

ACWAY Report for:
UN World Interfaith Harmony Week

**Global Youth Interfaith and
Intercultural Forum**

Qatar 2023

Date submitted: 7 March 2023

Overview

On February 11-14 2023, and in the spirit of the UN World Interfaith Harmony Week, A Common Word Among the Youth (ACWAY) and the Doha Centre for Interfaith and Intercultural Dialogue (DICID) organized the **Global Youth Interfaith and Intercultural Forum**.

The Forum, lead and managed by young people, brought together 65 youth aged 18-35 from 42 nationalities and 35 countries, from different religions and cultures, to learn, to exchange ideas and plan local activities in their home countries.

At ACWAY our aim is to support a network of young leaders to deliver local grassroots activities that promote peaceful and harmonious societies between people of different faiths and cultures. We are pleased to have been participating in the UN WIHW since 2016, delivering local activities around the world under one common theme. This year we decided to organize a youth forum in celebration of the UN WIHW as we did in 2021.

Summary

Title and theme	Global Youth Interfaith and Intercultural Forum – Qatar 2023 Theme: Youth and Peacebuilding: Interfaith Dialogue from Theory to Practice
Under the auspices of	His Excellency Mr. Salah bin Ghanem Al-Ali, Minister of Sports and Youth of Qatar
Event website	www.acway.org
Occasion	In conjunction with the United Nations World Interfaith Harmony Week
Organizers	A Common Word Among Youth (ACWAY) and Doha International Center for Interfaith Dialogue (DICID) (See Appendix 2 for more information about the organisers)
Sustainability /continuation	This is the 7 th Forum ACWAY has organised and we have been taking part in WIHW since 2016.
Participants	65 Youth aged 18-35 from 42 nationalities and 35 countries with additional 15 guests and trainers
Collaborative partners	Participating organisations included: Locally: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1- Qatar Ministry of Youth and Sports. 2- Qatar University 3- Hamad Bin Khalifa University 5- Doha University of Science 6- Georgetown University 7- Qatar Scouts and Guides Association

	<p>International partners:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) The G20 Interfaith Forum 2) The Network for Religious and Traditional Peacemakers 3) The Stirling Foundation
Location	Qatar Scouts and Guides Association (Doha)
Dates	<p>11-14 February 2023</p> <p>(4 days excluding arrival and departure dates)</p>
Media links	<p>Selection of pictures:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1VrC7Nm_5r2ZbafLtZrJXIYJNMi1ptv85 2) https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/13xSoF4nl7NfUtlAixVgdztrQPAF6kTmm?usp=sharing <p>Video Introduction and promo: English [Link] and Arabic [Link]</p> <p>Youth reflections [Link]</p> <p>Academic reflections [Link]</p> <p>Qatar Daily News [Link]</p> <p>Media links:</p> <p>Doha to host global youth interfaith and intercultural forum next week, The Peninsula Qatar, 8 February 2023. [Link]</p> <p>Participants highlight Global Youth Interfaith and Intercultural Forum's role in promoting dialogue values, Qatar News Agency, 11 February 2023. [LINK]</p> <p>World Youth discuss ways to build peace at Doha meet, Gulf Times, 11 February 2023. [Link]</p> <p>Doha to host Global Youth Interfaith and Intercultural Forum, Qatar Tribune, 8 February 2023. [Link]</p> <p>World Youth Discuss Interfaith Dialogue, Peacebuilding In Forum In Doha, MENAFN, 11 February 2023. [Link]</p> <p>Reflections of some participants:</p> <p>Alaa Alsewid [Link]</p> <p>Jehangir Malik [Link]</p>

	<p>Hira Aftab [Link]</p> <p>Zubair Madni [Link]</p> <p>Barsa Ahmed [Link]</p> <p>Anojitha Sivaskaran [Link]</p> <p>Lucy Plummer [Link]</p> <p>Facebook official</p> <p>Instagram</p> <p>LinkedIn</p>
Forum Topics	<p>The program revolved around the following 3 key topics:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Peace through Interfaith understanding and intercultural communication 2) Contemporary Issues and Challenges: Faith and Culture, Civility and Religion 3) Youth Action, Collaboration and Global Citizenry <p>Number of Sessions: 11 interactive and engaging sessions</p> <p>Number of Workshops: 4 parallel world cafe style workshops.</p> <p>Sub-topics discussed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contemporary Issues and Challenges: Faith and Culture. • Religious Pluralism in the Middle East: Challenges and Prospects. • Conflict Resolution scenarios: Negotiating in Active and Passive Dialogue • Supporting a Unified Approach to Faith-based Peacebuilding: • Grassroot Action and Grasstop advocacy: Unpacking core challenges Faced by Youth of Faith • Project Planning for local interfaith activities • Breaking Bad Stereotypes: Dialoging for a contemporary context and navigating biases • Dialogue for a contemporary context Global Citizenship, Climate Change and Faith: A Lego Serious Play Exploration • Peace, Policy and Practice: The Role of Religion and Religious actors. • Policy formulation in interfaith work • From Diversity to Pluralism: Islam's Approach to Getting to Know the Other.
Outputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ A growing active network of young people engaged in the interfaith sector ❖ A series of planned activities which the young people will deliver back in their home countries ❖ Adoption of the Interfaith Development Goals by young people and partner organisations

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Youth recommendations to the G20IF India 2023 and beyond (Appendix 1) ❖ In the activity planning session young people discussed tools and techniques to build and sustain interfaith engagement in their communities. ❖ 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. ❖ Young people presented their previous interfaith activities and some shared planned activities for the next six months
Volunteer driven	ACWAY is an organization that is led and driven by a team of young volunteers who invested their time and energy to organize the interfaith forum for their peers.

