between the household/community and health facilities; periodic supervision, and collection of information from monthly meetings of community leaders' networks.

In 2010, UNICEF supported the government to develop a Memorandum of Understanding among line ministries, religious organizations and UNICEF on the issue of birth registration. The Catholic Church was an important partner in the 2011 nationwide birth registration campaign during which more than 63,000 children under five years of age were registered.

UNICEF, together with the National Commission on the Rights of the Child and numerous civil society organizations, also collaborated with religious communities (in particular the Catholic Church), in celebrating the Day of Prayer and Action for Children in 2011, 2012 and 2013; activities, such as messaging during mass, helped raise awareness on violence against children, child marriage and birth registration.

### *Tonga*

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Following tropical cyclone Ian that hit Tonga in January 2014, UNICEF worked with the National Forum of Church Leaders to access affected communities in the Ha'apai island group. In collaboration

with UNICEF, church leaders and members delivered psychosocial support to communities in schools and churches, supported capacity building and followed up with response monitoring exercises. UNICEF also partnered with the Forum and with the Ministry of Education to conduct awareness raising activities among students and teachers on bullying among schoolchildren, including cyber-bullying. The National Forum of Church Leaders will be instrumental in 2015 in the delivery of child protection messages designed to prevent violence against children, particularly in the hardest to reach communities and outer islands in Tonga.

### *Vanuatu*

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In 2012, UNICEF partnered with Save the Children and members of the Vanuatu Christian Council of Churches (VCC) to promote child protection. More specifically, the collaboration sought to encourage church leaders to understand and promote relevant child protection messages in their communities and associated groups, and to train church leaders in implementing and monitoring child protection policies within their churches and institutions. Activities involved Save the Children meeting with VCC members twice a week; church leaders attending a five-day workshop on child protection; identifying five church leaders to pilot the training on community engagement tools; developing a shared 2012 action plan as well as training programs; identifying child protection messages in the Bible; developing pre- and post-training materials; developing child protection policy focused training over two of the five days training; and inviting follow-up church participants from previous policy training workshops.

### *Vietnam*

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During the East Asia and Pacific Regional Consultation on Children and HIV and AIDS held in Vietnam in 2006, the Buddhist Leadership Initiative was reviewed and expanded. Based on the review, a five-year strategy on faith-based programming on HIV and AIDS was proposed and a national conference held. Capacity building for government counterparts, mass organizations and religious partners, and support for community-based and pagoda-based models was provided. Between 2009-2013, 240 monks, nuns and volunteers were trained by the BLI on caring for people living with HIV and AIDS and child rights. They, in turn, conducted monthly home visits to over 200 individuals, including children, and made hospital visits to more than 200 patients.

Monks and nuns have also provided counseling services in pagodas and hospitals for more than 300 individuals. Nearly 180 children affected by HIV and AIDS were trained on life skills and child rights. Activities on prevention of HIV and AIDS, stigma, and discrimination against people living with HIV and AIDS were also conducted at the commune level. Quarterly newsletters were produced and distributed to provide updated information on BLI and the Government's legislation and programmes related to HIV and AIDS prevention. These activities were carried out with UNICEF's technical and financial support.

During two typhoons in 2009 the WASH cluster was activated in Vietnam, involving UNICEF, the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD), the World Health Organization, OXFAM-Great Britain, Save the Children, CARE, Plan International, World Vision, Catholic Relief Services, Samaritan's Purse and the International Federation of the Red Cross/Red Crescent Societies.

### *Regional programme: Buddhist Leadership Initiative*

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The Buddhist Leadership Initiative (BLI) originated in Thailand in 1997 as part of UNICEF's regional strategy for Buddhist engagement in the response to HIV and AIDS in the Mekong sub-region. With UNICEF support, BLI was launched in Cambodia in 2000 by the Ministry of Cult and Religion. BLI was designed to mobilize and enable Buddhist monks, nuns and lay teachers in collaboration with key Buddhist institutions and government agencies to lead community-level HIV and AIDS care and prevention, with a view to: increasing access to care and support for adults and children living with HIV and AIDS and children affected by AIDS; increasing community acceptance of adults and children living with HIV and AIDS; and building HIV resilience in communities, especially among youth.

The Regional Buddhist Leadership Initiative was developed as part of the Mekong Partnership Programme, with East Asia and Pacific Regional Office (EAPRO) support to Country Offices combining advocacy to government and religious organizations at national level with funding and technical assistance for monks and nuns at local level. UNICEF used a common orientation training approach in all countries in the Buddhist Leadership Initiative. The approach has been documented in the training manual "A Buddhist Approach to HIV and AIDS Prevention and Care."

UNICEF partnered with the following organizations to implement the BLI: the *Sangha Metta* Project and Department of Religious Affairs in Thailand; the Ministry of Cult and Religious Affairs in Cambodia; the Buddhist Association of Xishuangbanna, AIDS Control Office of Xishuangbanna Prefecture, Yunnan Provincial Government Cooperative Project on HIV and AIDS Prevention, Care and Support in China; the Religious Department of the Lao Front for National Construction and the National Buddhist Association in Lao PDR; *Rattana Metta* (a lay Buddhist organization) in Myanmar; and the Vietnam Fatherland Front (VNFF), the Vietnamese Buddhist Association of Vietnam, and the Ministry of Labour, Invalid and Social Affairs (MOLISA) in Vietnam.



## F. Latin America and the Caribbean

**Understanding the context:** Latin America and the Caribbean is considered the most unequal region in the world. While there have been notable development leaps that have improved the lives of some children, there remain staggering gaps that continue to leave millions of other children and their families at risk.

UNICEF's mission and mandate is of particular importance in the region, since more than 40 percent of the total population (510-million people) is under 18 years of age, and more than half of the region's children and adolescents live in conditions of poverty.

Children throughout the region face hardship in their everyday lives, including:

- Sixty percent of children under 12 years of age and 50 percent of adolescents between the ages of 13-19 live in poverty.
- With 40-50 million indigenous and 150 million Afro-descendants living in the region—close to half of which are under 18—millions of children in these communities have lower levels of nutrition and limited or non-existent access to basic services.
- Nearly 85,000 children die annually as a result of violence in the home; violence affects over six million children and adolescents.
- The Caribbean has the second highest prevalence of AIDS in the world, after sub-Saharan Africa, and has an increasingly adolescent female face.
- An estimated 35 million children do not enter any educational program. Region wide, 83 percent of children reach the fifth grade, and of those students an average of 5.6 percent must repeat at least one grade level. Children from poor families are six times less likely to receive full primary education compared to wealthy families.

