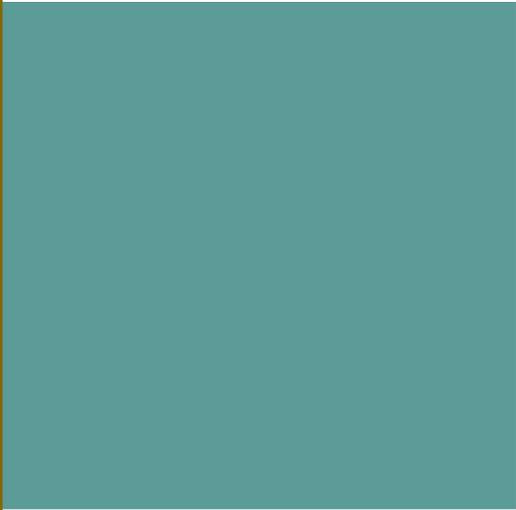




Religions for Peace 

A GUIDE FOR BUILDING WOMEN OF FAITH NETWORKS



“Women of faith draw deeply upon their reserves of agency, wisdom and compassion to lead the world towards peace. At every turn, they are working on the front lines to improve living conditions, avert violence, combat environmental problems and spread peace. Their leadership has activated the social, moral and spiritual assets of their communities and empowered them to act as leaders.”

ABOUT THE ORGANIZATION

***Religions for Peace* builds, equips and networks the Global Women of Faith Network, Inter-religious Councils and the Global Youth Network to harness the largely untapped power of multi-religious cooperation to stop war, end poverty and protect the earth. Founded in 1970 as an international, nonsectarian organization, *Religions for Peace* is now the largest coalition of the world’s religious communities, with affiliated Inter-religious Councils in five regions and more than 70 countries.**

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A MESSAGE FROM DR. WILLIAM F. VENDLEY, SECRETARY GENERAL



As the world struggles with war, poverty and protecting our earth, the commitment of women of faith is critically important. Women of faith are on the front lines of these challenges. They know what is necessary to help us heal our communities and families. Now more than ever, our world needs the wisdom and leadership of women of faith. This is all the more so given the pervasive character of gender inequalities.

Religions for Peace recognizes that religious women around the world have enormous capacities for leadership and effective action in all areas of human development. Since the establishment of *Religions for Peace* in 1970, women of faith from diverse faith backgrounds have been contributing their tremendous courage, passion and vision to its overall mission—to transform conflict, end poverty and protect the earth.

This toolkit is designed to support women of faith to build, equip and grow powerful and effective multi-religious networks. It includes essential information about the mission of *Religions for Peace*, and it provides practical tools for collaborating with existing Women of Faith Networks in Africa, Asia, Europe, North America and Latin America and the Caribbean. It is a manual for empowering women to join the *Religions for Peace* Global Women of Faith Network in its crucial work for peace.

Religions for Peace is committed to building the capacity of women of faith to assume increasingly visible leadership roles in transforming conflict, promoting peace and advancing just and harmonious societies. By collaborating across faith lines, women can and will make change for both their individual communities and our deeply interconnected global human family.

Thank you for your hard work and commitment to peace, and welcome to the *Religions for Peace* family.

A MESSAGE FROM MS. JACQUELINE OGEA, DIRECTOR, WOMEN'S MOBILIZATION PROGRAM



Religions for Peace believes that Women of Faith Networks can form an interconnected community across religions and cultures to build and share knowledge for common action. This guide affirms networks of women of faith as essential infrastructure where women can demonstrate their leadership to transform violence, promote just and harmonious societies and protect the earth. Such networks offer a unique space where women, with a stillness of heart, reflect on their work and create linkages with other organizations.

You will find within this guide tools on how to transform the networks of religious women's organizations to building blocks for inter-religious cooperation. The goal is to build interfaith communities where all women and men are engaged and empowered, and then ask important questions such as: What does engagement for peace, gender equality and women's empowerment mean for religion and its leadership? And when women bear the disproportionate burden of poverty, violence and disease, what role can religious communities and leaders play to restore human dignity and well-being? Multi-religious networks of women of faith can be the critical mechanism to raise important

questions and take action.

In order to effectively manage and equip networks of women of faith, it is essential to have significant resources dedicated to capacity building and support. True partnerships can promote the capacity of religious women's organizations as sites of social change. This guide provides tools for building partnerships and mobilizing resources to build a true movement of global solidarity among women of different faiths. It is not intended only for women. The guide is a relevant resource for men, Inter-religious Councils and non-faith-based organizations seeking partnerships with women of faith and their organizations.

Are there good practices? Although the work of engaging women of faith in multi-religious action is embryonic in nature, this guide provides examples of organizing and action by women of faith. It offers information on how to create linkages at all levels, guided by the principles of mutuality and reciprocity of the *Religions for Peace* Global Women of Faith Network.

I trust that this guide, developed collaboratively with religious communities, will be an important resource for multi-religious networking. Together, we can deepen the work of women of faith exponentially and achieve results that are difficult to achieve alone.

Introduction

PURPOSE OF THIS GUIDE

In producing this guide, *Religions for Peace* hopes to give women of faith the tools to network and participate fully in conflict transformation, peace-building and work that creates a more just and harmonious society. The guide was created by *Religions for Peace* Global Women of Faith Network with feedback from women of faith, men and young people of faith from around the world. It is based on lessons learned through *Religions for Peace* work in building and equipping women of faith networks. It is an introductory guide that provides a framework for building a *Religions for Peace* Women of Faith Network.

The resources within this guide offer the tools and ideas to support women of faith in gathering together, establishing a collective vision for social transformation, and creating change at all levels. The issues these networks choose to address are not confined to problems that involve women; they are problems that impact society as a whole. The powerful contributions that a Women of Faith Network can make in any single community are deeply interconnected with the well-being of all.

Though not a complete step-by-step manual, it does refer to additional resources that women religious leaders can access for further support and guidelines.

It is designed to enable religious communities to:

- Strengthen awareness regarding the critical role of women of faith in multi-religious cooperation aimed at promoting peace, protecting the earth and advancing shared security;
- Utilize practical models for building new Women of Faith Networks;
- Effectively integrate Women of Faith Networks into the larger *Religions for Peace* global network of Inter-religious Councils; and
- Foster multi-stakeholder partnerships with women of faith.



THE RELIGIONS FOR PEACE GLOBAL WOMEN OF FAITH NETWORK

Religions for Peace—the world’s largest and most representative multi-religious coalition—advances common action among the world’s religious communities for peace. Guided by respect for religious differences and a belief in the power of multi-religious cooperation, *Religions for Peace* mobilizes religious communities to collaborate on deeply held and widely shared concerns since its establishment in 1970.

Religions for Peace began the process of mobilizing religious women in 1998 when the Women’s Mobilization Program was established. The purpose was to ensure that the needs and perspectives of women are mainstreamed in all of *Religions for Peace*’s programming and to strengthen the capacity of women of faith and their organizations as actors in peace-building and human development. In 2001, the program launched the first-ever Global Women of Faith Network.

The *Religions for Peace* Global Women of Faith Network allows women from different religions and cultures to coordinate strategies and pool resources and capabilities for cooperative action to achieve results that would be difficult for any single member to accomplish alone.

The network’s objectives are to:

1. Enhance multi-religious networking among women of faith globally.
2. Strengthen capacities of women of faith to build peace, promote just and harmonious societies, and transform conflict through congregations and religious women’s organizations.
3. Promote gender equality and women’s empowerment in multi-religious collaboration for peace.
4. Develop strategic relevant multi-stakeholder partnerships and alliances.

