



ACWAY Report for:
UN World Interfaith Harmony Week

YOUTH FORUM 2021: SOLIDARITY IN ACTION

Date submitted: 6th March 2021

Overview

On February 25th 2021, and as part of the UN World Interfaith Harmony Week, [A Common Word Among the Youth \(ACWAY\)](#) organized the 5th ACWAY Forum (with this being our first virtual forum), under the theme of **#SolidarityinAction**.

ACWAY is pleased to have participated in the UN WIHW since 2016, delivering local activities around the world under one common theme. Our aim is to promote global collaboration through local action for a more peaceful and harmonious society between people of different faiths.

By organizing this Forum we hoped to continue creating opportunities where we can come together in solidarity. We firmly believe that it's at times like these that we must rally together to give and to share, and to support and reflect, both in spirit and in action. A pandemic might stop us from coming together physically, but it should not prevent us from building community socially, spiritually and virtually.

The aim of the Virtual Forum was to provide a platform for young people to share ideas, experiences and opportunities to engage in promoting peace, understanding and solidarity among different communities.

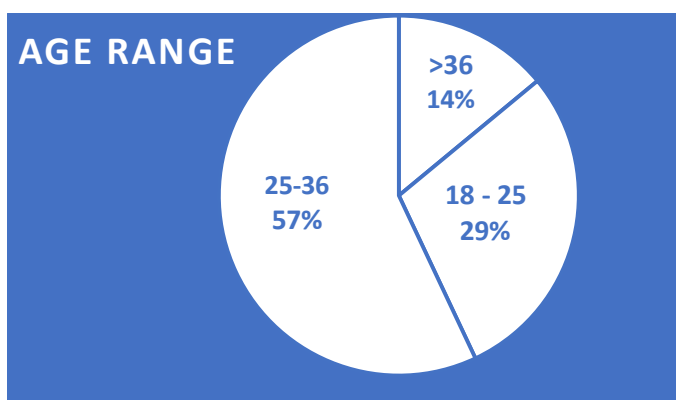
Highlights and added value

- ❖ One of the biggest online events for young people to inspire and talk about action in promoting interfaith harmony. Over 86% of the attendees were young people aged between 18 -35, engaging in intergenerational dialogue and facilitated trainings.
- ❖ ACWAY is an organization that is led and driven by a team of young volunteers who invested their time to organize the interfaith forum for their peers.
- ❖ According to testimonials, this Forum was “the best organized online event in the past few months”. Out of 170 people that joined, over 150 stayed for the full 2.5 hours.
- ❖ The Forum did not just promote solidarity between representatives of faith/philosophical traditions, but it also brought together in cooperation several interreligious organizations that collaborated in organizing the breakout sessions.
- ❖ Key takeaway from the Forum (based on testimonials): “Solidarity is Responsibility”. It is in difficult times like this we should stand up in solidarity and do what we can in our respective communities to promote peace and mutual understanding.



Forum in numbers

- ❖ 450 people registered for the event/170 attended
- ❖ 74 countries represented
- ❖ 30 religions/philosophical traditions



Outputs

- ❖ During the Forum, more than 170 young people engaged in one of the three breakout sessions: POLICY, ACTION and LOCAL CONTEXT. At the end of the Forum, participants came together again to report on key recommendations and next steps (see Appendix 1: Forum Program).
- ❖ In the ACTION breakout session young people discussed tools and techniques to build and sustain interfaith engagement in their communities and especially during UNWIHW.
- ❖ Shared the Interfaith Development Goals and how delegates and organisations can contribute towards a more collaborative effort in capturing the great work that happens in the interfaith sector.
- ❖ Young people connected with each other and as a result, some collaborations have been formed for future partnerships and events based on the region or theme.
- ❖ Several young people, including ACWAY fellows, presented their interfaith activities that were conducted during the UN WIHW in Zambia, Madagascar, Cameroon and Kenya.
- ❖ Young people were able to share key issues in their communities and put forward policy recommendations to be presented to the G20 Interfaith Forum in Italy later this year.
- ❖ Partners of the Forum: *The Stirling Foundation, We the World, The G20 Interfaith Forum, GenLab (Bangladesh), United Religions Initiative and the Parliament of the World's Religions*

Testimonials

“I think it was inspiring to see just how many other young people are interested in interfaith and intercultural work **and are implementing projects in their communities**. My main take home message from the Forum was therefore the power of young people working together. We need to continue to create space for these connections to be made”.

