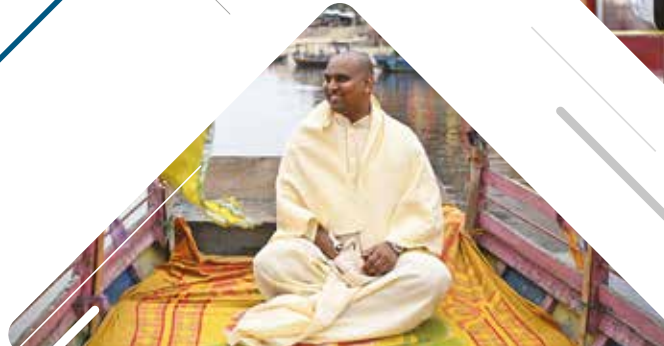




KAICIID DIALOGUE CENTRE

2020

ANNUAL REPORT





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ABBREVIATIONS

AU-IFDF	African Union Interfaith Dialogue Forum
Coalition FBO	Coalition of Faith-Based Organizations
DKH	Dialogue Knowledge Hub
EU	European Union
EuLeMa	European Muslim Leaders Majlis
IDFP	Interfaith Dialogue Forum for Peace
IPDC	Interreligious Platform for Dialogue and Cooperation in the Arab World
JOTI	Jamboree on the Internet
KAICIID	International Dialogue Centre
MFAC	Multi-faith Advisory Council
MJLC	Muslim Jewish Leadership Council
PCRC	Plateforme des Confessions Religieuses de Centrafrique
PMI	Paungsie Metta Initiatives
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
UNAOC	United Nations Alliance of Civilizations
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
UPEACE	University of Peace
WAGGGS	World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts
WOSM	World Organization of the Scout Movement

2020

ANNUAL REPORT



ABOUT

THE INTERNATIONAL DIALOGUE CENTRE

A unique mandate with a mission to promote dialogue to foster respect among cultures and religions.

VISION

A world in which there is respect, understanding and cooperation among people; justice, peace and reconciliation; and an end to the abuse of religion to justify repression, violence and conflict.

COUNCIL OF PARTIES

The Council of Parties is composed of the Republic of Austria, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and Kingdom of Spain, with the Holy See as a Founding Observer.



ADVISORY FORUM

The Advisory Forum is a consultative body comprising influential leaders from world religions and religious and cultural institutions and communities across the world.



5 MAJOR RELIGIONS

represented on the Board of Directors

- ▶ BUDDHISM
- ▶ CHRISTIANITY
- ▶ HINDUISM
- ▶ ISLAM
- ▶ JUDAISM

KEY PLATFORMS AND NETWORKS SUPPORTED BY KAICIID GLOBALLY

5 REGIONS WITH INTERRELIGIOUS DIALOGUE INITIATIVES

EUROPE
Established the Muslim Jewish Leadership Council (MJLC) and launched the Network for Dialogue

ARAB REGION
Launched the Interreligious Platform for Dialogue and Cooperation in the Arab World (IPDC) and the Network for Religious Christian and Muslim Faculties and Institutes in the Arab World

CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC
Supported the Peace Journalists Network and the Plateforme des Confessions Religieuses de Centrafrique (PCRC)

NIGERIA
Established the Interfaith Dialogue Forum for Peace (IDFP)

MYANMAR
Supported and strengthened the Paungsie Metta Initiatives (PMI)

Partnerships

13

MEMORANDA OF UNDERSTANDING AND 40+ ADDITIONAL PARTNERSHIPS with governmental and religious organizations

Staff

29

NATIONALITIES

51% 49%

FOREWORD

FAISAL BIN MUAAMMAR
KAICIID SECRETARY GENERAL

Early in 2020 the International Dialogue Centre (KAICIID) was faced with the significant challenge of the COVID-19 pandemic, which limited opportunities for physical engagement important to its programme of work and effectively ended collective worship – a vital avenue for religious expression and observance.

KAICIID was swift to adapt to the new reality, shifting its focus to virtual communications and adapting its programmatic response to one of the greatest human tragedies to afflict humanity in many decades.

October's G20 Interfaith Forum, for which 2000 reli-

adversity, KAICIID supported hundreds of initiatives with resources and capacity-building, ranging from proposals aiming to prevent COVID-19 from being used as a vehicle for division, to educational initiatives among our extended network of partnerships and platforms.

Despite the challenges, KAICIID was able to expand its programmatic delivery, with the introduction of support and funding for 222 new initiatives aiming to tackle the effects of COVID-19 in countries around the world, including measures to fight hate speech and initiatives to help religious leaders and faith-based organizations counter the pandemic.

Despite the challenges, KAICIID was able to expand its programmatic delivery, with the introduction of support and funding for 222 new initiatives aiming to tackle the effects of COVID-19

gious leaders and organizations, experts, academics and policymakers gathered virtually to agree on recommendations for the approaching G20 summit of world leaders hosted in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, was a vivid reminder of KAICIID's success in rising to the COVID-19 challenge.

The virtual consultations leading up to this event, involving hundreds of participants from various religious backgrounds across five continents, demonstrated KAICIID's convening power and its enduring mission to use dialogue to build bridges and counter the social fragmentation the pandemic has brought across the world.

Soon after the pandemic started, I issued a call to protect people who directly or indirectly found themselves marginalised by COVID-19. Through its unique mandate to establish consensus and understanding in the face of

Although there is sometimes no substitute for face-to-face gatherings, we have learned from and exploited the full potential of digital platforms for exercising and expanding our mission. The year has seen a change in the methodology behind KAICIID's religious, social and cultural imprint – but not in its intensity or relevance.

None of this, of course, would have been possible without the support of the KAICIID Council of Parties and the multireligious Board of Directors and Advisory Forum. I wish to thank all those in the KAICIID family – including the Fellows, our many platforms and partners, and of course our staff – who have dedicated themselves to their work despite the personal and professional dislocations and uncertainties introduced into their lives by the pandemic.

GOVERNANCE UPDATE

KAICIID is governed by two principal bodies – the Council of Parties and the Board of Directors. The Centre’s founding Member States – the Republic of Austria, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and Kingdom of Spain, with the Holy See as a Founding Observer – constitute the Council of Parties, responsible for overseeing KAICIID’s work. The Board of Directors comprises high-level representatives of major world religions, including Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam and Judaism.



Council of Parties

The Council of Parties consists of representatives of those parties to the Agreement for the Establishment of the Centre, with the Holy See as a Founding Observer. It convenes at least once a year. Its functions include the election of members of the Board of Directors and the appointment of the Secretary General and Deputy Secretary General.

The Council of Parties adopts KAICIID’s financial regulations, work programme and annual budget. Based on proposals from the Board of Directors, the Council of Parties nominates members of major religions and faith-based and cultural institutions to the Advisory Forum. The Council of Parties approves international agreements and the establishment of cooperative relationships with public and private entities that can contribute to the work of KAICIID.

In 2020 the Council of Parties approved international agreements strengthening KAICIID’s ties with the United Nations and its specialised agencies, including the

memorandum of understanding with the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations (UNAOC), to which KAICIID has become a member of the Group of Friends, and the University of Peace (UPEACE).

The Council of Parties decides on the admission of new parties and observers to the Establishment Agreement.

The Council of Parties has offered continuous support to the work of KAICIID since its inception. In 2020 representatives of the Council of Parties held a record total of five special sessions aimed at preserving the cohesive and efficient work of KAICIID for 2021.

Advisory Forum

The Advisory Forum is a consultative body comprising influential leaders from world religions and religious and cultural institutions and communities across the world. The Advisory Forum supports the activities of the KAICIID Board of Directors and advises on its programmes.

Through the vast pool of knowledge available from the Advisory Forum members, the Secretariat is briefed on developments in regions where KAICIID operates, such as Africa, the Arab region, Asia and Europe.

Members contribute alongside the Secretariat to guarantee successful implementation of KAICIID’s programme of work. Members help raise awareness of KAICIID and advocate for its goals in all corners of the globe.

Members of KAICIID’s Board of Directors and Advisory Forum participated in the Keeping Faith and Transforming Tomorrow assembly, which focused on “the nexus of women, faith and diplomacy, giving prominence to women’s respective roles and contributions and highlighting their leadership.” Photo: Religions for Peace



Board of Directors

KAICIID Board Members have been instrumental in partially migrating the organization’s programme of work and activities to virtual channels in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

From left to right, top to bottom: Dr. Hamad Al-Majed, Dr. Kezevino Aram, H.Em. Cardinal Miguel Ayuso, H.Em. Metropolitan Emmanuel, Reverend Kosho Niwano, His Virtue Prof. Dr. Allahshukur Pashazade, Chief Rabbi David Rosen, Dr. Mohammad Sammak and Reverend Richard J. Sudworth



This year the Board of Directors welcomed the Church of England’s Reverend Richard J. Sudworth as its newest member. The Board contributed regularly to the Centre’s knowledge resources, offering thought leadership and insight, and often participated in online panel discussions and webinars, including Protecting the Vulnerable: A Multireligious Call for Solidarity and Action during COVID-19; Prevention and Response: the Contribution of Religious Leaders to Counteracting Violent Extremism and Promoting Social Solidarity in Europe; and Dialogue Despite Difference: Resources for Combating COVID-19.

The Board of Directors participated at several virtual conferences, including the Second European Policy Dialogue Forum on Refugees and Migrants, held virtually on 3–4 November 2020.

In October 2020 members of the Board of Directors spoke at and contributed to the G20 Interfaith Forum, which relies on the thought leadership and recommendations of the world’s most prominent faith leaders, to provide consultation to the G20 Leaders’ Summit. Co-organized by KAICIID, the virtual forum gathered more than 2,000 participants from 90 countries. Participation of the Board of Directors in this historic event was instrumental in its success.

1



CHAPTER 1:

Multilateralism and External Relations



One of the main prerequisites for sustainable development is peace, but there can be no peace without sustainable development.

COVID-19, DIALOGUE AND MULTILATERAL DIPLOMACY

AMBASSADOR ALVARO ALBACETE
KAICIID DEPUTY SECRETARY GENERAL

As KAICIID joined the world in marking the 75th anniversary of the United Nations in 2020, the relevance of multilateral diplomacy was more evident than ever. The COVID-19 pandemic has served to multiply and enhance systemic political, economic, social and environmental issues.

In pursuit of development, a contradiction is discernible in global affairs. On the one hand, we are facing global impact trends that require systematic responses through multilateral cooperation. On the other hand, we have witnessed a tendency towards fragmentation of the international order, where actors express increasing scepticism of such cooperation.

In this context, international organizations constitute a unique global influence and are needed more than ever to stimulate fresh momentum towards multilateral cooperation that engages actors from a broad spectrum of arenas, including governments, civil society, faith-based organizations and the private sector.

COVID-19 has demonstrated the profound impact crises can have at international, regional and local levels. Crises amplify systemic weaknesses in the infrastructure of international cooperation. They exacerbate existing vulnerabilities in governance systems and intercommunal relations, and intensify grievances and social and economic inequalities around the globe.

The social contract between states and their populations risks further erosion, creating frustration and an increasing need to fill existing gaps. In societies around the world, especially those that are vulnerable and affected by conflict, uneven and inconsistent responses to the COVID-19 pandemic have further weakened the social compact and trust among religious and ethnic groups, shrinking spaces for dialogue and cooperation.

Systemic discrimination, compounded by the increasing blight of poverty, has worsened suffering, creating ample space for growing mistrust and hate speech, often leading to violence. The pandemic can also be viewed as a reminder of the imminent risks that may be wrought by climate change-induced disasters.

In this context, collective and coherent responses to pressing socioeconomic challenges are key to alleviating the negative effects they can, and most probably will, have on peace and sustainable development. This endeavour

can be enriched significantly by the constructive contribution of religious leaders and faith-based organizations across the globe. Their leadership, rooted in prophetic and spiritual values, can establish and promote interfaith cooperation in a space where religion and human rights support and reinforce each other and where all members of society have a voice, independent of race, age, gender, religion and other identity factors.

Multilateral intergovernmental organizations such as KAICIID can contribute to the United Nations Agenda 2030 and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and support the international community in the expansion of multistakeholder partnerships worldwide. Together we can convene, mobilise and support the growing community of diverse, yet like-minded, actors towards sustainable and inclusive development, based on a human-centred approach.

One of the main prerequisites for sustainable development is peace, but there can be no peace without sustainable development. Religious leaders have acknowledged this interdependence, operating at grassroots levels to support local communities and promote their livelihoods. They have distributed aid, facilitated and provided formal and informal education, and acted as main focal points to spread messages of peace and reconciliation.

INCREASED ENGAGEMENT WITH THE UNITED NATIONS

As 2020 brought unprecedented challenges to humanity and to the wider international community, KAICIID reinforced its strong partnership with UNAOC to jointly promote the significant potential of faith-based organizations, youth, women and the media in advancing interreligious and intercultural dialogue, particularly in societies affected by identity-based conflicts.



The strong commitment to this partnership was reflected in a memorandum of understanding signed by the two institutions on 27 October 2020. In previous years KAICIID and UNAOC have developed joint projects in the field of mediation and capacity-building, especially focusing on young peace advocates and women in communities affected by violence, such as in the Central African Republic. Under the memorandum of understanding, the two organizations combined their expertise in training and resource development to create online courses on the promotion of peaceful and inclusive societies through interreligious and intercultural dialogue.

KAICIID and a consortium of like-minded United Nations agencies and international nongovernmental organizations, including the Institut Superior de Ciències Religioses de Barcelona, the Lutheran World Federation, the National Muslim Council of Liberia, UNAOC, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), and UPEACE, have initiated and developed a joint online course, Engaging Faith Actors to Support Implementation

of Sustainable Development Goals. The course aims to raise awareness and strengthen the capacities of religious leaders, the United Nations, faith-based organizations, civil society organizations and government officials at all levels for greater engagement and to support the implementation of the SDGs at the national, local and community levels.

