

ELEVATING HOPE

हृषी

Ελπίδα

Hope

Chiyembekezo

BERHARAP

Spesanza

आशा

희망

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Esperanza

harapan

希望

ithemba

tumaini

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Esperança

أمل

hoffnung

Esuubi

надежда

आशा

Espérance

اميد

תקווה

Nadzieja

UMUT

Naděje

Hoop



UNITED RELIGIONS
INITIATIVE

People

of diverse religions
spiritual expressions
indigenous traditions

in Action

As the world is stunned by senseless acts of violence, our URI community elevates hope as it takes on the challenge to heal wounds, bring diverse communities of people together for humanitarian action, and strengthen the foundations for lasting peace.

Our Charter begins, “We people of diverse religions, spiritual expressions, and Indigenous traditions throughout the world...”. The **We** of URI is a diverse people. **We** are people of all traditions, all beliefs, all nationalities, all races, all genders, all sexualities, and all ages. **We** stand together against the forces of violence, extremism, oppression, and prejudice. Our way is a way of respecting the uniqueness of each other’s lives and traditions, and of working together for the good of our communities and the world.

In the face of violence, we unite for peace. This is the power of **We**.

Kiran Bali, MBE JP
URI Global Council Chairperson

The Reverend Victor H. Kazanjian, Jr.
URI Executive Director

The Right Reverend William E. Swing
URI President and Founder

Honoring Interfaith Heroes



RITA SEMEL
Jewish, United States

Rita has served URI since the 1990s – initially in partnership with Bishop Swing, then as the first Global Council Chair, now as a member of several URI committees. Her interfaith work has inspired generations of people to follow in her footsteps.



**FATHER TERESITO
“CHITO” SUGANOB**
Catholic, The Philippines

Longtime leader of one of URI’s Cooperation Circles, Father Chito works across religious and cultural boundaries to heal deep wounds of conflict and improve socio-economic conditions in the Mindanao region.



**WILLIAM “BILL” K. BOWES,
JR. (IN MEMORIAM)**
Episcopalian, United States

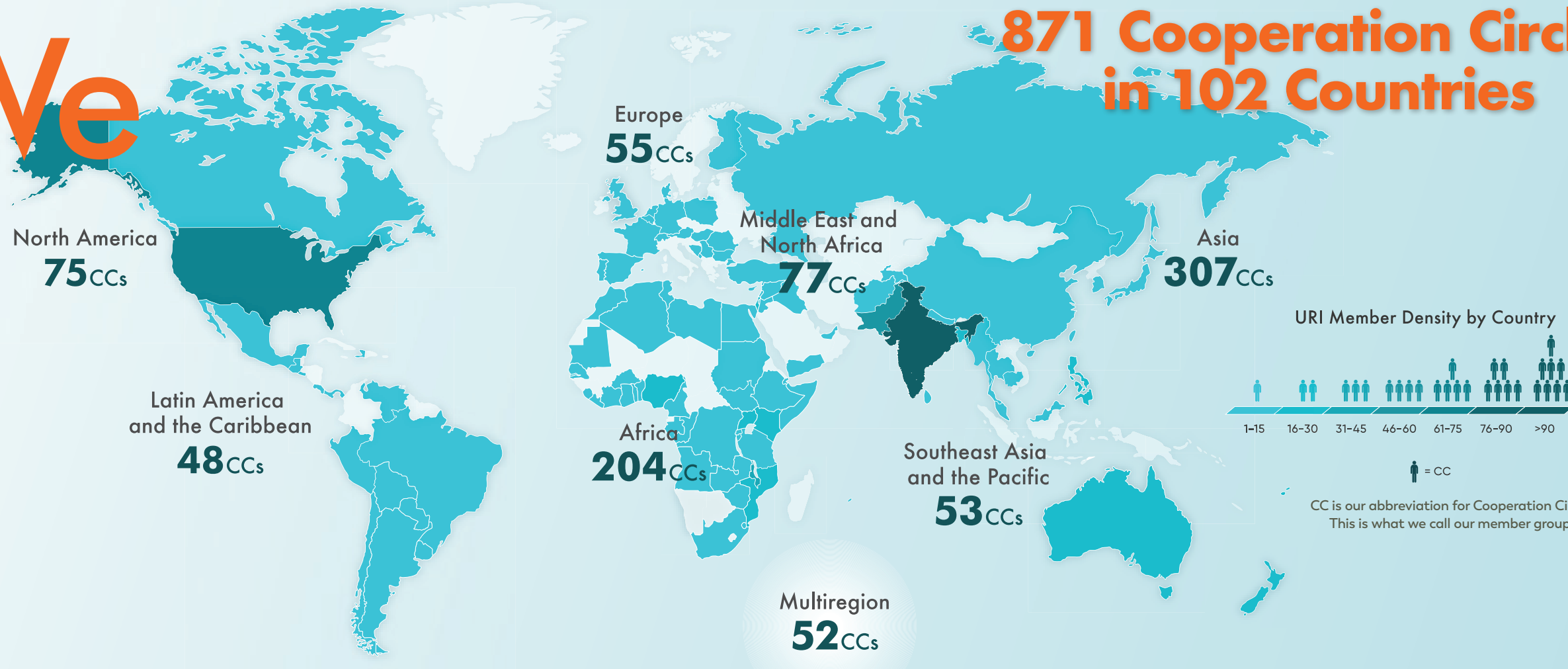
Beloved member of the President’s Council and pioneer URI philanthropist, Bill’s forward-looking vision and generous financial backing helped grow URI’s global interfaith network to what it is today.