“My main take home message was to **get conscious about the damage of fake news**, which can affect even on intercultural or interreligious levels. Also, the idea that solidarity and responsibilities are inseparable”.

“The Forum actually impacted me with knowledge on how to respond to the challenges in my community and also gave me the motivation to keep promoting the United Nations Sustainable development goals by connecting me to local and international opportunities all over the world for networking. **The Forum enables me to grow mentally, spiritually and inspired me to act in my community**”.

“So wonderful to see so many of you! It was a great reminder of the strength that comes from joining together, even virtually. **I came away re-invigorated to keep working on interfaith projects**, and to reconnect with you all”.

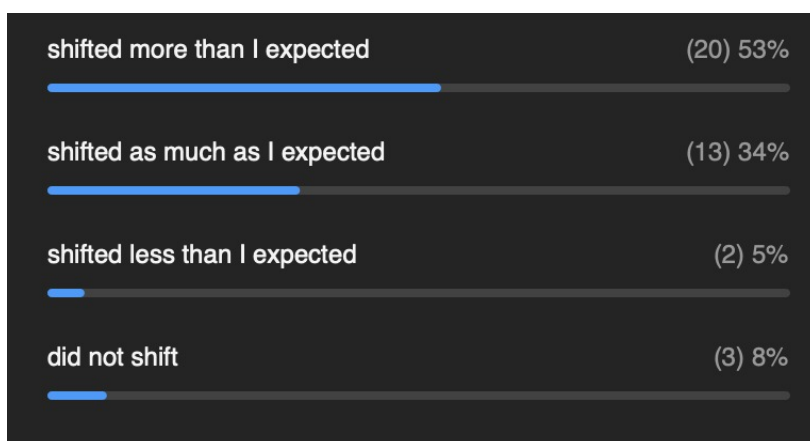
“**This was the most energizing online event I’ve ever attended**”.

“It was such a wonderful experience discussing and listening to great minds all over the world. It was quite **an enriching, interactive, informative and network building forum with community developers**. The G-20 presentation was so insightful and caught my attention with its goal of bringing together economic and political leaders of the world to brainstorm on the way forward for changes in these directions. I wish to applaud all the presenters for the marvelous presentations. I also wish to applaud the organizers for permitting participants to be so interactive and networking.

Evaluation

Out of 86 people who participated in evaluation:

- ❖ 82 people (94%) found this Forum useful/beneficial.
- ❖ 76 people (88%) stated that they felt they had the opportunity to share their ideas, questions, or comments in a safe space.
- ❖ 78 people (91%) stated that The Forum met their expectations.
- ❖ Results of the G20: Policy Breakout Room evaluation *“As a result of attending this breakout room, my perspective...”*:



