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**Faith and Positive Change for Children, Families and Communities #FAITH-IN-ACTION Covid-19 Initiative**

INITIATIVE BRIEF

**BACKGROUND**

**Faith and Positive Change for Children, Families and Communities (**[**FPCC**](https://www.faith4sbcc.org/)**)** is a global partnership initiative between UNICEF, the world’s largest inter-faith network **Religions for Peace** (RfP) and knowledge partner **Joint Learning Initiative on Local Faith Communities** (JLI). While work at a technical level began in 2018, the initiative was officially launched by RfP and UNICEF’s Executive Director in Washington DC in October 2019. The central aim of the partnership is **to capacitate religious leaders and faith communities to influence positive social and behaviour change with and for children, parents and communities**. The specific emphasis is to move beyond simply delivering messages, to engaging faith communities in self-reflection, dialogue, exchange and feedback in order to achieve real and lasting positive change on jointly agreed priorities affecting children and their families. In February 2020, in response to the COVID-19 worldwide pandemic, the FPCC partners agreed to immediately shift focus of its joint workplan to respond to the international crisis through a new global #Faith-in-Action Covid-19 Initiative to provide coordinated and evidence-based inter-faith support for the protection and well-being of children and their communities. UNICEF’s Executive Director [signed a joint global statement](https://www.unicef.org/press-releases/launch-global-multi-religious-faith-action-covid-19-initiative) and call to action on the COVID-19 response with 13 of the top religious leaders.

**OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES**

The initiative aims to mobilize religious leaders, faith communities, women of faith, and youth networks within RfP through its Inter-Faith Councils at country level to support COVID preparedness and response. The key objectives of the campaign are to:

1. Manage communication, misinformation and rumours
2. Dispel fear, stigma, discrimination, reduce tensions and promote social harmony
3. Promote adaptation of religious gatherings, practices, rituals, handwashing and hygiene
4. Address specific needs of vulnerable groups
5. Promote the prevention of violence against children and women
6. Promote the participation of children and young people and their active engagement in the initiative
7. Promote and support the recovery of social services, resilience and return to normalcy

In order to achieve the above objectives, the Faith-in-Action initiative has outlined the following strategies:

* High level advocacy at global, regional and country level
* Generation and analysis of faith-related behavioural evidence to inform action
* Development, dissemination and local customization of global guidance on key thematic issues
* Periodic webinars at the different levels for sharing of knowledge, issues and experiences
* Digital engagement and capacity development
* Tracking, monitoring and documentation of the results of the initiative

**COORDINATION STRUCTURE**

The FPCC initiative seeks to achieve its multi-religious Faith-in-Action goals by working through existing international, regional and country networks and structures of three constituencies *Religions for Peace inter-faith networks; UNICEF and FBO partners* with support of the FPCC Advisory Group consisting of FBO membership of the Joint learning Initiative (JLI). The structure of RfP includes a World Council of senior religious leaders from all regions of the world; six regional inter-religious bodies and more than 90 national ones; and the Global Women of Faith Network and Global inter-faith Youth Councils. UNICEF has 192 country offices across the world, receiving technical and coordination support from 7 Regional offices. FPCC will also continue collaboration with International FBOs, especially those that have been part of the FPCC Advisory Group including Islamic Relief Worldwide, Rissho Kosei-Kai, World Vision, Jewish World Service, Episcopal relief and Development, Tearfund, Salvation Army, ACT Alliance, ADRA. Alongside RfP and UNICEF, these and other FBOs will be consulted and actively engaged in the design and implementation of the initiative, through the proposed troika at global and country office level.

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