

Culture Matters Lessons from a Legacy of Engaging Faith-based Organizations

CULTURE MATTERS

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Foreword

“The implementation of the recommendations contained in the Programme of Action is the sovereign right of each country, consistent with national laws and development priorities, with full respect for the various religious and ethical values and cultural backgrounds of its people, and in conformity with universally recognized international human rights.”

— *The Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development, Chapter II: Principles*

One hundred seventy-nine Member States meeting in Cairo in 1994 made it clear that development cannot take place in isolation of people’s cultures and beliefs. The United Nations Populations Fund (UNFPA) realizes that working with communities of faith is both a privilege and a necessity. The mandate of UNFPA is located in the heart of human procreation and well-being, and as such, part of it deals with the most sensitive—and often taboo—themes of all time: gender relations and the right to sexual and reproductive health. As identified in the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD), “reproductive health care is ... the constellation of methods, techniques and services that contribute to reproductive health and well-being by preventing and solving reproductive health problems. It also includes sexual health, the purpose of which is the enhancement of life and personal relations, and not merely counselling and care related to reproduction and sexually transmitted diseases”. With this in mind, reproductive rights embrace certain human rights that are already recognized in national laws, international human rights documents and other consensus documents.

The ICPD Programme of Action brought human relations from the private sphere into the public one. It opened human relations, especially the most intimate, to the world of debate and negotiations, in order to ensure that collectively we understand the dynamics of such relations and work for a better quality of life for women and men, young and old. The rest of the mandate is no less complex—as it shifted the population agenda to population and development, from counting people to making people count, thus repeating and insisting that people are the centre of development. The population and development agenda includes many sensitive issues, including those factors that lead people to abandon home, hearth and profession to seek new lives in new places—often under dire circumstances; or indeed growing up—and growing older—among societies that have yet to adjust to the social, cultural, economic and/or political implications of either. It further included issues of forced displacement and movement of people, as well as the mutually impacting factors of population and environment. All of these issues were placed within the context of human rights and the right to development.

The fact that the ICPD brought religion to the forefront of population and development was highlighted in a study by the Park Ridge Centre for the Study of Health, Faith and Ethics, which described what happened in ICPD as follows: “People of [religious] conviction shocked each other and the watching world as they clashed over some of the most volatile topics of the day: family planning and the nature of family, the rights of women, gender and sexuality, and abortion and birth control¹.”

¹ Thoraya Ahmed Obaid, UNFPA Executive Director, “Culture Matters to Development: It Is the ‘How’ and Not the ‘Why’ and the ‘What’” (Traverse Lecture, Swiss Development Corporation, Bern, Switzerland, 13 December 2005).

Hence, UNFPA, through this publication, maps out its legacy of seeking the council of the oldest sources of “wisdom” and service known to mankind—faith-based organizations, religious leaders and institutions of worship. In doing so, we are building on our earlier series, titled *Culture Matters: Working with Communities and Faith-based Organizations*, in which we make clear a case for why engaging faith-based organizations and local leaders is critical to UNFPA development work. We believe that engaging these community-based organizations is critical for many reasons: They are often reference points for the communities, and they are respected. They provide the communities with spiritual and moral support, as well as educational and health services. They are those communities’ institutions and networks, and they are often credible to their constituency. Most of all, we share the same objective, though we approach it from different perspectives. We want to serve *people*, and we want to respond to the needs of the poor, the marginalized and the excluded as they claim their human rights to a life free of fear and free of want.

This sequel to the earlier series shows how broadly we have attempted to honour these partnerships, and shares some of the key lessons learned in that process. Far from being an ad hoc shaking of hands, the nature of the partnerships with faith-based organizations requires analysis, contestations, deliberations and negotiations, resulting in an agreed-upon *modus operandi* for joint work.

As this publication testifies, there is no one formula or standard blueprint for engagement. Instead, there is an ongoing—and cautious—series of calculations, commitments and mutual assessments of objectives, methods and even language. This is the essence of the culturally sensitive approach to programming taken by UNFPA, which holds human rights, the right to development, and gender equality as consistent and unwavering objectives.

I acknowledge that the “stories” of engagement contained in this publication are likely incomplete, as many contribute to our ongoing commitment to building bridges with the faith-based communities, as is the case with other critical agents of change.

The complicated—and ongoing—process of mapping the engagement between UNFPA and faith-based organizations began under the guidance of my colleague Safiye Cagar, Director of the Information and External Relations Division and the compilation of Noemi Espinoza. The results were updated, elaborated upon and assessed by Azza Karam, Senior Culture Advisor, Gender, Human Rights and Culture Branch, led by Aminata Toure. The report on the Civil Society Hearing included here was compiled by Elisabeth Scheper. Thanks to our consultant Julie Slok, the initial drafts of this document were comprehensively compiled and edited. The references on which Julie worked were provided by Suvekchya Ghimire and Carolina Iacovino. Culture Consultant Karen Demavivas was on hand to ensure follow-up with information sought from our many UNFPA country offices around the world that make up what this organization is. Our Culture Team—an interdivisional structure—parented this process of production and includes many of the names mentioned here, as well as Geeta Lal (Asia and the Pacific Division), Sherin Saadallah (Division of Arab States, Europe and Central Asia) and Julitta Onabanjo (Office of the Executive Director). In addition, we are grateful to Melissa D’Agostino, our Research Consultant, for her meticulous editorial input; to the Publications Team (with Hedia Belhadj’s supervision), for their input and process; and especially to Kate Ramsey for her comments on an earlier draft, and to Beverly Kerr, and Mehdia Bendella for managing the publication process.

As we commit to continuing this journey—with more wisdom gained from both successes and challenges—I thank each and every one of the UNFPA country offices, the Headquarters team, and our colleagues in our sister United Nations agencies; their shared thinking and experience is key to this kind of endeavour and thus made this work possible.

Most of all, I would like to express our gratitude to our partners in the faith-based community who believed in UNFPA and supported our partnership, who opened their minds and their hearts to listen to us and the messages of the Millennium Development Goals and the ICPD goals, and who found ways for us to work together. Through our context-specific partnership, we acknowledge that we are not the same, but we also acknowledge that there is a common space where we can combine our various resources to achieve the one objective in which we believe: serving the people in the communities so that every pregnancy is wanted, every birth is safe, every young person is free of HIV and AIDS, and every girl and woman is treated with dignity and respect.

Thoraya Ahmed Obaid
Executive Director

United Nations Population Fund

Glossary of Terms

AYRH	Adolescent and Youth Reproductive Health
ASRH	Adolescent Sexual and Reproductive Health
AYA	African Youth Alliance
AoC	Alliance of Civilizations
BCC	Botswana Council of Churches
CBO	community-based organization
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
CDPMM	Corporación de Desarrollo y Paz para el Magdalena Medio (Development and Peace Corporation for Magdalena Medio)
CIPK	Council of Imams and Preachers in Kenya
CCM	Country Coordinating Mechanism
FBO	faith-based organization
FGM/C	female genital mutilation/cutting
GHRCB	Gender, Human Rights and Culture Branch (UNFPA)
GFTAM	Global Fund for Tuberculosis, AIDS and Malaria
IEC	information, education and communication
ICPD	International Conference on Population and Development
LAC	Latin America and the Caribbean
MSIA	Marie Stopes International Australia
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MOWCA	Ministry of Women and Children's Affairs
NGO	non-governmental organization

OPGA	Office of the President of the General Assembly
PICs	Pacific Island Countries
PLCPD	Philippine Legislators' Committee on Population and Development
PCB	Programme Coordinating Board
STIs	sexually transmitted infections
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNCT	United Nations Country Team
UN/DESA	United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs
UNIFEM	United Nations Development Fund for Women
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNAIDS	United Nations Programme on AIDS
UNRISD	United Nations Research Institute for Social Development
WFDA	Women, Faith and Development Alliance
WCCD	World Commission on Culture and Development

Executive Summary

Objectives and Content

Culture Matters: Lessons from a Legacy of Engaging Faith-based Organizations is a sequel to *Culture Matters: Working with Communities and Faith-based Organizations*. The objectives of this publication are:

- To document partnerships between UNFPA and faith-based constituencies in the areas of reproductive health and population
- To assess the outcomes, lessons learned and best practices of faith-based partnerships around the world
- To share further resources on faith-based engagement and organizations

The mandate of UNFPA is to promote the rights of each woman and man, young and old, in order to enable each and every individual to have the benefits of a life fully lived with health and equal opportunities through that person's life cycle. UNFPA supports the efforts of countries in implementing the ICPD Programme of Action through national and regional programmes to contribute to the reduction of poverty by achieving reproductive health and rights, and gender equality. *The aim is to ensure that every pregnancy is wanted, every birth is safe, every young person is free of HIV and AIDS, and every girl and woman is treated with dignity and respect.*

Over the past 30 years, UNFPA, through its dedication to this mandate, has implicitly incorporated cultural sensitivity into its programming, as it recognizes that people not only are products of their culture but also serve

as transformers of it. Culture, within which religion features prominently, is considered a powerful component in ensuring and sustaining human development. More recently, in the past five years, UNFPA has explicitly institutionalized cultural sensitivity approaches as one of its programming tools within the context of a new organizational unit—the Gender, Human Rights and Culture Branch, Technical Division.

Conceptually, culture is understood as the total of all factors that influence the perceptions, comprehension, behaviour and reactions of human beings. Culture is, therefore, not quantifiable, but pervasive. Cultural agents are those who determine, influence and articulate perceptions, attitudes and behaviour. These include intellectuals, authors, artists and media personalities, as well as tribal elders and religious and community leaders. These “agents of culture” are, in many respects, also its guardians, interpreters and transmitters—that is, its gatekeepers. But in a sense, each and every individual is a shaper of the culture in which that person lives—hence the dynamism and complexity of cultures. In contemporary contexts, it can be argued that religious leaders in particular, and faith-based networks in general, constitute some of the most influential cultural gatekeepers and actors.

Faith-based non-governmental entities with a foundation in community welfare and social service delivery are particularly obvious—and prominent—development agents, and have been so for longer than the modern-day, more secular service entities. Thus, faith-based organizations (FBOs) combine development and cultural features in a powerful mandate.

Assumptions

The basic assumptions underlying the engagement between UNFPA and FBOs, as outlined in the precursor to this publication, are that:

- Cultures are the context in which all development work takes place and where all international human rights agreements are implemented
- Faith as part of culture is an important determinant of value systems, at both the individual and community levels
- Cultures are dynamic, interactive and evolving
- FBOs, religious leaders and religious institutions, as the gatekeepers and interpreters of religious text and thus impacting culture, are important partners in the process of development, particularly when it comes to influencing behaviour, attitudes and perceptions
- FBOs and religious groups have enormous outreach, both actual and potential. They manage the oldest, most far-reaching and diverse array of social service delivery mechanisms

As a preview of sections to come, some of the lessons learned by UNFPA in its collaboration with FBOs are that:

- Communities can be encouraged to incorporate universally recognized rights into their own realities through an exploration of how human rights and gender issues contribute to the well-being of men, women, young people and families. (See the example of Honduras and Costa Rica on page 72.)

- Promoting behaviour change often begins by identifying religious leaders who have the capacity and legitimacy to motivate and mobilize communities. Moreover, partnering with local religious leaders or agents of change has repeatedly become an invaluable strategy in gaining wider acceptance and ownership of programmes. (See the example of Kyrgyzstan on pages 49-50.)
- Carefully developed advocacy campaigns, closely tailored to the religious and cultural contexts in which they are launched, make it easier to deal with sensitive subjects. Successful campaigns targeting changes in behaviours and attitudes are those that reflect a clear understanding of the views of both allies and potential adversaries, and draw from sources that are popular within a given culture. (See the example from Eritrea, on page 34.)
- Effective negotiation requires an understanding of the interests of diverse stakeholders—from political leaders to FBOs, cultural leaders and the private sector. Instances of successful partnership demonstrate that the interests of these stakeholders can be just as critical as political and economic concerns, and once these are clearly understood, the necessary common ground is established, with a clear respect for each other's particular space when and where necessary. (See the example of Colombia on pages 68-69.)
- Incorporating language that appreciates the nuances of religion and religious sensitivities is sometimes critical to the creation of spaces in which there is understanding and support for programme objectives, with a solid understanding of each other's constraints. (See the example from Afghanistan on page 54.)

This publication consists of five sections:

- Section I is an introduction to working with FBOs; it provides the UNFPA definition of FBOs, which is inclusive of many forms of organizations and representations of the faith community. This section also presents the “culture lens” used in UNFPA programming, and shares an insight into the experiences of sister United Nations entities working with FBOs, as part of its assessment of the climate of the engagement in the United Nations. In addition, this section contains relevant highlights from the lessons learned, which are presented in more detail in the case studies—or mapping of engagements—in Section III.
- Section II highlights some of the ongoing international engagements from the work of UNFPA. To that end, outcomes and deliberations from the Civil Society Hearing around the High-Level Dialogue on Interreligious and Intercultural Cooperation for Peace and Development, held in the United Nations Headquarters in fall 2007, are provided.
- Section III provides a mapping of most of the UNFPA programs that have included or specifically targeted FBO engagement in one form or another. The presentation is divided

according to the different regions, and each mapping is preceded by a brief overview of population and reproductive health issues.

- Section IV, an Epilogue, shows that the case for engaging FBOs in development is no longer a matter of discussion, but rather one of considered, systematic and deliberate engagement of partners who make a positive difference. It also shares the conclusions of the mapping that ignoring an important parallel universe of development at a time when resources are growing scarce for the entire world, and when basic needs are becoming increasingly harder to provide for more than half of the world’s population, is not an option. The case for distinguishing among the variety in the world of faith-based development and service provision is reiterated. The Epilogue also presents five critical UNFPA policy considerations on engagement with FBOs.
- Section V is a listing of selected and annotated further readings and resources on culture, faith and development issues more broadly. This section provides information about articles; books and reports; case studies; United Nations initiatives; and toolkits on working with FBOs.

I Introduction—Background, Climate and Tools

“Today, there is an urgent need to rebuild bridges and to enter into a sustained and constructive intercultural dialogue, one that stresses common values and shared aspirations. Religious leaders can play an important role in such an exchange. They can stress the core beliefs and ideals found in all the great faith traditions: compassion, solidarity, respect for life and kindness towards others.”

— Ban Ki-moon, United Nations Secretary-General

The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) promotes the right of every woman, man and child to enjoy a life of health and equal opportunity. UNFPA supports countries in using population data for policies and programmes to reduce poverty and to ensure that every pregnancy is wanted, every birth is safe, every young person is free of HIV and AIDS, and every girl and woman is treated with dignity and respect.

— UNFPA Mission Statement

Learning from a Legacy

Over the decades, UNFPA has partnered with “agents of change” across faith traditions. Agents of change are those in communities who have leverage with many people and are open to bringing about or helping to bring about change in societies. The engagement has ranged from preventing HIV and treating AIDS, to encouraging safe motherhood and preserving the dignity of men and women by affirming their human rights as well as their moral capacity to plan for their families’ well-being. Pleased with the recent increase in interest and acceptance of the role of FBOs² in the wider development community, UNFPA is committed to both assessing and enhancing its faith-based partnerships, as part

of its broader strategic goal of creating conducive sociocultural environments to ensure the achievements of the ICPD Programme of Action.

UNFPA-supported programmes have reached some of the most vulnerable and marginalized communities through partnerships with faith and interfaith organizations. Some churches, mosques and temples around the world already have affiliated schools, health units, income-generating programmes, and youth networks with nationwide and grass-roots reach. Working with these existing, long-standing, far-reaching and energy-efficient mechanisms can lend credibility and familiarity to

many United Nations initiatives. This work is also time- and resource-efficient, and may reduce unnecessary duplication of activities. In addition, in many instances it can—and does—empower local communities to bring about the changes they deem necessary and prevent changes from being imposed by external actors. This is especially important if initiatives are perceived as being threatening to community or religious values, as locally interpreted.

Culture Matters: Lessons from a Legacy of Engaging Faith-based Organizations is a sequel to

“Religion as practiced and interpreted is a powerful force, with both positive and negative impacts on programming.”

— Thoraya Ahmed Obaid,
UNFPA Executive Director

² Faith-based organizations are defined as religious and religion-based groups or congregations, specialized religious institutions, and registered or unregistered non-profit institutions that have a faith-based character or mission. Spiritual organizations are also considered faith-based organizations.

Culture Matters: Working with Communities and Faith-based Organizations. Some of the lessons learned through these collaborations, presented in the first *Culture Matters*, and elaborated through the mapping undertaken in this sequel, are highlighted herewith:

- *Communities can be encouraged to incorporate universally recognized rights into their own realities* through an exploration of how human rights and gender issues contribute to the well-being of men, women, children and families. See the example of Honduras and Costa Rica (page 72).
- *Promoting behaviour change often begins by identifying religious leaders who have the capacity and legitimacy to motivate and mobilize communities*. Partnering with local religious leaders or agents of change has become an invaluable strategy in gaining wider acceptance and ownership of programmes, as illustrated by the example of Kyrgyzstan (pages 49-50).
- *Carefully developed advocacy campaigns, closely tailored to the religious and other cultural contexts in which they are launched, make it easier to deal with sensitive subjects*. Campaigns should reflect a clear understanding of the views of both allies and potential adversaries, and should draw from sources that are popular within a given culture. One example is from Eritrea, (page 34).
- *Effective negotiation requires an understanding of the interests of diverse stakeholders*—from political leaders to FBOs, cultural leaders and the private sector. Until their interests are clearly understood, it will be difficult to find common ground. See the example of Colombia (pages 68-69).

From Afghanistan: The Importance of Semantics

A case study from Afghanistan proves the importance of semantics. Under the culturally sensitive banner “healthy family relations”, UNFPA supported a mass advocacy campaign to eliminate domestic violence on the occasion of the International Day of the Elimination of Violence against Women.

All the messages in the distributed books were informed by words from the Qur’an and Hadith (sayings of the Muslim Prophet), and included sections on topics such as conflict management, as well as a reference section on practical ways for mullahs to use the book. Through the liaison of the Ministry of Religious Affairs, the mullahs’ assistance was successfully sought to disseminate the messages in the book to their constituents in prayer sessions and community meetings.

- *Incorporating language that appreciates the nuances of religion and religious sensitivities* is sometimes critical to the creation of spaces in which there is understanding and support for programme objectives, with a solid understanding of each other’s constraints. See the example from Afghanistan on page 54).

UNFPA began implementing its vision to partner with FBOs on reproductive health and population issues more than 30 years ago, when it supported the establishment of the International Centre for Population Research of Al-Azhar University in Cairo, the oldest Islamic religious academic institution. It further published a very authoritative study on “Family

Box 1. Faith-based Organizations—UNFPA Typology³

FBOs are defined as religious or faith-based groups or congregations, and officially registered non-governmental or governmental institutions that have a religious character or mandate.

Categories of Faith-based Organizations

1. Faith-based and/or faith-inspired development organizations, (e.g., Islamic Relief, Christian Aid, Catholic Relief Services, and their national, regional, and international chapters);
2. Interfaith- or multi-faith-based organizations: Organizations that come together for a common cause guided by common values derived from different religious traditions, and provide services that are beyond the scope of a single congregation;
3. Local congregations: People who worship together and reach out socially (e.g., organizing food pantries, clothing donations, in-home visits and assistance to the elderly);
4. Ministries of religious affairs (particularly, but not only, in countries where non-governmental organizations may, for whatever reason, find it difficult to register or function).

Planning in the Legacy of Islam”, which is still considered a reference for discussions on the subject. More recently, in 2002 UNFPA started its revival of the relevance of culture on development, especially within the rapidly changing socio-cultural and economic environment that is sweeping countries and peoples around the globe.

To gain a deeper understanding of the regional cultural specificities, UNFPA conducted internal regional consultative meetings from 2002 to 2005 to hear directly from its international and national staff who are working at the country level. It further included questions about culture in the questionnaire sent to all governments in preparations for the commemoration of ICPD+10. The responses highlighted different priorities by location. In Africa, the responses prioritized local traditions; in Latin America, religion; in Asia and the Pacific, cultural practices; and in the Arab States, religion and culture took equal priority. Building on these findings, UNFPA developed a programmatic “culture lens” as an approach to working with its partners in developing countries.

As the United Nations agency dealing with reproductive health and gender relations, UNFPA is acutely aware of the need to integrate culture, in its broadest sense, into programming as a key means of generating national and community ownership and sustainability for the programmes. In fact, UNFPA—as mandated by 179 countries meeting at ICPD in Cairo in 1994—realizes that, without the involvement and integration of community acceptance and ownership, it cannot provide the required support to the countries in which it is invited to work.

UNFPA has a three-pronged programming methodology characterized by:

- Gender equality
- Cultural sensitivity
- A rights-based approach

Under these interlinked concepts, UNFPA's work is focused on:

- Reproductive health
- Women's empowerment and gender equality
- Population and development issues

³ UNFPA, *Engaging Faith-based Organizations in HIV Prevention: A Training Manual for Programme Managers* (2007).

Since early 2002 in particular, UNFPA has built on its legacy by systematically targeting, mainstreaming and mobilizing FBOs in all its areas of work. As a critical component of its culture mandate, UNFPA has advocated for mobilizing like-minded members of all faith-based and interfaith communities, indigenous peoples, and cultural actors.

This has led UNFPA to focus first on understanding and promoting the significance of culture in development work, and thus it has progressively developed a three-pronged programming methodology: a combination of gender equality, cultural sensitivity and the rights-based approach to programming. Under these interlinked concepts, and within this nexus of culture-gender-human rights, UNFPA realizes its strategic mandate on reproductive health; women's empowerment and gender equality; and population and development issues.

Collaboration and partnerships between UNFPA and local faith-based and religious leaders and organizations have proved instrumental in creating local ownership of the ICPD Programme of Action⁴.

In countries where partnerships with such structures and institutions were formed, UNFPA was able to mainstream reproductive health concerns and services into many of these networks⁵.

Objectives, Assumptions and Challenges

OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this report are:

- To document current partnerships between UNFPA and its faith-based constituencies in the areas of reproductive health and population;

⁴ The recommendations contained in the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (the Cairo Conference) address the mandate of the conference and its overall theme: the interrelationships among population, sustained economic growth and sustainable development.

⁵ *United Nations Population Fund: Report of the Executive Director for 2003* (programme highlights).

From Colombia: Human Rights, including Reproductive Rights

In Colombia, a predominantly Catholic country ridden by conflict, UNFPA and the Catholic Church found common ground and goals. Shared principles on human rights and the conviction that there is an urgent need to create peace was the basis for this partnership.

UNFPA and the Church developed an awareness of individual rights by initializing talks of reproductive rights. One of the benefits of the collaboration was the opportunity to engage armed groups, who were less threatened by talk of reproductive rights than of human rights. Thus, armed groups willingly participated in reproductive health workshops, which then became opportunities to discuss human rights. The entry point was reproductive health, which led to a discussion on respect for life and for the dignity and freedom of people.

- To note some critical outcomes, lessons learned and best practices of faith-based partnerships around the world;
- To share further resources on engagement with FBOs.

ASSUMPTIONS

The basic assumptions, underlying the engagement between UNFPA and FBOs, based on lessons learned to date, are:

- Faith and culture are important determinants of value systems at both the individual and the community level. Religions and cultures are dynamic and interactive. They cannot be immune to societal changes, or to dialogues and interpretations that take place in response to the changing context of the communities.
- FBOs and religious leaders have enormous outreach potential. They can reach the hearts and minds of their constituents and be generators of sustainable change in traditions and cultures.
- FBOs have large numbers of constituents in public posts who are involved in determining social and economic priorities, allocating

“UNAIDS notes that “today faith-based organizations, both on their own and in partnership with others, play a vital and expanding role in the comprehensive response to HIV: empowering people to avoid risk of exposure to HIV, providing physical and spiritual care to those infected and affected, and combating stigmatization and discrimination.”

resources, and influencing public opinion.

- In concrete and pragmatic terms, not only do FBOs have large networks of schools, health clinics and income-generating activities that reach remote hamlets, villages, towns and cities, but in some parts of the world, FBOs provide the only and/or the best education and health-related services. The figures below are based on a USAID/Access study⁷ of the role of FBOs in health-care services in some African countries:

- Democratic Republic of the Congo—FBOs account for 50 per cent of health services, with 180 hospitals and several thousand health clinics
- Kenya—FBOs account for 40 per cent of health services, with 24 hospitals, 341 health clinics and 51 church programmes
- Lesotho—FBOs account for 40 per cent of health services, with eight hospitals and 75 health clinics
- Uganda—FBOs account for more than 55 per cent of health services and 75 per cent of pre-services
- Religious leaders want the best for their constituencies, and can often be persuaded by science and statistics to change positions from harmful practices to more positive alternative practices.

Box 2. Definitions: Religion and Culture⁶

Religion

1. The belief in a superhuman power, esp. in a personal God, or gods, entitled to obedience and worship.
2. The expression of this worship.
3. A particular system of faith and worship.

Culture

1. The arts and manifestations of human intellectual achievements regarded collectively.
2. The civilization and achievements of a particular group of people.

⁶ *Oxford English Dictionary* (Oxford: Oxford University Press).

⁷ “The Role of FBOs in Improving Maternal Newborn and Women’s Health” (USAID/Access presentation by Sarla Chand on, 24 March 2008).

CHALLENGES

Intended as a “mapping”, this report is more a “signpost along the road of UNFPA partnerships with FBOs”, and less a comprehensive documentation of each partnership. Whereas numerous programmes and studies point to the values of engaging faith-based communities (see Section V), a blueprint for doing so does not exist. Such engagement is contextual, based on the specificity of each community. Furthermore, systematic documentation and critical assessments of such partnerships remain limited, even within UNFPA. Ironically, this lack is partly due to the enormous numbers of such partnerships over the years, and to the fact that the engagement with the faith-based sector was often taken for granted by development actors, including UNFPA.

Compiling the information for this exercise has proved, time and again, the need for more systematic information gathering, as well as more clarity as to indicators with which to gauge both the range and extent of these partnerships and, critically, their impact. Last but by no means least, because of all these challenges, several pitfalls and dangers come with the territory. And while we share successful engagements (those that have resulted in changing mindsets and mobilizing key policy changes and/or amendments, as well as religious public-opinion makers), the engagement with the faith-based sector requires ever more consistent deliberation, patience, and wisdom.

The Culture Lens

As the first *Culture Matters* asserts, cultures are dynamic, interactive and subject to change.

“People are products of their cultures, but they are also active participants in shaping these cultures⁸”—that is, they are agents in and of cultures.

Religion is an important part of culture and vice versa, and harmful cultural practices rooted or assumed to be rooted in religious values and/or interpretations may be some of the most difficult to change. However, when attitudes and beliefs are respected and evidence is presented, most religious leaders are open to the idea that specific areas of development will improve the health and well-being of their constituents, as well as the exercise of their right to health and other interrelated rights.

The knowledge that different social and cultural realities create both challenges and opportunities for achieving programme goals prompts UNFPA to systematically integrate cultural dynamics and agents into all of its programmes. One of the results—and, indeed tools—of this was the development of the “culture lens”. The culture lens enables the integration of the three-pronged programmatic approach taken by UNFPA combining gender equality, cultural sensitivity and human rights. The culture lens is a tool that informs programme designs which fit diverse national and local contexts, but without losing sight of the rights that are basic to the well-being of the individuals and the communities⁹.

The Climate of Engagement—the United Nations and Faith-based Organizations

During the 1990s, in global conferences on the environment, population and development, women, human rights, and

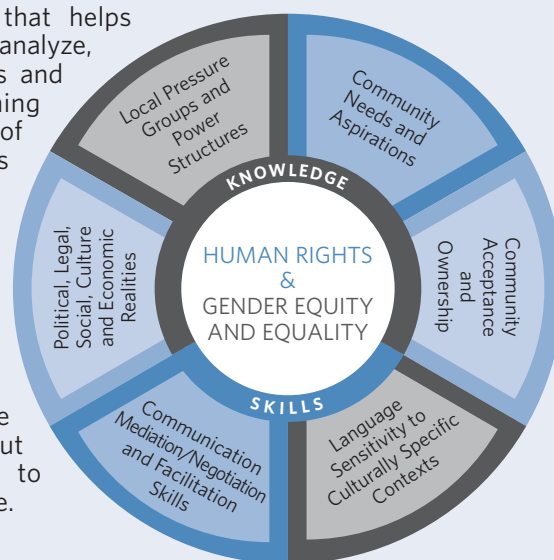
⁸ *Culture Matters: Working with Communities and Faith-based Organizations*, http://www.unfpa.org/upload/lib_pub_file/426_filename_CultureMatters_2004.pdf.

⁹ *Culture Matters: Working with Communities and Faith-based Organizations*, http://www.unfpa.org/upload/lib_pub_file/426_filename_CultureMatters_2004.pdf.

Box 3: The Culture Lens

The Culture Lens Encourages Finding Locally Grown Solutions to Ensure Ownership and Sustainability of Development Results

The “culture lens” is a programming tool that helps policymakers and development practitioners analyze, understand and employ cultural values, assets and structures in their planning and programming processes. This allows a deeper understanding of the ICPD Programme of Action, strengthens programming effectiveness, and creates conditions for ownership and sustainability of UNFPA programmes in the areas of women’s empowerment and promotion of reproductive health and rights. The culture lens is an approach promoted by UNFPA that can advance the goals of programming effectively and efficiently, with strong community acceptance and ownership. It allows the community to determine how to go about identifying what needs to change in order to achieve the basic rights of people to a better life.



The culture lens clarifies:

- Realities and socio-cultural assets of societies in which programmes are delivered. These assets could be religious congregations or prayer groups.
- Influential local power structures and pressure groups that can be potential allies or adversaries to development programming. In fact, some powerful partnerships have been forged by groups of religious leaders.
- The internal cultural tensions and aspirations of the various subcultures. Some of these tensions are between human rights and gender vis-à-vis religious communities and religious interpretations.

These perspectives can help policymakers and development practitioners achieve the goals of development programming more effectively and efficiently, with stronger community acceptance and ownership, by:

- Developing skills for interacting with and engaging individuals, communities and interest groups living in a specific cultural context—for example, by setting up acceptable meeting times that do not collide with religious services or decency requirements.
- Using culturally acceptable and persuasive language in communication with partners and stakeholders.
- Building bridges between local cultural values and universally recognized human rights and gender equity and equality.
- Creating a favourable environment for programme ownership by engaging stakeholders in consultations, design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of programmes, thus ensuring sustainability of these programmes.

social development, religion moved to the forefront of United Nations advocacy. Public awareness of religion at the United Nations also increased dramatically as a result of media coverage surrounding the 1994 ICPD in Cairo and subsequent United Nations meetings. The charged religious atmosphere that emerged there gave many observers pause to think about religion's role in international dialogue.

In response, Religion Counts was established as an international representation of scholars, experts and leaders as they participated in and monitored religious activities at the United Nations, especially the five-year reviews of the ICPD+5 and Beijing+5. They concluded that religion is indeed present at the United Nations; that its role at the United Nations is unclear to many people; and that religious individuals and groups do not have unified perspectives on either the issues before the United Nations or the appropriate role of religion in the United Nations¹⁰.

Since then, changes have occurred. In fact, during the sixty-second session of the General Assembly in October 2007, the High-level Dialogue on Interreligious and Intercultural Understanding and Cooperation for Peace noted, among many statements, that "in order to achieve full and timely implementation of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and strengthen human rights institutions, the United Nations cooperates with civil society groups, among them faith-based organizations". The aim of this, as the gathered participants maintained, is strengthened

cooperation to eradicate poverty and promote human dignity and freedom from despair¹¹.