As the world moved to online spaces for dialogue and cooperation, KAICIID swiftly adapted to the new modus operandi. The Centre partnered with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and the Coalition of Faith-Based Organizations (Coalition FBO) on a series of webinars focusing on the role of faith-based organizations and religious actors in addressing global challenges.

Ahead of United Nations World Environment Day, on 5 June 2020, KAICIID joined its partner organizations to host a webinar, Faith for Earth: Climate Change and Environmental Justice. The webinar invited prominent guests, including leading economist and climate expert Professor Jeffrey D. Sachs, to discuss how faith-based organizations can better respond to climate-related disasters.

Other webinars in the series explored topics such as the prevention of violence against women, and the role of faith-based organizations in ensuring humane treatment for people in prison during COVID-19.

The unique value of faith-based organizations and their contribution to global development agendas was recognised by the United Nations through the establishment of the United Nations Interagency Task Force on Religion and Sustainable Development in 2010, which today includes more than 20 United Nations entities and the Multi-faith Advisory Council (MFAC), created in 2018 and comprising more than 40 diverse religious leaders and faith-based organizations.

After successfully chairing MFAC in 2018, KAICIID continued to play an active role in the mechanism. On 8 September 2020, in honour of the 75th anniversary of the United Nations, MFAC organized the online conference Faith in the UN: Commemorating the 75th Anniversary of the United Nations and Looking to the Future. The event provided a platform for representatives of faith-based organizations, faith leaders and key voices of United

The unique value of faith-based organizations and their contribution to global development agendas was recognised by the United Nations through the establishment of the United Nations Interagency Task Force on Religion and Sustainable Development in 2010.

Nations agencies to discuss a variety of pressing issues and their roles in dealing with them.

Some of the key actors stressing the timeliness and relevance of such a platform included António Guterres, United Nations Secretary-General; Miguel Ángel Moratinos, United Nations High Representative for UNAOC; Henrietta Fore, Executive Director of the United Nations Children's Fund; Yfat Barak-Cheney, Director of International Affairs and Deputy Director of the World Jewish Congress; and Azza Karam, Secretary General of Religions for Peace.

THE FAITH4SDGS PROJECT

In October 2020 KAICIID launched the Faith4SDGs project¹, a digital storytelling series showcasing the work of faith-based organizations in providing good-quality education, clean water, renewable energy, jobs and safe housing and ensuring gender equality in line with the SDGs.



Launched in honour of United Nations Day, the project aims to further mobilise faith communities around the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and urges recognition of their contributions by the international community.

The project launch also included a series of webinars and panel discussions with representatives from the United Nations and prominent faith-based organizations, including Iyad Abumoghli, Director of the UNEP Faith for Earth Initiative; Bandar Hajar, President of the Islamic Development Bank Group; Yvonne Helle, Special Representative to the United Nations Development

Programme's Programme of Assistance to the Palestinian People; Azza Karam, Secretary General of Religions for Peace; and Esther Lehmann-Sow, Global Director of Faith and Development at World Vision International.

Sponsored by KAICIID's Dialogue Knowledge Hub (DKH), which provides online tools on dialogue and global policy issues, the project is intended to be a virtual resource to help religious actors and policymakers learn to speak the same language around development and humanitarian issues.

¹ www.kaiciid.org/faith4sdgs

GLOBAL PARTNERSHIPS AND PRIORITIES

It has been more relevant than ever for KAICIID to create the appropriate framework to deliver under the current social economic context and to address in a comprehensive and balanced manner the challenges of the Europe region, taking into account the priorities of the European Union (EU) and KAICIID Council of Parties states.

The Secretariat focused on streamlining contributions of the current and upcoming activities that are part of the recently established Europe Region Programme. This programme was developed within the framework of the KAICIID mandate regarding EU priorities, such as inter-religious and intercultural dialogue, migration, discrimination, racism, hate speech and gender equality, while also promoting the SDGs.

In particular, the EU Anti-Racism Action Plan 2020–2025 released on 18 September and the EU Action Plan on Integration and Inclusion 2021–2027 are important and timely documents, are relevant to all who work in the field of interreligious dialogue and social inclusion, and will be a guide to orient work towards equality and peaceful coexistence in the region.

In 2020 KAICIID's programming aimed to further strengthen the social inclusion of refugees and migrants through the use of intercultural dialogue, including through the European Policy Dialogue Forum on Refugees and Migrants. Following the successful implementation of the 1st European Policy Dialogue Forum in Athens in October 2019, the 2nd European Policy Dialogue Forum on Refugees and Migrants on 3–4 November 2020 was titled Contributing to the Social Inclusion of Refugees and Migrants in Europe through Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue and included 90 policymakers, religious leaders, experts and practitioners.

KAICIID followed the priorities of the German presidency of the European Union. Efforts were supported by the German Foreign Ministry and the European Commission representation in Germany.

In a world where distance is increasingly understood as “safety,” we must work hard to avoid normalising isolation in favour of fragmentation and the erosion of multilateralism. Dialogue assumes a principal role in overcoming these newly established detachments and brings us closer to each other and towards our common good. In this time of intense global polarisation, governments, civil society and religious actors can transform the reversal of human development into a historic leap forward by collapsing existing silos through dialogue.

With opportunity comes responsibility. We all need to think about how we can strengthen the peacebuilding and social cohesion thumbprint of multilateral diplomacy, while maintaining a strong sense of accountability to the individuals and communities who form “the peoples” who signed a historic document 75 years ago in San Francisco – the Charter of the United Nations.



European Policy
DIALOGUE FORUM

on Refugees and Migrants

G20 INTERFAITH FORUM

On 13–17 October the G20 Interfaith Forum convened virtually for its seventh annual gathering, welcoming more than 2000 guests from over 90 countries. The five-day conference was hosted by KAICIID in partnership with the G20 Interfaith Forum Association, Saudi Arabia's National Dialogue Committee and UNAOC. The G20 presidency rotates between member countries each year. Saudi Arabia assumed the presidency on 1 December 2019.



The G20 Interfaith Forum provides an annual platform for religiously linked institutions and initiatives to engage on global agendas related to the G20 Leaders' Summit. Its goal is to contribute meaningful insight and recommendations that respond to and help shape the G20 and global policy agendas.

KAICIID has been closely involved with the G20 Interfaith Forum since 2017, providing support for past summits in Germany in 2017, Argentina in 2018 and Japan in 2019, with further plans to support the 2021 summit in Italy. The annual event is tied closely to the KAICIID mandate, which promotes dialogue and cooperation between religious leaders and policymakers on the world's most pressing humanitarian and development issues.

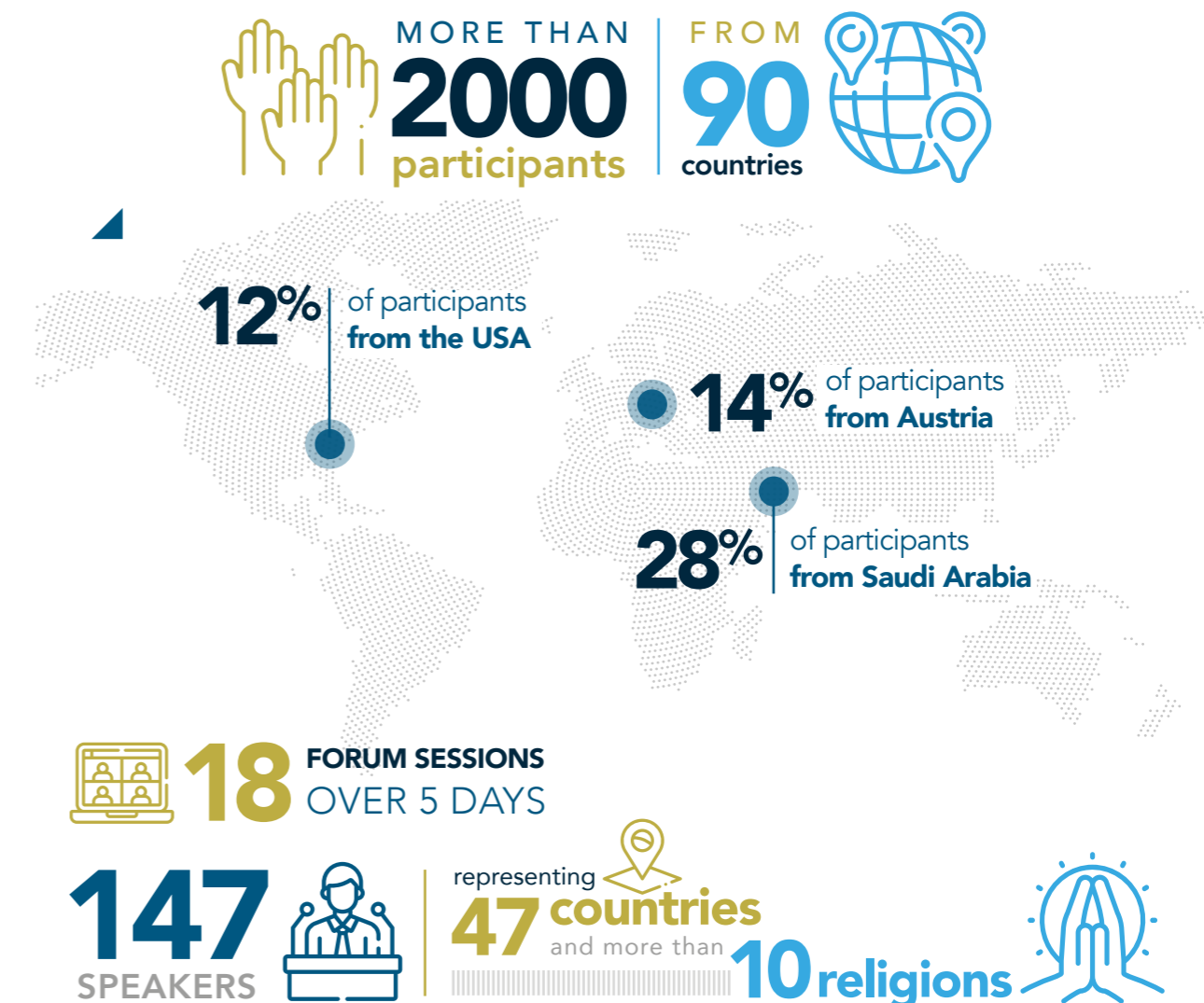
The agenda for each forum is framed by the host country and a changing group of partners, taking into account annual G20 priorities, outlined each year by the host government. These discussions contribute to the annual G20

Leaders' Summit, which is the premier forum for international economic cooperation. The 2020 agenda built on the SDGs and additional issues of social cohesion, equity and sustainability that have been a central underlying theme for the G20 Interfaith Forum from its inception.

In 2020, for the first time since the G20 Interfaith Forum was launched in 2014, six regional consultations were held in Africa, the Arab region, Asia, Europe, Latin America and North America. Discussions focused on the COVID-19 pandemic, advancing peace, reducing structural equality and racism, fostering common action to protect the planet, and empowering people through development agendas that promote education, oppose corruption and uphold gender equality.

Consultations took place from June to October 2020, inviting contributions from hundreds of religious leaders, policymakers, youth and experts from faith-based organizations

G20 Interfaith Forum facts and figures



and multilateral organizations, academic institutions, and civil society. A KAICIID Fellows Consultation followed by a joint KAICIID Fellows and Youth Forum were also part of the engagement process. While each region made recommendations based on different priorities and challenges, the consultations highlighted the engagement of religious leaders and communities in relief services, humanitarian aid and support in every part of the world.

These recommendations were presented at the culminating 5-day global forum held in October, which welcomed 147 speakers from more than 40 countries. Speakers and participants included global figures such as His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, Archbishop of Constantinople; H.E. Abdullatif Al-Sheikh, Minister of Religious Affairs in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia; H.E. Dr. Mohammad Alissa, Secretary General of the Muslim World League; H.E. Cardinal Miguel Ángel Ayuso

Guixot, President of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue; and H.E. Anthony Abbot, Special Envoy for Indigenous Affairs and former Prime Minister of Australia.

At the closing of the Forum, the organizing partners issued a joint statement calling for more robust representation at global policymaking tables for religious leaders and faith-based actors. As the G20 Interfaith Forum Association looks towards its 2021 meetings in Italy, leaders have recommended that the G20 Interfaith Forum become an official Engagement Group of the G20 Leaders' Summit.

This recommendation, as well as recommendations and policy briefs drafted by the participants of the regional consultations, were delivered by KAICIID Secretary General Faisal Bin Muaammar on 17 November to Fahad Almubarak, G20 Sherpa.

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Photo © M.Moira/Shutterstock.com

CHAPTER 2:

Protect the Vulnerable: A Message from KAICIID's Secretary General in a Time of Crisis



Photo © Ruwan Walpola/Shutterstock.com

The COVID-19 outbreak presents humanity with an unprecedented challenge, not just for those who contract the disease, but for all those facing problems associated with its collateral effects – economic disruption, unemployment, a breakdown in care provision and the risk of social and political unrest and dysfunction.

Much of the disruption is caused by the need to ensure that there is sufficient clinical and social care capacity to protect the most vulnerable – the old, the infirm, those who live alone. Mass isolation of those who are not at particular risk from the disease itself from a clinical viewpoint is a necessary step towards looking after those who are.

The world is being asked to reinvent itself and change its priorities, at great cost to established patterns of human interaction, to the global economy and trade and employment, so that the vulnerable might be protected. In a world increasingly inclined towards self-interest, we can see the rebirth of some of the noblest human instincts as reflected in numerous cultures and religions.

KAICIID is an organization that believes in dialogue, especially interreligious and intercultural dialogue. All of its global operations are based on the principle of putting aside personal perspectives and priorities in an effort to understand and engage with others. This principle is enshrined in the nature of KAICIID's programmatic outlook, supported by a governance structure that includes a Board whose representatives come from five religions and an Advisory Forum representing many more.

All religions in particular have at their core a duty to protect the weak and the vulnerable. Prophets and religious

figureheads from the respective religious traditions, religious texts and teachings all point to the importance of marginalised people as pathways to the Divine.