*Source: UNICEF Latin America and Caribbean Regional Office website (November 2014)*

### 1. Regional overview

Of the 36 programme countries, territories or areas in the Latin America and Caribbean region, 35 are represented in the mapping study, 25 of which indicated engaging with religious communities over the last five years.

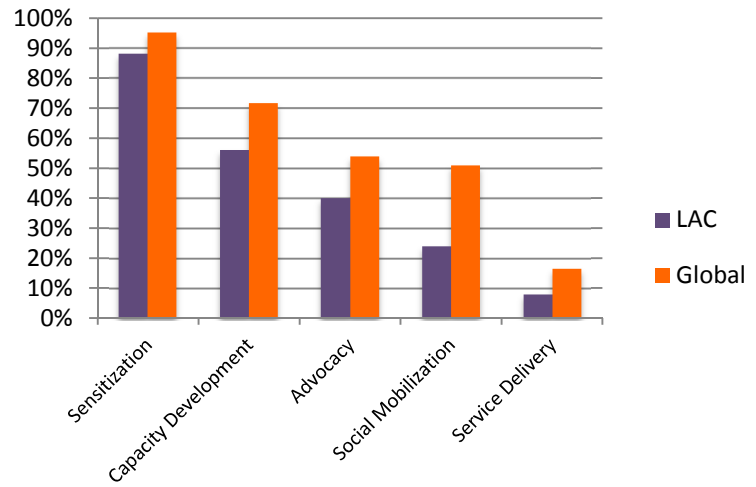
Reflecting the demographics of the region, all of the COs engaged with Christian communities; only two COs engaged with other religious groups. Further, of the 25 countries, territories or areas in the region, 23 engaged with Christian communities alone, a marked departure from other regions that featured at least some, if not considerable, multi-religious engagement.

Collaboration with national governments was considerably lower than other regions, while partnerships with international and national FBOs and religious leaders/institutions were relatively consistent with global trends. Only about one-third of COs collaborated with three or more partners, a stark contrast from other regions that reflected a much greater tendency for multiple partnerships.

Trends in the method of support UNICEF offered religious communities were generally lower in the region than those identified globally. For example, roughly one-third of COs engaged in advocacy, considerably lower than the fifty percent of COs that did so on the global level; similarly, just over half of COs provided capacity development programming, as opposed to nearly three-quarters of

which did so globally. Also, only a third of the 25 COs employed three or more types of support, compared to half in East Asia and the Pacific.

Similar trends can be found in reviewing the outcome areas UNICEF engaged in throughout the region. Though support in the area of child protection was consistent with global levels (roughly 80 percent), programming in health was considerably low (roughly one third in LAC compared to over half globally); work in WASH and HIV and AIDS was dramatically lower than global trends. Finally, roughly a quarter of Country Offices engaged in three or more areas of support.



## 2. At a glance: Latin America and the Caribbean

Country	Religion						Partnership				Method of Support				Outcome Area									
	Christianity	Islam	Buddhism	Hinduism	Voodoo	Interfaith	National Government	Int'l FBO	National/Local FBO	Int'l/National/Local CSO	Religious Leaders/Institutions	Advocacy	Capacity Development	Social Mobilization	Service Delivery	Sensitization	Health	HIV/AIDS	WASH	Nutrition	Child Protection	Education	Social Inclusion	Emergencies
Anguilla	✓						✓			✓					✓					✓				
Argentina	✓							✓				✓				✓								
Barbados	✓						✓								✓					✓				
Brazil	✓						✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓		
British Virgin Islands	✓						✓			✓					✓					✓				
Chile	✓							✓		✓		✓			✓					✓			✓	
Colombia	✓						✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Dominica	✓						✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓		
Dominican Republic	✓						✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓			
Ecuador	✓						✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
El Salvador	✓									✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	
Grenada	✓						✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓		
Guatemala	✓						✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓	
Haiti	✓			✓				✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓		✓
Honduras	✓							✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓				✓	✓		
Jamaica	✓							✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓		
Nicaragua	✓							✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	
Panama	✓	✓					✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓		
Paraguay	✓						✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Peru	✓							✓		✓		✓			✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓	
Saint Kitts and Nevis	✓						✓			✓					✓	✓	✓			✓	✓			
Saint Lucia	✓							✓							✓	✓	✓							
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	✓						✓			✓					✓	✓	✓			✓	✓			
Trinidad and Tobago	✓						✓	✓	✓	✓					✓	✓	✓			✓	✓			
Turks and Caicos Islands	✓						✓			✓	✓				✓	✓	✓			✓	✓			

## 3. Country snapshots

### Anguilla

UNICEF and Anguilla's Department of Social Development partnered in supporting the commemoration of the World Day of Prayer and Action for Children and Universal Children's Day in 2013. The occasion was used to launch the "Break The Silence: End Child Abuse" campaign, which featured a rally attended by a wide range of stakeholders, including children, teachers, church leaders and church groups, and youth centre directors, among others.

## Argentina

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Since 2013, UNICEF has partnered with RedInfa, the Child Rearing Pastoral, and the Department of Laity of the Argentina Episcopal Conference to train mothers and pregnant women on maternal health issues in vulnerable areas of the country. As part of the collaboration, volunteer leaders conduct monthly life celebrations in communities where the country's most vulnerable populations are found. In each participating community, children are monitored through regular weight and height measurement.

## Barbados

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In partnership with the Barbados Child Care Board, UNICEF supported capacity building for Evangelical leaders between 2012 and 2014 to sensitize them on their role in protecting children from abuse. During this time, UNICEF also helped develop a draft protocol for religious leaders on preventing and responding to sexual abuse and neglect. To commemorate Universal Children's Day in 2013, the "Break the Silence: End Child Abuse" campaign was launched with the participation of religious leaders. A national consultation of Evangelical leaders was also convened on this occasion to review the draft protocol on preventing and managing child sexual abuse.

## Brazil

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UNICEF is collaborating with religious groups to reduce violence at the community level and ensure greater protection for, and service outreach to, the most vulnerable children and their families. Birth registration, positive discipline, and promotion of a culture of peace are some of the key issues addressed through this collaboration.