The gathered governmental delegates were keen to stress the need to deepen the understanding among cultures, religions and civilizations, and come to a greater interreligious and intercultural cooperation for peace. This, they deemed, is required in order to remedy negative effects of the globalization process as manifested, in part, through patterns of migration, and increased tensions among ethnic and religious groups¹².

In fact, the United Nations has a long record of defending freedom of religion and beliefs as a fundamental human right and a foundation for peace and justice. Thus, religion is specifically mentioned in many important international conventions and declarations.

Initiatives that call for interreligious and intercultural dialogue are now unfolding and intensifying at the United Nations and beyond. They are framed by a number of United Nations General Assembly resolutions, which are the formal expression of opinions and/or positions by Member States.

A bird's-eye view of some of the most recent related activities and/or initiatives undertaken by various United Nations agencies, funds, programmes and bodies, apart from UNFPA, is provided below. Although by no means comprehensive, this overview provides an insight into how the United Nations system has actively and systematically partnered with FBOs on key mandate areas.

¹⁰ Thoraya Ahmed Obaid, UNFPA Executive Director, "Culture Matters to Development: It Is the 'How' and Not the 'Why' and the 'What'" (Traverse Lecture, Swiss Development Corporation, Bern, Switzerland, 13 December 2005).

¹¹ Sixty-second session, "High-level Dialogue on Interreligious and Intercultural Understanding and Cooperation for Peace" (summary of informal interactive hearings of the General Assembly with representatives of civil society, non-governmental organizations, religious communities, academia and the private sector).

¹² "High-level Dialogue on Interreligious and Intercultural Understanding and Cooperation for Peace" (summary of the report submitted to UNFPA by Elisabeth Scheper, Official Rapporteur).

Box 4: UNGA Resolutions Mentioning Religion¹³

2007	61/269. High-level Dialogue on Interreligious and Intercultural Understanding and Cooperation for Peace 61/221. Promotion of interreligious and intercultural dialogue, understanding and cooperation for peace 61/164. Combating defamation of religions 61/161. Elimination of all forms of intolerance and of discrimination based on religion or belief
2006	60/166. Elimination of all forms of intolerance and discrimination based on religion or belief 60/160. Effective promotion of the Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities 60/150. Combating defamation of religions 60/11. Promotion of religious and cultural understanding, harmony and cooperation 60/10. Promotion of interreligious dialogue and cooperation for peace
2005	59/199. Elimination of all forms of religious intolerance 59/142. Promotion of religious and cultural understanding, harmony and cooperation
2004	59/23. Promotion of interreligious dialogue

The Alliance of Civilizations (AoC)

The Alliance of Civilizations was established in 2005, at the initiative of the Governments of Spain and Turkey, under the auspices of the United Nations. It aims to improve understanding and cooperative relations among nations and peoples across cultures and religions, and, in the process, to help counter the forces that fuel polarization and extremism.

The first phase of the Alliance started with the creation by the United Nations Secretary-General of a high-level group of 20 eminent personalities mandated to produce a report exploring the roots of polarization among cultures and societies worldwide and proposing practical recommendations to address this

growing trend. The high-level group presented its report to Secretary-General Kofi Annan in November 2006.

In April 2007, United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon appointed Jorge Sampaio, former President of Portugal, as High Representative for the Alliance. This marked the beginning of the second phase of the Alliance of Civilizations, with the development of an action-oriented implementation plan focusing on initiatives and projects in the areas of youth, media, education and migration.

The Alliance is supported by a Group of Friends—a community of more than 85 member countries and international organizations and bodies. Working in partnership with governments, international and regional organizations, civil

¹³ Derived courtesy of the Committee of Religious NGOs at the United Nations website, <http://www.rngo.org>.

Box 5: Conventions and Declarations

The United Nations has throughout its history been aware of the importance of religion. Religion is mentioned in Article 2 of the **Universal Declaration of Human Rights** as one of the elements that is fundamental to ensure the enjoyment of human rights without discrimination.

Article 2 states that:

“Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms ...without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status.”

The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights recognizes the right to freedom of religion¹⁴. Article 18 stipulates that:

1. Everyone shall have the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion. This right shall include freedom to have or to adopt a religion or belief of his choice, and freedom, either individually or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in worship, observance, practice and teaching.
2. No one shall be subject to coercion which would impair his freedom to have or to adopt a religion or belief of his choice.
3. Freedom to manifest one’s religion or beliefs may be subject only to such limitations as are prescribed by law and are necessary to protect public safety, order, health, or morals or the fundamental rights and freedoms of others.
4. The States Parties to the present Covenant undertake to have respect for the liberty of parents and, when applicable, legal guardians to ensure the religious and moral education of their children in conformity with their own convictions.

In 1981, the **Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief** was signed and enacted. It states in Article 1.1 that:

“Everyone shall have the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion. This right shall include freedom to have a religion or whatever belief of his choice, and freedom, either individually or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in worship, observance, practice and teaching.”

Religion and religious beliefs are integrated and protected in a number of other conventions and declarations, such as:

1. The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1966)
2. The Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989)
3. The Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention (1989)
4. The Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities (1992)
5. The Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (2007)

¹⁴ http://www.unhchr.ch/html/menu3/b/a_ccpr.htm.

society groups, foundations, and the private sector, the Alliance is supporting a range of projects and initiatives aimed at building bridges among a diversity of cultures and communities. It is developing an online clearinghouse of best practices, materials and resources on cross-cultural dialogue and cooperation projects, as well as a Rapid Response Media Mechanism to provide platforms for constructive debate and opinion during times of increased tensions around cross-cultural issues.

The Alliance's focus on concrete initiatives was reinforced and consolidated at the First Alliance of Civilizations Forum, which was hosted by the Government of Spain on 15 and 16 January 2008. This high-profile, action-oriented event brought together a powerful network of political leaders, governments, international organizations, civil society groups, and religious communities, as well as media and corporate leaders. Among its many outcomes, it featured the signing of an action-oriented statement of solidarity and joint commitment by diverse religious leaders towards the goal of advancing shared security and peace, and providing youth with guidance to counter extremist influences.

United Nations Programme on AIDS (UNAIDS)

Created as a structure to ensure coordination among the various United Nations agencies working in and around HIV and AIDS, the UNAIDS Secretariat (and its 10 co-sponsors¹⁵) have long-standing historical engagement with networks of FBOs. UNAIDS recognizes that the role of religion is becoming increasingly relevant in international development today. Furthermore, UNAIDS acknowledges the important role that FBOs provide in terms of

health services in particular in many parts of the world. This, in turn, highlights the need to engage and enhance partnerships with religious leaders and faith-based communities from all faith traditions in the response to AIDS. It has been encouraging to find that collaboration on AIDS is often possible even in situations of significant religious tension and conflict.

UNAIDS cooperates with FBOs in the provision of a range of services that include spiritual and material support for people living with HIV or AIDS, home visits, and care for orphans and vulnerable children. It works with networks of religious leaders living with and/or affected by HIV—the African Network (ANERELA+) and the International Network (INERELA+)—which have a wide reach and capacity to respond to AIDS.

UNAIDS also works with FBOs that convene religious leaders in dialogue, and others that are actively involved in training health-care workers, teachers and other professionals, all of which are critical activities to address the growing human resource shortages in countries highly affected by AIDS. It thereby supports theological reflection that has fed into the teachings of clergy and religious leaders, and promotes interfaith dialogue at both international and country levels, where faith leaders are involved in national and international decision-making processes on AIDS. UNAIDS encourages religious leaders to speak out on stigma and discrimination.

FBOs have been represented on the NGO delegation to the UNAIDS Programme Coordinating Board (PCB), on the civil society task force for the High-level Meetings on AIDS, in national interfaith networks engaged in the Three Ones national partnership forums, and in the Global Fund for Tuberculosis, AIDS and

¹⁵ UNAIDS brings together the efforts and resources of 10 United Nations system organizations to the global AIDS response. Co-sponsors are UNHCR, UNICEF, WFP, UNDP, UNFPA, UNODC, ILO, UNESCO, WHO and the World Bank. <http://www.unaids.org/en/Partnerships/UNFamily/default.asp>.

Malaria (GFTAM) mechanisms, such as the NGO delegations to their governing board and Country Coordinating Mechanisms (CCMs).

The UNAIDS Secretariat has a Memorandum of Understanding with Caritas Internationalis, which provides practical relief and development through 163 national member organizations working in more than 200 countries, 103 of them with well-established HIV programmes. UNAIDS also collaborates with the Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance; the Tear Fund; Islamic Relief; the Buddhist Sangha Metta Project; and the Art of Living Foundation, a Hindu group building a leadership platform among Hindu religious leaders in India. In November 2007, UNAIDS Executive Director Dr. Peter Piot gave the plenary address at the Saddleback Church global AIDS summit, and senior managers made presentations in the plenary sessions of two significant Islamic conferences on AIDS. At the regional and country levels, the UNAIDS Secretariat has approximately 60 Partnership Officers working with regional and national interfaith networks, religious leaders, and NGOs with religious affiliations delivering AIDS services often in rural communities. It welcomes advocacy, coming from the faith community, which is designed to influence political decisions on AIDS, funding priorities, public policy, and access to antiretroviral drugs and services.

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)

UNESCO¹⁶ works with religious authorities of all faiths as well as other civil society partners to achieve common goals. The starting point for UNESCO is that ignorance of religious pluralism leads to misunderstanding and, consequently,

to intolerance. UNESCO believes that a unidimensional perception of culture and religious “truth” is detrimental to the pluralism of ideas and beliefs, and can lead to ideological or nationalistic extremism, and isolationism. However, UNESCO maintains that religion can and does foster social cohesion. To this end, UNESCO has developed an interdisciplinary programme on interreligious dialogue, a key component of intercultural dialogue.

The interreligious dialogue programme draws on various disciplines, as well as on the support and cooperation of all sectors of UNESCO. UNESCO has engaged specialized non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and universities to conduct specific research. Much of the research confirms that religion is not a factor leading to the disintegration of the social fabric but a factor of mutual enrichment, beneficial to society as a whole.

For UNESCO, interreligious dialogue is a component of intercultural dialogue, because beliefs are to be considered part of the overall culture of human beings. The fact that religion is viewed as a component of culture, UNESCO maintains, helps in avoiding dogmatic issues on the primacy of religion in social life.

The issue of religion is also placed within the overall discussion on cultural diversity. Religious beliefs, attitudes and practices are an important component of this diversity and should be respected and preserved at the different levels of social life.

Religious issues increasingly attract the attention of States as well as academic circles, intergovernmental organizations, and NGOs. In response to the actual focus on religious confrontations and religion-based prejudices,

¹⁶ http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php-URL_ID=29008&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html.

UNESCO was requested by its Member States to place particular emphasis on the issue of interreligious dialogue.

UNESCO has an expertise and added value to bring to this field because it is the only agency of the United Nations system to carry out an Interreligious Dialogue programme. As part of the United Nations reform initiatives of “delivering as one”, UNESCO has endeavoured to work in synergy with other agencies that address similar problems or issues, such as the High Commission for Human Rights, UNICEF, and other regional institutions, such as the European Council, Parliament and Commission. UNESCO intends to consolidate and strengthen this inter-agency work in the coming years.

The United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF)

For UNICEF, FBOs and religious leaders have become important partners in its work with children around the globe. In developing countries, UNICEF works very closely with Buddhist, Christian and Islamic faith communities. UNICEF maintains that religion plays a central, integrating role in social and cultural life in most developing countries, and that, indeed, there are often many more religious leaders than health workers. They are in closer and more regular contact with all age groups in society, and their voices are highly respected. In traditional communities, religious leaders are often more influential than local government officials or secular community leaders.

Some of the areas of engagement for UNICEF in addressing children’s rights are educational projects for out-of-school and abused children, advocacy and education for HIV and AIDS awareness and prevention, combating child labour and commercial sexual exploitation of children, and providing the best possible health care for children. The engagement of religious leaders in advocacy for, and the integration and promotion of, child rights and child protection into social action programmes led by churches and religious groups¹⁷ continues to be a hallmark of the work UNICEF conducts with FBOs.

The United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN/DESA)

DESA has a long-standing involvement in intercultural issues. As the United Nations entity servicing the Economic and Social Council, including its Commission on Social Development and the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, DESA produces extensive policy analyses and normative work on issues such as social inclusion and the status of indigenous peoples. This work always seeks to promote intercultural dialogue within and among communities. Moreover, DESA is mandated to bring various entities of the United Nations system together in support of the consideration by the General Assembly of the culture of peace, intercultural and interfaith dialogue, and the dialogue among civilizations¹⁸.

¹⁷ UNICEF home page, <http://www.unicef.org>, 15 January 2008. Also see Selected Further Resources for UNICEF experiences on working with FBOs.

¹⁸ <http://www.un.org/esa/desa> and <http://www.un.org/ga/president/62/issues/interreligiousintercultural/UNinitiatives.pdf>.

II Highlights of Ongoing Commitments by UNFPA

A. The Civil Society Hearing on Interreligious and Intercultural Understanding and Cooperation for Peace

In October 2007, a high-level dialogue took place at the United Nations General Assembly that included a half-day informal hearing under the overarching theme “High-level Dialogue on Interreligious and Intercultural Understanding and Cooperation for Peace”. The purpose of the informal hearing was to provide an opportunity for NGOs, academia and the private sector to interact with United Nations Member States and bodies.

UNFPA collaborated actively with the Office of the President of the General Assembly (OPGA), DESA, UNESCO, UNICEF, and the United Nations Non-Governmental Liaison Service to support a Steering Committee composed of global civil society representatives. The Steering Committee, which comprised representatives from various FBOs (accredited by relevant United Nations bodies), and on which the United Nations representatives served as facilitators, put together a list of candidates representing FBOs, as well as academia and private sector representatives, to speak at the informal hearing¹⁹.

UNFPA hosted and co-organized several of the deliberations and meetings, including the Civil

Society Hearing and facilitated the process of nominating and selecting FBO representatives. It also sent out invitations to members of its global faith-based networks urging their participation in the selection process. UNFPA sponsored some of the selected FBO representatives from Africa, Latin America, and the Arab region. In addition, UNFPA sponsored a round-table event that brought together some of the representatives at the Civil Society Hearing to discuss the challenges and successes of mobilizing around reproductive health and population in different parts of the world.

The objectives of the High-level Dialogue were to:

- Strengthen efforts towards interreligious and intercultural understanding and cooperation by engaging a variety of actors and constituencies in government, civil society and the United Nations system, to promote a culture of peace and dialogue among civilizations and advance multi-stakeholder coalitions on related issues
- Translate shared values into action under the high-level goal of achieving sustainable peace in the 21st century.²⁰

Through the Civil Society Hearing, it became apparent why religion was perceived as occupying an increasingly unique role. On the one hand, the FBO representatives maintained that religious spokespersons “have a distinctive spiritual and moral authority to bear the

¹⁹ “High-level Dialogue on Interreligious and Intercultural Understanding and Cooperation for Peace” (summary report), <http://www.un.org/ga/president/61/follow-up/hld-interreligious.shtml>.

²⁰ “High-level Dialogue on Interreligious and Intercultural Understanding and Cooperation for Peace” (summary report), <http://www.un.org/ga/president/61/follow-up/hld-interreligious.shtml>.

From Eritrea: Multi-faith in Action

Some of the UNFPA projects are multi-faith and engage not only various faith confessions but also several religions. In the project titled “Care and Support for People Living with HIV and AIDS”, UNFPA in Eritrea directly collaborated with the Islamic Mufti Office as well as the Orthodox, Catholic and Evangelical Churches. UNFPA facilitated a National Committee consisting of representatives from these groups to create an interfaith platform that would oversee and assess the performance of the project. The project itself addresses issues of reproductive health, HIV and AIDS, and maternal morbidity and mortality.

unbearable and forgive the unforgivable”.²¹ On the other hand, some of the participants noted that religions may also assert superiority to others and make claims to “ultimate truth”.

While this is one of the key factors behind the potential for religions to be abused to justify violence, it can also work as an incentive for peacemaking. Some of the FBO representatives argued that they are agents of peace. Some spoke to the need to view perpetrators who use sacred texts to condone violence as part of religious communities, who need to be invited to internal faith dialogues rather than pushed to further marginalization. They also suggested that the United Nations urge religious groups to work together—and if possible facilitate such work—across internal and external divides, noting that this would “undermine the potential for claims to absolutism or exclusivity”.

To develop a shared vision, the participants maintained, societies must be introspective with regard to their own religious and cultural traditions. There is a need, they urged, for two complementary dialogues: the interreligious dialogue, and the dialogue with extreme elements within the one religious tradition. Both were deemed equally important.

The FBO representatives noted that when religions promote egalitarianism, they become powerful allies in attempts to foster peace among the nations. They advocated further that concrete examples of successful grass-roots dialogues involving different religious communities and civil society organizations need to be systematically collected and disseminated as proof of practical efficiency and peacekeeping resources.

Some participants were keen to stress the role of the media in promoting understanding, and that freedom of speech must not be used to foster hatred and misunderstanding. Some of the FBO representatives also praised the role of the United Nations in monitoring and calling attention to victims of religious repression, but they cautioned that freedom of religion and beliefs continues to be violated in several parts of the world. Finally, participants urged that both governments and religious representatives need to work together more reflectively and deliberately, targeting shared concerns.

B. The Launch of the Women, Faith and Development Alliance (WFDA)

UNFPA has also endorsed the Women, Faith, and Development Alliance (WFDA), a unique partnership of a tripartite axis of internationally focused faith, development and women’s

²¹ UNFPA, *Report of the Civil Society Hearing around the High-level Dialogue on Interreligious and Intercultural Understanding and Cooperation for Peace* (excerpts compiled by Elisabeth Scheper, October 2007).

organizations. The Breakthrough Summit in April 2008 served as a forum for international leaders from faith communities, governments, donors and NGOs to convene and announce new commitments to engender global poverty alleviation efforts.

Co-founded by the Washington National Cathedral's Centre for Global Justice and Reconciliation, InterAction's Commission on the Advancement of Women, Religions for Peace and Women Thrive Worldwide, WFDA launched its international action and advocacy campaign at the Breakthrough Summit in Washington, DC. The Summit offered an opportunity to announce this unique alliance in a manner orchestrated to show the varied faces and discourses of its members, while highlighting the critical issues of injustice facing women and girls. WFDA is dedicated to engendering global efforts to reduce poverty by increasing political will and action to increase investments in women's and girls' empowerment around the world.

Echoing the UNFPA vision of collaboration and partnerships that bring the faith-based world within the programmatic ambit of international development agencies and women's rights organizations, WFDA provides a natural counterpart to the UNFPA efforts. Hence, UNFPA has committed to helping WFDA set its organizational infrastructure and programmatic engagements.

C. Trainings on Culturally Sensitive Programming

In August 2008, UNFPA concluded its cycle of training workshops for its own regional staff on culturally sensitive programming, which follow on the country-specific trainings that have taken place since 2003. So far, several such workshops have been held in Baku, Azerbaijan; Bangkok, Thailand; Cairo, Egypt; Contonou,

Benin; Nairobi, Kenya; Panama City, Panama; and Tashkent, Uzbekistan.

UNFPA has also developed training manuals on culturally sensitive programming for its training workshops organized for the United Nations Country Teams (UNCTs), which took place over the course of 2007/08. June 2008 saw the completion of the five trainings for UNCTs of Bangladesh, Brazil, Iran, Iraq and Jordan. As an opportunity to discuss the challenges of conceiving development programmes in the midst of the tense nexus of culture, gender and human rights, these UNCT trainings provided an overview of shared inter-agency dilemmas, as well as critical opportunities for reflection on creative approaches.

D. Consolidating UNFPA-FBO Partnerships in 2008 and Beyond: Convening and Launching Regional and Global Interfaith Networks on Population and Development

Lessons from the partnerships in which UNFPA has been active show amazing results in areas that might not have been the most obvious. The types of interventions and partnerships between FBOs and UNFPA are multifaceted, multicultural and multi-faith.

In 2007, UNFPA began planning a series of regional consultations bringing together its partner FBOs to share best practices and lessons learned. The regional meetings are designed to emerge with recommendations to enhance these multifaceted partnerships, with a view towards successfully addressing some of the most pressing concerns (HIV and AIDS, gender-based violence, empowerment of women, reduction in maternal morbidity and mortality, and response to humanitarian crisis).

The African Forum took place in Durban, South Africa, in December 2007, and was followed by the Asia and Pacific Forum in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, in May 2008. In July 2008, the Arab region hosted its FBO Forum in Cairo, followed by the Latin American and Caribbean one in Buenos Aires in September. Each of these Fora is an opportunity to convene a critical mass of FBOs that support the agenda of the ICPD and MDGs, and thereby to form regional interfaith networks.

The Regional Fora are critical moments of reflection in the journey UNFPA is taking towards creating a Global Interfaith Network on Population and Development. Their outcomes crystallize and fortify the emergence of this significant faith-based movement for human development. Each consecutive Regional Forum documents the lessons learned and incorporates the recommendations emerging from the prior consultation. At the same time, each Forum focuses on the specificities of building interfaith partnerships around a particular set of issues relevant to each respective region.

The Regional Fora culminate in a Global Faith-based Forum, during which the successes of FBO partnerships will be presented. The Regional and Global Fora are in line with the UNFPA 2008-2011 Strategic Plan, which emphasizes the forging of regional multilateral partnerships and alliances that include and underscore the importance of partnering with

faith-based groups in order to enhance the global outreach by UNFPA to support countries in achieving the ICPD-MDG agendas.

As the 15-year anniversary of the ICPD in 2009 approaches, it is time to take stock of achievements, gaps and challenges, and mobilize a critical mass of partnerships towards reaching the goals set out by the ICPD nearly 15 years ago and their link to the MDGs. Efforts to implement the ICPD Programme of Action and to achieve the MDG of reducing global poverty by half by 2015 continue to gather momentum. By convening this critical mass of FBOs at the regional and global levels around the ICPD issues, the Fora thus aim to achieve the following:

- Create a Global Interfaith Network on Population and Development as a key catalyst in furthering a conducive sociocultural environment.
- Endorse increased access to comprehensive reproductive health services and care. The gathered FBOs and religious leaders will provide recommendations to enhance their partnerships with UNFPA on improving strategies, approaches and capacities to deliver on the UNFPA mandate areas.
- Share challenges, lessons learned and best practices in creating culturally sensitive and rights-based partnerships and alliances for the MDGs.

III Mapping UNFPA and FBO Partnerships in the Field

In 2006, UNFPA carried out a “mapping exercise” that had the following objectives:

- To gather information on the partnerships between UNFPA and FBOs on reproductive health, gender equality and population dynamics
- To document specific outcomes, lessons learned and best practices of such partnerships
- To identify potential future FBO partners

Sources and Methodology

A questionnaire was sent out to all country offices, and an analysis of an earlier survey on ICPD+10 was performed to identify FBO partners. Subsequently, in 2007, UNFPA sent a follow-up questionnaire with five select questions to UNFPA country offices to update the information and fill in some gaps. The responses were consolidated in the form of an FBO case study chart and project summary documents. This was supplemented by additional data from the field derived from the UNFPA publications *Culture Matters: Working*

with Communities and Faith-based Organizations (2004), *Working from Within: Culturally Sensitive Approaches in UNFPA Programming* (2004), and *Programming to Address Violence against Women: Ten Case Studies* (2005).

Although the mapping covers the period of 2006/07, some of the FBO case studies presented were executed prior to those dates. An overview of all the case studies can be found in Appendix A. The relationship between UNFPA and FBOs continues and evolves, hence the mapping is intended to be a work in progress, or a living document, rather than a qualitative milestone assessment.²² In the following sections, the mapping information is organized by region: Africa; Arab States, Eastern Europe and Central Asia; Asia and the Pacific; and Latin America and the Caribbean. Each section consists of a brief overview of the context, a table, and a listing per country.

It is to the three-decade legacy of the partnership between UNFPA and FBOs working in Africa, the Arab States, Eastern Europe, Central Asia, Asia and the Pacific, Latin America and the Caribbean that we now turn.

²² Updates available at <http://www.unfpa.org/publications/index.cfm?filterListType=3&filterSortBy=1&filterTitleArr=A-B-C>.

Africa Overview

As a continent, Africa is rich in its wealth of natural resources and its abundance of people, though neither is yet well developed and utilized. Furthermore, it is a continent with a religious, cultural, social and economic diversity that ranges from rich tribal animist societies to modern urban centres, and has traditionally had strong collaboration between FBOs and international organizations. Complex cultural realities such as pro-natalism (an attitude that encourages childbearing), polygamy and customary law are present in a mix with modernity and monotheistic religions in much of the continent. Poverty, gender inequality, HIV prevalence and harmful practices, including gender-based violence, are the biggest challenges to meeting the needs and assuring the rights of women and girls, men and boys, young and old.

Though many of the African countries have made progress towards economic growth, efforts to eradicate poverty, empower women, reduce child mortality and improve maternal health in the region continue to be severely undercut by the devastating AIDS pandemic and by massive human displacements in the wake of natural disasters, violent conflicts and political strife. In an area that is home to more than 60 per cent of the world's HIV-positive people, halting and reversing the spread of HIV, as well as addressing other health issues such as malaria and tuberculosis, are among the highest priorities.²³

Making motherhood safer is another urgent priority: Women in the region face a 1-in-16 lifetime risk of dying from pregnancy-related causes, and millions more will be disabled. The high rate of teen pregnancies creates additional

risks for mothers and newborns. Lack of access to emergency obstetric care and a low proportion of births attended by professionally trained personnel contribute to the continuing, extraordinarily high rates of maternal death and disability. Among ongoing work, advocacy remains needed to target the poorest of the poor in urban slums and in difficult-to-reach areas, in efforts to stamp out harmful practices and reduce gender-based violence (associated with poor pregnancy outcomes, among other effects). Expanded efforts also are under way to treat women who have been disabled by obstetric fistula, a devastating injury of childbearing.²⁴ Early motherhood is prevalent, with a continental average of 103 births per 1,000 teenage girls aged 15-19. But this ranges from less than 6 per cent in South Africa, to Niger, where a fourth of adolescent girls are mothers.²⁵

Population statistics for Africa are themselves in need of enhancement, and diligent collection, updated analysis and utilization of this information for planning purposes is needed. But it is already well known that there are critical challenges to be addressed. HIV and AIDS prevalence is high, especially in southern Africa, where 25 per cent of men and 40 per cent of women carry the virus. Infant mortality rates are, on average, 89 per 1,000 live births; however, this ranges from 44 per 1,000 in Mauritius to 160 per 1,000 in Sierra Leone. From a reproductive health point of view, therefore, while the need for accurate data remains one of the key issues for population and development, the biggest challenges are the high levels of maternal and infant mortality, HIV and AIDS, and early childbirth.

Hence, the dominant areas of engagement with FBOs are AIDS treatment, support and

²³ <http://www.unfpa.org/africa/overview.cfm>.

²⁴ <http://www.unfpa.org/africa/overview.cfm>.

²⁵ UNFPA, "Monitoring ICPD Goals: Selected Indicators", in *State of the World Population 2007: Unleashing the Potential of Urban Growth* (2007).

care; reproductive rights and sexual and reproductive health (including such health and rights specifically for adolescents); maternal health; family planning; gender equality; and elderly health. The projects in which UNFPA has been involved are wide-ranging, having included programmes with youth, women and men, elderly people, religious leaders (e.g., imams), professional health personnel, and people living with HIV and AIDS.

UNFPA partnered with a variety of FBOs, such as the Botswana Council of Churches, the Catholic congregation of the House of the Little Sisters of the Poor (des Petites Soeurs des Pauvres), the Supreme Muslim Council of Ghana, and Religions Against AIDS in Rwanda. Partnership activities entailed advocacy such as establishing spaces for dialogue with communities in forums. Capacity-building activities consisted of training, sensitization and awareness-raising

among professional personnel, government representatives and NGOs, as well as the mobilization of religious leaders.

The lessons learned from the ongoing engagement with FBOs include the realization that prior to designing advocacy work for grass-roots communities, it is important to ensure that leaders of these communities are approached, sensitized and incorporated into the development process. In fact, practical field experiences point to the fact that dialogue, sensitization and joint programming with FBOs should be an ongoing process that goes beyond a single programming cycle. Likewise, it is vital to find ways and means to mainstream development activities into the work of faith-based partners, so that such activities become part of their regular programmes. Critically, providing hard data has proved time and again to be one of the best advocacy tools to win over some faith-based partners.²⁶

²⁶ The full case study, "Strengthening Ties with a Religious Network in Ghana that Promotes Interfaith Understanding and Better Prospects for Youth", can be found in the publication *Culture Matters: Working with Communities and Faith-based Organizations* (2004).

Table 1:
At a Glance:
UNFPA-FBO
Partnerships in
Africa

	RELIGION			PARTNERSHIP		ACTIVITY		ISSUES ADDRESSED									
	Islam	Christianity	Interfaith	Religious leaders	Faith-based organizations	Advocacy with community-based organizations	Capacity building with religious leaders	HIV/AIDS and sexually transmitted infections	Reproductive rights and sexual and reproductive health	Adolescent reproductive rights and sexual and reproductive health	Family planning	Maternal and infant mortality	Gender equality	Female genital mutilation/cutting	Gender-based violence	Population	Elderly health
Benin	✓				✓	✓					✓			✓			
Botswana		✓			✓	✓	✓	✓				✓		✓			
Burkina Faso	✓			✓	✓						✓						
Burundi	✓			✓			✓	✓				✓					
Democratic Republic of the Congo		✓			✓	✓			✓			✓					✓
Eritrea	✓	✓				✓	✓		✓				✓	✓	✓		
Ethiopia		✓		✓	✓	✓			✓		✓	✓		✓			
Gambia	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓										
Ghana	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓							✓			
Kenya	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓	✓		✓		
Liberia	✓			✓		✓	✓		✓		✓	✓					
Madagascar		✓				✓	✓	✓				✓					
Malawi		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓		
Mauritania	✓			✓		✓	✓			✓							
Niger	✓			✓			✓		✓		✓					✓	
Nigeria							✓				✓						
Senegal	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓										
Sierra Leone	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓		✓	
South Africa	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓										
Tanzania and Zanzibar	✓			✓		✓	✓										
Uganda	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓							✓			
Zimbabwe		✓		✓		✓	✓										

Africa Insights

Benin

- UNFPA supports a network of Islamic associations that build capacity among their constituency to advocate for the rights of women. The associations also assist with resource mobilization and work to increase the access of adolescents and young people to sexual and reproductive health information and services, including such information and services concerning HIV and AIDS.

Botswana

- To implement the African Youth Alliance (AYA) project, funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and later integrated into the national programme, UNFPA entered into a direct, interdenominational agreement with the Botswana Council of Churches (BCC) as the main partner, along with the Evangelical Fellowship of Botswana and the Organization of African Independent Churches. The overall goal of AYA is to improve the sexual and reproductive health of adolescents, especially focusing on sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and HIV prevention. The objectives are to advocate for the mainstreaming of reproductive health issues into the teachings of the church in Sunday school, confirmation, premarital classes, weddings, funerals and regular church services. Moreover, AYA advocates teaching these issues in seminaries and religious schools. The project employed programmatic strategies such as community and media mobilization, partnership and capacity-building, and the formation of coalitions for the advocacy of adolescent sexual and reproductive health in the church.
- Furthermore, the BCC conducted sensitization and mobilization campaigns among church

leaders and members of the religious community, with the active involvement of young people, in support of adolescent sexual and reproductive health programmes, as well as for the dissemination of information on STIs and HIV prevention. Through project site visits, the BCC closely coordinates and monitors the implementation of the projects. UNFPA monitors the project's implementation and offers technical support and resources for it, where needed. As a result, the project has developed a conducive environment for constructive interventions in the areas of adolescent sexual and reproductive health.