Religious leaders and their institutions, faith-based organizations and believers share a heightened duty of care at this time towards protecting the weak. They can be most effective when working hand in hand with a variety of partners, across religions and cultures, and across different kinds of organizations at all levels.

I applaud the numerous initiatives that are already underway to ensure that this charitable impulse is preserved and expanded in this time of crisis. In many parts of the world, where security, infrastructure, health care and a social safety net are lacking or weak, it is the religious leader and faith communities who take on or supplement responsibilities ordinarily reserved to governments and municipalities.

In many parts of the world during this crisis, religious charities, institutions and believers are seeking out the vulnerable, liaising with local authorities, checking that the isolated or at risk have provisions and the comfort of knowing that they are not alone, and offering sympathy to those who have lost loved ones.

Many religious leaders with pastoral oversight, and many believers, will be feeling a sense of dislocation as

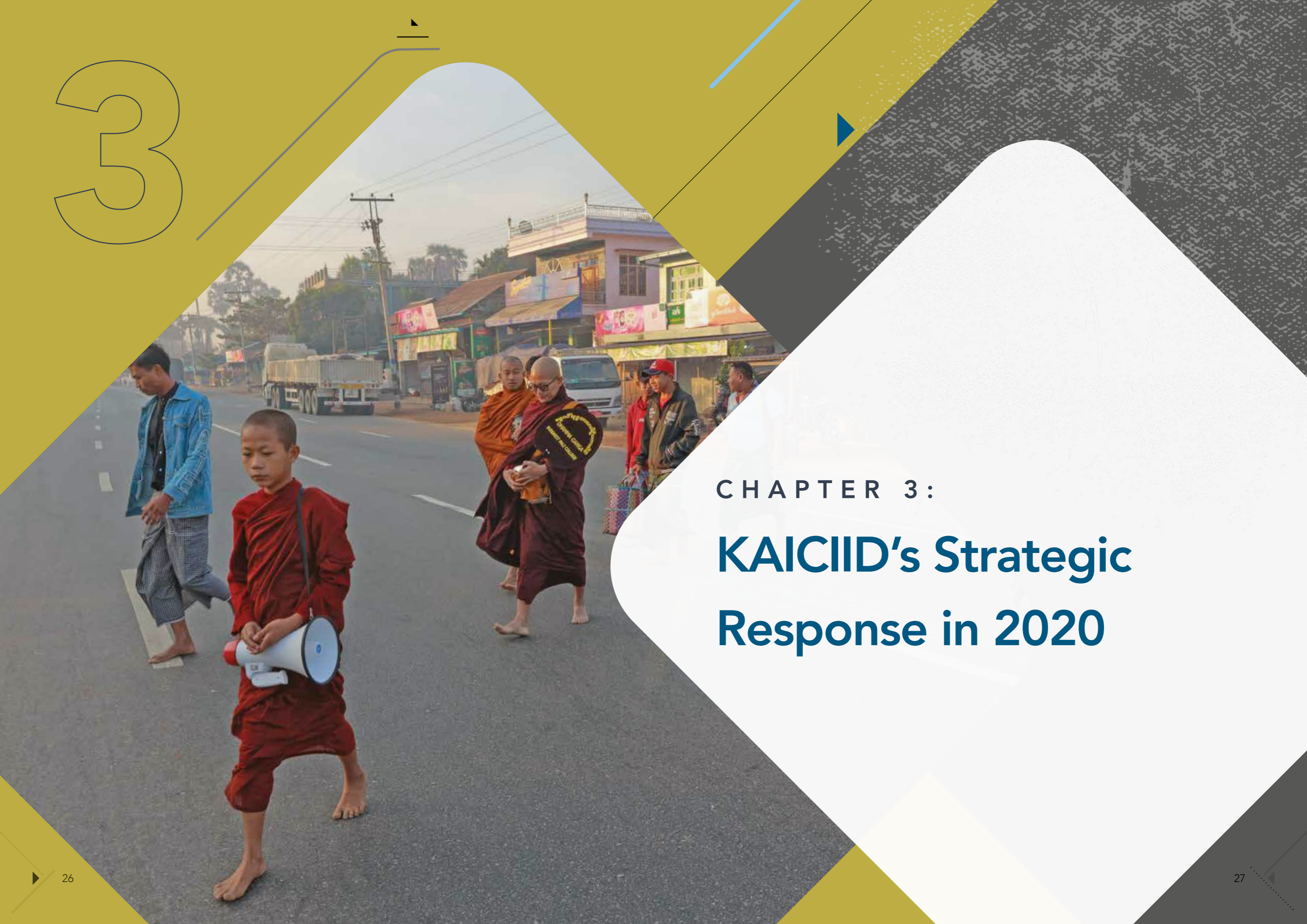
the protocols regarding this disease close down collective worship. But individual prayer provides equal access to the Divine. Isolated groups praying together will discover a new kind of spiritual solidarity. Believers do not need to be in the same room to experience a sense of collective religious identity. And many have access to social media and phones to reach out and care for each other and the most vulnerable and even engage virtually in joint worship.

Despite operational difficulties, be assured that KAICIID will do all it can, using its global network of relationships at pastoral as well as policymaking levels, to preserve a spirit of solidarity among faith communities and their partners, both religious and otherwise, reflect their experiences throughout this crisis, and facilitate conformity with best practices as we fight the effects of this pandemic.

In the meantime, I encourage everyone to continue to find ways to fulfil the universal call of all the religions and cultures – to seek out and protect the vulnerable.

Faisal Bin Muaammar, 20 March 2020

3



CHAPTER 3:

KAICIID's Strategic Response in 2020

The pandemic was not only a challenge to public health but also a threat to the fabric of societies in terms of interethnic and interreligious relations



The COVID-19 pandemic caught the whole world by surprise. In countries around the globe, calls for violence and exclusion of minority groups were rampant, as evidenced by rising anti-Semitism, Islamophobia and online vitriol targeted at refugees and migrants.

Social and peace studies inform us about similar patterns of behaviour among individuals, communities, societies and states in times of crisis and conflict. Societies in general, especially in areas of conflict, can become less tolerant towards other groups within their societies, such as minorities and refugees. KAICIID realised from an early stage that the pandemic was not only a challenge to public health but also a threat to the fabric of societies in terms of interethnic and interreligious relations.

The roles and reactions of religious agencies in this context become essential, providing communities with coping mechanisms and positive spaces for individuals and groups to engage with one another. In fragile contexts, particularly conflict and post-conflict situations, interreligious dialogue can bridge communities and alleviate tensions.

At the start of the pandemic, KAICIID launched the #ReligionsRespond campaign to bring together religious leaders, policymakers, interfaith organizations, KAICIID Fellows and civil society representatives to raise awareness about the work of religious communities in response to the pandemic. The campaign reached over 500,000 people and the hashtag has been used on social media by

religious communities and international organizations around the globe.

Also from the beginning of the COVID-19 crisis, KAICIID began to adjust its programme of work to ensure the safety of staff and the general public, and to adapt to the lack of opportunities for physical engagement. After working with partners on the ground to assess limitations and opportunities, the KAICIID Programme Department launched a contingency plan focusing on the continued delivery of high-quality programming, and moving many activities and resources online.

Based on the needs of partners and stakeholders, many of which reported cuts in technical capacity and funding, KAICIID expanded its microgrant programme to support and sustain the work of interreligious and intercultural dialogue platforms. The Centre distributed 222 microgrants to partners around the world, directly impacting tens of thousands of people. Microgrants were not directed towards relief or health support activities, but were aimed at addressing challenges specifically related to interreligious relations that emerged during COVID-19, such as xenophobia and stigmatisation.

In 2020 KAICIID organized over 100 webinars and online sessions

In the Arab region, for instance, where pre-existing religious, cultural and social fault lines were exacerbated by the pandemic, KAICIID launched the Dialogue 60 grant programme, supporting 60 organizations in 15 Arab countries with projects that engaged vulnerable groups to counter hate speech and enhanced common citizenship. Over 40 per cent of the proposals (24 national and regional projects) were related directly to tackling the impact of the pandemic.

KAICIID moves online

Throughout the pandemic, KAICIID's priority has remained the same: to convene stakeholders from across the world and provide capacity-building in interreligious and intercultural dialogue.

As COVID-19 dramatically modified the way people work, learn and interact, KAICIID witnessed an estimated fourfold increase in demand for virtual services. KAICIID quickly adapted to digital formats, drawing on its expertise in e-learning and online knowledge resources through the DKH.

In 2020 KAICIID organized over 100 webinars and online sessions, convening thousands of people across the

globe to discuss topics such as prevention of hate speech, effective integration of refugees and migrants, protection of vulnerable communities during COVID-19, and issues related to the SDGs.

Many of the webinars were directly supported by international partners, including Coalition FBO, the European Council of Religious Leaders: Religions for Peace Europe, the Joint Learning Initiative, the United Religions Initiative, UNEP, UNODC and World Vision.

KAICIID plans to continue to grow its portfolio of webinars in 2021 to further extend its reach beyond the limitations of physical meetings.

To compensate for the absence of in-person training, the Fellows Programme introduced more online training than ever before. The success in digital outreach has encouraged KAICIID to offer a hybrid approach to training and resources in future. The Fellows Programme has already developed an online course on intercultural communication planned for 2021.

Perhaps KAICIID's greatest success in 2020, however, was the launch of the first virtual incarnation of the G20 Interfaith Forum in October, which welcomed over 2000



Faced with a global crisis, KAICIID staff felt an even greater responsibility towards their mandate and target audience.

participants from prominent faith-based institutions and intergovernmental bodies.

Although this was the seventh annual Interfaith Forum, organizers were challenged to rethink the event conceptually and practically due to COVID-19. KAICIID and its partners opted to take the five-day global conference, with five additional regional consultations and a Fellows and Youth Forum, completely online. Adjustments to the agenda were made to reflect the extraordinary circumstances facing communities and countries across the world, such as hunger, poverty, the global health crisis, inequality and climate change.

Knowledge-sharing

Faced with a global crisis, KAICIID staff felt an even greater responsibility towards their mandate and target audience. In April KAICIID staff conducted empirical research, including an online survey, and a virtual conference with over 100 Fellows from 4 regions, analysing how COVID-19 has impacted interfaith relations in countries throughout the world.

KAICIID conducted a rigorous overview of existing resources by interfaith actors and international organizations to evaluate best practices and lessons learned.

In October KAICIID published the results in *Interfaith dialogue in action: a guide for dealing with COVID-19*². This aims to catalyse creative thinking among faith groups, helping them develop multilateral strategies to better deal with challenges associated with COVID-19, such as polarisation and exclusion. It also includes examples and recommendations applicable to any context in the world.

By the end of 2020 it was clear that a “new normal” would remain after the pandemic. Interreligious dialogue work has changed in terms of its approaches, methods and technologies. These challenges have provided much opportunity for further outreach and connection, which go beyond the limited capacity of physical events. Although online encounters can never fully substitute for human face-to-face interaction, an increase in digital resources and online training will help KAICIID achieve its goals of connecting and convening individuals from around the world and spreading the impact of interreligious and intercultural dialogue.

² <https://www.kaiciid.org/publications-resources/covid-19-interfaith-guide>

AFRICA REGION



Attempts to limit the spread of COVID-19 in Africa have taken a dramatic toll on the continent's economy, sociocultural norms and values. Community and family gatherings, which are central to African life, have been disrupted by measures intended to prevent the spread of the disease. Although many of these restrictions were recommended and supported by the international community, the breakdown in community relationships has resulted in decreased trust between states and their citizens, presenting long-term consequences for social cohesion.

The World Health Organization has praised many African countries for waging an effective campaign to combat COVID-19, aided by the authorities' previous experience with other infectious diseases such as Ebola. Africa has benefited from its relatively young population and a climate that has appeared to be less conducive to the virus spreading. Even so, infrastructure within these countries is not entirely reliable in terms of accurate reporting.



CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC

Reported numbers of people with COVID-19 in the Central African Republic in 2020 were low. However, the pandemic has presented numerous challenges to peace and security in the country.

In February reports that the virus was brought in by an Italian missionary resulted in a violent backlash against foreign aid workers. Heightened distrust, misinformation and xenophobia prompted international organizations to extend curfews for employees. Limited freedom of movement due to government restrictions and increased security concerns disrupted the delivery of humanitarian aid. This proved especially critical, as about 70 per cent of health services in the country are provided by humanitarian organizations.

The pandemic has led to vulnerable groups, including some of the country's 600,000 internally displaced people, being branded as "virus-spreading." In late March, militants entered a northern camp and forcibly evicted all 8,000 internally displaced people, blaming them for the potential spread of COVID-19.

KAICIID partnered with 14 nongovernmental organizations in 8 of the country's 16 prefectures to fight disinformation about the pandemic and promote positive public health behaviour. Training participants included 365 religious leaders, leaders of women's and youth associations, and local authorities. As community leaders, each of these trainees went on to use their new skills and knowledge to sensitise 100,000 indirect beneficiaries on barrier measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

The strength of KAICIID's work in the Central African Republic has been its focus on local platforms, such as the Plateforme des Confessions Religieuses de Centrafrique (PCRC), engaging influential religious and civil society leaders who speak the Sango language, know the local context intimately and are trusted as insiders. This standing has positioned them well to combat hate speech discrimination and to promote pandemic safety measures among their communities.

In 2020 KAICIID continued its institutional support to the PCRC Secretariat. KAICIID trained members of the PCRC antennae offices in dialogue facilitation to improve their capacity to mediate between faith communities at the local level and to promote peace and reconciliation through interreligious dialogue.

In July KAICIID and the PCRC continued to implement five targeted advocacy and rumour-prevention initiatives in four prefectures around the country. These initiatives raised awareness on the dangers of hate speech and equipped key stakeholders, including media, political

parties, members of parliament and civil society activists, with skills to prevent and combat incitement to violence.

