

Concept Note: Youth Interfaith Forum 2025

Leading with Ubuntu: At the Heart of Interfaith Action **10-14 August 2025**

A Common Word Among the Youth (ACWAY), as the global youth partner to IF20, is organising the Youth Interfaith Forum 2025 (YIF20) alongside the IF20. The Forum will be co-hosted in partnership with the G20 Interfaith Forum, supported by our longstanding partner The Stirling Foundation, and in collaboration with United Religions Initiative, Charter for Compassion, and The Network for Religious and Traditional Peacemakers.

The YIF20 theme for this year is “Leading with Ubuntu: At the Heart of Interfaith Action.” Through this event focused on emerging leaders, ACWAY seeks to continue creating spaces for interfaith practitioners to come together to share ideas, experiences, and opportunities to engage in promoting peace, understanding and solidarity among diverse faith and philosophical communities.

The main objectives of the Youth Interfaith Forum are to:

1. Expand and strengthen our global network of young interfaith practitioners equipped to deliver multicultural and interfaith activities in their communities.
2. Share practical tools, skills, and experiences to advance interfaith dialogue and peacebuilding across diverse contexts of local realities.
3. Prepare participants to engage strategically within the G20 Interfaith Forum framework and broader interfaith initiatives.

Youth Interfaith Forum Details

- **Dates:** The event will take place on 10th of August 2025 as a full-day in-person program, with additional events and contributions integrated throughout the main G20 Interfaith Forum from 11 to 14 August 2025.
- **Format:** The Youth Interfaith Forum is expected to take place in person, featuring interactive, workshop-style sessions, and will be conducted in English. The program will emphasize hands-on learning, peer exchange, and practical tools that participants can adapt and apply in their local contexts.
- **Participants:** The Forum will convene 50 emerging interfaith and intercultural leaders, selected for their active engagement in community-building, peacebuilding, and youth-led dialogue initiatives. Participants represent a diverse mix of local leaders from Cape Town, youth advocates from across the African continent, and members of global networks spanning multiple faiths, cultures, and regions.

About ACWAY

A Common Word Among the Youth (ACWAY) is an international network that brings together young people from diverse cultural, religious, and social backgrounds to promote understanding, peace, and coexistence. Through youth-led and community-based initiatives, ACWAY Fellows create local and global impact by encouraging dialogue, mutual respect, and shared responsibility. Since its launch in December 2015, ACWAY fellows have delivered over 200 grassroots interfaith and intercultural activities, cultivating a growing community of peacebuilders across the world.

As ACWAY celebrates a decade of work in 2025, the global landscape remains fraught with challenges. With over 100 active conflicts displacing 120 million people—40% of whom are under the age of 24—the urgency for innovative solutions to promote peace is more pressing than ever. Alarming, none of the seventeen Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are on track to be fully realised by 2030, with only 16% of targets showing meaningful progress.

It has become clear that traditional approaches rooted in violence and conflict are insufficient to address the complexities of today's global challenges. In response, ACWAY and partners recognise that young people, while being the most affected, are also crucial drivers of change. The ACWAY Forum seeks to cultivate a new generation of youth leaders equipped to foster interfaith and intercultural harmony, paving the way for a more peaceful and inclusive world.

ACWAY's Approach

1. **ACWAY is a youth-led and youth-driven movement** of over 180 young people aged 18-35 with a diverse cohort of practitioners from various faiths, traditions and cultures (including secular and non-religious) from over 85 countries.
2. **ACWAY provides opportunities** for young people to share their stories, experiences, and ideas on national and international platforms with key policymakers and fellow changemakers.
3. **ACWAY is about ACTION.** To date, ACWAY Fellows have delivered over 200 local, national and international activities to promote peace and understanding between different faiths and communities. ACWAY has supported and micro-funded several grassroots projects and delivered community activism awards to ACWAY Fellows.

At the centre of ACWAY are its fellows, and we firmly believe in peer-to-peer support, knowledge sharing, and peer empowerment.

Objectives of the Youth Interfaith Forum:

1. **Global Network:** Cultivate an expanding network of international interfaith practitioners equipped to implement multicultural and interfaith initiatives in their local communities.
2. **Global Collaboration:** Develop collaboration between grassroots and international interfaith youth organisations through structured and ongoing partnerships.
3. **Peer-to-Peer Learning:** Exchange tools, experiences, and best practices for how young people apply interfaith dialogue and peacebuilding in diverse contexts.
4. **Outcome-Oriented Programming:** Deliver a skills-based, outcomes-oriented programme that enables participants to contextualise their learnings and collaborate across different settings using our Interfaith Development Goals (IDGs).
5. **Intersectional Engagement:** Encourage intersectional thinking across faith, identity, migration, mental health, climate justice, and social justice within interfaith initiatives.
6. **Local-Global Bridging:** Showcase South African experiences alongside international practices to bridge local and global perspectives.
7. **Youth Leadership Empowerment:** Strengthen participants' confidence to engage actively and strategically within the G20 Interfaith Forum and beyond, affirming youth leadership as essential in advancing interfaith action.

Key Partners and Stakeholders

The G20 Interfaith Forum



The G20 Interfaith Forum seeks global solutions by collaborating with religious thought leaders and political representatives. It builds on vital roles that religious institutions and beliefs play in world affairs, reflecting a rich diversity of institutions, ideas, and values. The membership includes interfaith and intercultural organizations, religious leaders, scholars, development and humanitarian entities, and business and civil society actors.

Stirling Foundation



The Stirling Foundation works with trusted partners in several countries and regions to overcome challenges facing families, communities, and nations by providing partners with what they need to do more good, for more people.

Network for Religious and Traditional Peacemakers

The Network for Religious and Traditional Peacemakers



The Network for Religious and Traditional Peacemakers builds bridges between grassroots peacemakers and global players to strengthen the work done for sustainable peace. The Peacemakers Network strengthens peacemaking by collaboratively supporting the positive role of religious and traditional actors in peace and peacebuilding processes.

United Religions Initiative



The United Religions Initiative (URI) is a global grassroots interfaith network that cultivates peace and justice by engaging people to bridge religious and cultural differences and work together for the good of their communities and the world.

Charter for Compassion



The Charter for Compassion is a global movement that connects individuals, communities, institutions, and cities to embed compassion as a core principle in civic life, education, business, and religious practice. It supports local and international networks in fostering justice, dignity, and care for all—working toward a transformed world where compassion informs public policy, community action, and daily human interactions.

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