

BRIDGING FAITH AND DEVELOPMENT

A Strategic Path Forward

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WHY RELIGION MATTERS IN DEVELOPMENT

84%

of the world's population is religious.

Yet, international development has long treated religion as an afterthought—or worse, avoided it altogether. This initiative, led by the World Faiths Development Dialogue, aims to change that.



The Problem

Development efforts have often been **non-strategic**, engaging religious leaders only in crisis or using them merely to spread messages.



The Solution

Strategic religious engagement: Long-term partnerships with religious communities, integrated into development planning from the start.

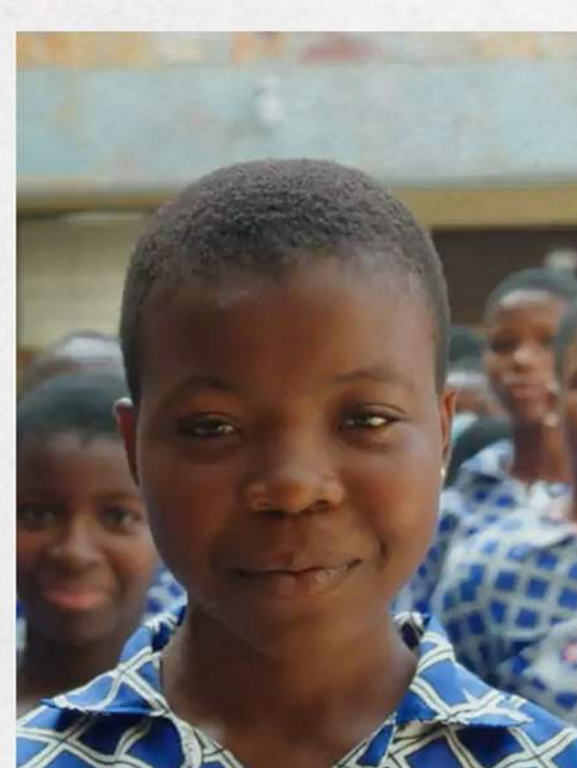
A NEW APPROACH

From Abstract to Actionable

Strategic religious engagement sounds good in theory—but it must work on the ground. This project puts theory into practice in four diverse, deeply religious countries:



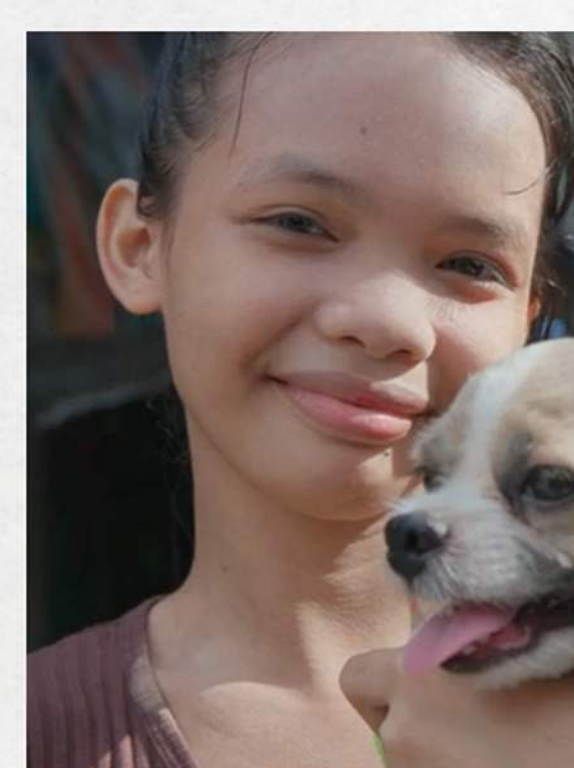
Senegal



Ghana



Sri Lanka



Philippines

Each country brings unique challenges and strengths. By comparing and collaborating, they help create models that can be applied globally.

WHAT STRATEGIC ENGAGEMENT LOOKS LIKE

The Old Way

- Instrumentalizing faith
- Short-term tactics
- Top-down messaging merely to spread messages.