Burkina Faso

- During a meeting of the country's principal Islamic organizations, UNFPA worked with religious leaders to promote family planning. Although the religious leaders did not make any decisions on the contraception methods they would promote, they agreed to take part in activities to sensitize their communities regarding the need for family planning and improved maternal health. The focus is to make family planning the responsibility of every couple.

Burundi

- UNFPA works with Muslim leaders to increase knowledge of and sensitivity to gender-based violence, reproductive health and rights, and gender equality. Focus areas are inheritance laws and marital rights, and population and development issues. As a result, UNFPA has witnessed an increased commitment among these religious leaders to adopt and enforce these laws.

Democratic Republic of the Congo

- In an effort to provide support to the elderly and to reduce the morbidity caused by malaria,

UNFPA has given funding to preventive programming. UNFPA partnered with the Catholic congregation of the House of the Little Sisters of the Poor (des Petites Soeurs des Pauvres) to reduce elderly morbidity and sensitize the congregation to the quality of life among elderly people in their community. UNFPA also held an open house to advocate for the sustainable care needed for the elderly. This was also an opportunity to further partnerships with other United Nations agencies.

Eritrea

- In a project titled “Care and Support for People Living with HIV and AIDS”, UNFPA collaborated directly with the Office of the Mufti, as well as the Orthodox, Catholic and Evangelical Churches. UNFPA facilitated a national committee consisting of representatives from these groups in order to create an interfaith platform to oversee and assess the performance of the project, which addresses issues of reproductive health, HIV and AIDS, and maternal morbidity and mortality.

Ethiopia

- In partnership with the Ethiopian Youth Network, UNFPA organized a high-level advocacy day targeting FBOs as well as parliamentarians, donors, NGOs, and other sectors. The objective of the day was to draw attention to and support for adolescent and youth sexual and reproductive health issues, including vulnerability to HIV infection and various forms of gender-based violence. This event was part of the comprehensive adolescent and youth reproductive health (AYRH) strategy developed by the Federal Ministry of Health. The strategy advocates a redistribution of resources and renewed efforts to reach all segments of adolescents and youth, including the marginalized and most vulnerable groups.

- The advocacy day provided valuable inputs to enrich the AYRH strategy. UNFPA supports the development of an AYRH Strategic Implementation Plan from the current national AYRH strategy. One of the key principles of the strategy is “segmentation” of information and services—that is, strategies to deliver sexual and reproductive health information and services that take into account the different characteristics of adolescents and youth such as age, sex, school attendance, residence (urban/rural) and vulnerability.

- In another example of strategic advocacy, UNFPA supported the government’s implementation of the National Population Policy. The Ethiopian Orthodox Church was approached as a partner to change the attitudes of strong opponents of population policies. The mechanism in this advocacy is the collation of a “Development Bible” as a tool for priests when they address population issues among the church’s 40 million followers.
- The UNFPA country office involved the Ethiopian Orthodox Archbishop in blessing a mural painted by more than 30 local artists. In blessing the mural, the Archbishop requested that priests all over Ethiopia cease blessing child marriages.

Gambia

- UNFPA partners with the Subcommittee on Islam and Christianity on Population and Development, made up of influential and religious leaders in each of the five administrative divisions of the country. The subcommittee is responsible for educating civil society on sexual and reproductive health issues, as well as encouraging effective participation in decision-making. The newly created FBO has contributed positively to building an enabling environment for the promotion of reproductive health and rights.

With regard to promoting the advancement of women and gender equality, UNFPA has contributed to advocacy activities by FBOs and the Subcommittee on Islam and Christianity regarding the importance of education, especially for female children. A recently formed FBO has benefited from forums held in Dakar and Zanzibar where members were exposed to innovative strategies and interventions in the implementation of the ICPD and the MDGs in Islam and reproductive health rights.

Ghana

- Aimed at building South-South cooperation, initiatives include supporting the participation of a delegation of Ghanaian Muslims in an FBO conference in Abuja, Nigeria. Moreover, UNFPA supported two follow-up workshops to enhance the capacity of religious leaders to establish networks for population, reproductive health and gender issues throughout the country. The advocacy of UNFPA among traditional and religious leaders on promoting the rights of women and girls has had a positive impact on development in that it has helped to improve the discussion and tracking of the impingement of these rights in the community.
- On awareness of fistula, UNFPA collaborated with a U.S. Christian philanthropic medical ship (Mercy Ship). The ship provides medical assistance to women suffering from fistula, particularly those from the northern region of Ghana.
- UNFPA partnered with an NGO called International Needs Ghana on the issues of gender-based violence, ritual slavery and female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C). International Needs Ghana was able to

implement information, education and communication campaigns, together with capacity-building efforts such as training workshops for community members. Such organizations gain entry into the communities in which they work by first seeking the permission of the Chiefs. In addition, public gatherings are held with the consent of community leaders such as Chiefs and Queen Mothers, who are seen as the custodians of culture. This serves to legitimize the organizations' messages. Since acts of gender-based violence—ostensibly based on religious doctrine—are not easy to eradicate, understanding the beliefs of the community in which one hopes to bring about social change is an important first step, and soliciting the participation and support of the host community and its local leaders is critical for efficacy and sustainability. Among the practices that work are the encouragement of networking among a wide range of civil society organizations (including FBOs) working on gender-based violence, and targeting young people in these campaigns.²⁷

- UNFPA also indirectly collaborated with traditional and religious leaders from the Supreme Muslim Council and the Catholic and Protestant Churches through its partnership with the Planned Parenthood Association of Ghana. In order to address the programme's reproductive health and population objectives, UNFPA, the Planned Parenthood Association and its partners further agreed to a number of strategies including sensitizing and building the capacities of religious leaders through training and seminars. The interfaith programme has attracted people to the reproductive health initiatives of religious groups and resulted in a network of religious organizations collaborating on reproductive health and social issues.

²⁷ The case study titled "Liberating Slaves and Changing Minds" can be found in the UNFPA publication *Programming to Address Violence against Women* (2005).

Kenya

- UNFPA partnered directly with the Catholic Archdiocese of Nairobi, the Catholic Diocese of Nakuru and the Council of Imams and Preachers in Kenya (CIPK) in the promotion of activities that protect young people from harmful practices such as female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C) and forced child marriage. UNFPA is working with both Catholic and Muslim organizations towards the elimination of FGM/C, raising awareness and sensitizing the communities and religious leaders to the dangers of the practice. Muslim leaders and followers are made aware that the practice is not a religious obligation prescribed in the Holy Qur'an. Muslim organizations also sensitize religious leaders and communities to the dangers of child marriage and the value of continued education for young girls. Similarly, the Catholic Church conducts initiation camps for young boys, where they are trained in life skills and provided with information on adolescent and sexual reproductive health.
- UNFPA has also worked on culturally sensitive programming with FBOs on the issue of HIV prevention and AIDS treatment among youth. This has included increasing access to condoms as well as youth-friendly information and services, among which are voluntary counselling and testing for young people. Through partnership with UNFPA, FBOs are now strong proponents of addressing and improving adolescent reproductive health, and are important partners in building awareness, sensitization and acceptance in the community.
- Working with local community-based organizations (CBOs) to eliminate harmful practices such as FGM/C has greatly

increased acceptability for change and adoption of alternative rites of passage. In Kenya, for example, in an effort to eliminate the practice of FGM/C, which is a rite of passage for many girls, UNFPA was able to work with local community and religious leaders to come up with alternative rites of passage that would allow for age-old wisdom to be passed down in a modern setting, and would not cause the girls to miss out on the attention, gifts and recognition that accompany their coming of age. In addition, these alternative rites of passage provided the opportunity to incorporate transmission of information on sexual health, HIV prevention, life skills, gender equality and human rights.²⁸

- UNFPA has partnered with the Gender and HIV/AIDS Technical Sub-Committee of the National AIDS Control Council. FBOs are among the broad range of stakeholders that have supported and participated in the Technical Sub-Committee. The group is tasked with developing a strategic framework for the integration of gender concerns into the analyses, formulation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes.
- UNFPA and UNICEF jointly organized a meeting with 19 Muslim scholars from communities that do not practice excision on their girls. The meeting resulted in a formal commitment by the scholars to influence other scholars from the communities that do engage in this practice so that both groups might establish a common stand against FGM/C.

Liberia

- UNFPA supported an Islamic youth group on HIV awareness. This group succeeded in convincing imams to advocate for condom

²⁸ http://www.unfpa.org/gender/docs/tao_interview.pdf.

use as the only scientifically known method for the prevention of HIV, and also as part of other family planning methods among Muslim communities. This, in turn, appears to have facilitated a markedly increased use of these methods among Muslim groups to exercise the right of couples to decide freely on the number and spacing of their children.

Madagascar

- UNFPA partnered with Lutheran and Protestant churches on sensitizing communities on reproductive health, including adolescent reproductive health and family planning issues. In terms of capacity-building, health staff have been trained in HIV and AIDS counselling, and in prenatal services and modern voluntary surgical interventions that are now being offered in some clinics of the Lutheran Church. Contraceptives are distributed in health centres, although not made available for youth.
- The work shows that FBOs contribute strongly to the promotion of reproductive health, since the most vulnerable people come to their health centres for affordable services. The involvement and motivation of religious leaders in taking part in reproductive health initiatives has increased people's acceptance of contraceptive use, and family planning initiatives have expanded in rural areas. Nevertheless, more advocacy is needed among some religious leaders and community members who might not be fully aware that family planning allows couples to determine how many children to have and how often to have them.

Malawi

- UNFPA partnered with the Scripture Union of Malawi, the Christian Hospitals Association

of Malawi, the Catholic Development Commission, the Christian Council of Malawi, and the Fertility Awareness Support Unit of the Catholic Church on the issues of reproductive rights and sexual and reproductive health and HIV prevention and AIDS treatment. FBOs have been on the front lines of the HIV and AIDS crisis in Malawi for nearly 15 years. Churches are a major source of health care and other social services. In addition, religious and faith-based institutions are among the only organizations in Malawi that have the structures capable of reaching many rural areas. In some cases, however, these institutions have not fully understood the complicated nature of the epidemic and thus were unable to promote support for those living with HIV and AIDS. This inadvertently fuelled the stigma and discrimination associated with HIV and AIDS. Still, the faith community and traditional leaders represent a vast, largely untapped resource that must be effectively mobilized if HIV and AIDS are to be successfully combated at the grass-roots level. Religious, cultural and faith-based institutions have the trust and respect of their communities, which is critical in successfully promoting culturally sensitive behaviour change. Efforts to find common ground are urgently needed to address the desperate situation in Malawi. One promising approach is the development of HIV-sensitive theological training.²⁹

Mauritania

- UNFPA provided training and equipment to the *ulemma* (Islamic scholar) and imam associations. The sensitization process enabled the development of a book on Islam and population issues. The objective was to help sensitize imams and teachers to the challenges

²⁹ The full case study, "Partnering with Religious, Cultural and Faith-based Institutions: An Underutilized Force in the Fight against HIV and AIDS", can be found in the UNFPA publication *Culture Matters: Working with Communities and Faith-based Organizations* (2004).

of marriage combined with other sexual partners, family planning, HIV and AIDS and STIs, and the education of girls, all of which are considered taboo subjects in Mauritania. This book permits religious leaders to speak with knowledge on these issues and counsel their communities. Use of this educational guide on population matters by the heads of the madrasahs (religious schools) will enable future religious leaders to be sensitized to issues of population. In addition, UNFPA provided training and equipment to the *ulemma* and imam associations, the media network, youth associations and NGOs at national and district levels. In 2006, sensitization and advocacy activities were fully implemented by these organizations. Establishing confidence with religious leaders is vital for the work of UNFPA. Once obtained, this confidence carries powerful and influential alliances in society.

Niger

- UNFPA supported the education of 120 *ulemmas* in the teaching and utilization of a bilingual (Arabic and French) guide on gender, HIV and AIDS, and sexual and reproductive health. This initiative contributed to the harmonization of religious discourse on the question of adolescent sexuality. It proved to be good practice in developing partnerships with religious leaders to facilitate young people's access to reproductive health services.
- UNFPA partnered with the Group of Islamic Associations for Questions of Population and Social Development (Groupement des Associations Islamiques pour les Questions de Population et de Développement Social) on the issues of gender equality, sexual and reproductive health, family planning, and HIV and AIDS. Activities included advocacy for a favourable political and sociocultural environment in the areas of population dynamics and reproductive health issues; the

harmonization of the various Islamic associations' opinions on issues related to population and development, including maternal health as well as family planning; the contribution to the elaboration and adoption of a national law on reproductive health; and the elaboration of a concept paper on gender and equality in the legacy of Islam.

- UNFPA collaborated with the Association of Traditional Chiefs of Niger (Association des Chefs Traditionnels du Niger—ACTN) on issues of population and development, reproductive health, family planning and child marriage. Moreover, UNFPA is in tripartite partnership with ACTN and the Ministry of Population and Social Reforms for the promotion of population and development issues. Capacity-building activities took the form of a training seminar for traditional chiefs from the Maradi, Zinder, Agadez, Tahoua and Tillabéry regions on population and development issues, as well as the training of 300 traditional chiefs and chief advisers on the relationship between population and development. Advocacy work included the development of a guide for the traditional chiefs on population and development issues. Furthermore, the partnership created a favourable environment by reducing the use of reproductive health services, specifically in the areas of family planning, maternal health services, deliveries in medical settings, and pre- and post-birth care.

Nigeria

- In 2008 UNFPA assembled 250 African traditional leaders in the Nigerian city of Sokoto to map out a strategy to fight maternal mortality. In addition, traditional leaders from several other African countries were also present at the assembly. It was noted that to reduce maternal mortality and promote maternal health, traditional and

religious leaders have a critical role to play, as they have the trust of their communities and are good entry points for effecting change at the community level.

Senegal

- UNFPA partnered with Muslim and Christian leaders to advocate family planning, prevention of maternal and infant mortality, and prevention of HIV and AIDS. The religious leaders have also integrated topics related to gender issues into their sermons. The constructive collaboration between UNFPA and these leaders is gauged to have contributed to declining rates of maternal mortality, increased use of family planning methods, and HIV and AIDS prevention.

Sierra Leone

- UNFPA worked with religious leaders from the Jesus is Lord Ministries and its Faith Clinic, the largest female-attended Christian church in Sierra Leone, to address issues of reproductive health and HIV prevention and AIDS treatment. The partnership generated HIV prevention campaigns, psychosocial counselling and support for pregnant women, awareness-raising to prevent maternal mortality, and the promotion of family planning methods.
- UNFPA consulted with churches, as well as imams, sheikhs and Islamic women's organizations, prior to launching an Islamic women's network for the promotion of reproductive health and population. The issues of concern to the network are reproductive health and rights, family planning, HIV and AIDS, gender equality and FGM/C. Activities consist of an HIV prevention and AIDS treatment campaign, and a symposium on Islam and its relation to women's rights and leadership. Since the

network's launch in 2005, it has gained momentum and created a forum for discussion of sensitive issues such as FGM/C, which have hitherto been taboo among Muslims.

- Rape, abduction and sexual slavery are part of the brutal legacy of Sierra Leone's decade-long civil war, which has left over half the country's population displaced and destitute. As a matter of survival, both during and after the war, women (as well as men) have been forced into commercial sex work, which leaves them vulnerable to more sexual violence, as well as HIV infection and other, potentially fatal, problems. In response, a faith network supported by UNFPA is helping girls and young women affected by the war to regain their health and dignity by providing them with the tools to generate alternative livelihoods. One key to success is responding to their needs using a holistic approach. Another is involving partners as well as the community in sensitization and training activities, and providing free education to their children.³⁰

South Africa

- UNFPA partnered with the South Africa Council of Churches, which coordinated a number of consultations with traditional and religious leaders in five provinces in South Africa on issues of reproductive health, HIV prevention and AIDS treatment, gender-based violence, and population and development. The aim was to involve male leaders in improving women's access to reproductive health services, preventing HIV infection and reducing gender-based violence. The communities have shown strong commitment to and support for the initiative, proving that community leaders are extremely effective in removing socio-cultural barriers and improving service delivery.

³⁰ The case study is from the UNFPA publication *Programming to Address Violence against Women* (2007).

- In cooperation with Religions for Peace, South Africa, UNFPA co-hosted the FBO Forum: Strengthening Partnerships with Faith-based Organizations (FBOs) for the Prevention of HIV and AIDS and Violence against Women, which emerged with the nucleus of a Pan-African Interfaith Network on Population and Development. The Forum also produced a number of concrete recommendations and initiatives to enhance the partnerships between UNFPA and FBOs across the region.

Tanzania and Zanzibar

- UNFPA worked to build the capacity of religious leaders and organizations to advocate for reproductive health issues and HIV prevention and AIDS treatment. An outcome of one of the workshops in Zanzibar was that the Council of Ulemmas agreed that condoms could be used among discordant couples to prevent infection and for child spacing by legally married couples. This initiative was fortified by the support of the Mosque Council of Tanzania for a workshop for imams, madrasah teachers and women. Moreover, the facilitation of a visit by a Senegalese imam and a Muslim scholar in order to exchange experiences and expertise with local FBOs in Zanzibar further strengthened such capacity-building.
- In 2006, UNFPA launched new efforts to establish working partnerships with civil society organizations to gain support to build a strong network of religious leaders and FBOs around the ICPD agenda, including gender-based violence. While some religious leaders have had a change of attitude on issues of reproductive health and gender equality, there is still a tendency to focus on HIV and AIDS rather than on broader reproductive health and gender equality

initiatives. Moreover, a capacity assessment by the Zanzibar AIDS Commission revealed that most of the island's religious organizations, which are predominantly Muslim, lack knowledge of reproductive health and gender and population issues that could enable them to make meaningful interpretations from a religious perspective.

Uganda

- UNFPA partnered with the Muslim Supreme Council on the issues of reproductive health and rights for adolescents and adults, and gender equality. Careful sensitization of Muslim leaders in Uganda helped open up the previously taboo subject of sexual and reproductive health. An important first step was to counter the fear that family planning was a way of reducing Muslim populations by clarifying its importance as a method of spacing one's children. With the support of the Mufti of Uganda, the highest Islamic religious leader in the land, reproductive health services have been improved and are being more widely used by the community. To ensure that these efforts were in line with Islamic thinking, reproductive health messages were studied and compared with teachings of the Qur'an and the Prophetic tradition. In addition, specific strategies were designed to reach women.³¹
- UNFPA partnered with the Sabinu Elders Association, the Kinkizi Diocese Church of Uganda, and the Bunyoro and Tooro kingdoms on reproductive health and rights, HIV prevention and AIDS treatment, family planning, gender equality and FGM/C. Elders, kings, bishops and imams are opinion leaders in Uganda's complex cultural environment. UNFPA has successfully reached out to

³¹ The full case study, "Partnering with Uganda's Muslim Community for Better Reproductive Health", can be found in the UNFPA publication *Culture Matters: Working with Communities and Faith-based Organizations* (2004).

partner with them in promoting healthier behaviours and the elimination of harmful practices.³²

- To foster better understanding among policy and decision makers and religious, cultural and community leaders on the interrelationship of sociocultural, economic and political factors, and population and development, reproductive health, adolescent and youth reproductive health (AYRH) and gender, a partnership was established. Its goal was to strengthen institutional and technical capacity for advocacy at the national, district and sub-county levels, and among cultural and religious NGOs and professional bodies and institutions. The key contribution to national capacity-building has been setting up AYRH programmes within cultural and religious institutions, which have a far-reaching impact among the targeted audiences. Partnerships with policymakers and religious and cultural institutions also have contributed to a policy environment that is conducive to making improvements in the areas of reproductive health, gender equality and HIV and AIDS.

Zimbabwe

- UNFPA worked with religious communities in Zimbabwe by offering technical guidance to the Musasa Project, an NGO. The project aimed to build the capacity of partners to work among religious and traditional sects, and to advance male involvement in the prevention and management of gender-based violence. It organized workshops that aim to engage male traditional and religious leaders,

and it conducted post-training support activities for the men in its communities.

- For decades, member churches of the Union for the Development of Apostolic Churches in Zimbabwe Africa (UDACIZA) had faced criticism for using the Bible to justify practices such as wife inheritance, polygamy, forced marriage of girls to elders against their will, and a ban on contraceptives. This criticism became more vocal amid the rising tide of the AIDS pandemic when the Church continued to steadfastly denounce condom use as a means of HIV prevention. Following wide consultations among its members, and with the technical assistance of the Zimbabwe AIDS Policy Advocacy Project, UDACIZA produced an HIV and AIDS policy document that calls on the Apostolic and Zionist Churches to “review their practices, internal laws, policies and guidelines to ensure that they are in conformity with the reality of HIV and AIDS,” and to translate knowledge about the disease into behaviour change to reduce its spread. UNFPA, in partnership with religious leaders, can place reproductive health and rights issues squarely on a wider agenda so that discussions once considered taboo can move into the public arena.
- UNFPA engaged with the congregants of 33 Apostolic and Zionist churches in and around Buhera, members of UDACIZA and Apostolic religious sects for the promotion of women’s rights, especially reproductive health and rights. UDACIZA then hosted a world population day commemoration with “Equality” as the theme.

³² The full case study, “Winning Support from Some of Uganda’s Custodians of Culture: Elders, Bishops and Kings”, can be found in the UNFPA publication *Culture Matters: Working with Communities and Faith-based Organizations* (2004).

Arab States, Eastern Europe and Central Asia Overview

The cultural settings within the Arab States, Eastern Europe and Central Asia (ASECA) are very different. According to a UNFPA study, religion in the Arab States is, in general, seen as a positive influence on reproductive health. However, cultural attitudes towards gender equality have a more negative influence. Certain Islamic beliefs and advocacy and awareness-raising on the part of religious leaders and groups were cited as positive cultural factors that could leverage change.³³ In the same study, the impact of religion in Eastern Europe and Central Asia were perceived as having less impact. Here, the greatest challenges to meeting the reproductive health needs of men and women are traditional patriarchal social structures and attitudes, taboos surrounding discussion of sexuality, traditional values, and stigmatization of people living with HIV or AIDS.³⁴

It is noteworthy that in these regions, the discourse of politics is becoming increasingly influenced by religious dynamics, and vice versa. The Arab region is witnessing an enhanced social and economic role played by religious NGOs, and a subsequent increase in popular political support for some of the organizations also vying for political power. In Eastern Europe, the role of migrants in general, and some religious minorities among them in particular, features more prominently in political discussions and electioneering. Some Central Asian states are also negotiating the status of religious discourse and groups in their midst. All of these form critical backdrops for both the general role of FBOs in development, and especially for the implications regarding gender

relations, reproductive health and population dynamics—that is, key UNFPA areas of engagement.

Population and reproductive health issues vary immensely among the Arab States, Eastern Europe and Central Asia. The Arab States have had the highest population growth rates in the world. Fertility declined significantly in the 1990s, but the growth rate is still high—about 2 per cent, compared with 1.4 per cent for the less developed countries as a whole. Use of modern contraception has become more widespread. Nevertheless, because of its huge youth population, the region faces enormous growth in the coming years. In contrast, Eastern Europe faces significant population reduction due to population ageing and declining fertility rates, which have been exacerbated by high migration rates.

Eastern Europe has one of the fastest-growing HIV rates in the world. The number of people living with HIV reached an estimated 1.4 million by the end of 2004, more than a ninefold increase in less than 10 years. Women account for about a third of those with the virus, but they make up an increasing share of newly diagnosed cases. The vast majority of people living with HIV are young adults, which highlights the need for a more vigorous and comprehensive response targeted to this sector. Denial, stigma, and the institutional challenges of providing services to marginalized and vulnerable sub-populations jeopardizes progress in preventing the further spread of HIV in this region.³⁵ In contrast, HIV prevalence appears to be fairly low in the Arab countries, making this an opportune time for public awareness campaigns to keep the virus from

³³ UNFPA, *Culture in the Context of UNFPA Programming: ICPD+10 Survey Results on Culture and Religion* (2005).

³⁴ UNFPA, *Culture in the Context of UNFPA Programming: ICPD+10 Survey Results on Culture and Religion* (2005).

³⁵ http://www.unfpa.org/europe_asia/overview.cfm.

gaining a foothold. Some Arab countries are now addressing HIV prevention among young people through training, educational materials and the establishment of youth networks.³⁶

The Arab region has made progress on closing the gender gap in early education, one of the targets of the MDGs. However, illiteracy and inequity persist. Some 10 million children, mostly girls, do not attend primary school. And although women's access to education has tripled since 1970, more than half of all adult women are illiterate. There is a growing acknowledgement of gender equality in constitutions, legislation and policies. Nevertheless, cultural, social and economic factors, as well as lack of political will, undermine their full implementation.³⁷ In Eastern Europe, gender inequities have risen in the past decade. Women's participation in economic and political life has decreased, income disparities have increased, and girls' school enrolment has slowly fallen. Gender-based violence in the region—including a rise in human trafficking, which primarily affects women and girls—constitutes a severe human rights and public-health problem. It is estimated that more than a fourth of all women and girls who fall victim to trafficking are from Central and Eastern Europe.³⁸

Annual maternal mortality rates are high in parts of these regions—for example, 570 in Yemen and 590 in Sudan, versus 86 in Tajikistan and only 41 in Jordan. Infant mortality rates, calculated in deaths per 100,000 live births, range from 12 and 14 in Bosnia and Oman, respectively, to 66 in Sudan and 73 in Azerbaijan.³⁹ Of all births each year, those by

adolescent girls aged 15-19 range from less than 1 per cent in Algeria to nearly 9 per cent in Yemen. HIV and AIDS percentages of the population are either not included or are very low—in Sudan, for example, 1.4 per cent of men and 1.8 per cent of women.

In the ASECA, the recurrent issues were reproductive rights and sexual and reproductive health (including those specifically for adolescents), gender equality, AIDS, family planning, gender-based violence, female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C), and population and demographic issues. The groups targeted were youth, women, religious leaders, communities, NGO workers and government representatives. In the area of advocacy, activities included providing spaces for dialogue, such as seminars and workshops for communities. Capacity-building initiatives included training, sensitization and awareness-raising among professional personnel, government representatives and NGOs, as well as mobilization of religious leaders. Women's FBOs, such as Mutakalim in Kyrgyzstan, should be further engaged to advocate for improvements in reproductive health care, family planning, and HIV prevention and AIDS treatment among Muslim communities. To this end, the capacity of national religious communities should be strengthened, the access to information and education should be improved, and the knowledge and skills of women in Muslim society should be increased. In these regions, UNFPA partnered with FBOs such as World Vision Armenia, Mutakalim (Kyrgyzstan), Al-Azhar University, the International Islamic Centre for Population Studies and Research (Egypt) and the World Islamic Council for Advocacy and Rescue (Yemen).

³⁶ <http://www.unfpa.org/ArabStates/overview.cfm>.

³⁷ <http://www.unfpa.org/ArabStates/overview.cfm>.

³⁸ http://www.unfpa.org/europe_asia/overview.cfm.

³⁹ UNFPA, *State of the World Population 2007: Unleashing the Potential of Urban Growth* (2007).

Table 2:
At a Glance:
UNFPA-FBO
Partnerships in
the Arab States,
Eastern Europe and
Central Asia

	RELIGION				PARTNERSHIP		ACTIVITY		ISSUES ADDRESSED								
	Islam	Christianity	Zoroastrianism	Interfaith	Religious leaders	Faith-based organizations	Advocacy with community-based organizations	Capacity building with religious leaders	HIV/AIDS and sexually transmitted infections	Reproductive rights and sexual and reproductive health	Adolescent reproductive rights and sexual and reproductive health	Family planning	Maternal and infant mortality	Gender equality	Female genital mutilation/cutting	Gender-based violence	Population
Algeria	✓				✓		✓	✓	✓								
Egypt	✓					✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓				
Jordan	✓				✓		✓	✓		✓		✓	✓				
Occupied Palestinian Territories	✓				✓		✓		✓				✓		✓		
Somalia				✓				✓						✓			
Sudan							✓	✓	✓					✓		✓	
Syria	✓				✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓				✓
Yemen	✓					✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Armenia		✓				✓	✓	✓	✓								
Bosnia and Herzegovina						✓	✓		✓								
Georgia					✓		✓			✓							
Kosovo	✓	✓			✓		✓		✓			✓					
Azerbaijan		✓	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓					✓			
Kyrgyzstan	✓				✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓				
Tajikistan	✓				✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓				

Arab States, Eastern Europe and Central Asia Insights

Arab States

Algeria

- UNFPA worked with imams through the Ministry of Religious Affairs. A training workshop for imams on the issue of HIV prevention and AIDS treatment was convened, and this led to the development and validation of a guide on these issues, to be used by imams in their speeches and by the Ministry of Religious Affairs.

Egypt

- UNFPA partnered directly with the International Islamic Centre for Population Studies and Research at Al-Azhar University, with the overall goal of contributing to the reduction of poverty (MDG 1). This entailed a focus on maternal mortality reduction, HIV prevention and AIDS treatment, women's empowerment, and girls' education. One of the partnership's main goals was to support the government of Egypt in achieving its population policy. This pioneer initiative linked the ICPD goals with the MDGs and presented this connection from a balanced Islamic perspective for young scholars. The objectives included involving young religious leaders in advocacy programmes for achieving the ICPD goals and the MDGs.
- A project was thus organized in which 14 travelling seminars for young religious scholars were conducted. One component of the project was the distribution of materials

“Given that religious leaders are crucial gatekeepers to engaging communities, their involvement on the issue of adolescent reproductive health is necessary.”

such as posters, booklets, flyers and CDs that included interviews with eminent religious leaders expressing the position of Islam. The information materials were prepared and intensively reviewed by a team of Al-Azhar University's eminent religious leaders, so that they could be an effective tool for the dissemination of information on reproductive health for young Islamic scholars.

- An expert group of Muslim scholars at Al-Azhar University finalized a research project on the links between the MDGs and development issues within the framework of religion. A manual was produced, titled *Islam and Development*, that was a result of the analysis made by scholars in the fields of theology, sociology, medicine, economics and reproductive health. The manual establishes that the basis of the MDGs is an integral part of Islam. It has thereby attracted the commitment of Egyptian religious leaders towards the adoption of these goals. Moreover, verses of the Qur'an and Hadith included in the manual have been further used to develop pamphlets and posters. As a result, Al-Azhar's religious leaders are qualified and sensitized to carry the message of the MDGs and the ICPD to other stakeholders in Muslim communities in Egypt and beyond.
- The materials linking the MDGs to Islamic concepts were used for advocacy activities such as the series of travelling seminars to the various governorates of Egypt (noted above). Policymakers and programme designers were invited to attend these seminars alongside religious leaders and civil society members so as to rally their commitment to the ICPD agenda and the MDGs.

Involving religious leaders in the process of developing information, education and communication (IEC) materials ensures their support of the messages. Moreover, the presence of credible Muslim leaders at these seminars was the best way to ensure the acceptance of their messages. An extensive revision of the choices of verses and quotations religious leaders use for their messages is a necessary step to prevent any actual or potential misinterpretations of the holy text, the faith and the practices.

- UNFPA assisted in the effective training of NGOs on mobilization of the community for the promotion of adolescent reproductive health. The NGOs collaborated with religious leaders, schools and parents to ensure a positive and healthy environment for young people. Training sessions were held and a curriculum was provided in several villages. Muslim and Christian religious leaders had the opportunity to gather and discuss how to establish common ground in communicating with young people on reproductive health issues. Given that religious leaders are crucial gatekeepers to engaging communities, their involvement on the issue of adolescent reproductive health is necessary.

Jordan

- UNFPA collaborated with religious leaders on issues of reproductive health, family planning and gender equality. It sponsored family planning study tours for religious leaders to Egypt. By providing relevant scientific information, UNFPA also supported lectures on gender equality given in mosques, and facilitated a workshop on reproductive health for religious leaders.
- UNFPA staff undertook cultural sensitivity training among United Nations Country Team (UNCT) staff in Jordan.