KAICIID's work in the Central African Republic reinforced the capacity of the Peace Journalists Network by helping its local branches and those of PCRC to perform an early-warning function allowing members to alert local, civil or military authorities and the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission (MINUSCA) of conflicts that may degenerate into violence and spark a crisis. This function is especially useful in municipalities or villages with state security or where a United Nations Peacekeeping presence is lacking.

As part of the campaign, the Peace Journalists Network ran billboard advertisements in the towns of Bayanga, Bossangoa, Bozoum and Nola on hate speech prevention. The project supported the further establishment of focal points or local branches of the network in the northwest. The local branches were supported with training on identifying and mitigating hate speech and misinformation.

In December presidential and legislative elections in the country were overshadowed by violence between government and rebel forces. Although the Khartoum Peace Agreement signed in 2019 between the Government and 14 rebel groups raised hopes of a new beginning, the country's security has remained volatile and is complicated further by the pandemic. Tensions mounted ahead of the vote, with friction between rival candidates, an upsurge in violence by a new rebel coalition, and jostling between rival international powers for influence.

KAICIID mobilised its networks of religious leaders to appeal to relevant parties, including the leaders of armed groups, to ease tensions during the crucial electoral period. KAICIID, in consultation with PCRC, established four key principles in reducing pre- and post-election violence:

- › **the importance of the Khartoum Agreement and its principles;**
- › **the importance of transitional justice mechanisms such as the Commission Vérité, Justice, Réparation et Réconciliation for the national reconciliation process, which seek to combat impunity and achieve reconciliation between the perpetrators and victims of the 2013 crisis;**
- › **the role of religious leaders in providing input on peace processes according to the mechanisms established in the Khartoum Agreement;**
- › **the role of civil society members in providing input on peace processes according to the mechanisms established in the Khartoum Agreement.**

These principles are put into practice by PCRC through its activities in the field. Recommendations from this work were presented in Bangui and transmitted to the Government and decision-makers and disseminated to all actors, including women and youth.



Promoting ethical journalism

In the Central African Republic, armed groups continue to launch attacks nationwide, including on the country's civilian population.

The country's media landscape faces severe challenges. Poor journalism can fan the flames of interethnic hostility and provide a platform for hate speech. The country is ranked 132 of 180 in the World Press Freedom Index – worse than other African countries with challenging media climates, including Uganda, the United Republic of Tanzania and Zimbabwe. Its poor standing is due to the authorities' increasing hostility towards criticism and the dangers journalists face from warring factions, compounded by the impunity enjoyed by perpetrators of such violence.

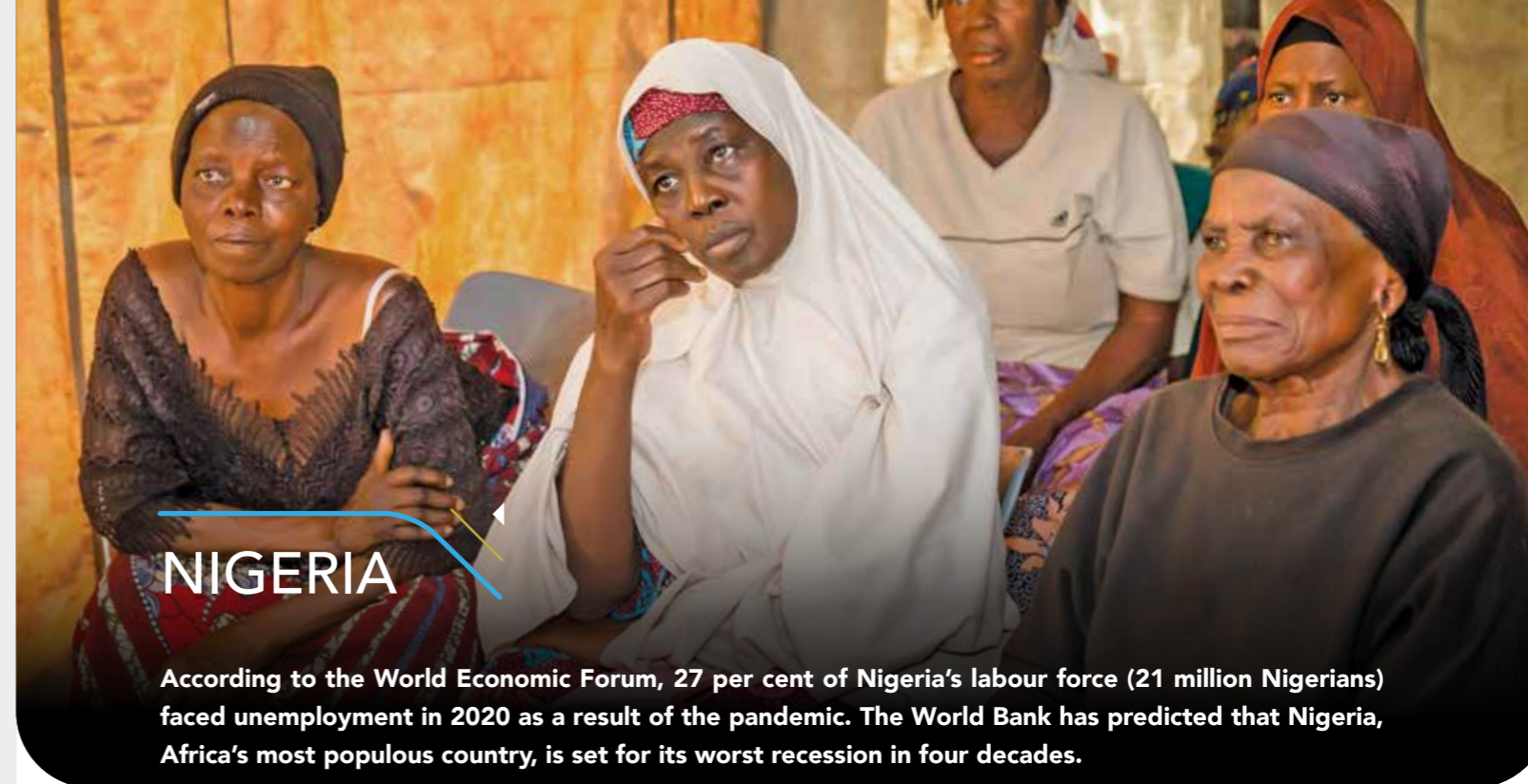
During the pandemic, xenophobic stories in newspapers and on social media have stoked animosity. Other sensationalist coverage continues to create divisions in the already fragmented country. Journalists responsible for inaccurate or unethical reports are not likely to face appropriate sanctions, while serious financial pressures on the media leave some vulnerable to corruption.

Against this backdrop, KAICIID is working with the Peace Journalists Network to strengthen the capacity and sensitivity of journalists as they report on the impact of hostilities and trauma. Today the network has some 400 members, including journalists working in radio, television and print media.

In September 2020 KAICIID and the Peace Journalists Network hosted a special media ethics workshop in Bangui to train network members in covering conflict-related trauma. Participants examined how to treat individual trauma, identify post-conflict trauma indicators and tackle this difficult subject as journalists. They also learned how to sensitively report on rape, which has become a widespread form of conflict-related violence in the Central African Republic and is often used to terrorise communities.

At the close of the workshop, participants developed a new code of conduct, in coordination with the Ministry of Communication and the High Council for Communication. Its rules stipulate journalists must verify sources before publication, encourage survivors of trauma to seek professional help, remain impartial towards electoral candidates, and advocate for better support for mental health from the government.

Network members further committed themselves to overturn the status quo and deliver meaningful public service information. Given the country's low levels of literacy, broadcasting holds much promise for reaching people unable to read print publications. Enthusiasm for a new era of journalistic endeavour is palpable.



NIGERIA

According to the World Economic Forum, 27 per cent of Nigeria's labour force (21 million Nigerians) faced unemployment in 2020 as a result of the pandemic. The World Bank has predicted that Nigeria, Africa's most populous country, is set for its worst recession in four decades.

Many of Nigeria's security concerns are directly tied to its economic woes. Poverty, unemployment and extreme inequality between northern and southern Nigeria have boosted Boko Haram recruitment and fuelled conflict between farmers and herders over scarce natural resources. In many parts of the country, kidnapping for ransom appears to have become a business, especially for otherwise unemployed youth.

Since 2017 KAICIID has supported the Interfaith Dialogue Forum for Peace (IDFP), which convenes Christian, Muslim and traditional community leaders from across Nigeria to work together for peace. IDFP targets the main drivers of conflict through policy, advocacy and local dialogue initiatives at the grassroots level.

In January IDFP organized the third Annual General Assembly and Peace Conference, welcoming over 150 religious leaders, academics and policymakers to deliberate the current state of security and develop joint solutions to foster peace. Recommendations included peace campaigns to be rolled out nationally across radio and television channels, an increase in university and school courses that teach religious tolerance, training for teachers on interfaith relationships, and improvements to peace mechanisms and existing security structures.

To increase engagement between religious leaders and policymakers, KAICIID supported IDFP in organizing a high-level dialogue on COVID-19 and security in Nigeria on 30 November 2020. The dialogue brought together representatives of religious organizations and government organizations, including the Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution, the Presidential Task Force on COVID-19 and

the Office of the National Security Advisor, to propose policy recommendations for the pandemic and the security crisis in Nigeria.

Despite limitations on monitoring visits due to international travel bans, KAICIID continued to support IDFP and other dialogue platforms, relying on Nigerian religious and civil society leaders who are well versed in the local context and viewed as trusted insiders. This standing puts them at an advantageous position to combat hate speech and discrimination and to promote COVID-19 safety measures.

KAICIID supported IDFP with advocacy and awareness-raising campaigns aimed at combating misinformation on COVID-19 in nine states (Borno, Ebonyi, Imo, Kaduna, Kano, Lagos, Niger, Oyo, Plateau) and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT). The campaigns used diverse means of communication, including television broadcasts, radio jingles, online media chats with members of the public in English and Hausa, and public sensitisation campaigns encouraging people to comply with national and international health guidelines.

In partnership with the Christian Association of Nigeria and Jama'atu Nasril Islam, KAICIID continued to support IDFP conflict mediation efforts on the ground, assisting with the establishment and training of interfaith dialogue units in five central and southern states (Abia, Nasarawa, Niger, Oyo, Rivers). The units monitor behavioural changes in communities, which serve as indicators of potential conflict situations and as mediators in tense situations with the collaboration of the state actors. These five units build on the existing five units (in Benue, Kaduna, Plateau, Taraba and Zamfara states) established in the north of the country in 2019.



ARAB REGION

ENGAGEMENT WITH REGIONAL AND GLOBAL PARTNERS

In 2020 the Africa Region Programme continued its engagement with the African Union Interfaith Dialogue Forum (AU-IFDF) as part of its activities under the memorandum of understanding with the African Union Citizens and Diaspora Department.

Starting in October, KAICIID supported an independent evaluation to assess the overall impact of interfaith dialogue and cooperation in the region within the context of COVID-19. The evaluation found that AU-IFDF had access to a strong diverse network of interfaith actors, faith-based organizations, and governmental and inter-governmental organizations. These findings contributed to the development of a strategic communications and advocacy plan aimed at enhancing the AU-IFDF strategy and increasing the quality, effectiveness and sustainability of interfaith dialogue in Africa.

In June KAICIID initiated an Africa regional mapping exercise exploring the role of 25 key organizations operating across the continent in the field of interreligious and intercultural peacebuilding. The exercise included analysis of best practices in preventing and countering violent extremism programming, which found that programmatic success is achieved where initiatives have been rooted in the community and capitalised on the persuasive power and legitimacy of mid-level influencers, such as trusted and influential

voices within communities – women, religious scholars, youth leaders and traditional chiefs – which can help educate the population and develop community-specific strategies for preventing violent extremism at the local level.

Based on this analysis, KAICIID will strategise which partnerships to prioritise and initiatives to engage with when increasing its scope of work throughout Africa.

Mapping of traditional leaders was conducted in partnership with UNAOC and the Network for Religious and Traditional Peacemakers to establish a network of individuals strategically positioned to conduct mediation efforts and further connect with the existing national peace infrastructure. Established in January 2013 through the initiative of the United Nations Mediation Support Unit, the Network for Religious and Traditional Peacemakers strengthens the role of religious and traditional peacemakers in peacebuilding processes, from the local to the international level.

In 2020 KAICIID worked closely with UNAOC and the Network for Religious and Traditional Peacemakers to correct and counter misinformation and support communities at high risk for COVID-19. Work was aimed at ensuring democratic standards were met, while respecting health measures within the context of the December national elections in the Central African Republic. Direct support was provided to the Baka Pygmies to combat the spread of the virus.



In the Arab region COVID-19 has become far more than a global health crisis, as it has further weakened fragile economic, political and social structures. In a corner of the world that already suffers from conflict and inequality, the pandemic has laid bare complex social issues such as hate speech and stigmatisation.

Fake news and disinformation have disrupted peaceful coexistence at all levels, heightening the sense of fear and isolation. Millions of vulnerable people have faced the perils of poverty and unemployment. Religious institutions have had to rapidly adapt to changes in worship, using digital technologies to promote awareness-raising and offer support for people experiencing anxiety and bereavement.

Despite the limitations to physical gatherings, the COVID-19 pandemic has provided unique departure points to enhance cooperation between religious leaders, faith-based organizations and policymakers in the region. In March the KAICIID-supported Interreligious Platform for Dialogue and Cooperation in the Arab World (IPDC) issued a statement calling for multi-religious and multicultural collaboration in regional responses to the pandemic. This platform, which brings together the highest religious authorities from Christian and Muslim institutions across the Arab region, pledged to raise awareness about the severity of COVID-19 and encourage citizens to adhere to preventive measures taken by governments.