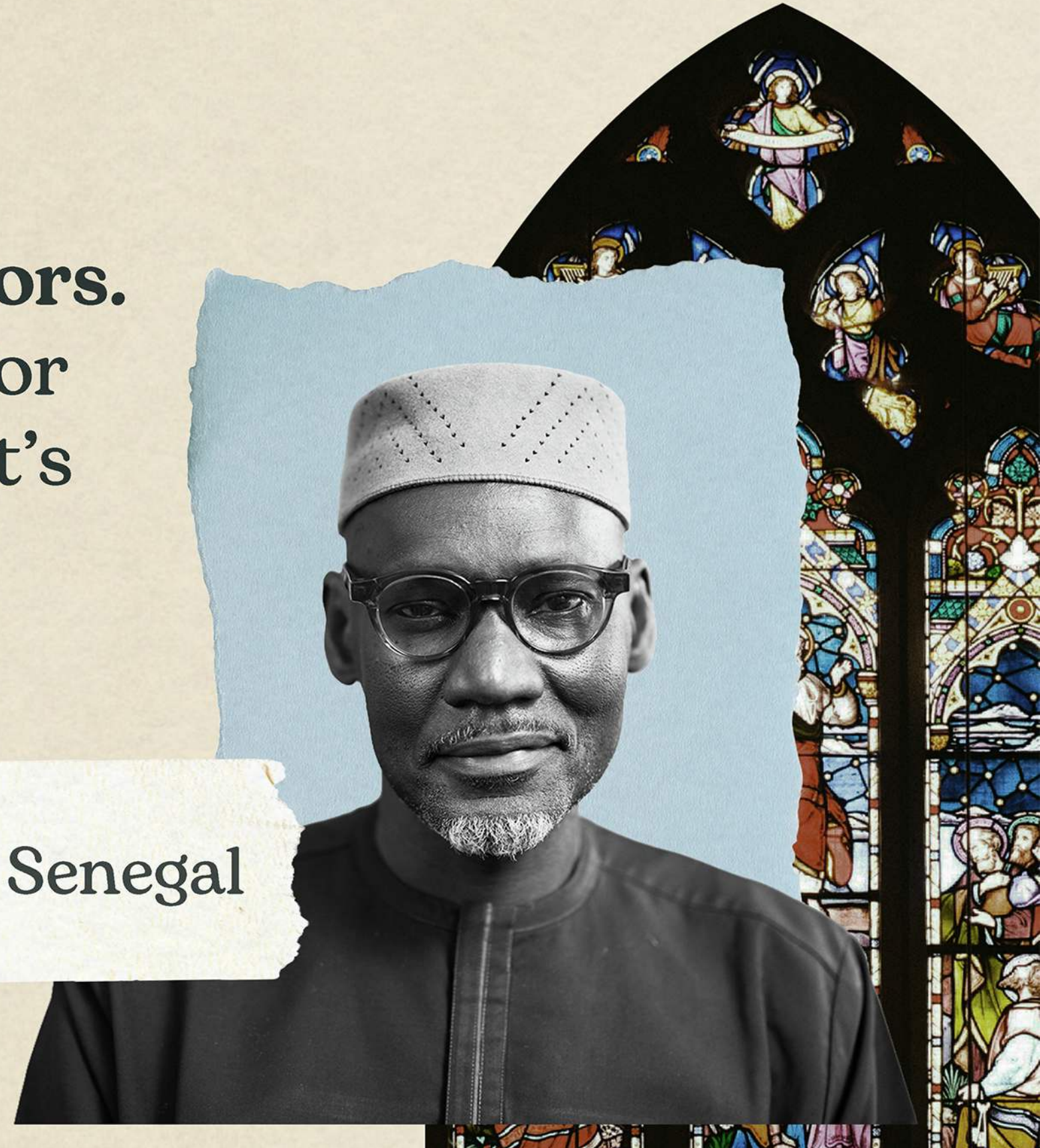
The New Way

- Long-term trust
- Local collaboration
- Practical goals (education & social protection)

“

Religious leaders are **natural development actors**. Their institutions care for the vulnerable because it's a moral mandate.”

—Saliou Mbacke, Senegal



FOCUS AREAS

Education and Social Safety Nets

Education acts as foundation for sustainable development and a space where religious institutions already play a major role. Caring for the vulnerable is a shared value across faiths. Religion can support inclusive social protection, ensuring relevance and ownership.



THE BIG PICTURE



A New Narrative

This initiative isn't just about implementing programs—it's about **changing how the world thinks** about religion's role in development and humanitarian work.

“

The central hope for this project is to make a difference in the way people think and talk about the role of religion in development and humanitarian affairs.”

—Katherine Marshall



Learn more about how faith and development can move forward together.

This is not just about four countries—it's a model for the world.

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