Occupied Palestinian Territories

- UNFPA partnered with the Department of Family Counselling and Reconciliation in sharia courts on the issues of gender equality, gender-based violence, and reproductive health and rights. A four-day training course was conducted for 31 participants, mostly heads of the Department of Family Counselling and Reconciliation. The issues addressed in the training course were based on the participants' needs, with the aim of assisting them in providing better family counselling and sensitizing them to the concept of reproductive health and rights. Furthermore, the training focused on the issue of domestic violence and its impact on the family and society, and also explored ways in which individuals and society at large can help victims of such violence.
- Experience indicated that the trainers involved with the FBOs would do well to have a strong background in religious issues. At the same time, sensitizing individuals on issues of reproductive health and rights is a gradual process, so overnight changes of opinions should not be anticipated. Religious leaders play a significant role in facilitating positive changes of behaviour among communities, and partnerships with their organizations remain important areas of engagement.

Somalia

- UNFPA collaborated with the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to work with the government sectors responsible for gender in initiating a project for the development of a national gender policy framework as well as advocacy for gender mainstreaming at the administration level. Specifically, to mobilize support against FGM/C and to advocate for eradication of the

practice, UNFPA collaborated with the relevant ministries to facilitate a series of round-table discussions involving experts, community and religious leaders, activists, and authorities. Going forward, the aim is to further develop these strong advocacy partnerships into sustainable political strategies and changes in behaviour and attitude among cultural gatekeepers in Somali communities.

Sudan

- UNFPA collaborated with Muslim and Christian religious leaders on HIV prevention and AIDS treatment, gender equality and gender-based violence, and assisted in the organization of a National Symposium on AIDS and Religion, which involved prominent members of the Muslim and Christian communities in the Sudan.
- UNFPA focused on increasing the number of female service providers and trainees in order to expand women's access to health services. This increase was made possible primarily by the involvement of the community (including male community and religious leaders) in the selection processes of trainees.
- In collaboration with other partners, UNFPA trained religious leaders, Ministry of Health service providers, NGOs and community workers on UNFPA mandate areas, including HIV prevention and AIDS treatment and the care and clinical management of rape survivors.

Syria

- UNFPA partnered with the Ministry of Awqaf⁴⁰ and religious leaders on issues of reproductive health, family planning and gender equality. It supported the Ministry of Awqaf in producing a booklet titled *Islamic Perspectives of Family*

Planning, based on discussions and questions raised during training workshops for imams and religious men on reproductive health and family planning issues. In addition, meetings were held with imams to increase their knowledge and gain their support regarding reproductive health and the empowerment of women. The workshops were aimed at establishing a strong group of advocates for the ICPD agenda.

- Another UNFPA initiative supported the Ministry of Awqaf in conducting a series of live television programmes that discussed reproductive health and gender issues through an Islamic lens.

Yemen

- Yemen has one of the highest total fertility rates in the world (more than 6 births per woman). UNFPA worked with the Ministry of Awqaf in the areas of sexual and reproductive health for adults and adolescents, family planning, and HIV prevention and AIDS treatment. Activities included engaging the community and the media, mobilizing religious leaders and resources, and training imams to give sermons in the mosques that would focus on reproductive health and family planning. UNFPA collaborated with the Seminar for Islamic Youth and the World Islamic Council for Advocacy and Rescue on the issues of sexual and reproductive health, family planning, gender-based violence, FGM/C and AIDS.
- UNFPA and various Yemeni ministries resumed their training of religious leaders to discuss family planning in their Friday sermons; going forward, however, their sermons will address the common misconceptions about reproductive health. Sixty-eight participants, including imams and

⁴⁰ Although a Ministry of Awqaf usually refers to a Ministry of Religious Endowment, it can also refer to a Ministry of Islamic Religious Affairs and Religious Guidance.

morshidat (female religious guidance counsellors), as well as members of the Ministry of Endowments and the Ministry of Public Health and Population, met to discuss scaling up their ongoing work to educate Yemenis nationwide about the benefits of family planning. The group discussed sensitive and potentially confusing issues, and how they can be addressed from an Islamic perspective. The religious leaders and ministerial staff identified a few key misconceptions about reproductive health, mostly surrounding the use of contraception.

- UNFPA held a number of discussion groups focused on the risks and consequences of child marriage and pregnancy, the harmful consequences of gender-based violence and FGM/C, and the benefits of girls' education and family planning. These discussions helped to mitigate some negative sociocultural constraints to improving reproductive health and women's rights.
- UNFPA, in a joint effort with the Ministry of Endowments and Guidance, the Ministry of Public Health and Population, and the National Population Council, is providing reproductive health and family planning services in Yemen, where there is currently an estimated 50 per cent unmet need for such services.

“At times, there is more room for constructive dialogue with religious leaders when it is done discreetly and away from media attention.”

Eastern Europe

Armenia

- UNFPA collaborated directly with World Vision Armenia, a Christian FBO and the principal recipient of the Global Fund-supported National Program to Prevent HIV

and AIDS in Armenia, to improve the reproductive health of the general population. The project serves as an entry point for working together on other projects and initiatives, which are being explored.

Bosnia and Herzegovina

- UNFPA partnered directly with diverse FBOs as part of the Country Coordination Mechanism for the National Response to HIV and AIDS—which also includes other United Nations agencies, government representatives, international organizations and local NGOs—on broad population issues, including youth dynamics, ageing, and care for the elderly. The FBOs represent the diverse religious heritage of the country, and the engagement with them also reflects the challenges and success of the legacy of conflict in the society.

Georgia

- In partnership with UNFPA, the First Lady of Georgia established the Reproductive Health National Council as part of the Ministry of Labour, Health and Social Protection to address reproductive health needs. Religious leaders are included as members of the Council, which aims to strengthen coordination among the Ministry, donors, implementing partners and civil society in the area of reproductive health.

Kosovo

- UNFPA and UNICEF supported the Ministry of Health in conducting a workshop for Muslim and Catholic leaders in November 2005 to deliberate a draft law on the termination of pregnancy. In discussing the country's widespread cases of pregnancy termination, the gathered leaders agreed that

it was critical to provide necessary care for the health and life of the mother. At times, there is more room for constructive dialogue with religious leaders when it is done discreetly and away from media attention.

Central Asia

Azerbaijan

- UNFPA partnered with UNDP to organize AIDS awareness-raising projects for religious leaders. The initiative made the government (representatives of ministries) and religious communities aware of the importance of collaboration with civil society on HIV prevention and AIDS treatment.
- UNFPA conducted a study on gender equality by comparing the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) with some widely recognized Islamic references and books. The result reflected the parallels between CEDAW and the just spirit of the Islamic faith. Specific issues were showcased, including violence against women, child marriage, respect for the dignity of women, and equality in the economic and political participation of women. Afterward, the study was used to produce training materials geared towards religious leaders. Furthermore, an information booklet on gender equality in Islam was developed for use as a public advocacy tool.

Kyrgyzstan

- UNFPA partnered with Muslim religious leaders, the Clerical Department of Muslims of Kyrgyzstan, the women's FBO Mutakalim,

and the State Commission on Religious Affairs on issues of reproductive health, family planning, gender equality, and HIV prevention and AIDS treatment. UNFPA helped organize several national conferences and round tables for religious leaders and other stakeholders on the promotion of reproductive health and rights and family planning throughout the country. As a result of the discussions that arose from the national conferences and round tables, an official appeal was issued to address the importance of reproductive health, family planning, and HIV prevention and AIDS treatment among adolescents and adults.

- With the support of UNFPA, a book titled *Family Planning in the Legacy of Islam*, based on the research of Islamic theologians, was produced in two languages. The book is used in seminars and trainings for religious leaders, women's FBOs and other NGOs, as well as for the local administrations of the Ministry of Health. The book was then revised and adapted in the context of Central Asia with the collaboration of the Clerical Department of Muslims of Kyrgyzstan and Mutakalim. The book is to be distributed further by the Council of Ulemmas in madrasahs (religious schools) and Islamic universities as part of a training curriculum.
- In joint collaboration with Mutakalim and the State Commission on Religious Affairs, additional round-table meetings and workshops were held in the northern regions for medical workers and religious and community leaders. The issues addressed were male involvement in reproductive health, family planning, and HIV and AIDS and STI prevention. The discussions maintained an Islamic perspective, and the

“Religious leaders are the most trusted and direct channels for increasing knowledge about reproductive health, family planning, HIV prevention and AIDS treatment among rural populations.”

book *Family Planning in the Legacy of Islam* was distributed during the round tables.

- In terms of initiatives for promoting gender equality and women's empowerment, UNFPA provided information brochures and booklets, and conducted seminars for religious leaders on reproductive health and family planning issues. The focus was on changing attitudes towards women.
- Among the lessons learned from partnering with FBOs and religious leaders in Kyrgyzstan was that religious leaders are the most trusted and direct channels for increasing knowledge about reproductive health, family planning, and HIV prevention and AIDS treatment among the Muslim rural population. One of the issues raised during the seminars for religious leaders was the promotion of reproductive health and family planning, not only for women but also for men and adolescents. The involvement of men on these issues is crucial for decreasing unwanted pregnancies, abortion, and the prevalence and incidence of HIV and AIDS and other sexually transmitted infections.

“The involvement of men on these issues is crucial for decreasing unwanted pregnancies, abortion, and the prevalence and incidence of HIV and AIDS and other sexually transmitted infections.”

Tajikistan

- The UNFPA Country Office supported summit agreements closely linked to the ICPD agenda to promote gender equality, eliminate poverty, and implement a number of activities to increase the capacity of adults and adolescents to protect themselves from HIV infection. UNFPA was able to implement the activities through the development of partnerships with the Ministry of Health, the Committee on Religious Affairs, the National Commission on Population and Development and the State

Statistics Agency, as well as civil society organizations and the private sector, including the mass media.

- More than 150 parliamentarians and parliamentary-group officials from Asia and the Pacific, as well as from Central Asia, attended the 8th General Assembly Asian Forum of Parliamentarians on Population and Development in Jakarta, Indonesia. The theme of the assembly was “Religion and Culture Matters”. Tajikistan was represented by Olim Salimov, Member of Parliament of Tajikistan.
- Religious leaders were involved in advocacy for reproductive health issues among population and youth. These leaders were instrumental in advocating for the benefits of access to and use of reproductive health services, especially in areas where religion has strong influence over people's attitudes and behaviour.
- The UNFPA Country Office has partnered with the government's Religious Affairs Committee which is dealing with local religious leaders. The objective of the partnership is to monitor the implementation of the legal minimum age for marriage, and to identify how religious leaders could be systematically involved in these efforts.
- UNFPA also worked with the government's Religious Affairs Committee in coordinating workshops for NGOs, with the aim of increasing their capacity in the areas of family planning and gender dynamics in an Islamic setting. Working with the Committee in designating Friday as the day for advocating family planning—within the context of the Qur'an and the Friday sermons, geared

particularly towards men—was found to be an effective and culturally sensitive outreach tool.

- UNFPA collaborated directly with the Islamic University of Tajikistan, the government's Religious Affairs Committee and the Safe Motherhood NGO for training on reproductive health and rights for adults and adolescents, family planning, gender equality and HIV and AIDS. UNFPA organized a study tour to Tunisia for the Rector of the Islamic University and the Director of Safe Motherhood with the objectives of gathering best practices from other Islamic teaching institutions on information campaigns and

counselling sessions for reproductive health; viewing and collecting relevant materials on reproductive health and Islam that would aid in developing a curriculum for the Islamic University; and learning about cooperation with civil-society and religious institutions.

- Following the tour, the Islamic University's curriculum was expanded to incorporate issues of family planning, HIV prevention and AIDS treatment, and gender equality. The university also developed a booklet titled *Islam and Family Planning*, which has been widely distributed.



Asia and the Pacific Overview

Asia—vast, culturally diverse, and home to 60 per cent of the world’s population—has made enormous progress both socially and economically over the past two decades. The development has been spurred by the ICPD Programme of Action and the MDGs. Most countries in the region have signed or ratified the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). However, not all ensure equal rights for women in their own constitutions. Among the most pressing issues are gender-based violence, which remains widespread, and in some countries a strong preference for sons, leading to prenatal sex selection or neglect of infant girls, with the result that at least 60 million girls are “missing” in Asia.⁴¹

Culturally, the main constraints to improvements in reproductive health and gender equality in Asia are patriarchy, manifested in purdah (seclusion of women), dowries, son preference and child marriage. However, it is also the case that numerous religious traditions—including Buddhism, Hinduism and Islam—can and do contribute to reproductive rights discourse and thereby also to improvements in reproductive health. For example, a 2005 UNFPA study showed how

some customary laws in Buddhist cultures contribute to gender equity and equality and women’s empowerment.⁴²

High rates of maternal and infant mortality in some countries underscore extreme inequities in health care across the region: In Afghanistan, Bhutan, Cambodia, India, Lao PDR, Nepal, Papua New Guinea and Timor-Leste, maternal mortality ratios exceed 400 per 100,000 live births. These countries, as well as Myanmar, Pakistan and the Philippines, also have a large unmet need in the areas of family planning and reproductive health services. Until recently, HIV prevalence in most countries in the region had been restricted to high-risk groups involved in injection-drug use and/or sex work. There is now a serious threat of the virus quickly spreading to the general population.⁴³

In Asia, the significant issues tackled by UNFPA programmes are reproductive rights and sexual and reproductive health, gender equality dynamics, AIDS, sex selection, gender-based violence, and population and demographic issues. Activities include forums, research, major training, health clinic establishment and resource mobilization. UNFPA has successfully collaborated with several faith-based organizations (FBOs), including the Art of Living Foundation, the Pacific Council of Churches and Caritas Dili, to address these issues.

⁴¹ <http://www.unfpa.org/asiapacific/overview.cfm> (18 January 2008).

⁴² UNFPA, *Culture in the Context of UNFPA Programming: ICPD+10 Survey Results on Culture and Religion* (2005).

⁴³ <http://www.unfpa.org/asiapacific/overview.cfm> (18 January 2008).

**Table 3:
At a Glance:
UNFPA-FBO
Partnerships
in Asia and
the Pacific**

	RELIGION							PARTNERSHIP	ACTIVITY	ISSUES ADDRESSED										
	Islam	Christianity	Hinduism	Buddhism	Jainism	Sikhism	Interfaith			Religious leaders	Faith-based organizations	Advocacy with community-based organizations	Capacity building with religious leaders	HIV/AIDS and sexually transmitted infections	Reproductive rights and sexual and reproductive health	Adolescent reproductive rights and sexual and reproductive health	Family planning	Maternal and infant mortality	Gender equality	Gender-based violence
Afghanistan	✓							✓		✓	✓				✓		✓			
Bangladesh	✓		✓	✓				✓		✓	✓	✓	✓				✓	✓		
Cambodia				✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓				✓				
India	✓		✓						✓	✓	✓		✓				✓			✓
Indonesia	✓							✓	✓	✓			✓				✓	✓	✓	
Iran	✓								✓	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		
Malaysia	✓								✓	✓				✓						
Maldives	✓							✓		✓	✓		✓				✓		✓	
Nepal	✓							✓			✓		✓		✓	✓				
Pacific Island Countries		✓						✓	✓	✓	✓		✓			✓				
Pakistan	✓							✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Papua New Guinea		✓						✓	✓	✓										
Philippines	✓	✓					✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓					✓	
Sri Lanka	✓	✓	✓	✓						✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓			
Timor-Leste		✓								✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓			✓	
Thailand	✓							✓		✓	✓		✓							

Asia and the Pacific Insights

Afghanistan

- UNFPA collaborated indirectly with religious leaders and community development counsellors through the Ministry of Women's Affairs, the Ministry of Religious Affairs and the Asia Foundation. The partnership focused on family planning, gender-based violence and conflict management. UNFPA supported a mass advocacy campaign to eliminate domestic violence under the culturally sensitive banner of "healthy family relations" on the occasion of the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women. The one-time campaign consisted of distribution of posters, brochures and a book to imams and community development counsellors.
- All the messages in the distributed book were informed by the Qur'an and Hadith. It includes a section on topics such as conflict management, and a reference section on practical ways for mullahs to use the book. Through the liaison of the Ministry of Religious Affairs, the mullahs were then asked to disseminate the messages in the book to their constituents in prayer sessions and community meetings. The campaign was monitored by a Community Development Council and has yet to be assessed in terms of lessons learned. It is anticipated that this project will be scaled up to train mullahs, who will then be asked to preach to, sensitize and train their constituents on issues related to the ICPD mandate.

Bangladesh

- UNFPA has collaborated with Muslim, Hindu and Buddhist religious leaders through its continued partnership with the Ministry of

Religious Affairs and the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs (MOWCA). The UNFPA Country Programme, which began in 2006, is increasing its efforts to work with stakeholders such as religious leaders, members of law enforcement agencies, media representatives and members of Parliament to advocate for the reduction of gender-based violence. The capacity of the Directorate of Women's Affairs, under MOWCA, has been strengthened to mainstream gender issues. Specific interventions to create awareness among women about their legal and religious rights have been initiated at the community level. UNFPA has supported the Ministries in training 35,000 imams and more than 3,000 Hindu and 300 Buddhist religious leaders on issues of reproductive health and rights, AIDS, and gender equality.

- Through the Ministry of Religious Affairs, UNFPA has also collaborated with leaders from the Islamic Foundation and the Hindu, Buddhist and Christian Welfare Trust. The major issues dealt with have been family planning, child marriage, dowry, safe motherhood, violence against women, and HIV and AIDS.
- UNFPA has worked with religious women's groups, particularly on the status of women in religion. The target groups are youth of both sexes, men and women, and religious leaders and institutions, as well as communities and professional health personnel. The activities include mobilizing religious leaders, creating spaces for dialogue in communities, and collaborating with educational institutions and supporting media platforms.
- Working with FBOs has contributed to a common understanding of the unity in diversity with respect to culture and the status of women in Islam, Christianity, Hinduism and Buddhism. Due to the country's vast population, UNFPA plans to scale up its interventions to cover a larger segment of religious leaders. By the end

of 2005, only 10 per cent of the total imams had been trained, but 99 per cent of those trained claimed they had been disseminating the messages they received during training.

- FBOs have facilitated the process whereby mothers make use of and feel comfortable with the institutional facilities provided. The training of religious leaders has also transformed those leaders into active supporters and educators in the population programme on issues such as safe motherhood, the elimination of dowries, AIDS and sexually transmitted infections (STIs). To properly implement the programme directed towards improvement of the overall status of women, subdistrict women's development officers have been trained on issues related to promoting and protecting the rights of women and girls. This has substantially enhanced the officers' capacity, and has also sensitized them to gender issues. Members of law enforcement agencies are being continuously trained to respect women and girls, and to be proactive in securing their legal rights. Religious and community youth leaders, along with elected representatives, are increasingly involved in effecting positive change regarding the rights of women and the value of female children.
- Child marriage and the giving and receiving of dowries are major factors in the continuation of domestic violence in Bangladesh. Laws have been passed that criminalize both practices, but they are difficult to enforce—especially in rural areas, where custom and tradition tends to govern social life. An advocacy project supported by UNFPA has worked at the grass-roots level to change the cultural beliefs and

“Religious leaders’ interventions are, by definition, culturally and religiously sensitive, and can transform adversaries into advocates while managing not to alienate any powerful groups in society.”

practices through which violence against women persists. A host of community groups, made up of civic and political leaders, religious leaders, village elders, schoolteachers, mothers-in-law, young people and others, are challenging age-old practices and proving that culture is anything but static.⁴⁴

- One key lesson learned is how religious leaders are important agents of change. Their interventions are, by definition, culturally and religiously sensitive, and can transform adversaries into advocates while managing not to alienate any powerful groups in society. Religious leaders can influence government policies as well as help to develop positive attitudes and commitment among political leaders. To expedite the process of people's behavioural change, religious leaders must constantly counsel their communities. For instance, following the training offered in this programme, six villages were declared dowry-free.

Cambodia

- Through a joint initiative with the European Commission, UNFPA collaborated with Buddhist monks and nuns on issues of reproductive health and HIV prevention and AIDS treatment, targeting adolescents. The initiative's two main partners were the international NGOs Save the Children and Pharmaciens sans Frontières. In turn, those NGOs have worked through local partners Operation Enfants de Battambang and the Women's Organization for Modern Economy and Nursing. The programme has offered improved access for adolescents and youth to reproductive health information, education,

⁴⁴ The full case study can be found in the UNFPA publication *Programming to Address Violence against Women* (2007).

counselling and youth-friendly services. It involves training monks and nuns in preventing the spread of AIDS through information and education campaigns inside and outside the monasteries; providing care and support to orphans and people living with HIV and AIDS; training monks to deal effectively with young people on the subject of HIV and AIDS; and eliminating the stigma of HIV and AIDS through Buddhist teachings of compassion.

- Moreover, the UNFPA Country Office facilitated South-South cooperation by sending two staff members from the Reproductive Health unit to share the Cambodian case study and ideas at a workshop in Ghana on improved birth attendance and FBO engagement with HIV and AIDS. Work has included strengthening the role of nuns in Buddhist religious orders by having them reach out to women and girls on reproductive health and gender-based violence issues, facilitating dialogues and conducting training. Study tours abroad for the exchange of ideas with monks have been among the other activities undertaken to expand knowledge and encourage positive attitudes in the areas of sexuality and reproductive health.

India

- UNFPA partnered with the Art of Living Foundation (AOLF), an interfaith organization under the spiritual leadership of Sri Sri Ravi Shankar. UNFPA mobilized funds for AOLF to organize an interreligious meeting titled “India’s Missing Daughters: Faith for Action Against Sex Selection”, which engaged representatives from the Hindu, Muslim, Sikh and Jain faiths to advocate against prenatal sex selection. At this meeting, 35 religious and spiritual leaders were invited to address the issue of sex selection in their discourses,

motivate their constituents to abstain from harmful practices, make a collective pledge to secure equal rights for female children, and appeal to medical professionals to stop the practice of sex selection. UNFPA undertook comprehensive advocacy with key constituents such as the media, political leaders, NGOs and FBOs, especially AOLF, in affecting local and national policy on this issue. Furthermore, UNFPA provided funds, at the specific request of the Government of India, for *padayatra* (advocacy walks) by the Hindu leader Swami Agenivesh, who preaches secularism and is active on a number of development issues.

- UNFPA plans to continue the partnership by supporting *padayatras* to draw attention to this sensitive issue. Religious leaders will participate in these walks along with their disciples and the general public. The walks will be piloted in two states, with the potential to be implemented in other states depending on their success. Practically speaking, non-conventional partners may not be aware of the UNFPA protocol with regard to contractual and grant agreements. UNFPA needs to find ways to avoid conflict in this area during the implementation process.

Indonesia

- UNFPA established partnerships with *pesantren* (Islamic boarding schools) in an effort to improve prevention and management of gender-based violence. Two *pesantren*-based crisis centres for survivors of violence have been established. Moreover, materials to mainstream issues of women’s empowerment, gender equality and gender-based violence have been introduced through the religious schools. The women’s crisis centres in the *pesantren* are successful because these schools are perceived and accepted by the community as traditional sanctuaries for women.

- South-South cooperation was facilitated by developing a regional proposal together with Badan Koordinasi Keluarga Berencana Nasional (a coordinating body of family planning movements) on revitalizing the commitment and support of Muslim leaders and Islamic institutions for population, reproductive health and gender equality issues. The project gathers religious leaders from Indonesia, Bangladesh and Iran, three high-population Muslim countries, to increase their involvement and strengthen their capacity to engage in advocacy, community mobilization and behaviour change regarding reproductive health and gender. Furthermore, it is a clear strategy for UNFPA to partner with religious leaders who are progressive and well-educated, and who have strong leadership and influence at the community level.
- UNFPA also supported the visit of an Indonesian delegation to the Indonesian provinces of West Kalimantan and Papua to share effective community response to HIV prevention and AIDS treatment with local stakeholders such as religious and community leaders.
- UNFPA developed modules, including religious perspectives on the prevention of violence against women in conflict and post-conflict situations, that were used in religious settings. In addition, UNFPA supported the training of community members on sensitivity counselling in accord with religious values, and the training of religious institutions on gender equality and women's empowerment.
- Finally, the Gender, Human Rights and Culture Branch of UNFPA headquarters sponsored two Indonesian case studies on gender-based violence with the assistance of the

International Centre for Islam and Pluralism, and Jurnal Perempuan, a network of media practitioners promoting women's rights.

Iran

- In Iran, recognition of the negative impact of rapid population growth by the government, along with concerted advocacy efforts and one of the best primary health systems in the region, has reduced fertility rates by more than half in the past decade. Moreover, the country has exceeded the targets laid out at the 1994 ICPD through the implementation of several programmes: two on reproductive health, one on literacy and one on women's rights.
- Provincial medical universities conducted an initial assessment of the attitudes of religious leaders towards reproductive health. Subsequently, a workshop for local authorities was held to develop an advocacy plan for reproductive health and family planning.
- In addition, a systematic review of public-domain data on gender-based violence and information on how it had been addressed by religious and civil law was initiated. UNFPA supported the creation of a task force composed of a network of key stakeholders to collaborate on the development of evidence-based advocacy strategies regarding gender-based violence. This task force includes both government organizations (GOs) and NGOs. The campaign addresses gender-based violence and develops methods of intervention that are in accordance with Islamic principles. The Iranian experience underlines the importance of factoring in culturally sensitive issues, and patiently seeking resolution of such issues at the outset.⁴⁵

⁴⁵ The full case study, "Moving the ICPD Programme of Action Forward in the Islamic Republic of Iran through Patience and an Enabling Environment", can be found in the UNFPA publication *Culture Matters: Working with Communities and Faith-based Organizations* (2004).

Malaysia

- UNFPA partnered indirectly with the Department of Islamic Development Malaysia (JAKIM) a local FBO, through the Federation of Family Planning Associations, Malaysia (FFPAM), an implementing NGO partner, on adolescent sexual and reproductive health. Faced with the need for more user-friendly materials on these issues, UNFPA assisted in the implementation of a project that actively engaged young people in the development of a comprehensive module, thereby ensuring a sense of agency and collectivity in the process. A steering committee and technical working groups were established, and JAKIM was invited to be an authoritative member playing a crucial role in the development of the manual's Islamic perspective. The module on adolescent sexual and reproductive health has been widely used by both government and NGOs as a training and advocacy tool. In addition to providing invaluable, religiously sensitive inputs to the module, JAKIM facilitated its wider dissemination.
- UNFPA hosted an FBO forum titled "Strengthening Partnerships with Faith-based Organizations (FBOs) in Addressing ICPD", which emerged with the nucleus of a Pan-Asian Interfaith Network on Population and Development. The forum also produced a number of concrete recommendations and initiatives to enhance the partnerships between UNFPA and FBOs across the region.

Maldives

- In light of rising religious conservatism in the Maldives, UNFPA has moved to establish official mechanisms to engage with FBOs in its new Country Programme (2008-2010). Under this programme, UNFPA works with FBOs to promote reproductive health and

rights. This includes, for example, the provision of information and services to unmarried adolescents, which is a challenging endeavour. The activities will be launched in partnership with the ministries covering health, gender, family, youth, sports, education and justice. These new partnerships will aim to build awareness, further advocacy and build capacity on reproductive health issues among FBOs. UNFPA is supporting the generation and sustainability of high-level political commitment to addressing gender-based violence with the establishment of a family protection unit in Male, the capital city.

- UNFPA recognizes the capacity of FBOs to build constructive alliances to promote reproductive rights and provide reproductive health services to all individuals in order to contribute to the attainment of the ICPD mandate and the MDGs. When advocacy and partnership with religious and community leaders in programme implementation is strengthened, these groups act as advocates for the UNFPA mandate and counter conservative misconceptions. Constraining factors include cultural (often religious) sensitivities that surround the delivery of adolescent sexual and reproductive health information and services, as well as limited technical expertise.

Nepal

- UNFPA has partnered with the District Development Committees in three UNFPA-focused districts—Kapilvastu, Mahottari and Rautahat—to work with faith-based leaders on reproductive health and gender issues. The partnership is focused primarily on Muslim leaders in Nepal. In Kapilvastu, UNFPA collaborates closely with the District Development Committee and District Health Office to facilitate the training and sensitization of faith-based leaders on these issues. The training sessions also serve to initiate

partnerships with these leaders in order to reach out to communities and communicate ways to improve reproductive health.

- Overall, the training sessions for the faith-based leaders have been beneficial in engaging them in discussion about reproductive health, family planning and gender issues in the context of religious discourse. After a three-year training period that engaged these leaders in reproductive health awareness programmes, a network of religious leaders was formed in Kapilvastu district. Based on the success of the initiative, the District Development Committee has allocated funds for similar training programmes in its regular budget. Furthermore, health facilities in some areas have reported the increased acceptance of family planning methods at the community level. UNFPA is now replicating the training programme in the districts of Mahottari and Rautahat.

“When advocacy and partnership with religious and community leaders in programme implementation is strengthened, these groups act as advocates for the UNFPA mandate and counter conservative misconceptions.”

Pacific Island Countries

At present, UNFPA has a presence only in Fiji, and relies on its partnership with the Pacific Conference of Churches (PCC) to implement projects on adolescent health development coordination in other Pacific Island Countries (PICs). Nevertheless, UNFPA aims to increase and better systematize its collaboration with FBOs in the future. It also hopes to extend partnerships to FBOs from the Hindu and Muslim traditions, in addition to the Christian groups with which UNFPA is already partnering. Most Christian FBOs are very supportive of UNFPA work on HIV and AIDS advocacy, and they are active in creating awareness and empowering their members by providing them with accurate information on HIV and AIDS.

UNFPA has learned to maintain a balanced approach, starting from the issue of abstinence and gradually sensitizing faith-based partners to provide other options through referrals to the appropriate outlets. Partner FBOs have differing opinions on family planning and condom usage. UNFPA partners both directly and indirectly with the PCC, which consists of representatives from different Christian denominations in the Pacific. UNFPA offers direct technical, programmatic and logistical support to its FBO partners on issues of HIV prevention and AIDS treatment, adolescent sexual and reproductive health, and gender equality.

- Funding for the PCC has been indirectly provided through the regional Adolescent Health and Development Project, which was implemented by the Secretariat of the Pacific Community. While the PCC remains the primary point of contact for UNFPA, additional contacts have been established and several requests for support received.
- A number of adolescent health and development coordinators work under this regional project at a country level in 10 countries, and collaborate with FBOs to advocate for adolescent sexual and reproductive health and provide related information and services to young people. For example, through the work of the adolescent health coordinator in Samoa, sexuality education sessions were included as part of a Christian school's extracurricular activities. Coordinators offer similar services in other schools and through clinics that raise awareness on family planning, HIV prevention and AIDS treatment, teenage pregnancy, and access to reproductive health services.

- In 2005, as a follow-up to World Population Day, UNFPA mobilized funds for a series of seminars on marriage preparation and gender equality for religious leaders in the region that was organized by the Fiji Council for Social Services.
- In 2006, UNFPA offered some funding and technical assistance to the PCC for a “Women and HIV and AIDS” workshop, attended mostly by pastors and their wives. Other training workshops have been developed since, to help ensure that church counsellors (mainly pastors) provide correct information and support to those who come to them for assistance, and to help counsellors gain the support of their communities in embracing HIV-positive individuals and others who are in need of care.
- In 2007, the UNFPA mobilized funds for its “Youth, Women, and HIV and AIDS” regional workshop. This workshop included participants of different religious traditions, mostly Christian, from various countries, who were encouraged to put together an action plan for FBOs on HIV prevention and AIDS treatment for a three-year period (2008-2010) by seeking the endorsement of the National Council of Churches in their respective countries.
- Apart from providing funds for the workshop, UNFPA offered extensive assistance through its HIV/STI Adviser, Regional Communications Officer and other programme staff in delivering presentations and helping participants create their action plans. Information, education and communication (IEC) materials and CD-ROMs of relevant workshop documents were made available to each participant.
- In addition, UNFPA funded travel for two women from the YWCA (Young Women’s Christian Association) of Fiji to attend the World YWCA

Council and International Women’s Summit held in Nairobi, Kenya, in 2007.