The alliance between UNICEF and religious institutions and organizations was launched in Brazil during the celebration of the International Day of Prayer and Action for Children in 2013. To date, partnerships have been established with World Vision, representing Evangelical churches, and with the National Council of Christian Churches (CONIC), representing the Roman Catholic, Lutheran, Syrian-Orthodox, Anglican and United Presbyterian churches. The initiative also relies on the participation of the National Network of Afro-Brazilian Religions and Health (RENAFRO) and Koinonia Ecumenical Presence and Service, an inter-religious and ecumenical group.

The Peace and Protection Movement, a UNICEF initiative that brings together faith-based communities to protect children from violence, partners with religious groups of different denominations to actively identify and refer groups of children without birth certificates to the authorities. The movement has the formal support of the Presidency of the Republic.

UNICEF promoted the use of the Smartphone application *Proteja Brasil* to enable users to refer cases of violence against children to the closest authorities. UNICEF's partnership with *Pastoral da Criança* will disseminate the App in 36,000 communities, targeting 6,305 parishes and approximately one million families.

The collaboration with RENAFRO and Koinonia-Ecumenical Presence and Service used social media to raise awareness and engage audiences to act on critical child protection issues in advance of the national day against sexual abuse and sexual exploitation; the collaboration also advocated for updates on the Brazilian legal framework to reduce the high level of adolescent homicides.

## *British Virgin Islands*

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In recognition of Universal Children's Day in 2013, UNICEF, in partnership with the Department of Social Development, aired radio talk shows and ads on the theme of child abuse and child maltreatment. A Prayer Breakfast was also held to commemorate World Day of Prayer and Action for Children.

## *Chile*

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UNICEF has been working with religious organizations in Chile since 1990, focused in particular on protection-related work for the most vulnerable children. UNICEF started working with *Hogar de Cristo*, a Catholic-affiliated NGO, by supporting the project "*Niños de la Calle*", targeting vulnerable street children. UNICEF has also worked with *Vicaría de Pastoral Social* on combating child labour. Additionally, UNICEF worked for many years with the Jesuit *Centro de Investigación y Desarrollo de la Educación* to encourage parental involvement in education and community development issues.

Over the years, UNICEF has diversified its cooperation with Catholic universities in Chile. UNICEF partnered with the Jesuit Alberto Hurtado University to organize training sessions for lawyers and justice workers on child rights. UNICEF also works in alliance with the law schools of the Catholic University of Valparaiso by co-organizing, promoting and participating in academic and public opinion debates on child protection issues.

Since 2012, the Catholic University of Temuco joined UNICEF to develop and implement a training model on child rights and inter-culturality for undergraduate programs. There is currently an agreement to incorporate this model into various faculty courses within the university. During 2014, the partnership began the process of transferring the training model to other universities as well.

## *Colombia*

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Since 1998, the Catholic Church community has been an indispensable partner in UNICEF's work in Colombia to advance children's rights and enhance their wellbeing. In Colombia, where emergency contexts (i.e. armed conflict and natural disasters) have exacerbated existing concerns about child rights, the partnership with the Catholic Church is a cornerstone of effective humanitarian action. Since 2008, the Pastoral Early Childhood Programme has been working in partnership with UNICEF in remote and poor areas of the country that have been affected by the armed conflict and natural disasters and where the presence of institutions to provide basic services does not exist. Collaboration has extended across a wide range of sectors, including child protection, education, health, and nutrition.

In 2012, UNICEF and the Pastoral programme worked together in the Department of Putumayo to combat the use of children and adolescents in armed conflict, as well as to address malnutrition and a lack of access to services. Similar support was provided to the Department of Sucre in 2013 through comprehensive protection activities in families, schools and the community. In the Municipality of Itzmina, for example, the collaboration aimed to promote arts and culture as a way of embedding children in their communities and making them less vulnerable to illegal armed groups. UNICEF also partnered with the Colombia Bishops' Confederation to promote food safety and nutritional care through training of community workers, children and adolescents from indigenous and afro-descendant groups affected by violence, displacement and natural disasters.

In 2014, UNICEF collaborated with a range of faith-based entities, including the Diocese Mocoa Sibundoy, the Mennonite Christian Association for Justice, Peace and Nonviolent Action, the Diocesan Pastoral Secretariat, and the Lutheran World Federation. These collaborations addressed an equally wide range of issues: preventing child and adolescent recruitment and involvement in armed conflict; ensuring the right to truth, justice, reparations and guarantees of non-repetition of child violence; and, nutritional care for families in ethnic communities.

### *Dominica*

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As part of the 2011 World Day of Prayer and Action for Children (DPAC) Initiative, UNICEF supported the Ministry of Social Services, Community Development and Gender Affairs to hold a rally on violence against children on 23 November 2011 that involved prominent religious leaders. In 2012 and 2013, UNICEF supported Dominica's Department of Social Welfare to hold a series of sensitization workshops for religious leaders on the role of the church in preventing and managing child sexual abuse. A draft protocol was developed to guide religious leaders. Also in 2013, in celebration of the World Day of Prayer and Action for Children, child protection officers from government institutions and NGOs visited churches to promote messages on violence against children.

### *Dominican Republic*

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In 2009, UNICEF and the Ministry of Public Health worked closely with Christian communities to improve health and nutrition outcomes. UNICEF organized a 50-hour training course for 70 community health volunteers from 15 municipalities; a new basic training course was also initiated for 27 volunteers of 12 parishes. Training workshops also addressed training methodologies and good practice for home visits. UNICEF supported follow-up monitoring visits and the annual evaluation meeting to share experiences and encourage renewal of the volunteers' commitment.

In coordination with the Ministry of Education, UNICEF partnered with World Vision, local youth councils and other NGOs to conduct training on disaster reduction and psychosocial recovery of children. UNICEF cooperated with the *Conferencia del Episcopado Dominicana* and the Dominican Center for Legal and Research Advisor (CEDAIL) to develop institutional capacity for promoting and guaranteeing the right to name and nationality. UNICEF further supported projects implemented by Catholic NGOs in the area of promoting child rights and eradicating commercial sexual exploitation. Catholic NGOs were included in the National Commission, which was formulating a National Plan of Action with a focus on guaranteeing the right to name and nationality.

In response to a Committee on the Rights of the Child recommendation to "Set up a Child Rights Monitoring Observatory and Social Sector Expenditure Analysis," and under agreement with the Santo Domingo Catholic University, UNICEF supported the development and launch of the Observatory on Children Rights' technical proposal in 2010. Cooperation agreements were signed with CSOs and the Catholic Church for the implementation of specific components of the country programme. The Observatory publishes the children and adolescent rights index that measures fulfillment of the rights of children and adolescents in the Dominican Republic. In past years, UNICEF worked with Catholic radio stations in the production of radio shows that encouraged training of youth as producers; a collaborative agreement with the Catholic Radio Stations Union (UNECA) was developed in 2010 to promote the production of a series of radio shows focused on advocacy and aired on seven different radio stations.