The Power of We

871 Cooperation Circles in 102 Countries

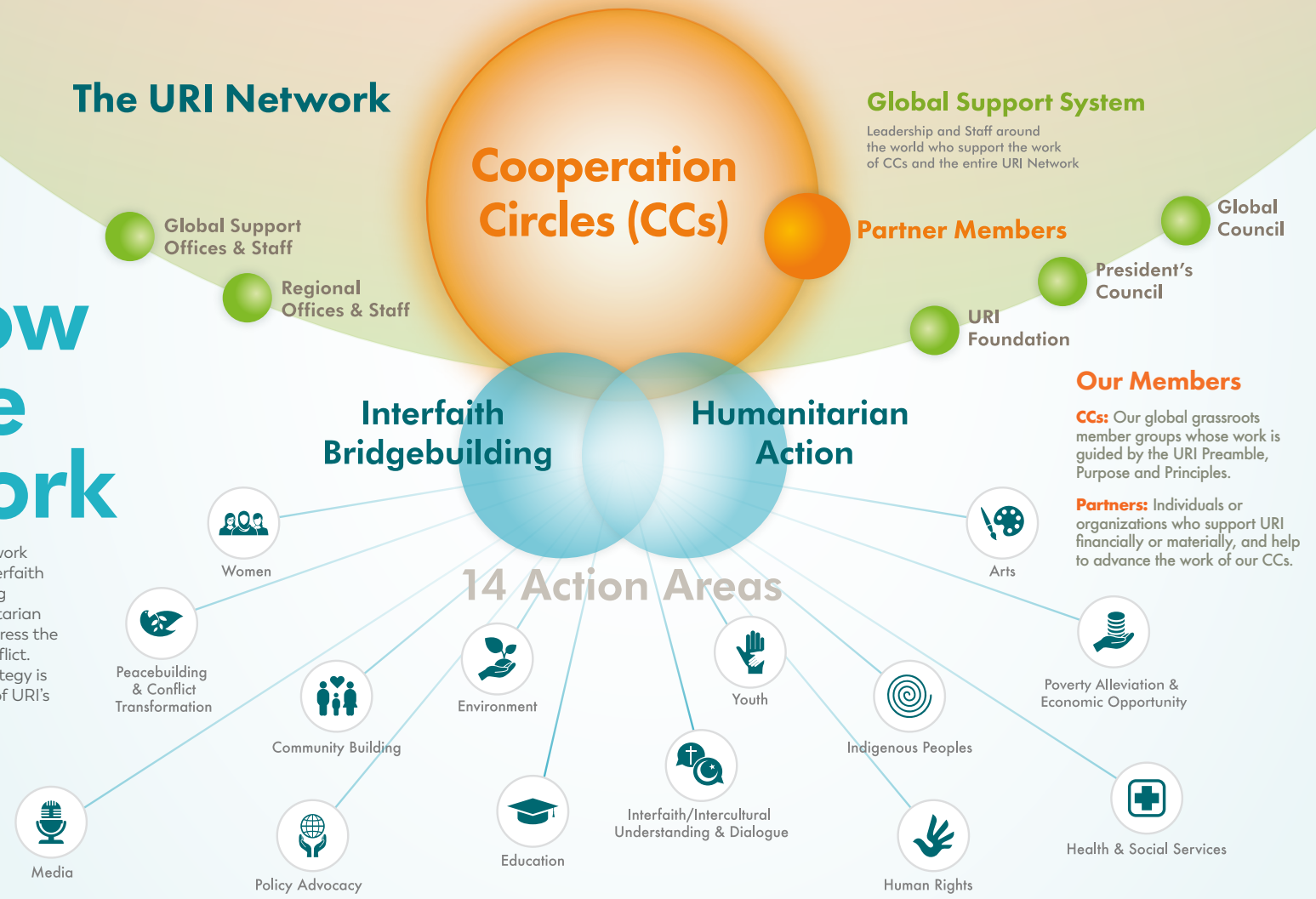
Along with hundreds of thousands of partners and volunteers, our membership is guided and supported by a Global Support System that includes leadership and staff based in 34 countries:

