



Report on Benchmarking Workshop on Freedom of Religion OR Belief

Integration of Lessons Learnt from the Benchmarking Workshop



28TH SEPTEMBER 23

FAITH COMMUNITY AGAINST DRUGS ABUSE (FACADA)
KWALE COUNTY

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1.0 Introduction:

On September 9th, 2023, a delegation of nine members from the Faith Community against Drug and Substance Abuse (FACADA) attended a benchmarking workshop centered around Freedom of Religion and Belief. The workshop took place in Isiolo County and was organized by a church organization deeply committed to advocating the principles of freedom of religion or belief within three wards of the county. This report aims to provide an in-depth overview of the key insights gained during the benchmarking workshop and, crucially, to offer actionable recommendations on how FACADA can effectively incorporate these lessons into its forthcoming project focusing on freedom of belief and religion.

2.0 Workshop Highlights:

The benchmarking workshop on Freedom of Religion or Belief was a profoundly enriching and interactive event, yielding the following noteworthy highlights and takeaways:

1. Understanding Legal Frameworks:

The workshop commenced with an extensive exploration of the legal frameworks surrounding freedom of religion or belief. Participants were educated about the international conventions, national laws, and the pivotal significance of safeguarding religious freedom as a fundamental human right. A notable aspiration is to collaboratively work towards the constitutional inclusion of Freedom of Religion or Belief (FORB), which would fortify the legal structure protecting religious freedoms. Some of the pertinent legal instruments discussed included:

- Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR): Article 18 of the UDHR recognizes the right to freedom of thought, conscience, and religion, asserting that everyone has the right to hold and practice their beliefs without coercion or discrimination.

- International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR): Article 18 of the ICCPR delves further into freedom of religion or belief, emphasizing that this right should be upheld without coercion and that individuals should have the freedom to practice, manifest, and propagate their religion or belief.

- National Laws: Many countries have enacted specific laws and provisions to protect freedom of religion or belief, ensuring individuals can practice their faith and express their beliefs without prejudice or persecution.

2. Interfaith Dialogue:

A substantial segment of the workshop was dedicated to the promotion of interfaith dialogue. The church organization underscored the vital importance of bringing together individuals from diverse religious denominations to nurture understanding, tolerance, and peaceful coexistence.

3. Community Engagement:

Organizers shared successful case studies of community engagement initiatives related to freedom of religion or belief. These initiatives included awareness campaigns, workshops, and community outreach programs that united people from various religious backgrounds.

4. Collaboration with Government and NGOs:

The workshop underscored the significance of forming alliances with government agencies and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to further the cause of religious freedom. Building partnerships with relevant stakeholders was emphasized as a strategic approach.

5. Education and Awareness:

The church organization highlighted the role of education and awareness in promoting tolerance and respect for different beliefs. They provided resources and strategies for educating communities about the importance of religious freedom.

3.0 Integration of Lessons Learned by FACADA

FACADA, an organization that involves members from all religious denominations in its activities and is poised to embark on a project concerning freedom of religion or belief can greatly benefit from the insights gleaned at the benchmarking workshop. Here are detailed recommendations for integrating these valuable lessons:

1. Legal Awareness:

FACADA should embark on an initiative to educate its members about the legal frameworks pertaining to freedom of religion or belief in their respective counties. This knowledge will empower members to advocate for their rights and engage with legal authorities when necessary.

2. Interfaith Dialogue:

FACADA should place a significant emphasis on promoting interfaith dialogue within its activities. This could involve organizing interfaith forums, discussions, and events to foster understanding and cooperation among members of diverse faiths.

3. Community Engagement:

FACADA should develop community-focused programs designed to promote religious tolerance and unity. These programs should encompass workshops, seminars, and outreach activities that engage all religious denominations. Moreover, the incorporation of sports and plays into outreach efforts can create opportunities for positive interactions, fostering a sense of belonging among community members.

4. Collaboration:

To amplify the impact of its projects and initiatives, FACADA should actively seek partnerships with government agencies and relevant NGOs that work on issues related to freedom of religion or belief.

5. Education and Awareness (Including integration of ICT and Sports)

FACADA should create comprehensive educational materials and launch awareness campaigns to disseminate knowledge about the importance of freedom of religion or belief. These materials should be distributed within religious communities and schools to reach a wider audience. The use of ICT and social media platforms and sports should be maximized to target the susceptible alpha and z generations among the wide community youth inter faith platform.

4.0 Summary key actions under the above framework

1. Conduct a Baseline study on forbs in Kwale county
2. Identify key religious alliances forums, Networks and institutions to be targeted
3. Identify Key alliance leaders for sensitization and mobilization support on forbs agenda
- 4.. Conduct FAM exchange visits to inter faith worship centres including kaya sacred sites
- 5.. Organize Sensitization and Trainings on what Forbs is targeting faith leaders
6. Conduct inter religious dialogues for sensitization at all levels including forums with duty bearers
7. Use of faith leaders' champions to propagate forbs at ward and village levels
8. Network with exist forbs partnerships and address emerging implementation Gaps in the forb's agenda
9. Integration of ICT in Facada and Forbs for communication query and response based on early warning systems antinarcotics, anti -radicalization or discriminative information timely response to prevent conflicts or misinformation
10. Develop strong media linkages to propagated forbs agenda that address radicalization, negative ethnicity and other acts that threaten peaceful co -existence among communities.

5.0 Conclusion:

In conclusion, the benchmarking workshop on Freedom of Religion OR Belief has equipped FACADA with invaluable insights and strategies that can be seamlessly integrated into its upcoming project. By prioritizing legal awareness, interfaith dialogue, community engagement through strengthened alliances, sports and cultural events, collaboration with stakeholders, and comprehensive education and awareness campaigns, FACADA can effectively advance its mission of promoting religious tolerance and combating drug and substance abuse while respecting the freedom of religion or belief across all denominations. It is imperative that FACADA proactively takes steps to implement innovatively these lessons, thereby enhancing its capacity to achieve its goals effectively.

ANNEXES

ANNEX 1 – Participant List

No.	Name	Role in Project	Project Zone	Contact
1.	Esther Kamau	Advisory Council	Msambweni Sub County	0721629161
2.	Nelson Mwagona	Advisory Council	Lunga Sub County	07277453721
3.	David Kiragu Gitau	Advisory Council	Msambweni Sub County	0722763589
4.	Bini Kemunto Bundi	Volunteer	Lunga Lunga Sub County	0791212104
5.	Salim Mbwana	Volunteer	Msambweni Sub County	0796688141
6.	Rahma Omar	Volunteer	Lunga Lunga Sub County	0790637077
7.	Emmanuel Pendo Kahaso	Project Lead	Ukunda Office	0723331694
8	Esther Keva	Volunteer	Msambweni Sub County	0796688141
9.	Sheikh Amani	Muslim Council -chairman Facada champion	Kwale County	0700504425
10.	Magero	FPFL ICT Expert Early warning systems	Katale /Uasin Gishu	0723554026

ANNEX 2 EVENT PHOTOS

a. Group photo participants forbs and facada project exchange learning -holding manual for forbs training



b. Forbs PL sharing in the Rap up meeting Forbs and facada teams



c. Facada PL sharing on Facada



d. ADC member Facada sharing



a. Facada VL sharing Omar causes of drugs abuse



b. Rahma sharing field experiences with addicts



c. Esther Facada VL sharing on Ward sensitization committees work, WSC



d. Binny Facada sharing on mobilization action in facada