The priority themes for common action to advance these objectives are: network building; peace and security; women of faith as agents of conflict transformation; and gender, poverty and health. Please refer to more details from the *Religions for Peace* Global Women of Faith Network Plan of Action 2007-2011 accessible online at

<http://www.religionsforpeace.org/initiatives/women/plan>.

A printed copy may be mailed to you upon request.



The *Religions for Peace* Global Women of Faith Network includes more than 1,000 Baha’i, Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Indigenous, Jewish, Muslim, Sikh, Jain, Shinto, Taoist and Zoroastrian religious women’s organizations. A network of networks, the *Religions for Peace* Global Women of Faith Network is growing regionally and nationally with a shared mission to build peace, protect the earth and promote just and harmonious societies.

THE POWER OF MULTI-RELIGIOUS COOPERATION: THE UNIQUE ROLE OF WOMEN OF FAITH

Women of faith are organized in groups within religious communities all over the world. These groups are already providing care on the frontlines of conflict, working to heal war-torn communities, addressing HIV/AIDS treatment and prevention, fighting poverty, defending human rights, and struggling to establish a more just and harmonious society. They have been doing this work with determination, and they have been doing it despite overwhelming gender inequalities that often pervade their personal and professional lives. Often, the women of faith carry out their work in isolation and do not have access to training or assistance in building strategic partnerships.

Women are not mere victims of violence and suffering. Increasingly, women are taking on leadership roles in politics, economics and religious life. *Religions for Peace* builds the capacity of religious women's groups to work together in multi-religious collaboration to transform conflict and build peace, and networks them at national, regional and global levels.

Multi-religious cooperation is a powerful way to engage women from diverse faith backgrounds to advance shared security and counter the abuse of religion. It can be more powerful—symbolically and substantively—than the efforts of individual religious groups acting alone.

The substantive strength arises when cooperation helps women from diverse religious communities to align around common challenges to peace. This cooperation offers women creative ways to take advantage of their complementary strengths, providing them with efficient modes for equipping themselves for needed forms of action and positions them for partnerships with secular institutions. Multi-religious cooperation also enables women to work collaboratively with men: locally, nationally and regionally through Inter-religious Councils and internationally through the *Religions for Peace* governing body, the World Council.

Women of faith worldwide are central to the strength and success of multi-religious cooperation, not only to promote the importance of women's rights, but also to mobilize religious communities in common action to achieve peace and defend the inviolable dignity of all human beings. The *Religions for Peace* Global Women of Faith Network increases the visibility of religious women as powerful agents of change. Women of faith and the institutions they have built must be supported and empowered to provide the leadership that is much needed to transform the world today.



SECTION I: Building a Women of Faith Network

WHO CAN BUILD A WOMEN OF FAITH NETWORK?

A Women of Faith Network can be comprised of representatives from religious women's organizations, inter-religious bodies, religious bodies and institutions. Young women of faith should also be included at each stage of the network's structural formation and programming. Men of faith should also be engaged in the process of building a Women of Faith Network, ensuring that they are consulted to offer nominees representing their different faith communities, as well as suggest methods of collaboration and mainstreaming of the networks into Inter-religious Councils and mechanism for programming and collaboration.



The following steps outline a process that may be useful in forming Women of Faith Networks examined in detail in sections to follow:

1. Form a preparatory working committee consisting of both women and men of faith from various faith traditions and Inter-religious Councils where they exist.
2. Identify representative religious women from religious women's organizations, inter-religious bodies, religious communities, and female religious scholars in their respective countries.
3. Convene private and joint meetings of these women of faith.
4. Nominate women of faith leaders for the formation of a Women's Coordinating Committee (WCC), to serve as a collective voice for their constituents. The WCC may be modeled after the International Women's Coordinating Committee, which is detailed on page 7.
5. Draft a strategy for communication and action toward multi-religious cooperation.
6. Develop a set of guiding principles that can serve as the basis for multi-religious cooperation among women of faith. These might include the following principles of *Religions for Peace*:
 - Respect for religious difference
 - Support locally led multi-religious structures
 - Act on deeply held and widely shared values
 - Preserve the identity of each religious community
 - Honor the different ways religious communities are organized
 - *Representativity*: recognize that a person or a group of persons can represent a larger community
7. Organize an inauguration meeting of the women's network, and endorse a framework for collaborative action. There is a sample workshop outline for this first time meeting on page 24.

A SELF-LED NETWORK OF NETWORKS

In building a new Women of Faith Network, it is important to use existing religious women's organizations as building blocks for multi-religious networking. The network, though new, should be a self-led network of networks, leveraging already existing resources multi-religiously.

The local self-leadership may be modeled after the *Religions for Peace* International Women's Coordinating Committee (IWCC), which is composed of about sixteen women of faith leaders who are elected every five years at the *Religions for Peace* World Assembly. The IWCC provides leadership and promotes the goals and objectives of *Religions for Peace* Global Women of Faith Network, both by building up its membership and working for its financial well-being. The committee also serves as the liaison for the Global Women of Faith Networks to the *Religions for Peace* World Council and assists in mainstreaming women of faith into Inter-religious Councils and programs. By strengthening links and partnership development with other agencies, such as the United Nations or other relevant institutions and organizations working for the attainment of goals similar to the Global Women of Faith Network, the IWCC helps to provide resources for Women of Faith Networks.

IWCC members are selected with due regard for achieving broad representation in terms of religion and geography. It is therefore important to engage individual IWCC members in regional and national level networking activities from regions and nations they represent, in order to enhance coordination, continuity and global liaison and connectivity.

“It is important to ensure that the needs and perspectives of women of faith are mainstreamed in all of inter-religious cooperation and to strengthen the capacity of women of faith and their organizations as actors in building peace, protecting the earth and promoting just and harmonious societies.”

In Forming A Women Of Faith Network, Remember That It Should Be:

- **Self-Led:** Recognize that national/local/regional decisions and actions can be taken at each level in autonomy and reciprocity, led by a Women's Coordinating Committee representing diverse religions and geographical locations.
- **A Network of Networks:** Utilize already existing women of faith groups and networks as building blocks for multi-religious cooperation.
- **Mainstreamed:** Integrated programmatically, financially and institutionally into existing inter-religious mechanisms such as Inter-religious Councils, governmental interfaith committees and engaging collectively (with men, youth and women) in interfaith activities.



DIFFERENT FAITHS, COMMON ACTION: FORMULATING AN EFFECTIVE PROGRAM STRATEGY

After women of faith from different religious communities in a country or region agree to work together, the next challenge they face is determining what issues to address. The following steps can assist a Women of Faith Network in formulating a meaningful and effective program strategy.

1. Determine Shared Concerns and Community Needs

A new Women of Faith network can begin by reflecting upon the following questions:

- What issues or problems evoke a strong sense of moral concern within our community?
- Which of these concerns are shared among women of different religious communities, and thus can be the basis for collaborative action?
- What other agencies or organizations are working on these issues, and where can multi-religious cooperation make its most effective contributions?

2. Identify the Potential Assets within Religious Communities

Women of faith representatives can profoundly strengthen their collaborative work as a multi-religious network by recognizing and engaging the unique assets of their own communities, such as:

- **People:** Religious communities are full of passionate and competent individuals. Never underestimate the critical power of human resources.
- **Facilities:** Mosques, temples, churches, synagogues, gurudwaras and community centers can be beautiful and inexpensive spaces for hosting events, meetings and advocacy campaigns.
- **Vision:** Religious leaders and communities often embody a moral vision for individuals and society. Women of faith can engage this unique asset to remind political leaders and citizens of the multi-religious ideal of a more just and harmonious world.
- **Hope:** In a world where so many have lost the spiritual will to create change, women can strengthen one another by expressing and celebrating hope. Transforming faith into constructive action depends on this essential resource.