Resilience and adaptation of the programme

Because community safety was a top priority, the Arab Region Programme applied a hybrid approach of digital training and physical relief programmes. This new approach encompassed virtual dialogue sessions and empowered networks on the ground to mobilise around the COVID-19 response led by religious actors, civil society activists and dialogue practitioners. The region's strategic framework for COVID-19 response included:

- › further empowerment of KAICIID networks across the region by providing constant support on initiatives and projects that address COVID-19;
- › increased investment in local and regional partnerships through grants and technical support to nongovernmental and faith-based organizations;
- › active promotion of the role of ethical journalism in enhancing interreligious dialogue, countering hate speech and fostering social cohesion;
- › focus on gender equality in the design and implementation of COVID-19 response strategies;
- › efficient use of digital modalities by offering Arabic online courses and training on interreligious dialogue and hate speech prevention;
- › management of knowledge production such as manuals, research and policy papers.



Under the umbrella of the IPDC in the Arab World, KAICIID launched the Dialogue 60 project, which supports local, national and regional organizations with initiatives targeted at interreligious dialogue, social cohesion and common citizenship.

ON THE GROUND

In 2020 alumni from the KAICIID Social Media as Space for Dialogue programme launched nine campaigns in seven Arab countries targeting COVID-19. Since 2015 the programme has equipped more than 700 young leaders in the region with skills to combat online hate speech and extremism and to advocate inclusion and moderation.

KAICIID invited graduates of the programme to harness social media to raise awareness of COVID-19, provide fact-checking as a means to counter misinformation, and support religious leaders to encourage their followers to abide by government health guidelines. Over half of the campaigns addressed issues related to hate speech and stigmatisation against vulnerable groups in Egypt, Iraq, Lebanon and the Syrian Arab Republic.

In Jordan, the KAICIID-supported Nahnu Nanhad (“We Rise”) initiative launched the Silah (“Connections”) project, training 600 participants to fight hate speech and stereotypes, including the stigmatisation of people with COVID-19. The team also countered misinformation and raised awareness about social distancing and handwashing, reaching out through social media and live broadcast and television interviews.

Under the hashtag #HopePartners, seven campaigns operated as a regional network, organizing online resources and producing information videos and daily live episodes to raise awareness for vulnerable groups during the pandemic. They also called for interreligious action to strengthen the role of religious leaders in responding to the pandemic and promoting solidarity among diverse communities.

In Egypt, KAICIID supported the Farah Foundation, which advocates human rights for marginalised groups. The project raised awareness of COVID-19 among 650 deaf people, disseminating information in visual and sign language and sharing these resources on social media.

In Lebanon, the Development and Improvement Initiative supported vulnerable groups in the Akkar governorate, which lacks access to public services and faces high unemployment. The initiative provided food and health care for

refugees and poor workers from different religious backgrounds by organizing online crowdfunding. It also launched a Ramadan-specific online campaign, Khubz wa Meleh (“Bread and Salt”), which distributed bread to needy families, including Syrian refugees. Together with dozens of churches and mosques, Khubz wa Meleh has distributed more than 74,900 food baskets to 37,452 families throughout Akkar.

Emerging data and reports from the field have indicated a sharp rise in violence against women and girls, with a particular increase in domestic violence. Other campaigns under the Social Media as a Space for Dialogue programme have tackled the growing issue of domestic violence.

In Iraq, the Hope Makers campaign launched an awareness campaign advocating for human rights and combating domestic violence against women by adopting and lobbying for a draft law in partnership with local civil society organizations.

In Lebanon, Dialogue and Rehabilitate launched an online awareness-raising campaign to provide online resources and draw attention to the dramatic increase in numbers of women experiencing domestic violence in the country during the first lockdown.

At the regional level, the programme intervention built the capacity of different stakeholder segments, aiming to establish online dialogue communities despite COVID-19 travel restrictions. This included 27 women from 5

countries (Egypt, Iraq, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, Syrian Arab Republic) under the She4Dialogue project, which aims to empower women from civil society and faith-based organizations in areas of dialogue, social cohesion, conflict transformation and peacebuilding. The project is planned to be expanded to include more countries in the region to ensure women play critical roles in building resilient, peaceful and cohesive societies.

Thirty Fellows from the Arab region and 45 members of the Youth4Dialogue Forum engaged in virtual capacity-building and dialogue sessions. The sessions provided training tools and skills on interreligious dialogue principles, promoting common citizenship and methods to tackle the increase in hate speech.

Under the umbrella of the IPDC, KAICIID launched the Dialogue 60 project, which supports local, national and regional organizations with initiatives targeted at interreligious dialogue, social cohesion and common citizenship. The project includes 60 organizations in 15 Arab countries (Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Palestine, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Sudan, Tunisia, Yemen). Initiatives included hate speech prevention, COVID-19 responses (particularly among vulnerable groups and disadvantaged communities), and psychological support through dialogue and humanitarian aid.



Rebuilding Lebanon through interfaith networks



In Mauritania, the Literacy Volunteers Association conducted awareness-raising campaigns to address the poor living conditions of migrants and refugees in Nouadhibou, a region with a high number of refugees from different religious denominations. The initiative provided informative consultations on COVID-19 and established a joint committee, made up of three women and three men from diverse nationalities, to ensure refugees and migrants had access to health services. Beneficiaries included 380 refugees (271 men, 109 women).

In Egypt, the Mediterranean Youth Foundation launched an initiative seeking to put young people at the forefront of post-conflict peacebuilding. The project is based on the values of the Declaration of Human Fraternity, signed by H.H. Pope Francis and H.E. the Grand Imam of Al Azhar Dr. Ahmed El-Tayyeb in 2019.

Since October the Mediterranean Youth Foundation has hosted a series of training sessions on themes such

as peacebuilding, conflict resolution, dialogue facilitation and project implementation. So far 79 young people aged 18–29 years have joined the project. Training and workshops have welcomed expert speakers from across Egyptian ministries, universities and religious institutions.

In 2020 the Arab region team, in partnership with Media in Cooperation and Transition (MiCT), started to design the Media for Peace Programme, aimed at promoting ethical journalism and peacebuilding. The programme, to be launched in 2021, includes a dialogue journalism fellowship, which aims to increase capacity of journalists in ethical reporting on sensitive and cultural issues; and the Media Policy Forum, which engages policymakers and religious leaders in endorsing the core values of journalism through national and regional charters.

The Arab Region Programme aims to promote the role of journalists in fostering social cohesion, especially in times of crisis.

On 4 August 2020, an explosion rocked Beirut's port area, levelling 30 per cent of the city's infrastructure and displacing 300,000 residents. In the aftermath, the KAICIID Arab region team rallied a global interreligious network of volunteers and resources to aid survivors of the blast. Together with local partners and the KAICIID-supported IPDC, which connects some of the top religious, political and civil society leaders in the region, they launched the Be Beirut project.

Graduates from the Social Media as a Space for Dialogue programme, Fellows alumni, the Arab Youth Forum, participants from the KAICIID women's empowerment training sessions and local partners mobilised to help on the ground.

Be Beirut members put together a coordinated action plan targeting the needs of the city's most vulnerable communities and ensuring strict adherence to COVID-19 safety guidelines.

The initiative focuses on two key areas: providing psychological support and housing renovation for survivors of the blast, and catalysing community dialogues on policy advocacy as a response to the crisis.

By the end of 2020, the Be Beirut network had conducted 3 workshops on trauma healing for 79 participants from different religious backgrounds. Mental health experts led participants through the intense emotions that follow crisis situations, helping them understand what happens to the mind and body, and offering advice for finding balance and healing.

Although the platform is not a funding organization, the Arab region team was able to work with local partners to find donors and identify beneficiaries who were most in need. A KAICIID partner nongovernmental organization, Tanmiya Wa Tahseen ("Development and Improvement Association"), based in northern Lebanon, dispatched a volunteer engineering expert to conduct an additional survey of the damaged homes and select several for Be Beirut's reconstruction project.

The project found a donor to cover all expenses and put together a professional team to rebuild three houses in the areas of Basta Tahta, Karantina and Mar Mkhayel. One additional home is still undergoing repairs.

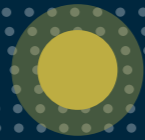
ASIA REGION

In Myanmar, and throughout much of Asia, COVID-19 triggered severe restrictions and disruptions at all levels of society, causing a major economic contraction and reversing progress in poverty reduction. Health systems were dramatically overwhelmed, and schools and universities were forced to shut, causing many students to lose a year of education.

Civic spaces contracted, impacting all aspects of social life. Religious sites were shuttered. Public worship and interreligious events were suspended from March until the end of 2020. Religious leaders and institutions required creative solutions, such as offering online Buddhist Dharma talks, Sunday prayers for Christians and Friday sermons for Muslims.

Interreligious engagement and dialogue were deeply affected. As observed in other regions, past investments in the development of networks, including (inter)religious ones, contributed to meaningful responses to the pandemic. In the case of Myanmar, youth and religious groups were and remain very active by supporting communities in need.

Over the past few years, Myanmar has seen a rise in hate speech and disinformation targeted at religious and ethnic communities, which has driven a campaign of violence against the country's minority Rohingya population. Incitement to violence, spread through social media platforms, has resulted in thousands of deaths and instigated a mass refugee crisis. Although there had been signs of improvement, misinformation, rumours and hate speech continued to spread widely during the pandemic, targeting minority communities and migrant workers.



Paungsie Metta Initiatives

The inability to gather physically meant that implementing activities with local partners and other projects under the KAICIID Myanmar programme had to be postponed. Where possible, programme efforts were redirected towards COVID-19 emergency response activities in coordination with other faith-based partner organizations.

Since 2016 KAICIID has worked closely with Paungsie Metta Initiatives (PMI), one of the most inclusive and largest interreligious dialogue networks in Myanmar. The platform represents the majority of religious denominations in the country and brings together over 50 religious leaders and organizations.

Drawing on its vast network of religious and youth organizations and 270 peace educators, PMI coordinated around 200 volunteers in a collective crisis response and organized initiatives to raise health awareness, counter stigmatisation and provide emergency support to vulnerable communities, including internally displaced people in Chin and Rakhine states.

The platform hosted consultations and awareness-raising events with religious and civil society actors on dealing with electoral tensions and violence. PMI reached over 9,400 people through its in-person activities, responses and initiatives and 1 million people through its online presence and publicly televised events.

The interreligious platform made significant strides towards sustainability in spite of the pandemic. In 2020 PMI became an officially registered organization in

Myanmar and successfully secured significant donor support for its interreligious peacebuilding work.

The Interreligious Dialogue Training Centre, initiated by KAICIID and PMI in 2018, contributed to COVID-19 response efforts. It served as an emergency quarantine facility for people from different religious communities and migrants returning to Myanmar due to the pandemic. The Training Centre held 4 intensive training sessions, equipping 227 youth leaders with advanced skills in interreligious dialogue, social media, electoral violence prevention and COVID-19 response.

Preparations for a more intensive college model programme, including a new curriculum, were completed. The Training Centre plans to host the first students in 2021.

Loka Ahlin

KAICIID continued its work with local partner Loka Ahlin on bridging divides among communities in Rakhine state. Although outreach efforts were limited by the pandemic, 60 youth from Buddhist, Christian and Muslim communities in Rakhine state were trained in diversity, dialogue and conflict resolution, while simultaneously advancing vocational skills in areas such as sewing and repairing mobile phones.

The youth organized nine joint community activities, including community exchanges to learn more about peaceful coexistence in non-conflict regions, film viewings and community dialogues, to build back confidence and trust in their communities. Over 300 participants benefited from these activities in 2020.



leading broadcasting channels, Mizzima, a televised dialogue mini-series called *Way Forward to Harmony and Peace* was launched. Five episodes aired over six months and included voices of youth and religious minorities discussing ways to create a more harmonious society and a peaceful country with no religious discrimination. Each episode was viewed by at least 900,000 people on television and through Mizzima's Facebook livestream and generated significant interest on social media. The show caught the attention of other donors, and two more episodes were produced with their support.

Campaigns on women and youth participation in interreligious dialogue

In cooperation with Religions for Peace, KAICIID supported a series of campaigns and forums to promote meaningful participation of women and youth in interreligious dialogue initiatives. Through this collaboration, the Mon State Regional Forum was organized in the city of Mawlamyine in February 2020, with the participation of a variety of high-level stakeholders, including the Union Minister of Religious Affairs and Culture H.E. Thura U Aung Ko and Chief Minister of Mon State H.E. Dr. Aye Zen. The event was attended by over 200 participants and received national media attention.

Broader Asian regional engagement

KAICIID participated in the Awareness with Human Action (AHA!) project focused on supporting religious organizations in South Asia in their response to COVID-19, in cooperation with the Network of Religious and Traditional Peacemakers.

KAICIID contributed to the Association of Southeast Asian Nations Institute for Peace and Reconciliation webinar on empowering women and youth in building sustainable peace.

KAICIID's past engagements and investments in partner organizations in Myanmar enabled interreligious partnership to respond to the many challenges presented by the pandemic. Although some progress was slowed by the pandemic, partners in Myanmar, with the support of KAICIID, made significant strides to respond, while continuing to build lasting relationships and increasing trust and cooperation among stakeholders, including policymakers, to support social cohesion in the country.

As part of KAICIID and Loka Ahlin's shared commitment to promote ethical journalism, which avoids rumour-spreading and ethnic and religious stereotyping, a joint guidebook on sensitive reporting of religion-related issues was developed through consultations with religious leaders and journalists on the appropriate use of religious terminology. The Burmese-language guidebook has been launched and has received positive reviews from users.

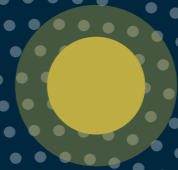
Swe Tha Har

KAICIID continued to deepen its partnership with the local nongovernmental organization Swe Tha Har in monitoring hate speech during election periods and providing early-warning information to key stakeholders, including religious leaders. The organization trained 15 staff members and volunteers to monitor hate speech and report potential threats during the run-up to the general election.

Safety Net

In partnership with the Burmese faith-based nongovernmental organization Safety Net and one of Myanmar's

EUROPE REGION



The COVID-19 pandemic has affected everyone in Europe. Health, education and political systems have changed dramatically, but the strongest impact was felt by people in vulnerable groups, such as refugees and migrants. The situation compelled the Centre's Europe Region Programme and others working to support dialogue, social cohesion and collaboration to seek new methodologies and to use these initiatives to address emerging problems.

