



STRATEGIC PLAN 2019 - 2024

FOUNDATION FOR INTERCULTURAL AND INTERRELIGIOUS DIALOGUE INITIATIVES (FIIDI)

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CONTENT

Executive Summary	3
Introduction	4
Our Mission	5
FIIDI Implementation Plan	5
Strategic Goals	6
Fostering Community Engagement and Understanding Program	6
The Generals (Focal Points) for Peace Program	6
Children & Youth Arts for Peace Program	7
Seminars and Workshops	7
Fundraising Program	8
Intern and Volunteer Placement Program	8
Resources Mobilization	9
Staff	9
Offices	9
Partnership	9
Program Dissemination and Communications	10
Conclusions	11

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Culture (ethnic and tribal) and religion are and will continue to underscore the initiation of either violent conflicts or peace around the globe, especially in Africa today. Therefore, it is important to include and engage cultural and religious actors in measures aimed at mitigating violence and creating sustainable peace resolution mechanisms in our communities. Undeniably, interfaith, intercultural, and interreligious dialogue has become a significant response to conflicts involving intercultural violence and religious strife. This current reality fuels the vision of the Foundation for Intercultural and Interreligious Dialogue Initiatives (FIIDI) and resides at the center of our strategic plan. While we intend to respond to interfaith, intercultural, and interreligious issues and conflicts in the form of five-year objectives and strategies, we underscore the importance of community partnership.

This strategic plan places FIIDI in a strong position as its operations and activities are well supported by the Plan of Action for Religious Leaders from Africa to Prevent Incitement to Violence that Could Lead to Atrocity Crimes. The regional (African) Plan of Action is born out of the broader consultations and recommendations contained in the Plan of Action for Religious Leaders and Actors to Prevent Incitement to Violence that Could Lead to Atrocity Crimes - launched on 14 July 2017 by António Guterres, Secretary-General of the United Nations at a meeting in the United Nations Headquarters in New York. The recommendations were developed between April 2015 and December 2016 by groups of religious leaders and actors organized under the leadership of the United Nations Office on Genocide Prevention and the Responsibility to Protect (“the Office”). The Plan of Action was developed in response to an alarming spike in recent years in hate speech and incitement to violence against individuals or communities, based on their identity. The consultations known as the Fez Process are relevant not only to situations where there is a risk of atrocity crimes but also to other contexts, including the protection of human rights, the prevention of violent extremism, and the prevention of conflict. While the Plan of Action is intended primarily for use by religious leaders and actors, it also includes detailed recommendations for others, including State and State institutions, secular civil society organizations (CSOs), and new and traditional media.

FIIDI’s unique approach is grounded in interfaith, intercultural, and interreligious dialogue programs aimed at promoting acceptance and encouraging peaceful coexistence among people from different faith and cultural communities. The Strategic Plan outlined here is intended to be a dynamic road map, defining a clear “destination” – where we want to be in 2024 – while encouraging flexibility and creativity throughout the journey over the coming years. Therefore, our Strategic Plan seeks to be more than a way forward. It is a road map to clarify how interfaith, intercultural, and interreligious dialogue can be leverage to promote peace through tolerance, understanding, and acceptance in our communities. It is a means to work with partners to empower affected and vulnerable communities so that FIIDI remains a relevant and active platform to address as well as prevent conflicts in Africa. Certainly, dialogue is the bridge between cultural diversity and peace.

INTRODUCTION

While we observe a decline in civil conflicts, strife, and upheaval, Africa is experiencing growing divisions among communities on lines of ethnicity, tribal ideas, cultural differences, religion, etc. The Sahel region and countries like Nigeria, Somalia, and the Central Africa Republic are witnessing conflicts that are already affecting peaceful and stable neighboring countries. The violence from such conflicts has claimed thousands of lives and produced millions of internally displaced persons (IDPs) and refugees, and it continues to undermine the political, economic, and social development of the affected countries.

In Sub-Saharan Africa, some countries are already experiencing conflicts that do appear to demonstrate a mixture of religious and secular roots. Also, ethnic and religious identity has further created boundaries that fuel the risks of interreligious confrontation. The challenge is those affected and vulnerable communities are faced with a lack of major opportunities for the citizens to engage in dialogues. At FIIDI, we believe the best response to this situation is education for citizens about interfaith, intercultural, and interreligious understanding. Citizens will benefit from understanding what roles they could play in relation to the promotion of a culture of tolerance and understanding.

