

Shared Futures

ADVANCING PEACE, SOCIAL COHESION, AND ECONOMIC GROWTH THROUGH INTERFAITH ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN FRAGILE CONTEXTS

The European Union's commitment to sustainable growth, social cohesion, and peace in fragile regions drives its development policy. To meet these goals, the EU must adopt innovative, community-focused approaches addressing the root causes of instability and marginalization.

The Shared Futures methodology, led by Kerk in Actie, advances these objectives by fostering interfaith cooperation, entrepreneurship, and community-led change. It builds resilient communities through dialogue, mutual understanding, and skill-building, particularly for marginalized women and youth. The program is active in countries like Kenya, Pakistan, Egypt, Ghana and Cameroon and soon expanding in Bangladesh, Lebanon and the Netherlands.

Aligned with the EU's Gender Action Plan III, Shared Futures promotes gender equality and inclusion. By equipping participants with entrepreneurial skills, it strengthens economic resilience and social stability while engaging religious and community leaders to build trust and unity.

This document outlines the building blocks, impact, and scalability of Shared Futures as a community-driven framework for sustainable peace and development.

1 | INTERFAITH SOCIO-ECONOMIC COOPERATION

Focus on combining interfaith dialogue and socio-economic cooperation to build community resilience against interfaith tensions and conflicts.

"The joint business among youth of different religions provides a platform to learn and understand one another's religion and promote interfaith harmony through socioeconomic cooperation."

Shared Futures participant, Pakistan

- Total participants 16,350

2 | TARGETING ROOT CAUSES OF CONFLICT

Addressing issues of exclusion and scarcity that arise from unequal power balances, which are key drivers of conflict, these can be ethnic, religious, and social economic.

3 | YOUTH-CENTRIC APPROACH

Engaging youth from different faith groups to improve their employment prospects and enhance social cohesion in their communities.

- 1510 internships
- 1997 businesses started
- 1452 increased income

4 | CONFLICT TRANSFORMATION PROCESS

Implementing interventions that build new systems and relationships to address structural causes of conflict like power inequities and cultural norms.

"I was a victim of discrimination because of my disability. Thanks to Shared Futures I was able to join a group of Muslim and Christian women. We received a sewing machine, and thanks to this machine, I learned to sew. Engaging in group activities allowed me to open up to others, flourish, and heal my trauma. Today, I am a role model for other disabled people in the village."

Shared Futures participant, Cameroon

5 | INTERFAITH DIALOGUE AND COOPERATION

Promoting joint activities and interfaith dialogue to reduce tensions and encourage mutual understanding and cooperation.

6 | COMPRE- HENSIVE APPROACH

Engaging multiple actors (youth, parents, religious leaders) across various domains (school, work, community) to effect change.

7 | RELIGIOUS LITERACY

Offering training to counter misconceptions about different faiths and their teachings, promoting tolerance and understanding.

"We have successfully brought together Hindu, Muslim, and Christian youth to work towards a common goal. Celebrating Holi, Diwali, Eid, and Christmas together fosters unity and understanding among different religious groups."

Field facilitator, Shared Futures Pakistan

8 | IMPLEMEN- TATION IN DIVERSE CONTEXTS

Adapting the program to various regions with different religious compositions, such as urban and rural areas in Pakistan, Kenya, Cameroon, Egypt and Ghana.

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