

Faith, Community and Adolescent Wellbeing

Learning from Efforts to Address Teenage Pregnancy in Africa

MEET THE SPEAKERS



Prof. Azizat Adebayo

Head of Dept., Islamic Law
University of Ilorin, Nigeria

A trailblazing scholar of Shari'ah and International Human Rights Law, Prof. Adebayo is the first female Head of the Department of Islamic Law at the University of Ilorin — a milestone after joining as its only female lecturer in 2005. A Commonwealth Scholar and former Fellow at the University of Nottingham (PhD, 2007–2012), she has since become a Research Fellow at UNISA, a Non-Resident Visiting Fellow at the International Centre for Law and Religion Studies (Utah, USA), and an African Humanities Programs Fellow of the American Council of Learned Societies.

Her publications span Cambridge University Press, Oxford University Press, Hart Publishing, and Routledge, with contributions on gender, feminist theories and Islam, blasphemy laws, disability rights, and religion in the African Union's Agenda 2063. She holds appointments on the University of Ilorin Anti-Corruption and Transparency Unit and the Governing Council of Ojaja University



Dr. Scholar Kaaria

International Development Practitioner. Gender & SRHR Specialist

With over two decades shaping gender-transformative programmes and policy across Africa and beyond, Dr. Kaaria is a respected voice at the intersection of faith, gender, and sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR). Her practice is grounded in evidence, collaboration, and participatory knowledge co-creation — translating rigorous research into tangible impact for communities.

She is widely recognised for her expertise in gender-transformative programming, policy engagement, and the strategic partnerships that connect research to meaningful social change. Her work challenges harmful norms, builds institutional capacity, and fosters inclusive, gender-equitable societies — with a particular focus on how faith shapes and can accelerate progress.



Rev. Norah Murithi

Ordained Priest, NICA · SRHR Pioneer & Gender Justice Advocate

An award-winning SRHR pioneer and ordained priest in the National Independent Church of Africa (NICA), Rev. Murithi brings practical, faith-rooted solutions to ending teenage pregnancy and advancing adolescent wellbeing across Africa. She works at the intersection of faith, SRHR, and community development — equipping faith communities to serve as trusted spaces for mentorship, protection, and honest dialogue for young people.

A passionate advocate against sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), she champions awareness, agency, and accountability for both girls and boys. Her work also extends to disability inclusion and inclusive education, fostering sustainable community transformation that leaves no one behind.



Hamisi Mwatondo

MEL Officer · Kenya Muslim Youth Alliance (KMYA)

As Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Officer at the Kenya Muslim Youth Alliance (KMYA), Hamisi Mwatondo documents the impact of programmes spanning peacebuilding, interfaith collaboration, youth livelihoods, and SRHR. His background in International Relations and Diplomacy with Information Technology equips him to build rigorous, context-sensitive evidence systems.

At KMYA, Hamisi has coordinated interfaith camps that unite young people across faith communities, alongside capacity-building workshops that champion peace, inclusivity, and social resilience. He believes sustainable peace is built through shared humanity — and that young people cannot fully participate in civic and economic life without accurate SRHR information and the freedom to make informed decisions. A firm believer in narrative and participatory methods, he ensures youth voices shape the programmes designed to serve them.



Prof. Ezra Chitando

Professor of History & Phenomenology of Religion · University of Zimbabwe

Widely recognised for scholarship on religion as a catalyst for social transformation, Prof. Ezra Chitando holds the Chair in History and Phenomenology of Religion at the University of Zimbabwe. His research regularly engages questions of justice, community resilience, and the capacity of faith communities to respond to contemporary crises — from HIV and AIDS to gender justice and adolescent wellbeing.

As an affiliate of the Faith to Action Network, Prof. Chitando bridges academic inquiry and field practice, contributing theological depth and empirical rigour to the global conversation on faith-based development in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Moderator



Farida Abdulbasit

Head of Programmes · Faith to Action Network

Farida Abdulbasit is the Head of Programmes at Faith to Action Network. She is a development professional with expertise in peacebuilding, gender justice, and inclusive governance. She has led civic engagement and accountability initiatives. Farida holds a degree in Communication and Media Technology from Maseno University and specializes in program design, M&E, and strategic planning. She is a passionate advocate for women's rights and youth leadership across Africa