Identifying Common Concerns Among Women Of Faith In Asia

In 2003, women of faith from Laos, Thailand, Indonesia, Sri Lanka and Cambodia joined to take action on shared concerns in their region. They focused specifically on the legal, health and post-conflict implications of violence against women. Together they devised action agendas for both advocacy and assistance. The consultation was a pivotal event in the launch of the sub-regional network, providing both a strong sense of solidarity and a powerful vision for change. Since its 2003 launch, the South-East Asian Women of Faith Network has continued to undertake multi-religious projects at both the local and regional levels to address the needs of the most vulnerable members of their communities.



3. Craft a Plan of Action

Grounded in the network's shared concerns and collective resources, develop a plan for upcoming actions. These activities can include, but are not limited to the following:

- Meetings and inter-religious dialogue
- Workshops and trainings
- Multi-religious publications
- Advocacy campaigns
- Direct community assistance

Be sure that action plans: 1) address shared concerns in an effective way; 2) are realistic and achievable; and 3) nurture a spirit of cooperation and mutual respect among women of diverse religious backgrounds.

4. Take Action

Putting faith into action is one of the most exciting possibilities for a Women of Faith Network. Some general tips for action include:

- Record and publicize what you do: invite the media (including religious media), take pictures, get feedback from participants, and write a report
- Network: connect with others who are working on similar or related issues
- Identify and involve key stakeholders including community members, male religious leaders, local and international organizations, political representatives and youth
- Mobilize volunteers: the more creative and constructive energy, the better
- Incorporate music, dance, theater and art: draw on the music and art of diverse faith traditions to express the Women of Faith Network's vision and action
- Promote the action or event through outreach materials: create colorful posters, distribute flyers, send e-mail blasts and talk to people
- Piggy-back on already existing resources and activities



Faith Communities Can Support Multi-Religious Action Through:

- Staff
- Financial Contributions
- Equipment
- Convening space in places of worship such as mosques, temples, synagogues, gurudwaras, churches or community centers
- Volunteers
- Technical Expertise
- Publicizing Activities



SECTION II: Equipping a Women of Faith Network

NETWORKING FOR SKILLS TRAINING

Women of faith can greatly enhance their creativity, efficiency and power with sound networking skills. Networking does not require great amounts of funding or advanced technology. Indeed, some of the most effective networking techniques are actually quite simple—bringing people together for inter-religious consultations, relationship building and mutual learning, and engaging pre-existing faith-based or secular networks.

One of the most effective ways to build a sense of commitment towards a common cause is to meet with people face to face. While technology has relieved some of the need to join in training and workshops, human contact, meetings, and bonding play a unique role in networking and are unrivaled by less personal forms of communication.

Networking for skills training is an effective way of building and sharing knowledge and skills among women of faith. The cost and logistics of training and workshops can make them challenging, however. They should therefore be used sparingly and planned with great care or in partnership with a funding agency.

Examples of training programs that foster networking include:

- Workshops on specific peace and development issues that are important to participants, such as HIV/AIDS prevention, education, violence against women, poverty alleviation, climate change and addressing violence in refugee and Internally Displaced People's Camps;
- Training of Trainers provides an excellent way to expand a network because it ensures that participants will teach others what they have learned;
- Coalition planning is often a productive use of meeting to create a vision for the network, particularly with other non-faith partners; and,
- Technical training may be used to offer a group a specific skill such as in Information and Communication Technology to help groups communicate easily and in a cost effective manner. Additional topics for technical training include: monitoring and evaluation, conflict mediation, community organizing, resource mobilization, and working with the media and budget management.

Regional Conferences In West Africa And Southeast Europe

In 2003, women of faith from Southeast Europe and West Africa joined in their respective regions for training sessions on transforming conflict including advocacy and media, non-violent communication and leadership skills. Both trainings inspired national and regional working groups that are replicating the training for men and women in their respective countries. As a result, participants have joined together to engage in concrete actions to mitigate and mediate violence and promote social justice. The manual "Women of Faith as Agents of Conflict Transformation"—that was developed as a direct result of these conferences—is a resource that is still being used by *Religions for Peace* in providing training to other women of faith. *Religions for Peace* has partnered with the Ford Foundation and UNESCO to replicate this important work and offer training to women of faith from over 10 countries. The manual is accessible online at: <http://www.religionsforpeace.org/resources/toolkits/transforming>



COMMUNITY, CROSS-BORDER FORUMS AND SOLIDARITY VISITS

Forums are opportunities for individuals to speak out on issues that impact both their own lives as well as the life of their communities. They can be modeled after the “town hall” meeting, in which facilitators moderately guide participants in an open discussion and debate. Cross-border forums have a similar format, but focus more on coalition-building and cross-border cooperation. Solidarity visits offer an opportunity to express support for those facing dire conditions or atrocities such as in violent conflict situations.

Community, cross-border forums, and solidarity visits are particularly excellent tools for Women of Faith Networks when working with communities that have been in conflict with one another, or with survivors of violence. They provide opportunities for women to express their experiences of suffering, struggle, and hope, and they foster a greater sense of compassion and understanding. These attributes are fundamental to building healthy relationships between war-torn communities, and offer support to survivors of violence of any kind, even in communities where violent conflict has not taken place.

SMALL GRANTS BASED ON COOPERATIVE EFFORTS

Women of faith often provide voluntary services and have limited access to resources. Small grants are often available for networks willing to collaborate on projects. Grants based on collaborative efforts help Women of Faith Networks find ways to work together with other faith-based and secular groups rather than competing for funds and resources. Collaborative grants can also link Women of Faith Networks to groups and individuals who, under other circumstances, would have no reason to work together. For example, a collaborative project involving micro-lending might connect women of faith with other development and non-profit organizations dedicated to women’s empowerment and economic reform. Even when a Women of Faith Network has a loose structure, the members can work with an Inter-religious Council where it exists or identify one of the faith-based organizations that are formally registered to serve as a fiduciary agent, which means that they can receive, distribute and report on the small grants on behalf of the Women of Faith Network.

Women Of Faith Networks Foster Understanding In War-Torn Communities

In 2003, women from the Islamic, Orthodox, Catholic and Jewish communities of Kosovo and Bosnia and Herzegovina came together for the first time since the end of the Balkan conflicts to mark the beginning of the Southeast Europe Women of Faith Network. This was an important step, both symbolically and substantively, towards building friendship and broken relationships. The women returned to their communities with a renewed sense of understanding, compassion and commitment to strengthen their inter-religious network and action initiatives.

Small Grants, Large Impact

In 2007-2008, *Religions for Peace* Global Women of Faith Network collaborated with USAID/Health Policy Initiative and Constella Futures Group to provide small grants to Women of Faith Networks in eight countries in Africa to increase education and awareness on HIV/AIDS and its links to violence against women. In addition to the education, inter-religious networking and dialogue was expanded and new women of faith networks were launched in Kenya, Uganda, Zambia, and Ghana while existing networks in South Africa, Tanzania, Liberia and the Democratic Republic of Congo were strengthened.

FUNDRAISING AND RESOURCE MOBILIZATION

Regional and national Women of Faith Networks are responsible for planning and achieving their own organizational and financial sustainability. Women of Faith Networks can mobilize substantial resources through service contributions, the resources of member religious communities, and diversified external support from partnerships with national and international funding organizations. The following are important steps for fundraising:

1. Identify Your Project Goals and Needs

Begin with clear plans and measurable goals for the network's action plan. Who will this project benefit and how will they be helped? What short-term changes are expected? What are the network's long-term expectations? After you establish clear and concrete needs, you can develop a project-based Women of Faith Network "case for support." This case for support will be essential for any grant proposal that you submit. Proposals may also include background information on the Women of Faith Network, an itemized budget, project rationale and measures of evaluation.