In 2010, UNICEF collaborated with *Pastoral Materno Infantil*, a network of community promoters that has played a leading role in improving maternal and child health and breastfeeding promotion in peri-urban communities and rural areas. UNICEF provided financial, technical and political-institutional support to this community network of the Catholic Church that has been recognized internationally for the effectiveness of its work. Through home visits and community meetings, the partnership addresses nutrition issues, promotes breastfeeding, and monitors pregnancy development in an effort to reduce infant and maternal mortality.

In 2012, 2013 and 2014, UNICEF participated and supported the World Day of Prayer and Action for Children advocating for positive parenting and elimination of violence against children and adolescents, especially corporal punishment.

### *Ecuador*

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In 2009, the Archdiocese of Guayas and UNICEF worked together to promote breastfeeding, growth monitoring, complementary diet and consumption of iron and vitamin A foods. UNICEF and the Catholic Church further collaborated on advocacy and capacity building in the area of early childhood development. This work was done through C4D training for women, families and communities; training health staff to reduce anemia in pregnant women caused by iron deficiency; improving the quality of the nutritional services provided by the Catholic Church health centers and the quality of childcare in the family in peri-urban and rural areas (in particular for children vulnerable to armed violence).

In 2010, UNICEF and the *Vicariato Apostólico de Esmeraldas (VAE)*, a Catholic FBO, worked together to promote prevention and protection from violence, adolescent development, and inclusive education. Training and sensitization activities were held for teachers, public education officials, and families; sports, arts and recreational activities were also promoted as part of the program. These activities were carried out in areas of severe poverty and where Afro-Ecuadorian populations were highly impacted by the turbulence in Colombia. In 2012, the *Pontificia Universidad Católica del Ecuador Sede Esmeraldas (PUCESE)* also collaborated in this work, offering complementary support through voluntary student work.

That year, as part of the Global Out of School Initiative, UNICEF also began to collaborate with *Fondo Ecuatoriano Populorum Progression (FEPP)*, a Catholic FBO, to mobilize duty-bearers to guarantee the right to culturally relevant, high quality education along the northern border of Ecuador. Of the 1,200 indigenous children and adolescents identified as excluded when the programme began, 1,100 enrolled and currently attend school.

In June 2014, UNICEF initiated a formal joint-dialogue with the *Conferencia Episcopal Ecuatoriana, Confederación Latinoamericana de Iglesias*, Protestant and Evangelical churches, and World Vision, among others, to establish a strategic nation-wide alliance for child rights. The joint-dialogue is designed to develop and implement an Ecumenical “Pastorate” for Children and Adolescent Rights, with focus on ECD, prevention and protection from violence and exploitation, and disaster risk reduction.

### *El Salvador*

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UNICEF began working with religious communities in El Salvador in 2006, supporting the “First National Meeting of Christian Leadership for Children and Adolescents” organized by the Church “ELIM”, and Red Viva, a network of Christian churches. Four thousand Christian Ministers and leaders



participated, and soon after developed Guidelines for the Protection of Children and Adolescents. Between 2007-2008, UNICEF supported the consultation process for the formulation of the National Law for the Protection of Children and Adolescents. This process was coordinated with Christian leaders from the Catholic Church, Evangelical Church, and the Lutheran Church.

In 2008, UNICEF supported the “Second National Meeting of Christian Leadership for Children and Adolescents,” which focused on the prevention of violence against children and adolescents, and was attended by 1,500 Christian Ministers and leaders. Between 2007 and 2009, UNICEF developed sensitization workshops with religious leaders on the National Law for the Protection of Children and Adolescents. UNICEF also supported religious institutions to further develop and distribute books on the rights of children for use by Dominical Schools.

In 2009, UNICEF trained 134 Sunday school teachers from five evangelical Christian churches on rights of the child. In particular, the training addressed child abuse and mistreatment, and prevention of violence. Training was based on the Bible, and included interactive methodologies and games appropriate for children. In 2013, UNICEF also supported a conference of religious leaders to discuss on “The State of the World's Children 2013: Children with Disabilities.” In 2014, UNICEF began working with a network of Christian doctors in the training of Christian volunteers on Early Childhood Development.

### *Grenada*

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As part of the 2011 World Day of Prayer and Action for Children (DPAC) Initiative in Grenada, UNICEF supported a meeting on violence against children at the Grenada Institute for Theological Education that included participation from religious leaders, over 150 ministers, business professionals and the Prime Minister. The Ministry of Social Development prepared an official letter to the church umbrella body urging them to be involved in the Day of Prayer and Action for Children; with UNICEF’s support, information on the Day of Prayer and Action for Children was also disseminated.

### *Guatemala*

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Since 2007, UNICEF has provided support to *Pastoral de Crianza*, an organization affiliated with the Catholic Church, to reduce inequalities of access to health services. *Pastoral de Crianza* makes home visits and provides support to malnourished children and pregnant women in remote communities where access to health services are limited. UNICEF has provided technical assistance to strengthen the organization’s communication capacity. Based on UNICEF’s technical inputs, *Pastoral de Crianza* started producing its own educational materials with recyclable materials. Pastoral members have joined the communication subcommittees of the Municipal Council for Food and Nutrition Security (COMUSAN) in three municipalities and have helped organize informational meetings on nutrition with other local stakeholders; these meetings emphasize the First 1,000 Days Initiative to prevent malnutrition.

Since 2008, UNICEF has worked to provide child rights training to government personnel participating in local child protection systems to prevent, detect and refer child rights violations. UNICEF liaises with the Human Rights Office of ECG to conduct the training activities. Through the partnership, UNICEF has been able to provide human rights diploma courses to approximately 180 civil servants throughout the country on annual basis in the past years. The diploma is endorsed by a prestigious Catholic university in Guatemala thanks to the advocacy undertaken by the Episcopal Conference of Guatemala, which provided additional value and motivation to participants at the local level.