Pakistan

UNFPA partners with Islamic FBOs, religious leaders and schools through implementing partners such as the Ministry of Population Welfare, the Ministry of Women’s Development and the Family Planning Association of Pakistan. UNFPA seeks to engage with a wide spectrum of FBOs and leaders from Muslim countries in order to decrease population growth and overcome challenges to family planning that are framed in religious discourse. The partnerships UNFPA maintains cover reproductive health for adolescents and adults, family planning, HIV prevention and AIDS treatment, gender equality, and gender-based violence.

One specific lesson learned in working with FBOs is that partnerships should be based on mutual learning as a regular, long-term endeavour. Moreover, because religious issues often provoke tense exchanges and disputes, it is important to lay down conditions for discussions that take place during workshops or sensitization sessions. Likewise, it is important to prepare curricula well in advance through a consultative and inclusive process. Curricula that are prepared in collaboration with partners may pre-empt any potential conflicting ideas that could block the entire process. The UNFPA Country Office has developed a checklist of potentially sensitive issues that must be discussed internally with the implementing partners and resource persons prior to the training or orientation sessions.

- Through implementing NGOs, a collaboration between UNFPA and religious leaders and teachers started with the Reproductive Health

Initiative for Youth in Asia. The collaboration focused on raising awareness for youth health and empowerment, maternal health, gender equality, HIV prevention and AIDS treatment, and providing health and educational information and services to young boys and girls. While the programme ended in 2006, many of these interventions have continued. Health education sessions were organized for girls studying in a Lahore madrasah (religious school). The collaboration with FBOs and religious leaders has been absolutely essential in addressing issues related to reproductive health and young people in Pakistan. Some beneficial practices have been documented under the Reproductive Health Initiative for Youth in Asia (RHIYA) programme; further information is available at www.rhiya.org.

- In 2005, UNFPA hosted an FBO leadership consultation titled “International *Ulemma* Conference on Population and Development”, which addressed family planning and gender issues in partnership with the Ministry of Population Welfare. The *Ulemma* Conference was a milestone for giving clear direction to policymakers on reproductive health and the promotion of human rights. Addressing population and reproductive health issues from an Islamic perspective has proved to be a successful advocacy strategy.
- As a follow-up to the conference, a training programme for local *ulemmas* (Islamic scholars) is under way. The involvement of communities—with attention to religious leaders, particularly in conservative areas—has proved to be successful for promoting and increasing demand for reproductive health services at the grass-roots level.
- In 2006, UNFPA and the Ministry of Women’s Development conducted a series of gender orientation sessions in Pakistan’s four provinces, with participants from 10

districts. Religious leaders were invited to these sessions as resource persons and participants. The collaboration aimed to widen the scope of gender-related issues to include controversial matters such as honour killings and other customs harmful to women propagated by *jirgas* (committees of elders). UNFPA also worked with the Ministry of Women’s Development to design its annual plan for 2007.

- UNFPA worked with the Family Planning Association of Pakistan to deliver gender sensitization workshops in the four provincial capitals. Local *nazims* (mayors) attended these orientation sessions. *Idara-e-saqafat Islam*, an Islamic FBO, was invited as a resource partner, and through them, materials on gender and youth issues for the UNFPA RHYA project were published.

Papua New Guinea

- Under the Adolescent Sexual and Reproductive Health (ASRH) project in Papua New Guinea, UNFPA works with partners such as the YWCA, the National Council of Women, the Catholic and Anglican Churches, the Seventh-day Adventist Church and the Salvation Army. Among the activities is the promotion of discipline and responsibility among young people, usually through resource mobilization and technical assistance. Church representatives trained through the ASRH project have organized their own trainings for their congregations during religious events. The churches themselves are gradually accepting and incorporating the teachings on reproductive health in discussions with their communities and organizing such trainings in various settlements.
- UNFPA partners with the NGO Marie Stopes International Australia (MSIA) to implement components of the ASRH project. The

interventive components address issues such as population and development; adolescent sexual and reproductive health; family planning; the prevention of STIs, HIV and AIDS; and gender equality. Projects include knowledge-sharing on these issues, as well as targeting behavioural changes through drama performances, peer counselling on prevention of HIV and STIs, family-life education among in-school and out-of school youth, capacity-building to strengthen youth-friendly reproductive health services, vocational skills training and advocacy for youth-friendly policies, and the implementation of adolescent reproductive health programmes.

- MSIA provided technical support for the training of student peer educators at the University of Papua New Guinea to facilitate interaction with and counselling of their peers in sexual and reproductive health and HIV prevention and AIDS treatment. MSIA also provided technical assistance to the YWCA in training church representatives to become trainers themselves and to interact with their respective congregations about reproductive health, gender, and HIV and AIDS issues.
- With the YWCA as the implementing partner, UNFPA has sponsored a radio series called "Tok Street" aimed at increasing awareness and knowledge about population and reproductive health issues through guest panellists such as government officials and NGO workers, who then encourage members of the general public to call in and exchange information with them. "Tok Street" has generated much interactivity among the youth and general public, and has contributed to increased knowledge and awareness about population and reproductive health issues.
- UNFPA also assisted the National Council of Women in implementing the Role Models

project, which provides assistance to in-school youth through the school visits of mentors who encourage the youth to lead responsible lives. Following this initiative, churches have expressed interest in collaborating with UNFPA on youth and adolescent programmes, as well as on men's involvement in gender issues. The Role Models project in Papua New Guinea was prominent in encouraging young people to emulate the lives of their role models, resulting in the rate of early pregnancies among female students dropping in many of the targeted communities.

- UNFPA recently sponsored the YWCA in providing alternative vocational skills training for a number of sex workers. The YWCA undertook vocational skills training to make these individuals economically self-sufficient enough to leave the streets. Increased efforts will be made in the next Country Programme to work closely with and monitor the activities of the FBOs to ensure that the necessary impact is achieved.

Philippines

- UNFPA connects indirectly with an interfaith network of FBOs and religious leaders through the Philippine Legislators' Committee on Population and Development Foundation (PLCPD), which is one of its implementing partners under the UNFPA Country Programme. UNFPA provides financial assistance to the PLCPD to implement activities with the FBOs on issues relating to reproductive rights and sexual and reproductive health (in the context of Islam, for some case studies), family planning, gender equality, and population and development. Although the partners of UNFPA categorically reject abortion, they believe that women who become victims of sex crimes should be counselled and treated humanely.

- In 2003, the PLCPD initiated several activities that led to the organization of the First Interfaith Conference on Responsible Parenthood and Reproductive Health. The conference was attended by various FBOs and resulted in the formation of the Interfaith Partnership for the Promotion of Reproductive Health and Family Planning Programmes at the national level, which comprised about 15 FBOs. Among these were Iglesia ni Cristo, mainline Protestant churches, Evangelical churches, the Office of Muslim Affairs, the Regional Commission on Bangsamoro Women, the Islamic Women's NGO and the National Committee on the Role of Filipino Women. Since then, the PLCPD has provided secretariat support to the Interfaith Partnership. The collaboration between UNFPA and these partners includes coordinating conferences (for example, on gender in the context of Islam), developing guidelines for its members on how to set up family planning and reproductive health services, and developing a Rights Literacy module with an Islamic perspective to protect and promote the rights of women and girls and advance gender equity.
- The organization of the interfaith partnerships at the local provincial and municipal levels has a growing need for technical assistance. As the secretariat and implementer in the 10 UNFPA pilot provinces, the PLCPD has discussed this need with stakeholders, specifically asking them for assistance in forming an interfaith organization in their localities. Thus far, the island region of Leyte and Samar and the region of Bicol have organized various forms of interfaith coordination.
- Under the UNFPA 6th Country Programme, the interfaith partnership was registered with the Securities and Exchange Commission and

“Sensitively shared, evidence-based information and participatory approaches are successful means of mobilizing religious leaders who have reservations about addressing reproductive health.”

conducted organizational consolidation through a series of meetings with leaders in the network, person-to-person consultations with interfaith leaders, a project development and design workshop to address the partnership's sustainability issues, and the employment of a Coordinator/Operations Officer for the partnership. The interfaith partnership continues to support reproductive health and population and development issues for the passage of the Responsible Parenthood and Population Management Act and other similar policy proposals.

- Among Evangelicals and other faith-based groups, there is a high level of acceptance of integrating responsible parenthood, reproductive health, and family planning in their programmes and ministry. Nevertheless, the interfaith partnership is still in its formative stages. As yet, the partnership is focusing on its sustainability by organizationally preparing its member churches in the programmatic integration of responsible parenthood, reproductive health, and family planning.

Sri Lanka

- UNFPA indirectly supports Muslim, Hindu and Christian FBOs and religious leaders through its implementing partner Sarvodaya (a national NGO) on issues of reproductive health and rights, gender equality, gender-based violence, male responsibilities and participation, socio-economic support to various groups, prevention of HIV and STIs, and the impact of migration at family and community levels. The Country Office notes that while hierarchical structures exist in some religions, such as in the Protestant and Catholic churches, such strict hierarchy does not exist in Hinduism and

Buddhism. The selection of an implementing organization such as Sarvodaya, which is respected by all religions and has a wide network among the communities, has worked well.

Sarvodaya was able to involve the main religious representatives in Sri Lanka to address reproductive health and gender issues.

“It is not always necessary to commence advocacy programmes at the highest level.”

advocacy and motivating religious leaders to be proactive in addressing reproductive health and gender issues. With regard to the dissemination of reproductive health information, Buddhist

temples have requested relevant publications for their libraries, which would be made available for young people following dharma classes.

- The project has also triggered Sarvodaya to strengthen the engagement of religious leaders on HIV and AIDS. Joint consultations and training have proven that religious leaders from different faiths can work together, learn from each other and share best practices. Some religious leaders have even participated in reproductive health programmes arranged by other religious leaders from different faiths.
- Armed with sensitive, evidence-based and participatory approaches, Sarvodaya was successful in mobilizing religious leaders who initially had reservations about addressing reproductive health and gender issues. The effective implementation of Sarvodaya's programme at community and village levels, as well as at the national level, proves that this outreach can have far-reaching results. The lesson learned is that it is not always necessary to commence advocacy programmes at the highest national level.
- Furthermore, the religious leaders have addressed reproductive health and gender relations in religious sermons, public meetings, Sunday schools for adolescents and youth, school visits, and media and religious publications. In addition, reproductive health and gender-related publications have been introduced into libraries of Buddhist monasteries. A joint international study tour was arranged for two representatives from each religious organization. This programme was effective in building a common ground for
- In some villages, religious leaders, police, and health and community-based organization (CBO) leaders have established committees to monitor reproductive health and gender-related problems, which includes promoting a community-based approach to resolve such problems.

Thailand

- A UNFPA pilot project among the Southern Muslim communities of the Pattani Province of Thailand promotes adolescent health and reproductive rights. Initiated by Planned Parenthood Association of Thailand (PPAT), with the support of UNFPA, the project focuses on out-of-school Muslim youth, and uses peer educators. The project has also enlisted the cooperation of religious leaders and, by taking an Islamic perspective on issues related to reproductive health and male responsibility, has helped sensitize the influential local Islamic Council on the importance of reproductive health education.
- Through youth health centres, managed by young men and women living in the communities, the project provides reproductive health and family planning information and services to young married couples, as well as single young people. Because men are often the family decision-makers in the community, PPAT encouraged their participation in youth centre activities. The project employed a three-pronged approach of advocacy,

communication, and reproductive health service delivery to reach adolescents and males.

Timor-Leste

UNFPA is in direct partnership with the Catholic Church through the Catholic FBO Caritas Dili. Through that FBO, the Church is in partnership with the Ministry of Health, with financial support from the UNFPA Country Office, on issues of family planning, maternal and child mortality and morbidity, adolescent reproductive health, and prevention of HIV and STIs. In some districts, local medical doctors and other health personnel are actively involved in the provision of reproductive health information and counselling for new couples as part of pre-marriage courses conducted in every parish.

One of the lessons learned is that it is extremely important to strengthen existing institutions at the community level in collaboration with parish priests, nuns, and local health authorities. The material that is currently used requires constant updating by health professionals in order to incorporate other issues such as family planning and HIV prevention and AIDS treatment. Discussions are ongoing with local health authorities and members of religious groups.

- The programme assisted in the provision of training in family planning for health providers to give them counselling skills in natural family planning methods and birth spacing as a means of decreasing maternal and child mortality and morbidity. In terms of advocacy with religious leaders, several meetings were conducted with Catholic Church leaders to raise awareness and understanding on issues related to reproductive health as well as population and development as part of the ICPD agenda. Key members of the church were invited to attend national

and international events on sexual and reproductive health and other population issues.

With regard to the family planning programme, training and IEC materials were provided to Catholic clinic health personnel. These personnel were also invited to attend the ongoing family planning training for Ministry of Health providers.

“Because of successful advocacy with the Catholic Church...[it] is now supporting the idea of adolescent reproductive health in school curricula.”

- In the area of adolescent reproductive health, the Salesian priests are providing sexual education to Don Bosco Secondary School students. The Carmelite sisters occasionally offer sexuality orientation to groups of teenage girls. Because of successful advocacy with the Catholic Church during the past two years, there is no longer aversion to the inclusion of adolescent sexual and reproductive health in school curricula; in fact, the Catholic Church is now supporting the idea.
- A project on adolescent sexual and reproductive health with both the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Education is being planned for the future. As they play an important role in the area of adolescent reproductive health, the Salesian priests and the Carmelite sisters are essential in contributing to initial consultation meetings, planning and implementation. Moreover, the Catholic Church is now promoting natural family planning and, significantly, not exhibiting opposition to modern methods.
- During the crisis in 2006, UNFPA supported a Caritas Dili project in providing health support, house supplies and hygiene kits to internally displaced people at religious institutions in Dili and two other neighbouring districts. The initial draft agreement between Caritas Dili, the Ministry of Health and UNFPA needs to be expanded by incorporating family planning, adolescent reproductive health and pre-marriage courses for couples.

Latin America and the Caribbean Overview

In Latin America, many countries are lagging in their efforts to meet the poverty reduction targets laid out in the MDGs for 2015. The region is also falling behind in meeting the MDGs for HIV prevention and maternal mortality. Improved access to quality reproductive health services can contribute substantially to reducing poverty and providing social services more equitably and efficiently. More equitable access can eliminate the barrier of out-of-pocket expenses that keep many poor households from receiving treatment for obstetric complications and sexually transmitted infections (STIs), including HIV.⁴⁶

As a predominantly Catholic continent, reproductive health and family planning policies often meet strong resistance from the Catholic church. In the Caribbean, patriarchy is sometimes strong, but some matriarchal social structures and cultural practices elevate the status of women.⁴⁷ Specific reproductive health issues do not always receive enough attention in social policies and programmes. Often there is a reluctance to deal with reproductive health, and legislation on reproductive health is usually strongly contested. There are those, for example, who equate giving young people access to reproductive health services or sexuality education with promoting early and irresponsible sexual activity. However, with adolescent fertility rates still high and HIV prevalence rising among the region's youth, the need to address these issues is clear and demands sincere and open

dialogue with young people about sexuality, reproductive health and gender.⁴⁸

Population indicators vary immensely by country. In Bolivia, maternal and infant mortality rates are the highest in the region, at 420 and 47, respectively, per 100,000 live births. In comparison, the rates in Mexico are 83 and 17, respectively. In Nicaragua, more than 11 per cent of adolescent girls aged 15-19 are mothers, compared with 6 per cent in Mexico.

In Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC), the most predominant issues addressed by UNFPA in its partnerships have been reproductive rights and sexual and reproductive health (including those specifically for adolescents), family planning and gender equality. The projects have targeted youth, women and girls, religious leaders, institutions and communities, indigenous communities, and teachers. UNFPA partners include faith-based organizations (FBOs) such as Pastoral da Criança (Brazil), Alianza Evangélica de Guatemala, Fe y Alegría (Nicaragua), Consejo Latinoamericano de Iglesias (Latin American Council of Churches) and Ayuda y Solidaridad con las Niñas de la Calle (Mexico). Activities include advocacy through forums, seminars and workshops for communities, as well as support for media platforms and information dissemination. Capacity-building efforts involve training, sensitization and awareness-raising among professional personnel, government representatives and NGOs. Also included are programmes designed to secure the mobilization of religious leaders as well as the establishment of health clinics.

⁴⁶ <http://www.unfpa.org/latinamerica/overview.cfm>.

⁴⁷ UNFPA, *Culture in the Context of UNFPA Programming: ICPD+10 Survey Results on Culture and Religion* (2005).

⁴⁸ <http://www.unfpa.org/latinamerica/overview.cfm>.

Table 4:
At a Glance:
UNFPA-FBO
Partnerships in
Latin America and
the Caribbean

	RELIGION				PARTNERSHIP		ACTIVITY		ISSUES ADDRESSED							
	Catholicism	Evangelical	Other protestant denominations	Interdenominational	Religious leaders	Faith-based organizations	Advocacy with community-based organizations	Capacity building with religious leaders	HIV/AIDS and sexually transmitted infections	Reproductive rights and sexual and reproductive health	Adolescent reproductive rights and sexual and reproductive health	Family planning	Maternal and infant mortality	Gender equality	Gender-based violence	Migration
Brazil	✓					✓					✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
Colombia	✓		✓		✓	✓				✓	✓			✓	✓	✓
Ecuador		✓				✓				✓				✓		
Guatemala	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓				✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Honduras	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓					✓		
Jamaica					✓	✓		✓	✓	✓				✓		
Mexico	✓	✓	✓			✓				✓		✓		✓		✓
Nicaragua	✓					✓				✓						✓

Latin America and the Caribbean Insights

Brazil

- UNFPA, along with the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) and the International Women's Health Coalition, funded a 2005 campaign by Catholics for a Free Choice titled *Amigas das Católicas* (Friends of Catholics). The campaign mobilized resources for the printing costs of its publication—a leaflet on women's rights—as well as the continuity of its advocacy activities. With UNFPA support, the leaflet was printed in three languages and used as a funding mechanism. It explained that a “Friend of Catholics for a Free Choice” is one who believes in a fair and equal society, as well as in women's ethical and moral ability to make their own decisions about their bodies and lives. Although the UNFPA contribution to the Catholics for a Free Choice initiative was limited, it was well appreciated and marked the starting point of a close partnership with this FBO. The partnership led to a joint project proposal to foster interreligious dialogue and FBO contributions to reproductive health and the prevention of gender-based violence in the LAC region. As a result of the campaign, *Amigas das Católicas* and Catholics for a Free Choice were able to increase their visibility in the media, raise funds to ensure their organizations' financial stability, and expand the scope of their advocacy activities.
- In its ongoing attempts to innovate its approaches regarding gender-based violence, the Brazil UNFPA office expanded its partnership base to include FBOs. This enhanced the outreach capacity and key messaging related to prevention.

- In conjunction with the United Nations Programme on AIDS (UNAIDS) Secretariat and the Government of Brazil, UNFPA hosted a global technical consultation on HIV and AIDS and sex work in Rio de Janeiro in 2006. UNFPA invited participants from other governments, other United Nations agencies, donors, and civil society organizations, including FBOs and sex worker networks.

Colombia

- UNFPA partners with the Catholic Church through the Corporación de Desarrollo y Paz para el Magdalena Medio (CDPMM—Development and Peace Corporation for Magdalena Medio), the implementing NGO, on issues of gender equality, reproductive rights and sexual and reproductive health, and maternal morbidity and mortality. The project is geared towards the promotion of reproductive rights and sexual and reproductive health in a region that is characterized by an extended period of armed conflict. Conflict and a culture of machismo lend themselves to victimization and dominance of women and youth, as well as the violation of human rights. From this perspective, the project has focused on two important strategies: the development of a common language for public policy formulation on reproductive health and human rights, and a strategy to reject stereotypes that lead to inequality and gender-based violence.
- The project targets civil society organizations, service providers, and civil servants in institutions responsible for sexual and reproductive health in the region, as well as the population most affected by the armed conflict. The latter includes the displaced and those at risk of displacement, female heads of households, youth, and communities made invisible by poverty and violence. The Humanitarian Response Unit of UNFPA at

headquarters provided the Magdalena Medio region with emergency kits to support outreach activities in isolated areas where poor people are displaced by armed conflict. Project outcomes include an increased capacity of local leaders and organizations to mobilize and participate in promoting and defending reproductive rights and sexual and reproductive health and gender equity. Moreover, the project has enhanced the capacity to design and implement behaviour change communication by promoting healthy practices and preventing sexual violence. In addition, the project has increased the ability of health service providers to deliver comprehensive, quality sexual and reproductive health services. This includes prevention of AIDS and gender-based violence, especially among youth. The Magdalena Medio project has raised awareness among community leaders to the extent that the CDPMM would like to implement similar projects for all its personnel. Thus, the NGO has asked for UNFPA assistance in mainstreaming the focus of gender and human rights in all the projects it implements in the Magdalena Medio region.

- Two additional development and peace programmes on sexual and reproductive health are being implemented in Montes de María and Oriente Atiqueño. These projects have increased the political commitment of local administrations for the implementation of the national policy on sexual and reproductive health. They have promoted mechanisms for intersectoral coordination that guarantee reproductive rights and sexual and reproductive health as well as gender equality.

“The partnership between UNFPA and the local Catholic Church has been enabled through finding common ground and goals, such as striving for a respect for life, for the dignity and freedom of people, and for the education of the young in the practice of safe and responsible sexuality.”

- UNFPA has provided the Catholic Church with the technical knowledge and the necessary resources to create awareness about problems related to sexual and reproductive health in order to carry out effective activities that meet the needs of its parishioners. The partnership between UNFPA and the local Catholic Church has been enabled through finding common ground and goals, such as striving for a respect for life, for the dignity and freedom of people, and for the education of the young in the practice of safe and responsible sexuality.
- The core shared principles are the declaration of human rights and the conviction that there is an urgent need to create a basis for peace by means of developing an awareness of individual rights. In the case of armed groups, such groups are threatened by human rights advocacy, but not on issues of sexual and reproductive health, since they view the right of a child to be born or the right of health to be logical. Armed groups thus see the benefits of the debates on these issues and often participate in workshops that they are monitoring. This situation has allowed for an opportunity to open the debate on human rights from the starting point of reproductive rights and sexual and reproductive health .
- UNFPA recognizes the important role of the Jesuits in this region of the country, which is predominantly Catholic, and sees their potential as catalysts for cultural reformation. The Development and Peace project is also important in promoting change in a region that is immersed in armed conflict and poverty. Working in such a difficult zone, in which trust-building was not easy for an

institution like UNFPA, was enabled due to the support provided by partnerships with the Catholic Church. From the beginning and throughout the process, the Jesuit community that has led and carried out this project has been faced with moral dilemmas and political risks, which it has discussed openly with UNFPA. This atmosphere of constant dialogue and mutual respect has made it possible to find solutions and alternatives to deal with divisive issues.

- UNFPA let religious leaders make decisions and define the scope of their political vision, since they know the risks they face if they defend principles that are not approved by the ecclesiastical hierarchy. This has allowed religious leaders to respectfully manage their relationship with the Church, as well as to have a clear focus on project results. In this relationship, the Catholic Church respects the standards of basic care services for sexual and reproductive health; however, it does not distribute supplies for family planning itself, but instead designates health workers to disseminate the contraceptive supplies directly. The participation of the Catholic Church in the establishment of sexual and reproductive health projects for peace and development in Montes de María and Magdalena Medio resulted in greater cultural sensitivity in supporting interventions, and helped to address social beliefs and myths in this area. This partnership also generated credibility and increased coordination and social participation.
- In targeting displaced youth in areas affected by internal conflict, art and communication activities proved to be empowering for these young people. Moreover, such activities created a space for reflection on human rights, equality, and the development of safe and

“Working in a zone immersed in armed conflict and poverty was enabled due to the support of UNFPA provided by partnerships with the Catholic Church.”

responsible sexual and reproductive behaviour. Specifically, the use of theatre provided youth with a channel for expression and re-evaluation of their beliefs. It also allowed them to claim rights and autonomy over their own bodies. The technical capacity of UNFPA to work on the settlement of displaced populations increased with the collaboration of local NGOs and other United Nations agencies.

- Since 2006, a new partnership has been developed in the Montes de María region. The Fundación Red Desarrollo y Paz de los Montes de María (Network Development and Peace Foundation of Montes de María—FRDPMMa), an alliance between the Catholic and Mennonite Churches, is the implementing NGO. Such partnerships with FBOs are focused on reproductive rights and sexual and reproductive health (including, specifically, those for adolescents and youth), gender equality and gender-based violence. Issues related to sexual and reproductive health have been adopted by these counterparts. FRDPMMa is experienced with communitarian work. UNFPA collaborates with specialized partnerships—such as with universities and professional associations—with the aim of carrying out the development of institutional capacity. FRDPMMa has adequate capacity to operate at all levels required by the project.

Ecuador

- In response to the priority areas established in the UNFPA Country Programme 2004-2008, the Country Office in Ecuador began a collaborative initiative with the Centro Integral de la Familia (CIF), a local ecumenical NGO based in Quito. Consisting of evangelical

leaders and with strong leadership from the Lutheran Church, CIF aims to create awareness and provide guidance among evangelical leaders, academics and young people on issues related to reproductive rights and sexual and reproductive health from a theological and public-health perspective. Furthermore, CIF, in turn, works closely with the Latin American Council of Churches by providing technical support in matters related to its mandate. The partnership between UNFPA and these mixed Protestant denominations addresses issues of reproductive rights and sexual and reproductive health as well as gender equality. The main objective of UNFPA in the partnership is to advocate the agenda of the ICPD and MDGs among evangelical leaders to establish a better environment for reproductive health issues.

- Through a rapid assessment methodology, UNFPA has built evidence on knowledge, assumptions and attitudes about sexual and reproductive health in the specific context of Ecuador. Among the lessons learned is that the partnership between UNFPA and CIF has provided a significant opportunity to develop new partnerships by expanding its mandate to additional geographical areas. FBOs are important allies in reaching out to local communities and educational institutions, and for positioning sexual and reproductive health within a human rights framework. By finding a common understanding on reproductive rights, UNFPA and FBOs can mutually enhance their respective mandates.
- As in many other areas in Latin America, FBOs in Ecuador are well positioned at the political level and are growing in influence among indigenous leaders, communities and other relevant institutions. Their opinions on controversial topics within the debate of the new Constitution, such as the declaration of Ecuador as a lay state, could ease extreme

radical influences. FBOs often perceive the United Nations system to be inaccessible, but UNFPA has worked to change this view by fostering dialogue between FBOs and other United Nations agencies under the framework of the MDGs to see where mandates can intersect and expand.

Guatemala

- UNFPA engaged the Episcopal Conference and the Catholic and Evangelical Churches, as well as the private business sector and the Coordinating Committee of Agricultural, Commercial, Industrial and Financial Associations. The partnerships centred around the issues of reproductive health, maternal and infant mortality, and population and demographics. Activities focused on mobilization of religious leaders through knowledge sharing, as well as capacity-building and trainings designed for advocacy, skills and resource mobilization.
- With regard to some new arguments for reproductive health and rights, UNFPA was able to find common ground with the beliefs of the Evangelical churches. Through the strong infrastructure and credibility of the Alianza Evangelica de Guatemala among rural and indigenous communities, the partnership has allowed UNFPA to reach the most remote and impoverished families and increase the demands for reproductive health services. Evangelical leaders potentially hold great influence in their congregations' decision-making process. Furthermore, the information from religious leaders, in turn, lends confidence and credibility to the community members disseminating reproductive health messages.
- UNFPA works directly with the Alianza Evangelica, which represents approximately 85 per cent of the Evangelical churches and

about 45 per cent of the Guatemalan population. The Alianza partners with UNFPA to develop and spread reproductive health messages to its constituencies at the community and national levels. The main focus groups are church leaders, women, and youth leaders of the Evangelical churches. In its reproductive health initiatives, UNFPA also collaborates with the Ministry of Health. The project began with baseline research about the knowledge, attitudes and desires around reproductive health in the Evangelical communities. Both men and women (500 of each) were interviewed in various churches around the country in order to develop high-impact strategies to reach them. The data gathered then contributed to the development of a methodological training guide for use by the Alianza Evangelica.

- UNFPA then worked with the Alianza on training its leaders in five areas of reproductive health to increase the demand for reproductive health services: prenatal care; clean and safe delivery; organization of the community for emergency obstetric situations; pregnancy spacing and the prevention of adolescent pregnancies; responsible parenting; and interpersonal communication techniques.
- A two-day workshop for pastors and church leaders was held. Trainers and trainees developed interpersonal communication skills and knowledge of the themes of the project. These teams disseminate the messages they have learned to their respective congregations. People who wish to use reproductive health services are referred to the health centres and hospitals of the Ministry of Health. In the training workshops of the project, it was essential to showcase significant behaviours of solidarity to build community.
- UNFPA has expanded its collaboration with the Alianza Evangelica by extending training to

youth leaders and partnering with the Population Council in order to reach indigenous young girls. The training and interpersonal activities developed by the trainers and trainees were reinforced by local radio messages addressing the reproductive health themes of the project. Fifty local radio stations communicate 10 daily messages and reach an estimated audience of more than 50,000 people. The Alianza also takes advantage of their information networks to broadcast messages through local radio stations, which, in addition to informing the community, also promote the use of reproductive health services. With regard to gender, UNFPA has exerted efforts to mainstream this perspective in reproductive health projects through the training of trainers and the work of its partners, such as the Ministry of Health, the Alianza and the other supporting NGOs. Furthermore, UNFPA has commenced work on the prevention of gender-based violence. Through the project, a large number of adolescents are receiving information about reproductive health for the first time.

Honduras

- Based on the previous efforts of the Ministry of Health, UNFPA created the Inter-ecclesiastical Committee on HIV and AIDS Prevention. This committee co-coordinates with the Ministry of Health and allows for the Ministry's direct partnership with representatives of the Catholic, Evangelical, Episcopal and Adventist Churches, as well as the Theological Community of Honduras, an ecumenical academic institution. UNFPA distributes a grant to each FBO partner for HIV-prevention activities such as educational seminars and youth peer educational workshops.
- Since 2004, the Inter-ecclesiastical Committee on HIV and AIDS Prevention has organized four Inter-ecclesiastical Forums on HIV Prevention and AIDS Treatment throughout the country. More than 100 leaders and

representatives of the Catholic, Evangelical, Episcopalian and Adventist Churches have participated in each of these daylong workshops. The overall objective of these forums has been to generate a process of analysis to identify common visions, strategies and elements to approach HIV prevention and AIDS treatment from a religious perspective. The panels have included topics on sexuality and human rights, gender equality, and intergenerational communication. Working groups also have been held, highlighting the need to address gender equality more thoroughly in churches, the need to provide accurate and thorough information about sexuality and sexual and reproductive health to young people, and the importance of frank communication within families. Based on the conclusions presented by the working groups at the Inter-ecclesiastical Forums, it is apparent that the various churches acknowledge their responsibility in HIV prevention and AIDS treatment, and in caring for those living with HIV or AIDS.

“As opinion leaders, FBOs feel a commitment and responsibility to their respective communities to help prevent HIV.”