2. Identify Potential Partners

Kinds of financial support to explore include: a) donations of voluntarily contributed time and technical services; b) annual membership fees collected from participating religious communities and groups; c) support from local community organizations and businesses; d) partnerships with national and/or multilateral funding organizations; e) collaboration in funded international projects of *Religions for Peace*; f) social, health, educational and humanitarian units of local and national governments; and, g) national governmental organizations.

3. Prepare Requests for Support

Follow the donors' guidelines in preparing written fundraising proposals and requests of other types of support. Provide all requested materials, (brochures, reports, news articles and publicity, lists of participating leaders, and descriptions of past and current networks' activities), that illustrate the benefit for both the donor and the Women of Faith Network project or initiative. This is why it is essential to keep summaries and records of past events and initiatives.

4. Communicate Your Challenges and Successes

Always be sure to report the outcomes of the Women of Faith Network program with financial partners. Some donors will specify what they expect the report to include; other funding sources may not. Also communicate your successes and lessons learned to the wider community by making use of the media. Increasing the Women of Faith Network's visibility and credibility will expand future funding opportunities.



Make Use Of Existing Resources Within Religious Communities

Religious communities often have abundant resources. Examples of ways that Women of Faith Networks can make the most of these assets include:

- Community events: coordinate network actions with already planned faith-based events
- Joint implementation of action and advocacy campaigns
- In-kind contributions: accommodations, food, transportation, meeting venues, etc.
- Member contributions
- Sharing of existing resources such as manuals



EVALUATION

In order to develop effective and sustainable programs, it is important for Women of Faith Networks to take deliberate action to monitor and evaluate program activities. This can help track progress in the areas of decision-making and leadership, project implementation procedures, the preparation of timely reports and the proper utilization of project resources based on lessons learned.

Data gathered through a monitoring process should provide sufficient information for a final evaluation of the project, which can then serve as the basis for continuing, expanding, or shifting the program activities. The Women of Faith Networks should conduct periodic evaluations, which will help measure whether or not the expected results were attained and identify the impact of the project activities.

There are a wide range of materials and organizations that provide expertise on monitoring and evaluation, and Women of Faith Networks are encouraged to make use of these resources in their local environments. *Religions for Peace* may offer such technical support when needed. However, there are a number of basic steps a network can take to establish an evaluation process:

1. Establish a Plan for Collecting and Reporting Data

The network needs to determine how the data will be collected and who will be responsible for getting the information and reporting it back to the network.

2. Reference Established Objectives

If the network has developed objectives and specific action steps for its program activities, these can be the basis for a very simple but effective monitoring tool that can measure whether the activities were actually conducted, how many people participated and whether it achieved the desired result and objective.

3. Incorporate Findings into Future Program Planning

The Women of Faith Network should identify how the monitoring and evaluation results can best be used to plan future program activities.

4. Share Results with Partners

When a Women of Faith Network receives project funds from external donors, this process of monitoring, reporting, and evaluating program activities and their results is absolutely essential. Future funding depends on clear and accurate reporting of successes and challenges. The results of this action can also be shared with potential partners and religious communities to raise awareness and enhance the visibility of the roles of religious women.

SECTION III: Strategic Networking

CREATING NEWSLETTERS AND E-UPDATES

Newsletters are an efficient and cost effective means of maintaining a well-informed and energetic Women of Faith Network. Newsletters can be distributed in hard copy form, posted on a website, sent via e-mail, or a combination of all three. The most effective newsletters are consistent and concise. Send a newsletter at least quarterly or bi-monthly, and limit the content to no more than eight pages.

The power of regular written communication is two-fold: a) it provides recipients with updated information on the Women of Faith Network's progress and current activities; and, b) women of faith can refer to newsletters to spread the word within their communities and recruit new members, or initiate contact and interest with potential partners.

1. The Content of a Newsletter

Examples of items to include in a newsletter are:

- Activity updates
- Staff, volunteer and leadership changes
- Announcement of new partnerships
- "Save the Date" calendar of upcoming events
- Invitation for members to submit reflections for the next newsletter
- Photographs of recent meetings or actions
- Contact information

Mosaic: The Women Of Faith Newsletter

Women of Faith Networks are also strongly encouraged to submit reports and exciting news for publication in the *Religions for Peace* Global Women of Faith Network quarterly newsletter, *Mosaic*. To review past *Mosaic* newsletters, please check out the *Religions for Peace* website:

<http://www.religionsforpeace.org/news/newsletters/index>

2. Tips for Crafting an Effective Newsletter

- Offer a human interest story. The newsletter should be interesting to read, sometimes highlighting personal stories on how your network has impacted the lives of individuals in the network.
- Be sure to quantify activities and achievements as much as possible. For example, a newsletter that describes a Women of Faith Network meeting should highlight the number of people who attended, the date and location of the event, the major issues that were addressed and plans for future actions.
- Include reports of the Women of Faith Network's most significant actions in a separate text box so that readers recognize and remember exciting news. If possible, distribute newsletters through a combination of both electronic and hard copy materials to help broaden the reach of Women of Faith Network information.
- Always express gratitude to any sponsors or financial supporters.



ESTABLISHING LINKS BETWEEN WOMEN OF FAITH NETWORKS AND INTER-RELIGIOUS COUNCILS (IRCS)

1. What is an IRC?

Religions for Peace is a rapidly growing global network of 71 national and 5 regional Inter-religious Councils (IRCs). These inter-religious bodies are locally led by religious leaders of different faiths and designed to provide a platform for cooperative action throughout the different levels of religious communities, from the grassroots to the senior-most leadership. These action-oriented councils are not themselves religious organizations; rather, they are public in character, formed as networks of networks of religious organizations.



2. How Do Women of Faith Networks Relate to IRCS?

Women of Faith Networks are part of the *Religions for Peace* IRCS and the goal should be to work together towards promoting women's multi-faith participation in peace-building. To enhance effective collaboration and mutual support, consider the following initiatives:

- Ensure that women of faith represent at least 30% of the leadership and membership of the IRC (national or regional), and remain integral to all its activities and programs. *The African Council of Religious Leaders, Latin American and the Caribbean Council of Religious Leaders and the World Council of Religions for Peace already have over 35% women of faith represented in the senior most leadership of the Inter-religious Councils;*
- People of faith work together to establish a Women of Faith Network where it does not exist and mainstream it into the IRC's activities and structure. This may include establishing a women of faith coordinating mechanism within an IRC, such as a women of faith desk, working committee or taskforce; **the Inter-religious Councils of Sierra Leone and Liberia established women of faith desks during their formation and mainstreamed women of faith into the councils' leadership. These councils have been very effective in their inter-religious action for peace, with women of faith at the fore-front;**
- Organize quarterly or bi-monthly meetings with leadership representation (including male participation from IRCS) to plan short-term and long-term goals specific to women of faith; communicate regularly, keep each other informed and seek ways to support each other; and
- IRCS and Women of Faith Networks convene joint meetings, co-host events, and work together as a family in a mutually cooperative and reinforcing manner.

For more details on mainstreaming Women of Faith Networks into IRCS, please refer to the *Religions for Peace Manual: A Guide to Building Inter-religious Councils*, accessible online at <http://www.religionsforpeace.org/resources/toolkits/IRCmanual>

MAKING USE OF THE MEDIA

Women of Faith Networks are strongest when they actively engage religious communities, governments and the public through effective communications. Since corresponding with disparate individuals and community organizations can be difficult, the media is a tremendous resource for a Women of Faith Network.