Since 2010, UNICEF has worked with the Episcopal Conference of Guatemala (ECG) in the area of child protection; in particular, the collaboration has provided technical assistance for the protection of unaccompanied child migrants. In collaboration with the *Pastoral de Movilidad Humana (PMH)*, UNICEF has promoted public discussion on child migration issues, engaging governmental and non-governmental institutions over the past four years to keep migration issues on the public agenda.

### *Haiti*

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UNICEF began working with religious communities in Haiti in the aftermath of the 2010 earthquake. A pre-school run by nuns of the Lauritas order that served approximately 250 young children was devastated by the earthquake. In response, UNICEF provided the pre-school three large tents, along with 20 early childhood development (ECD) kits.

Catholic Relief Services and *Centre Épiscopal pour l'Éducation Catholique* have been UNICEF's primary faith-based partners for other education programming. UNICEF has distributed more than 1,000 ECD kits in Haiti, with plans to distribute more. This sustainable approach provides children access to stimulation, early learning and play, without making the community dependent on external aid. UNICEF is also encouraging communities to develop their own ECD materials, which include hand puppets, puzzle blocks, memory games and coloring pencils.

Since 2010, UNICEF and *Action Contre la Faim* have partnered to provide oral rehydration solution (ORS), hygiene training, cholera kits, and buckets with a tap to voodoo priests based in cholera-affected communities. The partnership also promotes hand washing during voodoo and protestant religious ceremonies, and training religious leaders to act as community intermediaries for hygiene promotion.

### *Honduras*

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In 2009, UNICEF partnered with *Pastoral Juvenil Arquidiocesana* and Father Ricador Sevilla to advance youth leadership in the political, economic and social fields. The partnership also sought to promote participatory mechanisms for youth engagement, including a three-day Pilgrimage of Youth from the Archdiocese "Soldiers Chosen by Christ" against drugs, kidnapping and corruption.

### *Jamaica*

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In 2009, activities in support of UNICEF's education programming were implemented in partnership with international and national NGOs, including the national FBO, Children of Faith. FBOs were also part of the target audience for a series of sensitization workshops on parenting in Jamaica, as well as beneficiaries of parenting initiatives undertaken in six regions by the Ministry of Education. UNICEF also funded the printing of two studies to improve the evidence base on current parenting practices: "Parenting in Jamaica" and "The Changing Roles of Fathers in Jamaican Family Life."

More recently, in 2014, UNICEF partnered with the Jamaica Council of Churches (JCC) to challenge the perception of church members and the communities they serve regarding the use of violent approaches to discipline in families. The JCC trained a cadre of religious leaders, selected by faith-based organizations, to conduct parenting workshops under the theme "Effective Discipline in the Home." Criteria were established for suitable trainees who agreed to conduct at least one workshop

within their church membership and/or church community following an initial two-day training workshop.

The programme has equipped 60 individuals to facilitate parent workshops within their churches and communities. These parent workshops focused specifically on reducing/eliminating the use of corporal punishment and emotional abuse in child-rearing, and on substituting and practicing more effective positive disciplinary strategies; particular effort was made to target persons from communities that are known to be volatile. It is further expected that the 374 parents did not only become aware of the negative impacts of corporal punishment on children, but also were informed of alternative methods of discipline and their application; approximately 1,500 children were expected to benefit as a result of changes in parenting practices.

### *Nicaragua*

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For the 2009 CRC@20 celebrations, and with UNICEF support, the Ecumenical Council of the Caribbean Coast—consisting of the main leaders of the Catholic, Moravian, Anglican, Episcopal and Baptist churches—presented the Nicaraguan Christian community with a pastoral letter on the rights of children. The pastoral letter's motive was to renew the churches' commitment to children, especially indigenous and Afro-Caribbean children and particularly the protection of children made vulnerable by AIDS.

In 2011, numerous activities were implemented as part of the Day of Prayer and Action for Children Initiative and with UNICEF support. Evangelical pastors from 29 churches, with support from *Acción Médica Cristiana* and the Association of Pastors of the South Atlantic of Nicaragua, mobilized more than 1,000 of their members to hold a rally against child violence and the importance of a protective family and community environment. Further, the Theological and Social Research Centre in Managua organized its first inter-religious day in favor of children on November 19. Discussion and reflection sessions also took place with students at the Evangelical University from November 20-25. Finally, the Episcopal Conference of Nicaragua agreed to dedicate prayers during Sunday church services during the first week of December on the care and protection of children.

In 2012, UNICEF sought to increase the social mobilization of churches and civil society to protect children made vulnerable by AIDS. UNICEF established an alliance with *Action Medical Cristiana (AMC)* and *Centro Intereclesial de Estudios Teológicos y Sociales (CIEETS)*, with whom UNICEF published textbooks. Specific objectives of the effort included: 1) strengthening the participation of churches and faith-based organizations of the Caribbean Coast in the implementation of AIDS pastoral care, and promoting and defending the rights of people with HIV and their relatives, with the aim of reducing stigma and discrimination; and 2) promoting theological-pastoral reflection on the epidemic of HIV by developing textbooks that contributed to prevention, pastoral care of persons affected and reduced stigma and discrimination. Church leaders developed pastoral reflection messages on child and adolescent protection, prevention of gender-based violence and violence against children, and prevention of drug and alcohol consumption that were used for religious activities and broadcasted on local radio.

The textbooks provided information to children, adolescents and young leaders, and were based on: 1) The Theological Fundamentals Book for prevention of stigma and discrimination based on Bible Study for Pastoral Reflection, 2) the Manual of Pastoral Counseling for HIV Prevention, 3) the Guide for Sunday School, and 4) the Pedagogical Module for including the "Pastoral and HIV" in the educative curriculum of 10 theological institutes. Support also comprised training of educators of theology from the major religious institutes of the country who subsequently trained 868 religious

leaders (402 men and 466 women) from 200 churches of 22 evangelical denominations in seven departments; of these 200 were Pastors.

To spur social mobilization, UNICEF supported 104 pastors in 15 communities to promote and defend the rights of people with HIV, with emphasis on the protection of children affected by the epidemic. Further, pastoral reflection messages were developed and broadcast on local radio. Also, a network of 15 pastors responsible for providing emotional and spiritual support to people with HIV in 68 churches was established. UNICEF promoted the formation of the network via technical and financial assistance. Key partners were CIEETS and AMC. These activities, which were performed in Region Atlantic Caribbean South (RACS), allowed “pastors of HIV” to organize people with HIV who lived hidden by stigma and discrimination. UNICEF also supported community level efforts, including in indigenous territories of Li Aubra in the municipality of Waspam, on sensitization and awareness raising on HIV prevention and discrimination.

