

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

# CULTURE MATTERS

Lessons from a Legacy of Engaging Faith-based Organizations



**United Nations Population Fund**  
220 East 42nd Street  
New York, New York 10017  
[www.unfpa.org](http://www.unfpa.org)

ISBN 978-0-89714-894-8  
E/1,000/2008



# Culture Matters

Lessons from a Legacy of Engaging Faith-based Organizations



# Contents

Foreword .....	4
Glossary of Terms.....	7
Executive Summary.....	9
<b>I. Introduction—Background, Climate and Tools .....</b>	<b>12</b>
Learning from a Legacy.....	12
Box 1. Faith-based Organizations — UNFPA Typology .....	14
Objectives, Assumptions and Challenges .....	15
Objectives .....	15
Assumptions.....	15
Box 2. Definitions: Religion and Culture.....	16
Challenges.....	17
The Culture Lens.....	17
The Climate of Engagement—the United Nations and Faith-based Organizations .....	17
Box 3. The Culture Lens .....	18
Box 4. UNGA Resolutions Mentioning Religion .....	20
The Alliance of Civilizations (AoC) .....	20
Box 5. Conventions and Declarations .....	21
United Nations Programme on AIDS (UNAIDS) .....	22
The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) ...	23
The United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF).....	24
The United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN/DESA) .....	24
<b>II. Highlights of Ongoing Commitments by UNFPA .....</b>	<b>25</b>
A. The Civil Society Hearing on Interreligious and Intercultural Understanding and Cooperation for Peace.....	25
B. The Launch of the Women, Faith and Development Alliance (WFDA).....	26
C. Trainings on Culturally Sensitive Programming .....	27
D. Consolidating UNFPA-FBO Partnerships in 2008 and Beyond: Convening and Launching Regional and Global Interfaith Networks on Population and Development .....	27
<b>III. Mapping UNFPA and FBO Partnerships in the Field .....</b>	<b>29</b>
Sources and Methodology .....	29
Africa Overview .....	30
Table 1: At a Glance: UNFPA-FBO Partnerships in Africa.....	32
Africa Insights .....	33
Arab States, Eastern Europe and Central Asia Overview .....	42
Table 2: At a Glance: UNFPA-FBO Partnerships in the Arab States, Eastern Europe and Central Asia .....	44

Arab States, Eastern Europe and Central Asia Insights .....	45
Asia and the Pacific Overview .....	52
Table 3: At a Glance: UNFPA-FBO Partnerships in Asia and the Pacific.....	53
Asia and the Pacific Insights .....	54
Latin America and the Caribbean Overview .....	66
Table 4: At a Glance: UNFPA-FBO Partnerships in Latin America and the Caribbean.....	67
Latin America and the Caribbean Insights.....	68
<b>IV. Epilogue: Policy Considerations for Engaging Agents of Change.....</b>	<b>76</b>
<b>V. Select Further Reading, Resources and References .....</b>	<b>79</b>
Overview and Magazine Articles.....	80
Books and Reports.....	82
Case Studies .....	92
United Nations Initiatives, Conferences and Programmes.....	95
Reviewed Articles .....	98
Toolkits .....	101
Appendix A. Matrix of Case Studies .....	103

# 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 control<sup>1</sup>.”

---

<sup>1</sup> 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

预览已结束，完整报告链接和二维码

<https://www.yunbaogao.cn/report/index/report?reportId=>