1. Getting Started

- Appoint one member of the Women of Faith Network to be the “media contact.” Having a single person responsible for contacting the media keeps communication clear and consistent.
- Identify key individuals in the print and broadcast media such as reporters, editors and producers that have covered stories related to religion, religious communities and women’s issues in the past.
- Collect and categorize the Women of Faith Network’s internal communications such as newsletters, program reports, photographs, videos; keeping these materials organized is useful when the media requests documentation about multi-religious women’s collaboration in general, or recent events and projects in particular.
- Use the official *Religions for Peace* Women of Faith Network logo: a consistent image helps ensure that your multi-religious efforts are more recognizable and memorable to both the press as well as the general public. Over time, the press will come to respect and use the Women of Faith Network as a valuable resource on issues impacting and of concern to women and religious communities.

2. Engaging the Media

- Invite the media to cover Women of Faith Network events and programs
- Circulate a press release when beginning a collaborative multi-religious initiative
- Report on events to the media after they happen
- Write editorials and letters to the editor on issues important to the Women of Faith Network
- Give interviews to voice the concerns and hopes of the Women of Faith Network

Religious Media

Utilize already existing religious media and communications departments in mainstream religious communities to publicize the work of women of faith. *Religions for Peace* regularly seeks to publicize the work of its affiliates through newsletters, press releases, annual reports and the like, and often requests reports as well as images for this purpose. Women of faith may also utilize existing *Religions for Peace* communications resources such as document templates, guidelines, media and communications trainings, and more.

For more information or to request assistance, contact *Religions for Peace* at info@religionsforpeace.org



FORGING EXTERNAL PARTNERSHIPS

Women of Faith Networks must forge partnerships with international, governmental and civil society organizations that enhance their efforts to implement programs, advocate on common issues and achieve self-sustainability. Collaborative partnerships not only offer the opportunity to broaden the impact and scope of the Women of Faith Network's work, they may also facilitate financial support. Additionally, the credibility and visibility of the network may increase as it is associated with key actors on common social concerns.

1. Identify Potential Partners

Forming external partnerships begins by recognizing the unique strengths, tools, and expertise of other agencies. When considering collaboration with other agencies, a *Religions for Peace* Women of Faith Network can ask the following questions:

- What is the mission of the agency or organization? Does it align with the mission of *Religions for Peace* and the Women of Faith Network?
- Has the organization worked collaboratively with other organizations in the past? If so, how might multi-religious collaboration be different?
- Does the organization have resources to contribute to shared projects?
- How might the Women of Faith Network benefit from this partnership?
- What are the possible challenges that can be anticipated?

2. Contact Potential Partners

After the identification of potential partners, contact them and offer information about the *Religions for Peace* Women of Faith Network's structure and current activities. When possible, a direct or group consultation can take place, allowing both organizations to understand areas of overlap and discuss the parameters of a potential partnership.

3. Make Use of Existing Partnerships

The *Religions for Peace* International Secretariat and Women's Mobilization Program develop partnerships with public sector actors, including United Nations agencies and bilateral donors. These arrangements take a number of forms, dealing with both advocacy and direct action. When appropriate, the International Secretariat can facilitate the involvement of a Women of Faith

Network in such partnerships, encouraging international agencies and to engage and empower women religious leaders.



Religions for Peace African Women of Faith Network Partners with UNIFEM

In March, 2006, the African Women of Faith Network and the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) joined to promote an educational day entitled, "African Women of Faith—Building Peace and Advancing Shared Security." The day was aimed at bringing together faith-based organizations, multilateral institutions and non-governmental organizations towards the common goal of peace building and creating stronger ties between organizations working on women's concerns.

UNIFEM offered financial support to the African Women of Faith Network to advance women's human rights and the rule of Law in Kenya, following the post election violence in 2007-2008. The partnership continues, and its long-term goal is to improve human rights services and psychosocial support, particularly for women and children, by raising awareness, influencing policy and creating an exchange of information and common agenda among religious women's organizations.

SECTION IV: Good Practices

Building a Women of Faith Network can greatly improve the capacity of individual women of faith by linking communities at the national, sub-regional, regional and global levels. Here are some inspiring examples of sisters in faith working together for the benefit of our entire human family.

RELIGIONS FOR PEACE GLOBAL WOMEN OF FAITH NETWORK

The *Religions for Peace* Global Women of Faith Network consists of all duly formed local, national and regional women of faith networks and those individuals and institutions in agreement with the purposes of *Religions for Peace*. *Religions for Peace* has facilitated the formation of Women of Faith Networks in four continents and over 30 nations of the world, spanning a membership of 1000 religious women's organizations. *Religions for Peace* has convened World Assemblies to allow spaces for global networking and inter-religious dialogue among people of faith. Over 400 women of faith convened during the most recent *Religions for Peace* 8th World Assembly held in August 2006 in Kyoto, Japan.

By 2007, women of faith constitute over 36 percent of *Religions for Peace* governing body at the global level, the World Council, with a woman of faith serving as Vice-Moderator of the *Religions for Peace* World Council for the first time in history. Having women of faith at the forefront profoundly impacts *Religions for Peace's* mission of promoting multi-religious cooperation to transform conflict, build peace and protect the earth.

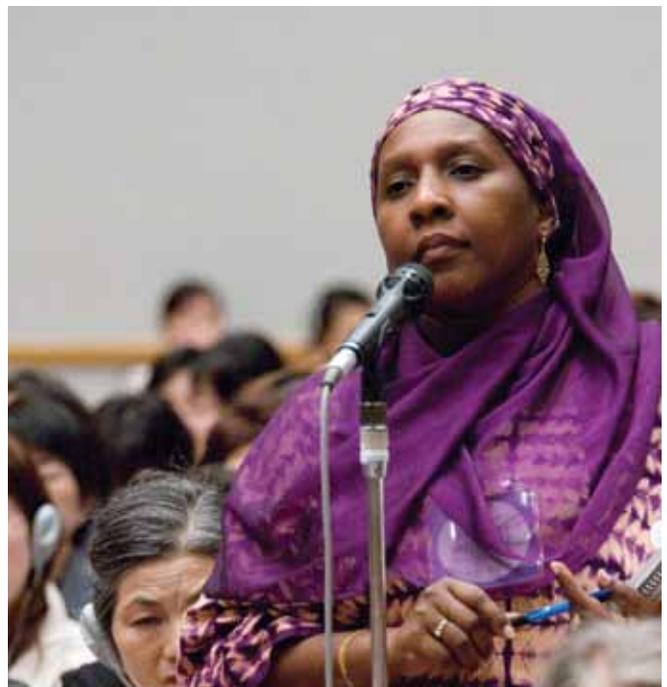
Capacity building support facilitated by the *Religions for Peace* Global Women of Faith Network includes:

- Providing technical support, accompaniment and advice on formation, program development and fundraising to Women of Faith networks in formation.
- Leadership training and advocacy. The network also offers opportunities for participation in international

consultations and leadership trainings, seminars, and workshops such as the annual United Nations Commission on the Status of Women.

- Sharing of resources, training manuals, guides, and tools.
- Communication updates through women of faith e-groups, the *Mosaic* women of faith newsletter, the Multi-Faith Women's Calendar, or regular updates to the *Religions for Peace* website. These are sent to network members and international agencies to highlight the unique roles of women of faith in peace-building.
- Expanding partnership development and coalition building for women of faith with other civil society, United Nations Agencies, governments, donor agencies and foundations.

Whether it is convening representatives of the Global Women of Faith Network at the *Religions for Peace* World Assembly, providing mechanisms for joint advocacy, or facilitating communication between two national Women of Faith Networks that face common challenges, the coordination carried out by the *Religions for Peace* Women's Mobilization Program adds great value to the work of individual Women of Faith Networks and IRCs. The following are highlights from the work our network has accomplished in the past years.