- 29 Global Council Trustees
- 19 Global Office Staff
- 17 Regional Coordinators
- 49 Additional Regional Staff



How We Work

The URI Network combines Interfaith Bridgebuilding with Humanitarian Action to address the causes of conflict. This dual strategy is at the heart of URI's success.



URI and the UN

Since the 1995 United Nations (UN) anniversary celebration that sparked the idea for a "United Religions," URI has grown in parallel with the UN. We hold the prestigious distinction of being a Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) with consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council. We also have long-standing partnerships with several other UN agencies.

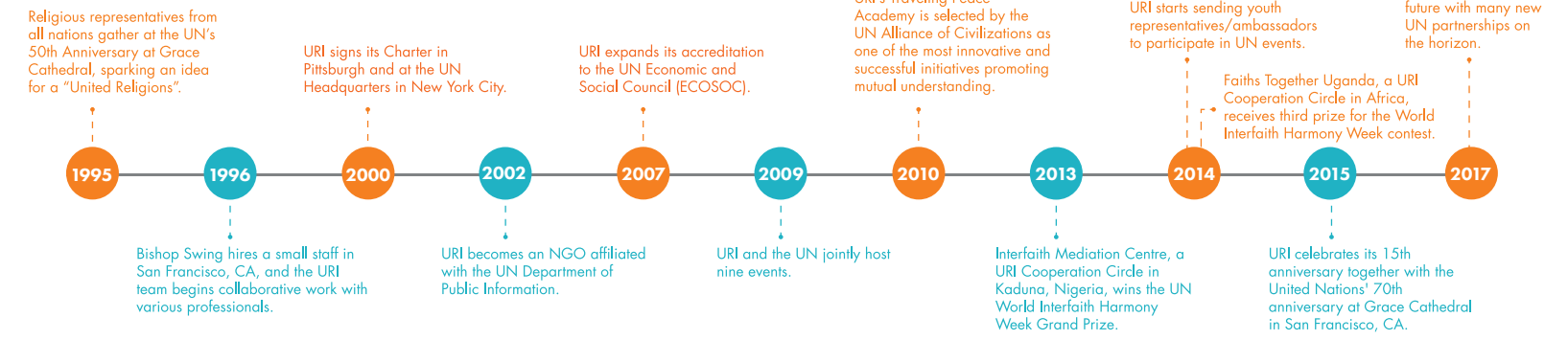
Every year, hundreds of our Cooperation Circles around the world celebrate the **UN International Day of Peace** and **UN World Interfaith Harmony Week**. Two of our member groups have even been honored with highly competitive prizes.