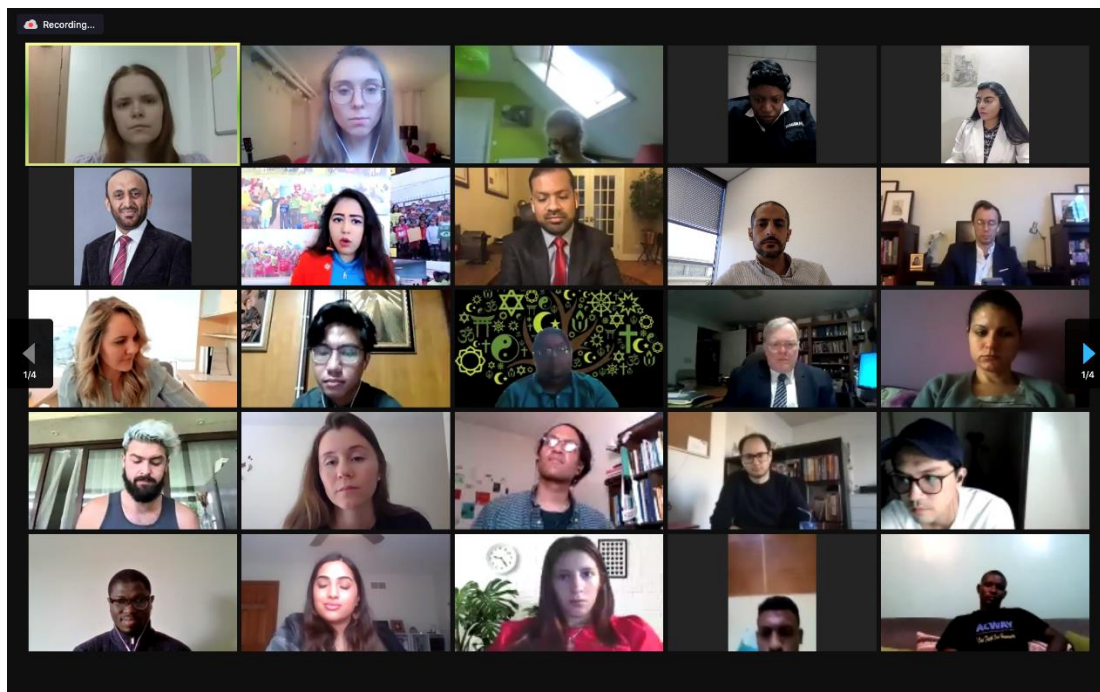
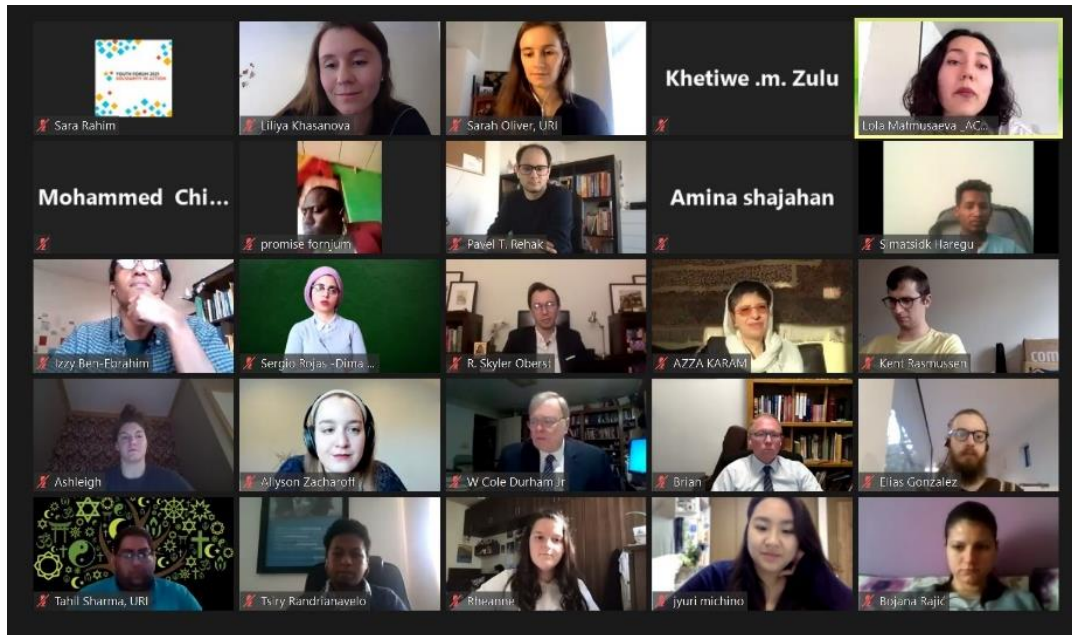
Media & Forum Coverage