In the coming years, FIIDI envisions itself as a leader and a reference organization in fostering community engagement and understanding with different stakeholders in Africa and beyond. Therefore, FIIDI will continue to foster effective and appropriate networking through the building of strategic partnerships, establishing thematic alliances, membership of appropriate platforms and umbrella organizations in human rights, peacebuilding, and interfaith, intercultural, and interreligious dialogue.

The situation described above has shaped our Strategic Plan. Below we outline the operational programs of the *Foundation for Intercultural and Interreligious Dialogue Initiatives (FIIDI)* for the next five years, along with the organizational and support activities which complement operations.

The main principles that will guide activities in the next five years are as follows:

- ❖ Focusing on strategic planning and refining of operational processes as we progress
- ❖ Ensuring effective and timely implementation of projects and raising funds and mobilizing resources for continuity
- ❖ Developing project proposals and building partnerships in order to allow FIIDI to achieve set goals for the next five years
- ❖ Mainstreaming gender and social equity in FIIDI operations and activities
- ❖ Documenting and disseminating results and knowledge gathered during FIIDI operations and activities
- ❖ Enhancing communications, visibility, and outreach
- ❖ Managing resources and institutional concerns
- ❖ Mobilizing human and material resources for FIIDI operations from 2019 to 2024

OUR MISSION

Arising out of a commitment to end religious and ethnic violence, FIIDI has taken an awareness (education) based approach to address and prevent religious and ethnic violence affecting the communities we serve in Africa. We believe that education, including education for tribal, ethnic, and religious leaders and actors, as well as youth, increases mutual respect; tolerance, and understanding while diminishing the risk that individuals could be manipulated for political purposes. We don't give aid; we strive for dialogue and tolerance, empowering communities to stand up for peace.

"No one is born hating another person because of the color of his skin, or his background, or his religion. People must learn to hate, and if they can learn to hate, they can be taught to love, for love comes more naturally to the human heart than its opposite." Nelson Mandela (1918 – 2013). FIIDI's mandate and promotional activities stem from this quote. Our goal is to give meaning and actuality to Mandela's words.

Vision

To foster a strong community-centered platform grounded in a culture of peaceful coexistence among people from different backgrounds as a pillar for peace, stability, democracy, and sustainable development.

Mission

To promote intercultural and interreligious understanding and to empower communities in peacebuilding activities that contribute to living together in dignity and dialogue.

FIIDI IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

FIIDI programs for the next five years encompass the *Fostering Community Engagement and Understanding Program*, *Generals (Focal Points) for Peace Program*, *Children & Youth Arts for Peace Program*, *Capacity Building of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs)* on relevant regional and international human rights mechanisms, *Community Outreach*, *Intern and Volunteer Placement Program* and *Fundraising and Resource Mobilization Program*. Through fundraising and resource mobilization efforts, FIIDI implements these programs with local and international partners. This approach enables communities to participate in, and eventually, take ownership of our initiatives to sustain programs. FIIDI creates partnerships with local and international institutions, organizations, and associations in order to better identify and serve programs' beneficiaries on a complimentary basis.

STRATEGIC GOALS

The following strategic goals will serve as the base for programs implementation:

Fostering Community Engagement and Understanding Program

Strategic Objective: *To promote peacebuilding through interfaith, intercultural, and interreligious dialogue initiatives and conflict prevention services in different communities of Africa.*

The Fostering Community Engagement and Understanding Program strive to promote peace education, strengthen peacebuilding skills, and strengthen interfaith, intercultural, and interreligious dialogue in communities. The program will work with partners to support active and effective peacebuilding as well as interfaith, intercultural, and interreligious dialogue processes. This program will be implemented at the local, national, sub-regional, and international levels with the aim of contributing to conflict prevention, reconciliation, and peacebuilding through various program activities, in particular within the educational area. FIIDI's institutional partnerships will help identify partners and strengthen its capacity to give early warnings when and where violence is imminent. Through this program, FIIDI plans to reach 5,000 community (religious & tribal) leaders and youth across Africa in the next five years.