Our UN representatives provide an ongoing presence at the UN in New York City and Nairobi. URI thought leaders have spoken at UN Assemblies on topics like nuclear disarmament, sustainability, and women's rights. We also send a yearly delegation of youth representatives to participate in UN events at the New York City headquarters.



URI Representative to the UN Monica Willard and URI Executive Director Victor Kazanjian with UN colleagues at the UN's 70th Anniversary Celebration.

A Long History



Global Partnerships

We are excited to announce a powerful new partnership with **Women's Earth Alliance (WEA)** to create The Ripple Academy, which will unleash a global cadre of women leaders allied to forge and amplify solutions for peace, justice, and environmental healing in communities around the world. The Ripple Academy will bring together the best of URI's and WEA's grassroots leadership models, offering a coordinated training experience to equip leading change-makers with the skills, tools, and alliances they need to build bridges of cooperation and environmental solutions for generations to come. Expect to see projects like women's clean cookstove microenterprises in Kenya, community seed banks in Egypt, sanitation efforts in India, or the preservation of water rights in Jordan, Israel, and Palestine.



Global Communications

Our global grassroots organization is always looking for better ways to elevate the work of our members and to foster strong connections.

Here are just a few ways we help bring our worldwide network a little closer together with:

- ★ Our newly redesigned **website** will be an even more effective platform for raising our members' voices on a global level. The new streamlined design will allow easier navigation and access to our Cooperation Circles, as well as our network's wealth of peacebuilding stories and resources.
- ★ Our new constituent relationship management platform, powered by **Salesforce**, will not only be fully integrated with our new website, but it will also act as a tool for impact assessment, allowing our leadership teams to direct their energy and resources more effectively.
- ★ Using **Zoom**, a web conferencing service, we are now able to connect participants face-to-face across the planet for all of our global meetings. This new technology also offers greater capacity to conduct webinars and virtual breakout sessions.
- ★ Our **social media channels** are more active than ever. Join URI community conversations online on Facebook (unitedreligionsinitiative), Twitter (uriglobal), YouTube (uriglobal), and our newest channel, Instagram (uriglobal).





Highlighting Impact

from our global membership



MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA — EcoPeace Middle East CC gathers Israeli, Palestinian and Jordanian government representatives to set aside their differences and join their voices in one clear call to clean up the polluted Lower Jordan River.

Bridging Rivers that Divide

Our members work at every level, from influencing policymakers to providing training at the grassroots, to building peace, healing existing tensions, and preventing new conflicts.

HIGHLIGHTING IMPACT:

- ▶ After an increase in anti-Muslim hate crimes in California, USA, the **Interfaith Council of Contra Costa County CC** co-sponsored a “Ring of Solidarity” where over 150 people joined hands around a mosque to show community support for their Muslim neighbors.
- ▶ In Africa, **Shalom Ghana CC** ended a 10-year feud between Christians and Muslims by getting youth from both sides to plant trees the village badly needed.

256
Cooperation
Circles

25
Countries



**Peacebuilding
& Conflict
Transformation**



ECOPEACE MIDDLE EAST CC - FAITHS/TRADITIONS:
CHRISTIAN, MUSLIM, JEWISH, NONTHEIST



Uniting to Protect the Environment

By uniting to address threats to our shared ecosystem, we can find literal common ground, since every member of all traditions depends on necessities like clean water to survive.

HIGHLIGHTING IMPACT:

► In Cambodia, **Interfaith Peace Building on Natural Resources Management CC** uses religious teachings and practices to promote ecological efforts like reforestation and native species planting in ecologically-sensitive areas.

► **Rio Inter-Religious Movement CC** in Brazil gathered URI CCs, religious leaders, and expert voices in a “Faith in the Climate” initiative that publicly called upon government leaders to take strong action on climate change.

218
Cooperation
Circles

45
Countries



Environment



Bringing Aid to People in Need

Our members work hard to improve the health of people in communities all over the world, giving them the chance to lead full and meaningful lives.

HIGHLIGHTING IMPACT:

► When Sri Lanka was hit by the most devastating flood in over a decade, **Sarvodaya Shanthi Sena CC** coordinated relief services to distribute food, clothes, drinking water, and medicine.