Religious minorities and migrants faced numerous challenges and a subtler change of prevailing attitudes during 2020. In some cases, refugees were portrayed as "foreigners importing the virus," a narrative that became prominent in public discourse and on social media, influencing decisions such as the severity of border closures and reactions to the destruction of the Moria refugee camp in Lesbos, Greece. The resulting social stigma encouraged some governments to take even stronger exclusionary measures. The EU's Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA) pointed out that members of Muslim communities with migrant backgrounds were disproportionately affected by the pandemic, as victims of both the disease and the misinformation blaming them for its spread.





In 2020 interfaith relationships were needed more than ever, as terrorist attacks in France and KAICIID's host city of Vienna threatened peaceful coexistence.



For people seeking refuge already living in Europe, the pandemic caused other problems. Some lost their jobs and finding work became more difficult. Lockdowns restricted families to cramped accommodation.

The rise in hate speech directed at faith communities, following several religious super-spreader events early in the year, disturbed religious leaders across the continent. KAICIID networks in Europe – the Muslim Jewish Leadership Council (MJLC)³, the European Muslim Leaders Majlis (EuLeMa) and the KAICIID Fellows – reported the strain they felt meeting the spiritual needs of their followers while also following government and health guidelines.

Creativity and cross-sector collaboration were needed to master new technology and adapt ceremonies such as funerals to conform to the standards required, with problems and solutions being shared internationally, such as on EuLeMa social media.

MJLC created a space for “corona diaries” in which members could document their experiences working with other faiths and secular authorities to overcome successive challenges during the pandemic, in the hope that the lessons learned and relationships formed might last.

The Europe Region Programme adapted its planned activities wherever possible to take place online. In some

cases, virtual meetings provided opportunities and benefits that might not have been possible in other circumstances. For example, in the lead up to the G20 Interfaith Forum, European experts from across the continent were able to meet several times during the regional consultations to collaborate on policy briefs and recommendations that informed the G20 Leaders' Summit. The process involved more than 100 people, including influential speakers such as Margaritis Schinas, Vice President of the European Commission for Promoting Our European Way of Life.

The KAICIID-supported Network for Dialogue⁴ increased membership to 25 organizations working in the fields of social inclusion and integration policy. The Network for Dialogue hosted online capacity-building sessions in inclusive education and drafting policy recommendations to support members to effectively engage with policymakers. To raise awareness of the importance of the social inclusion of refugees and migrants, a series of webinars were conducted on topics ranging from building trust to psychosocial support.

KAICIID's Project Integration through Dialogue organized dialogue cycles for refugees in Madrid and Vienna.

³ www.mjlc-europe.org

⁴ www.network4dialogue.eu

Online dialogues in Arabic and Farsi were organized for women in Vienna with refugee backgrounds, addressing the everyday challenges that families faced during the lockdown. Drawing from this event, a brochure in Arabic, German and English, based on recommendations on how to overcome everyday challenges through the use of dialogue, was developed.

The major event for the Europe region was the 2nd European Policy Dialogue Forum on Refugees and Migrants on 3–4 November, organized by the Network for Dialogue and cosponsored by the German Foreign Ministry and the European Commission Representation in Germany. The Forum gathered 90 participants and high-level speakers from the EU and the Council of Europe and yielded policy recommendation proposals on the social inclusion of refugees and migrants. The documents have been developed into policy briefs to contribute to inclusion policies involving interreligious and intercultural dialogue.

MJLC and EuLeMa continued to be vocal despite their planned activities being largely postponed due to the pandemic. In January members took part in the commemoration of the 75th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz organized by the Muslim World League and subsequently spoke out for Muslim–Jewish relations in numerous online events.

In 2020 these interfaith relationships were needed more than ever, as terrorist attacks in France and KAICIID's host city of Vienna threatened peaceful coexistence. Seeking to support key actors dealing with the situation and its aftermath, KAICIID swiftly organized two webinars to reflect on the ways in which religious leaders can intervene productively both before and after acts of violent extremism to preserve social solidarity.

One of the webinars brought together youth representatives in Austria to voice their thoughts on the terrorist attack in Vienna. Another gathered high-level religious leaders and policymakers from around Europe to analyse best practices and ways forward. The findings provide the basis for more programmatic activities of the Europe region in 2021 that will work towards the prevention of violent extremism and countering hate speech to strengthen Europe's social cohesion.

In 2021 the Europe Region Programme plans to build on its progress within the virtual space as it acknowledges dialogue activities will require the design and incorporation of more opportunities for informal chatting and networking to increase the overall value for participants. Even after the pandemic ends, it is predicted the demand for hybrid elements will play a much stronger role in the future of event design.



FELLOWS PROGRAMME

By the end of 2020 the Fellows Programme had built a close community and network of 364 Alumni from 67 countries, representing 9 world major religious traditions. The KAICIID Fellows are a network of global leaders and change-makers committed to fostering peace in their communities.

The 2020 cohorts assembled 92 Fellows from 37 countries around the world. Fellows from Albania, Brunei Darussalam, Chile, Côte d'Ivoire, Malawi, Mozambique, New Zealand and the Republic of Korea were welcomed for the first time. The Fellows Programme is working towards equal gender participation and has achieved a ratio of 36 women to 56 men.

Adjusting to COVID-19

Three residential training sessions were held in Addis Ababa, Colombo and Vienna in the first quarter of 2020. The Fellows Programme then shifted training online. Four online training sessions and 10 online sessions and webinars were organized for the 2020 Fellows cohort. Five online sessions were hosted for Fellows Alumni.

Despite the challenges of the pandemic, Fellows stepped up to mutually support one another, sharing approaches for dealing with COVID-19, acting as resource people in online initiatives, and developing new ways to collaborate with and across their respective faiths.

In May 2020 over 100 Fellows Alumni took part in a virtual conference, providing a vivid picture of how the

pandemic had affected their respective communities and outlining their efforts to mitigate its effects. Participants provided compelling testimonies on the challenges posed by COVID-19, the initiatives they had undertaken to tackle them, and the ways in which the situation had been abused as a vehicle for marginalising others.

The 2020 Fellows cohorts were able to implement 62 initiatives in 31 countries, in addition to 25 microgrant projects implemented by Alumni. The initiatives span a broad variety of themes such as interreligious dialogue, peaceful coexistence, the role of religion in countering hate speech, and the engagement of youth and women.

Targeting COVID-19 challenges

KAICIID Fellows were among the first responders to the challenges of COVID-19, using their networks to reach out to vulnerable members within their communities and proactively finding solutions to emerging challenges.

Fellow Alumnus Vladimer Narsai from Georgia implemented an initiative that gathered eschatological interpretations in support of COVID-19-sensitive religious practices.

The KAICIID Fellows are a network of global leaders and change-makers committed to fostering peace in their communities.

Fellows in Myanmar liaised with youth groups twice a day for 14 days to help vulnerable groups with environmental sanitation. An interfaith counselling programme also worked with local volunteers and religious leaders to reduce social discrimination and hate speech among young people.

KAICIID offered additional grants that supported Fellows alumni on 26 initiatives in 19 countries reaching thousands of people. The projects focused on online engagement and countering the COVID-19 crisis through youth mobilisation and capacity-building of religious leaders.

In the Arab region, Fellows connected religious leaders with policymakers to address the social impact of the pandemic. In Erbil, Kurdistan, Iraq, Fellow Barzan Baran



Rashid brought together the Ministry of Endowment and Religious Affairs and the Ministry of Health in Kurdistan, Iraq to raise awareness of COVID-19.

Fellows in Africa used radio messaging to raise awareness of the pandemic. In Kenya, Alumna Mercy Muigai developed a booklet called *COVID-19 ABCs for religious leaders*, which was distributed to places of worship to help faith leaders better engage with their communities.

Fellows in Asia shifted activities online, providing mental health support and combating stigmatisation. Alumna Swati Chakraborty used her KAICIID grant to develop the WebPlatform4Dialogue, which provides information to network users on how to combat hate speech and disinformation and offers a space for dialogue and reflection.

In Europe, activities focused on bringing interreligious dialogue to the online sphere through platforms, dialogue sessions, and theological and scriptural reasoning. The platform Religion Goes Online offered opportunities for believers of various faiths to come together virtually and across religious lines and to practise their faith during high holy days such as Ramadan, Seder and Vesak.

Fellows in the Americas provided training opportunities in interfaith dialogue and ethics, with a focus on young people. In Argentina, Fellow Rabbi Marcelo Bater conducted

pastoral counselling through a government-supported multireligious telephone hotline, Cadena Telefónica, which connects people with a leader of their faith.

Sustainable and continued programming

Despite its challenges, 2020 offered an opportunity to continue to grow strategically by establishing and enhancing relationships and collaborations. KAICIID hosted and trained UNAOOC Fellows in interreligious dialogue and media engagement for peacebuilding. KAICIID facilitated virtual encounters with Austria-based government officials, religious representatives, journalists, civil society organizations and international actors.

KAICIID Fellows had the chance to learn about the work of the Office of the United Nations Special Representative for the Prevention of Genocide through a dedicated online session.

Shaping the way for future engagement with faith and religious education institutions, KAICIID concluded a needs assessment on targeted interaction with Fellows who are institutional representatives. The study aims to provide strategic guidance towards increased institutional partnerships and collaboration across the education sector.

Including women in post-conflict peacebuilding

More than 20 years of ethno-religious conflict have beset vast stretches of Nigeria's North and Middle Belt, claiming tens of thousands of lives and forcing millions of people from their homes. Clashes over fast-disappearing grazing land between nomadic Fulani pastoralists, who are mostly Muslim in faith, and Christian farmers have been particularly fierce. Reports of brutality abound on both sides.

Nearly 30 per cent of Nigerian women surveyed between 2012 and 2013 said they had experienced some form of gender-based violence – a figure that leaps to almost two-thirds in the northeast.

According to data compiled by the Council on Foreign Relations, only 6 per cent of the 1,860 peace agreements reached worldwide between 1990 and 2019 included provisions that specifically addressed violence against women.

Lacking a pre-existing platform for young women interested in conflict resolution, KAICIID Fellow Lantana Bako Abdullahi decided to build her own, titled the Women for Positive Peacebuilding Initiative. Abdullahi mentors girls and young women, equipping them with capabilities and confidence to deliver to their communities a plan for peace.

Her team trains young people in the art of leadership, interfaith dialogue and public speaking, in the belief that real change must come from the bottom up. After the training concludes, the participants are charged with starting their own local programmes.

Abdullahi's campaign of empowerment has taken her to Nigeria's northeastern corner, a lawless region ravaged by the insurgency of Boko Haram. There she became involved in counter-extremism efforts, striving to challenge the allure of militants, who, in 2014, gained global notoriety with the kidnapping of 276 schoolgirls.

Addressing these divisions is central to Abdullahi's work in conflict mediation – a process dominated by men, indicative of Nigeria's enduring patriarchy. Overcoming gender prejudice has been a challenge, but one she has slowly overcome.

In December 2020, in recognition of her commitment to conflict resolution and women's rights across Africa's most populous nation, Abdullahi received a Points of Light award – an honour conferred upon the British Commonwealth's most inspirational volunteers.

Ultimately, she says, this is her greatest achievement – demonstrating to the young women of Northern and Central Nigeria that anything is possible.

"I want every woman who is disadvantaged to understand that she can make it happen. She can make her dreams come true and make a meaningful contribution to her society."





YOUTH

The COVID-19 pandemic had severe effects on children and youth worldwide. With the gradual rollout of restrictions at national, regional and local levels, the social sphere for youth was narrowed dramatically. Exchanges were limited and, where possible, moved to the digital space.

Education opportunities were diminished or entirely unavailable, and the consequences of the digital divide and disparities in digital learning became ever more visible. Billions of students were impacted by school closures, with the International Labour Organization reporting disruptions in education for more than 70 per cent of youth worldwide.

Beyond education, health care was and remains a priority, with a particular focus by the international community placed on mental health for young people.

Working with and through partners, most notably KAICIID's longstanding partner the World Organization of the Scout Movement (WOSM), the 2020 programme for youth experienced a gradual shift of priorities, format and content in its attempts to respond to internal and external challenges and limitations induced by the pandemic. KAICIID and WOSM have worked together since 2015 on the Dialogue for Peace programme, which equips young people with skills to prevent conflict and contribute to peacebuilding efforts. To date, more than 9,000 young people from across the world have been exposed to the programme. Additionally, 22 Dialogue for Peace Scout trainers have been accredited, and over 25 are preparing for accreditation.

Scouts were among the first of KAICIID's youth programming partners to react to the pandemic. Although in-person regional and global activities were postponed or cancelled, many events were shifted online to create a continued sense of community for its 54 million global members.

In April WOSM launched a special edition of its Jamboree on the Internet (JOTI), which welcomed the participation of over 4,000 Scouts from countries including Algeria, Mauritius, North Macedonia and the Philippines. Attendees chose from a suite of activities aimed at connecting youth and equipping them with new skills and friendships to combat COVID-19 isolation and anxiety. Dialogue for Peace trainers offered 19 webinars centred around the theme of dialogue and discussed how to cope with the pandemic at the first ever Dialogue Café series.

Additionally, the annual JOTI in October offered sessions in interreligious dialogue, identity, biases and health to over 800 youth worldwide. Dialogue for Peace trainers greatly increased their online engagement across the board in 2020, particularly in online sessions, workshops and dialogue circles. In total, the 2 editions of JOTI and the World Scout Academy offered over 5,300 youth worldwide the chance to learn more about dialogical principles and approaches, the use of social media as a space for dialogue

and assessing performance of grassroots level activities.

In 2020 KAICIID extended the cycle for the Dialogue for Peace programme, refocusing it towards the development of educational and reference materials in light of restrictions that hindered in-person capacity-building sessions necessary for the accreditation of new Dialogue for Peace trainers. The expectation of both partners is to support the programme's sustainability and to prepare to fully integrate Dialogue for Peace into WOSM in 2021.