EUROPE

“We the *Religions for Peace* European Women of Faith Network commit ourselves in a spirit of friendship to work together to promote spiritual values, social justice and peace for an inclusive Europe.”

—RELIGIONS FOR PEACE EUROPEAN WOMEN OF FAITH NETWORK;
ROVERETO, ITALY, JULY 2008

In May of 2007, women of faith from eight countries in Europe convened in Sassone, Italy to consult on the need to form the *Religions for Peace* European Women of Faith Network. Several other consultative meetings were convened where the structure, coordination and thematic foci were discussed, and the *Religions for Peace* European Women’s Coordinating Committee was formed. One year later, the *Religions for Peace* European Women of Faith Network was launched at the European Parliament in Brussels, Belgium in October 2008. The *Religions for Peace* European Women of Faith Network is committed in a spirit of friendship to work together to promote spiritual values, social justice and peace for an inclusive Europe.

The *Religions for Peace* European Network is part of the *Religions for Peace* Global Women of Faith Network that mobilizes action among women of faith the world over. Its objectives are to enhance inter-faith networking among women of faith in Europe; strengthen the capacities of women of faith to build peace, promote just and harmonious societies; transform conflict through congregations and religious women’s organizations in Europe; promote gender equality and women’s empowerment in multi-religious collaboration for peace; develop strategic relevant multi-stakeholder partnerships and alliances; and promote the establishment and development of faith-based and inter-faith based women’s networks in Europe. In a campaign to advocate for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals to end poverty, the European Women of Faith Network engaged and lobbied governmental leaders from Finland, Macedonia, Belgium, Scotland, Netherlands, Norway, Bosnia and France to increase resources to end poverty and its devastating impacts on women and children. The work of the network has just begun, and already the European women of faith have accomplished so much through multi-faith cooperation and networking.



LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

“Conscious of the importance of strengthening and enriching our societies on the basis of a spiritual strength our traditions offer, we find it necessary to create spaces which would permit us to unite our objectives and create strategies in order to construct together a road which leads to unity, solidarity, equity and reciprocity.”

—RELIGIONS FOR PEACE LATIN AMERICAN AND CARIBBEAN WOMEN OF FAITH NETWORK; LIMA, PERU, AUGUST 2003

The *Religions for Peace* Latin American and Caribbean Women of Faith Network is made of representation by women of different faiths from five geographic sub-regions: the Southern Cone, the Andean Countries, Mexico and Meso America, the Hispanic Caribbean, and the non-Spanish Caribbean. The Network has been particularly concerned about overcoming violence against women in all its forms including femicide, maternal mortality and migration, advocating women’s human rights in the framework of international instruments such as the Universal Declaration on Human Rights and the Beijing Platform for Action, addressing sexual exploitation of children and adolescents and enhancing inter-religious dialogue and action.

The women of faith have also been active in the formation and training in the areas of gender and leadership, to enhance visibility of women’s leadership capacity and impact in the region. The *Religions for Peace* Latin American and Caribbean Women of Faith Network also advocates for women organizing themselves more effectively into their faith communities through workshops, improving communication channels, promoting experiences of each faith community and creating more spaces of dialogue and reflection. The network has partnered with the United Nations agencies, specifically the United Nations Development Fund For Women (UNIFEM), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) to convene joint programs and meetings for the empowerment of women and girls.



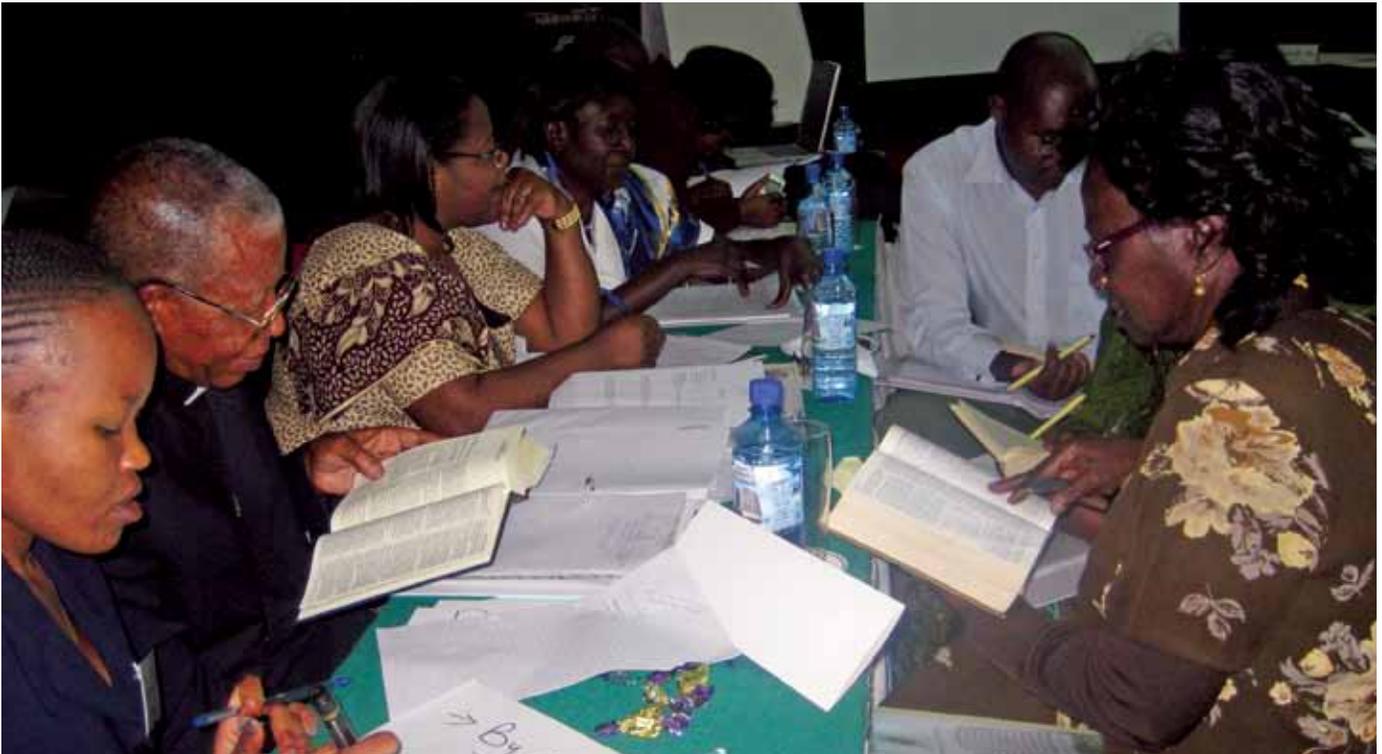
AFRICA

“Guided by the ethos of equality and dignity of each person ingrained in our spirituality and African values, and rooted in our collective strength, we are deeply committed to the elimination of poverty, conflict, and HIV/AIDS in Africa through cooperation, mobilization, positive transformation, advocacy, and the enforcement of global human rights instruments.”

—RELIGIONS FOR PEACE AFRICAN WOMEN OF FAITH NETWORK;
NAIROBI, KENYA, FEBRUARY 2003

The African Council of Religious Leaders (ACRL) was the first regional multi-religious network to form through *Religions for Peace*, and in 2003, women of faith created the groundbreaking African Women of Faith Network. This regional women’s network has had huge success both structurally and programmatically. Today, it brings together five hundred women of faith organizations, spanning the rich continent of Africa, to network, share resources and strategies to address conflict, poverty and gender discrimination.