► **A Better Community for All Pakistan CC** organizes free medical care for rural families who can't afford doctors, distributing medicine and connecting patients with free hospital stays when necessary.

181
Cooperation
Circles

39
Countries



Health and Social
Services

AFRICA — **Blantyre CC** coordinated 50 young people of all backgrounds to clean polluted areas so the community could live in healthier surroundings, restoring sanitary conditions to the Bangwe township in Southern Malawi.



BLANTYRE CC - FAITHS/TRADITIONS:
MUSLIM, CHRISTIAN: ANGLICAN, CHRISTIAN: BAPTIST, CHRISTIAN:
PRESBYTERIAN, CHRISTIAN: ROMAN CATHOLIC, CHRISTIAN: EVANGELICAL

ASIA — Professional dentists from **Drishti Foundation Trust CC**, in New Delhi, India, donated time and supplies to provide dental care and teach kids about oral hygiene.



DRISHTI FOUNDATION TRUST CC - FAITHS/TRADITIONS:
HINDU, JAIN, MUSLIM, CHRISTIAN



Standing with Indigenous Peoples

Indigenous voices are essential within URI's membership. We act to protect Indigenous peoples' right to thrive while honoring their traditions.

HIGHLIGHTING IMPACT:

- ▶ **Comunidad Cosmica CC**, in Buenos Aires, Argentina, preserves Indigenous cultures' rich oral histories by publishing written stories that would otherwise be lost.
- ▶ **1God CC**, in Clayton, Victoria, Australia, leads a movement to return excavated Aboriginal human remains for dignified burial in accordance with Aboriginal traditions.

106
Cooperation
Circles

31
Countries



Indigenous
Peoples



Beyond Language, Teaching Communities

Harmful stereotypes are usually rooted in ignorance, and the desperation of poverty often fuels tensions between groups. Our members educate people on cultural and religious differences to create safer, more peaceful communities.

HIGHLIGHTING IMPACT:

- ▶ In Bosnia and Herzegovina, **Youth for Peace CC's** summer school brought together young people from different backgrounds through volunteering efforts like painting houses and repairing old cemeteries.
- ▶ In the Great Lakes region in Africa, **Busoga CC** members teach families the importance of sending daughters to school along with their brothers.

58
Cooperation
Circles

25
Countries



Education

MULTIREGION AND NORTH AMERICA — On the invitation of Chief Arvol Looking Horse of **Protecting and Restoring the Sacred CC**, a URI delegation presented the Standing Rock tribal elders with more than 1000 messages of support from our global network during the Interfaith Day of Prayer at the reservation.



PROTECTING AND RESTORING THE SACRED CC - FAITHS/TRADITIONS:
INDIGENOUS, UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST, SPIRITUAL, CHRISTIAN, MUSLIM, SIKH, JEWISH, HINDU, NONTHEIST

SOUTHEAST ASIA AND THE PACIFIC — **Cultural Infusion CC** educates young Australians by using cultural and artistic expression to promote social cohesion.



CULTURAL INFUSION CC - FAITHS/TRADITIONS:
CHRISTIAN: GREEK ORTHODOX, CHRISTIAN: CATHOLIC, SIKH, HINDU, MUSLIM, BUDDHIST



NORTH AMERICA — SunDABT CC, a university student group, creates safe spaces for people to ask respectful questions about other religions by holding signs that read, “Meet a Muslim,” “Meet a Christian,” etc.

Young Leaders Show the Way

We prize a diversity of ages in leadership positions worldwide. Our members work towards equity and fair representation in intergenerational peacebuilding.

HIGHLIGHTING IMPACT:

- ▶ In Korea, young peacemakers from around the world gather annually at a **URI youth camp**, which provides scholarships to encourage learning and action.
- ▶ **Youth of Peace CC** in Yemen helps youth find their voice amidst a country torn apart by war - training them to produce their own documentary films promoting tolerance, respect, and religious freedom.