Before the implementation of COVID-19 restrictions, KAICIID's youth programme completed two joint in-person training sessions for youth from within and beyond the Scouting movement. Youth from the Africa Scout region advanced their skills and knowledge in a Dialogue for Peace training session in Cabo Verde in February 2020. This was held as part of the process of strengthening and expanding the pool of potential trainers in the region.

Also in February a large Dialogue for Peace workshop in India gathered over 70 young peacebuilders, activists, educators, and representatives of regional and international organizations from South and South-East Asia. The workshop offered the last opportunity in 2020 for a Dialogue for Peace trainer accreditation due to the subsequent cancellation of in-person training.

KAICIID has contributed towards the development and finalisation of Guidelines to Spiritual Development in Scouting and will continue to provide expertise in the development phase of the WOSM interreligious dialogue programme.

KAICIID's DialoGo board game added an eighth language (Brazilian Portuguese) and is available online for free download and printing. The game is designed to help youth leaders and peacebuilders develop their dialogue skills, capacity for teamwork, and social and emotional learning.

In collaboration with the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts (WAGGGS), the work on two research projects continued, with one of them being finalised. In 2021 KAICIID will continue providing expert input to WAGGGS and support with dissemination of project reports.

Initial plans were made for the development of a KAICIID guide on interreligious dialogue intended to be finalised in 2021. The guide aims to increase awareness on and wider engagement in interreligious dialogue by illustrating its value as a means to building peaceful and socially cohesive societies to various stakeholders.

The current Dialogue for Peace programme cycle is reaching its end. A comprehensive evaluation of the programme and partnership between KAICIID and WOSM was initiated

in November 2020, which is expected to conclude by March 2021. The main aim is to assess the programme's successes, shortcomings and development, and more broadly to identify lessons learned and recommendations to inform KAICIID partnerships and joint programming.

Another significant development for the youth programme is to integrate youth as a theme across all KAICIID regional and capacity-building programmes. A process began in 2020 aiming to ensure continuity and sustainability of youth engagement in all KAICIID programmes.

In 2020 the youth programme faced a variety of challenges and worked to find creative ways to mitigate them. The gradual shift in focus towards knowledge generation and activities in preparation for the upcoming Dialogue for Peace handover in 2021 brought the international Dialogue for Peace team closer in their joint engagement and collaboration in drafting materials and leading online sessions.

KAICIID's important decision to treat youth as one of its core cross-cutting themes in its programming has opened possibilities for comprehensive inclusion into all levels of programming. The Dialogue for Peace programme has provided a basic framework for engagement across regions and areas, which will be explored further in 2021.



DIALOGUE KNOWLEDGE HUB

As the pandemic has forced millions of people into lockdowns and isolation, the demand for online learning and resources has increased four-fold. The KAICIID DKH has responded to this need by supporting KAICIID programmes with development and implementation of digital solutions such as e-learning, training courses and thematic webinars.



The DKH has also responded to the pandemic by supporting other programmes to digitise their own training content and bring their activities online.

In 2020 the DKH, KAICIID's arm for digital resources, developed three new interactive and "gamified" online courses in Arabic, English and French on key thematic areas of the KAICIID strategy and mission. The platform continues to provide open access to online resources on interreligious dialogue to various target groups, including KAICIID's own programmes.

The DKH has also responded to the pandemic by supporting other programmes to digitise their own training content and bring their activities online.

The DKH currently offers 10 online courses tailored to the needs of different groups of stakeholders. These include self-facilitated, self-paced intensive one-week courses, and mid- and full-length facilitated or instructor-led online courses spanning two to three months. These online courses are interactive, "gamified" and mobile-compatible to meet internationally recognised quality standards.

Through the inclusion of specific and practical exercises and joint projects relevant to certain groups of participants, the courses are customised to learning needs and context.

In 2020 the DKH successfully convened 21 facilitated/instructor-led online courses, 2 massive open online courses, and a series of short self-paced online courses. A total of 1,100 participants from 126 countries were trained. The majority of participants who completed the online courses requested further courses focusing on interreligious dialogue and similar topics. All KAICIID online courses are available free of charge.

In close collaboration with international partners, including several United Nations agencies, such as UNEP and UNODC, the DKH convened 29 webinars, including Faith and COVID-19; Empowering Youth; Integration through Education: Creating Opportunities for Refugees and Migrants; and Environmental Justice and Climate Change.

Other collaborations included international and regional organizations such as Coalition FBO, the European Council of Religious Leaders, the Joint Learning Initiative, Religions for Peace, the United Religions Initiative, World Vision and several universities. The webinars were attended by over 2,000 participants and are available on the KAICIID YouTube channel.

Type	Modules	Duration	Administered	Number of Participants
Short executive-type online courses	1-2	1-2 weeks	Self-paced	Unlimited participation
Mid- and full-length online training courses	8-12	8-12 weeks	Facilitated/instructor-led	20-25 participants per cohort
Massive open online courses	8	8 weeks	Self-paced	Unlimited participation

In comparison to the previous year, DKH users grew by almost 72% to a total of 62,018 for the year.

Webinars are often tailored to timely relevant global or regional events, such as United Nations International Days and other themes relevant to focus areas of KAICIID and partner organizations. Recorded webinars were accessed 14,397 times in 2020, compared with 463 times in 2019.

In comparison to the previous year, DKH users grew by almost 72% to a total of 62,018 for the year. Over 58,600 of these were new users. Overall viewership increased by 70% (accessed 94,946 times). The three most popular sections were Who is Who in Interreligious Dialogue, KAICIID's online resource for key individuals working in the field of dialogue, which had a share of 41.3% of the traffic; webinars, which had 30.3% of traffic; and online courses, which had 12.6% of traffic.

As a result of the global shift to online learning, the number of participants completing KAICIID facilitated and self-paced online training courses grew by over 200% (1,100 participants in 2020, compared with 514 in 2019). The significant increase in online learning is expected to build a critical mass of beneficiaries globally, including religious leaders and policymakers, with the intention that this e-learning will positively influence changes in behaviours and policies.

In the second half of 2020, the online resources were streamlined in readiness for the relaunch of the DKH in 2021 as a redesigned interactive networking nucleus. Steps were taken to unite the flagship's online directories (Peace

Map and Who is Who in Interreligious Dialogue) into a single interactive map, which will allow users to easily find key organizations and individuals working in interreligious dialogue around the world, and build sophisticated networks of partners. This upgrade is in line with the DKH's new strategy, which seeks to enable a true community of practice.

Additional online resources were selected to support the new network, such as the Almanac of Interreligious Events, a calendar featuring the year's most significant interreligious dialogue events, and Promising Practices, which offers successful initiatives from faith-based organizations, designed for replication in other countries and contexts.

The DKH plans to launch further knowledge resources in support of KAICIID programmatic areas. At the end of 2020, KAICIID commissioned four regional and country programme case studies focusing on the Arab region, Europe, Myanmar and Nigeria. The studies will analyse the successes and lessons learned of using interreligious dialogue as a tool for peace and reconciliation in various countries and contexts. Expected publication is set for the third quarter of 2021.

A total of 1,100 participants from 126 countries were trained.

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CHAPTER 4:

Bringing KAICIID Online



Faced with the need to adapt to the new reality of the pandemic, KAICIID staff worked tirelessly to convert its planned training programmes and global events into e-learning solutions, ensuring conversion into the electronic format and digitisation of its training and learning content and programmes.

In 2020 KAICIID hosted over 100 webinars and online sessions. Although virtual panels and online question-and-answer sessions with experts were a good alternative to physical panel discussions, more effort was needed to establish the level of dialogue KAICIID typically facilitates at its intensive training sessions and workshops.

By summer, staff and facilitators started importing and developing methods and techniques that would provide safe and engaging spaces online, despite the virtual divide. KAICIID adapted tools such as icebreakers, breakout sessions, polls, games, exercises and online dialogue sessions.

KAICIID experts developed a set of guidelines and a checklist for Dialogue for Peace facilitators to help them establish a safe space and conduct online dialogue sessions with Scouts.

Under the newly created Europe Region Programme, KAICIID's Programme for the Social Inclusion of People Seeking Refuge in Europe organized four webinars on integration, inviting experts to discuss trust-building, inclusive education and psychosocial support for refugees during the pandemic.

Two online training sessions were organized for Network for Dialogue members: a four-day course on inclusive education and a two-day capacity-building session on drafting policy recommendations and briefs.

The 2nd European Policy Dialogue Forum on Refugees and Migrants was organized online, bringing together 90 participants and 20 speakers, using the online space to come up with policy recommendations, proposals and joint learning on social inclusion policies in the areas of education, trust-building and changing the narrative.

In November 2020 the Europe region team organized two webinars in response to terrorist attacks in France and KAICIID's host city of Vienna. After the initial meetings of the executive committees of MJLC and EuLeMa in Vienna in January 2020, all meetings that followed were concluded online.

The KAICIID International Fellows Programme has used a blended learning approach since 2015. This meant the programme was already well-positioned to shift to a fully online model during the pandemic. Despite their virtual nature, the activities were well received and well attended.

The first online conference for Fellows Alumni was convened in May to discuss the impact of COVID-19 on the Fellows and interreligious dialogue work in general. The event was attended by more than 100 Fellows. Online sessions on experience-sharing and targeted lectures on disaster risk response and prevention of genocide were also well attended and addressed the concerns of many Fellows.



Although the threat of COVID-19 will likely diminish, the potential for and experience gained from online operations will continue.

In the Arab region, staff hosted several online webinars and training sessions and launched awareness-raising campaigns to mobilise stakeholders around crisis responses. The Social Media as Space for Dialogue programme was resumed and tailored to address issues of hate speech online, which saw a significant increase due to the pandemic.

Trainees organized 8 social media campaigns across the region and a webinar on combating fake news in times of crisis in support of the United Nations initiative "Verified," reaching 100 participants from 12 Arab countries. Diverse online training sessions were held within the social media project tackling urgent topics that emerged in the face of the pandemic, including stigmatisation, prejudice, and mistreatment of and discrimination towards people with COVID-19.

A webinar was convened on empowering youth to achieve the SDGs in the Arab region and attended by 149 participants. The programme organized five online capacity-building sessions for the Arab region 2020 Fellows cohort, and several virtual events and workshops as part of the Women's Empowerment in the She4Dialogue project.

Other KAICIID programmes included Arabic simultaneous translation for its webinars and opportunities for participants from the Arab region to engage with global themes.

Shifting effectively to online activities and resources

was not equally possible or necessary in every region. For example, in the Central African Republic, Myanmar and Nigeria, internet access is unequal and expensive. Many of the ongoing projects in Myanmar had to be postponed until in-person gatherings were allowed. The move to the digital space was possible for coordination meetings via online conferencing or calls.

At the regional level, it was more possible to organize online regional engagements such as the G20 Interfaith regional consultations in Asia and Africa. It was not possible to move local initiatives online, particularly in conflict areas, due to limited access to the internet. While these activities were placed on hold, focus was given to developing tools and resources for knowledge development, such as a guidebook on sensitive reporting, and on responding to the pandemic.

Although the threat of COVID-19 will likely diminish, the potential for and experience gained from online operations will continue. The blended learning approach combining online training, webinars, sessions and materials with traditional face-to-face training workshops has been applied to almost all KAICIID training and projects. KAICIID staff will continue to assess and evaluate new approaches to interreligious dialogue online to ensure efficiency and sustainable impact.

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CHAPTER 5:

Grant Report



KAICIID supports and develops the field of interreligious dialogue in many ways, including identifying promising community-level leaders and dialogue advocates, providing them with training and skills to invest in interreligious dialogue, and building networks and platforms that allow them to build lasting and sustainable relationships with their peers.

Religious communities and institutions and committed individuals often lack the skills, resources and networks to implement dialogue initiatives, especially those that transcend the borders of their own faith communities.

KAICIID helps to surmount this challenge and amplify the impact of its training by establishing and administering

small grants, which may be used to implement concrete interreligious dialogue projects tailored to the needs and contexts of different communities. This model of implementation has several advantages:

- › They can be owned and implemented by the community, which increases their sustainability and effectiveness.
- › The grants programmes support participants in KAICIID interreligious dialogue training courses to implement and test their learning immediately.
- › The grants build interfaith cooperation. Many KAICIID grants are implemented by representatives from different faith communities working together. These relationships, forged through joint action on shared challenges, tend to be longer-lasting and deeper.
- › The projects implemented through the grants programme provide visible community-level examples of interfaith cooperation on shared challenges.
- › The finite nature of the grants lends itself to effective monitoring and evaluation of the impact of interreligious dialogue initiatives, which is another way in which KAICIID can contribute to the field.
- › Beginning with the Fellows Programme in 2015, KAICIID has supported the implementation of hundreds of small grants in 67 countries around the world. In 2018 KAICIID expanded the grants programme to its focus countries.

In 2020 the grants programme took on new significance and importance. As the COVID-19 pandemic made meetings, conferences, workshops and international travel impossible, the responsibility for dealing with the impact of the pandemic devolved to communities.

The place of religious communities at the frontlines of development and community support meant they were optimally placed to identify community needs and risks. But as government and state authorities struggled to deal with the pandemic, funding and resources for interreligious dialogue initiatives became scarce. In response, KAICIID quickly stepped up its grants programme, making hundreds of thousands of euros available to its networks of religious institutions, faith-based actors, dialogue advocates and young people.

In 2020 KAICIID funded over 220 projects to address challenges emerging from the pandemic and related to interreligious relations, xenophobia and stigmatisation. Many of these projects focused on COVID-19 awareness-raising and preparedness, according to positive behaviour guidelines from health authorities. They also recognised the unique status of religious authorities as moral and ethical guardians with credibility in their communities.