- ❖ Social media posts about this Forum in conjunction with the UN World Interfaith Harmony Week have reached more than 26000 people, engaging more than 1000 online.
- ❖ Video teaser was made by young people on “What Does Solidary Mean to You and Your Community?”. Watch [here](#).
- ❖ Forum was highlighted on the websites, newsletter, blogs of interfaith organizations (URI, KAICIID) and Youth Organization





Solidarity in a New Virtual Reality (Selection of Forum Screenshots)

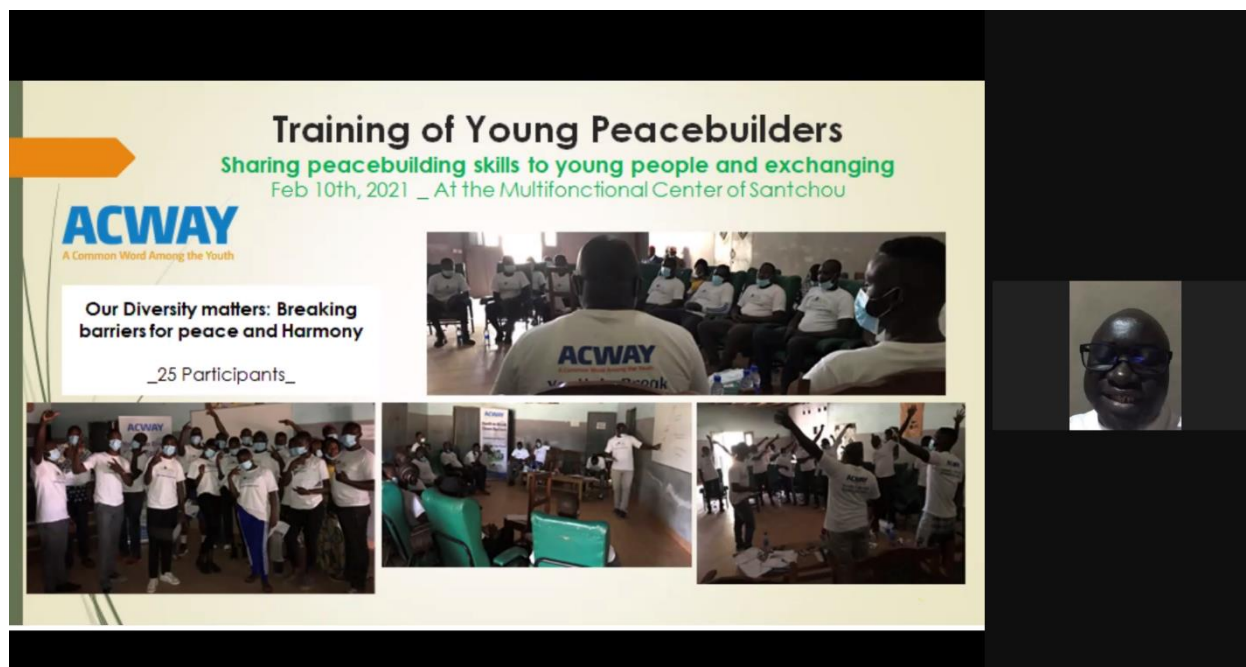




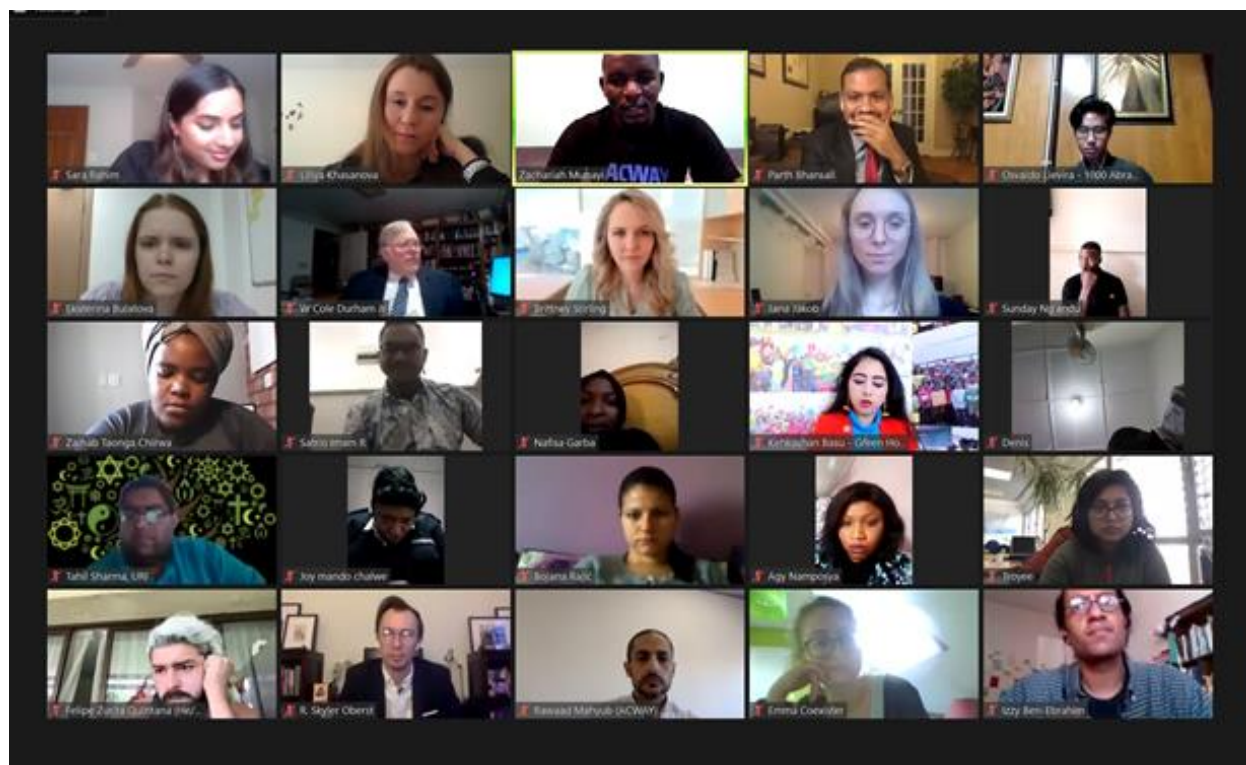
Prof. Azza Karam from Religions for Peace



Prof. Cole Durham, G20 Interfaith Forum



An interfaith activity presented by ACWAY Fellow Clement Awanfe from Cameroon



An interfaith activity presented by ACWAY fellow Zachariah Munayi from Kenya



Social media coverage

A Common Word A...

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Promote

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Promote Website

Enter phone number

Send Message

info@acway.org

Edit business hours

Charity Organization · Nonprofit Organization

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Are you interested in advancing the Unit...

You and 7 others
389 Views · a week ago

Page Transparency
See All

Facebook is showing information to help you

Comment as A Common Word Among the ...

A Common Word Among the Youth
Published by Rawaad Mahyub · January 25 ·

Registration is now live! Join ACWAY and hundreds of young people from around the world for the Youth Forum 2021: Solidarity in Action, in conjunction with UN World Interfaith Harmony Week. We are not able to convene in person, so we are bringing the Forum to you virtually.
To register, visit: <https://acway.org/acway-forum-5/>
Thursday, 25th February... See More

ACWAY.ORG
ACWAY – A Common Word Among the Youth
A global youth movement promoting peace and und...