Program interventions will be tailored to appropriate target groups and will include the following projects:

1. Community Circles for interfaith Dialogue Project
2. Sports for Peace Project
3. Culture and Religion for Peace office Project
4. The International Day for Victims of Religious Violence (22 August)
5. Youth Democracy and Peacebuilding Project
6. The Seed of Unity (Our National Anthem – Our National Pledge) Project
7. International Day of Peace (21 September)
8. International Day of Non-Violence (2 October)
9. Community Adult Functional and Financial Literacy Project
10. African Human Rights Day (21 October)

The Generals (Local Focal Points) for Peace Program

Strategic Objective: *To identify and partner with like-minded entities (individuals and organizations) from around the globe who subscribe to our vision to expand our communications and outreach activities in Africa.*

The Generals for Peace Program aims to reach 500 committed Local Focal Points (individual or organization) with skills and information sharing in the next five (5) years by continuing to build on strong community relationships with cultural and religious leaders and youth groups.

FIIDI Generals will be responsible for the implementation of FIIDI activities at local, national, sub-regional, regional, and international levels as per the FIIDI work plan in collaboration with our offices. A Certificate of Commitment will be issued to FIIDI Generals (Local Focal Points) for their active participation in fostering community engagement and understanding.

Children & Youth Arts for Peace Program

Strategic Objective: *To create opportunities for children and youth to engage in the arts and to discover things about themselves and others that will help them better deal with differences and handle conflicts peacefully.*

The Children & Youth Arts for Peace Program is geared toward reaching 5000 children and youth, as they are the world's next leaders, doers, and activists, and the best hope for a new and better future of tolerance, coexistence, and dignity. Children and youth from Africa will be invited to submit their art creations to FIIDI Art Exhibition & Awards. FIIDI collaborates with partners (The Generals for Peace) to organize Art Exhibition & Awards at local, national, sub-regional, regional, and international levels. Every year children and youth will be given the opportunity to propose a new theme to stimulate the participants to portray values of peace.

Seminars and Workshops

Strategic Objective: *To build the professional capacity of FIIDI staff (interns & volunteers) and partners as well as individual citizens and organizations through training, research, and technical skills acquisition.*

FIIDI wishes to collaborate with interested partners and donors for the organization of *workshops and seminars* in the next five years (2019 – 2024). Scheduled *workshops and seminars* include but are not limited to:

- ❖ Regional and International Human Rights Mechanisms
- ❖ Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)
- ❖ Inspection Panel (World Bank) Mechanism
- ❖ Plan of Action for Religious Leaders from Africa to Prevent Incitement to Violence that could lead to Atrocity Crimes
- ❖ The Universal Declaration on the Human Right to Peace
- ❖ Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment

Fundraising Program

Strategic Objective: *To increase the sustainability and financial viability of the Foundation for Intercultural and Interreligious Dialogue Initiatives (FIIDI).*

One of the main activities of focus in the next five (5) years will be *fundraising and resource mobilization* to secure sustained funding and resources for the next five years and beyond. Resource requirements for 2025 onwards will be defined in the new Strategic Plan. No funding commitments by donors have yet been made for 2019, either cash or in-kind contributions.

Intern and Volunteer Placement Program

Strategic Objective: *To build skills and experience as well as increase the sustainability and human resource viability of the Foundation for Intercultural and Interreligious Dialogue Initiatives (FIIDI).*

FIIDI will offer intern opportunities for both local and international candidates from various academic and professional backgrounds, to support our work in any of our country (local) programs. This is a particularly good opportunity for those seeking a future career in human rights, peacebuilding, or development to gain on-the-ground experience working for a locally based NGO.

Also, FIIDI will offer exciting short-term and long-term volunteer opportunities in our local offices. Our volunteer placements are open to people of all ages and backgrounds, regardless of nationality or qualifications. Volunteers will gain amazing life experience as well as work experience from their participation in our volunteer program. We encourage volunteer involvement in all the programs we offer, and we will recruit new volunteers all year round.



RESOURCES MOBILIZATION

Staff

The Foundation for Intercultural and Interreligious Dialogue Initiatives (FIIDI) will recruit more staff as affordable as well as specialist volunteers when and where required. We will ensure the continual development of skills, knowledge, and technology amongst staff and volunteers and become a learning organization, with supportive, team-based culture. FIIDI will maintain and develop professional and effective leadership and governance.