KAICIID provided 105 grants for current Fellows and

Alumni. In Uganda, KAICIID Fellow George William Akora and the Youth and Women Empowerment Foundation designed a campaign to promote handwashing to prevent infection. The organization developed radio messages and online campaigns with leaders from different religious and cultural backgrounds to disseminate messages on prevention, and focused especially on women and girls, as they frequently play the primary role in household hygiene.

In the United Republic of Tanzania, KAICIID Fellow Paul Elisha Mdumi implemented a social media campaign in which religious leaders from diverse faiths used verses from sacred texts to promote public health awareness.

In Sri Lanka, Fellow Saumya Indivarie Amarasinghe worked with community development councils in Colombo to address the economic impacts of the pandemic on the most economically disadvantaged sections of the urban population.

In Myanmar, representatives of different religious communities came together to produce video messages and awareness-raising campaigns centred around COVID-19. KAICIID also supported local organizations in Myanmar to implement activities to address community challenges by bringing together different faith communities and promoting dialogue in action. A total of seven local projects



focused on interfaith collaboration during COVID-19 were awarded grants. One such project was carried out in partnership with the Lashio Muslim Women Association and Community Information Management, offering media literacy training for 200 women in Northern Shan State, Lashio. Other initiatives addressed root causes of hate speech through research and policy advocacy and offered psychosocial support to marginalised communities.

In addition to addressing the immediate impacts of the pandemic, KAICIID grants sought to address a secondary repercussion of the pandemic – growing levels of hate speech and mistrust, especially towards religious minorities. In many parts of the world, members of religious minorities and other vulnerable communities were stigmatised as being responsible for the spread of infection.

In Nepal, a KAICIID grant allowed Fellow Babu Ram Poudel to work with religious leaders to combat Islamophobia arising from misinformation on COVID-19.

Through its Africa programmes, KAICIID funded 33 projects implemented by local organizations. Fourteen of these projects were disbursed in the Central African Republic and 19 in Nigeria. Projects aimed to promote peace and enhance the role of interreligious dialogue through religious actors and community leaders in responding to COVID-19; to promote public health by providing support for vulnerable groups such as elderly people, people with special health conditions, women and refugees; to counter stigmatisation, hate speech and fake news in the context of the pandemic; and to support the United Nations Secretary-General's call for a global ceasefire in response to COVID-19.

In the Central African Republic, the Organisation Centrafricaine pour la Protection de l'Enfants implemented the project Reinforcing the Role of Interreligious Dialogue in Combating COVID-19, which impacted 2,100 individuals, including 700 Muslims from targeted communities. The project focused on awareness-raising for COVID-19 prevention, including its modes of transmission and the harmful effects on health and society. This project was run in cooperation with the Local Peace and Reconciliation Committee of the city of Bimbo, through which its impact was multiplied.

In Nigeria, the Almanar Women Association worked to promote interfaith coexistence by conducting COVID-19 awareness and sensitisation campaigns, implementing skills acquisition training for women. Sixty-seven women received training in entrepreneurship, computer literacy, sewing and cookery. Due to its success, participants registered three cooperative societies with the Corporate Affairs Commission of Nigeria.

The Almanar Women Association also implemented a campaign for youth, targeting drug and substance use through a radio jingle in the Hausa language and flyers in the English. More than 90 youth were reached with this training.

The Center for Equality and Equity in Nigeria designed the Bridge Peace project for people aged 18–29 years to “promote peace through languages and interfaith events.” Abuja and Lagos were selected as the implementation cities for this 26-week project. At the core of the project was the facilitation of dialogue on interreligious cooperation and mutual understanding among youth in local communities, using the vehicle of their language and religion. Participants explored the use of digital tools, art, sport and

In addition to addressing the immediate impacts of the pandemic, KAICIID grants sought to address a secondary repercussion of the pandemic – growing levels of hate speech and mistrust, especially towards religious minorities.

interfaith understanding to address issues of bias, hate speech and prejudice. As a result of the project, the Bridge Peace Alumni platform was formed to promote networking and implement further activities and knowledge-sharing.

In the Arab region, KAICIID launched the Dialogue 60 programme, which supported the implementation of 60 projects in 15 Arab countries. The programme focused on preventing and combating hate speech and continues to build on KAICIID's work in this area after the Power of Words conference the previous year.

Projects implemented under the Dialogue 60 programme included a research and awareness-raising campaign by the Opinions without Borders Center for Sustainable Development on the impact of cyber-bullying on young Jordanians with COVID-19; a workshop series on religious leaders and institutions in times of crises in Morocco; a training programme for young people in Lebanon by SHIFT Social Innovation Hub to equip them with skills to combat misinformation and false information on COVID-19; and a one-hour documentary on the specific challenges COVID-19 has created for older Christian and Muslim populations in Palestine.

In Lebanon, the We Are the Cure project addressed through six documentaries social issues such as bullying, domestic violence, hate speech based on faith or cultural backgrounds, and discrimination against people from regions with higher COVID-19 and poverty rates.

In addition to the focus on COVID-19, KAICIID grants went to projects that addressed other challenges. In Egypt, the Ibrahimia Media Center built the capacity of 35 religious leaders to fight hate speech through cooperation with each other and civil society organizations and individuals.

In Sudan, Rights for Peace trained 50 local activists (half of them female) to document case studies of hate speech and related violence in Sudan's conflict regions and provided remote training on topics including digital security and human rights.

A pan-regional project conducted and recorded 20 interviews with community religious or tribal leaders in 8 Arab countries to showcase positive instances of interfaith and interethnic community cohesion related to physical and mental health, the provision of needs for elderly people, and

support and service. The interviews were published as text and audio files online and informed three longer articles to be published in the Arabic-language press.

In Lebanon, a project by Women's Platform to Lead provided counselling and support on domestic violence and abuse to 120 vulnerable women.

In Somalia, Radio Daljir broadcast 20 radio episodes to more than 1.5 million people on the impact of COVID-19 and how to deal with it within the country's context.

Many projects sought to promote cooperation between religious and community institutions and policymakers. In Iraq, a series of dialogue within the local community of Karkouk brought together 75 Christian, Muslim and Sabean religious leaders with policymakers to counter hate speech.

In Tunisia, a dialogue platform bringing together youth, parents, local authorities and education experts closed with the signing of a charter titled We Listen and Protect You as a commitment gesture from the local authorities to engage youth in policy advocacy and public affairs.

In Uganda, a KAICIID-supported symposium created a forum for religious leaders and representatives from the Ministry of Education, the National Curriculum Development Centre and the Inter-Religious Council of Uganda to cooperate on building inclusive education tools and curricula.

In Argentina, two projects brought together policymakers, religious leaders, scholars, nongovernmental organizations, civil society stakeholders and journalists. One project was based on the SDGs, culminating in an online course and an e-book. The other consisted of an artistic event for the remembrance of *Kristallnacht*, with an interreligious musical performance, a joint statement of interreligious solidarity, and the donation of food to people in need.

Empowering youth in local community activities was the emphasis of the KAICIID and WOSM mini-grants scheme rolled out in 2020. Through the creation of a Dialogue for Peace fund, eight projects were awarded grants in Argentina, Madagascar, the Philippines, Tunisia, Ukraine and Zambia to implement grassroots initiatives. The projects included organizing COVID-19 community responses, promoting dialogical approaches and principles, and organizing blended capacity-building opportunities for dialogue, inclusion and sustainable development.

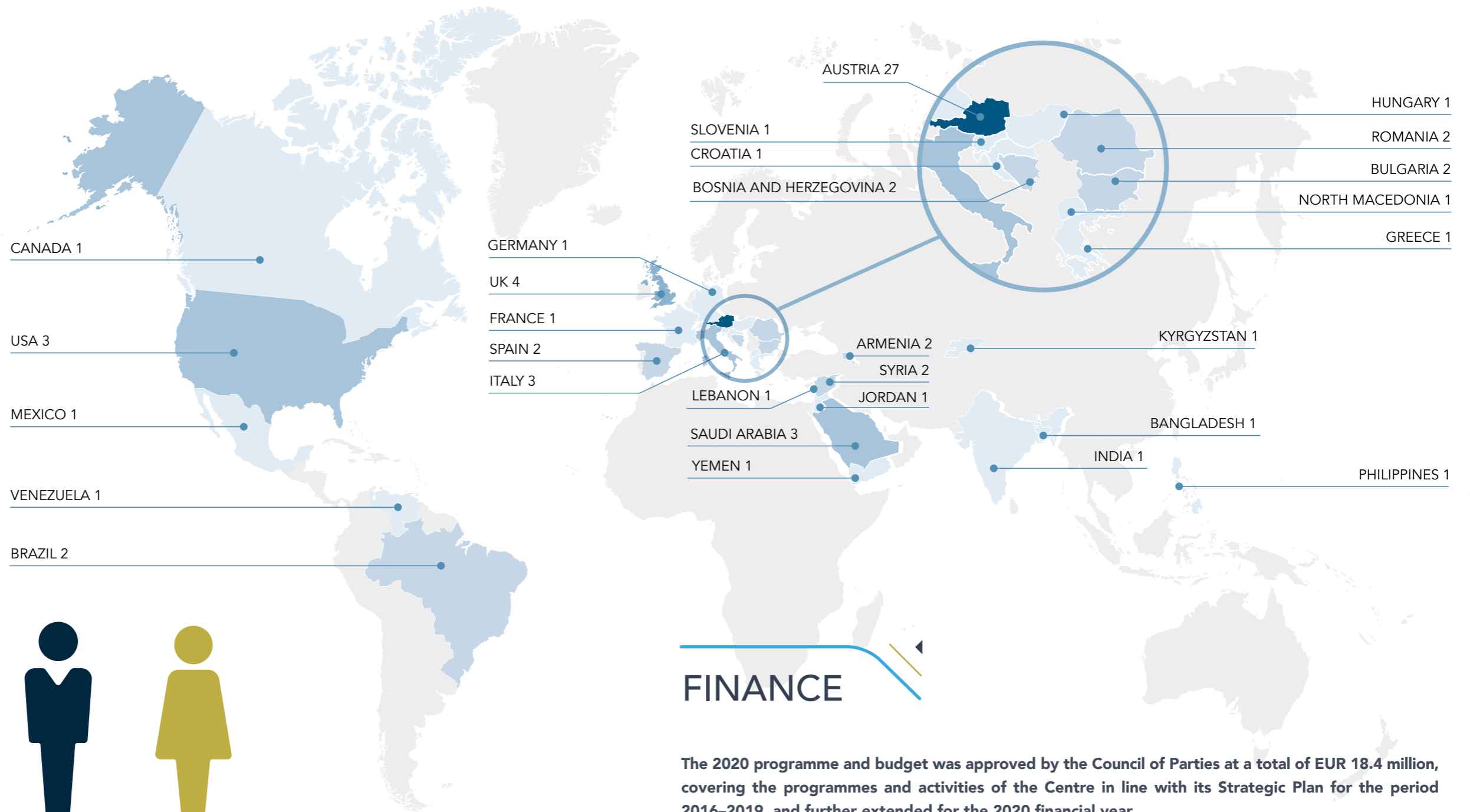
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CHAPTER 6:

Staff and Finance

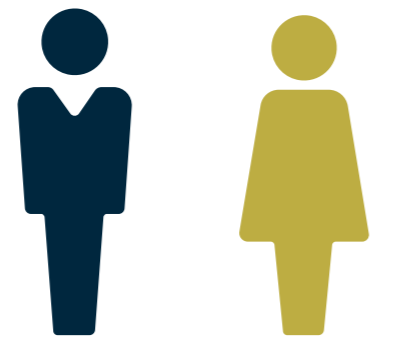
STAFF



71

TOTAL STAFF

Countries 29



49%

51%

STAFF BY GENDER

Male 35
Female 36

STAFF NATIONALITY

BY MEMBER STATES

Country	Number of Staff	% of Staff
Other	39	55%
Austria	27	38%
Saudi Arabia	3	4%
Spain	2	3%
Total	71	100%

STAFF BY CONTINENT

Continent	Number of Staff	% of Staff
Europe	51	72%
Asia	12	17%
North America	5	7%
South America	3	4%
Total	71	100%

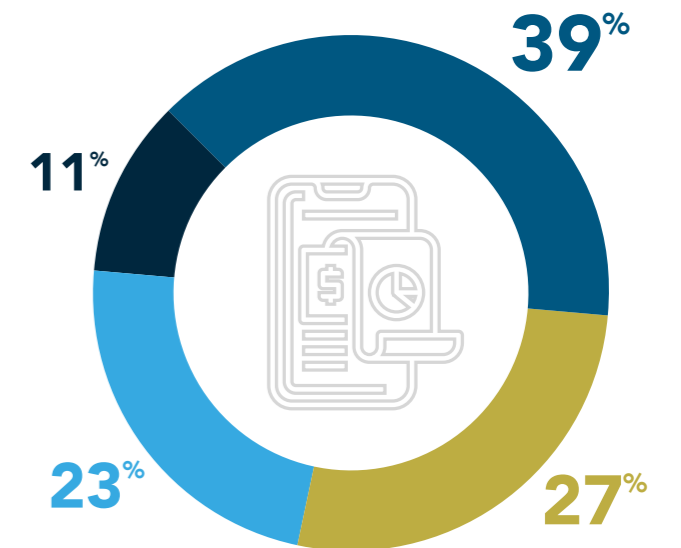
FINANCE

The 2020 programme and budget was approved by the Council of Parties at a total of EUR 18.4 million, covering the programmes and activities of the Centre in line with its Strategic Plan for the period 2016–2019, and further extended for the 2020 financial year.

The cash surplus from the 2019 financial year, as well as further voluntary contributions received during 2020 from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, provided the financing of the 2020 programme and budget. The total 2020 expenditure reached EUR 12.70 million (this figure is subject to the final audit of the 2020 financial statements).

Distribution of 2020 Expenditure

- Programme Department
- Executive Management
- Organizational Support Services
- Communications Department





The International Dialogue Centre (KAICIID)

Schottenring 21, 1010 Vienna, Austria

office@kaiciid.org

+43 1 313 22 0

www.kaiciid.org