Sign Up

26,039
People Reached

1,031
Engagements

Completed

People Reached
23K

Link Clicks
381

View Results



A Common Word Among the Youth (ACWAY) Retweeted

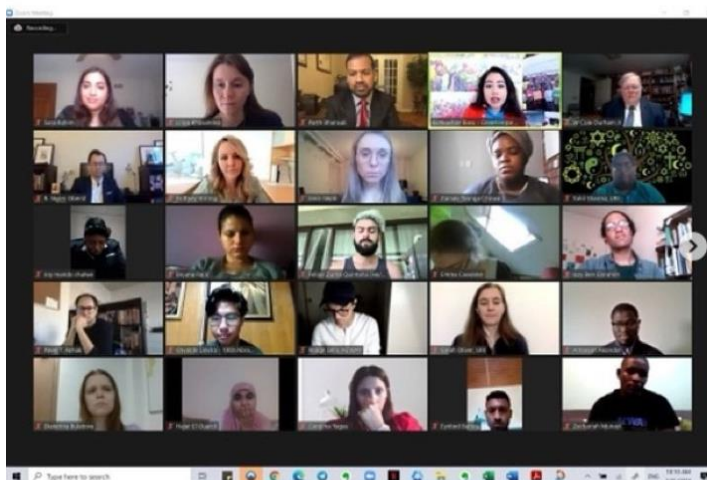


Friends of UNAOC @friendsunaoc · Feb 18

MT @ACWAYProject: Interested in learning how to adapt an interfaith event to your community?

Participate in a breakout room to hear from those who have contextualized #interfaith & #intercultural projects to fit their communities' needs.

REGISTER NOW AT
acway.org/acway-forum-5/



acwayofficial • Following



acwayofficial We are still buzzing from the success of our Youth Forum 2021: Solidarity in Action, which took place last week on 25 February, in conjunction with UN @wihweek. Our virtual event brought together a diverse and dynamic group of 170 young participants and panelists from 65 countries and 17 religious/philosophical traditions.

This Forum wouldn't have been as successful without the contributions from our partners: The Stirling Foundation, We the World, the G20 Interfaith Forum, @genlab.idea, @uriglobal, and @interfaithworld. We'll be sharing more highlights in the days to come - and are so grateful for all your support and



Liked by sawruhh and 21 others

13 HOURS AGO

Add a comment...

Appendix 1. Program of the Forum

13.00 – 13.25 Opening session	
<p>Izzy Ben-Ebrahim South Africa Spiritual Activist & Educator, ACWAY Fellow Sara Rahim USA Head of Programming, ACWAY</p> <p>Prof. W. Cole Durham, Jr. <i>G20 Interfaith Forum</i> <i>W. Cole Durham, Jr., is the immediate past President of the International Consortium for Law and Religion Studies (ICLARS), and Susa Young Gates University Professor of Law and Founding Director of the International Center for Law and Religion Studies (ICLRS), at the J. Reuben Clark Law School of Brigham Young University.</i></p> <p>Prof. Azza Karam <i>Religions for Peace</i> <i>Prof. Dr. Azza Karam serves as the Secretary General of Religions for Peace – the largest multi-religious leadership platform with 92 national and 6 regional Interreligious Councils. She served as a Senior Advisor on Culture, at the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA); and as Coordinator/Chair of the United Nations Inter-Agency Task Force on Religion and Development (UN IATF-R&D); and founder of the Multi Faith Advisory Council of the UN IATF-R&D.</i></p>	
<p>13:25 – 13:35 Local project presentations by ACWAY fellows (Grantees): Clement Awanfe Ngueto Cameroon Peace building Consultant Tsiry Randrianavelo Madagascar Founder at <u>Move Up Madagascar</u></p>	
13.35 – 14.45 Break Out Sessions	
<p>Group 1: Policy Recommendations for G20IF Italy</p>	<p><u>Description:</u></p> <p>The G20 is a forum that brings together the political and economic leadership of the twenty largest economies of the world to address global challenges and coordinate responses to them. In 2020, the forum was hosted virtually with the theme “Realizing Opportunities of the 21st Century for All.” This year’s theme is focused on “Time to Heal: Peace Among Cultures, Understanding between Religions.”</p> <p>The G20 Interfaith Forum (IF20) is a consultative process that seeks to weave interfaith insight and faith perspectives into practical policy recommendations to the G20. ACWAY has been a global youth partner of the G20 Interfaith Forums since 2016. Every year, ACWAY is focused</p>