Our Offices

FIIDI offices will solicit support, through its partners, for the full complement of office space as well as office equipment required to facilitate the development and printing of all its educational materials within its premises. This will considerably reduce the huge costs of office space and printing. Among the equipment required are laptops, laser printers, digital cameras, and facilities for stitching and binding.

Partnership

FIIDI will continue to build reliable relations with key partners for the purpose of implementing initiatives. We will seek support for the strengthening of our programs and activities. Our goal is to achieve the self-sustainability of FIIDI by encouraging beneficiary communities to take ownership of our initiatives by the year 2024.

Close links will also be established with higher education institutions as well as human rights, peacebuilding, and development organizations throughout the globe for the provision of interns and exchange programs.



PROGRAM DISSEMINATION AND COMMUNICATIONS

FIIDI will promote its programs through targeted activities aimed at audiences including, but not limited to, government agencies and institutions at local, national, sub-regional, regional, and international levels, academia, civil society, community-based organizations, funding organizations as well as the general public in Africa and beyond. This will be executed by a Communications Specialist through broadcast, print, and alternative media, and through direct public outreach and knowledge-sharing events, community forums, and other relevant channels.

Print and electronic media play an important role in educating the public as well as promoting peace. Thus, FIIDI will work with the media for the promotion of its activities and messaging formats will be agreed upon in advance with relevant partners for effective and professional outreach. Human rights and peacebuilding events (conferences, workshops, forums, etc.) in Africa and around the globe represent unique opportunities for extensive outreach and knowledge-sharing on our programs and activities.

Social media has become an increasingly popular component of our everyday life in today's globalizing society. It provides a context where people across the world can communicate, exchange messages, share knowledge, and interact with each other regardless of the distance that separates them. Therefore, FIIDI will use social media (e.g. Facebook, blogs, Twitter, etc.) as one of the main communication channels to keep the public abreast of our programs and activities.



CONCLUSIONS

The Foundation for Intercultural and Interreligious Dialogue Initiatives (FIIDI) will measure the success of these strategic initiatives at the end of each fiscal year and will consider new initiatives to develop and implement each fiscal year subject to the availability of funds. This strategic work plan will allow us to be true to the vision of FIIDI – to foster a strong community-centered platform grounded in a culture of peaceful coexistence among people from different backgrounds as a pillar for peace, stability, democracy, and sustainable development.

This strategic plan places FIIDI in a strong position as its operations and activities are well supported by the *Plan of Action for Religious Leaders from Africa to Prevent Incitement to Violence that Could Lead to Atrocity Crimes*. The regional (African) *Plan of Action* is born out of the broader consultations or recommendations contained in the *Plan of Action for Religious Leaders and Actors to Prevent Incitement to Violence that Could Lead to Atrocity Crimes* - launched on 14 July 2017 by António Guterres, Secretary-General of the *United Nations* at a meeting in the *United Nations Headquarters* in New York. The recommendations were developed between April 2015 and December 2016 by groups of religious leaders and actors organized under the leadership of the *United Nations Office on Genocide Prevention and the Responsibility to Protect* (“*the Office*”). The *Plan of Action* was developed in response to an alarming spike in recent years in hate speech and incitement to violence against individuals or communities, based on their identity.

A number of organizations, including the *International Dialogue Centre (KAICIID)*, the *World Council of Churches*, and the *Network for Religious and Traditional Peacemakers* supported the consultations known as the *Fez Process*. In addition, the Governments of Ethiopia, Morocco, Italy, Jordan, Thailand, and the United States also supported the *Fez Process* by hosting the consultations. The consultations are relevant not only to situations where there is a risk of atrocity crimes but also to other contexts, including the protection of human rights, the prevention of violent extremism, and the prevention of conflict. While the *Plan of Action* is intended primarily for use by religious leaders and actors, it also includes detailed recommendations for others, including State and State institutions, secular civil society organizations, and new and traditional media.

Consequently, the *Plan of Action* helps us articulate our case for the fundraising goals we have identified and how they will support our strategic priorities. New opportunities will no doubt emerge during the course of the next five years, offering us additional resources to build on the excellence and distinguishing characteristics that allow us to carry out our mission: to promote intercultural and interreligious understanding and to empower communities in peacebuilding activities that contribute to living together in dignity and dialogue.

“Tolerance, inter-cultural dialogue and respect for diversity are more essential than ever in a world where peoples are becoming more and more closely interconnected”.

— Kofi Annan (1938 – 2018)



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