Thank you to all the partners



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College of Islamic Studies

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HAMAD BIN KHALIFA UNIVERSITY



WORLD INTERFAITH HARMONY WEEK
The Official UN Observance in the 1st Week of February



Appendix 1: Policy recommendations

- 1) Emphasize the central role of youth and its significance in activating coexistence and dialogue, and in combating extremism, fanaticism and hatred of the other.
- 2) Increase efforts to support young people, discover their energies, and overcome difficulties and challenges that prevent them from taking the lead and participating in civil society, promoting world peace, social cohesion and serving humanity.
- 3) A call for collaboration among international and civil society organizations and other educational and research institutions to create more opportunities for young people, and a study of current conditions and challenges facing young people.
- 4) Call on the competent authorities to open the doors to integration, dialogue and coexistence for young people belonging to minorities and to demand their right to societal participation as an essential component of citizenship in its various dimensions.
- 5) The need to involve young people in all international events and activities related to interreligious dialogue and to find compelling incentives to do so.
- 6) Call for the launch of media initiatives to engage with youth on issues of religious and cultural dialogue and to educate young people through social media about their role in combating the phenomena of hate speech and religious fanaticism.
- 7) The development of curricula that promotes a culture of dialogue, diversity, cooperation, love, and peace among adherents of different religions and cultures.
- 8) Participating youth agreed to carry out a local interfaith project in their country after the forum.

Appendix 2: Information about the organisers

ACWAY

A Common Word Among the Youth (ACWAY) is a global youth movement that brings together young people from a multitude of backgrounds to increase understanding of different cultures and faiths and promote peace and coexistence by delivering local interfaith and intercultural grassroots activities. The youth movement aims to develop an international network of active young people who are committed to enhancing interfaith and intercultural dialogue such that they become agents of change in their communities.

ACWAY launched its first annual interfaith & intercultural forum in December 2015 in Rabat, Morocco in response to the growing misrepresentation and misinterpretation of different religions and cultures. The aim of the forum was to promote harmony and understanding locally and to foster coexistence between intercultural and interfaith communities around the globe.

Since the launch, ACWAY fellows have delivered over 200 interfaith/intercultural activities and projects, in 95 countries, ranging from educational seminars to peace walks, national conferences and media campaigns.

ACWAY participates every year in the UN World Interfaith Harmony Week, where youth fellows join the celebration by delivering local activities under one global theme. For example, in the space of four weeks, fifteen local activities were conducted in ten countries with over 1300 participants and 22 partners (www.acway.org).

ACWAY organizes international youth forums to support young people in delivering local interfaith/intercultural activities and further enhance interfaith and intercultural understanding. The movement successfully held annual forums in Rabat, Morocco (2015); Brisbane, Australia (2016); Khartoum, Sudan (2017); Baku, Azerbaijan (2019); an Online Forum (February 2021) and Bologna, Italy (September 2021).

ACWAY is the Global Youth Partner to the G20 Interfaith Forum and chairs the IFG20 Youth Working Group.

DICID

Doha International Center for Interfaith Dialogue (DICID) is a Qatar-based institution dedicated to interfaith dialogue, intercultural cooperation, and capacity building.

The State of Qatar, represented in DICID, believes that the process of nation-building is based on cooperation and respect among the various components of society to ensure social harmony and constructive interaction among different faiths, cultures, and races both, locally and globally. Qatar thus plays a leading role in rapprochement, multiculturalism and advocacy for peace and strives to realize these values throughout the world.

Qatar is a country that stands for religious, cultural and ethnic diversity. In due course Qatar fully supported the principle of dialogue between the followers of revealed religions. As a result of that, the first interfaith conference in Doha was held in 2003 under the kind guidance of His Highness the Father Emir, Sheikh Hamad Ben Khalifa Al-Thani. Since then, an idea to held annual conference between the followers of the three monotheistic religions, namely, Islam, Christianity and Judaism, was established with the aim of creating a constructive dialogue among the followers of these religions and to bring about better understanding of principles and teachings these religions convey for benefit and servitude of all humanity.

Having established all necessary foundation within the government policy towards interfaith dialogue, Doha International Center for Interfaith Dialogue was founded in May 2007 with its Qatari board of directors and an international advisory board, including scholars from the three monotheistic religions.

The Center (DICID) since then has identified various means to achieve its goals. The most important of these are annual conferences, roundtable discussions for local communities, and training courses for youth, teachers, women, social activists, and others, both in Qatar and abroad. To achieve its goals, DICID also promotes publications that contribute to peace-building, and dialogue, creating an environment of acceptance and shaping a balanced and moderate mindset that recognizes pluralism and works to improve coexistence. These publications can be found in ADYAN's peer-reviewed journal "Religions," the regular newsletter, translations, and selected papers.

In June 2010, the Amiri Decree No. 20 approved the establishment of Doha International Center for Interfaith Dialogue to support and promote the culture of interfaith dialogue, and peaceful coexistence among religious adherents, as well as the activation of religious values to solve issues and problems affecting humanity.

The decision to establish the center was warmly welcomed by religious scholars, researchers and academics interested in dialogue and cooperation among different religions, civilizations and cultures. It would help create an environment of peace and justice, and reduce existing tensions, ignorance, and infiltration of extremists who foment hatred among people.

Information about DICID can be found at the following link:

http://www.dicid.org/about_us_dicid/?lang=en

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