- In addition, the working groups identified possibilities and constraints for their churches to work in HIV prevention. The possibilities are that churches are structurally organized and have the capacity to gather and garner the attention of a large segment of the population; religious leaders have the capacity to convince and guide substantial segments of the community; and young people are particularly interested in the subject matter (underscoring the need to provide accurate and through information on sexual and reproductive health). The constraints are that sexuality and HIV are still taboo topics in many churches, and some churches still lack the knowledge and capacity to deal with these topics effectively.

- One of the lessons learned from these programmes is that candid, respectful dialogue can go a long way in achieving common ground between UNFPA and FBOs. Efforts such as bringing in experts who speak the language of FBOs (e.g., theological arguments for the respect for life and human rights) and building arguments based on facts (such as providing national epidemiological data on HIV) are successful.
- Lack of knowledge on how to address HIV prevention in churches provides a good opportunity for capacity-building by UNFPA. Representative groups should be included even if their perspectives are not initially compatible with that of UNFPA. FBOs recognize the need to address gender equality more thoroughly. Moreover, FBOs are aware of the need for home-based care services and health facilities for AIDS-afflicted parents and their children.
- Due to the formation of strategic alliances with several churches in the country, specifically around the area of AIDS, UNFPA has experienced increased support from a broad network of partners. The threat from conservative religious groups in the country that oppose the ICPD agenda (and, in some cases, have influence over high-level officials) remains, and makes it important to continue strengthening advocacy through community mobilization, the mass media and decision makers.
- In 2005, the UNFPA Honduras Country Office facilitated South-South cooperation between offices in the region by supporting the Ecumenical Committee on HIV and AIDS in close collaboration with the Costa Rica office, which sent experts and religious leaders to Honduras to support the process. The exchange

was positive, as Costa Rica had already made important advances in HIV prevention and AIDS treatment.

- The national Inter-ecclesiastical Committee has, in the meantime, created three local committees. It also worked with FBOs on capacity-building, forums and activities regarding HIV prevention and human rights advocacy, based on epidemiological data gathered in Honduras on HIV. The Inter-ecclesiastical Committee continues to meet regularly to continue projects and activities in Honduras. The forums were successful, with participants setting aside their differences and seeking common ground. As opinion leaders, they felt a commitment and responsibility to their respective communities to help prevent HIV and AIDS.

Jamaica

- Through the United Theological College of the West Indies in Jamaica, UNFPA collaborated indirectly with the Jamaican Council of Churches, which represents several Christian denominations. The partnership also included the Ministry of Health and the Women's Centre Foundation of Jamaica, an NGO, which worked on issues of HIV prevention and AIDS treatment, sexual and reproductive health for adults and adolescents, and gender-based violence.
- UNFPA partially funded an HIV and AIDS awareness project with FBOs, also organized by the United Theological College of the West Indies in Jamaica, targeting youth, religious leaders and the general community. This resulted in an increased awareness of HIV and AIDS among several denominations, the training of many laypeople and ministers, and an expansion of institutional links with the Ministry of Health and other agencies. Nevertheless, in spite of the increased

dialogue on reproductive health, a backlash from religious conservatives occasionally occurs, which underscores the importance of continued advocacy and FBO partnerships.

Mexico

- UNFPA partnered directly with the Latin American Council of Churches on issues of population and reproductive health and rights. The Latin American Council of Churches is an organization of Evangelical churches in the region with headquarters in Quito, Ecuador. In 1998, UNFPA held a landmark seminar and produced a publication of the presentations and proceedings, which continues to be used.
- In cooperation with the State Secretary of Health and in coordination with the State Council on Population, UNFPA maintains an ongoing dialogue with the religious leaders of the Lutheran Church of Mexico around reproductive health issues.
- UNFPA collaborates indirectly with the Catholic Church through the NGO Ayuda y Solidaridad con las Niñas de la Calle (Shelter and Solidarity with the Girls of the Street), whose board members are connected to the Church. The project offers sexuality education for girls who have been rescued from the streets, and provides for them in a safe house until they are 16 years old. This project was successful enough to warrant media attention, and efforts are under way to scale up activities.

Nicaragua

- UNFPA partnered directly with the Catholic FBO Fe y Alegría on the issue of sexual and reproductive health. The FBO promotes education and social development in Latin America's poorest areas in order to build

sustainable human development and a democratic society. In Nicaragua, Fe y Alegría comprises 22 Catholic schools, some of which are managed by religious congregations, with 353 teachers.

- In 2004, 277 teachers participated in one of nine UNFPA-sponsored basic workshops focusing on sexuality education. Fe y Alegría perceives this education to be a key component in building private, family and social relationships. In negotiating with directors and teachers, UNFPA was able to facilitate the development of the first phase of the project in 2004. Due to the participation of directors in the sexuality education workshops, schools opened dialogue to address sexuality with students in extracurricular activities.
- In 2006, UNFPA coordinated a second phase of the project that aimed to create a critical mass of specialized teachers to

“By keeping some of the preliminary work with supportive FBOs low-profile, many activities were achieved without a conservative backlash.”

facilitate sexuality education in their own schools and communities, as well as to introduce the contents and methodologies of sexuality education to the Rural Educative Nucleus of La Asunción, which is home to the only teacher training school in Nicaragua. The nucleus consists of 58 teachers, eight primary schools, one secondary school and one rural teacher training school. Furthermore, UNFPA worked to enhance a Sexuality Education Comprehensive Programme that included training, tracking, evaluation and systematization of activities developed with the involvement of students, teachers and families. The view of the religious congregation managing the Rural Educative Nucleus of La Asunción constituted an opportunity to introduce sexuality education into the curricula. By keeping a low profile on the project, UNFPA was able to deliver actions without the interference of conservative religious groups.

IV Epilogue: Policy Considerations for Engaging Agents of Change

The case for engaging FBOs in development is no longer a matter of discussion, but rather one of considered, systematic and deliberate engagement of like-minded partners. For a long time, international development has been a field dominated by, for lack of a better word, the “secular” agents of development—those with a preference for keeping faith and faith-related matters strictly in the so-called private domains. At the same time, many scholars, human rights activists and, indeed, development actors have argued persuasively that the dividing line between “public” and “private” is increasingly blurred. In a rapidly globalizing world, where information technology leaves little to the imagination, this is even more apparent.

Moreover, there is clearly an important parallel faith-based universe of development. At a time when basic needs are becoming increasingly harder to provide for more than half of the world’s population, we can no longer avoid acknowledging these parallel faith-based actions and development interventions that reach so many and provide so much. These are critical pools of outreach and service delivery.

The world of faith-based development organizations should not be painted all the same colour. Indeed, the diversity of their mandates, missions, expertise, services and modality of work, among other things, is vast. Among this world are friends of the MDGs and the ICPD. And it is to these friends—with a legacy of engagement and service provision—

that the international development world turns, as was the case more than a quarter of a century ago with other civil society organizations.

An important realization from the mapping shared in this document is that even where headquarters of United Nations and development agencies were themselves too hesitant to engage with the faith-based sectors, some of the country or field-based offices did anyway. This was a natural evolution not necessarily always mandated by policy, but in most instances because the realities on the ground required it, and it was strategic to realize their objectives.

The legacy of engaging FBOs as cultural agents, complemented by recent initiatives, provides important opportunities to reflect on and formulate the lessons learned by UNFPA and respective policy considerations around engaging FBOs, as part of the overall UNFPA strategy to

create a supportive sociocultural environment. While planning for more in-depth consultations and deliberations (both within UNFPA and at the United Nations interagency level) on these lessons and policy implications, UNFPA developed the following five policy considerations:

1. Strategic issue-based alliances. Such alliances must focus on the common ground that allows engagement and joint efforts to achieve the ultimate objectives captured in the UNFPA mission statement, and must do so by targeting specific issues. This common ground is a critical

“At a time when basic needs are becoming increasingly harder to provide for more than half of the world’s population, we can no longer avoid acknowledging the parallel faith-based development universe that reaches so many and provides so much.”

building block of these partnerships. UNFPA has found that leaders of faith- and interfaith-based organizations are open to discussing reproductive health if issues are addressed with care and sensitivity. It is clear that women's equal rights, and reproductive rights in particular, are not usually the issues that generate consensus among religious leaders—and especially not publicly—yet UNFPA recognizes the importance of rallying those within the faith-based communities who are already supportive of the common goals and targets embodied in the ICPD and reflected in and re-endorsed by the MDGs, and who have have ongoing programmes to that effect. One effective approach is to use objective evidence—on issues such as infant and maternal mortality, violence against women, and HIV and AIDS prevalence—to tap into ethical positions.

2. A level playing field. While UNFPA recognizes the differences between its mandate and approach and those of FBOs, it nevertheless seeks cooperation as equal partners, depending on each other's comparative advantage and respective strengths. In addition, as equal partners, neither side is utilized or perceived as a means, and instead both are relevant agents of action based on their different, respective and, often, complementary strengths. While the partnerships sought within the FBO community are expected to share the objectives of the ICPD-linked MDGs, UNFPA respects their reaching these objectives differently—using their own language, networks and modus operandi.

3. Diversity of outreach. UNFPA ensures that its outreach is multi-faith and balanced, according to the religious diversity within communities, nations and the world. This is often made explicit in the terms of reference of the programmes. One of the lessons learned is

that this multi-faith outreach approach cannot be implicit. UNFPA also recognizes that in order to identify like-minded partners and continuously enhance the working modality and programme delivery, teaming with established multi-faith organizations and communities that already work on an inter- and intrafaith basis is critical.

4. Clarity, accountability and consistency. As with any other partnership, UNFPA clearly sets out (in Memorandums of Understanding, joint proposals and other project documents) the concrete outcomes expected of the joint endeavour. From the perspective of UNFPA, how the partnership falls within the parameters of the strategic plan (and its global and regional programmes) defines joint mechanisms of accountability, monitoring and evaluation, which are then discussed and on which agreement is reached. Moreover, the engagement with FBOs needs to be intentional and consistent, not a one-off, event-oriented alliance. An engagement that is intended and designed to be long-term, with mutual investment in time and effort, is also one that can bear fruit. Together, clarity, accountability and consistency are essential for building the trust necessary to establish a legacy of sustainable partnerships.

5. Multi-dimensionality. Throughout these partnerships, UNFPA maintains important dimensions *and* targets of its commitment that significantly enrich the experience and inform the policy considerations:

- *South-South engagement:* Within each region, and among its five regions (Africa, Arab States, Asia and Pacific, Eastern Europe and Central Asia, and Latin America and the Caribbean), the scope is wide for knowledge sharing, creation of knowledge networks and strengthening of alliances. Indeed, several UNFPA Country Offices have expressed an

interest in learning from other experiences of engaging FBOs and in strengthening their own networks of faith-based partners.

- *Global perspectives, comparisons and continuity:* There is much to be said for a continuous feedback loop in which the regional, national and global/international enrich one another. In several cases, regional and national efforts at engagement have been informed by organizations that, at the global level, advocate against some aspects of the ICPD Programme of Action.

Yet in other instances, some FBOs are actually finding very creative means of providing ICPD-relevant services at the field levels, mandated by circumstances and needs. Such knowledge and comparison of engagements at the regional, national and international levels enables better appreciation of FBO interventions, as well as grounding and sustainability of the partnerships formed.

We conclude with a Mandinka proverb: "Do a thing at its time, and peace follows it."

V Select Further Reading, Resources and References

This section of resources is divided into the following subsections:

Overview and Magazine Articles

Contains journal articles about particular initiatives and specific areas of intervention such as HIV and AIDS or country experiences, and overview articles on concepts of culture.

Books and Reports

Includes a variety of academic books as well as reports from international organizations and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) on a broad variety of subjects pertaining to faith, religion, politics, development, culture and economics.

Case Studies

Contains case studies from international organizations, FBOs and NGOs dealing with the integration of faith/religion in specific programmes and projects. The case studies are from every region and cover a range of health and development topics.

United Nations Initiatives, Conferences and Programmes

Covers United Nations-based initiatives, conferences, workshops and programmes that include faith, religion or culture as a major component. The articles range from overview articles on development-related topics to speeches given at conferences.

Reviewed Articles

Contains select reviewed articles from scholarly journals. This subsection covers specific topics as well as overviews of cultural perspectives on development.

Toolkits

Contains practical toolkits for working with FBOs, and for integrating culture and religion into programme planning. The integration of FBOs in HIV and AIDS programmes, for example, is included in two toolkits.

Overview and Magazine Articles

Baha'i International Community. 1996. Women from China and the West find common challenges. *One Country* 8 (1).

This article is based on the proceedings from a convention on "Women and the Welfare of Humanity" held in Geneva. The convention discussed women's roles in careers and family in a modern society. Similarities were found among European, North American and Chinese women, as they all faced challenges living in male-dominant societies.

Link: <http://www.onecountry.org/oc81/oc8108as.html>

Baha'i International Community. 2000. In Tanzania, a school with a mission: To uplift girls and promote spiritual values. *One Country* 12 (3).

This article reviews a girls' school in Tanzania that promotes patience, diligence, courtesy, trustworthiness, compassion and justice. Ruaha Secondary School also has programmes that train students to develop skills in agricultural techniques, computer literacy and basic commerce that will help them enter the job market. The school was started by the Baha'i community of Tanzania, and it continues to promote spiritual values among the community's students, in addition to offering them job training.

Link: http://www.onecountry.org/e123/e123-04as_Ruaha_School.htm

Development Gateway Foundation. 2003. From Burkina Faso to Bolivia: Traditional culture protects food and diet.

This article describes projects that safeguard local tradition and assure cultural survival. Many grass-roots organizations and communities are implementing projects designed to revitalize age-old practices of food production and use. They range from projects aimed at promoting consumption of wild vegetables in Burkina Faso, to

utilizing oral traditions to transmit ancestral farming lessons in Benin, to reviving raised agricultural fields to produce potatoes and cacao in Bolivia.

Link: <http://topics.developmentgateway.org/culture/highlights/viewHighlight.do-activeHighlightId=7188>

Development Gateway Foundation. 2004. Gender and literacy: Narrowing the gap with cultural strategies for women and girls.

This article illustrates how culture can be incorporated into development projects. Focusing on the issue of literacy for young women, the article discusses some creative ways to use tradition and cultural expression. Examples showcased range from using poetry and other oral traditions in Yemen, to tying literacy to everyday traditional skills such as making *chicha*, a corn drink, in Peru.

Link: <http://topics.developmentgateway.org/culture/highlights/viewHighlight.do-activeHighlightId=9187>

Development Gateway Foundation. 2004. Innovation on culture-based HIV and AIDS programs.

This article showcases cultural practices that are helping HIV and AIDS victims cope with the virus. Expressive arts are found to be extremely well suited for transmitting practical messages regarding prevention and care, especially to youth. In a Kenyan example, HIV and AIDS orphans are connected to family and local history by a program that enables sick or dying parents to record narratives in order to share their personal stories and wisdom with their children.

Link: <http://topics.developmentgateway.org/culture/highlights/viewHighlight.do-activeHighlightId=103120>

Development Gateway Foundation. 2005. AIDS donors and culture: How understanding a country's culture promotes aid effectiveness.

This article illustrates how incorporating local cultural practices in the implementation of development projects can improve their effectiveness.

Link: <http://topics.developmentgateway.org/culture/highlights/viewHighlight.do-activeHighlightId=105780>

Development Gateway Foundation. 2006. Cultural development by reforming old practices that are harmful to women.

Traditional practices that are harmful to women range from female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C) to forced marriage and sexual abuse, which are part of long-standing traditions defended by local leaders. This article illustrates how awareness raising is a very effective way to fight for policy reforms and protection of women.

Link: <http://topics.developmentgateway.org/culture/highlights/viewHighlight.do-activeHighlightId=110327?activeHighlightId=110327&activeHighlightId=110327&activeHighlightId=110327>

Fabrizio, Claude. 1996. Reflections: Culture first. UNESCO Courier, October.

This article focuses on the UNESCO cultural dimension of development. It argues that the economical development programmes implemented in the 1960s and 1970s did not take into account the cultural dimension of social development. Instead of helping the South, development projects that fail to take culture into account tend to hinder those societies working to eradicate poverty. Only by the 1980s did the dimension of culture in development emerge in programme planning.

Link: http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m1310/is_1996_Oct/ai_18826833

Giusti, Daniele, Peter Lochoro, Everd Maniple, and John Odaga. 2004. Pro-poor health services: The Catholic health network in Uganda. The World Bank Group.

This article examines the experience of the health network in Uganda in providing health services to the most economically vulnerable populations.

Link: <http://www1.worldbank.org/devoutreach/march04/textonly.asp?id=237#top>

Isar, Raj. 1996. Our creative diversity. UNESCO Courier, September.

This is an interview with Javier Pérez De Cuéllar former Secretary-General of the United Nations and head of the independent World Commission on Culture and Development, which spent three years (1993-1995) rethinking the notions of development and culture and the relationship between them. Here, he outlines the Commission's approach to its task and sums up some of the conclusions it reached.

Link: http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0010/001044/104497eb.pdf?bcsi_scan_A8AA4F79F19141A2=0&bcsi_scan_filename=104497eb.pdf

Moncrieffe, Joy M. 2004. The role of culture in development.

Prepared for the Commission for Africa, this paper argues that culture is gradually gaining presence in development discourse as policymakers acknowledge that the social and cultural norms people observe often influence their attitudes and choices, and that people need not—and in many societies often do not—act independently of cultural norms. While there is no consensus on exactly how culture matters or what its implications are for policy, this paper suggests that fixed definitions (such as those in which culture is depicted as consistently irrational and inimical to development) tend to overlook or underestimate the very important and myriad ways in which culture positively influences development.

Link: http://213.225.140.43/english/report/background/montcrieffe_background.pdf

Sen, Amartya. 1996. A matter of choice: Is culture merely an adjunct to development? UNESCO Courier, September.

This article explores the different views on development planning and its implication for the

people who benefit from development projects. It argues that such economic measures as gross national product (GNP) alone cannot account for the success of development projects. By explaining the role culture plays in development, the author posits that a paradigm shift can take place in order to go from a purely economic view of development to one that is more culturally sensitive.

Link: http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m1310/is_1996_Sept/ai_18798914

Sen, Amartya. 2000. Culture & development.

International development banks cannot work to eradicate poverty without the help of culture. The author explores the benefits of interaction between culture and development, and presents the example of Japan and its rapid transformation to argue that culture strongly influences behaviours. Sen concludes by warning against generalizations and simple development theories that fail to take local cultures into account.

Link: http://www.gdnet.org/pdf2/gdn_library/annual_conferences/second_annual_conference/sen.pdf

Tibetan Women's Association, Central Executive Committee. 1996. A state-owned womb: Violations of Tibetan women's reproductive rights. Dharamsala. India.

This report examines the fundamental rights of women that have been impeded by the Chinese government. These include a woman's rights to her reproductive health, the number of children a woman can bear, and access to safe abortion and various family planning methods. The right of women to practice their own religion is also violated by the Chinese government, which is contrary to the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights.

Link: <http://www.tibet.com/Women/twwomb.html>

The World Bank. 2007. Building bridges through faith: The role of faith-based

organizations in youth development. Children & Youth, February.

The World Bank, through its Faith and Development programme, recently produced an article on the ways in which the youth community has been actively involved in interfaith activities, such as the organization of World Youth Day.

Link: <http://siteresources.worldbank.org/EXTDEVIALOGUE/Resources/BuildingBridgesthroughFaithFeb2007.pdf?resourceurlname=BuildingBridgesthroughFaithFeb2007.pdf>

Books and Reports

Alexander, Kanjirathara Chandy, and K.P. Kumaran. 1992. Culture and Development: Cultural Patterns in Areas of Uneven Development. New Delhi: Sage Publications.

The authors of this book argue that cultural values form an important component of any development strategy. To demonstrate this, their study investigates cultural patterns in regions that have experienced different degrees of development. It concludes that injecting money into development projects is important, but that taking the time to understand the cultures in which these projects take place is the only way to guarantee their sustainability.

Alkire, Sabina. 2006. Religion and development. In *The Elgar Companion to Development Studies*, by Edward Elgar. Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar Publishing.

In *The Elgar Companion to Development Studies*, a reference book that examines various aspects of culture and development, the chapter on religion provides a brief exploration of how religion can play an important role in social services and post-conflict reconstruction.

Bayes, Jane H., and Nayereh Tohidi, eds. 2001. *Globalization, Gender and Religion: The Politics of Women's Rights in Catholic and Muslim contexts*. New York: Pelgrave.

Accompanying the current wave of globalization since the 1970s, conservative nationalist religious movements have used religion to oppose non-democratic, Western-oriented regimes. Reasserting patriarchal gender relations, presumed to be rooted in religion, has been central to these movements. At the Fourth United Nations Congress on Women, held in Beijing in 1995, Muslim and Catholic delegations from diverse countries united to oppose provisions on sexuality, reproductive rights, women's health, and women's rights as human rights. Scholars from eight different Muslim and Catholic communities analyze the political strategies that women are employing when living in these conditions, ranging from acceptance of traditional doctrines to various forms of resistance that are centred on religious reinterpretation, innovation, and political action towards change and equal rights.

Belshaw, Deryke, Robert Calderisi, and Chris Sugden, eds. 2001. *Faith in Development: Partnership between the World Bank and Churches in Africa*. Oxford: Regnum Books International.

The authors argue that while the World Bank is a secular institution, it recognizes that its attempts at economic and social reform are in vain if they do not reflect the reality of the societies in which it works. The book reports on a meeting that took place in Nairobi in 2000 between the World Bank and the Council of Anglican Provinces of Africa that aimed at strengthening the partnerships with grass-roots organizations and exploring ways to work more effectively with them. Issues of gender, post-conflict reconstruction and poverty reduction were discussed throughout the meeting.

Black, Jan Knippers. 1991. *Development in Theory and in Practice: Bridging the Gap*. Boulder, CO: West View Press.

This book examines the various development theories that have emerged since the end of the

cold war. The author argues that none of them is appropriate, and analyzes new forms of development thinking in which he introduces the idea of culture in development.

Buchanan, Constance H. 1997. *Choosing to Lead: Women and the Crisis of American Values*. Boston: Beacon Press.

The author argues against portrayals of unwed teenage mothers as breeding "illegitimacy", and as welfare mothers who are compelled to get jobs on the one hand, or as employed mothers neglecting their children and families on the other. Women and mothers are everywhere in the debate about the crisis of American values today, except as speakers and shapers of the debate. *Choosing to Lead* analyzes the barriers that keep women from full participation in the public sphere by tracing the history of religious ideas that restrict women's authority to domestic concerns, and explores how these ideas continue to shape our modern "secular" values.

Burket, Mary K. 2006. *Advancing Reproductive Health and Family Planning through Religious Leaders and Faith-based Organizations*. Pathfinder International.

This publication explores the long-standing engagement between the NGO Pathfinder International and FBOs. Over the years, they have joined forces to improve maternal health and provide family planning methods to populations around the world.

Link: <http://www.pathfind.org/site/PageServer?JServSessionIdr007=4ks4bj70w2.app-7b&pagename=Pubs>

Buykx, Michael, and Georges Tiendrebeogo. 2004. *Faith-Based Organizations and HIV/AIDS Prevention and Impact Mitigation in Africa*. Royal Tropical Institute.

This study, conducted by the Royal Tropical Institute (KIT), reviews articles and documentation on the role of FBOs in African strategies for HIV prevention and AIDS

treatment. Christian and Islamic religious principles have been studied, and FBO involvement and ideologies regarding HIV and AIDS are presented.

Link: http://www.kit.nl/net/KIT_Publicaties_output/ShowFile2.aspx?e=603

Centre for the Study of Faith in Society. 2004. Faith and development: Practice and theory forum. St. Edmund's College, Cambridge.

This paper argues that approaches to development are very similar among many FBOs and secular development agencies. Notions of solidarity, freedom, respect and collective responsibility are all incorporated into development programmes by both sets of stakeholders.

Link: <http://www.st-edmunds.cam.ac.uk/vhi/fis/backgroundprogram.pdf>

Chandiramani, Radhika, and Geetanjali Misra, eds. 2005. Sexuality, Gender and Rights: Exploring Theory and Practice in South and Southeast Asia. New Delhi: Sage Publications.

Chapter 8 of this book, Raising Sexuality as a Political Issue in the Catholic Philippines, discusses how the women's rights NGO Likhaan is targeted by both the Catholic Church and the Communist Party because it promotes reproductive rights.

Cooper, Frederick, and Randall Packard. 1997. International Development and the Social Sciences: Essays on the History and the Politics of Knowledge. Berkeley: University of California Press.

This book examines the production, transmission and implementation of ideas on development within historical, political and intellectual contexts over the past 50 years.

Coward, Howard. 1998. Peace, Development and Culture: Comparative Studies in India and Canada, Shastri Indo-Canadian Institute. Calgary, Alberta: University of Calgary.

This report, from a conference organized by the Shastri Indo-Canadian Institute in celebration of its 20th anniversary, explores official

governmental relations between Canada and India. One chapter is dedicated to culture and development. For example, the report presents a case study of a farm called the Amul Cooperative that was able to increase milk production while handling its own marketing and production. It is argued that grass-roots organizations can successfully engage with governments while adopting a more holistic and culturally sensitive approach.

Danish International Development Assistance (Danida). 2002. Culture and Development: Strategies and Guidelines.

This publication argues that culture needs to be a key element in all development partnerships, and, for development partnerships to succeed, they must incorporate a cultural component at all stages.

Link: <http://www.um.dk/Publikationer/Danida/English/DanishDevelopmentCooperation/CultureAndDevelopment/index.asp>

Drogus, Carol Ann. 1997. Women, Religion and Social Change in Brazil's Popular Church. Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press.

This book analyzes the attempts of liberation theology to mobilize the Brazilian poor for political and social change. Drogus illustrates the successes and failures of this movement, and shows how religious personality and gender have affected the way the urban poor of São Paulo respond to the liberationist message.

Eade, Deborah. 2002. Development & Culture: Selected Essays. London: OXFAM.

Published in association with the World Faiths Development Dialogue, this book is a collection of papers on culture as a dimension of development.

Eck, Diana L. 2003. Encountering God: A Spiritual Journey from Bozeman to Banaras. Boston: Beacon Press.

The author focuses on how it is increasingly important, in our ever-changing communities, to help people of different faiths negotiate ways

of living together peacefully. Dialogue between people of different faiths is crucial in an interdependent globalized world. Eck reveals how her own encounters with other religions have shaped and enhanced her Christian faith toward a bold new Christian pluralism.

Ertürk, Yakin. 2007. *Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women: Intersections between Culture and Violence against Women.*

This report addresses the dominant, culture-based paradigms that justify or explain the violations of women's rights, reducing violence against women to a cultural problem. It traces the trends in the development of the international normative framework on violence against women in relation to a culture that culminated in the recognition of the primacy of women's right to live a life free of gender-based violence over any cultural considerations.

Link: <http://www.crin.org/violence/search/closeup.asp?infoID=12449>

Gaztambide-Géigel, Antonio, and Rafael Hernández. 2003. *Cultura, Sociedad y Cooperación: Ensayos Sobre la Sociedad Civil del Gran Caribe.* Havana: CIDCC.

This book argues that culture and civil society organizations are important factors in planning development projects in the Caribbean. The analysis discusses the role of NGOs in development programmes. Case studies are presented in the last part of the book, including a piece titled "Towards a Comprehensive Understanding of the Sexual and Reproductive Health of Caribbean Women".

The Global Fund. 2007. *Report on the Involvement of Faith-Based Organizations in the Global Fund.*

Recognizing the important role of FBOs as partners in its work, the Global Fund has been working closely with this community since its creation in 2002. This report looks at the relationship between the Global Fund and FBOs since that time. The analysis shows that FBOs administer grants in

many countries, and are an essential part of the governance of the Global Fund programmes in most countries through their involvement in the Global Fund's Country Coordinating Mechanisms (CCMs). The report also shows that in 2006, nine FBOs received funds from the Global Fund as principal recipients, and an additional 488 were sub-recipients. Furthermore, 94 out of 120 CCMs with active Global Fund grants had at least one FBO representative. The Global Fund has also engaged in a number of activities to encourage the full participation of all members of civil society, including FBOs. This includes developing and implementing requirements to diversify the composition of CCMs and other workshops and materials to educate FBOs and other members of civil society on how to best engage with the Global Fund.

Link: http://www.theglobalfund.org/documents/publications/other/FBOReport/GlobalFund_FBO_Report_en.pdf

Hoodfar, Homa. 2000. *Iranian women and the intersection of citizenship and the family code: The perils of Islamic criteria.* In *Gender and Citizenship in the Middle East*, by Suad Joseph, ed. Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press.

Women in Iran are attempting to break the male monopoly on interpreting Islamic holy texts, and have reinterpreted traditional understandings of Islamic text to advocate reform. Hoodfar provides accounts of successful lobbying by Iranian feminists to change the constitution to improve marriage contracts and family law.

Human Rights Watch. 2004. *Divorced from Justice: Women's Unequal Access to Divorce in Egypt.*

This report summarizes the status of women and the role religion plays in the social and economic development process of women in Egypt. It illustrates how sharia law and a lack of female lawyers and judges make it difficult for women to initiate or obtain a divorce.

Link: <http://www.hrw.org/reports/2004/egypt1204/>

Human Rights Watch. 2004. "Political Shari'a"? Human Rights and Islamic Law in Northern Nigeria.

This report documents human rights violations since sharia law was introduced to cover criminal law in 12 states in Northern Nigeria.

Link: <http://www.hrw.org/reports/2004/nigeria0904/>

Human Rights Watch. 2006. A Question of Security: Violence against Palestinian Women and Girls.

This report covers violence against Palestinian women and the obstacles of the Palestinian women's movement. Political factions and Islamist groups have attacked the movement at various junctures, accusing it of being part of a Western conspiracy to destroy Islamic family and social values, and questioning its commitment to the national cause. At the same time, the sharia court system that local judges follow does not provide real justice for women and suppresses their rights. These religious, cultural and family perceptions restrict women's rights, and ultimately slow the process of economic development across Palestinian society.

Link: <http://www.hrw.org/reports/2006/opt1106/>

Human Rights Watch. 2007. Over Their Dead Bodies: Denial of Access to Emergency Obstetric Care and Therapeutic Abortion in Nicaragua.

This report discusses the ban on abortion in Nicaragua, which includes therapeutic abortion. The ban provides no exceptions, even when the pregnant woman's life is at stake. The anti-abortion law was passed by political parties in Nicaragua to ensure and maintain political support from the Roman Catholic Church and the Evangelical Church.

Link: <http://hrw.org/reports/2007/nicaragua1007/>

Jenkins, Carol, and Holly Buchanan-Aruwafu. 2007. Cultures and Context Matters: Understanding and Prevention of HIV and AIDS in the Pacific. Manila: Asian Development Bank.

This publication provides information on culture diversity in the Asia-Pacific region. The authors argue that a better understanding of the traditions in this region is crucial to successfully expand HIV treatment and health services.

Link: <http://www.hivpolicy.org/Library/HPP001294.pdf>

Juschka, Darlene, ed. 2001. Feminism in the Study of Religion. New York: Continuum.

This book includes various short articles on issues related to feminist analysis and its application to the study of religion. Writers show the intersection and development of feminism in the study of religion.

Karam, Azza, ed. 2002. A Woman's Place: Religious Women as Public Actors. New York: WCRP/Religions for Peace.

This is a compilation of 11 essays by women representing a wide variety of religious traditions—specifically, African traditional spirituality, Bahaimism, Buddhism, Chinese traditional religion, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam and Judaism. The essays seek to document the achievements of ordinary women within their respective religious communities, and also to demonstrate that religious women are "capable, articulate, active, aware, and totally committed." The essays vary greatly in their styles and approaches; some put forward a largely historic overview of the role of women in their religious communities, while others draw heavily on scripture, offering a reinterpretation that upholds a wider role for women.