### *Panama*

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Numerous activities were held as part of the 2011 DPAC Initiative with UNICEF support. The Catholic Archbishop celebrated a nationally televised mass on 20 November on the importance of a violence-free early childhood. Religious communities of the Global Network of Religions for Children celebrated DPAC during their respective religious ceremonies. Finally, the First Lady led an event with children in a park in central Panama City.

UNICEF has continued to support DPAC initiatives every year since, increasing the participation of religious leaders at each celebration. Activities over the last three years include appearing on radio and television programmes, writing opinion articles in leading newspapers and other related advocacy activities. In each of the three years, with UNICEF support, representatives of the Christian, Muslim, Jewish and Baha’i communities issued joint statements—“For a Violence-Free Childhood and Adolescence”—calling on the media to highlight positive news about boys, girls and adolescents.

### *Paraguay*

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In 2010, UNICEF conducted a research study on the incidence of intra-family violence against children. This study showed that approximately 60 percent of children suffer some kind of violence in Paraguay. Based on the survey, UNICEF designed and implemented a campaign designed to prevent violence against children within the family. In this framework, *Agencia Adventista de Desarrollo y Recursos Asistenciales (ADRA)* (The Adventist Development and Relief Agency) collaborated with UNICEF in the implementation of training processes oriented to parents at community level.

In 2014, Paraguay was affected by of the worst flooding in its history. According to the National Secretariat for Emergencies, 240,000 people and 84 schools were affected countrywide (including 12,000 school-age children). In collaboration with ADRA, UNICEF is focused on providing assistance to the Ministry of Education to create alternative spaces for children to continue their studies. UNICEF provided 20 tents and educational materials for the implementation of provisional classrooms for safe learning activities. The partnership is also supporting the implementation of sports and recreational activities with children and adolescents to build community resilience. The purpose is to re-establish minimal conditions for guaranteeing safe education activities, facilitating the emotional recovery of children and adolescents. UNICEF and ADRA are also training teachers on sexual and gender violence, HIV and AIDS, and psychosocial relief, and to ensure that education activities are implemented in a healthy and safe environment. UNICEF and ADRA are also working to

support the diagnosis and treatment of HIV among pregnant women. In the context of the emergency, UNICEF has also worked with *Oguasú*, a local NGO, and the Churches Committee for Emergency Help, in addressing indigenous communities with health, education and protection services.

In 2010 and 2011, UNICEF and the Catholic University of Asunción arranged seminars on linguistics in Mercosur, in cooperation with the Brazilian government. In 2011, UNICEF partnered with the National Coordination of Indigenous Pastoral to strengthen indigenous education, allowing children to attend school in their own languages. The project has contributed to the incorporation of indigenous education in the policy agenda of the Ministry of Education. The Ministry of Education has subsequently established a General Directorate of Indigenous Education, which is seeking to improve indigenous education curricula. In 2014, UNICEF and the Catholic University of Asunción provided university training courses for indigenous teachers. The partnership aims to strengthen indigenous teachers' skills in their own languages, and thereby improve the quality of education for indigenous children. In that year, UNICEF also supported the development of a diploma for indigenous teachers. Finally, UNICEF has supported the Apostolic Vicariate of the Pilcomayo for the development of a congress about the Nivacle language, one of the native idioms of Paraguay.

### *Peru*

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Since 2000, UNICEF has worked with the Catholic Parish of Santa Rita de Casia to improve prenatal women's health and early child development. UNICEF has contributed to growth and early child development community monitoring by training and overseeing "community promoters." Promoters are responsible for training families in nutrition, health and early child development, early stimulation sessions, monitoring nutrition and health status of communities, conducting home visits, and organizing community meetings to assess the situation of pregnant women and children. The Parish has worked with two priests, a congregation that has three nuns, and a technician responsible for the community work.

In 2014, UNICEF partnered with a number of international faith-based organizations on a range of issues. UNICEF works with Caritas, the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA), and World Vision, among others, to advocate for, monitor and evaluate public policy related to maternal and child policies. UNICEF also supports the "Initiative for Fighting Against Child Malnutrition," a non-governmental groups of 19 members (including Caritas, World Vision and UN agencies) to provide technical assistance to the government to address nutrition issues in the public sphere. UNICEF has also expanded its work with Caritas to include emergency response.

### *Saint Kitts and Nevis*

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In 2013, with UNICEF's support, the Department of Probation and Child Protection Services held a series of sensitization workshops for religious leaders on the role of the Church in preventing and managing child sexual abuse. School visits were organized to raise awareness about the Blue Bear Campaign (a government campaign to address issues related to incest and sexual abuse of children). Activities included painting Blue Bear murals in schools and holding a rally for six schools in Saddlers Village. In commemoration of the 2013 World Day of Prayer and Action for Children, the Ministry of Social and Community Development, Culture and Gender Affairs requested that all churches use November 24th to address issues of violence against children.

### *Saint Lucia*

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In 2013, as part of the “Break the Silence, End Child Sexual Abuse Campaign,” UNICEF supported the Department of Human Services—the agency responsible for Child Protection—to conduct a training workshop for religious leaders on how to prevent and manage the sexual abuse of children.

### *Saint Vincent and the Grenadines*

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In 2013, as part of the “Break the Silence, End Child Sexual Abuse Campaign,” UNICEF supported the National Commission on Crime Prevention to host a national consultation for approximately 200 religious leaders on the sexual abuse of children.

### *Trinidad and Tobago*

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In 2011, UNICEF and the Ministries of Gender, Youth and Child Development, People and Social Development, Education, National Security, and the Institute of Gender and Development Studies at University of West Indies (St. Augustine Campus), collaborated to promote the Day of Prayer and Action for Children (DPAC). High-level lobbying resulted in the endorsement of DPAC by the Prime Minister, who called upon key stakeholders—e.g. government, civil society, religious communities and the private sector—to forge closer relationships to make violence against children a phenomenon of the past.

From 2012 to 2014 UNICEF partnered with the Pentecostal Association of the West Indies in collaboration with Family Heart Beat International to build the capacity of religious leaders to address and respond to child protection issues. Activities included the sensitization of evangelical leaders in Trinidad and in Barbados on the sexual abuse of children and the role of the church in its prevention and management.