391
Cooperation
Circles

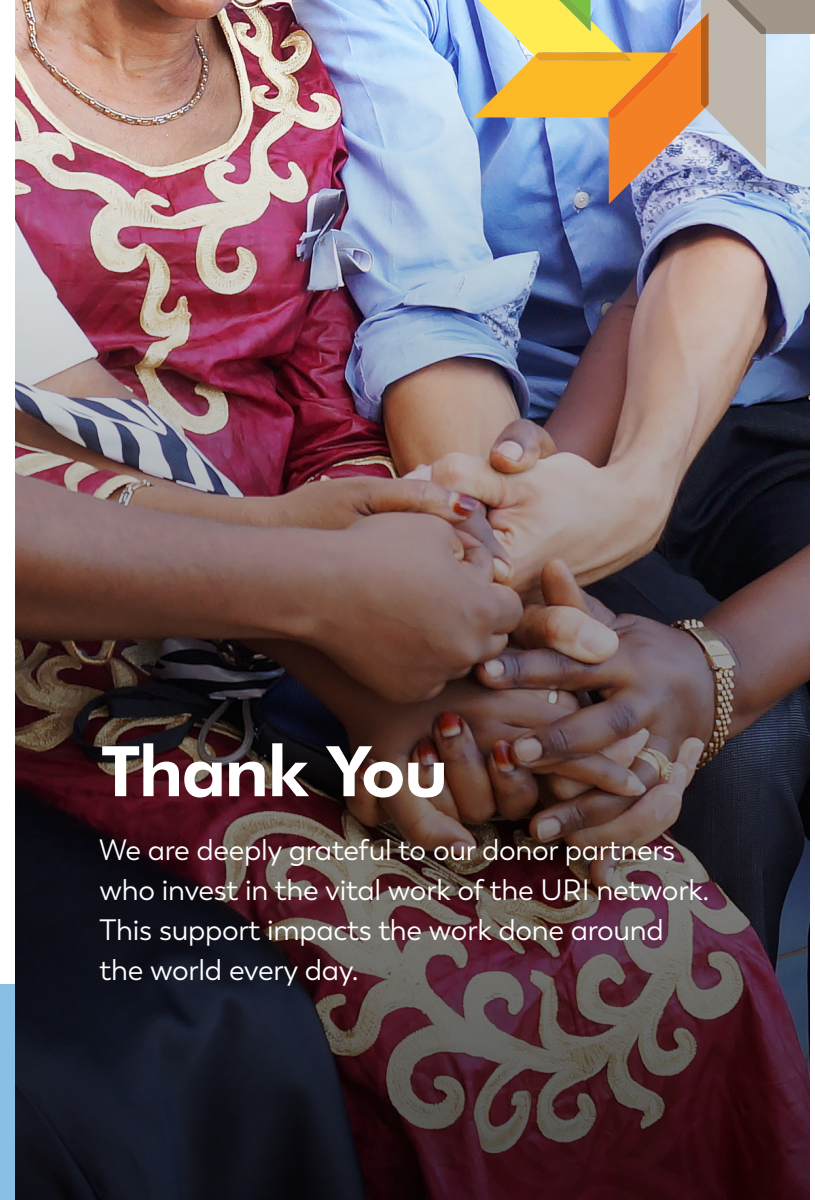
65
Countries



Youth



SUNDABT CC - FAITHS/TRADITIONS:
ATHEIST, CHRISTIAN, MUSLIM, JEWISH, PAGAN, BUDDHIST, AGNOSTIC, SIKH, CHRISTIAN: CATHOLIC, CHRISTIAN: CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER DAY SAINTS



Thank You

We are deeply grateful to our donor partners who invest in the vital work of the URI network. This support impacts the work done around the world every day.

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build a peaceful world, one community at a time.”**