Over one-third of the ACRL’s Executive Board and Consultative Council are women, and the Chairperson of the African Women of Faith Network has a critically important role on the Executive Board of the ACRL. In order to ensure that women’s voices are better heard and honored at the leadership level, the ACRL Executive Board has also established a Women’s Coordinating Committee that links directly with the African Women of Faith Network. With such strong structural foundations, African women of faith have been able to organize and lead highly effective multi-religious programs in conflict resolution, peace-building and gender justice. The network has trained approximately 4500 women of faith, male religious leaders and youth on conflict transformation, addressing gender-related HIV/AIDS stigma and discrimination, and ending violence against women and girls. Currently there are eleven national Women of Faith Networks that have been launched and whose membership constitutes the African Women’s Coordinating Committee (AWCC). In addition to the existing 500 organizations that are part of the network, partnerships have been expanded with donor agencies, governments, UN agencies and civil society organizations on shared concerns. African women of faith leaders are represented in the International Women’s Coordinating Committee as well as the World Council of *Religions for Peace*.



ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

“We envision the *Religions for Peace* Asian and Pacific Women of Faith Network to be a dynamic entity playing a role in strengthening community based responses for peace and human development in the Asia and Pacific region. As trusted and respected members of our faith communities, we acknowledge our importance and unique role in shaping social values and public opinion.”

—RELIGIONS FOR PEACE ASIAN AND PACIFIC WOMEN OF FAITH NETWORK; BANGKOK, THAILAND, APRIL 2008

Religions for Peace has worked with women of faith in Asia since its formation in 1970. Through the national chapters of the Asian Conference of *Religions for Peace*, women of faith in over 20 countries in Asia have continued to engage in inter-faith activities in their countries over the years. In 2001, *Religions for Peace* convened a meeting in Laos which led to the formation of the South-East Asia Women of Faith Network. In 2008, the women of faith forged a Pan-Asian initiative that would strengthen networking regionally. In April of 2008, *Religions for Peace*, in partnership with the World Fellowship of Buddhists, the Christian Council of Asia and the International Network of Engaged Buddhists, brought together 30 senior women religious leaders from the Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Muslim and Taoist communities to strengthen the role of religious women as agents of sustainable change and peace in the region. The Summit—representing the efforts and beliefs of women of faith from Japan, Cambodia, China, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, Pakistan, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Vietnam—concluded with the realization of the participants’ goal to establish the *Religions for Peace* Asian and Pacific Women of Faith Network. Acknowledging both the necessity and challenge of such a network, the women resolved to join together in inter-religious advocacy and action for progress in peace, justice, gender equality and women’s health. Mainstreaming women in religious networks and in partnerships with important inter-governmental and non-governmental organizations will strengthen both the involved women of faith and the world as a whole in its quest for a harmonious future.

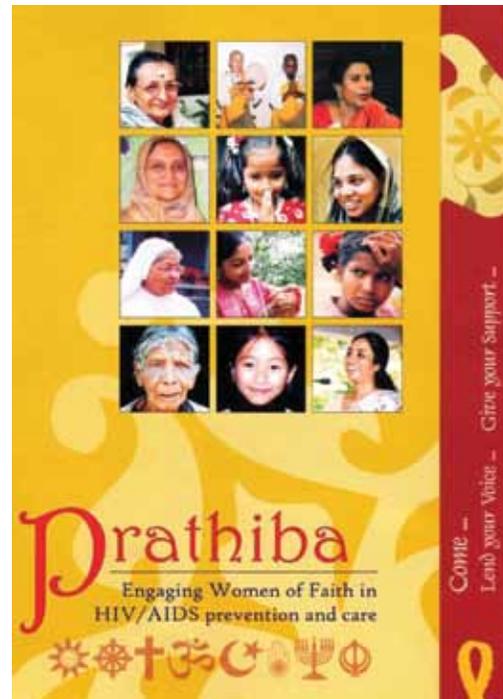


JAPAN

The *Religions for Peace* Japan Women of Faith Network (Japan Women’s Committee) was formed in 1981 and remains one of the oldest Women of Faith Networks. Recently, their initiatives to promote inter-religious cooperation have focused on serving people suffering from war and poverty. They have engaged in sponsoring a parents program for Cambodian refugees and established a social service center for orphans. They have aided in the construction of elementary schools in Cambodia, and have distributed picture books of folktales to children who returned to their home country from refugee camps. The Japan Women of Faith Network has been working in Afghanistan as well, cooperating with the United Nations and the Shanti International Volunteer Association. In Afghanistan, they have distributed picture books to underprivileged children, and have helped organize traveling library projects for those without access to schools.

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO

The *Religions for Peace* Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) Women of Faith Network was launched in 2006 to address widespread violence against women and insecurity. The central goal of the DRC Women of Faith Network is to organize collectively around ending violence against women and young girls through the elimination of rapes, forced prostitution, mutilations, and by addressing the lack of security to protect women and children from the accelerated spread of Sexually Transmitted Diseases and HIV/AIDS. In 2007—one year after its launch—the DRC Women of Faith Network hosted a sensitization workshop on violence against women and skills training for women leaders, attended by 30 participants from different faith traditions. It was an unprecedented opportunity for “breaking” taboos and speaking openly about some traditional and religious customs that promote the proliferation of violence against women in a multi-faith forum. At the conclusion, participants resolved to be more proactive through networking and building partnerships to bring together people of different faiths—particularly women of faith—to expand their important work on ending violence against women and promoting shared security.



INDIA

The *Religions for Peace* India Women of Faith Network is in the process of formation. Over the past two years, the women of faith have been promoting inter-religious collaboration to address HIV/AIDS awareness, prevention and treatment through their “Prathiba” Initiative. Inspired following the South-East Asia consultation convened by *Religions for Peace* in 2003, this project is grounded in strategic partnerships with key organizations including Shanti Ashram, the South-Asia Inter-religious Council, Amity Humanity Foundation, the Society for Positive Mothers Development, and UNICEF. The initiative is framed by a set of multi-religious programmatic steps, including:

- Setting up of a Joint Coordinating Committee
- Prathiba National Launch
- Capacity Building and Training Workshops in the 5 regions of India
- Documentation of ongoing women-led initiatives
- Participatory monitoring and evaluation

Such collaboration goes a long way in strengthening mobilization and laying a solid ground towards the inauguration of the *Religions for Peace* India Women of Faith Network.

SECTION V: Appendix

SAMPLE: WORKSHOP OUTLINE FOR FIRST-TIME WOMEN OF FAITH NETWORK MEETING

(Approximately 8 hours)

1. Welcome and Introductions (30 minutes)

Either in small groups or in partners, have participants discuss questions about themselves. Proposed questions can be fun or serious, spiritual or practical. The purpose of the exercise is to help participating women get to know each other on a personal level and feel a sense of support and commitment to their sisters in faith. This support will become the foundation on which the network functions.

Once you have completed the exercise, ask participants to share reflections from their smaller group with the larger group of women.

2. Review of Structure and Organization (1 hour)

Explain the structure of the network and the roles of members and leaders. The model can be fashioned after other *Religions for Peace* networks in the region. After describing the proposed structure, ask participants if they think the system will work, or if they propose changes and additions. Key questions to guide the discussion could include:

- How is it best to communicate with each other on a regular basis?
- Should we organize committees for different activities we choose to work on, or do we want one governing board?
- Should we hold elections for leadership periodically? If so, how often?
- How often and for how long should we meet?

3. Priorities Identification Exercise (PIE) (2 hours)

(a) Break participants up into groups of no more than eight people. Ask them to brainstorm all the issues they can think of that a Women of Faith network should work on, asking them to be as specific as possible. For example, instead of listing HIV/AIDS, encourage women to brainstorm what the network could do to address the problem, such as forming youth groups or promoting young women's education. One person in the group should be the note-taker, and list all of the ideas.