Landry, Charles. 2006. The Role of Culture in Social and Economic Development: Lessons from the Swiss Cultural Programme.

This publication is the outcome of an independent study commissioned by Pro Helvetia and the

Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation. It shows how cultural work plays a key role in the social development of transition countries.

Link: <http://www.deza.admin.ch/index.php?navID=26465&itemID=65217&langID=1&userhash=939c3f673b8ebb72eae46bbecaf0c032>

Madan, T.N. 1983. *Culture and Development*. New York: Oxford University Press.

The author argues that so far, the relationship between culture and development has been studied only from a strong Eurocentric standpoint. It is further argued that in the last part of the 20th century, there was a reformulation of the relationship between culture and development. However, the book warns that many policies are still rooted in the old ways of excluding culture from development planning, and that has yet to be changed.

Marshall, Katherine, and Richard Marsh, eds. 2003. *Millennium Challenges for Faith and Development Leaders*. Washington, DC: The World Bank.

Based on a meeting at which 40 faith and development leaders met to examine what needs to be done in order to move the MDGs forward, this book explores the challenges for the faith community in achieving the MDGs. It also presents some very short case studies that illustrate current collaborations between FBOs and development agencies towards achieving the MDGs.

Marshall, Katherine, and Marisa Van Saanen. 2007. *Development and Faith: Where Mind, Heart, and Soul Work Together*. Washington, DC: The World Bank.

Poverty and social injustice demand a vigorous response, yet the challenges are vast and the actors many, including complex bureaucracies, limited infrastructure, and constraints on human and organizational capacity. To successfully address the huge challenges of development, not only careful planning and analysis are

needed, but also the concerted efforts of all the stakeholders to focus on results and institutional collaboration.

Moghadam, Valentine M. 2003. *Modernizing Women: Gender and Social Change in the Middle East*. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner.

The author focuses on major changes in gender dynamics and social progress in the Middle East, including a shift in development strategy and population policy. She also discusses sharia law and its implementation in patriarchal societies.

Mukherjee, Ramkrishna. 1991. *Society, Culture and Development*. New Delhi: Sage Publications.

This theoretical book defines the concepts of society, economic growth, culture and development through anthropological analysis. The author argues that not one of these terms is static and independent of each other. In this sense, development cannot be perceived as a very specialized instrument for economic growth because it is too restricted. Rather, development is successful when it freely interacts within culture and society.

Nandy, Ashis. 1989. *The Intimate Enemy: Loss and Recovery of Self under Colonialism*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.

This book looks at the effects of colonialism on Indian culture, which remained even after British rule ended.

Okkenhaug, Inger Marie, and Ingvild Flaskerud, eds. 2005. *Gender, Religion and Change in the Middle East*. New York: Berg Publishers.

This book is a compilation of articles on the nexus between women and religion in the Middle East. It looks at Muslim, Jewish and Christian women in the region, and the influences that colonialism, post-colonialism and Western imperialism have had. Contributions include:

"Justice without Drama: Observations from Gaza City Shari'a Court", by Nahda Younis Shehada. This article explores the justice system at a court in Gaza City. The author argues that even though Arab States have used personal status codes to govern family affairs, the application of sharia is flexible. Shehada believes that women's rights have not suffered in contemporary Palestinian society following the codification of law.

"The Paradox of the New Islamic Woman in Turkey", by Jenny B. White. In the social and political mobilization of large numbers of conservative women in Turkey, women's activism was crucial in bringing various Islamist political parties to power.

Parry, Sue. 2003. *Responses of the Faith-Based Organisations to HIV/AIDS in Sub Saharan Africa.*

This report by Dr. Sue Parry, Southern Africa Regional Coordinator for the World Council of Churches, reviews the contributions made by FBOs in the fight against HIV and AIDS. The publication is unique in that it is written from the standpoint of the South and not from an international organization or NGO.

Link: <http://www.wcc-coe.org/wcc/what/mission/fba-hiv-aids.pdf>

Perm, Carpal, ed. 1994. *Culture and Development.* New Delhi: Her-Anan Publications.

The premise of this book is that culture in India is in crisis. The contributors explore different reasons for this, including the fragmentation of life as individuals become increasingly specialized and dependent on technology. The book also argues that cultural cooperation among nations is important because it creates bridges of understanding, based on harmony, creativity and fraternity. Intercultural knowledge is needed, and culture is being neglected in development plans, which are often designed by economists.

Philpot-Almeida, Raphine. 1994. *A Profile of the Roles of Women as Economic Producers and Family Supporters in the Gambia.*

This book looks at social factors contributing to the lack of education of women in the Gambia.

Pieterse, Jan Nederveen. 1992. *Culture and Development.* New York: Berg Publishers.

The author examines the activities of Christian churches in developing countries. For example, in Southern countries, an increase in the number of Evangelical churches has been noted. Pieterse argues that while Evangelical churches claim to be politically neutral, some of their activities are perceived to have an American political agenda included in their programmes. This book is a collection of essays that portray the role (active or not) the Evangelical Church has taken in recent political history in the South. As an example during apartheid in South Africa, the Evangelical church tried to stop local churches from joining the liberation movement.

Qurush, Mahmud Shah. 1983. *Culture and Development.* Bangladesh: National Book Centre.

At the request of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the author compiled a collection of essays to better inform foreigners on aspects of the cultural and intellectual history of Bangladesh. Among other perspectives, the book examines the role of Muslims during the "Bengal Renaissance", and the perspective of folk religion.

Radcliffe, Sarah. 2006. *Culture and Development in a Globalizing World: Geographies, Actors and Paradigms.* New York: Routledge.

This book offers a theoretical and empirical critique of development discourse and practice. It argues that culture is a tool for development that must be taken into consideration when designing projects, and examines how culture plays out in development programmes. The author provides

examples (such as the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and UNESCO) and case studies to illustrate her arguments.

Rao, Vijayendra, and Michael Walton, eds. 2004. *Culture and Public Action: A Cross-Disciplinary Dialogue on Development Policy*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

The anthropologists and economists contributing to this volume defend culture as central to development, and argue that culture can be a source of profound social and economic change.

Reese, Laura A., and Raymond A. Rosenfeld. 2002. *The Civic Culture of Local Economic Development*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

The authors challenge the idea in economic development discourse that “one model fits all” when trying to achieve economic growth. They criticize the paradigm, rooted in economics, that all societies are governed by similar infrastructures and regimes and therefore can be treated the same from a public policy perspective. The authors argue that some societies do not have political and economical structures as rigid and solid as those in the United States or the European Union. In contrast, in these societies, local structure is often held together by civic organizations, in which NGOs play an important role within local politics and the social arena. Furthermore, development agencies must engage as much as possible with local authorities, including NGOs.

Schech, Susanne, and Jane Haggis. 2000. *Culture and Development: A Critical Introduction*. Oxford: Blackwell.

This book examines the historical background of the terms “culture” and “development”, and argues that an understanding of the cultural context in which development programmes take place is fundamental to their success. Culture in development improves

understanding of globalization, and is a useful tool for nation-building and achieving international human rights standards.

Serageldin, Ismael, and June Taboroff, eds. 1992. *Culture and Development in Africa: Proceedings of an International Conference Held at The World Bank, Washington, DC, April 1992*.

This publication is a report from a conference sponsored by the World Bank, UNESCO and the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) on culture and development. The conference was framed by the question, “How can we better incorporate culture into development in Africa?” The three sessions were titled “Cultural Theory and Development Practice”, “Culture and Civic Society” and “Economic Development: Culture as a Cause or Consequence”. Included is a UNESCO appendix titled “Towards Developing Tools for Integrating the Cultural Dimension into Development”.

Smock, David. 2001. *Special Report No. 76: Faith-Based NGOs and International Peace-building*. Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace.

This article analyzes the participation of FBOs in peace-building efforts, exploring ways in which FBOs work in comparison to secular organizations’ efforts in the same field. It argues that FBO participation has an impact because FBOs benefit from having established the trust of their communities.

Link: <http://www.usip.org/pubs/specialreports/sr76.html>

UNAIDS (United Nations Programme on AIDS). 1998. *NGO Perspectives on Access to HIV-Related Drugs in 13 Latin American and Caribbean Countries*.

UNAIDS collected information from 13 Latin American and Caribbean countries to better understand the activities aimed at improving access to HIV- and AIDS-related services and

access to pharmaceutical drugs. In the section titled "Church Relationships with NGOs and Institutions", the authors illustrate the importance of considering the participation of FBOs and how they facilitate access to HIV-related services.

Link: http://data.unaids.org/Publications/IRC-pub01/JC100-NGO-Perspectives_en.pdf

UNDP (United Nations Development Programme). 2003. *Culture and Development in Viet Nam.*

UNDP is making an effort to introduce culture in development planning. This book analyzes six case studies from Viet Nam and illustrates how a cultural approach can be included in programme planning.

Link: <http://www.un.org.vn/undocs/vanhua/culture.pdf>

UNDP. 2004. *Human Development Report: Cultural Liberty in Today's Diverse World.*

In this report, UNDP argues that to reach the MDGs and ultimately eradicate poverty, the challenges of how to build inclusive, culturally diverse societies must be met.

Link: <http://hdr.undp.org/en/reports/global/hdr2004/>

UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization). 1995. *National Seminar on Culture and Development: Report. New Delhi: Centre for Cultural Resources and Training.*

Since the beginning of the UNESCO World Decade on Cultural Development, the Centre for Cultural Resources and Training has been organizing annual seminars on the decade's theme. In 1995, the Centre put together a meeting on culture and development with the highlighted question, "How can culture be restored to its rightful place at the core of social development?" The meeting provided recommendations, and this publication portrays a short summary of the findings.

Link: <http://ccrtindia.gov.in/productcatalogue.htm#pb>

UNESCO. 1996. *Our Creative Diversity: Report of the World Commission on Culture and Development.*

Established by UNESCO and the United Nations in December 1992, the World Commission on Culture and Development prepared a policy-oriented report on the interactions between culture and development.

Link: http://portal.unesco.org/culture/en/ev.php-URL_ID=33067&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html

UNFPA (United Nations Population Fund). 2007. *Ending Violence against Women.*

This is an online exhibition and a book of case studies on how to end violence against women. The exhibition includes case studies from Bangladesh and Sierra Leone, where FBOs play a crucial role.

Link: <http://www.unfpa.org/endingviolence/home.html>

UNICEF (United Nations Children's Fund). 2003. *Activities Report: The Church and UNICEF: Latin America and the Caribbean.*

This publication highlights a 20-year-old partnership between UNICEF and the Latin American Episcopal Conference. Some of the issues addressed are education, HIV and AIDS and health.

Link: http://www.unicef.org/media/files/celamactivitiesreportUNICEFandCatholicChurch.pdf?bcsi_scan_A8AA4F79F19141A2=0&bcsi_scan_filename=celamactivitiesreportUNICEFandCatholicChurch.pdf

UNICEF. 2004. *Study of the Response by Faith-Based Organizations to Orphans and Vulnerable Children.*

This study was conducted in six South African countries by UNICEF and the World Conference of Religions for Peace. The organizations joined

efforts to document what has been done by FBOs to help orphans and vulnerable youth who are infected with HIV or AIDS. The publication includes appendices on religious affiliation and congregation by country, and orphanages and shelters established by FBOs.

Link: <http://www.wcrp.org/files/RPT-ovc.pdf>

Verhelst, Thierry V. 1990. *No Life Without Roots: Culture and Development*. London: Zed Books.

This book presents a history of development and presents culture as the “missing link” in development project success. It explores new ways of conducting participatory development projects in which culture is taken into account during implementation. The book uses examples from FBOs and UNDP, and includes case studies on custodians of traditional culture.

Vohra, N.N., ed. 2001. *Culture, Democracy and Development in South Asia*. New Delhi: New Delhi: Shipra Publications.

This book examines cultural diversity as a means of re-examining existing economic development theory. The writers explore the vibrant multicultural and pluralistic society that exists in South Asia. Religions such as Hinduism, Buddhism and Sikhism were born in this region, and others, such as Islam and Christianity, were imported here from other parts of the world. The writers argue that this has resulted in a pluralistic society, albeit one that is not always at peace. Yet in this context, culture and development have not been treated as interlocking and interdependent terms, resulting in the failure of many development methods in the past. However, somewhat of a paradigm shift in development has occurred recently, towards engaging FBOs, and South Asia can play an important role by highlighting the benefits of a pluralistic society and the success of its interfaith movement.

Warren, Michael, L., Jan Slikkerveer, and David Brokensha, eds. 1995. *The Cultural Dimension of Development: Indigenous Knowledge Systems*. London: Intermediate Technology Publications.

This book is a collection of various development projects that benefited from local cultural knowledge. It includes a section devoted to international organizations that use local knowledge when designing development projects.

The World Bank. 2001. *Faith in Development: A Partnership between the World Bank and the Churches of Africa*.

Based on an international conference held in Nairobi in 2000, organized by the World Bank and the Council of Anglican Provinces of Africa, this book explores the practicalities and details of the partnership between the World Bank and FBOs, with a special focus on grass-roots organizations.

World Faiths Development Dialogue. 2001. *Cultures, Spirituality and Development*.

In this publication, the authors explore ways in which culture and spirituality can be taken into consideration when planning development projects. They argue that stressing these concepts will ensure the effectiveness and success of such projects.

Link: http://www.wfdd.org.uk/documents/publications/CutureSp_Dev.pdf

World Health Organization (WHO). 2008. *Building from Common Foundations: The World Health Organization and Faith-Based Organizations in Primary Healthcare*.

The key findings in this report, prepared by WHO in collaboration with Geneva Global, are that: FBOs are major health providers in developing countries whose efforts often go unrecognized because they usually operate outside government planning processes; FBOs' core values lead them to offer compassionate

care to people in need; FBO responses to HIV and AIDS demonstrates that they have delivered a range of treatment, care and prevention activities; with attention to accountability and monitoring, governments can work with FBOs on the basis that such partnerships will deliver public value and narrow gaps in national health planning systems; and local interest in participative planning is strong, according to WHO exercises in community mapping. Engineering a network of FBOs and other community assets could open new possibilities for comprehensive health systems.

Case Studies

Burghart, Richard. 1984. *The Tisiyaki Klinik: A Nepalese medical centre in an intercultural field of relations. Social Science and Medicine* 18: 589-98.

This case focuses on a medical centre that administers treatment to patients using methods that vary according to the patients' religious beliefs. In this alternative health-care facility, exorcism, Brahman traditions and Western medicine are all being practiced. The author argues that this clinic is a good example of how different cultures and religions can work side by side harmoniously.

Chan, Shun-hing. 2005. *Regulating Faith-based Organizations by Government Funding: A Case Study of the Methodist Church in Hong Kong. Presented at the annual meeting of the American Sociological Association, Philadelphia, PA.*

By analyzing the Yang Memorial Methodist Social Service Agency, a Protestant-based medical organization, this paper argues that the Protestant churches in Hong Kong have maintained a social function as a third sector, building social capital in their communities.

Link: http://www.allacademic.com/meta/p21600_index.html

Danish Centre for Cultural Development. 2006. *Culture Strategy in Vietnam: A New Culture Programme and Culture Fund in Vietnam.*

The Danish Embassy in Hanoi has prepared a new culture programme with inputs from DCCD.

Link: <http://www.dccd.dk/dccd/cku.nsf/doc/kulturstrategi vietnam?OpenDocument>

Munguti, Nzaya, Moses Mokuu, Rick Homan, and Harriet Birungi. 2006. *Cost Analysis of Reproductive Health Services in PCEA Chogoria Hospital, Kenya. Nairobi, Kenya: FRONTIERS Population Council; Chogoria, Kenya: PCEA Chogoria Hospital; Research Triangle Park, NC: Family Health International.*

The Presbyterian Church of East Africa (PCEA) Chogoria Hospital is an FBO that provides numerous health services to the community. Because of challenges to the survival of PCEA, a team from the hospital attended a workshop in Ghana on financial sustainability. Within the scope of this workshop, the team designed a project to determine the cost of certain reproductive health services.

Link: http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PNADG649.pdf

Nikolov, Boris. 2002. *Religious Social Services in Lebanon and Egypt. Paper prepared for the World Bank.*

This paper is an overview of religious social services in Lebanon and Egypt, the legal framework within which FBOs operate, and the relationship between civil society and the government. Following this overview, the author uses a case study of social services provided by FBOs in Egypt to illustrate his point.

Link: <https://repository.berkeleycenter.georgetown.edu/RD-20020804-WorldBank-RelSocServ.pdf>

Otolok-Tanga, Erasmus, Lynn Atuyambe, Colleen K. Murphy, Karin E. Ringheim, and

Sara Woldehanna. 2007. Examining the actions of faith-based organizations and their influence on HIV/AIDS-related stigma: A case study of Uganda. *African Health Sciences* 7 (1): 55-60.

This study explores the perceptions, held by Uganda's political decision-making community, of the role of FBOs in combating the stigma attached to people living with HIV and AIDS.

Peuraca, Branka. 2003. *Special Report No. 103: Can Faith-Based NGOs Advance Interfaith Reconciliation? The Case of Bosnia and Herzegovina*. Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace.

In post-conflict regions, religious reconciliation can be difficult. This article presents a case study from Bosnia and Herzegovina, where interfaith organizations have been able to provide social services, food, shelter and clothes. Interfaith partnerships also help to overcome the problems that have led, or can lead, to armed conflict situations.

Link: <http://www.usip.org/pubs/specialreports/sr103.html>

Reach Out Mbuya Parish HIV/AIDS Initiative. (2001). Kampala, Uganda.

Reach Out began in a Christian community and for its first four years carried out services from within Our Lady of Africa Mbuya Catholic Church. Over time, donor funding has allowed Reach Out to increase operations of its holistic model of care. Reach Out Mbuya Parish HIV/AIDS Initiative serves the poor community of the Mbuya Parish, a suburb of Kampala, Uganda, providing holistic care to more than 2,700 people living with HIV and AIDS. The holistic approach to care and treatment has enabled many clients who were without hope of receiving care to return to a normal, healthy life. Each of the six villages within the Reach Out catchment area is headed by a community supervisor who works with a team of community workers. The community workers are exemplary clients who receive training in home-

based care and subsequently serve their community and act as a relay between their community and the organization.

Link: <http://www.reachoutmbuya.org>

Saraswati, Baidyanath, ed. 1997. *Integration of Endogenous Cultural Dimension into Development*. New Delhi: D.K. Printworld.

This book contains case studies on local religious and traditional healing practices among indigenous minority groups in Indonesia. The book argues that development projects can be viable only if all the complex elements that constitute a culture are understood. The author shows the importance of local traditions and religions in health service provisions in Kalimantan, Sulawesi and Irian Jaya.

Shrestha, Ramesh. 1980. *Faith Healers: A Force for Change*. Kathmandu, Nepal: Educational Enterprises.

This book explores a study conducted in Nepal illustrating that, many traditional faith healers working across the country play an important role in distributing reproductive health information and services to assist in family planning because they are in daily contact with the rural population.

Tanenbaum Center for Interreligious Understanding. 2007. *Peacemakers in Action: Profiles of Religion in Conflict Resolution*. Ed. by David Little. New York: Cambridge University Press.

This publication is a collection of case studies of projects conducted in various parts of the world on interreligious cooperation for conflict resolution.

Tyndale, Wendy. 2006. *Visions of Development: Faith-based Initiatives*. Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing.

This publication is a collection of case studies that show the role non-economic social groups, such as FBOs, are playing in assuring socio-economic development. The book also argues that spiritual

development can sometimes lead to material development, and that a more holistic approach to development incorporates all actors and cultures when designing projects, producing greater benefits and outcomes for everyone involved.

UNAIDS. 2001. *Reaching Out, Scaling Up: Eight Case Studies of Home and Community Care for and by People with HIV/AIDS.*

This publication explores case studies on local, grass-roots organizations successfully implementing initiatives in the fight against HIV and AIDS. Two of the case studies illustrate examples of FBO initiatives: the Kariobangi community-based home-care and home-based AIDS care programme that was established in 1986 by the Medical Mission Sisters; and the Centre for Socio-medical Assistance (CASM), a clinic established in 1991 by HOPE, an international FBO that provides services to people living with HIV and AIDS.

Link: http://data.unaids.org/publications/irc-pub02/jc915-reachout_en.pdf

UNAIDS. 2005. *HIV-Related Stigma, Discrimination and Human Rights Violations: Case Studies of Successful Programmes.*

This publication illustrates initiatives aimed at reducing the stigma related to HIV and AIDS in order to improve the rights of people living with the disease. Case studies include AIDS-integrated programmes undertaken by the Catholic Diocese of Ndola, Zambia; and Catholic AIDS Action, in Namibia. An important part of the conclusion points to the benefits of working with faith-based leaders in development.

Link: http://data.unaids.org/publications/irc-pub06/JC999-HumRightsViol_en.pdf

UNAIDS. 2006. *Collaborating with Traditional Healers for HIV Prevention and Care in sub-Saharan Africa: Suggestions for Programme Managers and Field Workers.*

This paper aims to educate health authorities, governments, NGOs and local communities on

both traditional and conventional health systems. It shows ways in which traditional healers can help in the prevention of HIV and care for AIDS patients.

Link: http://data.unaids.org/pub/Report/2006/jc0967-tradhealers_en.pdf

UNAIDS. 2006. *A Faith-Based Response to HIV in Southern Africa: The Choose to Care Initiative.*

This case study shows how the Catholic Church in South Africa has been providing services to answer needs related to HIV and AIDS. The Church's programme is implemented on a small scale and is rooted in local communities' practices and traditions.

Link: http://data.unaids.org/pub/Report/2006/JC1281_Choose_To_Care_en.pdf

UNESCO. 2003. *Women and Peace in Africa: Case Studies on Traditional Conflict Resolution Practices.*

This is a compilation of case studies—from Burundi, Cameroon, the Central African Republic, Namibia, Somalia and Tanzania—on women's roles in conflict and peace. In all of the case studies, women use traditional cultural practices to keep peace and resolve conflict.

Link: <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0013/001332/133274e.pdf>

UNICEF. Date N/A. *Working for the Children: Some Stories about Our Joint Efforts in Latin America.*

Produced by UNICEF in collaboration with the Latin American Episcopal Conference, this publication showcases some examples of the work these two organizations have accomplished together across Latin America. Some of the case studies included reflect issues relevant to the MDGs as well as the ICPD, such as universal education, maternal health, and HIV and AIDS.

Link: <http://www.unicef.org/media/files/5historias.pdf>

Young, Greg. 2003. *Cultural Mapping in a Global World*. Speech delivered at the ASEAN [Association of Southeast Asian Nations] Committee on Culture and Information. Australia.

The author defines cultural mapping as an ethical tool for mainstreaming culture in social and economic development. He advocates for wider public engagement and more respect for cultural diversity. Included are case studies from development programmes aimed at indigenous communities in Australia.

Link: <http://plt.sagepub.com/cgi/content/abstract/7/1/71>

United Nations Initiatives, Conferences and Programmes

Marazzi, M.C., G. Guidotti, G. Liotta, and L. Palombi. 2005. *DREAM: An Integrated Faith-based Initiative to Treat HIV/AIDS in Mozambique*. Geneva: WHO.

Drug Resources Enhancement against AIDS and Malnutrition (DREAM) is a programme created by the Community of Sant'Egidio to fight AIDS in sub-Saharan Africa. The main objective of the programme is to enable Mozambique to expand its HIV and AIDS treatment and care and malnutrition-related services.

Link: <http://www.who.int/hiv/pub/casestudies/mozambiquedream.pdf>

Tyndale, Wendy. 2004. *Religions and the Millennium Development Goals: Whose agenda? Speech delivered at the Conference of Religion and Development, The Hague, Netherlands*.

Poverty and wealth are intertwined. Tyndale argues that for the MDGs to be achieved, a re-examination of the relationship between international development agencies and religious leaders must take place. Development agencies cannot provide only financial support for FBOs to carry out

Western agendas. Religious leaders need to re-examine their relationship to power and gender. The Jubilee 2000 movement and its influence on the call to cancel the international debts of the most highly indebted nations is a good example of what FBOs and religious leaders can accomplish when they collaborate.

Link: <http://religiondatabases.georgetown.edu/berkeley/religiondev.php?sortColumn=Date&direction=DESC#tag1814>

UNAIDS. 2005. *A Report of a Theological Workshop Focusing on HIV- and AIDS-Related Stigma*.

In December 2003, UNAIDS supported this workshop in Windhoek, Namibia, in which 62 academic Christian theologians participated. The outcomes of the workshop provide themes for further theological reflection on HIV- and AIDS-related stigma.

Link: http://data.unaids.org/Publications/IRC-pub06/JC1119-Theological_en.pdf

UNAIDS. 2008. *Working Group on Religion and FBOs*. Geneva.

UNAIDS, in collaboration with UNFPA, WHO, the International Labour Organization (ILO) and UNDP, brought together a working group of partnership officers from across the UNAIDS Secretariat as well as co-sponsoring organizations and FBO representatives to outline a strategy for future work with FBOs on AIDS issues. The meeting, which took place 9-11 April 2008 in Geneva, aimed to establish a strategy for a more coordinated response to partnership work among all stakeholders involved in the AIDS response. Participants at this meeting analyzed how to work the most effectively with the wide range of FBOs focusing on AIDS, discussing the opportunities and challenges they offer. The working group produced a three- to five-year strategy that will guide UNAIDS and its co-sponsors' efforts to consolidate a response to AIDS in coordination with the faith community.

UNESCO. 2004. Workshops on the Cultural Diversity Programming Lens.

In order to better implement the cultural diversity lens, the culture sector of UNESCO Bangkok organized workshops to raise awareness and train programme officers in the use of the cultural diversity programming lens. The workshops included "Introduction to Cultural Resource Management", "Cultural Mapping Principles", "Cultural Mapping Applications" and "Cultural Heritage Impact Assessment".

Link: <http://www.unescobkk.org/index.php?id=2529>

UNESCO. Bangkok Country Team.

The Bangkok office of UNESCO is active in the field of culture and development, and has worked to incorporate a cultural dimension into its development programmes. Its website provides information on the various activities in which this country team is involved.

Link: <http://www.unescobkk.org>

UNESCO. Chairs in Interfaith Studies.

The UNESCO Chairs on Intercultural and Interreligious Dialogue have been created in academic centres of acknowledged experience in the field, bringing together teachers and researchers who specialize in the multidisciplinary aspects of the history of religions, and who are committed to the promotion of interreligious dialogue. This network aims to foster educational exchanges among students and researchers, including those considering undertaking a religious vocation, providing them with a secular, multireligious and intercultural education.

Link: http://portal.unesco.org/culture/en/ev.php-URL_ID=29403&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html#2

UNESCO. Interreligious Dialogue.

The UNESCO Interreligious Dialogue programme aims to promote dialogue among different religions and spiritual and humanistic traditions, as world conflicts are increasingly

being associated with religious belonging. It stresses the reciprocal interactions and influences among religions and spiritual and humanistic traditions on the one hand, and the need to promote understanding among them in order to challenge prejudice and foster mutual respect on the other.

Link: http://portal.unesco.org/culture/en/ev.php-URL_ID=11680&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html

UNESCO. UNESCO Courier.

Created in 1947, this magazine covers current concerns in the UNESCO agenda. It has been available online since March 2006, issued every two months in all six official United Nations languages.

Link: http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php-URL_ID=42213&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html

UNICEF. 2007. Fifth International Congress on Culture and Development.

This conference in Havana, Cuba, organized by UNESCO and UNICEF, was attended by nearly 800 intellectuals, artists and spokespeople from 64 countries. The theme was "Defense of Cultural Diversity in a Globalized World". It served as a forum for open debate and free exchange of ideas about multiculturalism and diversity in development projects.

Link: http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/cuba_40125.html

UNRISD (United Nations Research Institute for Social Development). 2007-2009. Religion, Politics and Gender Equality.

The prediction that secularism would sweep the world has been confounded in recent years as religion has left the place assigned to it (by theories of modernity) in the private sphere and thrust itself into the public arena. This research project seeks to examine the social and political implications of religion assuming such prominent and contested public and political roles. Some

observers, including many feminists, see incompatibilities among democracy, human rights and gender equality on the one hand, and a world in which religious issues and organizations have an active presence in public affairs on the other. Others, however, argue that religion (at its best) can act as a significant counterweight to the otherwise hegemonic institutions of the state and the market, revitalizing public debate on their moral underpinnings and their social outcomes. The task of this research, therefore, is to develop analytical and normative criteria to differentiate among the various forms of public religion and their social and political consequences, including the implications for gender equality.

Link: [http://www.unrisd.org/unrisd/website/projects.nsf/\(httpProjectsForProgrammeAreaen\)/3F3D45E0F8567920C12572B9004180C5?OpenDocument](http://www.unrisd.org/unrisd/website/projects.nsf/(httpProjectsForProgrammeAreaen)/3F3D45E0F8567920C12572B9004180C5?OpenDocument)

UNRISD. 2008-2010. Religion, Identity and Business.

This research project explores the resurgence of religious movements in various regions of the world, which has been linked to the collapse of secular ideologies and movements; long-running economic, social and political crises associated with global economic change; and problems of war and large-scale migration. These developments raise questions about the relationship among religious identity, socio-economic change and conflict. Religious movements, including new revivalist movements, seek to address a range of issues relating to spirituality, morality, well-being, community development and political change. They often fill a void in social provisioning and protection associated with state failure and marginalization.

Link: [http://www.unrisd.org/unrisd/website/projects.nsf/\(httpProjectsForResearchHomeen\)/D207052B7F422966C12571C60046B0AE?OpenDocument&panel=team](http://www.unrisd.org/unrisd/website/projects.nsf/(httpProjectsForResearchHomeen)/D207052B7F422966C12571C60046B0AE?OpenDocument&panel=team)

Woolcock, Michael. 2002. Culture and development: Rethinking implications for

policy research. Comments delivered at the World Bank “Culture and Public Action” Conference.

This speech examines what culture is, what it is not, and how it plays out in development policy research. Woolcock argues that when policymakers study culture and development, they need to keep an open mind, be flexible to new ideas, and work to integrate qualitative and quantitative methods and data in their work.

Link: <http://www.cultureandpublicaction.org/pdf/Woolcock.pdf>

The World Bank. Date N/A. Culture and Development.

In its programmes and projects designed for the Latin American and Caribbean community, the World Bank has identified culture and development as a thematic area of social development. To ensure that development projects and policies are feasible and effective, it is essential to understand the social, cultural and institutional contexts in which they are carried out. The areas identified as having a focus on culture and development are:

- Support for the identity and culture of indigenous peoples and Afro-descendants. Projects include the Peru Indigenous People and Afro-Peruvian Development Project; the Indigenous and Afro-Ecuadorian Peoples Development Project (PRODEPINE); the Indigenous Peoples Development Project in Bolivia; and the Indigenous Community Development Project in Argentina
- The New Cultural Heritage programmes, with projects such as Profuturo, the Honduras Interactive Environmental Learning and Science Promotion; and the Regional Development in the Copan Valley Project
- Culture and education policies, such as the Universalization of Basic Education Project in Guatemala.

Link: <http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/COUNTRIES/LACEXT/EXTLACREGTOPSOCDEV/0,,contentMDK:20547292-menuPK:1308760-pagePK:34004173-piPK:34003707-theSitePK:847655,00.html>

The World Bank. 2005. Dialogue Between the Worlds of Faith and Development.

The Development Dialogue on Values and Ethics is a unit within the Human Development Network Vice-Presidency. It is primarily responsible for engaging with faith institutions around development issues, and working with other institutions and leaders who are addressing the complex ethical issues around globalization.