— Enoé Texier, Regional Coordinator, Latin America and the Caribbean

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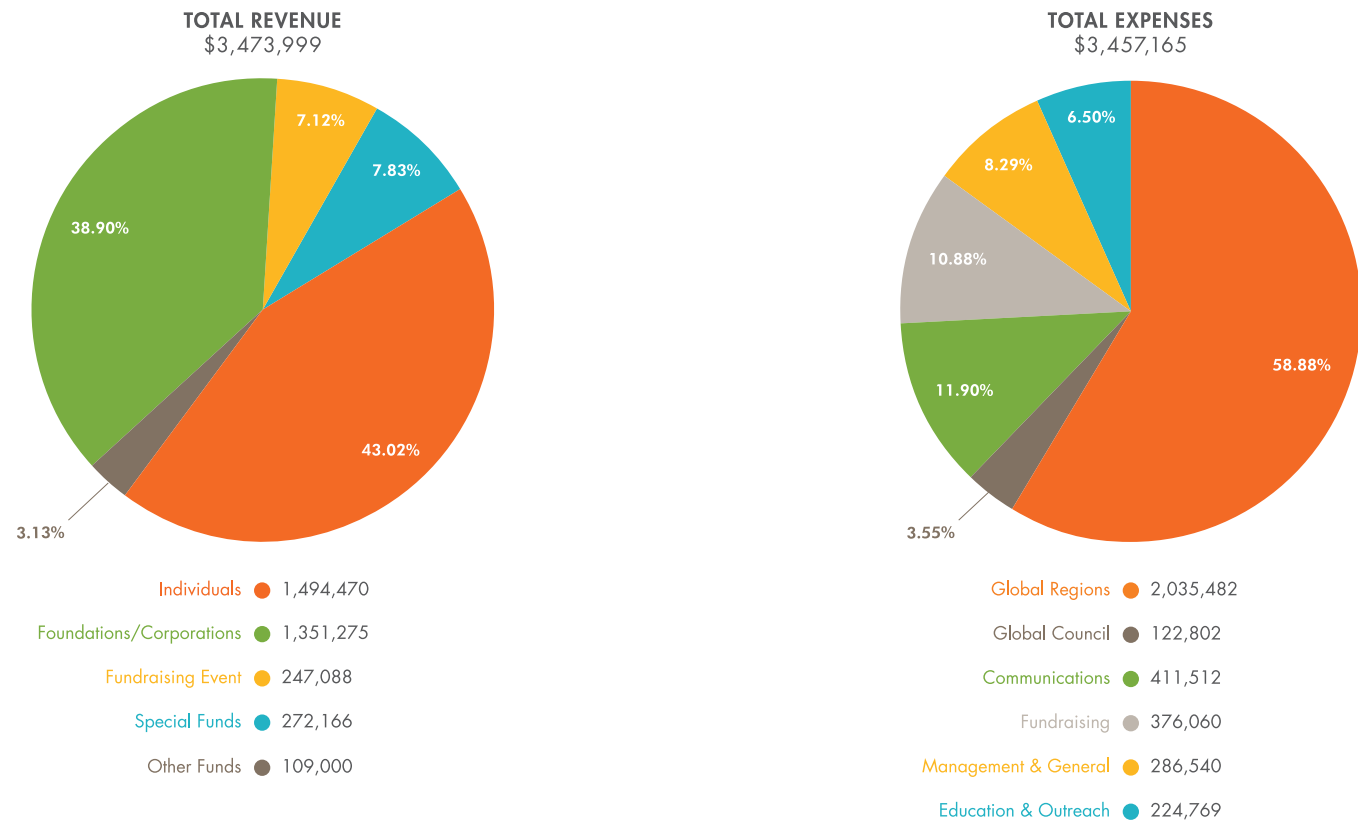
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Our Efficiency

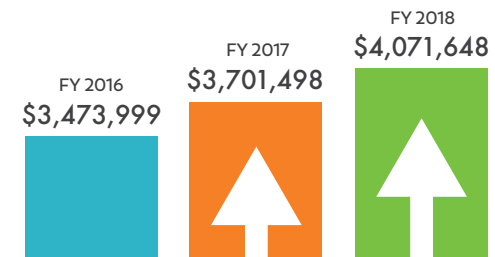
Our organizational efficiency shows. We have the highest rating (4 stars) on Charity Navigator.



For the year ended December 31, 2016 (unaudited) — copies of the latest audit are available upon request

Now More Than Ever

Your investment in URI elevates hope, and impacts communities around the world. Every contribution matters. Goals for 2017 and 2018 have been set, and we can reach them with your help:



☀️ Increase revenue by 10% each year.

☀️ Expand donor partner support both nationally and globally.

You can be the catalyst in enabling URI to further its organizational growth to respond to peacebuilding needs around world.