### *Turks and Caicos Islands*

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As part of the 2011 DPAC Initiative, UNICEF supported the Social Development Department to hold several activities with religious leaders that included morning devotions at schools on 18 November 2011 followed by a “Night of Fellowship” on the evening of the same day. The programme consisted of prayers, praise team singing, performances from church youth groups, greetings from the Ministry representative and other government and community leaders. On Sunday 20 November religious leaders of all churches incorporated the theme of “Stop Violence Against Children” in their sermons.

Activities to commemorate the 2013 World Day of Prayer and Action for Children included letters sent to churches to include the theme of child protection and stopping violence against children in their services. Prayer Vigils were also held to pray for children in abusive situations, laws governing child protection, and families, among others.

### *Regional initiative*

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From 2008 to 2010, the UNICEF Office for the Eastern Caribbean Area partnered with the Evangelical Association of the Caribbean to sensitize evangelical youth on HIV and AIDS. Activities included a study among evangelical youth in Antigua, St. Lucia, St. Vincent, and Barbados, and capacity and sensitization for regional evangelical youth leaders on HIV. Sensitization activities also took place

with regional evangelical youth leaders and pastors, including advocacy efforts with an HIV positive gospel artist.

UNICEF and the UK Department for International Development (DFID) partnered in 2014 to launch the Child Safeguarding in the Overseas Territories Regional Project. The Project seeks to increase the capacity of the non-self-governing territories of Anguilla, Turks and Caicos Islands, Virgin Islands UK and Montserrat to address the range of issues confronting children, including sensitizing religious leaders on the role of the Church in child abuse prevention.



## G. Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States

**Understanding the context:** In the Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States region, UNICEF addresses the unfinished business and exclusion that keeps too many marginalized children in institutions, too many out of school, too many living in unsafe and hazard-prone communities and too many adolescents excluded and without hope. These are children with disabilities, children of migrant workers, children from ethnic minorities, rural children and the urban poor, children in conflict with the law or living in institutions and, in some cases, girls.

In partnership with governments from the region, UNICEF's 10-point agenda for action aims to strengthen those institutions that allow capacity gaps to exist. UNICEF's goal is to get the region talking and working together on behalf of the most vulnerable children and to ensure that UNICEF's work evolves in step with the changing world.

The 10 areas that require the most attention in order to create a region that is fit for children are detailed below and known as the Regional Knowledge and Leadership Agenda:

- A child's right to health: 'A promise renewed'
- A child's right to a supportive and caring family environment
- A child's right to access to justice
- A child's right to early learning
- A child's right to an inclusive quality education
- A child's right to be born free of HIV
- A young child's right to comprehensive well-being
- A child's right to social protection
- A child's right to protection from the risks of disasters: reducing vulnerability
- An adolescent's right to a second decade, a second chance

*Source: UNICEF Central and Eastern European and Commonwealth of Independent States Regional Office website (November 2014)*

### 1. Regional overview

Of the 20 programme countries, territories or areas in the Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States region, 18 are represented in the mapping study, six of which indicated engagement with religious communities over the last five years. This region represents the lowest country office engagement with religious communities.

The six countries in the region working with religious actors do so with Muslim and Christian communities only; four countries work with each religion, two work with both. All six COs engage with religious leaders and institutions, and all but one have national governments as a partner as well. Only one CO works with national or international FBOs; this is significantly less in terms of national FBO engagement, as the global level nears 60 percent. Sensitization and advocacy were the two most common methods of support, but social mobilization and service delivery were also noted on four and two occasions, respectively.

Like the other regions, child protection stood out as the outcome area of highest engagement, yet social inclusion, a relatively uncommon area globally, accounted for four of the six programme countries.

Further, only one country in the region worked on health and WASH with religious communities, and none worked with HIV and AIDS or nutrition.

## 2. At a glance: Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States

Country	Religion						Partnership				Method of Support					Outcome Area								
	Christianity	Islam	Buddhism	Hinduism	Voodoo	Interfaith	National Government	Int'l FBO	National/Local FBO	Int'l/National/Local CSO	Religious Leaders/Institutions	Advocacy	Capacity Development	Social Mobilization	Service Delivery	Sensitization	Health	HIV/AIDS	WASH	Nutrition	Child Protection	Education	Social Inclusion	Emergencies
Georgia	✓						✓			✓	✓		✓		✓						✓		✓	
Kazakhstan	✓	✓					✓			✓	✓	✓	✓		✓						✓			
Montenegro	✓	✓								✓					✓						✓		✓	
Tajikistan		✓					✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓						✓	✓	✓	
Turkey		✓					✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓						✓			
Ukraine	✓						✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

## 3. Country snapshots

### Georgia

Since 2005, UNICEF has been advocating for alternatives to the institutionalization of children, such as foster care or small group homes, and for family support services that are in line with child rights principles. Comprehensive changes have been introduced at all levels of the child care system and a new gatekeeping policy is being rolled-out to ensure that children come into formal care for the right reasons. This government policy aims to ensure that institutional care is considered as a last resort for the shortest possible time for both state and non-state run residential care programs for children.

Since 2010, UNICEF has incorporated work with religious leaders from the Georgian Orthodox Church in its advocacy strategy as well as in its deinstitutionalization work. UNICEF works with the Church in advocating for the development of alternatives to large institutions and family support services that are in line with child rights. UNICEF further supported awareness raising efforts in congregations on contemporary approaches to the child-care system and the ongoing reform initiatives. UNICEF also sought to elicit greater church support in recruiting specialized foster caregivers for children with disabilities within the family environment.

In 2014, UNICEF supported the establishment of a monitoring unit at the Ministry of Labour, Health and Social Affairs to enable the Government to undertake monitoring of child care services. The Government started to use the monitoring instruments and approaches developed with UNICEF

support to monitor church-based institutions since these institutions are not licensed and are not subject to any oversight either by government agencies or by the ombudsman's office.

### *Kazakhstan*

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In view of the high suicide rate among children, adolescents and youth in Kazakhstan, UNICEF and the Ministry of Health undertook a large study in 2012-2013 to understand underlying causes, risks and protective factors. Preliminary findings of the study were presented at a conference organized by the Ministry of Health and UNICEF in May 2013. The Ministry of Health invited religious leaders from the Muslim and Russian Orthodox Church communities to the conference, and, in response to demand and with UNICEF support, distributed materials with further information as follow up.

Though the UNICEF study did not specifically identify religion as a protective factor for adolescent suicide behaviour, both national and local religious leaders have been invited by central and local government bodies and NGOs to be part of suicide prevention programmes. In some regions, Muslim and Russian Orthodox representatives have been invited to schools to provide awareness raising activities. An imam from the largest mosque in Astana, who attended the conference and requested additional materials, conducted a series of lectures and discussions with youth from his congregation on suicide prevention; he also gave an interview on the subject on a local TV channel.