Link: <http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/EXTABOUTUS/ORGANIZATION/EXTPRESIDENT2007/EXTPASTPRESIDENTS/PRESIDENTEXTERNAL/0,,contentMDK:20091872-menuPK:232057-pagePK:139877-piPK:199692-theSitePK:227585,00.html>

Reviewed Articles

Bergendorff, Steen. 2007. Cultural complexity and development policy. *European Journal of Development Research* 19 (2): 195-209.

This article examines the UNESCO report *Our Creative Diversity* and investigates the assertion that culture matters in development. The author concludes that instead of creating new roles or introducing democracy, development policies should address the nature of local interaction and the rules upon which it is based.

Link: <http://www.informaworld.com/smpp/content-content=a779217086-tab=send>

Boehle, Josef. 2007. Religions, civil society and the UN system. *Studies in Interreligious Dialogue* 17 (1): 20.

The author of this article explores how civil society organizations—in particular, religious NGOs or FBOs—can better interact with the United Nations system. He argues that in today's globalized world, societies have to move past the religion-versus-state dichotomy.

Bradley, Tamsin. 2007. *The Relationships Between Religion and Development: Views from Anthropology*. Working Paper 5.

The author of this paper conducted a review of literature on religion and development, and concluded that very little literature actually exists on the work that FBOs and NGOs are doing to improve their communities.

Link: http://www.rad.bham.ac.uk/files/resourcesmodule/@random45c8b732cd96d/1186738047_WP5.pdf

Brijnath, Bianca. 2007. It's about TIME: Engendering AIDS in Africa. *Culture, Health and Sexuality* 9 (4): 371-386.

This paper analyzes how *TIME* magazine represents sub-Saharan African women in its coverage of HIV and AIDS. As rates of infection escalate across the continent, researchers increasingly are emphasizing the need to understand the socioeconomic and cultural contexts that make women particularly vulnerable to infection.

Carranza, Jose. 2002. Culture and development: Some considerations for debate. *Latin American Perspective* 29 (4): 31-46.

This article examines the concepts of culture and development as defined by UNESCO. It does not provide case studies.

Elyachar, Julia. 2002. Empowerment money: The World Bank, non-governmental organizations, and the value of culture in Egypt. *Public Culture* 14 (3): 493-513.

Financing for development has taken a new turn since the mobilizations and protests at the 1998 World Trade Organization (WTO) meetings. Microfinancing is becoming the new way to finance development. While this may seem a more just way of financing, compared with more mainstream development projects, it does not incorporate culture. The author illustrates her point with the case of Egypt and the microfinance industry.

Griffin, Keith. 1997. *Culture, Human Development and Economic Growth (UNRISD/UNESCO Occasional Paper Series on Culture and Development)*.

This paper aims to contribute to and facilitate the debate on culture and development on the eve of the release of the *World Culture Report*, published by the World Commission on Culture and Development. Its main theme is that culture is an important component of development but is often overlooked by development planners. However, the author believes that the *World Culture Report* will ignite a new debate that will have important consequences in future development programming.

Link: <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0012/001241/124175eo.pdf>

Ibhawoh, Bonny. 2000. *Between culture and constitution: Evaluating the cultural legitimacy of human rights in the African states. Human Rights Quarterly 22 (3): 838-860.*

Examining a dilemma confronting many African states, this article explores ways in which culture, through adaptation and modification, can serve to complement rather than constrain specific national human rights aspirations.

Lewis, David. 2003. *NGOs, organizational culture, and institutional sustainability. Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Sciences 590 (1): 212-226.*

This paper draws on qualitative research on a sericulture (silk farming) project in Bangladesh to explore the ways in which the concept of organizational culture can provide understanding of the complex root of sustainability problems within multi-agency rural development projects.

Marshall, Katherine. 2001. *Development and religion: A different lens on development debates. Peabody Journal of Education 76:3&4: 339-375.*

In this article, the author explores the history of the partnership between the World Bank and FBOs and highlights lessons learned. She portrays this engagement in terms of three categories: first, the political dimension of FBOs; second, the oppositional dimension whereby FBOs pursue different agendas on development than that of the World Bank; and third, in terms of the relevance of religion in a modern society.

Link: <http://www.informaworld.com/smpp/content~content=a785830223-db=all>

Pieterse, Jan Nederveen. 1995. *The cultural turn in development: A question of power? European Journal of Development Research 7 (1): 176-192.*

The author contests economic globalization and its ethnocentrism in terms of culture, and argues that globalization renders ethnocentrism inviable. The ideological shift, since the end of the cold war, forces the West to make a place for religion and ethnic movements when designing development projects. The author agrees with the UNESCO discourse on pluralism and local cultures.

Rouhana, Hoda. 2003. *On feminism and national identity: The experience of Palestinian women in Israel and Muslim women in India. Critical Half 1 (1): 4-9.*

This article explores the double oppression faced by Muslim women in India and Palestinian women in Israel because of their gender and their religion.

Link: <http://www.womenforwomen.org/downloads/CHJournalv1.pdf>

Sachedina, Abdulaziz. 2003. *Globalization, religion, and women. Critical Half 1 (1): 10-13.*

Sachedina perceives globalization as a new type of domination and universal ideology. This ideology presents new challenges for women's human rights due to the use of women as a cheap source of labour, the exploitation of women by multinational companies, and male

domination in patriarchal societies. The writer proposes "religious globalization".

Link: <http://www.womenforwomen.org/downloads/CHJournalv1.pdf>

Salbi, Zainab. 2003. Why might women support religious fundamentalism?" *Critical Half 1 (1): 14-19.*

This article focuses on Middle Eastern women who seek to advance their own interests through the revival of religious traditions. Religion touches upon the private spheres, which traditionally encompass the women's sphere. Increased poverty, unemployment and economic insecurity generate interest in returning to traditional Islamic society with predefined gender roles.

Link: <http://www.womenforwomen.org/downloads/CHJournalv1.pdf>

Selinger, Leah. 2004. The forgotten factor: The uneasy relationship between religion and development. *Social Compass 51 (4): 523.*

The author argues that religion is a defining force within culture. By exploring the roots of development and its historical avoidance of religion, the article seeks to determine a course of action that incorporates the social significance of religion, to be recognized and handled in a constructive manner.

Sered, Susan Starr. 1990. Women, religion and modernization: Tradition and transformation among elderly Jews in Israel. *American Anthropologist (New Series)92 (2): 306-318.*

The author states in this article that modernization has affected the lives of women by increasing women's involvement in society.

Tomalin, Emma. 2007. *Gender Studies Approaches to the Relationships between Religion and Development. Working Paper 8.*

This is a literature review of the impact of religion on social differences between the sexes. The main themes are religion portrayed as an

impediment to improving women's lives and reproductive health, and eliminating female genital mutilation and HIV and AIDS.

Link: http://www.rad.bham.ac.uk/files/resourcesmodule/@random45c8b732cd96d/1186738083_WP8.pdf

Tucker, Vincent. 1996. Cultural perspectives on development. *European Journal of Development Research 8 (2).*

What does cultural analysis have to offer development studies? Is culture a new paradigm for the study of development, or a minefield of theoretical confusion? Can we move beyond notions of "global culture" and "local culture" to a more refined notion of cultural processes?

Uchem, Rose. 2003. Overcoming women's subordination in the Igbo African culture and in the Catholic Church. *Critical Half 1 (1): 26-31.*

This article explores the roots of gender equality in egalitarian traditions of pre-colonial/pre-Christian Igbo society. Colonialism brought gender inequality to the Igbo people. Along with the Europeans came Christianity, which re-enforced the gender differences. Uchem argues that Western colonial rulers interpreted the equal power of men and women in the Igbo society as a threat.

Link: <http://www.womenforwomen.org/downloads/CHJournalv1.pdf>

Vohra, Sumona. 2003. The practice of dowry from the context of Hinduism. *Critical Half 1 (1): 32-35.*

The author discusses the dowry system and how it affects the lives of women in India. Due to the misinterpretation of the Hindu texts by the British, dowry has become something that it was not meant to be. Initially, dowry was supposed to be money given to the bride by her father to be used in a time of difficulty. Instead, it is now seen as something the father must give to the groom and his family to take care of his daughter.

Link: <http://www.womenforwomen.org/downloads/CHJournalv1.pdf>

Winter, Bronwyn. 2002. Religion, culture and women's human rights: Some general political and theoretical considerations. *Women's Studies International Forum* 29 (4): 381-393.

Though many countries endorse women's rights, such rights are rarely implemented. Since the majority of those promoting human rights are men, women's rights have often been given less preference or ignored. Winter supports her argument with examples of various conventions in which religious text and religious practices have interfered in giving women their full rights.

Toolkits

Kettle, C.K., and Saul Libby. 2006. *Guidelines for Managing the Integration of Culture into Development Programmes*.

The ASEAN Foundation worked with SEAMEO-SPAFA, the Regional Centre for Archaeology and Fine Arts, to produce this toolkit—a guide to integrating culture into development programs.

Link: [http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/rwt.nsf/db900SID/OCHA-6EXCY/\\$File/SEAMEO_guidelines.pdf?OpenElement](http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/rwt.nsf/db900SID/OCHA-6EXCY/$File/SEAMEO_guidelines.pdf?OpenElement)

Lux, Steven, and Kristine Greenaway. 2006. *Scaling up Effective Partnerships: A Guide to Working with Faith-based Organisations in the Response to HIV and AIDS*.

Co-produced by Church World Service, the Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance, Norwegian Church Aid, UNAIDS and the World Conference of Religions for Peace, this toolkit is designed to improve partnerships and collaborations with FBOs in the fight against HIV and AIDS.

Link: <http://www.e-alliance.ch/media/media-6695.pdf>

UNESCO. *Cultural Diversity Lens*.

To ensure that cultural diversity is addressed at all stages of project implementation,

UNESCO is developing a cultural diversity lens. It will use the lens to identify the gaps and shortcomings of a project or programme and develop appropriate indicators for the promotion of cultural diversity.

Link: <http://www.unescobkk.org/index.php?id=2529>

UNESCO. *The Cultural Diversity Programming Lens Toolkit*.

This toolkit is designed to help implement the cultural diversity lens. It contains a general introduction and a step-by-step guide on how to develop and use the cultural diversity lens.

Link: http://www.unescobkk.org/fileadmin/user_upload/culture/Cultural_lens/CDPL_Toolkit-August_Workshop.pdf

UNESCO. 1995. *The Cultural Dimension of Development: Towards a Practical Approach*. Paris: UNESCO Publishing.

Constructed as a how-to manual, this book provides information on incorporating cultural factors into development programmes. It shows the links that exist between culture and development in order to identify the common methodological aspects of development.

UNESCO. 1997. *A Cultural Approach to Development: Planning Manual, Concepts and Tools*. Paris: UNESCO Publishing.

This practical tool, a complement to *The Cultural Dimension of Development: Towards a Practical Approach*, is aimed at development planners and practitioners to help them better integrate local customs into their planning.

UNESCO. 2005. *Faith in Action: Working Toward the Millennium Development Goals: An Action Toolkit for Religious Leaders and Communities*.

This toolkit was created in response to religious leaders asking what they can do in the endeavour to achieve the MDGs. After presenting all eight goals, the manual

provides tools on how to enlist the support and participation of communities by advocating for the MDGs and mobilizing to take action to achieve them.

Link: <http://www.wcrp.org/files/English%20African%20MDG%20toolkit.pdf>

UNFPA. 2007. *Engaging Faith-based Organizations in HIV Prevention. A Training Manual for Programme Managers.*

UNFPA has embarked on a number of joint initiatives with FBOs to address the spread of HIV and to fight the stigma often directed towards people living with the virus. Dialogue and partnership with FBOs have yielded results that have been mutually beneficial to UNFPA and religious institutions, and, most important, have improved the lives of the people they serve. This training manual aims to encourage policymakers, programmers in the field and development practitioners to

recognize the complex social, cultural and economic factors in HIV prevention, and to partner with FBOs to address them. The ultimate goal is to advance the ICPD agenda and reverse the spread of HIV.

Link: <http://www.unfpa.org/publications/detail.cfm?ID=337&filterListType=>

UNICEF. 2003. *What Religious Leaders Can Do about HIV/AIDS: Action for Children and Young People.*

This publication was developed after members of the African Religious Leaders' Assembly on Children and HIV/AIDS asked for information on how to help children tackle HIV and AIDS. The manual contains tools and resources useful to religious leaders working on HIV and AIDS at the community level.

Link: http://www.unicef.org/Religious_leaders_Aids.pdf

Appendix A. Matrix of Case Studies

FBO Mapping Chart

Region: AFRICA

Country	Religion	Project name	Partnerships	Activities	Issues addressed	Duration	Target Groups
Botswana	Evangelical	ASRH Campaigns in the Church	Botswana Council of Churches, Evangelical Fellowship of Botswana, Organization of African Independent Churches	Advocacy: Forums, community, educational institutions, media Capacity-building: Religious leaders	Adolescent sexual and reproductive health (SRH); HIV and AIDS; maternal mortality	2005-2006	Youth
Democratic Republic of the Congo	Catholicism	Reinforced Capacity to Protect Older Persons	Congregation of the Little Sisters of the Poor	Advocacy: Community	Elderly health	May-June 2005	Elderly people
Eritrea	Islam, Catholicism, Evangelical, Orthodox	Care and Support for People Living with HIV and AIDS	Orthodox Patriarchate, Islamic Mufti Office, Catholic Secretariat, Evangelical Church	Advocacy: Forums/committees	Reproductive health (RH); HIV and AIDS; morbidity and mortality	December 2001-June 2005	People living with HIV and AIDS
Ethiopia	Orthodox	N/A	Churches	Capacity-building: Religious leaders	HIV and AIDS; gender	N/A	N/A
Ghana*	Catholicism, Protestantism, Islam	Strengthening Ties with a Religious Network in Ghana that Promotes Interfaith Understanding and Better Prospects for Youth	Supreme Muslim Council; churches; Planned Parenthood Association (NGO)	Advocacy: Community; data gathering and research; media and information Capacity-building: Mobilization of religious leaders and resources; training the trainers	Adolescent SRH; gender equality; HIV and AIDS; family planning; population and demographics	2001-2006	Religious leaders, professional personnel, youth
Ghana	Catholicism, Protestantism, Islam	Liberating Slaves and Changing Minds	International Needs Ghana	Advocacy: Community Capacity-building: Training the trainers	SRH	4 years	N/A
Madagascar	Protestantism, Lutheran	Strengthening the Reproductive Health Activities	Lutheran and Protestant Churches	Advocacy: Community Capacity-building: Religious leaders, health clinics, training the trainers	Adolescent RH, family planning, HIV and AIDS, overall RH	2005-2009	Health staff, youth, men

* Data from the 2004 UNFPA publication. *Culture Matters: Working with Communities and Faith-based Organizations and Working from Within: Culturally Sensitive Approaches in UNFPA Programming.*

Region: AFRICA

Country	Religion	Project name	Partnerships	Activities	Issues addressed	Duration	Target Groups
Malawi*	Catholicism	Partnering with Religious, Cultural and Faith-based Institutions: An Underutilized Force in the Fight against HIV and AIDS	Government; Scripture Union of Malawi, Christian Hospitals Association of Malawi, Catholic Development Commission, Christian Council of Malawi, Fertility Awareness Support Unit of the Catholic Church (FBOs)	Advocacy: Media and information Capacity-building: Mobilization of religious leaders and resources; training the trainers; health clinics	SRH and rights; HIV and AIDS	N/A	Religious leaders, professional health personnel
Mauritania	Islam	UNFPA Country Office in Mauritania	Ulemma and imam associations	Advocacy: Forums	Capacity-building: Religious leaders	RH and rights; gender; family planning	N/A
Niger	Islam	N/A	N/A	Capacity-building: Religious leaders	Population and demographics	N/A	N/A
Rwanda	Islam, Catholicism	RWA03P04-RH in Imidugudu	Religions against AIDS (FBO); Catholic, Protestant, and Islamic religious groups	Advocacy: Communities	Capacity-building: Religious leaders	SRH and rights; gender; family planning; HIV and AIDS	May-December 2006
Senegal	Islam, Christianity	N/A	Islamic community	Advocacy: Community	Capacity-building: Religious leaders	RH; family planning; gender; HIV and AIDS; maternal and infant mortality	2004-ongoing?
Sierra Leone**	Christianity	Getting at the Roots of "Survival Sex"	Women in Crisis Movement (FBO), NEWMAP (women parliamentarians and ministers)	Advocacy: Community	Capacity-building: Resource mobilization, religious leaders, training the trainers	Gender-based violence (GBV), HIV and AIDS, adolescent reproductive and sexual health (ASRH)	2001-Present
Sierra Leone	Christianity	Integration of Reproductive Health in Faith Clinics	Pastors and other religious leaders in the church	Advocacy: Community	Capacity-building: Religious leaders, resource mobilization	RH; HIV and AIDS	Ongoing

* Data from the 2004 UNFPA publication. *Culture Matters: Working with Communities and Faith-based Organizations and Working from Within: Culturally Sensitive Approaches in UNFPA Programming*

** Data from the 2007 UNFPA publication. *Programming to Address Violence Against Women*

Region: AFRICA

Country	Religion	Project name	Partnerships	Activities	Issues addressed	Duration	Target Groups
Sierra Leone	Islam	Islamic Network for Reproductive Health and Population Development Promotion in Sierra Leone	Churches, imams, sheiks; Islamic women's organizations (FBOs)	Advocacy: Forums	Capacity-building: Religious leaders	RH and rights; family planning; gender; female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C); HIV and AIDS	2005-ongoing?
Uganda*	Islam	Partnering with Uganda's Muslim Community for Better Reproductive Health	Muslim Supreme Council	Advocacy: Community; forums; media and information	Capacity-building: Religious leaders, training the trainers, health clinics	RH and rights	1995-ongoing
Uganda*	Islam	Winning Support from Some of Uganda's Custodians of Culture: Elders, Bishops and Kings	Sabiny Elders Association (NGO), Kinkizi Diocese Church of Uganda, Bunyoro and Tooro kingdoms	Advocacy: Community; forums; media and information Capacity-building: Religious leaders, training the trainers	RH and rights; HIV and AIDS; family planning; gender equality; FGM/C	1995-?	Religious and indigenous leaders, youth, women, government officials
Uganda	Islam, Catholicism, Anglican, Orthodox	Inter-Religious Council of Uganda (IRCU)	Catholic, Anglican and Orthodox churches; Uganda Muslim Supreme Council	Advocacy: Forums, community Capacity-building: Religious leaders	Adolescent and overall RH; gender equality; HIV and AIDS	2001-ongoing	Religious leaders and organizations
Zimbabwe	Christianity	N/A	Churches	Capacity-building: Religious leaders	HIV	N/A	N/A

* Data from the 2004 UNFPA publication. *Culture Matters: Working with Communities and Faith-based Organizations and Working from Within: Culturally Sensitive Approaches in UNFPA Programming*

Region: ARAB STATES, EASTERN EUROPE, CENTRAL ASIA

Country	Religion	Project name	Partnerships	Activities	Issues addressed	Duration	Target groups
Algeria	Islam	N/A	Government (Ministry of Religious Affairs)	Capacity-building: Religious leaders, training the trainers	STIs; HIV and AIDS	N/A	Religious leaders (imams), youth
Armenia	Christianity	Third-Party Procurement of Condoms	World Vision Armenia (FBO)	Capacity-building: Resource mobilization	SRH; HIV and AIDS	September 2005-June 2006	Communities
Armenia	Christianity	Joint Project on HIV and AIDS Capacity-Building/Prevention	Indirect partnership through NGO with Lori Marz (region) Diocese of Armenian Apostolic Church	Advocacy	SRH; HIV and AIDS	July-October 2007	N/A
Azerbaijan	Islam, Zoroastrianism	N/A	Local mosques	Capacity-building: Forums/committees	RH, HIV	2 years	N/A
Egypt	Islam	Advocacy of Reproductive Health in the Context of Islam	Al-Azhar University, International Islamic Centre for Population Studies and Research; government	Advocacy: Educational institutions; media and information Capacity-building: Religious leaders	RH; HIV; population and demographics; gender equality	January 2005-December 2006	Religious leaders
Eastern Europe	Orthodox, Christianity	N/A	UNICEF, World Bank	Advocacy: Data gathering and research	Gender equality	N/A	N/A
Georgia	Orthodox, Christianity	N/A	Government, NGOs, churches	Advocacy: Forums	RH, family planning	N/A	Communities
Georgia	Orthodox, Christianity	N/A	Government, churches, media	Advocacy	RH, family planning	2006-2007	N/A
Jordan	Islam	N/A	Mosques, religious leaders	Capacity-building: Religious leaders	RH	N/A	Religious leaders
Kosovo	Catholicism, Islam	N/A	Catholic Church, Office of the Mufti for Pristina, UNICEF, government (Ministry of Health)	Capacity-building: Religious leaders	RH	N/A	Religious leaders
Kosovo	Islam	Cairo Workshop on Population and Islam	Religious leaders, Senior Member of Kosovo's parliament, Vice Dean of the Faculty of Islamic Studies	Capacity-building: Religious leaders	RH	N/A	Religious leaders, culture
Kyrgyzstan	Islam	Reproductive Health Programme	State Commission on Religious Affairs; Clerical Department of Muslims; Mutakalim (women's FBO)	Advocacy: Forums Capacity-building: Religious leaders	RH and rights; family planning; gender equality	2001-2005	Youth, women, communities

Region: ARAB STATES, EASTERN EUROPE, CENTRAL ASIA

Country	Religion	Project name	Partnerships	Activities	Issues addressed	Duration	Target groups
Kyrgyzstan	Islam	Reproductive Health Programme	State Agency on Religious Affairs; Clerical Department of Muslims; Mutakalim (women's FBO) and its regional branches; Kyrgyz Family Planning Alliance (NGO)	Capacity-building, advocacy, social mobilization, training	SRH and rights; family planning; HIV prevention and AIDS treatment; social mobilization on SRH and reproductive rights; gender equality	2001-2007	Youth, women, Muslim religious communities, Muslim religious leaders
Lebanon	Islam, Christianity	N/A	Religious leaders	Advocacy: Media	SRH	4 years	Youth
Oman	Islam	N/A	Government	Capacity-building: Religious leaders	RH and rights; gender; HIV	3 years	N/A
Occupied Palestinian Territories	Islam	IEC in Support of Reproductive Health	Department of Family Counselling and Reconciliation in Sharia Courts	Capacity-building: Training the trainers	RH, GBV	N/A	Sharia department officials, religious leaders
Sudan	Islam	N/A	Religious leaders	Capacity-building: Religious leaders	RH	N/A	N/A
Syria	Islam	Awareness Creation Among Decision-Makers and Opinion Leaders	Ministry of Islamic Affairs (Awqaf)	Advocacy: Media Capacity-building: Religious leaders	RH, family planning, gender	2003-2006	Religious leaders (e.g., imams)
Tajikistan	Islam	Enhanced Availability of Quality and Gender-Sensitive Reproductive Health Services	Islamic University of Tajikistan; Government Religious Committee; Safe Motherhood (NGO)	Advocacy: Educational institutions, community Capacity-building: Religious leaders, training the trainers	RH and rights; family planning; HIV and AIDS	2005-2009	Religious leaders, youth, NGO workers
Yemen*	Islam	Opening the Door to Reproductive Health in Yemen	Ministry of Islamic Affairs (Awqaf) and Religious Guidance	Advocacy: Community; media and information Capacity-building: Mobilization of religious leaders and resources	SRH; HIV and AIDS; family planning	2002	Religious leaders, youth
Yemen	Islam	Reproductive Health, Family Planning	Seminar for Islamic Youth in Riyadh, World Islamic Council for Advocacy and Rescue	Advocacy: Forums, community Capacity-building: Strengthening the structures, training the trainers	RH, gender, youth, family planning, FGM/C	4 years	Religious leaders, youth

* Data from the 2004 UNFPA publications *Culture Matters: Working with Communities and Faith-based Organizations and Working from Within: Culturally Sensitive Approaches in UNFPA Programming*

Region: ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

Country	Religion	Project name	Partnerships	Activities	Issues addressed	Duration	Target groups
Bangladesh	Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism	Involvement of Religious Leaders in Human Resource Development	Religious leaders (imams, monks, etc.)	Capacity-building: Religious leaders	RH and rights; HIV and AIDS; gender equality	1998-2005	Religious leaders
Bangladesh	N/A	Challenging Age-Old Views on Violence Against Women (from the 2007 UNFPA publication Programming to Address Violence Against Women)	Ministry of Women's and Children's Affairs	Advocacy: Community Capacity-building: Religious leaders, training the trainers	GBV; RH and rights; HIV and AIDS	2003-2005	Women, youth
Cambodia*	Buddhism	Tapping the Potential of Buddhist Monks and Nuns to Halt the Spread of HIV and AIDS	Religious leaders (Buddhist monks and nuns); ; Pharmaciens sans Frontières Save the Children Australia (international NGOs); Women's Organization for Modern Economy and Nursing, Operation Enfants de Battambang (local NGOs)	Advocacy: Community, data gathering and research Capacity-building: Religious leaders	RH and rights; HIV and AIDS; gender equality	2002-?	Youth
India	Hinduism, Islam, Sikhism, Jainism	Faith for Action against Sex Selection	Art of Living Foundation	Advocacy: Forums, media Capacity-building: Religious leaders, resource mobilization	RH, gender	8 months	Religious leaders, women, men, youth
India	N/A	Restoring the Sex Ratio in India*	Ministry of Health and Family Welfare	Advocacy: Community	Sex selection, RH, gender	2 years	Community
Iran*	Islam	Moving the ICPD Programme of Action Forward through Patience and an Enabling Environment	Government (Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education); Centre for Women's Participation, other women's NGOs	Advocacy: Community; educational institutions; data gathering and research; media and information Capacity-building: Training the trainers	RH and rights; gender equality; family planning	N/A	Religious leaders, women, men, youth, indigenous minorities
Lao PDR	Buddhism	N/A	NGOs	Community	HIV and AIDS	N/A	N/A

Region: ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

Country	Religion	Project name	Partnerships	Activities	Issues addressed	Duration	Target groups
Malaysia	Islam	Promoting Adolescent Reproductive Health and Healthy Living	Federation of Family Planning Associations, Malaysia (NGO); JAKIM/Department of Islamic Development Malaysia (FBO)	Advocacy: Community	Adolescent SRH	1998-2004	Youth
Maldives	Islam	N/A	N/A	Religious leaders	RH; population and demographics	N/A	N/A
Pacific Island Countries	Christianity	UNFPA Partnership with FBOs in the Pacific Island Countries	Fiji Council for Social Services, Pacific Council of Churches, Christian schools	Advocacy: Community, educational institutions Capacity-building: Religious leaders, resource mobilization, health clinics	Adolescent SRH; HIV and AIDS; gender equality	Ongoing	Youth, women
Pakistan	Islam	Ulemma Conference	Heads of religious schools, religious leaders, government (Ministry of Population Welfare)	Advocacy: Forums Capacity-building: Religious leaders	Population and development	2004-2008	Religious leaders
Papua New Guinea	Catholicism, Protestantism	Adolescent Reproductive and Sexual Health	Marie Stopes International Australia (NGO), University of Papua New Guinea	Advocacy: Educational institutions Capacity-building: Religious leaders, training the trainers	Adolescent SRH; HIV and AIDS; gender equality	5 years	Women, youth, religious leaders
Philippines	Islam, Protestantism	Interfaith Partnership Development	Philippine Legislators' Committee on Population and Development Foundation	Advocacy: Forums/committees Capacity-building: Resource mobilization	RH; population and demographics; family planning	2003-2006	Religious leaders, FBOs
Sri Lanka	Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam	Support for Advocacy for Reproductive Health and Gender	Sarvodaya (NGO)	Advocacy: Community Capacity-building: Religious leaders	RH, gender, GBV	2002-2007	Religious leaders
Thailand	Islam	N/A	Planned Parenthood Association of Thailand	Advocacy: Community Capacity-building: Religious leaders	RH	N/A	N/A
Timor-Leste	Catholicism, Protestantism	The Provision of Natural Family Planning and Reproductive Health Training and Services	Caritas Dili, Pastoral da Saude, Christian Connection for International Health (FBOs); Health Alliance International (NGO); government (Ministry of Health)	Advocacy: Forums, educational institutions Capacity-building: Religious leaders, training the trainers	Family planning; RH; HIV and AIDS; population and development	2006-2007	Health staff, religious leaders

Region: LATIN AMERICA AND CARIBBEAN

Region: Latin America and Caribbean	Religion	Project name	Partnerships	Activities	Issues addressed	Duration	Target groups
Brazil*	Catholicism	Information and Communication/ Pastoral da Criança	Pastoral da Criança (FBO)	Advocacy: Forums, community	Adolescent RH, family planning	3 years	Youth
Brazil	Catholicism	Amigas das Católicas	Catholics for a Free Choice	Advocacy: Community; media and information Capacity-building: Resource mobilization	RH, gender	March-July 2005	Women, Catholics, other religious communities
Colombia	Catholicism	Sexual and Reproductive Health in the Magdalena Medio Region	Catholic Church; Corporation for Development and Peace (FBO)	Capacity-building: Training the trainers, strengthening the structures	SRH, gender equality	5 years	Women's and youth organizations; SRH service providers and civil servants; conflict-affected populations
Ecuador*	Evangelical	N/A	Centro Integral de la Familia (NGO)	Advocacy: Forums Capacity-building: Religious leaders, training the trainers	SRH, gender equality	N/A	Evangelical religious leaders; organizations and educational systems
Guatemala*	Catholicism, Evangelical	Pursuing Advocacy and Consensus-building in Guatemala, Leading to a New Law on Reproductive Health	Episcopal Conference, Catholic and Evangelical Churches; Coordinating Committee of Agricultural, Commercial, Industrial and Financial Associations	Advocacy: Community, forums; data gathering and research; media and information Capacity-building: Religious leaders, training the trainers	RH; maternal and infant mortality; population and demographics	2001	Religious leaders
Guatemala	Evangelical	Alianza Evangelica de Guatemala	Alianza Evangelica de Guatemala, NGOs	Advocacy: Media and information; data gathering and research Capacity-building: Religious leaders, training the trainers	Family planning; RH rights; maternal and infant mortality	2004-2006	Rural and indigenous women and families

* Data from the 2004 UNFPA publications *Culture Matters: Working with Communities and Faith-based Organizations and Working from Within: Culturally Sensitive Approaches in UNFPA Programming*

Region: LATIN AMERICA AND CARIBBEAN

Region: Latin America and Caribbean	Religion	Project name	Partnerships	Activities	Issues addressed	Duration	Target groups
Honduras	Catholicism, Evangelical, Episcopalian, Adventist	Strengthened Response to HIV and AIDS in Vulnerable Populations in Honduras	Government (Ministry of Health), churches, educational institutions	Advocacy: Forums, committees	HIV and AIDS	2004-ongoing	Women, youth, families
Mexico	Evangelical	Umbrella of 1998	Latin American Council of Churches	Advocacy: Community	Family planning, RH and rights	1998	N/A
Mexico	Lutheran	Proyecto Estatal de Cooperacion-Puebla	Iglesia Luterana de Mexico, government (State Secretary of Health and State Council on Population)	Capacity-building: Health clinics	RH, gender	2000	Indigenous community
Mexico	Catholicism	Desarrollo de Habilidades para la Vida en Niñas que han sido Rescatadas de la Situación de Calle	Ayuda y Solidaridad con las Niñas de la Calle (FBO)	Advocacy: Community	SRH	3 years	Adolescent girls
Nicaragua	Catholicism	Strengthening of Schools Joined to Fe y Alegría on Sexuality Education Matters	Fe y Alegría (FBO), religious congregations	Capacity-building: Training the trainers	RH	January 2004-December 2006	Catholic school directors and teachers