	<p>on building concrete policy recommendations informed by challenges that young people (children, youth, and adults under the age of 40) are facing around the world.</p> <p>This breakout room will specifically focus on building discussion around specific challenges facing young people, and practical recommendations to address them. The takeaways from this specific room will then be integrated into a policy brief to be submitted to the next G20 Interfaith Forum, on behalf of the Children & Youth Working Group.</p> <p><u><i>Facilitators:</i></u></p> <p>Jana Jakob Sweden Project Coordinator Sara Rahim USA Head of Programming, ACWAY</p> <p><u><i>In Discussion with:</i></u></p> <p>Elizabeta Kitanovic Belgium G20 Interfaith Forum, Secretary Skyler Oberst USA Faith & Tech Specialist Parth Bhansali USA Head of Travel at Groupon</p>
<p>Group 2: Action planning with URI</p>	<p><u><i>Description:</i></u></p> <p>From ideation to evaluation, let's talk action! This breakout room seeks to take an action-based approach to discuss how young people can develop and implement their ideas into successful interfaith projects, including context-specific strategies, challenges, and lessons learned.</p> <p>We come from different contexts and backgrounds, where our work as interfaith and social justice activists has different political and social implications. Recognising this, what are the strategies and praxes that are useful to be shared with each other? How do we move between the local and global in our responses to social injustice?</p> <p>As young people we are expertly positioned to be navigating the current challenges of our world. We know our communities best, and therefore have the skills to be imagining and co-creating our desired futures. In this breakout session, we hope to create a space of inspiration, skills-sharing and learning. Join us! The breakout room will be run in collaboration with our partners and friends at URI – United Religions Initiative.</p> <p><u><i>Facilitators:</i></u></p> <p>Lola Matmusaeva Sweden International Development Professional</p>

	<p>Izzy Ben-Ebrahim South Africa Spiritual Activist & Educator <i>in Discussion with:</i></p> <p>Tahil Sharma USA United Religions Initiative Sarah Oliver South Africa United Religions Initiative</p>
Group 3: Local context with GenLab	<p><u>Description:</u></p> <p>Context matters. We hear that a lot and rightly so. The interfaith sector is diverse with many challenges and opportunities that differ from country to country and even within the country as well as within the same religion/faith/culture. The complexity of diversity is a strength in our community but how does it affect interfaith dialogue? What can we learn from each other at the local level about what works and what doesn't? Can we share examples of locally-led initiatives? This interactive session will explore the ACWAY IDGs, and how we can contribute to these at a local level with account for local context. The session will be led by our local partner GenLab based in Bangladesh.</p> <p><u>Facilitators:</u></p> <p>Ratul Dev Bangladesh Executive Director, GenLab Sneha Roy India/UK Researcher, ACWAY Fellow</p>
<p>14:45 - 15:30 Closing Ceremony</p>	
<p>14:45 – 14:50 Activities delivered during UN WIHW: Zachariah Munayi Kenya Gender & Youth Programme Specialist Maria K Daka Zambia Social Justice Activist</p>	
<p>14.50 – 15.30 Closing remarks & Announcements Brittney Stirling USA Program Manager, Stirling Foundation Kehkashan Basu Canada Founder, Green Hope Foundation</p> <p>Announcements:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How to contribute to the G20IF Youth Policy Brief and present at the Forum 2. Capturing impact of interfaith action using ACWAYs Interfaith Development Goals (IDGs) 3. Opportunities to apply for the next round of ACWAY's Activism Award grant to deliver activities during UN WIHW 2022 	



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