(b) Next, ask the group to choose the five issues they feel are most important for the network at this time. Explain that the network will not be limited to these issues, but that the group is prioritizing their concerns in order to take initial steps as a group. As each group reports their top 5 priorities, put a check mark next to issues that are repeated.

(d) Ask the entire network to look at the answers and decide the top five to seven issues they would like to focus on as a network. Suggest that those issues repeated most often should be included in the list.

4. Mission Statement/Visioning Exercise (1 hour)

Once participants have a sense of their priorities, they can easily begin to shape a mission statement. Explain that a mission statement is a guiding principle that sums up the intention of the network. It should be direct, and no more than a paragraph long.

In the large group, ask participants to call out words or phrases that capture the mission of the network. List all of the words (no more than about 15), and then ask the group to take a look at them and come up with a few coherent sentences that capture most of them. Develop a few sentences and check in with everyone to ensure that they feel comfortable with the mission.

5. Activities Planning Exercise (2 hours)

(a) Ask participants to look back at the top five to seven issues they chose in the PIE. Write them each on a piece of paper and hang each paper on a part of the wall in the room. Request that each participant choose the topic they feel most passionate about and sit near the paper. Once they have selected their group, ask them to make a list of specific activities they would like to see the network take on in the first year of their work together.

(b) Ask each group to narrow down the activities, by selecting no more than four activities. Allow each group to share their top ideas, while recording their thoughts on a flip chart or board in the front of the room.

(c) If the network has chosen to function with committees, it may be useful to link specific committees with the PIE issues, and ask for volunteers to follow up with network leaders to follow through with the activities after the workshop. Alternatively, ask the group who will volunteer to take the lead on the activities their group devised.

(d) As a group or as a committee, create a strategic time line that includes as many of the activities as possible. The time frame for the strategy should be no longer than one year.

6. Wrap Up (1 hour)

Four things should happen in the wrap up:

(a) A confirmation of the group's commitment to the network;

(b) A re-cap on what has been accomplished during the workshop;

(c) A plan for follow up or next steps; and,

(d) Final reflections and/or closing prayers of reflection



RELIGIONS FOR PEACE RESOURCES

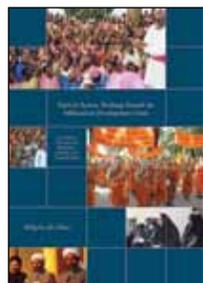
Most of the *Religions for Peace* publications and training manuals listed below are available to download on the website <http://www.religionsforpeace.org>. You may also contact us at the mailing address below to request any of our materials.

Religions for Peace Global Women of Faith Network Plan of Action 2007-2011. World Conference of *Religions for Peace*. (2007). Summary available in French. Offers a framework for developing national, regional and global thematic priorities and action for Women of Faith Networks.



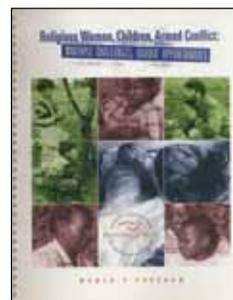
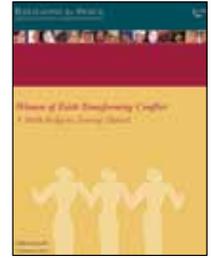
Religions for Peace Strategic Plan, 2007. (2007). World Conference of *Religions for Peace*. Available in Arabic, English, French and Spanish. Offers strategic vision, mission and general goals for establishing multi-religious collaboration for common action.

Religions for Peace - A Guide to Building Inter-religious Councils. (2006). World Conference of *Religions for Peace*. Offers a manual on how to build Inter-religious Councils (IRCs). Pages 25-31 are specifically focused on mainstreaming gender in an IRC.



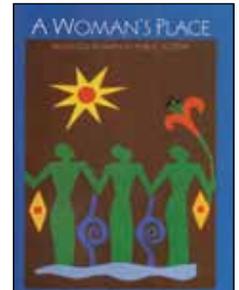
Faith in Action: Working Towards the Millennium Development Goals; An Action Toolkit for Religious Leaders and Communities. (2006). World Conference of *Religions for Peace*. Available in Arabic, English, French and Spanish.

Women of Faith Transforming Conflict: A Multi-Religious Training Manual. (2004). World Conference of *Religions for Peace*, Offers insights for readers who want to learn more about the controversial and often contentious role of women and religion in situations of conflict. It provides step-by-step sessions for trainers working on three issues: (1) conflict transformation; (2) communication and leadership skills; and (3) media and advocacy.



Religious Women, Armed Conflict: Multiple Challenges, Unique Opportunities. (2002). World Conference of *Religions for Peace*. Provides a political analysis of the role of religion and women of faith in transforming conflicts around the world. Includes perspectives from UN agencies and case studies narrated by women of faith.

A Woman's Place: Religious Women as Public Actors. (2001). World Conference of *Religions for Peace*. This book describes the religious mandates for women to play an active public role mirrored through different traditions in the voices of women of faith from around the world.



Religions for Peace website:
<http://www.religionsforpeace.org>

Website link to women of faith:
<http://religionsforpeace.org/initiatives/women/index>

Website to other resources:
<http://www.religionsforpeace.org/resources/index>

Email: info@religionsforpeace.org

Mailing address:
777 United Nations Plaza
New York, NY 10017 USA

RESOURCES AVAILABLE ON OTHER WEBSITES

Women, Faith and Development Alliance. Offers a model for building alliances among women, faith and development organizations committed to ending poverty and increasing investments in women and girls. *Religions for Peace* is a co-founding partner of the Women, Faith and Development Alliance. <http://www.wfd-alliance.org>.

Gender Equality Now. (2008). The United Nations Development Fund for Women. A resource guide for awareness and advocacy strategies to achieving the Millennium Development Goals. <http://www.unifem.org/resources>.

Women Building Peace and Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict-Affected Contexts: A Review of Community-Based Approaches. (2007). The United Nations Development Fund for Women. A collection of good practices for community based programming and advocacy for women's inclusion in peace-building.

Picturing a Life Free from Violence. (2001). The United Nations Development Fund for Women. Media and communications strategies from around the world for ending violence against women. Available on CD Rom. <http://www.unifem.org/resources>.

International Federation of University Women.

The International Federation of University Women has created a database of guidelines and tools to help build and strengthen networks. Topics include: effective leadership strategies, organizational communication, planning and leading effective meetings, a guide to increasing and retaining membership, and tools for development and fundraising. All of these guidelines are available at: <http://www.ifuw.org/training/index.htm>.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Produced in 2009 by the World Conference of *Religions for Peace*

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Special thanks to the women of faith who have contributed their stories of courage, strength and determination to protect the earth and promote peaceful and harmonious societies. Thanks to *Religions for Peace* International Women's Coordinating Committee, Secretariat staff and all other key persons for all of the support and assistance in completing this guide. With deepest appreciation to all of our partners, whose financial support has contributed greatly to the building and equipping of *Religions for Peace* Global Women of Faith Network.

This guide was made possible through financial support from the Ford Foundation.

“Peace has become a galvanizing concept made concrete by women of faith. A network of networks, the *Religions for Peace* Global Women of Faith Network supports inter-religious cooperation and action for peace among women of different faiths in Africa, Asia & the Pacific, Europe, Latin America & the Caribbean, and North America. The network is a valuable resource for women of all faiths to communicate and learn from each other and to build bridges and partnerships between faith-based women’s organizations, secular partners, international agencies and the United Nations.”

Religions for Peace 