Ways to Contribute

Monthly Giving Circle

Increase your donation and contribute it in installments.

Multi-Year Giving

Pledge your annual contribution for several years.

Connect to Foundations

Help us connect with likeminded foundation giving opportunities.

Matching Gift

Include your employer's matching gift program with your contribution.

Legacy Circle Giving

Consider including URI in your estate plans and inform us about it.

Endowment

Contact us with an interest in supporting URI with a significant gift.

Host an Event

Introduce friends and colleagues to help us raise awareness.

Become an Influencer

Spread the word through social media, your friends and colleagues.

What We Believe

PREAMBLE

We, people of diverse religions, spiritual expressions and indigenous traditions throughout the world, hereby establish the United Religions Initiative to promote enduring, daily interfaith cooperation, to end religiously motivated violence and to create cultures of peace, justice and healing for the Earth and all living beings.

We respect the uniqueness of each tradition, and differences of practice or belief.

We value voices that respect others, and believe that sharing our values and wisdom can lead us to act for the good of all.

We believe that our religious, spiritual lives, rather than dividing us, guide us to build community and respect for one another.

Therefore, as interdependent people rooted in our traditions, we now unite for the benefit of our Earth community.

We unite to build cultures of peace and justice.

We unite to heal and protect the Earth.

We unite to build safe places for conflict resolution, healing and reconciliation.

We unite to support freedom of religion and spiritual expression, and the rights of all individuals and peoples as set forth in international law.

We unite in responsible cooperative action to bring the wisdom and values of our religions, spiritual expressions and indigenous traditions to bear on the economic, environmental, political and social challenges facing our Earth community.

We unite to provide a global opportunity for participation by all people, especially by those whose voices are not often heard.

We unite to celebrate the joy of blessings and the light of wisdom in both movement and stillness.

We unite to use our combined resources only for nonviolent, compassionate action, to awaken to our deepest truths, and to manifest love and justice among all life in our Earth community.

PRINCIPLES

1. The URI is a bridge-building organization, not a religion.
2. We respect the sacred wisdom of each religion, spiritual expression and indigenous tradition.
3. We respect the differences among religions, spiritual expressions and indigenous traditions.
4. We encourage our members to deepen their roots in their own tradition.
5. We listen and speak with respect to deepen mutual understanding and trust.

PURPOSE

The purpose of the United Religions Initiative is to promote enduring, daily interfaith cooperation, to end religiously motivated violence and to create cultures of peace, justice and healing for the Earth and all living beings.

6. We give and receive hospitality.
7. We seek and welcome the gift of diversity and model practices that do not discriminate.
8. We practice equitable participation of women and men in all aspects of the URI.
9. We practice healing and reconciliation to resolve conflict without resorting to violence.

10. We act from sound ecological practices to protect and preserve the Earth for both present and future generations.

11. We seek and offer cooperation with other interfaith efforts.

12. We welcome as members all individuals, organizations and associations who subscribe to the Preamble, Purpose and Principles.

13. We have the authority to make decisions at the most local level that includes all the relevant and affected parties.

14. We have the right to organize in any manner, at any scale, in any area, and around any issue or activity which is relevant to and consistent with the Preamble, Purpose and Principles.

15. Our deliberations and decisions shall be made at every level by bodies and methods that fairly represent the diversity of affected interests and are not dominated by any.

16. We (each part of the URI) shall relinquish only such autonomy and resources as are essential to the pursuit of the Preamble, Purpose and Principles.

17. We have the responsibility to develop financial and other resources to meet the needs of our part, and to share financial and other resources to help meet the needs of other parts.

18. We maintain the highest standards of integrity and ethical conduct, prudent use of resources, and fair and accurate disclosure of information.

19. We are committed to organizational learning and adaptation.

20. We honor the richness and diversity of all languages and the right and responsibility of participants to translate and interpret the Charter, Articles, Bylaws and related documents in accordance with the Preamble, Purpose and Principles, and the spirit of the United Religions Initiative.

21. Members of the URI shall not be coerced to participate in any ritual or be proselytized.

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URI is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization which relies on individual contributions to further its global efforts.