### *Montenegro*

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In 2012, UNICEF engaged the national heads of the Serbian Orthodox Christian, Montenegrin Orthodox Christian, Jewish, Catholic and Muslim congregations in a nationwide foster care campaign as part of a broader child welfare/de-institutionalization reform. All the religious leaders engaged in disseminating foster recruitment materials through their congregations and promoting the campaign through their sermons. Moreover, the Head of the Serbian Orthodox Church—the most influential religious figure in the country—promoted the campaign in his Christmas speech.

### *Tajikistan*

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From 2010 to 2013, UNICEF worked on the “Girls Education Package,” an initiative designed to reduce gender disparities in basic education and increase attendance and completion rates of girls. This initiative was carried out in cooperation with the Ministry of Education and Science and the local NGO *Oshtii Milli*. Local community representatives, education authorities, elders and religious leaders were mobilized to form Education Support Committees (ESC) in schools to support girls' education. By setting up the ESCs, the programme was able to get closer to the grassroots and mobilize community and religious followers, transform traditions and customs, raise awareness of the importance of girls' education, and highlight the responsibility of teachers and parents to bringing girls back to school.

In 2012, UNICEF, in collaboration with the Tajikistan Association of Professional Social Workers and the Committee on Religion Affairs, promoted an initiative called “Fostering Dialogue and Joint Action between Religious Leaders and Human Rights Advocates in Response to Violence against Children and Women in Tajikistan.” This initiative was designed to explore an innovative approach to communicating child rights among Muslim communities in Tajikistan. The initiative—conducted under the “Safe and Friendly Cities for All” programme—facilitated a constructive dialogue among religious leaders and human rights advocates; used best practices demonstrated by UNICEF for

effective communication of child rights within the context of religious values; and developed a Friday sermon that was delivered in a selected mosque in Dushanbe.

### *Turkey*

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Between 2010 and 2013 UNICEF implemented the “Strengthening Preschool Education” project, designed to increase enrolment and attendance rates of pre-school education among disadvantaged children. Family health center personnel and religious officials were involved in the social mobilization campaign as an alternative way to reach families in the target group. Seminars for 300 religious officials and 146 family health center personnel were organized to convey the details of the project and the messages that they were requested to relay to families; participants also received campaign brochures to be distributed at family visits/gatherings.

### *Ukraine*

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From 2012 to 2013, UNICEF partnered with the local Orthodox Church of Moscow Patriarchy in Kyiv to promote the expanded use of mediation and restorative justice approaches in cases of children who were in conflict with the law (who would otherwise be subject to the formal criminal justice system). To do so, the project aimed to further develop restorative justice programmes by strengthening coordination mechanisms among Ukrainian law enforcement, entities of the legal system, and the Mediation Service, that is based in the Spiritual and Educational Centre of the Parish of St. Spyridon of Trimythus. Support to the Mediation Service included a wide range of capacity building activities, such as the development of work procedures and processing of mediation requests; creation of procedures for maintenance of mediator registries; development of duty rosters and schedules; and the development of questionnaires for potential mediators, among others. This project thus facilitated the involvement of a religious organization in providing community based services in the area of juvenile justice.

In 2014, UNICEF worked with Caritas to reduce IDP children’s and families’ stress levels through psychosocial support and enhance their abilities to integrate into their host communities. To achieve the goal, the collaboration will identify the range of specific psycho-social needs and the extent of necessary assistance for IDP children and adults; provide professional training in efficient specialized techniques of CBT for psychologists, social workers, school counselors and teachers; and, compile data and identify good practice for research and educational purposes.

The severe escalation of conflict in Eastern Ukraine in 2014 resulted in the deterioration of the humanitarian situation, causing civilian casualties and an influx of people from conflict areas. To address these emergency needs, UNICEF partnered with the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) on a WASH project, distributing water tanks, WASH kits, and drinking water in selected areas. UNICEF also partnered with Red Cross and the Salvation Army to distribute hygiene kits and education goods in preparation for the school year.

## V. Conclusion

The critical role that religious communities can play in promoting the wellbeing of children is now readily recognized in most development circles. It has therefore become incumbent on UNICEF to apply greater rigor to its work in this area. This mapping exercise was a necessary first step in strengthening UNICEF's partnerships with religious communities. Only by better understanding the extent and nature of this engagement could the organization identify challenges and opportunities for improved collaboration.

Perhaps the most important finding of the mapping is the extensive work being done by country offices with religious communities. That over two-thirds of participating country programmes are, or have recently been, engaged with clergy, faith-based organizations and religious institutions speaks to the importance of religious actors in helping UNICEF fulfill its mandate. That over 60 percent of COs have engaged with three or more religious partners speaks to the diversity of religious entities engaged in development efforts. Finally, that nearly half of COs have engaged religious communities in three or more of UNICEF's core outcome areas speaks to the range of needs and capabilities of religious communities and partners, respectively.

With the evidence of UNICEF's extensive engagement with religious communities in plain view, UNICEF must now turn its attention and focus to maximizing the benefits of its partnerships with these key actors. Simply because a great deal of work is being done in this area does not necessarily signify success or effective programming. Further research is needed to identify challenges and opportunities in UNICEF's work with religious communities. This necessarily must involve further research on religious communities' views, insights and guidance on how UNICEF can become a partner of choice. Country offices must also articulate their needs and interests in this area. Greater collaboration and coordination within the organization must also be a priority if UNICEF as a whole is to truly benefit from engaging with religious communities. As the mapping illustrates, this work touches on all outcome areas, in all regions, in all contexts and across all types of support.

To this end, UNICEF's Civil Society Partnership unit is well positioned to coordinate efforts to improve the organization's engagement with religious communities. Further research is needed to identify and collaborate with others in the organization—like C4D—who are already moving forward in this area. UNICEF efforts are at their best when they draw on the collective expertise, experience and creativity of its staff.

As part of an effort to improve partnerships with religious communities, Civil Society Partnership facilitated a consultation in December 2014 for CO and HQ staff to identify concrete steps to advance UNICEF's work with religious communities. In addition to exploring the challenges and opportunities of partnering with religious actors, the workshop also began to explore improved approaches and platforms for realizing the enormous potential of working with religious leaders, institutions and faith-based organizations.